

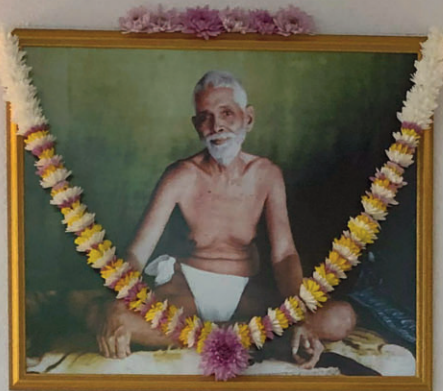


Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya



Om Namah Sivaya

**Disciple:
What is Vijnana?**



The Maharshi:

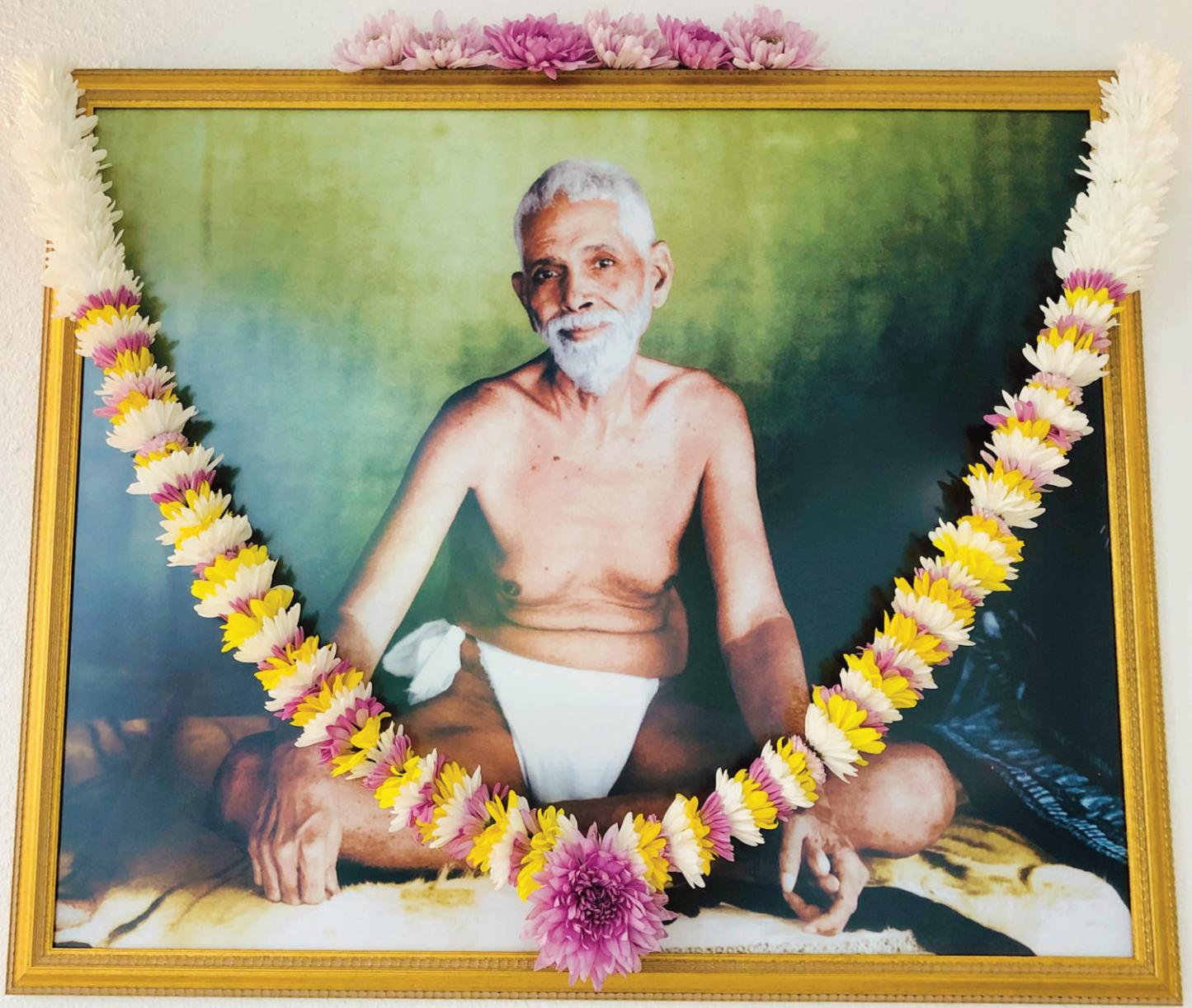
It is that state of pure, changeless Consciousness, likened unto an ocean without waves or the wide expanse of immobile space, wherein all thought has completely subsided and which has to be realized as such by the sadhaka. It is pure Consciousness that has no attributes.

– Origin Of Spiritual Instruction
(A Catechism of Instruction)
Chap. 3, verse 2 (See page 3 and 4 for commentary by Nome.)



Reflections  **SAT Temple**

July . August . September 2019



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Commentary by Nome from cover page.

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

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Self-Knowledge is nonobjective knowledge. In it, there is no division of knower, knowing, and known. It is of the nature of indivisible Consciousness. It is of the nature of Self-luminous Consciousness. It shines naturally when ignorance is abandoned. How is it that one abandons ignorance? There is the perception of ignorance as just ignorance and not as real. This is not knowledge of something. This is pure Knowledge reposing in itself. Discern what is the nature of pure Consciousness in the absence of objects? When the objective portion of your experience is negated, what knowingly remains?

The meaning of the word “vijnana” is to be grasped from the context in which it is used. It can mean intellect, it can mean awareness, and it can mean special knowledge. The meaning of the term and the truth indicated thereby are apparent in Sri Bhagavan’s answer.

What is pure Consciousness, not mixed with anything else? Not Consciousness plus some ideas or plus some mode or state of mind, or plus the world, or plus perception due to the senses, but, just by itself—pure Consciousness.

By itself, it is changeless. Discriminate between the changeful and the changeless. He describes it as an ocean without waves or the wide expanse of space. Space-like is the nature of Consciousness. It is expansive. It is without boundary. It is the only thing that does not change, because it is not a thing. What is so vast like the ocean or like space? Your very Consciousness, which is your Existence, and it so shines in a state in which all thought has completely subsided. Complete, permanent subsidence of thought can be only if you know its

nonexistence. So, what makes you think that you have thought? If the object portion of the thought is negated, what remains of it? There is no such thing as a formless thought. If, in wisdom, one negates thought, knowing it is not one's identity, and it is not the reality, all that remains is that space-like ocean of pure Consciousness. In That is true Knowledge.

[Question: I have something invested in the thoughts, like happiness, or I believe that I am in thought somehow.]

Nome: But are you? If you know that a thought is not your happiness and you know that it is not your identity, you can also discern that it is not reality. Happiness, identity, and reality are all of the same nature. Indeed, they are the same thing. They are found only in the Self, in abundance as the Self. A thought cannot supply you with happiness, a thought cannot tell you what reality is, and a thought most certainly cannot tell you what your identity is. The source of the sense of identity is the same as the source of the sense of reality. What is the source? It is in you. This is subsidence of thought according to knowledge. One can also have thought subsidence, or, at least, have calm by falling asleep or by other forms of meditation. It is only in Knowledge that the result is permanent, for by inquiry in this manner you find that the first thought has yet to occur.

Questioner: So, that Knowledge is because of immersion in what is real?

Nome: That is correct. In the light of the knowledge of what the Self is—Sat-Chit-Ananda—Being-Consciousness-Bliss—who can entertain a thought? If the assumption of individuality is mistaken to be real, the mind regarded as existent, thought will seem real, both in content and the experiencing of the thought, but such is actually unreal, both as a thought and its content. When the unreal is discerned as unreal, the real knows itself. Is it clear for you now?

Questioner: Yes.

Another question: I was thinking earlier about the phrase you used “entertaining thoughts.” For me, a thought is actually entertaining me, and the “me” that it is entertaining cannot be the Self; so, it has to be the ego?

Nome: For complete subsidence of thought, all that is needed is to discern the ego.

Questioner: The sense of awareness seems to make it all seem to happen and observes it all. I’m trying to get back behind it all.

Nome: What is the awareness, if the “this,” “that,” etc., are negated—not aware of something, but just the awareness itself? What is that?

Questioner: That would have to be the Self, because, if that were not there, I would be unconscious or asleep. As someone who is addicted to thinking things out, I reach the point at which I do not know what to do.

Nome: For that which is not a thing, thinking does not work.

Questioner: It is said that everything perceivable is essentially not real. Sometimes, I get hung up on perceptions that do not really have a source; they just seem to appear. Sri Ramana says that, whatever is happening, keep asking who is having this experience. So, I try to get away from them that way.

Nome: When we ask ourselves that question, the importance of it is in making our vision nonobjective. If the objectifying tendency is relinquished, there is found to be only one awareness, that is to say, one Consciousness. It alone exists. It alone is real. By the time you are thinking of perceptions through the senses, etc., it is time to turn around the other way.]

It is that state of pure Consciousness where all thought has completely subsided and which has to be realized as such by the sadhaka. How is it to be realized? In a manner that is free from thought. Freedom from thought means no more confusion regarding yourself or regarding reality. It is pure Consciousness that has no attributes. The Consciousness is you. You are only pure Consciousness, unchanging, without qualities, without conditions, and without anything conceived in thought. If you are not a thought, you do not have an attribute. Consciousness is not an attribute of something else, and, in itself, it has no attributes. ॐ

from LETTERS FROM
SRI RAMANASRAMAM

The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

September 16, 1947

Peace of Mind Itself is Liberation (9)

The day before yesterday, an Andhra lady with her husband came to Bhagavan and asked: "Swami, I have heard several discourses on Vedanta; I also do some meditation. Sometimes while in meditation, I feel blissful, and tears come to my eyes; at other times, I do not have them. Why is that?"

Bhagavan with a smile said: "Bliss is a thing which is always there and is not something which comes and goes. That which comes and goes is a creation of the mind, and you should not worry about it."

The lady: "The moment the bliss that comes with a thrill of the body disappears, I feel dejected and desire to have the experience over again. Why?"

Bhagavan: "You admit that you were there both when the blissful feeling was and when it was not? If you realize that 'you' properly, those experiences will be of no account."

Another questioner: "For realizing that bliss, there must be something to catch hold of, mustn't there?"

Bhagavan: "There must be a duality if you are to catch hold of something else, but what IS, is only one Self, not a duality. Hence, who is to catch hold of whom? And what is the thing to be caught?"

No one replied, and with a kindly expression, Bhagavan said, "The inherent vasanas are so strong. What can be done?"



A young man came in, sat down, and gave a note to Bhagavan. Bhagavan, after reading it, said, "See, in this note is written, 'Is peace of mind liberation (moksha)?' The reply is contained in the question itself. What else can be said? He must have asked after knowing what mind (chitta) is."

Someone asked the young man, "You know what is meant by chitta don't you?"

The young man: "Chitta means mind."

Bhagavan: "Yes, but what about it? Your question itself states that peace of mind is liberation."

The young man: "The mind is at times peaceful and at other times distracted. How are we to prevent those distractions?"

Bhagavan: "For whose mind is that distraction? Who is it that is inquiring?"

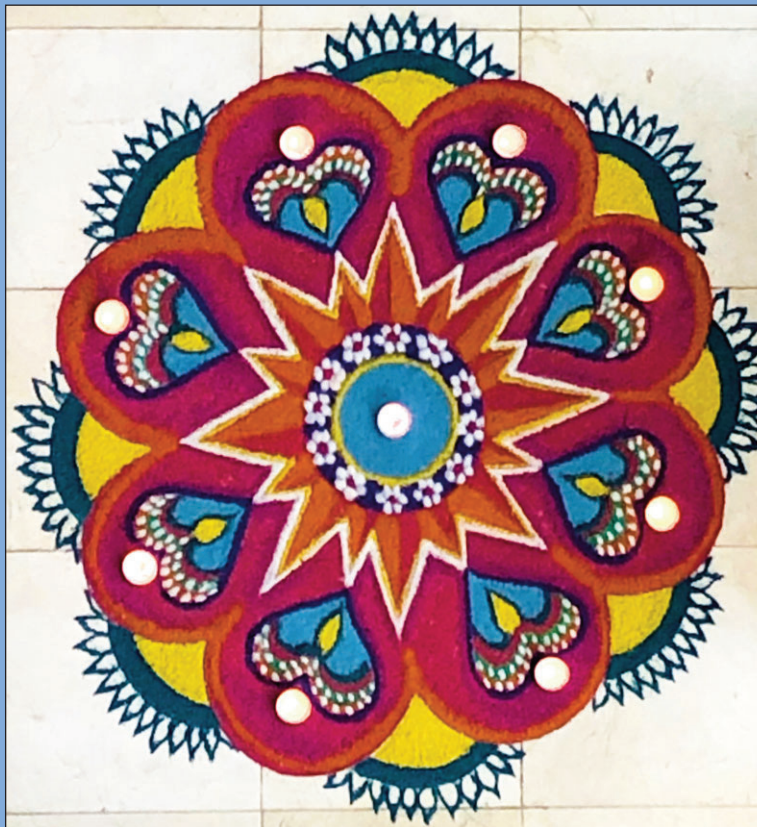
The young man: "For my mind. The inquirer is myself."

Bhagavan: "Yes, that is the real thing. There is a thing called 'I.' Peace being experienced now and then, it must be admitted that there is a thing called peace. Moreover, those feelings called desires are also of the mind, and if desires were banished, there would be no wavering of the mind, and if there is no wavering, that which remains is peace. To attain that which is always there requires no effort. Effort is required only for the banishing of all desires. As and when the mind wavers, it must be diverted from those matters. If that is done, peace remains as it is. That is Atma, the Self, that is Liberation and that is Self."

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥

Gita VI, v. 26

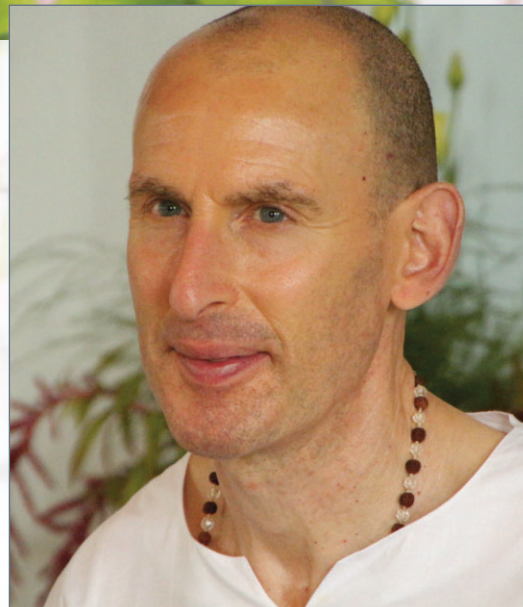
(Restraining the restless and fidgety mind from all those objects after which it runs, one should repeatedly concentrate on the Self.) ॐ



Satsang with Nome

Beginningless and Endless
Satsang, July 28, 2013

Om Om Om
(Silence)



Nome: Beginningless and endless is our Being. Undivided and not multiple is our Existence. Ever-existent and with never an interruption is our Consciousness. Unlimited and supremely peaceful is our innate Bliss. Infinite and without a cause is Sri Ramana's Grace. For this reason, the wisest of the wise, Sri Bhagavan, declares that there is no difference, no distinction, between Jivan Mukti and Videha Mukti, Liberation in life and disembodied Liberation. Why is this? It is because the entire Being of one who is liberated is simply That, Brahman. He is not an embodied individual who knows about a disembodied Existence; he is always bodiless and without the least trace of individuality.

There is no distinction between the realizer and that which is realized. In a similar way, there is, in reality, no such distinction as those who know and those who are ignorant. How can there be no such distinction, when clearly the definitions of the liberated and those who know and the bound who are ignorant are so apparently distinct? One is embodied; one is bodiless. One is misidentified as an ego; one is utterly egoless. One is caught in the turmoil of the mind; one is utterly transcendent of the mind. One sees himself as in the world; the other knows the world within himself. One appears bound; the other is most certainly free. One is unhappy; the other enjoys the innate happiness always. One is mixed up with the changeful; the other is changelessly abiding as the changeless. So, how can there be no such distinction?

If we inquire to know the nature of the bound one, we find only the liberated One. If we inquire keenly to see what the nature of the individual is, we find only the undivided, supreme Self, Brahman, which is certainly not multiple or of different kinds. If we search for the root cause of suffering and bondage, which is the notion "I," we find no such thing actually exists. Similar is it with all the other distinctions. A bound or embodied individual is not what you are. What are you? Beginningless and endless and ever-liberated is our Being.

Questioner: When the topic of bodiless existence comes up in some of the recorded dialogues of the Maharshi, he points to the dreamless deep sleep state, as an indication. I am not sure that I absorbed all that I could from that instruction.

N.: What do you understand from it?

Q.: I recall that he suggests that the listener realize that happiness is innate and that no mind, thought, body, or world was required and that Existence is there and, since there is a sense of that happiness afterward, Consciousness is there.

N.: If you understand all of that, what more do you need to know?

Q.: It seems to be a unique characteristic of the Maharshi's instruction. I do not want to close it off with the idea that I got it all.

N.: What is the nature of the one who would say, "I have it all," or "I do not have it all"?

Q.: He was not there in deep sleep.

N.: Since he was not there in deep sleep, he cannot be you, because you existed in deep sleep. Whatever has newly appeared since deep sleep cannot be you. You are just the Existence. Existence is Consciousness. Existence-Consciousness is Happiness. The Self, which is the Existence-Consciousness-Happiness, really does not enter into any state. It does not wake. It does not dream. It does not sleep. That which does not enter into any state is you. Just as you do not enter into a state such as waking, dreaming, or such, similarly you do not enter into states such as living and dying and such. That which is not born and which will never perish is you. For absolute certainty regarding this, all you need do is deeply inquire and do not treat yourself as if you were an object.

Another Q.: I am not able to fix my mind in that. I am trying to question what I am, what is, what I am putting my belief in, as if I will get freedom in some other way.

N.: In what other way would you get freedom?

Q.: By not questioning, not trying to achieve the freedom.

N.: What is the nature of the one who does not question?

Q.: The question is where freedom starts.

N.: Yes. You must truly turn inward always. Do not fixate on the object, but gaze into the subject. You say you put your belief in other things temporarily. What is the source of the belief? Belief pours forth into various things. What is the source, the root? Is not the basis of all the belief in your own existence? If there were not Existence, could there be the belief in existence? Existence is most definite; everything else is doubtful. Let your belief pour itself back into its source. Every time you have the idea that you are bound or limited in some way, find out who is bound, who is limited. The limited one and his limitations, being unreal, vanish. What remains is the pure, unlimited Existence.

Q.: The Maharshi says, "Take the world as unreal." Most of the time, my mind is concerned about something other than who I am.

N.: If there is the conviction that the world is unreal, the mind does not wander there. Even more so, the idea that there is a world to be experienced includes a definition of one self as the experiencer or perceiver of it. The Maharshi said that if we seek Self-Realization, there is no alternative but to accept the fact that the world is unreal. Otherwise, who sees it and his definitions remain unexamined. Unexamined definitions, misidentification, tend towards bondage and create illusion. So, who sees the world? What is the nature of the seer?

Q.: There is also the aspect of renunciation and detachment, because of this questioning.

N.: For detachment, the strong, profound knowledge of the source and nature of happiness suffices. Knowledge that the world is unreal will make the detachment even stronger, but its deep significance lies in what I just explained.

Q.: So, I should not think of myself as an object?

N.: Any form, any kind of thing, be it a subtle thought or a sense-perceived object. You should not regard such as who you are. If you are not an object, subtle or gross, not a thing, and not a thought, what are you? What remains? Detachment consists in not being confused regarding happiness. Supreme detachment consists in not being confused regarding your identity or reality. Thereby, you no longer associate yourself with any of the attributes of the illusion. The world appears only in the waking state of mind. How can something that is dependent on the state of mind and is contained within it be real? The Reality is self-existent, non-dependent, and is not contained within anything else.

Q.: I had forgotten that feeling of existence.

N.: Who forgot it? Did Existence forget?

Q.: No, it was there, and I was dreaming.

N.: Who was dreaming? Did existence dream? Is there another one, another self?

Do you see how the identity apparently shifts from the real Self to the individual? The utter annihilation of the individual and the individualized perspective is Liberation. It is absence of "I" and "my." The individual standpoint is not what you are. The cessation of this imagination yields lasting peace. The Self does not have ignorance, forgetfulness, dream, or illusion, etc. Who does? The ignorance and the ignorant one both vanish, for they are not real. The Reality knows and is itself, always.

Another Q.: For me, there is a paradox with the greatness of the Maharshi. Sri Muruganar, who was awakened, talks about how great the Maharshi is. The paradox I do not quite understand is was the Maharshi's realization greater than Muruganar's? Why? I feel the same way. When I read the Maharshi, I feel that this is the wisest being I have ever met, yet Realization and Truth is One.

N.: There are not different kinds of realization. Realization is only One, but one what?

Q.: Maharshi said that it is a delusion.

N.: Who is the Maharshi?

Q.: Who is the Maharshi? That is the thing.

N.: In one sense, we can say that, upon realizing the Truth, devotion finally truly begins.

Q.: I do not quite understand. The Maharshi said that, after realization, that one is just completely fixated on the Self effortlessly. Is that the devotion to which you are referring?

N.: The Self remains fascinated with itself. There are not two involved.

Q.: It does seem paradoxical that even people who are realized say that the Maharshi is so amazing. It seems that duality and nonduality mix together.

N.: There is no duality in the experience of it.

Q.: In the experience of ?

N.: Of such devotion.

Q.: Mmm, yes.

N.: Worship of the Sadguru does not presuppose duality. Indeed, it is when duality is erased that such devotion truly shines. This cannot be understood from an onlooker's perspective. It can be understood only from directly being immersed in it.

Q.: The more I look at different nondual teachers and texts, my love and appreciation for the Maharshi spontaneously grows. My respect and gratitude just spontaneously grow.

N.: If you experience such gratitude in the course of sadhana or practice, consider the gratitude that there is upon realization.

Q.: It answers my question.

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

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil from Chapter 8 of the Song of Ribhu.)

Absorption

Satsang, May 6, 2018

Om Om Om

(Silence)



Nome: The essence of devotion and knowledge is absorption of identity. Absorption of what in what? It is absorption in God, the Sadguru, the Self, for Sri Bhagavan proclaimed that these three are not three but are One and the same. Then, absorption of what? It is the dissolution of false attachment and misidentification. It is the dissolution of the idea that there are limiting adjuncts connected with your identity. What is truly your identity? The search for it dissolves the falsely assumed individuality, and, with that, one is absorbed. It is absorption in the reality of Being. It is absorption in the infinite Consciousness. It is absorption in supreme Bliss. Therefore, practice in a manner of absorption. In this lies liberation from all of the imagined bondage. (silence) Absorbed in That, abiding as That, and identifying yourself only with That leaves no further happiness to be desired and no further knowledge to be realized.

Questioner: It occurs to me that, in what you share, you are not so much informing as you are sharing your direct experience, I believe. The only thing that counts is direct experience. The only questions that matter are "How can I find the "I," how can I go to that door more often, and how can I knock more persistently?" The rest is useless.

N.: The realization of the Self is the finality, and realizing the Self is the purpose of life. What is direct experience? Can there be anything more immediate and direct than the light of your own Consciousness?

Q.: The Self and the Supreme seem to be interchangeable. When I can find the "I" and be with that, there is nothing else.

N.: The "I"-less true "I" is the Self. That alone is actually experienced by all, at all times. If it seems otherwise, at any time, profound inquiry is called for.

Another Q.: Will my progress toward realization help alleviate the suffering of a loved one? Apparently, the suffering is still there. If I stay focused on myself, I think that it will help, but I want to see the connection of how that will help him.

N.: Abiding as egoless is supreme love. The discernment of what your true nature is is simultaneously the discernment of what a loved one is, indeed, what all are. That is beyond all suffering. In this Knowledge, in this Love, you yourself become the answer to whatever the question is and the resolution for whatever the difficulty is. How else to gain peace except through Self-Knowledge, and how can there be happiness without peace? By the realization of your true nature, you bring them, as it were, happiness and peace.

Another Q.: How do we practice Self-inquiry, even when we are not meditating, especially at work or when doing any other activity? How do we practice Self-inquiry when we are engrossed in work or are driving a car?

N.: Activities offer no interruption to the inquiry. The activities engage your body. Are you a body? For Self-inquiry to be continuous, there must be freedom from the misidentification with the body, and the inquiry itself must be off the mental level. The inquiry is all about thought-transcendent Knowledge. So, do you drive a car or go to work? Not in reality. You know that you exist, and you know that in a way that is deeper than any sense perception or mental conception. It is natural to you, and no one and nothing can remove it from you. At the depth at which you feel you exist, not as something, but just that you exist, that is the depth of inquiry, that is the level at which the inquiry goes on. The Knowledge that you exist is not interrupted by anything, is it? It is naturally continuous. Therein lies the answer to your question.

Another Q.: Is Self-inquiry timeless, or is it in time? Does it go according to the time?

N.: The essence of Self-inquiry is nonobjective Knowledge, which is timeless. If it were merely a form of concentration, paying attention to one thing rather than paying attention to another, it would have its interruptions, for no concentration, no particular thought is continuous. This Knowledge, which constitutes both the realization and the practice, is timeless.

Q.: Thank you, thank you.

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

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil of verses of chapter 29 of the Song of (Ribhu) ॐ



Correspondence

WITH NOME



[A seeker requested advice concerning a few details of his practice of Self-inquiry. Here is the reply.]

March 20, 2019

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. It is not so important at what speed you inquire as at what depth is the inquiry. The deeper the inquiry is, the deeper the experience of peace is.

Rather than considering the peace to be momentary and the tumultuous thoughts to be continual, it is wiser to know the thoughts to be transitory and the eternal peace to be continuous.

**Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome**

[A seeker related the various practices in which he engaged and some experiences he had and requested guidance. This is the reply.]

March 23, 2019

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. It is beneficial to keep in view that what you seek to realize is eternal. That alone is real which is ever-existent. The non-eternal is unreal, which means that it does not exist. That is Self-Knowledge in which the eternal

Brahman, the Self, knows itself. The Knowledge is nonobjective in nature.

To be fruitful, the means and the end must be of the same nature. In Self-inquiry, the end manifests as the practice. Passing sensations and mental modes are objective and transient. They cannot be the inquiry or the realization.

Therefore, use the innate capacity of discrimination and discern what it is to inquire "Who am I?" The question "For whom is this?" is meant to express making one's vision, or way of knowing, nonobjective and the negation of all that is objective as being unreal and not the Self.

The inquiry questions the assumption of your existence, or identity, as an individual. The egoless Self is your only true Existence.

May your inquiry be deep so that the Self remains self-revealed, God knows God, and you thus abide happy and at peace always.

**Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome**

[A seeker asked about the sadguru and the universal "I." Here is the response.]

April 10, 2019

Dear ,

**Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Namaste. The true nature of the sadguru is the Self, which is attributeless.**

Considered in the context of universal manifestation, he is the Self within all. This is of the nature of pure Consciousness. When known as it is, free of all misidentifications, the Consciousness is realized to be One without a second. This is the reason for the boundlessness of his love, the fathomlessness of his wisdom, and the eternality of his grace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A reply to a seeker:]

April 13, 2019

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Know the undecaying, indestructible, always perfectly full Existence-Consciousness-Bliss alone to be the Self. It is the Reality that is transcendent of all of the states of the mind and what appears in them. Realizing that this is the truth, abide in peace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker in Germany wrote again requesting instruction, edited here for the sake of brevity. Nome's response follows.]

April 15, 2019

Dear Nome,

Namaste

I have been following your advice to always seek the identity in any question or confusion I may have. I was struck by a statement you made in Saddarshanam that there is never a reason to delay the nondual truth and see duality as real for the time being. I can track a habit of mine to vaguely assume that nondual truth is for those who have done all their spiritual homework or some variation of such ideas.

I don't see clearly how this is realized when in serious conflict with other people. Very rarely do I experience a peace that is untouched when I need to deal with a conflict. Being established in nonduality when interactions with people are very antagonistic is not yet there for me.

I know you have, in the past, not spoken about yourself in any personal terms, but I truly wonder how you experience conflict and address antagonistic situations. How does one who has realized his true nature do so?

Best regards and much gratitude for all you are offering,

April 17, 2019

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. A Self-Realized sage abides always free of any misidentification with the body or as an individual entity. Indeed, one who knows the Self is the Self, Brahman, alone, without the least difference.

Bodiless, he is never in any situation. Knowing the true nature and source of happiness, he is ever serenely detached. Egoless, he is himself the Self of all. Although being the Self of all, he is not entangled in the illusion of the ignorant, and his bliss, his peace, is not disturbed by those who may be antagonistic. He remains inwardly silent, even when it is necessary for him to engage with others. Although he may thoroughly disagree with the actions and ideas of another, he knows that the true Self of the “other” is utterly beyond such. Just as, after waking, the dream characters, their activities, and situations of your dream are of no consequence or interest to you, so is it with the waking state world of delusion for those who abide in the Knowledge of the Self.

Does Brahman experience conflict? Are you anything but Brahman, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss? If not, who are you truly, and what do you consider yourself to be?

I hope that the above gives you some understanding of the wondrous freedom to be found by deep, thorough inquiry to know the truth of the Self.

May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self, the One without a second, which is the Reality, the indivisible perfect fullness, the immortal and eternal, and thus at peace always.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[The same seeker who asked about the sadguru and the universal “I” requested further explanation. This is the reply.]

April 25, 2019

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Yes, your message from Sunday was received, but there was no opportunity to type a reply to you until today. I apologize for the delay.

The “universal ‘I’” refers to the Self, which is infinite, omnipresent, and the sole-existent Reality everywhere and at all times. That alone is truly the “I,” the Self, and not the assumed individuality.

The Self in and of the Sadguru is the same in and of you. Differences that may appear to you are born of imagination that is due to misidentification. Inquire to know the Self, and, with ignorant misidentifications thus eliminated, you will realize that there is only one “I,” and it is universal.

Om Namah Sívaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker wrote about his attempts to inquire and his experiences of sensations and vibrations. This is the reply.]

May 27, 2019

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Inherent in Self-Knowledge are the nonexistence of individuality, or ego, and freedom from misidentification with a body, gross or subtle. You may find it beneficial, using the sharp discrimination intrinsic to Self-inquiry, to examine what you are doing in the name of spiritual practice. Sensations, whether apparently spontaneous in their occurrence or caused by other or previous practices, pertain to the body. They are not eternal. The Self is not a body and is eternal. If you earnestly seek Self-Knowledge and actually inquire, these illusory disturbances will subside, and your true nature, full of peace and self-luminous, will be known.

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

Om Namah Sívaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome ॐ



The Ribhu Gita

Chapter 2, Verses 17-21

With Commentary by Nome at a
Boundless Wisdom Event held on
March 5, 2010 at the SAT Temple

the Ribhu-Nidagha Dialogue

Om Om Om
Om Namah Sívaya

17. Whoever you are, you are He. You are all those who are great. You are Brahman. There is no doubt of this.

Whoever you are, you are He. He signifies Síva, the undivided, invariable, one Absolute, which we know to be of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss. It makes no difference with what body you seem to be endowed and with what mind you seem to be endowed. It makes no difference what the objective circumstances are. In your real nature, in your quintessential Being, you are that which is called Síva, Brahman, He, and God. No matter what your activity and no matter the time of your birth and death, you are He, That, the one Absolute. To realize such, you must see that you are not actually endowed with anything else whatsoever. Whatever body you seem to be endowed with, in Truth, your Self is He, bodiless Being. To realize this, you must cease to misidentify with the body, cease to consider your Self as being a body, being embodied, or possessing a body. If such misconception ceases, if you set aside such false definition, why Ribhu declares You are He makes sense. When misidentification is discarded, one's real Being is revealed to be Brahman, Síva. Similar is it with the attributes of the mind. However the mind is defined or defines the supposed person, you are He. No matter what kind of individual you seem to be, in truth, you are He. You are That, which means, in truth, you are not the mind at all. You are not anything conceived, and you are not any kind of individual.

You are all those who are great. Who are those that are great? What is the greatness to which he refers? Greatness is not measured in activities performed or by the acquisition of outer, material things. Greatness is not measured in power. If something is truly great, it is infinite and eternal. In contrast to the infinite and the eternal, anything non-eternal or finite is most certainly not great. Who are those who are great? They are those who, hav-

ing given up attachment to the body, have abandoned the false assumption of individuality. Their individuality, their ego, has vanished. All remains of them is Brahman, Siva. That is the true Self. How can you be all those who are great? It is because "all those" are not actually "all those." The differentiation is not true. Differentiation is based on the assumption of individuality, but the greatness consists of the absence of individuality. The differentiation stems from the misidentification with the body; the form of the "I" conception. Greatness is bodiless, for it is infinite and eternal and no body is infinite or eternal. All those who are great, that is, all those who have realized the Self, abide as the Self and not as distinct knowers of the Self. Knowledge of the Self is being the Self, with no residue of individuality to limit. If inquiring profoundly, "Who am I?" you know yourself as you truly are, you are infinite, eternal Being-Consciousness-Bliss, without beginning, without end, without birth, and without death. It just is as it is, for all eternity. All who have realized are That. When you realize the Self, you realize them in you. Do not set yourself aside, apart, as if this applies to the Self of someone else. That of which Ribhu speaks is your very Being, your very Self.

You are Brahman. There is no doubt of this. If you cease to be "you," you are Brahman. Such cessation is actually a matter of Knowledge, since ignorance is false, and individuality and embodiment are products of delusion. Upon inquiry, true Knowledge shines, and, in that Knowledge, you realize, "Tat tvam asi" – That, Brahman, you are. You are not apart from it; you are not a part of it; rather, That is what you are. Clear away the delusion that causes you to imagine yourself to be something else, to think of yourself as a second kind of self, other than the real Self, and that there is a second reality, rather than just the one supreme Reality. **There is no doubt of this.** It is the certainty of one's own Existence. In its realization, Brahman, the Self, is found to be one without a second, one without anything else whatsoever. Where difference is not, doubt is not. Consider how certain you are of your existence. One never doubts his own existence. He can think of anything, and he can doubt all that he thinks, but his Existence is inconceivable, not dependent on thought, and not subject to doubt. The essence of true Knowledge is the essence of this Existence. Inquiry deeply, "Who am I?" Realize this Existence, and, in the Knowledge that is non-triadic --- not divided into knower, knowing, and known --- certainty is absolute. In this lies great Bliss.

18. You are devoid of indications and qualities. You are just Consciousness. You are afflictionless. You are ever the undivided Essence. You are Brahman. There is no doubt of this.

Whatever you are is so much you that it cannot be perceived or conceived objectively. Whatever quality is conceived or perceived pertains to something objective. "I am this, I am that, I am like this, I am like that" are notions of objectified qualities. No quality, subtle or gross, pertaining to the mind, the senses, prana, the body, the world, is a definitions for you. What quality is the Self? Because it is utterly nonobjective, it is described by negation, neti neti not thus, not thus. What is your own Self? Is it possible to stand apart from your Self, so that it could even be indicated? The word for "indication" in Sanskrit can also mean a proof. What could be the proof of that

which is undivided? There is no proving your Self and no disproving your Self. Though indicated all of the time everywhere, it is not indicated at all. It is measureless. It is quality-less.

You are just Consciousness. Trace what is known to the knowing. Knowing is common to all that is known in variety. The knowing essence is the same. It is not an objectified quality. Trace the knowing to the knower. You are the knower. Disassociate from the Knower any of the qualities or attributes of the known, everything gross, everything subtle, everything perceived, and everything conceived. All of that depends on the Consciousness, which is the Knower. Consciousness, your Self, does not depend on any of that. Every limitation, every bit of the imagined bondage, which conduces to any kind of suffering, has nothing to do with the Consciousness itself. The limitation, the bondage, is due only to the delusion of connecting Consciousness with that which is not the Self. Consciousness is the Self. You consist of that and nothing but that. As Consciousness, where do you begin, and where do you end? What can be said of you? Though you are ever present, can you be indicated?

You are timeless, and you are location-less, and said to be infinite or eternal. The idea of eternal and the idea of infinite are a far cry from That itself, and fortunately they are not eternal. All of the descriptions given in the course of spiritual instruction by Ribhu and other sages of Vedanta have for their aim something that is most eloquently described in silence. If one's vision is made nonobjective by Self-inquiry, what is described here, the actual message, is realized. Then, whether he says great or quality-less, infinite or space-less, eternal or timeless, or I am the Self, or I am not at all, the one essential meaning is abundantly clear.

Differentiation is born of imagination. The absence of imagination is the absence of difference, and in this lies perfect certainty. If one knows the word, which Adi Sankaracharya declares is only the power of Brahman and if one knows the silence, which is undoubtedly of the nature of that same Brahman, who is it that knows thus? Not a single word of the teaching is apart from the silence; nor is it anything but the one Reality that is always without modification. So, who listens to what?

You are afflictionless. How can you be without any suffering whatsoever? Suffering is due to bondage. Bondage, or limitation, is only imagination. It consists of misidentification. The root misidentification is the bare assumption, the notion, of "I". If you are "I"-less, you are without further misidentification. Without such ignorance, where is bondage? Without bondage, there is no suffering, and the happiness that was sought for, for so long, is found to be innate. Even when suffering, who is it that is the sufferer? The real Self, unborn and imperishable, never suffers. You are afflictionless: you are not the body that can experience pleasures and pains. You are not a mind that becomes caught in its own imaginings. You are not any kind of bound individual whatsoever. What you are and what you are always, stands beyond all that as just Consciousness. That is pure Existence, or real Being. If you know yourself as That, you are happy always, and you are your own happiness. If you do not know that, the one who does not know is not you. Inquire and all becomes clear; it is a matter of identity. Consciousness is not afflicted at any time, by anything, anywhere.

You are ever the undivided Essence. You are Brahman. There is no doubt of this. See the essence. With an eye towards name and form, divisions appear, so that you are one thing, and the world is another, you are one person, and someone else is another. Look beyond the false appearance, the illusion of name and form, to the essence which is Sat-chit-ananda - Being-Consciousness-Bliss. If you see the essence, which is real Existence, there is no division in it. Division is imagined only by the superimposition of that which is not the Self upon the Self; that which is unreal upon the Real. You have no form. You have no name. The one undivided Essence is your own Existence, and that alone is real. Since the time of the Vedas, it has been referred to as Brahman. Brahman is what you are. You are not another. Know it by profound Self-Knowledge. Know it with utmost certainty. Know it as your Self, and there is no doubt about it. About something else, a doubt can arise, but when Knowledge is in the Self, by the Self, of the Self, for the Self, then Knowledge itself is the Self, and, in this, there is no doubt.

19. You are of the nature of the substratum of all. You are of the nature of the Light of all. You are devoid of all differences of meaning. You are Brahman. There is no doubt of this.

You are of the nature of the substratum of all. All that you experience, all that moves -- your senses, your mind, the world conceived in them - rest upon some substrate that is unmoving. Everything that is experienced rises and sets; upon what does it rise and into what does it dissolve? Everything appears; upon what does it appear? It must appear upon something that is non-appearing. What is the non-appearing substrate? Every form of experience appears and disappears, rises and falls, upon what? The images, gross and subtle, are projected upon the screen; what is the screen for you? There is some unmoving, undivided Existence. It is of the nature of Consciousness. It is; it does not become more or less when all else rises. It does not become more or less when all else subsides. It is. It is called the substrate in relation to the idea of all else. By itself, in truth, it is solitary Existence, One without a second. Vaster than the vastest, subtler than the subtlest, That is what you are. Therefore, you are not with birth and death, and you are not with appearances of a body or a mind. You are the substrate. By inquiry into your nature, dive from the superficial appearance into the substrate. Such diving is by Knowledge. Knowing your Self to be the substrate, remain peacefully detached from all that appears and disappears. Abiding as the substrate, find That alone to be the case always.

You are of the nature of the Light of all. What illumines? That which illumines all of your experience, from the most interior to the supposedly exterior, lights the experience of all. The Consciousness is singular. Only the superimposition of the "I" and the body conception upon it makes it seem as if there are multiple consciousnesses, multiple selves, or multiple lights. The Light is only One. Consciousness is undivided. That which illumines all, utterly transcendent, is your Self. Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya from darkness to Light, lead me. What is the significance of the prayer? Proceed from the object to the subject, from the shadow of illusion to the Light of Knowledge;

from the mistaken of assumption that you are some kind of thing – even the idea of “I” – to the radiant Knowledge that you are pure Consciousness, the Light of all lights, the Self-illuminated Light, the Self’s own Light.

You are devoid of all differences of meaning. You are Brahman. There is no doubt of this. In the realm of the mind, there is interpretation. Are you in the mind? Listening to the teaching, reading the teaching, etc. various interpretations may arise. Such can even lead to dispute, but is the Self defined by any of that? Can the Self be reached by argument and counter-argument? Is the Self some hard to discern meaning to be found lurking in some old book somewhere? An old book may be about the truth, but the truth is the Self, your own true Self. In this holy scripture, there is no difference of meaning. The entirety of it is about one thing. We could say that it consists of various ways of trying to coax you to realize this one thing, the Reality, and realize it conclusively as your own Being. There are many words here; the meaning is One. All of the sages are One. The teachings are just One. Everyone everywhere is just the same One. We need not think of it as “the One,” as if it were something apart. Realize it inwardly, and there is just One.

20. Indeed, you are Brahman, devoid of differences and devoid of disturbance. You are peaceful, devoid of differences. You are Brahman. There is no doubt of this.

Indeed, you are Brahman. It is the truth. All efforts in sadhana – spiritual practice – are for undoing the false belief that you are otherwise, the false beliefs that make you think that you are one thing and Brahman is another. Within the context of such delusion, even if told that Brahman is the Self, one will think that the Self and himself are two. Yet, the Self is only One and can never be divided. Dive into the depths of your own Existence, and you will realize this.

Devoid of differences and devoid of disturbance. If you cease to misidentify with the body, with the mind, and as an ego, there is, then, nothing to divide, nothing to set you off. Free of differences, free of bondage and suffering, you are at peace. That which is set off as having differences is a form, and all form is mutable. It changes, and it is subject to destruction. The formless is indestructible. The formless is the changeless, and the changeless is alone and, by its very nature, peace. If, inquiring to know your Self in truth, you realize the Reality of the Self – unchanging Existence-Conscience-Bliss – you are never disturbed; nor does there exist anything else to disturb you. Without differences, there is only One, one Being. You are That, unchanging, beyond disturbance, entirely peaceful, and indestructible.

You are peaceful. The Sanskrit word in the text translated as “peaceful” is Śiva. So, you are Śiva. Śiva is the peaceful, the auspicious, the good, and the absolute. You are peaceful because you are the immutable Consciousness, the never ending Existence. You are Śiva. You are not another; you are Śiva, the auspicious Absolute, devoid of differences. If Śiva, being God, is devoid of differences, there is no scope for anyone else. If Brahman is the Reality, the same as Śiva, if the Reality is truly real, truly non-dual, One

without anything else or any alternative, that leaves no scope for a so-called "you." Without you, where are your problems?

You are Brahman. There is no doubt of this. Thus, Brahman comprehends Brahman. In this lies the doubtless certainty. The idea that I am one and Brahman is another, I am someone else and Siva is another, belongs to the unreal individual. A profound inquiry into the nature of the individual reveals his nonexistence. Being unreal, he vanishes. What remains, previously referred to as the substrate, is the real Self. That remains as the Reality, the identity. That alone is there the entire time. All else is an illusion. The idea that illusion ever came to be is also an illusion.

21. You are devoid of the term "exalted knowledge." You perceive you own nature. You abide in your own nature. You are Brahman. There is no doubt of this.

That which is so essential to know, which is so important to realize in this life, the Upanishads speak of as the supreme Knowledge, the exalted knowledge. The way to know it is to turn within to inquire. The most important thing to know is Self-Knowledge, which is not the study of something else, but is the Knowledge of your own Self, by your Self. This Self is not a mere person; this refers to impersonal Knowledge, Knowledge of that which is vaster than the vastest. To realize this Knowledge, inquire. When you inquire, the distinction of the knower and the known -- yourself and the Self to be known--- dissolves. That which is thus revealed, self-revealed, is that in which Being and Knowledge are identical. There is, in That, nothing to be pointed out as mundane knowledge, nothing to be pointed out as exalted knowledge, nothing to be pointed out as the inert, nothing to be pointed out as the consciousness. One undifferentiated Being-Knowledge alone knows itself. It is not a state or condition of the mind. Thus Ribhu says, **You are devoid of the term "exalted knowledge."** Even that does not apply to your true Being.

You perceive you own nature. Nothing else can do so. The senses cannot know it. Thought cannot know it. You alone can know your Self. Supreme Knowledge knows itself; that is, Consciousness illuminates itself in a nonobjective manner.

You abide in your own nature. Loosely, we speak of abidance in the Self; in the depths of this, though, who abides in what? Are there two of you that one should dwell in another? Is there a little self and a great Self? Your Existence is invariably singular. It has no division. The ego, or individual, does not abide anywhere, let alone in the Self. There are no enlightened egos. There are no Self-realized individuals. Self-realization is characterized by an utter absence of individuality. Where the ego is nonexistent, you are said to perceive your Self; you are said to abide in your Self. Who abides in the Self? Only your Self. None other can do so.

You are Brahman. There is no doubt of this. How did Ribhu become so certain? In the same way, you also become certain. In the certainty regarding the truth of your Self, in the certainty of Self-Knowledge lies perfect peace, the perfect fullness, and unending happiness. Become certain. You can be-

come certain by questioning, questioning all, and, indeed, questioning yourself upon which all depend. Question within, "Who am I?" Become uncertain of what you previously assumed regarding yourself. There is no certainty in all that of which you have thought. Those thoughts may disappear at any time. There is one thing that is without doubt; find it within you. Start and end in your own true Existence. Inquire, "Who am I?"

Om Namah Sívaya

(Silence)

Om Shantí Shantí Shantí Om ॐ



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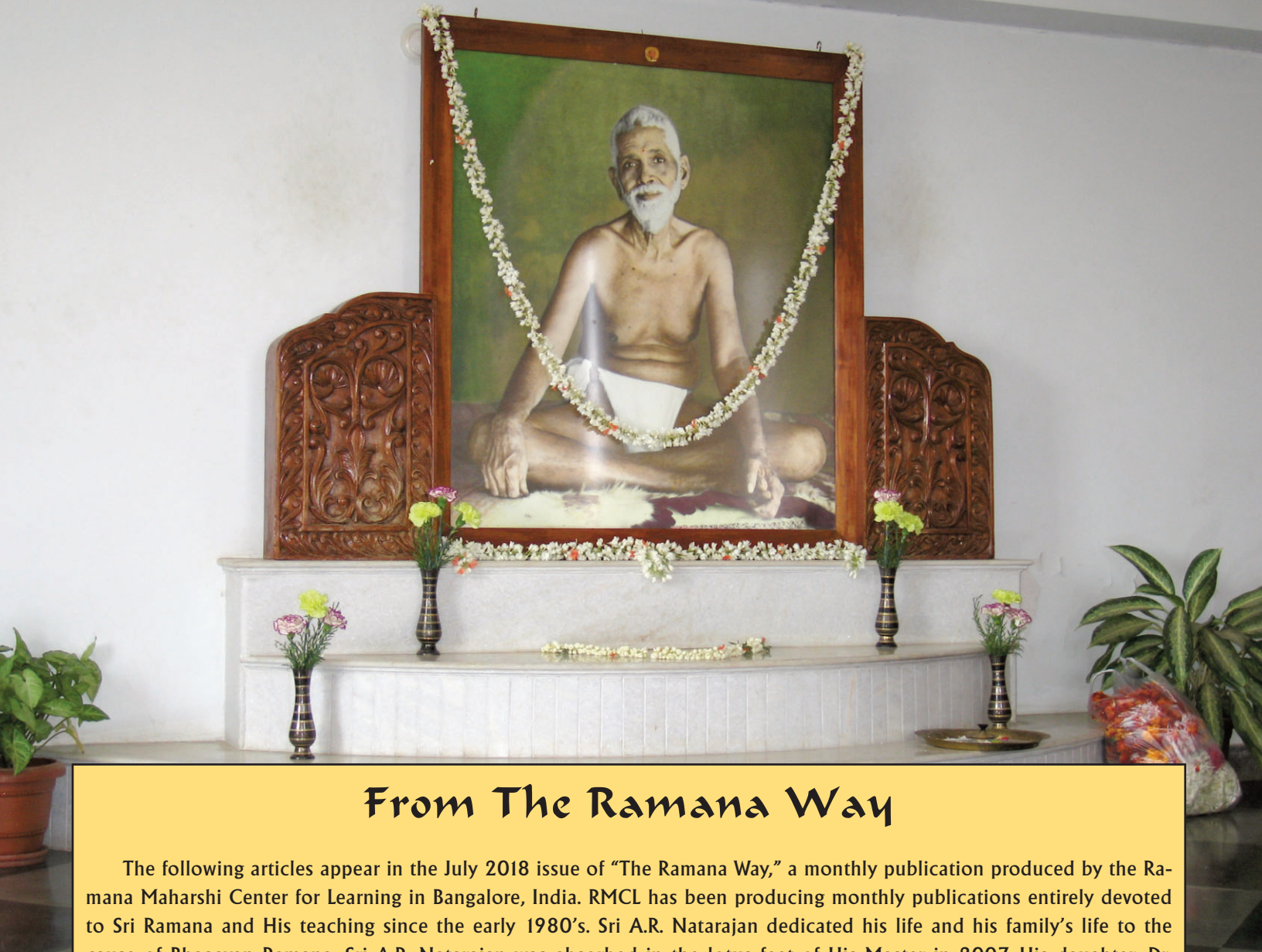
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From The Ramana Way

The following articles appear in the July 2018 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

Editorial

by Dr. Sarada Natarajan

If I am Sarada, there is and always will be plenty for me to do. If we can rely on the identity that we have taken ourselves to be, the possibilities of what may be done or needs to be done by that entity are, in fact, infinite. As Sarada, I would have bodily needs to be fulfilled and a duty towards such fulfillment. I would have to take care primarily of my physical hygiene and of my health as well. If I do not know who I am, how can I

know anything about the needs of my body or of any other body for that matter? Is it possible for me to know at any point of time whether someone else is hungry or sleepy or in some kind of physical discomfort? Of course I would know if someone tells me but even then I would not know it intimately as I presently know my own physical sensations. Someone else's physical experiences are, at best, only a piece of information in my head. If that someone else is dear to me, I would have concern for their experiences, yet, even then, I would be unaware of the actual experience that they are undergoing.



The entire gamut of experiences that each one of us undergoes springs directly from our sense of self or what we call "I." The whole range of physical experiences and sensory experiences are obviously based on my assumption that I am a body and, further, a specific or particular body. When I am Sarada, I sit, stand, walk, run, jump, lie down and so on. I have sensations pertaining to my limbs and sometimes to my inner organs like the stomach, the heart and the like. I also have knowledge of the sensations. If I am gripped by the question, "Who am I?" can I presume that I am Sarada? Can I further presume that I have a specific body and needs pertaining to that body? If I cannot presume that I am Sarada, what would I know in the first place about what Sarada is experiencing with reference to her body? Without this primary knowledge, where is room for any thought pertaining to Sarada? And where is the question of pursuing that thought and acting upon it?

When I presume that I am Sarada I have sense experiences. I see, I hear, I smell, I touch, I taste. But, if I do not know who I am, can I assume that I have all these sense experiences? Supposing I am someone who is visually challenged or is challenged in speech and hearing? How can I say that I am challenged and, equally, how can I say that I am not challenged? If I do not know who I am how can I make any declaration whatsoever about myself? Can I say that I see? Can I say that I do not see? Can I say that I was able to see? Or can I say that I will not be able to see? Can I say that I can hear or taste or smell or touch? Or can I say that I cannot hear or taste or smell or touch? When I do not know who I am, all I can do is to wonder who I am and to try to know who I am.

If I know that I am Sarada, I will have role responsibilities pertaining to Sarada. She may be a student or a teacher, a mother or a daughter, a sister or a friend. Eventually, there will then exist a responsibility related to each of these roles. Actions will have to be undertaken and goals pursued with reference to these responsibilities. These will be manifold, and ever new needs would arise. But if I do not know who I am, how is it possible for me to define any rules for myself?

Very often, when a person sets out on the inward journey, he or she wonders, "What will happen to my responsibilities if I am busy pursuing Self-inquiry and I do not pay attention to anything else?" This is a hypothetical question. One who is gripped by an intense spirit of inquiry cannot do anything else other than inquiring into the truth of one's nature. One who is not so gripped by the spirit of inquiry cannot help being caught in the grip of the current identity. All needs, all questions, all doubts arise only from that identity. Would one ask, "Who will take care of my dream responsibilities if I decide to wake up?"

Or, as Ramana would often suggest, "Why not put these questions to one's self in deep sleep?" Is it possible to do so? And would one even wish to have thoughts or ideas during sleep? Is it not to be free of everything, of all experiences, that one puts one's head down on the pillow? At that time, one naturally reaches a state of surrender. One is ready to surrender everything to sleep. One does not have any doubts. One does not look for any answers.

Would one have any spiritual queries if one is gripped by the inquiry, "Who am I?" Would one wonder which path is most suitable to follow, karma, bhakti, or yoga or jnana? How can I wonder about the efficacy of something with regard to someone I do not know? When a student is to be admitted in school, information would be asked about the age of the student. Some test may be conducted with reference to that age to decide which course is suitable. When the critical high school final exam is taken, it decides which academic course the student will be able to take up thereafter. But what if a parent were to go to a school or college and ask for admission for his child, saying, "I do not know how old my child is. I do not know what is this aptitude of my child. In fact, I do not even know who my child is." Would not such a parent be sent out pronto?

Yet, we wonder about what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad, what is easy and what is difficult for us. Sure, all this makes sense, great sense, if I am sure that I am a particular person. But, if I do not know who I am, what sense would any of this make? Would it make sense to plan which would be the best way to style the hair of a lady who has just shaven her head clean?

Are we ready for the clean shave which Ramana says was given to him by Arunachala? Or do we want to have our hair trimmed and styled? Do you want cosmetic changes to our present identities, a better Sarada, a better so-and-so? Or do we want to know the truth about ourselves? Muruganar Swami says, "People have thousands of recourses. Yet, the true sadhus have only one recourse, and such are fully governed by Ramana. He takes absolute care of those who seek him as the only refuge."

What does it actually mean to seek him as the only refuge? It means seeking refuge in the Self alone. It means not seeking refuge in one's own identity. It means not striving to achieve anything whatsoever because one is not that entity who strives. It is not seeking to avoid any activity that falls to one's lot, as one is not the entity who seeks to avoid anything. It means having no likes, as one does not seek happiness in those goals. It means not having any dislikes, as one does not seek happiness through the avoidance of those circumstances. It means a readiness to stay absolutely still, absolutely silent.

If this is not possible due to the push of the long habit of tendencies, one then questions, "Who seeks anything other than the Self? Who wishes to think in order to attain some goal that is outside? If not, why think at all? "Who am I?" One recognizes that every thought is the seeking of an external refuge and one questions that thought, "For whom is this thought?" "Who am I?" One realizes that every assertion is meaningless, that every denial is equally meaningless. One would expend less and less energy on seeking anything outside of the Self and more and more on turning within to the source.

All practices, including the practice of Self-inquiry, are only to take us to this point of non-seeking.

In Self-inquiry, all external supports are repeatedly cut right from the beginning. It may appear to be difficult, but for whom would this difficulty be? It is not the path that is difficult. It is only thought about the path that makes it seem difficult. Difficulty is a thought. That something is easy or easier than something else is also a thought. Why any thought if one does not know who that "I" is?

As Sri A.R. Natarajan says, "In the inquiry about the subject, one has to go into the question whether thoughts can exist at all unless the individual pays attention to them. The answer must be no. For all thoughts are the individual's thoughts, the thinker's thoughts. Attention to the individual, the mind center, is seen to be the crux."

Self-inquiry is relentless faith in non-knowing, faith in the awareness that currently one does not know. When one does not know who one is, one cannot know anything else thereafter. In this total refusal to hold onto any objective knowledge by questioning the validity of such knowledge each time it arises in the form of thought, one gets back to the source of all knowledge. One gets back to one's true nature which is not known, as it is not for me to know. Yet, it is not unknown, for it is not for me to not know. It is that knowledge, says Ramana, which transcends both knowledge and ignorance.

Holistic Meditation

by A.R.
Natarajan

In holistic meditation, one's focus is exclusively on the mind, in order to discover its nature. In that discovery is the key to freedom from the fragmentation of the mind, its endless fencing and identifications. The subject matter of the inquiry is the



subject itself, the mind, and the instrument used is also the mind, the focused mind.

Knowledge about the subject “I”:

Here, one might cause to ponder how exactly knowledge about the subject is different from knowledge about objects. The latter is limited knowledge, limited to the area of one’s expertise. Illustratively, the field of knowledge of a cardiologist would be the heart and its problems. It would not include all matters connected with the heart. Cases calling for surgical intervention of the heart, like open-heart surgery, would be a different field. Both cardiac specialists would be ignorant about the treatment for other parts of the body, say about gastric ulcer. Knowledge of particular specialization would necessarily imply ignorance of the rest, which is therefore vast. This knowledge is dualistic, part of a pair; knowledge-ignorance, rich-poor, educated-illiterate and so on.

In contrast, knowledge of the subject is total. For, ours is a mental world, everything being dependent on the perceiver. Therefore, once the true nature of the mind is discovered, everything else is known. Hence, Ramana emphasizes the need for and the primacy of knowledge about the “I”.

Understanding the Mind, The Inquiry:

In this inquiry about the nature of one’s mind, one begins at the beginning, the state when the mind as we know it is not there, when the thinker and his thoughts are not there. This happens each day in deep sleep. The fatigued mind reappears on waking, refreshed. From this the origin of the mind can be inferred to be from a rejuvenating source. This Ramana had discovered to be the spiritual heart.

What happens on waking? Is the link with the source broken or continued? It is as good as broken because the thinker is lost in his own thought-hordes and forgets his association with his conscious source, the heart. In the rapid movement of successive of thoughts, the one to whom the thoughts relate, the central force, is forgotten. The mind’s attention is hijacked as it were by this nonstop thought movement away from where it should be, on itself. This Ramana says is no wiser than to think that a creeper can exist without a tree and consequently paying attention only to it. Thoughts are given an independent status,

as if they can exist by themselves. Remedies are sought for control of thoughts through meditation. Will it free one from thoughts? No. At best, there may be a lull during the period of meditation, but thoughts will be back with a vengeance.

Trace attention back to the center of the mind:

Recognizing this, in the inquiry about the subject, one has to go into the question whether thoughts can exist at all unless the individual pays attention to them. The answer must be no. For all thoughts are the individual’s thoughts, the thinker’s thoughts. Attention to the individual, the mind center is seen to be the crux.

The question is how one is to shift attention back to himself from his thoughts? Half the battle has been won by recognizing its importance. Here again, one cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that this shifting attention of “I” to itself is still only a halfway stage. True understanding will come about by maintaining an uninterrupted link with the energizing conscious source from which the mind has arisen. Time and again one should not forget that Ramana’s focus is on the single energy source, the heart. Therefore, it is also the source of energy for the mind. The mental energy derived from its unconscious association with the source, during sleep, is only limited to a single day supply. As his energy gets dissipated in thoughts during waking, mainly, and also in dreams, there is need for a fresh supply of energy. Illustratively, the UPS (uninterrupted power supply) system connected to batteries in turn depends on electricity, which charges these batteries. If there is no fresh input of current then its energy would be exhausted, though it may be called uninterrupted. The computers will start tripping and will shut down, the fans will stop and lights will go off without being switched off.

If the mind’s link is uninterrupted with its unfailing energy source, the heart within, the mind will remain charged at all the times. Would it not? Hence, maintenance of this link with the power source within cannot be over emphasized. But then every thought, by distracting one’s attention from oneself, gnaws at this connection until it snaps leaving one in partial, if not total, darkness. Due to lack of self-attention, one becomes a helpless onlooker of the ongoing power thefts by these hangers on. ॐ

Vidyarambham of Arnima



Above: Arnima with her mother and father Tulasi and Arunkumar. At right: Nome and Sasvati. Below: Arnima's grandparents Krishna Tulasi and Lakshmi.



Devotees' gather for Arnima's Vidyarambham ceremony held in the SAT Temple Satsang Hall on Sunday, May 5, 2019.

Vidyarambham is a Hindu tradition where children are formally introduced to music, dance, and languages. It involves a ceremony of initiation into the characters of the syllabary.

The Vijayadashami day is considered auspicious for beginning learning in any field. The process of learning and initiation on this day is also closely related to the Ayudha Puja ritual. It is usually on Vijayadashami that the implements kept for puja are taken up again for re-use. This is also considered a day when the Goddess of learning, Saraswati, and teachers (gurus) are revered. The ceremony of Vidyarambham (Vidya means "knowledge", arambham means "



beginning') for children is held in temples and in houses. It is common practice for thousands of people to visit temples to initiate their children into learning.

Initiation into the world of syllabary usually begins with the writing of the mantra:

“Om hari sri ganapataye namah, which means: “Salutations to Hari (Lord Vishnu), Shree (the Goddess of prosperity), and Lord Ganapathy.”

Initially, the mantra is written on sand or in a tray of rice grains by the child, under the supervision of a master who conducts the ceremony (usually a priest or a guru). Then, the master writes the



18 names to Saraswati are recited.

mantra on the child's tongue with gold. Writing on sand denotes practice. Writing on grains denotes the acquisition of knowledge, which leads to prosperity. Writing on the tongue with gold invokes the grace of the Goddess of Learning, by which one attains the wealth of true knowledge. The ritual also involves an invocation to Lord Ganapathy for an auspicious start to the learning process.

Today, the Vidyarambham ceremony is celebrated with variations in the rituals.

(-Wikipedia)





Arnima is assisted by Nome and her father to write the holy symbol ॐ in the rice.





Blessings are given to the family with the customary saffron colored rice.



“May you learn. May you learn by speech, spoken and written. May you learn what is expressed in speech. May you also learn what is beyond speech. May you learn. May you learn what is known by the mind. May you learn what is known in the mind. May you also know what is beyond the mind. May you learn. May you learn about all. May you learn from all. May you learn of That which is beyond all.” -Nome

SAT Retreats 2019

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 16 - 18, 2019

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

The Truth Revealed Retreat: November 15 - 17, 2019

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

Online Retreat Registration Available!

End of sign-up date is
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

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya Om Namah Sivaya