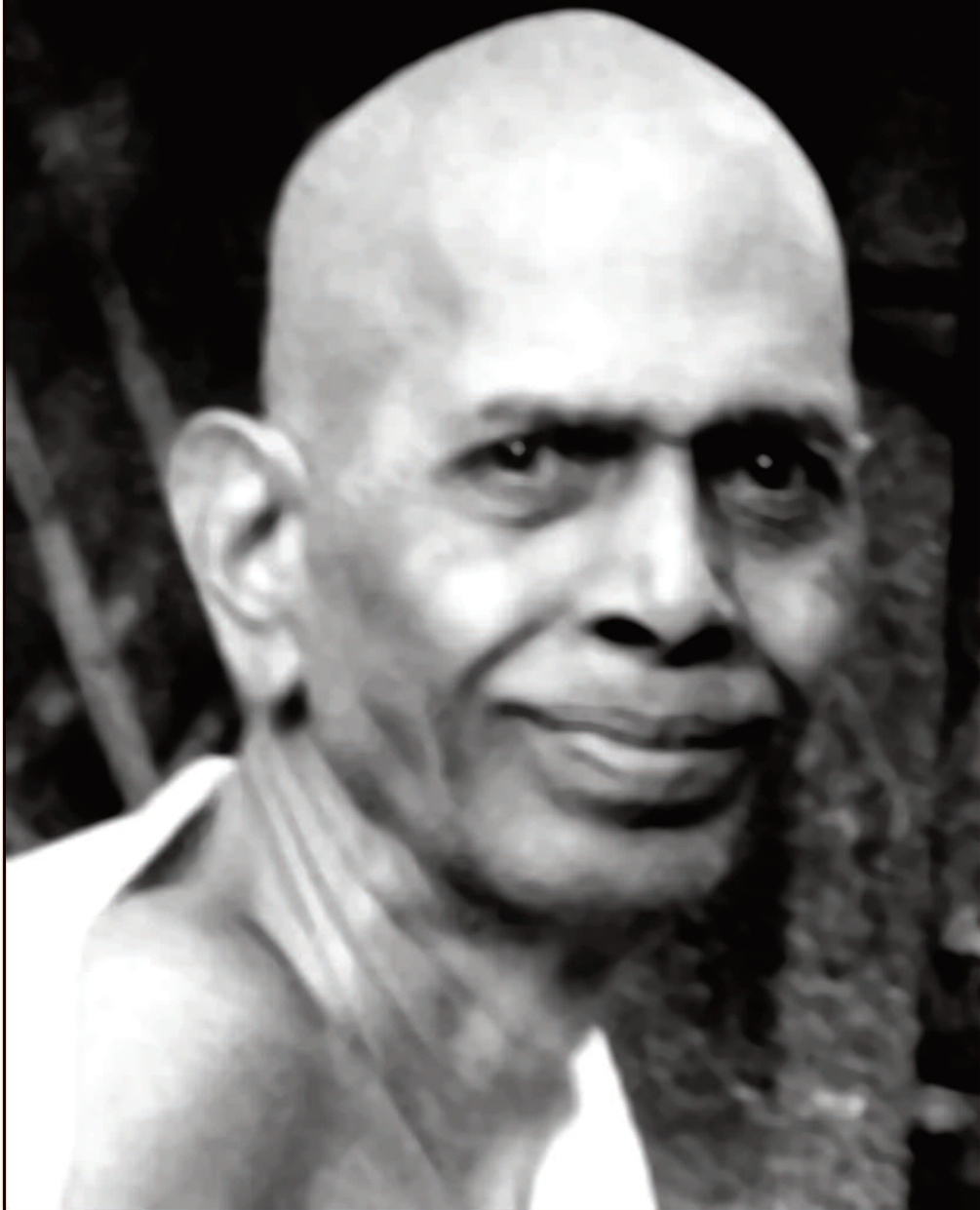


Reflections

Society of Abidance in Truth



July August September 2012

Invocation

Dakshinamurti being the beginning,

Sankara Acarya being in the middle,

Ramana Sadguru being the end,

To this lineage of Gurus, obeisance!

-Homage to the Lineage of the Sadguru, Advaita Davatam

*Though you give up all faults, acquire all merits,
cast off every kinship and practice every penance
known, you cannot gain the ultimate bliss until you
reach the teacher's feet.*

- The Garland of Guru's Sayings, by Sri Muruganar, verse 321

*Unless you have obtained the grace of the good
Guru who has subsumed all triads in the One, you can
have no abiding place in the infinite bliss of moksha, the
ultimate goal and good.*

- The Garland of Guru's Sayings, by Sri Muruganar, verse 322

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Reflections, July August September 2012

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The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

(From *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*)

August 11, 1946

Karthuragnaya Prapyathe Phalam

(Fruits of Actions are Ordained by the Creator)

... one devotee asked Bhagavan, “in Karthuragnaya Prapyathe Phalam” who is the karta?” Bhagavan said, “karta is Ishwara. He is the one who distributes the fruits of actions to each person according to his Karma. That means He is Saguna Brahman. The real Brahman is nirguna (attributeless) and without motion. It is only Saguna Brahman that is named as Ishwara. He gives the phala (fruits) to each person according to his Karma (actions). That means that Ishwara is only an Agent. He gives wages according to the labour done. That is all. Without that sakti (power) of Ishwara, this Karma (action) will not take place. That is why Karma is said to be jadam (inert).

August 18, 1946

Ekam Aksharam

(The One Letter and the One Imperishable)

A few days ago some Gujaratis who had come from Bombay purchased some Asramam books and Bhagavan’s photos and showing them to Bhagavan, requested him to write his nome on the books. “What name should I write?” asked Bhagavan. “Your name,” said they. “What name have I?” said Bhagavan. When they said “Your name is Ramana Maharshi, is it not?” Bhagavan said smilingly, “Somebody said so. Really what is a name or a native place for me? I could write only if I had a name.” The Gujaratis went away quietly without saying anything further.

In January 1945, you remember that you sent your book on Banking with a request that Bhagavan might be pleased to write in it the word “OM” or “Sri” and return it to you, and Bhagavan declined to do so. Instead he gave me a piece of paper, on which he wrote a Telugu translation of a verse that he had written long back in Tamil when Somasundaraswami made a similar request. When I sent that slip of paper to you, you took it as an upadesa, a precept from Bhagavan, and were overjoyed. Subsequently, he made some slight alterations therein. Later on Bhagavan translated it into Sanskrit as a sloka at the request of Muruganar as follows:

एकमक्षरं हृदिं निरंतरम् ।
भासते स्वयं लिख्यते कथम् ॥

It means: “The one imperishable which is in the Heart at all times is self-luminous. How to write it?”

I was reminded of all this when the Gujaratis made a similar request today and got a refusal.

About ten months ago, Pantu Lakshminarayana Sastri, Telugu Pandit, Maharajah’s Collage, Vizianagaram, came here. After praising Bhagavan with verses composed extempore, he appealed to Bhagavan thus: “Please let me have something to commemorate this event and bless this poor soul.” “What shall I give?” asked Bhagavan. “Anything you please; just an aksharam (letter) by way of upadesa,” he said. Bhagavan said, “How can I give that which is akshara?” and so saying he looked at me. I said, “It will perhaps do if you tell him about the sloka Ekamaksharam.” “Where is that Dwipada?” asked Bhagavan. I read out that too. Sastri was overjoyed as if he had got a great treasure, and copied both the sloka and the Dwipada. When I told him about the circumstances under which those two were written, he felt very happy and went away after bowing before Bhagavan. I remembered all this when Bhagavan was saying to the Gujaratis, “What is a name or a native place for me?” Not only this, I was reminded of a song which mother used to sing while engaged in her domestic work, the meaning of which is somewhat as follows: “Ramanamam is the

wide universe which has no name or body or work. It has a lustre surpassing the moon, the sun and the fire.”

Ramana’s name also is just like that!

August 19, 1946

Atma Pradakshina

(Going Around the Self)

One morning last May, Sundaresa Iyer, who used to bring food for Bhagavan while in Virupaksha cave by going about abegging came and bowed before Him. Bhagavan asked him, “Did you go round the hill by way of pradakshina?” “No,” said the devotee. Looking at me, Bhagavan said, “Last night when people were going out for giri pradakshina because of the moonlight, he also started to go. But he felt he could not complete the round. When they were starting out after telling me, he went round me quickly. When I asked him why he did so, he said, “I am afraid I cannot go round the hill. So I have gone round Bhagavan.” “Go round yourself. That will be Atma pradakshina, I said.” So saying Bhagavan began laughing.

“It means that he has done what Vinayaka once did,” said one devotee. “What is that story?” asked another devotee. Then Bhagavan began telling it. “Once upon a time, Lord Parameswara wanted to teach a lesson to His Son Lord Subrahmanya who fancied himself to be a great sage; so Parameswara sat on the top of Mount Kailasa with Parvati, with a fruit in his hand. Seeing the fruit both Ganapathi and Subrahmanya asked their Father, Parameswara for it. Then Ishwara said that He would give the fruit to whoever of them got back first after going round the whole world. With self-confidence and pride that he would win the race, Subrahmanya started immediately riding on his favorite mount, the peacock, and began going at a fast pace, frequently looking behind to assure himself that his older brother Ganapathi was not following. What could poor Ganapathi do, with is huge belly? His vahanam (mount) was after all a mouse. So he thought it was no good competing with Subrahmanya in the race round the world, and went round Parvati and Parameswara, bowed before

them and claimed the reward. When they asked him whether he had gone round the world, he said, "All the worlds are contained within you; so if I go round you, it is as good as going round the whole world." Pleased with his reply, Parameswara gave him the fruit and Ganapathi sat there eating it.

"In full confidence that he would be the winner, Subrahmanya finished going round the world and arrived at the starting point, but found Ganapathi seated before Parvati and Parameswara eating the fruit. When he asked Parameswara to give him the fruit for winning the race, Ishwara said, "There it is, your older brother is eating it." When he asked his father how that could be fair, Ishwara explained to him all that had happened. Subrahmanya then realized his vanity in thinking that he was a great sage, bowed before his parents, and asked to be pardoned. That is the story. The significance is that the ego which goes round like a whirlwind must get destroyed, and must get absorbed in Atma. That is Atma Pradakshina," said Bhagavan.

August 20, 1946

Narakasura—Dipavali

Ramachandra Iyer came here from Madras recently. One day he was seated in the hall going through an old notebook and correcting some dates and numbers in it. Seeing that, Bhagavan asked what it was. He replied, "This is an old notebook written by Bhagavan. I am looking into the numbers and dates in it, and entering them in the printed book." "Give it to me," Bhagavan said, and taking it and turning over the pages, said to me, "There are some Dipavali padyams (verses) in it. Have you heard them?"

When I said I had not, he read them out and gave the meaning thereof as follows: "He is Narakasura (a demon) who feels attached in the thought that he is the body. That attachment to the body itself is a Naraka (hell). The life of a person who has that attachment, even if he be a Maharajah, is hellish. Destroying the attachment to the body, and the self shining by itself as Self is Dipavali. That is the idea contained in those verses." I asked, "Are all these verses in Nool Thirattu?"* Bhagavan said, "These were all composed extempore on the spur of the moment from time

to time. Why include all these in that book?”

After the first publication of the book these verses were read out in Bhagavan’s presence, and he asked, “Do you know why I wrote those verses?” When I said that I did not know, he said, “Is that so? One Dipavali day, Muruganar wanted me to write something about Dipavali. Why don’t you write? Why should I? I asked. He said that he would also write if I did. I agreed, and wrote these verses. I did not write anything without reason. There is a story behind every verse that I wrote.” So saying he showed me the verses in Tamil. I gave them below with the meaning:

He is the king of hell who says that he is the body which is hell itself. He is Narayana who ascertains who Maraka is, and destroys him with His vision of wisdom, Jnana Drishti. That is the auspicious day of Narakachathurdasi.

The false belief that this hell-like house called body is me, is Naraka himself. To destroy that false belief and let the self shine as Self, is Dipavali.

*Nool Thirattu is the title of the book in Tamil containing all the verses, songs and prose writing of Bhagavan. “The collected Works of Sri Ramana Maharshi” contains the English translations of these. Both these books have been published by Sri Ramanasramam.



Satsang

Egoless Being

Satsang February 12, 2012

Om Om Om
(Silence)

N: Existence is naturally egoless, and what is truly your existence is always so, the nature of which never changes. It is Ab-

solute. By the term “ego” is meant the entirely false assumption of individuality, some particularization of existence, or separation from this absolute Existence. Sri Bhagavan says, “The egoless state is the real state, the only real state that there is.” Individuality, or the state of egotism, is an illusion and not real at all. Freedom from such illusion is known as Liberation, or abidance in the Self as the Self.

The individual is not, but you exist. The nature of your existence, yourself, is entirely that Existence, the Self, or Brahman, and it is never otherwise. To imagine otherwise is merely ignorance, which, too, is not apart from this absolute Existence, though there is no ignorance inherent in this absolute Existence, for how could that which is of the nature of the infinite Consciousness, or Supreme Knowledge, contain ignorance? How could it be ignorant of itself? If one inquires, “Who is ignorant?”, ignorance ceases. If one inquires, “For whom is this illusion?”, the illusion ceases.

The interior Knowledge of the Self, Being’s own Knowledge of itself, transcendent of sensation and thought, is true Knowledge, truly spiritual Knowledge. Words and thoughts used to express this Knowledge should not be regarded as the Knowledge itself. The Knowledge is of a nonobjective character. It is not an “it”. Rather, in Self-Knowledge, in which you know yourself, you, yourself, are the Knowledge. From the perspective of an individualized “I,” embodied and otherwise misidentified, how this can be so is most mysterious. Yet in your “I”-less true nature, your Existence as it is, which is absolute and one without a second, what is being indicated is self-evident.

If there is the assumption of being an individual, where is the proof of it? That you exist is the fact. That you are a supposed individual is just a supposition.

The body is not proof of individuality. After all, whose body is it? That is, the body supposedly belongs to an individual, which means that the individual is distinct from the body. What is the individual? What is your own sense of “I” minus the misidentification with the body? (Silence).

Similarly, what is the nature of Existence without misidentification with the senses? (Silence).

The herd of thoughts that seem to roam about is not proof of individuality, or the ego. The thoughts seem to belong to some-

one. One says “my thoughts”. The “I” of that “my” must be different than the thoughts. What remains of the sense of “I” if misidentification with any thought ceases?

The further inward you proceed in this inquiry, the less there is to mark off the supposed individual and the more the sense of individuality vanishes or may be said to merge with Brahman. The closer the look at the jiva, the more he turns out to be Siva and not a jiva at all. That which in ignorance is mistaken to be a jiva, or an individual being, is, in truth, only Brahman and not anything other. (Silence).

Illusion, delusion, ignorance of any kind, bondage, suffering, the samsara, birth, death, etc., are for the assumed individual and never for the reality of the Self. Abandon that false assumption of being an individualized existence, and what you truly are, your real Being, remains as it naturally is, as it always is. In this is found complete peace and happiness, freedom from illusion, freedom from bondage, etc. Whatever appears as a problem or an obstacle or bondage is for someone. Without that someone, what problem could there be? (Silence).

If your heart's desire is the supreme spiritual Knowledge, inquire within yourself and know your Existence as it is. You cannot be known as an object. The Self is never a known or unknown object. This is transcendent Knowledge, Self-Knowledge, in which the Self that knows, the Self that is known, and the nature of the knowledge, itself, are all one and the same thing. (Silence).

If you yearn for Liberation from all of the imagined bondage, know yourself. If you yearn to devote yourself to God, know yourself. If you yearn to realize the significance of Brahman, know yourself. If you understand that Self-Knowledge is the key to all of this, certainly, know yourself. Inquire. Inquire, tracing your own sense of existence and find its non-individualized, infinite, eternal nature.

Q: Master, “I know, and I exist” is my direct experience. In deep sleep, there is pure existence and pure knowledge. When I am trying to understand, my enquiry, do “I know” and “I am” borrow this existence from pure knowledge and pure existence, due to this “I know and I am”? My existence and my objectless knowing are equal to pure existence and pure knowledge. So, and after

that, mind, body, senses come with thoughts, knower, knowing, and known and all that stuff. But, Existence is pure, so how should I do the inquiry?

N.: Existence is pure, and Existence is Knowledge. Then come all these, this other stuff, as you put it. What starts that?

D.: Thought.

N.: What starts thought? What is the root of thought?

Q.: Consciousness.

N.: Consciousness is undifferentiated, so how does Consciousness become a thought?

Q.: Out of its own nature, its own freedom?

N.: It is freed by its nature, but it is also forever unmodified. So, how does Consciousness become a thought, if it is unmodified, never changes, and is undifferentiated?

Q.: To know itself.

N.: It knows itself with the innate Knowledge of Existence. It has no need of another knowledge.

There must be one, with the barest definition, who conceives of thought and who seems to have a distinct awareness of thought. This is the one you regard as yourself. Look at his nature. If he is individualized, "I," even without any other definition, there is some kind of "this." If he is subtle, the "this" is thought. If he is regarded as the gross body, the "this" is the objects of the world. How did it start? Did it start? The answer to this cannot be objective. It must be known immediately, directly within yourself. You can do so by inquiring into the "I" that has the thoughts and everything else.

The thoughts do not proclaim their own reality. Someone says, "These are." Pure Consciousness, which is Supreme Knowledge, plus the objective notion, the idea of something objectively existing, comes out as a thought, a thing, etc. Not that such really is a transformation of the Consciousness, this is just a way of describing the illusion. The illusion rests entirely upon the single assumption of "I," the one who perceives it, the one who says, "This is so," or "This appears." Again and again, inquire.

Q.: Master, what about the physical object and the subtle object? I know, "I am, I am free." So, I am freedom itself; I am self-luminous, eternal, but what about the objects of the world, physical and subtle? I only know them, but since objectless knowing is my nature, I only know I am behind them. The inquiry should be done in such a way that they should point to me or they are to point themselves to objectless knowledge, if they want to be known, because I am self-luminous?

N.: How do you know about them?

Q.: By my senses?

N.: Alright. You know about them by your senses, and you have no experience whatsoever of them apart from the sensations.

Q.: Yes, I agree with that.

N.: So, you have never experienced an object. You have experienced just the sensations. How do you experience the sensations? How do you know about them?

Q.: Knowing does not belong to the senses, I am sure.

N.: Alright, that is correct. They appear only in a waking state of mind. Apart from that waking state, you have never had an experience of the senses. So, neither do the sense objects nor the senses actually exist. You have absolutely no experience of them. There is just a thought of them in a state of mind.

Q.: So, from there, those thoughts, which I think make the sounds and the other sense objects, proceed.

N.: Can you see that these are all thought? You don't think of an object; the thought is the object. You don't think of a sensation; the sensation is nothing more than a form of thought.

Q.: But they appear to me.

N.: They appear projected by the mind into itself. There is no such thing as an external world.

Q.: I know that I am the witness, and the thoughts are there, as I witness them. I am something more than the senses. The

thoughts move in a train, and I become lost. After some time, I remember that I am the witness.

N.: Do you have any experience of the thoughts apart from the knowledge of them? Just as with the objects and the senses, you have actually never experienced a thought, just the knowledge of it. So much so is this the case, that you can't say there is an "it;" there is just the knowledge. If you dive deep into the nature of that knowledge, you will find that there is no world, no senses, and no mind, at any time. Just one undifferentiated Being-Consciousness-Bliss is. The entire idea, "I know it", is delusive. The objective portion is merely imagined, knowledge belongs only to Consciousness, and there is no "I" except absolute Existence.

Q.: Master, so when the thought arises and imagines the form, and form is seen, I should ask, "To whom does it belong?"

N.: Yes, if you inquire like that, "To whom does it belong, to whom does it appear?" the sense of reality and the sense of identity will return to their rightful place.

Q.: I can discard objective thought, discard the objective part, and focus only on the light, and know that they appear because of my light?

N.: When you ask, "For whom is this?" by the return of the sense of reality, the objectification is lost. "For whom is this? For whom is the appearance? For whom is this idea that there is an appearance?" Like this, pursue inwardly in a nonobjective fashion. If you still assume, "It is there," find out who has that assumption. Everything rests on you. In relation to all, the Consciousness, which is yourself, is referred to as the sakshi, or witness. It does not mean that there are actually things witnessed. It is a way of indicating the nature of Consciousness as the perpetual, nonobjective knower.

Q.: Master, you are suggesting to always try to be that knower.

N.: You are that.

Q.: I mean the inquiry.

N.: Yes.

Q.: But I become related to the known sometimes.

N.: The mixing up of the knower and the known is the characteristic of delusion. Remove the attributes of the known that are superimposed upon the knower. The reality belongs to the knower, and the known has no independent existence. Think of the knower in terms of the known, as a mind, as a combination of the senses, etc., and it appears to be objects, subtle and gross. Divest the knower of the superimposed notion, and what is there? What is the knower when you cease to think of him in terms of the known? By the known, I mean from the notion "I" to the forms of the world. Negate all those notions, the known from the knower, and then say what is what.

Q.: Thank you. Thank you.

Another Q.: The attempt to prove individuality is a great meditation. As soon as you posed the question, I thought of how to do this. It makes me look at what I actually consider an individual to be and if I am an individual. Who is that? It's clearly not a body. The idea that an individual is represented by a body, or the other way around, makes me question even more what I am talking about. What is this thing that seems to be surrounded by a bunch of forms, subtle and gross, and I am saying is there. What if I actually look at what is there? There isn't anything there.

N.: There is Existence.

Q.: That's all that is?

N.: The body also belongs only to that and is only that. Who is the thief that gets between and claims both "I" and the body?

Q.: The Maharshi's definition is a spurious ghost-like entity. I love that because it's spurious, because it's there only in one form, in the waking state. It's in another form during the dream state and disappears in deep dreamless sleep. This brings me back to the question, "Has there ever been an individual?" The idea of individuality is not a real thing. It is a very interesting concept because it's at the core of knowing oneself. When I try to find myself as an individual, I can't find anything that matches that concept. There isn't something that goes with it.

N.: The knowledge that illumines such inquiry is innately egoless, for it is the luminosity of pure Consciousness.

Q.: I am asking myself, if I experience myself as that which you just described? That is a great question to ask because I really must quickly figure out who is “me” in that process.

N.: Exactly so.

Q.: If I go for the “me” part and set aside the other part, it resolves itself easily.

N.: So, always know the nature of “I” first. Then, we will see if any doubts or differences remain. (Silence). That which you are, you are always. Reality never changes its nature. (Silence). So, if you are without individuality now, you are without ego in the past and the future as well. This dissolves the delusive notion of an unrealized being entirely. It also eliminates the notion of a realized being. There is just Being, which is Realization, and, for that, there is no unrealized state. (Silence).

Q.: I do have the direct experience of what you’re talking about, when I consider what has always been there, unchanging, always silent. That’s the one thing that I actually know. I have always known that, and I have never lost track of it.

N.: The knowledge of Existence is as perpetual as the Existence itself. If it were otherwise, it would not be eternal, so it would be tenuous. What begins has an end. What appears disappears. What is born dies. What is created is destroyed. Real Being, which is the Knowledge, is without beginning and without an end. It belongs to no one, though it is everyone. In that, the idea, “I do not know,” does not arise. Consequently, the idea, “I do know,” also does not arise. (Silence).

Q.: Looking in my experience of Existence, all that I see there is, “I am,” and that’s really it.

N.: (Silence).

Another Q: Thank You Master. I was enjoying all the different perspectives you were offering, which were all about one thing. There is a clean finality of Knowledge, Existence. If there should be imagined a mistake, there is no effort or resistance that is involved in dropping it, and there is sort of a timeless finality. There was a mistake, or it seemed so, now there isn’t, and that’s it! It isn’t like it’s going to come back or drag on.

N.: It does not have a life of its own.

Q.: Right. (Laughter). All the positive terms are like that, too. They are so final and clear. Sometimes, there is an imagined inertia or dreaminess to some of the illusion, and it can seem like a spell or something, which, of course, it can't be.

N.: If it seems that way, one hasn't recognized a mistake as a mistake.

Q.: No, mistakes are clean, though.

Nome: Once you see the false as false, it ceases from that moment onward. If it hasn't ceased for someone, he doesn't quite know yet that it is really false. He may have some initial belief that it is unreal, but it still seems to be a bit real. Once he knows that it is entirely unreal, there is no more affliction. When a mistake is thoroughly known as a mistake, you don't conjure that idea anymore.

Our nature is Truth itself. We love Truth. If, through discrimination, we can see a mistake as a mistake, we will no longer pursue it because of our innate love of Truth. It is just like that with the ego and all its attendant notions. Such is just a mistaken assumption. It has no inherent continuity or reality. It has no life of its own. It is not truly clear to say that one got rid of the ego, and it came back. It came back for whom? If there is still a coming and going, such is in the stage of practice. Deeper inquiry, further discrimination, is called for. When the inquiry really strikes home, there is nothing more to be done. (Silence.)

Another Q.: The mind creates the idea that we are the body. We become hungry. It is not the mind that has created that. It is the genuine need of the body. Is that a genuine need?

N.: There is nothing wrong with fulfilling such needs. However, we should not regard them as real or as the Self. In a dream, your dream body becomes hungry. It is a genuine experience for the dream body, but we shouldn't mistake any of that as being real or as being who we are. The nondual truth is a matter of Knowledge. There is no nondual action of the body. The body having needs does not prove that it is you or prove that it is yours or that it exists or that it is real. Simply, do not regard the body as your Self. When it is hungry, feed it. When it is thirsty, give it

something to drink. When it is tired, let rest. When it can be active, let it be active. Just don't regard any of that as yourself, and there will be no bondage.

Q.: Good. When I am hungry, my awareness seems to go away. I am too much into that state in which all I want is to just eat.

N.: While that is going on, you still exist obviously. You exist before, during, and after that experience. The Existence does not become hungry. Your body becomes hungry. Cease to misidentify the one with the other. The Consciousness that knows of the experience of hunger is not hungry. Just your body is hungry, for the time being. No matter what experience seems to occur for the body, you can keep your interior focus upon Self-Knowledge. Hunger will not interfere with the inquiry. Eating and satiation will not interfere with the inquiry either. Food is not an obstacle to Self Realization, and absence of food also does not obstruct the Realization. You need to turn inward and have your entire sense of identity rest in that which is bodiless and transcendent of the senses. Otherwise, various sensations, such as hunger, will seem to sweep you away. In reality, something remains unmoving, unaffected, and that something is truly you. If you are spiritually hungry, you pass beyond the physical hunger. (Silence).

Another Q.: Master, I had a question regarding the waking, the dreaming, and the sleeping state. We just slide from the waking state into the sleeping state. There are no thoughts. There is no experience. It is uncaused and spontaneous. In the morning, we wake up, and that is uncaused. In the waking state, there just two perceptions: one is I go to sleep and one I wake up. Maybe it is like two thoughts? In between, it's like blank, but it's not blank, for there is pure Existence and pure Consciousness. If it is uncaused and spontaneous, and it doesn't belong to the mind because I just slide into it somehow, it's not a perception, too. Should activities in the waking state also be focused that way? Should they be uncaused and spontaneous? They may give the best result because it seems the way Consciousness behaves, but I am Consciousness.

N.: Identity is more important. Stand beyond the three states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. These states come and go.

They are states of mind.

Even if you don't think a thought in one state to bring on the next state, they are still states of mind. You are beyond all three states, and you remain the same throughout all of them. Therefore, you are also beyond the content of those three states. The activities of day-to-day life are merely part of the waking state. You are not that. You are not in that. You are not the performer of action in that state. Whether something occurs with a lot of forethought or something seems to occur spontaneously makes no difference for one who is dis-identified from the three states. If there is no misidentification, that is the best.

Q.: So it would it be fair to start with being the witness of the three states, to start the inquiry as the witness?

Nome: Yes, you can start there, but it is no place to end. As the Maharshi has pointed out, there is no witness in deep sleep. The idea of a witness is in the waking state. However, what that idea points to is a Consciousness that is beyond all three states, that knows the three states but is unknown by them. With that Consciousness remain identified. Then, how can you be a performer of action, spontaneous, caused, or otherwise? When we consider the causality apparently perceived, it is nothing more than a notion in the waking state of mind. What is the difference between spontaneous and premeditated? The very idea of cause and effect is very questionable.

Q.: Thank you.

Another Q.: I have been meditating on if I die or go to sleep, would I dream of a new body, a new world, new likes and dislikes. What would be the tendency? Would I gravitate toward true happiness, or would I gravitate to objective happiness? Meditation is really about clarifying myself, instead of something objective. I fast, and when I do physical stuff when I am fasting, it is not an issue. The body can function. The issue occurs when I have to do mental stuff, to really think. That actually becomes very difficult sometimes. I can't do it, so I become frustrated.

N.: Does your happiness rely on the dependability or usefulness of the instruments of the body and the mind? If someone is using a tool to do some work and the tool is not working properly,

and he becomes frustrated and starts yelling at the tool, you would say that it's absurd. It's completely unnecessary. It's all out of proportion. Regard the body and the mind as mere instruments, mere tools. Certainly you can see that these are things that cannot be depended on. The body and the senses will not always be at your disposal. Likewise is it with the mind or intellect. Something is invariable. The light by which you know the mind is not working or not working properly is the same light that knows when it is working well. Likewise is it with the body and the senses. The illuminative Consciousness remains unchanged. Clearly identify yourself as that and not with what is subject to the waves of change. Fast from misidentification and abstain from consuming ignorance.

Q.: (Laughter). Fasting from food is relatively easy, and fasting from ignorance should even be easier.

N.: There is no nourishment in it. (Laughter). It doesn't taste good.

Q.: It doesn't taste good at all! (Laughter). It's serving up a bad-tasting, burned meal, the opposite of nourishment.

N.: There is no difficulty in overcoming ignorance, but your inquiry must be deep and thorough. Ignorance is insubstantial.

Q.: You say thorough.

N.: It means to verify throughout the entirety of your experience the truth of what you are inquiring into, so that root concepts and the tendencies coming from them are both eliminated. Or you may think of it as, rather than fasting from ignorance, just stop fasting from Bliss.

Q.: Yes, that is it. (Laughing)

Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English of verses from the Isa Upanishad and in Tamil from chapter 20 of the Song of Ribhu.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Silence)

Om Om Om



From the Ribhu Gita

February 10, 2012

Chapter 4, Verse 42 – 45

(Silence)
(Om, Om, Om)

Om Namah Sivaya

We'll start this evening with Chapter 4 Verse 42 of the Ribhu Gita.

Verse 42:

Ribhu continues to instruct Nidagha and says,

“I am ever of the nature of Consciousness alone. I am the real and the unreal and full of Consciousness. Of whatever I am devoid, nothing in the least has been grasped by me”

“I am ever of the nature of Consciousness alone.” Consider deeply what this means. Your nature, the nature of the “I,” is only Consciousness. It is not anything objective, not with any form, but just Consciousness. You are not anything apart from Consciousness so that you could look at it or be ignorant of it. What you are is Consciousness and Consciousness alone. Therefore, you are without a body, without a mind, and without an ego. You are just Consciousness and Consciousness alone. You are not a part of Consciousness; nor is Consciousness a part, or aspect, of you. What your identity is, what your very Existence is, is thoroughly, without even one little speck left out, pure, infinite, eternal Consciousness. This should be understood as the significance of the word “I,” and nothing else should be mistaken to be so.

“I am ever of the nature of Consciousness alone. I am the real and the unreal and full of Consciousness.” “Real and unreal,” can be understood to mean what is existent and nonexistent.

Whatever is existent, whatever is nonexistent, existence itself, and non-existence itself are all of the nature of Consciousness, which is the only true Reality, the only actual Existence. Existence is Consciousness. As Existence is perfectly full without increase and decrease at any time, likewise is it with Consciousness. It has no increase, and it has no decrease.

“I am ever of the nature of Consciousness alone, I am the real and the unreal and full of Consciousness.” He says, “ever;” always this is the case. You are Consciousness, and you are full of Consciousness. There is no other element in you. Whatever is conceived of as existent is just your own Consciousness, and whatever is conceived of as nonexistent is also just your own Consciousness. There is never anything else but Consciousness, and that Consciousness is the Self. There is no other kind of self, and Consciousness should not be subject to the imagination of objective conception.

“Of whatever I am devoid, nothing in the least has been grasped by me.” If you are pure Consciousness, you are devoid of all illusion, devoid of birth and death, devoid of bondage, devoid of an ego, devoid of the form of the mind and the form of the body. Knowing that of all this you are devoid, inquiring within, you realize your true nature. You find that this nature, which is your only nature, being absolute and transcendent over all, has never touched or grasped anything; nor has anything grasped it, because it is One without a second, without anything else whatsoever, and because its nature is one of transcendent freedom. For this Self, bondage is not at all. It is quite impossible. If you think, “But I touch these things, I grasp them, and they seem to exercise a grasp over me,” dive within and inquire to realize what, in truth you are. Leaving aside all false definition and all that is objectively conceived, you find that your nature is pure Consciousness alone and that is ever the case. It is not that you become pure Consciousness then, but you are not that now. Rather you are ever pure Consciousness alone. “Pure” means unmixed with anything. This Consciousness, which alone is your Self, has not been bound by anything, has not grasped anything, and remains absolutely free.

Verse 43:

“I am without the knot of the heart. From the Heart, I am all-pervasive; I am devoid of the six changes. I am without the six sheaths.”

The opening phrase of the verse is, “I am without the knot of the heart.” What is meant by “the knot of the heart?” It is the delusive tying together of the real, which ever is, and the unreal, which never is. It is the illusory connection of the Self with what is actually not the Self at all. Sri Bhagavan has described the knot of the heart as being the illusory connection, or tying together in confusion, of the Self, which is of the nature of pure Consciousness, and the insentient body. The misidentification in the form of, “I am the body,” is the tying together of the Self of pure Consciousness and the inert form of the body. That is this knot. The severance of that knot, which is the destruction of delusion, is the purpose of all spiritual endeavor, or spiritual practice. If that knot is cut, all delusion is done away with, samsara ends then and there, suffering becomes impossible, doubts scatter and are forever gone, and bondage is no more. Cut that knot of the heart.

“I am without the knot of the heart.” Of course, we can understand this statement as Ribhu’s expression of his freedom from such delusion, but the phrase can also be understood as the “I,” the Self, is without the knot of the heart. The Self does not have this confusion of tying together pure Consciousness and the insentient body, the real and the unreal. The confusion regarding the real and the unreal does not belong to the real. To whom does such confusion belong? Not to “I.” If there seems to be some ignorant one, that, itself, is the knot of the heart. Inquire, “Who am I?” and destroy that illusion forever. When the illusion of that connection is destroyed, you find that the Self was never bound, never became ignorant, and never had this knot of the heart. This can be said only when one has conclusively realized. Therefore, inquire into the nature of the “I.”

“From the Heart, I am all-pervasive.” Heart is to be understood as the quintessence of one’s Being. From that Heart, I am all-pervasive. As long as the Self is tied together with the body through misconception, how can you be all-pervasive? You seem to be located in or as a body, but without that knot, viewed from that Heart or the quintessence of one’s Being, which is entirely

bodiless, one's own Self is limitless and all-pervading. If something is truly all-pervading, it is so to such an extent that there is no separate thing left to be called "the pervaded." If there is a separate thing left besides the pervader, that pervader is not yet all-pervading. The all-pervasive Existence, "I"-less and bodiless, is the all-pervasive Consciousness. It pervades itself. There is no other. To realize how this is so, know your own Being, know the nature of your own Consciousness. Cease to tie the Consciousness with some form of an experiencer, be it the body, gross or subtle, or any other form. Consciousness just as it is without any superimposed limitation is all-pervasive and one without a second.

"I am devoid of the six changes." The six changes are considered to be: origination, existence, growth, maturity, decay, and death. These six modifications, or changes, are that to which every object and every body are subject. He says, "I am devoid of the six changes." What in you does not undergo such change? What in you did not begin? If there is origination at the beginning, there will be destruction at the end, with the changes of existing, growth, maturity and decay in between. What in you had no origination? What in you does not become a thing or a body? What in you has not grown? What in you has not reached any maturation or decay?

You are not the body. To emphasize this, he says, "I am without the six sheaths." The "six sheaths" is a term different than pancakosha, five sheaths, as normally found in Vedanta teaching. Six sheaths refer to the substances of the body, which are regarded as: marrow, bone, seminal fluid, blood, flesh, and skin. In short, they are the components of the body. I am not the body, and I do not undergo the changes of a body. This is the essential message to be grasped. Sever the delusive connection that seems to tie you with a body. Inquire within yourself, "Who am I? Can I be a body?" If you are a body, you will appear to be caught in those six transformations, and death is inevitable, but, if you are not the body, what then?

Q: As I've been listening to what's being said, the experience comes to the point at which there isn't anybody meditating anymore, there isn't any thought process about what's being said, and everything that is being said is just a description of reality.

The meditation is so natural, and I would say easy compared to the way I've meditated a lot before.

N.: The less there is of the delusive illusion of an ego, the individuality, the more natural the truth is found to be. In the absence of individuality entirely, the truth is innate, self-evident, and without anything else whatsoever. The more the individuality-notion dissolves, the better sense the teaching of Ribhu, the Maharshi, Sankara, the Upanishads, etc. is seen to be. They speak only of that which is the Reality, clearing up some doubts here and there should they arise.

Q.: It is almost as if there is nobody listening anymore separate from what is being said.

N.: That is listening.

Verse 44:

"I am liberated from the group of six enemies. I am the inmost of the interior. I am without space or time. I am with the directions as my apparel (clothed in space)."

"I am liberated from the group of six enemies." The six enemies are those things that are said to disturb peace and spiritual progress. They are: desire, anger, greed, infatuation, arrogance, and jealousy.

Whether we regard these as six individual traits that should be abandoned or as one continuum of ignorance, each one leading in succession to the next one, one must be liberated from all of that and find his nature that is ever beyond such. If one deeply understands the Maharshi's teachings about the nature of happiness, he will naturally be without these six enemies. If he knows the nature of happiness, or the source of happiness, he will not conjure up, or become entangled, in desire. Not being caught in desire, he will not become frustrated upon his desires being met or being not met, and so he will be devoid of anger. Being free of those and knowing where happiness is, he most certainly will not be caught up in greed with the delusive notion that happiness lies in objects. Not being caught up in those three previous tendencies, he will not become infatuated with anything or with anyone. If a person does not understand the nature of happiness, he

becomes subject to all of these things, and his ego becomes far out of proportion. The proper proportion of the ego should be zero, but his ego inflates all out of proportion and becomes arrogant. Being unhappy in his egotism, he becomes jealous of others. If we know the source of happiness, the nature of happiness, we do not forge those chains of bondage, and we do not create the enemies that would obstruct our own peace and happiness. Therefore, deeply determine, with a complete certainty within yourself, where happiness is found. What is the nature of happiness? If you comprehend that happiness is within, it has its source within, then, within is the Self. What is the nature of the Self, or "I"? It is pure Consciousness, Absolute Being, which is perfect Bliss.

"I am the inmost of the interior." What is meant by "inward"? It does not mean within the body. The entire body is outer and is to be dispensed with as forming any part of your identity, as mentioned in the previous verse. What is inner? Can it mean inside your mind? There is something more interior to your mind that knows the mind but is not known by it. What is interior? Ribhu says, "I am the inmost of the interior." What is the most interior? Whatever is most interior is completely non-objectified. It can be objectified neither as something thought nor as something perceived. Interiorly inquire, search within yourself, what is the innermost? Finding that, know that to be "I" and remain quite free of misidentification with anything else whatsoever.

"I am without space or time." In Saddarshanam, Sri Ramana says, "If we are bodies we are in space and time, but are we bodies?" If we are not bodies of any kind, if we have no form yet are entirely real, we are timeless, and we are spaceless. Just as the time and the space that appear in a dream do not actually measure your Consciousness, likewise, is it with the time and space of this waking state universe. You are not in time. You are not bound by time. You are not limited by space. You are not in space.

"I am with the directions as my apparel (clothed in space)." What is your form? In what are you clothed? You are clothed in nothing. There is nothing wrapped around your true nature. The Svarupa, or true nature, of the Self is formless, veil-less, sheath-

less, and nothing covers it. The space-like Consciousness is spread all over with nothing covering, with no ignorance to hide the view. It is entirely free by its very nature. A body is a covering, and a body has a covering. Is there a covering for Consciousness?

Verse 45:

“I am free from “is” and “is not.” I am without the negative syllable “na” (in any attribute). I am of the nature of all that is only Consciousness. I am Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.”

“I am free from is and is not.” You may think something is; you may think that same thing is not. Both are mere conceptions. What is it that does not fall in the context of such conceptions? Look for this within yourself. He has not changed topic. He is still speaking only of your Self, which is the innermost, the space-like, and the bodiless. You may think that the Self is, but it is quite beyond that. You may doubt and think that the Self is not, but it is quite beyond that. Who are you? You may think that the world is, or you may think that the world is not. Who is it that knows both views or both ideas?

“I am without the negative syllable “na” (in any attributes).” In English, the equivalent is “un,” “non,” “a,” “less,” or some other negative syllable appended to a word to define an attribute. Although in scriptures such as this, the Self is defined primarily in terms of negation, this is just instrumental in the course of spiritual instruction, so that the aspirant turns within and realizes what his true nature really is. The Self has no attribute, not even a negative one. We can say that it is entirely attribute-less, but that brings in the same negative attribute. So, dive within and realize, proceeding in the direction that these negative attributes point to see what exactly it is that is being indicated by means of negation. When it is said that the Self is world-less or bodiless or ego-less, it is not meant that one should go on thinking, “I am world-less, I am bodiless, I am egoless.” What is it that is being indicated by such terms as world-less, bodiless, egoless, beginning-less, endless, etc? What is it that is indicated when we say, “Neti neti; not thus, not thus.” That which is being indicated should conclusively realize itself, the nature of which is lauded by all these negation-containing statements.

Another Q.: This is a different understanding of negation than I had. Previously, I thought that the ego was going to start throwing stuff out of the raft, but it was going to still stay in the raft. The negation doesn't really happen that way. It is a matter of when I know who I am. Then it negates it and destroys the wrong concepts that I've had about myself that I am in a body or that I have a mind.

N.: Then, the raft and the sailor are both gone.

Q.: (Laughter) That's very much my experience this evening. It is just washed away with a tide that's far more potent than any individual could conjure up.

N.: In the flood tide of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, which is revealed by this Knowledge, no one and nothing else remains--- just one vast, expansive peace.

"I am of the nature of all that is only Consciousness." There is no multiplicity of Consciousness. There are not several Consciousnesses. The Consciousness that is the Self is the All-Consciousness. With no individuality to interrupt it, it is utterly undivided. This Consciousness, the Self, which is all Consciousness, is only Consciousness, and your nature, the nature of the "I," is only that. If you think in terms of "your Consciousness" and some "other Consciousness," you are thinking of illusory limitation superimposed upon Consciousness and not knowing Consciousness itself as it is. As it is, it is indivisible and undifferentiated. Consciousness never becomes otherwise. It never becomes different from its nature, just as Existence never ceases to exist. Find that in you which is only Consciousness, and by the inquiry, "Who Am I?" realize that to be entirely you. Consciousness is not a part of you and you are not a part of it. Consciousness is one and complete and is entirely you. You are entirely it. Let there be no delusion of distinctions. If there seems to be distinction, inquire "Who Am I?" Upon such inquiry what will be realized?

Ribhu says, "I am Existence-Consciousness-Bliss." What does it actually mean? If you are Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, where is bondage? If you are Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, where is birth? Where is death? If you are Existence-Consciousness-Bliss,

where can there be unhappiness? How could it be? If you are Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, how can there be ignorance and the delusion that proceeds from such. Bliss will not be unhappy, and Consciousness, being pure Knowledge, will not become ignorant. As for Being or Existence, it is unborn and imperishable. If there seems to be someone else who thinks, "I would like to know that I am Existence-Consciousness-Bliss," what is that "I"?

Another Q.: To what does Knowledge in Existence-Knowledge-Bliss refer? What Knowledge does Consciousness have?

N.: The innate Knowledge or self-luminosity. You see the sign of it in the understanding of your own existence. You exist, and you know that you exist. In what manner do you know that you exist? Do you need to think about it? Follow that trail deeply within. The Knowledge in Self-Knowledge is the natural self-luminosity of pure Consciousness, of pure Being. Existence-Consciousness-Bliss is a threefold compound term to describe one thing. They are not attributes. The threefold term is meant to indicate the thing in itself. The Knowledge of Consciousness, the Knowledge of Bliss, and the Knowledge of Existence are entirely one and the same thing. It is not thought and not sensory.

"I am free from "is" and "is not." I am without the negative syllable "na" (in any attribute). I am of the nature of all that is only Consciousness. I am Existence-Consciousness-Bliss." If you drink even a drop of the immortal nectar of this truth revealed by Ribhu, all is perfect. If you consume even a drop of this, there is Existence without beginning or end and you are that, there is Consciousness with no darkness and you are that, and there is bliss without cause, without end, and you are that.

Q.: If you are Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, what is the body?

N.: Only that or nothing at all. Who perceives the body? How do you know that there is a body?

Q.: I can feel the body.

N.: With your senses; apart from the five senses have you ever experienced a body? Apart from the state of mind, usually the waking state, that contains the senses, you have never experi-

enced them. The senses, the body, and all else are the equivalent to a figment of the imagination. Have you ever experienced the mind apart from the Consciousness that knows it?

Q.: No, not the mind.

N.: This being so, the body and all else may be regarded as a misperception of that same Being-Consciousness-Bliss that is innately, absolutely bodiless.

Q.: But then why do I see you. I see you right now.

N.: What is the definition of “I” and “You”? Would the body be creeping into that definition?

Q.: Yes.

N.: From the standpoint of “I am the body,” other bodies are seen. From the standpoint of “I am the mind,” other minds are conceived. Transcending such false definition by profound inquiry, true

Knowledge, there is found to be neither “you” nor “I”. Leaving behind the misconception of “I am the body” is the entrance into profound, spiritual wisdom. As long as the “I am the body” misidentification is intact, much, if not all, of the spiritual wisdom remains incomprehensible, but set aside this “I am the body” misconception and everything is open for you.

Q.: Then, what is it that I am seeing? I see what you are saying, that I am not the body, I am the Light within or the Existence, the feeling of Existence. Why do I still see you?

N.: The habit is an old one. No sooner have you completed the sentence that you are the Light of Consciousness within than you tie it together with the body and say, “I see you.” Are you the senses? Are you a sensing entity? Is that what you are?

Q.: No, but the Consciousness within is using the senses to see out.

N.: How do you know that the senses even exist? Or do they exist?

Q.: Because I see you.

N.: Do the objects exist because of the senses, or do the senses exist because of the objects?

Q.: Both.

N.: It appears that way, just as, in a dream, it seems both, but, in a dream, do you really see anyone? As long as you misidentify as the dream character embodied in a dream body endowed with dream senses, with dream inner thoughts and dream outer perceptions, and as long as you go on dreaming, it seems to be that way, but, when you wake up, what do you find to be the case?

Q.: Yes, all that was fake.

N.: That was just a false appearance. The one thing that was invisible and that was not the false appearance was misconceived in the dream or imagined to be all those things and people, the “you” and the “I,” the people you saw, and the people you spoke with regarding the state of that dream, etc. When you wake up, you abandon the dream identity and, with it, the dream world, and you find what was actually there the entire time. There was something there, but it did not correspond to the names and forms, the concepts and percepts, of the dream. So, who is really here? I can tell you that there is only one Self here, or God alone is here, but you must find the truth of this yourself by inquiring as to what your nature is. The senses do not tell you what is real. They are not useful for that.

Q.: Let’s assume for a second that I am suddenly a realized person, and I start walking. Will I hit the wall?

N.: The “I” is being defined as a body, and now the realized person, which is a contradiction in terms, is being regarded as a body. Is Ramana his body?

Q.: Let me rephrase the question. Say, body A walks toward body B.

N.: If, in a dream, body A meets dream body B and they collide, there are mutual sensations according to the dream bodies, but that is like speaking of the waves of a mirage hitting each other.

Rather than think of the realized being, such as the Maharshi, as being “a being,” which is contradicted by everything he ever taught, it is better for us to let go our preconception, our defining notion, and rise to that level. Rather than to try to comprehend the infinite within a small pot, shatter the pot.

Q: I understand the Existence-Consciousness-Bliss aspect of it, but what I am still not getting is what is the body?

N.: It is whatever you imagine it to be, just like everything else, but there is one thing that is not imagined.

Q.: The reason the mirage example doesn't work for me is, in a mirage, I will never reach the object, but, in real life, I will reach the object.

N.: What is real life?

Q.: Which is waking state.

N.: Is that real?

Q.: No, so I am saying that example is different from a mirage. In a mirage I will never reach the lake, how much ever I try.

N.: Similarly, in the attempt to find Reality while regarding the world as real, you will never find Reality. The Existence, itself, cannot be found by objective conception, which is based upon certain false premises. The fundamental, false premise is the idea of “I,” the perceiver. The saints and sages, in the Scriptures, have spoken of the body in numerous ways. For those who think of it as themselves, it is a death trap. For those who are devoted to God, it is a temple. For those who are busy dissolving or attenuating the ego, it is an instrument. For those who know themselves, it cannot be uttered.

Om Namah Sivaya!

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om



From the Temple Archives

[This reply is to a seeker who has long attended satsang and who had mentioned his ill health in a message.]

March 5, 2012

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. I hope that your health recovers quickly. Sri Bhagavan's instruction regarding the bodiless nature of the Self is the supreme remedy for the ills of illusion.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is a response to a SAT member, whose questions in her message can be inferred from the answers in the reply.]

March 16, 2012

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

It is important to deeply, conclusively realize that the Self is not the body. This yields transcendence of bodily attributes, such as condition, location, etc. That which remains is the egoless nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Is it not this Self that you love in all that are loved? Yes, it is without boundary and devoid of separation. Repose in the peace of this true Self, the One who dwells in your heart.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This message is from a devotee of Sri Ramana. Nome's response follows.]

March 20, 2012

Master Nome,

I wanted to thank you for the generous grace with which you showered me at the retreat. To say I am grateful would be an understatement of such tremendous magnitude that I would rather close my eyes and pranam to you from the depths of my heart.

Having arrived back in New Jersey yesterday, I felt an utter longing for your presence, for the divine. This is only due to your grace. Thank you.

It is superfluous to ask, I know, but yet I must. Please be with me, each moment. Please nurture the longing in me. Please lead me to myself. Please do not allow me to fall by the wayside and wake up one day years from now, thinking that I have wasted my life.

I know that when Bhagavan was asked the same, he replied "You are standing neck deep in water and you ask for water." I know that grace is ever present. I know that grace was present prior to meeting you. Yet, today I feel a hope and confidence that I did not feel previously. So, to me, it is as if the grace is anew.

I pray that it may continue to flow. Thank you.

Pranam to your feet,

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Yes, Grace is ever present. All that is required is for one to be keenly aware of it. Relinquishing misidentifications, one finds himself absorbed in it.

With your sincerity of purpose and earnestness, you are never forsaken. Not a single drop of devotion or effort in Self-inquiry ever goes in vain.

Not only did Sri Bhagavan say that one's situation is like asking for water when he is neck deep in water, but he also said that

it is like water itself asking for water.

May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, and thus always dwell in happiness and peace.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This message is from the same Ramana devotee. Nome's reply follows.]

March 21, 2012

Hello Master Nome,

I was just sitting at my desk, deeply immersed in solving a computer problem that I had been working on for the last hour. Suddenly I felt a sensation on my head and my chest.

My eyes closed, and your smiling face flashed before my mind's eye. Suddenly, I went into a deep spontaneous meditation. I felt myself lose awareness of my body. It was not a complete loss, but I could no longer clearly feel my arms or hands. I felt that I was expanding beyond the frame of my body. I felt a deep vibrant silence.

As I sat, I tried to think, "to whom is this experience happening?"

This started a chain of mental activity. I put an end to it and just tried to stay with the feeling of expansion, still in the deep silence. I must have sat like this, motionless, for a few minutes.

Then gradually I opened my eyes. I felt surprised to see my small body sitting in the chair, having felt so expansive a few minutes earlier. The thought crossed my mind, that if my awareness had expanded beyond the body, then the body must be in it, not the other way around.

If I were near you, I would come and pranam at your feet and relate this experience and sit content at your feet. Since this is not possible, I relate it through email, yet the pranams continue in my heart.

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The experience shows you that your nature is expansive and beyond the limits of the body. Transcendent of the body, silence shines.

The particular form of the experience, such as sensations or loss of sensations, is of a transient character. The Knowledge-essence is of a permanent nature. It pertains to your very Existence, which is continuous and eternal. It is this Existence that is free from the body and bodily limitations. Place emphasis on this Knowledge-essence.

In your thought, “to whom is this experience happening?”, the chain of mental activity manifested due to the undue emphasis on the delusive “person.” If, as the Maharshi instructs, one truly inquires, “For whom is this?” the egoless nature of the real Being-Consciousness, as the only reality, becomes self-evident.

May you ever abide in That, as That, which is the Self, the infinite and the eternal, and thus remain at peace.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This message is from a SAT member. Nome's reply follows.]

March 20, 2012

Dear Master Nome,

Namaste!

Thank you so much for a superb retreat! Much of the discourse relating to simply being the Self was especially valuable for me, and just what I had been “requesting” to deepen my practice. Already I can tell a major difference during meditation. Also, your reading of *The Song of Ribhu* (which I still read daily, as you suggested) and the puja were special “take-aways.”

Something you said near the very end of the discourse Sunday morning reminded me of related questions I have been pondering. How can God be the doer of the actions of jivas since jivas are imaginary? Similarly, what is meant by the Maharshi's teachings that all activities are actually God's and proceed as

God's will? (God willing the actions of unreal beings?)

I am confused about the idea of God being the doer and actor of a dream world. I relate to the concept of the Supreme Brahman/Siva/Self/pure Consciousness being Absolute Reality, Existence, Consciousness, Bliss. However, the idea of God being responsible for all the actions of individuals and of God's will being responsible for all that happens in the world seems to suggest the traditional Christian concept of a bearded man in the sky pulling all the strings, which seems contrary to Advaita Vedanta. Perhaps some of the ideas and imagery about the doer are part of the expedient teaching to which you refer as being necessary at certain stages of learning.

Your clarification would be most appreciated.

In great appreciation and sincerity,

Dear . . . ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. I am glad to know the retreat was and continues to be spiritually beneficial for you.

In Reality, the Self, or Brahman, alone exists. In that, there can be no question of individuals, the world, or a God. Without these, there can be no concept of destiny or free will. This is egoless Knowledge.

If this is not deeply, conclusively realized, a question about manifestation will arise. For those who are perplexed by such, it is pointed out that the entire manifestation is but the imagining within the mind, and the Self is the unaffected, eternal Consciousness that is the witness of the mind and its content. Thereby, the idea of being a perceiver is abandoned. This is ego-dissolving Knowledge.

For those who do not comprehend this and who assume the reality of an external world, the question regarding the power that accomplishes all things arises. For them, it is pointed out that there is only one supreme power, which is of God, the supreme Lord of the universe. Thereby, the idea of the ego's importance is nullified. This is ego-attenuating Knowledge.

One cannot truly know that the jiva is unreal yet still hold that the world, in which actions appear, is real. If the nature of

the jiva is discerned by deep inquiry, ideas of both destiny and free will vanish. One Existence alone appears as jagat-jiva-para. One Existence alone appears as God, the witness, and Brahman. This Existence is the Self.

It is hoped that you find the above clarifying. May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self, in which there is not the least trace of duality or difference, so that you remain always happy and at peace.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This message is from another Ramana devotee. Nome's reply follows.]

April 1, 2012

Dear Master Nome:

Namaskara. After my return from SAT with the great benefit of having met you and received the instructions, by His Grace, my mind is getting more focused on self inquiry. I pray never to veer from the path.

Though I understand that self inquiry must be ongoing all the time, I believe that to always inhere at His feet, at my stage, I should stabilize my practice in the morning and evening, and carry the momentum the rest of the day. I have been successful in spending an hour or so in the evening, and spend more time on weekends. However, I have not been very successful lately to wake up early and practice, and sporadically remember to practice during the day. Your words of wisdom will help.

Bhagawan's image and reading keep me inspired. I am reading *Essence of Inquiry*, and this work is making my understanding clear and motivating me. Thank you so much.

Also, I have started reading *Ribhu Gita*, and the mention therein that there was a Kannada publication even before Tamil has caught my attention. Since I was educated in Kannada, I may find that version easy flowing along side the English book that I have. Do you know where I can get the Kannada version? That will be of great help to me, I assume.

I appreciate a response at your convenience.

With deep respects,

In Bhagawan,

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Bhagavan's Grace is ever present, even manifesting as the ability to inquire. If one's earnest prayer is to be endowed with inquiry, certainly all illusion will dissolve for him, and the Self will be self-revealed.

Inquiry reveals Knowledge and consists of Knowledge. Depth, thoroughness and continuity are important. The time of day for meditation is not important. Though it is common to wisely meditate at the commencement of the waking state or shortly thereafter and at the end of the waking state or shortly before, Self-inquiry that yields the timeless Realization of the Self transcendent of all states of mind does not depend on those times.

With the intense desire for Liberation, you will find yourself eagerly seizing every opportunity to dive within. Thereby, as the Maharshi has taught, the Self is readily realized.

I do not know where the Kannada version of *Ribhu Gita* can be found. The SAT temple does not have a copy.

May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self, so clearly, graciously revealed by Sri Bhagavan, Ribhu, and other wondrous sages, in That, as That, and thus dwell always in peace and happiness.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[A message from a Ramana devotee followed by Nome's response.]

April 15, 2012

Dear Master Nome,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya.

Namaste and Pranams.

Through the mystery of grace, my practice of inquiry has been happening on a daily basis since my return from the ashram. How wonderful! I know that this is a function of grace alone, since when I tried to maintain a regular practice in the past, I have found it very difficult. Thank you.

When I sit to meditate, a thought comes up. I inquire, "For whom is this thought?" and, finding no response, the thought and the thinker of the thought both disappear. I am left in a silent, peaceful state that feels wonderful. I sit like this for 20 minutes or so and the above process repeats numerous times.

Here is my question:

When I inquire, the thought and the thinker of the thought vanish, I am left in silence. However, I have read that whatever one perceives is not what one is. I perceive my body, so I am not my body. I perceive my thoughts, so I am not my thoughts, etc. However when I inquire and perceive peace and silence, then by the same logic, this is not I either. So, then, who am I? Is the peace and silence resulting from inquiry also just a phenomena that must be discarded? Master, would you please clarify, I am confused.

Thank you,

Pranam,

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

When, through deep inquiry, the thinker and thought both vanish and silence alone remains, complete the inquiry by discerning the nature of the one who knows the silence. True Silence knows itself; the Self alone knows the Self.

There is no need to attempt to discard the peace and the silence. Rather, seek to realize the very nature of peace and silence, which is the Self. Sri Bhagavan has declared that Silence is that in which no "I" appears. He also says that peace is of the Self. We should know that peace is rooted in the changeless. Therefore, if one inquires into the egoless, changeless Existence that he truly is, all confusion vanishes, and the nonobjective Truth shines for itself.

It is not necessary to continue with a conception that peace or silence is a transient experience or a state of mind. The peace and the silence exist forever as the very nature of the Self. If such a conception does arise, simply inquire for whom such is and, then, inquiring "Who am I?" realize your very Self to be the ever peaceful, eternally silent Reality.

One who understands that bliss lies within cannot do otherwise than practice continuously.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[Here are two messages from a devotee of Sri Ramana. Nome's response follows.]

April 4, 2012

Om Namo Bhagawate Sri Ramanaya.

Dearest Master Nome,

Your words are greatly helping me. You simply make me happy.

Thank you!

Ever grateful in Bhagawan,

April 15, 2012

Dearest Master Nome,

Thank you for being the ever inspiring presence of Sri Ramana.

The Grace has been supplying efforts for my sadhana. However, I am not pleased with myself yet.

While reading *Ribhu Gita* Ch 2, verse 40, the line . . . “There are no gods such as Siva to worship . . .” shook me a bit.

Intellectually, I understand that the remover of all obstacles, Ganesha, is no different from the most beautiful ever Divine Mother, who is no different from the ever gracious Lord Siva, who is no different from my own Self. However, I love Lord Siva, who I believe manifests as great teachers to remove all ignorance and suffering. Moreover, sage Ribhu himself obtained the teachings from Lord Siva.

Please explain at your convenience.

With deep respects,

In Bhagawan,

Dear . . .,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Grace is infinite and ever present. We need only remain keenly aware of it.

It is natural to feel less than complete satisfaction until the Self is conclusively realized. It is an intuition of the natural state of the perfect fullness of Bliss. It serves as a goad that prompts one to deeper and deeper inquiry and devotion.

The thorough negations expounded by Ribhu must be comprehended in their proper context and by inner experience. Not only is any idea of “Siva” negated, but everything else including the world, all that is objectively perceived, all that is conceived, and even the individuality of the one who negates. That which can never be negated, remaining resplendent, is truly Siva.

The same scripture that expounds such negation also lauds devotion to the Supreme Siva. Ribhu declares that the source of this highest spiritual instruction that the Self alone exists is none other than Siva. So, Siva and the Self must be the same.

If some idea causes bondage, it is wise to relinquish it and destroy it. If some action is motivated by ignorance, it is wise to

renounce it. Who, though, has ever been bound by devotion and its expression? Therefore, the spiritual instruction found in Ribhu Gita is intended for those who, filled with devotion and clear inquiry, are intent upon the Realization of the Supreme Truth. Even if duality would be imagined during the start of sadhana, the dualism ought to be abandoned and not the sadhana. With the abandonment of dualism, supreme bhakti flourishes, and such becomes abidance in Knowledge.

Om Namah Sivaya

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[A seeker from Gujarat, India wrote a few messages that contain questions about renunciation, bhakti, jnana, Vedanta, study of the scriptures and such. Here are Nome's replies.]

April 27, 2012

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. I am glad to know that you find *Ribhu Gita* and the *Song of Ribhu* to be beneficial.

The true renunciation is the abandonment of the ego and of the concept of an objectively existing world.

Complete detachment, born of the knowledge of the source of happiness, is necessary for Self-Realization. Renunciation may thus also be understood as the expression of such detachment in the form of cessation of those actions that are based upon, or motivated by, ignorance regarding the nature of happiness.

Vows of renunciation, wearing the symbols of sannyasa and engaging in a particular mode of life, etc. or not doing such are according to the temperament of the seeker. The appearance, actions, and condition of the body do not affect the Self. Knowledge of one's true Being, the Self, yields Realization. Actions performed by the instruments of the body, speech, and mind cannot accomplish this. Perplexity over activity and inactivity arises only so long as there is misidentification with the body. Upon inquiry to know one's own nature, this delusion vanishes.

Destiny is an idea of and for the illusory individual, or ego. Grace is the dissolution of that very illusion.

To choose wisely that which promotes the inner realization of supreme Bliss cannot be regarded as a fault.

The effects of polio or any other disease are only for the body and never touch the perfection of the Self, which is unborn and imperishable.

I hope that you find what is written here helpful.

May you ever abide as That, the bodiless and egoless, which is the goal of all renunciation, initiation, and such, which is the ever-existent Self, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, and which is Brahman, and thus dwell in happiness and peace always.

Om Namah Sivaya

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

April 27, 2012

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Scriptures and meditation upon what they declare are for the purpose of the revelation within us of that which is imperceptible to the senses and transcendent of the mind. That is Brahman. That alone is the Self.

Bhakti and Jnana are inseparable and not different.

Om Namah Sivaya

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

May 1, 2012

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for both of your messages.

All differentiation is merely imagined and based upon the false assumption of, or misidentification as, an individual or ego. If that vanishes due to clear inquiry, differences are found to be unreal.

If one inwardly inquires as the nondual scriptures, such as those mentioned by you, are read, the experience will be profound. Indeed, the depth is of one's own Self, of the nature of ilimitable Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

By deep devotion and clear inquiry, abandoning entirely the objectifying tendency (vasana), abide in the Knowledge of the Brahman-Self. That alone is real. That alone exists. That alone is what you are.

Grace is ever there and always perfectly full.

Om Namah Sivaya

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[These are two responses to a Ramana devotee who wrote expressing his perplexity concerning making a decision regarding the direction of his occupation.]

June 1, 2012

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Nonattachment born of the knowledge that the source of happiness is within is most important. With that, regardless of which occupation is chosen and regardless of the result of such choice, you will be free from worry and will be happy and at peace.

As Sri Bhagavan graciously teaches, you are not the body and, therefore, cannot be the performer of action. You are the immovable Self. In light of this Truth, what is "to be done" and what is "not to be done," for you who are Brahman itself?

Whatever is done without attachment, free of the false notion of being the body and doer, and dedicated in devotion to Sadguru Ramana, the Supreme Lord, is the right way to proceed.

May you, by the Knowledge of the Self, ever repose in the peace that is imperishable.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

June 1, 2012

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. In the initial paragraph of the book, “Who Am I?”, Sri Bhagavan declares that happiness is the cause of love and that the Self is this happiness.

Upon meditation on what was mentioned in the previous email, the decision will feel as light as air.

As Brahman, the Self, one should remain free of all concepts. Inquiring, abandon the thoughts and the thinker as not-Self and as unreal notions about unreal things.

If you think that the mind decides, inquire and know for certain that you are not the mind and that its content, in the past, present, and future, does not pertain to you.

If you feel that all is universally ordained, inclusive of the decisions made by the mind and acted upon by the body, remain at ease in the state of non-identification with and detachment from all of that. He carries all and is, indeed, all.

If you think of yourself as making the decision, sincerely reflect on which course of action would best express and support your devotion to Sri Ramana and, detached from the fruits of the action, make your decision as an offering to Him. Thus, as proclaimed in the *Gita*, Brahman is the offering and that which is offered, and the one who offers, and Brahman indeed is reached by him in the samadhi of Brahman-action.

In brief, without the ego’s intrusion, there will be found no cause for worry. All is alright always. Dive within and realize the ever-existent perfect fullness. It is the Self.

Grace is ever with you and within you.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome



Announcements

Thank You...

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 service at our temple...

Bob Haber: keeping the bathrooms clean, watering plants, sweeping the walkways & parking lot, cleanup after events, cleaning the temple, set-up for events, helping with flower arrangements; Tim Frank: vacuuming & cleaning the temple, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats, transcription; Myra Taylor: vacuuming & cleaning the temple, providing prasad after satsang & atmotsava, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Raman Muthukrishnan: running the bookstore including mail order service, maintaining the SAT website, mastering recordings of events at SAT, providing prasad after satsang; Sangeeta Muthukrishnan: helping with the bookstore mail order, organizing things around the temple, providing meals at retreats, providing prasad after satsang & atmotsava, leading kirtans at atmotsava; Wimala Brown: providing meals at retreats and prasad after satsang; Dhanya Nambirajan: singing during special events, providing meals at retreats, providing prasad after satsang, 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: lighting candles at meditation events, flower arranging, preparing meals at retreats; Richard Clarke: providing incense for the temple and helping with book orders from India; Nome: temple grounds maintenance, writing books, administrative stuff, general help wherever needed including spiritual guidance; Sasvati: preparing

books & Reflections for publishing, maintaining residential rentals, overseeing property repairs, flower arrangements, maintaining temple gardens; Advait Sadasivan: providing play time at any time for anyone who wishes to play, helping out when asked; Jaden Silva: transcription, mastering recordings of satsangs; helping out wherever needed; Tristan Mzhavia: assisting with flowering the murtis and lighting candles, cleaning the temple, transcription; Sheila Hillman, providing prasad after atmotsava.

If you would like to transcribe satsangs and other events at SAT, please contact Sasvati at: <sasvati@att.net>

Transcribing these events is a wonderful opportunity to dive deep into this supreme teaching and it is also a beautiful service to preserve these precious teachings in printed form for many years to come.

It is perfect for those who live at a distance and would like to engage in service.

Upcoming Special Events

Guru Purnima: July 3, 2012

Sri Ramana's Self Realization Celebration: July 17, 2012

Sri Ramana Maharshi Self Realization Retreat: August 31-Sept. 2, 2012

Sri Sadisvara Mandiram

Everything we do at SAT has the direct purpose of evoking devotion in the heart and inducing the immediate experience of the Self. This purpose is fulfilled by all the events held at SAT—satsangs, meditations, Ramana darshanams, atmotsavas, temple sevas, special events, retreats, and publications. This purpose is also fulfilled by the design of the Temple itself including the deities and symbols used throughout the Temple for worship and meditation. SAT has the good fortune of already housing in the Temple deities Dakshinamurti, Nataraja, Lingodbhava, Ardhanariswara, and Lingam, which are worshipped regularly at SAT events. To complete the Temple, deities Ganesh and Subramania (Skanda) are to be added. Devotees endeavor to build a proper shrine for these deities downstairs in the front entry to the temple. The “Sri Sadisvara Mandiram” would also include Nandi and an additional Lingam to the one that is already situated in the Inner Shrine outside the Satsang Hall. In addition, murtis of Ribhu and Adi Sankara will take their place in the Satsang Hall near the front Ramana altar next to the dias.

The “Sri Sadisvara Mandiram” will provide an atmosphere in which devotees visiting the temple may experience puja, engage in pradakshina, listen to vedic chanting, read scripture, and worship. It will embrace the ambiance of Siva temples found throughout India.

To find out more about this holy endeavor and if you are inspired to sponsor this project, visit the SAT website at:

satramana.org and then click on “Sri Sadisvara Mandiram” located in the sidebar menu.

Om Namah Sivaya!