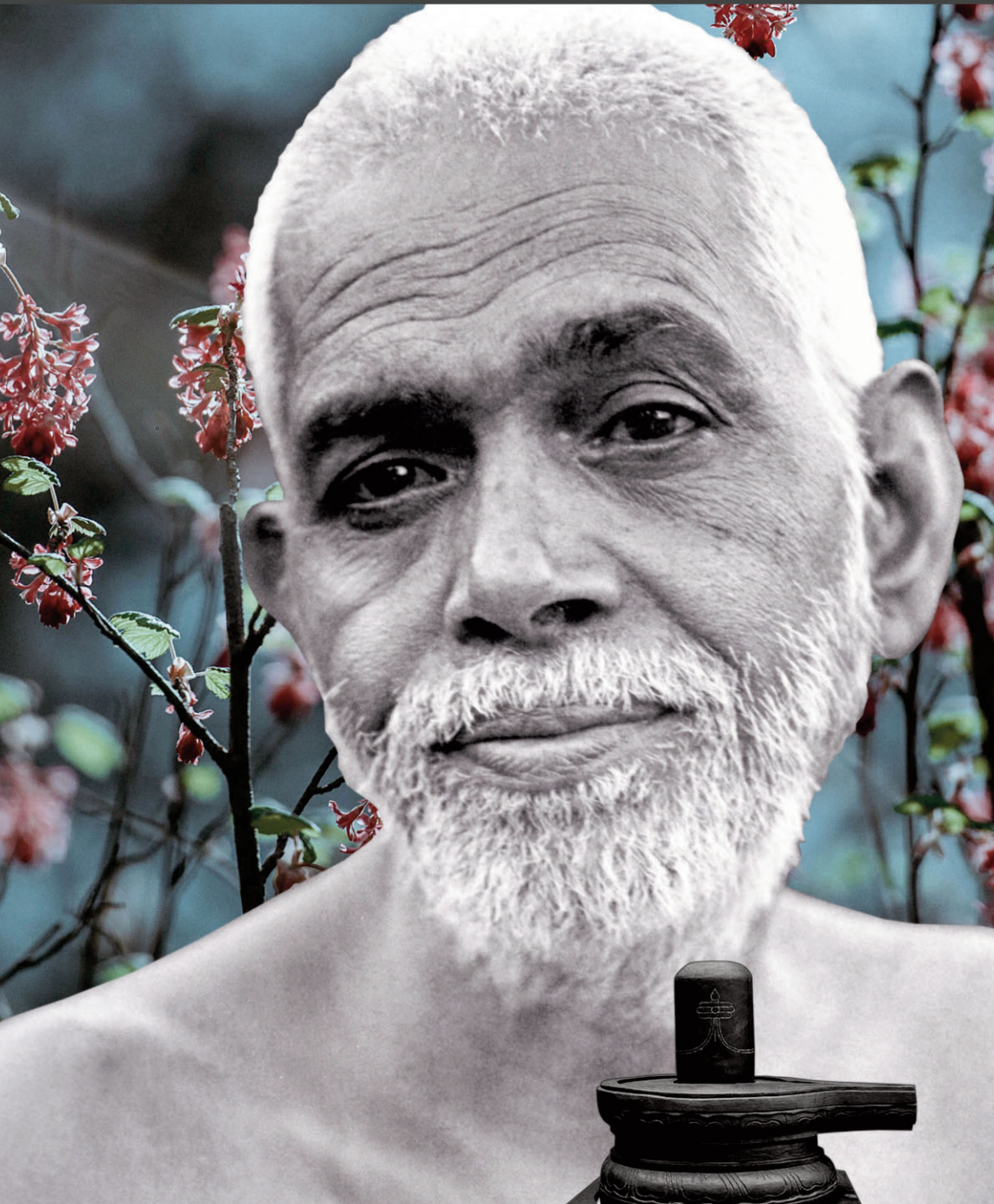




Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya



Om Namah Sivaya



Disciple: If the entire universe is of the form of the mind, then does it not follow that the universe is an illusion? If that be the case, why is the creation of the universe mentioned in the Veda?

The Maharshi: There is no doubt whatsoever that the universe is the merest illusion. The principal purport of the Veda is to make known the true Brahman after showing the apparent universe to be false. It is for this purpose that the Veda-s admit the creation of the world and not for any other reason.
- From Essence of Inquiry, Vichara Sangraham, verse 10
(Continued on pg. 3)



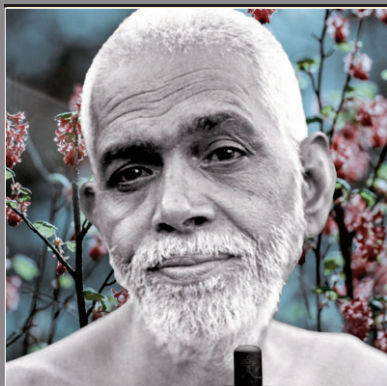
Reflections



SAT Temple

July . August . September 2018

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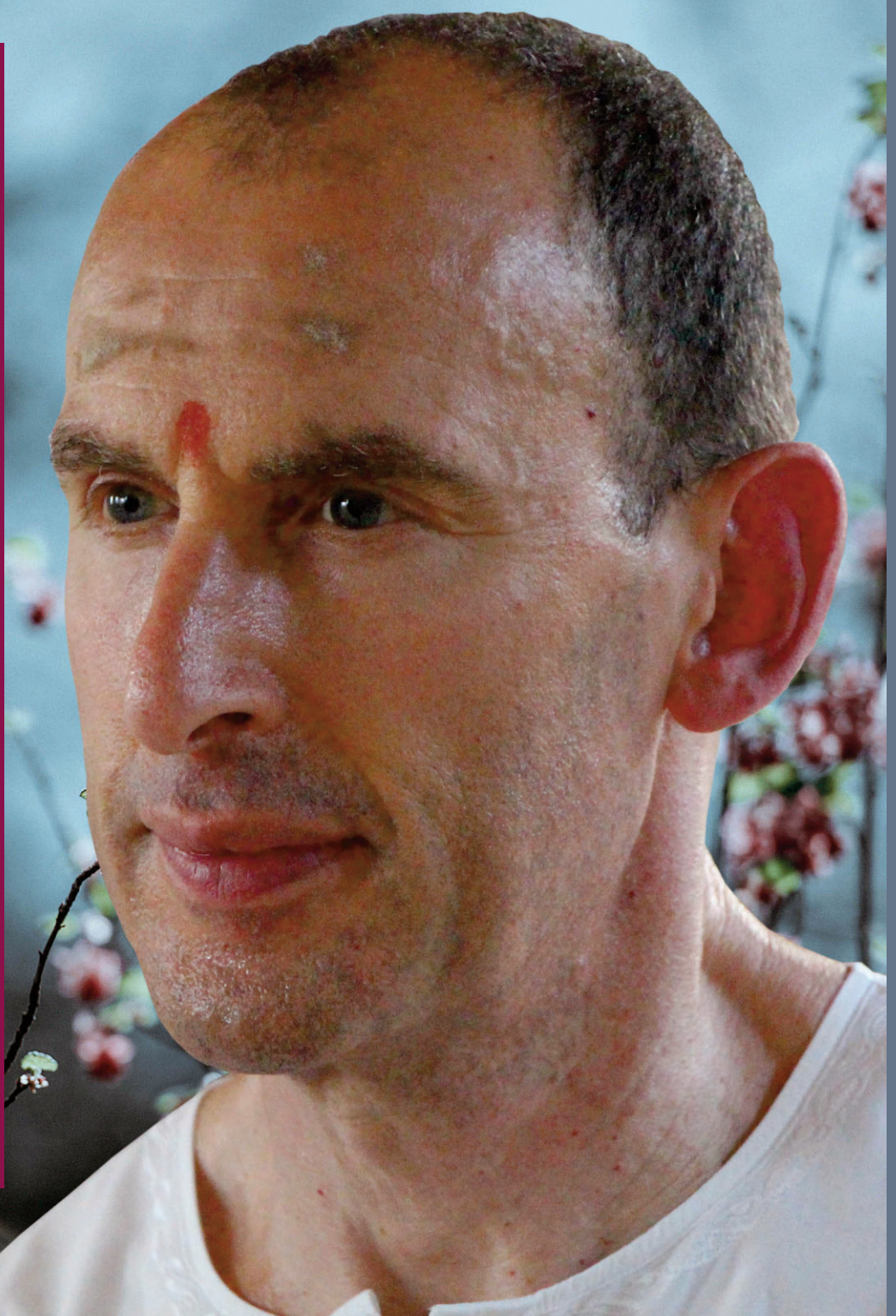
1834 Ocean St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060 USA / 831.425.7287

/ email: sat@satramana.org / www.SATRamana.org

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(Continued from pg. 1)

The Maharshi: Moreover, for the less qualified persons, creation is taught, that is the staged evolution of prakriti, mahatattva, tanmatra-s, bhuta-s, the world, the body, etc., from Brahman; while for the more qualified, simultaneous creation is taught, that is, that this world arose like a dream on account of one's own thoughts induced by the defect of not knowing oneself as the Self. Thus, from the fact that the creation of the world has been described in different ways, it is clear that the purport of the Veda-s rests only in teaching the true nature of Brahman after showing somehow or other the illusory nature of the universe. That the world is illusory, every one can directly know in the state of Realization, which is in the form of experience of one's bliss-nature.



Commentary by Nome on Verse 10 of Sri Bhagavan's Vicharasangraham (Essence of Inquiry)

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Sri Bhagavan abides as That, Brahman, wholly transcendent of all form. His state is his Being, and this Being is free of creation, forever unmanifested, of the nature of unalloyed, nondual Consciousness-Bliss. Ever abiding as That, he appears as the guru, the guru who is beyond the world and graciously awakens one from the dream-like illusion of the world, and who is beyond the mind and compassionately awakens one from the illusion of the mind.

The Maharshí has already revealed that all phenomena appear only in the mind and are of the nature of the mind itself. The disciple, pursuing the guru's precious instructions, perceives that the world, being but the product of the mind's conjuring and having no separate or external reality, must necessarily be an illusion. The question then arises: if the universe is an illusion, why have the Vedas and other scriptures, the purpose of which is to reveal the Truth, given elaborate details concerning the manner of creation?

The Maharshí commences his all-illuminating answer by declaring the unreal nature of the universe and by proclaiming that the purpose of the Veda is the elucidation of the Knowledge of Brahman, the nondual Absolute. What is referred to as "the universe," or "the world," includes all forms, subtle and gross. It includes all objects, all sentient beings, all events, all matter and energy, and all that is perceptible and conceivable. All of that, without exception, is declared to be unreal—utterly illusory and nonexistent—by the knowers of Truth.

Brahman alone is. It is the one undifferentiated Existence that ever is as it is, free of all modification. It has neither within nor without, beginning nor end, creation nor destruction. Described as Being-Consciousness-Bliss, it transcends all objectivity, all thought, and all differentiated experience. They who realize it are it, for there is no such duality as knower and known.

It is this one Existence that, in delusion, is conceived as a differentiated world, as a rope is imagined to be a snake in a dimly lit room. The illusion of a world depends upon the illusion of a separate seer. If the true nature of the seer is known, individuality, being false, vanishes, and with it disappears the world illusion. So, in *Who am I?*, the Maharshí again states, "When the world is thus perceived, the true nature of the Self is not revealed; conversely, when the Self is realized, the world ceases to appear as an objective reality."

Therefore, in *Vivekacudamaní*, Adí Sankara states, verse 292,

यत्रैष जगदाभासः दर्पणान्तः पुरं यथा ।
तद् ब्रह्माहमिति ज्ञात्वा कृतकृत्यो भविष्यसि ॥

yatraiṣa jagadābhāsaḥ darpaṇāntaḥ puram yathā |
tad brahmāhamiti jñātvā kṛtakṛtyo bhaviṣyasi ||

which may be translated as: Where this reflection of the world is as a city within a mirror, having known thus, "I am Brahman," you will be (one who is) fully accomplished (fully realized, with full attainment). Similarly, in verse 294,

सर्वात्मना दृश्यमिदं मृषैव नैवाहमर्थः क्षणिकत्वदर्शनात् ।
जानाम्यहं सर्वमिति प्रतीतिः कुतोऽहमादेः क्षणिकस्य सिद्धयेत् ॥

sarvātmanā dr̥śyamidaṁ mṛṣaiva naivāhamarthaḥ
kṣaṇikatvadarśanāt |

jānāmyaham sarvamiti pratītiḥ kuto'hamādeḥ kṣaṇikasya
siddhyet ||

Which may be translated as: With the Self, which is all, this, the seen (this perceived) is false. Not, indeed, is "I" the truth (real), for its momentariness is seen. "I know all," thus: how can [this] ascertainment be valid of the momentary "I," etc.?

If one misidentifies with the illusion, Brahman is not seen. If one is liberated from such misidentification, one realizes that Brahman alone is, and there is neither illusion nor a seer of it.

The Realization of Brahman is vast peace and bliss. It is immortality and complete freedom. It is abidance in our natural state.

The purpose of the scriptures is an exalted and glorious one. They appear for the revelation of the eternal, not merely the transient, the revelation of the Absolute, not mere relative conception. They cannot be intended for a description of duality, for such dualism is already the view of the spiritual aspirant and reiteration of the same would merely foster maya and samsara. Rather, nondual Truth must be the basis, purpose, and teaching of the scriptures, for the Realization of such is blissful immortality. The Vedas and similar sacred texts have as their purpose the revelation of Brahman. The endless teachings and passages contained in them have for their ultimate purpose the revelation of Brahman. Some passages are immediate revelations, some gradual, but the ultimate purpose remains the same. Therefore, descriptions of creation are intended to guide one to creation's source. The source can never be defined in terms of its effect. Brahman is ineffable and indefinable by worldly or objective notions.

Sri Bhagavan states two general approaches taken by the scriptures relating to creation. The first assumes, for the sake of the aspirant who as of yet does not comprehend a higher view, that the world has actually come to be. How has it come to be? The descriptions are various, but involve prakrti ("primal nature," manifestation; or the substance of which all forms are made), mahat-tattva (an initial great principle or intelligence that brings forth creation—the Maharshi has stated that it is the projected light from Absolute Consciousness); the tanmatra-s which are the five subtle elements corresponding to the five forms of sense experience (smell with subtle earth, taste with subtle water, form with subtle fire, touch with subtle air, and sound with subtle space); the bhuta-s (five gross elements: earth, water, fire, air, space); and the combination of all of the above to form a world and a body appearing in such a world. From there, the individual bodily experiences extend. All of that, in all its complexity and permutations, for however long appearing, is from Brahman and Brahman alone. The effect is nothing other than its cause; the cause itself appears as the effect. Brahman, being the one cause of all, alone constitutes this entire universe.

The second approach presented by Sri Bhagavan, simultaneous creation, is comprehensible by those who are more steeped in wisdom. In this, the world is declared to be like a dream, produced by one's own thoughts. If the Self is known, one is free from thoughts. In the Reality of the Self, even the first thought has not yet arisen and no differentiation, dream-like or otherwise, has ever come to be. If the Self is not known, Consciousness, which is the Self, appears as if differentiated into countless thoughts and a knower of them, who remains unseen. When the knower, who is nonobjective, is known, he is pure Consciousness unalloyed with any thought or form.

Thought alone constitutes the experience of all form. There is no sense perception apart from the mind that knows those perceptions. There are no forms apart from those perceptions. There is no world apart from those forms. The body is thought. The gross and subtle are thought. Time and space are only thought. Inside and outside are only thought. All things perceived at all times are only thought. Thus, in a similar passage of *Who am I?*, Sri Bhagavan says, "The phenomenal world is nothing but thought. When the world recedes from one's view, that is when free from thought, the mind enjoys the Bliss of the Self. Conversely, when the world appears, that is when thought occurs, the mind experiences pain and anguish." Likewise, in *Saddarshanam*, verse six concludes (translation by Sri A. R. Natarajan), "Therefore, the world is but the mind."

A dream is composed of thought. Its supposed “reality” is due solely to the projection of this “reality” from Consciousness, which is true Being, upon thoughts. In a dream, neither the dream character nor the dream world is real. The only real substance, composing the entire dream, is Consciousness; this Consciousness is the one thing that never appears as a dream form. That is, Consciousness, which alone constitutes the dream, is the one thing never seen in the dream. But when one awakens, one knows, “All that was a dream: it was all only my mind,” and the Consciousness, which was present in the previous state, remains, unchanged, in the waking state. Similarly, Consciousness, which is the Self, composes the entire waking state experience, inclusive of the entire universe, but never appears as any particular form in this universe. When one awakens in Self-Knowledge, this dream-like world is known as entirely illusory, and one realizes that pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss alone exists.

Regarding the dream-like nature of the waking state experience, which is erroneously conceived as a world, the Maharshi states, in *Who am I?*, “He should, on the other hand, consider the phenomenal world with reference to himself as merely a dream. Except that the wakeful state is long and the dream state is short, there is no other difference between them. All the activities of the dream state appear, for the time being, just as real as the activities of the wakeful state seem to be while awake. Only, during the dream state, the mind assumes another form or a different bodily sheath. For, thoughts on the one hand, and name and form on the other, occur simultaneously during the wakeful and dream states.”

What is illusion does not exist in any manner whatsoever at any time. That which is Reality never ceases to be and never becomes other than what it is.

The all-knowing, ever gracious Sri Ramana, the one who liberates and is the dweller in the Heart, then describes the purport of the Vedas again. The fact that creation is described by the authoritative scriptures in a variety of ways is itself proof of the employment of a multitude of perspectives and that none are the final Truth. The ultimate intention of all of them is to teach the true nature of Brahman—the infinite, eternal, Absolute Being. Many are the ways of revealing the illusory nature of the world. The direct experience of Brahman is singular.

The actual understanding of the nature of the world comes only by direct experience. Since, as has already been shown, the world has no independent existence, direct experience consists of experience of the Self, of the nature of Being-Consciousness. Such experience, being beyond the senses and thought, is of the nature of pure Knowledge. That Knowledge invariably reveals the nondual Truth for all beings. Such Realization is profound, unending happiness and peace. Wherever Being is, there is Consciousness. Wherever Being is, there is Bliss. Being-Consciousness-Bliss are three terms used to indicate the indivisible, ineffable Reality of the Self. Whoever realizes Being dwells in immortal Bliss.

The Maharshi has declared, at a later time, that all of the sastra-s (scriptures) are based upon the ego, the destruction of which is their purpose. Thus, if the ego is taken to exist as an embodied form, the grand creation of the universe is taught to reveal the illimitable immensity of the Supreme, and the ego is thus attenuated and drawn to the source. If the ego is taken to exist, yet misidentification with the body is not prevailing, all this is shown as a mere dream, and the ego is thus dissolved as the objectifying outlook is abandoned, and one transcends the states of mind that could give rise to such illusion. If the ego is not existent at all, in the Realization of the Unborn, no-creation is the self-evident fact, and the scriptural explanations of the final Truth relate to this. Therefore, in verse four of *Saddarshanam* (translation by Sri A. R. Natarajan), the Maharshi proclaims, “When one is the formless Self, who is there to see?”

In Gambhiram Seshiar’s original notebook, as mentioned by B.V. Narasimha Swami, the Maharshi concludes this section with: It is by the Self being clouded by avarana (veiling of ignorance) that this dreamlike, illusory, or phenomenal world appears. In reality, though, the Self is not covered. It only appears to be covered to the eye of persons who are under the impression that they are the body.

Thus, when the world is conceived, the Self is not known. When the Self is known as it is, the world is not imagined. One Existence alone is. With the veil of ignorance, it appears as if a multiplicity. Free of ignorance, the formless Existence is as it is. The veil of ignorance, also, is not real, as the one Self alone exists eternally. This is the original intention of the holy scriptures. This is what Sri Bhagavan has revealed. He, whose nature is ineffable, has thus graciously revealed the ineffable Truth. He who transcends the world has thus shown its nature. Revealing the Self, he has revealed himself. Yet no one can know that, for if one knows that, individuality is forever lost, and nothing remains but Him, the Self.

Whoever, with a heart full of devotion and endowed with an intense desire for Self-Realization, absorbs so much as a drop of the nectar of the Maharshi's supreme, sublime teaching, realizes the uncreated, worldless Truth, and thus abides, no doubt, in infinite Wisdom and Bliss.

Om Sri Ramanarpanamastu
Om May this be an offering to Sri Ramana

(A second edition of Vicharasangraham, Essence of Inquiry,
is set to be released by SAT at the end of 2018.)



Special Events at SAT

Devotees celebrated four special events during the first quarter of this year:

Adi Sankara Jayanti was celebrated on April 20th; Chitragupta Pournami was celebrated on April 30th; Ribhu Rishinatha Day was celebrated on May 14th; The Self-Knowledge Retreat was conducted May 25-27th; Sri Sadisvara Mandiram Pratishta Day was celebrated June 14th

Images, readings, and bhajans from these events may be viewed and listened to by following these links:

<https://satramana.org/web/gallery/>
<https://www.facebook.com/SATTemple>



from LETTERS FROM
SRI RAMANASRAMAM

The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

Remain Where You Are

September 10th, 1947

At a quarter to ten this morning, just as Bhagavan was getting up to go for his usual short mid-morning walk, an Andhra young man approached the couch and said, "Swami, I have come here because I want to perform austerities (tapas) and don't know which would be the proper place for it. I will go wherever you direct me."

Bhagavan did not answer. He was bending down, rubbing his legs and knees, as he often does before beginning to walk, on account of his rheumatic trouble, and was smiling quietly to himself. We, of course, eagerly waited to hear what he would say. A moment later, he took the staff that he uses to steady himself while walking, and looking at the young man, said, "How can I tell you where to go for performing tapas? It is best to stay where you are." And, with a smile, he went out.

The young man was confused. "What is the meaning of this?" he exclaimed. "Being an elderly person, I thought he would tell me of some holy place where I could stay, but, instead of that, he tells me to stay where I am. I am now near this couch. Does that mean that I should stay here near the couch? Was it to receive such a reply that I approached him? Is this a matter for jokes?"

One of the devotees took him out of the hall and explained, "Even when Bhagavan says something in a lighter vein, there is always some deep meaning to it. Where the feeling 'I' arises is one's Self. Tapas means knowing where the Self is and abiding in it. For knowing that, one has to know who one is; and, when one realizes one's Self, what does it matter where one stays? This is what he meant." He thus pacified the young man and sent him away.

Similarly, someone asked yesterday, "Swami, how can we find the Self (Atma)?"

"You are in the Self; so how can there be any difficulty in finding it?" Bhagavan replied.

"You say that I am in the Self, but where exactly is that Self?" the questioner persisted.

"If you abide in the heart and search patiently you will find it," was the reply.

The questioner still seemed unsatisfied, and made the rather curious observation that there was no room in his heart for him to stay in it.

Bhagavan turned to one of the devotees sitting there and said smiling, "Look how he worries about where the Self is! What can I tell him? What is, is the Self. It is all-pervading. When I tell him that it is called 'Heart' he says there is no room in it for him to stay. What can I do? To say that there is no room in the heart after filling it with unnecessary vasanas is like grumbling that there is no room to sit down in a house as big as Lanka (Ceylon). If all the junk is thrown out, won't there be room? The body itself is junk. These people are like a man who fills all the rooms of his house chockful of unnecessary junk and then complains that there is no room for keeping his body in it. In the same way, they fill the mind with all sorts of impressions and then say there is no room for the Self in it. If all the false ideas and impressions are swept away and thrown out, what remains is a feeling of plenty, and that is the Self itself. Then there will be no such thing as a separate 'I,' it will be a state of egolessness. Where, then, is the question of a room or an occupant of the room? Instead of seeking the Self, people say, 'No room! No room!' just like shutting your eyes and saying there is 'No sun! No sun!' What can one do under such circumstances?" ॐ



Satsang with Nome

Always

Satsang April 5, 2015

Om Om Om
(Silence)

Nome: That which you truly are, you are always. Not only is that immutable, it is eternal. What of you is eternal? What has a beginning and an end, a birth and a death, cannot be your very Existence, for Existence does not cease to exist at any time. Evidently, that cannot be the body, which has a beginning and an end. If your real nature is bodiless, what is it? What has a beginning and an end, which is not eternal, is merely a false appearance and not the reality of your Being.

Who are you? Thought is not eternal. It is momentary. What you are is always. If you are neither the perceptible nor the conceivable, what are you? The Upanishads declare that the Self is Brahman, and Sri Bhagavan, Ribhu, Adi Sankara, and others, have proclaimed the nature of the Self to be Sac-cidananda (Sat-Cit-Ananda) – Being-Conscious-

ness-Bliss. If you know yourself, therefore, Brahman knows Brahman, God knows God.

To know yourself, inquire deeply within, at the depth of your very Existence, “Who am I?” Such inquiry brings a cessation to the imaginary conception of differentiation, such as jagat-jīva-para – the universe, the individual, and the Supreme. In the Eternal, as the Eternal, one finds complete peace and illimitable joy. Such are of your very nature. If you mistake yourself to be a limited, embodied individual, with such misidentification bondage seems to be, and, being bound, the innate happiness appears veiled, and such is a state of suffering. To be free of the suffering, liberate yourself from bondage. To become unbound, cease to misidentify. To cease to misidentify, inquire, “Who am I?”

As all forms are seen to perish, the eternal must be formless. Your very Existence is formless. What is formless cannot possibly be multiple. Differentiation is only among imagined forms. Thus, if you seem to have a form, likewise do God and the world. If you are the eternal, pure Existence-Con-

sciousness-Bliss, there is no question of form or of differentiation. There is only one homogeneous, boundless, beginning-less, endless, pure Existence, and that is what you are.

The Self is only One. Your Existence is invariably singular. There cannot be two selves, an eternal one and a transient one, a real Self and a false self, an Absolute Self or Brahman and an individualized self. If you inquire to know yourself, penetrating the very heart of the apparently individualized existence, you will find only Brahman, the Absolute Self, which is One without a second for all eternity. The interior, silent, direct experience of this, without cessation, is steady abidance or true Knowledge.

Questioner: In Reflections, Bhagavan says that the inquiry is not an indolent state, and it is full of intense activity. My mind seems to go from thought to thought. That habit comes also in the meditation. To some extent I know what the answer is. The “I” is not surrendered. I have not seen it as unreal.

N.: You see the mind move from thought to thought. Who is this “you” that knows? The thoughts do not know themselves; nor can they know each other. Who knows? You are the knower and cannot be the known. Thoughts are objective. Who knows? Turning inward in the form of this inquiry that dissolves the form of the mind, is what the Maharshi referred to as the intense activity. The knower should not be defined in terms of the known; to do so is delusion. The knower divested of all of the known is the revelation of the Self.

Q.: All thoughts are sorrow, because they cover the Self. Maharishi also says that not following a thought is vairagya. I need to get clarity about that. Is it the same as happiness is being in the Self, not having a separate identity other than the Self?

N.: Misidentification alone is the cause of sorrow. The real Self is of the nature of happiness. Misidentification gives rise to the illusion of the happiness being eliminated or limited. To regain the happiness that is actually never lost, you have only to know yourself. Being is Bliss. “I am such

and such,” is false limitation. Being false, it is destructible. The Reality is indestructible. If the misidentification ceases, misidentification with the body, with the mind, or as an “I” or ego, the natural state of Bliss remains. That which remains, you not only experience, but you are. Being is Bliss.

Q.: So, I am the knower of that, and the thought is the known. Out of habit, I mix them up.

N.: Out of habit, you mix them up, but what is the nature of the one who mixes them up? Who are you? The explanation of illusion is not to establish illusion but to eliminate it.

Another Q.: Without a defining body, there cannot be an individual. I try never to forget that, in all of the beauty of the teaching, there’s always the cornerstone that freedom from identification with the body is step one. If it’s like the Maharshi’s experience, it’s the last step as well.

N.: The realization of bodiless Being will suffice.

Q.: By your word, I am not the body.

N.: That which is bodiless is the ever-existent. It is the unborn and the deathless.

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English of verses of the Avadhuta Gita.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil from Chapter 3 of the Song of Ribhu.) ॐ

The Ribhu Gita

Chapter 1, Verses 36-41

With Commentary by Nome at a
Boundless Wisdom Event held on
September 11, 2009 at the SAT Temple

the Ribhu-Nidagha Dialogue

Om Om Om
Om Namah Sivaya

36. I am Consciousness alone. I am possessed of divine Knowledge. I am without any words to express myself. I am Brahman alone.

The “I,” your real Self, is Consciousness and **Consciousness alone**. You are nothing objective, nothing conceived or perceived. Your nature is pure Consciousness, which is formless and undifferentiated. **I am possessed of divine Knowledge**. Inherent in the Consciousness, in the Self, is the innate Knowledge of itself. It is God’s Knowledge of God, so it is divine. What in you can possess such Self-Knowledge, Knowledge of Brahman? Only the Self, or Brahman, can do so. The senses cannot do so, the body cannot do so, and the mind cannot do so. Only the infinite, Absolute Consciousness, which is the Self’s very nature, can possess this divine Knowledge of itself. That is already within you, that is you, and that is the nature of all sages.

I am without any words to express myself; thus the image of Dakshina-murti. What is inconceivable is obviously ineffable. What word is there for your actual Being? The word “Being” was just employed, but what can be the definition for Being? What word do you have, truly, for your Self? What thought can there be for your Self? A thing can be conceived, a thing can be perceived, and a thing can be expressed. It may be a subtle thing, an abstract thing or a gross thing. How can that which is not a thing at all, which is ever existent, be put in words? The entire, spiritual instruction, therefore, is conveyed in Silence and it is that Silence which lends its power, as it were, to the words of spiritual instruction.

I am Brahman alone. Not anything else is “I.” Inquire within, “Who am I?” and determine what Ribhu proclaims by your interior experience. It is a statement of identity. Determine it by inquiry. Find the meaning of this statement, **I am Brahman alone**, within yourself. This is the divine Knowledge.

I am possessed of; what he has is what he is. Whatever is truly yours must be yours at all times. Only one thing is with you all of the time. That is Consciousness. Consciousness is the Existence. Here, the distinction between you and yours disappears. All differences disappear. You have what you are.

37. I have no meaning. "This" is without meaning. I am devoid of the meaning of all. I am Brahman alone.

"I", "this," and "all": such words, such ideas, have no meaning. The real Existence is just Brahman. That alone is the Self. The idea or word for an individual "I" that simply does not exist is quite meaningless. The idea of "this", when no objective thing has actually ever been created, is quite meaningless. Where "I" and "this" are meaningless, certainly "all" is superfluous. What exists is Brahman the pure Existence, which is forever undifferentiated, and that alone is what you are. That alone is real.

I have no meaning. For the intellect, there is meaning, but how can that which is Supreme Existence be said to have a meaning? Or we may interpret ***meaning*** as a purpose. I have no purpose, for what I am truly in my Self is pure Existence. Things serve a purpose, but I am not a thing. An idea has a meaning, but I am not an idea. Beyond the conceptions of purpose and meaning lies the true Existence and the real "I." That is the Self. ***This is without meaning.*** The only nature of "this" is the same as the nature of "I." Any conception about "this", in an objective sense, is utterly meaningless. Indeed, "this" serves no purpose, for your Self. The Self is the unmodified, perfectly full Existence. For That which is perfectly full, what purpose would anything serve, whether it is "all", "this," or anything else? ***I am Brahman alone*** concludes the verse. If you inquire to know your true nature, you will cease to misidentify with whatever is not the Self. With the cessation of misidentification, what remains, which is the one reality that exists all of the time, is known as Brahman. It is vast, illimitable, expansive beyond all conception, and it is the Self. Do not take yourself to be anything else.

38. I am ever pure, enlightened, eternal, totally blemishless. I am of the nature of the ever-blissful. I am Brahman alone.

The consistent theme is ***I am Brahman alone***. In each verse, he elucidates the Knowledge, so that the experience of it, the realization of it, can be full. The repetition, which is apparent, is intentional. It is stated in this way to keep the focus entirely on the discernment of what is real, by the real. ***I am ever pure, enlightened, eternal, totally blemishless.*** We may understand "pure" to mean unalloyed, unmixed with anything else. If we understand it to be stainless, without fault, it is synonymous with "totally blemishless" at the end of the line. He said earlier that your nature is Consciousness that is identical with Being. Consciousness is ever unmixed. It never becomes something other than itself, and nothing else ever becomes mixed with It. To think otherwise is delusion, which is productive of illusion. When by inquiry, Self-Knowledge, delusion is put to an end, what we find is that which is ever pure, that which is not mixed. Consciousness never mixes with duality, with multiplicity, or with anything whatsoever. It remains as it is. So, when you inquire, you do not purify yourself. Rather, you find

that which is ever pure and identify with that alone and not with anything that is mixed. ***I am ever pure, enlightened.*** The ostensible meaning is Ribhu declares that he is enlightened, but this is obvious. So, what is the purpose in him uttering this? It is to cause us to find that same enlightenment within. What can become enlightened? It is customary to conceive of oneself as a being, and, if one is a being in ignorance, one will become a being in enlightenment. One will proceed from a bound individual to a liberated individual, a mukta, a liberated one. The conception is good as far as initial practice is concerned, but what actually is the realization? In the realization, in the enlightenment, all trace of individuality is absent. There is, therefore, no enlightened being. There is Being, which is the enlightenment. What can know the Self? Only Being, the Self, itself can do so. Another cannot do so, because another does not actually exist. Your nature is singular. So, who can truly say, "I am enlightened"? Only that which never knew any darkness can. That is the very nature of the innate Consciousness, which shines in apparent darkness and apparent light.

Eternal. If you, with the aid of Self-inquiry, distinguish what is eternal, in your own experience, in your own existence, that will suffice. What form is eternal? What thought is eternal? What body is eternal? No body is eternal. No perception is eternal. No thought is eternal. No individual, no jiva, can be eternal. What is eternal? It is best known; it is self-known. It is of the very nature of Consciousness, which knows no beginning and knows no end. It is utterly changeless, for if something changes, it is a perishable form. For something to be eternal, it must be utterly without any change, at any time, and without a moment's interruption.

The formless knows itself. The Knowledge of what is eternal, the true Knowledge, is as eternal as that which is known. The true Knowledge of the eternal is not transient. The Knowledge must be as lasting as that which is known; thus the permanence of Self-Realization. To be eternal, it must be utterly formless. There cannot be a multiplicity in that which is formless. There cannot be two things formless. Formless must be absolutely One. So, the Knowledge of the eternal cannot coexist along with the eternal; rather, they are One and the same. Being knows itself.

I am of the nature of the ever-blissful. Everyone yearns for the deepest happiness and yearns for the happiness to be always present and continuous. That for which they yearn is found to be the very nature of the "I," if the "I" would be known correctly and truly. "I am the ever-blissful". As long as bliss is considered an experience, it comes and goes and the "I" is not ever blissful. Such bliss cannot be objectively experienced but must be of the very same nature as the Being-Consciousness, which has already been described. Bliss is ever blissful. Cease to regard Bliss as objective and consequently inert. Bliss is the same as Consciousness or Being in "Satchitananda" – Being-Consciousness-Bliss, for that is One. Bliss experiences its ever-blissfulness. You are Bliss. You experience your own Bliss. To identify just as Consciousness, just as Being, is the same as identifying just as Bliss. To identify and thus be ever-blissful in this way, all that is required is the profound, thorough inquiry "Who am I?" The result of such inquiry is the cessation of misidentification, and, since misidentification alone is the cause of all the illusory suffering, when, by deep inquiry, you know your Self as you are, suffering is abolished. The very seed of suffering is found to be nonexistent. It vanishes, like last night's dream. The perfect fullness of the ever-blissful is not only your direct experience but is you. So, happily engage in this inquiry.

39. I am of the nature of the eternal perfection. I am Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. I am of the nature of nonduality alone. I am Brahman alone.

The eternal perfection. Consider this deeply. The nature of the Self is eternal perfection and not some limited individual, not anything flawed, not some mistake, and not something that is mistaken. Within the context of the ego, the perfect fullness seems as if veiled. As soon as the notion of being an ego arises, there is the feeling of something being wrong, of something being not quite right. It is an intuition of your real nature, which is egoless, worldless, without bondage, without any limitation at all. It does not go away unless there is Knowledge of the Self. Upon Knowledge of the Self, it vanishes, as the mistake vanishes when you know what is right. Then, you are happily surprised to find that there never is anything wrong, no reason to suffer, no bondage, no limited individual, and no birth and death. There is just one perpetual Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. That alone is "I," and that alone exists. Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss are three compounded terms for one unspeakable Essence. That is I. Any other view of your Self is just ridiculous. To see how ridiculous it is, you have only to inquire. When we see the ridiculous as ridiculous, the absurd as absurd, we are no longer caught in it; we remain free and happy.

The tendencies of the mind do not procure or secure happiness because they are based on the same presupposition as the cause of the difficulty. The intention is right, but the approach is misguided. The intention is right because it is natural for everyone to yearn for complete happiness. To strive for great bliss once one knows that it is available is quite reasonable. To complete the striving, the view must become nonobjective. This is generally true of all aspects of spiritual advancement. There is a very significant difference between the expectation of something to happen to you and, in contrast, that which shines from within you. If the meditator is waiting for or attempting to obtain something that is going to occur in time, it will disappear in time. What is gained is lost, what appears disappears. You should inquire and strive to realize that which has no appearance and disappearance, which is not acquired and lost. It is funny that one would wait for bliss to come over one, while all the while his very nature is Bliss. If he thinks bliss is not here, it is like water saying it is thirsty. How could water be thirsty?

If you learn to utterly relinquish the objective outlook and actually inquire non-objectively, Bliss shines within, Being shines within, and Consciousness shines within. They do not happen to us. Self Realization does not happen to anyone. The idea of an "anyone" is abandoned, as well as the objective outlook, and what remains is the forever present, undifferentiated Reality, the pure Self, Satchitananda, Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Because it does not happen, it is not an occurrence, it endures, just as your Existence always endures.

For the aspirant who has determined where the source of happiness is and is actively diving into it by his inner meditation, the worldly things lose their interest. He becomes naturally, transcendently indifferent toward them. They do not mean anything. To abide at the very source of happiness is so important. People yearn for or crave things in this world only because they hope to get happiness through them. If they know where the place of happiness is, the craving for objects disappears. Depending on circumstances, temperament, and other factors, the person may have more objects or less objects. In the interior experience, one

becomes detached even from his own body and all the things of the world. When you are in the midst of infinite Bliss enduring for all eternity, what could be the significance of the various worldly things? What could you obtain that would add to it, or where could you go that would make it different?

I am of the nature of nonduality alone. I am Brahman alone. Alone means no alternative, just That. While it might be commonly understood as a resolution of opposites, non-duality or Advaita signifies that for which there is no alternative, no other. For the Self, there is no alternative; nothing else exists but That. The significance of non-duality is just That, just the Self. Another does not exist. In the solitary, singular, pure Self, which is the Reality as it is, there can be no alternative. Even the slightest notion of differentiation, of grades of difference, of something else at some other time besides That alone, any notion of such differentiation, is based on the notion "I." The "I" is the first differentiation. The root of all duality is the ego "I." Brahman alone is, in truth. It has no alternative. No ego "I" could ever actually exist at any time. If you comprehend this, you see that duality is never true at any time, and dualism, which is the belief in duality, ceases. What you are, you are always without an alternative. Find out what you are. If you do, in unison with Ribhu you will say, "I am Brahman alone."

40. I am of the nature that cannot be described. I am without beginning and without end. I am not of the nature of insentient matter. I am Brahman alone.

You ***cannot be described*** in thought. Come to the realization that not one of your thoughts is a description of who you are. Inquire, "For whom are the thoughts?" and see that no thought defines you. ***Without beginning and without end***, never is there a time when you were not, and never is there a time when you will cease to be. Your Existence did not commence with the birth of the body, and your Existence will not end with the perishing of the body. Your Existence is without a beginning and without end. It is not even possible for your mind to imagine a time before you existed, without you existing to be the witness of that imagination. Similarly, it is impossible to imagine the cessation of your Existence. You can imagine the cessation of your body, but not of your Existence. You can conceive of the cessation of your thinking, but not of your Existence. Likewise is it for the beginning. All things have a beginning and an end. You are not a thing. You are pure Existence, and you have no beginning and no end. One who knows himself as the beginningless and the endless, the eternal, is not confused by anything else and does not confound anything that has a beginning or an end with himself. He is happily detached from everything, free of the least trace of misidentification. He is simply the Self; without beginning and without end. Likewise is the Realization, for it must necessarily be of the same nature as that beginningless, endless Self that is realized. For if it were otherwise, non-duality would not be so.

I am not of the nature of insentient matter. Your body is composed of matter; are you the body? If you are not the body, if you are not the matter composing the body, can any of the attributes of the body be you or yours. Attributes are such as beginning and end, birth and death, active and inactive, doing and not doing, growth, maturation, decay, diminishing, size, shape, form, color, or bound-

ary. Can any of these be yours? All these pertain to the body. Can we be bodies? It cannot be so. You are not insentient matter. You are pure Consciousness alone. Consciousness is Brahman, the vast Absolute. I am Brahman alone. I am not a thing; I am not matter. **I am Brahman alone.** Inquire and realize the truth of this within.

41. I am without any sankalpa of my own. I am devoid of all nescience. I am all. I am That itself; I am Brahman alone.

Without any sankalpa of my own. Sankalpa may mean will, or volition. It may also mean a fixed idea, a fixed concept. Where the ego has vanished, what volition could be attributed? Where "I"-ness disappears, the Supreme alone is all, does all, decides all, empowers all, and there is no scope for the ego or for volition. I have no fixed idea of my own; this is the state at which to arrive through profound inquiry to know your Self. Every idea about "I" and every idea about "this," the two poles of dual experience - subject and object - is merely a sankalpa, a fixed idea. It seems solid, by deriving the sense of reality falsely from the true Self. It shines by reflected light, as a false appearance, as a distortion. To abide in that state which has not a trace of sankalpa is natural; it is what is right. Your ideas about things are not the truth. Pure Consciousness plus the unexamined, deluded notion of objectivity, comes out as the form of thought and shines in ones experience as "I know this." It is similar to the misidentification of "I am this." It is just misidentification. "I know this" is the misplacing the reality of one's own nature upon something merely imagined. Such is sankalpa. To be without that tendency is to be free of sankalpa. When you cease to believe in whatever ideas are conjured up in the mind, you know Reality as it is. You know the Truth, and the Truth is Brahman, **Brahman alone.**

I am devoid of all nescience. Ribhu, being a realized sage, is devoid of even the least trace of ignorance; there is neither "I" nor "this," no sankalpa, no misidentification, no false attachment, and sucho forth. That which is the "I" in Ribhu is also the "I" in you. In truth, you are not ignorant. The ignorant one is not who you are. When you inquire for whom is ignorance, the ignorance vanishes into the one who supposedly has it, and that one, upon inquiry as to who he is, also vanishes, because he is not real. What remains is the perpetual, real "I" of the very nature of Knowledge. For this "I" there is no nescience ever. The shining of the truth of this can be seen in one's own experience, even in the course of practice. When you determine some ignorance is ignorance, you abandon it right then, and you no longer conjure it up. Only so long as ignorance is thought to be valid can you conjure it up. When it is seen as ignorance, you cannot do so any more. When you discern the root of suffering and abandoned it, you forget how to suffer. So it is with nescience. The very foundation of it, the ego notion, is found missing. The "I" that is real, the one without alternative, never has ignorance. The Knowledge of those who know is eternal. **I am all. I am That itself; I am Brahman alone.** The three statements mean the same thing. If there is all, you are that all. If there is That, you are only That. Describe it in any way you please, there is just Brahman. That alone is the Self, and that alone is Real.

If we say, "Not me, but Thou," or "Not my will, but Thy will," it amounts to the same. A devotee, or bhakta, who says, "Not my will, but Thy will," so that he

effaces all sankalpa, reaches the same truth as one who says, "Not me, but only That or only Thou." There is just no scope for the ego. The same volition is manifested in the drive to secure happiness and to know what is. When someone turns within by Knowledge or by devotion, the happiness, the reality, and the sense of identity return to their original place. That leaves no room for the ego or its volition. The drive at the center of the volition turns back to its origin. The identity that is at the center of the ego return to its origin.

There is no such thing as a happy ego. The ego is itself suffering. The search for happiness is the call of your own nature that does not accept suffering as a satisfactory state. The ego "I" manifests as the tendencies; they are just different names or different thoughts for the same "I." When there is the veiling of the true Self, the form of the ego appears, and there is the projection outward manifesting in multiple ways. The ignorance manifests as veiling and projection, the not-seeing of the Reality which is only the Self and the projection falsely of multiplicity – "I", "this", "the world," etc. If you inquire and know yourself as "I am Brahman alone," the very seed of the potential to suffer, to project delusion, is destroyed. All that remains is Purnam—the perfect fullness.

Om Namah Sivaya

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om ॐ

From The Ramana Way

The following articles appear in the June 1998 issue of "The Ramana Way," a monthly publication produced by the Ramana Maharshi Center for Learning in Bangalore, India. RMCL has been producing monthly publications entirely devoted to Sri Ramana and His teaching since the early 1980's. Sri A.R. Natarajan dedicated his life and his family's life to the cause of Bhagavan Ramana. Sri A.R. Natarajan was absorbed in the lotus feet of His Master in 2007. His daughter, Dr. Sarada Natarajan, continues in his legacy, keeping the Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning and "The Ramana Way" alive for all Ramana devotees. May the devotion and wisdom from which these articles are written "jump" off the pages and into your heart. Please visit them at: www.ramanacentre.com

Of Knowledge

By Dr. Sarada

"Don't I know?" "Yes, I know," "Of course I know." We all claim knowledge of something or the other at some time or the other. Often, we are so sure of our knowledge and so unaware of its boundaries, its limitations. First, of course, there is objective knowledge, knowledge of objects, of things outside or other than oneself. Surely, this knowledge cannot be exhaustive even in a single field. Indeed, the joke goes that, in this era of specialized studies, a doctor who can treat one's left eye may soon be incompetent to deal with the right eye. Jokes apart, in the seriousness of life itself, one is sometimes in anguish as two experts battle about the supremacy of their opinions while the life of a dear one is ebbing away. And like all things, in the relative realm, objective knowledge is never either complete nor absolutely true even at a given time, let alone for all times. Of course, in the field of art and culture, that which is considered pure and



beautiful by one may be rejected as vulgar and imperfect by another. Those of scientific temper would perhaps scoff at this, claiming it is because art is finally a subjective discipline. Yet, even in the realm of science, a discovery or a theory does not hold water for very long. It is soon rendered irrelevant by a new discovery or new theory. Why? Because of the growing frontiers of knowledge certainly. However, this only proves the incompleteness of that knowledge.

For, that which is full, that which is whole, cannot grow further. It will either remain as it is in all its fullness, or, if it is subject to the laws of relativity, having reached its potential, it may then begin to decline, to decay. It is clear, then, that what grows is at present incomplete. Since there is the possibility in every field of knowledge for growth, all objective knowledge is incomplete. This is for the entire field. What, then, can one say about the knowledge that any single individual possesses about anything? Can it ever be full, complete? Yet, we have the audacity to declare that we know, to think that we know.

In this false belief of knowledge, we lose out on the immediacy of experience. "I know what a sunset is, I have seen it so many times," says the mind. Do we really know that day's sunset, that particular formation of clouds, that special pattern of gold and orange, of sparkling blues meeting muted greys with boundaries and cross currents of white? Do we know at that moment that the sun never sets and that day and night are only in the mind? Do we know at that very instant that the sun ever sets, at some point or the other on the earth, it is sunset every second, it is sunrise every second, every moment is day, and every moment is night? What do we know of this wonder, we who are so wrapped up in the idea that we know? We who have drawn boundaries to relative knowledge by deciding that we know, what do we understand about the beauty of tentativeness, of now knowing, of waiting? The expectancy that shines in the child's eyes every time he throws down the keys, the glow in the child's eyes every time we play the same "old" game of peek-a-boo is because she has no thought of "I know this game." Hence, the game is ever fresh, ever magical. Not so our experiences because "we know." We know objects, so we think. We know people, so we believe. Thus, we fail to notice, to observe, to see or hear the nuances in their expression, their new moods, their changing feelings. We have already put them into a slot, and our responses are to that slot, not to them. We believe we know, and we cast people in that image of our knowing and comfortably respond to that image. We miss the joy of freshness and are surprised or hurt when something unexpected happens. Why? Because we are certain we know, and when something contrary to that knowing happens, we are upset. We know the sweetness of Bhagavan's name. We know the glory of his story. Yes, sadly, we believe we do. It does not, therefore, thrill us any longer as it did the first time we heard it. It does not amaze us. It does not bring laughter and tears all at once to our eyes. Yet, what do we know? Do we know of the vari-

ous levels at which Bhagavan's name is meaningful? So sweet to say, yes. So lyrical, so lilting to repeat in song. Then, the repetition moves with the breath, into the heart. What of that bliss? Do we know? Do we know how the name has saved a life? How it has dragged another out of the abyss of misery? Oh yes, we have read of all this, but do we know with the intimacy, the clarity that knowledge is? No.

Yes, we know very little. In every field, in any field. This is the case of objective knowledge. And far more pathetic is the knowledge regarding our very self, the subject, the very fulcrum of our lives. Yet, here, too, we strut about in the confidence that we know ourselves. "Not the Self, not the Supreme Truth, but surely I know myself as I am today," we may say. Let us pause a moment. Let us ask "Do we know? Do we even know ourselves or what we have taken ourselves to be? Is even this apparently simple knowledge clear or complete?"

What do we believe ourselves to be? First, a body. How well do we know this body? Are we sensitive to its needs? Are we even aware of the simple fact as to when it is actually hungry and when it is not? Are we aware of the flow of breath, the pattern of our breathing? Yes, breathing that is the primal factor in the body. Can we say how changes in the rhythm of our breath affect the rest of the body? Can we alert the doctor as soon as an internal system begins to malfunction? Can we detect the presence of a tumor without a scan? We do not even realize that our heart has stopped functioning until there are symptoms. And, if the body does not show us through disease what its problems are, if there are no symptoms, we do not know, sometimes until it is too late. Yet, we claim to know ourselves. Sure, there are a few who are sensitive to their bodies, who can recognize through a touch of certain nerve centers the state of the entire body. These, however, are few. Yet, all of us believes we know ourselves.

Perhaps, when we believe “I know who I am,” we mean the mind. The pattern of thoughts, the ideals that we hold before ourselves, our likes and dislikes, our capacities to adapt or the manner in which we will react. Yet, do we not surprise ourselves? Are there not times when we say “I never imagined I would be so influenced by this person,” or “I hardly dreamt that I could be so moved by these words”? We are surprised that something makes us sad. When we think nothing can shake us, we find ourselves vulnerable. When we believe we are independent, suddenly, we find ourselves dependent on something, someone, a new habit, a new passion. Similarly, what seems very dear one day becomes boring after a time, routine, and dull. Interests change. Attitudes change, even ideals are transformed. Then, of course, there is the onset of those thoughts over which we apparently seem to have no control. “Why do these thoughts haunt me?” we wail. If we knew ourselves, where would be the need to ask? “I am absolutely honest,” we say, and, yet, we deceive others in the name of caring and even ourselves giving many excuses. Yes, our unknown weaknesses and hidden resources of strength both often come unawares. How? Why do we not know all this if we really know our minds?

Of course, about the source of the mind, of its true nature we know next to nothing. Yet, there is hope. In this very awareness, in this very recognition that we do not know lies the key to knowledge. Once a person came to Bhagavan with all his favorite theories about the world and himself. Cock-sure he was about all that he thought he knew. Bhagavan questioned him on the nature of his identity and soon made him recognize the invalidity of what he had taken to be true. The man said sadly, “Bhagavan, when I came here I was happy in the thought that I knew. Now I am confused, unsure

of all that I had taken to be true!” With great compassion, Bhagavan told him that this very confusion would pave the way to right knowledge. Acknowledging that we do not know is the beginning of true seeking, the basis of enquiry whereby knowledge is pursued with eagerness and is then bound to dawn. It is in this spirit of inquiry to understand the objective world which is purely relative. Hence, the scientist is unable to come up with conclusive answers. However, when the same spirit of inquiry is focused on the search for this subject, who is the basis of the entire objective universe as well, then all is known. That alone is true knowledge. As Bhagavan says in “Forty Verses on Reality”:

*Without knowledge can there be ignorance?
Without ignorance can there be knowledge?
When one inquires to whom they both pertain
And abides at the source, the Self,
That, indeed, is true Knowledge.*



The Mortal and the Immortal

By A.R. Natarajan

It all happened so suddenly, so swiftly, this bolt from the blue. He was a fine man, ever helpful, genial and active. He complained of chest pain, and two massive attacks stopped the functioning of his heart. His body was brought home from the hospital. It was a heart-rending sight. The mother's loud lamentation, the

wife's inconsolable sorrow, the deep mourning of the sons notwithstanding their brave fronts, the continuous stream of condolers.

Amidst all this, there was a need for informing close relatives who would like to have a last look at the dear face, which could be seen no more, the need to make funeral arrangements, to make the minimal arrangements for food and so on, for life had to go on.

The air was thick with sorrow. Every new condoler would add to it. Strange! A body, which was so full of life, only a few hours earlier was now a mere corpse. It had to be preserved until the next morning by putting it over ice blocks.

The dreadful night hours dragged on and were somehow over. Lady members were asked to bid the last farewell. The heavy body, from which the life force had fled, had to be brought down with utmost care. Then, the last journey. It was through a burial ground where hundreds of dead had been buried, rows and rows of them, before reaching the electric crematorium. How many graves! They kept reminding one about the way of all flesh. The body made up of five elements will be dissolved into the very elements from which it is made at the pre-appointed but unknown time. At the crematorium, there were jarring formalities, sets of rules and regulations. The clerk in charge had gone for a cup of coffee. One had to wait. The waiting seemed so long. One last look was permitted. One last homage, and then the body was pushed into the electrical oven to be seen no more. They said that the ashes and bones could be collected the next morning. Only a handful of ashes remained, that, too, to be scattered at sacred places.

The dear one had departed. No more could he call his daughter on whom he doted, his wife who had served him so well, nor, for that matter, anyone who was dear and near. The curtain was down on a good life of a humble and devout person who had come up in life by sheer dint of hard work and intelligence. The torch of his life burnt no more. The sharp edge of sorrow would be blunted soon by the great eraser of memories--time.

Sitting amidst this sorrow and sharing it, one does feel a sense of disgust about the way one's life is proceeding, our petty concerns over trifles, our short sightedness, our self-centeredness, and what not. One does feel deeply that life is but a passing show and that one must look deeply within to find out its meaning and its purpose.

At the same time, this sense of transience, the feeling about the ephemeral nature of the body, its early sojourn, around which everything else is built, does not last. Soon, the old ways of life capture the mind.

Some, however, escape and begin to question the mortality of the body in the face of scriptural pronouncements about the immortality of the Self. It may be because of the immortal element in each of us that one refuses to accept the ending of the body as the finality of everything. If one starts reflecting and pondering over this issue over and over again, then the death of a friend or a near one would start transforming one's life. That sorrow would lead to a questioning, which would lead us to a new awakening.

It is more or less the kind of situation, which Ramana had faced when his father Sundaram Iyer died. It was in 1892, at Tiruchuzhi, his birthplace. He was 12 years old then. Surrounded by grieving relatives, in the midst of the encircling sorrow, Ramana wondered what made the difference between his father's body pronounced dead and his own which was full of life. This introspection made him conclude that his father's "I" had left the body and turned it into a corpse, whereas his "I" was still in his body.

A similar situation arose in Ramana's life when his mother Azhagammal fell seriously ill on her way back from a pilgrimage. The sole refuge of Ramana was Lord Siva, embodied as Aruna Hill. His mother was not yet ready to be liberated. While praying to Arunachala for her recovery, Ramana posed in that prayer itself the fundamental question, "What exactly is death?" He says, "Inquire,

what is time? What is death?" Quite obviously, death is the physical ending, but what about the mind? What about the divine presence? Is there anything in us that is deathless, because of which both the mind and the body become conscious?

Ramana has explained that, at the time of the body's death, the mind gathers the vital forces and gets attached to another body, be it gross or subtle. Consequently, there is a continuous birth and death of the body until such a time as the mind itself dies. Hence, it is important that one should tackle the mind and understand its true nature. Otherwise, it would continue to be a bundle of thoughts and innate tendencies based upon the experience of pleasure and pain of past action.

Another point that Sri Ramana makes is that the death of the mind only means the merging of it in its source. Self-inquiry being an inquiry relating only to the subject, the "I," results in the merging of the mind in its source. Then, one's pure mind, which is a reflection of Consciousness, would take the place of what is now called the mind.

Consequently, those who wish to be free from the womb-to-womb travel should work consistently and vigilantly towards the discovery of the

true nature of the mind. Self-inquiry being directly focused on the subject would ensure it.

While undoubtedly the steadfast practice of self-inquiry would lead to knowledge about the mind's real nature, one's own effort by itself would not be successful. One has to remember the need for the constant dependence on Ramana's grace and protection. This is because one's innate tendencies are like potential time bombs. Consequently, using the five senses, they can capture the mind and pull it down to abysmal depth. In one's weak moments, when seemingly all the fruits of one's hard earned spiritual practices are in jeopardy of being lost, who can save except the compassionate Sadguru Ramana? He has to stand guard against the sudden and often unexpected attacks of the imbedded memories of the past.

Ramana also assures that this discovery of immortality in each of us is possible here and now while being in this body itself. This is possible through persistent practice of Self-inquiry going hand-in-hand with the constant awareness of Ramana's Grace. If one fails to use the opportunity which life offers for inward search, one's journeys to the grave, life after life, would be inevitable. ॐ

Ever Yours in Truth

Correspondence between Nome and seekers.

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

[A devotee of Sri Raman wrote:]

March 6, 2018

Dear SAT Ramana and Master Nome,

I have been a devotee of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi for almost two years. Now, I have come upon several difficulties in the path. I am contacting for Your guidance.

My questions are as following:

1. How can I control my desires? 2. How can I develop bhakti? 3. How can I develop vairagya i.e. dispassion? 4. How can I develop viveka i.e. discrimination from worldly things? 5. How can I stop doubts and calm my fleeting mind?

I seek Your guidance as well as Bhagavan's.

Yours in Bhagavan,

[Here is the reply.]

March 6, 2018

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Difficulties are only apparent and are not at all real.

If you discern the source and true nature of happiness, vairagya will be natural, and you will no longer be perplexed by desire. With the removal of ignorance, the innate Bliss remains, shining in its perfect fullness.

Viveka is the discriminative, introspective inquiry to know the Self. At the same depth that you know that you exist, the Existence should be known as it is. Doubts arise and

differentiation appears due to misidentification. Freedom from such is determined by the depth and thoroughness of Self-inquiry.

The mind appears to move; it moves only in itself. Who is the unmoving one who knows the mind and its movement? Inquiring in this manner, you will know the true nature of the mind, or we may say that it returns to its source.

Bhakti wells up within quite naturally. Consider the magnitude and eternality of Sri Bhagavan's grace, and how could you not become steeped in devotion?

It is recommended to read Sri Bhagavan's teachings daily. You may also find reading the SAT publications to be beneficial. After all, you are not the first to have these doubts and questions and to have them resolved, discovering the significance of the answers within. I hope that what is said here is helpful for you.

May you ever abide in the Self, as the Self, and thus remain happy and at peace always.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker raised questions about desires, enjoyments, and the desire to realize the Self. Here is the response.]

March 22, 2018

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

The joy should remain, its true source discerned, and the misidentification with the body should fall away.

The idea that happiness is dependent on external things or bodily condition is attachment, which is confusion regarding the source and nature of happiness. Freedom from attachment yields bliss and peace and is a state of Knowledge, not an action. Objects, circumstances, and activities neither bestow happiness nor remove it.

Even while engaged in the activities mentioned by you, deeper inquiry can continue. The desire for Self-Realization wells up from that depth and, likewise, the motivation to listen, read, reflect, meditate, etc.

The body is transient and illusory; the Self is eternal and real. The misidentification with the body dissolves, and the perfectly full remains self-revealed.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[This is spiritual instruction to a devotee whose father had just passed away.]

March 27, 2018

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. His body has ceased to live. His Being, the source of his love for you, remains forever. Water wets it not; fire burns it not; the wind does not whither it; the earth does not cover it. Sri Bhagavan says, "What is death if scrutinized?" and "With the death of this body, am I dead?"

The Self is unborn and imperishable. Abide with certainty as That and thus in peace that is unending.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome and Sasvati

[A seeker in India described his spiritual experiences and finished his message with: Please help me to perfectly realize the inner silence so that mind will not affect me anymore. Please help me. Here is the response.]

April 1, 2018

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

The Existence of the Self is innately transcendent of all thought and states of mind. With thought, without thought, with few or many thoughts, during gaps or otherwise, you exist, and you know that you exist. The Existence is eternal and alone is that which you are. It is self-known with a Knowledge that is not dependent on thought. Inquire at the same depth to realize the Self. Indeed, the end appears as the means.

Self-Knowledge should be the focus, which is nonobjective. All thoughts and states of mind, both with and without content, are objective and, therefore, not the Self and not real. First, all misidentification with thought is abandoned, and then the notion that thought is existent (the assumption that there is such a thing as a thought) is relinquished.

Silence is that in which no "I" appears. There is no assumption of individuality. In that in which no "I" appears, how could the concept of any "this" arise? The undifferentiated Existence alone is real, alone exists, and alone is who you are, the space of Consciousness.

Sri Bhagavan says that what is not eternal is not worth seeking. What comes goes, what appears disappears. All thoughts, modes, and states of mind are such. They are illusory occurrences. The Existence, the Self, is without beginning or end. It is the Reality; there is no other.

It is hoped that you find the above helpful. May you ever abide as the Self, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, inconceivable and perpetually silent, and thus dwell in happiness and peace always.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[The same seeker then wrote:]

April 2, 2018

I went through your mail. My heart is full of gratitude for your kind reply. Yes, as you mentioned, the nonexistence of thoughts is really striking. It increases the depth of stillness. Please bless me for the perfection. Only the blessings from the one like you can remove the ignorance. So please bless me.

Thank you, Master, thank you.

[Here is Nome's reply.]

April 2, 2018

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Grace is ever present; blessings are always there.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker in UK wrote of her concerns regarding her sick son. Here is the response.]

April 13, 2018

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. That which is changeless is the root of peace. It is the Self of all. Imperishable and unborn, nothing can destroy or damage it. Bodiless, it does not suffer when the body is sick, decays, or dies. She who realizes this finds the Self to be imperturbable by abidance in Self-Knowledge.

Deep, clear discrimination is the basis of nonattachment, for your Being is of the nature of perfectly full happiness. Suffering has

its origin in ignorance, which Self-inquiry removes, revealing the Existence of the Self as it truly is.

Who is truly your son? As is yourself, so is his self. An Upanishad says that the son is loved for the sake of the Self. Full of love and endowed with clear Knowledge, set free of attachment, you will be at peace in the Self, as the Self.

Certainly, your son wishes you to be at peace and not to worry and suffer. Surely, you should oblige his wishes in this regard.

Even if he has yet to become aware of the spiritual teachings that you are endeavoring to practice, your deepening peace will silently speak volumes to him.

All is determined by one supreme power. You need not carry any load of anxious thought.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A response to questions about a verse, Hridaya Kuhara Madhye, by Sri Bhagavan:]

April 27, 2018

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

For a discussion regarding the verse, with multiple English translations of the verse. and if it refers to three or two paths or one path, you may wish to read Eka Sloki by C. Sudarsanam. Regardless of the possible interpretations of the number of paths indicated, the instruction is to be in Atma-nishta, abidance in and as the Self. Thus, the emphasis of the verse is that such Self-abidance is remaining as, or identifying yourself solely as, the nature of the immediate Self, which shines as that in which Being and Knowledge are one, and that, being in the center of the cave of the heart, the quintessence of your Being, is of the nature of Brahman alone.

The fruitfulness of any sadhana is determined by the presence of the knowledge-essence. Intrinsic to this knowledge is the dissolution of the ego. The dissolution of the ego brings, without delay, the abidance in and as the Self alluded to by Sri Bhagavan in the verse.

Diving or seeking deeply inward, with the mind plunging inward, the mind and prana within transcendent control, let the means be considered one, two, three, or more; what does it matter? The Reality of the Self is like space; how many doorways are there in it? The space is only one and indivisible. You enter space via the same space; the doorframe is inconsequential. So it is with Self-Knowledge and the idea of paths. Practice in the manner to which you feel inclined.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker asked regarding mantra: Is there a place for japa in Advaita? What would be a nondual understanding of such practice? Here is the reply.]

April 29, 2018

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

If, whether one performs japa or does not perform japa, the source of the mantra is sought, the highest is found.

Mantra means an instrument of the mind, for it is thought to guide or save the mind that adheres to it. It is considered to be a sacred formula or a type of prayer. It may be a reminder of devotion or an expression of it. It reminds the seeker of the God to whom it pertains or the guru who initiated the seeker. Thus, the mantra serves to concentrate the mind, so that it focuses upon that which dissolves it and is beyond it. In a similar way, the mantra may be a very concise, pithy expression of the essential instruction, in which case, deep inquiry to inwardly real-

ize its significance is preferable to repetition, for the continuity is thus of thought-transcendent Knowledge.

Of course, there are many other uses of mantra that are unrelated to nonduality, such as many of the mantras that constitute the Samhita portion of the Vedas, etc.

You may wish to refer to Ribhu Gita, the Song of Ribhu, and Essence of Inquiry for further explanation regarding Advaita Vedanta and the view of mantra.

May you ever abide in Self-Knowledge and thereby dwell in happiness and peace always.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[In reply to questions about the witness:]

May 30, 2018

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Sakshi, the witness, is truly of the nature of Consciousness considered in relation to objects. The objects may be regarded as gross, such as the phenomena, the body, or the senses, or as subtle, such as thoughts, mental modes, and states of mind. If, by profound inquiry, the objective portion or consideration is negated and thus abandoned, all that remains of the witness is indivisible, undifferentiated Consciousness alone.

Absolute Consciousness is ever existent. Therefore, truly, you never cease to be that. In as much as the state of deep sleep is devoid of anything objective or witnessed, there is no witness-hood then, though Consciousness remains unchanged. In as much as unmodified Consciousness knows that state, or the blissful existence, and its coming and going, it is the witness or non-individualized knower of that, as well.

That which knows the appearance and disappearance of the "I" notion, the assump-

tion of individuality, may be referred to as the witness. That does not become individualized. The attributes of the ego do not belong to it.

That which witnesses the appearance and disappearance of thoughts, mental modes, and states of mind does not become one of them.

Self-inquiry, which involves the knowledge of your real Being and the cessation of misidentification, does not produce the strain or pain in the head mentioned by you. Such physical sensations may be perhaps due to other causes, such as rigid staring or

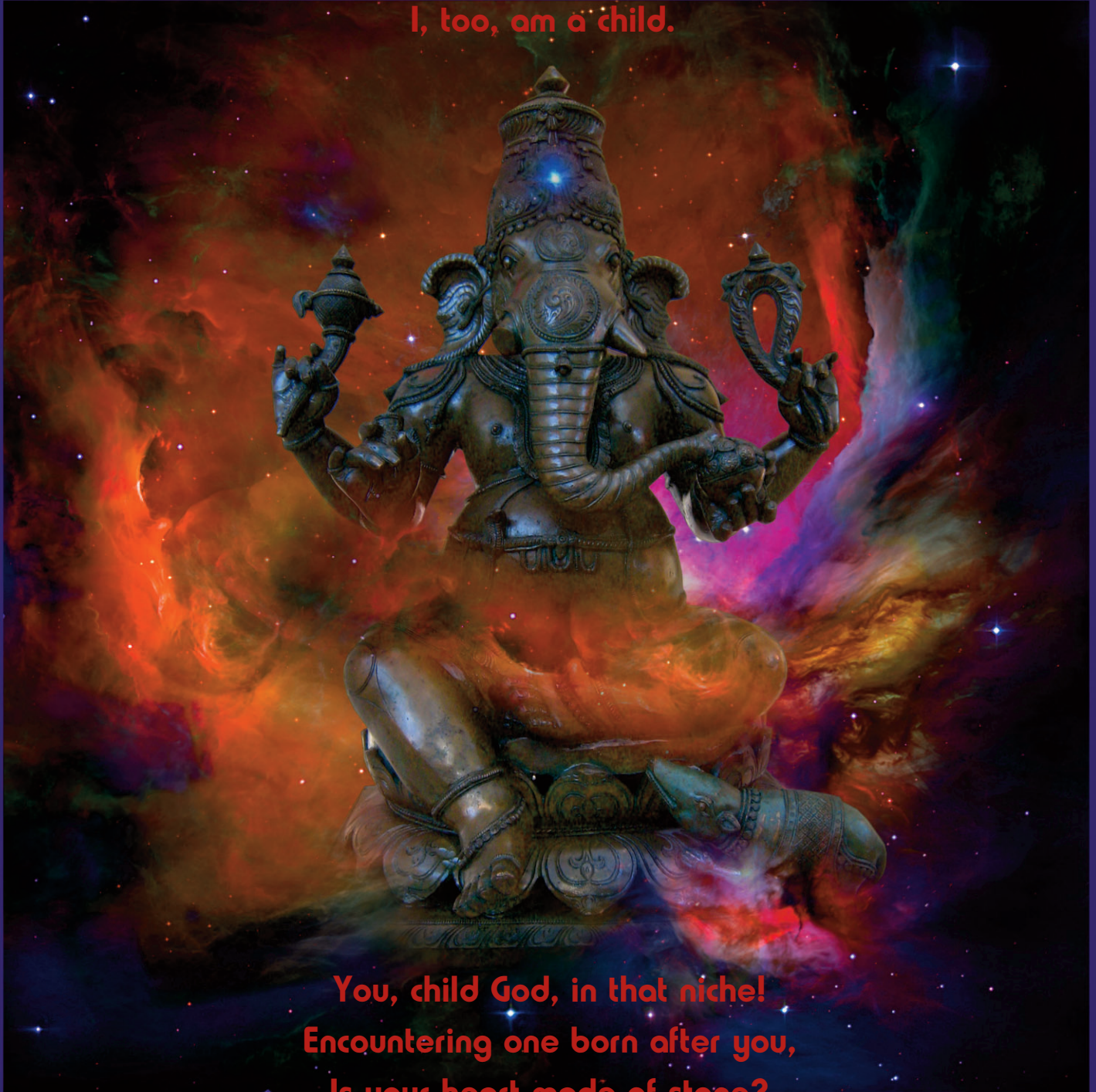
particular focus of the eyes, control of the breath, and similar techniques practiced by some yogis; or the pain may have other bodily causes.

If you carefully read and meditate upon what is mentioned above, your questions about the witness will be resolved.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome ॐ



Him, who begot you as a child,
You made into a beggar;
As a child yourself, you thus lived everywhere
Just to support your own huge belly.
I, too, am a child.



You, child God, in that niche!
Encountering one born after you,
Is your heart made of stone?
I pray you look at me.

- Sri Ramana Maharshi,
Advaita Devatam

Upcoming Special Events at the SAT Temple

Sri Ramana's Self-Realization: July 17, 2018

Guru Purnima: July 27, 2018

**Sri Ramana Maharshi Self-Realization Retreat:
August 17-19, 2018**

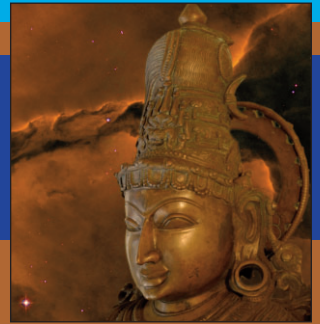
Sri Ramana's Arrival at Arunachala: August 31, 2018

Sri Krishna Jayanti: September 2, 2018

Ganesha Chaturthi: September 12, 2018



<https://satramana.org>
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Many satsangs and special events are available to
view on YouTube at: **satramana**



Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Om Namah Sivaya

Upcoming SAT Retreat

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

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

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

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

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

Sri Ramana Maharshi Self-Realization Retreat

August 17 – August 19, Friday morning through Sunday afternoon

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

The Truth Revealed Retreat

November 16 - November 18, Friday morning through Sunday afternoon

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

Online Retreat Registration Available!

End of sign-up date is
one month prior to commencement of each retreat.
Please visit the link below to register for retreats at the SAT Temple:
<https://satramana.org/web/events/retreats/retreat-application-form/>
Or, visit the SAT website at: satramana.org > Events > Retreats

