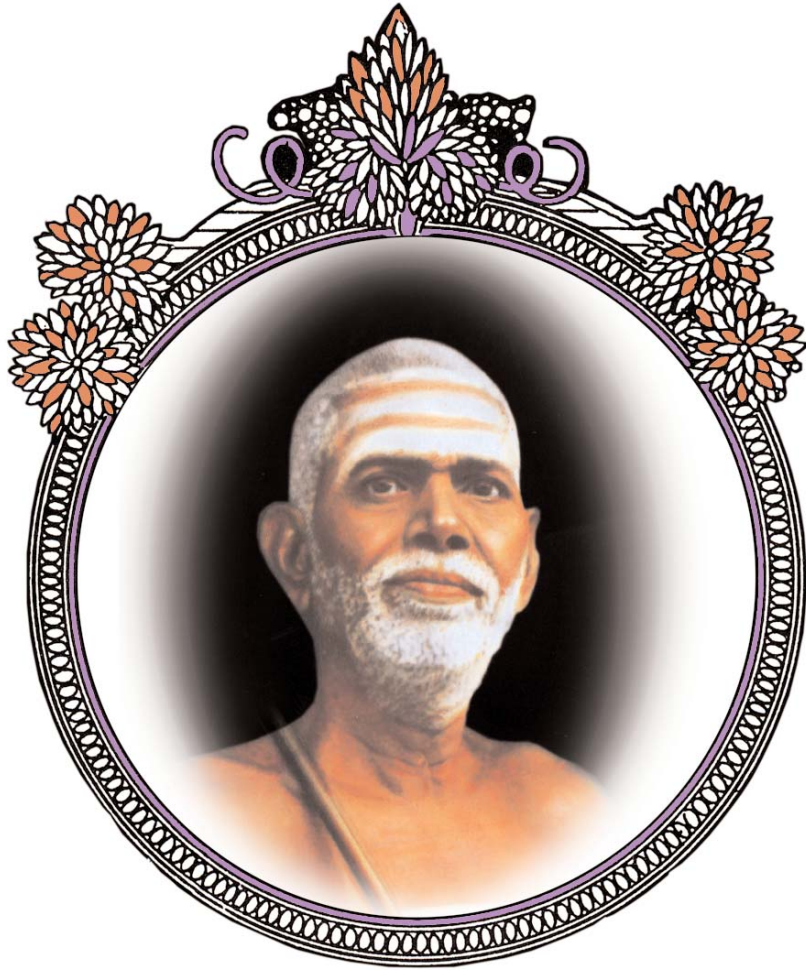


Reflections

January February March
2010



Society of Abidance in Truth



Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

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Reflections, January, February, March 2010
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Invocation

The terms, Being-Consciousness-Happiness, after causing the seer to completely see himself, arrive at Silence.

He is not that, whatever we may speak about Him. It is not possible to speak about His real nature, as it is impossible to measure the height of ones measure by the length of his shadow.

Jnandeva, Amrtanubhava, 5:25-26

Now, renouncing the curtain of duality and the pairs of opposite conceptions, it remains alone in its own blessedness.

Jnandeva, Amrtanubhava, 5:33

That talk is wise that has drunk deep the draught of Silence.

Jnandeva, Amrtanubhava, 5:53



The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

(From *Day by Day With Bhagavan*)

4-10-46 (Oct. 4, 1946)

This evening, D.S. Sarma, asked Bhagavan: In Western mysticism three definite stages are often spoken of, viz., purgation, illumination, and union. Was there any such stage as purgation corresponding to what we call sadhana in Bhagavan's life?

Bhagavan replied: I have never done any sadhana. I did not even know what sadhana was. Only long afterwards, I came to know what sadhana was and how many different kinds of it there were. It is only if there were any object, or anything, different from me that I could think of it. Only if there were a goal to attain, I should have made sadhana to attain that goal. There was nothing that I wanted to obtain. I am now sitting with my eyes open. I was then sitting with my eyes closed. That was all the difference. I was not doing any sadhana even then. As I sat with my eyes closed, people said I was in samadhi. As I was not talking, they said I was in mauna. The fact is I did nothing. Some Higher Power took hold of me, and I was entirely in Its hand.

Bhagavan further added: The books, no doubt, speak of sra-vana, manana, nididhyasana, samadhi and sakshatkara. We are there always, sakshat, and what is there for one to attain karam of that? We call this world sakshat or pratyaksha. What is changing, what appears and disappears, what is not sakshat, we regard as sakshat. We are always, and nothing can be more directly present, pratyaksha, than we, and, about that, we say we have to attain sakshatkarm after all these sadhanas. Nothing can be stranger than this. The Self is not attained by doing anything but remaining still and being as we are.

8-10-46 (Oct. 8, 1946)

This afternoon, a visitor asked Bhagavan: No doubt, the method taught by Bhagavan is direct, but it is so difficult. We do not know how to begin it. If we go on asking, "Who am I?" "Who am I?" like a japa, with "Who am I?" for mantra, it becomes dull. In other methods, there is something preliminary and positive with which one can begin and then go step by step, but, in Bhagavan's method, there is no such thing, and to seek the Self at once, though direct, is difficult.

Bhagavan: You, yourself, concede it is the direct method. It is the direct and easy method. When going after other things alien to us is so easy, how can it be difficult for one to go to one's own Self? You talk of, "Where to begin." There is no beginning and no end. You are, yourself, the beginning and the end. If you are here and the Self somewhere else, and you have to reach that Self, you may be told how to start, how to travel and then how to reach. Suppose you who are now in Ramanasramam ask, "I want to go to Ramanasramam. How shall I start and how to reach it?" What is one to say? A man's search for the Self is like that. He is always the Self and nothing else. You say, 'Who am I?' becomes a japa." It is not meant that you should go on asking, "Who am I?" In that case, thought will not so easily die. All japas are intended, by the use of one thought, the mantra, to exclude all other thoughts. This japa eventually does for a man. All other thoughts, except the thought of the mantra, gradually die, and then even that one thought dies. Our Self is of the nature of japa. Japa is always going on there. If we give up all thoughts, we shall find japa is always there without any effort on our part. In the direct method, as you call it, by saying ask yourself "Who am I?" you are told to concentrate within yourself where the I-thought (the root of all other thoughts) arises. As the Self is not outside but inside you, you are asked to dive within, instead of going without, and what can be easier than going to yourself? But the fact remains that to some this method will seem difficult and will not appeal. That is why so many different methods have been taught. Each of them will appeal to some as the best and easiest. That is according to their pakva or fitness. But to some, nothing except the vichara marga will appeal. They will ask, "You want me to know

or to see this or that. But who is the knower, the seer?" Whatever other method may be chosen, there will be always a doer. That cannot be escaped. Who is that doer must be found out. Until that, the sadhana cannot be ended. So, eventually, all must come to find out "Who am I?" You complain that there is nothing preliminary or positive to start with. You have the "I" to start with. You know you exist always, whereas the body does not exist always, e.g., in sleep. Sleep reveals that you exist even without a body. We identify the "I" with a body, we regard the Self as having a body, and as having limits, and hence all our trouble. All that we have to do is to give up identifying our Self with the body, with forms and limits, and then we shall know ourself as the Self that we always are.

The visitor further asked: May I believe that there is nothing more to be known now, so far as the technique of sadhana is concerned, than that which has been written in your books from time to time? This question arises from the fact that, in all other systems of sadhana, the sadguru unfolds some secret technique of meditation to his disciple at the time of initiation or diksha, as it is called.

Bhagavan: There is nothing more to be known than what you find in the books. No secret technique. It is all an open secret, in this system.

Visitor: If, even after God-realization, one has to pay attention to his bodily needs, such as hunger, sleep, rest, heat and cold, of what use is Self-realization? This state is something that cannot be called completeness.

Bhagavan: What will be the state after Self-realization? Why should you bother about it now? Attain Self-realization, and then see for yourself. But why go to the state of Self-realization? Even now, are you without the Self? And are all these things, eating, sleeping, etc., without or apart from the Self?

11-10-46 (Oct. 11, 1946)

This afternoon, I made Nagamma read out to us all in the hall her account of what Bhagavan had said in reply to Prof. D.S.

Sarma's questions on 4-10-46. Mr. Sarma had also sent an account himself of his talk with Bhagavan. We had that also read out. On comparison, I found that what I had already recorded in these pages needed few alterations. Nagamma has recorded all that took place then, including questions that others besides Mr. Sarma put and the answers Bhagavan gave them. In this connection, Bhagavan recollected that he had in answering Sarma quoted, "abhyasakale sahajam sthitim prahurupasanam" (Ramana Gita). (What is sahaja state is known as upasana during practice.) Bhagavan again repeated much of what he told Prof. Sarma and said: What is obvious, self-evident, and most immediate to us, the Self, we say we are not able to see. On the other hand, we say that what we see with these eyes alone is pratyaksha (direct perception). There must first be the seer before anything could be seen. You are, yourself, the eye that sees. Yet, you say you don't know the eye that sees, but know only the things seen. But, for the Self, the Infinite Eye, referred to in the stanza in *Ulladu Narpadu* (Reality in Forty Verses), what can be seen? You want sakshatkaram. You are now doing karam of all these things, i.e., realizing these things, regarding as real all these things, making real what is not real. If this karam is given up out of your present sakshatkaram of the unreal, then what will remain is that which is real or sakshat.

17-10-46 (Oct. 17, 1946)

This morning, Dr. Roy [who is blind] showed before Bhagavan how he writes, reads, reads his watch, etc. I have learnt he is a M.A., B.L., of Calcutta University and has afterwards become a Ph.D. of an American University. In the afternoon, when I entered the hall about 3:00 p.m., Dr. Roy was asking Bhagavan: In the case of persons who are not capable of long meditation, will it not be enough if they engage themselves in doing good to others?

Bhagavan replied: Yes, it will do. The idea of good will be at their heart. That is enough. Good, God, Love are all the same thing. If the person keeps continuously thinking of anyone of these, it will be enough. All meditation is for the purpose of keeping out all other thoughts.

After some pause, Bhagavan said: When one realizes the truth and knows that there is neither the seer nor the seen, but only the Self that transcends both, that the Self alone is the screen or the substratum on which the shadow both of the ego and all that it sees come and go, the feeling that one has not got eyesight and that, therefore, one misses the sight of various things, will vanish. The realized being, though he has normal eyesight, does not see all these things. (He sees only the Self and nothing but the Self.)

After further discussion with Dr. Roy, Bhagavan added: There is nothing wrong in seeing anything, this body or the world. The mistake lies in thinking you are the body. There is no harm in thinking the body is in you. The body, the world, all must be in the Self; or rather nothing can exist apart from the Self, as no pictures can be seen without the screen on which the shadows can be cast.

In answer to a question as to what is the best way to the goal, Bhagavan said: There is no goal to be reached. There is nothing to be attained. You are the Self. You exist always. Seeing God or the Self is only being the Self or yourself. Seeing is Being. You, being the Self, want to know how to attain the Self. It is something like a man being at Ramanasramam asking how many ways are there to reach Ramanasramam and which is the best way for him. All that is required of you is to give up the thought that you are this body and to give up all thoughts of the external things or the not-Self. As often as the mind goes out towards outward objects, prevent it and fix it in the Self or "I." That is all the effort required on your part. The different methods prescribed by different thinkers are all agreed on this. The advaita, dvaita, visishtadvaita schools and other schools all agree that the mind must give up thinking of external things and must think of the Self, or God as they may call it. That is called meditation. But meditation being our nature, you will find, when you realize the Self, that what was once the means is now the goal, that while once you had to make an effort, now you cannot get away from the Self even if you want.



Talks from Sri Ramana Maharshi

October 23, 2009

[This is a transcript of what was said during an evening event at the SAT temple. Of course, the long periods of silence are not transcribed.]

(Silence)

Om Om Om

Let us dive deep into the Maharshi's teachings.

If you have brought a copy of *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* with you tonight, we are reading the entry dated June 18, 1936, dialogue number 205.

Mr. Cohen had been cogitating on the nature of the Heart, if the "spiritual heart" beats; if so, how; or if it does not beat, then how is it to be felt?

The Maharshi responds: This heart is different from the physical heart; beating is the function of the latter. The former is the seat of spiritual experience. This is all that can be said of it. Just as a dynamo supplies motive power to whole systems of lights, fans, etc., so the original Primal Power supplies energy to the beating of the heart, respiration, etc.

The disciple asked: How is the "I"-*"I"* consciousness felt?

The Maharshi responds: As an unbroken awareness of "I." It is simply Consciousness.

The disciple asked: Can we know it when it dawns?

The Maharshi responds: Yes, as Consciousness. You are that even now. There will be no mistaking it when it is pure.

The disciple then asked: Why do we have such a place as the "Heart" for meditation?

The Maharshi responds: Because you seek Consciousness. Where can you find it? Can you reach it externally? You have to

find it internally. Therefore, you are directed inward. Again, the “Heart” is only the seat of Consciousness or the Consciousness itself.

The disciple asked: On what should we meditate?

The Maharshi responds: Who is the meditator? Ask that question first. Remain as the meditator. There is not need to meditate.

That concludes the dialogue. Let us go into it in some detail.

The questioner had been cogitating on the nature of the heart. Does the spiritual heart beat? If so, how, or, if it does not beat, how is it to be felt? The question is within a certain context of attempting to find that which is spiritual in that which is objective, or which has bodily attributes. When we approach with such an angle of vision, when we hear, read, or come to know in some way or another of spiritual things, we will, because of the tendency of the mind, think of it in objective terms. In this case, it is in bodily terms. So, hearing about the spiritual heart, he assumes that it must have a function, perhaps it beats, and wants to learn how is it to be known. The very questing after it in the objective sense needs to be transcended in order to actually directly experience the spiritual essence.

So, the Maharshi begins his answer. “This heart is different from the physical heart; beating is the function of the latter. The former is the seat of spiritual experience. This is all that can be said of it.” What is referred to as the heart is not an organ, gross or subtle. It is not something bodily, and it cannot be said to have an activity or a function. He said that it is the seat of spiritual experience. That is, it is the place where spiritual experience occurs, and is, also, simultaneously its source. What is that place? It is referred to by the name “Heart.” Other names are also given to it, but what is that place? Being beyond the body, it is also beyond the senses. Being beyond the body and senses, it is, in truth, something timeless and spaceless. How can we speak of where the spaceless is?

It is loosely said to be the seat or the place of spiritual experience. Where does spiritual experience occur? It is not in time and space. What in you is the “place,” so to speak, of spiritual experience? Since it is spiritual, it cannot be of the world. Since

it is spiritual, it cannot be in the body or in the senses. So, where does spiritual experience occur? If it is profound, spiritual experience, it is beyond thought and transcendent of the mind. Where is that which is not in the mind? This is the “Heart,” the seat of spiritual experience. We can say that it is the quintessence of your Being.

The Maharshi continues with his response, “Just as a dynamo supplies motive power to whole systems of lights, fans, etc., so the original Primal Force supplies energy to the beating of the heart, respiration, etc.” Etcetera means all other manifestations. There is some one primal source, some one primal force, for all this that you ever experience, inclusive of the activities and functions of your body. That force has an origin. That force, or shakti, has its origin in Siva, the eternally unmanifested. This eternally unmanifested Existence is the Heart. From this Heart comes forth all power. Into the Heart, again, all is withdrawn. That Heart is the body-transcendent, space-transcendent, time-transcendent Reality. Its nature is absolute.

The disciple then asked, “How is the ‘I’-‘I’ Consciousness felt?” The term “I”-“I,” aham, aham, is met with in various scriptures, such as *Ribhu Gita*, *Ramana Gita* and other texts. What is referred to by this, how is the “I”-“I” Consciousness felt? In those scriptures, it is declared that Reality shines as aham, aham, “I”-“I” and that the nature of that “I” is Consciousness, so how is it to be felt? To be felt objectively or bodily has already been discarded by the Maharshi, and thus he says that it does not beat like a physical heart. So, how is this “I”-“I” Consciousness to be felt? As long as individuality is retained by the experiencer, he seeks for a way to feel the experience, and there is still the triadic differentiation of the experiencer, the experiencing and the object of experience. Sri Bhagavan lifts him beyond all that. The Maharshi says, “As an unbroken awareness of ‘I.’ It is simply Consciousness.” An unbroken awareness of “I”: what is unbroken is eternal. That which is objective, gross or subtle, can never be eternal. It cannot be unbroken. That which is beyond the body and mind and which is beyond the ego notion is naturally eternal. To know oneself as the eternal Reality, of the nature of pure Being-Consciousness, is so essential.

How can we feel this “I”-“I” Consciousness? As an unbroken awareness of “I.” It is an awareness of “I,” not of “it,” not of some-

thing other. So, it is not a thought of anything. It is no mere placement of mental attention on something. It is awareness of “I,” which is the utterly nonobjective. Who has awareness of “I”? In this Realization, the “I” that knows, the “I” that is realized, and the “I” that is the Knowledge, or the Knowing or the Awareness of it, are all the same.

In the unbroken Awareness, here is no differentiation of the knower, knowing and known. It is simply Consciousness. When you leave behind considering it in relation to something else, what is this Consciousness? It is not awareness of something, but awareness of “I,” the innermost Consciousness. What is that? For Self-Realization, Consciousness should know itself as it is. That is, you, yourself, should know yourself as you, yourself, are. It is just Consciousness. It is not someone knowing anything. That “state” in which Consciousness alone exists is the Realization, or Knowledge of itself.

Question: This is very interesting that it knows itself. It seems that it is always trying to know itself, because misidentification is really just grasping for my self. You asked the question, “What is it when you do not grasp externally?” It makes sense that it would know itself.

N.: Yes, when you make this attempt to know who is the knower, it is an unbroken awareness of “I,” by “I,” of “I,” for “I,” and “I,” can be nothing bodily or mental. It is Consciousness alone.

The question is how is “I”-“I” felt? The Maharshi says, “As an unbroken awareness of ‘I.’” There is no feeler, nothing felt, and no feeling. There is just an unbroken Awareness of “I” as the “I” is. He adds, “It is simply Consciousness.” As long as there is the question regarding how to know it, how to feel it, the inquiry should be into the nature of the “I” who seeks to know or to feel. Divested of any superimposition, which is to be divested of any limitation, all that remains of it, which is the reality of it, is pure Consciousness.

Q.: What of the knowing of something?

N.: The knowing of something is the objective outlook commented upon in the beginning. The example was the idea that

the heart beats, etc., which is bodily in character, but the same principle holds true for any objective conception.

Q.: Knowing yourself is different.

N.: Yes, Self-Knowledge is not a knowledge of “something,” however subtle.

Q.: Even the “I” per se...

N.: If one says that he wants to know the “I,” it is obviously being differentiated from one’s own “I.” How many “I’s” are there? In the Maharshi’s answer, the “I” indicates something entirely nonobjective, purely the subject. In other words, it truly refers to Consciousness and not to some form imagined within Consciousness. All of that which is known, in its entirety, is merely imagined in the unformed pure Consciousness.

Q.: This dialogue is very interesting. I did not understand the part which the Maharshi said, “...dynamo supplies motive power...”

N.: It indicates the one source of the universal force that manifests in ever so many ways.

Q.: So, it is drawing the mind back to that source.

N.: Yes, the point is to trace the many to the one force or one power, the power to its origin, and to remain in the origin as the origin. What force could there be apart from the solitary Existence, the one Reality, the nature of which is this very same Consciousness? Consciousness transcends all, yet, if we speak of all, what power becomes or appears as all, other than that very same Consciousness? It is both the material and the efficient cause, yet it is not the material cause, and it is not the efficient cause. All is in that which is without cause and without effect. It is the substance of all, and it is the power that causes all and moves all, yet it is unmoving and is entirely without all.

Q.: It is understood only from the experience of it. I can understand it intellectually.

N.: The intellect is also in the context of the same power.

The disciple asked: How is the “I”- “I” consciousness felt?

The Maharshi responds: As an unbroken awareness of “I.” It is simply Consciousness.

The disciple asked: Can we know it when it dawns?

The Maharshi responds: Yes, as Consciousness.

N.: How can you know the dawn of Consciousness or Self-Knowledge? Will you know it when you realize? The Maharshi answers: Yes, as Consciousness. Consciousness, then, is the only knower and the only known. It is not known as “I know it.” It is realized as Consciousness. To obtain a grasp of that which the Maharshi indicates in his profoundly terse answers, trace the knowingness, or knowing principle, in your experience. Something knows; it shines. By that shining, or knowing, every experience of whatever kind for all beings is experienced—is known. Proceed in your inquiry from the object known—the object could be a thing or an occurrence, an event, or any kind of experience, even the experience of having a thought—and trace the knowing to its source. The source cannot be a thing that is the known. The known depends on the knower. Everything depends on the light of knowing. The source can not be a thought, for that is still something known. Trace the knowing. It is not a sensory activity, as that is something about which you know. It is not mere thinking, for that is something about which you know. It is not any state of mind. All of these are the known. Trace the knowing inward. Inward means more subjective. It is not in the body. If you inquire in this manner, the Light is only one. It shines as pure Consciousness, which is entirely formless. Inquiring in this manner, everything is swallowed in this one solitary, infinite, timeless, spaceless Consciousness. It is without a trace of individuality so it is “I”-less, but it is you, so it is the only true “I,” an unbroken “I.” How can you realize it? Only as the Consciousness itself. It can not be realized in any other manner, in anything less, or in anything known. The Consciousness of the realizer is itself the Realization and That which is realized. There is no individual realizer whatsoever.

Q.: I was surprised by the certainty. Yes, as Consciousness, but Consciousness is not something you can put your finger on.

N.: That is correct. It can not be considered an “it,” and it can

never be a known or unknown objective thing. In this lies certainty.

Q.: Yes, and, in this, there is a conviction, a certain solidity, not with form, but there is a solidity of knowledge that makes that conviction strong.

N.: Yes. What you think about may or may not be so. It may be so at one time and not at another, and, certainly, what you think about will not remain for eternity. Consciousness, itself, is beyond doubt and certainty as conceived. It is of a transcendent certainty—an absolute certainty. It is the same as Existence. Just as no one can doubt his own existence, there cannot, in truth, ever be a doubt about the Consciousness itself. About thoughts there can be plenty of doubt. The Knowledge of Self-Knowledge is pure Consciousness, and this is very certain.

Q.: Yes, because everything else has doubt or confusion. There is always insubstantiality. It is just made of nothing. Even though our Self is formless, it is very substantial. That is what is very interesting.

N.: Yes, it is formless, yet, it is more solid than anything else could ever be. Can we know it when it dawns? Yes, as Consciousness. You are that even now. That which is found at the conclusion of sadhana in the Realization of the final Truth is what your Being consists of for eternity. The Maharshi says that even now it is the case. The emphasis, of course, is not on the now moment, but on the eternal, invariable existence of the pure Consciousness—one's real Being. You are that even now. It is only a pretense to artificially imagine a difference between That and yourself and then assume that you are distant from it and that it will be reached later. What is reached later is the case all the time. Reality does not become more real later, but we can say that you just abandon the belief in the unreal. The Maharshi said, "You are that even now. There will be no mistaking it when it is pure." In the realm of mental modes, in the realm of states of mind, in the realm of thinking, there can be mistakes. From another angle of vision, thinking itself is a mistake. Obviously, the notion of "I," which is at the base of all thoughts, is thoroughly a mistake, and it is blissful to be without it.

He says, “There will be no mistaking it when it is pure.” When the Consciousness is pure, well, in truth, it is always pure, that is, unmixed with anything else. The Maharshi graciously advises the aspirant by showing both the nature of Reality and the practice to realize it. Discern Consciousness—your own Being—purely as it is, unmixed with any superimposed limitation, unmixed with any conceptual definition. Pure is bodiless, mindless, and egoless. When it is pure, there is no mistaking it. When it is pure, there is no one to be ignorant to make the mistake, and, thus, mistaking it becomes impossible. Pure Consciousness has the innate certainty of itself. The realm of making mistakes and correcting those mistakes is in the mind only. Profound sadhana or spiritual practice in the form of inquiry liberates you not only from the content of the mind—its mistakes—but from the very notion that there is an existent mind. Revealing the Consciousness as it is, which is infinite and undifferentiated, in which there are no divisions in it and there is no difference, it is pure. Pure Consciousness knows itself with its own innate certainty. If, in imagination, you step outside, as it were, of the innate Consciousness and assume the role of an individual, an ego entity, and then take on various thoughts as your experience, there is the non-recognition of Consciousness. Even though it is immediate, you ask where it is. Even though it is you, you treat it as “it.” By inquiry, undo that mistake. Thus, Consciousness revels in itself. It shines and is self-luminous. It has no mistake about itself. You, in your essence, have no mistake about your essential existence. Only if you assume the guise of an “I,” thoughts, and a body, etc., and think that this is what you are, you can be mistaken about what that is. Abandon the misidentification, and there is no mistake, no one ignorant, no ignorance—just pure Consciousness. That is the Knowledge.

The disciple’s next question was, “Why do we have such a place as the ‘Heart’ for meditation?” In certain texts, the term Heart appears as a place for meditation or as a thing upon which to meditate. Depending on the nature of the text—whether it is a yoga text or a Vedanta text, or if it appears in the Vedas or in other scriptures—the descriptions of the Heart or what is meant by the “Heart” vary. The question then arises, “Why do we have such a place as the ‘Heart’ for meditation?” What the questioner meant by “place” cannot be discerned

entirely clearly now. Did he mean a place in the body? Did he mean a place in the subtle body? Or, did he mean the “place,” so-called, of pure Consciousness, eluded to earlier by the Maharshi?

The Maharshi says in response, “Because you seek Consciousness.” Hearing that Consciousness is Bliss, the Reality to be realized, one seeks it. So, it is pointed out as the “Heart,” the center of all. Where can you find it? Can you find it externally? What is external? Anything objective, from the subtlest to the gross, is external in relation to yourself. So, where can you find Consciousness? The scriptures say that it is to be found in the Heart. What is the Heart? It cannot be something external. So, it cannot be in the body. It cannot be in the senses. It cannot be in the mind. When one seeks Consciousness, he is told that he cannot find it externally in the mind or in the senses and needs to find it in the Heart, the quintessence of your Being.

You need to find it in the center. What is the center of all that is ever experienced? In the universe of experience, what is the Heart? What is the center? The Maharshi said, “Where can you find it? Can you reach it externally? You have to find it internally.” That is, nonobjectively. You must find Consciousness in Consciousness, itself. How would it be possible to find Consciousness in that which is not Consciousness? That would be like looking for something that is in the room here outside in the street. You would not be able to find it that way. One needs to look for oneself in oneself, Consciousness in Consciousness. It cannot be otherwise. The Maharshi said, “You have to find it internally. Therefore you are directed inward.” Again, inward means nonobjective. It refers to the subjective Existence of your own nature. The Maharshi continues, “Again the ‘Heart’ is only the seat of Consciousness or the Consciousness itself.” In relation to all else it is called the “Heart” or the “center.” It is said, “Look at the center. Look at the ‘Heart’ to find the Consciousness.” When, though, you find Consciousness and you yourself are That, Consciousness alone is existing. So, he says, “the seat of Consciousness or Consciousness itself.” It is the center only in relation to the supposed circumference. It is the Heart in relation to all that is experienced. When the Heart is reached, that is, when Consciousness is realized in its own nature, it can no longer be regarded as a center of anything, for

it is one without a second. The entire objective realm of experience is known to be uncreated and Consciousness to be unborn.

The disciple's final question then follows: "On what should we meditate?" The Maharshi's response, "Who is the meditator? Ask that question first." The response is incredibly profound and multifaceted. It tells the seeker about that which transcends even meditation and tells him how to meditate simultaneously. "Who is the meditator?" is the response. The disciple asks how should one meditate, being prepared to engage in some kind of activity, however spiritual and interior it might be. The Maharshi answers, "Who is the meditator?" Who is the ever-existent Consciousness? Who is the Self? If one is to meditate, that is the meditation. He lifts the disciple beyond the idea of "I will make a plan for meditation and follow it through," etc., as if the reality of pure Consciousness were to come about later. It is the ever-existent now also. It is natural to wish to meditate, so meditation should be upon "Who is the meditator?" Otherwise, it will be merely objective and dealing with what is sporadic and unreal. Meditation upon Truth, which is nonobjective, must be meditation upon the very nature of the meditator. If meditation be upon the very nature of the meditator, does there remain a separate practice called meditation? Rather, it becomes continuous Knowledge. So, the Maharshi says, "Who is the meditator? Ask that question first. Remain as the meditator. There is no need to meditate." What is the meaning of this, "There is no need to meditate"? Obviously, if there is worldliness, there needs to be meditation. If there is ignorance, one should meditate for wisdom. The Maharshi's answer is spoken to a hall full of meditating sadhaka's (practioners). So, why does he say that there is no need to meditate? It is declared from the highest. The pure undifferentiated Consciousness cannot be divided into a state of meditation or non-meditation. It has no need, but is self-known with its own Light always. Where there is no individual meditator, there can be nothing distinguished as meditation, nor is there any need. The perfect fullness of pure Consciousness shines in its own Light.

The Maharshi says, "Remain as the meditator." Who is the meditator? Let us say that you intend to meditate. You go to

your own place where you meditate or you come to this temple, sit down, make preparations, and then you start meditation. Who is the meditator? What is his nature? The meditator cannot be the body seated or otherwise. So, who is the meditator? One might think the meditator is the mind, but as soon as the meditation becomes one of sharp discrimination that discerns the distinction between thought and oneself, it is no longer the mind, is it? Who is the meditator? The Maharshi says: remain as the meditator. First he says who is the mediator? Ask that question first; then remain as the meditator. Then comes “there is no need to meditate.” The fourth line, the last line, can be so only if the first three lines are grasped and realized conclusively. Can the meditator be the individual? Can the ego be a meditator? Meditation is for ego-death. The ego will never go in for that. The very desire for meditation, then, must come from some source deeper than the ego. The power of meditation is, likewise, not of the ego, and, obviously, the goal of mediation, that upon which one meditates, is not of the ego. Who is the meditator? Whether it is referred to as aham, aham, “I”-“I,” pure Consciousness, the Heart, or the nature of the meditator, that one thing should be enquired into and should be realized. It is realized in a state of identity.

Q.: You mentioned something about activity. It occurs to me that everything would be considered an activity because there would be an object. However, real meditation, what he has been pointing at, follows no activity at all.

N.: Real meditation—inquiry—consists of Knowledge. It is not an activity. When we understand this, we can see Adi Sankara’s emphasis, in his texts and in his bhashyas or commentaries, that action does not lead to liberation. Knowledge or Self-Knowledge alone is Liberation. The initial verses of the Maharshi’s *Upadesa Saram*, in which he says that action is inert, it cannot be the Supreme, are then seen as expressing a higher meaning.

Q.: Yes, I am getting the feeling that it really is not an activity. It is much more direct. It is funny: why can’t you be who you are?

N.: I do not know; why can’t you? (laughter) The answer to the question, ‘Why can’t you be who you are,’ has never been fig-

ured out by any of the great rishis or sages. Only those who are dreaming in maya have been able to come up with a reason. The reason is never very good. It is always imagined.

Q.: Satsang erases the mental thinking or habit energy of coming up with those excuses. Satsang erases a belief in an external world—something other than myself.

N.: That is one aspect of it.

Q.: What is the other one?

N.: The Reality. Hence, sat-sang, association with the Reality. The idea of activity—“I will do something to gain happiness, I will do something to realize the Truth”—is not the Truth itself. The truth of Realization—the truth of practice—consists of pure Knowledge. It is not an activity with any of the instruments of action—body, speech, and mind. Of course, it is very possible for one to engage the body, speech and mind in spiritual activities, but what is the light of those activities? What is really occurring is the experience of profound Knowledge. If we would divorce the Knowledge from the activities, the activities would become inert. The Knowledge-essence is always the key. It is Knowledge pure that liberates. Abidance in such Knowledge is the purpose of satsang.

Mr. B.C. Das, a lecturer in physics of Allahabad University asked: “Does not intellect rise and fall with the man?”

The Maharshi responds: “Whose is the intellect? It is mans. Intellect is only an instrument.”

The disciple said: “Yes. Does it survive man’s death?”

The Maharshi responds: “Why think of death? See what happens in your sleep. What is your experience there?”

The disciple said: “But sleep is transient whereas death is not.”

The Maharshi responds: “Sleep is intermediate between two waking states, so also death is between two successive births. Both are transient.”

The disciple said: “I mean when the spirit is disembodied, does it carry the intellect with it?”

The Maharshi responds: “Spirit is not disembodied. The bodies differ. It may not be a gross body. It will then be a subtle body, as in sleep, dream or daydream. Intellect does not alter; the bodies may differ according to circumstances.”

The disciple then said: “The spirit-body is the astral body then?”

The Maharshi responds: “The intellect is the astral body even now.”

The disciple then said: “How can it be?”

The Maharshi responds: “Why not? You seem to think that the intellect cannot be limited like a body. It is only an aggregate of certain factors. What else is the astral body?”

The disciple then said: “But intellect is a sheath?”

The Maharshi responds: “Yes. Without intellect, no sheath is cognized. Who says that there are five sheaths? Is it not the intellect that declares thus?”

The dialogue begins with an observation by the lecturer in physics that the intellect rises and falls with the person. It belongs to the person, so it is an instrument. The Maharshi confirms this by saying, “Whose is the intellect?” The intellect and all its permutations belong to somebody. It is not self-existent. The Maharshi said, “It is man’s. Intellect is only an instrument.” If we recognize that the intellect is only an instrument, we will not regard it or any of its content as our Self. The coming and going of the intellect, whether such be with birth and death or due to various states, etc., does not cause any confusion because we know ourselves beyond that.

The disciple’s next question was, “Yes. Does it survive man’s death?” The Maharshi, eager to show the disciple his freedom from the intellect entirely, directs him to his more immediate experience and says, “Why think of death?” His thoughts about death will be in the very intellect he is questioning as to whether

it survives death or not. How could he possibly get an accurate answer? So, the Maharshi says, “Why think of death? See what happens in your sleep.” This deals with the disciple’s own experience. “What is your experience there?” Of the three states of waking, dreaming and deep, dreamless sleep, in the last the intellect is inactive. The disciple does not immediately grasp the lead of what the Maharshi is showing him, and asks, “But sleep is transient whereas death is not.” So, the Maharshi graciously assists him and says, “Sleep is intermediate between two waking states...” That is obvious. There is waking, sleep, waking, sleep, etc. They oscillate. “...so also death is between two successive births. Both are transient.” Life is transient; death is transient. Birth and death are both transient. Waking and sleeping are both transient. What is not transient? In chapter two of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna says, “For that which has birth death is certain; for that which has death birth is certain.” If birth and death both come and go, what actually always exists? What is not transient? It is important, and also easy, to see that death takes away all, but death also disappears. What remains?

The disciple’s next question was, “I mean when the spirit is disembodied, does it carry the intellect with it?” The spirit at this point represents an individual soul and not that which is absolute or Brahman. Otherwise, the question would not arise whether it is embodied or disembodied.

The Maharshi responds, “Spirit is not disembodied. The bodies differ.” It is not that the intellect, which is the same as spirit in this context, has a body at this point and later exits the body and enters another body. Rather, the bodies differ. The Maharshi continues, “It may not be a gross body. It will then be a subtle body, as in sleep, dream or daydream.” The intellect always maintains some kind of form. He says, “Intellect does not alter...” It is the same intellect, whether waking or dreaming or transmigrating birth after birth. It is the same intellect or the same individuality. He then says, “...the bodies may differ according to circumstances.” According to the state of waking or dreaming or according to birth upon birth. The question was, “The spirit-body is the astral body then?” The intellect—the form of the intellect—becomes the astral body after death. The Maharshi responds: “The intellect is the astral body even now.” It is nothing more than an instrument. Neither the subtle form

nor the physical form is the birthless and deathless real Self, which is the Reality.

The disciple then questioned, “How can it be?” The Maharshi responds, “Why not? You seem to think that the intellect cannot be limited like a body. It is only an aggregate of certain factors. What else is the astral body?” It is only an instrument. It is only an aggregate of factors. It is a limitation. Although not the same as bodily limitation, it is another kind of limitation. To know yourself as bodiless, beyond the five sheaths—from the body to the intellect to the basic ignorance—and not to identify with what is merely an instrument or an aggregate of factors is so important. The disciple said, “But intellect is a sheath?” The Maharshi then responds, “Yes.” It is well known as one of the five sheaths, being the fourth sheath counting inward. Then, he says, “Without intellect, no sheath is cognized.” So, the intellect, which is considered a sheath, alone considers sheaths. Without the intellect, is there any idea of a sheath? How could a mere sheath, the intellect, give a conclusive certitude or knowledge about the sheaths, which is something thought of only within itself?

The purpose of spiritual instruction about the five sheaths is not to build up the concept that there are five existing sheaths. The point of such instruction is to bring about freedom from misidentification with anything that could be considered a sheath of any kind and realize one’s nature as absolute, formless Consciousness. Always, with spiritual instruction you must follow what is intended and not place it in the pre-existing conception of objective things, of duality, of the ego, and such. The purpose of all such instruction is to lift one beyond such so that you realize the homogeneous Reality.

So, the Maharshi says, “Yes. Without intellect, no sheath is cognized. Who says that there are five sheaths? Is it not the intellect that declares thus?” Pass beyond the intellect’s declarations, assertions, and doubts. Pass beyond anything that can be considered a sheath and discern through Knowledge alone—true Knowledge—what your nature is—the endless Being-Consciousness-Bliss. That is the immortal.

(Silence)

Om, Shanti Shanti Shanti Om



From Yoga Vasishtha

(Continued from previous issues)

3:100:18

From the difference between the mind and Brahman, in delusion, is the primary cause, which is in the mind, of whatever there is of existence and nonexistence (real and unreal).

That which is variously named (uttered) as omnipotent, the power that agitates Brahman (or the power that, as Brahman, consumes / burns), being of the nature of the mind, is named just as this abidance in the mind.

The powers of the jiva, here, stays in Brahman, just like, at the appointed time, the season invariably pervades all the flowers, the earth, and the place according to the different modes of life.

Just as it gives (holds) the flowers, so the minds create the world. Here and there (now and then), sometimes, from that thought come (upon that depend) the powers.

Like from the manifold (variety of) place, time, and such, from the earth and what is beneath the earth, the grains are, [so] one sees that which is born (brought into existence), by that appearance (in the mind) alone, not another.

Ardently cut off oneself from both that which is correlative (contradiction, dependent existence) and the sankhya form (sankhya philosophy that enumerates the tattva-s etc., calculation, or numbers), for they are imagined by the mind's words. Know them that are born of Brahman to be penetrated by Brahman.

Just as, in this way, from (in) the mind, the appearance issues forth (is set in motion, proceeds), just so, just so indeed,

the example here (in this respect), is the false moon (kilain-davah).

Just as, of its own, a vibration is rapidly caused in the stainless great water (the ocean or celestial water), just so the jiva, [which is] the cause of samsara, is in the Supreme Self.

By (lit., of) knowing all is the mind, Rama, Brahman alone returns always. (or: Knowing all is the mind, Rama, turns back to Brahman, indeed, ever. or: All is of the knowledge of the mind, Rama, and ever revolves in Brahman alone.) The intelligent [know that] waves, billows, surges (taranga, waves), are of the nature of the same ocean water.

A second (duality) is not. Reality (Being) is one. What is of the nature of name, form, and activity is in the Supreme, just like the different waves in the ocean are imagined (invented in the mind) and are not other than water.



From the Temple Archives

[This message was sent by a SAT member who had returned to India for a visit. Nome's response follows. Personal comments have been removed from both.]

September 2, 2009

Dear Nome,

Namaste.

Yesterday was Vamana jayanti, the avatar taken by Vishnu to destroy the ego for the demon king Mahabali, who was supposed to have ruled Kerala during that time. It is celebrated as Onam festival. We read chapters in *Srimad Bhagavatam* that described the rule of Mahabali, birth of Vamana murti etc. I am sure that Sept. 1st event would have gone very well.

Reflecting and meditating upon the teachings of Sri Ramana heard during retreat and satsangs have been filling up this mind in vacation. It is indeed very peaceful.

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Om Namah Sivaya

Dear ,

The pervasive One, the Supreme, who seems as if small due to subtlety, is realized as limitless, transcendently "striding" over the three worlds, as soon as the ego is humbled, even so much as by giving the opportunity to observe the extent of that true Self, leaving the apparent "I" to engage in conducting only what pertains at the lowest level, the manifested experience, and that, too, in devotion and only by the divine Grace of that Supreme One.

September 1st went very well here.

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya,

Om Namah Sivaya

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is a response to a seeker whose mind was mired in anger at others and who had also asked questions that can be inferred from the response.]

September 14, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your recent messages.

If you perceive the needlessness of the ignorance that is the cause of what you may find deplorable, you will be endowed with compassion rather than be swept up in anger, hatred, etc., which are rooted in delusion. Furthermore, by the realization of the divine Self within you, you will see the same Self in all and everywhere.

It is also quite useful to not employ the mind in sweeping generalizations of people, such as the formation of opinions about them. Are all people of a certain category conceived in the mind like that? Has one even met all of them, let alone been able to know them? Even simple questions can unravel the absurd tendencies of manifested ignorance.

The craving for acceptance and the fear of rejection are two sides of the same erroneous concept regarding the source of happiness.

However you practice, for final Realization, you must know yourself. How else is one to know the Self except by constant profound inquiry? If you find various methods of meditation helpful to acquire concentration, then use the concentration thus gained to dive into Self-inquiry. The inquiry, though, is always available and does not depend on any preliminary method. Self-Knowledge alone is Liberation from all of the imagined bondage.

May your continuing earnest efforts bear the fruit of steady Knowledge of the Self, so that you abide in lasting peace and bliss.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[Another response to the same seeker.]

September 17, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your messages.

Concentration is a mode of mind that derives its intensity from the luminous Self, yet is placed within the context of thought or mental attention. The concentration may be external, that is upon some object or the breath, or internal, upon some mental conception or mental image, such being of a spiritual character. The value of such lies in the abeyance of other thoughts, though temporary, and the faith in the spiritual ideal contemplated. Dharana (concentration) is not an end in itself, and the yogis say that one should proceed to dhyana (meditation). Such should involve the dissolution of the mind or the transcendence of thought. This, also, is not the end, but one should then enter into samadhi, your questions about which were answered previously. The highest and nonobjective form of meditation is Atma-vicara (Self-inquiry), which reveals sahaja samadhi or sahaja sthiti, absorption or steady abidance in the Innate as the Innate, which is Self-Knowledge. Such inquiry and Knowledge are jnana. The inquiry, thus, is not a mere shift of attention, or the repetition of a mental mode, but a profound questioning of your very identity to inwardly discern your Being as it truly is. Such inquiry is inherently mind-transcendent.

You may find it helpful to refer again to the previous comments in several messages about happiness, detachment, and viewing things in proportion. Otherwise, as you can observe with some reflection, an idea such as a desire seems to occupy your entire experience, just as, if one places the small tip of his smallest finger before his eye, it seems to occupy the entire scene and blocks out the view of all else, for example large mountains, the sky, the stars, etc. It is perfectly alright to read and reflect upon

the same passages again and again until the inner comprehension dawns. Some books, such as *Self-Knowledge*, are intended for such use.

From another angle of vision, from what you have been relating in your messages, you can see how even one idea can continually rise and appear so important when you project even a drop of that which is of the Self upon it: happiness, identity, and reality. If, with wise discrimination, the same importance were placed upon Self-Realization, for the sake of the direct experience of that full happiness, true identity, and absolute Reality, how focused, intense and consuming would your spiritual practice become?

A tendency many times repeated may require sustained effort to be destroyed. Such effort should be perseverance in knowledge in the form of profound inquiry.

From still another perspective, if you are destined to be married or have a companion in the future, all the anxious thought and craving concerning it will amount to so much wasted time and purposeless suffering. If you are destined to live singly, all that anxious thought and craving will be a waste of precious time that could be spent more joyfully and wisely. Either way, the depth and purpose of life is to be found and fulfilled within.

Find within yourself that which is perfectly full regardless of whether you are alone or in the company of others.

If the inner understanding is clarified, and thus one is endowed with inquiry and detachment that blossom as Knowledge, the actions will become harmonious of themselves.

Humility is essential.

It is natural for anyone who Abides as the Self,

Inquires to know the Self,

Comprehends the vastness of Brahman,

Knows the Truth,

Perceives the magnitude and depth of the great sages,

Considers the significance of immortality,

Sees the approach of death,

Notices the fragility and precariousness of life,

Contemplates upon God,

Observes the play of his own mind,

Discerns the insignificance of his own thoughts,

Considers the immensity of this mere, entire universe,
Recognizes the smallness of his transient body,
Feels the fullness of love,
Experiences the magnificent perfection that is always,
Or who has found Grace.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[These are two responses to a seeker who expressed worry over some mistakes that he had made and had raised some questions about love.]

September 22, 2009

Dear ,

Namaste. Thank you for your message. Between yesterday and today, it arrived three times, so you can be quite sure that it was received.

If a man understands a mistake that he has made as a mistake, he is no longer mistaken. Further, if he discerns the causes of his mistake in his mind, and dissolves that cause by clear inquiry or by deep devotion, he is free from the repetition of that mistake from then onward. He discovers the abode of Truth in his own heart and abides at the very source of happiness, which is the fountainhead of love.

If you dive within, you may find that you have far more control over the direction of the use of the instruments of body, speech, and mind than what you have been assuming. In that responsibility also lays freedom.

Steady, ardent spiritual practice can bring about transcendence of any tendency. If you so practice to become wise, you will find the plenitude of Grace.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

September 22, 2009

Dear ,

Namaste. It is necessary that you find the source of happiness and love within you. Within means the Self. You must know yourself.

You are completely free to become involved with a woman or not. Either way, you must find the love within, the Bliss of Being.

Love is not a commodity. Being is neither an activity nor a thing. Inquire within to realize the true nature of your Existence.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[A response to another seeker who had written many times previously and who had received numerous responses. The questions can be inferred from the response.]

September 27, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Thank you for your several messages.

You need not have any worry concerning whether or not it is appropriate to write what you have written to me. If such writing benefits your practice, perhaps as a means for gaining better perspective, use it. The explicit details represent no harm.

Some of what you have written is, indeed, pointing in the right direction. Yet, better than guessing, even intelligently, at the state of a jnani, how the jnani views such-and-such, what the Self may be, what Self-Realization may be, etc., is to experientially inquire and directly realize. For otherwise, whether cloudier or clearer, it remains an idea, and the Truth of Absolute Being, the self-luminous infinite Consciousness, and the perfect fullness of Bliss are undoubtedly transcendent of any idea.

In your messages, you expressed how you have been engaging in somewhat of a debate on certain websites. At some time,

you may wish to consider the value of such. Whether your viewpoint or that of another prevails in such a debate, ask yourself what purpose it serves. Is this the best use of your time and effort? If you are inspired, is this the best way to share what you have found? Does such debate help your practice or deepen your experience at all?

From your fears regarding bodily discomfort, pain, etc., as described by you, you can discern the need for actual, deep, thorough inquiry to liberate yourself from suffering. An intellectual grasp of ideas thought to correspond to the real essential teaching does not have the capacity to reveal that freedom, to unveil the innate Bliss, or bestow lasting peace. Therefore, more profoundly assimilate what has been said and written, in satsang, correspondence, and in sacred books, by persevering inquiry that uproots the misidentifications by which you falsely define yourself. Self-critical examination of your mind (not egotistical self-judgment that depresses) is helpful, just as the humility that is natural for anyone who is aware of the scope of That is superior to futile confidence rooted in the ego's assertion. Therefore, joyfully and ardently seek to know your Self, which is utterly free of the ego-notion (individuality) and far, far beyond the tiny concerns of the phantom-like personality and the illusory moods and modes of an unreal mind.

May you be ever happy at heart, discovering how imagined your pseudo-bondage is and finding the purpose of life fulfilled within you—the immortal Bliss of the illimitable Self.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[In answer to a question regarding destiny and free will.]

September 28, 2009

Dear ,

Namaste. Concepts of destiny and individual free will are entertained only so long as the individual to which either pertains is assumed to exist. In Self-Knowledge, both ideas are absent, for the ego does not exist. Self-inquiry reveals this Knowledge. The unreal ego has no part in it, for the nature of

the inquiry is of the Knowledge essence. If one asks about the “I” that seems as if implicit in the inquiry, the answer is found in the Maharshi’s analogy of the stick used to turn the burning pyre. Therefore, inquire into the nature of the inquirer.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This message is from a SAT member who lives at a distance from the SAT temple. It has been edited slightly for brevity. Nome’s response follows.]

September 25, 2009

Om Namo Bhagawate Sri Ramanaya.

Dear Nome. Namaste.

I would like to share my recent experience of Sri Bhagawan’s grace and guidance. One early morning, in my silent sitting, I was deeply touched by the understanding of my wrong and deep-rooted belief that all the objects of material world that my senses sense are out there, and I have a sensory impression on the screen of my mind in here, in the head or my body. Now, I am awake to the truth, more and more, that such is not the case. Objects that look solid are just vibrations of / in Consciousness, including my own solid-looking body. So, where is in, and where is out? How can I get something or loose something? As I sink deeper in my understanding of this line of thinking, there is no limitation of my little body and mind, and I feel oneness as and with the whole Existence. I hope my rambling has made some sense to you, but, then again, you have understood all my rambling before, so this is not new. Right after this experience, during that morning, two books that I was reading—*Saddarshanam* and one by Sidharameswara Maharaj—they both point at the same idea or truth. That is all for now. I deeply appreciate your loving kindness. Convey my namaste to Sasvati.

In and as Self,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Grace immeasurably vast manifests in innumerable ways.

Far from rambling, your words reflect the truth. Free of misidentification with the body, you, yourself, are beyond all considerations of inner and outer. This Self, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, alone exists. If there is all, this Self is all, to such an extent that there is nothing else to be referred to as “all.” If there is no such thing as all, the one, indivisible Self alone exists. For this Self, there is no gain or loss, birth or death, beginning or end, or creation or destruction. For one who truly, deeply inquires, there can be no “wrong path,” and, for one who knows, ignorance and illusions of duality are impossible.

May you abide in the everlasting Knowledge of the Self and thus remain in the happiness of the perfect fullness.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[A response to a seeker whose mind was both inspired and plagued by tendencies]

October 9, 2009

Dear,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your numerous recent messages.

Your messages express both worthwhile spiritual reflection and repetitive patterns of thought. They do not have equal validity. One reflects that which is true and profound, while the other is mere repetition of imagination given undue emphasis. The latter is based on egoism and non-comprehension of the source of happiness and lends itself to worldly craving and fear. The former is of the nature of sattva and points in the right direction, which is the nirguna (quality-less) Truth. Examine the play of your mind, discern, and direct accordingly.

At the root of your ideas are the definitions that are misidentifications. The root of all misidentifications is the assumption of individuality, or ego. Inquire to become free of all of them.

The abandonment of misidentifications reveals the true Self. Such is inquiry.

The Self is actionless. It remains so regardless of the activity or inactivity of the body. Likewise is the Bliss of the Self.

That which is vast, eternal, deep, infinite, utterly beyond the personality and its concerns, bliss itself, illimitable Consciousness, formless, constant, imperishable, and nondual, and so knowing which there is nothing else to experience, is ever cherished by the wise. Focused on that, devoted to that, inquiring to know that, finding the utter insignificance of all else in light of that, with that as their support, delighting in that, absorbed in that, the wise realize that to be the sole-existent Reality and remain completely content, as peace in the perfect fullness.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[To the same seeker, who had sent several messages, the varied content of which can be surmised from the response presented here.]

October 13, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your several messages.

Certainly, you may feel at ease in writing whatever you wish to express.

One's ideas about others tend to reflect his ideas of himself. From that perspective, "observations" are, perhaps, more interpretation than observation. You may find it helpful to consider this in relation to your views of the happiness, sadness, etc. of others.

It may also be helpful to examine, in the light of spiritual freedom or aspiration toward that, how you are using your mind.

If repetitive patterns of thought, such as craving, fear, frustration, etc., plague your mind, from where is such force or vividness derived, and from where does this repetitive, undue emphasis come? Is it necessary to continue to conjure confusion?

Spiritual humility is more joyful than assertive arrogance and its corollary of depressed shame.

The ideas that objects, circumstances, etc., provide happiness and that the Self or Brahman may be a lonely, desolate state are not based on actual experience or wisdom. The great rishis, sages, saints, etc., have not been those who are unhappy or lonely, but, rather, they are truly full of bliss and are at peace.

Whether or not you should administer medications to your body to becalm your mind is a question that I cannot answer. I have no experience or familiarity with such.

There are many aids known since the most ancient times to create, enhance, and maintain a sattvic state of mind. Have you attempted such and continue with such?

It is incumbent upon the spiritual seeker to change from his limited conception to embrace the vast Knowledge of the Self. The attempt to reduce the Knowledge to fit within the existing conception will not liberate. Similarly, if one does not understand the meaning of a saying, scriptural passage, etc., he would do well to seek explanation, reflect and contemplate such, and deeply meditate so that the meaning becomes clear for him. It may not be necessary to change the words, and it may prove that the expressions of the wise, born from silence, contain profound meanings that may be lost by prematurely replacing the terms with ones that fit in with the existing conceptions mentioned earlier.

If your opinion is that some aspect of the teaching is pedantic, that is, obsessed with doctrine and a parading of book-knowledge, such could appear to be so because of a lack of experience that may make the absence of deviation from Reality seem like a fixed doctrine and, also, not yet understanding the depth of experience that can be had with spiritual literature and the reasons for references to such.

The stiffness or rigidity of this body noted by you is a symptom, one among many, of Parkinson's Disease. By the innate Knowledge of the Self and by the Grace of Sadguru Ramana, to whom one can never be too thankful, the body and its states, liv-

ing or dead, present no bondage. The one Self, unborn and imperishable, alone exists. That is perfectly full. (Om purnamadah purnamidam, etc.)

I hope that you find what has been written here helpful. It is to be understood in the context of the collection of previous messages and not taken standing alone.

May you ever abide in the happiness and peace of the Self, which is Brahman, God.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is a response a seeker who frequently attends satsangs and who was struggling with unhappiness at that time.]

October 15, 2009

Dear ,

Namaste. Thank you for both of your messages.

It makes little difference what words are used to phrase the question or if no words are employed at all. What is important is that you come to understand the nature of happiness and that you find it within you.

Deep meditation transcends thinking, even concentrated thinking, on a sentence. It is inner experience. The attainment of that is referred to as true Knowledge.

You say that you are miserable. No one likes to be miserable. Rather, everyone wishes to be happy. This is an intuition of your natural state, which is unmixed happiness. No object or external experience or circumstance can supply this to you. It is within you awaiting discovery. When the ego subsides, along with its erroneous ideas, the innate happiness shines forth in its fullness and without obstruction.

If you meditate on what is stated here and in the previous message to you, how to proceed will become clearer for you, and you will become happier.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[Here is a message, slightly edited for brevity, from a SAT member who lives at a distance from the temple and attends retreats, along with Nome's response.]

October 16, 2009

Om namah Shivaya.

Namaste, dear Nome and Sasvati,

I received the warm welcoming letter from Sasvati. The experience took me to days and times when Sri Bhagawan used to remember and arrange for the transportation for any devotee coming to Tiruvannamalai. There was one incident about a devotee coming from Columbo, Sri Lanka by steamship and had written a letter to the ashram. Sri Bhagawan remembered the arrival date and all other details and then made sure that he came safely from Madras to Tiruvannamalai. Every time I read or think of that incident, I get teary-eyed at Bhagawan's compassion and also his grace in making all of us know and be exposed to him and his teaching and staying with us every step of the way.

When I read one statement by Sri Bhagawan in one issue of "Reflections," it hit me like lightning. He is telling a devotee, "There is nothing but the dreamer. Where does the question of dream people—real or unreal—arise? We are all unreal. Why do you doubt it?"

Even few days before, I was experiencing more and more that "I" and "this" both rise and subside together. They are thoughts, perceptions and conceptions only, which means they are not real. Between "I" and "this" is included every thing except the Self, which remains after I and this merge-subside-disappear. After reading Sri Bhagawan's statement, I felt like I was the devotee he was talking to.

There was this question about Bliss being the nature of Self and me not feeling it. Today, on my morning walk, I started thinking about it. It hit me that it is like that old saying, "I want to have my cake and eat it, too." I want to have bliss and, at the same time, be there to experience it, too. Either I go or bliss goes. So, it is back to self-inquiry to realize beyond doubt my true nature as the Self, Existence and Consciousness.

Please explain or make clearer to me the following statement by Sri Bhagawan, also from an issue of “Reflections” (May-June 2005), page 2. Bhagawan: “.....There is the creed of only one Self, which is also called the creed of only one jiva. It says that the jiva is only one who sees the whole world and the jivas therein.”

With hope and prayers for your well-being,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. It is by Sri Bhagavan’s Grace that any journey, outer or inner, reaches its destination.

Yes, the innate Bliss shines unobstructed, upon the abandonment of the merely assumed individual. The ego cannot experience Bliss anymore than the ego can realize Being. The ego is not. Being is Bliss.

The idea of multiple jivas is for, by, and contained within a jiva. Usually, the multiplicity is defined by the misidentification of the Self with a body, gross or subtle. As Sri Ramana explains, such a jiva is really the Self conceived as a seer who can see other jivas, the world, etc. So, if jivas appear, they are only for the one jiva; other beings are for “I.” The Self, though transcends any “I,” even defined as a mere perceiver. The real nature of the jiva, thus, is only the Self. So, also, the Self is said to be the Self of all jivas. Yet, there is neither a jiva nor many jivas in the one Self. It is forever undifferentiated.

May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self, the immutable, illimitable Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

Om Namah Sivaya

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[Here is a seeker’s question about sattvic diet and Nome’s response.]

October 21, 2009

Hello

While reading some of Ramana's writings, I noticed he recommended a satvic diet. Can you please direct me to a resource where I can learn what are the components of such a diet?

Thanks,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Mention of sattvic diet appears in numerous texts and in a few places in the printed records of Sri Ramana's teachings. Generally, a sattvic diet is said to be a traditional vegetarian diet; that is, a vegetarian diet that includes dairy products. In addition, a more sattvic diet may be further determined by the individual regarding the effects on the body, prana, and mind from different amounts of items that stimulate, induce torpor, etc.

From a more transcendent perspective, sattvic diet is that which is consumed free of the ideas of being the body, being the eater, being the enjoyer or experiencer, and such.

Finally, a sattva (of the nature of Truth, of Being) diet consists of fasting from all misidentifications and false concepts, never consuming the least bit of the ego assumption, and imbibing continuously the immortal nectar of the Knowledge of the Self to thus be utterly satiated with lasting Bliss.

I hope that the above is of some help for you. May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self and thus dwell always in peace.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome (for SAT)

[This is a response to a seeker's messages, the content of which can be inferred from Nome's response presented here.]

October 21, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your several messages.

The Maharshi's teachings reveal something far vaster and deeper than the resolution of personal problems. To apply them to such problems, of course, works, just as applying the whole ocean to extinguish an ignited match that is singeing your finger will certainly work, but we would not say that this is the entire purpose and scope of the ocean.

If you turn within, you will find the illimitable source of happiness, which is also the abode of love. Becoming absorbed in that, you will see how false, needless, and purposeless have been all the ideas of cravings, fears, hatred, anger, and the other tendencies with which your mind has plagued itself.

Understanding that a thought is transient may be a fine place to start. It is not the end and, by itself, does not destroy ignorance, which will produce the idea, the attachment, the suffering, and the problem again. For permanent freedom, inquiry to know oneself is the direct means.

Most, if not all, of your other questions and comments have already been dealt with multiple times in previous correspondence, in "Self-Knowledge" and other books, in satsangs, in the recorded satsangs, etc., so reiteration here is unnecessary. It is wise to continue going over these. It is also important to fully use your capacity to engage in spiritual practice.

May your inquiry be steady and deep so that you leave behind the imagined bondage of the mind and remain happy at heart and at peace.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[A message was received by a seeker, who had never visited the SAT temple, regarding attending satsangs at SAT. Nome's response follows.]

October 21, 2009

Hi,

I was planning to attend the satsang at your place as suggested by Richard of Arunachala Grace blogspot. I was wondering if there is any cost involved? I attend a satsang group of Ramana Devotees that are linked to Arunachala Ashram run by [name omitted] and that tends to be a pot luck like thing.

I am keen on visiting Nome, hence want to know if we are expected to pay for the satsangs conducted by your organization.

Thanks,

Dear,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. You will be warmly welcome to attend satsang at the SAT temple. There is no cost for satsangs. Similarly, there is no cost for the holy events that occur at the temple on other days, such as meditations, Ramana Darshanam, etc. If you wish, you can look at the website at www.SATRamana.org to see the schedule of events. If you wish, you can give a donation, but it is not mandatory. I, myself, have made it my consistent custom to offer a donation to every ashram, temple, center, etc. that I have ever visited, but no one is required to do so at SAT. Those who wish to give, do so; those who do not, do not.

May you ever abide in that priceless treasure of Self-Knowledge in which all worldly attachments do not exist and in which one is ever absorbed in the perfect fullness.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome (for SAT)

[This piece of correspondence, from October 2009, is a response to two SAT members who have long been devoted to

Sri Ramana, living at a distance from the SAT temple and thus not able to attend frequently. One of them had become seriously ill.]

Dear and ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

It is evident that the body is subject to decay and is transient. It is a natural response to attempt to heal illness and to preserve life. The Self abides transcendent of all of that and is ever at peace. True Knowledge is found by the abandonment of the misidentification as a body or as an embodied individual and identification solely with the birthless and imperishable Being-Consciousness-Bliss that you truly are.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[The seeker who asked about sattvic diet wrote again. In his message, he expressed appreciation for the previous answer, mentioned his plans to visit along with questions about arrangements, listed the several books he was reading, many of which are authored by contemporary writers, but a few of which contain profound teachings of Sri Ramana, and spoke of his intention to stop reading every book, except "Who am I?" because "reading is a waste of time." Here is the response sent to him.]

October 22, 2009

Dear,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

If you travel also to California, please know that you will be warmly welcome to attend satsangs, meditations, Ramana Darshanam events, etc., at the SAT temple. You can look at the website www.SATRamana.org to view the schedule and descriptions of events. There is no cost involved, and, though donations

to the temple are helpful and appreciated, they are not mandatory. Similarly, no service is required of those who attend, though some SAT members volunteer their efforts to help the temple operate.

Better than the reduction or elimination of the reading of spiritual literature is to find a wiser way to approach such literature. Such a wiser way includes keen discrimination, actually inquiring while reading, and absorption in the Truth indicated. It involves the traditional Vedanta approach of *sravaṇa* (listening, though in this case reading), *manana* (reflection), and *nididhyāsana* (profound, continuous meditation), either serially or simultaneously. Since ancient times, certain sacred books were written and carefully preserved by those who knew their value for centuries and millennia to help seekers realize “that before which all words and thoughts turn back unable to grasp,” as the Upanishads and Gita proclaim. The same is so even now.

Hopefully, the above is of some use or benefit for you. May you deeply inquire so that the innate Knowledge of the Self shines unobscured, in all of its peace and bliss.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This message is from a frequent visitor at Satsang. Nome's response follows.]

October 26, 2009

Namaskar Master Nome,

Thank you for the great Satsang yesterday.

In Ramana's quote below, is “God” a conceptual, formalized God?

Otherwise it doesn't make sense to me. For me, God is the Infinite. I would appreciate your response.

*Verse **289. *The Infinite is like the screen on which the moving pictures appear; the soul, the world, and God are like the moving pictures; the Infinite alone is real. (From *Guru-Ramana-Vachana-Mala*, by “Who”.)

Thank you,

Dear ,

Namaste. Yes, this refers to God as conceived and not to God as Brahman. Jagat-jiva-para is the term commonly used to express this, which means the universe (or world), the individual (or individual soul or individual self, jivatman) and the Supreme (or God). The three are three only so long as the one who knows them is unknown. Upon true Knowledge of the Self, there is no ego to be a jiva, to experience a world, or to conceive a God differentiated from the infinite Brahman, which alone is the Self.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This message is from the same SAT member who resides at a distance from the SAT temple that wrote two of the messages above, again edited slightly for brevity. Nome's response follows and alludes to other messages sent by the same seeker.]

October 24, 2009

Dear Nome,

Om Namah Shivaya.

Namaste from . In my prayer room, I have a picture (one of many) of Sri Bhagawan. On the bottom, I have pasted a little handwritten strip of paper with one of his quotes, "You are Knowledge," but I have written the Tamil words for it "Arrive Nan." Every time I look at that picture, I imagine that Bhagawan is telling me himself in Person.

The word "everything" means mind that holds the idea of I as individual, idea that I am the body, idea that there is "this," all duality of I and this, subject and object, and all triads of knower knowing and known. If all this is gone—forgotten—then what is left is pure knowledge itself. Where there is no one to know any thing and nothing to be known by anybody, and no knowing going on for anyone, just knowledge or Consciousness remains. That is what Sri Bhagawan is saying: "Arrive Nan". Also, that is same as Tat Tvam Asi. When "I" is removed from all its upadhis or so-called labels, like ego, body etc., there is no difference between I and That. Knowledge of I am is Brahman. As

long as I stay with this understanding, there is peace and joy. I know you will say, “Why do I come out of that understanding?” For that, I do not have any excuse.

Previously I said, “I imagine Sri Bhagawan is telling me in person.” Behind that statement, there is a deep desire in my heart to hear his voice on some recording or such. Is it possible?

Hope everything is fine there. Must be getting little cooler. Give my regards to Sasvati.

Namaste,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for both of your messages.

Your analogy of light and a prism is quite apt. The original light or source is unmodified. Due only to the prism of imagination in the form of the ego, the very same light seems differentiated into all else, jagat-jiva-para.

The Knowledge of Consciousness is Consciousness. The one who knows is only this Consciousness. There is no other to know or to not know, and no one to be ignorant. Thus, Knowledge is said to be without attainment, for you are Knowledge.

Bhagavan is always speaking in resounding Silence to those who dive within, inquiring to know the Self.

Who comes out of the understanding?

Bhagavan refused the attempt to record his voice, saying that his voice is Silence.

Sasvati sends her love.

May you ever abide as the one Self, the real Knowledge, in Bliss.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is a message from and a response to a SAT member who was visiting Sri Ramanasramam.]

October 31, 2009

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Dear Nome and Sasvati,

Namaste.

Just a quick note to say that I arrived at Ramana Ashram and all is well. ...sends his best wishes.

I'm having the best of meditations. Will be going up to Skandashram and Virupaksha Cave this afternoon. Ahhhhhhhh—the Bliss of Ramana and Arunachala.

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste.

Dear ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. We are glad to know that you arrived safely and that, according to, you even obtained your luggage.

Please convey our love and respects to Sri... and his wife, if you have not already done so.

Seeing with an eye of a different form or nature (Virupaksa), attacking (Skanda) with the vel (lance) of Jnana the illusion of differentiation, meditating on the nature of the meditator, realize the unmoving (acala) Being (A)- Consciousness (Ru)- Bliss (Na) to be the only Reality, One without a second.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome and Sasvati

[Here is a response to a seeker who was troubling himself and others with his anger and related tendencies. Some of it has been edited to delete specific references to what the seeker had communicated and for the sake of brevity. The reference to knowing the thoughts of others is in response to the seeker's statement about the purported powers or claims of such of a

famous spiritual teacher. The other questions raised by the seeker can be inferred from the responses.]

Dear,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your many messages.

So, you now see how mistaken your mind was, with the delusions and fears, projecting the same on to others and forming ignorant opinions accordingly. This is so not only regarding the people whom you see at the places you may frequent, but also others about whom you know little or nothing but of whom you have been vehemently proclaiming your hatred in your messages, such as ... humanity in general, and the entire world. Fortunately, they do not entertain the same aggressive thoughts about you. It would be wise to take full responsibility for the workings of your own mind, cease to hate anyone, abandon violent fantasies, and find fulfillment within yourself.

Though one can always imagine a better set of circumstances, bondage is one's own making; likewise is spiritual freedom.

Anger is created by delusion in one's mind. Only you apparently rob yourself of your innate happiness. Blaming others for such is absurd. Find the source of happiness within.

If you examine what you have written, you will perceive that, in the vehement portions, your ideas are equal to or worse than the qualities of which you accuse those other people.

As for Mahatma Gandhi, first accomplish within and outwardly what he accomplished, and then you can offer criticism if you wish.

In general, forming opinions about others in such a manner is spiritually worthless.

Regarding knowing the thoughts of others, especially when directed to oneself: In Jnana, the undifferentiated Consciousness is known to alone be real, and thoughts, their objects, and the thinker are unreal.

The messages that are and have been sent to you during this correspondence are intended for you and are in response to your questions, doubts, problems, etc. It is alright that you have shared some of them on the web or in person with others. On

the SAT website, in the *Reflections* section, and in printed form, some of them have been published, omitting your personal details to preserve your privacy as well as to maintain the impersonal orientation. As far as creating a manuscript of such, it is best to leave that for a future SAT publication in which it can be included with other correspondence. Of course, SAT publications are produced slowly with great care at every step to fulfill multiple spiritual purposes in a lasting manner.

In Self-Realization, individuality is effaced, and only the one, indivisible Being-Consciousness-Bliss remains. Therefore, the attempt to count the number of realized beings is like asking for a dream calculation of the number of waking "Consciousnesses."

Please accept whatever seems critical here in the right spirit, for you truly are the Self, not an ego, and can abide in lasting peace and bliss. Therefore, with some lessons learned, become your own answer to the illusory problems, shine with what is true, good, and beautiful, love others as your Self, treat all as you would wish them to do to you, and find your true nature.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[From a seeker in India who had written in the past. The response from Nome follows.]

November 7, 2009

Dear sir,

I have been working in CMC hospital, Vellore. Recently, after a little illness, I expected my colleague to carry out little routines. She does it only when I say. All these days I was doing it. I am the senior person doing all the works without any expectation, but, more recently, I am expecting the juniors do it, even though I am capable of doing it. Is it my ego? Also, when she talks to others, I feel she talks about me. Kindly advise to overcome this problem.

Yours sincerely,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

The worries and frustrations, indeed, have their source in the ego, which means that they have ignorance, or illusion, as their basis. The ego manifests as the misidentification with the body, as the performer of action, as a person in the world, etc. If one ascertains the source of happiness to be within, that basis of delusion dissolves, and he becomes nonattached. This yields steady peace regardless of circumstances. That which is within is the Self. Abidance as the Self is perfectly full joy without end.

A keen awareness of Sri Bhagavans's Grace, and complete reliance on it, yields steady peace, so that all feels as light as air.

For those blessed with such Grace and who dive inward with the inquiry to know the Self, it is natural to view all with an equal eye and to shine with love for all beings, even for those whose actions are not completely to your liking.

May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self and thus dwell in peace and happiness always.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[A message from the SAT member visiting Sri Ramanasramam and Nome's response.]

November 5, 2009

Dear Nome,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

I have had time today to go through your suggested verses. All of the verses are wonderful, and your selections have left me in a puddle of Blissful tears. Such undivided Love and absorption into the Heart are expressed in these Divine words. My, oh my, what an inspiring and all encompassing sweep of Truth. I want to include all of them! Oh, what a wonderfully difficult task to select from such Wisdom and Grace.

These days I feel like I'm being swept up in a torrent of endless Knowledge and Grace. I feel any ever-deepening certainty that my nature is the Absolute. For example, I woke up about 4 a.m. today with the body feeling a bit out of sorts and the mind foggy. I opened *Saddarshanam* to meditate and it was difficult to experience directly what the words were expressing. But I knew to focus on my existence until that became clear before reading further. In doing so, the state of the body and mind dropped into the background and the Reality began to shine. Then, as I returned to verses, I became absorbed and the marvelous clarity of Ramana's teaching spilled forth. More and more, I know the path inward and it becomes shorter and shorter every "trip," so much so, that the "trip" is continuous at an evermore deepening level. The momentum moves in the direction of Truth.

Namaste.

Dear,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

I trust that, in Wisdom and Grace, your "wonderfully difficult task" is continuing.

In the inner path, the one that shows the way, the one that illumines the path, the space of the path itself, the goal of the path, and the one who knows these are the same One. For the bodiless and mind-transcendent Self, naturally egoless, there is no modification. It is ever existent and the only real Self. Any other, an unreal self, is ever nonexistent. For the Self, no ignorance exists, and the Self, itself, is Knowledge. An unreal individual, spoken of as the seed of all delusion, does not actually exist and so has neither knowledge nor ignorance. The self-luminous Self is. By Sri Bhagavan's Grace may there be abidance in this Truth, as this Truth.

May your momentum continue to reach dissolution, like a river when it joins the ocean, and like space empties into space.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[A response to more messages from the seeker mentioned previously as caught up in anger, now much calmer.]

November 17, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your several messages.

Here are a few suggestions that you may find helpful upon meditation upon them.

Self-critical examination can be quite useful for the seeker of Self-Realization who wishes to destroy vasanas (tendencies), but such must be in the context of an ardent desire for Liberation and the understanding that such examination and destruction are for the purpose of revealing the innate perfection of the Self.

In light of this, consider egocentric thinking, whether assertive or depressed, as delusive. Contemplation upon how much one uses his mind for such useless thinking, the imagined tales (or should we say tails, after which one chases) of an illusory character, should inspire him to completely alter the way he uses his mind, thereby revealing much freedom as it unveils great peace.

The deep spiritual aspirant knows that the illusions of his mind are entirely his own making and that he is free to set himself free of them, dissolving the misidentifications that are their root, so that, abandoning even the false assumption of an ego (an individual), he abides in the Self as the Self, full of bliss.

Life is fleeting, and one does not know how much time remains. Use it wisely in a worthwhile manner, so that you have no regrets later.

Free of the least bit of misidentification with the instruments of body, speech, and mind, the wise naturally use these instruments in a selfless manner, for such is a manifestation of that which is divine. It may be helpful to consider this, examine your activities with these instruments, and determine if and how you would wish to change based upon such spiritual principles.

May your meditations be deep and your life suffused with illumined happiness.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[From India, a woman wrote on behalf of her father requesting how to overcome fear. This response was sent.]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

As Sri Bhagavan has taught, there are two ways by which peace can be attained. One can inquire to know the true nature of the Self and, in this case, realize that it is ever peaceful and changeless, beyond the three states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. Identifying with the Self, the root of all fears and binding ideas (the ego or separate mind) is destroyed. The vast peaceful Self alone remains. Alternatively, one can recognize that all is ever in the Supreme. Whether approached as God or Guru, that is the sole power. Thereafter, having given up all worries and attachments, with no scope left for the ego and its troubles, one rests dissolved in the Supreme Self, as the Supreme Self.

In either approach, it is wise to examine the fear, which is composed of thoughts that contain the belief in a loss of existence or loss of happiness or both. If one recognizes the specific thoughts that compose the fear, he can trace those ideas to their underlying false definitions or misidentifications. Those, in turn, can be traced inward to the “I”-notion or ego. Self-inquiry, as revealed by Sri Ramana and actually practiced, dissolves the fears, the ideas composing them, the underlying misidentifications, and the falsely assumed ego, leaving the Self as it is. “Where there is a second, as it were, there is fear.” “A second” means the individual who seems as if separate from the Self and all dualism. Abidance in the nondual Self, which is Self-Knowledge, is freedom from fear, for it is abidance as the imperishable Existence, which is the unconditional Bliss.

Therefore, if one relies on the Grace of the Maharshi and earnestly seeks the Knowledge of the Self, all will be right.

I hope that the above is of some help to you and your father.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[Here is a message from a seeker and the response sent.]

November 19, 2009

Prior to the I am arising, the absolute is eternal, the sat chit ananda, our true nature. Sri Nisgardatta states that when the consciousness dissolves, it returns to the elements, which return to the universal consciousness. In order to be consciousness, a body is needed. Prior to a body, mind and world arising, nothing is remembered. Also awareness is aware, but there is no self awareness. There is nothing that this I can do except rest in awareness. Is there a difference in awareness and consciousness? Presently, I am rereading the final talks of Sri Nisargadatta.

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Perhaps, because, in part, of the manner of translation of some of the books expressing the teachings given by Sri Niargadatta Maharaj, there may be some lack of clarity regarding the meaning of the terms “awareness” and “consciousness.” This confusion is very little, if any at all, in the “Master of Self-Realization” book, which contains the English translation of the instructions Sri Maharaj received from his Guru Sri Siddharameswar as Maharaj recorded them in Marathi. SAT was carrying the book, but is now awaiting its reprint, which is supposedly in process.

A similar difficulty can arise with certain Sanskrit terms that may correlate with the Marathi terms. They are used in various ways by different sages and others and at different times. For example, Cit is Consciousness, citta is mind or memory, Jnana is Knowledge, but jnana can also be any kind of knowledge, caitanya is Consciousness (absolute) or awareness (relative) or sentience, and vijnana is Supreme Knowledge, intellectual knowledge, or awareness (relative) by the intellect. The words Sat, sata, and sattva similarly carry a host of meanings. One must understand the context and also must have the capacity to discern the intended meaning, which comes from one’s own inquiry or Knowledge. To assist the spiritual seekers with this, in SAT publications, terms that refer to the Absolute Self are capitalized,

and those employed with another meaning are placed in lower case letters, but such capitalization is actually not in the Sanskrit language. This approach is not necessarily followed by other publishers.

Addressing what you have written here, the Svarupa (True Nature) or Atman (the Self) is forever undifferentiated Being-Consciousness-Bliss (Saccidananda—Sat-Cit-Ananda). It is as it is eternally. It is only from the supposition that there is another that one speaks of prior, origin, arising, etc. With the supposed rise or appearance, only in imagination, of the notion of “I,” all else appears or arises. Just as, in illusion, the real Being (Sat) appears as if individualized, so the reflected light of Consciousness (Cit) appears as a mind or awareness, of which one aspect is the senses, and within such appears the entire world or objective sphere of experience. Of course, all this is conceived only in the mind, which also is not real, and is not the Truth.

Without the body, no world is perceived. This is also explained in Sri Ramana’s *Saddarsanam*. The worldly awareness requires the activity of all of the five sheaths. Apart from the mind, there are no senses, body, or world. The belief in an entity called “mind” is due only to lack of inquiry or Knowledge. Memory and forgetfulness are also merely modes of the mind. True Knowledge is beyond all of that and is nonobjective.

Consciousness is self-luminous; it knows itself timelessly. Such Knowledge is innate. The mind or awareness has no knowing capacity of its own, either to know Consciousness (the Self) or to know itself. There is only one Consciousness. If you feel that you are aware, trace the awareness or knowingness to its source, the original Light, which is the invariable pure Consciousness. In other words, seek the nature of the “I” that seems to be aware so that you realize the egoless true Self as your only identity. That is Sat-Cit-Ananda.

I hope that you find the above to be of some help. May you know yourself as you truly are and thus ever shine in Self-Knowledge, full of Bliss.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[From a seeker who occasionally attends satsangs and retreats. The response follows.]

November 25, 2009

Namaste, Master Nome!

I want to tell you how important and profound your advice to me to read *The Song of Ribhu* has been. Immediately after you recommended it during our lunch conversation at the August retreat, I was in the bookstore, and , from India, came up and volunteered that he would recommend that I read *The Song of Ribhu* and be sure to read it aloud. (Divine reinforcement!) That's what I have been doing, and I eagerly look forward to the reading each day and am now on Chapter 35.

It speaks to me so directly and powerfully.

My friend, who came with me one Sunday to SAT, was also reading it, but stopped. A few days ago I mentioned my continued reading to him, and he said, "That Ribhu really knows how to brain wash."

I said, "Yes, but it's a good brain washing, and I want my brain washed."

A "brain-washing" (cleansing, redirection, awakening, remembering) to develop the certitude of the "I am Brahman" presence is certainly desirable! I'm experiencing increased connections to Spirit through Self-inquiry and the "I am Brahman" presence.

One question I have concerns love. Most scriptures and sages affirm God as love, and of course the Bible does so quite directly. In *The Song of Ribhu*, love is never (up to Chapter 35 anyway) used to describe the Supreme Brahman or Consciousness. What is your understanding of that? Is love assumed to be an aspect of purity, Bliss and Consciousness? Does the Maharshi equate God or Brahman with love?

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dear ,

Namaste. Thank you for your message. I am glad to know that you are finding *Song of Ribhu* to be so beneficial.

Yes, there are passages of the recorded teachings of the Maharshi in which he equates love and the Self. In the *Ribhu Gita* and *Song of Ribhu*, love is there, too, though it is usually mentioned in the context of the love of the Lord by the devotee. Similar is it with other Vedanta scriptures and such in which God is said to lovingly bestow Grace and sages lovingly give their instruction.

In Truth, love is the indivisibility of Being. Being is Consciousness and Bliss. “Pure” means unmixed with anything else. In Being-Consciousness-Bliss, which is the nature of the Self, there is no differentiation whatsoever. To abide as That is the supreme love, or, as Sankara refers to it, “parabhakti,” supreme devotion. Perhaps, because of the tendency of the mind to think in terms of the lover and the beloved, and thus imagine division, the term “love” is not frequently employed in texts such as Ribhu, but there can be no doubt of the height of love that this knowledge reveals.

By profound inquiry to know the Self, by dissolution in the love of God, may you ever abide in That, as That, itself.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome



Our Hindu Heritage

The significance of the temple. . .

Hindu temples known by present-day researchers date back as far as 3300-1200 BC, however, there may have been earlier temples whose material existence is no longer present. Certainly, the temples are an ancient tradition within Hinduism.

In Hinduism, temples vary greatly in their architecture, appearance, rituals, traditions and customs according to the presiding deities or Gods of each individual temple. Traditional temple architecture is complex and by no means randomly designed. Many temples simultaneously mirror the outer cosmos—all manifestation, the inner cosmos—the mind space, and the Absolute, which transcends both. In other words, tem-

ple significance is no small thing as it represents the entire gamut of the cosmos and human experience pointing the way to Knowledge of the Supreme, which in Advaita Vedanta is understood to be Self-Knowledge. One could say that the Siva temple is born out of the mind of Siva, leaving a map, as it were, to oneself—Siva. Regardless of the school of thought or the deities or Gods each person worships, common among all practicing Hindus is the belief that visiting the temple plays a primary role in one's spiritual practice. Depending on the approach of the spiritual seeker, it is a place of worship, prayer, and meditation. It is a place where one seeks solitude, solace, worldly and spiritual boons, blessings, and Self-Knowledge.

A temple may be perceived as the embodiment of the Divine. So, when one enters the temple, he or she leaves the dust of the mundane world behind (symbolized by removal of the shoes) and enters the abode of the Absolute, or the Absolute itself, where one meditates upon the Absolute and thus becomes the Absolute. So, in a Siva temple, the highest view would be that Siva abides within Himself.

Our temple, the SAT Temple, which is the “Temple of Being,” is a Ramana-Siva temple, the presiding Gods being Sadguru Ramana and Lord Siva, which are viewed as One. Though it is non-traditional in its architectural form, the essence of its method of worship is the ancient, primordial, original Supreme Knowledge with the forms of worship consisting of spiritual instruction, meditation, recitation, puja, and such.



Announcements

Thank You...

The selfless service we do here to help maintain the temple is prompted by the love we have in our hearts for this teaching. We do not desire acknowledgement for such. We would, though, like to thank all of the folks who perform service at our temple...

Bob Haber: keeping the bathrooms clean, watering plants, sweeping the walkways, cleanup after events, cleaning the temple; Kathy Rogers: maintaining residential rentals, overseeing

property repairs, providing meals at retreats; Claude Rogers: temple repairs; Michael Polam: maintaining the “meditation garden” behind the temple; Ryan Shaw: maintaining the temple grounds gardens; Tim Frank: vacuuming & cleaning the temple, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Myra Taylor: vacuuming & cleaning the temple, providing prasada after satsang, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Raman Muthukrishnan: running the bookstore including mail order service, maintaining the website, providing prasada after satsang; Sangeeta Muthukrishnan: helping with the bookstore mail order, organizing things around the temple and providing meals at retreats; Clark Coffee: assisting with production of recordings; Wimala Brown: providing meals at retreats and prasada after satsang; Jennifer Birnbach: providing prasada after satsang; Dhanya Nambirajan: singing during special events, providing meals at retreats, cleanup after pujas; Ganesh Sadasivan: organizing special events including singing, recitation, and chanting; Eric Ruetz: editing and mastering all recordings of satsangs and special events, providing meals at retreats, securing the temple; Jim Clark: securing and maintaining safety at the temple, lighting candles at meditation events; Richard Clarke: providing incense for the temple and helping with book orders from India; Nome: temple grounds maintenance, writing books, administrative stuff, general help wherever needed including spiritual guidance; Sasvati: preparing books for publishing; Advait Sadasivan & Janani Chandran: providing play time at any time for anyone who wishes to play; Anandhi Muthukumarasamy: providing prasada after Atmotsava and singing at special events.

NEW WEEKLY EVENT...

Atmosava Ramana Nama San-Kirtanam: This is a new weekly event at SAT. This event includes meditation, readings, devotional kirtans and arti followed by prasada. This event is designed to provide a fun opportunity to learn and participate in kirtans.

Upcoming Special Events...

Mahasivaratri: February 12 and 13, 2010.

Nondual Self-Inquiry Retreat: March 12-14, 2010.

