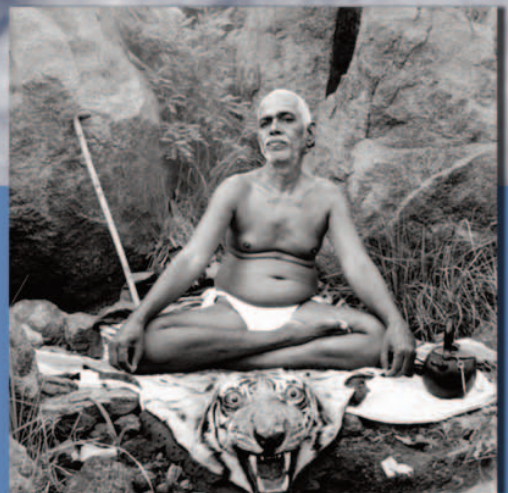


REFLECTIONS

October / November / December 2013



SOCIETY OF ABIDANCE IN TRUTH

Invocation

*The refuge is not the mother,
Father, sons, brothers or others;
The supreme refuge is this foot
Placed on my head by the Master.*

*When there exists the foot of the Master,
When there exists limitless Grace in his look,
When there exists anything at all of what he has said,
What further fruition of life exists?*

*Abundant with the essence of compassion,
Granting the desired boons, the special kalpaka trees
Of the feet of the revered Guru, with the cool glances,
Assuage the anguish of the mind.*

*Having swallowed the wavering mind, the weighty frog,
There sleeps with contentment, in the cave of the heart,
For an extremely long time, alone by itself,
The serpent of Consciousness.*

*In me, the vast ocean of Bliss and Knowledge,
A thousand universe-bubbles
Form repeatedly by the wind, of the nature of maya,
And disappear, again and again.*

*Only by the ship of compassion of the Guru,
By the favorable wind of the good fortune of former times,
The ocean of samsara, with lofty waves,
Of intolerable sorrow, has been crossed.*

verses 146-151, Svatmanirupanam,
The True Definition of One's Own Self,
SAT Publication,

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Reflections, October, November, December 2013

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The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

(From Letters from Sri Ramanasramam)

February 9, 1947

Maya (Illusion)

The same devotee who questioned Bhagavan yesterday again asked him this afternoon about illusion, Maya. "Swami, all the innumerable varieties of things that appear to the human mind to be real, are mere maya (illusion), aren't they? Will the illusion disappear if they are all discarded?"

Bhagavan replied, "Illusion will continue to appear as illusion, so long as the idea that oneself and Iswara are two different entities persists. When once that illusion is discarded and the individual realizes that he is Iswara, he will understand that maya is not something distinct and separate from his own self. Iswara exists without and distinct from illusion, but there is no illusion without Iswara." "Therefore that illusion changes into pure illusion, doesn't it?" asked the questioner. Bhagavan replied, "Yes! It amounts to that; unless the individual self is existent how can one realize Iswara? There is no self, unless the illusion is there. When once the individual realizes who he is, the evil effects, i.e., "doshas" of illusion do not affect him; call it pure illusion, or anything else you like; that is the essential thing."

Somebody else took up the topic and asked, "They say that the jiva is subject to the evil effects of illusion such as limited vision and knowledge, whereas Iswara has all-pervading vision and knowledge and such other characteristics and that jiva and Iswara become one and identical if the individual discards his limited vision and knowledge, and such other characteristics usually attached to him; but should not Iswara also discard his particular characteristics such as all-pervading vision and knowledge? They too are illusions, aren't they?"

"Is that your doubt? First discard your limited vision and such like characteristics and then it will be time enough to think of Iswara's all-pervading vision, knowledge, etc. First get rid of your limited knowledge; why do you worry about Iswara? He will look after Himself. Has He not got as much capacity as we have? Why should we worry whether he possesses the all-pervading vision and knowledge or not? It is indeed a great thing if we can take care of ourselves."

The questioner asked again, "But first of all we must find a Guru who can give us sufficient practice and thereby enable us to get rid of these gunas, mustn't we?"

"If we have the earnestness to get rid of these qualities can we not find a Guru? We must first have the desire to get rid of them. When once we have this the Guru will himself come, searching for us; or, he will somehow manage to draw us to himself. The Guru will always be on the alert and keep an eye on us; Iswara himself will show us the Guru. Who else will look after the welfare of the children except the father himself? He is always with us, surrounding us. He protects us, as a bird protects its eggs by hatching them under the shelter of its wings. But we must have whole-hearted faith in Him," said Bhagavan.

A devotee, by name Sankaramma, who is generally afraid of asking Bhagavan questions, said quietly on hearing those words: "But Swamiji! Guru's upadesa (instruction) is necessary for sadhana, isn't it?" Bhagavan replied, "Oh! Is that so? But that upadesa is being given every day; those who are in need of it, may have it." Others present there said: "But Bhagavan must bless us that we may be enabled to receive the instruction. That is our prayer." "The blessing is always there," replied Bhagavan.

February 10, 1947

Aadarana (Regard)

...Some time ago, a very poor old lady came here one morning with her relatives. All except she made their pranams to Bhagavan and sat down. She however remained standing. Krishnaswamy, the attendant, requested her to sit down but she did not do so. Her relatives called her to come away but she did not do that either. I too advised her to go to them and sit down but she did not take any notice. Someone there said, admonishing her, "Why don't you listen to the advice of all the people here?" I looked at her relatives to find out the reason of her obstinacy. They said that she was almost blind and so wanted to go near Swami to see him at close quarters. I got up, took her hand and led her to the sofa where Bhagavan was seated. Shading her eyes with the palm of her hand she looked at Bhagavan intently and said, "Swami! I can't see properly. Please bless me that I may be enabled to see you in my mind." With looks full of tenderness, Bhagavan nodded his head by way of assent saying, "All right."

As soon as they left, Bhagavan told us, "The poor lady can't see properly and so afraid of coming near to see me. What can she do? She merely stood there. To those who have no eyes, the mind is the eye. They have only one sight, that of the mind, and not many other sights to distract their attention. Only the mind should get concentration; when once that is obtained they are much better than us." What a mild and soothing admonition!

February 12, 1947

Sadhana in the Presence of the Guru

Today, I reached the hall at about 3:00 p.m. Bhagavan was at leisure, answering questions asked by some devotee. One of the questions was: "Swami, they say that japa and tapa performed in the presence of Bhagavan yield greater results than usual. If so, what about bad actions done in your presence?" Bhagavan replied, "If good actions yield good results, bad actions must yield bad results. If the gift of a cow in Benares yields great punya (virtue) to the donor, the slaughter of a cow there result in great papa (sin). When you say that a little virtuous action done in a holy place yields enormous benefit, a sinful action must likewise yield enormous harm. So long as the feeling that you are the doer is there, you must face the consequences of your actions, good or bad."

"There is the desire to discard bad habits but the force of the vasanas is very strong; what are we to do?" that person continued. "There must be human effort to discard them. Good company, good contacts, good deeds and all such good practices must be acquired, in order to eliminate the vasanas. As you keep on trying, eventually with the ripening of the mind and with God's grace, the vasanas get extinguished and efforts succeed. That is called Purushakaram (human effort). How could God be expected to be favorable towards you without your striving for it?" said Bhagavan.

Another person took up the thread of conversation and said, "It is said that the whole universe is God's chidvilasam and that everything is Brahmamayam. Then why should we say that bad habits and bad practices should be discarded?" Bhagavan replied, "Why? I will tell you. There is the human body. Suppose there is some wound inside it. If you neglect it, on the assumption that it is only a small part of the body, it causes pain to the whole body. If it is not cured by ordinary treatment, the doctor must come, cut off the affected portion with a knife and re-

move the impure blood. If the diseased part is not cut off it will fester. If you do not bandage it after operation, puss will form. It is the same thing with regard to conduct. Bad habits and bad conduct are like a wound in the body; if a man does not discard them, he will fall into the abyss below. Hence every disease must be given appropriate treatment.”

“Bhagavan says that sadhana must be done to discard all such bad things; but the mind itself is inert and cannot do anything by itself; chaitanya is achalum (motionless) and so will not do anything. Then how is one to perform sadhana?” someone asked. Bhagavan replied, “Oho! But how are you able to talk now?” “Swami, I do not understand that and that is why I ask for enlightenment,” he said. Bhagavan replied, “All right, then please listen. The mind which is inert is able to achieve everything by the force of its contact, sannidhyabala (strength of proximity) with chaitanya (Self) which is achala. But without the aid of chaitanya the inert mind cannot accomplish anything by itself; chaitanya, being immobile, cannot accomplish anything without the help of the mind. It is the relationship of avinabhavam, one dependent on the other and inseparable. That is why elders discussed this matter from various angles and came to the conclusion that the mind is chit-jada-atmakam. We have to say that the combination of chit (Self) and Jada (inert) produces action.”

Bhagavan has written nicely about this Chit-jada-granthi in his *Unnathi Nalubadhi*, verse 24 as follows:

“The body does not say “I.” The Atman is not born. In between, the feeling “I” is born in the whole body. Whatever name you give it that is Chit-jada-granthi (the knot between the consciousness and the inert), and also bondage.



Satsang

Who Would Do Otherwise?

December 2, 2012

Om Om Om

(Silence)

Nome: The answer to the question, "Who am I?", is ever existent. We should abide as That, in the Knowledge that we are That. Who could do otherwise?

Grace is eternal and limitless. We should remain steeped in devotion. Who would ever wish to do otherwise?

Bliss is the very nature of Being. We should abide absorbed in bliss, completely detached from all illusory appearances. Who would want to do otherwise?

Detachment, devotion, knowledge are actually all of one undivided Essence. For the realization of this undivided Essence, dive within and no longer imagine that there is a without. If you understand this, complete peace is yours. (silence)

Questioner: There is a term that was very characteristic of the Maharshi's instruction, and I always felt it had a richness of meaning I might never come to the end of, and that was the statement that his state was a natural state. I'd never heard that particular expression so much in scripture, and I always felt there could be more to that wisdom than I had fathomed.

N.: What do you understand of it?

Q.: That it was the only possibility. It was not a mental construction by some individual. There was no bridge to it that could be mentally constructed by an individual. It was the self-expressive Reality of his Being.

N.: What is natural for you? What is truly innate?

Q.: Existing and being conscious, I think.

N.: Just this Being-Consciousness is entirely natural. What comes and goes is not actually natural. What appears and disappears cannot be the natural state. Existence, itself, without the least notion of "I", or the body and such, is ever existent. That is entirely natural. That is who we are. (silence)

Q.: You mentioned in your discourse everlasting peace or eternal peace. I forget the exact words.

N.: Complete peace.

Q.: The common view is that the peace is an experience that comes and goes.

N.: Because of that concept, it comes and goes.

Q.: But, in truth, it's really always there.

N.: Because it is the quintessential nature of the experiencer. If, through ignorance, we imagine objectivity for that which is nonobjective, it seems subject to creation and destruction. The same holds true regarding our identity. We, being unborn and immortal, appear as if subject to birth and death, if we conceive of an objective definition for what is really nonobjective Existence. The nature of the Self is changeless. Changelessness is the very root of Peace.

Q.: So, then the peace is experienced in direct proportion to our propensity to not misidentify. If peace is experienced and there still appears to be a remnant of ego experienced as well, it would be wise to look toward the peace.

N.: You can look toward the peace by inquiring as to what is the nature of this ego identity. If you discern the heart of the ego, only the Self is there, and, in that, your peace remains undisturbed.

Q.: That's the only thing in the way.

N.: Yes, the only thing in the way is the ego, but what kind of thing is that? It is like saying that a "nothing" got in the way, but we really must know it as nothing. For that Knowledge, there is inquiry. Your Existence is self-known, and your Existence is self-evident. It is quite naturally infinite and eternal. How can it be imagined as a limited individual? Question within yourself thoroughly, in this manner. In the earnest attempt to know the Self, see if there is any such thing as individuality or is it just a baseless assumption. Happiness and peace are our very nature. Lack of happiness and lack of peace do not mean that our nature has been modified; rather, it is just overlooked. Unhappiness and disturbance of peace are due just to delusion – the misidentification. If you gain clarity regarding the knowledge of what is your Self, the peace and happiness are full. Indeed, you are the happiness and peace. What you are is complete and will never be lost.

Q.: That spiritual instruction is very helpful towards this inquiry. There's tremendous gratitude.

N.: What we adhere to adheres to us. What we are grateful for is intimately our own. What we treasure we tend not to lose. As for spiritual instruction, the Maharshi has said that it consists of restoring the mind,

which has imagined itself to be differentiated, to its proper place. (silence) There is an ocean of gracious Knowledge. It's yours if you want it. (silence)

Q.: In the last couple of weeks, my body has been struggling with a flu. When the discomfort becomes really bad, I'm having the hardest time disidentifying from those sensations and being free from them. The body still is pretty uncomfortable, and I just can't seem to disconnect myself from it.

N.: The body feels the discomfort or the pain. What makes you think that you are the body?

Q.: I don't have a good answer for that. I don't even have a stupid reason for it.

N.: In the initial spiritual instruction, emphasis was placed on who would do otherwise? Who is it that thinks that he's the body?

Q.: When I first start to examine that, there's this concept that there's some connection with the body. If I really start to get at the "who" part of it, the connection becomes weaker. Then, if I keep going, what's left of the one who thinks he's the body becomes weaker still.

N.: What supposedly is the connection between you and the body? Obviously, the body does not know about the body. You know about it. Even when caught up in misidentification, thinking of yourself as the body, the one who so thinks cannot be a body. To the degree misidentification with the body occurs, to that degree the pains of the body become the source or cause of suffering. If, inquiring, you realize the Self's complete freedom from the body, pain does not cause suffering.

Q.: There have been times when I had extreme pain. I was actually able to disidentify from the pain much more readily; I guess because of the desire to just escape it. With something that's much less intense and dramatic, I tend to misidentify more. Is there something that I can see?

N.: You can see from that experience that the misidentification is not in relation to the pain. If it were determined by the pain, the more pain there was the more there should be the misidentification, or feeling confined within the experience. But, that's not your experience. So, misidentification cannot be caused by the occurrence of pain.

Q.: That's helpful to see.

N.: There are several things that will stop the occurrence of pain, ranging from pain killers to that which kills the body. But, only one thing removes suffering, and that is Self-knowledge. In what way can your Existence be equated with the body?

Q.: When I look, they don't equate or actually connect.

N.: There is no connection at all. It is an illusory knot called "the ego" that seems to tie them together to create a false identity. The experiences you have been having with pain or discomfort are calling you to truly, profoundly, and very thoroughly inquire and know your bodiless nature. Certainly, you can see now that such knowledge cannot remain at the level of the intellect, because along comes the flu, and the knowledge of the intellect is shaken. True Knowledge, though, is profoundly experiential and is steady. True Knowledge is not subject to change. True Knowledge is not shaken under any circumstance. Then, whatever the bodily experience is, one remains free, and, if there is no body at all, of course one is free. One who remains with certainty in the "I" - less and bodiless knowledge of the Self is said to have attained Jivanmukti – Liberation while alive. When the body disappears entirely from experience, he is said to attain Videhamukti – Liberation without the body. The common essence is the Liberation, which is entirely bodiless and "I" - less. For one who knows himself, even the distinctions of life and death disappear, but we may start just with the flu. Anytime you feel as if caught up in the body, or the bodily experience, the sense experience etc., question within yourself, "In truth, who am I? Am I this body?" If you consistently question in this way, the deep conviction in the Knowledge of the bodiless Self will become firm. (silence)

Q.: I'm distracted by those thoughts of sickness or some other distracting thoughts pertaining to something at work. You asked him about the natural state, what's his experience of it. He said something like, "Existence and the awareness of it." I have an awareness of it, but it's in objectified terms of the Existence.

N.: That which is objective and the awareness of it appears and disappears. That cannot be natural. Pure Being, which is self-known, is natural. You are distracted only when misidentified. If there is no misidentification, even if there are thoughts about something or another, such as the body, the world, etc., such present no distraction.

Q.: It could be a lot of different topics.

N.: The topics, as you call them, can appear as multiple, but the misidentification is rather simple – “I”, the body. Remove that much -- “I am the body” – and how many topics are left? Remove the notion “I,” and what topics are left?

Q.: But, that’s sort of what the Maharshi was doing Friday night right, it’s just like – it seemed like that whole topic that you were reading from, was just removing that one little nothing, I guess, as you put it earlier. But, is that – there’s no other prerequisite, I guess? Cause you say, eliminate the body and eliminate the ego.

N.: What else are you thinking of?

Q.: It is all the same, some imagination or other. That’s all I think it would be.

N.: When you imagine something else with which you need to deal, don’t you do that from the position of “I” and “I am the body”? If the misidentification is removed, the topics become no topic at all. If you set yourself free of the misidentification and thus know with certainty what your Being is, you will find that you are never distracted. In the context of the mind, there is concentration and distraction. In Being’s Knowledge of itself, can there be any distraction? Do you ever forget “I exist”? You may not think the thought, “I am,” but do you ever actually lose track of your Existence?

Q.: That’s constant, whatever way one would measure it.

N.: Yes, it just is and the “is” is not an object, not a thing, and not an occurrence. The “is” just is. Being is. You are completely this Being, this Existence, and not any sort of thing.

Q.: It must be, in a certain sense, very, very simple, but that wouldn’t describe it.

N.: It is very simple in the sense of it being thought-transcendent.

Q.: It wouldn’t require anything objective.

N.: The direct Knowledge of your Self is not apart from your Self. Your Self is Being, only Being. Your Self is not an occurrence, most certainly not a thing, not an attribute that would be attained and nothing removed from yourself. You are not removed from Being. There is just

Being. That is the Reality. That is the Self. Being this or being that is just an idea.

Q.: The idea part would be the binding.

N.: If you know yourself as you truly are, just Being, there is no bondage anywhere, at any time. You never become other than what you are. What are you?

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English of verses from the Chandogya Upanishad.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil from chapter 38 of the Song of Ribhu.)

ॐ

Satsang

What Is Self-Realization?

February 10, 2013

Om Om Om

(Silence)

Nome: The Self is One alone. It is with no difference. It is only by misidentification with the mind that one can think of a multiplicity of selves, internally so to speak, and with misidentification with the body that one can think of multiplicity of selves, externally so to speak. The internal and the external are also determined from the "I am the body" misidentification. But you are not the body, and you are not the mind. Unperceived, unconceived, the nature of the Self is unalloyed, undifferentiated Existence, One, without anything other or different whatsoever. It is beginningless and eternal. It is limitless and thus truly infinite. Inconceivable, it is immeasurable. This perpetual, nondual Existence is Brahman. This Brahman is your Self. One should seek to realize the Self for

the sake of final peace, immortal bliss, and complete Liberation from all of the imagined bondage and its consequent suffering.

What is the nature of the Realization that is to be sought? The nature of Self-Realization must necessarily be identical with the Self that is to be realized. So, just as the Self is not an event with a beginning and an end, likewise Self-Realization is not an event. If it had a beginning, it would have an end. The Maharshi has instructed, "What is not eternal is not worth seeking."

What is this Self-Realization? It is not an experience that comes to you, as if you were an individual being who would experience another kind of self. The individuality is just the primal misidentification, the "I"-notion or "I"-thought. Your Existence is not an experience that comes and goes. Similarly, it is not a state of mind. Indeed, it is not anything transitory, not anything that appears or disappears.

Self-Realization is said to be complete peace and the perfect fullness of Bliss, and indeed this is so. Sages and scriptures declare that one ought to seek Self-Realization, for that is the purpose of life, and indeed it is so. Yet, what is the Realization itself? When ignorance is destroyed, that is, when misidentification is eliminated, that which remains is it, but that which remains did not just begin. Being unborn or beginningless, it is deathless and endless. Self-Realization is declared to be Atmasthaniti, abidance as the Self. Now, there are not two selves, that one would abide as another; so what is meant? Your Being, your Existence, as it truly ever is, unchanging and forever unmodified, is itself the very substance of Realization.

Abidance as the Self is known as Self-Knowledge. It is not a thought that comes and goes. Nor is it the possession of anyone, as if an individual would become realized, rather than the realization that there is no individual. The Knowledge is of an imperceptible, inconceivable nature. In Self-Knowledge, Being is Knowing, just as Existence is Consciousness.

If you earnestly desire Self-Realization, inquire within yourself as to who realizes? Who are you? If you are not the body, inclusive of the senses, as well as the prana, if you are not the mind and any of its permutations, if you are not contained within such, and if you are not the ego, the notion of existing as an individual entity, what remains? What are you? The Self is itself the Knowledge. The Self is the Realization. It neither comes nor goes, as you do not come or go, for your Existence is always.

Sri Bhagavan declares that the egoless state is the only real state that there is. That state is Self-Realization. It is innate. The Self that is Brahman is the only real Self that there is. An unrealized state would belong to an unrealized being. Is there such a one? If presently you have the doubt, "But I am not realized," inquire as to who it is that is supposedly not realized. There is only one Self; it is the one Reality. To imagine yourself as an individual or as a mind that is in another state is purely illusory and only imagination. When the conjuror of imagination is sought, such a one is nowhere to be found. What remains is absolute Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, Sat-Cit-Ananda. That which remains is now also and forever.

Questioner: Thank you Master. There is an instruction attributed to the Maharshi, which is, "Your best spiritual efforts are necessary, but can only take you so far, at which point the Self absorbs what seemed to be the individual."

N.: Where the "I" disappears and identity is absorbed in its origin, how can we speak of effort? Nor can we speak of its opposite. The advice should not be misconstrued to mean such as that one should abandon one's efforts. Who would do such a thing? The effort should be directed at the dissolution of that very "I." What better way could there be to dissolve the "I" than to find its unreality through the inquiry, "Who am I?" The individual cannot realize the Self. The individual is a fallacy, unreal. The unreal does not realize the Real. The Reality alone has the ability to comprehend itself. The Reality is truly your Self. Abandon the assumption that there is another self. If you then wonder, "How do I abandon 'I'?" simply inquire to know, "Who am I?" The "I"-notion will vanish. The Self alone will remain in its own Knowledge of itself. Such is the absorption referred to, and such is also Grace.

Another Q.: The natural prerequisite is some kind of sraddha or faith in the words of the teacher, the scriptures, and the community of realized ones throughout history. Enough that the inquirer is willing, a gentle surrendered willingness, to not be the feverish seeker for a little while and to see what happens if he doesn't retain the misidentification with the body-mind seeker entity. The Truth can become evident without effort and also without a separate self stopping effort.

N.: Sraddha is very useful, extremely useful---faith in the scriptures, faith in the Guru, and faith in the teaching. There is sraddha, doubtless faith, in one's own Existence. If the seeker abandons the misidentifica-

tion with the body and the mind, that will suffice. He need not get rid of the identity of being a seeker; that will absorb itself. After all, if one thinks that he will abandon being the seeker, he is still the same seeker. That is why he is abandoning. (laughter) The very nature of the seeker is that which he seeks. If he simply seeks his own nature, everything comes out right.

Q.: A sense comes within consciousness, some inspiration or inclination, that perhaps one is not what he thought himself to be. Perhaps he is not a seeker, to either make a decision to continue seeking or drop the seeking.

N.: Yes, that is all right. From a slightly different angle of vision, if one would not abandon seeking but abandon everything else, perfection would be realized.

Q.: Thank you.

N.: Generally, in the scriptures, the advice found is to seek and seek ardently. Not much advice is given that says, "Don't seek."

Another Q.: In my meditation, there's something gone that used to be there. It was this strong assumption that the ego is going to rise up out of its own self and that I really don't have any control over it coming back. Now, in deep meditation, I know that it does not come back on its own, but I don't have the certainty that it never started. There's something that I'm not understanding about myself.

N.: As to the one who lacks certainty, what is his nature?

Q.: Oh, he seems to be the one who's trying to find certainty.

N.: In what is certainty found?

Q.: Certainty is found in Existence.

N.: Is the nature of Existence an ego?

Q.: No, that's for certain.

N.: Are there, then, two or more selves, an ego self and a non-ego self?

Q.: The ego is not another self.

N.: How many selves are there?

Q.: To answer that, I'd have to figure out what a self is.

N.: That would be wise.

Q.: Yes.

N.: So, first find out what the Self is, and then you can decide if the ego has been destroyed or if it never came to be.

Q.: Asking that question, "What is the Self?" I feel that I become swallowed in the question. It's destroying my concept of what the Self is. Concepts about myself start to go away.

N.: If you are not anything conceived, what are you?

Q.: I can't make my Existence turn into a thought, and it's never a thought.

N.: If it is never a thought, how could it be an ego?

Q.: It can't.

N.: This is to be realized conclusively, interiorly, not just thought about.

Q.: I can see that there are things I do in my practice that I'm calling meditation, but they are really just thinking about it.

N.: It is all right to think about it; just don't stop there.

Q.: Because I'm having some thoughts, I'm actually thinking that's real, instead of penetrating those thoughts and finding out I'm not in those thoughts.

N.: Are thoughts the Existence itself?

Q.: No, in contrast to the Existence, they don't exist. So, they can't possibly be the Existence. The primary nature of the thought is its nonexistence.

N.: So, your bondage or your uncertainty is merely imagined. How could you be really bound by a nonexistent thought? The nonexistent doesn't have a trace of Existence, and Existence has not a trace of nonexistence. Therefore, there are not two, as in two selves, to choose between. The discrimination between the Self and the not-Self is the discrimination between the Real and the unreal. When one so discriminates and discards the unreal, has anything really been discarded? As for the Reality, it is not attained anew, but, where the ego notion and all its attendant vasanas subside, the Self remains shining in its own light,

the self-luminous.

Another Q.: Realization is not a doing. The ego doesn't do this.

N.: The ego does not realize because the ego does not exist.

Q.: I have to eliminate those things that I think of as myself, because that stuff is going to be in the way otherwise.

N.: You are merely eliminating ignorance. That is not an action. That is a matter of Knowledge. Thus, Adi Sankaracharya's comments that action does not bring Liberation, and Self-Knowledge alone is Liberation. It is not a doing; it is Knowledge. It is not knowledge by an ego, but rather the Knowledge of Consciousness of itself by itself.

For elimination of the unreal ignorance, nothing is better than persevering self-inquiry. Intense, ardent, persevering practice of inquiry is the end appearing as the means. The perseverance derives from the perpetual Existence of the Self. The Knowledge is of the nature of Consciousness. The intensity is of the nature of Reality. What could possibly be more consistent than your Self, your own Existence? To imagine yourself as other than that Existence is unnatural. As soon as such an unnatural state of ignorance appears, then and there, there is naturally the call for Liberation within you. That call to know the Self, the same as the desire to be happy, is answered completely in the Knowledge of your Self. So, truly speaking, spiritual practice in any of its aspects has absolutely nothing to do with the ego, the destruction of the illusion of which is its purpose.

Q.: That is why you say there's no such thing as really inquiry that doesn't work, because any introversion is elimination. The only way I would be able to do that is by eliminating the unreal to see the Real.

N.: To say it would not work would be like saying one's Being is out of order or that Consciousness is not working. It is absurd.

Q.: More assumptions have to be investigated, because there's some assumption there that prevents me from realizing what is deeper.

N.: Inquire. Discern what you assume and what truly is the case regarding your Existence. Dive deep into the nature of the one who assumes. If you penetrate the heart of the ego, only the Self is found.

Q.: So, staying on that trail of that assumption, whatever form that would be. It takes Grace.

N.: Grace is ever there. Be determined to trace your Existence, like in the Maharshi's analogy of the dog searching its master. Nothing else matters. He just follows the scent one-pointedly until he arrives. In the same way, keep tracing your sense of Existence. Bark if you understand. (laughter)

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English of verses from Aparokosanubhuti.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil from Chapter 43 of the Song of Ribhu.)



From The Ramana Way

The article presented here, "What Does Inward Mean?," by Dr. Sarada, appears in the August 2012 issue of "The Ramana Way," a monthly publication produced by the Ramana Maharshi Center for Learning in Bangalore, India. RMCL been producing monthly journals entirely devoted to Sri Ramana and His teaching since the early 1980's. The succeeding article presented here, "The ABC of the Ramana Way," by Sri A.R. Natarajan, appears in RMCL publication, "Forever Is In The Now." 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.ramana-centre.com

What Does Inward Mean?

by Dr. Sarada

Bhagavan tells us that the path is inward. What does this mean? Firstly, we must understand that Bhagavan tells us this only as a con-

cession to our division of “in” and “out.” In truth there is only the undivided Self that is all pervading. How can there be any “in” or “out” in the Self? Hence, when Bhagavan guides us to go “inward” it is on accord of his compassionate recognition that we are holding on to a standpoint of limitation.

So long as we believe that we are limited entities with a given name and form, or limited in any manner whatsoever (sometimes we may even assume subtle identities), there has to be that which is “I” and that which is not “I.” This is the very nature of any limitation. When there is something that is not “I” obviously that may be said to be “outside” me or external to me. All that is contained in the “I” would therefore be “within” me.

Since we believe we are a form, a body, primarily we feel that all that is included in the body is “I.” In this context, what is “inward” and what is “outward”? Evidently, the world is outside us. Hence, we can say that all that is perceived by our senses is outside of us, can we not? How do we say so? Obviously, the eye does not see itself, the eye. It only sees objects other than itself. Even when it sees its own reflection, the reflection is an object, its own image in a mirror and not the eye itself. Similarly the ear does not hear itself, the nose does not smell itself, the tongue does not taste itself, the hand or the skin do not touch themselves. When we touch one hand with another there itself it is clear it is an “other” and not itself. Thus, anything that is experienced by the sense organs is external or “outward” and Bhagavan’s instruction to us is to go “inward.”

If we cannot think of anything that is grasped by the senses, then, in our “inward” journey what are we left with? Are we capable of thinking about anything that is not sense-based? One would say, “No,” because, as Bhagavan points out to us in his “Forty Verses on Reality,” what we call the “body” is nothing but a conglomeration of the five sense experiences. If all the five are absent, how could we experience a body? And without a body how could we experience a world that is “outside” of us? To remind ourselves of the premise with which we started, it is only because we experience a limitation in the form of a body that we perceive a world outside this limitation. Because our entire experiences of an “outer” world are dependent on sense based experiences, Bhagavan calls these five senses the “five robbers” in his “Marital Garland of Letters to Arunachala.” The question arises in our mind, “What about my emotions, my subtle experiences like joy, sorrow, anger, fear, love, ha-

tred, etc.? They are not sensory experiences. Does “inward” mean focusing on my emotions rather than on my gross experiences?”

The answer is best framed as a counter question. “Do we feel any of the emotions except in relation to a sense object? Are we happy or sad about a thing that has never been seen or heard or touched or smelt or tasted? Can we love or hate something that we do not know of? Can we be angry about something if we have not senses it in some manner? Either directly or indirectly all our experiences are based only on the sense. Even our so called “abstract” concepts have a gross sensory base. For instance, we may say that a mathematical concept is abstract and not sense based. However, numbers are very much based on the multiplicity of objects and a perception of such multiplicity in turn stems from seeing or sensing many things. Geometry is based on the distance, which in turn is understood by us either on account of seeing or listening to sounds travel or by physically walking across a space and so on. Thus, even the abstract concepts of physical sciences are all based only on sensory perceptions.

The point is that as the very primary concept of “in” and “out” is body-based and awareness of the body itself is dependent on sensory experiences, we may say that all our emotions are also dependent on sensory experiences. Hence, in the “inward” path, if one cuts off or consciously seeks to let go of all sensory experience, in effect one will be left with nothing to think about. It is on account of this that many spiritual paths are based on weaning our interest in sense objects. However, Bhagavan’s emphasis is not on letting go of the “outward” or the “external” but on focusing “inward” or “within.” It is only in order to get a better understanding of what is meant by “within” that we are performing this exercise of defining what is “without.”

We have now seen that all our bodily experiences are evidently “outward.” Further, we have understood that our emotions too stem from physical experiences and have only these experiences as their basis. Thus, “inward” seen as the counter directions to sense experience will not permit us to dwell on any of our emotions either, in fact, on anything in the realm of the “known” because everything is “known” only on account of the sensory experience. Memory is also only a store of such prior sensory experiences. Hence, “inward” does not give scope for any remembrance either.

Another question arises, “What of the experience of fear which is very often of the “unknown,” especially fear of new places and situa-

tions, which is also the primary fear of death?' Here again we must recognize that something is seen as "unknown" only because something else is seen as "known." If nothing is "known" then what can be "unknown" and what can then be feared? It is the sense of "knowing" that also gives rise automatically to its opposite, the sense of "not knowing." And "knowing" in turn, as we have clearly seen is a body-based, sensory experience. It is also a fact that for a thing to be "known" it has to be external to us. Similarly, for something to be "unknown" also it has to be "other than" or "outside" of us. Hence that too is potentially only a sense-based experience which is feared.

The next questions which arises is "If I cannot think of anything that is experienced through the senses, what should I think of? Is "inward" a state of blankness as in sleep?" It is not the case because we have clearly seen that so long as "non-knowing" or "absence" is perceived it becomes an implicit recognition of "knowing" or "presence." Sleep for us is perceived only as an absence of objects, hence it is not an "inward" state.

It can therefore be stated that the "inward" path does not pertain to anything that is "known," at the same time it does not pertain to anything that is "unknown" either. In short, it does not pertain to any object whatsoever. This brings us to the understanding that the "inward" path can only be pertaining to the subject or the experiencing "I" and not to any object whatsoever. Bhagavan in his great love understands that it is next to impossible for us to cut our attention away from objects or to drop the "outward." This is because objects are infinite in nature. However, the experiencing "I" is unitary. Hence, he shifts attention to the "inward." He gives us the invaluable clue of the question "Who am I?"

By asking this question we are in effect conceding, "I perceive a world of infinite experiences. All that I perceive or do not perceive, all that I sense and do not sense, all that I know and do not know are outside of me. They are all objects. What is it then, that experiences, what is the knowing subject? If I am not any object that is known or experienced, who am I?" Thus, the "inward" path cuts away all attention on "objects" and turns it totally on the subject "I." What would happen thereafter is that, as an "experiencing I" requires an "experienced object," being the obverse of it, both would disappear. There would then be no "in" or "out" but only the expanse of the Heart, the Self.

The ABC of the Ramana Way

by Sri A.R. Natarajan

If one were to ask what are the cardinal principles of the direct and easy path to Self-Knowledge taught by Ramana one can say that it can be summarized as: “It is our nature to be happy,” “Thinking is not our nature,” “Inward, Inward is the Way.” All these three essentials are interlinked in practice, for one has to constantly keep in mind the first and second while working towards inwardness.

A depressed visitor once told Ramana that he has never known the meaning of the term “happiness.” Even when he was in the womb he had brought sorrow to his mother. From his birth it was one long tale of woe, of unrelieved suffering. Whatever he did, it was futile for it was evident that his destiny stood against him. He was fated to end his life as it had begun, in failures and depression. Ramana could readily see the depth of his unhappiness. He gently told him that unhappiness was not his nature. He put it to him thus: “Had unhappiness been really your nature the questions of attempts to get out of it would not arise. Is it not? You would have been reconciled to the inevitability of suffering. No effort would have been made nor would you have sought any counsel for finding a way to happiness. The very fact that you have been trying to be happy and your coming here for guidance proves the contrary. Does it not?” The logic of Ramana’s explanation went home to the visitor who learnt to have faith in himself and the certainty of his happiness.

Ramana would make this point every now and then, for it is important that we should remember that our real nature is happiness. For in it is the key to a new horizon. Ramana stresses the need for an unhurried and recollected way of life. Why? For when we have found the time to adjust our activities to permit time for reflection we have to remember and remember always our true nature. The importance of remembering this fact cannot be overstated, that nobody can deny us happiness except ourselves, because of our thought distractions.

Again, by way of analogy Ramana would point out that health too is natural. It is for this reason that one tried to get rid of even a minor ailment like headache. Because health is natural, all ill-health is not. It is easy enough to see the rationale of it. Everyone is in search of happiness. May be at wrong doors, through externalization of the mind, through senses. But the basic motivation is common—it is to find happiness. One cannot rest or be peaceful till he has found it.

This leads us on to the second categoric statement that thinking is not natural as surely as happiness is. Linking the first and the second proposition the implication would be that if thinking be unnatural, if we could be rid of thoughts, we would find our natural happiness. At first it would be difficult if not impossible to accept this proposition. For our very sense of existence is linked to thoughts. Thoughts alone give us the sense of living. So we have to go into this deeply and understand what exactly Ramana is meaning by this proposition. Quite obviously it cannot mean that one should lose all mental faculties of memory, reason, inference and intelligence. Ramana's mind itself was sharp and his memory phenomenal. He could recall to the last detail every little incident of his life. In fact, the information given by him forms the best biographical material about him. Being always accessible Ramana has answered the questions and set at rest the doubts of thousands of seekers. In the course of this he would reply about intricacies of the scriptures, the practical aspects of self-enquiry and the like. When questioned Ramana has clarified that normally he would have no thoughts. But thoughts would arise automatically when required for answering the visitors or devotees.

Looking at it from this angle what Ramana refers to when he states that thinking is not natural, must be to our addiction to thoughts. One just feels lost if thoughts are not there. We do not wish to be thought-free. That is our greatest bugbear. So we fill our minds not only with functional thoughts but allow it to be crowded with psychological and purposeless thoughts. Psychological thoughts are coming forward from previous lives, and experiences of this life add to it. They cause our dislikes and likes, our prejudices and attachments. They have to be handled through inwardness and self-enquiry, which will be gone into a litter later. For the time being let the focus be on the load of purposeless thoughts. Often we fall into a reverie, into day dreaming, into crystal gazing into the future, or looking back to dwell on memories. So much of one's mind is filled with such thoughts making Ramana remark that "the past is our present misery" or say, "take care of the present and the future will take care of itself." One may wish to be well informed about what is happening around, but is it necessary to load the mind with irrelevant facts, irrelevant because they have no use for one in his daily life? To be up-to-date on the latest "Guinness Book of Records," to remember to the last detail all the nail-biting one-day cricket matches of the past, to listen to BBC news every hour upon hour seems fasci-

nating. But of what use is this data? Actually it is tragic, for the mind is crammed with lot of needless information, the eschewing of which alone can make for a supple and alert mind. Ramana would say that if a room in a house is crowded with furniture, to create space all that you have to do is to remove some of the items which are not essential. Similarly one has to eschew from the mind all that is not functionally needed. Then only there would be the mental space so necessary to feel the natural joy.

This process of freeing the mind can be complete only to the extent to which its psychological thought content is also handled and off-loaded. It is this content of the mind which is the last stumbling block. In the scriptures, this is termed the “ego,” the feeling of “i” and “mine.” The root of ones problems, the cause for ones blinded and jaundiced view of life has been laid at its door and perhaps rightly too. For it is only identification with the body, one’s body-consciousness which makes for building fences round oneself. But such separation, this feeling of individuality, cannot end as long as one does not know how to handle the thought-thrust which causes it. According to Ramana, every incomplete experience leaves a memory mark called tendency. It is really thought in seed form. All our actions are incomplete for it is not over and done with when that action is over. One wishes repetition or avoidance of the result of that action. These residual memories, which constitute the pleasure-pain index, are all located in the spiritual heart, says Ramana, He has explained that the spiritual heart is at once the home of the Self, and of all thoughts. These residual memory seeds may be compared to floppies which are the memory records of computer system. They cause the thought-thrusts which keep alive the individuality, the ego. It follows from this that the only successful method for handling it would be that which neutralizes this external thought movement. The solution can only be found in a means which counters this by providing an equally powerful inner thrust. If the thoughts are successfully pushed back to their place of origin then one would be freed from the psychological thoughts too and not only of purposeless thoughts.

This is why the third basic principle of the Ramana Way is summarized in the word “inwardness.” Ramana has given us the infallible method of self-enquiry to deal with the problem. It is the enquiry into this “ego” by enquiring “Who am I?”. We had seen that all thoughts spring from the heart. If so this thought too must have sprung from

there. What is the idea in creating this source consciousness? If thoughts are pushed back to their source then since it is also the place of consciousness in its fullness one would have succeeded in linking oneself with the universal current. By frequent dips within the idea of separate individuality gets corroded. Gradually one discovers his identity with that fullness. The journey would end. Joy would suffuse one's being. The purpose of life would have been found.



Atmotsava
(Ramana Nama Sankirtanam)

Atmotsava, held each Wednesday night at SAT, is truly an event for the bhakta at heart and an opportunity to immerse oneself in devotion by listening to texts on devotion and singing songs of devotion to God and Guru to our hearts' content. During each Atmotsava Nome will read passages of devotion, either written by him or selected from other holy texts. Below is a stotram written by Ganesh Sadasivan from SAT's Publication, *Advaita Devatam*, from which Nome read to us during the most recent Atmotsava.

The Hymn of Twelve Letters
to Sri Ramana

om namo bhagavate śrī ramaṇāya

The immortal Omkara, the name Ramana,
Crushes the wicked (defective, false) ego, the name Ramana. (1)

The mark of the immovable abode/mountain dweller,
the name Ramana,
The heart-dweller's witnessing, the name Ramana. (2)

The one who keeps off delusion, the name Ramana,
Instrumental in releasing [one] from jiva-hood,
the name Ramana. (3)

Devotion, Knowledge, dispassion, the name Ramana,
Not within the grasp of mind, intellect, speech,
the name Ramana. (4)

The best path and the end (best and final path),
the name Ramana,
Supreme, completely auspicious, the name Ramana. (5)

May we always utter the name Ramana,
May we worship daily (always) with faith, the name Ramana. (6)

“His,” “mine,” not, “that,” “this” not, the name Ramana,
The five elements not, the sheath not, the name Ramana. (7)

Obeisance to the revered Guru, the name Ramana,
Offering oneself to the Sadguru, the name Ramana. (8)

The vision of Lord Ramana, the name Ramana,
The touch of the primeval Lord Aruna, the name Ramana. (9)

Superior among mantras, the name Ramana,
Superior among all measures, the name Ramana. (10)

Bliss [of] unmoving Knowledge, the name Ramana,
Ignorance fallen asunder (fallen to pieces, perished) in a moment,
the name Ramana. (11)

If [one] remembers the name Ramana always, absorption with the
nameless [and] formless is certain. (12)



From The Temple Archives

[A seeker wrote with these questions:]

June 18, 2013

Does one have to completely withdraw from the physical life? It seems like the masters, including you, live very simple lives, and it would seem to be easier to live the enlightened life.

I'm wondering how one who is employed, owns a home, has car payments, etc. does that and remains unattached. I'm reminded of Jesus who said to one of his want-to-be disciples, "to follow me you must sell all of your possessions." Without distractions it's easier to do than with. I pray all is well with you and yours.

[Here is Nome's reply.]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message and for your kind donation to SAT.

One should withdraw from the ignorance of misidentification with the body and the false notion of being the performer of action, regardless of the activities in which the body is engaged.

The root of detachment is the certainty of knowledge about the source and nature of happiness.

Freedom from the concept of "my" is renunciation of possessions, and freedom from the notion of "I" is liberation from all of the imagined bondage.

Distraction is in the mind, and tracing the mind to its source to know its true nature is wise.

May your inquiry be deep, so that you always abide in the true Knowledge of the Self, which is neither active nor inactive, in which there is neither an ego nor a world, and for which there is no false supposition of being a body, and thereby are ever at peace.

Om Namah Sivaya

Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker wrote:]

June 23, 2013

Dear Master Nome,

This week I have been finishing up your book *Self-Knowledge*. Again, it is truly clarifying.

I had read the chapter on the nature of the Unborn, and it really stuck with me. During my sitting meditations and continuous inquiry, the unmanifest nature of my self still appears like a witness in relation to the appearance of the phenomenal/objective body and world.

As I understand it from your teachings, so long as the nondual self appears to be in relation to some phenomenal existence/world, it will seem like an observer. When there is no attention on the phenomenal world, that observer/witness realizes itself as simply the unborn and abides in and as sat-chit-ananda.

My question is: In order to help facilitate that shift, would you recommend absolute detachment toward that which appears as manifest? What else might you suggest?

As always, your insight is truly appreciated.

In devotion,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Absolute detachment, in essence, is true Knowledge. Thus, the Maharshi equates vairagya with jnana. Such absolute detachment is not only complete clarity regarding the source and nature of happiness and abidance as the forever-unaffected witness, which is of the nature of Consciousness, but the realization that there is neither an objective world nor an individual to experience such. Therefore, it is wise to deeply and thoroughly inquire. For whom is the manifestation? For whom is the appearance? In and for the Self, there is the Self alone.

That is the sole-existent Reality. Inquire, "Who am I?"

Om Namah Sivaya

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This aspirant was on a return visit to her native India.]

June 30, 2013

Namsate. Dear Nome and Sasvati,

I have a question on bhakti and Bliss. After coming to Kerala, I went to a lot of temples. When I see the God's idol in temples, there is no bhakti, no bliss, feel numb bodily and I just stay in front of the God with no emotions. It has happened to me before also, but this time bodily I feel that a lot. There are also a lot of Satsangs and events going on at [name omitted]'s house. I am having trouble focusing on the events spiritually. Be it at the temple or at home where there are spiritual events this body does not get the happiness that I am doing something or attending a spiritual event.

I know spirituality is within. For some reason I do not get that same happiness that I get at SAT temple, when I attend a spiritual event or pooja or do the chanting. In India, it is totally different for me. There is a lack of spiritual focus. What should I work on?

Is it just me or does the presence of Nome (my guru) for me make a big difference? Is it that my mind is set in a way that "bliss is only at some spiritual places"? How should I focus? Please help.

Yesterday we went to see [name omitted]'s uncle who is Ramana devotee. It was a good satsang.

Hope to see you soon.

Namo Ramana,

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

The source of bliss is the Self. Indeed, bliss is of the very nature of

the Self. It is transcendent of bodily sensations and of emotions, which are a form of thought. It is to be found within.

Similarly, bhakti transcends the sensations and even the emotions that you may now associate with it. The source of bhakti is within, and, therefore, always available, no matter where in the world the body may be.

The satsangs, temples, etc. connected with one's Guru and such are naturally experienced with the deepest bhava, which is dissolution in the infinite and eternal. When you visit other temples, etc., remain keenly aware of the Existence of the Sadguru within, and He will reveal His omnipresence, as God, even as expressed in the form of the murti, temple, satsang, etc. There is no place where the Self is not. Realizing this, steady happiness is yours.

Reflection on your experience in India could serve to prompt you to turn inward more strongly and to experience what is at the SAT temple more consistently.

Please convey blessings to [name omitted].

May your heart blossom in the bliss of parabhakti.

Om Namah Sivaya

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[From a devotee of Sri Ramana in India]

August 20, 2013

Though the fear, thought, has no value, it affects the body with pain. How can one overcome these things?

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Fear is composed of thought. The Self, free from thought, is free from fear. Pain pertains to the body. The Self, transcendent of the body, is free from pain.

Where duality appears, there can be fear. In non-dual Self-Knowl-

edge, there is fearlessness, because of the absence of misidentification with the body, the mind, or as an ego.

By Self-inquiry, which reveals the Knowledge of your true Existence, you realize the imperishable nature of your Existence, which is also your happiness. Similarly, by immersing yourself in devotion to Sri Bhagavan, seeking refuge in that One alone, you rise above thought, and fear dissolves.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[An aspirant asked for an explanation of a verse in the Supplement to the Forty Verses on Reality (Saddarsanam, the Revelation of Truth).]

August 20, 2013

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Master Nome

Namaste

Please shed light on the following from Ulladu Narpadu: Anubandam

30. Like one to whom a tale is told while his thoughts are far away, the mind which is free of attachment is inactive while it acts. But the mind immersed in attachments is active, though it does not act, like the sleeper lying motionless here, (but) who in his dream climbs a hill and tumbles down it.

In Devotion,

[Here is Nome's response.]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Here is another translation, which appears in the 1979 edition of Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi:

The mind whose impressions (vasanas) have been destroyed is not engaged in activity even when it performs actions; it is like those who listen to a story absent-mindedly. The mind which is crowded with them

is engaged in activity even when it does not perform actions; it is like one who, while lying still (in sleep) climbs a hill and falls into a pit in his dream.

Vasanas may be understood as the tendencies of the mind that are rooted in misidentification. Upon the destruction of such ignorant tendencies, the immovable Self alone remains, though to an onlooker it may appear that there is a body engaged in action. Thus the analogy of someone appearing to listen to a story although his mind is not engaged in such at all.

Even if bodily desisting from actions, the mind that is filled with such tendencies is immersed in illusion. Although the Self alone is real, such a mind engages in imagination as in the dream analogy, confusing the experiences thereof with reality and deludedly thinks of oneself as if immersed in such.

Om Namah Sivaya

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[From the same aspirant:]

September 4, 2013

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste

Master Nome:

During the just concluded retreat, you stated, in response to a question, something to the effect of exerting more effort if you have more effort to exert. My questions now are: who is it that exerts the effort? What is complete surrender? How do effort and surrender interplay or balance?

In loving devotion,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

[Here is the reply.]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The inquiry regarding who applies effort is a wise application of effort. Likewise is surrender. Just as is so with inquiry, surrender is complete in the absolute nonexistence of the ego.

Om Namah Sivaya

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome



Announcements

Thank You . . .

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

Bob Haber: keeping the bathrooms clean, watering plants, sweeping the walkways & parking lot, cleanup after events, cleaning the temple, set-up for events, helping with flower arrangements, general maintenance around the temple; Tim Frank: vacuuming & cleaning the temple, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Myra Taylor: vacuuming & cleaning the temple, providing prasad after satsang & atmotsava, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Raman Muthukrishnan: running the bookstore including mail order service, maintaining the SAT website, mastering recordings of events at SAT, providing prasad after satsang; Sangeeta Raman: helping with the bookstore mail order, organizing things around the temple, providing meals at retreats, providing prasad after satsang & atmotsava, leading kirtans at atmotsava, organizing special events including singing, recitation, and chanting; Wimala Brown: providing meals at retreats and prasad after satsang and at atmotsava; Ganesh Sadasivan: organizing special events including singing, recitation, and chanting, preparing meals for retreats; Dhanya Sadasivan: preparing meals at retreats and special events; Eric Ruetz: editing and mastering recordings of satsangs and special events, providing meals at retreats, securing the temple; Jim Clark: lighting candles at meditation events, decorating Murtis with flow-

ers, preparing meals at retreats; Richard Clarke: helping with book orders from India; Steve Smith: providing meals at retreats; Advait Sadasivan & Janani Chandran: providing play time at any time for anyone who wishes to play, helping out when asked; Sheila Hillman, providing prasadam after atmotsava and satsangs; Jay Hiremath: transcription; Carol Johnson: transcription; Anandi Muthukumarasamy: beautification of the temple, providing prasadam after satsang and at atmotsava, cleaning the temple; Ribhu Chandran: providing play time and lots of smiles & giggles; Sabiha Vyas: providing prasadam after satsang and at retreats; Prema Roney: providing prasadam after satsang; Scott Roney: property and Temple maintenance, property rentals, building altars, preparing temple entry for remodel, & assisting wherever needed; Sivakumar Chandran: property and Temple maintenance, assisting wherever needed, maintains recordings for online bookstore, uploads satsangs on YouTube and Vimeo; Grant Summerville: transcription.



Upcoming Events

Navaratri (Vijayadasami): October 13, 2013

Deepavali: November 1, 2013

Skanda Shashthi: November 8, 2013

Karthikai Deepam: November 17, 2013

Truth Revealed Retreat: November 20-24, 2013

Arudra Darshanam: December 18, 2013

Sri Ramana Maharshi Jayanti: December 30, 2013

Satsang: With the exception of November 24, 2013 Satsang will be held each Sunday in the months of October, November, and December.

Atmotsava: With the exception of November 20 and December 18, 2013, Atmotsava will be held each Wednesday during the months of October, November and December.

Boundless Wisdom: October 4, November 14, and December 6, 2013.

Meditation: October 11 & 25, and December 13 & 27, 2013

Ramana Darshanam: October 18, November 29, and December 20, 2013.

Temple Seva: October 19, November 9, and December 14, 2013.

Please refer to calendar for changes.



Sri Sadisvara Mandiram

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

The “Sri Sadisvara Mandiram” will provide an atmosphere in which devotees visiting the temple may experience puja, engage in pradakshina, listen to vedic chanting, read scripture, and worship.

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

satramana.org and then click on “Sri Sadisvara Mandarim” located in the sidebar menu. Two new blogs have appeared regarding the arrival of the Murti-s and the creation of the Nandi altar.

Om Namah Sivaya

