

Sat Chit Anand

From: "Sat Chit Anand" <satchitanand@global.co.za>
Sent: 30 January 2011 08:31 PM
Subject: Newsletter: 30 January 2011



When the ego is crucified and it perishes,
 what survives is the absolute being,
 and this glorious survival is called resurrection.
 - Sri Ramana Maharshi



Where to start? There is so much to say I don't know where to begin. I recently returned from my 11th trip to India! I did a 2-week Advanced Self-Knowledge retreat at Swami Suddhananda Ashram near Tiruvannamalai, followed by a 2.5 week retreat on Saccidananda Ashram, a Christian-Hindu ashram near Trichy. Both ashrams are located in the south Indian province of Tamil Nadu, and both have a connection to Arunachala Mountain, which is regarded as one of the most ancient and holy spiritual centres in India. Hindu's regard it as the centre of the world, as much as Tibetan Buddhists regard Mt Kailash as the spiritual centre of the world. This is where the great Indian enlightened sage, Sri Ramana Maharshi spent 7 years living in a cave and subsequently established his ashram at the foot of the mountain. So perhaps to start with something from him.

Ramana Maharshi is famous for his meditation technique, which consists of looking within and asking the question: WHO AM I? Most people identify with either the body or the mind as being who they are. But we are not the body, which is temporal and passes away. The body changes all the time, from youth to old age, from sickness to health, but our sense of being – my sense that I AM – remains the same. Also we say: I have a body, and what I have, is not what I am. Who is it that says: my head, my hands, my body? We are also not our minds: our thoughts and feelings, ambitions and desires, likes and dislikes, hopes and fears: all these stay for a while and then pass away – those I have now are quite different from what I had 10 years ago – but my sense that I AM – remains the same. The enquiry 'WHO AM I?' means trying to find the source of the ego or I-thought.

Usually a person's mind is turned outwards, creating or following a course of action or of thought. Instead of that it is to be turned inwards, asking 'WHO AM I?', not seeking an answer to the question, but simply experiencing the sense of awareness, of I-AM-ness, and letting that alone remain in one's consciousness. This sense of awareness underlies our thoughts and actions. It is the necessary substratum for them, and yet it is almost completely overshadowed by them, so that it is rare that a man is aware of his being, of his pure I-AM-ness.

It is this awareness that is to be cultivated. Ramana would say: *"Simply be - not be this or that."* He would quote as the perfect name of God: *"I AM that I AM."* He also often quoted the sentence from the Psalms: *"Be still and know that I AM God."* Keep the mind still, free from thoughts, and know that the "I AM", the pure being, is God. He described the state of Samadhi (union with the Divine) as one where: *"You realize that you are moved by the deeper Real Self within and are unaffected by what you do or say or think. You have no worries, anxieties or cares, for you realize that there is nothing that belongs to you as ego, and that everything is being done by something with which you are in conscious union."*

OM SHANTI, LOVE LEELA

2011 Programme

The year started with a talk and slideshow presentation on my trip to India, which was very well attended, thank you to everyone who came. Our next event will be a follow-up evening, which will happen on the last Thursday of February, and will consist of a movie on the life of FATHER BEDE GRIFFITHS of Saccidananda Ashram. There will be a short introduction and space for questions afterwards. Thursday evening SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS will commence soon, with a 6-part DVD series by Swami Suddhananda on MEDITATION (details to follow later).

Our regular events include meditation, yoga, nature walks, spiritual teachings etc, and guests staying at the Centre are invited to join any of them at no charge. Events are optional, and guests structure their visit as desired and according to their needs. Come and experience a taste of ashram living where the emphasis is on good and healthy living, and spiritual fulfillment. See <http://www.satchitanand.co.za/programme.htm> for details of our daily schedule.

Gentle Mindful Hatha Yoga

Tuesday evenings: 17h30 - 19h00
 Wednesday afternoons: 16h30 - 18h00
 Cost: R50 per class

**INTERFAITH SPIRITUAL RETREAT CENTRE | RETREATS & HOLIDAYS | MEDITATION | YOGA
 | WELLNESS | BODYWORK TREATMENTS AND HEALING THERAPIES | STRESS REDUCTION**

Please forward this email to friends who might be interested.
 Please notify us if you wish to be added or removed from our mailing list.