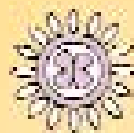


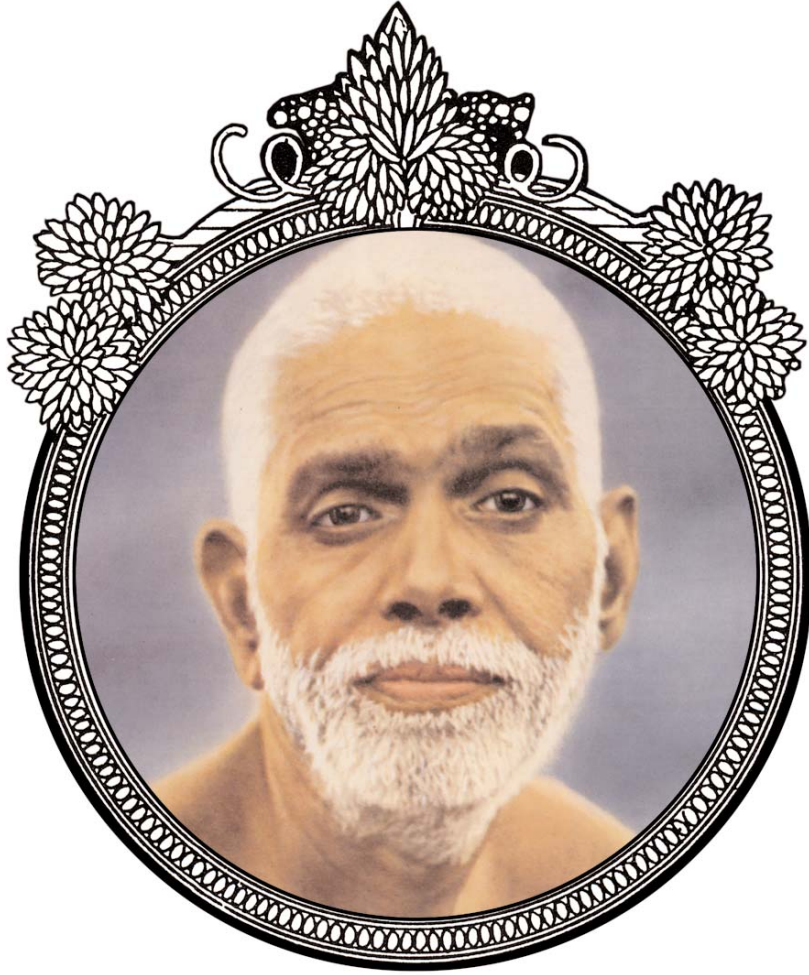
# *Reflections*

January February March  
2009



*Society of Abidance in Truth*





Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

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## Invocation

*The universe, "I," and the Supreme ☐ the three  
shine in me,*

*The undifferentiated Existence, by your words  
without doubt.*

Ganapati Muni, Sri Ramanacatvarimsat, verse 25

*From your spiritual instruction is the Knowledge  
(Consciousness),*

*In me, without another; the difference between  
Being and the "I" perishes (Falls).*

Ganapati Muni, Sri Ramanacatvarimsat, verse 26

*To meet the needs of various minds,*

*The Master spoke of various doctrines.*

*Ajata (no-creation) is the only doctrine*

*He taught as from his own experience.*

Sri Muruganar, Ramana Mandiram

# *The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi*

(From *Day by Day With Bhagavan*)

Khanna then asked : “The illumination plus mind is jivatma, and the illumination alone is paramatma. Is that right?”

Bhagavan assented and then pointed to his towel and said: “We call this a white cloth, but the cloth and its whiteness cannot be separated, and it is the same with the illumination and the mind that unite to form the ego.” Then he added : “The following illustration that is often given in books will also help you. The lamp in the theatre is the Parabrahman, or the illumination, as you put it. It illumines itself and the stage and actors. We see the stage and the actors by its light, but its light still continues when there is no more play. Another illustration is an iron rod that is compared to the mind. Fire joins it, and it becomes red-hot. It glows and can burn things, like fire, but still it has a definite shape, unlike fire. If we hammer it, it is the rod that receives the blows, not the fire. The rod is the jivatma and the fire the Self, or Paramatma.”

\* \* \*

“Advaita does not mean that a man must always sit in samadhi and never engage in action. Many things are necessary to keep up the life of the body, and action can never be avoided. Nor is bhakti ruled out in advaita. Shankara is rightly regarded as the foremost exponent of advaita, yet look at the number of shrines he visited (action), and the devotional songs he wrote.”

Bhagavan then gave further quotations from the eighth “Decad of Thiruvoymozhi” to show that some of the Vaishnavite Alvars had clearly endorsed advaita. He particularly emphasized the third stanza where it says : “I was lost in Him or in That” and the fifth, which is very like the “Thiruvagasam” stanza, that says the ego got attenuated more and more and was extinguished in the Self.

Later a visitor asked whether Bhagavan had ever thought of making a tour all round India or would consider such a proposal.

Bhagavan: I have never had any such idea, though several devotees have proposed it. Rajeswarananda once said he would arrange for a special train to take me all over India. But what is the use of my going anywhere? I am not able to see anything. (I took this to refer to Bhagavan's seeing only the Self in everything.) They say I must go and give darshan to all the people in those parts who may not be able to come here, but even if I went, who would take any notice of a beggar going about clad only in a loin-cloth? Or should I go with a label on my forehead or a card hung round my neck saying: "Here goes a Maharshi"? Or I should have to take a big retinue who would go about proclaiming: "Here comes our great Ramana Maharshi." Besides, out of all the millions of people, to how many should I be able to give darshan?

Again, at about seven o'clock in the evening, when I went into the hall, Bhagavan returned to the subject, saying: People come here to give darshan to me, so why should I go to give darshan to them? If I yielded to the importunity of some devotee and went to some place when he asked me, I should have to go to every place that every other devotee asked me to and there would be no end to my trouble."

28-6-46

In the afternoon Khanna's wife appealed to Bhagavan in writing: "I am not learned in the Scriptures and I find the method of Self-enquiry too hard for me. I am a woman with seven children and a lot of household cares, and it leaves me little time for meditation. I request Bhagavan to give me some simpler and easier method."

Bhagavan: No learning or knowledge of Scriptures is necessary to know the Self, as no man requires a mirror to see himself. All knowledge is required only to be given up eventually as not-Self. Nor is household work or cares with children necessarily an obstacle. If you can do nothing more, at least continue saying "I, I" to yourself mentally all the time, as advised in "Who

am I?”, whatever work you may be doing and whether you are sitting, standing or walking. “I” is the name of God. It is the first and greatest of all mantras. Even Om is second to it.

Khanna: The jiva is said to be mind plus illumination.

What is it that desires Self-realization, and what is it that obstructs our path to Self-realization? It is said that the mind obstructs, and the illumination helps.

Bhagavan : Although we describe the jiva as mind plus the reflected light of the Self, in actual practice, in life, you cannot separate the two, just as, in the illustrations we used yesterday, you can't separate cloth and whiteness in a white cloth or fire and iron in a red-hot rod. The mind can do nothing by itself. It emerges only with the illumination and can do no action, good or bad, except with the illumination. But, while the illumination is, always there, enabling the mind to act well or ill, the pleasure or pain resulting from such action is not felt by the illumination, just as, when you hammer a red-hot rod, it is not the fire but the iron that gets the hammering.

Khanna: Is there destiny? And, if what is destined to happen will happen, is there any use in prayer or effort, or should we just remain idle?

Bhagavan: There are only two ways, to conquer destiny or be independent of it. One is to enquire for whom is this destiny and discover that only the ego is bound by destiny and not the Self, and that the ego is non-existent. The other way is to kill the ego by completely surrendering to the Lord, by realizing one's helplessness and saying all the time: “Not I but Thou, oh Lord!” and 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 love of God for the sake of love and nothing else, not even for the sake of salvation. In other words, complete effacement of the ego is necessary to conquer destiny, whether you achieve this effacement through Self-enquiry or through bhakti-marga.



Khanna: Are our prayers granted?

Bhagavan: Yes, they are granted. No thought will go in vain. Every thought will produce its effect some time or other. Thought-force will never go in vain.

3-7-46

A visitor said: "I am told that, according to your school, I must find out the source of my thoughts. How am I to do it?"

Bhagavan: I have no school; however, it is true that one should trace the source of all thoughts.

Visitor: Suppose I have the thought "horse" and try to trace its source. I find that it is due to memory, and the memory, in its turn, is due to prior perception of the object "horse," but that is all.

Bhagavan: Who asked you to think about all that? All those are also thoughts. What good will it do you to go on thinking about memory and perception? It will be endless, like the old dispute, which came first, the tree or the seed. Ask who has this perception and memory. That "I" that has the perception and memory, whence does it arise? Find out that, because perception or memory or any other experience only comes to that "I." You don't have such experiences during sleep, yet you say that you existed during sleep. And you exist now, too. That shows that the "I" continues while other things come and go.

Visitor: I am asked to find out the source of "I," and, in fact, that is what I want to find out, but how can I? What is the source from which I came?

Bhagavan: You came from the same source in which you were during sleep. Only during sleep you couldn't know where you entered; that is why you must make the enquiry while waking.

Some of us advised the visitor to read "Who am I?" and "Ramana Gita," and Bhagavan also told him he might do so. He did so during the day, and, in the evening, he said to Bhagavan: Those books prescribe Self-enquiry, but how is one to do it?"

Bhagavan: That also must be described in the books.

Visitor: Am I to concentrate on the thought, “Who am I?”

Bhagavan: It means you must concentrate to see where the “I”-thought arises. Instead of looking outwards, look inwards and see where the “I”-thought arises.

Visitor: And Bhagavan says that if I see that I shall realize the Self?

Bhagavan: There is no such thing as realizing the Self. How is one to realize or make real what is real? People all realize, or regard as real, what is unreal, and all they have to do is to give that up. When you do that, you will remain as you always are, and the Real will be Real. It is only to help people give up regarding the unreal as real that all the religions and the practices taught by them have come into being.

Visitor: Whence comes birth?

Bhagavan: For whom is birth?

Visitor: The Upanishads say, “He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman.”

Bhagavan: It is not a matter of becoming but being.

Visitor: Are the siddhis mentioned in Patanjali’s sutras true or only his dream?

Bhagavan: He who is Brahman or the Self will not value those siddhis. Patanjali, himself, says that they are all exercised with the mind and that they impede Self-realization.

Visitor: What about the powers of supermen ?

Bhagavan: Whether powers are high or low, whether of the mind or supermind, they exist only with reference to him who has the powers; find out who that is.

Visitor: When one attains Self-realization, what is the guarantee that one has really attained it and is not under an illusion like the lunatic who thinks he is Napoleon or some such thing?

Bhagavan: In a sense, speaking of Self-realization is a delusion. It is only because people have been under the delusion

that the non-Self is the Self and the unreal the Real that they have to be weaned out of it by the other delusion called Self-realization; because, actually, the Self always is the Self, and there is no such thing as realizing it. Who is to realize what, and how, when all that exists is the Self and nothing but the Self?

Visitor: Sri Aurobindo says the world is real and you and the Vedantins say it is unreal. How can the world be unreal?

Bhagavan: The Vedantins do not say the world is unreal. That is a misunderstanding. If they did, what would be the meaning of the Vedantic text: "All this is Brahman"? They only mean that the world is unreal as world, but it is real as Self. If you regard the world as not-Self it is not real. Everything, whether you call it world or maya or lila or sakti, must be within the Self and not apart from it. There can be no sakti apart from the sakta.

Visitor: Different teachers have set up different schools and proclaimed different truths and so confused people. Why?

Bhagavan: They have all taught the same truth but from different standpoints. Such differences were necessary to meet the needs of different minds differently constituted, but they all reveal the same Truth.

Visitor: Since they have recommended different paths, which is one to follow?

Bhagavan: You speak of paths, as if you were somewhere and the Self somewhere else and you had to go and reach it. But, in fact, the Self is here and now, and you are that always. It is like you being here and asking people the way to Ramanasramam and complaining that each one shows a different path and asking which to follow.



# *Mandukya Karika 2:32*

Satsang, March 30, 2008

Om, Om, Om

(Silence)

Nome: The Self alone exists. This Knowledge, which is not for any other, but only for the Self, by the Self, in the Self, of the Self, is realized conclusively in a self-evident manner, by all who, following Sri Bhagavan's direction to inquire "Who am I?", realize the ever-nonexistence of an individual entity. (Silence)

In the unreality of the individual, shines the Reality of the Self, in which there is no ignorance, no bondage, no potential for suffering, and no duality of any kind. To realize the nondual Truth, inquire, determining the nature of your own Being. That which knows Being is Being. Brahman knows Brahman.

The individual, or ego, never really came to be. Knowledge of this is spoken of as its end. Really, it is only the Self, which is perfectly full at all times, that exists. (Silence)

The essence is always egoless, and the means of spiritual practice is egolessness. That which adheres to egolessness is devotion to Truth. That which reveals that the ego was never born is Knowledge. If the ego is not, there is no doubt about anything else, and the perfect fullness of the real Self is found to exist uninterruptedly forever.

Now, if you have a question about this, please feel free to ask, or, if you wish to relate your own experience, please feel free to speak.

Q.: Why does Ramana have me ask the question, "Who am I?" It must imply that I do not know who I am. Finding out that would be good. If there is someone who doesn't know who he is now, how is that one going to figure out who he is. Who is this one who does not know about himself? If there is someone who does not know himself, I am going to set that one aside without worrying about him and inquire into this one. How am I to know myself? What allows me to know who I am? This brings me to my existence, which is the only thing that I know directly.

N.: That contradicts the presumption with which you started.

Q.: Where did I start?

N.: The supposition that there must be someone who does not know who he is.

Q.: It was the supposition. It is a place to start.

N.: The inquiry does not assume anything. It starts with the basic Existence, which is beyond doubt by all. That is why Sri Bhagavan said that it is the only means that does not include the dualities that one is trying to transcend. “I am one who knows, and That is something to be known” is a duality.

The experience shows directly the efficacy of inquiring, “Who am I?” Your vision becomes nonobjective. The entire conception of a “this,” the objective portion of one’s experience is to be abandoned, consuming the “I” for whom “this” would be.

Sri Bhagavan said that the “I” that seems to be integral to the inquiry burns up, like the stick used to stir the funeral pyre, in the course of the inquiry.

Q.: The experience is that of being swallowed up by yourself.

N.: Yes, very much so.

Q.: Until there is no other self.

N.: (Silence). If one assumes that the individual exists, then, as the Maharshi has said in the “Five Verses on the One Self,” (Ekatma Pancakam) that is like a drunken man forgetting who he is and, giving a performance in the midst of a crowd, asking “Where am I? Who am I?” while, all along, he is himself.

Where there is no other, where Being and Knowing are one and the same, is the place of the inquiry and Self-Knowledge. (Silence)

Q.: The idea that I could pretend to be something else is really quite pointless.

N.: That idea also is consumed in the inquiry. Who would harbor pointless ideas?

Q.: Who would harbor any ideas?

N.: The “I” that supposes that “I am separate from the Self” is already considered separate from the Self. Who is he?

Q.: (laughing) He is an imposter and out of control at times.

N.: So, the Maharshi said that he is like the uninvited wedding guest who was not invited by the groom or the bride. He took all that he wanted until he was wanted on some important matter, in other words, his identity was questioned; whereupon, he quickly disappeared from the scene.

Q.: When I inquire of him, “Who are you?” ...

N.: He vanishes.

Q.: He does.

N.: So, the inquiry does not really suppose anything, does it? It is based in Reality.

Q.: If I suppose something, it is not inquiry but something else.

N.: Such would lose its liberating power.

Q.: It would veer off into some objective pursuit.

N.: Or, it would take one only thus far but no further.

Q.: It is becoming difficult to wander off because to do that I must imagine an entire story. To maintain that, and with all the suffering that goes along with it, I feel, “No!”

N.: It runs contrary to your nature.

Q.: It does. It consists of a few small habits that can be easily broken by inquiry.

N.: The habits, or tendencies (vasanas), are broken. We could say that they are pulled out by their roots, but they turn out to be rootless. The potential for them, the one who engages in them, the one who imagines them, the starting point, the “I” mode or aham-vrtti, proves to be utterly unreal. There is no one to create the tendencies. There is not actually anyone in them.

Q.: If now I try to imagine tendencies, they are very hollow. There is no one actually in those dreams. There is no one real in them.



N.: Inquiry enables you to discover how true that is. Then, a dream that did not really begin is said to be over. (Silence)

Another Q.: I understand from you that lack of ego opens the way. A train of thought, a dream, or any story of human story-telling always has the same pattern. As long as the ego subsides, progress goes wonderfully well. The story goes badly at the point that the character says, "I have come thus far, so it's okay to let the ego have free rein." The best intentions, even reflected in a dream, parallel the subsidence of the ego. Confusion and bad outcomes parallel the release of ego. If there is confusion, etc., I can ask if that is an ego expression or is it a humble openness to the teachings of the sages, and it will always be the first. Whether it is a dramatic story or the subtle inward turning of the mind, as long as the ego is not given free rein, things will tend to go well.

N.: The ego is at the root of everything that is of the nature of suffering, bondage, unhappiness, discord, desire, doubt, anger, and all that is better to be without. Egolessness, and all that proceeds in this direction, is at the root of everything that is of a divine nature, all happiness, peace, fearlessness, joy, and such. Not only is this true of the story and the intentions, but how else is the story to be brought to a conclusion, which is the most blessed state, except be abidance in egolessness?

Q.: This applies to even the subtler obstructions. They are less distinct versions of the same.

N.: Whether the definitions encrusting the ego be apparently gross or subtle, even the notions that the ego is and is important, no matter how they appear, all of them are equally false and useless.

Q.: And detrimental.

N.: Anything that is inclined toward egolessness shines, to the degree of its egolessness, with the Truth. Truth is always beneficial. If there would be any kind of obstruction for one's spiritual aspiration, if the aspirant would simply remove the ego-notion or the manifestation of that ego-notion, the obstruction would dissolve before him. What else constitutes an obstruction toward Liberation except the ideas regarding the "I"? Even the

idea that you are obstructed is based on the idea of “I.” All kinds of suffering are very self-centered, aren’t they?

Q.: It is easy to see that it is the ego that gloats, but I must remember that it is also that which wallows.

N.: It wallows in its own imagination.

Q.: There is a perverse satisfaction in self-imposed suffering.

N.: What kind of satisfaction is it?

Q.: It is incomprehensible.

N.: Not satisfactory. (laughter)

Q.: This seems like such simple instruction but so powerful: just take the ego out of everything.

N.: The most direct way to remove the ego from everything is to find out if it exists. (Silence). If the ego proves nonexistent, there is no starting place for the rest of the delusion. There is nothing to which delusion could adhere. If there is no ego, there are no differences anywhere. If there is no ego, there is no one to imagine the bondage and then become caught in what he has imagined. Where there is no ego, there alone is satisfaction. There can never be any satisfaction in suffering.

So, inquire within yourself. Determine what the “I” is. If it seems as if individualized, an ego, discern what it is. Penetrate through the seeming, and discern what it actually is. If you so inquire, only the Self will be found. There won’t be a trace of ego anywhere, and no one will be able to say where it went.

Another Q.: Sometimes, it is apparent that there is no center. That becomes its own encrustation. That prevents any further inwardness. I don’t see any center for whom I imagine myself to be. At other times, it becomes its own barrier. It re-emerges. How do I go deeper?

N.: From where does it emerge?

Q.: Thought.

N.: Where does thought emerge?

Q.: It seems to be here.



N.: By “here,” do you mean the body?

Q.: From the body. As the Maharshi said, look for the “I” in the heart. That has happened a few times lately. It is a physical center.

N.: Do you ever have thoughts that are not connected with the body?

Q.: I think that I do.

N.: Where do those thoughts emerge?

Q.: Beats me! I have seen written answers, so I go to those answers.

N.: The scriptural answers point you toward knowing yourself. If we make them a topic of study and learn the answer, we must proceed from there to experientially verify the truth of it.

The body, itself, is a thought. Thought cannot arise from it. From where does thought come?

Q.: Thoughts come from the mind, from the mind and body, from the physical structure in the body.

N.: But, as you mentioned before, there are thoughts that are not connected to what is physical.

Q.: Yes, surely. Well, no I don't. During the day, I ask myself who is suffering and who is doing, it goes to another center. There is no thought there. The, it immediately comes out.

N.: It must come out from somewhere. There must be some root. There must be someone for whom all that is being experienced.

Q.: The only answer is to keep inquiring.

N.: Yes. If one would continue inquiring, there would be no differentiation ever. Inquiry, though, is not an activity. If it is conducted as an activity of the mind, there will be breaks in it and going in and out.

In a dream, you are apparently endowed with a dream body. Would you say that your dream thoughts come from your dream body? Such would not make any sense, would it? The waking state is similar to the dream. The subject-and-object rela-

tion is similar. The body is merely a thought. It is kind of thought regarded as sensation that determines the experience of the body, apart from which you have no experience of a body. You experience, though, your own existence always, whether thought is present or not, whether the body is present or not. What is the nature of the existence?

The existence is the same, regardless of whether you think that you are withdrawing or going outward, encrusted or bound or free and such. What is the nature of that existence?

You know that you exist, even without thinking about it. For this knowledge, you do not require a body or a bodily sensation. Even in deep sleep, you know that you exist, though there is not a thought "I exist." That Existence should know itself as it is, at the same depth that you know that you are. That is the inquiry. It is not a mere mental process.

Q.: So, it is beyond thought. It is just the presence. It is just my existence knowing my existence, without any additive. Okay.

N.: Add the "I" notion to Existence, and you treat Existence as if it were something objective and the individual as if it were your identity. As the Maharshi declared, the individual is a ghost with no form of its own. So, it takes a form. Further misidentification with thought occurs. One pattern of thinking is sensation in the body. Then, you feel that you are the body, in the body, the body is the start of your existence, the body is the source of thought, etc. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Q.: This is exactly what has happened. That is it.

N.: If you find yourself tumbling along in that way, go back the way you came. Trace your own existence.

Another Q.: It is obvious that with Self-inquiry, without ideas, what is real and what is not real would be completely apparent. This is my theory, although it seems to be more and more my experience. Self-inquiry is totally nonobjective. Anything to do with the world and the mind is gone. Now, I am just looking for myself. This is somewhat hampered by ideas to the contrary, such as I am a mind with sprouts of other things.

N.: Whether they are of the mind or the universe, those ideas are yours. They do not speak of themselves. They are known by

you. Apart from your knowing of them, they don't exist. They do not declare their own reality. You say, "I know; I know this; it is." All of this depends on you. Inquiry to know the Self is discernment of what is real. Knowledge of Reality is actually only Knowledge of the Self.

Q.: Knowledge of the Self as opposed to anything else?

N.: Anything opposed would still be dependent on the "I" that knows it. Self-Knowledge is not opposed to anything but does transcend all.

Q.: In actual inquiry, the real knower is not connected to the objects.

N.: If the known is subtracted from the knower, it suffices.

Q.: Similar is it with any idea that appears in the mind?

N.: If the known, or objective portion of the idea, is removed, what remains?

Q.: (quiet for awhile) Definitely, whatever was believed is gone.

N.: The known dissolves in the knowing, and the knowing dissolves in the knower. Without the known and not in relation to anything else, by himself, what is the nature of the knower? (Silence)

Q.: This is different. (quiet) It is not describable.

N.: (Silence) The ineffable, the inconceivable, and the immutable are you. You cannot be anything else. (Silence) The one knower, of the nature of just pure Consciousness, is you. How can you say that you have ideas?

Q.: They would need to pertain to someone.

N.: That someone is nonexistent. That which exists, of the nature of pure Consciousness, is solitary Being. In Being, there are no means by which differentiation of ideas could arise. There is not a stoppage of that which did not begin.

Q.: Because?

N.: It must first be there in order to stop. It does not continue, and it does not stop.

Q.: I see that that is something in which I believe. If something stops, it begins.

N.: Reality does not begin and stop; and, truthfully, the unreal cannot be said to begin and to stop.

Q.: The experience is never that it (the Reality) stops. Only thought appears to stop.

N.: If there is thought, it appears to stop and begin, and to again stop and to again begin, but you do not. You are without beginning and without end. If this beginningless, endless Being is known, as you really are, there is nothing else to begin and to end.

The Reality is only One. Is not true to say that there is the Self plus ideas. You must first imagine yourself to be some kind of individual conceiver, some individualized awareness for you to speak of the ideas. Otherwise, there is just the indivisible, real Self. That is unmixed, undivided Consciousness, indivisible Being.

Sasvati, would you please bring the copy of the Upanishads that you are carrying? (She brings it forward and hands it to Nome) Thanks.

This is from the Karika by Gaudapada on the Mandukya Upanishad. It says: na nirodho na cotpattir-na baddho na ca saadhakah / na mumukshur-na mukta vai ityeshaa paramarthataa // It means: There is no control, or no stoppage, there is no rising up, origination, there is no one bound, and no one practicing, or one who engages in sadhana—sadhana means spiritual practice or the requisite means; there is no one who is desirous of Liberation, no liberated one, thus. This is the Supreme Truth.

What is in common with all of the negations? There is no individual. There is no dissolution and no origination. The Reality does not dissolve. The Reality does not originate. The unreal does not originate, and the unreal does not dissolve. Because this is the truth, there is no one bound. There is no individual to be bound. If there is no individual to be bound, who practices? The practice is the dissolution of the idea of a bound

individual. There is actually no one who practices. There is no one who is desirous of Liberation. There is no one who is liberated. Being unreal, the individual cannot desire Liberation. The Self is Liberation. It cannot desire itself. It just is itself. There is no one liberated. The individual is not bound, and the individual does not become liberated. The individual simply does not exist. The Self is not bound, and the Self does not become liberated. The Self just is. From the perspective of bondage, we call the Self “Liberation,” as if it were a state to be attained by the individual. The truth, though, is that the individual is not. This realization is said to be Liberation from all of the imagined bondage. Yet no change has occurred. The Reality of the Self just is. No one realize it. The Self, itself, is the Realization. “This is the highest, or the supreme, Truth.” “Artha” can also mean purpose, but, here, paramaartha must mean the Supreme Truth, for, where there is no bondage, no aspiration, no practice, and such, one can no longer be said to have a purpose.

Q.: Because a purpose would pertain to someone?

N.: It refers to going from one place, condition, or state to another. The Supreme Truth is the Reality. The Reality is nonobjective, so it is indicated by a process of negation. There is nothing more to be said. (Silence)

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English of verse 31 of chapter two through verse seven of chapter three of the Karika of the Mandukya Upanishad.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om



# *From Yoga Vasishtha*

*(Continued from previous issues)*

3:97:1

Sri Rama said:

The Brahman-mind alone is this within and the moving immensity,

Wherein, that, indeed, is the action thus. (Or: From that action, alone, of the Brahman-mind, indeed, is this within and the moving immensity.) [This] is understood from [your] exposition of the Truth. (Or: This is understood as the meaning of your exposition.)

Vasishtha said:

Again, the extended mind is the heated (distressed) solid (massive) appearance (existence), like the desert that is hot by the heat of the sun, the brilliant sun that is the color of light. (Note: maru can also mean a kind of desert deer, so the meaning would then be like the desert deer made hot by the heat of the brilliant sun that is the color of light, referring to the deer seeing a mirage in the heat of a desert scorched by the sun's rays.)

In the Brahman-Self is the mind, one, unformed, in which the universe comes, at some time (some place) risen as a man, at some time (some place) risen as a god. (Note: The verse can also be read as: In Brahman, itself, the one mind is driven to go to the world, at some time (some place) risen as a man, at some time (some place) risen as a god.

Somewhere (at some time) it appeared as a demon, somewhere (at some time) risen as a yaksha (semi-divine being), somewhere (at some time) it attained the state of a gandharva (sky-residing heavenly beings), and somewhere (at some time) the form of a kinnara (a type of being in the form of part horse and part man).

The progression (or: The bondage) is the portion of the sky thought of variously as a city or a town spread out. The mind alone has become expanded.



Thus are abiding the multitude of bodies resembling blades of grass, wood, and creepers. For that inquiry what (who) is the Truth, our inquiry is (into) the mind, alone.

In that manner, all the enjoyment of this universe, thus, is confounded (confused) and extended. It is thought of as that separateness (difference). The Supreme Self alone remains.

The Self is beyond all steps (traces, parts, words), omnipresent, and the support of all. By that Grace (power) (Grace of That), in the samsara the mind runs and leaps.

The mind is considered to be the cause in the body that is the karma (action) of the mind. That mind (intelligence) is born and dies. The attribute of the one that sees death is not in the Self.

The mind, indeed, by inquiry, it is considered, will be dissolved.

Only with the dissolution of the mind, therefore, the auspicious (the bliss of final Liberation, the Superior) will exist.



## *A Review*

In the Spring 2007 issue of 3e Millénaire (a quarterly) from Montreal, Canada, a review in French by Samir Coussa of Self-Knowledge appeared. In the course of some email correspondence between Raman Muthukrishnan and Samir, Samir wrote:

Hi Raman,

Hope all is OK. The issue where the review appeared was issue # 83 (spring 2007).

Hope this is helpful. Question: In your opinion what is the best Nome book? Thanks.

Samir Coussa

In response, Raman wrote:

Sunday, 11 Jan 2009

Hi Samir,

Thank you very much for your reply.

The first book I read of Nome is *Timeless Presence*. I found it very inspiring, and my practice immediately deepened. This is the article Nome wrote on his inner spiritual journey at the request of Sri Ramanasramam, India.

Then, I read *Ribhu Gita*. I had very good experiences with that, as well. I once had to wait for my wife at a place in Mexico near the roadside for three hours, and I had *Ribhu Gita* with me. It was 8 years back, and I still remember how by just reading it with full attention to verify what is being said inside ourselves gives such a deep experience. I continue to read *Song of Ribhu*. It is in poetic form and is very meditative. Both *Ribhu Gita* and *Song of Ribhu* increase our conviction that there is one Absolute Self.

I read *Self-Knowledge*. I have met people who continue to read that book. They treat that book as very precious. One of them has written a review of the book in Amazon.com. I like the Practice Mandala very much.

I enjoyed reading *Essence of Enquiry*. I read it after I met a person at the SAT temple who said he has read it eight times and another person who said that he reads it every morning to his wife. I have the book fully underlined, so that, as I flip the book, I gather the points that I need to improve on.

Nome reads and explains verses from *Bouquet of Nondual Texts* and *Svatmanirupanam* (both books by Sankara) during Boundless Wisdom events. I find it very meditative, and I always come with a resolution to practice more intensely to realize this.

The *Four Requisites of Self-Realization* booklet is very helpful. I found it very essential for me. I have asked Nome questions to deepen my practice based on those. In the quality of desire for liberation, it is written there that, if we develop that one quality, all other qualities (discrimination, peacefulness etc.), will follow.

I think, you may not have met Nome. Meeting him and talking to him immediately reduces our ego. He abides steadily in



the Self and is very devoted to Ramana Maharshi. I remember him once saying, “The disciple has disappeared; only the Guru remains.” I find every word from Nome’s mouth very beneficial and purposeful. When you get a chance, if you have any questions in your practice, do take the opportunity to ask him. I think you will term the reply as the “best book.” Only by God’s grace do we hear of such a person. As Maharshi has said, God comes in the form of the Guru to help us realize God.

I was unable to answer your question as the best book. Hence, I wrote a few words about every book. I should also say that I have many shortcomings in terms of the need to deepen my practice. So, my descriptions on the books will not be adequate.

Thank you very much for the review. Nome was also grateful for it. I will be quoting a few sentences from the review, as it will help bookstores know about the book.

Thank you again,

Sincerely,

Raman



## *From the Temple Archives*

[The following letter was written in 1988 in response to a gentleman from Nigeria who had sent a letter with 10 questions posed. A copy of the letter was preserved by Shanti, who had further correspondence with him, along with a copy of Nome’s response. In this case, the response was verbal and placed in writing by someone at the temple, who also added his own comments at the beginning and end of the response. Presented here is only Nome’s response, which includes the questions before each of the respective answers. The SAT temple was known as the Avadhuta Ashram at that time, and that name appears at the top of the letter.]

## THE AVADHUT ASHRAM

July 5, 1988

Dear Mr. ,

...1. What is the main obscurity of my infinity? Believing the world to be real, in other words, other than the Self, and of a different nature than you, and seeking for happiness externally (attachment), these things obscure your infinity. Your infinity is obscured by all erroneous conceptions or misidentifications, such as believing that you are a limited body and mind. Sri Ramana Maharshi and Sri Sankara have both spoken about this at length in their books, which you may want to read.

2. How can I be free from illusions and ignorance of the world? You lend reality to the world or you project your own innate happiness on it, and then the illusion seems real. This is ignorance. Let the sense of happiness return to your within-ness and the sense of reality return to the one changeless principle of Being-Consciousness.

3. How can I achieve self-reliance? By following the instruction above in the two previous answers you will be truly Self-reliant. Turning within to the changeless Being-Consciousness will give you the sense of freedom, peace and equanimity needed to conduct your relative phenomenal affairs in a detached, harmonious way.

4. Can my destiny or fate be changed or transformed? Man's true destiny is Liberation. He must fulfill this destiny. If a man feels his destiny has suffering in it, this destiny can be completely transformed or eliminated by spiritual practice leading directly to Self-Realization. Inspiration or guidance can be gained by deeply absorbing the message in non-dual books containing the words of genuine Sages.

5. What are the diets to achieve my spiritual stability? There are no diet restrictions, as the spiritual path involves Self-realization and not specific actions of the body.

6. What are you prerequisites for you members or spiritual aspirants? The prerequisite for any spiritual aspirant is sincerity of heart and intensity of spiritual practice.

7. What are the times and pattern of meditation so as to enable me to achieve my needs and intentions? The amount of time spent and the specific period of the day in which spiritual practice is performed is not important on the nondual path. Once one becomes attuned to his inner Being, becoming more awake to who he really is, meditation becomes continuous, both in activity and inactivity. Ultimately, in realizing the Absolute, meditation becomes permanent.

8. How can I maintain spiritual stability? Intense love of the Truth, self-examination to dissolve tendencies (vasanas and the personality) keeping holy company, and determination on the spiritual path give spiritual stability.

9. How can I be fully liberated from my karma? The answer to this question is the same as the answer to question 4. You may also want to consider deeply the axiom, "As you sow, so you reap." If you conduct your life accordingly, you will have no problems. As for full Liberation, it consists of Self-Knowledge.

10. Am I free from attacks of witches and wizards or my enemies as a member of your ashram? If you are truly in earnest, spiritually, everything will work out all right. Be free of the "Wizard" of the ego, which transforms nirvana into samsara. Be free of this "magician..."

\* \* \*

[This letter was from a SAT member in India. Some sentences from this letter have been deleted as not being pertinent for inclusion in Reflections. Nome's response follows.]

December 05, 2008

Dear Nome,

Namaste.

We had a good meeting with Ganeshan yesterday...

This troubled him. He recounted a story from his grandfather, who ran the ashramam during Ramana's days. Ramana's birthday was the next day. There was no rice and no money. Deeply troubled by this, he went to Ramana and told him of his concern (and that there was a rich devotee at the ashramam

who, if asked, would immediately give the money needed). Ramana said to him, “Do you not trust Arunachala?” (to provide what is needed.) Ashamed of himself, he left Ramana’s side. Two hours later, a bullock cart came into the ashramam with 20 bags of rice. Only 2 were needed for the jayanti celebration.

This is a story that Ganeshan has taken into himself deeply. So much so that he now thinks he was wrong when he raised the money for Ramana’s samadhi hall...

Sometime soon we will have him here at the house, and with him, will listen to a Satsang. Also we gave him our copy of *Bouquet of Nondual Texts*.

Ganeshan said to send you his regards. We also got an email address for him. May we give him yours?

Life here continues to be so good. We will move to another house soon...

Thank you for what you have shared so freely with those who come and listen.

Om Arunachala,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

I am glad to know that you met with Sri V. Ganesan. Thank you for sharing the anecdote that he related about the Maharshi. To be “deeply troubled” in the midst of the bliss of the infinite Consciousness of the Self is a product of illusory delusion. However, by the Maharshi’s limitless Grace and Knowledge, such illusion of that devotee, who was the Sarvadhikari, must have dissolved. That Knowledge, which is of the sole-existent Self, transcends bodies and the array of actions of the bodies, so, certainly, it transcends all objects. The manifestations of Grace are myriad as, likewise, the forms such take.

Therefore, free of the attempt to measure the Real by the unreal, the Self by the non-Self, the immensity of Grace by worldly manifestations, thought-transcendent Knowledge by ideas, love and devotion by objects, one should abide blissfully,

at peace, in That, as That, itself. Such a one has neither action nor inaction but is simply himself, which is the Self of all.

When you see Sri V. Ganesan again, please convey my best wishes, warm regards, and deep respect for him. Yes, certainly, you can provide my email address to him. I assume that he has seen *Song of Ribhu*. It was good that you showed him *Advaita Prakarana Manjari*. If you have copies of *Svatmanirupanam* and *Origin of Spiritual Instruction*, you may wish to show them to him, too, though he may have already seen them.

It is good that you will be near to where [name deleted] will stay to meet with him and to offer help, should he or his wife need such.

May you ever abide as the Self, which, devoid of the notion “I,” is ever uninvolved in anything, regardless of the bodily appearance, which ever rests as the Unmoving One, which is the priceless spiritual treasure, and which is who you truly are, thus to be happy and at peace always.

Om Arunacalesvaraya Namah

Om Namah Sivaya

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

\* \* \*

[The following letters were in response to an aspirant whose letters were printed in previous issues of *Reflections*. For the sake of brevity, only the responses are included here. The questions can be inferred or surmised from the answers]

November 3, 2008

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. Silence is that in which there is no ego or its attendant misidentifications. A repressed state is not the goal; a state rife with uncontrolled mental tendencies is not desirable or helpful either.

Meditation on the source of happiness will accomplish much toward the elimination of tendencies and your fears. Freedom from the fear of death, though, also requires transcendence of the body and all else that is transient. It requires abidance as the Self, as taught by Sri Ramana, *Katha Upanishad*, *Ribhu Gita*, etc.

Your sincere efforts will bear fruit. Progress is not always easily measured by the seeker in a short span of time, but increasing happiness and peace and freedom from ignorance are indications that one is on the right path. The Self is not far away. It is your true nature, closer to you than the mind's thoughts. Practice in a manner that yields ego-dissolution.

I am glad that you are benefiting from the excerpts on the web site. When the time is right for you, you may wish to have the experience of reading the entirety of the books mentioned in a previous email. Indeed, those who are deeply immersed in Self-Knowledge find that meditatively reading such remains blissful and never turns dry.

May you abide in the Knowledge of the Self, in which there is no return to the illusions of the mind.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

\* \* \*

November 5, 2008

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Actions of the body represent no disruption to the Self, which is the bliss. Only if one misidentifies with the body and thinks that one is the performer of action and confuses happiness with outer objects and circumstances is the bliss veiled. Inquire deeply and continuously so that there is no such veil.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

\* \* \*



[Here, the brief message from the questioner is included. In fact, by age 17, Nome was already immersed in the ardent practice of intense Self-inquiry]

When you attempted inquiry after you were 17, did you have to struggle with it like most of us, or was it easy? Did you have to really work at redirecting your awareness inward to look for happiness? Did you have huge obstacles come up?

November 8, 2008

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. When effort is applied both to adherence to delusion and to the attempt to be free, there is struggle. It is better to struggle, though, than to be indolent, for effort is based upon the right resolution. Better still is it to apply wholehearted effort and abandon the adherence to delusion. Adi Sankara stated that it is the one who strives who is liberated and that Knowledge alone is the cause of Liberation.

One applies effort: either toward worldly delusion or to keen inquiry and spiritual practice. The Self, itself, is effortless because it is One without a second. The Maharshi referred to Self-Realization as “sahaja,” which means innate or natural. By implication, one can say effortless. If you practice with intensity, the ego notion dissolves, and the innate Self remains.

These points and others are explained in *Self-Knowledge* and in *Timeless Presence*, the latter being written in an autobiographical and devotional style at the request of the President of Sri Ramanasramam for the centennial in 1996 commemorating the arrival of Sri Ramana at Arunachala in 1896.

There is no obstacle so large or longstanding that you cannot dissolve it, and there is no concept so small that it should be left unexamined as a false definition.

May you be happy and at peace in the Knowledge of the Self.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

\* \* \*

November 18, 2008

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Deeply answering one simple question will resolve all that is currently perplexing and depressing you. You have read the question previously. Not knowing the answer, living beings wander in delusion with the pursuit of unfulfilled desires and chased by their fears. When alone, they dream of others, and when with others, they still feel lonely. Even hearing the Truth, they are unable to adhere to it, their minds frantic with their own imaginative thinking that seems as if so real. The suffering is so needless. Oblivious to the blessings beyond measure, their minds stagnate in despair and hopeless moods.

The single question is: What is the source of happiness? Only if that is answered deep within you will you be beyond sorrow. Only if this is answered does one's life become profoundly and enduringly spiritual. Only if this is answered does the steady, ardent motivation for spiritual practice and for Realization shine in one's heart. Knowing the source of happiness within, the delusive thinking unravels and dissipates, attachments fade, and one sees how false the cravings and fears of her own mind were, and peace prevails.

In a sense, everyone pursues happiness in an endless variety of ways, in objects, in circumstances, in relating to others, etc. Not knowing the answer, the goal seems to be endlessly receding and the pursuit interminable. This is said to occur life after life. If only they examined their experience, heeding the advice of the wise, and plunged within and thus knew. Isn't it time that you knew? You must come to this sooner or later. No one can do this for you, but if you turn within, valuing it more than all else, a thousand hands of Grace support you.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

\* \* \*



December 1, 2008

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your messages.

The fears and desires are constituted of thoughts and are only as powerful as you imagine them to be. By consistent self-examination of those thoughts to determine the definitions from which they proceed and deep inquiry to understand the falseness of those definitions, you can dissolve them and be free.

Regular reading of Ribhu and Sri Ramana is good for spiritual practice.

Forbearance is born of the ardent desire for Liberation and detachment from the things of the world. Such nonattachment naturally shines for those who know the true source of happiness within. Likewise is the desire for Liberation. More about this can be found in the booklet "*The Four Requisites for Realization and Self-inquiry.*"

May you continue to dive within to realize the egoless Self, so that you remain ever happy and at peace.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

\* \* \*

December 1, 2008

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. If you keep contemplating the source of happiness, examining your own experience, the reason it is proclaimed to be within will become clear for you. You may wish to read and re-read the portions of the Maharshi's *Who am I?* that deal with this. Reading the mandala that deals with bliss and reading the first essay ("Self-revealed") in *Self-Knowledge*, if you have a copy of it, slowly, point by point, may be found to be beneficial.

Deep spirituality transcends the body and the limitations of the body. The decease of the body has no relation to it. The true Self is untouched by the difficulties of the body, and Self-Knowledge is not dependent on the body being in some sort of condition. “Within” does not mean inside the body, but rather more subjective than the body. There have been many who have had bodily and worldly conditions far worse than yours who have succeeded in diving within to realize the Self. One should be inspired by the example of those who went before and, undaunted and persevering, seek to know the Self, the treasure of happiness.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

\* \* \*

[Here, the brief message containing the question is included, followed by Nome’s response.]

December 3, 2008

This is an intellectual curiosity question, were there many female sages throughout history in the Advaita outlook? I have a friend, [with whom] I’d like to potentially share examples of female Realized Sages, that are pure nondual. The only one I’m familiar with, and found inspiring was Mathru Sri Sarada.

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. There are two suppositions in your question that would need to be examined prior to arriving at an answer.

First, a jnani, or sage, has no false notion of being a body. Gender refers to the body. It is false to define the bodiless by bodily attributes. Sages are neither male nor female, for they are the Self, which is neither male nor female.

Second, the history is only as real as the historian. Moreover, what is referred to as history is just the very small bit that one believes of only the tiny bit that one has read or heard of the small amount that survives of the miniscule part that has been published in some form. Such cannot possibly be an accurate view of what has occurred.

If this much is understood, the question becomes moot. Even still, many wise holy women are mentioned dating even as far back as the *Upanishads*. Who can say how many there have been?

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

\* \* \*

December 4, 2008

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for both of your recent messages.

It is good that you are delving into the four requisites (sadhana) for Realization and the application of them in your own spiritual practice. It is also beneficial to deepen your practice by examining the previous views of spiritual practice, Realization, and yourself in order to discard limitations, while retaining that which is fruitful.

When in ignorance, beings use the instruments of action (body, speech, and mind) in foolish and karma-producing ways, because of their delusion. Due to that delusion, they do not even perceive how deluded their views and activities are. The very basis, that of doing unto others as one would have others do unto oneself, is not grasped by them. Such dwell in their own suffering, oblivious of the nature of the true Self and even the purpose of life. Deserving of compassion, even the compassion they do not show toward others, they are like characters in a dream who are, themselves, dreaming and talking in their sleep.

The resolution comes from Knowledge of the Self, which is transcendent of the bodies of all and is not confined or defined by life or death. This shines as immovable peace and eternal freedom.

If the desire for Liberation is strong and consistent, all that is needed will manifest within you.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

\* \* \*

[Here is reproduced a message from a seeker and Nome's response.]

December 7, 2008

In *Song of Ribhu*, there are several places where it talks about wearing vibhuti, worshipping the guru. At times you've served in some sense as a guru, as in genuinely course correcting. My understanding is that the best worship of the guru, is earnest practice of the helpful instructions given? Sound correct? Because if a guru is a true guru, they are the Self, so they are the inner guru as well, and by Realizing the Self, earnest inquiry, that is the utmost worship? Even reading *Song of Ribhu* and inquiring, it puts me in touch again with a bliss that is non-dependent on outer circumstances, and everything including you, Maharshi, everything, those are just perceptions and ideas, and ultimately unreal?

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The value of wearing vibhuti is known by those who do so. Transcendence of the triads, in which the ego is dead, is the inner adornment with the holy ashes of Siva.

Earnest practice of the helpful instructions is, indeed, wise thankfulness.

It would be better to say that the disciple is unreal, a mere misconception, and thus vanishes than to say such of the Guru, who is the Self, Brahman. The Maharshi indeed exists and alone

exists. So, it is imperative to know him as he is. To accomplish that, one must first know oneself. Thus, true Knowledge dawns, and devotion wells up and overflows. Grace remains as Being.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

\* \* \*

[Here is the response message from the same seeker to Nome' answer. Nome's further response follows.]

December 9, 2008

I really like the idea of vanishing and the Maharshi alone remaining. The ego entity, "me," so clearly interferes with the proper functioning of the Universe, the auspicious events that would happen in it's absence. So, I've started pretty "vigorously" holding to the non-verbal space, even in the midst of conversations. Interestingly, others fill the void with words. What is real? Not a question I could come up with a good verbal answer for, so I'll surrender and be quiet. I've also noticed "you" do the method you mentioned in *Timeless Presence* of not handing out "enlightenment" because "you" can't. But giving responses when I've already done the work and come to it myself. I'll suddenly feel at peace, because I've found the answer after my own Inquiry, and in the Inbox, there is SAT! Ironic, the Jnani, whom everybody considers great, is great because they've rendered themselves non-existent. Isn't that a humorous irony? Suddenly they are revered down through the ages, simply because they gave themselves up. I've also noticed intense awareness of mortality provides the onus to dive deep within, and realize it for "myself."

\* \* \*

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. So, Sri Bhagavan said that our "greatest glory is where 'we' cease to exist." Inquiry to discover the nonexistence of the ego is this cessation.

If you fully draw upon that which is innately within, the Truth of the Maharshi's statement that God, Guru, and Self are one and the same becomes abundantly clear.

A keen awareness of mortality is very helpful for the motivation to deeply, consistently inquire and remain nonattached to all things. Such is clearly evident in the story of the Maharshi's Self-Realization, the story of Naciketas in the *Katha Upanishad*, and others. It appears in *Timeless Presence*, too.

May you ever abide in the Truth of the egoless, blissful, immortal Self.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[From the same seeker]

December 9, 2008

So, I suppose Jesus was a Jnani? Is Inquiry Christian as well? Are there heaven and hell? I'm asking myself this. Do the rituals of organized religions matter if you Inquire, or didn't Maharshi or Muruganar say the final oblation most worthy of praise is to Realize the Self?

[Nome's response]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste.

Self-Knowledge and Self-inquiry are of the nature of Reality, which knows no sectarian division. It is like asking if God is a Hindu or Christian. The humor of such is obvious. The same holds true for the nature of Jesus.

Vedanta has excellently preserved, in experience and scripture, these essential teachings. Perhaps this is due to the absence of "heresy hunting," with its concomitant book burning, violence, malice etc., carried out by those who have not a clue as to the real nature of God, worship, wisdom, etc., but who

nonetheless masquerade as “religious.” Or it may be due to the abundance of sages who have appeared in this ancient spiritual tradition.

Heaven and hell are according to the conceiver or perceiver of them. For those who experience such, such appear to be real. For those who know all is in the mind, they appear as states or modes of mind. They thus rid themselves of the errors that form the hell and find the heaven within. For those who abide as the Self, there is only That, God, and nothing else whatsoever.

The value of the ritual or form of worship is according to the one who practices it. See *Saddarshanam* and *Upadesha Saram* (both by the Maharshi) for a profound understanding of the relation of worship with name and form to the practice of what is formless or the worship of the formless. Yes, the final worship, puja, oblation, offering, etc., is Self-Realization. Nonetheless, Sri Muruganar performed puja with a Siva-lingam, and Sri Ramanasramam conducts much worship (puja), holy text recitations (Veda Parayana and the Tamil Parayana), etc., and there is at the center of its premises at Arunachala the Matribhutesvara Temple in traditional style with traditional worship offered by the priests.

So, worship in any form is good if it diminishes the ego. It is best to know what you worship, for thus your worship is in Truth.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

\* \* \*

[This is a letter from another spiritual aspirant who is a SAT member.]

October 22, 2007

Aloha Nome,

I've been examining the ingrained assumptions of 'causing actions and having volition,' saying something like, "I intend or I am the doer." I have a belief that I am director of the actions, such as thoughts, acquiring perceptions, saying words and doing deeds. On examination, being identified as an actor is an



assumption by 'I'. Both actor and 'I' disappear in deep sleep and so are discontinuous and not eternal.

In times of clarity, I'm not any of those features, and in times of unexamined thinking and doing, I seem to again be intending as a body. As the Maharshi says, "Remember the Self always". . . but as you've pointed out, thoughts can't hold the inquiry on-goingly. It's odd that I'm already the Self but struggle to remember that and then forget again. Would you comment on this? Many thanks,

[Nome's response]

Dear ,

Namaste and Aloha,

It is good that you are discerning the ego root of the false notion of being the performer of action. Continue to inquire and realize that your Being is the Consciousness that is ever the same and is never engaged in any action. The clarity is the result of inquiry, and the veiling is due to non-inquiry. As you have discerned, only that is you which is always you. What comes and goes cannot be your true nature.

To remember the Self is indicative of Knowledge. The Knowledge cannot be a thought, for no thought touches the Self ever. The Knowledge is of the very nature of Consciousness, itself.

Therefore, the unsteadiness of knowledge, now, is actually the coming and going of residual tendencies to misidentify as they are weakening. If you continue to inquire, the unreality of those misidentifications and the one to whom they pertain will become very clear. Ask yourself, "For whom is the forgetfulness or the remembrance?" "Who am I?"

Sri Bhagavan's Grace is ever there to illumine the one who so inquires.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

\* \* \*



[This is another letter from the same SAT member above, with Nome's response.]

August 23, 2008

Namaste Nome,

Just wanting to write with several questions and comments

My enquiry is focusing on several vasanas:

1) fear of bodily death from misidentifying myself with the body.

2) I'm aiming at more powerful enquiring into certain times of mental activity where I'm locked into argument or conflict with someone in my immediate extended family. I realize more often now that I'm choosing to feed this emotional vasana by continuing to pour unexamined attention into it. Sometimes the argument is in my mind—totally imaginary. Again I have to be feeding it (the vasana) attention and energy.

3) I'm enquiring into the area of self-concern. The vain attention to body and persona as if they are what's continuous and lasting while ignoring the truth of the fleeting nature of all these differences.

Meditation: I want more focus in Truth and stillness. I'm the one who knows the difference between a 'good' meditation and 'not good.'

Spiritual progress: what is its measure? Or is there a measure?

Regarding *Upadesa Saram*, I've been reflecting on the translation in *Collected Works* and somewhat on the version found in the book of Bhagavan's works in his own handwriting. Do you recommend any other translations? Is there a version with Muruganar's first 70 verses included?

The CD mailings of Satsang and Friday nights are pure gold and a blessing.

Aloha,

Dear ,

Namaste and Aloha!

Inquiry that reveals the bodiless nature of the Self bestows the fearlessness of the innate blissful immortality.

Addressing vasanas in the light of inner Knowledge is wise. Clarify your understanding of happiness and love. Detach your mind from objective things of the world. Cease to view yourself as a person, and, correspondingly, know the true nature of all beings. Learn to discard your ideas freely for that which is wiser. Be concerned with that which lasts forever. That which is fleeting is not the source of happiness, not who you are, and is unreal. When such is gone, it is the same as if it never had been, which is actually the case.

If the meditation is upon the nature of the meditator, fueled by the intense yearning for Self-Realization, it will bear wonderful fruit.

In Truth, there can be no measurement, for there is no distance to traverse between the Self and yourself. The eternal Being is subject neither to progress nor lack thereof. Nevertheless, it could be said that the increasing clarity and steadiness of Knowledge of what, in truth, you are is the measure.

All the translations that I have seen of *Upadesa Saram* are good. In addition to those mentioned by you, there is the translation from the Sanskrit by A. R. Natarajan. Sadhu On made one from the Tamil *Upadesa Undiyar*. Last year, I made a translation from the Sanskrit, which is quite literal, but it won't be published until next year at the earliest. Muruganar's 70 verses are, I believe, to be found in one of the published works of his verses, but, at the moment, I cannot recall which one.

I am glad to know that the recordings are so beneficial for you. Reading Ramana's teachings, Ribhu, Sankara, and books like Self-Knowledge is also very good to do. Most importantly: inquire.

May your meditations be deep, and, with the personal fear and desires cast off, may your heart be filled with the joy of the Self.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

\* \* \*

[From a different seeker, the same one to whom the series of responses was given]

January 5, 2009

There definitely appears to be a gradual progress occurring. And occasionally I drop into a space where the world seems dreamlike and illusory. Still reading *Song of Ribhu* and inquiring. Still focusing on happiness being within.

[Nome's response]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Constant, earnest practice of inquiry, fused with the wise detachment born of knowing the source of happiness, guided by Sri Ramana, Ribhu, and such, assuredly yields the cherished fruit, which is Self-Knowledge. The time, being unreal, is of no consequence; depth of the Knowledge of Reality is that which is significant.

May you ever abide in the changeless peace of the ever-existent Self.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

\* \* \*

[Again from the same seeker]

January 6, 2009

I get largely, free, peaceful, dreamlike, blissful, to a large extent. Then different things trigger, and I find the anxieties, the anger, sometimes depression as if I had never done any spiritual practice. Because of this, I just want to make sure that I'm doing the practice correctly. I do my best as possible as much

as I can try to stay still, peaceful, and thoughtless. I try to stay as deep as possible. So is this a common part of the practice, that vasanas rise, and they are strong, and once this is noticed, the attempt at Inquiry is commenced to get rid of it, to dissolve it? Or is the recurring vasanas a sign that I'm not deep enough in my practice, or Inquiry, and am not getting to the root of the misidentifications, and this will go on and on ad infinitum? I suppose I could always go deeper, however, in the deepest states, I'm making a strong effort toward Realization. Sometimes, once again, I get caught up in noticing and being bothered by worldly things.

[Nome's response]

January 6, 2008

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

In a sense, you are answering your own question. The vasanas, or tendencies, recur until you find and destroy their root. Destruction is by Knowledge, since a vasana is composed of ignorance. If a tendency recurs, it is an indication that thoroughness and more depth are needed. Trace the mode (e.g., anxiety, anger, fear, etc.), to the specific thoughts constituting the mode. Trace those thoughts to the misidentifications, and those to the ego notion. To "trace" implies realizing the falseness of that mode, thought, misidentification etc. If you know such as false, you no longer mix up your identity, the reality, or your happiness with it. You cease to create it. If you are still subject to what is false, you do not yet really know that such is false, though you may be on the way to knowing that it is. The same applies to realizing what is true.

That you are aware of the vasanas arising is good. Perhaps, previously, you may have called such tendencies "life," or even

thought that one could just “be in the now” with them, but now you are wiser, so they stand out to your discernment as being unsatisfactory. This leads to a deeper and more thorough inquiry that actually dissolves the delusion.

If you are not already doing so, you may find it helpful to access the downloads on the SATRamana.org website. There are many issues of “Reflections” and some audio files for free and many audio recordings at minimal cost. It is just another way to saturate your experience with the teachings, meditation, etc.

May your practice continue to deepen so that the natural peace of the ever-existent Self shines unobscured, the innate Bliss of the Self.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

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[This letter was sent in response to a seeker's questions about love and relationships]

January 6, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Love may be said to be the unitary “feeling” of Being; that is, it is of the very nature of the indivisible Self. One who revels in the Self is the same in a crowd or in a solitary place, with close friends or without, married or single, and so forth and so on.

That which is truly desired by all is the Bliss of the Self, which is undivided Being. Finding that within, all desires dissolve for the one who knows. The Being of the Self is ever-existent. It is not born when the body is born and does not perish with the death of the body. It exists: realize it within you and do not postpone your bliss.

Love in the form of desire, wishing for someone or something else to provide the happiness that is actually innate, is mired and entangled in delusion. If it is in the form of the desire to make the other or others happy, too, it is higher because of less egotism. If it is the wish for others to be happy with no regard for the ego, it is better. If it is in the form of the perfect fullness of the Self, with no notion of ego or other, it is true and without a veil. Such a one experiences neither desire nor fear and rests content within.

I hope that the above is helpful for you. Reflect upon its meaning and inquire to know yourself. You will thus be ever happy and at peace.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome



## *Announcements*

### ***SAT Pledge Offerings***

A big thank you to all of you who have expressed your appreciation for this teaching in the form of a pledge for 2009!

Eric Ruetz

Raman Muthukrishnan

John Frierson

Ganesh Sadasivan & Dhanya Nambirajan

Chris & Inge Mair

Gina George

Kathy & Claude Rogers

Tim Frank

Myra Taylor

Jenny Birnbach

Steve Smith

Ed & Sandy Smith

Don Hardin

Leslie Read

Richard Milardo

Maurice Lamarre

*“Whatever I am offered in devotion with a pure heart—a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water—I accept with joy.”*

- Lord Krishna, Bhagavad Gita

***Thank you Ramana . . .***

for this teaching, which reveals the Truth that we joyfully serve.

*What happens behind the scenes at SAT . . .*

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

Bob Haber: keeping the bathrooms clean, watering plants, sweeping the walkways, cleanup after events, cleaning the temple; Kathy Rogers: maintaining residential rentals, overseeing property repairs, organizing retreats, providing meals at retreats, cleaning the temple, arranging flowers; Michael Polam: maintaining the “meditation garden” behind the temple; Ryan Shaw: maintaining the temple grounds gardens; Tim Frank: vacuuming & cleaning the temple, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Myra Taylor: vacuuming & cleaning the temple, providing Prasad after satsang, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Stan Rice: providing spiritual bookmarks and pamphlets for the bookstore; Raman Muthukrishnan: running the bookstore including mail order service, maintaining the website, providing Prasad after satsang; Wimala Brown: providing meals at retreats and Prasad after satsang; Jennifer Birnbach: providing Prasad after satsang; Clark Coffee: general maintenance around the temple, providing labels for satsang CD’s; Dhanya Nambirajan: singing during special events, providing meals at retreats, cleanup after pujas; Ganesh Sadasivan: organizing special events including singing, recitation, and chanting; Eric Ruetz: editing and mastering all recordings of satsangs and special events, providing meals at retreats, securing the temple; Jim Clark: securing and maintaining safety at the temple, lighting candles at meditation events; Richard Clarke: providing incense for the temple and helping with book orders from India; Nome: roof & gutter cleaning, temple grounds maintenance, writing books, administrative stuff,



general help wherever needed including spiritual guidance; Sasvati: preparing books for publishing; Advait Sadasivan: providing play time at any time for anyone who wishes to play.

### ***Mahasivaratri***

Mark your calendar for the eve of February 23 through dawn February 24, 2009 to celebrate “The Great Night of Siva” Mahasivaratri. This event will be filled with meditation, readings, recitations, and a puja to Siva.

*Those who, worshipping the Supreme Siva—  
The Consort of Uma, who reveals the steadfast  
Knowledge—  
Attain purity of heart with all sins scoured out by  
His compassion,  
Will, with all sorrows effaced,  
Know themselves to be as the Supreme Siva,  
The mass of Bliss, the Self of all this universe,  
And formless and all pervasive  
As the undivided space of Consciousness.*

- Song of Ribhu, 4:41

***Om Namah Sivaya!***

### ***Our Hindu Heritage***

***Did you know?*** Veda means Knowledge.

Unlike every other religion, Hinduism was not founded by any specific person, its origin being that of a divine nature, nor is there a founding date. Scriptures tell us that the Vedas were “seen” (directly experienced) by the Rishis (seers, sages of antiquity) and passed down by an oral tradition (in Sanskrit) for thousands of years before they were written down for the first time. They are considered to be Shruti (revealed text) from which all other Hindu scriptures are derived. The Vedas were compiled over a period of several centuries. According to archeology and astronomy the Rg Veda, the oldest Veda, dates back as far as 10,000-6,000BC. There are four Vedas: Rg, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva.

*To be continued...*



