

Reflections

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Society of Abidance in Truth

Society of Abidance in Truth (SAT)
1834 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060 USA
www.SATRamana.org

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

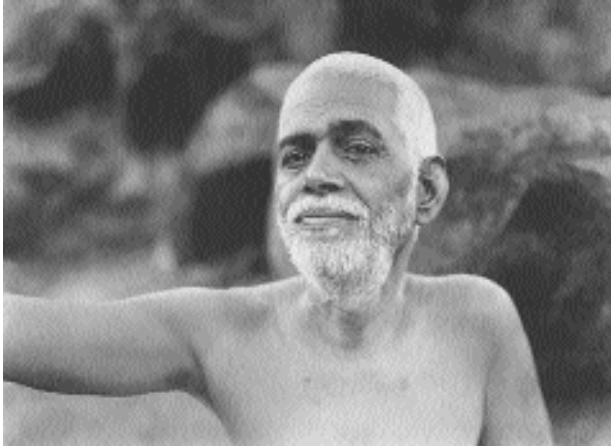
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Society of Abidance in Truth (SAT)
1834 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, California 95060 USA
Phone: (831) 425-7287 ~ Fax: (831) 425-0407
e-mail: sat@cruzio.com ~ web: www.SATRamana.org

Om Tat Sat

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Invocation

In Brahman, there is not separation.
Then, who is there to see?

The Reality, which is without encumbrances, is, itself, the most natural state of samadhi.
It is in that state that the sorrow and scourge of worldly life have their end.

That which is the end of attachment
Is to be understood as the final doctrine.
It is also verified by the Vedas and the Guru,
And the actual experience of the Self.

Enough with this.
Brahman is that Eternity in which there is no illusion or maya.
The one who has experienced it
Will realize the meaning of this.

The one thing that we must do
Is to discard concepts projected by the mind, at any level,
Through Self-Realization,
And then there is the eternal paradise of Bliss.

— Sant Ramadasa (Samarth Ramdas) in his *Dasboadh*

From
Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

A visitor asked Bhagavan: I want knowledge.

M.: Who wants knowledge?

D.: I want it.

M.: Who is that “I”? Find the “I” and see later what further knowledge is required.

D.: How shall I overcome my passions?

M.: Find their root, and then it will be easy. (Later) What are the passions? Kama (lust), krodha (anger), etc. Why do they arise? Because of likes and dislikes toward the objects seen. How do the objects project themselves in your view? Because of your avidya, i.e., ignorance. Ignorance of what? Of the Self. Thus, if you find the Self and abide therein, there will be no trouble owing to the passions.

(Later) Again, what is the cause of the passions? Desire to be happy or enjoy pleasure. Why does the desire for happiness arise? Because your nature is happiness, itself, and it is natural that you come into your own. This happiness is not found anywhere besides the Self. Do not look for it elsewhere, but seek the Self and abide therein.

Still again, that happiness which is natural is

simply rediscovered, so it cannot be lost. Whereas the happiness arising from other objects is external and thus liable to be lost. Therefore, it cannot be permanent, and so it is not worth seeking.

D.: One person says one thing one way. Another says the same thing in a different way. How is the Truth to be ascertained?

M.: Each one sees his own Self only, always and everywhere. He finds the world and God according to what he is.

A Nayanar went to Kalahasti for the darshan of God. He saw all the people there as Siva and Sakti because he himself was so. Again, Dharmaputra considered the whole world was composed of people having some merit or other and that each of them was even better than himself for some reason or another. Whereas Duryodhana could not find even a single good person in the world. Each reflects his own nature.

D.: Is there no way of escape from the miseries of the world?

M.: There is only one way, and that consists in not losing sight of one’s Self under any circumstances.

To inquire, “Who am I?” is the only remedy for all the ills of the world. It is also

perfect Bliss.

Annamalai asked: What is the exact difference between worldly activity and dhyana?

M.: There is no difference. It is like naming one and the same thing by two different words in two different languages.

D.: There is so much misery in the world because wicked men abound in the world. How can one find happiness here?

M.: All are gurus to us. The wicked say by their evil deeds, "Do not come near me." The good are always good. So then, all persons are like gurus to us.

D.: How is it that Atma vidya is said to be the easiest?

M.: Any other vidya requires a knower, knowledge, and the object to be known, whereas this does not require any of them. It is the Self. Can anything be so obvious as that? Hence, it is the easiest. All that you need do is to inquire, "Who am I?" A man's true name is mukti (liberation).

D.: There are several asanas mentioned. Which of them is the best?

M.: Nididhyasana (concentration of the mind) is the best. (Ed. Note: nididhyasana may also be defined as deep, continuous meditation)

M.: So, the fact is that Brahman is all and remains indivisible. He is ever realized. The man does not, however, know it. He must know it. Knowledge means the overcoming of obstacles that obstruct the revelation of the eternal Truth that the Self is the same as Brahman. The obstacles form altogether your idea of separateness as an individual. Therefore, the present attempt will result in the Truth being revealed that the Self is not separate from Brahman.

Silent Truth
Satsang
May 14, 2006

Om Om Om

(Silence for a long period of time)

N.: Thus the Truth. If you have a question this morning or if you would like to relate your own experience or wish to speak about Self-Realization, which Sri Bhagavan has so graciously revealed, please, at any point, feel free to speak or ask.

Q.: I have been reading the *Crest Jewel of Discrimination* with a commentary. I am seeing now that when discrimination is deep, the seeker starts to see the Reality within instead of the things in the world. He sees the actions and the fruits of the actions come back to some imagined individual. Then, detachment flows naturally. How can one be attached to something that he sees is not real? When there is detachment, then sama, peace of mind, etc. come. This, then, makes me focus again even more intensely upon the discrimination. Sankara says that for the process to deepen, the discrimination must be complete.

Inquiry cuts through so much and focuses on identity. What clarity and what a wonderful teaching! It is a focus beyond the mind.

N.: Whether we refer to this as discrimination, as inquiry to know the Self, as inquiry to destroy the illusion, inwardly focusing, or going beyond the mind, it amounts to

the same. As for the fourfold sadhana, or requisites for Self-Realization, you may view them as sequential or as four ingredients that mingled together are the qualities, or attributes, of successful, fruitful spiritual practice. What is most essential is to know yourself.

You spoke of going beyond the mind. What is it that goes beyond the mind?

Q.: That, in me, I see in inquiry. I see in inquiry that there is something there that is always constant, and the mind is not always there.

N.: The mind is not always there, but that “thing” that is you is always there.

Q.: Yes.

N.: So, we can only loosely speak of going beyond the mind. That which goes beyond the mind is already beyond the mind.

You can consider it like this. I am sure that the same is mentioned by Sri Sankara in his *Vivekacudamani*. As the Maharshi has said, the mind is considered to be only a bundle of thoughts. It has a great variety of permutations. Are any of those thoughts you? The mind is spoken of as manas, citta, and buddhi. Manas refers to those mental activities that deal with sensory cognition and association with the same. It is concerned with the registration of sensation, which is merely imagined in the mind and is not external, and the associations of good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant, painful and pleasurable, and such. Citta is memory. Since the thoughts of memory, with its sense of continuity through time, often go into one's thoughts about the

future, as well as the present thoughts, we can regard all such thoughts as the movement of citta. Buddhi is usually spoken of as “intellect.” It may be understood as that which seems to direct the focus or attention of the mind, as well as that which deals with things that are not sensory in character, such as abstract thought and spiritual thought. Your Self is beyond manas, citta, and buddhi.

How can that which is beyond the buddhi be reached by the buddhi? How can that which is beyond the reach of the intellect or mind be reached by the mind? The Maharshi points out that the mind, itself, is inert. In the text, it is said to shine by reflected light. This means that it is inert by itself. Trace the light to its origin. The origin is Consciousness. Consciousness is neither an object of the mind nor a director of the mind. Consciousness, being innately transcendent of thought, is that in which the mind is nonexistent; for the real does not subsist in the unreal, and the unreal does not subsist in the real. Consciousness does not become a mind, and there is no mind arising in Consciousness. This Consciousness is your real Being. In Being, there is no non-Being. In the Self, there is no non-Self.

Only the Self is capable of knowing itself. Brahman alone knows Brahman. No other can do so, because of the illusory limitations of that illusion, and because it is illusion. That which never is cannot know that which ever is.

If, like this, you discriminate through inquiry as to what is your identity, you see that the Real alone is and that there is no second. That is the inquiry and discrimination referred

to, and that is nondual.

Is this clear for you?

Q.: Yes, it is clear. In practice, seeing the limited adjuncts that I hold, I come back to examining the senses again. The sense of sight to me is not binding. Likewise is it with sound. There is still, in me, an internal body sense. It is more continuous, and I do not know how to close my internal feeling.

N.: Do you refer to the sense of touch or to the sense of being alive?

Q.: It is internal body sensations. One of the ways I inquire is to ask if it feels like me. This feels like me.

N.: But you know it.

Q.: Yes, I know it.

N.: If it is the known, or objective, how can it be you?

Q.: Exactly.

N.: Have you ever had an experience without that particular feeling being present?

Q.: Well, or course.

N.: But you did not cease to exist.

Q.: Of course.

N.: So, where is the connection? Where can be the identity of what you are with that sensation?

You are not the body, and you do not have any of the attributes of the body. The limitations of the body, including its birth and death, are not yours. Similarly, you are not the senses. Anything that has the

attributes of the senses, on the objective side as something sensed or on the supposedly subjective side as a sensing entity, is not you.

Everything that you know of the senses is contained in your mind. How can you be the content of something that you are not?

(silence)

You need not attempt to maintain the sensation. You need not attempt to cause the cessation of that sensation. Whether the sensation is there or not, you are. It cannot exist apart from you, but you exist just fine, with or without it. If this much is grasped fully, you are not bound by it.

Will you be unhappy if the sensation disappears?

Q.: No.

N.: Alright.

Q.: Any of the sensation is (missing word in recording).

N.: So, it has nothing to do with your Being, nothing to do with your Consciousness, and nothing to do with your Bliss.

Q.: I know that it feels like a sensation in the chest or the head.

N.: Everything with which you have misidentified at any time has supposedly felt like you. All you need do is to trace out from where the sense of identity derives. Similarly, for discrimination, you need only trace out from where the sense of reality derives, so that you do not mix it up

with objective, phenomenal illusions. So it is with identity.

If you continue to trace your identity, the one who traces is absorbed in that which he is trying to trace. That is pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss. It is entirely free of the body, senses, prana, or the sense or energy of being alive, an aspect of the mind. It has no individuality, no ego sense. That can know itself. Indeed, That is the Knowledge.

(silence)

Another Q.: Inquiry is a process of keeping the thoughts at bay. Sometimes while inquiring, I daydream. Thoughts rise up, and I become a thought. So, I am looking at what it is that causes veiling, that appears to have changed my identity and covered up the deep experience of myself. It has certain qualities. It is a memory. It appears to be in this time called "the past." So, I ask, what is the substance of all that? When I look at it clearly, it doesn't seem to have much substance. Then, the one who seems to have the veil and the veil itself seem to collapse. It is like being able to remember a dream when one is awake.

N.: (silence). What are you looking for?

Q.: I am looking for myself.

N.: Are you looking for confirmation of your idea or Realization of the Self?

Q.: It is confirmation of some idea.

N.: And, if you get that idea confirmed, what then happens?

Q.: Not much. (laughter)

N.: You first spoke of keeping thought in abeyance. Actually, when reading the Maharshi's words, "keeping off thoughts" refers to being transcendent and undefined by any thought. It has little to do with the increase and decrease in the number of thoughts.

Q.: Okay. That is so important. I have this idea that I must get rid of the thoughts. It is like there is a hole in the ground with thoughts coming out of it like water, and I need to put my foot on it.

N.: No, it is a mirage. The number of thoughts is like counting the waves, few or greater, in the mirage, thinking that the desert sand is becoming wet and that you are drowning in it.

Q.: What you just said pointed out something that I consider real.

N.: When you consider something to be real and try to eliminate it at its own level, the most for which you can hope is a change in phenomena, in this case a subtle phenomenon called "thought." The Realization of the True Self comes about by discerning what is real. Implicit in that is the negation of all that is unreal. It does come about by "monkeying around" with the unreal, with the plumbing in the mirage. (laughter)

Q.: Okay.

N.: It is like turning on and off the valves of a mirage. (laughter)

Q.: That is exactly what I have been doing.

N.: Is this clear?

Q.: Yes. This is clear.

N.: In the description of your experience, you traced it to a kind of memory. The experience is good, but you will probably find it more fruitful to examine how you have put together the causality. Any description of illusion is necessarily as illusory as the illusion, itself. Your attempt to define it is purposeful only to the extent that it helps you to eliminate it. To that extent, any explanation, no matter who gives it, of how duality, illusion, or ignorance comes to be is helpful but will have its limitations. The limitations are of the illusion, itself.

If you say that there is memory and then veiling comes about. Whose memory was it? Does the true Self have a memory? The space-like, timeless, location-less, unborn, uncreated Reality has a memory? It is not so.

Q.: It does not have a mirage.

N.: If you speak of multiplicity or projection, in this case, the mental projection in the form of memory, of whatever kind of memory, as having come prior to the veiling, the causality is somewhat inverted. It would be better to say that there is veiling, and, because of veiling, there is then a projection of the illusory multiplicity. You can see this in your everyday experience. In deep sleep, there is no projection of multiplicity. There is no body, no mind, no world, and no experience of any of that, but there is veiling of your real nature. Out of sleep comes dream, and one of those dreams you refer to as "waking." Out of veiling comes the projection of multiplicity, which is an illusion.

Q.: Yes, I can see that veiling occurs and

then there is a projection, a thought of some kind of memory.

N.: With the idea of time superimposed on it, you then think of it as the past and call it “memory.”

Q.: What is this that is veiling? I do not understand that. What is that?

N.: It is the same as the one who has it. (silence). We can call it “misidentification” or non-perception of your real identity, which is your real Existence. The Maharshi says that of all such *vrtti*-s, or modes, the root is the “I.” It is the assumption of existing as an individual, prior to the idea of any attribute of that individual. There is one who appears to experience whatever the objective, or “this,” aspect of the experience will be, be such memory or anything else. It is he that appears as a veil for himself, while your real Being shines, self-luminous, without a veil and without division, always. Inquire into that one. If there is a veil, that veil is for a “me.” Who is that? If you inquire in this way, you will find that there is no substance of which to create the veil. You cannot make darkness out of light. (silence)

Q.: It is very clear to me that there is a tendency of mine to explain things and then a want to think that the explanations are real, as if there were some value in those. It is a search in a dream world by a dream character.

N.: The search is right, but how will you fulfill it?

Q.: By finding out who is searching.

N.: If the desire for Liberation, the

fourth of the requisites (of the four-fold *sadhana*) as a search is turned in on the one who is as if bound, Liberation will be self-revealed. So, toward the conclusion of the book, *Who am I?*, the Maharshi says, in answer to the question of what is release, *Mukti*, Liberation, to inquire and know the nature of the one who is in bondage *is* release, or Liberation. Why did he say that?

Q.: Why did he say that? So that the guy could get free.

N.: (Smiling and chuckling) Yes, but also because there is only one Self, and there are not two of you. If there is a veil, there must be a veil between what is veiled and the one for whom there is a veil. This threefold division is not true. How can there be a veil for your Self? If it were another to be known, you might know or not know it, but in the case of yourself, how can you not know yourself? It is as absurd as saying that there could be a time when you did not exist.

Q.: Yes, it is truly absurd. Veiling is like saying, “I did not exist for a while.”

N.: Yes, yet you are there to report on it. However you wish to explain ignorance, or illusion, it is fine as long as it prompts you to inquire and thus uproot the very idea that such a thing exists. However you explain your bondage, though it is not really true, it is alright if it prompts you to inquire and find out that you have not really been bound, you have not become a separated, individual being, but you exist only as Being, which is unborn, undivided, and is with no form. (silence).

Is this clear for you?

Q.: Yes, it is all about inquiry.

N.: Yes, there is no substitute for knowing yourself.

Q.: Yes, it is very fundamental.

N.: You have now become a fundamentalist. (laughter)

Another Q.: Pure Consciousness and Being are not mine, not exclusively mine. Part of our problem is vijnana. We always need to leap across. What we see around us is an illusion not because it is not real but because we don't see it correctly. Isn't it true?

N.: If we saw correctly, how would we see it?

Q.: As our Self. Seeing stops. It is identity.

N.: Alright. The Self is not multiple or divided.

Q.: Yet there is a truth to individuality.

N.: In what does that truth lie?

Q.: In pure Existence-Consciousness.

N.: Which transcends thoughts of individuality, division, or duality.

Q.: I have to use thoughts and words because I do not have vijnana now. When we get to the state of pure Being-Consciousness, that is not the end. We do not cease to exist, and this universe does not cease to exist. So, why?

N.: Why what?

Q.: Why is it? Why did it manifest? Why

did we come into it?

N.: The idea of "us" who come into it is not being identified with pure Being-Consciousness, but as something else. If you would inquire into that something else, the root of your question, or doubt, would be eliminated. You would have the vijnana, the Awareness or Knowledge, for which you are searching. In That, there is just the Self, and to say it is all of this or that none of this is and only That alone is means the same thing. After all, when it is said that Brahman is all this, it does not mean that there should be any emphasis on "all this." It means that just Brahman is.

Q.: It is not an emphasis. It seems to me that the manifested is from Ananda. It couldn't be or express itself otherwise, if it didn't have a delight behind it.

N.: Delight is inherent in itself. One speaks of manifestation from some supposedly manifested point and not from the Self, itself. So, first, realize the Self, and then see if there is a universe or not.

Q.: Okay.

N.: Otherwise, whatever is the definition of the viewer will necessarily get into his view.

Q.: But, on the way, don't we have a responsibility too, for (pausing); if we hurt ourselves, we usually stop it, unless there is something wrong. There is hurt going on and to not do something, well, evil succeeds when good does nothing. You can say that there is no evil but...

N.: It is not necessary to say that. "Evil

succeeds when good does nothing.” Similarly, ignorance seems to prevail in one’s own mind if one does not employ Knowledge, which is wholly good. Knowledge alone destroys ignorance. Nothing else will do so. Another part of ignorance will not do so. This Knowledge is rooted in yourself. That Self, which is also Knowledge, is the very root of all that is true, good, and beautiful. When we find that root, we find that it alone is, and there is the utter destruction of the very cause of delusion, which, in its grossest form, manifests as what you call “evil.”

Q.: Could you clarify that a little more?

N.: About what do you have a question?

Q.: The question that is hard to say is the good question.

N.: (laughing) Okay.

Q.: On some level, there has to be a necessity for what we call evil. No, even that is not right. What we call “evil” is not evil but a consequence of being in ignorance.

N.: Yes. The denser the ignorance, the cruder is its form. When its form is very grossly manifested due to the grossest of action, you call it “evil.”

Q.: But isn’t it our responsibility?

N.: There is a responsibility to attain true Knowledge, which is the very root of all that you call good.

Q.: Let’s make it very practical. Someone comes to us and says he is going to kill us, just because he feels like it. What is our responsibility in that situation?

N.: To abide as immortal Being, whether

you choose to stop his action or not. Continuing with the delusion that you are mortal, that you are the body and that you can be slain, won’t help the situation.

Q.: I don’t have that delusion.

N.: Okay.

Q.: But it is a choice to allow or not to allow, to come back or not to come back. There is a loss of allowing if something can be done.

N.: Yes, you are not required to be indolent. Knowledge is transcendence and not indolence. Is that what you are asking?

Q.: Okay.

N.: We can look at the lives of those who have realized the highest Truth. Sankara and the Maharshi declare that the Self is and this entire universe is not. Yet, if you look at their manifested lives, how much good is there!

Q.: It is hard for us to see all the good that they did.

N.: We could go for eons attempting to describe it, and it would not be adequate. That in itself is standing proof of how this Self, the Knowledge of which is what we are concerned with, is the very root of all that is true, good, and beautiful.

Q.: Yes, it is beyond these words.

N.: It is beyond those words. It is all peace, but it is not indolent.

Another Q.: I have deep experience, but, then, I say to myself, “but.” You have directed my mind inward and instructed me to inquire

as to who has that “but.” There is always a trail or trace of that one. There is always something from which to trace it inwards. I am seeing that there is something to be eliminated.

N.: Alright. So, the Maharshi says that the ego is a ghost with no form of its own, that it feeds on forms, but when sought, it runs away.

Q.: If it leaves a form, it is good to eliminate that as a possibility.

N.: Yes, your inquiry should always be thorough. Both the ego notion and the apparent definition, the form that trails behind it, should be eliminated. How would the trail remain if there is no one who has it?

Q.: (laughing). It would not be possible.

N.: If you do not allow for the trails, how would a ghost with no form of its own survive?

Q.: There is that link. The ability to inquire is determined by how little one’s mind is going outward. If my mind is going outward, there is no way that I can look more deeply into myself.

N.: Isn’t it the other way around? If you are looking at yourself, there is no way that your mind can go outward.

Q.: (laughing) Oh yes!

N.: Outward is the projection of illusion within the mind itself, which is then erroneously regarded as if external.

Q.: (quiet for awhile) When I say that I want to find out who I am, the ability to do so seems to become better as I eliminate what is objective. My mind becomes more focused

and clearer. It could be more focused. It seems to me to be a matter of eliminating more and continuing to look.

N.: When you focus, is such a matter of thinking a particular way, or is it something deeper?

Q.: The essence is always deeper. Maybe it is a byproduct?

N.: The thoughts may coincide with or express the essence. Is the essence a thought or something else?

Q.: The essence is deeper than thought. If it were thought, that would be no good for that is part of what is being eliminated.

N.: There would be no freedom or real bliss in that.

Q.: Yes. It seems as if it is a byproduct. Is that true that there is always the focus when it...it seems to go hand-in-hand, but doesn’t always. Sometimes, the Truth comes shining through, even when the mind is not really focused.

N.: So, concentration, or focus, in as much as that is regarded as a particular line of thinking, is not the determining factor of Knowledge, is it? When you inquire, is it because you think along a particular line? Does that constitute the inquiry? Or, is something else occurring?

Q.: I still believe that it is thinking along a certain line.

N.: What is your experience? Is that true?

Q.: No, it isn’t true.

N.: You just made quick work of your

belief. (laughter)

Q.: That is part of the whole object-ification that is being jettisoned. The mind's focusing is not necessarily a problem. It cannot obstruct what is real. It doesn't seem to...(pauses)

N.: Is there anything obstructing Realization? The power of your belief is rooted in yourself. That is a reason why belief can be a wonderful thing. What obstructs Realization? What makes you think that you are not realized? What makes you think that there is someone, you, who is an unrealized entity, or a being?

Q.: Do you want the list? (laughter)

N.: Hmm, hmm. All of it.

Q.: (laughing) It is a fictitious puff that does not last very long. It does not hold up. I could list things, but they don't have much weight. It doesn't even look that interesting. (laughter).

N.: How can an uninteresting, fictitious, ephemeral "puff," as you put it, be an obstruction to the Realization of the Self?

Q.: Uh, maybe that is the way all illusion is, actually. It really is very boring. (laughter). There is certainly not anything juicy or great in it.

N.: There is no happiness in it.

Q.: But...

N.: Okay, it is juiceless.

Q.: No divine nectar there. (laughter)

N.: Juiceless, essenceless, tasteless. (laughter)

Q.: Unreal. Yet, for some reason, I believe that there is reality, myself, there.

N.: What is the basis of that belief?

Q.: The basis must be myself.

N.: How can you, yourself, be an obstruction to the Realization of your own Self? It appears as that, because there is nothing else, yet how can that occur? How can the Unborn give birth to illusion?

Q.: I don't know. A bad habit?

N.: A habit has to be for someone. Whose habit?

Q.: Yes, it cannot be for anything grosser. It won't be for the body, and it won't be for the mind, even though it seems that it partakes of the mind.

N.: All that is imagined. You do not become this thing or that thing. You cannot be this of be that. Just Being alone is.

(silence)

Another Q.: I wonder how the sages use words. Words are limited. They say to consider the nature of existence, the nature Consciousness, the place of, and the source of. I am curious about the nature. It turns me inward when I consider what "knowing" means, what is the nature of Consciousness, and if reality is existing, it must know itself. So, if I inquire, I am turning toward Reality, which knows itself. The ego could be defined as an illusion that does not know itself. Knowing of itself is the oneness of Existence and Consciousness, because the knowing of itself is the essence of real Existence.

N.: You have answered your own question splendidly. (laughter)

Q.: I try to take the hints of the words of the sages and follow where they are pointing to.

N.: To That. (laughter)

Q.: I could take the words for granted, but I try not to and ask, “What is the nature of knowing?”

N.: When you so inquire, what is your experience?

Q.: At the very least, it is a very inward direction.

N.: Alright. So, the words of the wise serve that purpose. In the inward direction lies Silent Truth. The words of the wise shine with the power of Silent Truth. Silent Truth is comprehended by the Silent Truth, itself. So, there is no distinction between the wise and their Wisdom, or between the one who instructs and the one who receives instruction. The teacher, teaching, and the taught are all one and the same thing. The teaching is not a set of ideas. The one who instructs must necessarily be identified with That. Otherwise, how will it be clear instruction? The one who understands is, himself, That, which is the significance of the teaching. Thus, the Upanishad says, “Tat tvam asi, That you are.” That aphorism is the instruction.

Q.: If an aspirant felt that there were partial understanding and partial not-understanding, the practice would be to inquire and eliminate the not-understanding?

N.: Alright. How would he do that? Does not his non-understanding have its basis in

what he regards as himself? So, he would discern what he defines himself as and then inquire to discern whether the definition were true or false.

Q.: And the partial understanding would serve as encouragement and intensity to continue inward.

N.: Yes, it may seem that way at the outset, but really what is true is self-evident. Even if we speak of what is known partially, that which is true is self-evident and does not really need strengthening. Your effort is primarily the destruction of ignorance. Knowledge, being the substrate, is already solid. If it seems that knowledge is unsteady, it is really the unsteadiness of ignorance prevailing that is the cause. We destroy the ignorance, and the Knowledge is said to become strong. Because of the longstanding habit of regarding oneself as an ego entity, or a bound individual, the wise and the scriptures say to you to make the Knowledge strong, because you are looking at it from the perspective of being a non-knower. How do you make the Knowledge strong? By inquiring to know who the knower is. In doing so, the ignorance is shattered. That which is changeful is that which is unreal. The unreal alone can be destroyed, and the changeful alone is changed. The unchanging Reality, which is the abode of Knowledge, seems to become steadier. Really, it is unmoving.

If you examine your experience, you will see that you are unsteady at those times of, and proportionately to, your misidentification. If the misidentification is regarding Being, you will take an ego “I” to be real, or there will be the ideas of “I am a body,” or “I

From *Yoga Vasishtha*

Vasishtha continued:

The Self cannot be cut into pieces. It cannot be burnt. It cannot be dried up. It has no sorrow. It is eternal. It is in everything. Its stability is like a rock. It is immovable.

To fall into illusion, to make others fall into it, and to dispute the correctness of the authority for it are one and the same. We are rid of all delusions and illusions. We realized Brahman. It is the ignorant who see the seen objects and are disillusioned, but not the wise, who see the space of Consciousness (Chidakasha) and experience bliss, in which all that is good is inherent. The tree called Chit (Consciousness), at the time of the spring season called maya, illusion, acquires the quality of the waters called the power of jadata (inertness), like a rock, and this makes the flowers of time and such fully bloom. It is only Brahman that appears in the form of space, the wind, the light, the ocean, the earth, the moon, and the sun. Their power is the power of Brahman. They have no individual power. If the seen objects disappear by the Knowledge of the Self, the Consciousness-Brahman shines as before.

In the three states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, it is Brahman that pervades. These three states are only in the idea of the inertness (jadata) and activity (kriyatva), which are ideas in the mind. The stability of the world derives from the stability of Brahman. Really, the world is false. The idea of the world is a void idea in the great space of the real Consciousness. The

am in a body,” and such. If the misidentification concerns your own Consciousness, you will take a mind to be existent, though there is no such thing. Likewise is it with the senses. If misidentification involves the Ananda aspect, or Bliss, you will become attached to something in an external world that is actually only imagined in your own mind.

Such seems to create unsteadiness in the Truth, but the Truth does not become unsteady. To regain the innate steadiness, destroy the illusion. Is this partially understood? (laughter)

Q.: (laughing) I think I fully understood that partial understanding is to be removed. (laughter).

N.: Okay, that is good.

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

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

movement of the wind is of the nature of Consciousness. The place of blackness of utter darkness is of the nature of Consciousness. The world is a false creation, as is the day of the sun, which is of the nature of Consciousness. It is false as well as true, that is, false in reality, but true in its nature.

Just as if a light is extinguished, only blackness remains, so, if the world is destroyed, only Consciousness, or Brahman, remains. The world is the heat of the fire, which is of the nature of Consciousness. It is the whiteness of the conch shell, which is of the nature of Consciousness. It is the liquidity of water, which is of the nature of Consciousness. It is the sweetness of sugar candy, which is of the nature of Consciousness. It is the oily part of the milk, which is of the nature of Consciousness. It is the coolness of snow, which is of the nature of Consciousness. It is the flame of the fire, which is of the nature of Consciousness. It is the oil of the mustard seed, which is of the nature of Consciousness. It is the sweetness of the sweet food, which is of the nature of Consciousness. It is the ornament of gold, which is of the nature of Consciousness. It is the fragrance of the flower, which is of the nature of Consciousness. It is the fruit of the creeper, which is of the nature of Consciousness. The power of Consciousness is the power of the world. The power of the world is of the nature of Consciousness.

The sky appears to be blue, but in reality, it is false. In the same way, the peculiarities of differences appear in Brahman, but they are not real. All the worlds are false but appear to

be real. Thus, there is the term, “sat” (existence, reality). The power of the created things is not different from the power of the original reality, Consciousness. Differentiating the Consciousness as formless (nirakara) and the world as with form (sakara) and saying that there is equal power in both or that there is no power equal to both (or this line can read: there will not be the same power in both) is to be shunned. This kind of saying is like the horn of a hare. When there is no individuality or independence to the great earth, which hold the oceans and the mountains, how can there be power to any falsely created petty things?

A crystal appears to be full inside and outside, too, but actually there is pure space within it. Thus, various things are reflected in it. Just so, the illusion, which is full of Consciousness, appears as if jada (inert) inwardly and outwardly, though it is only the reflection of Consciousness that appears in it. The world, though false, appears in the illusion with the reflection of Consciousness. In the space of the objects, there is not the wind and such, which are born from the space (sky). In the same way, in the space of Consciousness, there are no impurities of existence and nonexistence, of you and I.

The world appears to be different from Brahman, though it is not so. Though Brahman and the world are not different, it is Brahman that supports the world. Brahman is the cause of the cause. It is the root cause. It is Brahman that is in the mind as consciousness. There is no cause for Consciousness. For all objects, the original nature is Consciousness. Consciousness alone is to be experienced. It

has no outer event. Rama, understand that all the worlds that exist in the great Consciousness have no difference and are of the nature of Brahman.

At that time, the day came to an end. The sun set, and it was time to perform the religious rites at the time of dusk. Those who were assembled there saluted the sage and went to attend to their duties. The next morning, by the time the sun had risen, they gathered again in the assembly.

From the Temple archives

[This is letter composed in November or December of 1974 by Nome. It was written to Joe Miller, who was a spiritual teacher in San Francisco, who met with Nome a few times in 1975 following this letter. The original letter was edited and modified by another person at the time, who included some paragraphs copied from books written by another author, before the letter was sent. This copied material has been deleted (indicated by ...), so that which is presented here is the original letter by Nome.]

Dear Joe,

I, myself, am Realization. Being is Knowing. Existence and Consciousness are one and the same. I am the Self. How could I ever be apart or different from who I am? Thus, Realization, not being any sort of thing or state attainable, is just who I am; my very

existence, which is not objecti-visable at all. Who I am can never be seen, for it is the seeing itself. All objective attempts to define the Self are partial and incomplete. One could never hope to understand who he is by seeking in such a manner.

Realization can never be attained; for there are not two of me that one should reach the other. Realization is my ever-present Consciousness.

There is not even one of me, in the sense that I am not any sort of individual entity. The assumption of there being an individual entity causes all apparent suffering. This suffering is only an appearance and not real for a moment, for if we look (inquire who am I?) we see that the supposed entity is absolutely absent, thus revealing our eternal Existence-Consciousness, which is what the word "I" really indicates. People call this Realization. Actually, there is nothing attained, and no one to attain it....

This simple, non-conceptual understanding of who I am, beyond all words and thoughts, is Absolute Freedom. For there never having been bondage, there is no liberation for which to seek. There are neither sentient being nor buddhas, neither disciple nor guru, neither path nor achievement....

...Everyone call himself I, thus indicating our Absolute Unity.

Sincerely,

I. M. Nome

[This is a letter dated mistakenly as January 7, 1975, which was actually January 7, 1976 written by Maurice Frydman, the translator of the book, *I am That*, to convey the response of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj to a letter to him written by Nome on October 19, 1975. Here is presented Maharaj's reply only. The letter by Nome will appear in Reflections at some other time]

Dear Nome,

Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj has received your letter, and it was translated for him into Marathi. He gave it to me and asked me to convey his thanks and brotherly greetings.

As the letter was for Sri Maharaj only, I shall only add my best regards and sincere wishes for a long and fruitful life.

Yours sincerely,
M. Frydman (translator)

[This is a portion of a letter written by Nome to Shanti on September 22, 1975, who had supplied some copies of books by Sri Atmananda to Nome. This portion of the letter was written in a verse-like pattern and was entitled: I Am but there is No "me," or the Great Joke that made Lazarus Laugh. The name Lazarus is a Biblical (*Gospel According to John*) reference to one that was said to be

raised from the dead by Jesus Christ, with which text Shanti was thoroughly familiar, and the joke referred to the joyful immortality of the Self. There were other parts to the letter pertaining to Sri Atmananda, *Avadhuta Gita*, and *I AM That* (Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj), as well as a brief critique of some contemporary teachings and practices in which Shanti was interested at that time.]

I, myself, am the Truth,
There is nothing to be attained.
Self-Realization is Being,
Not being this or that,
Just Being.
This is the wisdom of infinite depth
And the Realization of all sages.

I have nothing at which to point;
Being cannot be called a thing.
There words are spoken
From the Absolute
Of the Absolute
To the Absolute.
There is no person or entity
On either side of this letter;
The absolute absence of "you" and "me"
Is the Absolute Presence of I.

I Am This I Am,
Existence-Consciousness,
Transparent, Void, and shining.
Un-nameable and inconceivable,
I am beyond all words and thoughts.
Utterly nonobjective,
I do not admit of:
This or that,
Here or there,

Now or then,
Within or without,
Form or formless,
Knowledge or ignorance,
Freedom or bondage,
Life or death.
For whom could these apply?

Without grasping,
Knowing myself to be the non-dual Reality,
I rest in peace.
Not subject to time,
I am called Eternal.
Not subject to space,
I am called Infinite.
Never having been born,
I am called Immortal.
Timeless and infinite,
Unborn and undying,
I am.

There is not
A single objective thing.
Any such thing would depend
On a subject,
Which, in turn, is another object.
But this subject, when sought,
Is found to be naught.
This absolute absence
Of any thing
And any one
To be enlightened or unenlightened
Is the great Liberation and
The Absolute Presence of I.

“Experience and Knowledge are inside.
How can their objects be outside?
It follows that there is nothing outside.
All is within.

What is within is my Self.
Therefore, the experiencer and the experience
Are one and the same.
That is my Self”
Relatively,
I, who am nothing, am everything.
Absolutely,
I alone Am.

When deeply inquired into,
Ignorance and bondage
Are seen to be
Enlightenment and Liberation.
Why do some people speak
Of teachings and practices
To flee from what has never been?

“You are Awareness.
Awareness is another name for you.
Since you are Awareness,
There is no need
To attain or cultivate it.”
(Sri Ramana Maharshi)...

Those who conceive of a “condition”
Have not awakened to the Truth
Beyond conditioned and unconditioned.
Those who are concerned
With the “form of reality”
Do not understand
That Reality is
Neither form nor formless.
Those who think
In terms of union and attainment
Do not perceive the wonderful Quiescence.
Those who speak of states
Do not know who they are....

One who views himself
As an individual entity
Has not looked deeply
Into the Truth
Of no-birth and no-death.

The absolute absence of a “me”
Is the Absolute Presence of I.
Truly, I am but there is no “me.”
Reality is not to be attained or gained.
Absolutely nonobjective,
Beyond all effort and experience,
It is realized as I.

Who can speak of
Dual versus non-dual?
Reality is as it is
And cannot be described in words.
I alone Am!
What need for further declarations?