

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 to 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

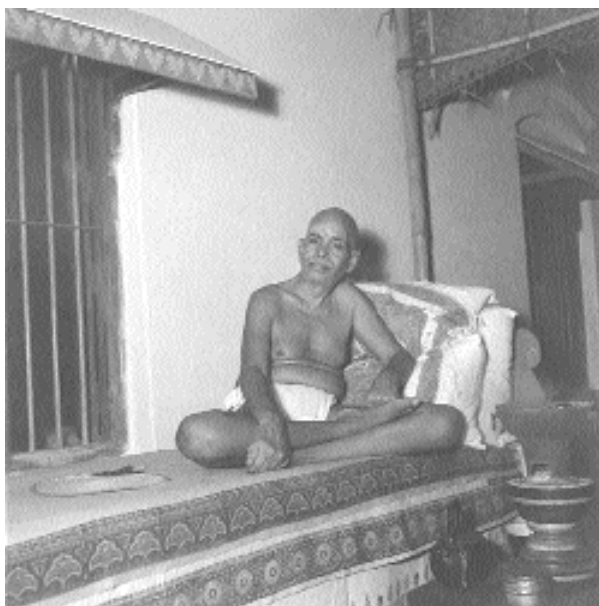
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Om Tat Sat

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Sri Ramana Maharshi

Invocation

By whose glance bondage is turned into Liberation and the Knower realizes himself...
He is like a solid substance that saves anyone from drowning in the water that does not exist,
and the individual thus saved remains nowhere.

He is indescribable in words, which become silent in his Oneness that allows for no duality.

Ah! Sadguru! How should I treat Thee who art so mysterious? Thou dost not allow Thyself to
be determined by any conception.

Sant Jnanadeva (*Amritanubhava*)

From Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Sri Bhagavan said:

The jnani says, “I am the body.” The ajnani says, “I am the body.” What is the difference? “I am” is the truth. The body is the limitation. The ajnani limits the “I” to the body. “I” remains independent of the body in sleep. The same “I” is now in the wakeful state. Though imagined to be within the body, “I” is without the body. The wrong notion is not “I am the body.” “I” says so. The body is insentient and cannot say so. The mistake lies in thinking that “I” is what “I” is not. “I” is not insentient. “I” cannot be the inert body. The body’s movements are confounded with “I,” and misery is the result. Whether the body works or not, “I” remains free and happy. The ajnani’s “I” is the body only. That is the whole error. The Jnani’s “I” includes the body and everything else. Clearly some intermediate entity arises and gives rise to the confusion.

Mr. Vaidyanatha Iyer, a lawyer, asked: If the jnani says, “I am the body,” what happens to him in death?

M.: He does not identify himself with the body even now.

D.: But you said just before that the jnani says “I am the body.”

M.: Yes. His “I” includes the body. For there cannot be anything apart from “I” for him. If the body falls away there is no loss for the “I.” “I” remains the same. If the body feels dead, let it raise the question. Being inert it cannot. “I” never dies and does not ask the

question. Who then dies? Who asks questions?

D.: For whom are all the sastras then? They cannot be for the real “I.” They must be for the unreal “I.” The real one does not require them. It is strange that the unreal should have so many sastras for him.

M.: Yes. Quite so. Death is only a thought and nothing more. He who thinks raises troubles. Let the thinker tell us what happens to him in death. The real “I” is silent. One should not think “I am this, I am not that.” To say “this or that” is wrong. They are also limitations. Only “I am” is the truth. Silence is “I.” If one thinks “I am this,” another thinks “I am this,” and so on, there is a clash of thoughts and so many religions are the result. The truth remains as it is, not affected by any statements, conflicting or otherwise.

D.: What is death? Is it not the falling away of the body?

M.: Do you not desire it in sleep? What goes wrong then?

D.: But I know I shall wake up.

M.: Yes, thought again. There is the preceding thought, “I shall wake up.” Thoughts rule the life. Freedom from thoughts is one’s true nature—Bliss.

M.: Ignorance, ajnana, is of two kinds:

(1) Forgetfulness of the Self.

(2) Obstruction to the Knowledge of the Self.

Aids are meant for eradicating thoughts; these thoughts are the re-manifestations of predispositions remaining in seed-form; they give rise to diversity from which all troubles arise. These aids are: hearing the truth from the master (savana), etc.

The effects of savana may be immediate and the disciple realizes the truth all at once. This can happen only for the well-advanced disciple.

Otherwise, the disciple feels that he is unable to realize the Truth, even after repeatedly hearing it. What is it due to? Impurities in his mind: ignorance, doubt, and wrong identity are the obstacles to be removed.

(a) To remove ignorance completely, he has to hear the truth repeatedly, until his knowledge of the subject matter becomes perfect;

(b) to remove doubts, he must reflect on what he has heard; ultimately his knowledge will be free from doubts of any kind;

(c) to remove the wrong identity of the Self with the non-self (such as the body, the senses, the mind or the intellect) his mind must become one-pointed.

All these things accomplished, the obstacles are at an end and samadhi results, that is, Peace reigns.

Some say that one should never cease to engage in hearing, reflection, and one-pointedness. These are not fulfilled by reading books, but only by continued practice to keep the mind withdrawn.

The aspirant may be kritopasaka or

akritopasaka. The former is fit to realize the Self, even with the slightest stimulus: only some little doubt stands in his way; it is easily removed if he hears the truth once from the Master. Immediately, he gains the samadhi state. It is presumed that he had already completed savana, reflection, etc. in previous births; they are no more necessary for him.

For the other, all these aids are necessary; for him doubts crop up even after repeated hearing; therefore he must not give up aids until he gains the samadhi state.

Savana removes the illusion of the Self being one with the body, etc. Reflection makes it clear that Knowledge is Self. One-pointedness reveals the Self as being Infinite and Blissful.

You Are Satsang

June 11, 2006

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

Om Om Om

(silence)

Nome: You are not the body. You are not the mind. You are not the ego. Of all that appears to arise or manifest, you are the source. Of the unmanifested, you are the Existence. Of all that is known, you are the Consciousness, which is Knowledge, itself. Of all joys, you are the Bliss.

In all perceiving, you are the knowing, which is Consciousness, Knowledge itself. Of all experiencing, you are That which is most immediate. Among all things, you are That which is all-pervading yet utterly transcendent.

You are That which is timeless and locationless. You are That which is never born and which never perishes, for you are not the body, you are not the mind, and you are not the illusory ego.

You cannot be perceived, and you can never be conceived; yet there is never anything of such that is other than you. You are, simply, the indivisible Reality. In the abandonment of the misidentification with the body or the mind, and in the abandonment of the false assumption of being a separate, indi-

vidual entity, or ego, all of this is self-evident.

Of all that is said and thought, of all that is taught and learned, you are the Silence.

(silence)

Inquiring within as the Maharshi instructs, “Who am I?,” you know yourself. When you know yourself, the essence revealed even by the Vedas, is you, yourself. Knowing yourself in your real Existence, your real identity, you find that there is no alternative identity and no other existence. The Self is the Nondual. So, knowing yourself is knowing Reality. Reality knows itself. Not knowing yourself is the unreal imagining the unreal. If the unreal imagines the unreal, it does not amount to much.

Knowledge of the sole-existent Self is Liberation from the imagined bondage. Ignorance, which has no support and no actual substance, is the only apparent bondage. Therefore, the way to eliminate the imagined, or apparent, bondage is simply Knowledge of yourself, for you are not the body, not the mind, and, most certainly, not the ego.

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

Q.: In much of Ramana’s teachings, it seems that he says that the mind and the ego are the same thing. My view is that they are just two different views through the crystal. What I really want to understand is that this mind or ego never existed to begin with, that is, that they are the same nonexistent thing.

N.: Do you consider them as existing now?

Q.: (laughing) Yes and no. When you spoke of who we are as the Silence, there was the Presence of the Silence. Still, they recur as the identification. I want to be clear that I can't identify with them because they don't exist. Identification with something that does not exist is remarkably stupid.

N.: For the clarity you seek, inquire into the "me" to whom these reappear. That "me" may be referred to as a mind, because these things are conceived, or as an ego, for the notion "I" is integral to every other thought or idea. It may be regarded as something subtle or as a thought or as a vague supposition. However it is regarded, see what the nature of that thing is. If there is a thing corresponding to the name "I," there will be differentiation, delusion, bondage, and the rest of samsara. If, upon inquiry, you find that it is rootless, that there is nothing there, that there is one who is existing, but there is not a trace of an ego or mind in it, all the instruction about the unborn, the uncreated, and the undifferentiated will be self-evident.

Q.: Though they are subtle, there is still something finer and subtler.

N.: You see the mind. You see this misidentification as an ego. The nature of the seer is far subtler than they. It is also far more enduring. It is much more your identity than they.

From the Maharshi's instruction, you know that the mind is nothing more than a bundle of thoughts. If we regard them as a bundle, such is called "a mind." If not, there is

a multiplicity of thoughts. He also refers to the ego as a ghost with no form of its own and also a knot that seems to tie together pure Consciousness and the insentient body. It is neither, but it seems to appear as a knot between them that ties them together. When we combine the two that cannot really be combined, that is, the body and pure Consciousness, bundled together such is called an "ego." Examine these bundles.

Q.: Can Consciousness turn into a thing?

N.: Without knowing about it?

Q.: (laughter)

Another Q.: Why without knowing about it?

N.: If he knows about it, he cannot be that thing, for it is objective. The knower always precedes and succeeds the thing known, existing before, during, and after. You need to see that your nature is only pure Consciousness. That is your only identity. Consciousness does not change its nature but always remains just Consciousness. That which is real is immutable and always remains such. Consciousness is real and cannot change its nature. Examine closely what appears to have happened so that Consciousness seems to be something that it is not. The more we search for ignorance to examine it, the more it dissolves before us. (silence)

Another Q.: This instruction is similar to, yet far vaster than, letting go of ignorance in the waking state dream of life, such as relative

ignorance about a relative thing. At the point that I recognize that it is unnecessary, pointless, and undesirable, and I have cast up a magic barrier — magic because there is no conceivable mechanism for the barrier to work or make it a barrier — and that it is just thoughts and these thoughts need to give way to direct experience that is far deeper, well, those elements seem to be there, but in a far more important way.

N.: It is as you describe. What makes you think that you are in a waking state?

Q.: I don't want to think of myself that way. Let us say that I have memories of some success of relative ignorance passing into a better understanding. It went through that process.

N.: Alright.

Q.: In the dream, the character goes through that process.

N.: In that case, there is the process of getting rid of some limited thought for a clearer thought.

Q.: Right.

N.: The similarity of that to going beyond thought entirely is so. Why did you refer to yourself as being in a waking state?

Q.: That's one of those magic barriers that are unnecessarily constructed.

N.: Are there two sides to this imaginary barrier?

Q.: (quiet)

N.: If a wall is made of space, are there two sides to it? Even now, and always, what is

your state? Are you one who appears in a waking state or are you the one who knows of the coming and going of the waking state? What is your experience?

Q.: Well, this is not exactly what you are asking, but what amazes me is the appearance of the Maharshi's teaching somewhere in this relative life, the meeting with a disciple of the Maharshi, and the grace of getting living instruction. I am blown away by the Bliss that I sense in the sage. If this is the waking state and this is the appearance of the Reality in that state, or the reflection of it, where is that Bliss by which I am so blown away? Certainly, it is not in a body like this body. It is still there. How can it be known? How is it that it is known?

N.: Is it known with your senses or by something deeper?

Q.: No. It is not known by the senses.

N.: Is it known by mere intellectual thought or by something deeper?

Q.: No. It is known in the way one knows love or that someone is loving.

N.: So, it is known in the depths.

Q.: Yes.

N.: Here, the bliss does not have an object as its cause. It does not have conditions. It is known in the depths of your own Consciousness. Consciousness, Bliss, and Being are one and the same.

Let's start with the Maharshi. You are casually saying that the Maharshi appears in the waking state.

Q.: The teachings appear in the waking state for this character.

N.: Yes, but what are those teachings.

Q.: That there is no waking state.
(laughter)

N.: On the one hand, you may say that the Maharshi's teachings appear in your waking state to wake you up out of your waking state. They appear in the manifested world to wake us up from the manifested world to realize the worldless, transcendent Reality. They appear as if in samsara to destroy the samsara, the cycle of birth and death. Yet, is the Maharshi, himself, one who is ever born? Does he ever die? That which is without beginning or end is Grace, itself.

The instruction is apparently heard in the waking state. So, you might erroneously say that the instruction comes from the waking state, but it does not come from the waking state. Nor do you actually listen to it in the waking state or any other state of mind. At first glance, it appears to be so. There is the face, there are the words, there are the recorded words or the printed words, etc. What actually occurs with upadesa, spiritual instruction? What actually is the experience?

Q.: The very first time that I went into a little satsang hall in San Bruno, at the very first moment; well, I had the wrong directions, and I arrived there late. I walked into a fairly crowded, little place. Two waves went through my mind. I looked at the teacher in front and I felt that that is the happiest being that I ever met. The second thought was that this strangely reminded me of myself. I did not know what the second one meant. How could that be? Those were the first two thought waves. The essence of that has never changed.

N.: Were they just thought waves?

Q.: They could have been. I never had thought waves like that. (laughter)

N.: There is a deeper Knowledge shining.

Q.: It was instantaneous, and it was not based on testimony of the sense or analysis by the mind.

N.: Nor is it restricted to the waking state. We must always understand and proceed on the basis of our own direct experience. If we do so, we will find that it matches identically that which composes the teachings of the wise sages. Your experience was a deeper knowledge and not of a thought wave. Your experience of your Self and of the Maharshi is something transcendent of the waking, dream, and deep sleep states. It is not necessary to take up the mental perspective that it is coming through your waking state thoughts. The experience is no barrier. There is no reason to construct through conceptual thinking alone the idea that there is a barrier and that you are on one side and the Truth or transcendent state, the Maharshi, the sages, and such are on the other side. There are not two sides.

It is important to be humble and egoless. It is also important to dive deep and to not deny one's own experience. Do not postpone truth and bliss. You see as an analogy what, in the world, are called ignorance and knowledge and can apply it to a certain extent to true Knowledge and the destruction of delusion. Then, do not put off the destruction of delusion and the realization of true Knowledge, as if that were ahead of you to be theoretically conceived of now and to be

experienced later. Plunge in, then and there. Do not be in the “planning stages” in regard to this inquiry, saying that you will inquire “Who am I?” later. Here and now, one should inquire.

Another Q.: I tend to deny the depth of my experience and believe in something else for a while. There is an apparent movement to something away from myself. As I am describing this, if I look at it, that does not actually happen. The apparent division doesn’t happen. At times, I think that it does happen. I think that I need to return to something, but it is clear that it is the wrong thing to which to return.

N.: Do you, yourself, go anywhere or return anywhere? If your Being is steady, what possible relation could all this coming and going have to you? What relation can you have to that which comes and goes?

You say that sometimes you deny your experience. Do you deny your existence?

Q.: No, that is impossible.

N.: So, of all experiencing, you are that which is most immediate. (silence) You are of the very nature of Existence, which is inseparable from itself.

Q.: I think that I see what you are saying. The most immediate experience is That, and there is not anything beyond That. If there would be, it would be something that I was making up.

N.: If you make up something, inquire as to what actually is your identity. What is your

nature? You will find it to be always pure Existence, which is pure Consciousness.

(silence)

Another Q.: So, that would mean that nothing ever happened and that there is nothing physical. It would mean that there is never anybody.

N.: (silence) It is only from the “I am the body” misconception that one speaks of physical things occurring. It is only from the “I am the mind” misconception that one thinks of possessing a personal life with events, experiences, occurrences, and such. All of that occurs within the mind but seems, by the mind’s own power, to be projected outside. Without misidentification with the body or the mind, and free of the idea of being an ego-entity, the possessor of the body and the possessor of the mind, who can say what happens?

(silence)

Another Q.: The knot assumed to be between the body and Consciousness, the Cit-jada-granthi, is where we assume the ego to be. That is as close as I can come to any idea of ego. That knot seems to be almost entirely composed of the assumption that we understand what perception is. It is identification with some process of perception. Investigating the ego, asking “Who am I?,” is really asking what this assumed perception is. The more I look into it, the more I find that we have absolutely no idea of it. It is just pure

assumption, just like the ego or the Cit-jadagranti. It seems that this investigation into “Who am I?” is investigation into some perception process that we assume exists but that does not exist at all. That should clear up the knot. I never found anyone who will discuss this or think about it. Everyone holds on to this assumption by not investigating.

N.: How is it that you speak of the “everybody”?

Q.: In the phenomenal world, when I try to talk with somebody about it, it evaporates then.

N.: By what means do you know the “phenomenal world” and the “everybody”?

Q.: That is the same thing that I am trying to investigate. It seems to disappear as soon as I look at it. As soon as I look away from it, I assume it is there.

N.: If the misperception or perceiving process comes and goes, according to whether you look at it or not, as you put it, who is it that has these two states?

Q.: Yes, that is the question.

N.: The emphasis is placed on identity. Who am I?

Q.: Right. As long as I assume that I am such and such, that I am a connection between something that presents itself and something to which it is presented...

N.: Who supposes that assumption?

Q.: That is the “Who am I?” question, yes?

N.: The assumption, that is, the assuming, and what is assumed are identical. They are identical with the one who assumes. Thus,

again, the emphasis is upon identity. The Maharshi has very succinctly stated it thus as “Who am I?”

A process must occur for someone. For whom would that process appear?

Q.: That is the assumption. That is the essence of “Who am I?” and not what I am trying to describe.

N.: Abide in the essence, and then see what happens to the world, everybody, and all else.

Q.: Jai Bhagavan.

N.: (Silence)

Another Q.: I have a good experience. Then, what makes it dissipate is I am choosing a wrong identity. This goes unquestioned. When I come here and listen to a discourse or you dialogue with others, it always boils down to “Who you are.” From that assumption, one gets a lot of “growth.” If I do not believe in an existent entity, there are no sprouts. If I start to believe in an entity, I start to paint the entity with different colors.

N.: Let’s start with the belief. What happens? Does the real Self, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, which is described as Satya-Jnanam-Anantam, True-Knowledge-Infinity, have the problem?

Q.: (laughing)

N.: Does that assume anything?

Q.: (laughing) No. That which the scriptures describe as the highest doesn’t have any problems.

N.: Brahman did not decide one day to become deluded, but Brahman is always just Brahman. So, when you say that your experience fades, what occurs?

Q.: My identity...I...it seems that I am never rooted in...no, I cannot say that either. When I meditate on what is real, it seems solid.

N.: You are absorbed in that.

Q.: Yes, it seems solid. What happens from that to ignorance? What is real is rock-solid. It is always there.

N.: It is unmoving.

Q.: It is unmoving. This other state is moving all the time.

N.: What is the cause and substance of the other state?

Q.: It is a chunk that breaks off from the Absolute.

N.: How does the Absolute become chunky (laughing) and break off?

Q.: (quiet for a while) I don't know. When I look from what is deep, that does not explain it. There is nothing there to explain it. I am not going to find pieces or even an entity to break.

N.: It is infinite, so there is nothing to break off, as if there were an edge. It is absolute, so it is without modification. It is you; it is the Self. So, there is no separate identity.

Q.: That is the beauty of it. If I just notice what I am taking myself to be and who I am directly, it is not very complicated. If I directly inquire as to what is really going on

here, I see that I made a mistake. I just had a type of belief in something, and that belief really had no substance. It was really my Self imagined as something else.

N.: So, only your Self is existing always. A mistaken belief; the seed of that belief is the one who has it, and he, himself, is that belief. It is a false assumption assumed by the false assumption itself?

Q.: (laughing) We have that problem in engineering at times. They say that here is the source and here is the destination, and...

N.: The engineering team of Brahma-Vishnu-Siva had the same engineering problem. (laughter)

Q.: They call me and say that they have this disastrous problem. They say that the source is going to be somewhere else, but they do not realize that there is no source. They need to make a source. It then runs out of control, because (laughing) there is no source.

N.: Maya's engineers are just like that. (laughter) There was no source. This does not have a place at which it begins.

Q.: This seems to be like what you are describing.

N.: It seems to draw its power from Cit-sakti, the power of Consciousness, so it is borrowed power, but it has no power source of its own.

Q.: And it is between two imaginary things.

N.: So, ignorance and samsara are said to be rootless. Maya is said to be beginningless.

Q.: Because, even though there is a belief

in something being real, but once that belief is there...

N.: The belief is the same rootless thing. The one who assumes, the assuming, and the assumption, that is, the ignorant one, the ignorance, and that about which he is ignorant, are the same thing. [ed. Note: not the Reality about which one appears to be ignorant, but the delusive notion that there is a realm of ignorance or a substance to ignorance is indicated here.]

Q.: It comes down to the same answer. The solution is to find out its rootlessness.

N.: Since ignorance pertains to oneself, the answer is to find out the nature of oneself.

Q.: In the state of ignorance, though, it is hazy. Even the clarity of noticing what is real requires some focus to recognize that this state has transpired and there is a deeper state.

N.: From where does that focus, or discrimination, viveka, come?

Q.: Ultimately, it comes from the Self.

N.: So, it comes from the light of the Self, but, in the Light of the Self, there is nothing else that remains. Such is called destruction by Knowledge.

Q.: What would remain?

N.: You discriminate between what is real and what is unreal, between who you are and what you are not. In this discrimination, you find that who you are is the Reality and that the unreal has not come to be at all. There is nothing existing corresponding to the unreal. Thus, Knowledge is said to “destroy” illusion. It is in this way that bondage is eliminated.

Q.: When you just said that it struck me: I should note how unreal illusion is. This is what we have been speaking about all along. Duh! (laughter)

N.: The final mantra sanctifies the statement. (laughter)

Q.: Once it loses weight, it doesn't have substance, so that there is not much to investigate. (laughing) It would be good to see if it ever could have any substance.

N.: That is a necessity. We must be so certain of our Knowledge of the Self, the Reality, that there is no alternative possible at any time. With that the very possibility or potential to be ignorant, and, therefore, to be bound and to suffer, becomes impossible. Where another, be it another state or another identity, is utterly impossible, for all eternity, that is Nonduality.

Q.: So it is upon that that all discrimination and all practice, everything is based. What does not live up to that should be destroyed.

N.: (Silence)

Another Q.: When we are closest to that experience, we usually associate bliss with it. Why is it that bliss is associated with the Self and not other experiences that we undergo, such as fear?

N.: Because Bliss is our very Being, our very nature. That which is called “fear” is only a veiling, an obscuring, of Bliss. It is a covering of our Being. Where Being, the Self, is perceived, there is no duality and no fear.

When the Self is not known as it is, then there can be fear because there is duality. Likewise is it with other emotions. Fear, anger, frustration, envy, jealousy, desire and such emotions are constructed of thoughts. Bliss is of the nature of pure Being-Consciousness and is not constructed of thought. Indeed, it is when erroneous thoughts are destroyed that Bliss shines, and when erroneous thoughts are destroyed, the other emotions become impossible. One needs to think of something in order to be afraid of it, but Bliss is not like that.

Q.: I have different experiences during different meditation times. At one time, I took the route of saying that I am not the body, thought, etc., but did not attempt to find out who I am. I just assume that I am not the mind, etc., and be still, for there is nothing else to do there. No inquiry even goes there because I am not assuming myself as anything, but it does not continue and does not give bliss. It gives some kind of peace or tranquility. There is no Self-inquiry process after awhile. I quickly reach that by just not identifying myself with these things. There is no question here. It is just my experience.

When I do a japa meditation, I get a physical experience. It is in my forehead. I have another experience when the focus is on the heart. Sometimes the two are mixed.

N.: Whether there is experience in the heart, forehead, or at any other location, there is one who is aware of these. The one who is aware has no location. The one who is aware has no definition. When tranquility, or peace, is experienced in meditation, it is his own peace, or tranquility, that is being experienced.

Inquiry should not be regarded as merely asking the question, “Who am I?” The Maharshi says that one should ask the question once and dive in. That diving in, or inquiry, is more than asking the question. “Who am I?” refers to the searching for one’s Existence, which transcends the words and thoughts used to describe such search. If one remains truly without definition, one is stateless. For the truly undefined, or for the true definition of one’s own Self, there is no beginning or end. If the state is temporary, or if inquiry seems impossible there, you may need to examine what other definitions are still lurking therein. When the spirit of inquiry and the remaining undefined, that is, not defining yourself as this, as this, as body, as mind, or as anything else, are fused, the experience is direct. When the experience is direct, peace and bliss become the same, and they become the same as one’s own Self.

The mind makes various interpretations, like looking at the various facets of a gem and describing such as different gems. It is like looking at the various waves and disregarding the one water. Though the mind makes various interpretations, the nature of the meditator remains the same. Who is he? Once the rope is mistaken to be a snake, one can then describe the snake as with various colors and parts. When the notion of the snake is discarded and the rope is seen, it is quite singular and without variety. If we consider meditation in objective terms, there are various parts and different kinds. When the meditator is purely the source and substance of the meditation, that is, when the meditation is entirely upon the nature of the meditator, such inquiry,

which yields a truly undefined, unconfined state, is absolutely one and partless. Meditate on the nature of the meditator. (silence)

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

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

From Yoga Vasishta

Vasishta continued: First, the mind was born from the Paramakarana, the supreme cause. Every thing that gives us pleasure, or is experienced, is born from the mind. All the drisya-s (seen objects) are of the mind, which is not different from Supreme Brahman. Like a wave, the mind changes this way and that way. All the differences in the world are created by the mind alone. With the destruction of the mind, all the differences disappear. Then, the Self alone remains well-established. With the dissolution of the mind in the Self, there is no Brahma, the creator, no jiva, the individual, no mind, no illusion, no subject, no object, and no world. Everything is the ocean of Consciousness, full of the waters of the Knowledge of the Self. Both the world and the mind are transient and, thus, called the “unreal.” They known to be false by the knower and appear to be true to the ignorant. Thus, both the world and the mind are false as well as true: false to the knower of Self and true to the non-knower. Just as, in darkness, one may mistake a log of wood to be a man, the mind

full of ignorance sees the world and not the Paramatman (the Supreme Self). The boy who is afraid of the ghost will never think about the cause of his fear. Similarly, the mind will never think that it is the Self, from which it is not different.

From the imagination of the Self, which is inexpressible and the nature of complete peace, comes forth the mind; from the mind jivatva, individuality; from the individual, egoism; from egoism the vishayatanmatra-s (the sphere of activity of the subtle elements or the subtle elements of the objects of the senses); from the vishayatanmatra-s, the indriya-s (the senses); from the indriya-s the body; from the body sorrow and attachment; and from them heaven and hell, bondage and liberation, like the seed and the plant.

The Chit (Consciousness), Atma (the Self), Brahman, jiva (individual) are not really separate. They are one. Thus, the mind and the individual self are one and the same; body and actions are one and the same. Really, there will be no body without actions (karmas). Thus, actions are the mind, and the mind is the individual self endowed with ego. The individual self without the ego is Brahman. Stated concisely, this is the eternal Truth of all the great vidya-s (knowledges) of Liberation.

From one lamp, many lamps can be lighted. From the One Supreme Self, innumerable forms appear. The broad-minded knower of Self sees the very vast, expansive nature of Brahman. With the Realization of the Self, the creation of individual self by the mind, its bondage, etc., are known to be false, and Liberation is attained. Sufferings of all kinds

disappear. As the mind appears as the jiva and the world, with the attainment of discrimination, the mind and the world disappear. To the man with shoes, the earth appears to be covered by skin. In the same way, the ignorant see the Supreme Self as if covered by illusion. The layers of many leaves appear as a plantain tree. Thus, the layers of ignorance appear as the world. Subjected to illusion, the mind obtains birth and death, boyhood, youth, old age, heaven and hell, etc. To the drunkard, the empty sky has the many bubbles and foam of liquor. Thus, the ignorant mind sees innumerable bubble-like worlds. To the diseased eye, two moons appear in the sky. To the diseased mind of the jiva, dualism appears due to illusion. The very intoxicated drunkard sees the stable tree as if it were walking. The deluded mind of the jiva sees the samsara in the very pure Self. Boys turn around and around, around themselves, and find the earth spinning around and around. The mind afflicted by delusion sees only the peculiar and innumerable objects seen. When the mind obtains the illusion of dualism, the illusion of dualism exists. If the illusion disappears, dualism also disappears. Then, the only Self remains, solidly, unchanged forever.

In the absence of fuel, a fire will be extinguished. In the absence of what is objective by discrimination and constant practice, the mind will be extinguished. If the mind is extinguished, the seen objects (drisya) become absent. If, by constant practice, that state is attained, one will be called a liberated soul, even if he is engaged in doing worldly things.

If the enjoyment is a little, the mind

becomes fickle. If the enjoyment is full, the mind forgets itself and immerses itself unknowingly in a joyful state. In the same way, if one realizes only a bit that he is pure Consciousness, he sees the objects (drisya-s) to some extent. If he fully realizes, the (object) drisya disappears permanently and completely. The Consciousness (Caitanya) shines resplendently only in the fully unknowing (no objective knowledge) state. The non-knowing state that is supremely excellent is nirvakalpa-samadhi. Then the Consciousness shines resplendently. That state is called Paramapada (the Supreme State).

The pure Consciousness becomes intelligence (cetana, intelligent, sentient, the mind, the soul, conspicuous) with the mind and experiences the illusion of, "I am the doer; I am the seer," as if true. As the wind has no other quality than movement, so the mind has no other quality than the desire for ever enjoying the pleasures of the senses. If the heat is gone, the fire will be extinguished. Similarly, if the desire for sense-pleasures is gone, the mind also is gone...

As the rope is thought by ignorance to be the serpent, due to ignorance, so the illusion of sense-enjoyments occurs in the pure Consciousness. The Knowledge of the Self alone is the fit medicine for the disease of samsara. The mind must remain in ever-constant meditation to attain this Self-Knowledge. There is no other path. If the external objects and the internal vasana-s (tendencies) are not driven away permanently and completely, you will not attain Liberation at all. If you do so, you will be liberated even now. By the correct understanding of the rope,

one will get rid of the delusion of taking it to be a serpent. Even so, the correct understanding of the Self will give one the benefit of Liberation, that is, the illusion of samsara in pure Consciousness will vanish for good. The giving up of the vasana-s associated with the senses is the surest path to Liberation. What difficulty is there with this? Great men sacrifice every thing, even their precious lives, for achieving the objects of their desire. Then, is there any meaning in hesitating to sacrifice vain desires for Liberation? The moment you are fully prepared to sacrifice your desires, unperturbed with perfect balance of mind, at that very moment you can attain Liberation.

Like the ball in hand, like a building before our very eyes, like a mountain we daily see, just so can we very easily see the vanity of human wishes and the emptiness and falsehood of the idea that the Self has birth, growth, and death or other changes, for it is quite evident and not a hidden thing or a mysterious thing. Just as the vast ocean appears variously in the forms of waves, etc., so the Self appears in different forms as the world only to the ignorant. The wise see every thing as Self, Brahman. Thus, the true Realization of the Self is eternal Liberation; non-realization is always bondage.

From the Temple Archives

[Editor's note: This letter from Nome is to Swami Swanandashram, the same Swami for whom were composed several of the pieces of correspondence that appeared in recent issues of Reflections. This letter was written with a sense of humor, which the Swami appreciated, and with respect at a time when the Swami had just informed Nome of his recent successful return visit to India. The beginning of the letter was not retained.

February 8, 1978

Dear Swamiji,

...It is hoped that your visit to India to "meet with prominent people" was found to be enjoyable by you; although I can not really be fooled when I hear that Swamiji has gone to India. I know, without a doubt, that, in Reality, Swamiji is neither a body nor a mind, nor any sort of individual, but that he is the Self, which is the sole-existent Reality. In Reality, there is no world, so "India" and "America" do not really exist. Although it is said that Swamiji went to India, actually only the body moves, and not Swamiji, who is truly only the Self. That Self is not a body, nor is it in a body, nor does it have a body. Just as Swamiji is not his body, so all the "prominent people" (as well as everyone else) are not their bodies. Also, just as Swamiji is only the formless Self and not the non-existent ego or imagined individual, so everyone else is only that same formless Self, and there are Absolutely no individuals. This being the case, I can not

be fooled when I read that Swamiji has gone to India to meet some people, for I know that Swamiji went nowhere and saw nobody. He only remained as he Is; and That which he Is, is the Self. That Self is pure Being and is beyond the illusory appearance of the world, body, senses, mind, and ego. The ultimate Truth is that the world, body, and the mind have never come to be. The Self alone exists; the Self alone is real.

Swamiji, it was mentioned in your letter that you are considering visiting the west coast this year. If the purpose of your visiting the west coast is for the spreading of a spiritual mission, it is highly unlikely that this body would be of any use in such an endeavor. This body is not active in, nor is there any interest in, “spiritual affairs,” institutions and ashrams, teaching, traveling, etc. Like the supreme sage Sri Ramana Maharshi, this body is quite content to just stay where it is. I rest in the complete Peace and Supreme Happiness of the Realization of my Self. There is no desire to experience, accomplish, or to do anything because there is no misidentification as an individual experiencer or doer. I have attained That which leaves nothing more to be attained or accomplished. I have known That which leaves nothing more to be known and I have realized That which leaves nothing more to be realized. That is the Self, and That Self am I.

I do not see any teaching which needs be spread nor any individuals who need to be taught. There are none in bondage, none striving for liberation, and none liberated. There is no ignorance and no knowledge, no bondage

and no liberation, no individual “me” and no others. There is only the one Reality which is the Self. I know who I am, and That is formless, non-dual Reality, which is Being-Consciousness-Bliss. All words and thoughts fail to express or describe the Self which I am.

I regard you with the deepest love and know that we are always One. “You” and “I” are just mere words, for we are always only That.

