

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya ॐ Om Namah Sivaya



I worship the bejewelled linga of the Self, residing in the city of maya, the lotus of the heart of the illusory body, by the sacred ablution and anointing of the clear water of thought in the river of faith and by the flowers of samadhi for not being born again.

-Nirguna Manasa Puja, verse 9



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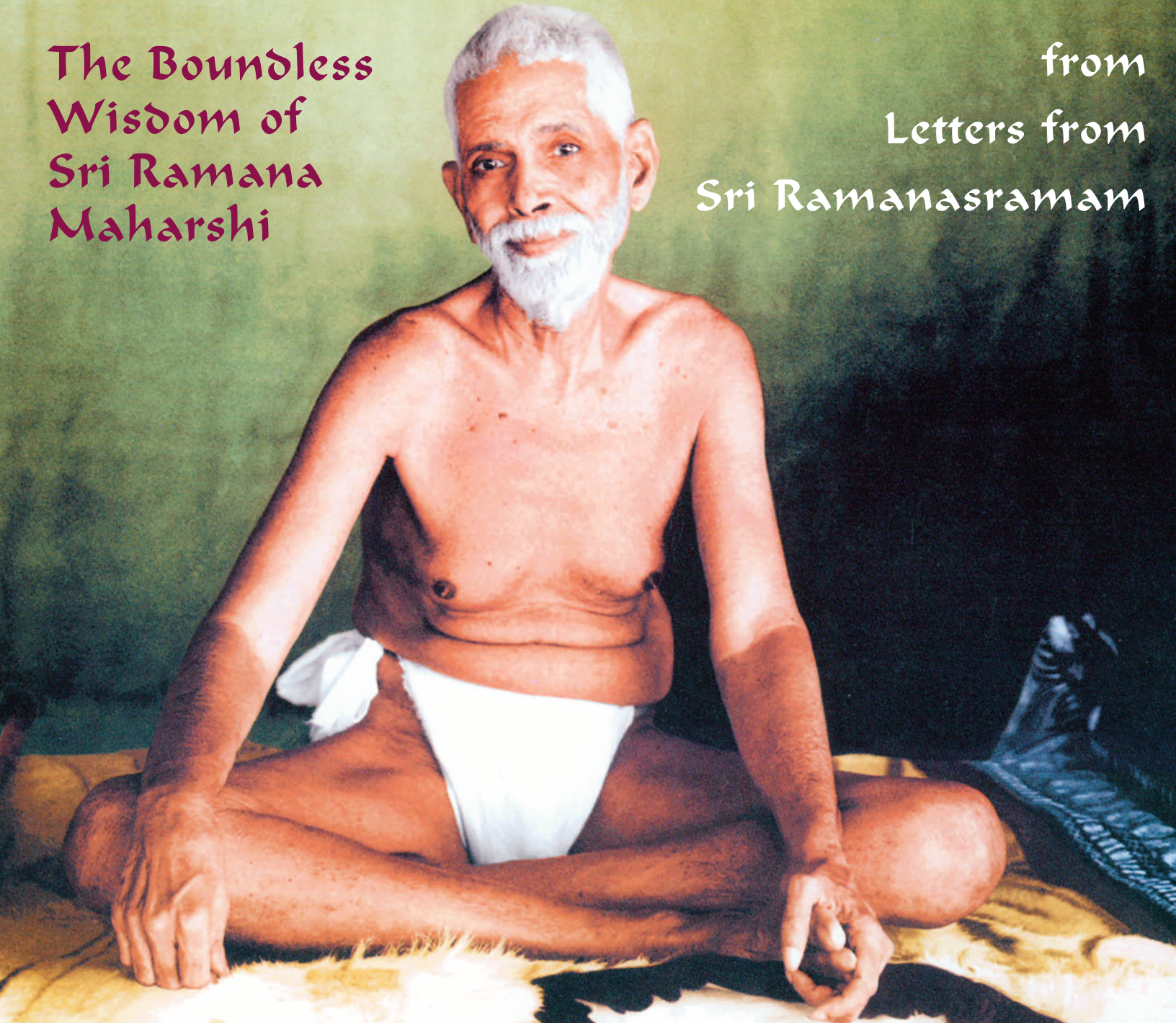
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Contributors: Grant Summerville, transcription of
Ribhu Gita events; Sangeeta Raman, transcription
of Satsang events; Ganesh Sadasivan,
Ramana Ramana Sadguru Ramana; Anandhi,
Paintings of Karanas; Janane
Sivakumar, 108 Karanas Interpretations.

1834 Ocean St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060 USA
Ph: 831.425.7287
email: sat@satramana.org
www.SATRamana.org
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The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

from
Letters from
Sri Ramanasramam



The Screen

April 28, 1948

Yesterday afternoon, a devotee approached Bhagavan and said, “Swami, for one who has realized his Self, it is said that he will not have the three states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. Is that a fact?”

Bhagavan said kindly, “What makes you say that they do not have the three states? In saying that ‘I had a dream; I was in deep sleep; I am awake’, you must admit that you were there in all the three states. That makes it clear that you were there all the time. If you remain

as you are now, you are in the wakeful state. This becomes hidden in the dream state, and the dream state disappears when you are in deep sleep. You were there then, you are there now, and you are there at all times. The three states come and go, but you are always there. It is like a cinema. The screen is always there. Several types of pictures appear on the screen and disappear. Nothing sticks to the screen; it remains a screen. Similarly, you remain your own Self in all the three states. If you know that, the three states will not trouble you, just as the pictures which appear on the screen do not stick to it. That means that the three states will not stick to you. On the screen, you sometimes see a huge ocean with endless waves; that disappears. Another time, you see fire spreading all around; that too disappears. The screen is there on both the occasions. Did the screen get wet with the water or did it get burned by the fire? Nothing affected the screen. In the same way, the things that happen during the wakeful, dream and sleep states do not affect you at all; you remain your own Self.”

The questioner: “Does that mean that, although people have all three states, wakefulness, dream and deep sleep, these do not affect the people?”

Bhagavan: “Yes, that is it. All these states come and go. The Self is not bothered; it has only one state.”

The questioner: “Does that mean that such a person will be in this world merely as a witness?”

Bhagavan: “That is so. For this very thing, Vidyaranya, in the tenth chapter of the Panchadasi, gives as example the light that is kept on the stage of a theater. When a drama is being played, the light is there, which illuminates, without any distinction, all the actors, whether they be kings or servants or dancers, and also all the audience. That light will be there before the drama begins, during the performance and also after the performance is over. Similarly, the light within, that is, the Self, gives light to the ego, the intelligence, the mind and the lower mind (ahankara, buddhi, chitta and manas) without itself being subject to processes of growth and decay. Although during deep sleep and other states, there is no feeling of the ego, that Self remains attributeless, and continues to shine of itself. That is the meaning. There will be no doubts whatsoever if one finds out who one is and what one is by Self-enquiry.” ॐ

Satsang with Nome

Without an Ego

Satsang, Sep. 11, 2022

Om Om Om
(Silence)

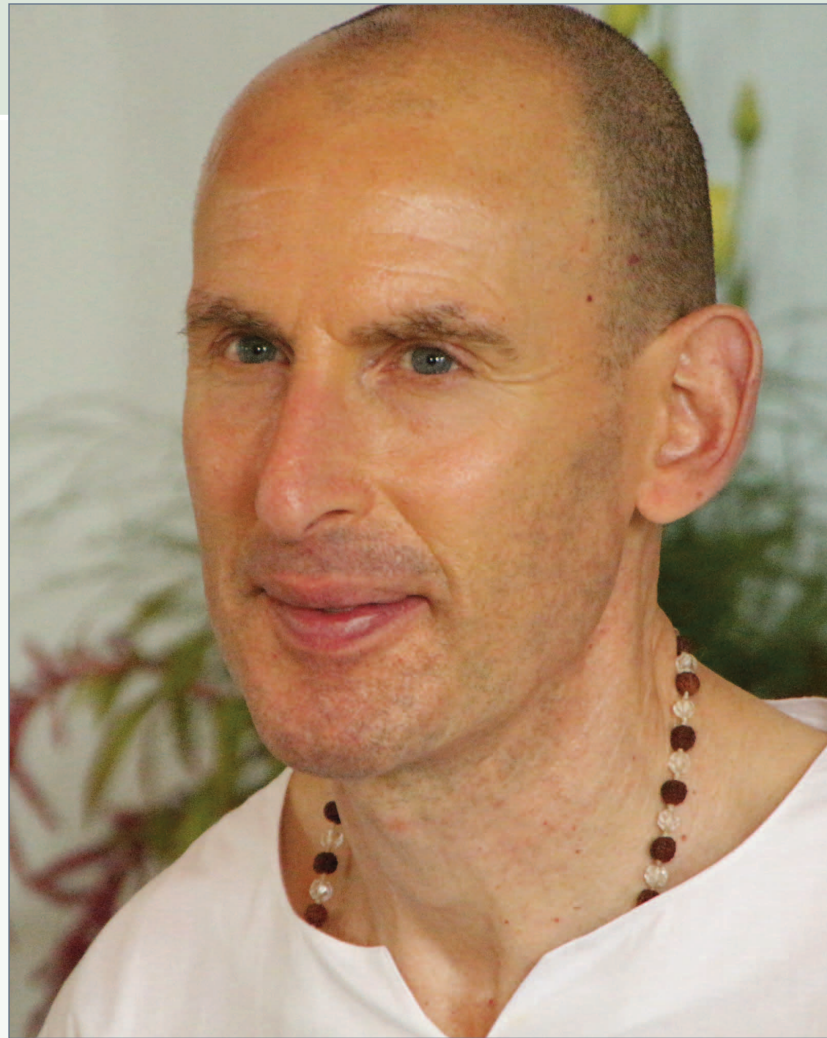
If you abandon the false assumption of individuality and cease to misidentify with the body, you will find yourself to be infinite and eternal, unborn and imperishable, indivisible and undifferentiated, and of a nature of illimitable joy, of a nature of self-luminous Consciousness, and of the nature of ever-existence.

The Self is not something perceptible to the senses, and it is not a sensing entity. It is not something conceivable by the mind, and it is not a thinking entity.

If you are not the body, you are quite free of all that pertains to the body – its state, its condition, its activities, etc. If you are not the body, what are you? Something immeasurable and unceasing, without a beginning and, thus, without an end; something changeless and not an object of perception or conception.

The one who knows thoughts is not defined by them. You are not a thought, nor are you a group of thoughts. Beyond thought, what are you?

Bodiless you are. What are you? Egoless is your actual Existence. What gives birth to the assumption, the bare supposition, of existing as an individual entity, a limited embodied individual? If you inquire to discern what this individualized existence actually is, its individuality, being unreal, will vanish. What remains is of the nature of Sat-Chit-Ananda, Being-Consciousness-Bliss, without a beginning and without an end. Who conceives of individuality? Who conceives of the ego notion? The true Self has no such imagination. Something else, such as the body, does not conceive it. Obviously, it cannot conceive itself.



If there is no such misidentification as an “I” and as a body, how will the possibility of being bound survive? Without that concept, how will suffering continue? Suffering is due solely to bondage, bondage is only ignorance, and ignorance is mere misidentification.

Cease to misidentify, and you will find yourself in your natural state of complete peace. Cease to misidentify by inquiring deeply “Who am I?” and you will find that your only existence is Brahman. Brahman is not other than your existence, and you do not have another existence. Existence is only one. It is indivisible, and undifferentiated. The notions of “I” and “this” do not pertain.

Your natural state is that which is innate. What is innate? Existence, only Existence. Ignorance is not innate. Existence itself is Knowledge, Knowledge of itself.

To comprehend what is being indicated here, inquire deeply and continuously to discern the real nature of the Self. In this, the Self knows itself; Brahman comprehends Brahman.

Questioner: Namaste Swami. In the Who Am I? book, Bhagavan says, when thought arises, ask to whom it is happening. It is "I," and I am already seeing the "I," then why the second question, "Who Am I?" What I think from the discourse you gave, "to whom" is to steady the Self. The question is how can I steady the Self. I am going to the "I" state; how will I steady the Self?

Nome: To ask yourself for whom is the thought is to return the sense of reality to what is non-objective. The desire for Self-realization will make it steady. Asking yourself, "For whom is this?" the thought should subside, and the sense of reality attributed to it should return to the origin, which is "I." With such nonobjective vision, you can discern, asking "Who am I?," what your real nature is. Such discernment is not another thought; it is thought transcendent.

We casually refer to making the Knowledge steady, making the inquiry steady, but, really, what you want to do is make ignorance unsteady. Ignorance becomes unsteady when you recognize it as ignorance and not as truth.

Inquiry is composed of Knowledge, Self-Knowledge. The end and the means are of the same nature. How steady is your Existence? Is it ever interrupted?

Q: I flip-flop. Existence is constant.

N: It is constant and changeless. So should your inquiry be constant. A thought cannot be constant, but you are. Thus, in the inquiry the entire focus ought to be upon what your identity is.

Another Q: This recent retreat was very intense. By your grace, it was seen that to hold on to the experiencing structure of perceptions, thought, especially the storyteller, is futile, and what appears to be concrete and tangible is actually not solid. Towards the final day of the retreat this contempla-

tion led to surrender to Bhagavan. Then on Friday, during meditation, in your presence, this understanding was again affirmed. But still there is back-and-forth, back-and-forth, though now there is somewhat of a knowing that it is not as real as it appears to be. So, how can this conviction be so strong that it's an unconditional surrender to Bhagavan.

N: The desire you are expressing itself will make the conviction strong.

Q: It is especially harder the first few moments of waking up in the morning when the grip is so that it is almost like a panic. But on inquiry it eases back into the understanding.

N: Waking, dreaming, sleeping, all these come and go. The conviction in Truth lies beyond those states.

You wish to surrender to Bhagavan. Who is Bhagavan? He is indescribable. It says in the Gita that he is the Self that dwells in the hearts of all. If he is the Self, your surrender consists in returning to Him what you have taken that did not belong to you. That is your self. The feeling should be, "I wrongly was mistaken claiming my separate identity." The surrender is the cessation of doing that. Where "I" and "mine" disappear, that is the surrendered state; that is identical with Knowledge.

Another Q: I was reflecting on evenness of mind. In Bhagavad Gita, the Lord says that evenness of mind is yoga, and there are many verses where he emphasizes the importance of evenness of mind. Yesterday, I was listening to a talk by Swami Tejomayananda, and he humorously said that if you don't have your mind under control, it is like driving a car without brakes. It is a very apt description of a state of mind that is not under my control. Even in Parabhakti, you mention that it is true devotion, the highest state of devotion. For me, there are times when ignorance takes over, and the mind is not under control. There is no way out but constantly inquiring. The state of evenness of mind that all texts describe, that Krishna describes, can be achieved only when there is no mind. The supreme state

that they describe in which peace is there and one is completely unmoved by outer circumstances, like pleasure and pain, heat or cold, all the pairs of opposites, can be achieved only when there is no mind. As an aspirant, as a practitioner, the only way out is to constantly inquire, as you said. There is lot of time that I spend not inquiring. Bhagavan said that, in every moment that a man spends on vain thinking, if he can only inquire, he will realize the Self very soon. But that's not what I do all the time. My mind wanders; it still gets affected. But I wouldn't say it is all the time; there are times when it is very nice, in a very sattvic state. How do I make the state of sattva constant?

N: By the recognition of its value. Your sense of identity should be withdrawn from the mind. The sense of reality should also be removed from the mind. If you know the mind is unreal, it cannot bother you. What causes the unevenness?

Q: There is a constant thread that is running through all those states. I am looking for something outside. That is the constant thread of ignorance. If I reflect on what I was thinking that made me move away from evenness of mind, it is always looking for something outside in the world, be it relationship, family, or work.

N: What do you desire in all those things? The form is different in each case, but what is actually desired? If the sense of happiness is returned to its source, there

will be no unevenness of mind. Knowing the source of happiness within yields detachment from all outer appearances.

The mind is unreal, both as an entity and its content. Its content is not the Truth, and it itself does not actually have an independent existence. If you abide as the Self, what could possibly be more even than Existence?

Misidentification yields unevenness. Freedom from misidentification is liberation from unevenness.

Cease to imagine what you are not as being what you are, and what could possibly disturb your evenness? It will be found to be as steady as Existence itself.

Q: I need to realize that what I think that I am in the waking state is very similar to what I thought I was in the dream state last night. As you say, if I give up that misidentification, just as I don't identify with the dream character, the evenness is there.

N: You don't now misidentify with the dream character, nor do you harbor the mistaken notion of the dream world being real. Without the ignorant individual and without the world, what will disturb you?

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English from the Ashtavakra Gita and in Tamil from the Song of Ribhu.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti ॐ



Correspondence with Nome

[Here is the email from a seeker, slightly edited for brevity. The reply follows.]

June 4, 2023

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

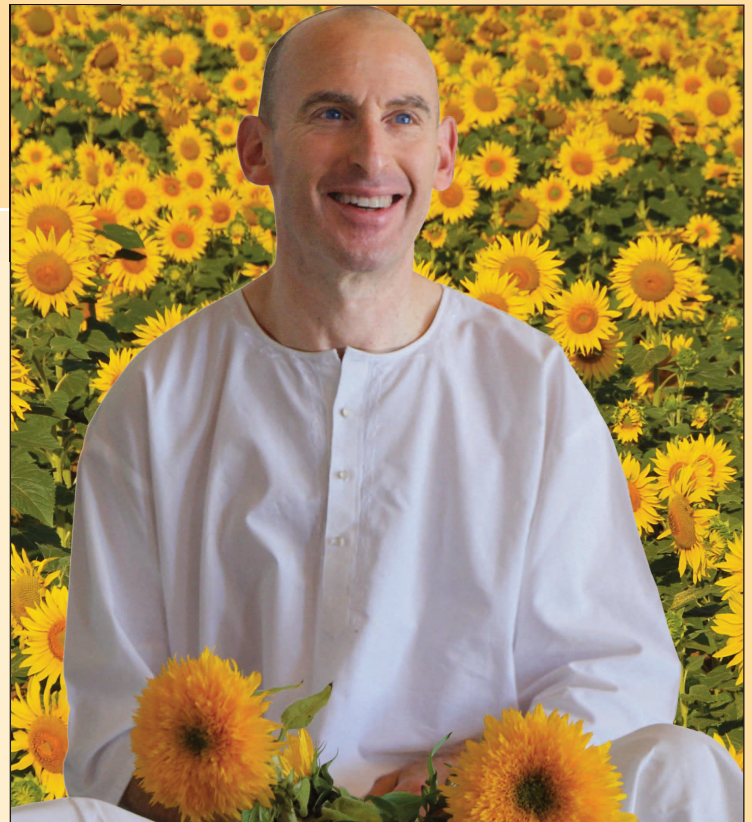
Namo Nome,

Thank you very much for the wonderful discourse and your gracious and illuminating response to my question. In retrospect, I felt that I should have restrained myself in posing the question, knowing that the allocated time for the satsang was drawing to a close and that it may have caused more strain to the body since you had already had been speaking for a long time. I felt sorry about this and wanted to express my apologies.

There are many things I feel like expressing around the divine nature of a satsang with you, but the realm of thought and words are limited in understanding that which lies beyond their reach. Several times, the emotion of happiness and inspiration wells up in me in the form of tears when one realizes the profundity of your teaching both in words and in silence. Whether one knows it or not, there seems to something unseen that happens. The knowledge that is being revealed silently destroys the erroneous concepts, notions born of ignorance, and loosens this terrible binding knot of the heart. I notice that the teaching has sunk in deeply only when there are instances that trigger a need for expression such as explaining to others and a deeper discrimination to resolve a mental conflict or a situation...

Humbly seeking your blessing to realize this most wonderful Knowledge of the Self which destroys all suffering and makes one abide in that Self as that Self in fathomless Peace.

Namo Ramana
Loving Pranams



June 4, 2023

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. There is no need to feel sorry regarding asking questions during satsang.

Blessings and Grace are always there. Self-Knowledge is absorption in the Self, as the Self.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker, a Neurophysician in Chennai, sent this email. The reply follows.]

July 2, 2023

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Arunachala Ramanaya.

Dear Sri Nome, please accept my namaskarams on this auspicious day of Guru Poornima on behalf of me and my family. I'm (name omitted, living in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.

I'm a devotee of Sri Bhagavan, following his teachings and path of Self-Enquiry .

I'm delighted to read your satsang books [on] Self-Knowledge. It gives immense peace to me when feeling restless and gives me a clarity of teaching of how to follow the teachings; reading a passage or a few lines puts me back in a state of calm and peace.

For this, my sincere gratitude for you and SAT RAMANA temple.

I humbly seek your blessings on this Guru Poornima day. May I constantly abide in the heart, follow the path diligently and be established in that state.

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. That you are devoted to Sri Bhagavan is itself a sublime blessing. That you follow his teachings is also a wonderful blessing. Inquiry to know the Self yields the revelation of the ever-existent Reality in which Being is Knowledge. So, you are blessed indeed.

I am glad to know that you find the SAT publications to be beneficial.

May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self, of the nature of indivisible Being-Consciousness-Bliss, the one without a second, and thus dwell always in happiness and peace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[This is the response sent in August 2023 to a seeker's handwritten letter in which he asked the question that appears in the third paragraph of the reply.]

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. That you have such experience with Sri Abhinava Vidya Shankara Bharathi is a wonderful blessing. The Guru is of the nature of the imperishable Self, transcendent of all. He never dies. His presence is the eternal, Supreme Self.

You asked, "How does one cope with the departure of the Guru's physical presence?"

It is by reflecting upon and ardently practicing the spiritual instruction you received from him. It is by contemplating upon his immortality. It is by meditating upon the nature of his grace. It is by inquiring to realize the Self, the endless Brahman. Thus, that which unites the disciple with the Guru can never be severed or broken. May your devotion be full, dissolving all illusions of separation. He has not gone elsewhere, but is ever within you.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker wrote asking about grace and guidance. Here is the reply.]

August 11, 2023

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Suffering is due to ignorance. Ignorance is misidentification. Misidentification is due to lack of inquiry. Self-inquiry yields Self-Knowledge. Self-Knowledge is peace.

Grace is always there. You just need to be keenly aware of it.

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

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[This is the reply to a seeker's handwritten letter at the end of August 2023.]

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. If you understand the source and nature of happiness, you will be endowed with the motivation to practice Self-inquiry with natural intensity and joy. If your self-critical evaluation of your spiritual

practice prompts you to engage in practice more and with more intensity and continuity, it may be useful. If not, such measurement is not of much use, as it is based on the false supposition of the existence of the ego, while Self-knowledge is of an egoless nature. Spiritual practice is never in vain.

May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self, which is of the nature of perfect fullness, free of concepts of limitation, and thus dwell in happiness and peace always.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[This is the reply to a seeker's questions that can be inferred from the answers in the reply.]

August 2, 2023

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. By the cessation of misidentification, the nature of blissful Being, the Self, is revealed.

The suppositions of "I" and "the world" are maya, illusion. Illusion, itself, is illusory. Maya is that which is not. The unreal does not have a real cause. It is merely imagined in ignorance.

Steady, deep inquiry yields Knowledge of the Self, which is ever-existent Being, self-luminous Consciousness, and perfectly full Bliss. The Self is the Reality, which is without an alternative.

Bodiless and transcendent of all states of mind are you, the Self. Knowing this, abide in the Self, as the Self, and remain happy and at peace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[Here is the reply to a seeker's email.]

August 7, 2023

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. It is always a deep joy to hear from those who are devoted to Sri Bhagavan and follow his teachings.

If you discern the source and nature of happiness, detachment is natural, and desire is not confusing. The same knowledge regarding the nature of happiness eliminates anger. The source of the mantra may be regarded as Brahman or as the Guru. If, whether one repeats the mantra or not, the source of the mantra is realized, that is found to be at no distance from oneself. There are not two selves, that one could not know the other. The Self is only one, indivisible, forever unmodified, changeless, undifferentiated, infinite and eternal, and of the nature of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, without beginning or end.

What is the nature of the mind? Profound inquiry to know the Self reveals that there is no such thing as the mind. There is only one Consciousness, one Existence.

The concept that you are a performer of action, a doer, is based on misidentification with the body. Are you the body? If you are not the body, how can you be considered to do anything?

The Knowledge of your true identity is the focus of the inquiry. Absorption in the Self, as the Self, is the Knowledge in which knowing is Being. It is transcendent of thought, and so it is continuous.

The false assumption of individuality, or ego, is destroyed by such knowledge, and thus ends all ignorance, bondage, and its consequent suffering.

You may find reading some of the SAT publications to be beneficial.

May your inquiry be deep so that the Knowledge of the Self is self-evident for you, and you thus remain always happy and at peace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome ॐ



The Ribhu Gita

Chapter 4, Verses 20-27
With Commentary by Nome from a
Boundless Wisdom Event held on
September 9, 2011 at the SAT Temple

Ribhu-Nidagha Dialogue

Om Om Om
Om Namah Sívaya.

20. The relative is one undivided Essence. I am one undivided Essence. The king is one undivided Essence. The city is one undivided Essence.

21. Lordship is one undivided Essence. The Lord is one undivided Essence. Mantra is one undivided Essence. Japa is one undivided Essence.

22. Contemplation is one undivided Essence. An abode is one undivided Essence. What is to be grasped is one undivided Essence. What is great is one undivided Essence.

23. Light is one undivided Essence. The transcendental is one undivided Essence. The consumable is one undivided Essence. The oblation is one undivided Essence.

24. The homa (oblation by pouring clarified butter and such into a consecrated fire) is one undivided Essence. Victory is one undivided Essence. Heaven is one undivided Essence. Oneself is one undivided Essence.

“I am one undivided Essence.” What is Essence? It refers to your very Being, your very Existence. What is that? It is “one” and “undivided.” It cannot be the body. The body is endowed with parts. It is divisible and can be discerned or perceived as distinct from one’s Self. It is not the “undivided Essence”. What is the “undivided Essence”? “I am one undivided Essence.” It is the definition of “I,” “undivided Essence.” It cannot be the body, for that is divisible. Similarly, it cannot be the mind, for the mind apparently is divided into innumerable parts called thoughts, and, moreover, it can be seen as distinct from one’s Self. Therefore, abandoning any misidentification with the body or the mind, associating such as a definition for yourself, the body and the mind, with your actual Existence, what is your essential Being? What deserves to be known as “I” and not anything else? If you see yourself as this one essential Being, undivided, nondual by your very nature, then everything else will be viewed accordingly.

“The relative is one undivided Essence.” As you are, so all are. Whoever is related to you, in whatever way, whether in the common understanding of one who is a relative, in kinship, or if you view the entire world as your relatives, all without exception are entirely this one undivided, essential Existence. If this is so, what can you refer to as yourself and what can you refer to as another?

“I am One undivided Essence. The king is one undivided essence.” The ostensible meaning of the king is someone who is powerful and important, at least in his own estimation. Such is one undivided Essence. The king is one undivided Essence. The city is, in reality, just this essential Existence, and likewise his dominion, the place that he governs. All that is of a worldly nature is of the same undivided Existence. Right where false appearance of worldliness seems to be, there is actually only this one indivisible Existence. The phrase may also be interpreted as the king representing the Atman or the Self, the ministers for whom are the senses and the mind. The body is the city, puram, that he governs. The Self, the ruler of all, is this one undivided, essential Being. The body is the field of experience, which is just the same undivided Existence. The Reality, which is Brahman, the real Self, is One without anything else existing whatsoever.

21. “Lordship is one undivided Essence. In Sanskrit, the word “Prabhu” means the Lord or a powerful master, which “is one undivided Essence. Mantra is one undivided Essence. Japa is one undivided Essence”.

Only one absolute Existence, ever indivisible, is there, even in the forms of all these things. The Lord, or God, who is worshipped should be known as this one essential Existence. Lordliness, that which makes the Lord the Lord, is also just this essential Existence. The thing in itself or the attribute, that which is worshipped and the reason for being worshipped are also just this essential Existence. Mantra, which is a means of attaching the mind to the Lord, and japa, which is the practice of that mantra – focusing the mind upon it and repeating it – partake of

the very same essential Existence. God and what makes God, God and the means of remembrance of God and the practice of those means, all of that should be understood as being of the nature of this undivided Existence.

22. Contemplation is one undivided Essence. An abode is one undivided Essence. What is to be grasped is one undivided Essence. What is great is one undivided Essence.

The word is dhyanam, meditation or contemplation, is “one undivided Essence.” When you meditate, what occurs? When you meditate, what is the substance of the meditation? What is the Essence? If we know the Essence, Being as it is, and that is our Self, meditation is one undivided Essence. Being is itself the meditation; this is nondual meditation.

“An abode is one undivided Essence.” In whatever state you appear to be, that thing in itself is the same undivided, essential Existence.

“What is to be grasped is one undivided Essence”. That for which you are striving, attempting to grasp with your inward-turned mind, is the same essential, indivisible Existence; the very same should be realized as the Self, as the meaning of “I.”

“What is great is one undivided Essence.” The Supreme, God, is of the very same nature as “I,” the undivided Essence.

The abode is the place where God dwells. Where does God dwell? If you know the undivided Essence, which is pure Existence as it is, that abode is your own.

“What is to be grasped is one undivided Essence. What is great is one undivided Essence.” The supreme Lord is great, indeed, with a greatness that cannot be measured. The nature of it is the undivided, essential Existence. What you grasp for the purpose of taking refuge to find sanctuary, to find the divine peace, is the same indivisible Existence.

23. “Light is one undivided Essence. The transcendental” – Param, the Absolute – “is one undivided Essence. The consumable is one undivided Essence. The oblation is one undivided Essence”.

The Light of all lights is pure Consciousness; that is your Being; That is the one undivided Essence. It transcends all and is of an absolute nature. That nature is this one undivided, essential Existence. In the context of worship, consider Light to be symbolized by the fire. The transcendental, which the Light symbolizes, or that which the fire is a means of reaching, is the same undivided Essence.

The consumable is the thing which is offered in the fire; it is one undivided Essence. The oblation, the activity of offering, the offered and the offering, are one undivided Essence. When you worship, when you perform puja, the entirety of it consists of the same one undivided Essence, for those who worship in Truth, who know what they worship.

24. “The homa, which is oblation, “is one undivided Essence. Victory is one undivided Essence. Heaven is one undivided Essence”.

For what purpose does one engage in such worshipful activity? He gives the examples – for victory, for heaven. Victory can be defined in any number of ways and, likewise, heaven. You seek to overcome something that seems to obstruct you, and you wish to abide in some place

that is full of happiness. Such are considered in a worldly way, in an afterlife, or in a knowledgeable transcendent way. Regardless of how perceived, it is one undivided, essential Existence that is all. Oneself is one undivided Essence.

25. “There is nothing apart from the nature of the one undivided Essence, ever, at any time”. . .

“Oneself is one undivided Essence. There is nothing apart from the nature of the one undivided Essence, ever, at any time.” What do you consider yourself to be? Are you this one undivided, essential Being? Or, do you consider yourself to be something else, so that it is not one undivided Essence, but two divided appearances? If it seems as if two, or dual divided appearances, inquire. To see something as apart from the absolute Existence, known as the Self or Brahman, you must first give rise to the imagination that your own Existence is individualized, an “I.” Only then will the notion of a “this” arise. The “this” is utterly dependent for its appearance upon the “I.” To eliminate the falsely imagined individuality of the “I” is to find everything, everywhere, at all times to be only this one Existence. Lift your vision beyond name and form, which are but illusory appearances, and discern the actual Existence. You can see such for all by first seeing your Self, but if you see your Self, there is no “all” to be later perceived. “There is nothing apart from the nature of the one undivided Essence – ever, at any time”. This not only means that all differentiation is illusory, but the very appearance of illusion itself does not exist. What is real is always so. What is real is that which exists. That which is not real does not exist at all. To know the Reality, know your Self. Inquiring within, “Who am I?” experience directly what Ribhu teaches.

“Hear again the wondrous treasure of the eternal Experience.” “Wondrous treasure” could also be translated as “great wonder.” So, “hear again the great wonder of the eternal Experience.” “Eternal Experience” is the “eternal experience of Perfection,” or is the “eternal experience of Attainment,” or the “eternal experience of Being.” Why is it wondrous? It is because it transcends all that is perceived and conceived. Why else is it wondrous? It is because realizing it, one is immersed in Bliss without beginning or end. Why else is it wondrous? It is because it is immortal, it is eternal. Only one Thing is immortal, only one thing is eternal. It is not a thing as such. It is Being – innately perfect Being, which is unborn and imperishable; it is without beginning and without an end.

(25) . . . “Hear again the wondrous treasure of the eternal Experience,” – the great wonder of the eternal experience of Being.

26. “so very rare – so rare to come by in all the worlds, the rarest, indeed. I am; I am the transcendent.” “I am the luminous; I am the illuminator.”

If everything is only the one undivided Essence, or real Existence of Brahman, why does he say that is rare? Not only is it rare, he says it is very rare. Not only is it very rare, it is the rarest! In an absolute sense, it is the rarest, because it is One without a second. In terms of attaining spiritual Knowledge, why is this considered the rarest? It is because, in this Self -Knowledge alone, one abandons the delusive objectifying outlook. In every other perspective or approach other than nondual Self-Knowledge, the objectifying outlook is left intact; the “I - the experimenter of it - is taken for granted as an unexamined assumption. Thus, the spiritual instruction

can also be regarded as the rarest of the rare, for there is nothing else like it. Everything else is objective conception. Some conceptions may be regarded as subtler than others. This Knowledge is of a nonobjective nature; it is Self-Knowledge.

“I am.” That is the first instruction. What does it mean? You invariably have the sense that you exist. Ribhu has been lauding the one Existence as the “undivided Essence.” Inquire within to know what the Existence is. “I am”; it’s the sense of your identity. To what does it truly belong? Sri Bhagavan says, “I am, is correct; I am this or I am that is not so.” Freeing yourself of any tendency to define your Self in objective terms, gross or subtle, what is the meaning of “I am”?

“I am; I am the transcendent”. Not a mere body; not a mind or anything you think of; not an ego entity – that is to say, an individual, what is the sense of “I” or “I am” divested of the imaginary individuality? That is the Supreme, transcendent of all. It is absolute in nature and thus cannot be in relation to anything else.

“I am the luminous; I am the illuminator.” Being, which is transcendent, knows itself. It shines; it knows; Being is identical with Consciousness. Nothing else knows. The world does not know, objects do not know; the body does not know; thoughts of your mind do not know. Something utterly transcendent shines from within. That knows. It is luminous; It is self-luminous; it is the knower of all, unknown by any and alone capable of knowing itself. That is the “I;” and nothing else should be imagined to be so, for the sake of immortal Bliss.

The plant may not know itself as a plant; it may just know. Similarly, it may not be necessary for you to know yourself as if you were an individual or an embodied being; it is enough to just know. Knowing is of the nature of pure Consciousness; the objective portion is merely dreamed. Where does your form and the plant’s form go when you are in deep sleep? You still exist then, and fully so. The Existence still knows itself; It is luminous, even without thought of itself and with an utter absence of all sensations. In Existence, there is just “one undivided Essence,” or real Being; and there is no human form, plant form, or any other form.

They neither know your existence nor do they know their own existence. “There” and “what is there” are conceived after the rise of “I,” they are for someone who contemplates them or experiences them, not noticing that they have no existence apart from himself. If he turns inward to know himself, all vanish, and one’s Self-knowing Existence remains. It does not depend on anything else, unlike the conceptions of a human form and a plant form, etc.

There is neither a thinker nor that which he conceives in such sleep. What should be firmly grasped is the understanding that that which exists during deep dreamless sleep obviously exists now also. All that has been added on to that Existence is built up out of imagination. The reflection upon the deep sleep state experience points out the unreality of all that is conceived and perceived, the name and form. There is Existence that transcends every state of mind, which still exists when all disappears, such as in deep sleep. It still exists now in the midst of an apparent waking state. It is both indivisible and invisible, not to be perceived through the senses and never an object of thought. It is who you are.

Something else is not self-known. You say it is; it does not say it is. The very idea of “there” and the “something” depend on you, but you do not depend on them.

If Existence and the Consciousness are One and the same thing, by what means does one realize Self-Knowledge? “I am luminous; I am the illuminator.” Another cannot know your Self; the Self alone can know itself. What do you consider yourself to be? If you consider yourself to

be an individual, it will seem as if you are in the darkness of ignorance. If that false assumption is abandoned in the light of true inquiry, you find your Self to be the illuminator of your Self; that is, self-luminous. In Self-Realization, the one who knows, the Self that is known, and the Knowledge are all one and the same, not three distinct things – not three distinct things coming together in some kind of union but One and the same thing. “I am; I am the transcendent; I am the luminous; I am the illuminator”.

27. “I am the Guru of all forms; I am of all forms” “Such a one am I. I am myself. I am pure. I am the magnificent. I am the Supreme.

“I am the Guru of all forms”; ‘I am all forms’, or “of all forms”. What is the nature of the Guru? We consider Sri Bhagavan to be the Guru; what is his nature? He liberates beings of all kinds of forms. He may be regarded as the Guru of all, whether they know it or not. What is his nature? Contemplating in this way plunges one into endless wonder. “I am the Guru of all forms; I am of all forms”. If “I” be equated with the body, you are but one miniscule form in a very vast, longing-lasting universe. If, though, the truth be known that you are not the body, what forms are yours? That which has no form in itself is the nature of every form, there being only one undifferentiated Existence ever.

“Such a one am I,” or That am I. What is That? Precisely because it is ineffable, it is described simply as That. That is the supreme Brahman. That is the nature of the Guru, the nature of one’s own Self. That is the real “I.” Know it by inquiry that absorbs your sense of identity.

“I am myself. I am pure. I am the magnificent. I am the Supreme.” When all that can be negated has been negated and not one drop of delusion remains, the simple revelation of “I am myself,” abidance is your Being, is the finality. That is the significance of Being is Knowledge.

“I am pure”: your very Existence, the innermost Consciousness, never mixes with anything else. In Truth, there is nothing else for it to mix with, but even if it seems as if there are other things, it stands transcendent, untouched and unsullied by anything. It is an innate perfection that can never be marred. The perfection is the magnificence.

“I am the Supreme”: as an individual one cannot say this; it would not be true. Free of the ego, Ribhu declares the self-evident fact about our nature.

(Silence)

Om Shantí Shantí Shantí Om ॐ



॥ सद्गुरुपरम्परा स्तोत्रम् ॥
॥ sadguru-paramparā stotram ॥
A hymn in praise of the lineage
of Sadguru.



सच्चिदानन्दरूपं तं सर्गस्थित्यादि वर्जितम्
सदास्वात्मनि लीनस्थं सदाशिवमहं भजे ॥ १ ॥

saccidānanda-rūpaṃ taṃ sarga-sthityādi varjitam
sadā-svātmani līnasthaṃ sadāśivamaham bhaje ॥ 1 ॥

Of the nature of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, devoid of creation,
sustenance and such, absorbed in his own Self eternally,
that eternal Siva I worship.

मौनेनाज्ञानविध्वंसं ज्ञानवैराग्यसंग्रहं
सनकादिसमाराध्यं दक्षिणामूर्तिमाश्रये ॥ २ ॥

maunenājñāna-vidhvaṃsaṃ jñāna-vairāgya-saṃgrahaṃ
sanakādi-samārādhyam dakṣiṇāmūrtim-āśraye ॥ 2 ॥

In the One who destroys ignorance by silence, the epitome of knowledge and dispassion, worshiped by [sage] Sanaka and such, in Dakshinamurti, I seek refuge.

ब्रह्मैवसत्यं नास्त्यनदिति रामं प्रकाशितं
ब्रह्मनिष्ठं वरिष्ठं तं वसिष्ठं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ ३ ॥

brahmaiva-satyam nāstyanad-iti rāmaṃ prakāśitaṃ
brahmaniṣṭhaṃ variṣṭhaṃ taṃ vasiṣṭhaṃ praṇamāmyaham ॥ 3 ॥

To the one who illumined Rama [by his instruction], “Brahman alone is Truth. Nothing else exists”, thus, the excellent one who abides in Brahman, [sage] Vasistha, I prostrate.

शिवरहस्यवेत्तारं शिवज्ञानप्रदायकं
निदाघस्योपदेष्टारं तं ऋभुं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ ४ ॥

śiva-rahasya-vettāraṃ śiva-jñāna-pradāyakaṃ
nidāghasyopadeṣṭāraṃ taṃ ṛbhuṃ praṇamāmyaham ॥ 4 ॥

To the knower of the secret of Siva, the bestower of the Knowledge of Siva, the spiritual instructor of [sage] Nidagha, to that [sage] Ribhu, I prostrate.

सर्वबन्धाद्विमुक्तं तं ज्ञानामृतरसार्वम्
त्रिमूर्तिरूपमात्रेयं दत्तात्रेयमहं भजे ॥ ५ ॥

sarva-bandhād-vimuktaṁ taṁ jñānāmṛta-rasārṇavam
trimūrti-rūpam-ātreyaṁ dattātreyaṁ-aham bhaje ॥ 5 ॥

The one who is liberated from all bondage, the ocean of the essence of the nectar of Knowledge, of the nature of the trimurti-s (Brahma, Vishnu, Siva), the son of sage Atri, that Dattatreya, I worship.

वेदाधिकारिणं वेदं पुराणगुरुसत्तमं
वेदान्तसूत्रकर्तारं वेदव्यासमहं भजे ॥ ६ ॥

vedādhikāriṇaṁ vedaṁ purāṇa-guru-sattamaṁ
vedānta-sūtrakarttāraṁ vedavyāsaṁ-aham bhaje ॥ 6 ॥

The authority of the Vedas, veda (Knowledge) [itself], the most virtuous ancient guru/the guru who authored the Purana-s, the author of Vedanta Sutra (Brahma sutra), I worship Veda Vyasa.

अद्वैतस्थापनाचार्यं आत्मबोधप्रकाशकम्
शङ्कापहारिणं शंभुं शंकराचार्यमाश्रये ॥ ७ ॥

advaita-sthāpanācāryaṁ ātma-bodha-prakāśakam
śaṅkāpahāriṇaṁ śaṁbhuṁ śaṅkarācāryam-āśraye ॥ 7 ॥

In the spiritual teacher who established Advaita, the one who reveals Self-Knowledge, the beneficent one who removes doubts, in Sankaracharya, I take refuge.

कोऽहं विचारसिद्धान्तं मोहमायाविवर्जितम्
सोऽहं भवेऽचलस्थं तं महर्षिं रमणं भजे ॥ ८ ॥

ko'haṃ vicāra-siddhāntaṃ moha-māyā-vivarjitaṃ
so'haṃ bhave'calasthaṃ taṃ maharṣiṃ ramaṇaṃ bhaje ॥ 8 ॥

The final end/conclusion of the inquiry “Who am I?”, the one who is devoid of delusion and illusion, who remains still/on the mountain in the bhava “I am That”/“I am He”, that Maharshi/great seer, Ramaṇa, I worship.

मनोजवासनान् त्यक्तं तनुर्नास्मीति भासकम्
सद्वासिनं सदा मुक्तं तं गुरुं नोमिमाश्रये ॥ ९ ॥

manoja-vāsanān tyaktaṃ tanur-nāsmīti bhāsakam
sadvāsiṇaṃ sadā muktaṃ taṃ guruṃ nomim-āśraye ॥ 9 ॥

In the One who has renounced the mind-born (objective) tendencies, who makes it evident “I am not the body”, who abides in Existence/dwells at SAT, the ever liberated, in that Guru, Nome, I take refuge.

नामरूपे विभिन्नोपि गुरुतत्त्वं त्वखण्डितम्
गुरोः परतरं सत्यं नास्ति नास्ति कदाचन ॥ १० ॥

nāma-rūpe vibhinnopi guru-tattvaṃ tvakhaṇḍitam
guroḥ parataraṃ satyaṃ nāsti nāsti kadācana ॥ 10 ॥

Though different in names and forms the truth of the Guru is undivided indeed. A truth greater than Guru, does not exist, does not exist at any time.

भवार्णवात् निमग्नानां दीनानां मुक्तिकाङ्क्षिणां
गुरोःपदाम्बुजादन्यत्र कश्चित् त्रातुमर्हति ॥ ११ ॥

bhavārṇavāt nimagnānāṃ dīnānāṃ mukti-kāṅkṣiṇāṃ
guroḥ padāmbujād-anyan-na kaścit trātum-arhati ॥ 11 ॥

For those depressed, tormented, and the ones desiring liberation,
other than the lotus feet of Guru, nothing else can rescue them from
the ocean of samsara.

स्वरूपं मनसा तस्य वचसा वाप्यगोचरम्
अन्तर्मुखविचारेण प्राप्तस्वात्मनि सद्गुरुः ॥ १२ ॥

svarūpaṃ manasā tasya vacasā vāpyagocaram
antar-mukha-vicāreṇa prāptaḥ-svātmani sadguruḥ ॥ 12 ॥

Although his true nature is inaccessible by mind and speech, by an
inward-turned inquiry, the Sadguru is found in one's own Self.

– by Ganesh Sadasivan

Siva's Cosmic Dance



CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS REFLECTIONS

The 108 karanas, as described in the fourth chapter of the Natya Shastra (a Hindu treatise on the performing arts), are synchronized dance movements with each posture displaying a particular mood. They are performed to spiritually enlighten the spectators. The Natya Shastra states that one who performs well the karanas created by Mahesvara will be freed of sin and go to Mahesvara. A few Hindu temples exhibit the karanas in the gopuram, the entrance tower to the temple. Lord Siva or Parvati are depicted displaying the karanas.

A number of interpretations are written regarding the karanas, however, there is no universally accepted analysis, leaving each person free to interpret the karanas in a manner that most inspires him or her. Here, we introduce an interpretation by Janane Sivakumar to accompany the production of the 108 paintings of the karanas as painted by her mother, Anandhi Muthukumarasamy, and adorn the walls in the Lotus room of the SAT Temple. Her interpretation is garnered from the descriptions of the movements as found in the 3 volume set of "Karanas, Common Dance Codes of India and Indonesia," by Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam, M.A., Ph.D. Each painting is numbered and titled.

Anandhi uses quartz crystals, 24k gold foil, and metallic paints to adorn each painting, yet, due to the limitations in the medium of photography, the images presented here are not able to capture the sparkling characteristic of each painting, which give them a stunning quality. (Continued in subsequent Reflections.)



43. Kaṭibhrāntaṃ

Regardless of what the senses and the mind reveal, remain ever immersed in the continuous the song of bliss.



69. Talasamsohoṭitaṃ

By the compassion of the Guru, which is ever radiating in his glance and smile, one is freed from all ownership and responsibility from the ego and its vāsanas.



56. Talavilāsitaṃ

Rather than succumbing to the insecurities and anxieties of the individual, freely abide in the Knowledge that one's entire life is directed by the loving grace of the Guru.



82. Daṇḍapādaṃ

Through the recognition that true Knowledge arises from a state of Bliss and unconditional love, and not from the content of thoughts arising from anger, one remains unwaveringly in the blissful stillness of Existence.



Disciple: What are the distinctive marks of a Guru, or Master, that enable one to know and recognize him as such?

Master: The Guru is one who at all times abides in the profound depths of the Self. He never sees any difference between himself and others, and he is not in the least obsessed by false notions of distinction, that he himself is the enlightened one (i.e., has realized Truth) or is the liberated one (mukta), while others around him are languishing in bondage or immersed in cimmerian darkness of ignorance. His firmness or self-possession can never be shaken under any circumstances, and he is never perturbed.

D.: What are the requisite qualifications of a disciple?

M.: He should have an intense and incessant longing to get free from the miseries of life and to attain supreme spiritual Bliss. He should not have the least desire for anything else.

– *Origin of Spiritual Instruction*

SAT Retreats 2023

In SAT retreats, Self-Knowledge and Self-inquiry meditation, the means of inquiring within to know the true Self, are taught, with ample time to ask questions as the teachings are given, so that you can clarify and deepen your understanding and experience. SAT retreats are very thorough in their presentation and provide a tremendous amount of spiritual guidance. The experience of attending retreats is profound and very helpful for spiritual development. All of SAT's retreats are taught by Nome, a sage who practiced the inquiry for steady abidance in Self-Realization. He places no emphasis on himself but keeps the focus of the instruction entirely upon Self-Knowledge and Self-inquiry, turning the aspirants' attention fully inward, for it is in this way that meditation, Self-inquiry, and Self-Knowledge truly open for one.

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

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

The Truth Revealed Retreat: November 3-5 This retreat is focused on nondual Self-Knowledge as revealed by Sri Ramana Maharshi and consists of an in-depth explanation of the teachings contained in Sri Ramana Maharshi's **Saddarshanam** (i.e., **Sat-Darshanam**, **Truth Revealed**, **Forty Verses on Reality**). There is also much time for the participants to silently meditate upon this quintessential, profound, Blissful Knowledge for the revelation of the Truth within.

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