

# *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*

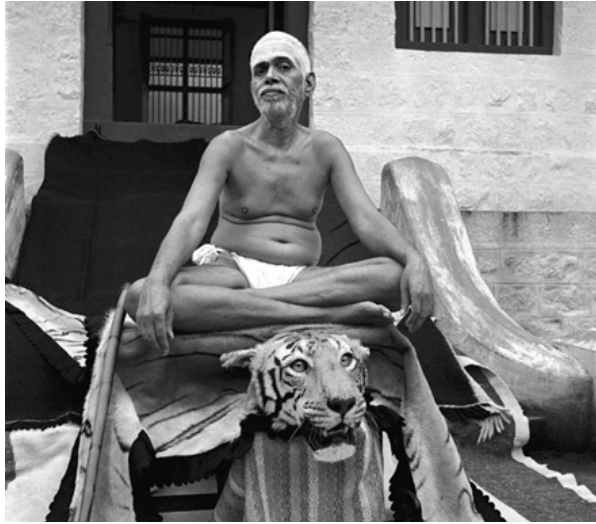
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**Om Tat Sat**

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*Sri Ramana Maharshi*

## Invocation

One sole Awareness, Lord supreme,  
Silent sky, the Vedas import,  
That you are Venkata!  
Yet, to your eager devotees  
You utter without speech the blissful  
Secret of their being That.

Muruganar, *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai*

Let me join your devotees  
Whose joy it is to share among themselves  
The Truth that pervades within.  
Your Grace alone, Master Venkata, let me taste,  
Let me be filled with Siva-bliss,  
Let my ego fade away,  
Let eternal Mukti be regained, so help me Lord!

Muruganar, *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai*

# **The Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi**

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

M.: There is only one Consciousness, but we speak of several kinds of consciousness, as body-consciousness, Self-consciousness. They are only relative states of the same Absolute Consciousness. Without Consciousness, time and space do not exist. They appear in Consciousness. It is like a screen on which these are cast as pictures and move as in a cinema show. The Absolute Consciousness is our real nature.

D.: From where do these objects arise?

M.: Just from where you rise. Know the subject first, and then question about the object.

D.: It is only one aspect of the question.

M.: The subject comprehends the object also. That one aspect is an all-comprehensive aspect. See yourself first and then see the objects. What is not in you cannot appear outside.

D.: I am not satisfied.

M.: Satisfaction can be only when you reach the source. Otherwise, restlessness exists.

D.: Is the Supreme Being with or without attributes?

M.: Know first if you are with or without attributes.

D.: What is samadhi?

M.: One's own true nature.

D.: Why, then, is effort necessary to attain it?

M.: Whose is the effort?

D.: Maharshi knows that I am ignorant.

M.: Do you know that you are ignorant? Knowledge of ignorance is no ignorance.

All scriptures are only for the purpose of investigating if there are two consciousnesses. Everyone's experience proves the existence of only one consciousness. Can that one divide itself into two? Is any division felt in the Self? Awakening from sleep, one finds oneself the same in the wakeful as well as in the sleep states. That is the experience of each one. The difference lies in seeking, in the outlook. Because you imagine that you are the seer separate from the experience, this difference arises. Experience shows that your Being is the same all through.

D.: From where did ignorance come?

M.: There is no such thing as ignorance. It never arises. Everyone is Knowledge itself. Only Knowledge does not shine easily. The dispelling of ignorance is Wisdom, which always exists—e.g., the necklace remaining around the neck though supposed to have been lost or each of the ten fools failing to count himself and counting only the others. To whom is knowledge or ignorance?

D.: Can we not proceed from external to internal?

M.: Is there any difference like that? Do you feel the difference—external and inter-

nal—in your sleep? This difference is only in reference to the body and arises with body-consciousness (“I”-thought). The so-called waking state is itself an illusion.

Turn your vision inward and then the whole world will be full of the Supreme Spirit. The world is said to be illusion. Illusion is really Truth. Even the material sciences trace the origin of the universe to some one primordial matter, subtle, exceedingly subtle.

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M.: As for nirvikalpa samadhi, i.e., samadhi of non-differentiation (undifferentiated, supreme, beatific repose), it consists of pure Consciousness, which is capable of illumining knowledge or ignorance. It is also beyond light or darkness. That it is not darkness is certain. Can it be said, however, to be not light? At present, objects are perceived only in light. Is it wrong to say that Realization of one’s Self requires a light? Here, light would mean the Consciousness that reveals as the Self only.

The yogis are said to see photisms of color and lights preliminary to Self-Realization by the practice of yoga.

Once before, Goddess Parvati practiced austerities for realizing the Supreme. She saw some kinds of light. She rejected them because they emanated from the Self, leaving the Self as it was ever before. She determined that they were not the Supreme. She continued her austerities and experienced a

limitless light. She determined that this also was only a phenomenon and not the Supreme Reality. Still, she continued her austerities until she gained transcendental peace. She realized that it was Supreme, that the Self was the sole Reality.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* says, “Seek Brahman through tapas.” Later on, “Tapas is Brahman.” Another Upanishad says, “Itself is tapas, which is again made up of wisdom alone.” “There the sun shines not, nor the moon, not the stars, nor fire; all these shine forth by Its light.”

## **No Other Satsang May 21, 2006**

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

Om Om Om

(Silence)

N.: You are the Self, and That alone exists. There is no other. The conception of “other” is based purely on imagination and is composed entirely of imagination.

The conception that you have an alternative identity, other than the Self, is ignorance, imagination. The conception of “this,” of a world and such, is only imagination. The conception of one who is caught up in imagination is only imagination. The conception of “I” is the root of all duality. However dualism may manifest, whatever be the projection of multiplicity, it is always based on a veiling of the Truth of the Self. It is always based on the idea of “I.”

If there is the individual, there is something other. The Absolute Self will be viewed as other, and there will be other “others,” as well. If you determine by deep Knowledge born of inquiry what your real identity is, there is no “other” at any time.

If there is duality, if there is the notion of “other,” there will be the illusion of bondage, which will seem as if real, and consequent

unhappiness. If there is no other, there is no bondage, no one to be bound, and no unhappiness.

Examine for yourself your own experience. Perceive how this idea of being other than the infinite Self, of being an individualized “I,” is integral to the conception of any other kind of limitation, so-called experience, etc. Seeing that, determine who you really are. What is supposed as an individualized existence is, in Truth, just pure Existence without the individual. The inquiry, “Who am I?” reveals this.

Whatever is born of imagination is also imagination. Whatever the ego “I” seems to undergo, seems to possess, the objective aspects of its activities such as of the body, speech, and mind, are entirely as imaginary, or unreal, as the ego itself. The knowing of oneself is the knowing of Reality, known by the Self, of itself. The purpose of spiritual practice is the elimination of the imagined. Since it is the elimination of imagination, and, therefore, the insubstantial and the nonexistent, truly speaking, there can be no obstruction to your spiritual practice, save that which is imaginary.

Knowledge is inherent in the Self. So, what could interpose and act as an obstruction between yourself and yourself? By deep Knowledge, which is not an activity of body, speech, or mind, abandon the assumption, the false notion, of existing as an individual entity, an ego “I.” If just that much is accomplished, the Self stands self-revealed. (silence)

The ego cannot know the Self. The Self

knows the Self. The ego cannot be ignorant of the Self, because it is not a knowing, sentient separate being. Egoism, the individual with his limitations, is merely imagined. Likewise is everything based upon it, all that is other.

The Vedas and the Maharshi declare that the Self is One without a second, One without anything other. Simply comprehend the deep significance of that. (silence)

If, at any point, you have a question, feel free to speak, or, if you wish to relate your own experience, please feel free to speak.

Questioner.: I read that discrimination and inquiry are key to Self-Knowledge. Discrimination seems to be looking for the other to see if I can find one. This body stands as an “other.” If that is real or not seems to be an appropriate subject for inquiry.

N.: Certainly, the one who perceives the body is not the body. So, bodiless is what you are.

Q.: And the senses, etc.

N.: Yes, likewise the senses and all else. You are without the body and without the senses. Any kind of definition that associates the body, its characteristics, its qualities, its activities, or its conditions with you is false. Likewise is it with the senses. Even if the definition be only that you are one who inhabits a body, or that you are the nexus point of all the senses, all such definition is simply false.

From here, comprehend that the body, not being the Self, still has no existence

independent from the Self. This does not mean that the Self manifests as or transforms itself into a body. It means that that body, which is not who you are, has no substance apart from you, the bodiless.

Q.: Just like the ring has no substance apart from the gold.

N.: So, this entire universe is made of only you, the Unmanifested. The ring is not anything apart from the gold. Gold, itself, has no form or shape. The form of the ring is, in substance, only the gold. The form of all this is, in substance, only yourself. Inquiring even more deeply, we naturally ask, how does this gold become formed into a ring? Even if it is just gold, how does it take on the appearance of such a shape? You are left with two possibilities. Either the conjecture that there must be something that acts upon it, or direct inquiry, which is more advisable. Did the gold become formed into a ring? Did the rope become transformed into a snake that was only a rope? Or is that merely imagined?

Q.: In the inquiry, the experience is very much of One. I can see the confusion with this individual. The confusion confuses the individual. The experience is always One. We just become confused as to what that One is.

N.: The confusion does not actually create a transformation in your Existence.

Q.: No, it does not.

N.: Confusion confuses only itself. Existence, which is pure Consciousness, remains as it is. It is the very substance of Knowledge. Knowledge does not become ignorant. The ignorance seems to become



ignorant. A false assumption falsely assumes its own and another's existence. This is one way of putting it.

The experience of all is always of an unmodified, undivided Existence. Everything other than that is only a product of ignorance. Inquiry does not create the Reality. It simply reveals the fact. Deep inquiry will invariably be the self-revelation of that singular, undivided Existence, which is never modified, even to the extent of water and its waves, in any way whatsoever.

When one thinks he is a body, in a body, or has a body, such are not thoughts of from wisdom. They are thought from the perspective of ignorance. We know all those ideas to be ridiculous as soon as we inquire and determine that our Existence is bodiless. Likewise is it with the senses. The idea that the body exists, at all, is conceived from what perspective? Is that from the Self, or does some kind of individual experiencer creep into this? As it is with the body, so it is with the senses, the mind, and the entire world. By the time you are considering "it," there is already an "I," and otherness is there.

Q.: From what you have said today, the "I" is the first falsehood.

N.: If that first false notion of "other" is seen to be nonexistent, what happens to the rest of it? Then, there is no more question about a body, senses, mind, or any similar thing. The ideas rise as "I," "this," and "I am this." All of them are just notions. The only actual experience is perpetual Existence, which is without "I," "this," or any kind of differentiation. We should abide in that Being's

Knowledge of itself. We should not put up with these false notions.

Another Q.: Inquiring "Who am I?" prompts the question: are there two of me? Is there one looking for the other? Where is that question coming from? How does the idea of there being two of me get started? Who is this me, and what is going on here? Is there something going on? When I start the sideshow, there is something going on, but when I stop the show, there is just nothing going on. It is much better when the show is over.

N.: (Silent for a while). How do you bring the show to a conclusion? The sideshow is over, and the circus is closed.

Q.: I have to inquire into who is the star of the show. Then, the star and the show are absorbed into a much... absorbed into Reality.

N.: In your experience, is this final or are there alternating states, with or without the show, with or without an "I"?

Q.: There appears to be an alternation.

N.: What creates the alternation?

Q.: (quiet for a while) Something creates it that I cannot catch hold of. It is difficult to get hold of the alternation actually happening. I am not quite sure what this thing is that I call alternation.

N.: You are describing two states. One is with an "I," and one is without an "I." One is with a show, and one is when the show has ceased. If that alternation is not desirable, how are you going to put an end to it?

Q.: The easy answer is Self-inquiry. It is obvious that this is the only way that I know

that can get rid of it. I actually know that, so why do I not do that all the time?

N.: Yes. Why?

Q.: (quiet for a while)

N.: He is hard pressed for an answer. (laughter)

Q.: There is really not a good answer for that.

N.: From what vantage point do you speak of two states?

Q.: From a vantage point of knowing both of those states, but not really Being. They are like objects.

N.: So, deal with the subject, not with an object. The objects fall within the context, or sphere, of the subject. Who is the subject? Who is the knower of both states?

Q.: The obvious answer is that I am the knower. I am unsure of who that is, at the moment.

N.: Become more unsure.

Q.: (quiet for a while) I was a little unsure. How do I become completely unsure. That seems to be the direction.

N.: Examine for yourself. What do you know of this "I"? What do you know of this knower of all the states? (silence) There is the certitude of Existence. How can there be certainty regarding anything over and above that?

Q.: I don't know if there is anything. I don't know what else there is to really know. I must make something else up to know.

N.: Then, you have your alternating states.

Q.: Yes. (chuckling)

N.: Does Existence go in and out of a state? Does it not remain just as it is?

Q.: Yes, it is not in the realm of statehood.

N.: Existence just is as it is. It is always the knower. Does it ever become the known?

Q.: I have to ask what it is that I call the "known" when you ask that. If all that there is to know is Existence, that is the end of the show, right there.

N.: (Silent) The Knowledge of Existence is invariable as the Existence itself. If you assume that your identity is something other than that Existence, there are these other options. Whatever the state is, with an "I" or without an "I," waking, dreaming, and sleeping, living and dying, is Existence in that? Inquire and know the Existence as perpetually transcendent of all. Know your identity as just that Existence and not as something other.

The Self, itself, has no alternation. Who goes into or comes out of a state? Like this should you inquire. If you inquire deeply, you will find that there is no one going into ignorance. You will also find that no one enters into Knowledge. If there is Knowledge, there is an absence of ego. Knowledge knows itself. That is pure Consciousness, the Self. There is no one else involved.

When we speak of attaining or realizing Self-Knowledge, it is said loosely, by way of instruction, catering to the perspective that there is one who is in samsara or in ignorance. If there is one in ignorance, he is told to find

Knowledge, Wisdom. If he is bound, he is told to seek Liberation. If, though, he liberates himself from his bound identity, so that there is Knowledge and not a trace of ignorance, he finds that there is only one Self and not a second self who has entered into the Self. We loosely speak of merger. There are not two that become merged. There is just the indissoluble, undivided, homogeneous Existence, which is Consciousness and Bliss. That is the only Self.

Alternating states are as illusory as the one who seems to be caught in them.

From another angle of vision: cease to regard Self-Realization as a state to be attained. It is nonobjective. Since it is nonobjective, Self-Realization, in its nature, is your own Being. Therefore, be unconcerned with whatever states seem to come and go, and know what your Being is.

Q.: That is something that I am trying to do. I try to get into a certain state, yet what you are saying is to find out who it is who thinks that he is in a state.

N.: If you are in one state and that state is bound, naturally you will seek another state that is one of Liberation. It is alright as far as it goes, but this Liberation is attained by knowing your own Self. If you come to know your own Self, you will see that you are stateless. The idea of being in a delusive state and attaining another realized state is said conceding the idea that there is an individual who has these states. Inquire into his nature. Self-Realization is Being. Being is not an activity. Being is not a state. Being is not an object. Being transcends all of those limitations and

definitions.

Another Q.: This is a parable in the history of human thought in simple terms...

N.: Did people used to think more or less before? (laughter) The development of human thought?

Q.: Some people may still be doing it. It may not be only in the past. There were those who determined with their minds that there must be an infinite God. That infinite God must be ever present and all-present. At the same time, they conclude with what is almost a complaint that there was a mystery here, for while ever present and all-present, this God still seemed hidden. I have always thought that the position from which that complaint is made is the standard of their own ever-presence that God is not matching, in their minds. They could extend that to the whole universe, regarding the sense of ever-presence and all-presence. Their own existence was the standard by which they were grading God's performance as a mystery.

N.: Was God's Existence a mystery to God or for somebody else?

Q.: Well, to them, of course.

N.: But not to God.

Q.: In a way, they were betraying the contradiction there. There was already a very familiar presence: their own Existence.

N.: Yes. If they would know their own Existence, God would no longer be a mystery. From the perspective just described, God is considered a mystery. The human being

considers God a mystery; perhaps God considers the human being a mystery. (laughter)

What makes you, or them, say that God is a development in human thought?

Q.: No, no. The recognition of God would be the development in human thought.

N.: Why would the recognition of God be a development in human thought?

Q.: Well, uh...

N.: Is there any proof that human thought is actually developing?

Q.: It is like the sense of happiness. Unhappiness is believed only due to the reference that complete happiness must be possible.

N.: So, it comes after the fact. The fact is the existence of happiness. The other is only in relation afterward.

Q.: Right.

N.: Likewise is it with the thought of God. God, or Knowledge of God, comes first. The thought of God merely trails after. That is why it is curious to call it a development.

Q.: Well, that was with quotes. (i.e., as if written within quotation marks) (laughter) The unhappy person and the frustrated thinker are both using a much more formless reference point from which to draw their conclusions. The reference point is the ideal of perfect happiness, in the one case, and the ever-presence of their own Existence, in the other case. The clue to their problem is right in the reference that they are using.

N.: If, from that reference point, which is actually their own Existence, there would be

the elimination of the false, limiting definitions superimposed on that Existence, God would know God without any mystery, without any conception of a human, and God is always happy. The unhappiness and the mystery, or perplexity, quality arises only from false definition. There may be, as you note, the inclusion of the intuition that they are also existing all the time to make the measurement, but they have superimposed the limitation upon that. They have identified the perpetual Existence with the limitation, which is how they can arrive at such inverted views. Yes, we can leave all that aside, for that is for them. That is not for you.

Q.: I hope not. (laughter)

N.: You were just quoting, correct? (laughter)

Q.: Well, yes, no....it seems interesting to notice that even in the fallacy there is the clue to its undoing. It is in its basis.

N.: That is always so. So, the Maharshi said that maya carries the seeds of its own destruction.

Q.: In the mundane sense of identity, it is assumed that this is a voluntary choice; that someone can assume or create or fabricate or take on an identity. It is an admission that it is an imaginary activity.

N.: It is an admission that one is there in order to do that, with or without the clear understanding that this is just an activity. The person who is engaged in ignorance may not recognize it as ignorance, for, if he would recognize it as ignorance, the activity would cease then and there. Always he exists.

(silence) So, in that sense, everywhere and at all times, even all the illusion is pointing out the Reality, but we must know how to perceive it. Do you think that God has any of this confusion?

Q.: I did not mean to be disrespectful, and I was putting the words into the mouths of others.

N.: I am not implying that you were disrespectful. I am saying that it is better to be God than otherwise. If we want to know anything about God, we need to see such from God's perspective. We cannot look at God from the perspective of the limited individual and assume that we are going to see anything other than our own reflection. If we take up the standpoint of the individual, the individual, God, and the world are, all, equally imagined, just reflections of the same definition. If we know that perpetual, omnipresent Existence as it is, That alone is what we are, and there is no individual, or jiva. That, itself, is the nature of God. Some may regard that as mysterious, but some may say that it is self-evident.

We should never assume that we will understand the Absolute in the context of human, mental conception. Just because it is never within the conception of the mind does not mean that it is hidden in any way or mysterious. That very same One is, as you have mentioned, omnipresent. That means that there is no room for anything, even so much as a single dot, to be other than that. That includes those who had the various "quotes." (laughter)

Another Q.: When you asked what makes one swerve, in my mind was the answer: forgetfulness. The forgetfulness, itself, is part of the illusion. The Self cannot ever forget its true nature. So, if there is forgetfulness, it is a consequence of non-inquiry.

N.: That is right. Forgetfulness of the Self is a consequence of non-inquiry. It is a very peculiar kind of forgetfulness. Usually, we speak of forgetfulness as the inability to bring forth the thought about something. In this case, the forgetfulness consists of bringing forth thought about it.

Q.: Right. (laughter)

N.: The remembrance of the Self is similar. Usually, remembrance is getting the thought of something. Here, remembrance is remaining quite free of the thought of it.

Q.: Yes.

N.: Then, your Being knows itself.

Q.: It's like not letting go.

N.: What do you mean?

Q.: Not letting go of the Self. Not imagining.

N.: Alright.

Q.: Not letting the "I" arise.

N.: But, when we hold on to the Self, we do not stand in any way separate, as if we were grasping something.

Q.: There is no one there to grasp.

N.: It can be said that you simply desist from taking on false definition.

Q.: Say that again.

N.: It can be said that you simply desist from taking on false definition.

Q.: Yes. I just stop.

N.: With ignorance or the delusion of forgetfulness, by the time you are making an earnest inquiry to get to the root of it, it ceases to exist. Even in the very effort to put an end to it, it vanishes.

Q.: That is clear. It is not a big journey.

N.: It's the most important one, but it is not long.

Q.: A step in any direction is a misstep.

N.: Yes, but in knowing ourselves we see that there is no other place to which to wander off.

Q.: Ah.

N.: It is not like balancing on the top of a pole.

Q.: It seems like that at times. Resting as the Self, there is not much edge anywhere off of which to fall ever.

N.: When you perceive it as it were a state, you have an edge. When inquiry is deep and you have Knowledge of your Being, you can no more fall away from it than you can fall away from your Existence. It is absurd.

Q.: This is true.

N.: Keep making your vision nonobjective. (silence)

Another Q.: Inquiry eliminates what appears to hold us bound. You describe that state of abidance in the Self. In that state, there is nothing objective. If I believe in the ego,

duality begins. So, there is effort to eliminate the duality. At that point, it seems as if I have these selves.

N.: But do you really? Whose is the duality?

Q.: I don't know. One is very flimsy, and one is always there.

N.: Can there be a duality between That which is ever real and that which is never real?

Q.: Duality in what sense?

N.: Can there be two such things if the Real ever is and the unreal never is?

Q.: (quiet for a while) It seems like it.

N.: Is Reality only at a point in time or is it always?

Q.: It is definitely always.

N.: Realization, to be nondual, must necessarily be of the identical nature as Reality, itself, which is the Self. So, it is always and not at a point in time. A point in time is in reference to the individual who experiences it. The individual, being unreal, never is. The Self, which is Realization, always is. (silence)

Q.: Ok. With that Knowledge, there is not going to be any ignorance.

N.: There is no ignorance or anyone in ignorance ever or anything else whatsoever. There has always been the one Self. This is the Knowledge, the conclusion of the wise. That is both the Maharshi's instruction and His Grace. (silence)

Q.: This is quite amazing. I feel that there is maintenance that needs to be done when I

am practicing. I am looking for a maintenance...

N.: "Maintenance-free"? (laughter)

Q.: Yes. Essentially. Realization is.

N.: As long as there is a trace of individuality, there will be... (missing recording)

Q.: (missing recording)... the ignorant one, there is nothing to be done.

N.: (missing recording)...How can we speak of maintenance? Who would be doing what?

Q.: Yes. (laughing) Without the ignorant one, there is nothing to be done.

N.: Without the ignorant one, there is nothing to do to maintain the Self-Knowledge, nor is there any possibility of the recurrence of ignorance. Since there is no possibility of the recurrence of ignorance, there is, similarly, no possibility of the manifestations of ignorance.

Q.: (quiet for a while) This is clear. This is not practice, right?

N.: What do you mean?

Q.: Because practice would imply duality and that there is separation.

N.: Maybe, but in practice, do you emphasize the duality or the nonduality?

Q.: (laughing) Yes.

N.: If you are emphasizing the duality, you might as well just be worldly. (laughter)

Q.: (laughing) That would be a big mistake.

N.: Practice is always the emphasis of the nondual. Even among the dualists, it is the emphasis of the nondual but unknowingly so.

Q.: In what way?

N.: There will be some touch of devotion or of spiritual knowledge, all of which has its root and source in Nonduality, the Truth.

Q.: So, then, continuous practice is the Realization and maintenance-free.

N.: If practice is continuous, there is no scope for delusion. If there is no scope for delusion, yours is continuous Knowledge, which, being realized as identical with yourself, is maintenance-free.

Q.: On Friday I had a very good meditation because the identity was more fused. That is just the way it is when one is realized. There is no loss of that identity. One knows that identity directly.

N.: Has the way it is changed since Friday?

Q.: (laughing) No. It is not like the sun coming out and then a cloudy day comes, so it is dimmed.

N.: That would be only from the perspective of being on the ground. For the sun, it is a sunny day all the time, with neither night nor day. If, since the time of the meditation, from then to now, something seems to have changed, what has changed?

Q.: Right at this moment, I do not know if anything has changed.

N.: Why relegate that which is high and true to the past? Why consider it as an experience? Actually, it is the direct, ongoing

experience of Existence. It may be better to consider the entire samsara as a thing of the past.

Q.: Yes, it feels more and more like that.

N.: It is a thing of the past as in the sense that we can speak of a dream as a thing of the past. It is not that it really occurred, but it is behind us.

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

## From Yoga Vasishta

The Sage Vasishta continued: Rama, the world is nothing but the space of Consciousness, or Brahman. Like the illusion of the pearl necklace in the clear blue sky, the illusion of the world appears in Brahman. The picture (scene) of the three worlds are only in the pillar of Consciousness, yet are uncarved for there was no sculptor to be adept in the art of carving it. Just as it is natural for the water of the ocean to be endowed with motion and speed, so it is natural for the world to appear in Brahman. For the ignorant, the world is real and physical. For the man of Knowledge, it is unreal as the world, though real as Brahman. It is like the many minute particles seen in the rays of sunshine that pass through a window or a hole in a wall. Without the sunshine, the small particles could not be seen. Similarly, without the Knowledge of the Self, the world

cannot be seen as Brahman.

The world is nothing but that which is the real nature of Space of Consciousness. It is seen as of the form of earth and such, and it is as false as a dream. For the ignorant, the water seen in a mirage appears as real, for they do not have an understanding that it is not water but only a mirage. In a similar way, the world is a form of the space of the sheath of the intellect, yet, by the ignorant, is not seen as Brahman. Like the flow of water in a mirage, like an imaginary town seen in a dream, the unformed world seen by the ignorant is only an illusion. In the waking state, the objects of a dream state are known to be unreal. Those who have Knowledge alone can see the differentiated world as *asat* (unreal, non-existent). They see it as Brahman alone. The ignorant see Brahman and the world as different, but not those who have Knowledge. The world is shining in Brahman, full of Consciousness, just as an imagined cloud within a small cloud, by the sunshine in the sky.

The town in a dream and a town on the earth are both false. The world and an imaginary world are both false. They are comparable to each other. Therefore, realize that the world is not different from the space of Consciousness. The world and the great space are one and the same. They are other forms of Brahman, full of Consciousness. The seen universe is never born. It has no light, no real form. It is nonexistent. The world is in the great space, but can never cover Brahman in any way. Like space, it is pure and formless. Like an imaginary town, it shines in the great space, like a picture, full of space...



Thus it is quite evident that though Consciousness shines as the world, it does not lose its truthfulness. As the ocean receives all the rivers and streams and remains unaffected by them, the Self, or Brahman, remains unaffected by the illusion of the world. Those who try for Realization of the Self with constant effort will be able to succeed. Others may only try for it, for they are not as serious as the most sincere. From a minute part of an atom, this illusory universe appears and disappears. There is no gain for the jiva from it whatsoever, however much it tries. There is no meaning in obtaining or not obtaining a false thing. Only the space of Consciousness shines, having no gap and being all peace. This continual dream appears due to indiscretion and remains until one is able to be the Self. The cause of this dream, the Self, is true. The dream, experienced previously, is false. The tree is only one, though it is full with leaves, flowers, nuts, and fruits. Similarly, though appearing in different forms in different places, with all power, the Self, or Brahman, is one and the same. It is spread everywhere. There is no multiplicity or dualism in it. We can never forget the Self when once it is realized. This is inclusive of the illusion and the means of knowing, the thing to be known, and the knower. The Self, or Brahman, has no rise or fall, no birth or death. It is the darkness as well as the light. It is the nature of space, time, and such, yet, simultaneously, it has no beginning, middle, or end. It has no second. It is entirely pure, entirely at peace, and full like the ocean, even with its delicate waves. From the mind, which is the cause of thinking of dualism and non-thinking of the only One, Brahman, the world,

in which there are the ideas of “he,” “you,” “me,” and such, seems to appear. There is nothing other than the Light of Brahman, which is entirely pure and which is the real nature of Knowledge. Though the sky is a void, in it, by illusion, a necklace of pearls appears. In the same way, the world appears in Brahman.

## From the Temple Archives

(In a previous issue, the response from Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj translated by Maurice Frydman appeared. Here is the letter from Nome, dated October 19, 1975, that preceded that warm response. The reference in the opening paragraph is to the book, *I Am That*, is to the original Indian edition that consisted of 75 dialogues)

Dear Maharaj,

Recently, I had the good fortune of reading a copy of “I Am That,” and I am overjoyed with the constant expression of Truth conveyed by Your words. I bow and prostrate before You, You who are Truth itself and the perfect confirmation of my own Realization. [editor’s note: Nome did not write “confirmation,” but another person inserted that verbiage into the letter according to his own views]. Reality cannot be expressed, described, or conceived, and there are not two of us between which a communication can take place. [editor’s note: Here again, that other person inserted a sentence of his own,

not included here]. Still, I trust that this letter will indicate, as well as words can, a sharing or communion in Absolute Truth.

I alone Am. Indivisible, I do not admit of any dualism. Not confined within space and time, I can never be experienced. Not a thing or entity, I am never the object of perception or conception. When the experiencer, perceiver, or conceiver are deeply inquired into, I stand Self-revealed.

I am transparent Awareness, devoid of the dualism of life and death, subject and object, self and other, within and without. Even the term “transparent Awareness” is not meant to indicate anything objectivisable, experienceable, or conceivable. When sought as an object or entity, I am found to be utterly absent. Yet this absolute absence reveals the Absolute Presence that I am.

Self-Realization is Being; not being this or that, just Being. Realization is not to be attained, for it is my very Being. There is no entity, no “me,” to attain and no thing to be attained. Being is not a state or experience that can be reached or attained by methods, stages, or practices. Realization is the simple non-conceptual understanding of who I am. This understanding or knowing is inseparable from and identical with Being. Self-Realization or Enlightenment is not an event. I, mySelf, am Realization, and I am intemporal or what is sometimes termed eternal. Actually, I have neither the attribute of time nor that of timelessness, for, being absolutely non-objective, in the sense of an entity or object, I remain always undefined. Being is neither existent nor nonexistent, neither this nor that. Not a single attribute can be associated with

the unqualified Awareness that I am. Being and Awareness are one and the same. Awareness cannot be cultivated or attained, being what we are, and I am that Awareness.

I have never been born, and so I shall never die. I am not an entity dwelling within the confines of time and space. In other words, there is no “me,” no individual entity that I can call myself, and there is no world in which this supposed entity could be born, live, and die. I am not now young, nor shall I ever be old, for I am neither the body nor the mind nor a thing or person of any sort. I am, and there is no “me.”

All is within. Although I am no thing, I am everything. Absolutely, I alone am, and there is no within to have a without and no without to have a within. I cannot be said to exist, nor can I be said to not-exist; nor both exist and not exist, nor neither exist nor not exist. Although the perceiver can never be perceived, all that is perceived is actually the perceiver. If the perceiver be deeply examined, the nature of all things proves to be the same as the Absolute inconceivable Quiescence that I am.

As Realization is not a state to be attained or maintained, it is quite effortless. It is the ever-present natural state, which is not a state at all but, rather, the Being-Awareness-Bliss that I am. Realization is none other than who I am, and so I can never be separate, different, or other than what the words “Realization,” “Self,” and “Jnana” signify. There are not two selves, one to “realize,” attain, or come into union with the other. There is not even one self, in terms of an individual entity. I AM as I Am: ungraspable for I am not a thing, unat-

tainable for I am the ever-present non-dual Reality, and not even in “union” for there was never any division.

Standing naked in the Truth, I speak to You totally honestly. I know who I am, and this clear Knowledge, which is identical with my very Being, has set me free of all imagined bondage and liberation, hopes and fear, desires and desirelessness, ignorance and knowledge, happiness and suffering. By understanding the absolute absence of any “me” to be defined or confined by any of these, I have awakened to the Absolute Presence of I.

Sri Ramana Maharshi has functioned as my Guru, through silent Grace and the written recordings of what He said. Also, I have taken great joy in reading the words of Sri Atmananda of Trivandrum and the Avadhuta Gita of Dattatreya. In You, I find the perfect Realization of what is indicated in the teaching of the above mentioned sages. That is to say, I consider You to be identical with my Guru, and Your wisdom (ed. Note: here another phrase was inserted by another writer, which has been ignored here) to be unsurpassed. All praise falls short of describing You, and words cannot adequately express how profound a sage I feel You are. It can only be said that I know You as I, as my very Self.

If You wish, and it is possible for You to do so, I would greatly enjoy and appreciate hearing from You. I speak, write, and read only English, so any response would have to be in this language. Such a correspondence with You would be greatly treasured, and I would be deeply thankful for any reply that You would care to offer.

(Editor’s note: Two sentences, not shown here, were inserted at this point by the same person who had made the previous insertions). It is this Self-Knowledge that I have to share and upon which the relationship between us stands. This Self-Knowledge is the deepest, earnest Love. The absence of “you” and “me” is the perfect at-one-ment or Presence called Love. Even though we may appear to live a great distance away from each other, this Love is as intense as if I were sitting right before You.

Whether you decide to write or not, we are in eternal Love, in the silent absolute communion of I.

With tears of joy as well as a Hearty laugh,

Nome

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(Editor’s note: This is a letter, dated May 10, 1977, addressed to Swami Swanadashram, an illumined yogi and swami of the Sankara Order, with whom Nome had been in correspondence for the previous 6 to 12 months. They had met many times during the spring of 1972. There had been no contact for the years in between until the revered Swami returned from India to visit the USA during 1976 and 1977. He also visited the USA again in 1978. The Swami had meditated for years at Gangotri, where the river Ganga starts in the

Himalayas. Nome's response in this letter is to some questions asked by the Swami about Nome's life and history. Here are given only some extracts from Nome's letter. The portions not included here deal with a critique given by the Swami of the lack of spiritual attunement and respect for the holy that he was finding among American aspirants at that time and Nome's agreement with that view based on his interactions with similar aspirants in California at that time.)

Dear Swamiji,

Absolutely, neither you nor I exist as separate individual entities, but only as Existence or Being itself, admitting neither of me nor mine nor you nor yours. The Self (Brahman) is alone the Reality, and verily I am That.

I was blessed to come across the teaching of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. It was about three years ago, while reading a small pamphlet of Maharshi's teaching in which were found the words: "Self-Realization is Being, not being this or that, just Being," that I awakened to who I am. There is no "personal" history to relate past this point, as Realization is the simple, non-conceptual understanding that there is no individual person, never has been, and never will be. Even the previous history is illusory—for whom is the history? I am the Self, having neither past nor future, neither bondage nor liberation, neither life nor death.

It is needless to expound my Realization to you, for not only do I exist as the Self, which is the sole-existent Reality, but words

and thoughts cannot express That which I am. I am formless, nonobjective Being, sometimes called Consciousness, but not of any thing; or Bliss, but not an experience. I am devoid of all dualism such as self and other, subject and object, experiencer and experience. I am not now young nor shall I ever be old. I have never been born, and so I shall never die. There is no world in which any supposed individual entity could be born, live, or die. I am neither the body nor the mind nor the ego nor a thing of person or any sort. I alone am, and there is no "me" or individual. I am, no me.

Self-Realization is Being, not being this or that, just Being. Therefore, Realization is effortless, ever-present, and natural and is not any sort of state of mind, experience, or event that is objectively attained or needs to be maintained. It is Being-Consciousness-Bliss, which is who I am. In Self-Knowledge, Being and Knowing are one and the same. Realization is none other than who I am, and so I can never be different, separate, or other than what the words "Realization," "Self," "Brahman," and "Jnana" signify.

Nor are there two selves, one to "realize," attain, or come into union with the other. The one Self, attributeless and formless, is alone the Reality, and I am That.

You have often mentioned in your letters the rather corrupt conditions of most aspirants, ashrams, and spiritual institutions in America. Perhaps, my relative view concerning the matter is even stronger. You receive at least a certain amount of courtesy and respect due to your body being Indian and older in years and from having official

Sankara lineage ties. This is not so for this body. Appearing as young and American, even common courtesy and respect is lacking in my encounters with ...

Renouncing my home, family, name, fame, friends, worldly ambitions, etc. and embarking on the path of Self-inquiry at the age of seventeen, shortly before I met you, following ...into the nature of Ultimate Reality, ...

True Knowledge, which is Self-Knowledge, alone destroys the illusory ignorance (superimposition or misidentifications) and the imagined bondage and reveals the eternal freedom and Bliss of the Self. Paths and techniques are based upon dualism, actions, and the belief in an individual practitioner, and so they cannot destroy ignorance because they are not in conflict with it. Only Self-Knowledge removes all misidentifications and yields Liberation by the Knowledge that there has never been any ignorance. (editor's note: The reference to "paths and techniques" here was specific to certain physical, subtle, and mental practices already discussed by the Swami and Noma and mentioned earlier in a portion of the letter not included here).

...Actually, in Reality, there are no separate individual, enlightened beings; nor are there unenlightened beings. There is only Absolute Being, the One without a second. The word, "jivanmukta" is a contradiction in terms, for a mukta (or mukti) does not admit of any assumed jiva (individual) whatsoever. Therefore, there is no one to be discriminated as realized or unrealized, because, in Reality, there is no individual or ego to be either, but only Absolute Being.

Realization is nothing but my Self. The Self is One, eternal, immutable, stainless, desireless, and is identical with Consciousness. I am not the body, senses, mind, intellect, or the ego. The Self, which I am, is the sole-existent Reality, and, verily, pure Bliss itself. It is the highest of the high, purest of the pure, transcendent over all dualism, and eternally free. I am That. I am not the result of any practice or path, for I am the eternal, ever-present, formless Reality. As Realization is none other than who I am, totally transcendent of time and space, I am not to be found in any experience or state of mind. Nor can Realization be an event. When sought, the mind cannot be found. The Self alone is the One Reality, and, hence, the nature of the mind, like that of the supposed ego, is the nature of the Self. When thought is deeply examined, by discarding its assumed objectivity, it is known to be nothing other than Consciousness. That Consciousness is the Self. There is no concentration or control of thoughts needed for Self-Realization. Through Self-inquiry, one simply discards all that is not the Self or superimposed and realizes that there exists nothing but the Absolute Consciousness, the Supreme Being, and I am That.

There has never been an assumed individual in ignorance, nor is there now one liberated. I alone am, and there is no "me." There is no dissolution, no origination, none in bondage, none aspiring for Liberation and none liberated. This is the Highest Truth. There is only Being, not being this or that, only Being. The Self alone exists. The Self alone is Real. That Self is my very Being. That is the final Truth, and That is Realization.

(Editor's note: The first two lines of this paragraph are derived from verse 32 of part 2 of Gaudapada's Karika on the *Mandukya Upanishad*. Nome frequently references this text and this verse in particular, now as then. Swami Swanandashram had previously sent this verse in Sanskrit to Nome in a letter, expressing that this verse was for him.)

...Actually, I did not do anything, because I am not the doer, so, in Reality, I never do anything. There is no individual doer, and, therefore, there is absolutely nothing ever done. I am neither the doer nor the enjoyer nor the reaper of the fruits of action. I am the Self, actionless and worldless.

Sincerely,

Nome

