“The ordainer controls the fate of souls in accordance with their prarabdha karma. Whatever is destined not to happen will not happen, try as you may. Whatever is destined to happen will happen, do what you may to prevent it. This is certain. The best course, therefore, is to remain silent.”

–Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
“Prarabdhakarma is employed as an explanation of the manifest activities of the non-Self. One who realizes the Self is the Self, and no karma can be ascribed to him. Yet, for those who have not yet relinquished the objective outlook, prarabdhakarma is said to govern the affairs of the body and such as a means of explanation.” —Nome, Ever Yours in Truth, Nome

Sri Krishna instructs Arjuna saying: “I am the mighty world-destroying Time, now engaged in destroying the worlds. Even without thee, none of the warriors arrayed in hostile armies shalt live.” XI-32 “ . . . By myself (the Lord) have they been already slain; be thou a mere instrument, O Savyasachin.” XI-33

“After the origination of the knowledge of Reality, prarabdha verily ceases to exist, inasmuch as the body and the like become nonexistent; just as a dream does not exist on waking.” —Aparokshanubhuti, v. 91; “The body also being within the phenomenal world (and therefore unreal), how could prarabdha exist? It is therefore, for the understanding of the ignorant alone that the Shruti speaks of prarabdha.” —Aparokshanubhuti, v. 97

Bhagavan, in His compassion and addressing mother Alagammal, desiring her son to return home, tells her the “I” has no power, that the Ordainer alone controls the fate of all, to remain Silent—free of the “I,” which is suffering, and abide as the Self. Expanding the view further in order to diminish the “I,” Krishna says to Arjuna, that not only is one’s fate in the hands of the Lord, but that which is destined to transpire has already occurred. Further eliminating the sense of “I,” Sri Krishna tells us that we are not the performers of action, because “we” do not exist, that all occurs without us and has already been accomplished. With ego destroyed and with clear vision, righteous action prevails. Nome and Adi Sankara express the final, highest truth saying that prarabdhakarma does not actually exist at all because there is no “I” for whom it would exist. The apprehension of these expedient teachings regarding prarabdhakarma—that all is in the Lord’s hands—arises with ego-destruction through the practice of Self-inquiry on the path of Self-Knowledge. These Rishi-s put forth a cosmic view of prarabdha karma and the abandonment of the “I,” and those practicing ego-annihilation experience these Truths with absolute certainty.

Devotees at SAT are exceedingly grateful to receive these cosmic teachings, and, in gratitude, celebrated several special events at the SAT Temple this past quarter, which appear on the following pages.
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Sri Ramana Maharshi’s Self-Realization Day: July 17, 2016

A sannyasi came from somewhere near Madurai and asked Sri Bhagavan to put His name in a notebook intended to raise collections for a choultry or something. He (Bhagavan) asks: “What is my name?” The swami states: “Sri Ramana.” Sri Bhagavan said: “You say so; I have no name.”

—Crums from His Table.

I BOW TO THE TRUE DIVINE GURU

He, my Lord, is the Lord of the Universe. He, my Guru, is the Guru of the universe. He, my Self, is the Self of the Universe.

Self-Realization Day included readings by Nome from the Self-Realization pamphlet and Crumbs from His Table.
Sadguru! What avails explanation by many words? 
By your steady, unwavering compassion, I have traversed the evil, 
the originless ocean of worldly existence, in a trice, and, totally devoid 
of the triad of qualities, devoid of even a trace of the primal ignorance, 
I have become the peerless Supreme Brahman, the attributeless, 
the eternal Consciousness-Bliss. (Song of Ribhu, 39:28)
This retreat was based upon the teachings from Atma Vidya and Five Verses on the One Self.
Janmastami included readings by Nome from the Bhagavad Gita. Images from this event can be viewed by following these links: https://www.facebook.com/SATTemple and https://satramana.org/web/gallery/pictures/
“There are only two ways to conquer destiny or to be independent of it. One is to inquire whose this destiny is and discover that only the ego is bound by it and not the Self and that the ego is nonexistent. The other way is to kill the ego by completely surrendering to the Lord, realizing one’s helplessness and saying all the time: ‘Not I, but Thou, oh Lord,’ giving up all sense of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ and leaving it to the Lord to do what He likes with you.”

—Sri Ramana Maharshi, *Self-Realization* pamphlet
...Atom within atom, vast beyond vastness!
Sweetness hid in the hardened node,
You have steadied me clear in human form
All besmeared with holy ashes;
Added me to the congregation
Of Your servants true and trusty:
Made me experience in my heart
The inmost meaning of the five letters;
Restored my real state to me,
And rule me now, O Master of Wisdom,
Vinayaka; Your feet alone,
Your feet alone are my sole refuge.

Excerpt from Vinayaka Ahaval,
by Saint Auvaiyar Ma as it appears in
“Loving Ganesha,”
Himalayan Academy

Images from this event can be viewed by following these links:
Aravind Bose, a long-standing Bengali devotee, had one son and one daughter. The son, a stalwart young man, suddenly passed away before he completed his eighteenth year. Bose was very much grieved and to get relief he used to ask Bhagavan questions now and then. Today also, he asked some questions. Even in that question, his grief was evident. Bhagavan, as usual, asked him to enquire into the Self and find out. He was not satisfied. Bhagavan then said, “All right. I will tell you a story from Vichara Sagaram. Listen.” So saying, he began telling us the following story:

“Two youngsters, by name Rama and Krishna, told their respective parents that they would go to foreign countries to prosecute further studies and then earn a lot of money. After some time, one of them died suddenly. Bose was very much grieved and to get relief, he used to ask Bhagavan questions now and then. Today also, he asked some questions. Even in that question, his grief was evident. Bhagavan, as usual, asked him to enquire into the Self and find out. He was not satisfied. Bhagavan then said, “All right. I will tell you a story from Vichara Sagaram. Listen.” So saying, he began telling us the following story:

“Two youngsters, by name Rama and Krishna, told their respective parents that they would go to foreign countries to prosecute further studies and then earn a lot of money. After some time, one of them died suddenly. The other studied well, earned a lot and was living happily. Sometime later, the one that was alive requested a merchant who was going to his native place to tell his father that he was wealthy and happy and that the other who had come with him had passed away. Instead of passing on the information correctly, the merchant told the father of the person that was dead, that his son had earned a lot of money and was living happily. The parents of the person that was actually dead, were happy in the thought that their son would come back after some time while the parents of the person whose son was alive, but was reported to be dead, were in great grief. In fact, neither of them saw their son, but they were experiencing happiness or grief according to the reports received. That is all. It is only when they go to that country that they will know the truth. We, too, are similarly situated. We believe all sorts of things that the mind tells us and get deluded into thinking that what exists does not exist and that what does not exist exists. If we do not believe the mind but enter the heart and see the son that is inside, there is no need to see the children outside.”

About a year back, a Rani from Bombay Presidency came here. She was a good lady and a mother of several children. Her husband was staying in foreign countries. However, courageous as she might be, would she not feel his absence? We all thought she came here hoping to get peace of mind by Bhagavan’s darshan. Accordingly, you know what happened? Having heard that Muruganar had written several songs and verses in Tamil about Bhagavan, she requested Bhagavan through a friend, to get some of the good ones translated into English.

Though Bhagavan said in an indifferent manner, “What do I know? Better ask Muruganar himself,” by the time I went there at 2:30 p.m. he was turning over the pages of the book, leaving book marks here and there and showing them to Sundaresa Iyer. I sat down, surprised at that kindness. Looking at me, Bhagavan said, “That Rani requested me to select some songs from Muruganar’s book and get them translated into English. In his book, Sannidhi Murai there is a portion called Bringasandesam. I put some marks in that portion. The bhava is that of a nayika (heroine) and of a nayaka (hero). The mind is nayika. Ramana is nayaka. The bee (the unwavering buddhi) is the maid. The gist of the songs marked is: the heroine says to her maid, “My Ramana has disappeared. Search and bring him.” The maid says, “Oh, mistress! When your Ramana is in your own Self, where can I search for him? If at any time, the food given is hot, you say, “Oh! My Ramana, my lord, is in my heart; will he not get burnt with this heat? Now where do you want me to search? When your Lord is within yourself, where can I search for him? Give up this delusion. Join the Lord that is within yourself and be peaceful.” This is the gist of those songs. I marked them as they existed does not exist and that what does not exist exists. If we do not believe the mind but enter the heart and see the son that is inside, there is no need to see the children outside.”
may be of use to her. Poor lady! There is no knowing where her husband is. The mind is troubled. So, we shall have to tell her to adapt her mental attitude. I felt that these verses would be appropriate."

Meanwhile, the Rani came, Lokamma was made to sing those songs and Sundaresa Iyer to give the meaning in English. She was satisfied. We thought that Bhagavan, by this opportunity, taught us that one should not grieve over people residing in foreign countries but should turn the mind inward so that the atma swarupa (the Lord in the Self) will be close to us at all times.
The Reality of the Self

September 7, 2014

Om Om Om Om

(Silence)

Nome: Our very Being, the Self, is Brahman. Perfectly full, eternal, infinite, and completely real, it is One, without there being anything else whatsoever, at any time.

What do you consider yourself to be? If something other, there is another. Otherness is for otherness. The world is for the individual. What do you consider yourself to be? An embodied individual? How can that which has birth, limitation and death, the body, be equated with the ever-existent Self, the unborn and the imperishable?

What do you consider yourself to be? Thoughts or a group of thoughts? How could something that is changeful, transitory, and objective, be the nonobjective, eternal Existence? How could something which appears as multiple be that which is One, without a second? How could that which is changeful be equated with the invariable?

What do you consider yourself to be? An “I,” an individual? Though this may be assumed, have you actually determined its nature? If the individual is sought, through profound self-inquiry, what is found? The individuality, being falsely assumed, vanishes, and the reality of indivisible Being alone remains.

This undivided Truth is Brahman, the Reality. For That, in That, there is no other, no differentiation; neither “I” nor “this,” neither the ego nor the world. If you are something other, there may be something else. But what are you? The perceived is determined by the perceiver, the conceived by the concealer. What is the nature of the perceiver? If the identity is not known, reality and happiness are imagined to be elsewhere. If, by deep inquiry, you discern the identity of you, reality and happiness and identity are the same, one illimitable, indivisible nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss – Saccidananda (Sat-chit-ananda). If you are another, happiness appears to be other. If you are not another, you, yourself, are the happiness. If you are another, reality, whether considered as God or the world, appears as other, as differentiated. Then, there is the triad of jagajjivapara (jagat-jiva-para) – the universe, the individual and the Supreme. But are you another? Can you be differentiated from your own existence? If you seek to know your own existence, what is it? Abandon any tendency to consider it in terms of a body, a thought, or as the individual, the “I,” and what is actually your existence? It is only the other-less Brahman, the nondual, and this is invariably so, for Existence does not change its nature at any time.

Abidance in such Knowledge of the Self is a state that is utterly complete. In the sastras, the realized are described as being those who have done what needs to be done. What is the completeness that they have found? If it is something that comes, it will go; if it appears, it will disappear. Bhagavan has made this abundantly clear. He is complete, perfectly full. What is the nature of this completeness? This ought to be known. Know it within yourself, by profoundly inquiring, “Who am I?” Only the complete, the perfectly full, reveals in itself. Only Brahman knows Brahman. No other
can do so, but no other actually exists. You, yourself, are the perfect fullness. Find it by knowing yourself.

Questioner: If there were an unguarded or an unprepared moment, and, turning in, one caught oneself taking a perspective as an individual, the slightest inquiry causes that to flicker away. But Existence and Consciousness remain unbroken. Just that simple test of continuity versus flickering away is enough to throw oneself totally into the teaching and take it deeper.

N.: Indeed, if you would simply abide as That which is forever immutable, which has no beginning or end, and cease to misidentify with anything that changes, that would suffice. That which seemingly has a momentary existence does not actually exist at all. That which is eternal actually alone is, always. Is the individual always? Then, that cannot be you, for you exist always. If your existence is not an individual, in what way can you be bound? Thus, inquiring to know the nature of who is bound reveals Liberation. Inquiring to find who is ignorant reveals the innate Knowledge.

Q.: Sri Ramana’s example of using one thorn to remove another thorn could be implemented, in so far as the very teaching of Self-inquiry also appears within the dream known as the world.

N.: Does inquiry belong to the dream? What is inquiry?

N.: The idea of this moment is also a dream. Such instruction or practice that negates the dream, the illusion, that negates ignorance, which actually has no substance whatsoever, is the thorn used to pull out the other thorn. In the finality, there is neither assertion nor negation. Thus, both thorns are said to be thrown away. However you view it, whether as something appearing in the dream, or appearing from beyond the dream, the most important thing is to actually inquire, to know oneself. After the Self is known, conclusively realized, then we can decide such matters.

Q.: Oh, yes. (laughter)

Another Q.: The amount of time I spend in the waking state actually inquiring is very little actually. I am perplexed why I just don’t do the inquiry. When I’m here and following the instructions, it’s not a difficult thing to do. It’s not complicated. I think that it’s been said it’s the easiest thing to do, but I do something that’s far more difficult instead, most of the time. So, why do I do the difficult thing, when the easier thing would solve all the difficulty’?
N.: Even aside from the question of ease and difficulty, what works? So, please do not expect me to answer that question.

Q.: No.

N.: As to why one doesn’t inquire, how should I know? (laughter) If you come to understand with certainty, that your happiness and immortality depend on it, you will inquire. Since the inquiry is inherently transcendent of thought, continuity is no difficulty.

Q.: So, I need to really understand what you just said. I need to understand to a sufficient degree that I do what works, instead of what doesn’t work.

N.: It is a simple question. What is the source of happiness, or what is the nature of happiness? It is very simple, but the result of understanding it is extensive.

Another Q.: I can just see how a lot of my mistakes are based on that non-seeing of where happiness is. I feel that I have to do something in the world as a body that’s my obligation, to entertain, or to do whatever. Obviously, everything in that illusion is moving, and it’s all powered by thinking somehow happiness is out there. I’m running after it to make people happy or to make myself happy.

N.: Does that work?

Q.: Ah no, it’s not doing too well. (laughter)

N.: How would it be possible for something eternal to give you what is within? If happiness is within, realizing the Self becomes extremely important. Your own experience tells you where happiness is and where it is not. No object in the world can supply it to you; it is self-evident. When divested of all objects, such as in deep dreamless sleep, you are quite happy, happy with nothing more than your existence. Indeed, the Existence is the Happiness.

Q.: I think that the striving for external happiness is what makes movement seem inevitable. It’s impossible. I don’t know that for sure, because I keep trying it. One trillion attempts and counting.

N.: If you pile up imagination upon imagination, will it eventually turn real? It does not work that way.

Q.: I know. Yes, it is like one dream upon another dream, fleeting imagination. My whole life is a group of thoughts put together, strung together, and somehow believed to exist as something real.

N.: Not just this life.

Q.: Yes, my dream life. That is another one.

N.: All the lives are like dreams upon dreams. There is something that isundreamed, by the light of which all the dreams are seen. That something is perfectly full and ever-existent. That something is you. What you presently regard as the subject is merely objective illusion, and what you regard as an object, the Self, is actually you, the subject.

Q.: You mean that it is my attempt to get to myself? I try to get happiness externally, and I try to get myself externally, too.

N.: As if there were two of you, one the Self and the other yourself, even though your Existence is invariably singular.

Q.: I have to remove these false beliefs, because, with those false beliefs will never be able to see. I get a little bit of a glimpse of that, but I can see that, to make it steady, I have to really remove this ignorance.

N.: If ignorance is removed, by realizing that it is, indeed, only ignorance and not true, what is true remains, self-evident. The Reality is already here, perfectly so. It need not be attained anew. Just that which has been falsely regarded as yourself, as real, should be discarded. The false being abandoned as false, the true remains. That is actually the only thing present the entire time. Happiness went in quest of happiness. What a silly story. That which is Knowledge becomes ignorant is not possible.
Q.: It is very painful to look outside myself.

N.: Such ignorance alone is the cause of suffering. If ignorance is abolished, the potential to suffer vanishes.

Q.: This teaching is very subtle, but maybe it isn’t so subtle. I know what annihilates all ignorance, what is my essential Being, yet I believe myself to be other than that. This is the movement.

N.: Whose belief is it? The other has a belief in the other? The Self has no ignorance. Whether this is subtler than the subtlest or plainly obvious, either way, inquire.

Q.: Sometimes, it seems obvious. Sometimes, it seems totally subtle. Somehow keeping the company of a sage makes it definitely more obvious.

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

(Silence)
Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil of verses from the Ribhu Gita)

Reality of the Self
September 27, 2015
Om Om Om

(Silence)

Nome: The Self is the Reality, of the nature of absolute, invariable, undifferentiated Being-Consciousness-Bliss. What you suppose as your identity, that is, to be the Self, determines what you assume to be reality. So, if you assume yourself to be an individualized “I,” there is also “this” regarded as real. If you assume yourself to be a particularized, individualized, mental entity, thoughts are regarded as real. If you regard yourself as a sensing entity, sense objects are regarded as real. If as a subject that is, then an object seems to be real. If you regard yourself as a body, an objective world seems as if real. If you regard yourself as differentiated, anything distinct from the Supreme Brahman, you see differences everywhere. If you regard yourself as a jiva, there are distinct jagat and Para – the world and the Supreme.

What is the truth of the Self? What, in truth, are you? The changeful body cannot be your immutable Existence. So, what are you? The multiple, changeful senses cannot be your actual Existence, your true nature. So, what are you? Thoughts, any number of thoughts, cannot be you who know all of them. So, what are you? The notion of being an individual cannot truly be what you are. What you are is changelessly so. If you are not any of these things, what marks you off as distinct from Brahman? If you are Brahman, there is only Brahman. What in truth are you? If you are the Reality, you experience your Self alone, everywhere and at all times. That is the Reality; that is pure, undifferentiated Existence. What is not real is not your Self, and what is not real does not actually exist. If you wish to know Reality as it is, know your Self. If the Self is known, there is nothing else to be known, nor is there a distinct knower thereof. What do you regard as your identity, and what truly is the Self? Question yourself, inquire; inquire deeply as to “Who am I?”

If there is no “I,” there is no “this,” and all are only the Supreme Brahman, your own true Self. If you are bodiless, you are also world-less, and all that exists is only Brahman, the perfect fullness of your own true Self. If you are thought-transcendent, there is only the inconceivable pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss. What do you regard yourself as being, and what truly is your Being?

The Self alone can know the Self. Nothing else can possibly do so. Only that which is real can comprehend the Reality. The unreal cannot do anything at all. How could the unreal know something? Trace knowledge to its source, and you find your Self. Trace happiness to its source, and you find your Self. Trace reality to its source, and you find your Self. What is the Self? Inquire deeply, and know it with certainty, the certainty of self-evident Reality.

Questioner: I’m thinking of tracing the sense of “I!” to where it arises finding that place where the
sense of “I” could never arise. Those are not contradictory, but are a question of depth. If there could ever be a source for a sense of “I,” as an individual, it could only be the Consciousness-Self. Deeper, no sense of “I” would ever arise from there. I would never think I had exhausted the depth of that instruction.

N.: If you would completely understand the instruction, what would remain in order to question?

Q.: Whenever I wanted to disidentify from discomfort associated with the body, I used to sing, “Not the body, not the mind,” and then I took it to a religious sense of saying, “Not my will, but Thine,” because it rhymed. I used that as a prompt to disidentify from any sense of discomfort in the body, the mind being that which evaluated it as discomfort and also evaluated the sense of time and any persistence of it. The religious part is what I want to ask about. It seems more dualistic, but there was always a sense in dualistic religion that one would offer up to God discomfort or pain, as if a primitive sacrifice, but it didn’t seem like a bad thing.

N.: Is that the only thing that is offered?

Q.: Well, also the ego, which makes that evaluation and owns it.

N.: If the ego is offered, if there is no sense of “I” and “mine,” it is all right. Where “I” and “mine” vanish, where is there any duality? Rather than think about all these things, it is direct experience that is desired. So, if you are endowed with a sense of “I,” from where does it rise? It cannot be coming from the body, for the body is for the “I.” It cannot come from the mind, for the entirety of the mind is for the “I.” The “I” is primary. From where does the sense of “I” arise?

Q.: From where it doesn’t exist, in one sense.

N.: Do you experientially know this, or do you think this?

Q.: I think I’ve touched that.
Q.: Yes, it’s not like prison bars, so that more thoughts would be more bars, because they are not real to begin with. All this discrimination and the inquiry seem very tied together.

N.: Because the Self is not an object, the discrimination that negates all that is objective from your identity is very much part of the inquiry. As the Self is ever-existent, the inquiry is primarily negation. By such negation, the sense of reality, identity, and happiness return to their rightful place. That rightful place is your Self.

Q.: Is it true, though, that negation has to happen with the light of inquiry to the drive to know happiness, who I am, and reality? It seems that it all comes from that kind of drive. It seems more focused and more energized.

N.: Then, you have answered your own question.

Q.: This dialogue is helping me. The clarity isn’t always there like this.

N.: You clearly know when the clarity is missing. What is it that so clearly knows, always without interruption and without end? That which shines clearly forever is the very nature of your own Existence. Existence alone knows itself. It does not rely on anything else to know itself. At the depth of which you know that you exist, discern the nature of that Existence. Thus the Reality comprehends itself. The Self knows itself; Brahman alone knows Brahman.

Another Q.: The power, the greatness, and the depth of Self-inquiry; it is the final path that can break the illusion. I’m just so grateful to Bhagavan, to have this great door. It takes one directly to that Existence. Whether I am here, there, then, now, later, whatever, it’s all different imaginations that are being built, and it’s all so unreal. This powerful tool takes one back. So, the most important thing is just inquiry.

N.: That is it. Yes, the most important thing is to inquire. It is pure Grace that he has revealed the inquiry and revealed what the inquiry reveals. The power of it is the power of Brahman, the power of Reality. Before That, nothing can stand. Since all of bondage is a product of imagination, by inquiring as he has instructed, all of the imaginary bondage is put to an end. What remains, the Reality, is what he is. We disappear; he alone remains. Is that not pure Grace?

Q.: Everything else is making a preliminary just to be able to inquire.

N.: Yes, in the end, one has to come to know himself. In what Sri Bhagavan has revealed, the end is the beginning. There is complete finality in Self-Knowledge, because it is thought-transcendent, and it is the self-revelation of the ever-existent. There is nothing beyond that. If it were a matter of thinking, there might be something beyond that, but, as this is mind-transcendent Knowledge, there is no duality and no beyond. The Absolute Reality simply is as it is, alone always. The inquiry reveals it to itself. We are very fortunate.

Q.: My prayer is always, “Let me inquire instead of anything else.”

N.: If you always inquire, where will any ignorance ever be found? The disappearance of ignorance is found in its ultimate nonexistence. The inquiry reveals true Knowledge, is itself constituted of that Knowledge, and reveals you to be That alone. As he has said, “It is the ego’s death and the true display of Grace.”

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

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil from Chapter 14 of the Song of Ribhu.)
To Die and Live
By Dr. Sarada Natarajan
December 1992

Finally one becomes a mere statistic—born, died, mourned deeply, etc. True, one lives in the thoughts of dear ones, in their tears and laughter, in their bitter-sweet memories. And then, there is always the euphemistic consolation that one lives in ones works, ones writings and song, dance and art, in the students one may have taught, in the discoveries and inventions one may have made, and most of all in the love one has shared. But is it really “I” who would live in all that? When my writings are read, what lives are my words, not “I.” For “I” was not my words while alive to become so after death. My words, my song, my dance, my invention—always something that springs from me, that is created by me—doubtlessly closely interwoven with my sense of “I,” yet, a thing apart. None of these are “I.” If my book be perused, it brings me joy; if it be burnt, great grief. Yet, I always know that the life or death of the book is not my life or death. The book may die and I may live still. Or, I may die and the book survive the ravages of time. It is so with all art, with all creation, with every action; it is most certainly not “I.” One may protest that a work of art or a loved one is a part of oneself, yet, we cannot say that is “I.” Our primary identification is with the five foot or six foot frame, the body which we believe is “I.” All other identifications are merely secondary or tertiary.

Having identified oneself with a given form, name is added on. Then, follow all things that are intimately related to that name and form. On the heels come other phenomena not so intimately related. And in the periphery lie a host of experiences rejected as irrelevant to this name and form, and, hence not meriting the attention of this “I.” This is not to say that the body is the ultimate reality about oneself. No, not at all. It is, rather, to point out that it is thought to be so, taken to be practically the ultimate truth about oneself. We logically argue the case of the mind’s supremacy. We say convincingly that, but for the mind, there would be no awareness of the body. “What happens daily in sleep?” we triumphantly ask. Yet, how true is the truth to us? How far does our life reflect the reality that is only the mind that gives a semblance of life to the body and that the mind itself has no consciousness of its own either? It is but a reflection of the Self. Is this not just one more thought in our minds? Are we able to be less tempted at the sight of a delicacy, less attracted by a colorful dress or melodious tune? Are we less sad when we lose even the tiniest of our belongings? Are we cheerful in adversity? Are we calm in failure? Are we less perturbed at the prospect of sorrow and pain and death?
If we are not, or, are not significantly so, then we might as well recognize our deep attachment to the body. For all our philosophizing, the bond is still tight, no break in the chain, no chink in the prison door. And how can there be, unless we get to the root of the matter, unless we understand through enquiry the very basis of the identification? All other endeavor is a mere whitewashing of the dungeon walls. It may help us to feel happier with our imprisonment, but does not make us free.

Yet, we shun the spirit of enquiry. We take every possible detour to avoid the royal path. We, daily, in the by-lanes of good deeds, turn to comforting discussions of truth, else we get caught in a traffic jam of depression, or simply stuck in the rut of routine. Anything to avoid serious enquiry. Why? When we believe it means so much to us, when we are sure we care for Self-Knowledge, when we have faith, too, in Bhagavan and his way, why do we procrastinate? Fear, it seems, can be the only reason. We are afraid of turning round, afraid of facing ourselves. Yes, afraid, therefore, of self-enquiry. We are frightened by it, frightened almost it seems, as by death itself.

Why, of course! That is the answer. We feel that Self-enquiry is death, the death of the ego. Hence, we dread it. Although we are repeatedly assured that the death of the ego means a new life of immeasurable bliss, we dread the prospect. And all our cajoling of the mind still lies, happily for it, only within its own realm. So, we tell ourselves time and again, that there is a supreme need for serious pursuit of Self-enquiry, but are unable to stick to our good resolves. It is time then, perhaps, for a little shock-treatment, time to be frightened out of our complacency, and there is only one thing that is truly scary, the prospect of death. It is time, therefore, to remember the possibility of its imminence. Yes, we must remember that death may strike at any moment. Then, what becomes of us? It is then that one becomes a mere statistic, just a thought in some minds and a record on paper. What becomes of all ones' treasured plans? Can they be continued? And would it really be a consolation if they could? Do we feel less worried about death because it is only the body that dies? Are we content in the thought that the mind will continue in any case, it will only assume a different body, just a change of clothes? All this is true, no doubt, but how real is it to us emotionally, psychologically? Does it really matter that we continue to exist after death? We only console ourselves with the thought when faced with the bitter reality of death. The bitterness is very much there, the fear at the thought of death, the clinging to this known sweet identity, the longing for its continuance. Deep down none of us want to die. Of course, for the most part, we even take ourselves to be immortals. Neither our actions nor our thought reflect the possibility that death may strike at any moment. If we do persuade ourselves to think of death, however, it is not a happy thought.

It is good that we dread death. At least a vivid remembrance of its looming presence may thus force us to grapple with the true meaning of life. There is the thought of the utter futility, when death arrives, of all that by which we lay such great store. This thought could make us turn to that which is of eternal value.

A visualizing of death would make us recognize that not all the tears of the beloved could give us sweet life. Of what meaning would it be then? What would be the value of the rich treasures that we hoard? Could we continue to work at our pet projects? Or, would all these be abandoned for want of our presence? Life would go on relentlessly—only, not for us. Then, is it not time to stop behaving now as if life is so dependent on us, as if the world economy would collapse if we did not earn or all beauty fade away if we did not uphold its cause? To live and act well is laudable, indeed, but at what cost? Must not our priority lie in piercing the mystery that shrouds death? For only then can we really come to terms with life itself. Only then can we experience eternity in a dew drop and the universe in a grain of sand. Only when we conquer death can we conquer life. We fail to recognize that need for a vibrant life, though. Perhaps, at least the need to escape death may lead us to the right door.

In order to conquer death, we may even become prepared to pre-empt it through enquiry. By facing death, by enquiring into its meaning, by enquiring into the nature of the one for whom death is, one would steal its thunder. Then, death would have been stripped of all its trumps and must surrender. Then, as Bhagavan emphatically declares, we are naturally immortal. If we yet have doubts
about the urgency for Self-enquiry, let us reconcile ourselves to becoming mere statistics, one more feather in Death's crowded cap.

Is the Mind a Myth?
By A.R. Natarajan
September 1992

1. “What is the mind? If one searches to find out, then there would be no separate entity as the mind. This is the straight path.” –Upadesa Saram, v. 17

2. “Control of the mind is of two kinds, its lulling and its destruction. A lulled mind will rise again but not the one which is destroyed.” Upadesa Saram, v. 13

3. “Since satva-guna (the constituent of prakriti that makes for purity, intelligence, etc.) is the nature of the mind, and since the mind is pure and undefiled like ether, what is called mind is, in truth, of the nature of knowledge.” –Self-Enquiry: Collected Works, v. 11

Having heard from Muruganar about Ramana and the uniqueness of his teaching Santamma comes to Sri Ramanasramam with eager longing to quench her spiritual thirst. Straightaway she asks Ramana, “Please destroy my mind.” Ramana tells Muruganar, “Ask her if there is such a thing as the mind? If so, what is its form?” She is baffled, not being able to grasp the true import of Ramana’s words. But Muruganar tells her, “You have been initiated.” What had she been initiated into?

Was it the secret about the mind’s nature and the need to enquire about it? But, then, if one looks at the statements in their naked form, the question would arise as to what one is to enquire into if the mind is nonexistent. Ramana’s statement in Upadesa Undiyar, “There is no such thing as the mind,” also makes one ponder about the exact meaning of Ramana’s words.

Does Ramana then subscribe to the view that the mind is a myth, that it is nonexistent? Does he say that it is as illusory as the waters of a desert mirage or a barren woman’s son? Quite surely “no.” Why do we say this? Were it so, quotes 2 and 3 above would have no meaning, would they not? If there be no mind, it would be idle to refer to its lulling or destruction. Again, where would be the question of going into its nature, as to whether it is consciousness, whether it is pure or impure? So, we must find out what exactly is the notion which Ramana is declaring to be false. It is the notion that the mind is a separate entity. What Ramana is constantly bashing is this erroneous idea of an independent existence to the mind. For the mind is only a bundle of thoughts. “Because of emergence of thoughts, we surmise something from which they start and term it as the mind.”

Where was your mind in deep sleep when thoughts were not there? If it were permanent as it is imagined, can it be nonexistent sometimes and existent at other times?

If thoughts constitute the mind, some further questions would arise. “Are you distinct from your thoughts? Can you exist without them? Can thoughts exist without you?” If one questions thus, it would be found that thoughts cannot exist without you. Why do we say this? It is common knowledge that thoughts are innumerable and varied, but, at any given moment, only one thought can exist. Why? Because the individual's attention is needed. The moment this attention is withdrawn or switched on to another thought, the first thought recedes and the latter thought to which the attention has been shifted sprouts up.

Therefore, Ramana points out that other thoughts are dependent on the individual “I”-thought. What about the opposite position? Can one exist without the other thoughts? Can one be totally free of thoughts? “Yes.” Sleep and the state of a jnana are enough evidence for this. It follows that the individual is the mind and not the individ-
ual and his mind, as we have all along been think-
ing.

Logically, then, if we must know about the mind
and its nature, we have to find out about the indi-
vidual, about the feeling of individuality. Our daily
experience of waking, dream and sleep holds the
key to this. Individuality is existent in waking and is
absent in sleep. Since it is discontinuous, it must
have a source from which it rises and into which it
subsides. Must it not?

On the basis of his experience, Ramana has in-
dicated its source to be the spiritual heart. What is
the nature of this heart? It is the fullness of con-
sciousness. If the mind has a conscious source, its
nature must be consciousness. It is precisely this
point which Ramana explains in great detail to
Gambhiram Seshaiyer, at the turn of this century.
The nature of the mind is “intelligence, pure and
undefiled.” It is a wave in the sea of consciousness.
One can never lose sight of this fact for in it lies the
way to our freedom.

As long as the mind remains anchored in its
source its purity is unsullied. However, presently it
is merged at its source only in deep sleep and that,
too, involuntarily. Due to the rising of latent thought
on waking, the mind is in continuous association
with some thought or the other without let. These
associate thoughts may be good, bad, neutral and
so on. But, they are all dangerous. If you let in one
thought by paying attention to it, you are done for.
Because the mind’s natural purity and silence
would be disturbed and muddied. The gentle pa-
tience of Ramana in explaining this point is touch-
ing. As he says, one should not give room for such
thoughts: “Is this good? Or is that good? Or can this
be done? One should be vigilant even before such
thoughts arise and make the mind stay in its natural
state.” For no thought is our friend. It is a foe in dis-
guise ready to topple us; once thoughts surface,
they cause “more and more evil,” to use the strong
expression of Ramana. It is seldom that Ramana
uses such a strong expression. But he does so
about conceptualization for there is no point in
mincing matters, when it comes to restoring to us
the means to be free and ever joyous. Free of what?
The pollution of the mind. The overcrowding of the
mind. The dissipation of the mind’s energy in innu-
erable thoughts working at cross purposes. Not
that one cannot handle the mind after the “I” is
badly mixed with its associates, the other thoughts,
but then it would be a salvage operation of ques-
tioning to whom thoughts relate, which is often
time-consuming and frustrating. Instead, if vigilant,
one can prevent foothold to thoughts which are
ever ready for the unguarded moment.

The very simplicity of the step by step search-
light which Ramana throws on the mind is baffling.
Why? Because we are unwilling to jettison, to
throw overboard, our false notions. We keep fum-
bling and groping like blind bats when the sun is
shining brightly. Lost in the mind’s labyrinthine
ways, we end our lives grumbling and complaining
about the mind which is out of control, restless and
chaotic. Should we not give ourselves a chance to
be that vastness of silence when the mind is abid-
ing at its source?

NAMO RAMANA
A message from Ujwal Jagadeesh, RMCL
August 23, 2016

“Mami, Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, music
director, RMCL, leader of Ramananjali absorbed in
Bhagavan Ramana, listening to Sharanagati song,
sung by whole group. She is a great light in
Ramana movement. Her passing on is a glory, not
a tragedy. It is Absorption.”

Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, divinely devoted servant
of Sri Bhagavan, was Bhagavan's driving instrument be-
hind the Ramananjali Music at the Ramana Maharshi
Centre for Learning.

Shared here are excerpts from the
Ramana Way
entitled “How Bhagavan Captured Us.” They appear in a
series of articles written by Smt. Sulochana in several
Ramana Way issues from 2014.

“. . . Bhagavan brought me into a family totally soaked
in Karnatik Music so that I received the best of training
at every stage of my life in order to be able to use this
art for the development of Ramananjali Music...”

“. . . My maternal grand-uncle hailed from
Chidambaram and was a great devotee of Bhagavan
Ramana. He used to visit the Ashram and have Bhaga-
van’s darsan frequently. The name of Ramana would
ever be on his lips...”
“... There cannot be even an iota of doubt that ARN and I were brought together by Bhagavan’s grace. Looking back I see all the possible directions that my life could have taken at that juncture had I married anyone other than ARN and I shudder to think that none of those would have likely led me to the feet of Bhagavan. It is amply clear to me that Bhagavan captured me in no small measure through my marriage to ARN...”
[A seeker wrote with several questions. Here is the response.]

June 20, 2016

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. The Self is bodiless, and one who has realized the Self is the Self alone. The distinctions such as living or dead do not apply to him. He is timeless Existence. This is the nature of Sri Bhagavan. Yet he, the wise, and the sastras (scriptures) declare the value of satsang (keeping holy company) and upadesa (spiritual instruction).

Rather than thinking that there are “fakes” and using the mind to form opinions of others, a mode that is fraught with delusion, it is better to perceive that each can express or convey only that which he has experientially understood or realized.

The seen is always according to the viewpoint of the seer.

Sphurana means the shining, the flashing forth, or vibration. In jnana, it refers to the “flashing forth” or shining forth of Consciousness, by the light of which “I” and all else are known, but the Self really does not have such. It may be regarded as the basic feeling of existence, though Existence, itself, the Self, transcends that.

You are quite right: regardless of whatever experiences may appear, be they apparently internal or external, be they of light or cakras, keep your focus on Self-Knowledge by Self-inquiry. Nonobjective is the way, and the eternal is the goal.

Images are symbols. Words, spoken or written, are symbols. Who is the symbolized?

The undifferentiated Existence is the nature of the Guru. Bodiless, how can there be two? The Guru is One alone. Is this not the reason that Dakshinamurti, the primordial Guru, is depicted as seated at the root of the banyan tree?

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[Another reply to more questions from the same seeker:]

July 15, 2016

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. I am glad to know that you are making such good use of Ever Yours in Truth. By Self-inquiry, the seed of ignorance and its manifested form are dissolved. Yes, to use the appearance of delusion to prompt the inquiry that reveals transcendence is wise.

The smiling gaze of Sri Bhagavan stops the mind in mid-flight and absorbs the viewer.

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

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[This is a response to a seeker who previously wrote about samadhi experiences and now wrote concerning a teacher of his.]

July 16, 2016

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste.

Images are symbols. Words, spoken or written, are symbols. Who is the symbolized?

The undifferentiated Existence is the nature of the Guru. Bodiless, how can there be two? The Guru is One alone. Is this not the reason that Dakshinamurti, the primordial Guru, is depicted as seated at the root of the banyan tree?

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[This is a response to a seeker who previously wrote about samadhi experiences and now wrote concerning a teacher of his.]
Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Teachers teach according to what they know. If some have been helpful in some way, thankfulness is natural. Opinions in the mind are, generally, based on misidentification. After all, it is not the other-less Brahman, the “I” in aham brahmasmi (I am Brahman), that has any idea of another. Nor is there an existent other “I” for whom it could be. Nor is there any objective entity about which it would be.

“I am Brahman” is the indubitable Truth. This natural, inconceivable Knowledge of the reality of absolute Being is the undifferentiated, essential meaning of all the mahavakya-s.

As always, rejoicing with you in your happiness—the purnam (perfect fullness) of the Self,

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

July 26, 2016

Dear   ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

As Being is ever-existent yet not an object, as Consciousness is all-knowing yet not a thought, so Bliss is ever full yet not an emotion. These are the very nature of the Self and not attributes. When ignorance is destroyed, the self-effulgent Self is said to shine for itself, though, in reality, the Self always is just as it is, and ignorance is not real.

You may find that the book Parabhakti is of help in your devotion.

“Thou dost root out the ego” is the phrase that precedes “of those who meditate on Thee in the heart.” The extinguishment of the falsely assumed ego is essential. Heart is one’s quintessential Being. The meditation on, or in, it is nonobjective. It is abidance as That, the Self. So, the alternative translation found in my copy of the old edition of Collected Works is, “of those who meditate on their spiritual identity with Thee.” The power that abolishes the ego is of the Absolute Self. That is Siva, the Lord of Arunachala, and Sri Ramana. If one abandons one’s own misidentification with forms, such as the body, the forms of the divine take care of themselves.

May you ever abide as the Self, which is of the nature of eternal peace, the fountainhead of love, the abode of uncaused joy, and which is Brahman alone.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

|A reply to another seeker:|

July 23, 2016

Dear   ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Freedom from misidentification is peace without end. It reveals happiness that is non-dependent and love that is limitless.

The bodiless Self is ever un-afflicted and imperishable. It is serenely transcendent. That alone is what you truly are. All the worries and anxious thoughts are based on the false assumption of being a body.

She who always devotedly adheres to the Truth is fully embraced by it and is ever absorbed in it. Grace is always present. Inquire, and the mind dissolves, revealing that the Self alone truly exists.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

|A reply to another seeker:|

July 23, 2016

Dear   ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

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May you ever abide as the Self, which is of the nature of eternal peace, the fountainhead of love, the abode of uncaused joy, and which is Brahman alone.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

|Here is the reply to a seeker who raised several questions, which can be inferred from the answers.|

August 24, 2016

Dear   ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

|A seeker in Indonesia asked questions about Ribhu Gita and wished to know if there were caste restrictions concerning who is eligible to read it. Here is the reply.|

August 24, 2016

Dear   ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Namaste. Thank you for your message.

The Sanskrit Ribhu Gita appears as a dialogue between Ribhu and Nidagha in the sixth amsa of the Siva Rahasya, which is considered to be an itihasa.

The stories concerning Ribhu appear in the Purana-s, as is mentioned in the introduction to the Song of Ribhu, which is the English translation of the Tamil version of the Ribhu Gita. Similar dialogues between Ribhu and Nidagha appear in four Upanishads.

The qualifications for being able to deeply comprehend and realize that which is revealed by Ribhu are entirely inner in nature and are not bodily in character, such as profound Self-inquiry, sincere devotion, and an earnest, ardent desire to realize the Self, which is Brahman-Knowledge. The requisites, or four-fold sadhana of Vedanta, are of significant benefit in this regard, also.

I hope that what is stated above suffices to answer your questions.

May your meditations with Ribhu Gita be deep so that, abiding in the Knowledge of the Self, you dwell in happiness and peace always.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth, Nome

[In answer to questions asked about vibhuti and kunkuma:]

August 30, 2016

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth, Nome
As neither the heavens nor the earth stand in awe,  
So fear-free be my life.  
As the day, the night,  
The sun, the moon,  
The priest, the hero,  
The truth, the violation of truth,  
What's gone, what's yet to come—  
As these stand in no awe and come to no grief,  
So fear-free be my life.  
-Atharva-Veda, 2:15, 1-6

I hastened through the skies, I trotted the worlds,  
And here stand in reverence before the  
-Atharva-Veda, 2.1.4

He is near. He cannot be shed off.  
He is near. He cannot be seen.  
But O, you sons of the Immortal, see the  
poetry of the Lord,  
It neither dies nor decays.  
-Atharva-Veda, 10.8.32.

Knowing no death let the musician proclaim  
 aloud the Supreme Resort,  
Secreted in the heart-cave.  
In Him the multiform resolves into uniform.  
He, our father, progenitor, brother, knows all  
homes and beings,  
The sole nomenclator of the gods.  
To Him enquiringly resort all beings.  
-Atharva-Veda, 2.1.2.1.3.

Vedic Mysticism, by Ragu Vira, 1938
Devotees install murti-s Ribhu Rishi Natha, His disciple Nidagha, and Adi Sankaracharya in the SAT Temple.

Please visit these two links to the SAT Temple blog to see:

Altars for Ribhu Rishi with His Disciple Nidagha and for Adi Sankara

Bronze Murti-s of Sri Ribhu Rishi-natha with His Disciple Nidagha and Sri Adi Sankaracharya Arrive at the SAT Temple

Please visit the link below to register for retreats at the SAT Temple:

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Arrive at the SAT Temple
Nidagha receives his altar.
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Dipavali: October 30, 2016
Skanda Shasti: November 5, 2016
Truth Revealed Retreat: November 11-13, 2016
Karthikai Deepam: December 12, 2016
Dattatreya Jayanti: December 13, 2016
Sri Ramana Jayanti: December 30, 2016
Arudra Darshan: January 11, 2017

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Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Om Namah Sivaya

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