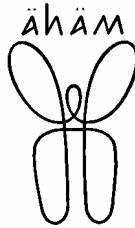


**A Light on the Teaching of  
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi**

**The Essence of Spiritual Practice  
(Sadhanai Saram)**

By  
Sri Sadhu Om

Published by



AHAM Publications  
Asheboro, NC 27205  
U.S.A.

First published in Tamil in 1983  
Under the title, "Part Three – Sri Ramana Vazlu"

Translated from the original Tamil edition by  
Swami Sadhu Om and Michael James

Other English books by this author:  
"The Path of Sri Ramana Maharshi – Part One"  
"The Path of Sri Ramana Maharshi – Part Two"

Originally the book was to be called,  
"The Essence of Spiritual Practice"  
(*Sadhanai Saram*)

However, before his passing in March 1985,  
Swami Sadhu Om chose to name it  
"A Light on the Teaching of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi"

This is the first fully-revised English printing.

Published by  
AHAM Publications  
Asheboro, NC 27205 • USA



Copyright © 2002

ISBN: 1-888599-21-9

All rights reserved. No part of this book is to be used or reproduced in any manner without prior written permission, except for brief quotations embodied in articles and critical reviews. For further information, contact the publisher:

AHAM Publications • 4368 NC Hwy. 134  
Asheboro, NC 27205 • USA  
Phone: (336) 381-3988 • Fax: (336) 381-3881  
E-mail: [ahamcntr@asheboro.com](mailto:ahamcntr@asheboro.com)  
Web site: [www.aham.com](http://www.aham.com)

## Table of Contents

Publisher's Brief History of This Book.....	iv
About the Author.....	vii
Photo of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.....	xiv
The Essence of Spiritual Practice (Beginning Verses).....	1
Eleven Verses on Self-Inquiry .....	88
Forty Verses on Renunciation .....	92
Glossary of Sanskrit and Tamil Words.....	105
An Invitation.....	115

## **Publisher's Brief History of This Book**

After Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi left the body in 1950, many of His devotees came to recognize Swami Sadhu Om, the author of this book, not only as one of the foremost disciples of Sri Bhagavan who lived outside the ashram, but also as someone with the rare gift of explaining His teachings in an easy, clear and simple manner that could be not only understood, but also easily practiced by all sincere seekers of true Self-knowledge. Thus, many of His devotees began to approach the Swami seeking clarification of all aspects of Sri Bhagavan's teachings. This also included among other things the proper use of the method of Self-Inquiry in one's practice.

Finding the Swami's explanations clear, and easy to understand, some seekers made notes of his oral replies, and others collected and preserved his letters answering their questions and doubts. Realizing how useful Swami Sadhu Om's explanations would be to all sincere seekers of truth, one of the devotees of Sri Bhagavan, the late Dr. R. Santanam, took great pains over several years to gather together many of the letters written by the Swami and many of the notes taken by those who had visited him, and requested him to edit all the letters and notes and present them in the form of a book.

Since the material gathered by Dr. Santanam consisted of replies given under various different circumstances, to devotees who were on various different levels of understanding and who were deal-

ing with various diverse subjects – such as devotion, Self-Inquiry, *yoga*, *karma*, God, world, soul, birth, death, liberation and so on – Sadhu Om Swami felt it would not be appropriate to form a book consisting of so many miscellaneous ideas; and so he selected first only those ideas which were centered around the direct path of Self-Inquiry for his first book, leaving the others to be used later. In this regard, Swami's first book, *The Path of Sri Ramana – Part One*, first published in 1971 and now with later editions, is an outstanding contribution extended to all devotees and admirers of Sri Bhagavan on the method of Self-Inquiry, which is His primary Teaching.

When Part One of *The Path of Sri Ramana* in both Tamil and English began to reach the hands of devotees of Sri Bhagavan living in various corners of the world, some of them began to ask Sri Sadhu Om Swami, "Why does this book deal only with the path of Self-Inquiry? Why have you not written about the path of self-surrender, and various other aspects of Sri Bhagavan's teachings, such as the truth He revealed about the nature of God, world, creation, *karma* and so on?" The result being that Sri Sadhu Om once again took up the material gathered by Dr. Santanam, and from the various replies which he had set aside while editing Part One, he compiled *The Path of Sri Ramana – Part Two*, which consists of three chapters, namely; (1) "God and the World," (2) "Love or *Bhakti*," and (3) "*Karma*," followed by a number of explanatory appendices. Part Two was first published in English in 1976. It is planned by this publisher to publish a newer revised edition.

While replying to the questions on spiritual practice put to him by Tamil devotees of Sri Bhagavan, Sri Sadhu Om Swami sometimes replied by writing verses and songs, which Dr Santanam gathered together under the title *Sadhanai Saram* (The Essence of Spiritual Practice). *Sadhanai Saram* was first published in Tamil in 1983 as the third part of *The Path of Sri Ramana – Parts One and Two* (called *Sri Ramana Vazhi* in Tamil).

In 1984-5, when the third Tamil edition of *The Path of Sri Ramana – Parts One and Two* were being printed, Sri Sadhu Om revised both parts, and added many fresh explanations, which he had given in reply to questions raised by devotees who had read the earlier editions of the two books in Tamil and English.

Michael James, a longtime devotee of both Sri Bhagavan and Sri Sadhu Om, continued the editing and translations of these added explanations, poems and songs into English after the Swami's death in 1985. The edited content of these conscious topics make up this first English edition, they now being a complete book.

Michael James, who managed Sri Sadhu Om's small ashram after he died, stated that it was the Swami's wish that these revised explanations of Sri Bhagavan's teaching be titled, *A Light on the Teaching of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*, which is being honored here.

## About the Author

Sri Sadhu Om Swami came to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi from the district of Thanjavur in the South India state of Tamil Nadu. This region is famous as a center of Tamil learning and culture.

From his early childhood, his life was inclined primarily toward spiritual interests, showing great reverence towards saints and sages. Even in later years, he filled his students and listeners with stories about their lives. In his early teens, he was by grace already an inspired Tamil poet, which inspiration came to him at the young age of fourteen.

His meeting and association with Sri Bhagavan Ramana brought his natural poetical aptitude to its full fruition, and up till the time of his death in March 1985, he composed around six thousand songs and verses, singing his devotion to his Guru Ramana, by depicting the unique glory and the beauty of His life, or expounding His philosophy in the most undiluted form in a language that was a marvel of simplicity and clarity, and that cannot fail to move one's heart and make us want to know more about Sri Bhagavan Ramana, and about His instructions (*upadesa*).

When answering questions on spiritual matters, Swami's replies showed that it was only through the grace of his guru, Ramana, that he was able to do full justice to all the many subtle points brought up; and to reveal the answers that addressed all the various standpoint's of the different listeners,

which was accomplished with a refreshing and joyful originality.

His association with Sri Bhagavan lasted only five years due to his master's death. As Sri Bhagavan says, "For men under the powerful glance of the Guru, as coal takes time to ignite, and charcoal is proportionately quicker, gun powder ignites immediately." The latter example proved to be true in the case of Swami Sadhu Om, whose enlightenment came about from being with his master for only this comparatively short period.

The deep spiritual insight shown in this book, and in his other books, clearly proves that Swami Sadhu Om does not fall into the category of ordinary seekers, those that Sri Muruganar, Sri Bhagavan's chief disciple referred to in verse 101 or his "Garland of Guru's Sayings":

*"...who stay unmoving near the Master of consummate knowledge, age and die while their ego's darkness tarries like the steady shadow lurking at the lamppost's foot. Such is perhaps their rawness, still from former births persisting."*

Although his was a relatively brief association with Sri Bhagavan Ramana, through his longstanding association with Sri Muruganar – himself a great Tamil poet who became instantly enlightened by the presence and grace of Sri Bhagavan – Swami Sadhu Om was able to absorb the import of Sri Bhagavan's words of wisdom in the terse classical



Tamil language in which He spoke and shared his teachings. Moreover, the Swami's whole-hearted devotion to his guru, and his one-pointed adherence to His teachings, make him a fit channel for Sri Bhagavan's grace to both flow and fill him with its rich abundance. And it also causes the listener or reader to be filled with the near same richness of Sri Bhagavan's grace.

This means Swami Sadhu Om had the three essential qualifications to explain the teaching of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi to those who came to him looking for clarification. Although he professes to not have a high command over English, his native language being Tamil, with the help of the three essential qualifications – i.e., having lived in close proximity to Sri Bhagavan Himself, having also a clear understanding of even the classical Tamil language used by Sri Bhagavan, and having himself realized and directly experienced the Wisdom and Truth as shared by Sri Bhagavan – he was well able to detect the faulty understanding of those who, per force, must depend only on the English versions in their approach to the teachings of Sri Bhagavan Ramana.

Some people tend to gauge the real worth of each devotee of Sri Bhagavan by the number of years they lived with Him, since having a long relationship in close proximity with the Guru is usually a major criterion for being qualified to teach or advise others in the proper use of His teaching; although the time a disciple has spent in the physical presence of his Sadguru is not a criterion by which one can judge his spiritual attainment.

When one such person once asked Sri Sadhu Om Swami in a slightly disparaging manner, "You lived with Sri Ramana for only five years; are there not many who lived with Him for many more years than you did?" he replied, "Yes, I am indeed ashamed about it, because when even five seconds were more than sufficient for the divine Power shining in the Presence of Sri Bhagavan to quench the spiritual thirst of mature souls, if five years were necessary in my case, does it not show my state of immaturity?".

This reply was typical of the unassuming and self-effacing attitude of Sri Sadhu Om Swami. In spite of his versatile genius as a Tamil poet of surpassing excellence, a talented musician, a melodious and sweet-voiced singer, a lucid writer of prose, and a brilliant philosopher endowed with a deep spiritual insight and a power of expressing the truth in a clear, simple and original manner, he never sought for himself any recognition or appreciation from the world. In fact, his life was a perfect example of strict adherence to the principal precept taught by Sri Bhagavan, namely that we should deny ourself at every moment of life by giving no importance to our own individual entity, and should thus completely erase our ego.

Though some of Sri Sadhu Om Swami's writings in both prose and poetry were published during his lifetime, and though many more have been published in Tamil after he shed his physical body in March 1985, his attitude towards the publication of his writings was quite different from the attitude of

many other writers of spiritual or philosophical books, who of their own accord seek to share their knowledge with the world by writing and publishing books. "We should not open the door unless it is knocked" was the principle underlying all his acts. Unless he was questioned with sincere earnestness, he would not speak or write anything about spiritual matters.

Sri Sadhu Om often used to say, "We should not run after the world; we should not look outwards at the world, we should look inwards at Self. Those *sannyasis* (spiritual seekers) that run after the world achieve neither the world nor Self (God). If we try to chase after our shadow, we will never catch it; but if we go towards the sun, our shadow will automatically come running behind us. Those *sannyasis* that are always attending to the world with the aim of teaching the world became spoilt in the end...".

An invitation once came to Sri Sadhu Om from an earnest seeker in U.S.A., "Will you not come to the West and guide us?" His attitude is shown clearly in his reply, which ran as follows: "It is unnecessary for the Reality to run after the world. Moreover, according to the great truth discovered and revealed by Sri Ramana Bhagavan, a good person leading a simple yet highly spiritual life, and passing away unknown to the world, does far greater good to the world than all the political and social reformers and all the platform-heroes of philosophy. A truly enlightened life will surely help earnest seekers even though they may be living in a remote comer of the world and even without any

physical contact, communications, magazines or writings. This is Sri Ramana Bhagavan's method of teaching the world through speech-transcending Mystic Silence, the greatest Power. Is it not up to us to follow the footsteps of our Guru, Sri Ramana? So, why should I think of going anywhere? As He who has guided me to His home is the Father, Lord, and inmost Self of one and all, does He not know best how to guide home earnest seekers, wherever they may be? Why then should an ego rise with the thought "I should guide people?" If such an 'I' were to rise, would it not be a self-conceited attempt to belittle the Grace of Sri Ramana, the one reality? Therefore, the thought of going to the West or the East, or here, there or anywhere else, has never occurred to me and will never occur to me!"

Thus, Sri Sadhu Om stood as an example of how those who wish to follow Sri Bhagavan should conduct their lives. Because of his self-effacing attitude, he was always indifferent to the publication of his writings either in Tamil or in English. When he answered the questions of those who came to him asking him how to practice the path of Self-Inquiry, he never expected that his replies would one day become a book. At no time did he ever have the least intention that he should write a book.

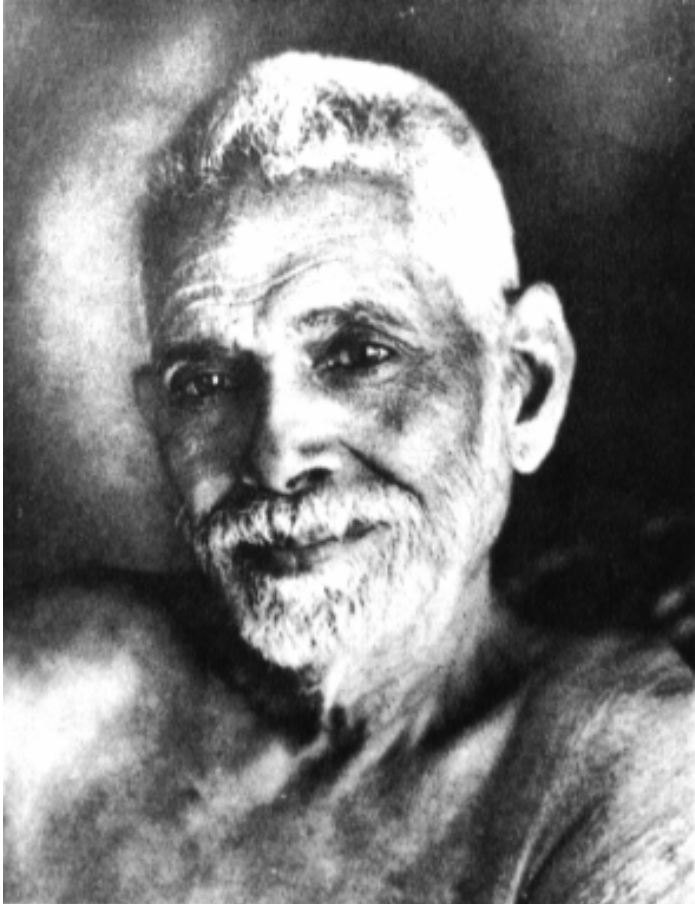
When aspirants asked him questions about spiritual matters, he would sometimes reply, "Since you ask me, I can answer, but only in accordance with the teachings of Sri Bhagavan. Do not expect me to give replies in such a manner as merely to please you. I can tell you only what I have come to

know from Sri Bhagavan. If you ask about paths other than Sri Bhagavan's path of Self-Inquiry, I can also explain about them, but only in the light of Sri Bhagavan's teachings. His teachings alone are the authoritative *sastras* (scriptures) for me. If the world chooses not to accept my ideas, it does not matter; let it throw them away."

Sri Sadhu Om was never concerned in the least about what others thought of his views, nor about whether or not his ideas would be valued by the world. Regarding the books that were published in his name, he once said, "I told whatever I know only for those who asked me. I do not object if they wish to share these ideas with others by printing them in the form of books. But I have not come to the world for writing books. I am not a writer, nor do I have any desire to become a writer. If the world likes to have these ideas, then it is its own responsibility to publish them."

Therefore, this book is published only for those who appreciate Sri Sadhu Om's unswerving adherence to the clear and direct path brought to the world by Sri Bhagavan Ramana.

(Note: This message is comprised in part of information about the author contained in the fourth edition of his book, *The Path of Sri Ramana – Part One*, published by Sri Ramana Kshetra, (Kanvashrama Trust). Tiruvannamalai, India.)



**Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi**

# **A Light on the Teaching of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi**

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Arunachalaramanaya

## **1. The Essence of Spiritual Practice (Sadhanai Saram)**

The Essence of Spiritual Practice is a collection of Tamil poems and songs composed by Sri Sadhu Om, a direct disciple of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. It consists of a total of 523 verses, most of which were written in reply to questions raised by aspirants on various aspects of spiritual practice. The whole work is divided into 86 chapters and contains numerous clues and ideas of encouragement and advice to help aspirants who are following the paths of Self-inquiry and self-surrender, the two principal paths taught by Bhagavan Sri Ramana. *Sadhanai Saram* was first published as a book in Tamil, and an earlier English translation of it was serialized in *The Mountain Path*.

### **1. Invocation**

1. O Sri Ramana, bestow Your Grace upon me so that I may in experience flawlessly attain the unequalled and unsurpassed essence of the practice (*sadhana*) of Self-knowledge, the excellent path “Who am I?” which you have discovered to be the central and foremost among all the various paths.

2. O Sri Ramana, the Heart, who through Your Grace protects me at every moment by guiding me along the correct path, rise from within and teach me

the true import of Your divine and unequalled teachings so that I may know them in their undefiled pristine purity.

## **2. The Greatness of This Birth**

3. Among countless births, one like this birth of ours is very rare to achieve. Ah! When Lord Ramana has assumed a sacred body on earth, we have attained the blessed boon of becoming slave to His Holy Feet.

4. However many crores of births they may take, it is indeed very difficult for anyone to have the opportunity of gaining such a great benefit as that which is gained in this birth of ours, in which we have come to the Feet of Bhagavan Ramana, who is a rare treasure for the world. So great is the benefit of this birth.

## **3. The Wealth of Sri Ramana**

5. The wealth of the almighty Sri Ramana's enlightenment (*Jnana*) is a treasure that is ever available to be plundered by all people who want it; and, however much it is plundered, it will never decrease even in the least. However, only good people who are true devotees know how to plunder it; and though other people who are too immature go near that treasure, they cannot see anything there.

## **4. The Grace of Sri Ramana**

6. Sri Ramana, the Bestower of Grace, will never give the least dissatisfaction to those who weepingly pray to Him, "Make me Your possession."



I know that our Lord uses countless inexpressible tricks in order to protect and save those who have become His slaves.

7. What our Lord uses to save us are tricks of Grace. Even by the skill of our intellects, it is impossible for us to know all those tricks. If He wishes, even an ocean will enter and disappear into a mustard seed. Therefore, as soon as the glance of Sri Ramana's Grace falls upon us, the Supreme Reality will be revealed.

8. Since He is not bound by time or even by the limitation of place, He will not wait for some suitable time or suitable place to bestow His Grace upon His devotees. He has far greater compassion than even a compassionate mother, who has no plan that she will give her baby milk to drink only when it cries (and hence, even without our crying for it, He will bestow His Grace upon us of His own accord).

9. O Bhagavan, innumerable are the wrongs (the mistakes and misfortunes) from which I, this poor creature, have escaped by Your Grace unknown to myself. You know all of them, but I do not know anything except enjoying the bliss of being saved by Your Grace.

10. O Sri Ramana, those who have taken refuge at Your Feet are protected perfectly not only on one or two occasions but on more than a crore of occasions. From many incidents that happen in their life, this is a truth that is clearly known to the hearts of Your devotees.

11. The state of abiding in the Heart as the Heart as it is (that is, as the adjunctless and thought-free existence-consciousness “I am”) is the ineffable and most excellent state. He, who nurtures the fruit of such Self-abidance by sowing the seed of clarity of mind and by watering it with divine Grace, is only our Self-realized or Celestial Preceptor (*Sadguru-deva*), Sri Ramana.

12. We and all our possessions, beginning with the body, are in truth only the possessions of Sri Ramana. When the responsibility of saving us and protecting our possessions is borne by Him alone, why should we worry about anything in our life on this earth thinking it to be either pleasure or pain? Where is any such thing as wrong, evil, harm or suffering now?

### **5. All That He Does is Happiness for Me**

13. The almighty Sri Ramana, who exists within the heart of everyone, who unfailingly helps me at all times, and who cannot be banished from my mind even for a moment, has brought me close to Him only to take me as His slave. Therefore, whatever He now does with me is only happiness for me; how can anything that He does hereafter appear to me as something undesirable or painful?

## **6. Leave it to Him**

14. He knows the best of all,  
Leave it to Him, be calm;  
Believe Him most of all,  
Then rests the mental storm.

Explanatory paraphrase: Our *Sadguru* (Self-realized Guru, or guide) Sri Ramana, alone knows what is best for us. Therefore, entrusting all our burdens and cares to Him, we should always remain peaceful and calm. If we believe Him more than we believe anyone or anything else, knowing that He alone is the Supreme all-knowing, all-powerful and all-loving reality, then, at that very moment, we will attain that perfect peace in which the raging storm of thoughts will have come to an end, forever.

## **7. Grace Alone is of Prime Importance**

15. The ego is only a trivial entity; besides, it is unreal (*asat*) and powerless (*asakta*). It is a mere adjunct which rises and subsides. Therefore, what foolishness it is to think, "The spiritual practice (*sadhana*) done by the strength of this ego will by itself bestow the goal of life; the supreme power of divine Grace is not of any consequence (and is not necessary in order for one to attain the goal)!"

Note: Not believing Grace, but thinking one's own individual effort alone to be of very great consequence, is mere foolishness.

16. Is not the unreal help which one unreal man renders to another unreal man, experienced by everyone in this world as real? Therefore, O *Sadguru*,

the embodiment of Grace, the sole reality, is it impossible for You to save me by dispelling the unreal ego? What doubt or wonder is there in Your being able to help me thus?

Note: A man or *jiva* is merely an unreal appearance, and hence whatever help he may seem to render to another man is also unreal. But when such unreal help rendered by an unreal man is experienced by everyone as real, why should we doubt the ability of the *Sadguru*, who alone is truly real, to render us the real help of destroying the unreal ego? Such help from the *Sadguru* will certainly be experienced by us as more real than the help that we feel is rendered to us by others.

17. Unless our Lord, Sri Ramana, who is the form of God, Himself bestows His divine Grace, who can by his own effort attain that heroic state of firmly abiding as Self, having clearly known one consciousness other than the body to be the real "I"?

### **8. What is Worthy to be Desired?**

18. The great wealth that exists in enlightened sages (*Jnanis*) is only the subtle secret of how to be still, abiding in perfect peace as the mere thought-free existence-consciousness "I am." Therefore, how wretched it will be if one greedily desires to attain from them mere worldly pleasures, such as gold, wealth or fame, which will only make one suffer in delusion.

## **9. Sense-Pleasures are Worthless**

19. Instead of eating the fruit that is in your hand, why do you desire to eat the unreal fruit which is seen in a mirror and which is merely a reflection of the fruit in your hand? Is the reflected fruit an object which can be eaten and give real enjoyment? Similarly, instead of drowning deep within the heart by keenly attending to Self and thereby enjoying the bliss of Self which is ever shining there, why do you desire to enjoy the pleasures experienced through the five senses of this perishable body, which are merely an unreal reflection of the true happiness within you?

## **10. Endeavor and Result**

20. For those who seek (and make effort to attain) Self, not only Self but also all other benefits will automatically be attained in full. But if one desires and makes effort to attain worldly objects (either through worldly endeavors or through spiritual practices), know that they will be attained only partially and to the extent of one's endeavor, and that Self will not be attained at all.

## **11. The Goal**

21. If we deeply ponder over the natural yearning of all living beings to remove their miseries (through some means or other), it will be decidedly known that the sole aim for which the whole world is striving is only to remain always in perfectly imperishable bliss.

22. If the people of the world still do not cease making efforts, the conclusion we must come to is, that they have not yet attained perfect happiness, is it not? Whoever among the people has obtained complete contentment and has therefore ceased making any kind of effort is truly one who has attained all that is to be attained.

### **12. Which Do You Like?**

23. Having limited and transformed oneself into a body, and having transformed the knowledge gathered through the five senses of that body into the world, one sees that world, which is nothing other than one's own real Self, as objects which are other than oneself, and one is thereby deluded with likes and dislikes for those objects. Such confusion alone is what is called the world-illusion (*jagat-maya*).

24. The non-dual state in which you do not see yourself as the body and as the any objects of the world, and in which you clearly know that that which exists is only you, who are one, this alone is the state of God. Whichever you like is possible (that is, by your own unlimited perfect freedom (or *paripurna-brahma-swatantra*), it is possible for you to remain in whichever one of these two states you like – either in the state of delusion (*maya*), in which you are deluded by seeing yourself as many, or in the state of God, in which you realize yourself to be the one non-dual reality).

### **13. The Nature of Desire**

25. When by one's own inexpressible power one imaginarily sees the one real Self as many objects (the soul, world and God) and thinks oneself to be one among those objects, then one's own natural self-love, which transcends thought, will assume the form of a thought and will appear to oneself, the individual who imagines thus, as desires for those objects, which are seemingly other than oneself.

Note: What is called "love" is truly nothing but the non-dual love (*ananya priya*), which the real Self has for itself in the state in which it alone exists and shines. And what is called "desire" is nothing but the dual love (*anya priya*), which springs towards other objects, which are truly not other than Self, in the state in which the one real Self seems to be many objects. Therefore, the only way to put an end to desire is for one, by means of one's own perfect freedom (*brahma-swatantra*), to use one's own inexpressible power to see Self as one and not as many. In order to see Self thus as One, as it ever really is, one must cease attending to the many objects which seem to be other than oneself, and must instead attend only to the first person singular feeling "I".

26. Of all things, is not oneself the most beloved? When one limits oneself by imagining oneself to be a body, one sees all these things (the world and God), which are truly nothing but one's own Self, as objects other than oneself, and hence one has desire for those objects. That desire is only a distorted form of the true self-love that is one's own very nature.

27. The love, which one always has for oneself, is not a thought; that supreme love is one's own real Self that is existence-consciousness-bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*). When a wrong knowledge rises in the form of a thought whereby one mistakenly sees the one Self as many objects which are seemingly other than oneself, even the true self-love will become a petty thought in the form of desire.

28. When self-love, which is not a thought, forsakes its own real nature of mere being and springs towards other things in the form of desires, it becomes ever-moving thoughts. When love remains as the thought-free love for Self instead of becoming thoughts in the form of desires for other things, that state of Self-abidance is true *tapas* (austerities or severe spiritual discipline).

29. This original love for Self, which has now become the three desires, will cease to assume the form of thoughts and will remain as supreme bliss only by means of Self-realization, the state in which one sees all the five elements and the entire world constituted by those elements, as not other than oneself.

Note: The three basic human desires are: (1) the desire for relationships (*uravu-asai*), that is, the desire for relatives, wife, husband, children, friends or any kind of human relationship, whether sensual, emotional or otherwise; (2) the desire for possessions in any form whatsoever (*porul-asai*); and (3) the desire for praise, that is, the desire for fame, honor, esteem or any kind of appreciation from others (*puhazh-asai*). The reason for classifying these



---

three desires is explained in more detail in verses 102 to 109 of this text.

30. The love for happiness is only the love for Self, because Self alone is happiness. But if one imagines that this world, which is nothing but Self, is something other than oneself, then on account of self-love the objects of the world will seem to be objects of pleasure, and hence the love for that Self, which appears as objects other than oneself, will assume the form of desire. This is the great wrong.

31. When the true knowledge dawns that everything is only "I", then the extroverted love which desirously springs towards other objects, will remain pervading everywhere in the form of mere Being and will no longer spring towards anything else. The love that thus remains as mere Being, having ceased to move in the form of thoughts, alone is Siva, who is Self.

32. Since Self is happiness itself, so long as one sees other things, which are in truth only Self (but whose names and forms are a mere appearance), how can one not think that those other things are pleasurable? This alone is the reason why all living beings, beginning with celestial beings and including men and all other creatures, are drowning and burning in the great fire of desires for external objects.

33. When our true nature of mere being is transformed into the nature of rising as an ego, know that the three real aspects of our nature, namely existence, consciousness and bliss, will seemingly become their opposites, namely non-existence, igno-

rance and misery, and will thus assume the form of the dyads (the pairs of opposites).

34. Just as a single ray of white light becomes seven different colors when it passes through a prism, so the single and undivided existence-consciousness “I am” is seemingly diffracted into the triads (the *triputis*, or three factors of objective knowledge, namely the knower, the act of knowing and the objects known) when it passes through the petty senses.

35. When we limit our true nature of undivided existence-consciousness-bliss by wrongly accepting an insignificant body to be “I”, desire arises for those objects of the world that are favorable to this limited “I”, and aversion arises for those objects which are not favorable to it. This desire and aversion are a twofold reflected shadow of our real nature, which is bliss (*ananda*) or love (*priya*).

Note: Though in the realm of cause and effect happiness and love appear to be two different things, each being the cause of the other, in the state of Self-knowledge they are realized to be one and the same. That is why existence-consciousness-bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*) is alternatively known as being-luminosity-love, or *asti-bhati-priya*. When our nature to “be” is mistaken as a nature to “rise,” the bliss aspect of our nature appears as the dyad pleasure and pain, which automatically gives rise to desire and aversion, or likes and dislikes. Thus, likes and dislikes are a two-fold reflection of the bliss or love aspect of our true nature. (Compare with Letters from Sri Ramanasramam of April 11, 1946 (pp. 55) and Sept. 25, 1947 (pp. 253-

4); also with Sri Bhagavan's Tamil translation of Drik-Drisyā Viveka, v. 20).

36. Likes and dislikes are a dyad which arises as a reflection of bliss (*ananda*); existence and non-existence are a two fold appearance assumed by the ever-indestructible existence (*sat*); knowledge and ignorance are a dyad which arises as a reflection of consciousness (*chit*); know this truth by abiding as Self, which is existence-consciousness-bliss.

37. Only by the experience of Self-knowledge will all desires be burnt and destroyed in such a manner that they can never again revive. Nobody has ever overcome the power of desires merely by fighting and struggling for any number of years against the wandering nature of the five senses.

38. Know that this indeed is the reason why our Father, Guru Ramana, always gave the advice "Know yourself" and unfailingly taught the path of Self-inquiry as the most powerful practice (*sadhana*), and as the only weapon to destroy all the desires existing within us.

#### **14. The Three Desires**

39. In Sanskrit, they classify the desire for wife, son and wealth (*thara-putra-dhana*) as the three desires, whereas in Tamil they classify the desire for land, women and gold (*man-pen-pon*) as the desires. But on scrutiny, these are found to be not three desires but only two. Let me say what are really the three desires born out of the darkness of ignorance. Listen.

Note: The three desires classified in Sanskrit and the three classified in Tamil can each be reduced to two desires, namely loving relationships (*uravu-asai*) and material possessions (*porul-asai*), as explained in the next verse.

40. The desire that we have for wife or women and the desire for son can be taken as one desire, namely the desire for relationships (or *uravasa*); likewise, the desire for gold, the desire for wealth and the desire for land can be taken as one desire, namely the desire for material possessions (or *porul-asai*). What then is the third of the three desires? It is only the evil desire for praise, fame, honor, appreciation or recognition (or *puhazh-asai*), which makes one hanker after the proud and vain glory of feeling “I have renounced the desire for all these four – wife, son, land and gold”.

41. The desire for loving relationships (*uravasa*) the desire for material possessions (*porul-asai*) and the desire for honor (*puhazh-asai*) are the unacceptable three desires. More than the first two desires, the third one is very dangerous. Know that the non-rising of the ego, which rises either with the feeling “I am having this particular desire” or with the feeling “I have renounced this particular desire,” is alone true renunciation.

42. Even after renouncing, with a little discrimination, love for relationships and love for material possessions, many wise people become a prey to this desire for name and fame, which has the power to destroy their discrimination. Therefore, know that true renunciation is only the state in which the ego-“I” does not rise, having renounced the liking to en-

joy even the honor (*puhazh*) that results from the renouncing of relatives and possessions.

43. Wise people say that the desire that one should become an object of honor (*puhazh*) is indeed despicable. Why? The joy which results from that honor is experienced by oneself, is it not? Therefore, even the desire for that honor is only selfishness. Hence, the state that is devoid of the ego, which feels “I” and “me,” is alone the state that is acceptable to Sages.

Note: When the Sage Tiruvalluvar sang, in verse 236 of Tirukkural, “If you take birth, take birth with fame (*puhazh*); for those without fame, not taking birth is better than taking birth”, he was addressing only those people who desire to take birth in this world, and not spiritual aspirants, who have no desire for taking birth.

44. Those who experience the sufferings that result from desire for relationships and desire for material possessions will finally one day or other become disgusted with these desires and renounce them. But the desire for honor (*puhazh*) that comes to one is a very treacherous delusion (*maya*) that is skillful in concealing and not showing the dangerous harm that lies in itself. Therefore, people will find more and more joy in this desire for power and honor (*puhazh-asai*) and will not shrink from it.

Note: When the mind experiences intense suffering due to the diseases which result from the desire for women or due to the enmity which results from the desire for sons, it will sooner or later automatically gain a liking to renounce them. Similarly, on

account of the endless misery that results from having desire for gold, land and wealth, the mind will sooner or later automatically gain a liking to renounce such possessions. Thus desire for relationships and material possessions (*uravasai* and *porulasa*) will one day or other reveal the dangerous harm that lies in themselves. But when desire for honor, name and fame (*puhazh*) is experienced more and more, it will make the mind feel only a delusion of joy, and hence the dangerous harm that lies hidden in it cannot easily be discerned by the mind. That is why Sri Bhagavan warns us in verse 37 of Supplement to Reality in Forty Verses (Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham), “Even though all the worlds have been renounced as mere straw, and even though all the scriptures have been mastered, for those who have come under the sway of the wicked harlot called praise, honor, recognition or appreciation, ah, to escape from slavery to her is indeed very difficult!”

45. If a person who thinks, “I, who am exalted in many ways, am a separate individual; my fame (*puhazh*) is flourishing among many people,” pauses and considers carefully about himself, inquiring “Who am I, this separate individual?” his ego will perish, and thus he will conquer and destroy all desire along with its root.

46. Trying to destroy the three desires while retaining the ego, the feeling “I am this body”, which is the root of all rising, is utter foolishness, just like trying to cross a river riding upon a crocodile as a raft. The destruction of the ego, the original sin, is alone the destruction of the threefold fire of desire. Therefore, in order to destroy all the three desires, the

only way is to destroy oneself by inquiring, “Who am I, who have these desires?”

### **15. The Way to Attain Good Qualities**

47. If one wishes to attain all the elevated and pure qualities (*sattva-gunas*) by training the mind, one will certainly fail in one’s attempts, no matter how long one may try. But if one takes to the practice of Self-attention, which will destroy the mind, and if one thereby transcends the three ordinary qualities, purity (*sattva*), activity (*rajas*) and inertia (*tamas*), the true quality of abiding steadfastly as the reality (*sat-guna*) will automatically shine forth and flourish in one; (and in the outlook of others one will then appear to be endowed with all pure [*sattvic*] qualities).

48. If ordinary people strenuously practice for many eons without wasting even a moment, they may develop a few of the good qualities which are gracefully brimming over and pouring forth from one who has attained the treasure of Self-knowledge and who has thereby transcended the qualities; yet, if any trivial tests come their way (for the ordinary people) they will fail to remain established in those qualities.

49. Good qualities and bad qualities are not qualities given by God, but are only qualities born of the mind (that is, they are the expanded form of the tendencies [*vasanas*] which one has accumulated in one’s mind through one’s own free-will and acts). The empty space of Self-knowledge that is completely devoid of all good and bad tendencies is, alone, what is called *sat-guna*.

50a. Those fortunate people who have attained a perfect *Guru* will not toil in vain to cultivate good qualities in the mind; they will only cultivate the practice of Self-inquiry, which will draw the mind within and destroy it, and thereby they will not allow the mind to rise in the form of thoughts. To attain the unequalled and unsurpassed nature (of abiding eternally as Self), there is no way other than the practice of making the mind humbly subside through devotion and inquiry.

50b. In the life of a sage (*Jnani*) who has transcended the qualities, the actions of His body (which happen spontaneously and without His thinking), will sometimes make it appear as if He is lacking good qualities. However, such actions appear to be real only because of the imagination in the mind of the ignorant (*ajnani*) who sees them; and hence they are merely a deceptive reflection of his own impure mind.

50c. Those who have bad qualities in them will see only bad qualities even in the sage (*Jnani*). If one could see one's own defects, as clearly as one sees the defects of the others who are in front of one, then would any evil befall one?

## **16. Sat-Sanga – Association With the Real**

51. Our association (*sanga*) with the reality (*sat*) alone is true *sat-sanga*. Since Self-alone is the reality, abiding in the Self-alone is the best *sat-sanga* (conscious company or association). Moreover, since those great aspirants (*Sadhus*) who have realized Self, the reality, cannot be other than Self, they too are the reality itself. Therefore, approach such



Self-realized Ones (*Sadhus*) and remain with them as their devoted slave.

Note: Refer to Talks With Ramana Maharshi page 242 and Day by Day With Bhagavan, page 236 (published 7-16-46), to see where Sri Bhagavan has expressed the ideas given in this verse.

52. If you do not have the power to abide in Self, the reality, remain with love in the constant company of *Sadhus* who have known the reality. If you do not have even the good fortune to be in their company, have contact at least with the teachings of such *Sadhus* by constantly studying those books that contain the words (works) they have spoken. Studying such books is also *sat-sanga* (conscious association).

53. What are those books, the study of which is to be considered as *sat-sanga*? They are only those books that will clearly impress upon you, "Self alone is the reality, so always abide in Self." "In order to abide in Self, practice only Self-inquiry and do not follow any other path." "Practice Self-inquiry now, it-self; turn and dive within."

54. If, in the name of conscious association (*sat-sanga*), you gather together all kinds of people, said "holy gathering" will consist only of a crowd of people who are skilled in oratory, or who have studied innumerable books, or who have mastered the sixty-four mundane arts (*apara-vidyas*); all of which are unreal products of the mind's power of imagination. Reject all such gatherings, knowing that they are not at all true conscious company (*sat-sanga*).

55. Rather than associating with such people, thinking their company to be *sat-sanga*, it is better for you to remain alone without associating with anyone; because such solitude or non-association will help you at least gradually to gain more and more detachment.

56. For those who have been blessed with the rare and great good fortune of gaining true *sat-sanga*, all the heaps of gold in the seven worlds cannot be compared with that treasure called *sat-sanga*, because by such *sat-sanga* they will cross the ocean of ignorance (*ajnana*), which is so difficult to cross, and thus they will attain in this very life the unequalled state of liberation, which is so difficult to attain.

Note: Compare verse 2 of Supplement to Reality in Forty Verses, in which Sri Bhagavan says, “that supreme state (of liberation) that is praised (by all the scriptures) and that is attained here (in this very life) by the clear Inquiry (*vichara*) that arises in the heart when one gains association with a sage (*Sadhu*), is impossible to attain by (listening to) preachers, by (studying and learning) the meaning of the scriptures, by (doing) virtuous deeds or by any other means”.

57. Though your mind lacks the strength of discrimination or dispassion (*viveka* and *vairagya*) required to withdraw itself from the false attraction of the pleasures of this unreal world, your mind will naturally and spontaneously become mature to the extent to which you humbly and lovingly come very close and associate with enlightened sages (*Jnanis*), who abide as the reality (*sat*).

58. If you ask how, just as even a fresh plantain tree will become dry and catch fire when it comes in close proximity to a raging forest fire, so the minds of those who associate with *Jnanis* will, unknown to themselves, be made by that association to attain great love to attend to and abide in Self.

59. When we gain association with a person who knows and abides as the reality (called a *Sat-purusha*), we will be able to know very clearly that real devotion to God, and steadfast discrimination between the eternal and the ephemeral, are steadily rising up and increasing in our hearts automatically, and without our own effort.

60. We should not believe that we have by our own efforts and practice (*sadhana*) brought about the rising of such pure devotion and clear discrimination that we are thus able to experience in our hearts. This true devotion and discrimination are spontaneously and naturally kindled in our hearts, not by our own efforts, but only by the power of the Grace of that *Sat-purusha* who is living close to us, and who appears as if he is someone other than us.

61. Just like a mother who feeds her sleeping child even without the child knowing that he is being fed, the Grace of the *Sat-purusha* enters our hearts in a manner that cannot be known by us even if we have the most subtle and powerful of intellects, and thereby His Grace reforms us and brings about the destruction of our mind. Ah! His Grace is beyond all limits and cannot be gauged by anyone.

62. Having understood the greatness of *sat-sanga*, which is revealed by the true words uttered

by our *Sadguru*, Sri Ramana, who is the Lord of the universe, “When the excellent cool, southern breeze itself is blowing, say, what is the use of holding a hand-fan?” Let us live taking refuge in Arunachala, the Hill of *sat-sanga*.\*\*

Note: “hand-fan?” Refer to Supplement to Reality in Forty Verses, verse 3.

\*\* Sri Bhagavan has revealed that Arunachala is the reality (*sat*) itself embodied in the visible and tangible form of a Hill. Therefore, taking refuge at the Feet of Arunachala is the highest form of conscious association (*sat-sanga*) that is available on the physical plane, and thinking of Arunachala with love is the highest form of *sat-sanga* that is available on the mental plane. Refer also to verses 63 to 70 of this work.

### **17. The Greatness of Sri Arunachala Pradakshina**

63. Only those who abide firmly in the reality (*sat*) are Sages (*Sadhus*); those pure Sages are not other than Self, whose nature is reality-consciousness-bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*). Knowing the truth, that Arunachala is manifest here as the peerless gross form of the reality, remain here in order to associate with the reality.

Note: There is no form of external conscious company (*sat-sanga*) superior to that of residing near and doing *pradakshina* (circumambulation) around Arunachala.

64. If due to its wavering nature one's mind is confounded and bewildered, being unable to cling fast to the practice of Self-abidance, or to the path of devotion, or to the eightfold path of *raja yoga*, and if one is therefore seeking some good form of austere spiritual practice (*tapas*) as an effective and easy path along which he can make further effort, let him repeatedly and perseveringly come round this divine Hill Arunachala.

65. Any kind of action (*karma*) is a dual activity (*dvaita vritti*) that casts one further and further away from Self, the center of all. But unlike all other actions (*karmas*), doing *pradakshina*, or circumambulating around Arunachala is a dual activity that does not cast one away from Self, the sun of true knowledge. Therefore, do this.

Note: Having the peak of Arunachala as the center, however much one may do *pradakshina* around it, one is never going away from that center. Hence, since *pradakshina* keeps one ever in close association with the center, unlike other activities which cast one away from the center, it is described here as "a dual activity which does not cast one away".

66. If a cow that is tied by a long tether to a peg fixed in the ground grazes round and round that peg, it does not notice that the length of its tether is thereby decreasing as it becomes more and more twisted round the peg. Similarly, consider how can your mind notice that its outward-going tendencies are gradually decreasing and subsiding due to your coming round Arunachala?

67. When the cow goes round the peg more and more, the length of its tether will finally be reduced to nothing, whereupon the cow will be brought to a standstill, being unable to move away from the peg. Similarly, the mind of a devotee who with love does *pradakshina* around Arunachala (Annamalai), which is Self, the exalted space of true knowledge, will finally be brought to a standstill with its attention fixed motionlessly within upon Self, all its mental tendencies (*vasanas*) having subsided completely.

68. The fact that the mind of a devotee who does *pradakshina* around Arunachala will attain great love to abide attending to Self within, is a great truth clearly known by direct experience. Arunachala (Annamalai) is the blazing fire of *jnana*, which burns to ashes all the desires that give rise to future births.

69. When iron is rubbed against a magnet, the magnet turns the atoms of that iron, which were scattered and facing in many directions, and sets them all on a north-south alignment. By thus re-aligning the atoms in an orderly manner, the magnet transforms the iron into a magnet like itself. Similarly Arunachala, the magnet which is the space of supreme Self-consciousness, turns the mind of a devotee who does *pradakshina* around it, to face Selfwards and thereby transforms it into Self.

Note: Just as the magnetic quality of iron, which is its true nature, does not reveal itself so long as the atoms of that iron are scattered facing in many directions, so Self, which is the true nature of the mind, does not reveal itself so long as the mind is scattered outwards in many directions by worldly

desires. And, just as the true nature of iron reveals itself when it is rubbed against a magnet, so the true nature of the mind reveals itself when the devotee does *pradakshina* around Arunachala, the magnet of Self-consciousness.

70. The story of how king Vajrangada Pandiyan finally attained liberation (*mukti*), having lost all dampness in the form of his desires and attachments and having gained perfect purity of mind, even though in the beginning he had started to do *pradakshina* of Arunachala (Annamalai) in order to fulfill a selfish desire, can be cited as testimony for what has been said above.

### **18. Japa – Repetition of Mantras**

71. The benefit in repeating a holy name of God is not only to gain one-pointedness of mind, but is to surrender oneself to God to such an extent that one's heart melts and dissolves with ever-brimming love for Him while repeating His name.

72. Thinking once of the name of God with a steady one-pointed mind is more valuable than doing a thousand, thousand (or *crores*) of repetitions (*japa*) with a wandering mind. But calling intently upon God even once, with a mind surging with love for Him, is far superior even to doing a million (*crore*) of *japa* with a one-pointed mind.

73. While doing repetition (*japa*) of the name of God, there is one thing, called "love," which is to be mingled with it. If one knows correctly the way to do *japa* uniting love with the name of God, the result attained by that *japa* will be not only one-pointedness

of mind, that *japa* will bestow upon one the deathless state of union with God.

74. Uniting love with the name of God is giving of oneself, the ego "I," as an offering to His feet. **Love is we, and the name is He.** Thus, uniting love with His name is offering our self to Him, which is the principle of self-surrender (*saranagati-tattva*). By such self-surrender, the state of Self-abidance is attained.

75. *Japa* (repetition of mantra) can be classified as being of two kinds, namely knowledge (*jnana japa*) and devotion (*bhakti japa*). Repeating mentally "I, I" is knowledge, or *jnana japa*; repeating the name of God with love is devotion, or *bhakti japa*. The mind of one who has liking for *jnana japa* seeks to know the true import of the word "I" and merges in that. One who is earnest in doing *bhakti japa* loses his separate individuality, melting with love in the name of his Lord.

76. The mind, which seeks the true import of the word "I" while doing natural or *swarupa japa*, will lose itself and die in Self, the reality. Those who depend upon God, the embodiment of pure consciousness, and who melt with love while repeating His name, become the supreme bliss which is devoid of the ego "I", and thus they cease to exist as an entity separate from Him.

77. For those who follow the path of Self-inquiry, or *jnana japa*, renders all the help required to attain Self-knowledge. For those who follow the path of devotion, *bhakti japa* makes them unite with God. For which ever one of these two kinds of *japa* a lik-



ing naturally arises in a person, that kind of *japa* is suitable for him.

78. Our *Sadguru*, Lord Ramana, who is the real Self, has given us only two paths to follow, namely Self-inquiry and self-surrender. Knowing that *japa* is also thus of two kinds, adhere to whichever one suits you and thereby attain Self-abidance.

### **19. Devotion and Knowledge – Bhakti and Jnana**

79. To the extent to which love for God arises in one's heart, to that extent will one acquire knowledge about Him. And to the extent to which one knows the nature of God, to that extent will the mind gain steadfast love for Him. Thus, knowledge (*jnana*) will be increased by devotion (*bhakti*), and devotion (*bhakti*) will be increased by knowledge (*jnana*).

80. By means of our love for God, He will give us more knowledge of Him, and by means of our knowledge of Him, He will give us more love for Him. Therefore, of these two paths, *bhakti* and *jnana*, follow that one for which you first gain a liking, because that one path will lead you to follow the other one into the heart.

81. In the life of an aspirant who is seeking liberation, *bhakti* and *jnana* will be experienced as inseparable, like the two sides of one sheet of paper. Hence, each one is equal to the other. They are not two different things, for the true nature of both of them is one and the same; know that *bhakti* and *jnana* are merely two names for that one thing. Gar-

land of Guru's Sayings (Guru Vachaka Kovai)  
verses 722, 731)

82. The state of abiding firmly in Self-alone is wisdom (*jnana*). Would it be possible to abide thus in Self if one did not have love for Self? Love for Self-alone is *bhakti*; abiding firmly in Self on account of that love alone is *jnana*. What difference is there between these two? Discriminate and know this truth. (Maharshi's Gospel p.24)

83. If there did not exist the power of gravity, which attracts and pulls everything towards the earth, would anything remain stable on earth? On scrutiny, devotion (*bhakti*) is found to be similar to the gravitational power of attraction, while the state of wisdom (*jnana*) is found to be similar to the state of objects remaining stable on earth as a result of that attraction. If either one of these two, the power of attraction or *bhakti* and the state of abidance or *jnana*, were absent, the other one would not exist.

84. An aspirant who practices Self-inquiry, which is the path of *jnana*, denies his own individuality by knowing, "I, this insignificant ego, am not the doer of any action"; while a devotee denies his own individuality by knowing, "God alone is the doer of all actions." Thus, since an aspirant who follows either of these two paths refrains from assuming the sense of doership, understand that these two paths are not different even during the time of practice, and follow either of them.

85. We should not allow our minds to become bewildered and confused by trying to deliberate and decide, "Which of these two, the practice of *bhakti* or

the practice of *jnana* is the best means for attaining liberation?" For whichever path a liking arises in the heart of a person, for that person that path alone is the best.

86. According to the strength of habit continuing from former lives, in this life the mind will acquire a liking either for the path of devotion or the direct and unfailing path of Self-inquiry, and will feel that particular path to be the best and most suited to itself. Therefore, follow at least one of these two paths to its very end.

## **20. Inquiry Becoming Easy Due to Devotion**

87. When, having wept and wept with intense yearning for a long time, unceasingly thinking of and adoring the Gracious Feet (of the Lord), the mind which rises (as "I am so-and-so") dissolves and becomes pure, the blemishless Self-inquiry (*jnanatma-vichara*) will become firmly settled (in the heart) and the experience of Self (*swarupa-anubhava*) will of its own accord arise very easily indeed. – Sri Muruganar

Note: from Sri Ramana Jnana Bodham v.1286

88. O, you who say, "We have never seen you closing your eyes and practicing Self-abidance (*nishtha*); tell us, how did you attain the state of inner silence (*mauna*)?" Understanding the above verse, know the secret of (how to attain the true experience of) God, who is not seen even though one waits closing one's eyes (for a long time in expectation of seeing His true vision).

Note: the previous verse is the answer to the above question

### **21. Self-Surrender and Self-Inquiry**

89. Since the ego itself is everything (as revealed by Sri Bhagavan in verse 26 of Reality in Forth Verses), giving up the ego, the feeling “I am this body,” by surrendering it to God, is lovingly surrendering everything to Him. Having once surrendered the ego to God, abiding in Self without taking it back again (that is, without again identifying the body as “I” or “mine”) is true *tapas*.

90. Having surrendered the ego to God, if one takes it back again, that is the sin of stealing back what has once been given. Therefore, in order to avoid committing such a sin, practice Self-attention unflinchingly, because only if one attends to the ego vigilantly and unceasingly will it drown in the heart so as never to rise again. Garland of Guru’s Sayings verse 317)

91. Destroying the ego through Self-attention is alone the excellent path of self-surrender. Therefore, scrutinizing and knowing one’s own Self is alone the proper method of practicing both self-surrender, the path of devotion, and Self-inquiry, the path of knowledge.

Note: Compare with Who am I?; thirteenth paragraph, where Sri Bhagavan says, “Remaining firmly....surrendering oneself to God.”

92. The path of knowledge, in which we scrutinize “Who am I?”, is itself the path of devotion in

which we have true love for God. Knowing thus, that Self-inquiry and self-surrender are one and the same, not only in their goal but also in their method of practice, follow the practice of Self-attention.

Note: In one of His stray verses, Garland of Guru's Sayings (or Guru Vachaka Kovai) verse B-13, Sri Bhagavan says, "Attention to Self is supreme devotion to God, because God exists as Self."

## **22. A Scrutiny of the Three States**

93. If we did not have the good fortune of having attained a human body, which enables us to experience daily the three states of waking, dream and sleep, how could we have the fitness to do Self-inquiry? Therefore, this human birth is indeed superior to all other births.

94. Except in this human body, all these three states are not experienced in one lifetime by any soul, whether *deva* (divine), animal or plant. Therefore, a very great boon indeed is the boon God has bestowed upon us in the form of this human birth, which is such a good opportunity enabling us to inquire and know the Self.

Note: Celestial beings (*devas*) experience only the waking state; animals experience only sleep and a dream-like waking state; plants experience only sleep\*\*; and insentient objects like stones are always in a state like swoon. Only in the human birth, does one experience all the three states of waking, dream and sleep. Hence, even *devas* must take birth as human beings if they wish to attain Self-knowledge, the state of liberation.

**\*\*Note:** Compare Talks, no. 617, p. 580.

95. The three states of waking, dream and dreamless deep sleep are experienced daily by all human beings, are they not? If we keenly scrutinize the nature of these three states, knowledge of the state of liberation, which is the reality of these three states, will be attained by us as a direct experience.

96. In the waking state we exist as “I am”; but in this state, beside us, so many second and third person objects of various kinds are also known by the mind. How have all these come here?

97. In dream also we exist as “I am”, having become the one who sees everything there; but in that state also so many second and third person objects of various kinds are again known by the mind. How did all those come there?

98. In sleep also we exist as “I am”; however, in that state we do not see anything appearing as other than us. Therefore, our state of existing as “I am” alone shines always without ever slackening or being obstructed, whereas our state of knowing objects other than us undergoes change. Hence, our state of existing as “I am” is alone the one unchanging state.

99. The state of our existing as “I am”, which shines in all the three states continuously and without ever coming to an end, is our exalted state of real knowledge; it is the state of *purna* (the Whole). Objects other than “I” do not exist in all the three states. Hence our own nature, the Self-existence “I am,” alone is the reality which ever exists.

100. Since objects other than “I,” such as the body and world, do not exist unceasingly in all the three states, but rise and appear to exist only in between in the waking and dream states, they cannot be the reality, which exists always and without being obstructed. This conclusion arrived at by scrutinizing our experience in these three states, is the foundation for the practice of Self-inquiry.

101. These objects other than “I,” which exist at one time and do not exist at another time, are truly non-existent even at the time when they appear to exist. When scrutinized, waking and dream are both found to be only one in nature, because the objects, which appear to exist in each of these states, unfailingly cease to exist in any other state.

102. That state, in which any object seen is not experienced as other than the one who sees, is alone the state of reality. If the seer, who is an unreal ego, rises, then only will all the unreal objects other than “I” rise, and seem to exist.

103. The dream-world – and the one who, living there identifying a dream-body as “I,” and sees that dream-world – both together constitute the dream. The waking state is also like that; that is, not only this seemingly vast world that is perceived in front of us, as if existing as other than us, and also we, the *jiva* who sees this waking world, both together constitute the appearance of this dream, which is called the waking state.

104. In practice, waking and dream are only one and the same. Just as in waking the mind thinks, “I am this body,” so in dream also the mind projects a

body by its creative power of imagination and functions there, feeling “I am this body.”

105. Until the root-tendency (*mula-vasana*) to identify a body as “I” ceases to exist, the appearances of the waking and dream states that arise due to delusion (*maya*) will not come to an end. If you, with a one-pointed mind keenly and incessantly attend to the consciousness of your existence, which shines as pure “I am,” the root-tendency “I am the body,” and all its products and other tendencies, will cease to exist.

106. To remain inactive forgetting the feeling “I am the body,” is sleep. In the dense ignorance of this sleep, arises a creative imagination of the mind (*mana-kalpana*), and this alone is the cause for the appearance of dream. Therefore, it is the mind alone that projects a dream.

107. Similarly, in the long sleep of ignorance (*ajnana*), which has engulfed us due to our forgetfulness of our true state of pure Self-consciousness, an imagination in mind (*mana-kalpana*) rises identifying a contemptible fleshy body as “I”, and this alone is the cause for the rising and appearance of this despicable waking state, which we are now experiencing.

108. Just as sleep alone is the cause for the appearance of dream, so the sleep of forgetfulness of our true Self-Knowledge is alone the cause for the appearance of this waking state. In this long sleep of Self-forgetfulness, many dreams in the form of countless births come and go.



109. Know that just like a person who without coming to the waking state, merges in deep sleep after the dream he was seeing has come to an end, if the dream of the present birth that this person has taken is brought to an end by death, before he attains the true waking state of Self-knowledge, he will merge again into the underlying ancient sleep of Self-forgetfulness.

110. Just like a person who was seeing a dream and who then leaves that dream and falls into deep sleep without coming to the waking state, if the waking-body dies before we attain the state of Self-knowledge, we will fall into a state like deep sleep. Just as a dream appears as soon as the mind of a person immersed in sleep rises and begins to wander, so after the death of this waking-body, as soon as the mind rises and begins to wander on account of its former tendencies, a waking state will again arise in which a body will seemingly exist as if "I".

111. Taking birth again, having come out of the delusion-enfolded state of death, and living a life of whirling about in this waking state, and finally dying without attaining Self-knowledge, is just like a person rising as "I" from deep sleep, seeing a dream again, and finally once again merging in sleep. You will not take birth again only if you awaken into the true state of Self-knowledge. Awaken thus.

112. If a person who has fallen asleep and is seeing a dream suddenly wakes up, by his awakening he will attain a state in which sleep and dream have both been dispelled. Similarly, if a person awakens from the present so-called waking state by attaining the exalted state of Self-knowledge, the

dream of birth and death and the underlying sleep of Self-forgetfulness will both be dispelled, and he will thereafter never again undergo either birth or death. The state of real awakening (*turiya*), which he thus attains, and which transcends the three ordinary states of waking, dream and sleep, is the state of liberation.

113. If the power of attention, which sees the second and third person objects existing in dream, turns to attend to itself, both the first person (who sees the dream) and the dream will disappear; the sleep that is the cause for the rising of that first person will be dispersed, and the worthy state of true awaking will be experienced.

114. Similarly, if the power of attention, which knows the second person objects existing in the waking state, turns to attend to itself (the "I" who sees this waking state), the waking state will disappear; the long sleep of Self-forgetfulness which is the cause for the rising of the individual sense of "I" will be dispersed and the true waking state of Self-knowledge will be attained. Therefore, attend only to yourself, the first person consciousness "I."

115. Even before the experience of the current destiny (*prarabdha karma*) which caused the appearance of a dream has come to an end, if the mind is struck by intense fear, joy or suffering, its power of attention will be driven Selfwards and return to the heart, whereupon waking will result.

Note: *Prarabdha* is that part of one's destiny (or *karma*) that has to be worked out in this life. *San-*

*chita* is one's *karma* accumulated in former lives that has not yet taken effect.

116. Similarly, even before all the accumulated *sanchita karmas* have been exhausted by being experienced in the form of *prarabdha*, if in this present life, which was started by *prarabdha*, the mind either gains firm dispassion (*vairagya*), being unable to bear the severe sufferings of life, or experiences intense fear of death, it will turn Selfwards and merge in the heart; whereupon the true awakening of Self-knowledge will result.

117. When such intense fear or suffering are experienced, if the mind with mature discrimination (*viveka*) at once earnestly scrutinizes, "To whom does this fear or suffering arise?" then the extroverted power of attention, which was till then being dragged out towards objects other than itself, will turn inwards to face itself, whereupon the truly awakened life of Self-abidance will immediately be attained.

118. Just as all that happens in dream is experienced as real so long as one is seeing that dream, so all that is now happening in this waking state is experienced as real. If the dream comes to an end, all that was seen there will be known to be unreal. Similarly, for those who have awakened from this so-called waking state by attaining Self-knowledge, all the happenings in this state are clearly known to be unreal.

119. As soon as the inwardly awakened state of Self-abidance is attained, all the adjuncts in the form of the wrong identification that the actions of the

body are one's own actions will become devoid of reality, being found to be mere superimpositions upon one's nameless and formless nature, just like the blue color superimposed upon the colorless sky; and the truth, that one is only the adjunct-free Self, will clearly shine forth.

120. Only in this real waking state of Self-abidance will true knowledge blossom in the form of the *ajata* experience, "No mundane dual activity such as birth and death has ever touched me; I am Self, the existence-consciousness which is ever devoid of the body and the senses."

121. The pure consciousness "I," which exists in sleep devoid of all adjuncts, is the Supreme Reality (*Brahman*). If we do not slip down from that state of pure consciousness due to attachment to the body (*dehabhimana*), that itself is the Supreme Abode (*parandhama*). If we remain, without leaving Self, that itself is liberation.

122. Though we think sleep to be a state of darkness, because no other objects are known there, know that it is not possible for anyone to deny his own existence in sleep. When you are able to affirm your experience in sleep, "It was darkness," "There were no thoughts" and "It was a happy state," is it not clear that you existed in sleep? To be able to affirm thus, who was that "you" who existed in sleep? Tell me.

123. Your ability to affirm all the three experiences mentioned above shows not only that you existed in sleep, but also that you knew these experiences there, does it not? This existence-knowledge,

which existed and was known in sleep, is indeed the peerless existence-consciousness (*sat-chit*), your own state, and the real nature of self.

124. In sleep, in which you existed solitarily as the mere existence-consciousness (*sat-chit*), you were the experienter of sublime happiness devoid of even a single petty misery, even though you were separated from all the possessions and all the objects which you seek in the waking state for happiness, were you not? That happiness which you experienced in sleep is indeed bliss (*ananda*), your true nature.

125. To become a hero who abides as Self, the infinite reality (*paripurna Brahman*) whose nature is existence-consciousness-bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*), devoid of the experience of any body or any world, is the fruit to be gained by proper scrutiny of the three states of waking, dream, and sleep.

126. The supreme *Guru* Sri Ramana has given the above clues so that, having thoroughly scrutinized the three states, we may finally abide blissfully forever as Self, our own true nature which transcends the three states.

### **23. Superimposition of the Qualities of Self Upon the Ego**

127. If you ask, "After appearing in the waking state, how can this mischievous ego, which did not exist in sleep, say anything about the experience which existed in sleep?" let us scrutinize and see. Tell me, does not Self, which existed in sleep as the

existence-consciousness “I am,” continue to exist without any impediment in this waking state also?

128. Except the knowledge of the first person singular, the existence “I am,” all the multifarious knowledge which shine in the waking state, and which pertain to names and forms, are only knowledge belonging to the unreal ego. But the knowledge of one’s own existence “I am,” is the property of Self.

129. Though this insentient ego, which rises and dances like a ghost only in the waking state, cheats itself by making the Self-consciousness “I am,” which Self alone experienced previously in sleep, appear to be its own here in the waking state, know that in truth that Self-consciousness “I am” is a quality belonging only to the Self.

130. Listen to another example of how the ego thus usurps the qualities of Self and makes them appear to be its own qualities: Though we have seen so many people dying, we always feel, “We will not die now; we will live for at least a little more time.” Know that the ego feels thus only because its nature is to superimpose upon itself the qualities of the deathless Self.

131. The ever-shining first person existence-consciousness “I was, I am, I will be”, and the knowledge that one is never subject to any such thing as death, are both only the natural qualities of Self. But due to the mere presence of Self, the insentient ego, whose nature is to rise, dance and subside, usurps these qualities of Self and acts as if they were its own qualities.

132. This ego, which rises in the form “I am the body,” lives only by usurping as its own both Self’s nature of consciousness and the body’s nature of insentience. Know that in this feeling, “I am the body,” the consciousness “I am” is truly Self’s own knowledge, whereas the ego’s quality of rising and subsiding is the base nature of the body.

133. The ego, which rises and seems to exist only by usurping the consciousness “I am,” which is the property of Self, makes a false show in the waking state in which it lives, saying, “I will not die; I did exist in sleep.” This is a falsehood more vast than the sky. (But when the ego itself is false, is there any wonder therefore in its speaking only falsehood?)

## **24. The Body and Yoga**

134. If it is asked, “Why is it said in scriptures that for attaining Self-experience the human body is best?” it is in order to reveal that this body alone enables one to have the keen discrimination (*viveka*) to scrutinize the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep (and thereby to attain Self-knowledge).

135. (When the scriptures say a human birth is the best, they mean only what is said above and in verse 94 with its ensuing note). The saying, “After it has come to you, cherish this human body,” is not at all the intended meaning. The destiny (*prarabdha*), which has given you this human body, will cherish (or protect) it. (Therefore, without worrying about protecting the body) you should earnestly make effort to remove the delusion “I am this body” by intense inquiry (*vichara*).

136. A human body is necessary (in order for us to attain Self-knowledge); all right, it has now come to us. But if we still have a liking for this human body (and if we desire to make it healthy and strong), the attachment to it in the form “I” and “mine” will increase, and it will not help us in the least to destroy the feeling “I am this body” (*dehatma-bhava*). That (desire to protect the body and to make it healthy and strong) is indeed an obstacle (to the attainment of Self-knowledge).

137. These (ideas expressed in the above three verses) are an expanded elucidation to make us clearly understand the true import of the *Jnana*-precept given by Sri Ramana in verse 12 of Supplement to Reality in Forty Verses, which says, “Trying to know the (real) Self and at the same time cherishing the (unreal and) perishable body, is like taking hold of a crocodile as a raft in order to cross a river.”

## **25. The “Shop Rent”**

138. The rent, which we must give for this shop (our body), is simple, basic food, clothing and shelter. If we do not pay this rent, we will have to go out leaving this body, just like a merchant who has to vacate his shop when he does not pay the rent.

139. The worldly life that we live is similar to the business done by a foolish merchant who earns only enough to pay the rent. Only he who toils hard and thereby earns a profit that is many times greater than the rent, is a wise and skillful merchant. Like such a merchant, we should try to attain the great



profit of Self-knowledge before the death of this body.

Note: The reader may refer to The Mountain Path, January 1984, page 39, where the simile given in the above two verses is explained in more detail.

## **26. The Fear of Death**

140. If the fear of death truly comes and takes possession of the mind, that alone will be sufficient; the mind will then automatically turn and take refuge in the Supreme Lord. But know that this benefit will result only for those who possess good qualities, and not for those who possess evil qualities.

141. If the fear of death comes to those who are possessed of selfishness, and of skillfully cunning and perverted intellects, they will become unscrupulously wicked and will ruin themselves making great efforts to enjoy all the petty pleasures of the five senses before the body perishes.

142. But if the fear of death comes to people who have mature and exalted minds, they will scrutinize the connection that exists between the body and the soul, by keenly attending to their mind (the first person consciousness "I") in order to know "To what extent does this death affect us?"

143. Having understood, "If death is only the destruction of the body, then it is merely the state in which I, the soul, am separated from the insentient body," the mind of the aspirant will come to a bold determination, accepting thus, "Let me remain in the

same manner as I would be when death occurs in practice.”

144. This bold determination is dispassion (*vairagya*). Only when it arises will true renunciation be attained. When true renunciation is thus attained as a result of the fear of death, then and there the divine Grace of the Guru will arise and function so as to separate us as other than this body – as Self, the nature of existence-consciousness (*sat-chit-swarupa*). Thus, the attachment to the body as “I” (*dehabhimana*) will perish.

145. When the power of divine Grace functions thus, the true light of Self-consciousness, the one peerless reality, will shine forth, expanding and blossoming in the heart, whereupon in front of that brilliant light this world and our life as an individual in this world will disappear, being found to be a mere false appearance, just as in front of the sun the yellow stain of turmeric disappears from a white cloth.

146. Since the truth, “The death which comes is only for this filthy body, and is not in any way for us,” will thus shine forth as one’s own experience, the fear of death will thereafter never rise again.

147. Then patient forbearance (*udasina*) or indifference to mundane happenings, absence of all base qualities, fearlessness, the steadfast power of true love, and all the six exalted divine qualities (*bhagavat-gunas*) divine splendor, valor, glory, pure knowledge, divine prosperity and desirelessness, will shine in one clearly and harmoniously.

148. After the death of the mind has thus been firmly attained as a result of the fear of the death of the body, since there is no law that the body should die as soon as the mind dies, in the outlook of others the body of the *Jivanmukta* will continue to live, yet his mind will have died due to the dawn of true knowledge.

149. The existence-consciousness “I am,” which continues to live even after the mind has died, alone is the Supreme Reality (*Brahman*), which continues to exist even after the entire universe has been destroyed (*pralaya*). Since there is never even for a moment any such thing as death or destruction for this Self-consciousness “I am”, know that this “I am” alone is the unending and indestructible supreme Self.

## **27. Birthlessness and Deathlessness**

150. Not thinking the body to be “I” is birthlessness; never forgetting the Self-consciousness “I am” is deathlessness. When and why will birth or death come to those who, abiding in the state of Self-knowledge, are ever devoid of thinking and forgetting?

151. Thinking of anything other than “I” is alone birth; not thinking of anything other than “I” is liberation (*mukti*). Will those who have learnt well the art of not thinking, and who thereby abide firmly in the thought-free state, come again under the sway of thought? The practice of refraining from seeing oneself as the many objects of this world is alone perfect practice (*sadhana*). If one achieves success

in this *sadhana*, then there will be no more birth or death.

152. In order not to experience either birth or death, let us arrive at the exalted practice (*sadhana*) of abiding in the natural state, which is devoid of thinking and forgetting. If we learn correctly how to abide thus, then for what reason will we take birth or die? The art of abiding without doubt in the state of Self is alone worthy for us to learn.

### **28. The Transcendent Nature of Self**

153. This vast world, God, souls, bondage and liberation all appear to exist only in the waking and dream states, in which thoughts exist; but do they exist in sleep, which is devoid of thoughts? Similarly, they do not exist in the state of Self-knowledge (*turiya*). If one scrutinizes, "To whom do they appear to exist in waking and dream?" they will cease to exist.

154. Since they are known only when thoughts exist, and since they do not shine when one abides firmly in Self, the creator of the soul, God and world is only the mind, which is the aggregate of all thoughts. Is this creation a work done by Self? No.

155. If the truth is to be told clearly, the real substance of the world seen in the waking state is only this ego, which rises and thunders, as "I am this body". On the other hand, if anyone says that Self at any time revolved in mad delusion and either performed creation and all such actions, or became this soul, world and God, that would be a great wrong.

## **29. Pramada**

156. Know that the world, soul and God have all seemingly come into existence only because of our *pramada* or slackness in Self-attention.

## **30. The Disappearance of Otherness**

157. The entire universe composed of the five elements, earth, water, fire, air and space, appears only due to our error of mistaking as “I,” the ego that rises from Self like a spark rising from fire, and which appears as different from Self whose nature is Being, and as identical with the mind, whose nature is rising.

158. The entire appearance of this world that is seen, including we (the individual or *jiva*) who see it, is a mere false appearance like a dream. If we keenly scrutinize the source (the real “I am”) from which the seeing ego rises, and thereby enter the heart and firmly abide there, the reality will shine forth (and the appearance of the triad – the seer, seeing and object seen – will disappear).

159. If we attain the otherness-free knowledge (*ananya jnana*), that this world is nothing but our own Self, seen wrongly in our self by our self through our power of imagination, then the delusion of desire for or fear of the world (the objects we see in front of us), will never rise again; and we will merge in and become one with Self. This alone is our natural state.

160. Self alone exists. Except oneself, nothing exists. But if one takes this pure consciousness,

which exists and shines as “I,” to be the body, everything will assume a form and appear to exist. If one inquires, “Is this ‘I’ only the body, or is it something else?” and thereby sees the true nature of “I,” everything will cease to exist. See thus.

161. If you ask, “For what reason is it said, that if one inquires and knows oneself, this entire world would disappear?” The reason is that the result attained by the inquiry “Who am I?” is the destruction of the unreal individual (*jiva*), the ego, who is immersed in activity due to his taking the body to be himself. (That is, since the entire world-appearance depends for its seeming existence upon the ego who sees it, and since the ego itself has no real existence of its own, when the real “I” is known, the ego will be found to be truly non-existent; whereupon, the world-appearance will vanish, having no one to see it and thereby to give it a seeming existence).

162. The “I,” which cannot shine without being joined with a body-form, is alone the ghost-like ego-“I,” the great illusion (*maya*). If one courageously and without fear inquires, “Who is this I?” it will become non-existent, and along with it everything else will cease to exist.

163. If this “I,” the self-rising ego-appearance, is destroyed by the inquiry “Who am I?”, then everything else, which till then appeared only in him (in the mind) but which was seen as if existing outside of him, will cease to exist. The ever-existing Whole or *purna*, which then shines forth as “I-I,” the blissful existence which neither appears nor disappears, is the real Self, the true import of the word “I.”

164. The “I” which is the Whole, which is the true import of “I”, which shines by its own light without appearing due to the functioning of the five sense-knowledges (and disappearing when they cease to function); which is the exalted and ever-unleaving experience of Self, and which is the true nature of everyone, alone is the one non-dual reality; it alone is true knowledge.

165. This true knowledge is not anything other than oneself; it is our own existence-consciousness “I am.” Why should we suffer by imagining and seeing the soul, world and God in this knowledge? Abiding firmly as mere Being, experience this knowledge correctly; then what thing other than oneself will appear there?

### **31. The Destruction of the Universe (Pralaya)**

166. The destruction of the entire universe together with the space and other elements that constitute it is not the state of absolute destruction (*pralaya*). The state in which the wicked ego, which rises in the form of the feeling “This body of flesh is I” (*abhimana*), drowns in Self and is destroyed entirely, is alone the glorious state of absolute destruction (*maha-pralaya*).

167. After being destroyed in the ordinary destruction at the end of an eon (*yuga-pralaya*), the heaven and earth will appear again at the proper time. The state in which the Fire of Knowledge (*Jnanagni*), which blazes forth on being ignited as the churning process of investigation “Who am I?” pervades and shines everywhere, having destroyed the feeling, “I am this body” (*dehatma-buddhi*), is

alone the absolute destruction (*maha-pralaya*); because the ego, which is thus destroyed by the Fire of Knowledge (*Jnana*) will never appear again.

168. The “I,” which continues to live even after the mind has died (as a result of the above said inquiry “Who am I?”) is indeed the Supreme Reality (*Brahman*), which alone exists after the universal destruction (*pralaya*). The mind expanding as everything, having risen from the heart (that is, the mind slipping down from the true state of *Brahman* due to inadvertence or lack of Self-attention (*pramada*), and thereby becoming the cause for the creation and sustenance of the false appearance of this entire universe), is not the state of true power; the mind merging and abiding firmly in Self is alone the true state of supreme power.

Note: The supreme and truly divine power is not the power of the mind (*maya*), which creates and sustains the false appearance of the universe, but is only the power of Self-abidance, which reveals the truth that illusion (*maya*) is ever non-existent.

### **32. Denying the Ego**

169. Your appearance as an ego, an individual soul who rises in the form “I am this body,” alone is the root-cause for the appearance of this unreal world. If this root-appearance, the rising of yourself as an individual soul, does not rise even in the least, that state will be the state of liberation, which is completely devoid of the imaginary appearances of the world and God.



170. If one has the ability to deny oneself and thereby to destroy the rising of the ego in its very source, what other *tapas* need one perform? The real Self, the source in which the ego thus subsides and dies, alone is the state which is worth to purchase and attain by selling (or renouncing) all the three worlds.

### **33. Illusion or Phenomenal Existence (Maya)**

171. Listen now to the proper reason why, in answer to those people who asked due to bewilderment of thought, "Why has this illusion or phenomenal appearance (*maya*) come? How has it come?" Lord Ramana did not give a direct reply by telling why or how, but instead said, "See to whom illusion (*maya*) has come."

172. He who says that phenomenal existence (*maya*) has come into being is only you, whereas enlightened Sages (*Jnanis*), who have attained the great experience of Self, never accept that *maya* has come or that it now exists. Therefore, you, who assert that *maya* has come and exists, alone are the one who has the duty to investigate the truth in that assertion in order to prove its validity. Investigate thus.

173. If you first attend to yourself, by investigating within yourself "To whom has this illusory appearance of the world (*maya*) come? To whom does it exist?" then in the mind that has merged in the state of Silence due to such Self-attention, the truth that you exist as the mere consciousness "I am," devoid of any differentiation, diversity or imagi-

nation (*vikalpa*), will spontaneously reveal itself to you.

174. When the truth is known that you, the person who identifies the body as “I,” and who raises doubts and asks questions about phenomenal existence (*maya*), do not exist even in the least, then you will know as a matter of direct experience that in no place, at no time and in no way did phenomenal existence (*maya*) ever come or exist, and that the existence of the illusory world (*maya*) cannot be accepted even as a false appearance.

175. He (the mind) who says that the illusion of phenomenal existence (*maya*) has come into existence is himself an illusion (*maya*). Therefore, the one path of Self-attention, which puts an end to the mind, is alone the means that the pure *Jnana-Guru*, Sri Ramana Bhagavan, has bestowed upon us as the apt medicine to put an end to all the arguments that arise about phenomenal existence (*maya*).

176. Even though our *Guru* has instructed us, “See ‘Who am I?’”, people of dull intellect ask, “Why has this world and the pleasures and pains herein come into existence?” instead of investigating “Who am I?” within themselves; only for such dull-minded people who ask thus, the *Guru* and the scriptures say, “Ah! That is all illusion (*maya*).”

177. But since people of pure faith who sincerely engage in the practice of Self-attention as instructed by the *Guru*, drown in the true consciousness “I” by turning their attention again and again towards the false self (the mind) whenever it rises, to raise any

kind of further questions, this talk of *maya* is not intended for them.

### **34. Doubt Who is the Doubter**

178. Do you merely want an apt reply to the doubt that has come to you? Or do you wish to attain the state in which no doubt can ever rise again? Know that to become pure consciousness, in which there is no place for any doubt to rise, is alone the state that is acceptable to wise people.

179. Even though one doubt that has come to you is removed by an apt reply, another one will spring forth in your mind. If you have a liking that such a nuisance should not rise again, investigate within yourself, "From where does this doubt arise?"

180. Doubts arise only about objects other than oneself; but no doubt can ever arise about one's own existence, "I am," (That is, no one can ever doubt "Do I exist or not?"). If one mistakes the body's existence to be one's own existence, then innumerable doubts will arise about the world and God (which appear to exist only when the wrong identification "I am the body" rises); but if one knows oneself to be Self, the one real existence, then no doubt will arise about anything.

181. Before this doubt "Am I this body, or am I something else?" is removed, why should one raise doubts about other things? Know that the only inquiry that is worthy for wise people to undertake, is to turn within and scrutinize in oneself, "What am I?"

182. Whatever doubt may rise, it cannot rise without you, the one who rose first and who then only raised it. Therefore, the original doubt, namely that of not knowing who this “you” is, is alone the root of all doubts.

183. Until this first doubt “Who am I?” is cleared, giving replies to the other doubts raised by you, would be just like plucking the leaves that grow on the branches of a tree, because they will sprout again and again. If you cut the root of the tree, they will not sprout again. (Similarly, if you root out the ego by scrutinizing “Who am I?” no doubt will arise thereafter).

184. Doubts arise about the reality of the world and God only because of one’s error of not knowing the reality of oneself. When one’s own reality shines as Self, the real “I” that is devoid of any other thing, what doubt can rise?

185. No doubt rose about anything when you were asleep. But when you wake up from sleep, you rise as a person feeling “I am this body, I am an individual.” That person who rises here in the waking state is the doubter. He did not exist in sleep; but you did exist in sleep. Therefore, you who existed even in sleep are not the doubter.

186. The doubter exists only in the waking and dream states; this doubter ceases to exist in sleep. Did any doubt rise to you who existed at that time? That “you” who existed even in sleep is alone the real “you.”

187. The existence of the doubter is itself doubtful. But your existence is the unique existence, which is devoid of any doubt. He who rises, feeling his body to be himself, is the doubter; but you are the space of pure knowledge (*jnanakasa*). In the state in which you thus shine as the space of pure knowledge, what other thing exists for you to know?

188. Know that it is only for this reason that Sri Ramana Sadguru, the embodiment of Wisdom (*Jnana*) and Grace, who has taken us as His own, replied to all the questions asked by His true disciples who had taken refuge in His Feet, "Doubt who is the doubter that asks these questions."

### **35. The Learning That Should be Learnt**

189. One's learning to abide as the indestructible existence-consciousness "I am," having known it to be different from the existence of the body, is alone true learning, (the supreme science or *para-vidya*). Abiding thus, having clearly known this existence-consciousness, and having thereby subsided in Self, is alone the state of true knowledge (*jnana*).

190. Even though one's mouth is dumb, (that may be an obstacle to one's speaking but) how can that dumbness of mouth be an obstacle to one's eating and filling one's stomach? Similarly, even though one has not at all studied and learnt the scriptures, (that may be an obstacle to one's delivering long and learned lectures, but it cannot be an obstacle to one's enjoying the true happiness of Self, because) to abide permanently in Self is easy.

191. The greatness which one attains by learning all the arts and sciences (the sixty-four kinds of mundane knowledge, or *apara-vidya*) is only like a very valuable gem which one has acquired in dream. In the true awakening, the state of absolute oneness (*kaivalya*), which is like one's awakening from dream, all that mundane learning will be found to be useless and unreal like the blueness of the sky.

192. All the knowledge which one learns (by studying countless scriptures) is nothing but a great store of thoughts and tendencies (*vasanas*). The pure (adjunctless and contentless) knowledge "I am", which remains as Silence when one has completely discarded all those thoughts and tendencies (*vasanas*), is alone true knowledge (*mey-jnana*). Therefore, know that all one's learning more and more is only ignorance (*ajnana*).

193. The knowledge of one's own Self, "I am", alone is true knowledge (*jnana*). Whatever knowledge one has acquired of anything other than oneself, is only ignorance (*ajnana*). Know that all that is seen by one who has first known himself, will not appear to him as different from himself.

194. Know that making effort to achieve an inward-facing attention, which will increase the clarity of Self-awareness, instead of driving the mind outwards with great force in order to acquire the useless learning (of mundane knowledge or *apara-vidya*), which will cloud and destroy that clarity, is the truest and highest learning (*para-vidya*).

### **36. The Destruction of Our Rising**

195. Seeing the world, which appears only due to our error of not knowing that the rising “I” or ego is unreal, and thinking the world to be a very great and attractive thing, the persistently mischievous mind runs after it with great desire, hoping to enjoy all the seeming pleasures which it sees in it. But instead of running thus after the world, if the mind turns its attention towards itself in order to scrutinize and know the truth of the rising ego, it will subside with great love and will thus become one with God, who is the real Self.

196. Self-knowledge will shine forth spontaneously only when the mind subsides. But if the mind that subsides is full of wicked and inauspicious tendencies (*asubha vasanas*), Self-knowledge will not shine forth, and hence the mind will once again rise and become extroverted. If on the other hand the mind that subsides is pure, being endowed with good qualities (*sattva gunas*) and the tendency to simply be (*sat-vasana*), it will merge within with one-pointed Self-attention and unsleeping vigilance, and hence it will not rise again; but will attain unwavering abidance in the state of Self-knowledge.

197. If the mind, having subsided and becoming one with Self, clearly knows that Being (as it really is) is alone real happiness, and that rising as “I” (a separate individual or ego) is nothing but misery, it will gain the fondness to subside in Self without ever rising again, having completely destroyed the duality of likes and dislikes.

### **37. Spiritual Maturity (Pakva)**

198. The mind will not be willing to come and follow the spiritual path until it has been repeatedly stung and afflicted by the miseries, which lie hidden like poisonous honeybees in all the worldly pleasures that are sought and attained through the five senses; and until it has thereby gained desirelessness (*vairagya*) towards all such pleasures. This alone is the reason why God gives all the sense-pleasures that people ask Him to bestow, and is also the reason why the Vedas mainly recommend the path of *kamya karmas* (actions performed for the fulfillment of temporal desires).

Note: When God bestows worldly pleasure upon those people who pray for them, and when the Vedas recommend people to follow the path of *kamya karmas*, their inner aim is only to create desirelessness or *vairagya* in the hearts of people by making them experience all the miseries which will inevitably accompany the enjoyment of sense-pleasures. Compare verse 681 of Garland of Guru Sayings, in which Sri Bhagavan says, "The injunction 'Marry a girl' is (given in the Vedas) in order to make one give up the desire for that petty pleasure (of sexual enjoyment), is it not? (Similarly) the injunctions which extol (the performance of) ritual sacrifices are (given) by the words of the Vedas in order to make one gain aversion for all the pleasures of heaven and so on; say, is it not so?"

199. For people whose madness of desire for the pleasures of this world has not yet subsided, who have not become disgusted with all the efforts they have been making to obtain those pleasures,



and whose minds have not therefore completely withdrawn from all such extroverted desires and efforts, it will not be easy to inquire, "Who am I?", and to know the true state of Self, just as a reflection of one's face will not be formed clearly in swiftly running water. Know that a reflection can be seen clearly only when the water stops running and collects itself calmly together in one place.

Note: Compare Vichara Sangraham, ch. 8, paragraph 3, where Sri Bhagavan says, "Just as it is impossible to separate the threads of a fine silk cloth with a very gross (and blunt) crow-bar, and just as it is impossible to determine the nature of very subtle objects with a lamp which is very much wavering due to the wind, so it is impossible to experience the reality with a mind which, being under the sway of inertia and activity (*tamo-* and *rajo-gunas*) and thus is gross and wavering, because the reality is extremely subtle and motionless".

200. If the liking to attain true knowledge really rises with one, it will be easy for one to experience Self-knowledge, the state of perfect emancipation, as clearly as an *amalaka* (crystal, or goose berry) fruit in the hand. But so long as even an iota of the liking to enjoy the pleasures of this unreal world remains unsubsidied in one's heart, the real thirst to know Self will not rise within one.

201. To the extent in which the conviction grows stronger in us that all the extroverted activity of the mind is only misery, to that extent the desire and love to turn within will also increase. And to the extent to which the strength to attend to Self alone increases in us, to that extent the conviction will grow

that attending to anything other than Self is useless. Thus, each one of these two (namely *vairagya* or desirelessness towards external objects and *bhakti* or the love to attend to Self) is an aid to increase the other.

202. Know that he who likes to remain steadfastly attending to Self, knowing that Self-attention is far more important than any action that he has to do, than any word that he has to speak, or than any thought that he has to think, alone is a true mature spiritual aspirant (*pakvi*).

203. Though many crores (millions) of very important thoughts rise in one's heart, bliss can be enjoyed only when one rejects all of them and remains still, knowing that to be still is far more important than to continue attending to any thought whatsoever. Only by those earnest aspirants who have clearly understood this truth, can real austere practice (*tapas*) be possible.

### **38. Intense Earnestness is Required**

204. Just as a pearl-diver ties a stone to his waist, dives and takes the fine pearl lying in the depths of the ocean, one should fasten upon the mind a stone girdle of firm desirelessness (*vairagya*) and dive within oneself to take the ancient pearl of Self, the original consciousness.

205. If a pearl-diver remains on the shore of the ocean waiting for the roaring waves to subside, will he ever succeed in gathering pearls? If he plunges through the waves on the surface and dives deep into the ocean with a heavy stone tied to his waist,

what waves will he find there in the depths? (Similarly, if we steadfastly dive beneath the waves of thoughts into the depths of our heart, by keenly attending to the consciousness “I”, we will find that there are no thoughts there to disturb us).

206. Since a life of great peace exists deep within the ocean of our heart, we should be completely indifferent towards the many tendencies (*vasanas*) which are tossing like heavy waves on the surface of that ocean, and with intense desirelessness (*vairagya*) we should dive deep into Self, the primal consciousness of our existence.

207. Having dived deep into the heart, which is the consciousness “I”, and having thereby rectified all kinds of sense-knowledge, which are distortions of the one real consciousness, and which rise like bubbles on the surface of the ocean, we should abide only as this existence-consciousness, which shines as “I am”, without knowing anything through the senses.

208. When we thus abide more and more in the natural state of Self, all the innumerable tendencies (*vasanas*) will be destroyed. Other than this practice of Self-abidance, there is no effective means that will destroy the tendencies so easily and so quickly.

209. Even before all the tendencies have been completely destroyed, by one’s own desirelessness (*vairagya*) and by the Grace of God, it is possible for one to attain the blemishless light of Self-knowledge. Then by the power and clarity of that Self-knowledge, the delusion of attachment to the body and mind will automatically be destroyed.

210. Those aspirants who have attained purity of mind due to the strength of the good qualities that they have gradually cultivated, and acquired through so many births, will easily learn how to abide in this state of Self-knowledge as soon as they come into the presence of the *Sadguru* who has manifested Himself in human form.

211. Do not fear. By the great power of the Grace of the *Guru*, who has transcended everything, you will certainly attain this Self-knowledge. If even a single tendency (*vasana*) remains in us, our *Jnana-Guru*, Lord Ramana, will not keep quiet.

212. If we each make the same effort by which it was possible for some people in some former time to attain this Self-abidance, will any of us fail to attain it as our natural state? Therefore, by making that effort (of diving deep within yourself by keenly attending to the consciousness "I"), attain that knowledge of the one real Self.

213. Other than knowing the ever-existing Self, all the aims and paths that the deceptive mind shows to be so lofty, are not worthy to be accepted even in the least by real aspirants, but are only worthy to be rejected. Therefore, without any fear or hesitation, reject all of them.

214. We should not give even the least room in our heart to the demonic ghost of forgetfulness (*pramada*), which deludes the mind by diverting it from Self-attention. Instead, with unhesitating and irresistible courage, we should victoriously attain Self-knowledge.

### **39. The Thoughts That Arise During Meditation**

215. Among a collection of many kinds of small seeds, it is impossible to detect and remove the thorn-seeds. Only after all the seeds have sprouted in the form of plants is it possible to detect the thorn-plants, and thereby to pluck them out and throw them away. Similarly, only if all the tendencies or *vasanas* which are hiding in the heart sprout out in the form of thoughts during the time of your meditation, will it be possible to destroy them by the practice of Self-inquiry. Hence, the rising of thoughts during the time of meditation is good.

Note: Compare Maharshi's Gospel, Page 19, where Sri Bhagavan says, "Yes, all kinds of thoughts arise in meditation. That is only right; for what lies hidden in you is brought out. Unless it rises up, how can it be destroyed?"

216. The tendencies (*vasanas*) are the seeds, and the thoughts that rise are the plants. The Grace of God or *Guru* is the water that makes the *vasanas* sprout in the form of thoughts. Then in order to destroy those thoughts, which exist in the form of desires, that same Grace crushes them by the power of the clear discrimination that it bestows upon us. Therefore, until you achieve victory in this war of Grace, do not become disheartened and give up your meditation.

217. All thoughts that we have cultivated due to our worldly desires in many former lives when we did not possess proper discrimination, have been accumulated in our heart in the form of very powerful tendencies (*vasanas*). Those *vasanas* exist in

the form of likes and dislikes, and they will be destroyed only to the extent to which we abide firmly in the Self.

Note: Compare Who am I? (Nan Yar?), paragraph 10, where Sri Bhagavan says, “Although tendencies toward sense-objects (*vishaya-vasanas*), which have been coming from the ancient past, rise without limit like the waves of the ocean, they will all be destroyed when Self-attention (*swarupa-dhyana*) becomes more and more intense.”

#### **40. How to Make Thoughts Subside**

218. All thoughts (*vrittis*) arise only because the unreal feeling “I am this body” has become well soaked and firmly established in us. All these thoughts will be destroyed only if we vigilantly practice Self-inquiry, and thereby root out the unreal feeling “I am this body.”

Note: Compare verse 2 of Atma-Vidya Kirtanam, in which Sri Bhagavan says, “The thought ‘This fleshy body alone is I’ is indeed the one thread on which the various thoughts are strung. Therefore, if one goes within (by keenly scrutinizing) ‘Who am I and what is the place (from which I rise)?’ the thoughts will perish and Self-knowledge will spontaneously shine forth within the cave (of the Heart) as ‘I-I’ ”.

219. If we feel “I am this body,” thoughts either about the world or about God will immediately rise with great vigor and attachment. Having risen thus, those thoughts will multiply and increase in the form

of likes and dislikes, and intense misery will then result.

220. During sleep, when one does not rise as an individual who feels “I am this fleshy body”, do any thoughts rise either about the world or about God? Therefore, know that the tendency to identify a body as “I” alone is the cause for the appearance of the world and God.

221. The tendency to identify this gross body as “I” (in the waking state) alone is the root which paves the path for ignorance to subsist as the subtle body (in dream) and to hide as the casual body (in sleep). Therefore, if we abide as Self, having repeatedly practiced Self-attention and having thereby put an end to this root-tendency to identify the gross body as “I,” the tendency to identify with the other two bodies will also be destroyed automatically.

Note: Compare Vichara Sangraham, chapter one where Sri Bhagavan says, “All the three bodies in the form of the five sheaths are contained in the feeling ‘I am this body.’ If that (the feeling ‘I am this body’) alone is removed, all (the three bodies) will be removed automatically. Since all the other bodies (the subtle and causal bodies) subsist only by clinging to this (the feeling ‘I am this gross body’), it is not necessary to remove each (of the three bodies) individually.” See also lines 27 to 30 of Sri Ravana Vachana Saram on page 230 of the Mountain Path, October 1984.

222. So long as any one of the three bodies is identified as “I,” it will be impossible to put an end to all the tendencies or *vasanas*, which are the seed-

forms of thoughts. Know that in order to put an end to all tendencies, any kind of effort other than the elevated practice (*sadhana*) of turning and attending to Self will be of no avail.

#### **41. Intermittent Attempts**

223. The state in which our power of attention, which now sees the objects that exist in front of our eyes, sees its own existence "I am", having suddenly become introverted by giving up all objective attention and turning towards "I," is alone the state of true austerity (*tapas*) or *yoga*. If our power of attention is used in any other way, that is only an objective attention that is opposed to true *tapas* or *yoga*.

224. Know that a *vichari* (a person practicing Self-inquiry) who makes effort with the liking always to turn inwards to see the "I" with the inner eye, will not be able to experience the pure Self-consciousness merely by the process of sitting majestically with closed eyes for a long period of time at one stretch.

225. If at one single attempt you strive persistently for long hours without limit, to pull Selfwards and restrain the running mind without leaving your hold on Self-attention, you will find that you are not able to maintain a steady intensity of Self-attention. Therefore, after making one attempt for a few minutes, relax your effort for a while, and then again make a fresh attempt with renewed effort.

226. If you continue incessantly to struggle for many hours at a stretch to turn your power of atten-



tion towards Self, your effort will become slack and the intensity of your Self-attention will decrease. On the other hand, if you take rest as and when each attempt becomes slack, and then if you repeatedly make fresh efforts to turn Selfwards, with each fresh attempt your Self-attention will gain an increased vigor and intensity.

Note: If we press our hand on a weighing-scale and if we try to maintain the pressure continuously for a long time by not removing our hand, as time passes the dial will indicate that the pressure is gradually decreasing. But if instead we relax by removing our hand for a while, and if we then again apply the pressure, the dial will indicate that with each fresh attempt the pressure is increasing. Similarly, instead of struggling to maintain the intensity of Self-attention for a long time, if we make intermittent attempts to turn our attention keenly towards Self, with each fresh attempt our Self-attention will gain a greater degree of intensity and clarity.

227. When the mind, our power of attention, having little by little gained the strength to turn Selfwards, finally at one time reaches the heart due to the intensity and clarity of its Self-attention, it will drown in Self, having been caught in the clutch of the Grace of God who has ever been waiting without the least forgetfulness to catch it, and hence it will never again turn outwards to know objects other than "I".

228. Knowing that this is indeed the peerless divine marriage of Grace, the power of attention will become settled and will attain firm abidance in Self. To remain steadily established in Self-abidance, be-

ing firmly bound by Self in Self, having known oneself to be that Self, is alone the state of supreme bliss.

## **42. Watching the Breath**

229. If one takes to Self-attention, the practice of keenly observing only the consciousness "I," then one need not perform any other practice (*sadhana*). But let those who cannot take to this practice of Self-attention from the very outset, practice for a short while either repetition of mantras (*japa*) or watching of the movement of the breath, and then let them give up all such practices and cling only to Self-attention.

230. The path that Sadguru Sri Ramana was for fifty-four years repeatedly teaching to us for our salvation was only this primary practice of Self-attention. Know that the practice of watching the breath was only one among the hundreds of thousands of other methods that He taught so as to guide on the path towards salvation even those people who were not ready to come to the path of Self-inquiry, which alone was His principle teaching.

Note: Refer to verses 208 and 209

231. For those who attend keenly to both the inward-going and the outward-coming movements of the breath, the length of both these movements will decrease, and within a short time the breath will be rising and subsiding only within a very slight manner. If they attain this state, it is a sufficient sign (to show that the agitated activity of the mind has decreased). (Therefore at that stage let them give up

attending to the breath, and let them attend instead only to the Self.)

232. If you fix your attention upon the one power within you, which is experienced in the form of the effort that draws the breath within and then pushes it out, then retention of the breath (*kumbhaka*) will be attained without difficulty or strain.

233. But if you think that effort of yours to be something other than “I,” no benefit will be gained from the retention *kumbhaka*. And even though you understand this effort of yours to be only yourself, if your attention does not cling to that first person consciousness “I,” know that even this practice will only be a buffoonery.

234. Relating to the breath, there are two suitable methods of practice (*sadhana*): one method is, after watching the movements of the breath for a short while, in order that the raging activity of the wavering mind may subside, to leave that breath-attention and to engage in Self-attention. The other method is to attend within oneself to the one power that draws in and pushes out the breath, knowing that that one power is not other than the consciousness “I.” For some people these methods are appropriate.

235. In whatever teaching He gave, the inner aim of *Sadguru* Sri Ramana was only to turn our power of attention somehow or other so as to fix it firmly upon our own existence-consciousness “I am.” If you ask why this is so, the reason is that God, the original reality, exists only as the first person exis-

tence, and hence He cannot be seen as a second person, an object other than “I.”

### **43. Self-Inquiry and Other Methods of Practice** **(Sadhana)**

236. For those who listen and pay heed to what Sri Ramana Bhagavan has said, the path of Self-inquiry is very easy. Only to those who ask, “What is *this* path? What is *that* path?”, having already confused their mind by learning so much, does it become necessary to teach all the other superficial and extroverted methods of *sadhana* saying, “First subdue the breath (by practicing *pranayama*), subdue the tongue (by observing silence), and subdue the mischief of the mind (by practicing meditation).”

237. From the mouth of Sri Ramana Bhagavan, words sometimes arose as if commending other methods, such as watching the breath or *japa*. This apparently was in order to shut the mean mouths of bystanders (those people who were attached to the practice of traditional yogic and vedantic methods of *sadhana*, by giving them no room to find fault saying, “Bhagavan has set aside all the ancient methods, showing complete indifference to them”.

238. If the mind practices any one thing incessantly, it will naturally gain one-pointedness in that one thing. However, rather than any external object, the first person consciousness “I” is alone the most worthy thing for the mind to have as the target of its attention, is it not? By taking any second person object, such as the movement of the breath, or the right side of the chest, as the target of its attention,

the mind will attain only a state of temporary absorption in that object.

239. The state in which the mind, by the strength of practice (*abhyasa-bala*), abides or immerses itself in the attention to any second person object, however exalted that object may be, is only a state of temporary absorption of the mind (*manolaya*). On the other hand, by abiding in the state of Self-attention, the natural state of true awakening, the state of destruction of the mind (*mano-nasa*) will be attained. Since this natural state of Self-knowledge alone is our goal, cling firmly only to this flawless practice (*sadhana*), or incessantly thinking “I, I”.

240. The one-pointedness of mind, which is gained by the practice of repetition of a mantra (*japa*) or meditation (*dhyana*), will also be gained by practicing Self-inquiry; but in a very easy manner without the need of any restriction or restraint, such as those that are to be observed while practicing other methods of practice (*sadhana*). Rather than the common existence-consciousness “I am,” which is always experienced by all people, what more worthy and easy target of attention (*dhyana-lakshana*) is now needed?

241. Whatever kind of person they may be, everyone says, “I am”; so what obstacle can there be for anyone to attend unceasingly to that Self-consciousness “I am?” Therefore, without giving room for even an iota of doubt, attend with love and joy only to your own being.

#### **44. Why is Practice (Sadhana) Difficult?**

242. When we are lacking in earnestness or faith (*sraddha*), whatever practice (*sadhana*) we may take to will appear to be equally difficult. But if our earnestness is firm and one-pointed, no *sadhana* will be felt to be difficult, and without any aid we will be able to remain firmly established in the state of Self-abidance.

243. Where there is a will, there is a way. That is, if a sincere liking to attain something arises in one's heart, a path whereby one can attain it will also be found, and because of that liking one's mind will unceasingly seek the goal until it is attained. Only when the liking to attain that goal does not truly arise in one's heart, will one experience difficulty in the practice (*sadhana*) or means adopted to attain it. Know that this is the secret underlying all methods of practice.

244. To the extent to which one approaches and lives close to true devotees, to that extent will the liking arise in one's heart to attain salvation, the real goal of human life. By having more and more association with such true devotees, that liking will gradually increase until finally one will attain salvation by abiding firmly in Self.

#### **45. Love for the State of Self**

245. By great love for the fourth (the state of mere being, the natural state of Self, which is known as *turiya* or the fourth state), we can go above (transcending the three states of waking, dream and sleep). By means of breath-control and so on, it (the

transcending of the three states) will not happen. Is it proper to investigate illusion? (That is, is it proper to seek to attain the state of Self by breath-control, or by any other such effort involving an attention to second or third person objects, which are products of illusion [*maya*]?)

#### **46. Gaining One-Pointedness in Self**

246. For whatever thing a liking or love arises in you, upon that thing your mind will certainly gain one-pointedness, because such is the nature of the mind. Unless a real love for Self arises in you, you will not turn within and attend to it one-pointedly; instead you will always be telling some excuse or other for not doing so.

247. (When will a real love for Self arise in you?) Whatever your intellect decides to be the greatest and most worthy thing, for that thing alone will a love arise in you. The intellect of a mature spiritual aspirant will decide that Self-alone is the greatest and most worthy thing, and hence he will have real love for Self. But to the intellects of immature people, the objects of this world alone will appear to be great and worthy to be attained, and hence their desire for those objects will constantly be increasing.

248. (When will the intellect decide that Self alone is the greatest thing?) The intellect will esteem something as the greatest according to its decision as to what is eternal and what is ephemeral. What can be correctly decided by the intellect to be eternal? Only that thing, which can be decided to be real, is unquestionably eternal; other things are only ephemeral objects that are fit to be discarded.

249. (How to decide what is real?) Whatever exists always and unceasingly, whatever exists without ever undergoing any change, and whatever shines by its own light of consciousness without depending upon the aid of any other thing, either to know it or to make it known – that alone is to be decided as real, is it not?

Note: Compare Maharshi's Gospel, 8th ed., page 63, where Sri Bhagavan says, "What is the standard of reality? That alone is real which exists by itself, which reveals itself by itself, and which is eternal and unchanging."

250. Existing always and unceasingly, means to be deathless and indestructible; existing without ever undergoing any change, means to be devoid of movement (*achala*), either in time or in space; shining by its own light, means to be the consciousness that itself clearly knows its own existence, and not to be an insentient object that is known only by the aid of some other thing. Knowing that the definition of reality is such, scrutinize and decide what is real.

251. Whatever satisfies this definition of reality, having all the aforesaid three characteristics, alone is to be accepted as real. Therefore, scrutinize and see whether there is anything in this world that can satisfy this definition. If you scrutinize carefully, you will find that every object exists for some time and then disappears, that every object undergoes change and is devoid of stability, and that every object is known only by the aid of some other thing.

252. Therefore, none of the objects that are known through the five senses can satisfy the afore-



said definition of reality, and hence none of them can be said to be real. But consider yourself in the light of the three characteristics mentioned above, and decide whether or not you, who know those objects, can satisfy this definition of reality.

253. The body and world are ever changing. But your own existence is the consciousness “I am” that always exists unceasingly, and without undergoing any change, is it not? Did you not exist without any deficiency even in sleep, where everything else had become non-existent? Therefore, how can there be any other thing that is more real than you? Consider well and say.

254. All the four inner organs (or *antahkaranas*), namely the mind, intellect, knowledge (*chitta*) and ego, are ever undergoing change, and they cease to exist in sleep. But you are always the same “you,” are you not? Did any second “you” exist in your sleep to know you, who know all the objects that appear in waking and dream? You, who are the one and only “you,” alone existed in sleep, did you not?

255. Since you alone knew your existence in sleep, and since you who knew thus are only one and not two, you alone are the self-shining substance (*swayam-prakasa vastu*). Therefore know that you, who are the consciousness “I am” that always exists and shines without undergoing any change, and without the aid of any other thing, alone can be said to be real.

256. Do not all human beings have love for sleep, the state in which one abides as Self-alone, having left aside everything else? If that state of

Self were not blissful, would anyone have love for sleep? Moreover, is any feeling of misery experienced there in sleep? Consider well and say.

257. Therefore, knowing that you, the Self, alone are real, drown in your own non-dual blissful existence-consciousness and experience the state of Self-abidance, which is completely devoid of the unreal body and mind. To experience this state is alone the real duty of all good and cultured people.

258. Know that those people who have discriminated and clearly understood that Self is thus greater and more real than any other thing, will surely gain true love for Self, and even through forgetfulness they will never have desire for any other thing.

259. Those people who have a clear and unshakable understanding of their own reality, having thus discriminated and concluded that Self, the existence-consciousness "I am," alone is real and eternal, will gain unlimited love to abide as Self and will thus attain the state of one-pointed Self-attention.

260. When you attain the non-dual state of Self-abidance, by gaining such one-pointedness and such unequalled love for Self, you will experience the state of true spiritual discipline (*tapas*) in which you alone blissfully exist as the direct knowledge of Self.

### **47. To Heed While in Inquiry**

261. Being worried on seeing that sleep is brought about during the practice of Self-inquiry, do not give up Self-inquiry. This sleep is one among

the experiences that will arise during the initial stages of Self-inquiry. Have no doubt about this.

262. If sleep comes, sleep well. After sleeping thus, as soon as you wake up, fix your attention with earnest love upon the self-consciousness “I am.” When the mind again subsides in that sleep-like state, and when waking returns once again, try gradually to experience the one existence-consciousness that shines in between these two states.

263. When you practice abiding more and more in the experience of this existence-consciousness, which shines between sleep and waking, the sleep that formerly appeared to overcome you will be dispersed, and the waking state in which you identify with the body and cognize external objects will not arise and engulf you again. Therefore, abide in this existence-consciousness repeatedly and untiringly.

264. Since there is the consciousness “I am,” this state is not sleep. Since there is a complete absence of thoughts, this state is not waking. It is the state of existence-consciousness, or *sat-chit*, which is the undivided nature of God, or *akhandā-siva-swarupa*. Therefore, unceasingly abide in this state with great love.

265. Why is it said, “Abide in this existence-consciousness repeatedly” and “Abide in this state with great love?” Because until all the tendencies (*vasanas*) which drive us out of this state have ceased to exist, this state will seem to come and go. Therefore, until those *vasanas* have been com-

pletely destroyed, it is necessary to have love and to make repeated efforts to abide in this state.

Note: Just as the moving of clouds creates the illusion that the moon itself is moving in the opposite direction, the coming and going of the mind's tendencies (*vasanas*) creates the illusion that our natural state of existence-consciousness is often coming and going of its own accord.

266. When by this practice of abiding in the state of existence-consciousness, this existence-consciousness is always experienced to be effortless and inescapably natural, then no harm will result even if sleep, dream and waking appear to come and go.

267. For those who firmly abide in the unending state of Self-consciousness, which pervades and transcends the three states of waking, dream and sleep, that state of existence-consciousness is the only real state. It is the unlimited Whole (or *purna*). That state, in which even the feeling "I am making effort to abide" does not at all rise, alone is your natural state of Being. Be thus.

#### **48. The Manner of the Dawn of Knowledge** **(Janodaya Vidham)**

268. Death happens in a split second. Awakening from sleep happens in a split second. Similarly, the destruction of the delusion of individuality happens in just a split second. True knowledge is not something that can be gained and then lost. If a person feels that true knowledge is coming and going, he is still only in the state of practice (or *ab-*

*hyasa*). It cannot be said that such a person has attained true Self-knowledge.

The perfect awakening into the state of Self-knowledge happens in just a split second. That state is not attained gradually over a long period of time. All the *sadhanas* that are practiced over a period of many years are meant only for attaining blemishless maturity. Listen to an apt illustration. After people have placed gunpowder in the iron barrel of a temple-cannon, after they have added broken pieces of brick, after they have packed it tight with a ramrod, after they have placed a wick in contact with the powder, and after they have plastered the open end of the barrel with clay, as soon as the charge is ignited it will explode in a split second with a blast that sounds like thunder.

Similarly, after one has learnt the truth about the real Self through hearing and reading, after one has practiced *sadhana* for a long time, after one has wept and prayed with heart-melting devotion, and after one has thereby attained purity of mind, the knowledge of the reality will instantaneously shine forth in a split second as "I am I". As soon as the dawn of Self-knowledge thus takes place, due to the clear shining of the reality of this state, which is an empty space devoid of objective knowledge, will be spontaneously realized to be the state of true knowledge, which is our beginningless real nature. When even the effort of attending to Self thereby merges in Silence, that state of mere Being, in which there is nothing further to do and nothing further to attain at any time, alone is the real state.

Note: Refer to Sri Ramana Gita 17.5 and 17.3

### **49. Self-Knowledge**

269. One's lying, having forgotten one's existence-consciousness, "I am," and having drooped, is sleep. One's being confused, mistaking one's existence-consciousness, "I am," to be the alien feeling "I am this body," is dream; which is of two kinds, known as the waking state and the dream state. One's experiencing one's existence-consciousness, "I am," without any forgetfulness (*pramada*), is the *true* waking. The former two are unreal, the latter alone is real.

270. One's lying, having forgotten one's existence-consciousness, "I am," and having drooped, is the world. One's being confused, "I am this body," is the soul. One's experiencing one's existence-consciousness, "I am," without any forgetfulness, is God. The former two are unreal, the latter alone is real.

Note: In Vedanta, nature (*prakriti*) consists of three essential modes or qualities called *gunas*. These are *sattva-guna*, *rajo-guna* and *tamo-guna* respectively. *Sattva*, the seed or quality of intelligence, purity and equilibrium, conserves and elevates the workings of energy; *rajas*, the seed or quality of force or action, creates or activates the workings of energy; *tamas*, the seed of inertia and non-intelligence, and the denial of *sattva* and *rajas*, limits, immobilizes, impedes, deactivates or dissolves what the former two create and conserve.

271. One's lying, having forgotten one's existence-consciousness, "I am," and having drooped, is *tamo-guna*. One's being confused, mistaking one's

existence-consciousness, “I am,” to be the alien feeling “I am this body,” is *rajo-guna*. The power of clear discernment (*sphurana-sakti*), which experiences one’s existence-consciousness, “I am,” is *sattva-guna*. Such is the nature of our illusion (*maya*); (that is, the concealing of our true nature by the former two *gunas* is ignorance or deception (*avidya-maya*), while the revealing of our true nature by the latter *guna* is true knowledge (*vidya-maya*).

272. Even when one drooped (as in sleep), having forgotten oneself, the consciousness “I am” was nonetheless existing and shining. Even when one was confused, mistaking oneself to be the body (as in waking and dream), the consciousness “I am” was still existing and shining (as the base and support of the perverted consciousness “I am the body”). Therefore, when I thus exist and know myself as the one who existed and shone (in the above two states), what obstacle can ever arise to impede me from existing and knowing my existence?

273. Therefore, one’s lying, having forgotten one’s existence-consciousness, “I am,” and having drooped, is not (something which ever truly happened). One’s being confused, mistaking one’s existence-consciousness, “I am,” to be the alien feeling “I am the body,” is not (something which ever truly happened). One’s newly experiencing one’s existence-consciousness, “I am,” is not (something which ever truly happens). Such is the nature of the experience of true knowledge (*jnana*).

274. Only so long as it falsely appears as if we have forgotten our existence-consciousness, “I am,” can an effort arise as an effort (*tapas*) or practice

(*sadhana*) to know and attain Self. After we have clearly known that we have never forgotten Self, and that the feeling as if we have forgotten Self is a mere imagination (*kalpana*), there will be no practice (*sadhana*) for us to do. The truth is that we ever exist only as mere Being.

275. To think that we have at some time lost or forgotten yourself is not true. If on the contrary it were true, then even if we were to make effort and attain Self, we may again lose it. Then what to do?

276. This true state of Self is not a state that can undergo changes, such as being lost, or again being attained. Know that this state is that which is never lost. In front of the clear light of the sun of Self-knowledge, which is devoid of changes such as being lost or being attained, how can such changes, which are an unreal darkness, take place?

277. This existing reality is not something that can be reached and attained like an object other than "I." All that is to be done is only to abide as it is, having set aside the empty imagination that has risen within us that we have lost that state. Setting aside that imagination is to abide in Self, having turned our attention within, withdrawing it from all other objects. The true state is nothing other than this.

### **50. Untouching Union (Asparsa Yoga)**

278. Our existence and the consciousness of our existence ever remain unseparated from us; when it is so, why should the state in which we remain as we are be called a state of *yoga*, in which



we have approached and united (with our own existence)? We are always only one; therefore, the natural state in which we abide as we are, is not a state of our uniting with ourself, nor is it a state of our becoming ourself. Declare that that state is the state of “not touching” (*asparsam*); that is, the state of separation from all adjuncts such as the body and mind).

279. To talk in admiration about going and uniting hereafter with our natural state, which is non-dual and which can never become two, and to glorify that this is *yoga*, is appropriate only for people who are deluded into believing that their ego-life (which is experienced only in the darkness of ignorance) is the real life. Know clearly that the truth is that no *yoga* is necessary for our real nature.

Translator's note: The above two verses were written to explain the significance of the term *asparsa yoga*, which literally means “untouching union,” and which is used in certain Vedantic texts such as the Mandukya Karikas (3.39 and 4.2). To unite with something, one must touch it; but since we have never been separated from the reality, which is our own true nature, how are we either to touch it or to unite with it? Therefore, if the natural state in which we abide as Self, is to be called a state of “union” or “*yoga*”, it is only an “untouching union” or “*asparsa yoga*”; that is, a state of oneness which is not brought about afresh by any act of union, but which is realized to be the ever-existing non-dual state of existence-consciousness from which we have never been separated.

### **51. Who is a Jnani?**

280. Is the intellect, which decides, "This person is a *Jnani*; that person is an *ajnani*" knowledge (*jnana*) or ignorance (*ajnana*)? *Jnana* is only one! Therefore, even the *Jnani* who is seen by the mind, the *ajnana* that sees *Jnanis* as many, is only a product of that *ajnana*.

281. You (the mind that sees others) are yourself a mere thought. Therefore, the person who is said by you to be a pure soul, or a *Mahatma*, is only one among the many thoughts that are thought by you, the first thought! How can such a thought, which is an illusory product of *ajnana*, be a supreme Knower of Self (*Atma-jnani*)? Reflecting in this manner, know this truth.

282. To say, "He is a good soul, a *Jnani*, I know," is untrue. Even to say, "All people are *Jnanis*," is untrue, because to see as if many people are existing, is the sign of ignorance. Only one person truly exists; that is you. Know thus.

283. In the true outlook of the *Jnani*, there is no *ajnani* (because there is no one who is other than himself). The *ajnani* (pointing to a body and saying "This person is a *Jnani*," gives the name "*Jnani*" only to a body. Due to this defective outlook, where-by the *ajnani* sees even the *Jnani* as a body, he becomes one who sees even the *Jnani* only as an *ajnani*.

284. Even though you may visit any number of *Mahatmas*, and even though they may exhibit all the eightfold occult powers (*ashta siddhis*), know that he

who turns your attention towards Self saying, "Without allowing your mind to go after these juggleries, turn within," is alone the true pure soul (*Mahatma*).

285. Let the individual (*jivatma*) who enters the lofty Himalayas and forests seeking *Mahatmas*, enter instead the heart, by turning within seeking "Where am I?" and thereby become the blissful Self (*sukhatma-swarupa*). Thereafter, all who were seen externally as pure souls (*Mahatmas*) will be experienced by him to be his own Self (*atma-swarupa*). This is the teaching given by Sri Ramana Bhagavan.

286. Before one knows oneself, in whatever way one may try, it is not possible for one to know the real *tapasvis* (the *Jnanis*, who ever remain in the egoless state of Self-abidance, the true state of *tapas*). Therefore, giving up all the futile efforts to seek externally to know pure souls (*Mahatmas*), cling firmly to the great and worthwhile effort of attending to Self, which will destroy the unreal feeling "I am an individual *jiva*."

287. Therefore, if any thought arises in you hereafter to seek to determine whether someone is a *Jnani* or an *ajnani*, reject that thought immediately by inquiring "Who am I who rise to determine about the state of others?" and thus merge your mind in the heart, the source from which that thought arose, by turning within and keenly fixing your attention in that source.

288. If you give up the effort to know whether a certain person is a *Jnani* or an *ajnani*, and instead scrutinize "Who is it who feels that this person exists?" the answer will be known "It is I." Then scruti-

nize immediately “Who is this rising I?” The true *Jnani* will then shine forth (being clearly known to be your own Self, “I-I”).

289. If someone is a *Jnani*, what is that to us? So long as we do not know ourself, that will be of no benefit to us. On scrutiny, *Jnana* alone is the *Jnani*; the *Jnani* is not a human form; he is only the supreme space of pure consciousness. That supreme space is our true nature.

290. Therefore, by Self-inquiry destroy the petty mind, which seeks to know “This person is a *Jnani*; that person is a *Jnani*.” The *Jnana* (the pure Self-consciousness “I am” that remains after the mind has thus been destroyed), which shines as one (devoid of any other) and which does not rise and jump as “I am this” or “I am that”, is alone the *Jnani*. Seeing the *Jnani* thus by Silence (the thought-free state which remains after the mind has been destroyed) is alone seeing him correctly.

## **52. The Ultimate Secret of Spiritual Practice** **(Sadhanottava Rahasya)**

291. (Among the three places or persons [the first, second and third persons], and among the three times, the present, past and future) the first person (known in Tamil as *tanmai-idam* or the “selfness-place”) and the present time, are the place and the time that *Sadguru* Sri Ramana told us to scrutinize (as our *dhyana-laksha*, or target for attention). If you abide, attending with subtle vigilance to either of these, investigating “Who is this first person, who shines as I?” or “What is this present time that shines as the consciousness am?” you will experi-

ence the supreme joy of Self (*atma-parabhoga*) – having accomplished *yoga* and having become one who has attained *siddhi* (the state of final liberation). See and feast upon Self, thus.

## **1. ELEVEN VERSES ON SELF-INQUIRY** **(ATMA-VICHARA PATIKAM)**

1. Thinking is a *vritti*; being is not a *vritti* (thought). If we scrutinize “Who is thinking?” the thinking process will come to as standstill. Even when thoughts do not exist, do you have any doubt about your own existence as “I am”? Abiding in your own existence, which shines as “I am,” the source, from which all thoughts rise, is the state of Self-abidance. Abide thus.

2. He who thinks is the soul, or *jiva*. He who exists as “I am” without any thought is God. If the thinker thinks with great love of that which merely exists as “I am,” this Selfward-turned thought will become the thought-free consciousness, which will destroy all thoughts. When the thinker thus dies along with his thoughts, the state of abidance, which then remains shining as “I am,” is the state of union with God or *Siva-sayujya*.

3. He who thinks, “I am so-and-so” is just a thought like all the other thoughts. But of all thoughts, this thought, “I am so-and-so” alone is the first. The soul who thinks, “I am so-and-so” is merely a reflection of our real Self. When we abide and shine only as that real Self, the thought “I am so-and-so” will not rise.

4. In dreamless sleep, this thought “I am so-and-so” does not at all exist. In the true state of Self-knowledge also, this thought “I am so-and-so” does not at all exist. But in the states of waking and dream, which rise in between the darkness of sleep

and the pure light of Self-knowledge, the thought “I am this body” seems to appear and disappear. Therefore this limited “I” is not real; this “I” is only a thought.

5. The flourishing of this “I” is only the flourishing of misery. This “I” is that which is called the ego. This ego-“I” rises and flourishes only because of non-inquiry (*avichara*). If we inquire “Who is this I?”, and thereby vigilantly scrutinize only the feeling “I,” without attending to the adjunct “so-and-so” with which it is mixed, this adjunct will disappear, since it is devoid of any real existence.

6. The second and third persons, the known objects, subsist only because of the first person, the knowing subject, who is the root. If the mind, which is ever wavering because of attending to second and third persons, turns and attends to the first person, who rises as “I am so-and-so,” the adjunct “so-and-so” will cease to exist and the real Self, which always exists as “I am,” will shine forth spontaneously. That real Self, which is the indestructible base of the first person, alone is true knowledge (*Jnana*).

7. Thinking about second and third persons is foolishness, because when we attend to second and third persons the mental activities (*mano-vrittis*) rise up and multiply. But the act of attending to the first person is equal to committing suicide, because only by scrutinizing the first person will the ego die of its own accord.

8. Attending to any second or third person instead of turning and attending to this “I,” the first

person feeling that is always experienced by everyone, is only ignorance (*ajnana*). If you ask, "The ego (the feeling 'I am so-and-so') is only a product of ignorance, so attending to the ego is also ignorance, is it not? Why then should we attend to this 'I'?" Listen to what is said below:

9. Why is the ego destroyed when we scrutinize "What am I"? Because this "I"-thought (*aham-vritti*) is a reflected ray of Self-consciousness; and thus unlike other thoughts, which are devoid of consciousness, it is always directly connected with its source. Therefore, when our attention dives deeper and deeper within by following this reflected ray "I," the length of this reflected ray "I" will diminish until finally it has shrunk to nothing. When the ego, the feeling "I am so-and-so," thus disappears, the consciousness that will remain shining as "I am I" is the true knowledge of Self.

10. Do not do anything thinking, "It should be done only by me." Nothing is done by you, **because you are simply nothing**. Knowing this truth from the beginning, if you refrain entirely from rising as "I am the doer," all actions will happen of their own accord, and your peace will ever remain undisturbed.

11. If we scrutinize "What is the reality that ever exists?" we will find that nothing in this world is real. Since Self alone is real, let us mentally renounce everything else and ever abide unshakably as that reality, which will remain shining alone as "I am." This alone is the service enjoined upon us by Lord Ramana, who ever-abides as the eternal Self.



Note: “Abiding in this state, having attained the supreme bliss which is devoid of bondage and liberation, is abiding in the service of God”, says Sri Bhagavan in verse 29 of Upadesa Undiyar.

## **2. FORTY VERSES ON RENUNCIATION** **(Turavu Narpadu)**

### **Invocation**

1. May the Feet of Sri Ramana Bhagavan joyfully be my support to enable me to sing this Forty Verses on Renunciation (Turavu Narpadu) expressing ideas which are agreeable to the divine heart of Lord Ramana, who has renounced both renunciation and attachment (by abiding as Self, the supreme bliss which transcends both liberation [renunciation] and bondage [attachment]).

2. Falling prostrate at the Feet of Sri Ramana, who graciously manifested and dwelt in this world as the God whom we have seen in front of us with our own eyes, and who lived as the king of both inner renunciation and outer renunciation, may I rise and sing this Turavu Narpadu.

### **Text**

1. What is the purpose of embracing the state of renunciation (*sannyasa*)? Is it not only to attain here in this very life the state of abiding as the infinite reality (*paripurna brahman*), which is devoid of any deficiency, by destroying the ego and by uniting with God, that pure infinite reality? If anyone says that there is any other purpose in embracing *sannyasa*, the Vedas will not accept it.

2. The renunciation of the ego is alone *sannyasa*. Instead of renouncing the ego, merely renouncing and leaving one's home and family is of no

benefit. The renunciation of the ego is alone liberation; that renunciation alone is Self-knowledge (*jnana*); that renunciation alone is bliss. Know this for certain.

3. The afflictions that possess us exist without leaving us even for a moment, in two forms, as “I” and “mine.” Along with the renunciation of the “mine”-ness (*mamakara*), which is the feeling “These things are mine,” to renounce the “I”-ness (*ahankara*), which is the feeling “I am this body,” is the highest among all the kinds of renunciation.

4. By changing one’s external appearance (*vesha*) by wearing ochre cloth (*kashaya*), shaving one’s head, or carrying a water-pot (*kamandalu*), nothing special (*visesha*) is achieved. Unless you can discover the peerless means by which to bring about the death of yourself, the ego, O my dear sir, your renunciation will not yield any benefit.

5. Know that a person who proudly feels, “I have attained renunciation (*sannyasa*), which is the highest among the four external modes of life (*asramas*); therefore people belonging to the other three levels of development (*asramas*) should praise and worship me with reverential fear and respect”, can never attain salvation, the state of Self-abidance.

6. If those people whose minds are raging with the proud feeling “I am a renunciate (*sannyasi*)”, would ponder over and understand the subtle truth contained in one lesson (*upadesa*) revealed by *Sadguru* Sri Ramana, namely, “To destroy the blemishful ego of the renunciate (*sannyasi*) or the man of

highest learning (*brahmana*) is indeed very difficult", they would be enabled thereby to attain salvation.

Note: The lessons or instructions (*upadesa*) of Sri Bhagavan referred to here is that contained in verse 162 of Garland of Guru's Sayings: "The powerful hero who has destroyed the ego, the feeling 'I am the body,' is alone the true *sannyasi* and true *brahmana*. However, to destroy entirely the ego borne by the *sannyasi* or the *brahmana* who has self-conceit (feeling 'I belong to the highest *asrama*' or 'I belong to the highest caste'), ah, is very difficult!"

7. If we investigate why the injunction is given to a wandering religious mendicant (*parivrajaka sann-yasi*), "Without remaining in the same village or town where you remained yesterday, before nightfall today move to a different village or town", we will find that it is in order to prevent his mind from developing a liking and attachment towards people who praise and honor him.

8. If a wandering religious mendicant (*parivrajaka sann-yasi*) wanders about depending entirely upon God to provide his material needs each day, without ever seeking to acquire or save anything for the morrow with the thought, "Let this place of abode or this food be available for me for another occasion," his faith in God will increase (and he will gain the strength to live with an attitude of complete dependence upon God alone, and not upon any people).

9. Not knowing that by this wandering (*parivrajaka*) life he should thus learn to develop the quality

of depending only upon God for everything, if a renunciate (*sannyasi*) thinks every time, "Since I am a renunciate (*sannyasi*), the householders are duty-bound to honor me and to provide all my needs," know that he is unfit for the life of renunciation (*sannyasa*).

10. The renunciate (*sannyasi*) has undertaken this wandering (*parivrajaka*) life only in order that he should by practice gain the strength to live depending entirely upon God. If, instead, he expects that the householders should take care of him, he is placing his faith only in those householders and not in God.

11. For a renunciate (*sannyasi*), begging is a pure and exalted spiritual practice (*sadhana*). If people belonging to any of the other three orders of life (*asramas*) say that by his begging the *sannyasi* is being a burden to others, they are ignorant of the truth. If the *sannyasi* is unable to endure the mean words of worldly people who speak thus, know that he is not a true *sannyasi*.

12. A steadfast renunciate (*sannyasi*) who has abundant strength of mind, does not beg for his food due to poverty. His begging is a training, which he undergoes in order to attain a state of mind in which he can experience an equal love towards those who revile him with mean words, and those who praise him with kind words.

13. The benefit which a true renunciate (*sannyasi*) is to gain by living a wandering (*parivrajaka*) life is to attain a state of mind which is fully contented, being endowed both with an attitude of com-

plete dependence upon God-alone at all times, and with a patient endurance, which cannot be shaken by either the abuse or the praise of others.

14. But alas, not knowing this truth, so many people nowadays after assuming the ochre garb of the blemishless order of a renunciate (*sannyasa asrama*), are seen to be seeking and running after worldly people who possess much wealth, or who hold high positions in society, instead of depending entirely upon God as their sole refuge and support.

15. Some other renunciates (*sannyasis*) are caught in the bondage of trying to accumulate wealth by the power of *mantras*, by practicing astrology, by giving medicines, and by many other such tricky means (*tantras*). For such people who are caught thus in bondage, tell me, what is the use of their assuming the outward guise of a *sannyasi* by growing a beard and long matted hair, by wearing ochre cloth, and by carrying a stick and a water-pot?

16. When will they ever attain salvation, those people who giving Vermillion *kunkuma*) and sacred ash (*vibhuti*) as divine food (*prasada*), gathering a crowd of people around themselves, and proclaiming that they will give divine sight (*darsana*) to common people on only one day a month or one day a year – thus consider themselves to be exalted gods who are far superior to all other people, even though they are in truth only petty egos who are devoid of even the least greatness? (Therefore, if you wish to be saved) be still (giving up all such pomp and show).

17. A person who is naturally humble and submissive to every person and every living being – having the constant remembrance that, except himself, each and every living being in this world possesses some good quality and is in some way superior to himself – is alone the king among true renunciates (*sannyasis*).

18. A person who has attained true renunciation is verily dead to this world. Such a true renunciate (*sannyasi*) is indeed superior to all the other people of this world. He is the embodiment of all virtue and ethical conduct (*dharma*). Therefore, he alone is an object worthy to be worshipped and adored by this entire world.

19. If it is asked how such a true renunciate (*sannyasi*) has attained the greatness of being worshipped by all the other people in this world, the answer will be that, since he is completely devoid of ego, he has truly bowed his head in humility and paid obeisance to each and every person before they have paid obeisance to him. Therefore, what he has given to others naturally comes to him.

20. On the other hand, the renunciate (*sannyasi*) who is devoid of true humility and whose mind is full of guile, thinking, “All other people should worship and pay obeisance to me”, will be left without any means of attaining salvation, and will become entirely worthless, sinking lower and lower on account of the surging and swelling of his ego.

21. If a person takes renunciation (*sannyasa*) with the desire that other people should honor and revere him that renunciation *sannyasa* will only de-

stroy his true happiness. The abstinence or austerity, which is to be observed in this world by a pure renunciate (*sannyasi*), who has given up all worldly attachments, is only to refrain even in the least from becoming a victim to the disease of self-esteem or pride.

22. If a renunciate (*sannyasi*) endowed with good qualities who lives as a *kutichaka* (an ascetic who remains in one place living in a small hut instead of wandering from place to place), gradually allows himself to become a *mathadhipati* (the head of a monastery or religious institution), he will be making himself into a place meant for the experience of all kinds of unbearable sufferings. Therefore, a good *sannyasi* will never desire to become a head of a monastery (*mathadhipati*).

23. For an ordinary worldly person there is the trouble of having only one family. But a renunciate (*sannyasi*), who has thus become a head of a monastery (*mathadhipati*), has become a person caught in the bondage of having many crores of families. All that is gained by him from the religious foundation (*matha*) that has come to him, is only misery. Thus, the action of becoming a *mathadhipati* is nothing but one's cheating oneself.

24. Hence, (when seen from the standpoint of a true aspirant who seeks only liberation) all endeavors such as establishing *asramas* and religious institutions are only purchasing great sufferings and difficulties for a price. To seek to establish *asramas* and public institutions by collecting money by going from place to place, climbing on platforms and giving



lectures and discourses, is just like going and playing with a venomous snake.

25. Since (as per an ancient saying) to a renunciate (*sannyasi*) even a king is mere straw, a renunciate should not engage in politics. Know that, having completely renounced the liking to enjoy even the ordinary rights to which one is entitled as a citizen of society, a renunciate should live majestically (without being a subject or slave to anyone,

26. With the firm dispassion (*vairagya*) of not cherishing or hoarding anything for the morrow (having an unshakable faith that God will provide you each day with whatever is good for you), pass the days of accepting whatever comes to you of its own accord on each occasion without giving any work to your brain (to investigate whether each thing which comes is good or bad and to decide whether it is to be accepted or rejected).

27. If you, who have come to this world alone, live alone (being free of attachment to anything) and subside in Self by knowing what is the reality of yourself, know that that is the greatest help which you can render to all the other people in this world.

28. Going and approaching the people of the world (collecting money and engaging in many external activities) in the name of social service (*paropakara seva*) and desireless action (*nishkama karma*) is not behavior befitting the purity of renunciation (*sannyasa*). Without a sense of doership, do whatever good action comes to you of its own accord forcibly prompting you to act, by making you

feel that it is necessary to do so, and then at once forget it.

29. He who remains like a dead person in all worldly affairs without rising as "I" under any circumstances, is alone the most exalted among the renunciates (*sannyasis*); he alone is a *Jivanmukta* (enlightened while still in the body); he alone is a true non-doer (because he has no sense of doership in whatever actions he may appear to be doing). Therefore, he alone is a true *karma yogi* (a person who does actions without any selfish motivation or desire).

30. The path of *karma yoga* (selfless service), which is practiced by anyone other than such a *Jivanmukta* (see previous verse), will gradually remove the impurities from the mind, and it will stop with thus imparting complete purity of mind. After thus attaining purity of mind, it is proper that a person should give up the path of *karma yoga* and should follow either the path of devotion (*bhakti*) or the path of Self-inquiry and thereby attain the egoless state of Self.

31. The fruit to be attained from selfless service (*karma yoga*), which bestows purity of mind (*chitta-suddhi*), is only to make one mature and fit to follow the paths of devotion (*bhakti*) or Self-inquiry (*vichara*). But unless a true renunciate (*sannyasi*) is already fit to follow either of these two paths, know that he will not gain the real fruit of the renunciation (*sannyasa*), which he has taken.

32. For a person who has taken renunciation (*sannyasa*) in order to attain God, the supreme real-

ity, it is not proper to go outwards seeking worldly people and climbing on platforms to give lectures. Instead of turning within towards God and becoming established in Self-abidance, if a renunciate (*sannyasi*) turns towards the alluring and deceptive world, diverting his mind to the habit of giving lectures, he will be doing great harm to himself.

33. You have taken this renunciation (*sannyasa*) not for the sake of giving spiritual instructions (*upadesa*) to the people of this world, but only to attain the infinite Self, and to remain firmly established in Self-abidance. Why do you forget this truth and wander about in the world giving lectures?

34. Only the real renunciate (*sannyasi*), who never deviates from the state of firm Self-abidance is a person who is correctly teaching true knowledge to all other people. Rather than by climbing on platforms to give lectures by mouth, if one turns the mind within away from the world and abides in Self, then the entire world, which seems to exist externally, will be awakened into the state of true knowledge.

35. Without renunciation (*sannyasa*), to attain liberation is not in the least possible; but renunciation (*sannyasa*) truly means only inward renunciation (that is, the renunciation of the first thought “I am this body”) and not anything else (that is, not the assuming of any traditional outward guise such as ochre cloth and shaven head). Therefore, in whichever one of the four stages of spiritual development (*asramas*) one may be in outward appearance, according to one’s *prarabdha* (see note following verse 115, above), know that that level or stage of devel-

opment (*asrama*) is not an obstacle to one's attaining liberation.

36. Just as a wife comes to one only in accordance with *prarabdha*, which is the fruit of *karmas* done by one in former lives, so the outward renunciation (*sannyasa*) also comes to one only in accordance with *prarabdha*. If outward *sannyasa* does not come to you of its own accord in accordance with *prarabdha*, do not have desire for it; if you remain free of all desire (including even the desire to live the outward life of a *sannyasi*), that itself is true *sannyasa*.

37. To become devoid of all impurities in the mind is true renunciation (*sannyasa*). If one abides in the true state of Self, which is devoid of all thoughts, that itself is all virtues and ethical conduct (*dharmas*). If one attains the state of being devoid of even the desire to become a renunciate (*sannyasi*), that itself is the true attainment of renunciation (*sannyasa*).

38. Even though he outwardly lives the life of a *grihastha* (a householder living with his family), a person who is devoid of the defect of thinking "I am a *grihastha*" is superior to a *sannyasi* that proudly thinks "I am a *sannyasi*". This is a saying graciously uttered by Sri Ramana Bhagavan, the supreme philanthropist.

Note: The saying of Sri Bhagavan referred to here is recorded in verse 840 of Garland of Guru's Sayings as follows: "Know that, rather than one's thinking in the heart 'I have renounced everything', the state of not thinking oneself to be limited to the

measure of the body, and to be caught in the mean bondage of family life, is a superior renunciation.' The experience 'I am only I' is true knowledge, or *brahma-jnana*. If along with the pure consciousness 'I am' any adjunct is added such as 'I am a *sannyasi*', 'I am Siva', 'I am *Brahman*', 'I am a *grihastha*' or 'I am so-and-so,' that is ignorance (*ajnani*). If a householder (*grihastha*) does not feel 'I am this body, I am so-and-so, I am a family man', he is a knower truth (*brahma-jnani*) who experiences his own existence as 'I am only I'. But if a *sannyasi* thinks, 'I am a *sannyasi*', he is only an ignorant being (*ajnani*) who identifies himself with the body and other adjuncts, and hence he is still immersed in bondage." That is why Sri Bhagavan used to say that a *grihastha* who does not feel "I am a *grihastha*" is truly a better *sannyasi* than a *sannyasi* that feels "I am a *sannyasi*."

39. A renunciate (*sannyasi*) is one who has severed all connection with the four castes (*varnas*). Therefore, to inquire about a *sannyasi*, "In which caste was he born? Is he a low-caste *sudra sannyasi*, or a high-caste *brahmana sannyasi*?" is only mischief born of the ego.

40. All distinctions of caste (*varna*) and stages of development (*asrama*) relate only to the filthy body, and not to Self, which is the form of Grace. Know that those people who have renounced and escaped from the attachment to the body, by gaining a clear knowledge of Self, are not bound by distinctions of *varna* and *asrama*, which are fetters of *maya*.

### **Concluding Verse (Mudivurai)**

41. Know for certain that these Forty Verses on Renunciation (*Turavu Narpadu*) are formed only of the ideas that have been conclusively realized in His divine heart by our Lord and *Jnana-Guru* Sri Ramana Bhagavan, who is the Sovereign of all the Sages who have attained inward renunciation, and who is the Embodiment of the supreme power of Silence.

## GLOSSARY

### (Sanskrit and Tamil Words Used in This Book)

#### A

- abhimana* – attachment
- abhyasa* – practice
- abhyasabala* – strength of practice
- adharma* – unrighteousness
- aham-vritti* – ‘I’ thought; the reflected ray of Self-consciousness
- ahankara* – ‘I’ sense; the ego-self
- ajata* – non-creation, knowledge of nothing
- ajnana* – ignorance
- ajana* – the ignorant one who has not realized Self
- akhanda-Siva-swarupa* – undivided nature of God
- amalka* –
- ananda* – bliss; love
- ananya jnana* – free knowledge that this world is nothing but our own Self  
seen wrongly in ourself by ourself through imagination
- anaya priya* – non-dual love
- antahkaranas* – four inner organs, namely; the mind, intellect, memory and ego
- anya priya* – dual love; desire towards other objects
- apara-vidya* – mundane, useless knowledge
- asakta* – powerless
- asat* – not real
- ashtasiddhis* – eightfold occult powers
- asparsa-yoga* – a state of oneness by act of union
- asrama* – a place where hermits and sages live
- asti-bhakti-priya* – luminosity-love

*asubha vasanas* – wicked and inauspicious tendencies

*atmanubhavam* – state of Self-experience

*atma-parabhoga* – supreme joy of Self

*atma-swarupa* – Self

*avali* – series

*avaita vritti* – dual activity

*avidya-maya* – revealing of our true nature

*avichara* – non-inquiry

## B

*bhagavat gunas* – divine qualities i.e., splendor, valor, glory, desirelessness

*bhakti* – devotion

*bhakti japa* – repeating the name of God with love

*Brahma jnana* – true knowledge of 'I am only I'

*Brahman* – the Supreme Being; the Absolute

*brahmana sannyasi* – lower caste

*brahma-swatantra* – one's own perfect freedom

## C

*chit* – *consciousness*

*chitta* – *memory; mind*

*chitta-suddhi* – *purity of mind*

## D

*dara-putra-dhana* – desire for wife, son and wealth (Sanskrit)

*darsana* – seeing; vision



*dattapahara* – stealing back what has once been given

*deedeepa* – lights

*dehabimana* – attachment to the body as ‘I’

*dehatma-bhava* – the feeling ‘I am this body’

*dehatma-buddhi* – ‘I am this body’ consciousness

*devas* – celestial beings

*dharma* – righteousness

*dhyana* – meditation

*dhyana-lakshana* – object of attention

*dhyana-laksya* – target of attention

*dosha* – dangerous harm

*drishti* – look, seeing

*dvandvas* – pairs of opposites; dyads

## G

*guru* – spiritual master

*grishastha* – householder

## J

*jada* – insentient

*jagat-maya* – world-illusion

*japa* – repetition of a sacred word or syllable or name of God

*jnana* – knowledge

*jnana-gurunatan* – Lord Ramana

*jnana japa* – repeating mentally ‘I-I’

*janakasa* – the space of pure being

*jnananubhuti* – Self-knowledge

*janatma-vichara* – Self-inquiry

*Jnani* – Sage; one who realized the Self

*jiva* – individual; ego

*jivan-mukta* – one who is Liberated even when alive

*jivatma* – individual

## K

*kaivalya* – state of Liberation

*kalpana* – imagination; idea

*kama* – worldly

*kamandalu* – water-pot

*kamyā karmas* – actions performed for the fulfilment of temporal desires

*karanas* – skillful actions of the mind, speech and body; causes

*karmas* – actions, work, deeds; results of actions

*Karma-yoga* – the spiritual path of action

*kashaya* – ochre colored cloth

*kumbhaka* – retention of the breath

*kumkuma* – vermilion powder applied to the forehead

*kutichara* – an ascetic

## M

*maha-pralaya* – absolute destruction

*Mahatma* – Enlightened person

*malam* – filth

*mamakara* – ‘mineness’

*mana-kalpana* – a creative imagination of the mind

*manana* – contemplation over meaning of ; thinking out what was heard

*mano-laya* – temporary subsidence of the mind

*mano-nasa* – extinction of the mind

*mano-vrittis* – mental activities

man-pen-pon – desires for land, women and gold (Tamil)

*mantras* – cosmic sound forms of the Vedas used for worship and prayer; ritual incantations; seed letters for meditation on the form of the Lord.

*math* – religious center or foundation

*mathadhipati* – the head of a religious institution or monastery

*mauna* – inner silence

*maya* – illusion, seeing Self as many

*mey-jnana* – true knowledge

*mukti* – Liberation; spiritual freedom

*mula-vasana* – root tendency identifying a body as 'I'

## N

*naman* – ashes smeared on forehead

*Nan Yar?* – Who am I?

*nishkama karma* – desireless action; action done without a motive

*nishtha* – Self-abidance

*nis-sanga* – non association

## P

*pakvi* – mature spiritual aspirant

*papa* – sin

*papa-malam* – filthy sins

*parandhama* – supreme abode

*para-vidya* – the supreme science; highest learning

*Paripurna Brahman* – infinite reality

*parivrajaka sannyasi* – wandering religious mendicant

*parivrajaka-brahma-swatantra* – own unlimited perfect freedom

*paropakara seva* – social service

*porul-asai* – desire for material possessions

*pradakshina* – circumambulating or going around a sacred person or object

*pralaya* – dissolution (of the world)

*pramada* – slackness of Self-attention

*pranayama* – practice of watching the breath; regulation of breath

*prarabdha* – destiny

*prarabdha karma* – karma to be worked out in this life

*prasada* – grace, food, etc., which has been offered to God and afterwards distributed among the devotees

*priya* – love; joy

*puhazh* – honor; fame

*puhazh-asai* – desire for praise, honor and appreciation

*punya* – merit

## R

*raja* – principle of activity

*Raja yoga* – the principal system of yoga

*raja guna* – one's being confused; mistaking one's existence-consciousness for 'I am this body' feeling

*Rama* – God

*Ramanarpanam* – that which has been offered to Sri Ramana

*Ramaniyam* – that which is ever of the nature of Ramana; that which is ever blissful

**S**

*sadhana* – method of spiritual practice

*Sadguru* – Ramana

*Sadhus* – those who have realized Self

*Sahaja Jnani* – one who has realized oneself permanently

*sanchita karmas* – accumulated karmas of former births

*sanga* – association

*sannyasa* – the state of renunciation

*sannyasi* – an ascetic; one who belongs to the fourth state of life

*sannyasi-asrama* – an ascetic living in a certain place; see *asramas*

*santasha* – joy

*saranagati-tattva* – principle of self-surrender

*sat* – ever-indestructible existence

*sat-chit-ananda* – existence-consciousness-bliss

*sat-chit-swarupa* – existence-consciousness-real nature

*sat-guna* – true quality of abiding steadfastly as the Reality devoid of good and bad tendencies

*sat-purusha* – a person who knows and abides as the Reality

*sat-sanga* – association with Reality

*sattva-gunas* – elevated and pure qualities

*sattvic* – purity

*sat-vasana* – good qualities

*Siddhi* – state of final liberation

*siddhis* – supernatural powers; realization; attainment

*Siva-sayujyu* – state of union with God

*sphurana-satki* – the power of clear discernment

*sraddha* – faith

*srutti* – single keynote  
*sudra sannyasi* – lower caste  
*sukhatma-swarupa* – blissful-Self  
*swarupa-anubhava* – the experience of Self  
*swarupa-dhyana* – Self-attention  
*swarupa japa* – repetition of real form  
*swayam-prakasa-vastu* – Self-shining entity

## T

*tamas* – darkness; ignorance of the three primal qualities described as black; the principle of inertia  
*tamo-guna* – one's lying; having forgotten one's existence-consciousness 'I am'  
*tanmui-idam* – selfness-place  
*tapas* – state of Self-abidance; austerity  
*tapasavis* – austerities  
*tat tvam asi* – 'You are That'  
*Triputi* – state of Self-knowledge; the fourth state beyond waking, dreaming and sleeping  
*turiya* – fourth state

## U

*udasina* – indifference to mundane happenings  
*upadesa* – spiritual instruction  
*uravi-asai* – desire for loving relationships

## V

*vairagya* – dispassion; non-attachment  
*varnas* – castes  
*vasanas* – latent tendencies or impressions; habits of the mind  
*vesha* – one's external appearance

*vibhuti* – sacred ashes; God's glory; supernatural power

*vichara* – person practicing Self-inquiry

*vidya-maya* – revealing of our true nature

*visesha* – special; particular

*vishaya-vasanas* – sense objects

*viveka* – keen discrimination

*vrittis* – thoughts; modifications of the mind

## Y

*yoga* – union; a system for purifying the body-mind

*yogi* – one who practices yoga.