



Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Om Namah Sivaya

Reflections ॐ SAT Temple

January . February . March 2020



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Commentary by Nome from

Origin of Spiritual Instruction

(A Catechism of Instruction)

Chapter 3 Continued from Previous Reflections

(This commentary was taken from the May 2018, Self-Knowledge Retreat held at the SAT Temple.)

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Nome: At first, one sees Consciousness plus objects. Then, inquiring more deeply, one sees that objects are no different than a dream, and the imperceptible Consciousness is real. Finally, one sees just the Consciousness by the Consciousness alone. Then there is no question of objects, as there has been no-creation.

The disciple asked next: “What then is meant by Anandatīta?”

Nome: Beyond ananda, beyond bliss.

Sri Bhagavan responds: “Having attained the state of supreme Bliss, or Ananda, which resembles deep sleep and is free from thought, to abide therein, realizing perfect peace, unbroken and changeless throughout, even while one is wide awake, is termed Anandatīta. Since, like the boy taking his food in sleep, the attention of such a yogi, who firmly abides in that bliss of perfect peace, is not drawn to what he does, he is really engaged in no kind of activity whatever, although he is engaged in all kinds of activity. This state is called Sahaja Nīrvikalpa Samadhī.”

Nome: “Sahaja” means innate or natural. Perfect peace, unbroken and changeless throughout, is termed “Anandatita.” It is no longer regarded as a state but simply is the reality. When it is said, “the attention of such a yogi, who firmly abides in that bliss of perfect peace, is not drawn to what he does, he is really engaged in no kind of activity whatever, although he is engaged in all kinds of activity,” what is meant by “the attention” is what is regarded as reality. If it were just a shifting of mental attention, it would be transient. This and the preceding answer can be understood as referring to states of samadhi. Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the finality. But this is about perfectly peaceful, changeless, pure Consciousness. It has no attribute. That which has no attribute has no state. So, what is stated here, then, is not a description of two different states, but rather the description of pure Consciousness as a matter of direct experience. Why does he say that he is engaged in no kind of activity whatever? It is because his nature is pure Consciousness. Consciousness is bodiless so what action could it have? Consciousness knows, always knows, but never does. Knowledge is not an activity. It transcends all activity. One who abides in Consciousness abides as Consciousness. He is, therefore, unborn, and, for the unborn, there has never been a creation.

Questioner: Did you just say that attention is that which you consider to be real; paying attention to something means taking that something to be real? Did I understand it correctly?

Nome: The meaning of the instruction here can be in regard only to what is discerned as what is real. The mere placement of mental attention on one object or another, whether gross or subtle, does not represent the finality—the samadhi of the innate. It is sahaja, innate or natural, and it is nirvikalpa, undifferentiated. What is innate never leaves you. What is innate has no beginning or end. So, if you think that samadhi is something you enter into

or come out of, inquire further to discern that which is innate. If it is really undifferentiated, how could there be a beginning or an end for it? For yourself, conclusively realize that you never do anything. You are not a body that acts; you are not a mind that thinks. You are, you shine, and you repose in your Self, which is Bliss. You are of the nature of Sat-Cit-Ananda—Being-Consciousness-Bliss. What enters into Being? Nothing does; just Being is. What experiences Consciousness? Nothing else, Consciousness is self-luminous. It shines for, or knows, itself as it is. Likewise, Bliss. If there is a “you” to experience it, it will come and go. If your very nature is Bliss, then, we can say Bliss experiences Bliss. It is similar to this with all that is concerned with spiritual knowledge.

Another questioner: Consciousness knows? Knowing, in common parlance, is a cognitive activity. How does Consciousness know?
Nome: It knows, but it is not an object of knowledge. When you think you know something, aside from the thought-form, there is something that knows, that shines, without which the thought-form could not even appear. That is not a brain activity; it is not a physical activity. It is pure Consciousness. Matter does not produce Consciousness. The body is made of matter. It would be better to say that Consciousness produces that, although this is not the final truth. You know when there is knowledge of something; you know when there is an absence of such knowledge. What is that interior knowing? Do you see?

Questioner: I know I exist, and I know it without thinking.

Nome: That is the knowing about which I am speaking. It is the only kind of knowing; everything else just borrows a little bit of its light. Everything else is perceived by what we call reflected light (abhasa, reflected or distorted light).

Another questioner: You said that Consciousness does not have a body and does not have action. When we say that we surrender to

Bhagavan, who is it that surrenders, whose is the action of surrender?

Nome: That is precisely what should be discerned in inquiry. There is supposedly a doer, a performer of action, but where is he when he is sought? The real Self is not that. The real Self is transcendent, changeless, and all peaceful. Is there a second self, a jīva, an individual? As long as it is mistaken to be the reality, there will be perplexity regarding action and non-action. If the jīva's nature is sought, his individuality drops off and, with it, all his attributes, including that of being the doer. Then, we discern that there is only one vast, illimitable Existence everywhere, and nothing is being done. Or, looked at from another angle of vision, you could say the body does, you do not do. From still another angle of vision, the Supreme Lord does everything, and you do nothing. If you do absolutely nothing, all action being beneath you, and the Supreme Lord does everything, I wonder who has the better deal. (Laughter.)

In your dreams who is the performer of action? The dream character with his dream body seems to engage in action. Is really anything being done? Is there really anyone to be called the performer of action? The actor, the acting, and the acted upon are all unreal. The only substance to them is pure Consciousness. That is the existence, but that is imperceptible in the dream, though it alone is there. Earlier, it was mentioned that we should regard the waking state like the dream. Just as now awake you do not misidentify with the dream performer of action, the dream character, or the dream body, so, should you be in relation to the present waking state. Is it understood?

Another questioner: I understand that the Supreme Lord is Consciousness . . . (inaudible)

Nome: In relation to the entire universe, the Supreme Consciousness is regarded as the Supreme Lord of all.

Questioner: But Consciousness doesn't have any action . . .
(inaudible)

Nome: Well, it doesn't have a universe either.

Questioner: (inaudible)

Nome: The answer depends on what you are looking for. Are you looking for an explanation of something unreal or are you looking for the reality itself as it is? If one is looking for an explanation in relation to the world, it is the Supreme Lord who rules everything, wills everything, does everything. If you are looking to know Consciousness as it is, or God as God is without the idea of God, the answer is different.

Questioner: So the Supreme Lord is just an imaginary creation like the world and the universe.

Nome: Or the Supreme Lord is alone real, and everything else is unreal.

Questioner: That's a lot of unreal.

Nome: A lot of unreal does not amount to much. (Laughter.)

Questioner: I just want to forget all that and just go straight for God.

Nome: That's what the Supreme Lord did. (More laughter.)

Questioner: It worked for him.

Nome: It should work for you, too, then. If it doesn't, you know who to complain to. (More laughter.)

Questioner: I won't get much of an answer.

Nome: It's because you are the answer. This leads to the next question and answer. ☸



The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

Brindavanam

September 28, 1947

This morning, a North Indian wrote the following on a slip of paper and handed it over to Bhagavan.

“If I could have audience (darshan) of the real form (swarupa) of Lord Krishna in Brindavanam, would I find the strength to rid myself of all my troubles? I want to have audience with Him to tell Him all my troubles.”

Bhagavan replied, “Yes, what is the difficulty? It can be done all right. After seeing Him, all our burdens will be transferred to Him. Even now, why worry about it? Throw all the burden on Him, and He will see to it.”

The questioner: “If I want to see the real form of Lord Krishna, do I have to go to Brindavanam and meditate, or could it be done anywhere?”

Bhagavan: “One should realize one’s own Self and when that is done, Brindavanam is wherever one is; there is no need to go from place to place thinking that Brindavanam is somewhere else. Those who have the urge to go may go, but there is nothing imperative about it.

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभुताशयस्थितः ।

अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भुतानामन्त एव च ॥

ahamātmā guḍākeśa sarvabhutāśayasthitaḥ ।

ahamādiśca madhyaṁ ca bhutānāmanta eva ca ॥

(Arjuna, I am the Self seated in the hearts of all beings: so I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings. —Bhagavad Gita, X, 20)

Where one is, there is Brindavanam. If one inquires as to who one is and what one is and finds out the truth, one becomes oneself. To resolve all inherent desires into one’s own Self is real surrender. After that, our burden is His.”

A priest, one Sastri, who was present, inquired, “It is said in the Bhagavad Gita, XIII, 10, “Vivikta desa sevītvam aratir jana-samsadi.” What is meant by “vivikta desa?”

Bhagavan replied, “Vivikta desa” is that where there is nothing but the Supreme Self, the Paramatma. “Aratir jana-samsadi” means to remain without getting mixed up with, or

absorbed by the five senses (vishayas). It is these five senses that rule the majority of people. “Vivikta desa” is the state in which they are in abeyance.”

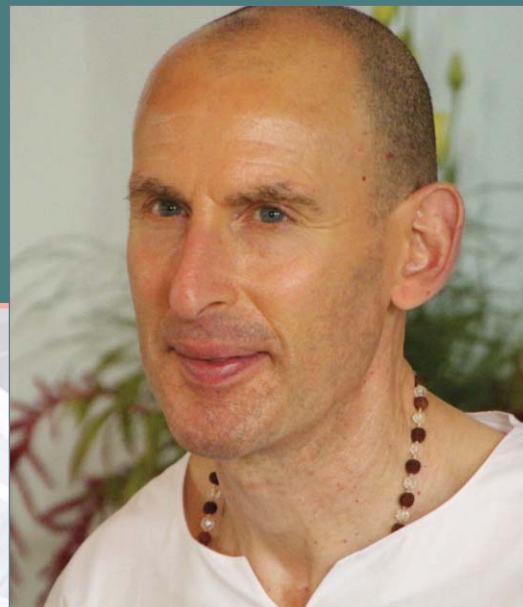
The questioner said, “The “vivikta desa” state to which Bhagavan refers is, I take it, the state of intuitive experience (Aparoksha), and, if so, that state of intuitive experience can only be attained if one follows the precepts, i.e., does sadhana for keeping the senses in abeyance. Is that right?”

“Yes, that is so,” replied Bhagavan. “In the “Vasudeva-mananam” and in other books, it is stated that one has to gain conceptual realization (paroksha jnana) with the help of a Guru by the act of hearing (sravana) and musing (manana); and then gain knowledge of “intuitive experience (aparoksha)” by spiritual practice and by consequent com-

plete maturity of the mind. It is stated in the “Vicharasagara,” “Intuitive experience (aparoksha) is always present; the only obstacle is conceptual knowledge (paroksha).” Spiritual practice (sadhana) is required to remove the obstacles; there is no question of attaining intuitive experience. It is all the same; hearing and the like, are necessary whether it is to know the intuitive or to remove the obstacles. Those who are able to overcome the three-faced obstacles are likened to the naked light in a windless place, or to the ocean in a waveless state. Both are true. When one feels the Self within one’s body, it is like the naked light in a windless place; when one feels that the Self is all-pervading, it is like the waveless ocean.” ॐ



Satsang with Nome



Egoless

October 11, 2015

Om Om Om
(Silence)

Nome: Bhagavan says that the egoless state is the real state, the only real state that there is. He also says that the ego is the source or cause of all that is undesirable and futile in life. What is undesirable is bondage and its consequent suffering. From what he has taught, we know that such bondage is illusory, and the consequent suffering is the illusory result of an illusory cause. What is futile? To search for the Reality in illusion, the Self in what is not the Self, happiness in that which is not the source of happiness---such is futile.

What is the ego? It is the assumption of existing as an individualized entity. How is it to be destroyed? By knowing its unreality. Relinquishing misidentification with the body, which is the form to which the ego becomes attached, examine what is this individualized existence. What is it in you that supposes "I"? The egoless state is just Being as it is, Brahman alone. Such is pure Existence, unmixed with illusion. Yet how can the Real and the unreal ever actually become mixed? Because the ego is unreal, its so-called destruction is guaranteed for anyone who so much as, seeking to know the true nature of the Self, inquires, "Who am I?" (silence)

What is your Existence? How can you stand apart from it, in order to know it or be ignorant of it? Such differentiation is quite impossible. The egoless state is the real state, the only real state that there is. Indivisible, nondual Existence is the nature of Reality. It is futile to seek Reality in the unreal, to seek Knowledge in ignorance. For the Reality, which is the Self, the Reality is self-evident. The Reality, the Self, is of the nature of undifferentiated Being-Consciousness-Bliss – Saccidananda (Sat-chit-ananda). That alone is your identity. The unreal has no existence, and the Real ever exists.

What is the ego? Who has actually seen it? This cause of illusion is itself illusory, for the unreal has no existence whatsoever. What is real? Sri Bhagavan said, "The egoless state is real, the only real state that there is." All differentiation, such as jagat-jiva-para, the world, the individual, and the supreme, are as illusory as their cause. All the differentiation is based on the primal one, the difference of existing as an individual entity. If your existence seems to be individualized now, inquire to know it truly. The Existence is real; the differentiated individuality is not. How can the Real and the unreal be mixed together? Such is merely imagined. For the sake of the Knowledge of Reality, for the sake of abidance in Brahman, for the sake of your complete happiness, seek to know your Self; inquire to know the true significance of "I."

Questioner: You have sometimes described the Real as inconceivable, indescribable, and unimaginable. What would be called conceivable, perceivable, describable, and imaginable? And There is not very much to it. There really is not much to the illusion.

N.: Of course, there is little to it. That is why it is referred to as illusion. If there were actually the least bit to it, it would be called reality. Facing inward is nonobjective in character. What is nonobjective is inconceivable and imperceptible, yet realizable. What is nonobjective?

Q.: Knowledge is one way to describe it.

N.: Yes, but what kind of knowledge is this? Unalloyed Consciousness is true Knowledge. For That, there is nothing else to know. To comprehend this, you cannot use objective conception or thought. It is better to turn within, making your vision nonobjective. Who are you? When great sages, such as Sri Adi Sankaracharya, have declared all this to be an illusion, it does not mean that illusion actually exists. Existence exists and always exists; nothing else is so. For whom is the illusion? This is facing inward.

Q.: I am planning retirement. When I was a student, I used to think about it. (laughter) The mind plans different stages, instead of being just in the present state. Of course, I do need to plan. Often, even when I was younger, I used to feel I need to renounce this, and I need to seek God. I do not need to be just sitting and only meditating, because the inquiry can be done, whether I am driving, working, cooking, or cleaning. Somebody asked Bhagavan whether a householder needs to renounce and become a sannyasi, and he says so clearly, that it is only the renunciation in the mind that matters. I should inquire, "Who is this householder; who is this sannyasin?" Whatever I am doing, who is that one?

N.: Thinking about being a householder and thinking about being a sannyasin are false definitions based on action. The inquiry is not an action. It is of the nature of pure Knowledge. Knowledge transcends the differences of action. Knowing what is truly secure peace, what is the source and nature of happiness, is the root of interior renunciation, or detachment. One who knows the source and nature of happiness rests inwardly at peace and is not attached to anything in the appearance of this world. Such a one abides as the eternal. That is quite beyond thinking of the past, anticipation of the future, or the conception of a present moment. It is really quite timeless. You should retire from the mind and from the false sense of being the performer of action. Make sure your retirement is permanent. All this rests on the singular understanding of the nature and source of happiness. If it is external to you, there is so much to be done and so much left undone, etc. If happiness is within you, if, indeed, you are it, that settles everything.

Q.: Adi Sankaracharya says, "I am not the doer, I am not the enjoyer." I used to contemplate that. It is very similar to, "Who am I?"

N.: If you are not the body, how could you ever be a doer, an experiencer, or an enjoyer? Bodiless, you transcend all action. Egoless, you are not in the world. Being the Self, you do not actually have an everyday life. Does Brahman have an everyday life? Yet it is always present and ever existent. This is the treasure of immortal Bliss.

Another Q.: The discrimination is good, but better is it to inquire for whom is that. The supreme detachment is really to see that there is nothing in it. If there is nothing in it, there is nothing to hold on to, there is no reality in it. Then, there is glue, and I cannot inquire?

N.: The glue that seemingly connects you with something else is always a confusion about happiness, reality, or identity. If you know something is unreal, how would you be attached to it? If you know something is unrelated to your happiness, it does not concern you. If you know something is unrelated, or not a definition for, your identity, you remain unbound by it. There really is no glue holding together the Self and the non-Self. Because there is no glue, because of the nonexistence of the ego, bondage is

unreal. As for your nature, unformed, undivided, unborn and imperishable, it is like space, all-pervading and attached to nothing.

Q.: All of my deeper experiences have been a result of that supreme un-attachment. It is totally unreal, and the only way it would be real, in a sense, is I am taking my happiness to be in it. Once I take my happiness to be it, there is going to be reality in it.

N.: Examine and see if that is so.

Q.: It does not deliver the goods. I believe it does and keep trying.

N.: The belief comes from you. What is your nature? The objective world does not declare its own existence. Rather, you believe that it exists. The belief, the quality of being real, is derived from you. What is the nature of this “you”? If it is individualized, there will be the object, a world. If there is “I,” there is also “this.” Inquire and realize the nature of the “I.” If it is not individualized, there is no “this.” If there is no embodied ego-entity, there is also no world.

Q.: Inquiry is not grasping this. It is a knowledge, because discrimination has occurred that this is not where happiness is, this is not where reality is. It would not be the objective part.

N.: If discrimination, or viveka, is there, vairagya, or dispassion, detachment, naturally follows.

Q.: The only thing that is left, then, would be the inquiry.

N.: If “this” is not, a world is not, and the individualized “I” is also not. What remains? What truly exists? The senses do not reveal it. Without the senses, is there any experience of the world? The thoughts and the mind do not reveal it. Has anyone ever conceived of a world, without thought? What actually exists? Not the name and form with which it appears, in the waking state of mind, but what is Existence itself? Nameless and formless, what is it? It is described as Sat-chit-ananda – Being-Consciousness-Bliss and such, yet what is it in itself? The nonobjective revelation of this is inquiry.

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English of verses from of Amrta-bindu Upanishad.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil of verses from chapter 15 of the Song of Ribhu.) ॐ



Certainty

Satsang, October 25, 2015

Om Om Om
(Silence)

Nome: Of what are you completely certain? You may think that something exists, or you may think that something does not exist, but of Existence itself, your own Existence, there is never any doubt. You may think that you know something, or you may think that you do not know something, but the Existence of the Consciousness that knows is never in doubt. With this same certainty, the Existence should be known as it is. What is your Existence? It is not an object of perception or conception. Your Self is not to be defined by what is perceived by the senses or conceived in the mind.

If you are not the perceived and you are not the conceived, being nonobjective in nature, and, therefore, if you are not the body and not a mind, what are you? You are, and you know that you are. What is it that you are? Bodiless, what you are has no beginning and no end; you are unborn and imperishable. Similarly, you are unchanging and uninterrupted, for Existence is not at one time and then comes to be at another, but Existence always exists. Consciousness always shines. Being inconceivable, you are without state or condition, without form or attribute, the Infinite, the Eternal.

Moreover, Existence itself is not individualized. "I"-less, your Self is free of the least trace of difference. Is there a second self that thinks that it knows or does not know this? Your existence is not two, but only One. What is that existence? Existence is certain of itself. Identify yourself entirely as That and That alone, by inquiring, "Who am I?" The inquiry is constituted of Knowledge, thought-transcendent Knowledge, just as you know that you exist without thinking about it. Certainty of Self-Knowledge is supreme peace. Certainty of Self-Knowledge is complete freedom. Certainty of Self-Knowledge is illimitable, undecaying happiness. Certainty of Self-Knowledge is the Knowledge of Brahman, the Knowledge of Siva. Attain such certainty of Self-Knowledge by inquiring, "Who am I?" Of what are you certain?

Questioner: I have been mistaking reflection for meditation. I read a spiritual text or listen, and then I reflect on what it says. As I reflect, my mind turns inward on the very wisdom that is in those words. Then, occasionally, I will actually inquire into my own nature. When I do inquire, Knowledge is revealed, but I tend to make a concept out of that and then just start reflecting on it more, thinking that I am actually meditating. It certainly not what you were just demonstrating on how to inquire. Can you give some guidance on how one could, instead of just reflecting on it, actually meditate and inquire.

N.: Sravana or listening is good, but one should not stop there. Manana or reflection is also good, but one should not stop there, but proceed to nididhyasana – profound, continuous meditation, and not stop that until one is absorbed – samadhi, in the realization that such samadhi is innate. It is absorption in the Self. The one who now wishes to meditate, what is his nature?

Q.: He seems to be an admixture of a couple of things. One is ...

N.: I am not asking you to think about it. I am asking, "What is his nature?" Right there, meditation opens for you.

Q.: Okay, do not think about it. Wow, what a different approach.

N.: It is good to think about these things, but one should not stop there. After all, the Self is not a thought, and the Knowledge of the Self, in order to be nondual, must necessarily be of the identical nature as that which is to be known. That which is to be known is actually the knower. Who is the

knower? If you cease to misidentify the knower with any of the known, what remains? Consciousness is the substance of profound meditation.

Another Q.: The vanishing of the individual is not a magical thing, but it is a discarding of its components, and, thereby, it does not remain.

N.: Only that which is unreal vanishes. The Reality neither appears nor disappears. An inquiry that examines the very nature of the supposedly individualized existence reveals just one homogeneous Existence and no individual, or ego, at all. The false is destroyed; but since it is false, is anything actually destroyed? The clear discrimination that you are not the body is fundamental. Examine keenly what you regard as your individualized existence. See what is actually there.

Another Q.: I try to inquire, and it is a sort of japa. I just think I am inquiring. I try to find out why the inquiry is so superficial. I find it is due to there being no devotion in it. So, the inquiry is the very surface level.

N.: On the surface of what?

Q.: I am asking that question just with thought, just asking it again and again.

N.: But from where do you view what is superficial? From where do you view the surface? What is that depth?

Q.: When I feel that I am inquiring well, the mind quietens down. In this case, it just wanders. I am asking the question, but the mind does not stop.

N.: Have you inquired to understand the definition of the one who asks the question?

Q.: I tried.

N.: You, in your real nature, are the depth itself. That the depth itself should apparently be caught up in what is superficial is like water crying out that it is thirsty. To what are you devoted?

Q.: When I see Bhagavan, I feel the love attracting me.

N.: If you would lose yourself in your devotion, what would remain? Something would remain, but it would not be a thing; it would be the depth itself. You wear the marks of Siva. It is indicative that Siva is the real nature of the Self. How could the Self be superficial? Devotion dissolves your sense of separate identity into That. Inquiry reveals that That alone is what you are, ever. There is really no such thing as a shallow inquiry, but you must actually inquire.

Q.: The depth is the most difficult part. There are things that I define as the depth. If one hour goes by, I feel that I did the inquiry. If it is just five minutes, I feel that I did not.

N.: How could that which is supremely deep be measured in time? What measurement is there for you? Measurements are imagined in the mind and pertain only to things in the mind. Are you in the mind? If the time spent measuring were spent in inquiry instead, what would be the result?

Q.: Progress.

N.: Then you know what to do. If Bhagavan were right there with you, would you have any worry of it being shallow or superficial?

Q.: No.

N.: Well, Bhagavan is right there with you, always. You need be only keenly aware of it; such is grace.

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English of verses from Amṛta-bindu Upanishad.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil of verses from chapter 16 of the Song of Ribhu.) ॐ





CORRESPONDENCE

with Nome



[A seeker wrote:]

. . . In general, my mother's condition is weak, dull, with anxiety, and irritable due to the medication. I sometimes feel very helpless seeing her deteriorating condition, but I keep affirming to myself and her that we are not the body and the mind. Last week, she felt very happy after she sought your blessings. We are deeply indebted to you for everything. Thank you.

[Nome's response:]

September 8, 2019

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Your mother's body is deteriorating, as all bodies eventually do, yet you need not feel helpless. The Self is transcendent of the mortal body and its conditions, and in this Knowledge is found immortal peace. Similarly, the Self is transcendent of the mind and its states and modes. In this is found immaculate freedom and eternal bliss. Your devotion and inquiry are marvelous help for her.

You may share all of these emails with her if you are not already doing so. . .

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A reply to a seeker:]

September 19, 2019

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. Yes, as nothing illusory can substitute for Reality, as misidentifications should not be superimposed upon the Self, so the innate perfect fullness, replete with happiness and peace, is not to be found externally.

[A seeker in Canada wrote:]

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste My dear Nome, please can you make this clear for me? Ramana Maharshi said that there are only two ways to conquer destiny. One way is to kill the ego by completely surrendering to the Lord, realizing one helplessness, and saying all the time, not I but thou oh Lord, giving up all sense of I and mine and leaving it to the

Lord to do what He likes with you. Surrender can never be regarded as complete so long as the devotee wants this or that from the Lord. True surrender is the love of God for the sake of love and nothing else, not even for the sake of salvation.

In another place, he said that, to get released from karma, see whose karma it is. You will find you are not the doer. Then, you will be free. This requires the grace of God, for which you should pray to Him, worship Him, and meditate on Him. The difficulty for me is to understand why he said complete surrender not asking anything not even for sake of salvation, and, in the other place, he said we must pray, worship, and meditate for release of karma, and, in another place, he prayed for the help for his mother.

[This is Nome's response.]

October 24, 2019

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The discrepancy or contradiction is only apparent and not really so. Most of Sri Bhagavan's teachings were imparted in the context of dialogues. Consequently, although the teachings are universally applicable, some expressions of them are particular to the seeker who was the recipient of the spiritual instruction at that time. So, due to the orientation and aptitude of the aspirants and the context of their understanding and experience, apparent differences appear among the responses to questions and, when they were placed into printed form, among the books. The essence and deep meaning are always perfectly consistent.

Relinquishment of "I" and "mine" is essential. This has been reiterated since the time of the Upanishads. If the ego-"I" is gone, who is there to conceive of or desire "my" salvation? The phrase about which you raise your question appears in the Srimad Bhagavatam, which is one of the 18 Maha-Puranas, and it is echoed in the teachings of Sant Tukarama and others. We can infer that the devotee to whom this was said was familiar with that book or something similar. The key to understanding it is the egoless and nonobjective nature of God, the love of God, and the Knowledge of God. The same is the case regarding worship, prayer, and meditation for God's Grace. The consistent meaning is ego-loss. Ego-loss destroys the bondage of karma. The deeper the ego-loss is the higher the spiritual experience, or state, is.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker wrote:]

Dear Nome, Sasvati,

Namaste,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

For the past two days, my heart is aching in extreme pain due to an incident that had happened to a child in India and the sufferings of the child's family. I am continuously listening to Song of Ribhu to get rid of the sorrow, as it alone gives me a great relief that there is no external world and it is only the imagination of the mind. How-

ever, I am constantly reminded of the sorrow, and I am again continuously reminding myself about the unreality of the world and existence of the individual beings.

I am seeking in refuge of your feet, to come out of the sorrow.

Namo Ramana,

[Nome's reply:]

October 28, 2019

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramana

Namaste. Whenever you become aware of some tragic incident, imagine that you are the person in the afflicted position, for whom the tragedy occurs, and, by Self-inquiry, find the inward way to be free and at peace. For example, if the incident involves death, discern that which is immortal and never destroyed. If the incident involves bodily afflictions, discern that the Self is not a body. If the incident involves loss of material objects, discern the ever-present source of happiness within. If the incident involves failure of some sort, discern the Self's freedom from doer-ship. Thus, the Self's absolute transcendence becomes clearly evident , and the suffering vanishes. The same Self exists within all. What is revealed within you can also be realized within the person or people who are suffering.

Reading or listening to the Song of Ribhu is excellent.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker in UK wrote:]

Namaste Nome,

It seems to me that any interest in anything whatsoever other than Self keeps drawing me into illusion. I once asked my Guru Ramakant Maharaj about interest in hobbies, and he replied that to enjoy the hobbies is no problem as long as I identify who I am beyond all doubt. As inquiry has intensified, I feel that every moment needs to be directed to Self. When I watch tv, read magazines, attend to hobbies etc. I feel unable to put my attention on Self, and find I get drawn into the activity. Do you feel that total absorption without interest in anything else whatsoever is the most effective way to proceed, or am I creating another concept? I would be so very grateful for your guidance.

Warmest regards

[Here is Nome's reply:]

October 31, 2019

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The question assumes misidentification as a performer of action, and that involves misidentification with a body and, perhaps, with the mind, especially

mental attention. Inquire to know the nature of the Self and become free of these misidentifications, and then see if these doubts or questions arise.

Self-Knowledge is blissful freedom. The activities do not bind. Of course, you are not obliged to continue with activities (hobbies) in which you are no longer interested. Self-inquiry should be practiced with the intensity as if your happiness and immortality depend on it, because they do.

If you have a guru, you should follow the instruction of the guru.

May you ever abide in the Self, as the Self, the immovable One, the all-pervading and all-transcendent Consciousness, which neither comes nor goes, and thus be at peace always.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker in Nigeria wrote about his sufferings during the past several years and requested spiritual advice. This is Nome's reply:]

November 20, 2019

Dear ,

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

To be free of suffering, one must first discern its cause, which is not external events and objects. To abide in permanent peace, which is profound happiness, you must know its source and nature. Upon determining that the source of happiness is within and ignorance is the cause of suffering, and within means the Self, one becomes free of attachment and misidentification by introspective Self-inquiry. Such Self-Knowledge is entirely experiential, just as your existence is.

You need not worry about membership. Our website www.satramana.org has much to listen to, view, and read. You can also obtain SAT publications (books), although the shipping costs may be too expensive for you. Some books are available in electronic form, as well.

May your inquiry be deep so that you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, and thus you always dwell in your natural state of eternal peace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome (for SAT) ॐ



The Ribhu Gita

Chapter 2, Verses 33-38

With Commentary by Nome from a
Boundless Wisdom Event held on
June 11, 2010
at the SAT Temple

the Ribhu-Nidagha Dialogue

Om Om Om

33. There is no doer; there is no action; there is nothing to be done, son! There being only Brahman, these are unreal—indeed, ever unreal.

There is no doer. In order to imagine yourself to be a doer, with the limitation that is concomitant with it, you must first conceive of yourself as an individual and as an embodied individual. Free from embodiment, you cannot be a performer of action. The body acts; you do not act.

There is no action; there is nothing to be done. If you inquire as to who conceives or perceives the doer, the doing, and the thing to be done, the action, the actor and that which is to be acted upon, vanish, being illusions based upon the notion of “I.” I, a body, in this world: with such as a framework, you can conceive of yourself as an actor doing actions and a purpose for these things to be done. If, though, you are not the body, if the world is not real, and if you are not an individual who engages instruments of action, none of the doer, doing, and the done apply to you. Not only do they not apply to you but also they are not real. What is actually there in the place formerly conceived of as the individual is only Brahman—absolute Being. What is there in the world where the actions supposedly occur is only Brahman. The unmoving is Brahman and even all of the moving is the same. The only substance that is present in all of the imagined motion is Brahman. There is no doer, there is no action, and there is nothing to be done. If you understand this, you have found true stillness.

There being only Brahman, these are unreal—indeed, ever unreal. The illusion of actor and action are not only unreal upon attaining Self-realization, but they are ever unreal. The illusion is never the case, even when you seem to be caught up in it. It is said that realization puts an end to duality, the imagined multiplicity. It puts duality to an end with the comprehension that

duality never actually exists. What was existing always, what is existing always, and what will be existing always is just Brahman, the vast, immeasurable, absolute Being-Consciousness. If you have the concept, "I do," inquire. Who you are truly never does anything. What really exists is not activity. Turn inward and, with Self-Knowledge, realize, "I never do anything, nor is anything done." Existence is not an activity and is not embodied. What is not Existence is entirely unreal.

If you are a body, you may do something. Is your identity, the Self, a body? Does it have any of the attributes of a body? If you are the speech or mind, you may do something with those instruments, but are you those things? Can you even be said to be the wielder of those instruments?

Without the notion "I," there is no one to be a doer. Without a doer, there is no doing. Without an "I," there is no one to perceive activity or to distinguish the action. In blissful Being, without an "I," there is no concept of "this is to be done." Only Brahman is. The illusion may be said to fade away. It may be said to be destroyed, or it may be said to be transformed into the Reality—its own actual Existence coming forth, with the illusory aspects dropping off. However it is described, in truth, the Reality is. Brahman is. Nothing else is. This is timelessly so.

Its absoluteness is its finality. The finality is in relation to the destruction of illusion by true Knowledge, which is Liberation. The finality, which is absolute certainty, derives from its absoluteness. Whatever is real is always real. Whatever is unreal is ever unreal. Sri Adi Sankara said, in describing the nature of the Self, "If It is Siva, it is always Siva. If it were jiva, it would always be jiva." The jiva, individual, is not always, and Liberation is distinctly characterized by its absence.

The Existence is ever the same. Changeless is the existence of the Self. It is not individualized, a jiva, at one point in time and then becomes the auspicious absolute, Siva, at another. It always is as it is. If you think of being on the threshold but unable to stay on the true side of it, unable to cross over, inquire into the "I" that seems to be on this side. He will prove to be nonexistent, and the entire identity will rest in the absolute Being that you truly are. That leaves no scope for another, for a second; hence the instruction: none bound, none striving, none liberated. (Mandukya Karika, Atmopaniṣad, Vivekacudamani, Tattvopadesha) Just the one Self is.

34. There is no "one"; there is no "two". There is no mantra, no tantra or anything else like these either. There being only Brahman, these are unreal, unreal, ever unreal.

There is no "one"; there is no "two." There is no concept of unity and no concept of duality, in reality. The mind can think of duality; this characterizes the samsara. The mind can think of unity; this characterizes aspiration. The real Self cannot be described as "one" or as "two". It is certainly not a duality. Even the concept of "one thing" falls short of this immaculate Being-Consciousness-Bliss. If we say that it is two, what is the "it"? If we say that it is one, what is the "it"? What actually is the Reality? What is the nature of existence?

There is no mantra, no tantra or anything else like these either. Mantras, which serve the purpose of remembering That, do not exist in the absolute

Brahman. Tantras, which are the scriptures relating to the knowledge of certain kinds of mysticism, ritual, and worship of different kinds; these do not actually exist. What exists is just Brahman. The worldly and worldliness certainly do not exist. Even that which is often regarded as spiritual does not exist as such. In the final analysis, what exists is only Brahman. Everything else, however imagined or conceived is **unreal, unreal, ever unreal**. The repetition is for emphasis and to indicate that it is eternally unreal. That which is real, the absolute Brahman, is always real. It never becomes less real and certainly never becomes unreal. That which is unreal is ever unreal. The unreal things do not become unreal just upon Self-Realization and somehow remain real prior to that or for someone else. They are ever unreal. Consider what this means. If the individual and what the individual seems to know are ever unreal, who is to crossover what to reach That?

The false concepts are only in the mind. It is the mind that conceives of "one" or "two." The mind, itself, is not real. Mantra carries the significance of that which saves or guides the mind that applies it or adheres to it. The knowledge known as tantra is strictly for the mind. The implication is that the mind does not exist. The mind does not exist as separate from the Absolute and does not exist as one with the Absolute. Brahman exists; the mind is not. If the mind is not, who would conceive of what?

There being only Brahman, these—whatever is imagined in the mind—are **unreal, unreal, ever unreal**. What does this say about bondage and liberation? We imagine that we are bound and make frantic efforts to become free, but, in the end, we will find that we were never bound at all. Why? Because Brahman, the Self, is ever real, and bondage and the one who is bound are ever unreal.

35. There is no sravana (listening) or manana (reflection); nididhyasana (profound meditation) is a misapprehension. There being only Brahman, all these are unreal—indeed, ever unreal.

In the spiritual practice of Vedanta, for entrance into knowledge, it is said that there should be sravana, manana, and nididhyasana. One should listen to the instruction, again and again, to gain comprehension. In the highest sense, listening should be without a listener, and the listening becomes Knowledge. In its usual context, it means being instructed, so that one comprehends what is true, what is not, how to realize, and such. There is also manana, reflection. Having heard, it should not be allowed to escape the mind. The teaching is important. Liberation from bondage depends upon it. Bliss and immortality depend upon it. So, there is so, manana, reflection. The reflection means not only not having the mind lose track of it, so that you constantly recollect it, but also to dive deeply into it, applying your best understanding and powers of reasoning and contemplation to think about it. In the highest sense, reflection is only by the light of Consciousness, which is the nature of Knowledge. Such reflection is simultaneous with listening and is of the very same nature. Having listened to the teaching and continuing to listen to the teaching, and reflecting upon it, so as to actually understand it and comprehend what it signifies, what the ramifications of it are, applying your mind to it, you enter into deep meditation. Nididhyasana conveys a

sense of profound, deep, continuous meditation. Thereby, one enters into the interior experience of what was previously listened to and reflected upon. In the highest sense, such profound continuous meditation is of the nature of the self-luminous Consciousness, revealed by the meditator meditating upon the very nature of the meditator. With the dissolution of individuality, one's own Self is the meditation. Now, there are no such things as these. What is it that exists as listening? What is it that exists as reflection? What is it that actually exists as meditation? When the "I" supposition vanishes along with the illusion of all name and form, we find that only one Existence, of the nature of pure Consciousness, exists.

There being only Brahman, all these are unreal—indeed, ever unreal. How would Brahman listen, and to what would Brahman listen? How would Brahman reflect, and upon what would Brahman reflect? What would Brahman meditate upon, and how could it happen? From this clear, absolute view of Truth, there are no such distinct things as these practices. Brahman's existence is Absolute, One without a second. If there is someone, that someone should listen, reflect, and deeply meditate to realize That, but in the realization of That, there is no "someone." Who listens? Who reflects? Who meditates? There is no such individual, and the Light in all of that which serves to liberate is of the nature of Brahman, which has no bondage whatsoever and no illusion at all. Therefore, there is no sravana, manana, and nididhyasana. They are a misapprehension. What is it that is misapprehended? The Truth is there, yet it is part-less. The Truth exists, and you cannot be separate from it, in the least degree. Imagine yourself bound, and all these come into play. Should the imagination cease, one sees Brahman, and one sees that Brahman alone ever is. Nothing else ever is.

36. The two types of samadhi (absorption in meditation: savikalpa and nirvikalpa) do not exist. The measure and the measurement do not exist. There being only Brahman, all these are unreal—indeed, ever unreal.

The two types of samadhi do not exist. Samadhi signifies absorption. Samadhi is the very purpose, or aim, of the previous listening, reflecting, and deep meditation. In explaining experiences of such absorption, the sages and holy texts speak, in a general way, of two kinds of samadhi: savikalpa and nirvikalpa. Savikalpa means "with differentiation." Nirvikalpa means "without differentiation." One can be absorbed in profound experience, in which differentiation still is a part of the experience to a certain extent, and one can more profoundly be absorbed, in which such differentiation does not exist. Sometimes, these are further delineated into external and internal savikalpa and internal and external nirvikalpa and, sometimes, multiple kinds of external and internal savikalpa. Of course, the divisions and delineations do not appear in the samadhi experience itself. They are conceived as descriptions of experience only to point the seeker, the yogi, to complete his practice and be absorbed in what is referred to as sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi, the innate undifferentiated state, which is not actually a state at all, but the abiding reality of the Self. As related by Adi Sankara, the differentiated samadhi and the undifferentiated samadhi are referred to as such

only because of the central focus of the meditation or the means used to catapult oneself into the samadhi experience. If one were absorbed in the profound experience of “I am the Self that manifests as this entire universe. I am the one Existence everywhere,” because there is still the idea of everywhere and a universe of existing things—even if I am the Existence in those things—this would still be referred to as savikalpa samadhi, with differentiation. The same experience, without reference to the world at all and with the knowledge that there is no such thing as a world, would be nirvikalpa samadhi. Likewise is the case with internal savikalpa samadhi; “I am the witness of all thought, I transcend all thought,” because it is in relation to thought, it is still considered to be with differentiation, though the substance of the experience is something beyond difference. If there be no question of a mind, the senses, or the world, such would be nirvikalpa samadhi. When one is in samadhi, he knows with certainty that what is experienced in samadhi is more real than anything of this world. There is the distinct certainty of experiencing Reality.

The types of samadhi do not exist. The delineations are just for purposes of instruction. They are not the Reality. The samadhi, itself, does not exist, for it treats Reality, or Brahman, as a state—a vast, profound, utterly transcendental state. The Truth of Brahman is actually stateless. It is the ever real. If you are Brahman, if that is the Truth, can you go into samadhi? Who would be absorbed in what? If you are truly Brahman, can you go out of samadhi? Who would leave what? If you are truly Brahman, who would be absorbed in the truth that “I am the Self of all,” or “I am the Self that is beyond all,” or “I am the Consciousness that is the witness of the mind,” or “I am the Consciousness that is free even of the mind,” and so forth and so on. Through inquiry, you experience and realize that which is implied and signified by the descriptions of samadhi, so that the idea of entering a profound experience, being absorbed in the highest state, and such other last delineations of difference vanish, and you see that the Reality, Brahman, alone ever is. No one is not in samadhi now, and no one enters into samadhi now. The truth of Brahman is referred to as samadhi, still from the point of view that there is some experiencer thereof, but there is no separate experiencer of Brahman; Brahman ever is. In light of this highest Truth Ribhu says that samadhi does not exist.

If there is entrance, there is exit. If one continues to inquire, he realizes that the nirvikalpa state, the undifferentiated state, is actually the innate state, and there is no other state. If it is innate, that is what one is. There is no one who enters it, and so there is no one who returns to a previous state.

When you conceive of another state, the samadhi is over. If one investigates, discerning keenly what caused the exit, he sees that the exiting of the samadhi consists of certain misidentifications formulated from the position of “I.” If he then climbs back up the way he came, removing the notion of “I” and seeing that there is no self but Brahman, then his samadhi is natural—innate; not a samadhi at all.

In savikalpa samadhi, the senses are said to be active, though one’s understanding might be of a transcendent nature. In nirvikalpa samadhi, the



senses, just like the mind, are inactive; they do not exist. When one sees that, with or without the senses, there truly are no senses, it is sahaja.

The states, themselves, are of a bodiless nature. Samadhi is bodiless. The activity or inactivity of the body is not of any consequence. They come as a result of profound meditation, and such meditation is not defined in bodily terms.

The measure and the measurement do not exist. How can we measure Consciousness? How can Consciousness be divided? With what would you measure, and how could you make a measurement? There is the infinite, formless Consciousness. One thinks that he can measure it or divide it into "I" and "this" and, from there, into all kinds of parts and then make a measurement to discern the relation between those parts. Then, one can imagine he is this close or this far from Consciousness. How absurd is all of that? Consciousness is ever undivided. Who could stand apart from it to measure it? What meaning could there be in any measurement thus ascertained? Can you say that there is so much Consciousness or so little?

The motivation is always to know, yet Knowledge is Consciousness. Can you take one part of Consciousness and use it to know or to measure another part of Consciousness, when the Consciousness is part-less like space? There is only the one undivided Consciousness. There being only Brahman, all these are unreal—indeed, ever unreal. It is not only upon realization that you are pure Consciousness, but you are always just pure Consciousness and there is no one to stand apart from this to measure it.

37. Indeed, ignorance does not exist. Lack of discrimination also does not exist. There being only Brahman, all these are unreal—indeed, ever unreal.

Multiplicity, which is illusion, is said to be the product of ignorance. Duality is only a result of ignorance, while nonduality is truth. The ignorance does not exist. That which is the cause of illusion and of its consequent bondage and suffering is only ignorance, but there is actually no such thing as ignorance. Brahman is real. Ignorance is said to start with "I." The "I" is the cause of ignorance, yet ignorance is itself the cause of "I," for the "I" is nothing but ignorance. "I" means the ego. If ignorance does not exist, as a power or a substance, what can we say of duality and the projection of multiplicity? It boils down just to ignorance, and the ignorance does not exist. The only reason for one to be separate from Brahman, is ignorance, but the ignorance does not actually exist. Indeed, if it actually existed at all, it would not be ignorance, but rather it would be a kind of knowledge. The ignorance that makes the nonexistent appear as if existent does not exist. When this is comprehended, the realization of Truth is certain beyond any doubt.

If ignorance is not a power in itself and it has no substance in itself, just as a shadow is only an absence of light, ignorance is only lack of discrimination. Clear discrimination removes the ignorance, which is really an insubstantial illusion, and shows Reality. Lack of discrimination also does not exist. Not only does ignorance not exist, for it has no substance and no power, but the lack of discrimination—the sheer inadvertence that seems to give rise to the forms of ignorance—does not exist. Brahman exists, and

Brahman, being measureless, boundary-less, and homogeneous, alone exists. There is nothing else within or without it. What truly exists ever exists. As ignorance with the dawn of Knowledge, as lack of discrimination with the rise of inquiry, what does not exist actually never exists. How can this be understood as your own experience, unless you dive deep into “you,” for, if there is a “you,” there will be lack of discrimination and ignorance? Knowing yourself, you find that there is no distinct entity called “you” but that you are only Brahman. Brahman has no lack of discrimination. Brahman has never had ignorance. Whose is the ignorance? Who lacks discrimination? With such inquiry, there is no ignorance and no lack of discrimination. Just the self-luminous Knowledge of Brahman exists perpetually, alone by itself.

When you abandon some portion of ignorance, it ceases to afflict or affect you, now and in the future; it is also erased from the past. Where the core of ignorance, the source of the lack of discrimination, is known not to exist, which is its elimination, or ego death, the resulting freedom from bondage is not actually a result but is the abiding reality—now and always.

It appears now that the individual is becoming free of ignorance, but the very root of the ignorance is the notion of individuality. If that ignorance vanishes, that is, if the identity as the individual is abandoned, then the only thing remaining of yourself—your identity, your sense of being—is Brahman, and that has never been bound. From within the context of the individual, you approach the Light of Consciousness and the darkness of ignorance disappears. Upon thorough, perfect inquiry, Consciousness remains as it is, your only Being, and, for That, there has never been any darkness. “I realize the supreme Consciousness” is only a euphemism, for Consciousness is self-luminous and eternally as it is. There is no one else, and there is no other state.

38. The tetrad of related adjuncts that follow does not exist, and, indeed, the triad of connections does not exist. There being only Brahman, all these are unreal—indeed, ever unreal.

The tetrad of related adjuncts, or fourfold adjuncts, describes how spiritual teaching is imparted. Such is usually related in the beginning of any Vedanta text. It states what the topic is, what is the subject matter that is to be understood. Then, it states the aim. Then, it states the relation of those, and, finally, it states the adhikarín, the one who is prepared or fit to receive such teaching. For example, the famous text Brahma Sutra, which is also known as Vedanta Sutra, begins with, “Now begins the teaching of Brahman.” It is stating what the subject matter is, what the topic is. So, the topic is the Knowledge of Brahman; or, Brahman itself is the topic. What is the aim? The aim is to know Brahman and thus ensure Liberation. What is the relation? The relation is that the Knowledge of Brahman destroys ignorance regarding it and thereby yields Liberation. That is why Brahman should be known. Who is fit for it? It is the one who is desirous of knowing Brahman as it is, the one who has a burning desire for Liberation. That is an example of the fourfold adjuncts. **The fourfold adjuncts do not exist.** There is nothing objective about Brahman whatsoever. Brahman is the utterly nonobjective abiding Reality. If there is an individual, the individual should strive to realize Brahman. He should gain that Knowledge. He should under-

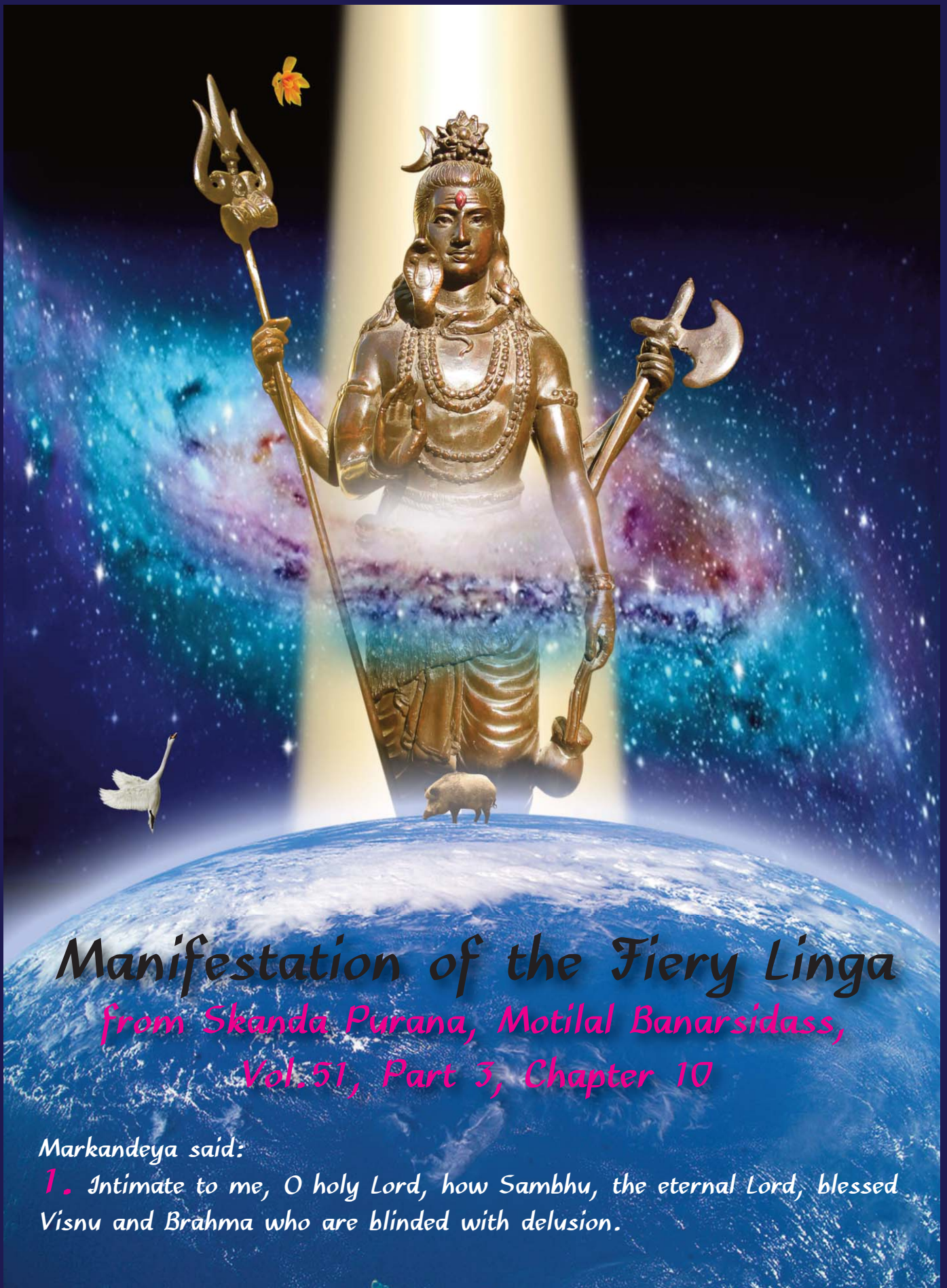
stand his aim. He should understand the connection, and he should be well qualified to do so. In the Reality, though, there is no such individual, no path to traverse, and the Knowledge of Brahman is innate to Brahman.

The triad of connections does not exist. Three connections are possible: two dissimilar things are connected, two things with mutual inherence, or there can be a state of identity. Consider this in terms of understanding the nature of the Absolute and oneself. There can be the idea of two dissimilar things and their connection, which are God and the individual soul, being different things possessing some connection the purpose of which is served through various spiritual practices. There can be the idea of mutual inherence, that the soul exists in God and God exists in the soul, and spiritual practice is determined accordingly. There can be the state of identity, which is one and the same thing is spoken of with two different names. In the comprehension of the teaching of the Upanishad, tat tvam asi, That you are, the first two are inapplicable, because it says, "That you are." Because the emphasis is on "are," the truth cannot be two dissimilar things with a connection. It is not a union with God as conceived, as one thing joining with another thing that is dissimilar. Nor is it mutual inherence, that there is God in the soul and the soul in God, that there is unity but also some distinction. If it were so, the Upanishad would not say, "That you are." If the idea is some similarity and some distinction, all kinds of confusions arise, such as whether the similarity is born of distinction or born of similarity. One could go on in an infinite regression with that way of thinking. The statement, tat tvam asi That you are, can be comprehended only in a state of identity. These three forms of connections—dissimilar connection, mutual inherence, and identity – do not actually exist. The first two do not exist for the reason that duality is not true and nonduality is true. Even a connection of identity is inconceivable, for Brahman alone exists. There is not even the semblance of two things or of two names. There is just Brahman. Therefore, there being only Brahman, all these are unreal—indeed, ever unreal.

The conclusion is invariably that Brahman alone is real. What is thought of as an experience, however profound, is actually the very nature of Existence. That Existence alone is your existence, and there is no other kind of existence. You do not have another kind of existence. To realize this with absolute certitude, as the finality, continue to inquire. The "I" proves "I"-less. Another "I," the only real "I" there is, remains. That is Brahman. That alone is the Self. Thou art That.

Om Namah Sívaya ॐ





Manifestation of the Fiery Linga

from Skanda Purana, Motilal Banarsidass,
Vol.51, Part 3, Chapter 10

Markandeya said:

1. Intimate to me, O holy Lord, how Sambhu, the eternal Lord, blessed Visnu and Brahma who are blinded with delusion.

Nandikesvara narrated:

2. Listen. I shall relate everything in detail in the manner it occurred: what the Lord who is compassionate towards devotees did out of tenderness (to them).
3. There arose between those two wranglers a mass of refulgence in the form of a column (of fire) filling up the chasm between heaven and earth.
4. As it increased in size and pierced the cosmic egg, it appeared as though the exceedingly dark-blue firmament was raised upward.
5. Due to the splendor of the fiery Linga everything all round became pale. The quarters shone suddenly as though they were extended far off.
6. It appeared as though the oceans were dried up by its exceedingly fierce and huge flames. The billows subsided and their agitation became reduced. They attained their original nature.
7. Like some sparks emanating from the fire-column, planets alone with galaxies of stars shone as before in the firmament.
8. Due to its red splendor all the mountains appeared to be painted with red chalk. They attained the splendor of mars and the rising sun.
9. As the aquatic animals were illuminated due to the close contact of its refulgence, the oceans appeared to be formed and shaped by means of rocky slabs of ruby.
10. The trees shone as though fresh grown clusters of corals had hung on them. The rivers shone as though they were full of full blown kalhara flowers.
11. The earth appeared to be smeared with saffron. The quarters were covered with red lead as it were. The sky all round was seen to be completely pink in color.
12. The top lid of the Cosmic Egg was completely filled with its splendor like the skull (in the hand) of the Hide-robed Lord (Siva) filled with blood.
13. On account of that Column of Fire that increased in size thus the entire universe consisting of the mobile and immobile beings assumed reddishness in appearance.
14. On seeing that wonderful Linga of Fire, the Four-faced and Four-armed Lords abandoned their mutual anger. They thought thus to themselves:
15. "Has the Mass of Splendor of the rubies on the hoods of the serpents beginning with Sesa pierced through the earth and come up?
16. Or have all the twelve Suns that commonly appear at the end of a Kalpa risen up simultaneously in between the sky and the earth?

17. Or have the streaks of lighting after being scattered due to clash of clouds commingled together in the middle of the sky and begun to fall on the earth?

18. This (Mass of Refulgence) dazzles and so diminishes the power of the eyes every moment by means of its luster. All the other elements have been made to appear as though they are not different from itself. This Refulgence has been going on increasing.

19. Although this is dazzlingly brilliant, it does not scorch. Unlike the fire, it does not burn the living beings nearby.

20. By the transmission of the splendor of this Mass not only the universe but my body also has attained a red color. How wonderful!

21. From whom has this come out? What is its root? What is its place of origin? What is its base? By which power does it shine?

22. What is its extent all round, sideways, above and below? How far has it gone down deep into the nether worlds?

23. The mind is constantly eager to know all this. It appears to fly up in the sky and penetrate deep into the nether worlds."

24. Thinking thus with great keenness on account of the sight of the Column of Fire, both of them, Visnu and Brahma, became eager and anxious.

25. With great pride Govinda looked at Brahma with smile spreading over his lotus-like face and spoke:

Visnu said:

26. O Brahma, we both desire (to prove our) superiority over each other. As a matter of fact, this has come into existence like a test (of our superiority).

27. Certainly it is not possible for either of us to know (both) the beginning and the end of this Mass of Splendor of incomprehensible nature.

28. If either of us finds out the root or the top of this Self-born Splendor, he is the superior of us. He is the Lord of the worlds, too.

Nandikesvara said:

29. Thus both of them resolved in their minds to find out the root and the top of that exceedingly great Mass of Splendor. They rivalled with each other in their attempt for the same. ॐ

Lingodbhava Dipam

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,
Sheds 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.



— by Nome



From The Ramana Way

The following articles appear in the April 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

Action and Actor by Dr. Sarada Natarajan

Sometimes, when we stop and take a look at what is thought to be intimately known, we are startled by its strangeness. Action is one of these things. Most of us are inexorably committed to action. We could barely imagine a state without it (apart from the blanket-ignorance of sleep). How dear it is to us, action. Yet, like many of the things that we habitually hold dear, how much of a stranger. What is it we know about action? Why do we act? Because we want the results of the action. Every action must have its equal result, so the logic of action seems to indicate. And each time we act in expectation of a given



result, we are subscribing consciously or unconsciously to the supremacy of action. We are endorsing our confidence in the power of action to yield results. But does action possess this power? Is not the belief that it does so as naïve as that of a child in New York who be-

lieved that milk vans produced milk? The milk van or the milk machine is merely a vehicle through which the milk is delivered to us on registering the appropriate input, similarly, action is the machinery which delivers the result to us.

But what is the conscious force that activates this machinery? Where would action be without the actor? It would not be at all! Hence, to perform endless activity without remembering that which activates is to be caught in the grip of a mechanical existence. Activity in itself is lifeless, insentient. It is the actor who gives consciousness and direction to activity. The milk van may carry the milk to various destinations, but it is the driver who maneuvers the van and enables it to do so. The milk machine may deliver milk at the mere push of a button but it must be programmed to do so. The first step to understanding action, therefore, is to recognize that action has no power of its own; it is, in fact, lifeless. Life and purpose are injected into action only by the actor. It is the actor who motivates action and enjoys the result of the action.

However, while the driver who allows the machine to rule him is as good as a machine himself, the driver who thinks himself all powerful is no better. The tragedy occurs when he decides that he holds the power and discretion to distribute the milk according to his wishes. Forgetting that he has a chartered course to follow, he fails to supply milk to some, to others his supply is inadequate, while those whom he likes or loves he floods with more than their need. Thus,

he starves some, angers others and fills a few with great pleasure. The actor who believes himself to be in sole charge of action is like this driver. He superimposes on action his sense of likes and dislikes. He avoids some types of activity altogether saying that he cannot or does not want to perform them. On some activities he bestows partial, inadequate attention. To a few activities, which he believes he enjoys or he believes to be good or right, he gives his entire love and life. In the process, his life becomes lopsided. From those areas which he neglects or ill-treats he reaps unhappy results. In those areas where he lavishes attention, tending the crops with water, fertilizer and every care, he reaps a rich harvest. And because it is not his responsibility to choose, because he has not been engineered to choose in this manner, he often makes the wrong choices. He acts where he must remain passive, fails to act when the need is for action. He waters a thorn bush and starves a sweet fruit tree. Thus, he finds himself faced, time and again, with apparently contrary results, no results or inadequate results. Even when he enjoys the expected result it is but for some fleeting moments. So, he puts himself once more into activity. Again, he chooses his directions to avoid those which held traps and to travel only along the lines that provided joy. But again he gets caught in the self-same problems, in the same passing joys and sorrows. Yet, again he acts wrongly, assuming the power to direct, the authority to decide. This time, too, he finds himself faced with the same ups and downs. In this manner he successfully loses himself in the great maze of activity. Taking once a right turn, twice wrong turns, thrice right, once wrong, once right, thrice wrong, and finding no way out.

All this trouble he puts himself to because he makes his own new maps and takes his own routes which lead him to some peaks but also to some abysses. It is when he is caught in some of the abysses of his own routes that he suddenly stops and longs to escape from it all. But then he finds it is too late. He desperately tries to regain the right road, yet loses himself more and more, because he tries only to use his own maps in returning to the right road.

But it is never too late. He only thinks so because he assumes himself independent, because he loses sight of his source. He forgets that he has, securely tied around his waist, a thread that leads him outside the maze of activity to its source. All he has to do is to pay attention to this thread, to this that links him with his source, to track the thread back, and he is free! Thus, having once understood that it is not the machine-like action, but the controlling actor who matters, the next step is to understand the actor. The real need is to identify the link between the actor and his source and to trace the actor back to the source following this thread.

Meditations on Teachings

By A.R. Natarajan



Disciple: What is the purpose of life?

Bhagavan: To seek to know the significance of life is itself the result of good karma in past births. Those who do not seek such knowledge are simply wasting their lives.

—Talks, 558

Ramana straightaway turns the questioner's attention to the importance of the quest for finding out the meaning of life. It is up to each one of us to work at it and find it out for ourselves. Experience is always for the individual, and any explanation or statements made by another can at best be only hearsay. Most people carry on from day to day fully engrossed in the immediate, in their jobs, professions, relatives, friends and entertainments. They are the unfortunate ones for their lives are superficial, skin-deep, lost in pleasantries and trivialities. Apparently, no event in life has stirred them to their depths. Nothing has

moved them enough emotionally to startle them into having a good look at the total waste of their lives. Generally, it is sorrow which shakes one at the very root and makes a person question the assumptions of his life. It was the shock of a chain of calamities, death of the husband and death of children in succession, which wrung the heart of Echammal and brought her to Ramana. The double tragedy of the death of both his son and daughter who were drowned in the well of his own house filled Narasimha Swami with renunciation and lead him to Ramana. Likewise, the recorder of the "Talks," Munagala Venkataramayya, turned to Ramana at a very critical period in his life.

Subbaramayya sought consolation and guidance from Ramana perplexed at the death of his infant child. It is true that sorrow makes one question cherished values. Even our prayers are more intense at times of distress when events appear to be beyond us. But one has to pause and introspect whether it is wise to wait till the sorrow beckons to contemplate on life's meaning and purpose. Should we be so dull-witted as to wait till doomsday?

Time does not wait. It relentlessly ticks away. Everyone's life span is determined at the time of one's birth itself. It is a product of karma. The body has to go through certain experiences, good, bad and indifferent. That done, death takes over. It is only in the case of Jnanis' that the Lord of death has to wait in attendance to find out whether they are ready to cast off their bodies. For them, the human garb is only for the welfare of humanity, and it has no karmic cause.

For the rest of us, when karma folds up, life, too, ends. It is only in exceptional cases that extensions are granted by the Sadguru's Grace. We have the instance of Jagadiswara Sastri pressing his demand on Ramana and recovering from a fatal illness. We also have the case of Ranga Iyer who managed to ward off fate by sticking Casabianca-like to Ramana's physical presence. It is also true that, in some instances, the life span has been increased without the particular person's knowledge, by the secret operation of Ramana's Grace. Ramana told the Rani of Baroda that everything is possible for the omnipotent guru. However, it has to be remembered that such

changes of the ordinary course of events are minimal and dependent on the extent of surrender of that person to the guru. It is safe to regard exceptions as exceptions and not to lay store by them. Death may therefore ring the bell at any time, any minute, any second. Since one does not know when exactly the operative karmic force would come to an end, one has to be ready for the call.

The question is, "Ready for what?" Ready to explore the purpose of life to its very depth and to find out what it is all about. It is because of this that Ramana says that even the very desire to find out life's purpose is the product of past good karma. Such is its importance. Here the past must be taken to mean not only actions preceding the body's birth but also those which have been done till such time as the questioning of life's intent starts.

Again, the use of the expression good karma by Ramana has to be meditated on. Altruistic actions for the society's wellbeing are commonly regarded as good. One can understand this. But the problem is that, stealthily, the desire for recognition, for name and fame, would creep in to sully the motives. Therefore, the litmus test is really one of the attitude of mind with which an action is performed. This criteria in mind, action has to be classified as good and bad. Bad action is such which binds one more and more to sticking attachments and egocentric existence. One the other hand, good actions are those which turn one God-ward, which turn one inward.

Ramana makes this distinction in the second and third verses of Upadesa Saram. Action can lead us to more and more of it resulting in our inability to look beyond the nose, inability to stop and ponder about life's meaning. The other type of action which is done with an attitude that it is an offering to God leads one out of the dense forest of karma. Therefore, one who acts with the dominant idea that he is the architect of actions and their results reaps only the real tragedy of dying more ignorant than he was born. The doership idea is the undoing. Unless this is tackled by good karma, one's goose is well and truly cooked.

The significance of good karma, therefore, lies in the fact that it is a vacuum cleaner which cleanses the mind by sucking up the dust of negative and selfish thought. By purifying the mind, it enables one to be successful in Self-inquiry leading to Self-Knowledge. Once the mind turns inward, half the job is done. Instead of wandering with the wandering mind, the wanderer is not only able to question life's purpose, but is also able to find it out for himself. Sustained attention on the "I" keeps the intuned mind at the source. Then, and only then, life is an opportunity, a blessing and not a mere chronological interval. When the inner work started by good karma and sustained by Self-inquiry continues, the myth of doership vanishes in the fullness of existence. The questioner himself is lost in the overwhelming natural bliss. ॐ



**Om Namo Bhagavate
Sri Ramanaya
Om Namah Sivaya**



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The SAT temple is a special place. It is a holy place where devotees have gathered for over 30 years to listen to the exposition of and meditate upon pure Advaita Vedanta as taught by Sri Adi Sankara and Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. It is an ethereal place where countless, worshipful celebrations have occurred in an atmosphere permeated by profound meditation. It is a supremely sattvic place of peace and happiness for those steeped in the practice and Realization of this zenithal spiritual teaching.

Once each year, the SAT board of directors extends a pledge invitation to those who benefit from the sacred events at the SAT Temple and understand its specialness. This invitation places before you the opportunity to express gratitude for this divine place in the form of a pledge donation. The pledge donations, the membership donations, and love donations from devotees who come to the temple for satsangs, special events, and retreats are a significant portion of the support that helps the SAT Temple thrive.

Pledges contribute to the general maintenance costs for upkeep of the temple and also for other special repairs, upgrades, and projects including repair and renovation of some of SAT's residential property. With your donation and by the Grace of Sri Bhagavan and Lord Siva, we can continue to care for the SAT Temple property assuring the perpetuation of this blessed sanctuary.

We invite you to reflect on the brilliant blessing of having the opportunity of participating in the SAT Temple, which shines within your spiritual life, and to offer a pledge for 2020. Please visit the following link to make your pledge for 2020:

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**With whole-hearted appreciation and in service to Sri Bhagavan,
The SAT Board of Directors**

SAT Retreats 2020

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 Svatanirupanam 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 13 - March 15, 2020

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 22 - May 24, 2020

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 Maharshi Self-Realization Retreat

August 28 - August 30, 2020

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, Ekātma 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 6 - November 8, 2020

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 Available!

End of sign-up date is
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Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Om Namah Sivaya