

# *Reflections*

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*Society of  
Abidance in  
Truth*

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# *Why Reflections?*

*Reflections is a special publication of SAT.*

*The print version is intended for members of SAT to enhance their spiritual understandings and practices.*

*This on-line version is offered so that Reflections can be available to all.*

*Reflections presents the actual teachings of  
Ramana Maharshi in every issue.*

*Reflections presents enduring Wisdom from  
ancient texts in every issue.*

*Reflections presents a transcript of satsang in every issue so that  
aspirants can have the opportunity  
to carefully study and reflect upon the teachings  
given in these sacred events.*

*So, read, reflect on what is here, and then dive within to realize.*

# *Reflections*

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**Om Tat Sat**

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## Invocation

This now is the time!  
Now give the gift of life,  
Pure Bliss, my God,  
Ramana immaculate.

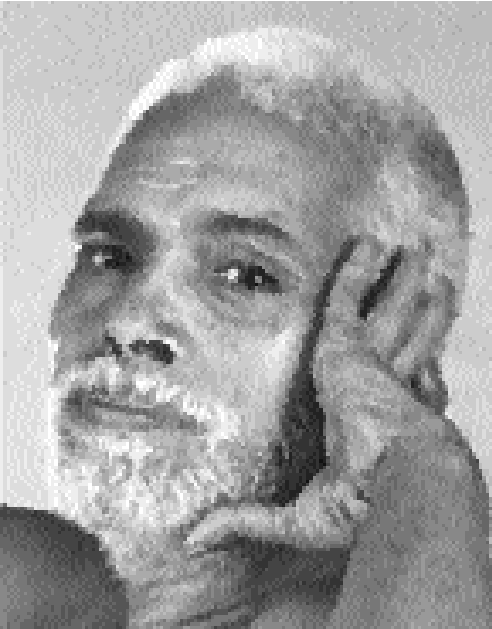
In the shadow of those lotus feet,  
Ramana, Lord of peace serene,  
Let me immortal sit.

Once, sense-perception and mental concepts  
Bewildered me as if real entities,  
But beneath the gracious glance of Venkata,  
Which frightens fear away,  
They have disappeared,  
And ceased to be.

All creatures, moving and unmoving,  
So many and varied in name and form,  
Have now become  
By the infinite Grace of Ramana,  
One sole Awareness.

The presence, here in my own heart,  
Of the treasure of Grace eternal,  
He revealed to me,  
Dispelled my false, dark nescience,  
And restored my inherent nature,  
Bliss Supreme.

From *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai*  
by Muruganar



**Sri Ramana Maharshi**

## **From Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi**

A European gentleman began in measured tones and spoke clearly and slowly: “Why should individuals remain caught up in the affairs of this world and reap troubles as a result? Should they not be free? If they are in the spiritual world, they will have greater freedom.

M.: The world is only spiritual. Since you are identifying yourself with the physical body, you speak of this world as being physical and the other world as spiritual, whereas, that which is, is only spiritual.

D.: Do the disembodied souls, i.e., the spirits, have a deeper insight and enjoy greater freedom?

M.: Because you identify yourself with this body, you speak of the disembodied souls as being spirits. From these limitations, you talk of their limitations and seek to know their capacities. Even the disembodied souls have subtle bodies ; otherwise, you would not say “disembodied souls.” Disembodiment means “divested of this gross body.” Inasmuch as you endow them with individuality, they are centered in their subtle bodies. Their limitations will be according to their own state. Just as you feel the burden of your limitations they also feel the burden of their limitations. What I meant by spirit and spiritual world is the Absolute Spirit and not relative. If you realize yourself as the spirit you will see that this world is only spiritual and not physical.

D.: Are their bodies temporary as our bodies are? Do they reincarnate?

M.: These questions arise because you think

yourself the body. This body has birth and death, and, when this body falls, another body arises which is called reincarnation. But are you the body? If you find that you are not this body but the spirit, you will be free from gross or subtle bodies, and then there will be no limitations. Where is the world, physical or spiritual, in the absence of any limitations? How will the question of reincarnation arise?

Again, consider it from another point of view: you create a dream-body for yourself in the dream and act with that dream-body. The same is falsified in the waking state. At present, you think that you are this body and not the dream-body. In your dream, this body is falsified by the dream-body. So, you see, neither of these bodies is real, because each of them is true for a time and false at other times. That which is real must be real forever. But you say “I.” This “I”-consciousness is present all through the three states. There is no change in it. That is alone real. The three states are false. They are only for the mind. It is the mind that obstructs your vision of your true nature. Your true nature is that of infinite Spirit. That was the case in your sleep. You note the limitations in the other two states. What is the difference due to? There was no mind in sleep, but it exists in the dream and the waking states. The feeling of limitation is the work of the mind. What is mind? Find it. If you search for it, it will vanish by itself, for it has no real existence. It is comprised of thoughts. It disappears with the cessation of thoughts.

D.: Do I remain then?

M.: What is your experience in sleep? There were no thoughts, no mind, yet you

remained then.

D.: When I try to meditate, I am unable to do so because my mind wanders. What should I do?

M.: Your question furnishes the answer. First, with regard to the first part of the question, you say you concentrate, but do not succeed. “You” means “the Self.” On what do you concentrate? Where do you fail? Are there two selves, for the one self to concentrate on the other? Which is the self now complaining of failure? There cannot be two selves. There is only one Self. That need not concentrate.

“But, then, why is there no happiness?”—you ask. What is it that prevents you from remaining as the spirit which you are in sleep? You yourself admit that it is the wandering mind. Find out the mind. If its “wandering” stops, it will be found to be the Self—your “I”-consciousness, which is Spirit eternal. It is beyond knowledge and ignorance.

D.: I am hard-worked and find little time to practice concentration. Are there any aids for it? Is control of breath a good aid?

M.: Prana and mind arise from the same source. The source can be reached by holding the breath or tracing the mind. If you cannot do the latter, the former will no doubt be helpful. Regulation of breath is gained by watching its movements. If the mind is watched, thoughts cease. Peace results, and it is your true nature. King Janaka said: “I have now found the robber (namely the mind) who has been robbing me of my “I”-ness. I will instantly kill this thief.” The perturbation owing to thoughts appears to rob the Self of its peace. The perturbation is the mind. When

that ceases, the mind is said to take flight. The Self remains as the undisturbed substratum.

Another person interposed: The mind must kill the mind.

M.: Yes, if there is a mind. A search for it discloses its nonexistence. How can anything that does not exist be killed?

D.: Is not mental japa better than oral japa?

M.: Oral japa consists of sounds. The sounds arise from thoughts, for one must think before one expresses the thoughts in words. The thoughts form the mind. Therefore, mental japa is better than oral japa.

D.: Should we not contemplate the japa and repeat it orally also?

M.: When the japa becomes mental, where is the need for the sounds thereof?

Japa, becoming mental, becomes contemplation. Dhyana, contemplation, and mental japa are the same. When thoughts cease to be promiscuous and one thought persists to the exclusion of all others, it is said to be contemplation. The object of japa or dhyana is the exclusion of several thoughts and confining oneself to one single thought. Then, that thought, too, vanishes into its source—Absolute Consciousness, i.e., the Self. The mind engages in japa and then sinks into its own source.

D.: The mind is said to be from the brain.

M.: Where is the brain? It is in the body. I say that the body itself is a projection of the mind. You speak of the brain when you think of the body. It is the mind that creates the

body, the brain in it, and also ascertains that the brain is its seat.

D.: Sri Bhagavan has said in one of the works that the japa must be traced to its source. Is it not the mind that is meant?

M.: All these are only the workings of the mind. Japa helps to fix the mind to a single thought. All other thoughts are first subordinated until they disappear. When it becomes mental, it is called dhyana. Dhyana is your true nature. It is, though, called dhyana because it is made with effort. Effort is necessary so long as thoughts are promiscuous. Because you are with other thoughts, you will call the continuity of a single thought meditation or dhyana. If that dhyana becomes effortless, it will be found to be your real nature.

## **Space-like Satsang June 4, 2006**

[N. signifies Nome; Q. signifies Questioner; laughter means that everyone was laughing, not just the speaker.]

Om Om Om

Nome.: One Self alone exists eternally. Unborn, it admits of no creation ever. Nonobjective, there is no other for That, and That is what you are. Considered to be all-pervading, yet it remains absolutely formless. Considered eternal, yet it is timeless. The Realization of That is characterized by egolessness. This is the absence of the false assumption of existence as something separate from That, as an individual entity. The conception of existing as an individual entity, or ego, is ignorance. Abidance as the real Self, which actually alone exists, is termed “Wisdom” or “Knowledge.”

All kinds of bondage and suffering have their root in ignorance. All freedom, peace, and happiness are founded upon Knowledge. Knowledge of the Self is not as if one self were knowing another self, for there is only one of you. That “you” that you really are, the Self, is the Infinite, the Eternal, the Forever-unconditioned. Being changeless, the forever-unconditioned, is the sign of reality. If you know that within yourself, you know the Truth, you know Reality. The Reality comprehends itself, for there remains no individual “I” to claim, “I know it,” or “I do not know it.”

In your real nature, you are completely detached. You are all-permeating, but detached from all. Such supreme detachment is the abode of bliss. Where there is detachment, there is happiness, peace, and freedom. There is joy without condition or limit. Where there is attachment, there seems to be superimposed a limitation upon the innate happiness, or a condition set up joy, love, and so forth and so on. When, in your spiritual practice, you become detached, you are simply knowing the truth about happiness, the truth about your own nature.

Misidentification is delusion. With the delusion of misidentification, Being seems as if an object. It starts with the notion of “I,” and then proceeds to be endowed with a mind, senses, a body, and such. With misidentification, the Consciousness that you are, which is entirely unformed and homogeneous, without subject and object, appears as if thought, as if sensing, and appears as if that which is thought and sensed. With misidentification, or delusion, the Reality of the Self—Being-Consciousness-Bliss—seems to be something that it can never be, and that which really never is seems to be as if something existing.

What actually never is? All differentiation, all duality, and everything from birth to death that seems to come from it.

The Maharshi states quite clearly that the egoless state is our real state, the only real state that there is. That state is worldless, bodiless, mind-transcendent, and utterly “I”-less. That which is referred to as a “state” is the very nature of your Existence. So, in realizing Self-Knowledge, it is not so much that one obtains a new state for oneself but,

rather, there is the recognition within oneself of what has always been the case. That is the unborn, imperishable Existence, the homogeneous Consciousness, and the uncaused Bliss.

(silence)

For Self Realization, the Realization of the Absolute Brahman, what is required is a very profound inquiry into one’s own nature. Such discriminating inquiry yields the natural detachment. It yields the natural transcendence. It reveals the fact regarding your own Being. Inquire deeply within yourself as to what you really are. Thereby, pass beyond everything embodied, everything perceived, everything conceived, everything associated as a limitation with the assumption of existing as an individual being. You are not the individual, which is but an imagined, false assumption. It is imagined as in the example of a rope seen falsely as a snake just due to lack of good light. See the rope for what it is; know your Self for what you truly are. As declared in the Vedas and so many other scriptures, you will find it to be space-like. That is, it is without any form. You will find that there is no place where it is not, so it is space-like. You will find that it has no interior or exterior, so it is said to be space-like. You will find that, though it is in all things, it is not in anything, so it is called “space-like.” You will find that though everything is in it, yet nothing is in it, so it is said to be like space. You will find it to be without limitation, without change, without division, without motion, and so they have called it “space-like.”

(silence)

Now and always, this space-like



Consciousness, the Reality of pure Being, is what you are. That Being is neither a thing nor an activity. Know it for yourself by inquiring within yourself, “Who am I?” (silence)

The Upanishads declare, aham Brahmasmi, I am Brahman. Find out the Truth of it within yourself.

If you have a question, please feel free to ask. If you wish to relate your own experience, please feel free to speak.

Questioner.: During the night, in a series of coincidences, I passed by three people on bicycles. I said that it was a beautiful night. One man said that it was a beautiful night for a stabbing. I thought that this was a bit odd. As I continued to walk I was meditating by asking the universe to protect anyone from any stabbing that night. A short while later while walking, I heard a voice say, “I am going to stab myself.” It was a crazy man with a knife to his wrist, talking about his wife cheating on him. I stopped and began talking to him. I told him that there were many beautiful people, things, and places. I told him this to stop him from doing this to himself. When I felt that he was calm, I left. I felt that the request I had made earlier to the universe about protection for anyone from a stabbing that night led me to protect this man from possibly stabbing himself.

N.: (silent).

Q.: How does this relate to the teachings of spirituality? How did a meditation asking for help lead me to be of help?

N.: When you say that you prayed to the

universe, you were not praying merely to the inert matter in it, were you?

Q.: No.

N.: So, what is it that you were referring to as “the universe”?

Q.: Actually, it is what I call “bodhaya,”(ed.: it is unclear what word the questioner was attempting to pronounce) which is “protector.” And the universe. Both of them. The universe is the collection of all.

N.: Something that protects, something that is all, and something that is not inert or unintelligent, for otherwise you would not expect an answer. Inasmuch as you refer to the universe, it is something very vast. So, you recognize, and prayer is recognition, the existence of some conscious power or principle that is quite vast, which is even evident in your own activities, which is given credit for all life and death, and which can protect but also dissolves all things. With the recognition there is the diminution of what you regard as you. Isn't there the diminishing of the ego?

Q.: Yes.

N.: Out of the recognition of something that is Absolute and the diminishing of the ego comes everything that is true, good, and beautiful. Consequently, your later interaction.

We don't need to wait for something so dramatic to abide in that which dissolves the false sense of ego. When we no longer wait, we find that that which we call upon in time of need is actually present all the time. When we see that it is there all the time, prayer changes from solicitation to reflection upon its

omnipresence. When contemplation upon its omnipresence and the like passes beyond attributes and even beyond the thinking of the mind, it becomes meditation. When meditation becomes quintessential in its introspection, it becomes atma-vicara, or Self-inquiry. When the inquiry penetrates deeply to the core of one's Being, so that one's Being is found to be That to which one originally prayed, the Absolute, the statements such as "aham Brahmasmi, I am Brahman," strike home.

Another Q.: For certainty, the seeker needs to inquire as to what is lasting within himself. Knowledge comes from dispassion. This seems to be the crux of the matter.

N.: If we know what the source of happiness is, if we know what the source of our desire for happiness is, if we know what the substance of the experience of happiness is, and if we find all of these to be the same within, which is the nature of the experiencer, to what would we be attached? Happiness is not complete unless it is lasting. Everyone desires happiness. They do not desire only for a brief moment. They desire for it to be always. Such is an intuition that bliss and immortality are our own nature.

Examine your own experience. Whenever you are attached to something, from a subtle thought to an activity, circumstance, object, or another person, what is your view of happiness?

Q.: Strongly attached to the thought that happiness is these ideas.

N.: The more the attachment, the less happiness is experienced, that is, the more there is limitation imposed upon it. When we are detached, it is because we know the causeless nature of happiness. We do not expect anything to give it to us. Nor are we in need of it from anywhere else. Your within-ness itself, your own Existence, is the happiness desired.

Q.: So, you don't have to go seeking externally.

N.: So, one who knows the source of happiness is detached. His detachment guarantees the solidity and unwavering character of his happiness. When misidentification is with thought or the body, we say that such is misidentification. When the same misidentification is in the form of mixing up one's happiness with objects in the world, such is called "attachment." It is the same silliness at work. What yields detachment also yields disidentification.

Detachment can be said to be of two kinds. One is the kind of which we are speaking now. It is attained by the discernment of where happiness is. The other kind of detachment is supreme detachment. It is abidance in That as That in which nothing else has ever come to be. That is the Self. It is not attached to anything at any time, for there is nothing besides it. Therefore, this detachment is not attained, and the attachment was never attained. The first leads to the second. (silence)

Another Q.: There has been much confusion for me during the last week. I am not sure that I can express what the cause is. During

the retreat, I was becoming very drowsy, and I was letting that slip by as if it were alright, because I am not the body and not the mind. I didn't want to do a self-examination of my action. This week, I was troubled by the feeling that it was incorrect to be falling asleep then when so much knowledge is presented. I was reading a book about Ramana Maharshi by Kunju Swami. It said that he (Ramana) would disguise himself and go to a temple to worship something or other. Then he felt bad about what he had done. I wondered why he would feel bad if he is identified with the Self, which is perfect. Why would he feel bad? It is as if he were identified with a mind-body having done something wrong, but for whom was this something wrong? If he is the Self, why is he upset about what he did? I am constantly observing what I do, but sometimes I miss things. I don't address some things that don't feel quite right to me. But then I think I am happy and it's ok to be a little off. I am confused about what is operating here. Is it the ego that wants to be perfect in everything that it does or is that coming from the Self, which is all good in everything and expresses that?

N.: Your question assumes something that you may wish to examine. Part of your question assumes that to be constantly engaged in the examination of oneself or the manifestations in the mind, etc. would be ego-forming and that ignoring such and not engaging in self-examination would be ego-dissolution. You may want to examine that concept to see if it is borne out in experience.

The second aspect of your question concerns your paraphrasing a story about the Maharshi. It is probably lacking in certain

respects. Perhaps what you are quoting from Kunju Swami is out of context or, perhaps, the book in which you were reading this is not clear. You suppose that the Maharshi was feeling bad about himself or feeling depressed in some manner. You may wish to re-examine what you were reading. The story of how he went in disguise is a bit humorous. Tell me how someone who wore only a loin cloth went in disguise. (laughter) It would be difficult, except for perhaps changing the Siva marks. That would not be much of a disguise. In any event, you may wish to review the passage and understand its context rather than assume that the Maharshi was subject to emotional moods. It is not the case at all. One who has transcended thought does not even have the stuff from which to make moods.

Importantly for yourself, since the Maharshi takes care of himself fine, is for you to consider deeply whether or not you wish to maintain the approach that to examine yourself through critical discrimination and inquiry will build up the ego while being oblivious to such would take down the ego. You may find that that is an inverted view.

Q.: Not to be oblivious? Would you say that again?

N.: Your question assumed that, if you would examine the workings of your own mind, this would build up the ego. The ego is, after all, only a false supposition. Your question assumed that to not so inquire and examine would maintain the ego in a dissolved state or in a state of abeyance or would keep it down. You may want to seriously reconsider that proposition. You can do so in the light of the Maharshi's own

instructions about the destruction of vasanas, or mental tendencies, any Vedanta work, or any of a host of other spiritual texts, or you may wish to examine your own experience. See how that proposition works or if it works at all. That this view might be entirely inverted is what was suggested.

You may find that self-examination never does any harm. The worse thing that could possibly happen when you examine yourself is that you find out that you were already right, so you would not learn anything. Other than that, you could find some vasana, misidentification, or tendency and, being aware of it, inquire and thus liberate yourself from it.

As for your falling asleep or not, that is of no concern here.

Q.: I should not have.

N.: You are That which transcends all three states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep and the thoughts, mental waves, and emotions that appear within those states. You are That which is the silent Witness of those three states and which, in Truth, never enters those three states. You are That which is undefined by what appears in your waking state and dreaming state, and even the emptiness of deep sleep you are not.

Q.: I feel inadequate and ask for Grace to always be able to see if there is a deviance from Truth; to see that and correct it. I can see that there is danger in falling off of that and saying that that is fine, I am fine, and everything is fine, when that is not really representative of total Self-abidance.

N.: That is clear.

Q.: To always have the fluidity to be able to see and correct.

N.: You see all the time anyway. There is nothing mysterious about ignorance or about Knowledge. When, in imagination, you concoct some ignorant concept and then act upon it, don't you know about it? If you did not know about it, how you could you bind yourself with it? How could act upon it? You do know. The so-called ignorance is only formally so. We actually always know. Self-examination and Self-inquiry simply reveal what we already know.

Q.: To have the forbearance or the power to know and see that rather than fall into a tendency as if one were out of control is just to stay still.

N.: Depth of inquiry is what is required. If it is fueled by the intensity of purpose, that is, the intense desire for Liberation, obstacles are not really found. What higher state of Grace could you desire than to have your inquiry be constant? If your inquiry is constant, your Knowledge is constant. Then, it becomes self-evident that the Knowledge, which is innate, appears as the form of the inquiry.

Q.: So, that is what I am asking for and not how I stated it.

N.: That for which you are asking you are already endowed with. Use it.

Q.: The other night I had a dream. I had parked my car on the corner. A policeman came to give me a ticket because I was parked in the wrong spot. It would block anybody coming from around the corner. He gave me a

whole bunch of tickets. Is this the Self correcting itself? Is it coming from ego sense of having done something wrong?

N.: There are more direct ways to realize the Truth than attempting to analyze the echoes and images of your dreams. The Consciousness that knows all the happenings of the dreams never itself appears as a thing in the dreams. The same is so now in the waking state, which can be regarded as another dream. Find out the Truth of that Consciousness and identify with it.

Another Q.: A simple and very practical analogy is used in the holy texts and by the sages. It is said that there is no need to repeat as a mental assertion the Mahavakaya-s and similar things. An ordinary human being does not have to say, "I am a human being," because it is an unquestioned experience for him. Even though it is not really, for them, there is that experience. If someone dreamed he (she) was a cow and woke up in a fevered delirium with that thought, that person would only need to know that that was crazy, "I am just not a cow," and would be done.

N.: As well as wiping away whatever remaining hay was in the mouth. (laughter)

Q.: And stop eating grass and running with the herd. (laughter) And start to take care of the things that lead to that assumption.

N.: (laughing) I am just kidding.

Q.: To cease taking the objective to be the subjective, the known to be the knower, even on a mental level, can help snap me out of that. It is not inquiry yet, but is that a helpful

form of Self-remembrance, and then proceed to inquire? The cow and human difference, for me, is the sharp separation from identification with the objectively known and the remembrance of the teaching of sages that really can only be the subjective knower, and then try to fathom what that means.

N.: It is from the knowledge of the subjective knower that the Mahavakayas were declared. The great sayings such as "Thou art That," "Supreme Consciousness is Brahman," "I am Brahman," and "This Self is Brahman" are statements of direct Realization, which is direct experience. We do not repeat them, but we get to the Truth of them. The Truth of them is your nature. In the statement, "I am Brahman," what is the "I"? In the statement, "Tat tvam asi," "That you are," what is the "tvam," what is the "you"?

There is the knower, and there is the known, the latter including cows and the human body. Eliminate from your sense of identity the known from the knower. What remains?

Q.: You used the term "space-like." It seems appropriate.

N.: This is your experience. The mental activities, your thoughts, which have innumerable permutations, are entirely the known, aren't they? For whom are the thoughts? Who knows them?

Q.: They are not known by another thought upon which I put my name.

N.: So, one thought does not know another thought, and thoughts are not self-known. They are not self-luminous; nor do they light

each other. Nor do they exist apart from the one who knows them, though the one who knows them exists quite distinct from them. Who is the knower? This inquiry cannot be mental, can it?

Q.: No, that would be more thoughts. That would be a cow again.

N.: It would be a herd passing by. (laughter) It would be a bunch of thoughts grazing, but they are not you. None of your thoughts—not one of them—has ever been you. None of them are a definition for your nature. You can be quite sure that whatever you think of yourself, that you are not. What remains?

(silence)

Another Q.: None, at times, I catch myself telling myself a story. It seems to dissolve into space, but only for awhile. I do not see much bliss in it, but there is peace. I wonder what that was. Was it just another thought?

N.: Does your experience seem like just another thought?

Q.: It seems to be dissolving into a cosmic space, when I am able to catch it and trip it.

N.: How much is just a story?

Q.: Hmm.

N.: Just your daydreams?

Q.: No, no.

N.: Your entire personality?

Q.: (laughing) I wish.

N.: The idea that you have a bodily life?

Q.: Yes, the idea that I have a bodily life.

N.: The dream commences with the idea that you have been born.

Q.: Yes, it all comes from that.

N.: Everything based upon that, including the personality that you wish were a dream, is just as much a story as that idea that you were born. Regard a story as just a story. Be thorough. Only that which is not dependent on the conceptions of the mind is not a story. Only that which is a nondependent self-existence is not a story.

If you proceed deeply into your own nature, which alone is not a story, you will find that which the mind, at times, calls “bliss,” and, at times, calls “peace,” and, at times, calls something else, but which really is quite beyond description.

Q.: Can I use that dissolving to go deeper?

N.: What else is depth but dissolution?

Q.: Yes, I just need to seek to dissolve.

N.: We do not really use dissolution, do we? The “we” dissolves. The way is always nonobjective. Dissolve whatever you regard as “you.” That which is truly you is unborn and indestructible.

Q.: And beautiful and good.

N.: Yes, and quite beyond the story.

Another Q.: The Maharshi says that, in deep sleep, one exists as he was, so we should find out what is different in this state. When I come here, there is a fullness. I feel that I discover something, and there is a fullness

behind it. When I meditated previously, it was undefined. That is, I did not feel defined. Yet, there is also this fullness that I do not know how to describe. What I just meditated upon is that there is more of my identity that I need to question and dissolve.

N.: Sri Bhagavan points out that you exist always, in deep sleep as you do now. In deep sleep, there is no experience of the manifestations of an ego, the mind, the body, the world, and so forth and so on. Now, these things appear, but your Existence remains the same. Those things come and go according to the state of mind. Existence remains the same. So, we know from this that Existence cannot be anything defined within those states. Hence, it cannot be anything confined within those states.

The Existence is immutable. Unchangingness is the sign of reality. If something appears to change its nature, it is an illusion. Illusion is that which is not.

Q.: In deep sleep, there is no mind. So, everything in the mind is gone.

N.: But you still exist.

Q.: Yes.

N.: Your Existence will not change. Otherwise it is not your Existence, for it would go out of existence, which is absurd. It is impossible for you to imagine a state of nonexistence. Existence always is and always knows itself. That which always knows itself and is existing by itself and is referred to in the instruction about deep sleep is the only thing that you are all the time. That, itself, is the Purnam, the perfect fullness. Variations in

states are according to the mind. What is the mind?

Q.: (quiet for awhile). It seems that the mind is contingent upon my belief. If there is a belief in something, there is a mind.

N.: So, the mind depends on you.

Q.: Yes.

N.: But you do not depend on it.

Q.: Yes. No, I do not, for the mind can be totally gone in deep sleep.

N.: Yet, you still are. Does the mind have any existence at all apart from you?

Q.: That is an important question.

N.: Does the mind ever declare that it is, or do you say that it is?

Q.: (laughing) Yes, it does not come out and say, "I have now found the mind."

N.: What has only a dependent existence actually has no existence at all. It is something else that is being misperceived as or erroneously called that thing. What is the real nature of your mind?

Q.: (quiet for awhile) The mind, it seems, is not just the thoughts, but also the one who has the thoughts. Is that true?

N.: You can look at it that way. What you call your "mind" is a combination of the thoughts and the one who has, or knows, the thoughts.

Q.: What do the thoughts pertain to?

N.: They do not pertain to other thoughts. Or, if they do, they have nothing to do with you.

Q.: (laughing) Yes, that is true. They definitely don't pertain to me.

N.: You can either see that thoughts pertain only to other thoughts and have nothing to do with you, and you can go happily on your way without thought from then on, abiding as the Self, and the mind won't trouble you ever again or you can see that your mind is a combination of the one who knows it, appears to have it, and the form of the thought. The one who knows it is of the nature of pure Consciousness. The form of thought depends utterly on the Consciousness, even in order for it to appear. It is only the Consciousness appearing in the guise of that. The nature of your mind is Consciousness. What form or wave does your Consciousness have? Then, you find that there is no such thing as a mind.

Q.: It seems that a lot of it is just assumptions.

N.: All of samsara is like that.

Q.: There is nothing tangible. I had this assumption. It was unquestioned.

N.: All of samsara, the repetitive cycle of birth, death, and all the experience pertaining thereto, is only the false assumption. It is imagination. The scriptures refer to it as maya, illusion. The Maharshi says that maya is that which is not. It has no existence whatsoever, not even a temporary existence. If we know the nature of maya, it ceases to exist for us.

Another Q.: Would you please repeat that? If we know the nature of maya...

N.: It ceases to exist for us. There is no such thing as maya existing.

Previous Q.: Maya would be any assumption?

N.: Is there one that you wanted to retain?

Q.: No, actually. That leads just to suffering.

N.: Suffering has its root in delusion only, not in reality. Therefore, if you know yourself, Reality comprehends itself, and suffering is abolished. Such elimination of the imagined bondage is called "Liberation."

Q.: The Self, itself, is Bliss. When it is not seen, I may believe that the bliss is outside or objective.

N.: Who is the "I"? Who is the one who does not see?

Explanations of maya or ignorance are just expedient teaching for the Truth to be self-revealed within you. In truth, there can be nothing real about a description of that which has never come to be. (silence)

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English of verses from the *Annapurna Upanishad*)



## From *Yoga Vasishtha*

Sri Rama asked: Kindly tell me how the illusion of “I,” “You” etc., is born without any reason.

Sage Vasishtha replied: Rama, the knower of the Self realizes that the illusion is dormant in the Self, that it is an integral part of it, and that there is nothing other than that, which is all-pervading at all times, and is thus eternal and birthless. Other things that are known to only the senses have no form. All forms are Brahman. They are not different from it. Just as the ornaments are not different from gold and the waves are not different from the sea, the world is not different from the Brahman, Iswara. This Iswara appears as the world, but the world is not in Iswara, just as gold appears in the forms of ornaments but the ornaments are not in the gold. The nature that has no limbs appears as full of limbs. The limbless Consciousness (Chit), which is all-pervading, all-inclusive, and all-embracing, shines as countless shapes. In the moonstone, the reflection of the forest appears as different though it is not at all different. In the same way, though the world is not different from the Consciousness (Chit), which is Iswara, with egoism it appears as if different. From the water waves rise and fall again in the water. They are not different from water.

In the same way, the waves of creation rise from Brahman and dissolve themselves in Brahman. They are not different from Brahman. There is no creation in the Supreme Brahman, and the Supreme Brahman is not in

creation. It is only illusion. The wise see the Supreme Brahman and not the world. By the wind, movement is created. In a similar way, by the knowledge reflected in ignorance, the Supreme Brahman creates within itself the world, which is nothing but Consciousness only. The sabdatanmatra (subtle element of sound or vibration), so far dormant in the cause, takes the form of space. This Brahman in the form of space with the sparsatanmatra (the subtle element of touch or tangibility) takes the form of wind (air), just as a stagnant wind (air) acquires motion. Brahman, the form of the wind becomes like light, and with the rupatanmatra (subtle element of form) becomes illumination. Brahman in the form of light with the rasatanmatra (the subtle element of taste or essence) becomes water, as water becomes liquid. Brahman in the form of water with the gandhatanmatra (subtle element of smell), becoming one with the mind, like the earth becoming solid, becomes the earth. Thus, the world shines in the Consciousness-nature. All of this happens in one one-hundred-thousandth of a moment. This creation remains for a hundred of thousand kalpa-s (age of enormous duration).

Brahman, the pure, the ever-illuminating, the cause of creation and dissolution, the undecaying, the birthless, the deathless, shines in itself without any support. Though in the Supreme Self, there are creations and dissolutions, it remains unaffected. When it is veiled by ignorance, the differences appear, but when it is awakened, it will be liberated. Whoever in whatever way thinks of Brahman, it reflects itself in them in that way, because the power of illusion in innumerable forms lies in the

Self. Thus, the world is nothing but the play of Brahman. What the senses and the mind externally see, hear, and experience are purely fictitious. They are merely fictions with names and forms. Therefore, they are false.

Just as there is movement in the wind, the world is in Parabrahman. When there is movement, the wind appears, and when there is no movement, it appears that there is no wind. In the same way, as long as there is ignorance, there is the world; when ignorance ceases, the world ceases to appear. If light is not looked upon as brightness it ceases to be light in one's mind. If one sees light and brightness as one and the same, it appears as true. In the same way, if one sees Brahman and the world as different, they appear as different. If one sees them both as one, they appear so. In the mud, as well as in the wood, there is the figure even before it is made. Thus the world, also, before creation, is unseen or not evident. Now, in the desert of Paramatma (Supreme Self), the mirages of the three worlds, though false, appear as if true. The seed comes out in the form of the plant dormant in it. Thus, by illusion, the Chinmayabrahman (Brahman of the nature of Consciousness) comes out as a jiva (the individual) and thus follows the process of creation. The sweetness in pure milk, the hotness in pepper, the liquidity in water, and the movement in the wind appear as different from them but are really not. Just so, Brahman is different from the creation, outwardly but not in reality. As the world has no power in itself, it is false. Without any cause whatsoever, the gem of creation shines in the form of creation. This shining is not different from Brahman.

The vasanas, the world, and the jivas are born from the mind itself. By perfect knowledge, constant practice, and self-effort the mind must be destroyed. Thus, it will never be born again. Brahman, the Self of all, the Peaceful, the Birthless, full of Consciousness (Chit) is ever shining, ever transcendent of birth and death, and ever solid. All the creations are generated from the atoms: so thinks the mind. The illusion originates from the mind. How can there be creations in atoms? They are all false.

Just as the waves rise and dissolve in water, the three states of waking, dreaming, and sleeping rise and dissolve in the jiva. If one attains renunciation from the worldly pleasures and enjoyments even to a small extent, by that he will attain the best state, say the Vedas. Complete renunciation gives one Liberation while one is alive. So, say the smirtis (texts after the Vedas). Hence, one who does not possess the idea that the body is the Self will never fall a prey to the illusion of birth and death.

Those who are able to realize that Isvara caitanya (the Consciousness of the Lord) and jiva caitanya (the Consciousness of the individual) are one and the same will attain Liberation. Just as waves are not different from water, Isvaracaitanya is not different from jivacaitanya. Caitanya (Consciousness) is One and never two or more. It is self-effulgent, and of the nature of Consciousness (Chit).

By egoism, it possesses the idea of the world. This world, full of Isvaracaitanya, is neither existence nor nonexistence. Brahma, the creator, with egoism, has different

sankalpas (concepts, formed ideas), according to which the world appears. The world is dissolved within one ten-millionth of a moment of Vishnu. That is the glory of maya, the illusion.

## From the Temple Archives

(In this issue, three more letters to Swami Swanandashram from Nome are reproduced. Please note that the spelling of the Swami's name on page 18 of the previous issue is a typographical error and should have been spelled as Swanandashram. See that previous issue for the context of these letters and for information about the Swami. Unfortunately, the letters written by the Swami to Nome have not been located and may be permanently lost. It is, though, possible to deduce some of what the Swami had written by the nature of Nome's response.)

May 23, 1977

Dear Swamiji,

In Reality, you and I are never apart, as there exists only the One Self. That Self is the sole-existent Reality, and its nature is Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Actually, there is no world, no bodies, no minds, no egos, no appearances, no play or dream, and no bondage of any sort. There is only Absolute Being, which is the Self. The Real ever is, and the unreal has never come to be.

Of course, you have permission to reproduce or print whatever you wish from the letters that have been sent to you. There are none in bondage and none liberated. The Self is neither taught nor learned. Knowing the Self is Being the Self. The Self is the ever-present Reality, utterly non-objective, beyond all dualisms, qualities, attributes, and experiences. Verily, I am That. Mukti is Being, not being this or that, just Being. It, or I, is totally nonobjective, and, so, it is neither given nor received. The Guru and the disciple are really only the Self, which is the sole-existent Reality, and I am That.

Ever Yours as That,

Nome

(In this next letter, nondual Self-Knowledge and complete detachment are emphasized. The comments on the nature of the Guru, Vedanta, and Isvara are in the context of the traditional admonishment that nonduality does not apply to one's relationship with such. Because of the very high level of communication between them, Nome wrote

in a part of this letter some comments that, though, at first glance, would seem to contradict this admonishment, really do not but expound on the very same nonduality of the God, Guru, and the Self revealed by Sri Ramana Maharshi. Indeed, in paragraph six, he mentions the three and, discarding the rules of grammar, uses a singular verb to express how the three are not three but one and the same Reality. The teaching, itself, is treated in the same vein.)

June 9, 1977

Dear Swamiji,

As you requested, enclosed with this letter are duplicate copies of the letters that you sent to me. If any of my letters are missing and you wish copies, please inform me, and I will gladly send them. There has never actually been two individuals between whom a communication has taken place. The Self alone is the Reality, and words can not approach or describe That.

As was mentioned in the letter of May 10th to you, all the commentary on ashrams, contemporary so-called “masters,” institutions etc., was given only for the relative explanation of illusory actions performed by this dream body. I know my Self as the Reality, and I am not, in the least, confused or disturbed by the unreal. My nature is verily Bliss or Peace itself, and there is no upset-ness or problems with any appearance in a non-existent world.

The same Self-Knowledge is true with regards to a nonexistent body. I am not a body,

and I have no body. I do not rejoice with good health, and I do not suffer with ill health. There is neither life nor death in the Self that I am.

When the mind is sought for, it cannot be found. The mind is, therefore, unreal. I am not the mind, and I have no mind. I am the Self, which is the sole-existent Reality. Self-Knowledge is beyond the illusory knowledge and ignorance, concentration and distraction of the mind.

Sri Sankara’s instruction (which you have often quoted) prohibiting one to think non-dually with the Guru, Vedanta, and Isvara is relative advice given to beginning aspirants, so that they will take the time to carefully listen to the full Teaching, reflect on their own true nature, and realize the Self, which is who they are. This instruction is not given to the Realized sage, for he is neither “alive” nor “embodied.” If embodied, he is not a sage; if a sage, he is not embodied. The sage has realized the Self as his very Being and only Reality. He knows Vedanta, Isvara, and his Guru as himSelf. Sri Sankara knew his Guru as the Self, as himself, and he did not fall into the dualism, or ignorance, of conceiving his Guru and himself as separate individuals and bodies.

In fact, the Guru, Vedanta, and Isvara is the very One that should be thought of non-dually. To think non-dually with any other is to misidentify or superimpose the very cause of the illusion of birth and death. If one does not think non-dually of his Guru, who else should he think non-dually of? To the dedicated and sincere aspirant, the Guru is not another body, but the calling of Truth within;

to the sage, the Guru is none other than the Self. If it is viewed otherwise, one merely clings to misidentifications with illusory bodies and minds, rather than knowing the Guru for who He really is. Therefore, in accordance with the Truth that a true Guru teaches, it is one's duty to think non-dually of his Guru and to realize Him as himself.

The sage has realized the Self. He has attained That which leaves nothing more to be attained and knows That which leaves nothing more to be known. He is liberated from the imagined bondage, for He has realized the formless Self as the non-dual Reality. He has passed beyond all dualisms such as life and death, creation and destruction, bondage and liberation, and guru and disciple. He knows HimSelf as Non-duality, itself, and there is, for him, no question of falling into any sort of dualism. He knows that God, Guru and the Self are one and the same Reality, which is His very Being. Transcending the unreal world, body, and mind, there are no binding rules of conduct or action for him. The sage can think non-dually of Guru, Vedanta and Isvara, because he is non-dual with, or the same as, Guru, Vedanta and Isvara,

Ever Yours as That,

Nome

(This short letter contains only two brief paragraphs. The first paragraph relates to some service that Nome was performing for the Swami. At that time, there was no SAT temple, no photocopier, and no computer to

store files or to print out. Letters were either handwritten or typed. To make a duplicate of a letter, one went to a copy shop to perform the work, made a carbon copy while typing on a typewriter, or penned a copy by hand. What was included in the missing section of the second paragraph, indicated by ..., cannot now be determined, but presumably it dealt with some practical matters that were not included in the copy. The sentence of that paragraph reiterates verse 32 of chapter 2 of Gaudapada's *Karika on the Mandukya Upanishad*, with which the Swami was very familiar and the reason for such is described in the previous issue on pages 20 and 21.)

June 20, 1977

Dear Swamiji,

Your last letter arrived about ten days ago, and I am now in the process of procuring the duplicates of all the letters you requested. Regardless of the cost, I am most happy to perform the service for you.

...There is no dissolution, no origination, none in bondage, none striving or aspiring for salvation, and none liberated. This is the highest Truth, for the Self admits of no conditions or definitions. Verily, I am That!

Ever Yours as the Self,

Nome

## Expanding Ribhu

SAT's books, *Ribhu Gita* and *Song of Ribhu*, continue to reach seekers and holy people everywhere. In the last few years we have received requests for books or appreciative letters from throughout Europe, the Far East, and from all around the USA and Canada. Previously permission has been requested (and granted) to create a Korean translation of the texts from SAT's English translations of the original works. More recently, a Hindi condensed version of verses from both works was published. Even more recently, an Ashram in Tamil Nadu, besides Sri Ramanasramam who published a slim edition of *Song of Ribhu* in 2003, brought forth a book of commentary upon selected verses, which includes the verses from our *Song of Ribhu*. Still more recently, SAT has been approached to allow an Italian translation from our English translations of both books to be published. And Ribhu continues to make Himself known...

