



Reflections

July August September
2009



Society of Abidance in Truth



Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Invocation | 3 |
| Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana | 4 |
| Satsang, May 24, 2009 (The Mind) | 7 |
| From <i>Yoga Vasishtha</i> | 18 |
| Om Sat Guru Ramana..... | 20 |
| Temple Archives | 20 |
| Our Hindu Heritage | 37 |
| Announcements | 39 |

Reflections, July, August, September 2009

Copyright 2009

Society of Abidance in Truth

1834 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 USA

Ph: 831-425-7287 / e-mail: sat@cruzio.com

web: www.SATRamana.org

Invocation

Such is the greatness of saints. We attain Knowledge in their company. There is no better way than the company of saints. By devotion to the Guru, by thinking on the teachings given by him, and by purity in our daily behavior, we should be able to attain the state of Brahman.

—Samarth Ramdas (Dasboadh 7:10:36-37)

The seeking, or spiritual endeavor, itself, means Knowledge. By Knowledge of Brahman, you will be Brahman. Yogis enjoy Bliss in this way only.

If we observe minutely, we can see that we, the seeker, and the object of our seeking are one. We, as an identity separately conceived with a body, go into oblivion, and Brahman, or Siva, which is the object of our search, remains.

—Samarth Ramdas (Dasboadh 20:4:22-23)

Who is there who can describe the glory of that Atman?

—Samarth Ramdas (Dasboadh 17:3:11)

The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

(From *Day by Day With Bhagavan*)

19-7-46

Again, today, a visitor put questions: I do not understand how to make the enquiry “Who am I ?”

Bhagavan: Find out whence the “I” arises. Self-enquiry does not mean argument or reasoning, such as goes on when you say, “I am not this body, I am not the senses,” etc.; all that may also help, but it is not the enquiry. Watch and find out where in the body the “I” arises, and fix your mind on that.

Visitor: Will gayatri help?

Bhagavan: What is gayatri? It really means: “Let me concentrate on that which illumines all.” Dhyana really means only concentrating or fixing the mind on the object of dhyana. But meditation is our real nature. If we give up other thoughts, what remains is “I,” and its nature is dhyana or meditation or jnana, whichever we choose to call it. What is at one time the means later becomes the end; unless meditation or dhyana were the nature of the Self, it could not take you to the Self. If the means were not of the nature of the goal, it could not bring you to the goal.

21-7-46

In the afternoon the following two questions were put by Mr. Bhargava, an elderly visitor from Jhansi in U.P.:

(1) How am I to search for the “I” from start to finish?

(2) When I meditate, I reach a stage where there is a vacuum or void. How should I proceed from there?

Bhagavan: Never mind whether there are visions or sounds or anything else or whether there is a void. Are you present during all this or are you not? You must have been there even dur-

ing the void to be able to say that you experienced a void. To be fixed in that “you” is the quest for the “I” from start to finish. In all books on Vedanta, you will find this question of a void, or of nothing being left, raised by the disciple and answered by the Guru. It is the mind that sees objects and has experiences and that finds a void when it ceases to see and experience, but that is not “you.” You are the constant illumination that lights up both the experiences and the void. It is like the theatre light that enables you to see the theatre, the actors, and the play, while the play is going on, but also remains alight and enables you to say that there is no play on when it is all finished. Or there is another illustration. We see objects all around us, but, in complete darkness, we do not see them and we say, “I see nothing;” even then, the eyes are there to say that they see nothing. In the same way, you are there even in the void you mention.

You are the witness of the three bodies: the gross, the subtle, and the causal, and of the three states: waking, dream, and deep sleep, and of the three times: past, present, and future, and also of this void. In the story of the tenth man, when each of the ten counted and thought there were only nine, each one forgetting to count himself, there is a stage when they think one is missing and don’t know who it is, and that corresponds to the void. We are so accustomed to the notion that all that we see around us is permanent and that we are this body that, when all this ceases to exist, we imagine and fear that we also have ceased to exist.

Bhagavan also quoted verses 212 and 213 from *Vivekachudamani*, in which the disciple says: “After I eliminate the five sheaths as not-Self, I find that nothing at all remains,” and the Guru replied that the Self, or That by which all modifications (including the ego and its creatures) and their absence (that is the void) are perceived, is always there.

Then Bhagavan continued speaking on the subject and said: “The nature of the Self or “I” must be illumination. You perceive all modifications and their absence. How? To say that you get the illumination from another would raise the question how he got it, and there would be no end to the chain of reasoning. So, you, yourself, are the illumination. The usual illustration of this is the following: You make all kinds of sweets of various ingre-

dients and in various shapes, and they all taste sweet because there is sugar in all of them, and sweetness is the nature of sugar. And, in the same way, all experiences and the absence of them contain the illumination which is the nature of the Self. Without the Self, they cannot be experienced, just as, without sugar, not one of the articles you make can taste sweet.”

A little later, Bhagavan also said: “First, one sees the Self as objects, then, one sees the Self as void, then, one sees the Self as Self, only, in this last, there is no seeing, because seeing is being.”

Mr. Bhargava also said something about sleep, and this led Bhagavan to speak about sleep as follows:

What is required is to remain fixed in the Self always. The obstacles to that are distraction by the things of the world (including sense objects, desires, and tendencies), on the one hand, and sleep on the other. Sleep is always mentioned in books as the first obstacle to samadhi, and various methods are prescribed for overcoming it, according to the stage of evolution of the person concerned. First, one is enjoined to give up all distraction by the world and its objects or by sleep. But then it is said, for instance in the *Gita*, that one need not give up sleep entirely. Too much and too little are alike undesirable. One should not sleep at all during the daytime and even during the night restrict sleep to the middle portion, from about ten to two. But another method that is prescribed is not to bother about sleep at all. When it overtakes you, you can do nothing about it, so simply remain fixed in the Self or in meditation every moment of your waking life and take up the meditation again the moment you wake, and that will be enough. Then, even during sleep the same current of thought or meditation will be working. This is evident because, if a man goes to sleep with any strong thought working in his mind, he finds the same thought there when he wakes. It is of the man who does this with meditation that it is said that even his sleep is samadhi.



The Mind

Satsang, May 24, 2009

Om, Om, Om (Silence)

The Self is non-individualized, indivisible, Being-Consciousness-Bliss that is forever without misidentification and without modification. It is the Reality, which is one without anything else whatsoever. If individuality is assumed, and so long as it is assumed, there appears to be a mind, yet what is the mind?

Sri Bhagavan said that the mind is only a collection or bundle of thoughts. He also said that the primary thought upon which all other thoughts depend is the notion “I.” So, the form of the mind is the various thoughts; the various thoughts form, or are the substance of, as it were, of the mind’s form. If the thought forms were removed, what would remain of the mind?

None of the thoughts are capable of knowing themselves. They are known by something else that is not a thought. If we remain without inquiring into the “I,” assuming the thought-forms to be real and to be us, we appear to be bound. If we become aware of that which knows the thoughts, but is not a thought, here lies the doorway to Liberation, which is freedom from the imagined bondage. The forms of thought are known by something; that something is Consciousness. Apart from Consciousness, the thoughts cannot even appear, just as the images in a movie do not appear independent of the screen upon which they are projected. So, thoughts have no existence of their own, but depend utterly on the Consciousness that knows them. The Consciousness, which knows them, does not correspond to, or is not defined by, any of the forms of thought. Yet, not one thought can stand independent of the Consciousness. So, the only existence imaged as thought is the Consciousness, which is innately transcendent of thought. If we understand in this manner, we find ourselves free from thought.

The Knowledge of the Self is of the nature of pure Consciousness. It is not a thought-form. It is not a mode of

mind. It is quite beyond all of that. Similarly, it is not a state of mind, and it does not occur within the contexts of the states of minds, such as waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. Consciousness, which is really the Self, transcends the three states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep and is not contained within them, though it is the only substance of which they are made. Since it is the only substance of which they are made, of which the entirety of the mind is made, and because it is forever without modification, is there a mind? Do these states actually exist? What exists is the Consciousness of the real Self. To be eternal, Knowledge of the Self, which is Self-Realization, must be of the very same nature as the Self that is realized. So, if the Self is beyond any mode of mind and any state of mind, the Knowledge that is to be realized is also beyond any state of mind and beyond any mode of mind.

It is axiomatic that the end and the means must be of the same nature. Often, you have heard me say that the end itself appears as the means. That which is pure, absolute Knowledge appears as the inquiry, Self-inquiry, and this Self-inquiry is not a mode of mind. A mode of mind, however refined, can take one only so far. For Self-Realization, there must be this absolute Knowledge, which is invariable and utterly mind-transcendent. It is often described as that in which the mind is absorbed or that in which the mind is utterly destroyed without a trace. Such traceless destruction lies in the Realization of the perpetual Existence of the indivisible Consciousness, which also signifies the perpetual nonexistence of the "I" or the mind. The Knowledge, therefore, which constitutes the inquiry and the Realization of the Self, is not a form of thought, is not a particular thought, and is quite beyond a train of thought. It is quite beyond a mode of mind or any state of mind.

Similarly, it is beyond the scope of mental attention. If one assumes the mind exists, then, in the context of that assumption, one is told to turn the mind inward. Turning the mind inward, one comes to the real nature of the mind, which is pure Consciousness that is free of the mind. Within the context of the mind, one is told to focus and to pay attention to the Self, but how could the Self, which is always the Knower and never the known, be an object of attention or an object of concentration? Turning one's focus, one's attention, or one's concentration

inward bears some results. The fruit is due to the Knowledge-essence and not to any form of the illusory mind.

Sometimes, the mind is spoken of in terms of its various parts or aspects, such as manas, which means “mind,” and in this context, that aspect of the mind that contains all kinds of cognitions, buddhi, intellect, which seems to be endowed with the ability to discern, and chitta, which also means “mind,” but, in this context, may be taken to be memory, that which can not only remember or recall thoughts from the past, but also possesses the ability of the mind to be able to compare one state from the past with the present state now. The appearance of continuity of memory is called chitta, while buddhi manifests the actual discernment that discriminates as to which is better and which is not. Because of the light of Knowledge shining as discrimination, Adi Sankara said in *Atma Bodha*, Self-Knowledge, that the Self, or pure Consciousness, shines, but is reflected especially, or shines especially in the buddhi, in the intellect, for it is that which has the ability to discriminate.

If we trace this ability to discriminate, we find that it is of the Knowledge-essence and does not belong to the mind, or buddhi, however described, at all. If we assume that the mind has some knowing ability, this is the false combination of pure Consciousness with the forms of thought that constitute the mind. Those very thoughts have no existence independent of the Consciousness and so, in truth, do not exist at all. That which has no actual existence does not have the capacity for Self-Knowledge. The Self has the capacity of Self-Knowledge. The Knowledge is innate. It is of the perpetual shining of the Being-Consciousness-Bliss that all truly are.

If you misidentify with the mind or take the mind to be an existent entity, it will either appear to give you trouble in the form of it being an obstruction or it will seem as if you are situated within the mind and attempting to know the Self or Brahman. As long as that duality prevails, the Knowledge will not be realized, or, though it may shine sporadically, it will seem to fade as soon as the dualism reasserts itself. Self-Realization is said to be the destruction of mind, which includes the complete abandonment of the misidentification as being a mind or being a mental entity, the core of which, as the Maharshi stated, is the notion “I.” Non-existence of “I” is the nature of the Self.

Destruction of mind is the nature of Liberation. Turn the mind outward, and it becomes engrossed in its own imagination. Turn the mind inward, and its form dissolves. What remains is the pure Consciousness of the real Self.

Now, what is this “turning the mind inward”? It is the profound inquiry to know the Existence of the Self as it truly is. Such succeeds by the abandonment of the supposed identity of the one who so searches. The mind will never know the Self. As for the Self, it never has a mind. Thought passes, mental modes pass, states of mind pass, the attention given to any object passes, the attention given to anything else also passes, concentration and diffusion both pass--all pass---and the Consciousness remains unborn, undivided, and undying. What is your mind? Who seeks to know this? The mind, being unreal, knows nothing. The Self, alone being real, knows itself only.

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

Q.: Thank you very much for that discourse and the presence that continues. I would really like to discriminate between the grace of being in the presence of the sage who is transmitting that truth in the way that it was and, I feel, still goes on and two other scenarios. One is that in which the so-called mind is busy attending to something, but in a minimal, nearly egoless way, and the other one, in which one would have to say that there is entanglement of egoistic tendencies. These three different things are the difference between absorbing that discourse and being open to it and then noting that the mind is attending to something in a low-ego mode. I would like to see how those need not be any different at all.

N.: In what way do you perceive difference?

Q.: I do not see why they would have to be different.

N.: In what way are they different?

Q.: The Self is not being superimposed or defined by the functioning of the mind in that second case. It is sort of as innocent as the coursing of blood in the body. It is completely harmless receiving the transmission from the sage. The coursing of

the blood was not getting in the way at all. I can envision that the function of the mind in a low-ego mode could be just like that.

N.: Why just low? Why not no?

Q.: O.k. No is better.

N.: Where do you see the distinction?

Q.: I never felt as solidly supported in that second scenario as I felt and still feel in your presence and during that discourse.

N.: How do you determine what is presence? When are you in it, and when are you out of it?

Q.: The shining of Consciousness feels very, very solid as that discourse was transmitted and still feels solid thanks to that.

N.: Alright. Can you anticipate a time when it will no longer feel solid?

Q.: No, but if I wanted to play the game of personal history, I could recount times.

N.: In what is the personal history contained?

Q.: You said the chitta played a role there. So, it is another function that could either be invested in or allowed to remain harmless.

N.: Do you have functions?

Q.: I do not have to identify myself with that function any more than the blood.

N.: Do you possess functions? Do you have functions? Are you a functioning entity?

Q.: It now seems like an illusion of function because these are inanimate structures, thoughts, even if subtle. They have no function. They are illumined by Consciousness, and imagination ascribes function to them.

N.: If things inert do not have function, and if Consciousness, which is ever still and self-luminous, is quite beyond the very idea of function...

Q.: Beyond, but not less that functional.

N.: ...what are you talking about when you refer to “function”?

Q.: That would be an imaginary realm of being that does not exist.

N.: The idea that “I am the performer of action, subtle or gross,” is the characteristic of delusion. Describing it in eloquent terms does not make it any wiser. It is still action, and the confusion regarding oneself as the performer of action, with body, speech, or mind, should be done away with.

Q.: The horrible third scenario is when egoistic tendencies are at play, even attending to the same matter, instead of being egoless.

N.: In that context of egotism, is the idea of being a performer of action bigger or smaller?

Q.: Oh, it is rampant!

N.: So, this tells you, by your own experience, which direction in which to head.

Q.: Yes, I am set on which direction, but I am just curious as to what is going on there.

N.: Misidentification. Ignorance.

Q.: So, it is an appraisal of what is real that is way off the mark.

N.: When you are caught up in egotistical thoughts, can that be called on the mark?

Q.: Is it an incorrect conclusion in which what has been taken to be real is what is not real.

N.: That is the characteristic of all ignorance. What is not the Self is taken to be the Self, what is utterly unreal is taken to be real, and, in its outer, grossest manifestation, what is not happiness is taken to be happiness. If the idea of being the performer of action is part and parcel of the delusion, you will not want to carry that with you, in any form, into wisdom.

Q.: I would not want to take credit for it?

N.: Yes, you would not want to carry the idea of being the actor, even if you call it functioning rather than acting. You would not want to carry that idea, because it would be a new eloquent term for the same old tendency, which is a form of blatantly manifested egotism.

Q.: To claim to be the actor seems similar to claiming that thoughts have some power. Both require a thought to state that.

N.: Both require a thought, and both are based upon absurdity. To claim that thought has power, when it is obviously you who emphasize the thought and give power to it or say that it is real, the idea of “it stands on it’s own, it is real, and it has power,” is plainly absurd and flies against all experience. Likewise, is the idea of being the doer of action. As you are not the body, how can you possibly be the doer of action? As the infinite Consciousness, God, does everything, how could your actions alone be done by you? It is absurd.

Q.: Those have to be thoughts, too. In other words, that thoughts do anything has to be a thought.

N.: Yes, it is only a thought and not Reality.

Q.: Consciousness could not shine with the conclusion that thoughts have power; only a thought could say that.

N.: In that context, conclusions are arrived at by the mind. Consciousness is beyond all of that. It is conclusive in its Existence as itself. It does not think, it does not draw conclusions, and it does not drawn erroneous conclusions. That which knows the correct and the incorrect, the knowledge and the ignorance, is the true Knowledge, and that is pure Consciousness.

Another Q.: I really enjoyed the discourse. I did not understand a part of it. You were talking about the means and the end being identical, and that makes sense. However, I make this mistake. I have insight into this, but I have not burned up the ignorance. I repeat the ignorance over and over again. I am reminded of the depth of Reality and experience it, but I do not burn up that ignorance.

N.: Only because you do not see it fully as ignorance. Should ignorance be seen completely as ignorance, you can not retain it. Only if, and to the degree that, it seems to possess some kind of validity will you retain it. You are Reality. You are the Truth, and you always want to know the Truth. When something is utterly false and you know it thoroughly to be false, you do not adhere to it.

Q.: I am considering the ignorance to be some sort of reality.

N.: You are regarding it as true—such as it is what is, it is the way you are, it is the way life is—but that ignorance is easily revealed as ignorance and ceases to exist simply by the deep examination, the inquiry: “Is this so?” “Who am I?”

Q.: So, when you say that I should see ignorance as ignorance, and I am inquiring, there is no half step, and there is no partial seeing.

N.: There may be, but Reality just is. It is not more real at one time and less real at another. You are not more the Self at one time and less the Self at another. In terms of insight, we can speak of full and partial and so forth and so on, but as for true Knowledge, or pure Consciousness, itself, how could that be partial or full? It is fullness beyond all measurement of fullness. Do you exist partially?

Q.: That does not make any sense.

N.: You do not exist more at one time and less at another.

Q.: There is no opposite.

N.: No opposite and no division.

Q.: So there is no such thing as ability and inability. In another sense, though, there is the recognition of what drives, motivates, and helps one to destroy ignorance. I have not burned up that ignorance, so there is a mistake that is being made.

N.: This is what was being said earlier. Because you do not see the ignorance as ignorance but regard it as true or valid in some way or another, you retain it or adhere to it. If you can per-

ceive that it is ignorance and only ignorance, it ceases to exist from that moment on.

Q.: O.k. It is as simple as that.

N.: If the ignorance, which, in reality, has no existence whatsoever but is like imagination, is destroyed, the innate Knowledge of the Self shines. It is never partial and is never unsteady, just as your Existence is never unsteady and never partial.

Q.: That entire ignorance is not steady because it can not hold up. It seems to hold up when it is imagined, but that imagination does not even hold up.

N.: Does it hold up, or do you hold it up?

Q.: I am the one supporting it, because it is all generated from my belief in it. I say happiness is there or some sort of reality is there.

N.: It is a testimony to the power of the belief that it can even make the unreal appear as if real. The belief must have some very powerful source.

Q.: It seems that the source pervades everything, but it does not assert itself. If I lay something on top of it, it will not assert itself over it.

N.: Alright, who is the one who does that? How does he come forth distinct from the source, that is, the Reality of the Self?

Q.: By non-investigation. Because there is a belief in something other, it seems that it is there. Perhaps, that is believing in ignorance after the fact.

N.: Who is it that comes forth or appears to be born and to grasp, to adhere to, to uphold, etc., the ignorance? Who generates the ignorance and then becomes confused and trapped within it? Who is that?

Q.: It is obviously not the real Self, as you keep saying. How can the Self have ignorance because it does not generate ignorance?

N.: So, is there a second one? Is there a second to the One without a second? (laughter) Is your existence divided, so that there is a true Self, of the nature of infinite Being-Consciousness-Bliss, and a second self, an individualized one? Is your existence divided?

Q.: It is never experienced as divided. It is only thought to be divided.

N.: Ignorance appears only in the forms of thought and imagination and is never the actual experience. It is never the actual Existence. If you can perceive that it is only the forms of thought and nothing but that, apply the instruction with which the satsang commenced about the mind and its destruction or dissolution.

Q.: Once I enter into thought, there is a belief in a world and a body, if it is not investigate.

N.: Non-inquiry leads to all kinds of imagined differentiation, from which come all kinds of bondage and suffering. Inquiry dissolves all of that.

Q.: I have tried this so many times and, in a sense, have been unsuccessful, but, in a certain sense, there is less belief in ignorance. Some ignorance is destroyed in the process.

N.: It is because of the Knowledge-essence, which is what makes any practice successful. Moreover, how are you measuring success or the lack of it? Again, are there two selves that one has to reach across a chasm to another? What is the distance you are trying to traverse? Is the existence of the Self missing so that it needs to be obtained anew? Or is it not always existing?

Q.: Because it is our self, it is never really missing.

N.: Consequently, not a drop of practice ever goes in vain. Even the least bit of practice has its benefit.

Q.: So that is why they said intense, fiery practice, tapas, in what we were reading Friday.

N.: The Maharshi quoted a passage that said tapas is Brahman, because what appears as the means is, itself, the end. That is the mind-transcendent Knowledge. Practice is not per-

formed by the ego, for the ego does not really exist. It is simply an illusion to be abandoned. It is a false assumption. So, practice can not be by the ego. What was described at the commencement of this satsang is why, in essence, the practice is that of pure Knowledge and is not within the context of the mind, though we casually say, "Turn the mind within." What actually happens when you inquire, when you turn the mind within? Is the experience and the result a mode of mind or a state of mind or something else? If you were the mind you could speak in terms of success or failure, partial or whole, but are you the mind? That which knows the innate freedom from the mind cannot be the mind.

Q.: Truly deep spirituality, then, does not assert one way or the other because there would be no need to assert something that is innate or to assert something that is totally not innate. That must be why they say the best recourse is silence. The mind is just not present in that case.

N.: What is the mind?

Q.: It is the individual, the concoction of the individual thought.

N.: Then, what is the individual? For the "I"-less true "I," the Real ever is and the unreal never is. This singular truth is indicated in silence. (silence)

[Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English of verses from the Tejobindu Upanishad.]

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om



From Yoga Vasishtha

(Continued from previous issues)

3:97:24

As long as you, Rama, are un-awakened, you are instructed, for your divine awakening (Knowledge, avabodha) to the Truth, by my inventing (forming in the imagination) the three spaces.

The space, the mind-space, and such are born from the stained Consciousness-space [and are] just as a conflagration that destroys by its fire and as a mirage in the desert.

Consciousness woven into the tarnished (soiled) form of the mind (mind-ness) [becomes] the one who has incurred (undergone, arrived at) [that]. (Or, Having arrived at the state of being the mind, Consciousness has a tarnished form.) It produces (fashions) the three worlds of Indra's net (illusion, magic) and confounded itself.

“The state of the tarnished mind, which consists of (is of the nature of) Consciousness, is the vision of the truth”—this is certainly by the forsaking (exclusion) of knowledge. It is just as, in the oyster shell, there is not silver but for those without knowledge. (or, It is just as, in the oyster shell, that there is not, indeed, silver [is understood] by those with knowledge.) By stupidity, bondage is here; by the strength of Knowledge is Liberation.

From what Consciousness and whence is risen (born) the mind, which is [only] somewhat, indeed? For Liberation, one should connect with (yoke) the eternal Self with diligence (with effort, zealously, carefully) faultlessly.

Conjoined with (lit., in) the Supreme, the mind should be pure and without tendencies (vasana-s). Thereupon, indeed, devoid of imaginings, it proceeds to (becomes) the Self, Raghava.

The mind adhering to (depending on) this is all, the universe of the nature of the unmoving and the moving. From the mind, alas, Rama, manifest [both] bondage and Liberation.

3:99:44

For as long as you live, and without blame, you should not stray from the Truth that appears from the Sastras (the Truth of the Scriptures). Equal, for the tendencies of the mind in the passions and such, indeed, is it to be with the silence of the best of sages. At last, the holy of holiest (the purifying of the purifying) that is the position of the Unborn, which is cool (free from passion, calm), is attained. With that abidance, one will not grieve again, even though a great calamity [may] happen.

For one who has approached (arrived) from the position (abode) of the Supreme Self, this mind is of Brahman. It is not of the nature of That, yet it is of the nature of That, like the wave and the ocean and such. (or: This mind approached (arrived) from Brahman, from the abode of the Supreme Self. It is not of the nature of That, yet it is of the nature of That, like the wave and the ocean and such.)

The mind of the awakened ones, Rama, is Brahman alone, here (in this case), indeed, and not different. The wave is not other than the ocean for [those with] the understanding (lit., understandings) of the entirety of (the universal) water.

Rama, the mind of the un-awakened ones is the cause of wandering in samsara. Disregarding the entirety of the water, there is the difference of water and wave.

3:100:5

The omnipotent Supreme Brahman is eternal, perfectly full, and immutable (imperishable). It (the mind) is not That and does not exist in That, which is the extensive Self.



Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

*Om Sat-Guru Ramana,
You, who are Existence-Consciousness-Bliss,
Om Sat-Guru Ramana,
Most excellent, silent Guru,
Om Sat-Guru Ramana,
The boat that safely carries the devotee,
Passing by the jagged rocks of egoity,
Passing by the shoals of individuality,
Passing by the reefs of mind and personality,
Who safely and securely ferries His devotees
To the ever-present shore of Self-Knowledge—
The abode of Peace, Bliss, and Truth,
Om Sat-Guru Ramana.*

by Tim Frank



From the Temple Archives

[This is a message from a person intending to write a book about surrender and who wished to ask his own questions, too. Nome's response follows.]

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

Hi Nome,

I am working on a book that focuses on surrender. It seems that most spiritual and mystical paths incorporate the act of surrendering. This act appears to play a key role in one's awaken-

ing and spiritual growth. I have tried to surrender hundreds of times over the past twenty years, only to be met with frustration, because I did not realize until recently that surrendering is not a conscious act of the mind, rather it is the act of the ego/mind letting go, giving up and surrendering. Under these circumstances, the ego lets go and enlightenment/awakening/healing occurs. I wonder if you would agree with that statement.

I had an inspiration to create a book of spiritual teachers from various faiths and spiritual paths and ask them the same five questions regarding surrendering. The book would be a compilation of teachings on surrender. The reader will experience surrender in a myriad of ways and, most importantly, find a path or practice that will bring them (sic) to surrender.

I am inspired to reach out to you to seek your participation. I would be honored if you would consider sharing in this book. Your life's work has inspired me in many ways and will inspire countless others through this book. In addition to your contribution on surrender, your section will include your bio, a listing of your books, DVDs, CD's, contact information so that readers who are moved can contact you or your organization.

Here are the five questions:

1. How would you define surrender? Who or what is one surrendering to, in your opinion? God, Universe, Self, Soul, What Is, present moment?

2. Is there a practice/methodology to surrender that one can follow that does not cause suffering? I.e., some paths try to create madness so that the ego surrenders. Is there a joyful methodology?

3. What happens when you surrender?

4. What is the ego or mind? What's holding on?

5. Is there a practice/methodology you follow that would create surrender? If so, please share!

Thank you so much for considering my request and for your teachings.

With Love,

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Sri Ramana Maharshi has given spiritual instruction (as found in *Origin of Spiritual Instruction* and elsewhere) that states the goal, or purpose, of the path of devotion and that of the path of knowledge are the same. Adi Sankara has elucidated the same in *Vivekachudamani* and other texts. As Self-inquiry constitutes the essential practice in Knowledge, so surrender does for devotion. In practice, there is no division between them. The result is Self-Knowledge, or Self-Realization as we often call it.

In answer to your questions:

Surrender is the dissolution of the ego, which is the false assumption of existing as an individual entity, and the delusive tendencies (vasanas) that appear as its forms. Surrender is only to God, which is the Self. That which is known as God in the context of the universe and which is known as the witnessing Consciousness in relation to the mind, is realized to be the non-dual Self upon profound inquiry or complete surrender. That alone is real, and That alone exists. It is infinite and eternal, and Realization of it is of the same nature. Surrender should not be misinterpreted to mean some transient emotional change or temporary placement of mental attention on some objective thing such as the immediate sensory perceptions, a fleeting moment of time, etc.

The path to Self-Realization, whether practiced as inquiry or surrender, is completely joyful. It is sweet in the beginning, middle, and end. Ignorance alone is the cause of suffering. Surrender, or inquiry, destroys the ignorance by revealing it to be only ignorance. Both the delusion and its effects are found to be illusory. The Reality, which is of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss remains. That which is the end manifests as the means.

In surrender, attachments and misidentifications are abandoned, and happiness, the sense of reality and identity return to their source, which is the one Self, or God. The false notions of “I” and “mine” compose ignorance, bondage and suffering. Absence of “I” and “mine” is real Knowledge, Liberation, and limitless happiness. Self-inquiry eliminates the “I” and, with it, the “mine,” while surrender eliminates the “mine,” and, with it, the “I.”

If one keenly discerns the nature of the ego or mind, there is found to be no such existent thing as an ego or a mind. Or it may be said that the individual “I” is Being misperceived and the mind is Consciousness misperceived. However, who is it that so misperceives? It cannot be the true absolute Self; nor are there two selves. If you inquire in such a manner, there is no misperception or one who possesses such.

One need not wait for or do something else previous to surrender. What has been indicated above can be practiced even now.

I hope that you find the above spiritually helpful, whether it finds a place in your book or not. If you decide to include it, it may benefit the reader to see the rest of this letter, as well. All the information about SAT, books, CDs, DVDs, downloads, etc., can be found at www.SATRamana.org. If you are going to include a list, you may find it beneficial to check this site close to your publication date, as there are new books about to be printed and new recordings being released frequently.

May you ever abide in That, as That, to which all surrender in one form or another, which is in truth that which all are, which is the Innate, the unborn and imperishable, reaching which one does not return to samsara again, finding which one knows what is to be known, and merging with which one abides in happiness and peace that never end.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[What follows are a series of responses to several lengthy messages from a spiritual seeker. The questions raised, difficulties encountered, and experiences had by the seeker can be inferred from the answers.]

March 22, 2009

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

As you discern, peace and stupor are not to be equated. The former is only a mode of tamas guna. Sattva guna is said to be the quality of the meditating mind. Self-inquiry reveals the Self to be gunatita (beyond the qualities).

The condition of the body is determined by many factors. They are unreliable and transient. The Self is bodiless and remains the same whether the body is still or moving, loose or rigid, strong or weak, well or sick, alive or dead.

Dullness in practice is due to lack of inquiry, especially manifesting as the conjuring of delusion and adherence to the same. The latter manifests as the illusion of continuity of ignorance. Here are two points that ensure spiritual practice is sparkling. Be sure to actually inquire, questioning your very sense of identity. Secondly, included in the inquiry, destroy vasanas, as the Maharshi has instructed. Vasanas are tendencies. They are the forms of the assumed ego. Examining your own mind and experiences, hunt for tendencies and destroy them by inquiry. Even the decision to do so will awaken one from the dream of ignorance, and actual practice even more so. You can see this demonstrated, or at least alluded to, in some of the dialogues recorded in Self-Knowledge and in some of the satsang transcripts that appear in *Reflections*. One must, oneself, practice in such a manner.

May you always abide in That which, though ever the same, is ever fresh and fascinating, and realize that to be your very Self.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

Sunday, April 5, 2009

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your messages.

Compassion initially derives from the perception that the ignorance that creates the suffering or the karma for and by someone else bears similarities, perhaps, to the ignorance and actions of one's own mind, speech, and body. Upon deeper

inquiry, it is born of the recognition of the needlessness of suffering and the unreal nature of the ignorance that is its cause.

Are there two selves that one should gain or lose the other? To think the “I” will stay in or step out of the “I”-less Self still includes the false assumption that is to be abandoned. Inquiry, steady, continuous, and deep, nonobjective and complete, accomplishes this in the revelation of the one Self without a second.

Destruction of vasanas is wise. Perseverance fueled by the desire for Liberation is very beneficial.

In response to your question about vegetarian diet: Sri Ramana gave very few specific directions regarding actions, for his instruction is of Self-Knowledge. He did, though, advise “sattvic food in moderate quantities.” The same is standard in numerous other teachings, texts, among the yogis, etc. Sattvic food is defined as traditional vegetarian diet (includes dairy foods), in which the lives of no creatures are taken. The reasons for this are multiple. First, since very ancient times, it has been known that the quality of the food affects the quality of the mind. Some present day health practitioners may be arriving at a similar conclusion. Second, the karma of taking lives is there, whether one recognizes such or denies it. Third, the reason for carnivorous diet among humans is often due merely to desire (habit, supposed convenience, etc.), and not actual need of that for nourishment. Fourth, considering the body to be a temple, consideration is given regarding what is offered in it. Fifth, there is the matter of integrity. Would you actually slay the cow or other animal yourself, or would you not, but will pay someone else (the butcher in the slaughterhouse) to do the deed? These can be considered in relation to this topic.

The Self, itself, though, is not a body, does not consume food, is beyond life and death, is untouched by a mind, is beyond all karma, is desireless, is all in all yet beyond all, is actionless, and is the Self that dwells in the hearts of all as their very Being.

Consume a steady diet of inquiry so that you are full of Knowledge.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

Thursday, April 9, 2009

Dear . . . ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your messages.

As you know, the Self is described as Sat-Cit-Ananda (Being-Consciousness-Bliss). These are not three parts or aspects but three terms combined that refer to one, indivisible Reality. In an Upanishad, the same is described as Satyam-Jnanam-Anantam, which means the True, the Knowledge, the Infinite. In other texts, it is referred to as Satyam-Sivam-Sundaram, the True, the Good, and the Beautiful. Whatever there is that is true, good, and beautiful, in whatever manner, wherever and whenever, it is the Self that thus shines forth. It is that which is dear in all and which is dear for all. It is that which is loved. When realized conclusively, love exists as the indivisibility of Being and has no opposite.

It is wise to continue to persevere in the questioning as to the source of happiness until peaceful detachment, unmoved by craving and aversions, expectations and fears, is constant and steady. The true Self is always unattached, ever free, and bliss itself. Your vairagya (detachment, dispassion) and jnana (knowledge) manifesting as deep inquiry are simply the clarification regarding your actual identity. Free of misidentification, the Self is the perfect fullness. Inquire, inquire, inquire. Like a light, there will be no darkness for you.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

Saturday, April 18, 2009

Dear . . . ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your messages. Focused, intense meditation to know the Self yields freedom from the illusory limitations. This is to be regarded as true concentrated meditation and not the mere riveting of mental attention or the com-

bating with thoughts. One should neither remain with the thoughts nor fight with them, as if they were real entities or as if they had any validity apart from the belief posited in them, but one should inquire and know himself in thought-transcendent Knowledge.

All the happiness ever desired and all the love for which you have ever yearned exist within you. Finding it, you become delighted at heart and ever peaceful. This Truth is to be realized in all its perfect fullness, whether you are alone or in a relationship. You may wish to refer again to the earlier instruction about depth of love and egolessness. That advice reveals both what is within and also the way to relate.

Yes, though written as an autobiographical description at the request of the President of Sri Ramanasramam, “Timeless Presence” is actually, for the most part, much more a description of realizing that is “samanya,” common to all or universal, a dissolution of the falsely assumed individual and an expression of what an Upanishad declares, in the description of how the ancient sages realized, to be like the tracks of the birds in the sky.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

Sunday, April 26, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your messages.

You certainly will be warmly welcome at satsangs and retreats. Some find retreats very beneficial because of the continuous focus during all the days of the retreat.

Yes, Meister Eckhart’s sermons and letters glow with transcendent clarity. Indeed, at SAT, a woman named Shanti, who was with us for many years until her bodily death a few years ago, translated into English all of his writings from the original middle-high German. The translated material remains in manuscript form at present.

May you abide as that which is of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, realized by profound inquiry by those endowed with sincerity of purpose, equanimity, detachment toward all things in the passing dream of the world, devotion to Truth, humility, perseverance, and the desire for Liberation from all of the imagined bondage.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

Friday, May 8, 2009

Dear . . . ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your messages.

The Self, unborn and imperishable, is always the same. One who knows the Self is the Self that is known, for that is one without any other.

Therefore, inquiring to know the Self, remain as the Self without misidentifications or attachments. The Bliss of Being is the perfect fullness, and this Self alone is real. Therefore, it is natural to abide unaffected by pleasure and pain, gain and loss, good reputation or defamation, acceptance or rejection, and all the other dualities imagined within the context of the false individual.

The Self is all in all, at all times, yet, in the Self, which is homogeneous Being, there is nothing to be conceived as all.

For your earnest aspiration to realize the Self, there is illimitable Grace. It is always present; one need only be aware of it.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

Wednesday, May 20, 2009

Dear . . . ,

Om Namō Bhgavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The essential inquiry is summed up, in English, as “Who am I?” However, they may be phrased, the various spiritual instructions, inclusive of that which is phrased as questions, have the purpose of coaxing the seeker to actually inquire so that the Self is realized conclusively as it truly is. They do not represent other practices.

The inquiry is of the essence of Knowledge. It transcends thought, mental attention, sensory perception, and action. If you understand and adhere to the instruction expressed in *Who am I?*, your efforts will bear fruit. In that scripture, the Maharshi’s instructions succinctly, fully explain the nature of happiness, the nature of the Self, what the mind is and how to transcend thought, the nature of the world, detachment, Self-inquiry and much more.

Inquire, and, in the Knowledge of the Self, repose in Bliss.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

Thursday, May 28, 2009

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Grace is ever present. Whenever the ego subsides, and to the degree it subsides, Grace is experienced, If the non-existence of the ego is realized, Grace is found to be the ever-existent Self.

Yes, prasad means Grace. It can also mean bright clarity. It is also a term to designate the blessed food that has been offered to God or to a spiritual teacher that is then consumed by the devotee. Even other blessed items, such as bhasma (sacred ash) and Kunkum (vermillion powder) are sometimes spoken of as prasad.

You may find that contemplation upon “what is present” still includes the non-discernment concerning happiness, identity, and reality. The temporary respite such offers is due to the reduction of thoughts, including those constituting the emotions. That result is not permanent and lacks the immense scope of actual Self-inquiry. Some familiarity with scriptures shows a

noticeable absence of mention of that mental mode as a means to Liberation. It is not harmful or obstructive; it is just not sufficiently deep. The Knowledge-essence is that which enables any practice to work as well as it does. This Knowledge-essence composes the inquiry and also causes devotion to shine.

The discrimination that regards as real only that which is eternal, without beginning or end and free of interruption, is wise. Being-Consciousness-Bliss is the very nature of the Self. This is timeless, free of the past, the present, and the future. This is nonobjective and absolutely undifferentiated. You may find it beneficial to read pages 291-293 in *Self-Knowledge*. The detailed commentary on verse 15 of Sri Ramana Maharshi's *Saddarshanam* as contained in *Saddarsanam and An Inquiry in to the Revelation of Truth and Oneself*, when it becomes available in about 8 weeks, may also yield more clarity regarding this.

May you ever abide as That, realizing which one is happiness, itself, and which leaves nothing else to be desired. It is the perfect fullness.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

Monday, June 8, 2009

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your recent messages.

It is wise to continue to distinguish the eternal from the non-eternal, disidentifying and remaining detached from the latter so that the former is revealed as the very nature of your Being.

Ardent inquiry to know the Self as transcendent of the mind, along with a keen cognizance of life and death, eliminates *tamas*. Awareness of the precious opportunity for Liberation and deep devotion also bring one out of inertia.

Yes, knowledge of happiness being within frees one from *rajas*.

Knowledge of the Self beyond all states and modes even transcends *sattva*.

May you abide firmly in the Knowledge of the Self, full or bliss and peace.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This message came from a Ramana devotee who is frequently at Sri Ramanasramam.]

Saturday, May 23, 2009

Dear sir,

I attended the Maha Puja at Ramanasramam last Monday 18th.

I came across a person whom I helped when he came to CMC Hospital, but he Did not recognize me and smiled at me. But I went and asked him. This hurts and I brood in my mind.

My colleague's daughter got more marks relatively. This, too, hurts my mind.

This does not affect me, and I do not even care. Why do these things affect my mind?

Why does Ramana fail to come to my rescue? Though the matter is nothing, these things brood in my mind.

With regards,

Yours in Sri Ramana,

Dear Sri . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

When you help someone, the joy in doing so derives from the indivisibility of the Self. That transcends the body and the mind and is free from the idea of a "person." It does not make any difference whether you receive appreciation or not, whether the person helped recognizes the fact or you or not. The joy is in the love that motivates you to help.

Similarly, it does not matter what is achieved or left unachieved. Inquire as the Maharshi instructs and abandon the

false notion of being the performer of any action. As you define yourself, so do you conceive of others. Know yourself as the Self by relinquishing, through inquiry, the false definitions attributed to the Self. Thus, you will be at peace.

Similar is it with family relations. By Bhagavan's Grace, strive to realize your unborn nature. Then, you have no relations, though you are everyone. That is, attachment vanishes, and the blissful Existence of the Self remains.

Sri Ramana never fails. He has even brought you to the present point so that you can ask these questions. As Ramana states in *Who am I?*, the disciple, for his part, must follow the path shown by the Guru. The brooding in the mind remains or returns only so long as you continue with that particular form of ignorance. When the ignorance is destroyed, peace shines. That which shines as peace then exists always. Therefore, there is no necessity to continue with such delusion. If you continue with the pursuit of what the Maharshi has taught, a time will come when you see that none of your ideas are true and the mind does not exist. Grace is ever present, just as the Self is ever-existent.

If you surrender all to Him, this will bring the same fruit.

You are fortunate to be at the Asramam. You are very fortunate to even know of Sri Ramana. You are blessed and fortunate beyond all measure to be able to practice according to His instruction, for in this are to be found liberation from all of the imagined bondage and the Realization of the Supreme Truth.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[This message was from the same devotee of Sri Ramana who is located in southern India.]

Thursday, June 4, 2009

Dear sir,

Last year, my daughter got through successfully in her higher secondary. She (and I, too) is interested in studying medicine. She was selected for graduate nursing course. In that batch, certain students entered with poor marks. She is now continuing

with nursing course. As a rule, she is not supposed to appear again for medical entrance. Is it the will of God? At certain times, when these thoughts pass through my mind, I am depressed.

As per Gita, is it the will of god?

Yours in Sri Ramana,

Dear Sri . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Yes, all happens by the power of God and is ultimately for the highest good. Since all rests in God, we should, in our devotion, always acknowledge that fact and carry no attachment to anything of this illusory world. One who rests in God is absorbed in God and, having lost the falsely assumed separate individuality, remains undifferentiated from God. The happiness of that can never be disturbed.

Bhagavan cares for all. Rest in the knowledge that He knows what to do and when and how best to do it. Thus, the cause of suffering vanishes.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[These are two messages from an aspirant in India who met Nome in Bangalore in the mid 1990's. Nome's response follows.]

Sunday, April 26, 2009

Namaste.

Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya!

In the normal meditation that we practice, we remember the Lord and continue our practice. This is very beneficial because, as Sri ARN also reminds us, the remembrance of the Sadguru makes the Grace start functioning on our meditation.

The mind is nothing but the food we supply it with. The

more we are turned toward the Lord better is the way we can meditate. The ability for the thoughts or the tamasic state like sleep or dullness is also not allowed to overtake one by the power of the Grace, by reminding ourselves of Grace or the Lord Himself, which becomes part of devotion.

I think one might have learned the first lessons when he recognizes that he can disassociate himself from the thoughts and the ability not to allow them to take over the mind. Then, the meditation flows.

In this way when the ego comes out, we ask the “Who am I?” and then again the mind subsides.

I felt like sharing this so that I may get even more suggestions or hints on practice of meditation, and I am just a beginner on the way.

Yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Saturday, 25 April, 2009

Namaste Sri Nome,

Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya.

As I say every time, I continue to practice. But activity takes over me after this. I am not surrendering my work to the Lord. But I hear things will get favorable by Grace alone and this will help me to seek Liberation. You always advise me to not bemoan myself.

I do not know if I can tell you that I am in difficulty. Will this be for my entire current life (birth)?

I am taking liberty in asking this question since I thought I may try asking this to a Jnani. Will external worldly issues be dealt with my own effort? I will be very happy if you can help me with this answer. If you can say, please give your wise counsel.

I was extremely reluctant to ask this question.

With Yours in Bhagavan,

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste.

By the Grace of the Sadguru, one is even able to commence meditation. By this same Grace, the meditation deepens. By this same Grace, the meditation reaches the zenith of perfection. Sri A. R. Natarajan knew fully the infinite extent and eternal nature of this Grace. In highest truth, Bhagavan, Grace, and the Self are identical.

Yes, remember Him, the Self, speak of Him, listen about Him and read of Him, think of Him, devote yourself to Him, contemplate Him, rely on Him, reflect on His spiritual instruction, deeply meditate upon that, Him, and, most importantly, inquiring “Who am I?” abide absorbed in Him, the Self, as the Self.

Self-inquiry not only causes the mind to subside temporarily, but also permanently in the realization of the nonexistence of the mind. Such is Self-Knowledge.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[Another response to a seeker who had sent several messages expressing anxiety concerning health difficulties and relationships.]

June 25, 2009

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your messages.

In the realization that the Self is not the body is found immense freedom and peace. The body is not the Self and, therefore, one should not misidentify with it. The body, though, is a temple, and should be treated accordingly. The body is a transient image in an unreal dream. The body is also to be regarded as an instrument to be used for divine service. The

body is mere, inert matter. The body's lifetime is a precious opportunity not to be wasted. What pertains to a body is of no lasting significance. The body, itself, is a wondrous manifestation of the Supreme. One should not misidentify, and one should know the Self.

Better than oscillating between *tamas* and *rajas*, inertia and agitation, is steady inquiry in quest of the Self. If there are problems with the health of the body, better than dully pursuing previous habits and engaging in repetitive anxiety in the mind is to learn and discover how to care for your temple, your instrument, while liberating yourself from the tendency to misidentify with it.

Several times, you have described your worry about acceptance and the fear of rejection. They are two sides of the same idea. No one and nothing can give you what is innately yours, which is the happiness and love that you seek. When you finally look within and discover the treasure of Bliss-Consciousness, which is your very Being, you will see how needless was the worry and how false were the fears. Growing in wisdom within and thus attaining detachment from worldly illusions, you will joyfully comprehend the dissolution of bondage. Knowing your nature beyond the notion of existing as a person, you will find the perfect fullness, the infinite and the eternal. By profound inquiry to know yourself, you must discern the ignorant concepts for what they are, and, being concerned with the Reality rather than the miniscule imaginings surrounding an unreal ego, become absorbed in the real Self.

May you always abide in the Knowledge of the immutable Self and thus be ever happy at heart.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome



Our Hindu Heritage

Hinduism is known as Sanatana Dharma

Sanatana means everlasting, ancient or eternal. Dharma means Truth, teaching, righteousness. Dharma connotes that which supports the universe and effectively means any path of spiritual discipline which leads to God. It is a spiritual discipline that governs all that leads to God. Sanatana Dharma is Eternal Truth.

In whatever way a Hindu defines the goal of life, there are several methods (yogas) that sages have taught for reaching that goal. One of the major texts explaining the yogas is the *Bhagavad Gita*. Its philosophical and historical basis is the Vedas, specifically the Upanishads. The yogas one can follow to achieve the spiritual goal of life include:

Bhakti Yoga (the path of love and devotion)

Karma Yoga (the path of selfless action)

Raja Yoga (the path of meditation)

Jnana Yoga (the path of wisdom)

An individual may prefer one or more yogas over others, according to his or her inclination and understanding. Practice of one yoga does not exclude others. Many schools believe that the different yogas naturally blend into and aid other yogas. For example, the practice of Jnana Yoga, is thought to inevitably lead to pure love (the goal of Bhakti Yoga), and vice versa. Ultimately, the path of Jnana Yoga (the path of Advaita Vedanta), which leads one to the goal in life (Self-Knowledge), in essence, includes all four yogas.

Understanding castes & triad of bodies in nonduality

According to tradition, Hindu society is divided into four castes based upon heredity. They are: Brahmin which is learned, priestly; Kshatriya which is warrior, statesman; Vaisya which is merchant; Sudra which is laborer. However, in Vedanta which usually negates caste, there is an interior interpretation of the

“four castes.” According to this interpretation, everyone’s experience encompasses the “four castes.” These four castes align with the triad of bodies. The Brahmana (Brahmin) is the one who knows Brahman (pure Knowledge). The Causal body is the Kshatriya because it is the destroyer of the following two bodies and is enthroned as the one who rules over them. The subtle body is the Vaisya for it conducts business with the world through the senses, prana, mind, & intellect. The gross body is the Sudra, laboring in servitude to the subtle body. Once Brahman is reached, one does not allow even the shadow of ignorance to fall upon him. He no longer becomes “polluted” by the illusion of the triad of bodies and considers them as “untouchable” (never to be touched by him again). In light of this interpretation, the Knower of the Self is beyond all the castes, bodies, and divisions, even the designation of being a “Brahmin.”

Sadguru (Sat-guru) means True Guru

In Hindu tradition, it is considered precious to be born a human being. Even as a human being, rare is it to have the opportunity to engage in spiritual practice. Rarer still is it to be in the presence of a Self-Realized Sage. Rarest of all is to be graced with the precious fortune of meeting and becoming initiated by one’s Sadguru. To have a Sadguru is considered fundamental for Self-Realization. In the presence of one’s Sadguru, Knowledge flourishes, sorrow diminishes and joy wells up spontaneously. The Sadguru shows the Truth to the disciple by silence, spiritual instruction, example, and other means.

When the disciple is ripe for initiation (diksha), it may take place in a variety of forms, including being given a mantra that has been empowered by the Sadguru, initiation through touch, through look, or in silence (mauna).

Sri Ramana said, “Mauna diksha is the highest form of initiation and includes the other forms. There must be subject-object relationship established in the other dikshas. Unless these two are there how is the one to look at the other or touch him? Mauna diksha will purify the individual in every way and establish him in the Reality.” He said, “Mauna diksha changes the hearts of all.”

Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj said, “Only those who are lucky enough to receive the blessings of the Guru, who is the Self, can escape from this illusion by right efforts.” “This Liberation is possible only through the teaching of the Sadguru. Therefore, have faith in the Guru and do exactly as told by Him.”

In highest Truth, Sadguru is the nature of the Self and may manifest in any form including that of the formless Self.



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, organizing retreats, providing meals at retreats, cleaning the temple, arranging flowers; 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 Prasad after satsang, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Stan Rice: providing spiritual bookmarks and pamphlets for the bookstore; Raman Muthukrishnan: running the bookstore including mail order service, maintaining the website, providing Prasad after satsang; Sangeeta Muthukrishnan: helping with the bookstore mail order, organizing things around the temple and providing meals at retreats; Wimala Brown: providing meals at retreats and Prasad after satsang; Jennifer Birnbach: providing Prasad 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: providing play time at any time for anyone who wishes to play.

New Publications

As we “go to press” with this issue, the arrival of two new SAT publications is expected by the end of July. The release date of both books will be announced shortly thereafter. The two new works are *Saddarsanam and an Inquiry into the Revelation of Truth and Oneself* and *Advaita Devatam*. The first includes the Sanskrit text accompanied by transliteration and English translation of this essential work composed by Sri Ramana Maharshi. This English translation includes multiple alternative meanings of numerous terms and phrases. This book also includes comments and discussions on each verse that elucidate the supreme Knowledge revealed and its application in spiritual practice. The second book is a compendium of verses by Sri Ramana Maharshi, Adi Sankara, Nome, Ganesh Sadasivan, and various Hindu scriptures that are focused primarily on forms of Siva in light of nonduality.

Retreat

The Sri Ramana Maharshi Self-Realization Retreat will be held at the SAT temple August 28 through August 30. Be sure to attend to benefit from this immersion in teachings of Sri Bhagavan, replete with silent meditation, devotion, and the highest Knowledge.

Twenty Years of the Temple

The Truth is origin-less. The teachings are ancient. The manifestation of Sri Ramana started in the late 19th century. The origins of SAT date back to 1974. The first public satsangs com-

menced in 1978. The plans for the SAT Temple commenced in 1987, and in August of 1989, sacred events, meditations, and spiritual instruction in this temple of nondual Self-Knowledge began. It continues to shine and stand as a sacred place of Silence and Truth, of Knowledge and devotion, of bliss and peace, dedicated to Sri Ramana Maharshi and open for all. The SAT Temple: the Space of Consciousness, the Temple of Being.

May Garage Sale

SAT's garage sale in May was a huge success thanks to Eric, Wimala, Raman, Sangeeta, Ganesh, Dhanya, Tim, Myra, Bob, and Advait. Thank you all for your donations and help! SAT made over \$1,000 from the garage sale!