

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Om Namah Sivaya



Contents

Letters

From Sri

Ramanasramam: page 3

Satsang with Nome:

page 6

Ever Yours in Truth:

page 10

The Ribhu Gita: page 12

nirvāṇaprakaraṇa

pūrvārtham chapter 11:

page 18

Who Am I? The Nondual

Self Inquiry Retreat 2025:

page 23

Siva's Cosmic Dance (108

Karanas): page 30

Retreats at SAT in 2025:

page 32

Pledge 2026: page 33

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REFLECTIONS

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The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

from Letters From Sri Ramanasramam (1970 ed.)



LIFE ON THE HILL

September 30, 1948

Recently Bhagavan himself changed the verses of “Atmabodha” which are in venba metre into the kalivenba metre by writing them afresh. As they have now been printed in a book form, that has since been the topic of frequent discussions in Bhagavan’s presence. Yesterday

afternoon, Bhagavan himself said, addressing a devotee sitting nearby: “Look. When we were in the Virupaksha Cave I wrote in this small note book in the Malayalam script at the request of Palaniswami a good portion of Sankara’s slokas and upadesas. This “Atmabodha” also is found in that notebook; but at that time I did not feel like writing a commentary thereon. Off and on, the slokas used to come to my mind. You know what happened once. We all started to go to the summit of the Arunachala Hill, with all necessary things for cooking our food and eating it whenever and wherever convenient. That was when we were in the Virupaksha Cave. Palaniswamy stayed behind in charge of the cave. By the time we reached the Edudonalu (Seven Ponds) it was rather hot. So, we bathed and then wanted to cook our food. We took out the cooking vessels and all the food-stuffs, such as dhal, salt and ghee and also arranged the fireplace and then found that we had not brought the most important thing of all, namely the matchbox. The cave was too far away to go and fetch a matchbox. Moreover, it was very hot and everyone was terribly hungry. Some tried to make a fire by striking one piece of flint against another but without success. Some tried to rub one piece of wood against another as they do in Yagnas for lighting the sacrificial fire, but that too was not successful.

The second stanza in “Atmabodha” came to my mind.

“I read it out, explained the meaning and kept them all in good humour.”

Another devotee said, “We do not know the meaning of that sloka.”

Bhagavan replied with a smile, “You want to know its meaning? It means that just as you cannot cook whatever articles you may have unless you have fire, so also you cannot attain liberation (moksha) unless you have jnana.”

“What happened afterwards?” asked someone.

Bhagavan said, “Someone appears to have sent word through one of the grass-cutters who was returning home with head-loads of grass. Palaniswami sent a matchbox through some one of those going up the hill for woodcutting. Subsequently we lit a fire, cooked and ate. You know how the cooking was done? Rice, dhal and vegetables were all put in one vessel and boiled together and then some salt was added. A kitchadi (hotchpotch) was thus made. All of us had decided on it beforehand. After food, we took a little rest and then started for the summit. To enable them to understand the stanza ‘Bodhonya Sadhanebhyo’ I continued to explain its full signifi-

cance to them during our walk. On reaching the summit, I said to them, 'You see the amount of trouble experienced in reaching here. We climbed to a little extent and then had to mix a lot of things and eat before we could climb farther. For preparing the food we had no fire, and so nothing could be done. Similarly, you may have everything for teaching and learning but without understanding there cannot be full ripening of wisdom. With that fire of jnana all worldly things must be mixed up and swallowed to attain the highest state.' After that we came back straight to the cave before it was dark. In those days we never felt it difficult or tiresome to go to the summit; so we used to go whenever we felt like it. When I think of it nowadays, I begin to wonder whether I ever went to the summit."

"Is it a fact that Echamma and others also used to accompany you?" I asked. "Yes. Even the old woman, Mudaliar Patti, used to come with us. Both of them used to bring food everyday without fail. They would not listen to me. Even if I went away somewhere just to avoid them, they used to find me out somehow," said Bhagavan. I remarked, "We complain of pain in the legs for several days if we go up to Skandasramam even once. It is remarkable how these old women managed to go up to Skandasramam everyday with a bundle on their head, and sometimes elsewhere also, wherever Bhagavan happened to be. Their great desire to fall at the feet of Bhagavan perhaps gave them the required strength." With a nod of approval and a smile, Bhagavan was silent.



The Self Is and What the Self Is

Satsang, Feb. 4, 2024

Om Om Om
(Silence)

Nome: Bodiless and egoless is the Self. It is of the nature of nonobjective consciousness. It is completely Brahman, bodiless and “I”-less. It has no beginning or end, but it is infinite and eternal. If you cease to misidentify with the body, immortal bliss is your own. If you cease to misidentify as a bound individual, Brahman-knowledge is your own.

With what kind of knowledge do you know yourself? It is not known through the senses. It is not known through the thoughts of the mind. In what way do you know you exist? It does not require a sensation to be known. It does not require thought to be known. How do you know your own existence?

Adi Sankaracharya says, first, the existence is known. Then one knows its nature. The knowledge that you exist is indestructible and also innate. What is innate is ever-existent and is changeless. Having known that you exist, through a profound inquiry, “Who am I?”, you discern what that existence is. Such knowledge puts an end to all bondage and suffering. So, making your vision nonobjective, know the nature of your existence.

You know that you are. What is that? It is transcendent of the perceptible and the conceivable. The Self is changeless, indivisible, partless, ever-existent, never modified, without limitation of any kind, undifferentiated, bodiless, formless, self-existent, timeless, locationless, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss. To know how this is so, inquire. The rest is known in silence.

Questioner: You mentioned that Adi Sankaracarya said, first, you know that you exist, and then you know its nature.

Nome: Yes. You know that you exist innately. At the same depth that you have that knowledge, you should know what the existence is. To know what the existence is, know the knower, and do not misidentify the qualities of the known upon the knower—that is, the qualities of what is not the Self superimposed on the Self.

Q: I see that that does occur. I think I am a body with these duties, responsibilities, and relationships.

N: When did you become a body?

Q: I was going to say when I thought it, but that doesn't make it.

N: What you are, you always are. The Self does not change its nature. So, what are you always? A body that appears in a waking state of mind—can that be you?

Q: No. Because I'm not confused by the change of state. I shouldn't take that lightly, but I don't feel that I change, although the body changes all the time.

N: That cannot be you then, can it?

Q: There's no way I know my existence with the body.

N: The Existence alone knows itself. Existence is Consciousness and the only knower of everything known.

Q: The mind keeps trying to grasp my identity somehow.

N: The mind is thought. Can a thought know itself? If not, who is the knower?

Q: That is very helpful.

N: If you cease to regard the content of any state of mind as yourself, what remains?

Q: It seems the mind wants to find a landing spot in a thought.

N: Waking, dreaming, and deep dreamless sleep—you are beyond all of that. You are the Consciousness that knows them but is not known by them.

Another Q: You posed the question, "You know you exist, what is the nature of that existence?". I love it when you give us those questions because they take one right to the heart of

the matter. The answer is in the silence of one's existence. Silence gives one the answer.

Nome: Where being and knowing are the same, identical, and only one thing, there is the knowledge of the Self. That is the knowledge in which Brahman knows itself. The Self knows itself. It is not dependent on anything else. If you simply disidentify with anything that is objective to you, ignorance is destroyed being only illusory in nature. That will suffice. If ignorance is destroyed, knowledge shines forth of itself by itself.

Q: Thank you, Nome.

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

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

What is Real?

Satsang, Feb. 11, 2024

Om Om Om

(Silence)

What is real? Only that which exists always. What is true about the Self is always. To be always requires changelessness. Existence without beginning and without end is the nature of the Self, what you are. It must be bodiless, for nobody is ever seen to be changeless. Brahman is the reality, the infinite, and the eternal. If you know yourself, you know Brahman. To be infinite and eternal, you must be bodiless, formless, self-existent, and ever-existent. What is the nature of yourself?

If you abandon the tendency of misidentification as a body or as an individual entity or ego, then what you are is of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss. That is without birth and is imperishable. You exist. You are existence. How do

you know it? How do you know that you exist? Existence is known always. It is not a perception of the senses, nor is it a conception of the mind. In Self-knowledge, being and knowing are one and the same.

What is real? What is immutable? Existence is real but not the names and forms that are falsely attributed to it. There is no multiplicity in reality. The Self is one without a second, without another or an alternative. You cannot be both simultaneously— the Self and an embodied individual. So, which are you? Inquire to know. What you know is what you are. Reality can alone know itself. Brahman knows Brahman. The Self knows the Self.

What is real? That cannot be known as an object. To know the reality, inquire. To imagine what is not the Self to be the Self is ignorance. If you inquire to know who is ignorant, the ignorance and the one who appears to be ignorant disappear, for they are not real.

Questioner: Namaste. In interactions with others, I see my ego rise when the other person thinks good or bad about me. There is the tendency to either accept it happily if they think good or try to defend myself if they think badly about me. How should I inquire during these times?

Nome: What is good and bad? The mind may be good or bad. The Self, not so. You may regard a situation of some kind as being good or bad, but is that the Self?

What is considered favorable or unfavorable occurs in the world. Are you in the world? If you were a body, you would be in the world, but ,as you are not a body, the world is a mere appearance within you. If we cease to misidentify with the content of the waking state, what is there? If you cease to misidentify as a body and cease to misidentify with the mind, is there anything favorable or unfavorable, good or bad? Are you ever in a situation? Not really.

Constantly inquire, “Who am I?”. Then, there is nothing unfavorable. We may say you have arrived at that which is supremely auspicious.

Another Q: Namaste Nome. We often start the satsangs with recalling what seems to be attributes of the Self that it is beginningless, nameless,

undifferentiated, and so on. I’m trying to understand, should I take them to be self-evident truths that the Self is undifferentiated, that the Self is beginningless and endless, or should I think about why that is so? I can proceed either way and am looking for guidance.

Nome: What kind of guidance do you need?

Q: Part of my process of inquiry, rightly or wrongly, is when I question, “For whom is this thought?”, an entity rises in my mind, and I try to apply these attributes to that entity. When it doesn’t match, I know it’s not the Self. Therefore, in my mind, it seems to be useful to think about them as either self-evident truths or something that I should more deeply process to see if it is undifferentiated.

N: To discriminate finely so that you no longer superimpose the attributes of what is not the Self upon the Self is wise. When the Self is described, it is not really a matter of attributes, for the Self is truly attributeless. It is not that the Self has Being, has Consciousness, and has Bliss; rather the Self is that. The description is about that in itself, not an attribute of something else. The instruction is about the Self, and it is not about one who is other than the Self. Otherness is an illusion.

Q: To dissolve this illusion of the other forms that appear in the mind, is it valuable to apply those attributes to them? Am I doing it correctly?

N: Existence is just itself, and that is the Self. Existence is not an attribute. Your existence is not an attribute of someone else, as if there were two of you, one to be realized and one who is attempting to realize. The Self is only one. That one solitary existence without another is yourself. Discriminate in such a manner that your sense of identity becomes absorbed in That, the Reality. That is the attributeless Brahman. The knowledge of it is also that. In Self-knowledge, the knower, the knowing, and the known are all the same thing—not many things or multiple things with some similarity between them, but rather, the existence itself.

Your discrimination should be experiential. It is not collecting ideas about the Self. Discrimination is knowledge. Knowledge is truly Consciousness. Consciousness is Existence. What are you?

Another Q: Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya. Nome Guru, there are several hours in the day when I'm not engaged in an explicit spiritual activity like meditation, inquiry, or pooja. During those hours, I forget my true nature. Even though these are not very emotionally demanding activities, I forget to have a background thought of who I am. How do I make the inquiry more constant during daily activities?

Nome: Do you ever forget yourself?

Q: I don't, but I also would love to have a background remembrance of my nature, and I don't even have that. That's the forgetfulness.

N: You never have a doubt about it existing. Even if you would imagine some doubt about the Self, you are still there with absolute certainty that you are. The reality should be known as it is, one without a second. You may know it as the substrate of all. You are the existence underlying all. You may say that the inquiry goes on as the background, but, really, it is in the foreground. What is indicated regarding inquiry is the same for devotion. It can be the constant background for you, and it is also the foreground. In inquiry and in devotion, otherness disappears, duality vanishes. The reality is all.

Another Q: Nome, when you said, "To imagine what is not the Self to be the Self is ignorance." I think, for me, that is the big challenge, differentiating what the Self is and what the Self isn't. This reminds me of a teaching I read once, "You are my very Self forever", that is, we truly are all one. It's really hard to see that when we're imagining that something such as the body is the Self when it is not.

N: There is no difficulty. The difficulty is only apparently so. As soon as you commence to inquire, the difficulty vanishes.

Q: When you absolutely know that, then there's no difficulty. Only if I'm seeing individuality, is there the difficulty. Is that right?

N: The individual is not real. So, an unreal ego has unreal difficulties.

Q: Yes. That's really beautiful. Thank you for clarifying this.

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

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti



Correspondence with Nome



[A seeker in UK was making an altar for worship and meditation in her home and asked:]

Dear Nome, Namaste. The only place I can have my own small temple in my home is a shared living space. Whichever way I work it, the Murti's (most of them) do not face the direction according to tradition. Is this important or is it more a matter of devotion being the most important factor?

Many thanks. Kindest regards

[Nome's reply:]

August 22, 2025

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The devotion is more important than the direction, and the most important direction is inward.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker in Canada questioned the need for spiritual practices, meditations, spiritual books, recorded teachings, sat-sangs, retreats, etc.]

August 22, 2025

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Use whatever you find to be helpful for the inquiry to realize Self-knowledge. Reflect upon this. For example, what would be the benefit or purpose of not reading books that expound upon Advaita Vedanta prior to your realization of what they say? What would be the purpose and benefit of not reading what they say after such realization? Such clarity does much to prevent leading oneself into absurdity.

Where is the need of the ego?

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[The seeker then asked if the absurdity was in the thoughts of the Realized. Here is the response.]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The "leading into absurdity" was a gentle, polite way of prompting you to examine your way of thinking, and thus gain clarity. You need not cogitate the state or "thoughts" of the Self-Realized; they can take care of themselves. Your thoughts, as expressed in your earlier email, had reached the point of being absurd. Dive within to the best of your ability, and you will find the perfect fullness of the Self and thus be happy.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[The same seeker asked about prede-

termination of everything. Here is the reply.]

Dear ,

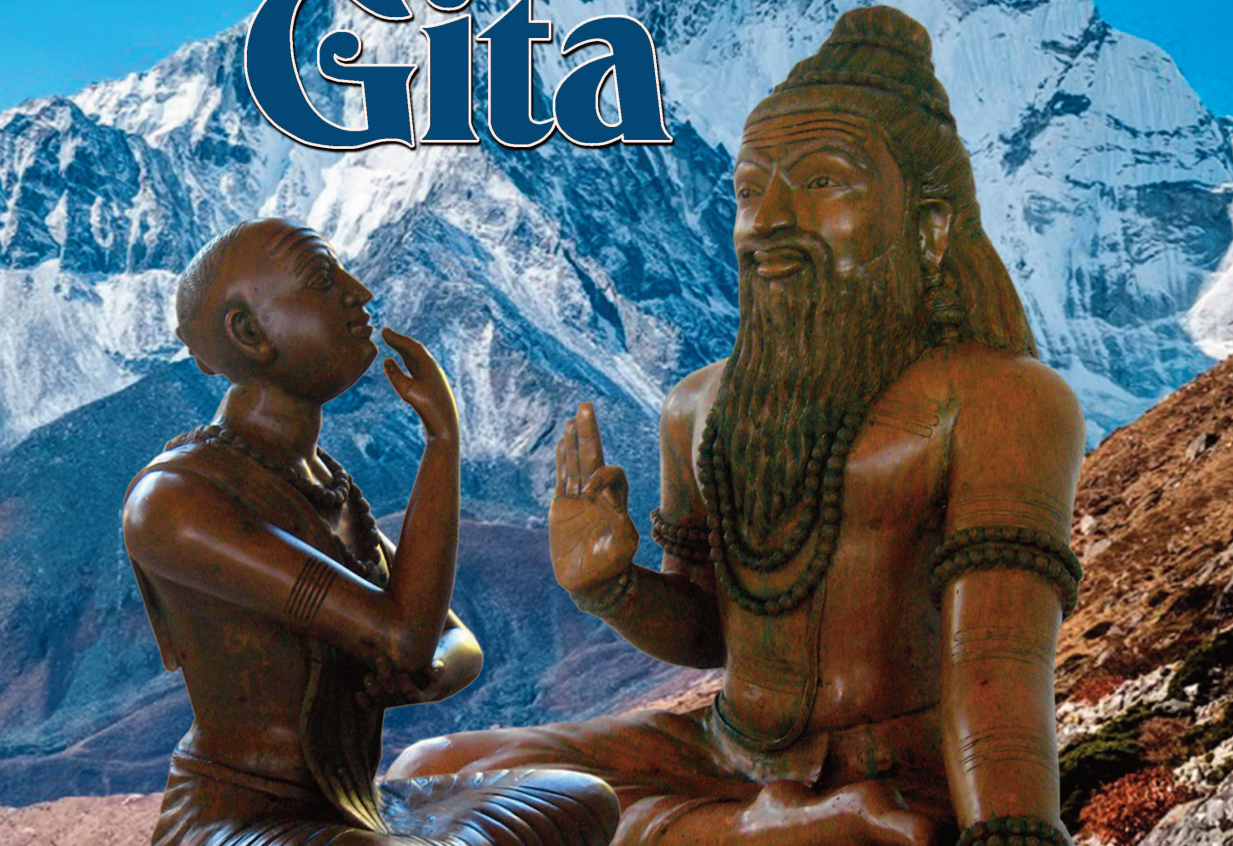
Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Predetermination for whom? First know the nature of the Self, and then you may determine if these things exist or not. Fully inquire or fully surrender and thus know the reality.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome



Ribhu Gita



Chapter 5, Verses 12-16
Commentary by Nome
Boundless Wisdom, June 15, 2012
Ribhu-Nidagha Dialogue

Om Om Om

Nome: Om Namah Sivaya

12. The tattva-s (twenty-four verities), the four means, similar categories, and dissimilar categories are all like the horns of a hare.

“The tattva-s”: these are considered to be the factors constituting manifested experience, as described in sankhya philosophy and elsewhere. They are usually counted as twenty-four in number, consisting of the five elements – earth, water, fire, air, space; the five sensations – seeing, hearing, etc; the five sense organs – the eyes, the ears, etc; the five organs of action – hands, feet, etc. and the four aspects

of the mind – manas, chitta, buddhi and ahamkara – manas being understood as the mind and its cognition abilities. Chitta is memory, or that which gives continuity to the mental functions. Buddhi is intellect, which has the ability to turn inward and contemplate things of a non-sensory nature. Ahamkara – the form of “I,” is the sense of ego. When all twenty-four are involved in manifested experience. According to Vedanta, there is only one tattva. “Tattva” means truth, and that alone constitutes all in all, at all times, without the least trace of differentiation. Considered as these factors of experience – these tattvas – they are “like the horns of a hare,” which means that they are unreal – entirely nonexistent. The horn of a rabbit does not exist at all. So, what does not exist? The objective elements, the senses, the sensing, the means of action and all the aspects of the mind, inclusive of all its content of any kind whatsoever. All of that, considered as a collective whole or individually – is entirely unreal, entirely nonexistent. What, then, exists? If all of these factors of experience do not actually exist but are unreal, and that entirely so, what exists? It is not material, it is not sensory, it is not something that acts or can be acted upon and is far beyond the domain of thought of any kind. This Existence is our Self.

The four means”: These are the requisites for Self Realization, sadhana chatustaya; consisting of viveka – discrimination, vairagya – dispassion or non-attachment, peacefulness, tranquility, dama self-control, renunciation uparati, fortitude or forbearance titiksha, faith, and profound deep meditation samadhana. The fourth means is mumukshutva – desire for Liberation. These are generally regarded as the requisites, or means of practice, for attaining realization of the Truth., These four means are like the horns of a hare – unreal. All of these are certainly divine in character and useful for the aspirant to proceed towards real Knowledge. If even all of these are unreal, what exists? Considered as separate qualities or characteristics, considered as activities of some kind, they are unreal, like the horns of a hare. What is their essence; what exists? That for which all of these means aim for, but which transcends all of them, is the Self, and that exists. That is One, without any differentiation whatsoever. For That, and in That, there is no duality. There is for That and in That, no need of a means to get over the duality.

“Similar categories and dissimilar categories are all like the horns of a hare”. When you say, “This is like this” or this is not like this,” such thinking is based on the supposition that there is indeed a “this” or “these,” so you can compare one “this” to another “this. Do objects truly exist? By objects, is meant anything gross or subtle; from the forms of sense objects to subtlest thoughts. Do any of these things truly exist? If they seem to for you, it is imperative to find out for whom they thus appear. If you thus inquire, “For whom are they?” all the this-s – the similar and the dissimilar ones – vanish, being unreal like the horns of a hare, and the one invariable Existence, of the nature of undifferentiated Consciousness, alone remains.

There is nothing similar to the Self, and there is nothing dissimilar from it. There is nothing like the Self whatsoever. It alone is pure Being, pure Consciousness. It alone is non-objective. There is nothing similar to It, and it is One and undivided, as well as infinite. So, there is no scope for anything apart from it to be dissimilar to it. Therefore, abandon any tendency in the mind to say, “Is this like the Self? or is this not like the

Self?"inquire in a nonobjective fashion to know the Self and realize that all such categories – the same, different, etc. formulated in the mind are just creations of the mind, like imagining horns on a rabbit – totally unreal.

What is essential, the key to gaining the full experience, is to apply it to one's self. If you accept it as a sweeping negation of various phenomena, it is an expansive view, but when you apply it to your own sense of identity, your own nature, the depth of it defies description. Apply this to your own experience and realize the objective portion, the sense portion, the entire mind and its content, memory, etc. all of this does not truly exist, what is your experience?

It is not doing, it is knowing. Doing attempts to make something happen; knowing simply reveals. What is revealed is the one tattva , the one Truth.

13. All the worlds, all the beings, all dharma-s with their philosophies, all learning, and all ignorance are all like the horns of a hare.

"All the worlds, all the beings, all (the) dharma-s with their philosophies are like the horns of a hare"; They are not real. If the world is unreal; where are you? If all the beings, the embodied individuals; and the disembodied individuals, are unreal, what are you? Dharmas, or revelations, or teachings, or philosophies, aimed at establishing an understanding of the worlds, the beings and that which lies beyond them, and the relationship between all these, if this great multiplicity does not actually exist, what truly is real? This is to be found out. The world is unreal, but you are real. Your reality is not of the world and not in the world. All beings regarded as embodied individuals are unreal, but you are real. See your own nature – worldless, bodiless, without particularized individuality, or an ego. Worldless and egoless is your nature, and one who has realized such has gone beyond the rabbit horns.

All learning, and all ignorance are all like the horns of a hare". Vidya and avidya, knowledge and ignorance. When you have a thought of something, you think you know it as such. When you are unable to conceive it, you say you do not know it; you are ignorant of it. Both knowledge and ignorance are in the domain of the mind. Are you in the domain of the mind? Real Existence is not as it is imagined to be. Therefore, knowledge and ignorance, vidya and avidya, do not apply to it. What has no bearing on true Existence or Reality, what does not exist in or for the Self, is unreal, indeed, entirely nonexistent. If one thinks that he knows the Self, that he has knowledge of It, that he has learned about it, what does he really know? If one feels or thinks, "I don't know the Self"– even though the Self is most intimate to him, how can such a state of ignorance be real? The inquiry "Who am I?" that reveals your true nature, lifts you beyond both ignorance and so-called knowledge. Everything of an objective character falls into the categories of known or unknown, but the Self is never a known or unknown object, and the Self is the Reality. Inquire and know the Self directly by its own light, and then there are no more rabbit horns.

14. All the castes, all the communities, all holy shrines and waters, all Vedas, and all scriptures are all like the horns of a hare.

What you may think of as social activities and religious activities, as social standing, as religious standing, of what reality is all that? Is anyone an embodied individual, that we should think of classes and divisions among them or communities of them? What are we in Reality? Just the undifferentiated, absolute Consciousness, and that is, Brahman. For Brahman, of what use are the Vedas? For Brahman, of what use are holy waters? For Brahman, of what use are all the scriptures, including this one? Not that one should regard the world as real or important and these things as unimportant; that would be a very big mistake and an utter misconception. Ribhu is expounding the nature of the Supreme, from the Supreme. Here, there are no embodied individuals; and nothing else of any kind whatsoever, just one Brahman Self. It is the meaning of all the scriptures – the Vedas, etc. – In That, standing as That, there are no such things as Vedas, scriptures, etc. It is the source of all that's blessed or spiritual, holy waters, holy shrines, etc. It is the essence of the holiness in all those things; yet in That, for That, there are no waters or shrines. It is vast, space-like, infinite Consciousness, and that eternally so. Realize this in your own experience, and everything else is just a horn of a hare.

What do you think the Vedas are, and what do you think you are? If the Self cannot be thought, likewise It cannot be expressed; yet the Vedas, from the ancient primordial source, express the Truth. The Truth is the ever-existent. Iff one is apparently in a waking state of mind and has the good opportunity to read or listen to the Vedas, and gets to their essence as proclaimed in the Upanishads, he finds himself beyond the waking state entirely and all of its content.

Let all that can be possibly negated be negated. There is one thing that remains, and that alone is real; inconceivable, ineffable, It is entirely real. There are no degrees of Reality, but Reality is always fully so, and the unreal is always completely so.

You are existing but not with “here and there” and “now and then.” and such. This can be readily realized by disidentifying from the body.

15. All bondage, all “liberation,” all “knowledge” (vijñanam), Isvara, all time, and all instruction (bodha) are all like the horns of a hare.

The second phrase about liberation can be understood only if the first phrase about bondage is comprehended. The first phrase is that all bondage is unreal, like the horns of a hare. By what do you suppose yourself to be limited? What appears to bind you to the world, to objects, to events, to the body, to the illusory divisions of life and death? What is the bondage? What seems to tie you to the body, to the senses, or to the prana, the animating life energy? What is the bondage? What seems to tie you to thought, any of your thoughts, so that you consider them you, yours, real, or telling you what is? What constitutes the bondage? What binds you to the feeble assumption of “I,” some kind of individualized entity that can become tied to the thoughts, the prana, the senses, the body, the world and such? What is the bondage? It may be called ignorance and may be recognized as mere misidentification, and the bondage is entirely unreal, just like the horns of a rabbit. The horns are not really there. The bondage is not really there. In truth, our Being is never bound. Hearing this

and coming to know of this from the supposed position of bondage, one conceives of this ever-existent Reality of absolute Being as a state of liberation. It is in contrast to the bondage. The truth is, the Self is never bound, so it does not become liberated. What is regarded, from the perspective of being bound, as the state of liberation, is actually one's own Self, one's own Being. To comprehend what is being indicated, make your vision nonobjective and inquire as to who it is that is bound. Sri Bhagavan says, "To inquire as to who is bound, is itself release or liberation."

What is the nature of knowing that real Being? If it is not actually tied together with anything else, there is no bondage, is there? The bondage is only the belief in such. The power in the belief is only the Consciousness that is the knowing. The Consciousness is forever unbound. This reduces the bondage to nonsensical imagination. With whatever you seem to become entangled, inquire and question the bondage.

All bondage is like the horns of a hare; likewise, all liberation is like the horns of a hare. All knowledge is likewise like the horns of a hare - unreal. Whatever it is that you think you know, it is not the Truth. Truth is realized; it is Self-realized. In realization, Being is Knowledge. There is, in truth, no separate knowledge distinct from one's Self, just as there is, in truth, no individual self apart from the Knowledge, which is of the nature of Consciousness. To regard Knowledge as something objective to you, different than one's own Being; to regard thinking as Knowledge - all of that is unreal, not true at all. To regard Knowledge as something distinct, a mode of mind, a state of mind yet to be attained, as something instrumental to attain something else, in possession of an individual and so forth and so on - all of this is just the ideas of horns of rabbits. True Knowledge is otherwise and is nondual.

"Isvara" is unreal. Isvara is the Lord. If even the Lord is unreal, how much more so is the individual? If you think the individual is real, you cannot honestly say the Lord is not real, but if the individual is nothing at all, and all that remains is the solitary Existence of the undivided Self, then in That, from That, one can say Isvara, the Lord, is not real.

"All time" is like the horns of a hare, past, present and future, however conceived. Time is not real; it is merely imagined in the mind. Whatever is in time, measured by time, or comes to an end in the course of time, is not real. The time itself is not real.

If there is no time and no ego to perceive or conceive of the time, what has been experienced and when? There is no time for bondage, liberation does not occur in time, the Lord is not seen at a particular time, and even the time of instruction is not in time.

One is instructed in spiritual Truth, but the Truth is that which lies beyond the individuals, the instructor, the instructed and the process of instruction. Of what does the instruction actually consist? It seems to occur between two beings, but the idea of two beings is negated by the instruction itself. It seems to be a process, but it is not in time; so it is not really a process. Where everything stops and the one Self alone remains, there the instruction is comprehended and from that, by that, it is said there is no instruction.

If there is bondage, one seeks liberation. In seeking liberation, one tries to attain knowledge; and that, by the grace of the Lord, at the right time and through the precious instruction. That being accomplished, the dream of illusion is over. With illusion over, the Reality, which ever is just as it is, remains. It is beginningless. It is endless. It is egoless. It is bodiless. The negation of all these things of a spiritual nature by Ribhu is to be understood by one who has already negated everything of a worldly nature, and to be understood as a revelation of the undivided Reality, which is the

essence of all these spiritual things but which transcends the forms of all these spiritual things, as well as all worldly things.

16. All existence (meaning objectified existence), all actions, all meetings with the wise (lit., great), and all duality are of the nature of unreality; all are like the horns of a hare.

We will talk about that next time. Om Namah Sivaya.

Om Namah Sivaya

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om





निर्वाणप्रकरण पूर्वार्थम् अध्याय ११ nirvāṇaprakaraṇa pūrvārtham chapter 11

श्री वसिष्ठ उवाच
śrī vasiṣṭha uvāca
Revered Vasistha said:

पुनर्पुनरिदं राम प्रबोधार्थं मयोच्यते ।
अभ्यासेन विना साधो नाभुदेत्यात्मभावना ॥ १ ॥

punaḥpunaridaṁ rāma prabodhārthaṁ mayocyate ।
abhyāsenā vinā sādho nābhudet-yātmabhāvanā ॥ 1 ॥

1 Again and again O Rama, for your understanding, I am explaining that; without practice, O excellent one, the ascertainment of the Self does not arise.

अज्ञानमेतद्वलवदविद्येतरनामकम् ।
जन्मान्तरसहस्रोत्थं घनं स्थितिमुपागतम् ॥ २ ॥

ajñānametad-balavad-avidyetara-nāmakam ।
janmāntara-sahasrotthaṃ ghaṇaṃ sthitim-upāgatam ॥ 2 ॥

2 This illusion, which is strong, is called ignorance and by other names. Rising from thousands of previous births, it has come to a very dense state.

सबाह्याभ्यन्तरं सर्वैरिन्द्रियैरनुभूयते ।
भावाभावेषु देहस्य तेनातिघनतां गतम् ॥ ३ ॥

sabāhyābhyantaram sarvair-indriyair-anubhuyate ।
bhāvābhāveṣu dehasya ten-ātighanatām gatam ॥ 3 ॥

3 The internal and external are experienced by all the senses. By the [repeated] states of being and not being the body, that (illusion) has reached a highly dense state.

आत्मज्ञानं तु सर्वेषां इन्द्रियानामगोचरम् ।
सत्ताम् केवलमायाति मनषष्ठेन्द्रियक्षये ॥ ४ ॥

ātmajñānaṃ tu sarveṣāṃ indriyānām-agocaram ।
sattām kevalamāyāti manaḥ-ṣaṣṭhendriya-kṣaye ॥ 4 ॥

4 Self-Knowledge is indeed unattainable by all the senses. One attains the Being that alone is when the six senses including the mind come to an end.

प्रोल्लङ्घ्येन्द्रियजां वृत्तिं यत्स्थितं तत्कथं किल ।
याति प्रत्यक्षतां जन्तोः प्रत्यक्षातीतवृत्तिमत् ॥ ५ ॥

prollaṅgh-yendriyajām vṛttiṃ yat-sthitam tat-katham kila ।
yāti pratyakṣatām jantoḥ pratyakṣātita-vṛttimat ॥ 5 ॥

5 Beyond the modes produced by the senses, how can that which remains be reached by the senses, it being a mode that is verily beyond perception of living beings?

त्वमविद्यालतामेतां प्ररूढां हृदयद्रुमे ।
ज्ञानाभ्यासविलासासिपातैश्छिन्धि स्वसिद्धये ॥ ६ ॥

tvam-avidyā-latām-etām prarūdhām hṛdayadrume ।
jñānābhyāsa-vilāsāsipātai-śchindhi sva-siddhaye ॥ 6 ॥

6 For your own accomplishment, by the stroke of the sword of the practice of Knowledge, joyfully break apart this creeper of ignorance, which has widely spread on the tree of the heart.

यथा विहरति ज्ञातज्ञेयो जनकभूपतैः।
आत्मज्ञानाभ्यासपरस्तथा विहर राघव ॥ ७ ॥

yathā viharati jñāta-jñeyo janaka-bhūpataiḥ |
ātma-jñānābhyāsaparas-tathā vihara rāghava ॥ 7 ॥

7 Just as King Janaka, the one who ascertained the one to be known, engaged in the practice of Self-Knowledge, moves about, in the same way, you, also, move about, Raghava.

निश्चयोऽयमभूतस्य कार्याकार्यविहारिणः।
जाग्रतास्तिष्ठतो वापि तज्ज्ञानं तेन सत्यता ॥ ८ ॥

niścayo'ayam-abhūt tasya kāryākārya-vihāriṇaḥ |
jāgratāḥ tiṣṭhato-vāpi taj-jñānaṁ tena satyatā ॥ 8 ॥

8 That certainty which exists for one who moves between action and inaction while awake or still, that is knowledge, by that is Reality [known].

निश्चयेन हरिर्येन विविधाचारकारिणा।
योनिष्ववतरत्युर्व्यां तत्तज्ज्ञत्वमुदाहृतम् ॥ ९ ॥

niścayena harir-yena vividhācāra-kāriṇā |
yoniṣv-avatarat-yurvyāṁ tat-tajjñatvam-udāhṛtam ॥ 9 ॥

9 By which certitude, [Lord] Hari incarnates and engages in diverse conducts in the earth, both are described/quoted/sited as the Knowledge of That.

निश्चयो यस्त्रिनेत्रस्य कान्तया सह तिष्ठतः।
ब्रह्मणो वाप्यरागस्य स ते भवतु राघव ॥ १० ॥

niścayo yas-trinetrasya kāntayā saha tiṣṭhataḥ |
brahmaṇo-vāpyarāgasya sa te bhavatu rāghava ॥ 10 ॥

10 The certainty that exists in the three-eyed [Śiva] dwelling with his consort, or even in the passionless Brahmā, may that be yours, O Rāghava!

यो निश्चयःसुरगुरोर्वाक्पतेर्भार्गवस्य च ।
दिवाकरस्य शशिनःपवनस्यानलस्य च ॥ ११॥
नारदस्य पुलस्त्यस्य मम चाङ्गिरसस्तथा ।
प्रचेतसो भृगोश्चैव क्रतोरत्रेःशुकस्य च ॥ १२ ॥
अन्येषामेव विप्रेन्द्रराजर्षीणां च राघव ।
यो निश्चयो विमुक्तानां जीवतां ते भवत्वसौ ॥ १३ ॥

yo niścayaḥ sura-gurorvāk-pater-bhārgavasya ca |
divākarasya śaśinaḥ pavanasya-analasya ca || 11||
nāradasya pulastasya mama cāṅgirasas-tathā |
pracetaso bhr̥goścaiva kratoratreḥ śukasya ca || 12 ||
anyeṣām-eva viprendra-rājarsīṇāṃ ca rāghava |
yo niścayo vimuktānāṃ jīvatāṃ te bhavat-vasau || 13 ||

11-13 That certainty which exists in Br̥haspati (guru of the gods), Brahmā (lord of speech), Bhārgava, the Sun, the Moon, the Wind, the Fire, Narada, Pulastya, myself (Vasiṣṭha), Aṅgiras, Pracetasa, Bhr̥gu, Kratu, Atri, Śuka, also in chief among brahmins, royal sages, and liberated beings, may that certainty be yours.

श्री राम उवाच
śrī rāma uvāca
Sri Rama said:

येनैते भगवन् धीरा निश्चयेन महाधियः।
विशोकासंस्थितास्तन्मे ब्रह्मन्प्रभृहि तत्त्वतः॥ १४ ॥

yenaite bhagavan dhīrā niścayena mahā-dhiyaḥ |
viśokā saṁsthitāstanme brahman-prabhruhi tattvataḥ || 14 ||

14 O venerable sage! Please tell me truly, by what conviction these wise and highly intelligent ones have become firmly established, free from sorrow.

श्री वसिष्ठ उवाच
śrī vasiṣṭha uvāca
Revered Vasistha said:

राजपुत्र महाबहो विदिताखिलवेद्य हे ।
स्फुटं शृणु यथा पृष्टमयमेषां हि निश्चयः ॥ १५ ॥

rājaputra mahābaho veditākhila-vedya he ।
sphuṭaṃ śṛṇu yathā prṣṭam-ayam-eṣāṃ hi niścayaḥ ॥ 15 ॥

15. Oh prince, the long-armed, who knows all that should be known, as you asked, listen to this [response] attentively. This, indeed, is certain.

यदिदं किञ्चिदाभोगि जगज्जालं प्रदृश्यते ।
तत्सर्वममलं ब्रह्म भवत्येतद्व्यवस्थितम् ॥ १६ ॥

yadidaṃ kiṃcidābhogi jaga-jjālaṃ pradṛśyate ।
tatsarvam-amalaṃ brahma bhavatyetad-vyavasthitam ॥ 16 ॥

16. Whatever little is this experience of seeing the web of the world, all of that is the blemishless Brahman. [All] this is established [in Brahman].

ब्रह्म चिद्ब्रह्म भुवनं ब्रह्मभूतपरम्पराः ।
ब्रह्माहं ब्रह्म मच्छत्रुर्ब्रह्म सन्मित्रबान्धवाः ॥ १७ ॥

brahma cid-brahma bhuvanaṃ brahma-bhūta-paramparāḥ ।
brahmāhaṃ brahma macchatrur-brahma sanmitra-bāndhavāḥ ॥ 17 ॥

17. Brahman is the abode of Consciousness-Brahman, Brahman is the succession of beings. I am Brahman; my enemies are Brahman; my good friends and relatives are Brahman.

- by Ganesh Sadasivan

Who Am I?

The Nondual Self-Inquiry Retreat March 14-16, 2025 Day 3

Session 1

Om. Om. Om.

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya.

Sri Bhagavan says,

“Since every other thought can occur only after the rise of the ‘I’-thought and since the mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts, it is only through the enquiry ‘Who am I?’ that the mind subsides. Moreover, the integral ‘I’-thought, implicit in such enquiry, having destroyed all other thoughts, gets itself finally destroyed or consumed, even like the stick used for stirring the burning funeral pyre gets consumed.”

The mind has no separate existence. It is not an entity. It appears as a bundle or a group of thoughts. All the thoughts have their rise based on the notion “I.” In other words, your sense of a separate individuality is the very root of all other thoughts and concepts. It is only through the inquiry “Who am I?” that the mind subsides. Always seek to know what you regard as your identity, and discern what your real existence is. The “I” of the seeker, the inquirer, is destroyed in the process of destroying all other tendencies.

“Even when extraneous thoughts sprout up during such enquiry, do not seek to complete the rising thought, but instead, deeply enquire within, ‘To whom has this thought occurred?’ No matter how many thoughts thus occur

to you, if you would with acute vigilance enquire immediately as and when each individual thought arises as to whom it has occurred, you would find it is to 'me.' If then, you enquire 'Who am I?' the mind gets introverted and the rising thought also subsides. In this manner as you persevere more and more in the practice of Self-enquiry, the mind acquires increasing strength and power to abide in its Source."

"Do not seek to complete the rising thought." Thought seems to have a direction, but it goes on endlessly. Rather, inquire, for whom has this thought occurred? Inquiring for whom it is is turning your vision in a nonobjective manner. "If you would, with acute vigilance," attempting to discern your real nature, "enquire immediately as and when each individual thought arises as to whom it has occurred, you would find it is to 'me.'" It's not to somebody else. Who is the "I" in this "to me"? Whatever be the idea, for whom is it? The idea may be valid or invalid, false or true; for whom does it occur? If you truly turn your mind inward in such an approach, the objective part of the thought falls off. Inquire inwardly. For whom is the thought? Any number of thoughts; for whom are they? Is that one a thought? It appears to be the primal thought, the start of all other thinking. Who is it? It is for "me." Well then, who am I?

"If then, you enquire 'Who am I?' the mind gets introverted,"—it ceases to believe in its own imaginings—"and the rising thought also subsides." This turning inward, negating the objective portions of the thought or of the mind, and keeping the focus entirely upon what is your identity, the true significance of "I," is the focus. If you persevere in this manner, "then the mind acquires increasing strength and power to abide in its Source." Abiding in its source, it has no form. It is absorbed in the source. That is only the Self, the Being-Consciousness-Bliss. It doesn't matter if you seem to have a lot of thoughts or a few thoughts. Inquire for whom they are, and the defining of yourself in terms of thought will drop off. You cease to misidentify with thought. Its form is gone. Its power is gone. Its bondage is gone.

Sri Bhagavan says,

"It is only when the subtle mind is external-

ized through the activity of the intellect and the sense-organs that gross name and form constituting the world appear. When, on the other hand, the mind stays and abides in the Heart, they (name and form) recede and disappear. Restraint of the out-going mind and its absorption in the Heart is known as introversion (antarmukha-drshhti)." Inward facing vision. "The release of the mind and its emergence from the Heart is known as bahirmukha-drishhti, (objectiveness)." Outward facing vision.

It is only an externalized mind that conceives of the world as being an objective reality. Regard name and form as all that is perceptible and conceivable. Ribhu says that there are five aspects to experience: Sat, Cit, Ananda, Nama, Rupa; Being, Consciousness, Bliss, Name, and Form. Then he goes on to declare, in Ribhu Gita, of these, the first three are reality, and the two remaining, name and form, are unreal. The name and form do not exist externally. They are merely the manifestation of an externalized mind. If we inquire for whom it is, and then "Who am I?" even the mind vanishes. Its vanishing is its ability to stay in its source. Hence, the value of introversion. "When the mind stays and abides in the heart,"—at one with the quintessential being—"they, name and form, recede and disappear" because they are unreal. If they were real in the least, they would not disappear at any time.

"If, in this manner, the mind becomes absorbed in the heart," in which manner? In the manner of inquiry, negating all that is objective, all that is merely the result of an externalized mind. "If in this manner, the mind becomes absorbed in the heart," the belief in a separately existing mind vanishes. The "I" that so conceived it vanishes. All that is unreal vanishes.

"the 'I', which is the centre of the multitude of thoughts," all of that multitude depending on one false assumption—it is called "I."

"If in this manner the mind becomes absorbed in the Heart, the ego or the 'I', which is the centre of the multitude of thoughts, finally vanishes" When it vanishes, what remains? "the 'I', which is the centre of the multitude of thoughts, finally vanishes and pure Consciousness or Self, which subsists during all the states of the mind, alone remains resplendent."

During the three states of mind, waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, the mind and its manifestations appear and disappear. The “I,” the individual ego, which seems to appear and disappear, appears and disappears in the various states of mind. One thing does not change or vanish with the states of mind change in. That is Consciousness, which is not a thought, not a bundle of thoughts. If you examine, you'll see only one thing survives the passage of the various states of mind. That one thing is the Self. Its nature is Consciousness. It is the Existence.

It is this state, worldless, without the mind, I-less, or egoless, what remains upon inquiring as to that which never changes in any of the states of mind. What remains is pure, that is, unmixed, Consciousness. It remains resplendent upon such inquiry to know who you are. Resplendent indicates its self-knowing nature. It shines by its own light. So, inquire, for whom is all this? Inquire, who am I? Inquire in a manner that is transcendent of the three states of mind, and all of their content. Inquire to know that which is self-knowing, self-existent. Inquire to find where there is not the slightest trace of the “I” thought. That which is just described, is the true being of oneself. And That, one's true being, is that which is called Quiescence, or Mauna, silence. “where there is not the slightest trace of the ‘I’-thought, that is the true Being of oneself. And that is called Quiescence”

Sri Bhagavan says:

“This state of mere inherence in pure Being is known as the Vision of Wisdom. Such inherence means and implies the entire subsidence of the mind in the Self. Anything other than this and all psychic powers of the mind, such as thought reading, telepathy and clairvoyance, cannot be Wisdom.”

Wisdom is Self-knowledge. That can be known only by the Self. What is the vision of wisdom? “It is mere inherence in pure being.” Not being this or that. Abidance in pure Being is the vision of wisdom. And it is by such wisdom that one finds bliss and immortality. “Such inherence”—such abidance as just Being, just as Existence—“implies the entire subsidence of the mind in the Self,” because the entirety of the mind was based on a single notion, “I.” And

when “I's” real nature is known, it is egoless without the least trace of individuality. With the entire subsidence of the mind, there is the vanishing of the world, the objectified sphere of experience. World-less you are and body-less too. Egoless you are. All dissolves into the Self. The Self is itself of the nature of Knowledge, that is Consciousness. Unusual powers of the mind, such as thought reading, etc. that he mentions, such is not wisdom. Wisdom is the knowledge of yourself. Wisdom is that in which Being and knowing are the same. Wisdom is that what makes you free of bondage, free of suffering. Wisdom is knowing yourself for what you truly are.

Sri Bhagavan says:

“Atman alone exists and is real. The world, the individual soul and God are like the illusory appearance of silver in the mother of pearl, imaginary creations in the Atman. They appear and disappear simultaneously. Verily, the Self alone is the world, the ‘I’ and God. All that exists is but the manifestation of the Supreme.”

He says, “Atman alone exists and is real.” Consider deeply the significance of this. The Self alone exists. Then nothing else exists. The Self alone is real. Then nothing else is reality. If the Self alone exists and is real, then it is always so. And such solitary existence, or reality, has no alternative. Being without an alternative is nonduality. The Self alone exists and is real. Where then is the scope, other than in imagination, for an ego, a mind, a world? What exists, always exists, and just as it is. What then are the world, the individual soul, and God? They are like the illusory appearance of silver in the mother of pearl. In such a shell, there's no silver. It just appears to be like that. Likewise in the Self, there is no world, individual, God, or any other differentiation. It just appears that way in imagination. If one inquires for whom do they appear and who am I, the three, the world, the individual soul, and God are not at all, but are only of the nature of unformed Existence, unborn Being. They are “imaginary creations in the Atman.” There is nowhere else where they could be. Yet, imagination cannot remain in the Self. The individual, the world, and God, they appear and disappear simultaneously. The appearance of an illusion is cer-

tainly not a real thing. So, they really do not appear or arise at all. Yet, they cannot appear in nothing. There is no non-existence. And Existence can give rise only to itself. That Self is without modification or change. Imagination takes the form of superimposition imagining differences upon some substrate that has no difference. Since it has no difference, it is not actually a substrate.

“Verily, the Self alone is the world, the ‘I’ and God. All that exists is but the manifestation of the Supreme.”

The Supreme is not modified for such manifestation. That is not the meaning of what he is saying. The only thing real in the world is the existence of the Self. The only thing real in the “I” is the existence of the Self. The only thing real in God is the same existence of the Self. So, the three are not three; the other is not other. There is only one sole existent reality. It can never be partial, partly real, but is always entirely real. All this is considered the manifestation of the Self by the wise. Then there's really not “all this.” The superimposed ideas of “all” and “this” are also eliminated by the inquiry to know oneself.

Questioner: I feel it is very important to understand what has just been explained. So, the Isvara, and some call it Saguna Brahman, is nothing but the imagination of the Atman; but, truly speaking, it is the Atman itself, because there is no substrate. Non-existence cannot be imagined. The description of Isvara is given as somebody, a reality that creates, sustains, and destroys the universe, and various attributes are provided; even in the form of Dakshinamurti or Nataraja, which is an Ashtamurti, which is a description of the entire manifested reality in the form, is my understanding. But listening, it is only the Atman that exists, though the world, Isvara, and the individual arise and subsist simultaneously. I would love to understand the significance of Isvara from a non-dualistic approach. And what is being explained is that it is only the Atman that is in the form of Isvara.

Nome: For whom do the world and Isvara appear? If that becomes the focus of the inquiry, there is no creation and no destruction, no world,

no Isvara, no Jiva. Hence neither mukti, liberation, nor bandha, bondage, from liberation.

Q: What then becomes a worship?

N: Abidance in the Self is the highest form of worship. You have just said that it is only the Atman that is in the form of Isvara. The Self alone exists. The Self alone is real. When the individuality of the worshiper dissolves, then alone does one know the nature of Isvara. It is said that it is saguna, with attributes, with qualities. How does Brahman get those qualities? Or what attribute of Brahman can be spoken of?

Q: And yet, it is also described as that all that is true, good, and beautiful. You have mentioned it a few times in reference to living in this world.

N: Yes.

Q: It is clear.

N: Brahman is the clarity. If thought of in any way whatsoever, it is Saguna Brahman. Utterly unconceivable, by itself with nothing else, it is Nirguna.

Another Q: You said the Atman is all there is, as it is. So, does that mean that there is no change? That there is no movement, no action?

N: Does the Self ever change?

Q: No.

N: Your existence never changes. You never cease to exist. Your existence is the unchanging Self. Movement and action refer to the mind and body. The Self does not move anywhere. Nor is there anywhere where it could go. The Self has no action. You are the existence that never does anything.

Q: And if that is all there is, that means nothing is ever happening.

N: That is so. Nothing is ever happening. Although all that appears to happen is only that. If

we ask for whom is it happening, that happening subsides. The very notion that anything has ever happened dissolves, and along with this dissolution, the idea that you are the performer of action also dissolves.

Q: Somehow the notion that there is nothing happening anywhere in the universe, that everything is still, that seems hard to accept.

N: Where is the universe?

Q: In my mind.

N: Does your mind move or is it still?

Q: Moves.

N: When it moves, where does it move? It can't be in the universe; you've already discarded that.

Q: It is imagining the movement.

N: So, it imagines the movement in itself. And when we look to grasp the mind, no such form is found to exist. The unmoving, the unchanging, the universal, that is, the infinite and the eternal, these are all you. You are not an individualized embodied being. Eliminate that imagination by the practice of inquiry and thereby gain Self-knowledge.

Q: Thank you.

Another Q: What you share just gives so much peace. It kind of just opens up the heart. And, I have two questions. One is, you know, the peace experienced, how do we hold on to it? And when you say everything is the Self, so why and how does ignorance arise?

N: Ignorance is only misidentification. It seems to have arisen, but it is not really so. After all, ignorance is only that, ignorance. It's not a real thing in itself. Peace is your natural state. The natural state is veiled when there is misidentification, which alone constitutes the ignorance. Free yourself of misidentification, and you are natu-

rally at peace. The changeless, which is free of misidentifications, is the very root of peace.

Q: So, it really doesn't matter when or why ignorance has arisen. I was just trying to understand whether there is a point in time or, to use a silly word, a root cause, for ignorance. So, I guess there is no such thing as time; so, it doesn't really matter.

N: A point in time is also illusory. So, can we pick an illusory time when the illusion begins?

Q: I mean, I'm trying to think about it because we are so attached to the idea of being born. If I think about it from that standpoint...

N: Did your existence begin with the birth of the body?

Q: Doesn't seem like it.

N: You are something that is unborn. and never-ending. If we look for the point where ignorance starts, it is only the notion, "I." With that assumption it starts, but then you will naturally inquire for whom has this come to be. Inquiring like that, the ignorance itself vanishes. It did not begin, which is why it is referred to as illusion. Not that illusion is a real thing that happened to anyone.

Q: I think the only reason I ask, or I think about the point is, I also think about how to end it. So, I feel like there's a start and an end to it.

N: That is what has been described in this book, Who Am I?: how to be free of ignorance or illusion. However, the illusion appears, ask for whom it appears, thereby turning your mind completely inward. Since ignorance is merely the mistake regarding one's identity, inquire: "Who am I?" That is verily the most effective means to eliminate the unreal ignorance. He says, "for the subsidence of the mind, there is no other means more effective and adequate than Self-inquiry." I think we should do that. "Even though by other means the mind subsides, that is only apparently so; it will rise again."

Q: Thank you.

N: Know yourself and ignorance will vanish once and for all. Was there a second question?

Q: No, I think that's all that is needed.

N: Alright.

Session 2

Bhagavan says,

“Countless vishaya-vasanas”—subtle tendencies of the mind in relation to sense objects—“that come one after the other in quick succession like the waves of the ocean, agitate the mind. Nevertheless, they too subside and finally get destroyed with progressive practice of Atmadhyana or meditation on the Self. Without giving room even to the thought which occurs in the form of a doubt, whether it is possible to stay merely as the very Self, whether all the vasanas can be destroyed, one should firmly and unceasingly carry on meditation on the Self.”

Ignorance has no power, save that which you lend to it. It is not only powerless, it is without substance. All of the tendencies that come with ignorance are the same stuff as the ignorance. How much substance does ignorance have? It makes illusion, which is not really making anything, and itself is an illusion. Taking the illusion to be real, caught up in the belief that sensations and the world etc. are real, agitate the mind. Such agitation is suffering. Peace is natural. The peace that is natural, uncaused, is the very nature of the Self. Meditate on the Self, which can only occur nonobjectively. Such meditation on the Self is inquiry, discerning who you are. Endowed with such knowledge, none of the ignorance remains. It is certainly possible for you to abide as that which is the Self. The idea that it is otherwise, that you are separate from the Self and trying to get to it, is just one more vasana to be discarded.

“Without giving room even to the thought which occurs in the form of a doubt, whether it is possible to stay merely as the very Self, whether all the vasanas can be destroyed,”—without giving room to any such doubts—“one should firmly and unceasingly carry on meditation on the Self.” Unceasingly is possible if your medita-

tion is thought transcendent. If it consists only of thought, there will be interruptions in it. No thought is constant. No thought is everlasting. But the Consciousness, which is beyond thought, though knowing it, is constant. So, carry on nonobjective meditation, inquiring, “Who am I?”

“So long as vishaya-vasanas”—vasanas related to sense objects—“continue to inhere in the mind, it is necessary to carry on the enquiry, ‘Who am I?’ As and when thoughts occur, they should, one and all, be annihilated then and, there, at the very place of their origin, by the method of enquiry in quest of the Self.”

What is the place of their origin? Find it by inquiring, “Who am I?,” tracing your identity inward, beyond such tendencies, beyond the mind, beyond the ego notion. With such inquiry, you are in quest of the Self, that is to say knowledge of the Self. And you are in quest of the Self, if you know where your happiness lies.

“Not to desire anything extraneous to oneself constitutes Vairagya (dispassion) or nirasa (desirelessness). Not to give up one’s hold on the Self constitutes Jnana (Knowledge). But really Vairagya and Jnana are one and the same. Just as the pearl-diver, tying stones to his waist, dives down into the depths, and gets the pearl from the sea-bed, even so every aspirant, pledged to Vairagya can dive deep into himself and realize the precious Atman. If the earnest seeker would only cultivate the constant and deep contemplative ‘remembrance’ (smrti) of the true nature of the Self until he has realized it, that alone would suffice.”

“If the earnest seeker would only cultivate the constant and deep contemplative ‘remembrance’ (smrti) of the true nature of the Self until he has realized it, that alone would suffice.”

“God and the Guru are not really different: they are identical. He that has earned the Grace of the Guru shall undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken, just as the prey that has fallen into the tiger’s jaws will never be allowed to escape. But the disciple, for his part, should unswervingly follow the path shown by the Master.”

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti, Om

Question after the retreat ended:

Questioner: Many thoughts on my head. How do you eliminate those bad thoughts about bad, like bad stuff?

Nome: Good is natural for you. Good feels good. Bad is not natural for you. It makes you suffer. You can eliminate bad thoughts. You don't have to think them. What you are is truly good, even when you have bad thoughts.

But bad thoughts are not natural for you, which is why they feel bad.

You can try this. Anytime, every time you get bad thoughts about whomever and whatever, think of Ramana. Think of me. Think of all holy people everywhere. Think of all the good that's done by people everywhere. And then reflect how it's natural to be good.

Is it clear what you should do?

Q: Yes

Nome: Try your best! And whenever you can see an opportunity to do something good for someone else. Do that. That is very important.





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.)



102. Viṣkambhaṃ

Through the Guru's grace, clarity regarding the purpose of life dawns, and the devotee is liberated from the repetitive cycles of worry and confusion that appear to return again and again disturbing the mind.



103. Udghaṭṭitaṃ

Abide in silence, immersed in the radiant joy of the Self's bliss.



104. Vṛṣabhakrīḍitaṃ

Through every turmoil of life, remain in śaraṇāgati, holding the Guru in steady vision, just as Nandi, in perfect surrender, gazes unceasingly upon the feet of the Supreme Lord.

SAT Retreats 2025

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. Retreats provide much time for silent meditation in addition to the instruction. 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.

Vegan meals are provided during the 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.

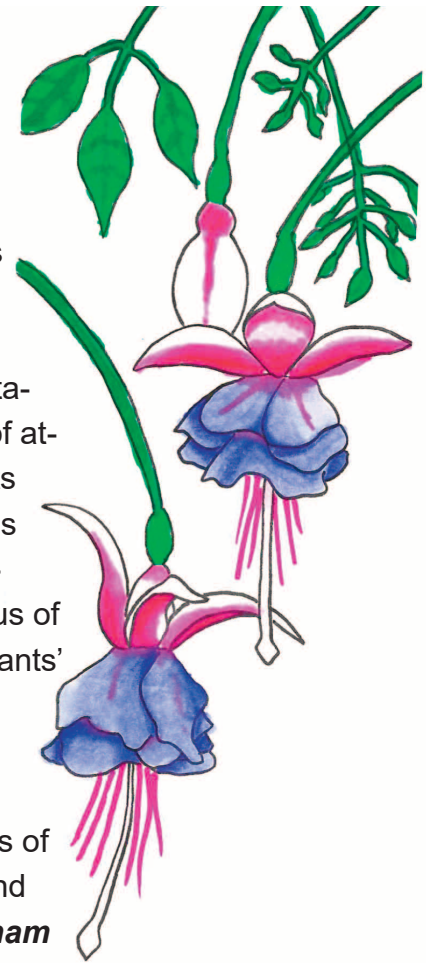
The Truth Revealed Retreat: November 14-16, 2025

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.

REGISTER ONLINE

<https://satramana.org/web/events/retreats/retreat-application-form/>

**End of sign-up date is
one month prior to commencement of each retreat.**



"IT IS THE STRENGTH OF YOUR WORDS
THAT GO DEEP. IT IS THAT STRENGTH OF A
SADHU THAT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.
SO, I THANK YOU."



Thank you, Nome. I thank Bhagavan for this Satsang and all the satsangs. Kabir has said, "Satsang with a saint will never fail, just as iron turns to gold by the touch of the philosopher's stone."

*Kabir sangat sadhu ki, kabahun na nishphal hoy;
Loha paras paras te, so bhi kanchan hoy.*

It says that Satsang with a Saint will never fail. Even iron will turn to gold. You have given so much strength to be able to inquire to be able to be with Being and Consciousness.

Last time when you were speaking with Raman about taking thoughts so seriously, it really woke me up. Why do I even take it that way when it is not real? You've said that so many times. It is the strength of your words that go deep. It is that strength of a sadhu that makes all the difference. So, I thank you.

Another bhajan that I have been hearing recently. It says that the lightning is striking, making the pearls glow, but suddenly darkness will come, and before you know it, the days are going to go by, and you have 21,600 breaths in a day. How much are you using it for Self-knowledge, for the real purpose that you are here? This Satsang does go deep, and I thank you so much.

Nome: It is yours.

Sabiha: Yes, thank you. Thank you.

Excerpt taken from August 17, 2025 Satsang with Nome

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Reference to the Gujarati bhajan (Brahmvedantji 84)

Ganga Sati (a devotional poet from Gujarat (1856-1884)) uses the metaphor of threading the pearls in the momentarily flash of lightening warning that sudden darkness will soon prevail. According to her, in a blink of eye, time will consume 21,600 breaths. This is the reference to how fleeting the nature of life is. The threading of the pearls symbolizes the unity with the Ultimate Divine. Moreover, the light of the bolt is a reference for the uncertainty and temporariness of life. Here, the darkness is metaphorically used to determine the death that will eventually come to all. The time is personified here further when it is said that time will eat/consume 21,600 breaths. The suggestive meaning implies the fleeting na-

ture of life and the inescapable, inevitable nature of death. The primary purpose of human life is unity with the Supreme Being. Human life is quite similar to that of the flash of lightning. The breath of human life once taken can't be revived or renewed. Hence, every breath of human life shall be devoted to attaining unity with the Supreme Being.

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It is by Bhagavan's Grace the SAT Temple exists making satsang with Nome available for devotees to go deep within. The Grace of Bhagavan is manifested in many ways through His devotees. One of the ways it is manifested is by donations. These donations include: membership donations, yearly pledges, retreats, and love donations.

We invite you to reflect on the significance of SAT, the SAT Temple, and Sri Ramana's teaching in your life and to offer a pledge for 2026 to maintain and care for this hallowed place, the home of that which supports and illumines your spiritual life.

Thank you.

In service to Sri Bhagavan, The SAT Board of Directors

Raman Muthukrishnan, President; Eric Ruetz, Vice-President; Sangeeta Raman, Secretary; Ganesh Sadasivan, Treasurer; Nome and Sasvati; Sivakumar Chandran; Scott Roney.