

Not from any desire, resolve or effort on the part of the rising sun, but merely due to the presence of its rays, the lens emits heat, the lotus blossoms, water evaporates and the individuals in society take up their respective avocations in life. In the proximity of the magnet the needle moves. Even so, the soul or jiva, subjected to the three-fold activity of creation, preservation and destruction which take place merely due to the unique Presence of the Supreme Lord, performs acts in accordance with



its karma, and subsides to rest after such activity. But the Lord Himself has no resolve, no act or event touches even the fringe of His Being. This state of immaculate aloofness is likened unto that of the sun who is untouched by the activities of life, or unto that of the all-pervasive ether, which is not affected by the interaction of the complex qualities of the other four elements.

– Sri Ramana Maharshi,
Who Am I?, Sri
Ramanasramam 1955





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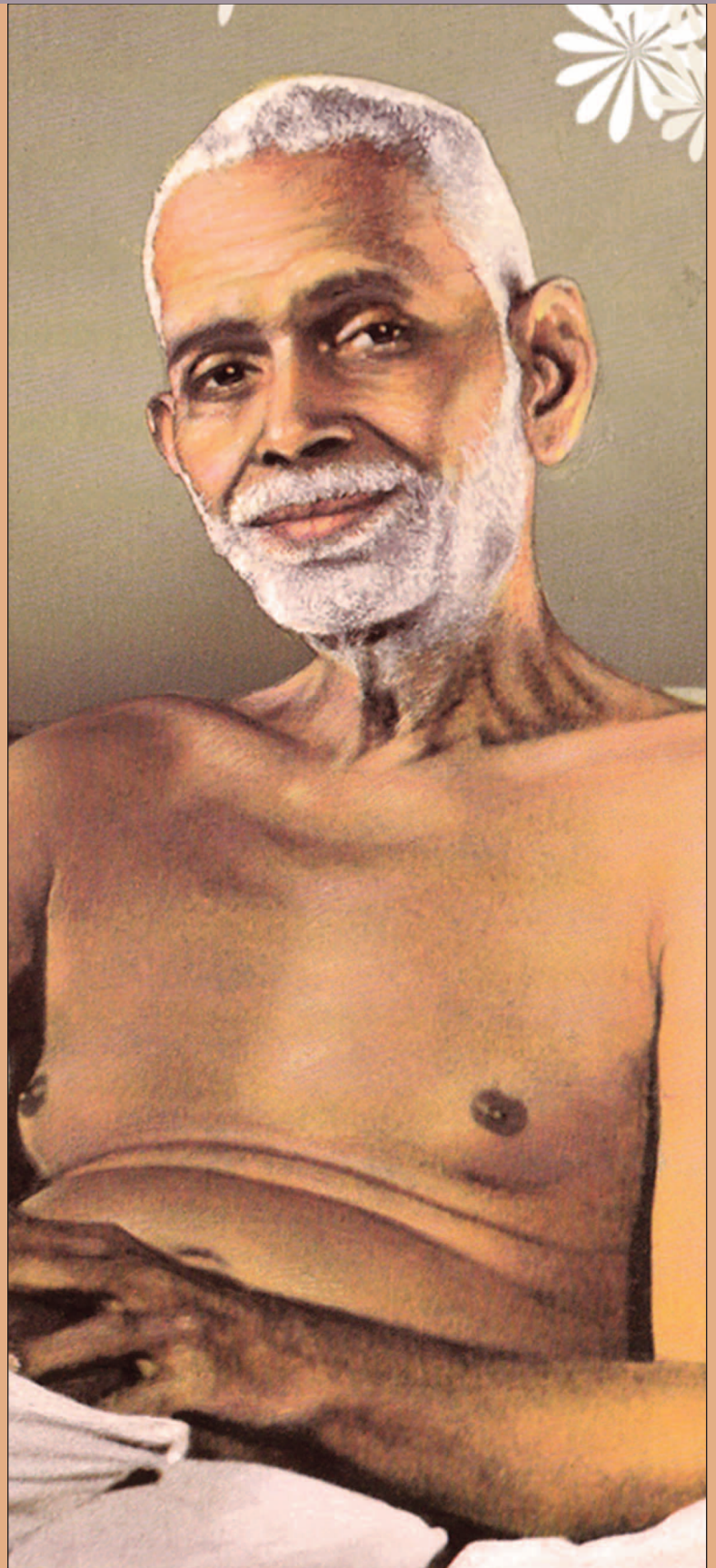
January . February . March 2023
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Salutations

April 6, 1948

At about 3 o'clock this afternoon, a young boy, four or five years of age, came with his mother. She prostrated before Bhagavan and sat down. The boy prostrated likewise but continued the salutations over and over again. Bhagavan laughed at that and told his attendants, "Just see. He is prostrating to me over and over again. Perhaps he thinks that if he does so, he may afterwards do whatever he pleases. He is a young lad. What does he know? He is just imitating his elders. He must, however, be rewarded. All that he wants is a plantain. If he gets it, he will stop. Give him one." On being given one, the boy went and sat down.

After some time, someone came and did sashtanga namaskara (reverential salutation by prostrating with all the eight limbs of the body touching the ground) but did not get up for a long time. People nearby finally made him get up. He somehow got up but began saluting again and again. He was ultimately prevailed upon to stop saluting and sit down. Bhagavan told the people near him, "Namaskara means prostration a number of times according to some. What can be done? The real meaning of namaskara is the dissolving of the mind." "What is the meaning of sashtanga namaskara, Bhagavan?" asked a devotee. "It means that eight limbs of the body, namely, two hands, two legs, two arms, chest and forehead, touch the ground while saluting. The idea behind this type of obeisance is that the person doing it says, 'the body which touches the earth, will dissolve itself into that earth ultimately, and the 'I' in me will continue to be 'I' alone.' That idea must be known to oneself by enquiry. Without knowing it, there is no use in



from LETTERS FROM SRI RAMANASRAMAM

doing these namaskaras. With meaningless namaskaras people want to secure all the benefits: 'Swami must give them whatever they desire, be it a bag of clothes or money.' Whenever they do namaskara, I feel afraid. I must fulfil all their desires. I must conduct myself carefully after knowing their minds. Not only that, just by bowing to me, they get a sort of right over me. When people like us suffer like this, what about Iswara himself? He must be beholden to ever so many; he must act according to the wishes of people; he must give boons to people. When swamitvam itself has so many troubles, what about Iswaratvam? If anyone refrains from prostrating before me, I feel very happy because I need not be beholden to him. A Jnani need not to prostrate

before anybody nor need he give his blessing to anybody. That is because his mind remains always submerged. He is deemed to be doing namaskara at all times. Some people feel offended when they prostrate before a jnani and he does not respond with another namaskara nor even raise his hand and bless them. But the fact is, before the others have prostrated, the Jnani will have already prostrated lower, his mind having been dissolved. Even blessing (asirvadam) is similar. The submerging of the mind itself is a blessing. The Jnani's mind remains always submerged. That being so, who is the one to bless? What is it that is done?" said Bhagavan.



Satsangs with Nome



The Self is the Reality, one without a second. The ego is the root of duality, and, for it, there is always another. Can such an ego be the Self? The unreal is attributed to the ego, never to the Self. Can there be two of you, a real Self and an ego self?

Your Existence is invariably singular, undivided, and undifferentiated. Can indivisible Existence become an ego? It cannot be, for that which is without division, indivisible, is also changeless. The changeless, ever-existent Self alone is you. The second, the root of duality, does not actually exist.

Has anyone actually ever seen the ego? It is a bare assumption. An assumption of what and by whom? The ego is not assumed by the Self. Being the root of all otherness, the ego is not assumed by another. How can it assume itself? The source of all illusion is itself illusory. Therefore, the real ever is, and the unreal never is. The Reality, unborn and imperishable, without beginning or end, infinite and eternal, is your own true nature. The egoless state realized by Self-inquiry is the real state, the only real state that there is. Inquire and know yourself.

Questioner: That was a very beautiful and inspiring discourse, and it went straight into the heart. There is a talk of the ripe ego and unripe ego in the books. They talk of spiritual progress in terms of ripening of the ego. Ego in any form is false. I don't understand what is meant by a ripe ego? Does it mean one does the right thing? There is always action, and the results that come in action. It was suggested to have an attitude of acceptance. Do whatever is to be done and accept the result as is. But one can also have the attitude of this whole thing being unreal and negating the universe as being the reality that one gives to it.

N.: Actions are for the body. How could they be related to you? Are you a body? You should thoroughly reject and not accept the misidenti-

Egoless

January 2, 2022

Om Om Om
(Silence)

Nome: The Self is Existence, Absolute Being. An ego is the assumption of existing as a limited individual. Are you an ego?

The Self is Consciousness, infinite, unmodified Consciousness. An ego is the supposition that there is a second knower apart from Consciousness. Are you an ego?

The Self is of the nature of perfect fullness, verily Bliss. The ego is that to which suffering is attributed. Are you an ego?

The Self is formless, bodiless. Form is that which is attributed to an ego. Are you an ego? The Self is beginningless and endless. Can such be an ego?

fication with the body. For the real Self, there is no obstruction. It is unimpeded. Who is it that meets with an obstacle? The Self itself has no unripe state. We cannot say that the Self becomes ripe. It is simply ignorance that makes one think of oneself as other than the Self, and, with right knowledge, Self-Knowledge, that ignorance is ended. Do you wish to call such ripeness? The ego does not become ripe. It simply vanishes, because it is unreal, when there is true Knowledge.

Q.: So, the ripe ego is no ego at all.

N.: Yes. If the ego or individuality is assumed to exist, all kinds of differences can be imagined and built up upon that. But, if you inquire "Who am I?", and the ego illusion vanishes, what then?

Q.: When it is said to have acceptance as an attitude, is it the ego that accepts?

N.: What is it that is accepted? What is the nature of the one who supposedly accepts? Is he an embodied, limited being? Are you supposedly accepting reality? Such would be absurd. Reality simply is as it is. Or are you thinking of accepting unreality, the world etc.? That would be foolish.

Q.: To alleviate the pain or suffering of the circumstances, which may be unreal, it is said that all the circumstances that happen, the good or the bad, happen by the will of the Lord.

N.: Are circumstances real? What is the nature of the perceiver or experiencer of them? Circumstances do not make for suffering. Suffering is self-caused, while happiness is self-existent. Examine your experience closely, and you see that the objective circumstances are not really the cause of your happiness or unhappiness. If suffering is self-caused, then and only then, can you free yourself of it entirely and be liberated from all suffering. If happiness is self-caused, that is to say self-existent, then and only then, you can have it and never lose it, for the realization is that Being is Bliss. Be detached. Why confuse yourself? Surrender to God; don't surrender to a circumstance. Are these clear for you now?

Q.: Thank you.

Another Q.: I would like to really understand more about worship. That sounds silly that, as old as I am, I don't know worship. I know we spend time worshipping. I see it as thanking, being grateful. I feel a lot of love when I thank Sankaracharya, Ribhu, Ramana, you, or my comrades here. That is how I would define worshipping. I don't know very much about it. We do engage in it, but I am not always sure why I am doing that.

N.: You have very well answered your own question. When you are feeling thankful, the ego diminishes; that bhava (feeling, attitude, disposition of the mind) is wanted. What else is worship, but the diminishing of the ego?

Q.: My sense of it is that Ramana is totally alive and well in all of us as Existence, Consciousness. When I thank him, I am thanking both his physical manifestation when he was alive and also that which is transcendent. I don't know if Ramana is guiding us, if praying for or asking him for guidance is real.

N.: What is it that is worshiped?

Q.: When I am worshipping, I find myself just being grateful and loving. When I am praying, or at least when I think about praying, I am asking for some help, usually help for someone else.

N.: There is prayer for something. What is prayer when it is not for a thing?

Q.: It would be attention to the knowledge of oneness, to the awareness, being One, being Brahman.

N.: When the objective portion of prayer drops off, there is worship. We could say that becomes contemplation. When contemplation reaches beyond thought, it becomes meditation. When meditation turns fully inward it becomes inquiry. Upon such inquiry, the ego diminishes entirely. It is no longer there. Such is the highest worship. The same holds true concerning abiding in love. God is the nature of that love, and

one who abides in love, abides in God, and God in her.

Q.: It feels like that when it happens. It is very beautiful. Thank you.

Another Q.: In the text Atmavidya, Maharshi says to keep a silent hold on body, speech, and mind and not to use it as an expression of the ego. I have not implemented it fully. I still assume the ego to be real and the ever-existent Self is completely overlooked. Then, the surrender to God, surrender to the Supreme, is not happening, because I take the ego to be real, and I carry all the burden.

Nome: What is the nature of the one who assumes the ego is real? You see the ego notion, so it cannot be you. What is your nature?

Q.: I am more formless. But that knowledge is not constant.

N.: What is constant?

Q.: The meditation is not constant. There is that constant Existence. I can see that when the ego is taken to be real, I have overlooked that Existence. You have said in Five Flowers, "Cherish the Self." Maharshi has said, "Be faithful to the Self."

N.: The more you cherish the knowledge of the Self, the more you will adhere to it. Something constantly knows. It already exists. What is it? When you say you lose track of your meditation, what is the nature of the one who is aware of that? The constant alone is you, for your Existence is never interrupted. The constant alone is real.

Q.: Maharshi has said, "You expect Grace to come from high up, but grace is experienced when one subsides the mind in the Self." He also says that all problems are because one expects things other than the Self.

N.: Something external to you.

Q.: The expectation of happiness, reality, or identity outside.

N.: Grace, happiness, these are other names for the Self. The view or expectation of something externally coming to you, as if grace or happiness were something other than the Self, is based on what definition of yourself? Certainly not the Self. Discern deeply who you really are.

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English from Svatmanirupanam and in Tamil from the Song of Ribhu.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

Natural

Satsang, Feb. 6, 2022

Om Om Om

(Silence)

Nome: The one Self alone exists eternally. Abidance in the Self as the Self is, indeed, your natural state. What is natural?

To dwell in happiness is natural, while sorrow and suffering are not. Peace is natural. Disturbance is not. The one Existence is natural. Separation and differentiation are not. Love is natural. Attachment is not. Self-Knowledge is natural. To be unwise, ignorant, is not.

What is natural for you? To be natural, something needs to be already existent, ever existent, and not something to be obtained anew. What is natural, therefore, is innate. Discern what is innate. Such discriminating inquiry is natural. Dwelling in mental concepts is not.

What is ever-existent and neither gained nor lost at any time? It is only the one Existence. Being as Being is, that is natural. The Self is natural. The ego notion of existing as a separate individuality is not natural. What is natural alone satisfies.

What is natural for you? Abidance as the Self is natural. Is it truly possible to exist separate from the Self? Who is other than the Self? The assumption of individuality vanishes upon inquiry to determine what its nature actually is. Who are you? What is the nature of your existence? Such inquiry should be pursued until the realization of the Self is natural.

The Self alone exists eternally. Such knowledge is natural. Abidance in and as the Self is alone natural. It is not natural to misidentify. To remain as you are is natural; not as a body, not as a personal entity, not as a mind, but abidance as yourself. Such abidance is that in which Being is the Knowledge.

Questioner: Obviously, what is natural would be myself, yet it doesn't feel that way. If I put energy in understanding what is real, what is there all the time....

N.: What is real is the innate. What is natural is innate. Determine what is innate in you. All that is not innate should be discarded as not so.

Q.: It is as simple as that. Because it is innate there is nothing to do except eliminate those things that are not innate. Because if it is innate, it would not require a doing.

N.: That is right. What is innate is transcendent of all doing. What is innate cannot be gained or lost. What can you lose? Everything you can lose. What of that which is not a thing? What is not a thing must be discerned nonobjectively.

Q.: So, the goal would be to stay with what is natural, to stay with that which needs no maintenance. Obviously, my thoughts need maintenance.

N.: Are thoughts or mental concepts natural? Is any mental mode natural?

Q.: The absence of those is fine.

N.: Freedom is natural. Peace is natural. Is any mental mode beyond gain and loss? Do not such mental modes come and go? Beyond com-

ing and going, there is only one thing. That one thing is Existence itself. It is the innermost Consciousness.

Q.: In your discourse, there is always the question of "Who am I?" buried.

N.: It does tend to come up, doesn't it? (laughter)

Q.: Because it is who I am, it is not doing. The only way possible is to eliminate anything else.

N.: Anything else is unreal. If it is other than the Existence itself, how can it be real? Spiritual practice is the elimination of the unreal. It is simply liberation from ignorance and not a change in your nature.

Q.: Yes. That makes sense. It was beautiful to contemplate the natural state as you were describing to me and eliminate those things that are not natural. I can see that discrimination needs to be extremely fine.

N.: Such fine discrimination is natural.

Q.: It would not be difficult discriminating the Self from the not-Self.

N.: It is because it is based on the knowledge of Existence. What could be more basic or natural than that?

Q.: Thank you very much. I will try to practice that and keep it close.

Another Q.: It was very reassuring to hear you describe it in this way. I have moments of panic and fear, because I feel that I am losing everything. I have to remember who it is that is losing everything. Then, I realize that nothing is being lost. Fear and disorientation are problematic for me.

N.: Fear and disorientation are mental products of ignorance. They are not born of spiritual practice. Spiritual practice cannot give rise to fear; rather, one practices to abandon one's fears. What is confusing or disorienting is repetitious misidentification.

Q.: Yes. It is just more of the furniture that has to be eliminated.

N.: Just as with the space in the room, you do not bring in more space; you simply eliminate that which was occupying the space. So, it is with losing ignorance. The space of the Self in all its blissfulness is already existing. To better see this, remove the clutter.

Another Q.: About 2 years ago, my youngest daughter left her body, and I asked you, how can I think about my daughter?' How can I perceive her? You answered, when you know who

you are, you will know who she is. I just loved these conversations. You have mentioned the urgency of our practices, of abiding in the in-nate that we are. It is very beautiful and blissful. I am so grateful to you for pointing us in this direction and helping us to transcend our misunderstandings. Thank you.

N.: All wisdom rests upon the singular Knowledge of the Self.

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English from Svatmanirupanam and in Tamil from the Song of Ribhu.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti





Correspondence with Nome

[The reply to a seeker in Singapore:]

August 19, 2022

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Even while applying your best efforts, remain detached and free of misidentification. Detachment includes remaining equanimous in the midst of obstacles. Freedom from misidentification means to be without the idea of being the performer of action. In addition, Bhagavan's grace is omnipresent. Therefore, practice as indicated here and dwell in peace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker wrote questions regarding time, the now moment, and activities. Here is the response:]

September 19, 2022

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. All three times, past, present, and future, are unreal, and the Self is transcendent of them. Time in the waking state, including the present or now moment, is similar to the time in the dream state, including the dream present or dream now. Such is merely mental conception. The concept of "being" in the now usually involves misidentification with a body and the senses, the mistaken belief in the sensations being real or determining what is real, and refers to degrees of mental attention and not to Being at all.

Even if you would suppose the present time to be real, it would be objective to you and not the Self. Realization consists of nonobjective Self-Knowledge.

Activities should occur without the misidentification of being a performer of action. With no confusion about the source of happiness and about what is real, one should remain detached toward all things. Thus, you will be even-minded and, with the Knowledge of the Self revealed within by Self-inquiry, abide in the peace of the indivisible Brahman.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A few minutes after his mother's passing, a seeker wrote to Nome. This is the reply:]

September 20, 2022

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Your mother's body is now deceased, but the Self she really is remains unchanged. Absorb yourself in the truth of the eternal, and, sustained by your devotion, find within you the fountainhead of immortal love.

Never has there been a time when we were not; never will there be a time when we shall cease to be. Realizing this, abide in perpetual peace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker in India wrote several questions. Here is the reply:]

September 30, 2022

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. In the one Brahman, no duality exists, so how could there be any difference? Tattvamasi may be said to be instructional and aham brahmasmi a declaration of the Knowledge of identity, but the essential meaning, devoid of the supposition of an individual "I," is the same---Brahman alone is. That alone is the Self.

First inwardly inquire to know the true nature of the jiva. Then, the question regarding its spurious descent no longer is conceived.

When spiritual instruction speaks of the origin, source, or cause of the jiva, the world, and such, the emphasis is on the reality, which is the origin, source, or primordial cause and not on the unreal effect,

world, jiva, and such. The reality is Brahman, the only Self.

Realize the beginningless and endless nature of the Self. For the Unborn, there can be no rebirth. One's own true nature is Moksha. Self-Knowledge, in which Being and knowing are one and the same, is never lost.

You may find reading The Quintessence of True Being and Ribhu Gita to be beneficial.

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

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker's brother had died a few days earlier. Here is the reply to the questions she raised:]

October 26, 2022

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Neither for the living nor for the dead do the wise grieve. Suffering continues only so long as there is residual misidentification with the body. Neither your mother nor your brother is a body. Certainly, you are not a body. In this knowledge, there is great peace, and such peace is the root of steady equanimity.

The Self of your brother has not gone away anywhere. The Self of your mother is never in jeopardy. It is imperishable, changeless, and eternal. In this truth, unending peace is found.

Grace is always present. Being keenly aware of this yields deep peace. Such faith is the desired spiritual strength.

May you abide in the Self, as the Self, absorbed in that which is immortal.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

The Ribhu Gita

Chapter 4, Verses 1-8

With Commentary by Nome from a
Boundless Wisdom Event held on
June 3, 2011 at the SAT Temple

the Ribhu-Nidagha Dialogue

Om Om Om

(Nome): Om Namah Sívaya

Ribhu said:

1. I shall tell you that which is most wondrous, that which is the rarest in all the worlds. It is the quintessence of the Veda-s and other scriptures. Rare – rare, indeed – ever.

Ribhu is about to instruct Nidagha the definition of the Truth of one's Self. What truly is your Self? The entire chapter should be understood as an inquiry, as a profound meditation on the nature of that which is truly your Self. "tell you that which is most wondrous," most wondrous because it is mind-transcendent, beyond the domain of perception and conception. It is most wondrous because, finding this, one experiences bliss that is unconditioned and unending. Indeed, one finds bliss to be identical with one's Being, if one knows truly the definition of one's Self. It is most wondrous because it is the revelation of Reality, in which the Reality, or pure Existence, comprehends itself. It is most wondrous because it is the self-luminous self-revelation of Consciousness, devoid of the supposition of an objective "I" or "this."

"that which is rarest in all the worlds." The pure, nondual Truth is said to be rare, the rarest of all. Where can one find instruction about the nature of one's own Self, the revelation of the absolute Reality, free of the least superimposition and untouched by any imagined dualism? Where can one find this? Having the grace and the instruction of Sri Bhagavan, we may think it is commonplace, but it is extremely rare. "Rare – rare, indeed – ever." The Truth is rare because it

is solitary. There is nothing like it in this illusory world. It is One without a second. What could be rarer than that?

“It is the quintessence of the Veda-s and other scriptures.” The highest, final, true purpose of the Veda is the revelation of the Truth of the Self. It is the revelation of true Knowledge. The same holds true in terms of the other shastras or scriptures. The purpose of them is that you should know your Self. When everything is said and listened to, reflected upon and meditated upon, the quintessence is Self-Knowledge. Without this essential Knowledge, all the scriptures become just a pile of words. Without this essential Knowledge, all the contemplations and meditations become just a pile of thoughts. With this Knowledge, the essence of meditation and the meaning of the scripture become abundantly clear. Self-Knowledge is the one undivided Essence.

2. Mantra is one undivided Essence. Its result is one undivided Essence. The individual soul is one undivided Essence. Religious rite is one undivided Essence.

There are said to be numberless mantras, and for each there is said to be a result. The essence of all of them, the source of all of them, and the substance in all of them is, one undivided Essence. The nature of this one undivided Essence is ineffable, inconceivable, but realized blissfully as pure, indivisible Being-Consciousness, which is one's own Self.

“The individual soul is one undivided Essence.” There is not a multiplicity of individuals, or individual souls, if all of them are one undivided Essence. Consider your existence, even if it appears as if individualized, though, in Truth, it is the non-ego Self. Consider your own existence, apparently individualized, and inquire deeply, “Who am I?” Even starting with this individualized existence, or jīva, its jīva-hood or individuality, being unreal, will vanish upon such inquiry, leaving only one undivided Essence. The real nature of the individual is this undivided essential Being – this undivided essential Consciousness. If you can perceive with profound, deep, continuous Knowledge that your Existence, previously thought to be individualized, is actually the one, indivisible, essential Existence, everything is only that. As the individual is viewed, how “I” is viewed, so is everything else viewed. The individual is one undivided Essence. What is this Essence? Find it within yourself. Inquire within for that which is absolute, One, not dual, and has no opposite. Look for that which is undivided – the part-less – which must necessarily be formless. If you find that, you find all, for everything is only this one undivided Essence.

“Religious rite is one undivided Essence”. When a religious rite is performed, what is its purpose, what is its substance, and what is the power in it, both as cause and result? All of that is just one undivided Essence, and that Essence is you.

3. Earth is one undivided Essence. Water is one undivided Essence. Scent is one undivided Essence. The sky is one undivided Essence.

Earth, water, air, space – all that is considered matter, all that is considered elemental – is one undivided Essence. Through the senses, it is difficult to perceive how this is so. If we perceive in true Knowledge, what Ribhu says is self-evident. From the misidentified position of, “I am the body, and the senses tell me what is,” how all this could be one undivided Essence is rather difficult to perceive. Abandoning the misidentification with the body, what, then, is all this? No longer regarding the senses as the determinants of reality, what is all this? One Existence is perceived as all these elements, matter etc. One essential Existence is misperceived as all these things. If we perceive truly from the position of, not of a body or a dividing mind, but from the position of Knowledge – pure Consciousness – everything is only one undivided Existence or Essence, and that Existence is our Self.

Either no object is ever created or the object is only Existence without there being even the least tinge of anything else. Is there an object? One passes from the objective outlook to nonobjective wisdom. What is actually there? There is no forsaking Existence, but Existence is not to be misconstrued as being different things. The name and the form, however manifested or apparent, are only the one essential Existence. Nothing is added to Existence, for how could one add something to Existence itself? The only existence in the form is just the same formless Existence, which can never be modified into any form.

Existence, which is undivided, not having the least trace of another or an alternative to it, is the true definition of one's Self, *svatmanirupanam*. You must first suppose, just through imagined assumption, that there is some distinction, however slight or gross, between Existence and yourself in order to conceive of anything else. Hence Sri Ramana's instruction, "With the rise of 'I,' all else rises; with the subsidence of 'I,' all else subsides." If you are just the one undivided, essential Existence, what can we say of anything else?

4. Scriptures are one undivided Essence. The Veda-s are one undivided Essence. Brahman is one undivided Essence. Religious vows are one undivided Essence.

The scriptures, the sastras, the sruti, the Vedas are one undivided Essence. What is the Knowledge expounded in them? The scriptures are, from the external viewpoint, a collection of sayings, statement, and descriptions. What are they attempting to describe? What vital Knowledge are they intended to impart? That Knowledge is the one undivided Essence, and what it is a knowledge of is the one undivided Essence. It is the Knowledge of Being-Consciousness by Being-Consciousness, in which the Being-Consciousness itself is the Knowledge. In this Knowledge known by this Knowledge, there is nothing else existing anywhere. The very forms of the scriptures that impart the Knowledge transcendent of their forms are themselves the same formless Existence-Consciousness.

"Brahman is one undivided Essence." "Brahman is" precludes the notion of anything else existing whatsoever. "Brahman is one undivided Essence" means that there is no other, no alternative, not you, this world, or anything else. Brahman is, and Brahman is One. It is also undivided, so it does not undergo states, stages, or conditions of manifested and unmanifested and so forth and so on. Just Brahman is, as it is, always One and undivided. It is the Essence; it is the only Existence everywhere in all. If you realize this as the nondual Truth, you know the definition of your Self.

"Religious vows are one undivided Essence." When you make or take a religious vow, what is the power in it; from where does that derive? Moreover, what is the ultimate purpose of it? Ultimately, some divine peace or bliss is its purpose, whether that is stated directly or indirectly in the vow. If the vow is for Liberation, it is direct. If the vow is for anything else, it is indirect. What ultimately is the purpose of the vow? The sincerity of purpose, the earnestness in which it is made, in which it is pursued and fulfilled, derives its power from where? All of that is of this one undivided Essence, which is truly our Self.

5. Vishnu is one undivided Essence. Siva is one undivided Essence. Brahma is one undivided Essence. The gods are one undivided Essence.

However God is prayed to or worshipped, there is one indivisible Essence. Seen as multiple, they are all still one essential, indivisible Being. The powers that create, sustain or pervade, and dissolve or destroy, are all of a divine nature, and that nature is indivisible, not divided into

parts. We see creating in our experience, we see sustained or continued existence, and we see dissolution. All of this occurs on a universal scale, from the smallest thing to the very largest. The power that appears as all of this, the Existence that appears as all of this, is this one undivided Essence. The one undivided Essence, itself, cannot be defined in terms of being created, sustained, or destroyed. It is beyond all of that. That which is the only existence in creation, sustenance, and dissolution, and that which is transcendent of creation, sustenance, and dissolution, is truly your Self, the one undivided Existence.

Something other than the One, something divided from the undivided, is imaginary. Have you seen the source of that imagination? How does imagination imagine itself? The imagination and the assumed individual are one and the same thing. There is no imagination in reality. The nature of the jiva is one undivided Essence, which you can understand as the nondual Existence. This means there is really no jiva at all, just the single, undivided Existence. There is, then, no such thing as imagination. What is imagined as the imagination is the one undivided Existence.

This inquiry applied to the nature of one's own existence puts an end to ignorance; hence the permanence of Liberation, because of its ever-existent nature – just Brahman, just the Self, nothing else at any time. All of creation, sustenance, and destruction, being the power and substance of the Divine, with all its time, space etc., are just one undivided Existence. The realized One is the ever-existent Reality Itself. The unrealized one simply never exists.

6. All is one undivided Essence. Oneself is one undivided Essence. The Self also is one undivided Essence. The Guru is one undivided Essence.

“All is one undivided Essence. Oneself is one undivided Essence.” There is just this one Existence, and there is nothing to be called “all” apart from it. If you consider it as “this,” the objective sphere of your experience, you should inquire and come to know the one, essential Existence that alone composes all of this – gross and subtle, from objects to thoughts. The same undivided Essence, or Existence, is your Self. In truth, there are no such things as “I” and “this,” the subject and object. There is just one undivided Essence, the nature of which is Existence or unalloyed Consciousness. This very Consciousness or Being, is the Self, the only real Self there is. Search yourself, and you will find, in reality only the Self exists.

The guru is he who abides as the Self, reveals through perfect Knowledge that very Self, and eliminates the false distinction between the Self and oneself, and, in the course of doing so, the distinction between one's Self and all. Who is the guru? The one undivided Essence. He who reveals, that which is revealed, and the one to whom it is revealed are all one and the same thing. This state of absolute identity is the real nature, or real definition, of one's Self. It is the self-evident fact for all those who, devoted to the Truth and to the guru, absorb the instruction, absorb themselves in it, and find that which truly exists.

7. Whatever can be spoken of is one undivided Essence. Light is one undivided Essence. The body is one undivided Essence; mind is one undivided Essence.

If we speak of spiritual matters, what we are actually speaking about in various ways – with all the permutations of speech and its descriptions – is something that is absolutely One and undivided, this essential Existence. If we speak of secular matters, the only Existence in all that is the same undivided Essence. Whatever you speak about, whatever you think about, it is really different descriptions of one undivided Existence, which, in truth, is beyond thought and beyond description. In spiritual instruction, we speak about the ineffable, attempting to describe the indescribable. The scriptures say, “Where words and thought turn back unable to grasp, there is My abode.” All the descriptions in spiritual literature are about that very thing.

“The body is one undivided Essence; the mind is one undivided Essence.” By what do you know the body and the mind? Do you have any experience of the body or the mind apart from the knowledge of them? If not, then cease to consider the body and mind as having an existence apart from the knowledge that knows them. They have, then, only an apparent, dependent existence. That which is not self-existent, but has only an apparent, dependent existence, really has no existence at all, but something else is seen as that, something else is conceived as that. What is it that appears as your mind? Within your mind appears the body; what is it that appears as the body? If you think matter appears as the body, we already addressed that in a previous verse. What is it that appears as all the elements? Trace your way inward. You know about all the matter – the elements, the world – by the body, specifically the senses. You know about the body and all the sensations, in the mind, by the mind. By what light do you know the mind? If you realize this, you will understand why Ribhu says even the body and the mind are the one undivided Essence

Is there any knowing apart from the knower? Has there ever been the experience of any knowing apart from the knower, experience of knowledge apart from the Consciousness that knows? The knower is not to be defined in terms of anything known. Consciousness alone knows itself, the triad of knower, knowing, and known not really subsisting in it.

8. Thought is one undivided Essence. Joy is one undivided Essence. Knowledge is one undivided Essence. The changeless is one undivided Essence.

“Thought is one undivided Essence”. The chief characteristic of thought is its multiplicity. So, how is it that Ribhu says thought is one undivided Essence? What is the substance of your thoughts? The content of them, the form of thought is easily observed but what is the substance? Apart from the substance, the thought form itself has no existence, just like a ring has no existence apart from the gold of which it is made. What is the substance in your thought? The substance is the same as that which knows them. Thoughts obviously do not know themselves; one thought does not know another thought. Thought is not self-luminous; it does not know itself. What knows? Thoughts are said to be like waves in an ocean. They are made up of the same substance, the water in the analogy. Your Consciousness is the water. Yet, in the ocean, there is some other force, some other activity, that creates the waves. There is no such thing in Consciousness. There is nothing outside it to act upon it, and, being one undivided Essence,” it is homogeneous, without parts that one could act upon another. So, what has been mistakenly referred to as your thoughts? The idea that thoughts exist is just another thought. What actually is the substance, the essence, that is referred to as thought? If you know this and by a profound inquiry identify your Self with this one undivided Essence, then, being utterly free from thought – for thought has no Existence – in what way would you be bound? In what way could you be bound?

Before a thought arises, there is Existence. It is self-known and self-existent. That is the Self. When a thought appears, it does not declare its own appearance. It does not say, “I rise up, I am, I exist.” You say that it does. The known rests in the knowing; the knowing rests in the knower. The nature of the knower is the indivisible, undifferentiated Existence. After the thought subsides, the same sense of reality prevails, undiminished, even in the least. It is the same Existence throughout. Countless thoughts could rise and set, and the real Existence would be utterly untransformed, unmoved, and undiminished. It is from this Existence that is derived, through imagination only, the sense of reality in each of those thoughts, in each thing experi-

enced. If you trace the sense of reality, if you trace the sense of identity, you are led to the one undivided, undifferentiated Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Reality is always difference-less. Differences are only imagined and do not exist apart from the one Self, the one Existence. What is said of Consciousness or Existence also applies to Bliss.

Om Namah Sivaya

(Silence)

Om Shantí Shantí Shantí Om ॐ





॥ श्री आदिशंकरस्तोत्रम् ॥
॥ śrī ādi-śaṃkara-stotram ॥
A Hymn in Praise of Sri Adi
Sankaracarya

हरशंकर गुरुशंकर भव मे गतिरनिशम् ।
हर मानसदुरितं मम तरसा वर कृपया ॥ १ ॥
(हरशंकर)

hara-śaṃkara guru-
śaṃkara bhava me
gati-r-anīśaṃ ।
hara mānasa-duritaṃ
mama tarasā vara kṛpayā
॥ 1 ॥ (hara-śaṃkara)

1. O Hara Sankara O Guru
Sankara, may you be my
refuge forever, O excel-
lent one! please destroy
the difficulty in my mind
without delay.

गुरुपुंगव कथनं तव चरितस्य विवरणम् ।
श्रवणं बहुसुखदं च तु मननं अतिशमकं ॥ २ ॥ (हरशंकर)

guru-puṅgava kathanam tava caritasya
vivaranaṁ ।
śravaṇam bahu-sukhadam ca tu mananam
ati-śamakam ॥ 2 ॥ (hara-śaṁkara)

2. O eminent guru, explanation/exposition
of your deeds/acts/course of your life is
very delightful to hear and very peaceful to
meditate upon.

गुरुमण्डलपरिमण्डित नयपूरितभगवन् ।
तरणे मृदुचरणे प्रतिनिमिषं मम हृदयम् ॥ ३ ॥ (हरशंकर)

gurumaṇḍala-parimaṇḍita nayapūrita-
bhagavan ।
tarane mṛducarane prati-nimiṣam mama
hṛdayam ॥ 3 ॥ (hara-śaṁkara)

3. O Lord full of wisdom who adorns the
group of Gurus [in the Satsang hall at
SAT], may my heart every moment be at

your delicate foot that helps in crossing
[the ocean of samsara] .

विदिताखिलनिगमान् उपनिषदः किल गहनान् ।
विगताखिलनियमान् उपकरणान् कृति विविधान् ॥ ४ ॥
(हरशंकर)

viditākhila-nigamān upaniṣadaḥ kila
gahanān ।
vigatākhila-niyamān upakaraṇān kṛti
vividhān ॥ 4 ॥ (hara-śaṃkara)

4. You know all the Veda-s and Upanishads
that are indeed deep/inexplicable, [in a
manner that is] devoid of fixed rules,
tools/assisting objects (like sense organs),
and various acts.

श्रुतिसम्मतवचनं तव भवभञ्जन वचनम् ।
स्मृतिसंशृतवचनं मम भवभीतिविहरणम् ॥ ५ ॥ (हरशंकर)

śruti-sammata-vacanam tava bhava-
bhañjana vacanam ।
smṛti-saṃśṛta-vacanam mama bhava-
bhīti-viharaṇam ॥ 5 ॥ (hara-śaṃkara)

5 Your instruction which is in agreement with the Sruti-s (the heard/Veda-s), your instruction which breaks the idea of mundane existence, your instruction which is united with the Smriti-s (remembered by sages/teachers), removes my fear of sam-sara.

सचराचरमखिलं पशुपतिरेव च सकलम् ।
इव नास्ति तु वचनं तव परमात्मकविदथं ॥ ६ ॥ (हरशंकर)

sacarācaram-akhilam paśupatir-eva ca
sakalam ।

iva nāsti tu vacanam tava paramātmaka-
vidatham ॥ 6 ॥ (hara-śaṃkara)

6 The entire universe of moving and unmoving is Pasupati (Siva) indeed and yet “all” as it were does not exist. This instruction of yours is the highest instruction/the highest knowledge imparted/pertaining to the knowledge of the Supreme Self.

– by Ganesh Sadasivan

Siva's Cosmic Dance



CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS REFLECTIONS

The 108 karanas, as described in the fourth chapter of the Natya Shastra (a Hindu treatise on the performing arts), are synchronized dance movements with each posture displaying a particular mood. They are performed to spiritually enlighten the spectators. The Natya Shastra states that one who performs well the karanas created by Mahesvara will be freed of sin and go to Mahesvara. A few Hindu temples exhibit the karanas in the gopuram, the entrance tower to the temple. Lord Siva or Parvati are depicted displaying the karanas.

A number of interpretations are written regarding the karanas, however, there is no universally accepted analysis, leaving each person free to interpret the karanas in a manner that most inspires him or her. Here, we introduce an interpretation by Janane Sivakumar to accompany the production of the 108 paintings of the karanas as painted by her mother, Anandhi Muthukumarasamy, and adorn the walls in the Lotus room of the SAT Temple. Her interpretation is garnered from the descriptions of the movements as found in the 3 volume set of "Karanas, Common Dance Codes of India and Indonesia," by Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam, M.A., Ph.D. Each painting is numbered and titled.

Anandhi uses quartz crystals, 24k gold foil, and metallic paints to adorn each painting, yet, due to the limitations in the medium of photography, the images presented here are not able to capture the sparkling characteristic of each painting, which give them a stunning quality. (Continued in subsequent Reflections.)



34. Daṇḍapakṣaṃ

From a single blow from the stick of knowledge, the ego abandons its form, leaving one's true nature ever revealed.



66. Atikrāntaṃ

The Guru, in his majestic repose, lovingly answers the prayers of the devotee and reveals in him the intangible nature of his thoughts and fears.



47. Vṛścikaṃ: When one is truly loyal and devoted to the Guru, not giving importance to appearances of the ego, Guru compassionately comes to the aid of the devotee, destroying fearful tendencies with a strike of knowledge, leaving the devotee in space-like silence.

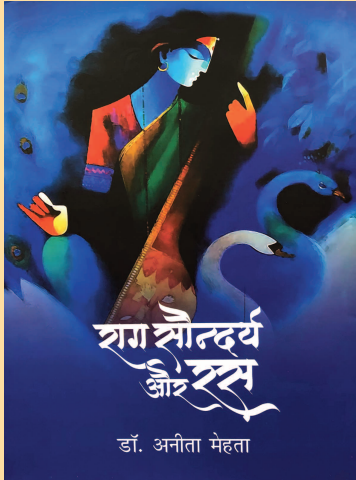
Note: Those who are said to have a scorpion-like personality are known for their loyalty and devotion. This name is given to this Karana because it resembles the tail of the vṛścika (scorpion).



79. Apakrāntaṃ

In the path to reach the Ultimate goal, one must sacrifice everything that pertains to the "I," thereby taking both one's accomplishments and misery to belong to the Lord.

The Beauty of Music for Spiritual Experience



राग सौन्दर्य और रस

(rāga saūndarya aura rasa)

By: Dr. Anita Mehta

"Man, by nature, has been fond of beauty, and his practice of art forms is an expression of his fondness for beauty. In reality, every form of fine art has a deep relation with beauty. In Indian culture, the aim (goal or purpose) of life is Satyam (the true), Sivam (the good), and Sundaram (the beautiful), and these three tattvas (verities) are existent in music.

Of these, the position of Sundaram (beautiful) is superior. Satyam and Sivam merge (come together; unite) within Sundaram. The experience of Sundaram is itself the experience of Bliss. When the art of music, through its beauty, enchants and absorbs (tanmaya) the listeners, this state of supreme bliss is called as "Brahmananda Sahodara" (brother of the Bliss of Brahman).

Rasa (the essence) is the foundation of the experience of beauty. Whatever is beautiful, it is so, because rasa is its basis. Rasa is the idol of beauty. Hence rasa, beauty, and music complete each other. Our Atma (Self) is of the nature of rasa, and this rasa is the atma (soul) of beauty. The nature and purpose of rasa and music is to create bliss. This rasa not only makes the one who offers it full of it, but the listener also finds himself one with it. This is also called as "Madhumati Bhumika" (sweet worship that serves as one of the Yogas)."

(The above was taken from the preface of Dr. Anita Mehta's book (rāga saūndarya aura rasa) written in Hindi and translated here by Sangeeta Raman.)





Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya ॐ Om Namah Sivaya

“Grace is the Self. That also is not to be acquired; you need only to know that it exists. The sun is brightness only. It does not see darkness. Yet, you speak of darkness fleeing on the sun's approach. So, also, the devotee's ignorance, like the phantom of darkness, vanishes at the look of the Guru. You are surrounded by sunlight, yet, if you would see the sun, you must turn in its direction and look at it. So, also, Grace is found by the proper approach you make, though it is here and now.”

—Maharshi's Gospel

It is pure Grace that the SAT Temple exists on this tiny planet in the universe. It is pure Grace that we have found our way here in our quest for Self-Knowledge. It is pure Grace and our assurance of something of surpassing grandeur that Sri Ramana's teaching is alive in our temple.

Once each year, the SAT board of directors sends a pledge invitation to those who benefit from the sacred events at the SAT Temple and understand the temple to be an important place in their lives. This invitation places before you the opportunity to express gratitude for this divine place of Grace in the form of a pledge donation. The pledge donations, the membership donations, and love contributions 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 and repairs of the temple 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 place of Grace.

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 2023. To make your pledge, please visit the SAT Temple website at: <https://satramana.org/web/sat-temple/offerings/> Thank you.

With love and appreciation and in service to Sri Bhagavan,
The SAT Board of Directors,
Raman Muthukrishnan, President; Eric Ruetz, Vice-President;
Sangeeta Raman, Secretary; Ganesh Sadasivan, Treasurer; Nome and Sasvati;
Sivakumar Chandran; Scott Roney.

SAT Retreats 2023

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 Sri 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.

Vegan 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 24-26 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 26-28 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. It is this Self-Inquiry that yields Self-Knowledge. The retreat provides much time for silent meditation in addition to the instruction.

The Self-Realization Retreat: August 25-27 This retreat focuses on Sri Ramana 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 3-5 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.

REGISTER ONLINE

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

End of sign-up date is
one month prior to commencement of each retreat.