



RAMANA MAHARSHI'S Core Writings

Based on the
English translations
of Sri Ramana's
Tamil and Sanskrit
writings by
MICHAEL JAMES

**Uncovering
the infinite
happiness
that is your
own being**

Compiled by
SANDRA DERKSEN

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Ramana Maharshi's Wisdom: Based on the Work of Michael James Series

- *Forty Verses on What Is – The ultimate truth on being as you actually are*
- *Who Am I? – The path to know and be what you actually are*
- *Ramana Maharshi's Core Writings – Uncovering the infinite happiness that is your own being*

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Contact: info@sandraderksen.com

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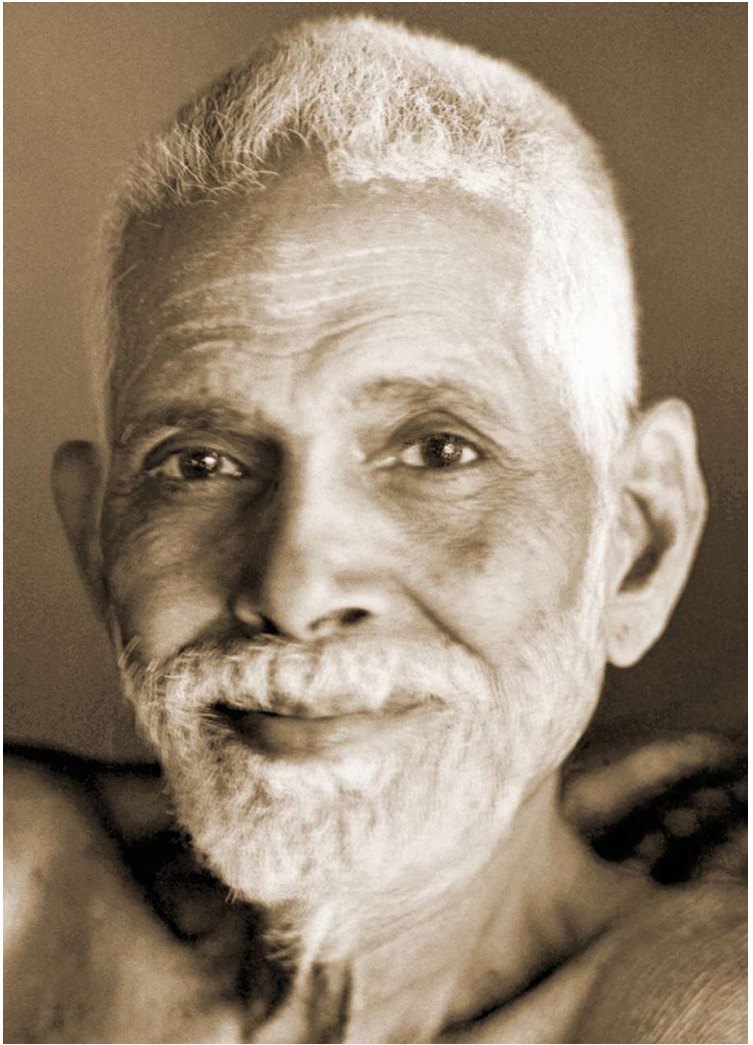
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Om Namō Bhagavate
Sri Arunachala Ramanaya



Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

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*There is no becoming [or coming into being],
destruction, bondage, desire to untie [the knot of
bondage], effort [made for liberation], [or] those who
have attained [liberation]. Know that this is paramārtha
[the ultimate truth].*

Ramana Maharshi
Upadēśa Tanippākaḷ, verse 24

Acknowledgements

I express my deep gratitude to Michael James for his extraordinary dedication to translating and explaining the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Through his careful attention to nuance, context, and spiritual depth, he has preserved not only the words but also the essential clarity and spirit of Bhagavan's teachings.

By generously making the writings and translations on the *Sri Ramana Teachings* website available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License — reflecting his conviction that Bhagavan's teachings should remain freely accessible to all — Michael has made it possible for compilations such as this one, and others in the *Ramana Maharshi's Wisdom: Based on the Work of Michael James* series, to come into being.

Without his tireless dedication, this collection would not exist, and countless devotees of Bhagavan's teachings would be without this invaluable resource. His generosity of spirit in freely sharing these translations embodies the very essence of the teachings he so faithfully serves.

I am especially grateful to Michael for his personal contribution to this work. In response to my request, he generously provided updated and previously unpublished translations of several verses from *Upadēśa Taṇippākkaḷ* (*Solitary Verses on Spiritual Teaching*) for inclusion in this compilation. These translations represent his most recent scholarship and reflect refinements made since earlier versions appeared elsewhere.

To Michael, with gratitude and love.

Editor's Note

This compilation arose from a simple need: to bring together in one accessible volume all of Michael James's English translations of the core writings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi (1879–1950). As someone who regularly turns to these texts for guidance and reflection, I often found myself moving between different sources when wishing to contemplate or compare verses more deeply. It also proved practical to have them at hand whenever Michael referred to a verse during his talks, making it easier to locate and reflect on his explanations in context.

Bringing these writings together has been both a practical task and an enriching one. Having Bhagavan's essential texts presented side by side in one place offers a more integrated appreciation of how his teachings illuminate each other. Whether reflecting on the concise clarity of *Upadēśa Undiyār (The Essence of Spiritual Instructions)*, the philosophical depth of *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu (Forty Verses on What Is)*, or the devotional yearning of *The Hymns to Arunāchala*, each work resonates more clearly when read in the light of the others.

In keeping with the spirit in which Michael has made these translations available, the complete PDF version of this book is offered freely via the *Sri Ramana Teachings Q&A* YouTube channel and *Ramana Maharshi's Wisdom* Facebook group. For those who, like me, also appreciate having a printed copy or Kindle version for daily study, the book is available on Amazon.

Editorial Approach

This book includes only the English translations, presented without commentary, in order to let Bhagavan's voice speak as directly as

possible. The original Tamil and Sanskrit texts have been omitted to maintain clarity and focus. Those seeking detailed explanations and in-depth analysis are warmly encouraged to explore Michael's website and YouTube channel, where his insights illuminate these teachings with rare clarity.

To the best of my knowledge, this compilation includes the most complete versions of each work currently available on the *Sri Ramana Teachings* website at the time of publication. Four verses have been sourced from the *Sri Ramana Teachings* YouTube channel, where they were not yet available in written form on the website. Michael frequently refines his translations as his understanding deepens, so this collection may not always reflect the latest nuances. Any omissions or oversights are entirely my own.

To ensure consistency, older translations have been lightly edited to match Michael's current transliteration standards (for instance, replacing *atman* with *ātman*, or *chit* with *cit*).

This evolving quality is not a limitation, but a sign of the living engagement Michael brings to these sacred texts. His revisions reflect an unwavering commitment to clarity, accuracy, and fidelity to Bhagavan's teachings.

To illustrate this, I have included a selection of renderings of verse 25 of *Uḷḷadu Nāṛpadu*, a verse Michael often refers to in his writings and talks. These examples show how his phrasing has shifted over time:

- 2009: Grasping form [that is, attaching itself to a body] it comes into existence; grasping form [that is, attending to thoughts or perceptions of a seemingly external world] it stands [or endures]; grasping form it feeds and grows [flourishes or expands]; leaving [one] form it grasps [another] form. If [we] seek [search, investigate, examine or scrutinise it], it will take flight. Know [that this is the nature of this] formless ghost-ego.

- 2011: Grasping form [a body], the formless ghost-ego comes into being; grasping form [a body, objects perceived through the senses of that body, and thoughts and feelings about such objects], it endures; grasping and feeding upon form [such as thoughts and objects], it grows [expands or flourishes] greatly; leaving [one] form, it grasps [another] form. [However] if [one] seeks [the truth of it by investigating what it is], it takes flight. Know [thus].
- 2015: Grasping form, the formless phantom-ego rises into being; grasping form it stands; grasping and feeding on form it grows [spreads, expands, increases, rises high or flourishes] abundantly; leaving [one] form, it grasps [another] form. If sought [examined or investigated], it will take flight. Investigate [or know thus].
- 2017: Grasping form it comes into existence; grasping form it stands; grasping and feeding on form it grows abundantly; leaving form, it grasps form. If seeking, it will take flight. The formless demon ego. Investigate.
- 2018: Grasping form the formless phantom-ego comes into existence; grasping form it stands; grasping and feeding on form it grows abundantly; leaving form, it grasps form. If it seeks, it will take flight. Investigate.
- 2024 (latest version on the website): Grasping form it comes into existence; grasping form it stands; grasping and feeding on form it grows abundantly; leaving form, it grasps form. If seeking, it will take flight. [Such is the nature of this] formless demon ego. Investigate.

In the summer of 2025, I heard him say in YouTube videos: ‘Grasping form, it comes into being.’

For the most accurate and up-to-date versions, please refer directly to Michael's website and videos. I intend to update this compilation periodically, so that it may remain as current and complete as possible.

Out of love for us, Bhagavan manifested as a body to give us one simple message: we are not this body. His primary teaching is that ultimate happiness is not something to attain but is what we always are — the supreme treasure of our own being, seemingly obscured only by our mistaken identification with the body and mind.

His radical yet simple teaching is that by turning within and attending to the fundamental awareness 'I am', we can investigate what is actually denoted by this 'I'. When we do so with sincere love to know the truth, the false awareness of ourself as ego subsides, and what alone remains is the ever-present reality — the supreme treasure of infinite happiness of our own non-dual being.

With love,
Sandra Derksen
December 2025

About These Writings

The following pages present the background and significance of the works included in this compilation. Each arose in its own unique circumstances, yet all are expressions of Bhagavan’s grace — guiding seekers to turn within and discover the truth of our own being. These accounts, drawn entirely from explanations given by Michael James, share the setting in which each work was composed or translated by Bhagavan and the central thread of teaching that runs through them. Understanding the context and circumstances behind each work can illuminate Bhagavan’s intended meaning — sometimes essential for certain verses — so that we may approach them with deeper understanding and reverence.

Aruṇācalaramaṇa

When asked by someone who is Ramana, Bhagavan composed this short verse, declaring his oneness with Arunachala — the sacred hill of Tiruvannamalai, outwardly stone but inwardly the infinite light of self-awareness that draws the mind within and destroys ego. He reveals that his real nature is pure awareness, the awareness that alone exists and of which nothing else could ever be aware.

Being eternally Arunachalaramaṇa, he is mother, father, God, and *guru* to all drawn to him by his grace. He also affirms that he is our very own self, the *paramātmān* (the supreme spirit or ultimate self of all) shining blissfully in the innermost cave of the heart of each one of us as our fundamental awareness ‘I am’, so we can know him as he actually is only by melting with love and thereby entering deep within and losing oneself completely in the innermost depth of our own heart.

Nāṇ Ār? – Who Am I?

The origin of *Nāṇ Ār?* (*Who am I?*) is a set of written answers to questions put to Bhagavan by a humble and self-effacing devotee, named Sivaprakasam Pillai, who began to visit him in 1901 and asked him many questions about spiritual philosophy and practice. Bhagavan, who seldom spoke in those early days, answered most of his questions by writing either on the sandy ground, or on a slate or slips of paper that Pillai gave him. Pillai copied many of these questions and answers into a notebook.

In 1923, at the request of other devotees, Pillai published a compilation of twenty-seven of these questions and answers as *Nāṇ Ār?*. In the years that followed, various other versions appeared, differing in number, order, and wording of the answers. The standard and most authentic version, however, is the essay version that Bhagavan himself wrote in 1927 or earlier. This consists of twenty paragraphs, formed by rewriting the most complete question-and-answer version — which had thirty questions and answers and eleven miscellaneous paragraphs, and was printed probably three or four times between 1924 and 1936. In doing so he made several improvements, removing all but the first question, rearranging the order of ideas, and making some significant changes to the wording.

Of all the changes that Bhagavan made in his essay version, the most significant was to add an entirely new paragraph at the beginning of the essay. This opening paragraph serves as a suitable introduction to the subject ‘Who am I?’, because it explains that the reason why we need to investigate and know who or what we actually are is that happiness is our real nature, and we can therefore experience infinite and eternal happiness only by being aware of ourself as we actually are.

The translation in this book is one that Michael has been gradually refining over the years ever since the late 1970s, when he

assisted Sadhu Om¹ in making the translation that has been published as Appendix One in many subsequent editions of *The Path of Sri Ramana* (Part One).² Michael has also explained the paragraphs many times, often deeply and clearly, in articles on his blog and in talks that are published on YouTube.³

Āṅma-Viddai – The Science of Knowing Oneself

The path of self-investigation (*ātma-vicāra*) that Bhagavan taught us is the direct and easy means to eradicate ego, the root, and foundation of all our troubles, but there is a widespread belief that it is a very difficult path and therefore suitable only for a few spiritually mature aspirants. Even among the devotees who lived with him this idea was common, as Muruganar⁴ discovered to his surprise soon after he came to Bhagavan.

One day, soon after Muruganar came to Bhagavan, another devotee called Viswanathan approached him in a secretive manner

¹ Sadhu Om (1922–1985), a devotee of Ramana Maharshi and Tamil poet-saint, was recognised by Muruganar (see footnote 4) for his exceptional clarity in explaining Bhagavan’s teachings, and was entrusted by him with responsibility for preserving and elucidating his literary work. Michael studied under Sadhu Om for eight and a half years, working closely with him to translate and clarify Bhagavan’s original Tamil writings.

² There is a new version of *The Path of Sri Ramana*, published in 2023 by the Sri Ramana Center of Houston (in collaboration with Michael), combining what were previously referred to as Part One and Part Two of *The Path of Sri Ramana*, available on Amazon.

³ For an extensive compilation of Michael’s explanations and translations, see the compiler’s *Ramana Maharshi’s Who Am I?* (complimentary sample available in ‘Free Resources’).

⁴ Muruganar (1890–1973) was Bhagavan Ramana’s foremost devotee, a gifted Tamil poet, and the disciple who most deeply absorbed and expressed Bhagavan’s teachings. Liberated by the direct grace of Bhagavan, he was instrumental in bringing into being core texts such as *Uḷḷadu Nāṅpadu*, *Upadēśa Undiyār*, and *Āṅmā-Viddai*. As Michael has observed, without Muruganar we would not have many of these teachings at all. His own major work, *Guru Vācaka Kōvai*, is the most authoritative and detailed record of Bhagavan’s oral instructions.

and said that though Bhagavan was very great, it was not possible to know anything from him directly. He offered to introduce Muruganar to Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri⁵, saying that if he were to take *mantra-dīkṣā* (initiation in a *mantra*) from him, he would gain the clarity to understand Bhagavan's teachings. Seeing Muruganar's surprise, Viswanathan told him to think about it, saying he would return later. Later that day when Viswanathan approached him again and asked what he had decided, Muruganar told him that he had come only for Bhagavan's grace, and whether fit or not, he was not interested in seeking anything from anyone else.

Telling this to Sadhu Om many years later, Muruganar said with a smile that Kavyakantha's followers must then have decided that he was a hopeless case, because they never again offered him such advice. He also said that this was one of the reasons why he decided a few years later to ask Bhagavan to write this song, *Āṅma-Viddai*.

Muruganar knew from his own experience how easy this practice of self-investigation is, but he also knew that many other devotees wrongly believed it to be very difficult, so he wanted Bhagavan to write a poem to dispel this mistaken belief and thereby reassure sincere aspirants, and hence on the 24th of April 1927 he composed the refrain and sub-refrain and asked Bhagavan to write the verses. Understanding his purpose, Bhagavan immediately composed five verses to explain how easy this path is and why it is so necessary.

This poem is written as a *kīrtanam*, a musical composition consisting of a refrain, a sub-refrain and one or more verses, in which the refrain expresses the central theme of the song and is therefore repeated after the sub-refrain and each of the verses.⁶

⁵ Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri (1878–1943) was a celebrated Sanskrit scholar and poet who became one of Bhagavan's devotees. In 1907, he recognised Bhagavan's spiritual greatness and gave him the name Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

⁶ The full text of *Āṅma-Viddai*, with Michael's explanations and translations, published by the Sri Ramana Center of Houston, is available on Amazon. It can also be read on his website (see Appendix E: 'Sources').

Appala Pāṭṭu – The Song of Pappadam

Bhagavan lived mostly in Virupaksha Cave on the eastern slopes of Arunachala from 1899 till sometime around the middle of 1916, when he moved higher up to Skandasramam. A few months before this move, in about January 1916, his mother, Aragammaḷ, came to live with him, and it was during the brief period when she lived with him in Virupaksha Cave that he composed this song.

Being a *sādhu*, during his early years in Tiruvannamalai Bhagavan lived the life of a mendicant, begging his food or accepting whatever food was offered to him, and those who lived with him did likewise, so before his mother came to live with him, they did not cook any food. Only after they moved up to Skandasramam did she and other devotees slowly introduce the habit of cooking.

Her first attempt to start cooking for Bhagavan and his devotees was soon after she came to Virupakshi, and it began with her telling some lady devotees that when he was young he liked *appaḷam* (a crisp round wafer, usually made of black gram flour and other ingredients, which can either be deep-fried or toasted over a naked flame or in hot embers, and which in other languages is known by a variety of names such as *parpaṭa*, *pappaḍam*, *pāpaḍ*, *papadum*, *papadom* or *poppadom*) and that he used to help her make them, so if she had the ingredients she would like to make some for him. Coming to know about this suggestion of hers, several devotees contributed the necessary ingredients, so she ended up gathering enough to make more than two hundred *appaḷams*.

Observing what she was up to, Bhagavan was not pleased, but he kept quiet until she started to make them, and since she could not make so many without help, she asked him to assist her. This was the opportunity he had been waiting for, so he began to scold her, asking her who wanted to eat *appaḷam* and why she had begun to ask people for such ingredients instead of being satisfied with whatever simple food was given to her, and saying that if she wanted to eat

appaḷams she should make them and eat them by herself. Seeing that he was unwilling to help her, she continued working on her own, but after some time she again asked for his help, but wanting to teach her that she should be satisfied with whatever came unasked and should not desire this or that, he was adamant in his refusal. When she had asked him several times, he finally said, ‘You make your *appaḷams* to satisfy your desire, and I will make my own kind of *appaḷam*’, and then, knowing that she liked to sing songs that used ordinary household activities as metaphors for conveying *vēdāntic* teachings, he composed this song, in which he compared each of the ingredients, implements and actions required to make an *appaḷam* to the qualities and practices required for us to know ourself as we actually are and thereby to eradicate ego.

Upadēśa Undiyār & Upadēśa Sāram

The Essence of Spiritual Instructions & The Essence of Teachings

In 1927, *Upadēśa Undiyār* was composed at the request of Muruganar, and in order to understand correctly what Bhagavan teaches us in this text, it is necessary for us to know the context in which he composed it.

Muruganar, who was not only Bhagavan’s foremost disciple but also a great Tamil scholar and poet, first came to him in September 1923, and before coming he composed a song called *Dēśika Padigam*, which he offered to him on his arrival. Soon after that he composed another song entitled *Tiruvembāvai*, and on seeing the poetic beauty of these verses and the lofty ideas contained in them, Bhagavan remarked, ‘This is in the style of Manikkavacakar⁷. Can

⁷ Manikkavacakar was a 9th-century Tamil saint-poet and ardent devotee of Śiva, renowned for composing the *Tiruvācakam*, a collection of devotional hymns central to Tamil Śaiva literature. He renounced worldly life as a Pandya minister to pursue union with the divine.

you sing like Manikkavacakar?’ Muruganar was taken aback on hearing these words, and exclaimed, ‘Where is my ignorant mind, which is as blind as an owl in daylight, and which is darker than the darkness of night? And where is the self-experience (*ātma-anubhuti*) of Manikkavacakar, in whom the darkness of delusion had vanished and in whom true knowledge (*mey-jñāna*) had surged forth? To compare my base mind with his exalted experience is like comparing a fire-fly with the bright stars’.

When Muruganar thus expressed his own deeply felt unworthiness, by his glance of grace Bhagavan shone forth in his heart, thereby making his mind blossom, enabling him to compose the great work *Śrī Ramaṇa Sannidhi Muṛai*, which in later years Bhagavan himself declared to be equal to Manikkavacakar’s *Tiruvācakam*. Among the songs in *Tiruvācakam*, there is one song of 20 verses called *Tiruvundiyār*, in which Manikkavacakar sings about some of the *līlās* or divine games played by Lord Śīva. Therefore in 1927 when Muruganar began to compose a song called *Tiruvundiyār* in praise of Bhagavan, he decided to follow a similar theme, and thus he started to sing about various *līlās* played by several Gods, taking all those Gods to be none other than Bhagavan Ramana himself.

Once some devotees asked Sadhu Om, ‘Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri claimed that Bhagavan is an incarnation or *avatāra* of Subrahmanya.⁸ Other devotees say that he is an incarnation of Śīva. What was Muruganar’s opinion? According to him, of which God was Bhagavan an incarnation?’, to which he replied with a smile, ‘According to Muruganar, it is the other way around. His conviction was that all Gods are incarnations or manifestations of Bhagavan’.

⁸ Subrahmanya (also known as Murugan or Skanda), son of Śīva, is the warrior deity and commander of the celestial armies, particularly revered in Tamil devotional tradition.

This conviction of Muruganar's is beautifully expressed by him in his song *Tiruvundiyār*.

Having attained self-knowledge by the grace of Bhagavan, Muruganar knew from his own direct experience that Bhagavan is the one unlimited supreme reality, and that all Gods and divine incarnations are truly manifestations of that same supreme reality. Although the supreme reality can manifest itself in any number of divine names and forms, the highest of all those manifestations is the name and form of the *sadguru*. Therefore, being an exemplary disciple, Muruganar was drawn in devotion only to the name and form of his *sadguru*, Bhagavan Ramana.

Hence, even when he had occasion to sing about the *līlās* of some of the different names and forms in which the supreme reality had manifested itself, he was able to sing about those names and forms only as various manifestations of his Lord and *sadguru*, Bhagavan. Thus, in *Tiruvundiyār* Muruganar sings about the *līlās* of Vinayaka, Subrahmanya, Vishnu and his various incarnations such as Rama and Krishna, Śiva, Buddha and Jesus, taking all these Gods to be manifestations of Bhagavan. *Tiruvundiyār* is divided into two parts, the first part consisting of 137 verses (*Sannidhi Murai*, vv. 1277-1413) about the *līlās* of various Gods narrated in the Hindu *Purāṇas*, and the second part consisting of 7 verses (*Sannidhi Murai*, vv. 1414-1420) about Buddha upholding the *dharma* of compassion (vv. 1-5) and Jesus Christ suffering crucifixion to expiate the sins of others (vv. 6-7).

In the first part of *Tiruvundiyār* Muruganar sings about Vinayaka breaking the axle of his father's chariot (1-2), about Subrahmanya subduing the ego of Brahma (3), giving *upadēśa* to Śiva (4-9) and playing with Vishnu (10-11), about Vishnu killing Hiranaya (12) and bestowing grace upon Mahabali (13-16), about Rama being merciful to Ravana (17), about Krishna teaching Arjuna his duty (18), and about Śiva drinking poison (19), subduing Kali by his dance (20-21),

plucking off one of the heads of Brahma (22), killing Andhakasura (23), burning the Tripurasuras with a mere laugh (24-34), punishing Daksha (35-36), destroying Jalandharasura (37), flaying the elephant (38), burning Kama (39-51), kicking Yama (52-61), showing compassion to Ravana (62-66), blessing Brahma and Vishnu when they worshipped him in the form of Annamalai, having failed to reach his head and feet (67-69), and finally enlightening the ascetics in the Daruka Forest (70-137).

While singing about these *līlās*, Muruganar sings of them as the *līlās* of Bhagavan, who had manifested as all these various Gods. It was in the context of the last *līlā* related in the first part of *Tiruvundiyaṅ* that the work *Upadēśa Undiṅyāṅ* came into existence. Having sung in verses 70 to 102 how Bhagavan in the form of Śiva had appeared in the Daruka Forest to subdue the pride of the ascetics (*tapasvis*) and bring them to the path of liberation, Muruganar came to the point where Śiva was to give them his spiritual teachings (*upadēśa*).

Thinking that it would not be appropriate for him to decide what teachings Śiva would have given in order to uplift the ascetics from their then level of maturity, in which they were blinded by their attachment to the path of ritualistic action (*karma*), and to elevate their minds gradually till they would be fit to come to the direct path to liberation, Muruganar prayed to Bhagavan to reveal the essence of the teachings which he had himself given to the ascetics in those ancient days, when he had manifested in their midst in the form of Śiva.

Accordingly, in verses 103 to 132 of the first part of *Tiruvundiṅyāṅ* (verses 1379 to 1408 of *Sannidhi Murai*) Bhagavan composed the essence of the *upadēśa* that Śiva gave to the ascetics in the Daruka Forest. While composing these thirty verses, which he did in one sitting, Bhagavan discussed in detail with Muruganar all the ideas which were to be presented one after another in a carefully arranged

and balanced sequence, and in the course of these discussions the original drafts of verses 16, 28 and 30 were composed by Muruganar and were then revised by Bhagavan. Such was the close co-operation with which they worked together.

These thirty verses form the main text (*nūl*) of *Upadēśa Undiyār*, and Bhagavan subsequently translated them into Telugu, Sanskrit, and Malayalam under the title *Upadēśa Saram (The Essence of Teachings)*. In Tamil the entire work consists of a prefatory verse (*pāyiram*) composed by Muruganar, six introductory verses (*upōdghātam*) that Bhagavan selected from Muruganar's *Tiruvundiyār* in order to present the teachings in their proper context, the main text of thirty verses, and five concluding verses of praise (*vārṭtu*), which are the last five verses of the first part of *Tiruvundiyār*.

In each of the six introductory verses, the main text of thirty verses and the five concluding verses of praise, the final word of the second and third lines is *undīpara*, which is a poetic elongation of the verb *undipara*, in which *para* is the root and an imperative form of a verb that means 'to fly', 'hover', 'flutter' or 'float in the air', and *undi* seems to have been the name of an ancient game played by women, which was perhaps an early non-competitive form of what later evolved into the modern competitive sports of ball badminton and badminton, and the aim of which may have been for the group of players to keep the ball or shuttlecock flying about in the air without touching the ground for as long as possible. *Undi* may therefore have also meant the ball or shuttlecock used in such a game, in which case *undī* would be a vocative (or eighth case) form of it, so *undī para* may have been an exclamation that meant 'ball, fly' or 'shuttlecock, fly'.

The *Tiruvundiyār* song composed by Manikkavacakar was perhaps intended to be sung while playing this game, and hence he adopted a metre in which this word occurs at the end of the second

and third lines of each verse. When these verses are translated into English, *undīpara* is obviously to be treated as a poetic expletive, but it is worth noting that it does lend a very joyful and playful spirit to the profound spiritual teachings that Bhagavan gives us in *Upadēśa Undiyār*.

In order to understand what Bhagavan is teaching us in *Upadēśa Undiyār*, particularly in the first fifteen verses, we need to read and carefully consider the six introductory verses and the summary of the story contained in it. Though in the *Purāṇas* the ascetics who were living in the Daruka Forest are described as *rishis* who were performing *tapas* or austerities, what actually was their state of mind, what kind of *tapas* were they performing, and what was it that they were seeking to achieve through their *tapas*?

These so-called *rishis* were following the path of *kāmya karma* (ritualistic actions performed for the fulfilment of temporal desires), which is the path prescribed by the *pūrva mīmāṃsā*, a system of philosophy focused on the interpretation and practice of the *Karma Kāṇḍa*, the preliminary (and by far the largest) portion of the Vēdas, which is concerned with performance of sacrifices and other ritualistic actions. Not knowing that the true goal of life is liberation, which is eradication of ego, they exhibited their ignorance by their actions such as the performance of various kinds of sacrificial rites (*yāgas* and *yajñas*), whereby they sought to attain powers, *siddhis* and other sources of enjoyment both in this world and the next.

Being adept in the performance of such sacrificial rites and in the use of other techniques such as *mantras*, *yantras* and *tantras*, they had become intoxicated with conceit. Their pride in the power and efficacy of their *karmas* (ritualistic actions) was so great that they had even come to believe that there is no God except *karma*. ‘*Karma* alone is of foremost importance. The efforts we make in performing *karmas* have the power to yield their own fruit; they must yield their fruit; even God cannot prevent them from yielding fruit. So there is

no need for us to be concerned about any God other than our own *karmas*' – such was their arrogant attitude.

Thus, though in the *Purāṇas* they are politely referred to as '*rishis*', their state of mind reveals that they were in fact only students in the first standard of the school of *bhakti* described in chapter two of the supplement to *The Path of Sri Ramana* {see footnote 1}. Can the *karmas* that they were performing for the fulfilment of their own selfish desires be called real *tapas*? As Bhagavan taught us in verse 30 of *Upadēśa Undiyār*, real *tapas* is nothing but complete cessation of ego, the false awareness 'I am this body', which is what gives rise to the sense of doership, 'I am doing *karma*'.

Since the ascetics had thus strayed so far from the path that leads to the real goal of egolessness, it was necessary for Lord Śiva, the ocean of compassion, to make them understand the error of their ways and guide them back to the proper path. Therefore he manifested in the form of a mendicant and made them understand that even their most powerful *karmas* were rendered powerless in front of him. Thus their pride was subdued and they prayed to him for salvation.

Knowing how gross and unrefined the minds of the ascetics had become due to their longstanding attachment to *karma*, Śiva knew that it would not be possible to bring them immediately to the subtle path of self-investigation (*ātma-vicāra*), which alone is the direct path to liberation. Therefore, he had to guide them towards the path of self-investigation in a gradual manner. That is why in the first fifteen verses of *Upadēśa Undiyār* it was necessary for Bhagavan to summarise the paths of *niṣkāmya karma*, *bhakti* and *yōga*, which Śiva first had to teach to the ascetics in order to elevate their minds gradually to the level of maturity in which they could understand that liberation can ultimately be attained only by means of self-investigation. Only after summarising those paths and explaining

how they are each intended to lead eventually to the path of self-investigation, which is the true path of *jñāna*, could he begin to explain this path in more detail from verse 16 onwards.

Either because they do not know the context in which he composed this work, or because they have not carefully considered the connection between the context and what he taught in it, many people wrongly assume that *Upadēśa Undiyār* or *Upadēśa Sāram* is the essence of Bhagavan Ramana's own teachings. However, if we consider the context and what he wrote in the first fifteen verses, it should be clear that the intention with which he composed this work was to summarise not his own teachings but the teachings that Śiva gave in ancient days to the ascetics in the Daruka Forest to suit their level of spiritual maturity.

As Bhagavan often used to say, whatever spiritual teachings are given must be suited to the grasping power and maturity of whomever they are given to, so many different levels of teachings and practices are necessary to suit the needs of people of many different levels of spiritual development (see for example section 107 of *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* [1978 edition, page 103; 2006 edition, page 105]), where it is recorded that he said that the instructions to be given 'differ according to the temperaments of the individuals and according to the spiritual ripeness of their minds').

Since the ascetics to whom Śiva gave his teachings were to be elevated by him from a very low level of spiritual maturity, it was necessary for him to begin by giving them teachings that they would be willing to accept and therefore able to grasp and put into practice, and then he had to lead them gradually from the grosser forms of spiritual practice such as *pūjā*, *japa*, *dhyāna* and *prāṇāyāma* towards the most refined, namely self-investigation, which is the simple practice of self-attentiveness.

Therefore, we should not assume that all the *sādhana*s or spiritual practices that Bhagavan discusses in *Upadēśa Undiyār* are his own

direct teachings. Though it is true that during his lifetime he had to give instructions concerning almost every kind of spiritual practice in order to guide those who were already following such practices and were not yet willing to come to the direct path of self-investigation, what actually was the core and essence of his teachings? Can it be said that *pūjā*, *japa*, *dhyāna* and *prāṇāyāma* are core elements of his teachings? Was it to teach such practices that he appeared on earth in our present age?

Though he acknowledged the efficacy of such practices as indirect means that, if practised with devotion and without desire for achieving any selfish aim, would gradually purify the mind and thereby sooner or later lead one to the direct path of self-investigation (as indicated by him in verse 3 of *Upadēśa Undiyār*), the main reason he appeared in human form in modern times was not merely to give his approval to such indirect practices, which have already been expounded in detail in ancient texts. The principal purpose of his life was to teach us why and how to practise the simple and direct path of self-investigation, which is the only means by which we can be aware of ourself as we actually are and thereby eradicate ego. That is why his teachings were focussed on the practice of self-investigation, which bypasses the need for any other kind of spiritual practice.

Having thus briefly summarised the paths of *karma yōga*, *bhakti yōga* and *raja yōga* in the first fifteen verses, showing how they must each sooner or later lead one to the practice of self-investigation, Bhagavan devotes the last fifteen verses to explaining the practice and goal of *jñāna yōga*, which he explains to be nothing other than the direct path of self-investigation, the simple practice of attending to and knowing the true nature of 'I'.

In 1928, one year after he had composed *Upadēśa Undiyār*, Muruganar prayed to him, 'So that we may be saved, reveal to us the nature of reality and the means by which to attain it' (*Uḷḷadu*

Nārpadu pāyiram: introductory verse), in response to which Bhagavan composed *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu*, in which the only practice he expounded was self-investigation, and he made no more than a few indirect references to other practices. Therefore, the real essence of his teachings is only the path of self-investigation, which he has expounded in both *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu* and the last fifteen verses of *Upadēśa Undiyār*.

Uḷḷadu Nārpadu – Forty Verses on What Is

Nāṇ Ār?, *Upadēśa Undiyār* and *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu* are the three texts in which Bhagavan expressed the fundamental principles of his teachings in the most clear, coherent, comprehensive and systematic manner. However, *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu* is arguably the most fundamental and important text.

Composed by Bhagavan in Tamil in 1928, this philosophical poem, which is written in the concise style of *sutras*, is widely regarded as the core and crest-jewel of his written teachings. Its forty main verses (preceded by two *maṅgalam* verses) give a clear, profound, and practical exposition of the means to realise the one reality — our own real nature — by eradicating ego through self-investigation (*ātma-vicāra*). Though it contains many philosophical insights, its aim is entirely practical: to turn our attention away from all that is unreal and towards ourselves, so we may directly experience what actually exists.

The work originated when Muruganar, then composing *Guru Vācaka Kōvai*, asked Bhagavan for verses to open that text. He initially suggested using twenty-one earlier verses, but Bhagavan began a fresh composition on 21 July 1928, writing over the next few weeks almost forty new verses. After review, only three of the earlier verses were included (one in modified form), the rest being set aside — later compiled by Muruganar as *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu Anubandham*.

The forty-two verses of *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu* were composed in *veṅbā* metre, but for regular recitation Bhagavan later reworked them into the linked *kalivenbā* form, renaming that version *Upadēśa Kalivenbā* (see Appendix C).

Michael points out that it would be no exaggeration to say that unless one has imbibed to a considerable extent the full import of these forty-two verses (two *maṅgalam* verses and forty verses of the main text) by carefully studying and reflecting deeply on the meaning of each of them and the close and coherent connections between the ideas expressed in them, and of course by trying as much as possible to follow the simple path of self-investigation that he teaches in them, it is not possible for one to adequately grasp and appreciate the real depth and radical import of his teachings. This is because many of the key principles of his teachings are expressed nowhere as clearly and coherently as they are in these verses.⁹

*Uḷḷadu Nārpadu Anubandham – The Supplement to
Uḷḷadu Nārpadu*

Muruganar had collected twenty-one verses that Bhagavan had composed on various occasions, and on 21st July 1928 he asked Bhagavan to compose some more verses in order to form a work of forty verses on the nature of reality and the means to attain it, so Bhagavan began to compose more verses on this subject. In order to arrange them into a logical order and to form them into a coherent text, each day for the next two and a half weeks he and Muruganar would discuss in detail the progress of the work, where gaps needed to be filled, and which of the original twenty-one verses should be retained and which discarded.

⁹ For an extensive compilation of Michael's explanations and translations, see the compiler's *Ramana Maharshi's Forty Verses on What Is* (complimentary sample, including an in-depth introduction by Michael, available in 'Free Resources').

On 11th August 1928 *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu* was complete in its present form, but only three of the original twenty-one verses were retained in it. The other eighteen of the original verses, along with three new verses that he composed while compiling *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu*, were not retained because they were not sufficiently germane to the subject, so these twenty-one discarded verses were formed into a separate work *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu Anubandham*, the ‘appendix’ or ‘supplement’ to *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu*.

The twenty-one verses included in the 1928 edition of *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu Anubandham* were the *maṅgalam* and verses 1, 3-10, 12, 18-20, 25, 34-38 and 40. In 1931 the first edition of the Tamil *Collected Works of Sri Ramana* was published, and in it *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu Anubandham* contained thirty verses, namely the above twenty-one plus verses 2, 11, 13, 15, 17, 28 and 30-32. The other eleven verses, namely 14, 16, 21-24, 26-27, 29, 33 and 39, were composed by Bhagavan on various occasions during the 1930s, so by 1938 *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu Anubandham* contained thirty-seven verses, and by 1940 it contained all the present forty-one verses, namely *maṅgalam* and verses 1 to 40.

Whereas all the verses of *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu* are original verses composed by Bhagavan, most of the verses of *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu Anubandham* are ones that he translated or adapted from Sanskrit or Malayalam. Eleven of these verses, namely 13-17, 31-33, 35-36 and 38, are original Tamil verses composed by Bhagavan. Verses 8 and 10 are verses that he originally composed in Sanskrit and later translated in Tamil. Verse 11 is an idea that he first expressed orally, and Lakshmana Sarma then recorded what he said in a Sanskrit verse, which Bhagavan then translated as this Tamil verse. The first two lines of verse 12 are an original composition by Bhagavan, and the last two lines are a translation by him of verse 84 of *Vivēkacūḍāmaṇi*. Therefore, these fifteen verses, namely 8, 10-17, 31-33, 35-36 and 38, are all wholly or partly original verses by

Bhagavan, whereas the other 26 were all translated or adapted by him from other sources.

At least ten of these verses, namely the *maṅgalam* and verses 2, 21-24, 26-27 and 29-30, are Tamil translations of verses from *Yōga Vāsiṣṭham*, and two others, namely 3 and 28, are Tamil translations of verses that are also said to be from *Yōga Vāsiṣṭham*, though Michael has not been able to verify this, and he doubts whether either of them are. In addition to the last two lines of verse 12, which are a translation of verse 84 of *Vivēkacūḍāmaṇi*, three other verses are likewise translations of verses by Adi Sankara, namely verses 1, 7 and 39, which are respectively translations of verse 9 of *Mōha Mudgara*, *Ēkaślōki* and verse 87 of *Tattvōpadēśa*. Verse 4 is a translation of a verse that is either *Garga Saṁhitā* 10.62.9 or a variant of it. Verse 5 is a translation of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 10.48.31. Verses 9 and 25 are respectively translations of verses 46 and 47 of *Dēvikālōttara – Jñānācāra-Vicāra-Paṭalam*, and these two verses were originally composed by Bhagavan together with verse 40, which is a translation of the final verse of the *Kaṭharudra Upaniṣad*, as a separate three-verse poem.

Verses 18 and 19 are translations of verses from a Malayalam version of *Aṣṭāṅga Hrdayam*, one of the principle Sanskrit texts on the medical science of Ayurveda. Verse 20 is an adaptation of two verses (chapter 19, verses 59 and 62) from *Prabhuliṅga Līlai*, which is a Tamil translation by Turaimangalam Sivaprakasa Swamigal of an earlier work composed by Chamarasa in Kannada on the life of a Virasaiva saint called Allama Prabhu.

The other five verses, namely 3, 6, 28, 34 and 37, are translations of Sanskrit verses, the sources of which are unknown, but verse 37 is a translation of a Sanskrit verse that was quoted or perhaps composed by Sadasiva Brahmendra. Verse 34 (and also verse 4) is said to be included in a work called *Subhāṣitaratna* or *Subhāṣita Ratna Bhaṇḍār*, but there are many works whose name begins with

the word *subhāṣita*, which means ‘well-spoken’, and all such works are anthologies of verses from known or unknown sources expressing wise or wholesome ideas, so such works cannot be said to be the original source of any verse.

Twelve verses of *Uḷḷadu Nāṛpadu Anubandham* were originally composed by Bhagavan as part of *Guru Vācaka Kōvai*, namely verses 12-17, 28, 30-32, 33 (last two lines) and 39. Of these, only verse 12 was among the twenty-one verses included in the 1928 edition of *Uḷḷadu Nāṛpadu Anubandham*; another seven of them were among the nine verses added in the 1931 edition, namely verses 13, 15, 17, 28 and 30-32; and the other four, namely verses 14, 16, 33 and 39, were added between 1931 and 1940. Of these twelve verses composed as part of *Guru Vācaka Kōvai*, verses 28, 30, 39 and the last two lines of verse 12 are translations of Sanskrit verses, and the others are all Bhagavan’s own original Tamil compositions, so of the eleven verses of *Uḷḷadu Nāṛpadu Anubandham* that are original Tamil verses composed by him, namely 13-17, 31-33, 35-36 and 38, eight of them, namely 13-17 and 31-33, were originally composed by him as part of *Guru Vācaka Kōvai*.

While *Uḷḷadu Nāṛpadu* itself is a tightly structured philosophical poem, the *Anubandham* covers a wider range of topics in a more varied style, though always pointing back to the central practice of self-investigation (*ātma-vicāra*) and the non-dual truth that only oneself is real. Together, the two works are often studied as a pair, giving a more rounded picture of Bhagavan’s written teachings.

Ēkānma Pañcakam – The Five Verses on the Oneness of Self

In February 1947, Suri Nagamma (the recorder of *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*) asked Bhagavan whether anyone had ever composed *veṅbās* in Telugu. When Bhagavan replied that he did not think so, she asked, ‘Bhagavan, can you do so?’ Bhagavan initially

brushed aside the idea, saying, ‘What do I have to write about?’ But with a little prompting from Muruganar, the next day he showed her three *veṅbās* he had written in Telugu, which he had also translated into Tamil. Later he composed two more, making five in total. He wrote them more or less simultaneously in both Telugu and Tamil, and later also in Malayalam.

The poem is called *Ēkāṇma Pañcakam* (also known in Sanskrit as *Ēkāṭma Pañcakam*). *Pañcakam* simply means a group of five verses. In Tamil, *ēkāṇma* is a Tamilised form of the Sanskrit *ēkāṭma*. In a philosophical context, *ēkāṇma* implies not only ‘oneself’, but that ‘self’ is the only one — that there is only one self, one reality, and that is oneself. The implication is that we ourself are the one thing that actually exists. Bhagavan states this clearly in the final verse, where he uses the Sanskrit word *ātma*. In the other four verses, he uses the Tamil equivalent *tāṇ*, which in this philosophical context refers to ourself — the one reality.

Afterwards, Muruganar composed a concluding verse to accompany Bhagavan’s five. Later, Bhagavan linked the original five verses together as one continuous *kaliveṅbā* — a string of *veṅbās* linked together, because the final line of a *veṅbā* is short and can be joined to the next verse. When Bhagavan made *Ēkāṇma Pañcakam* into a *kaliveṅbā*, it became one continuous verse, so it was no longer appropriate to call it *pañcakam* (five). Two alternative titles are therefore given: *Ēkāṇma Vivēkam* (*Discernment of Oneself*) and *Ēkāṇma Uṇmai* (*Truth of Oneself*). For this *kaliveṅbā* version, Muruganar wrote an introductory verse, which Bhagavan then linked with the five verses, so that all verses became one continuous *kaliveṅbā* (see Appendix D).

Śrī Aruṇācala Padigam – Eleven Verses to Sri Arunachala

Devaraja Mudaliar recorded in a couple of places in *Day by Day* the circumstances under which Bhagavan composed *Śrī Aruṇācala Padigam*. One morning, probably when Bhagavan was still living in Virupaksha Cave — sometime after he had composed *Śrī Aruṇācala Akṣaramaṇamālai*, so it was probably between 1912 and 1916 — he was sitting on the veranda of the cave when the words, ‘You, who by grace took charge of me’, rose spontaneously in his heart. Though at first he ignored them, these words continued to rise insistently, so to get rid of them he eventually allowed them to flow, and thus the first verse of *Śrī Aruṇācala Padigam (Eleven Verses to Sri Arunachala)* poured forth from his heart.

This first verse ended with the word ‘O Love’, addressing Arunachala, and the next morning the words ‘Arunachala, the form of love’ rose in his heart, so again, after ignoring them for a while, to free his mind from these words, he composed the second verse. In this way, for ten consecutive days, each day a clause of words started coming to his mind, beginning with the last word or last group of letters of the previous verse. So in ten days he composed ten verses without any effort or prior volition, and on the tenth day an extra verse flowed out, making the number up to eleven.

The next day he started for *giri-pradakṣiṇa* (walking barefoot around Arunachala in a clockwise direction) accompanied by a devotee called Palaniswami, and as they were leaving another devotee gave Palaniswami some paper and a pencil, saying that since Bhagavan had recently been composing verses every day, he might compose some more at any time, so Palaniswami should have the paper and pencil ready in case he did so. That day whilst walking around the hill Bhagavan composed six more verses, and when a devotee called Narayana Reddi came to Virupaksha either that evening or the next day and heard about these verses, he wanted to have them printed.

Bhagavan then looked at them again, and seeing that the first eleven were composed in a metre called *erū-cīr-viruttam*, which has seven feet in each line, whereas the other six were composed in a metre called *eṇ-cīr-viruttam*, which has eight metrical feet in each line, he named the first eleven verses *Śrī Aruṇācala Padigam*, because *padigam* means a poem or song consisting of ten or eleven verses, and then to make the other six verses into an *aṣṭakam*, a song of eight verses, he composed two more verses in the same *eṇ-cīr-viruttam* metre and named those eight *Śrī Aruṇācala Aṣṭakam*.

These two works, among all of Bhagavan's works, are unique in that they are the only two works that Bhagavan composed without any external prompting. All his other works, his own writings and translations, were done in some context of a request from someone. As a general rule, Bhagavan's nature is such that he does not give any teachings unless asked. Of his own accord, he did not try to teach anyone anything; only because people asked did he answer questions.

Bhagavan said that these two works were prompted 'from inside' by Arunachala itself, thereby disclaiming any doership. Therefore, they are very special; since they are without any external prompting, they show Bhagavan's teachings in a very pure and undiluted form.

Śrī Aruṇācala Aṣṭakam – Eight Verses to Sri Arunachala

As Michael explained in the introduction he wrote for his translation of *Śrī Aruṇācala Padigam*, that song and this one, *Śrī Aruṇācala Aṣṭakam*, arose in Bhagavan's heart and poured forth spontaneously without any volition or sense of doership on his part during a period of eleven or twelve days sometime between 1912 and 1916.

Just as each verse of *Śrī Aruṇācala Padigam* begins with the first one or two syllables of the final foot of the previous verse, the first verse of *Śrī Aruṇācala Aṣṭakam* begins with the first two syllables of

the final foot of the last verse of *Śrī Aruṇācala Padigam*, and each subsequent verse begins with the first one or two syllables of the final foot of the previous one.

Though *Śrī Aruṇācala Aṣṭakam* is composed in the form of a hymn in praise of God (*stōtra*) addressed to Arunachala (except for the first verse, which is sung in praise of Arunachala but referring to him or it in the third person neuter), in content it is primarily a *jñāna-śāstra* — a divinely authoritative text teaching spiritual principles and the means to attain *jñāna*, true knowledge, which is pure awareness.

Śrī Aruṇācala Pañcaratnam – Five Gems to Sri Arunachala

Śrī Aruṇācala Pañcaratnam is the only complete work that Bhagavan originally composed in Sanskrit and later translated into Tamil. Various conflicting accounts exist about how it came to be written, and even old devotees who were present at the time — including Kunju Swami and Sadhu Natanananda — have given slightly different versions. Though we shall never know the exact circumstances for certain, according to Michael, the following represents the most probable account drawn from these various sources.

Bhagavan was a natural poet in Tamil and composed most of his works in Tamil verse. Though he never studied Sanskrit systematically, by divine grace he possessed an intuitive understanding of the language so profound that when asked to translate Adī Sankara's *Vivēkacūḍāmaṇi* into Tamil, he was able to render the entire work. Despite this remarkable ability, he initially made no attempt to compose original verses in Sanskrit.

In 1917, Bhagavan spontaneously composed what would become the first verse of *Pañcaratnam* under circumstances that remain unclear. A few devotees became aware of this verse, and it

eventually came to the attention of the renowned Sanskrit scholar Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri through an indirect route: someone had requested Kavyakantha to compose a song about the guru. When a benedictory verse was subsequently needed, Bhagavan's spontaneous composition was mentioned, and thus Kavyakantha came to see it.

Impressed by what he read, Kavyakantha requested that Bhagavan compose additional verses in the same metre. Initially Bhagavan declined, but eventually wrote a second and third verse. Since the third verse clearly describes *ātma-vicāra*, Kavyakantha then asked Bhagavan to compose verses on *yōga*, *bhakti* and *karma*. Bhagavan obliged by composing the final two verses, though *karma* receives only oblique treatment in the fifth verse, whilst the fourth and fifth focus primarily on *yōga* and *bhakti*.

After completion in 1917, the five verses were titled *Śrī Aruṇācala Pañcaratnam (Five Gems to Arunachala)*. A devotee named Daivarata contributed a concluding verse to the Sanskrit original. Five years later, in 1922, when a devotee wished to publish all of Bhagavan's Tamil hymns in a single booklet, he requested that this Sanskrit work also be rendered into Tamil. Bhagavan accordingly translated all five verses into Tamil using *veṅbā* metre. The concluding verse was also adapted for the Tamil version, though accounts differ whether Bhagavan himself or a devotee, Ishwara Swami, made this adaptation.

In the daily recitation practices at the ashram, both versions would be chanted, with the custom being to recite first the Sanskrit and then the Tamil rendering of each verse before proceeding to the next.

Śrī Aruṇācala Navamaṇimālai –
Garland of Nine Gems to Śrī Arunachala

This hymn is a collection of nine verses composed by Bhagavan on different occasions. The title means ‘Garland of Nine Gems’ or ‘Necklace of Nine Gems’ each verse being regarded as a gem strung together in praise of Arunachala. The first three verses praise Arunachala’s greatness and give assurances about Arunachala’s grace, the next four are prayers, and the final two have autobiographical touches, thanking Arunachala for bestowing upon him his own state and rescuing him from the ocean of worldly delusion.

The circumstances under which he wrote those verses are not known, except the first and eighth verses.

The first verse was composed around 1914–15, while Bhagavan was living in Virupaksha Cave. A priest from the Chidambaram Nataraja Temple had come to visit Bhagavan and persistently urged him to visit Chidambaram to have *darśan* of Lord Śiva. However, Bhagavan remained silent. In an effort to persuade him, the priest argued that, among the *liṅgas* associated with the five elements, Chidambaram represents the space *liṅga* and is therefore superior to Arunachala, which represents the fire *liṅga*, since space is considered more subtle than fire.¹⁰

Though Bhagavan kept quiet at the time, he later composed a verse, which he gave to the priest on his next visit, affirming the unique greatness of Arunachala. He explained that the five elements

¹⁰ There are five holy places particularly sacred to Lord Śiva, each associated with one of the five elements (*pañcabhūtas*): Chidambaram (*ākāśa* — space), Kalahasti (*vāyu* — air), Tiruvannamalai (*agni* — fire), Jambukeswaram (*apas* — water), and Kanchipuram (*prthvī* — earth). In traditional cosmology, these elements are believed to evolve in sequence from the subtlest to the grossest: from space comes air, from air comes fire, from fire comes water, and from water comes earth. Each successive element is considered grosser and less subtle, and therefore less powerful, than the one from which it arises.

arise only when the divine power (*śakti*) seems to move away from Śiva, pure being, and that Arunachala is supreme because here that power merges effortlessly back into his motionless form, just as the restless mind subsides naturally into our own being in the presence of his grace.

The occasion on which the eighth verse was composed is also recorded. Ishwara Swami, being himself a good Tamil poet, showed Bhagavan a verse by the medieval Tamil poet Ottakkuttar, in which a wealthy king is praised for his generosity. The theme of the verse is: who is the one to whom it is given, who is the giver, and what is the gift? The verse was composed to extol the king's greatness through the value of his gift.

Discussing this with Bhagavan, the devotee remarked that, while it was a beautifully crafted verse, it merely glorified a worldly king and a worldly gift. Would it not be more appropriate, he suggested, to compose such a verse in praise of Arunachala. Ishwara Swami composed a verse on that theme and asked Bhagavan if he too might compose a verse.

In response, Bhagavan composed a verse following Ottakkuttar's theme, praising Arunachala for giving him the infinitely precious gift of his own state, implying that poetic talent should be used only to glorify the divine and its grace, rather than worldly gifts.

Śrī Aruṇācala Akṣaramaṇamālai –

The Marriage Garland of Syllables to Sri Arunachala

Bhagavan often said that *bhakti* is the mother of *jñāna*, and in the final verse of *Āṅma-Viddai* he sings, 'Grace also is certainly necessary. Be adorned with love. Happiness will certainly appear', thus affirming that all-consuming, heart-melting love is the sole means by which we can know and be what we actually are. Though this truth underlies all his teachings, nowhere does he express it so

clearly, emphatically, and movingly as in *Śrī Aruṇācala Akṣaramaṇamālai*.

The one hundred and eight verses of this song welled up in his heart spontaneously one day while he was doing *giri-pradakṣiṇa* (walking around the hill Arunachala). For some time prior to this his *sādhu* devotees had been asking him to compose a song for them to sing while begging for their food, but he had always declined this request, saying that there were so many suitable devotional songs sung by other Tamil poet-saints that there was no need for any new song, so it was not in answer to this request that he composed this song, even though those who had made the request took it to be an answer to their prayers. However, he did humorously remark, ‘*Akṣaramaṇamālai* fed us for many years’ (as recorded in *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, 9-12-45 Morning), though this of course was not the real purpose for which he composed it.

In later years, whenever devotees asked him to explain the meaning of these verses, he declined, saying that they could work out the meaning as well as he could, because the verses had welled up from deep within his heart as a torrent of pure love without any thought on his part. For example, when Muruganar was writing his Tamil commentary (*virutti-y-urai*) on this song, he was unsure about the intended meaning of some verses, because they could be interpreted in a number of different but suitable ways, so he asked Bhagavan which meaning he had intended, but Bhagavan replied: ‘The one who composed this has gone. If you want me to decide the meaning, I would have to break my head, so you may as well break your head to decide whatever you think the meaning may be’.

The main reason why he replied like this is that he had absolutely no sense of doership, because in his clear view he is nothing other than the one infinite, eternal and immutable pure awareness ‘I am’, which just is and never does anything, so he did not experience himself as the body, speech and mind that did actions (though of

course like everything else they were nothing other than himself, because he is the one real substance that we see as all this multiplicity). Since he did not experience himself as 'I am this person who is here now', how could he experience himself as the person who had composed this song in the past, so he said 'The one who composed this has gone'.

However, another reason why he declined to specify the meaning for any of these verses is that if he had done so, that would have limited the scope for devotees to see different meanings in them. Many of these verses can be appropriately interpreted in various different ways to suit different moods or states of mind that we may experience while following the path of self-investigation and self-surrender, so no one meaning of any such verse can be said to be the only correct meaning. A meaning that may appeal to one devotee may not appeal to another, and in different circumstances or states of mind different meanings may seem most appropriate to the same devotee. Moreover, as we go deeper in our inward journey, some verses may reveal to us new meanings that we had not seen in them before.

Though the verses of this song are brief couplets (or to be more precise, they are one-line verses, each consisting of seven metrical feet, but due to their length they are generally printed as two lines), they are extremely deep and rich in meaning and implication, and they express the very heart of his teachings.

Whereas in works such as *Nāṇ Ār?*, *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu*, *Upadēśa Undiyār* and *Āṇma-Viddai* he explains in a clear and systematic manner the fundamental principles of his teachings and the means by which we can know and be what we actually are, thereby eradicating ego, in *Śrī Aruṇācala Akṣaramaṇamālai* he guides and supports us in the practical application of these teachings and in facing all the obstacles that will inevitably arise on our inward journey. That is, as he often explained, the spiritual path is essentially a battle fought

within our own heart or will (*cittam*) between our *sat-vāsanā* (our inclination or love to know and be what we actually are by turning back within, fixing our entire attention on ourself alone) and our countless *viṣaya-vāsanās* (our inclinations or likings to know and experience anything other than ourself by allowing our attention to go outwards, away from ourself), so in our attempt to surrender ourself completely by turning back within and sinking into the innermost depth of our heart we face constant resistance from our own likings to hold on to other things.

This is why he often said that *bhakti* is the mother of *jñāna*, because without overwhelming, all-consuming and heart-melting love to surrender ourself entirely along with all our *viṣaya-vāsanās* we will never be able to succeed in sinking deep enough within to dissolve and lose ourself forever in our source and substance, namely *sat-cit*, the pure awareness of our own being, ‘I am’. This is where prayer plays such an important role in this path. By praying as he teaches us by example in *Śrī Aruṇācala Akṣaramaṇamālai* and the other songs of *Śrī Aruṇācala Stuti Pañcakam* (The Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala) we are aligning our will with the will of guru, thereby dismantling the obstacles to complete surrender that we have erected in our own heart by liking and desiring anything other than to subside and merge forever back into ourself as we always actually are.

In these verses, Bhagavan has used words to teach us how and for what we should pray, but prayer is of course much more than just words. Words may sometimes serve as a vehicle for prayer, as they do in this song, but prayer itself is intense longing and crying out from the innermost depth of our heart for our return to our natural state of infinite, indivisible and immutable pure being, pure awareness, pure happiness and pure love.

To express the depth and intensity of his love for Arunachala, and thereby to show us the depth and intensity of love that we require to

follow the path of self-investigation and self-surrender to its happy conclusion, namely the complete eradication of ego, Bhagavan sang this song in *nāyaka-nāyakī bhāva*, the devotional attitude (*bhāva*) of a young maiden (*nāyakī*) whose heart has been stolen by her beloved lord (*nāyaka*) and who therefore yearns cravingly for him, wanting nothing else but to be united with him in eternal and indivisible oneness. The young maiden is *jīva*, the soul or ego, and her beloved lord is Śiva, Lord Arunachala, who is God, *guru* and *ātma-svarūpa*, her own real nature.

Therefore, this song of the soul crying out to its Lord for such indivisible union is fittingly called *Śrī Aruṇācala Akṣaramaṇamālai*. *Akṣara-maṇa-mālai* has several meanings: Firstly it means a 'marriage garland of syllables', and it is so called because in an Indian marriage ceremony the bride and bridegroom exchange garlands, each placing a garland of flowers around the neck of the other, and in this case the bride, Bhagavan, is making a garland of flowers in the form of verses to adorn the neck of her beloved bridegroom, Arunachala, and the verses are spontaneously arranged in alphabetical order according to the first syllable of each one.

Secondly, it means a 'fragrant garland of syllables', because this marriage garland of verses composed by the bride is suffused with the sweet fragrance of her intense yearning and love for her bridegroom. Thirdly and most significantly it means a 'garland of (or for) imperishable union', because the marriage for which this bride is praying in these verses is the state of eternal, imperishable and immutable oneness with her beloved lord, Arunachala Śiva.

Thus, *Śrī Aruṇācala Akṣaramaṇamālai* means 'The Marriage Garland of Syllables for Sri Arunachala', 'The Fragrant Garland of Syllables for Sri Arunachala' and 'The Garland for Imperishable Union with Sri Arunachala', or it could also be taken to mean 'The Garland of Imperishable Fragrance for Sri Arunachala', because Arunachala is eternally adorned with the sweet fragrance of

Bhagavan's all-consuming love for him as expressed by her so beautifully and heart-meltingly in these verses.

The divine marriage or imperishable union with Arunachala for which she prayed so longingly in this song had of course been celebrated and consummated on that day in Madurai when an intense fear of death arose in her heart, prompting her to turn back within to take refuge in the fortress of the feet of Mahesan, the great Lord Arunachala Śiva, who exists and shines eternally in the heart as 'I am', so in this song she is reliving the anguish and joys of her former state of intense yearning for him, though there are verses here and there in which she reveals that what she was praying for so longingly had already been bestowed upon her in all its fullness.

Being eternally one with Arunachala, Bhagavan is indeed Arunachalaramana, and as such he is mother, father, God, and *guru* for all of us who have been drawn to him by his grace and who seek ultimate salvation in the form of annihilation of ego at his feet, as he himself sang in the verse *Arunachalaramana* (at the start of this book).

Therefore, as Michael writes, with this supreme love song given by Bhagavan as our guide, support and solace, let us each persevere in our attempts to turn back within and sink into the innermost depth of our heart, where he is always waiting to swallow us in his clear light of pure and infinite awareness.

Śrī Aruṇācala Tattuvam – The Reality of Arunachala &

Śrī Aruṇācala Dīpa Darśana Tattuvam – The Reality of Seeing Deepam

On *Kārttikai Deepam*¹¹ day in November 1931 (called *prajōtpatti* in Hindu calendars, the fifth year in the 60-year Jupiter cycle), which

¹¹ *Kārttikai Deepam* is an annual festival celebrated in the Tamil month of *Kārttikai* (mid-November to mid-December) on the day on which the moon is in conjunction with the constellation Pleiades (known in Sanskrit as *kṛttikā* and in Tamil as

was 24th November, when answering some questions about Arunachala, Bhagavan explained its *tattva* (reality, truth, import, or signification), and his explanation was immediately recorded by Muruganar in a Tamil verse entitled *Śrī Aruṇācala Tattuvam* (*The Reality of Arunachala*). When he showed this verse to Bhagavan, Muruganar asked him to compose a similar verse explaining the *tattva* of *dīpa-darśana* (seeing *deepam*), so Bhagavan immediately composed a verse in the same metre entitled *Dīpa-Darśana Tattuvam* (*The Reality of Seeing Deepam*).

The aim of *Śrī Aruṇācala Tattuvam* (*The Reality of Arunachala*) is to state what the actual reality of Annamalai, which is a Tamil name for Arunachala, is. This verse refers also to the story of the origin of Arunachala, and also (since Arunachala is *ādi-līṅga-svarūpa*, the original *līṅga* form of Lord Śiva) the origin of the *līṅga* (*līṅgōdbhava*), which in brief is as follows:

Brahma, the form of God who is responsible for the creation of this world-appearance, and Vishnu, the form of God who is responsible for its sustenance, stability or protection, were once gripped by pride and therefore began quarrelling with each other, each claiming to be the greatest, so to subdue their pride Lord Śiva, the form of God who is responsible for the final dissolution or destruction of this illusory world-appearance, manifested in their midst as a vast column of light, the top, and bottom of which could not be seen. Wondering how this column had appeared and was enduring, even though it had not been created by Brahma and was not being sustained by Vishnu, they decided that they could resolve their argument by seeing which one of them could reach its top or bottom. Therefore, Brahma assumed the form of a swan and began flying upwards in order to find the summit of the column, while

kārttikai), which always coincides with the full moon or comes one or two days before or after it. At 6pm on this day, a beacon light or *dīpam* (popularly spelt *deepam*) is lit on the summit of Arunachala, and continues to burn for about ten days.

Vishnu took the form of a boar and began burrowing deep into the ground in order to find its foot.

Though Brahma flew upwards for thousands of years, he could not reach the summit, so he eventually gave up all hope of ever reaching it. However, though he knew that he had failed, his pride and egotism were not subdued, so to protect his prestige he decided to tell a lie, saying that he had reached the summit. Vishnu, in the meanwhile, also understood that he would never be able to reach the foot of the self-luminous column, but unlike Brahma his pride and egotism were thereby subdued, so he decided to return and humbly admit his failure. Therefore, when he and Brahma finally returned and met at their starting point, he honestly admitted that he was unable to reach the foot, and being sure that Brahma would not have been able to reach the summit he declared that whatever the column of light may be, it was greater than either of them, and hence he began to praise it as the supreme Lord of all. Brahma laughed in derision, declaring that he had reached the summit, and mocked Vishnu, saying that he was praising the column only because of his failure, and that he should instead praise him (Brahma) since he had proved himself to be the greatest of all. Seeing the dishonesty and arrogance of Brahma, Śiva manifested himself in his human-like form from within the column and declared Brahma to be a liar.

Since Vishnu had lost his ego in his attempt to find the foot of Śiva, the column of light, he merged and became one with him, and hence since that time he is worshipped as the equal of Śiva. However, since Brahma was humbled only after Śiva declared him to be a liar, he was cursed never to be worshipped in any temple, and hence he is worshipped only through Vedic rituals, which are *kāmya karmas*, actions performed for the fulfilment of selfish desires.

After Śiva thus blessed Vishnu and cursed Brahma, Vishnu understood that he had been possessed by egotism because he had forgotten Śiva, who is the one real nature (*svarūpa*) of all, and hence

he prayed to him never to allow him to forget him again. He also prayed to him saying that he could not sustain the world in the presence of the column of light — which was the light of *ātma-jñāna* or pure self-awareness — and therefore beseeched him to assume a seemingly lacklustre form on earth so that people could remember him and thereby be saved from the delusion of ego. In answer to this prayer of Vishnu, therefore, Śiva contracted his form as the column of light into the form of the holy mountain Arunachala, the mere remembrance of which will subdue and eventually eradicate ego.

As Bhagavan points out in this verse, in this story Lord Śiva in the form of Arunachala, the mountain of light, signifies, ‘oneself, the heart, the centre’, namely *ātma-svarūpa* (the real nature of ourself, meaning ourself as we actually are), which is the heart or centre of all, being *sat-cit*, the original light of pure being-awareness, ‘I am’; Vishnu signifies *ahāṅkāram*, ‘ego’, the distorted and deluded form of awareness that experiences itself not just as ‘I am’ but as ‘I am this body’; and Brahma signifies *buddhi*, ‘intellect’, the instrument by which we as ego try to understand and gain mastery over the external world, which appears as soon as we rise as ego, thereby mistaking ourself to be a body.

Brahma flying upwards to find the summit of the column represents the effort that we make to understand the truth of the world, God and ourself through our outward-going intellect, which seeks to know the reality by extroverted means such as science, religion, or philosophy. So long as we thus direct our attention and efforts outwards, away from our own being, ‘I am’, we can never know the reality as it actually is, so whatever knowledge we gain thereby is only a lie, meaning that it is not real knowledge but just an illusory pretence masquerading as such.

Vishnu burrowing deep down into the ground to find the foot of the column represents the effort that we as ego make to be aware of ourself as we actually are by penetrating deep into our own heart, the

innermost core or centre of ourself. Only when we thus direct all our interest, attention and effort inwards, towards our own being, 'I am', can we be aware of ourself as we actually are, thereby eradicating ego, the false awareness of ourself as a person, a body consisting of five sheaths (namely the physical body, life, mind, intellect, and will). And since the reality of ourself is also the reality of both the world and God, only when we thus know ourself as we actually are will we know the world and God as they actually are.

Bhagavan indicates in this verse that this shining forth of Arunachala, the heart, as the infinite light of pure awareness, which is ourself as we actually are, thereby dissolving the false appearance of ego together with all its adjuncts that it mistakes itself to be, such as the intellect, and everything known by it, just as the rising sun dissolves all darkness.

That is, just as Annamalai shone forth as a column of light between Brahma and Vishnu to subdue their pride by showing them that they could not see its top or bottom as they desired, so it surges from within, shining forth as the infinite light of pure awareness, the heart, when ego and intellect despair, recognising their inability to know their own reality.

Just as Vishnu's pride was subdued only when he burrowed deep into the ground in search of the foot of the column of fire and thereby recognised his inability to reach it, ego's pride in its seemingly separate existence will be subdued only when it tries more and more to penetrate deep within itself in search of its own reality and thereby recognises its inability to know itself as it actually is. And just as Vishnu was able to recognise the infinite greatness of the column of fire only when his pride was completely subdued, only when ego's pride (its urge to rise and dance about as a separate entity) is completely subdued will its reality, the heart, shine forth from within, swallowing it forever in its infinite light of pure awareness.

In other words, ego will be able to see its own non-dual reality, the pure light of 'I', only when it subsides and dissolves completely in the heart by looking evermore keenly within, thereby giving up its false awareness 'I am this body', as Bhagavan implies in *Śrī Aruṇācala Dīpa Darśana Tattuvam (The Reality of Seeing Deepam)*, in which he gave us a very clear, compact and neat summary of his teachings.

Upadēśa Tanippākkaḷ – Solitary Verses of Spiritual Teaching

Unlike Bhagavan's other core works, *Upadēśa Tanippākkaḷ* is not a single composed text but a collection of twenty-seven individual verses of spiritual instruction that Bhagavan composed at various times. These verses were not originally included in the *Upadēśa Nūṁmālai (Garland of Teachings)* section of his collected works, yet they carry the same profound clarity and depth.

Sri Sadhu Om recognized the value of these scattered verses and gathered them together, arranging them in a suitable order to form this collection, which he titled *Upadēśa Tanippākkaḷ*. He included this compilation at the end of his Tamil commentary on *Upadēśa Nūṁmālai*.

At least thirteen of these twenty-seven verses were originally composed by Bhagavan as part of *Guru Vācaka Kōvai*. Eight verses are Bhagavan's translations or adaptations of verses from ancient Sanskrit texts, one verse is adapted from a Tamil text, and eighteen are his own original compositions.

Though less widely known than his other writings, these solitary verses offer the same direct guidance toward self-knowledge that characterizes all of Bhagavan's teachings.

Selections from:

Bhagavad Gītā Sāram – The Essence of the *Bhagavad Gītā* (Appendix A) &
Vivekacūḍāmaṇi – The Crown-Jewel of Discrimination (Appendix B)

These two works are not original compositions of Bhagavan, but translations he made into Tamil. *Bhagavad Gītā Sāram* (*The Essence of the Bhagavad Gītā*) is a selection of forty-two verses from the *Bhagavad Gītā* chosen and rendered by him in Tamil *veṅbā* metre. He later recast it into *kaliveṅbā* metre to facilitate easier recitation.

Vivekacūḍāmaṇi (*The Crown-Jewel of Discrimination*), an *advaitic* text attributed to Adi Shankara, was translated by Bhagavan into Tamil prose at the request of a devotee around 1907. Though he had never studied Sanskrit formally, he was able to understand the text and convey its meaning with clarity and simplicity.

In this compilation, only selected portions of Bhagavan’s translations have been included, rendered here in English by Michael.

Upadēśa Kaliveṅbā – The extended version of
Uḷḷadu Nārpadu (Appendix C)

On the 11th of August 1928, *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu* was completed in its present form. However, since devotees naturally wanted to include *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu* among all his other works that they regularly chanted in his presence, in order to make it easier for them to memorise the verses in the correct order, Bhagavan linked all forty-two of them (the two *maṅgalam* verses and the forty verses of the main text) together as a single *kaliveṅbā*. Since *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu* means ‘Forty Verses on What Is’ and since the *kaliveṅbā* version of it is not forty verses but just one, Bhagavan named it *Upadēśa-k-Kaliveṅbā*, ‘Teachings in *Kaliveṅbā*’.

To understand what linking a series of *veṅbās* together as a *kalivenbā* entails, it is necessary for one to know at least a little about (*veṅbā*) metre. A *veṅbā* is a classical Tamil verse form renowned for its purity and precision. The word itself means ‘white’, ‘pure’ or ‘simple verse’, because it represents the most perfect style of Tamil poetry.

Composing a *veṅbā* is like writing poetry according to a strict musical pattern. Each line must follow exact rules of rhythm and metre, and certain sounds must connect across the lines to create a natural flow when recited. Most *veṅbās* have four lines: the first three carry four metrical feet, while the last line ends with a shortened cadence that gives the verse its distinctive grace.

Because the rules are so demanding—governing rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration—mastering this form is considered the ultimate test of a Tamil poet. It requires both scientific precision and artistic intuition, ensuring that the tone of the verse matches its meaning.

This is why Bhagavan's compositions are held in such high esteem. In works like *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu* and its extended form *Upadēśa Kalivenbā*, he not only expressed the deepest truths of self-knowledge but also did so in a form that meets the highest standards of Tamil literary tradition. In fact, when he linked the forty-two verses of *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu* into one continuous *kalivenbā*, he subtly expanded certain verses, adding meaning while preserving perfect metrical form — a mark of extraordinary poetic mastery.

For this reason, Tamil scholars regard his verses as both spiritually profound and literary masterpieces.

Free Resources

All of the links provide free access to translations, videos, and community discussions focused on the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, particularly through the dedicated work of Michael James. These are offered freely, in the spirit of Bhagavan's grace.

Translations and Explanations by Michael James

- **Website:** sriramanateachings.org
- **Blog:** blog.sriramanateachings.org
- **YouTube Channel:** youtube.com/@sriramanateachings

Free Books on the *Sri Ramana Teachings* website

- ***Guru Vācaka Kōvai – Garland of Guru's Sayings:*** With Sri Sadhu Om, an English translation (with detailed explanation) of Sri Muruganar's comprehensive record of Bhagavan's oral teachings: sriramanateachings.org/guru_vachaka_kovai.html
- ***Happiness and the Art of Being:*** A clear and deep exposition of Bhagavan's teachings:
sriramanateachings.org/happiness_art_being.html
- More free books can be found here:
sriramanateachings.org/books.html

Video Series

Explore the eight key points of Bhagavan's teachings in this YouTube video series, presented in collaboration with the compiler of this book.

'Eight key points of *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu* (and of all Bhagavan's teachings)' playlist: youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnw6ACy-wqrwp_s4W1ILvyV8uBRo2FnJs

Ramana Maharshi's Wisdom: Based on the Work of Michael James

- ***Forty Verses on What Is – The ultimate truth on being as you actually are*** (includes an introduction written by Michael James)
Complementary sample: u.pc.cd/yDn7
- ***Who Am I? – The path to know and be what you actually are***
Complementary sample: u.pc.cd/gqEctalK
- ***Quarante Versets sur Ce Qui Est*** (French translation of *Forty Verses on What Is*)
Complementary sample : u.pc.cd/Q6CrtalK

You can also watch Q&A clips on the dedicated YouTube channel or join the Facebook group:

- ***Sri Ramana Teachings Q&A's YouTube channel:***
youtube.com/@sriramanateachingsqa
- ***Ramana Maharshi's Wisdom Facebook group:***
facebook.com/groups/ramanamaharshiswisdom

Asking Michael Questions about Bhagavan's Teachings

If you would like to ask Michael questions about Bhagavan's teachings, you may do so during the public Zoom meetings he participates in each month. For current meeting schedules, visit: sriramanateachings.org/contact.html

Aruṇācalaramaṇa

Bhagavan's Answer When Asked about His Real Identity

Aruṇācalaramaṇa is the ultimate self rejoicing as awareness in the cave of the heart-lotus of different souls beginning with Hari. Heart melting with love, reaching the cave where the sublime supreme dwells, the eye that is awareness opening, you will know what is innate; it will be exposed.

Explanatory paraphrase: Aruṇācalaramaṇa is *paramātman* [the supreme spirit or ultimate self of all] rejoicing as awareness in the cave of the heart-lotus of [all] different *jīvas* [souls or sentient beings] beginning with Hari [Viṣṇu]. Heart melting with love, reaching [or merging in] the cave where the sublime supreme dwells, the eye that is awareness opening, you will [thereby] know what is innate [or one's own, namely your own real nature, the indwelling Aruṇācalaramaṇa]; [because] it will be exposed [opened, disclosed or made clear] [meaning it will shine forth, devouring ego and everything else in the infinite clarity of pure awareness].

Nāṅ Ār?

Who Am I?

Paragraph One¹²

Since all sentient beings like to be always happy without what is called misery, since for everyone the greatest love is only for oneself, and since happiness alone is the cause for love, in order to obtain that happiness, which is one's *svabhāva* (own being, existence, or nature), which one experiences daily in dreamless sleep, devoid of mind, oneself knowing oneself is necessary. For that, *jñāna-vicāra* (awareness-investigation) called '**who am I**' alone is the principal means.

Paragraph Two¹³

Who am I? The *sthūla dēha* [the 'gross' or physical body], which is [formed] by *sapta dhātus* [seven constituents, namely chyle, blood, flesh, fat, bone, marrow, and semen], is not I. The five *jñānēndriyas* [sense organs], namely ears, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose, which

¹² In composing this essay version, Bhagavan made specific editorial choices to highlight key passages. In paragraph one, he highlighted the final clause in bold type, emphasising the ultimate means to achieve happiness.

¹³ In paragraph two, Bhagavan highlighted in bold the essential question 'Who am I?' (*nāṅ ār?*) and his two fundamental answers: 'awareness alone is I' (*arivē nāṅ*) and 'the nature of such awareness is being-consciousness-bliss' (*ariviṅ sorūpam sat-cit-ānandam*). This highlighting indicates what Bhagavan initially answered to Sivaprakasam Pillai's question, 'Who am I?'. The remainder of the paragraph was composed by Pillai himself, who, drawing on *nēti nēti* reasoning, expanded the reply with a list of what we are not. Bhagavan approved this addition, explaining that though it was not part of his original answer, it would help Sivaprakasam Pillai to understand that answer more clearly.

individually [and respectively] know the five *viṣayas* [‘domains’ or kinds of sensory phenomena], namely sound, touch [texture and other qualities perceived by touch], form [shape, colour and other qualities perceived by sight], taste, and smell, are also not I. The five *karmēndriyas* [organs of action], namely mouth, feet [or legs], hands [or arms], anus, and genitals, which [respectively] do the five actions, namely speaking, going [moving or walking], giving, discharge of faeces, and enjoying [sexual pleasure], are also not I. The *pañca vāyus* [the five ‘winds’, ‘vital airs’ or metabolic processes], beginning with *prāṇa* [breath], which do the five [metabolic] functions, beginning with respiration, are also not I. The mind, which thinks, is also not I. All *viṣayas* [phenomena] and all actions ceasing [as in sleep or any other state of *manōlaya*], the ignorance [namely absence of awareness of any phenomena] that is combined only with *viṣaya-vāsanās* [inclinations to experience phenomena] is also not I. Eliminating everything mentioned above as not I, not I, the **awareness** that stands isolated [or separated] **alone is I. The nature of [such] awareness is *sat-cit-ānanda*** [being-consciousness-bliss].

Paragraph Three

If the mind, which is the cause for all awareness [of things other than oneself] and for all activity, ceases [or subsides], *jagad-drṣṭi* [perception of the world] will depart [or be dispelled]. Just as unless awareness of the imaginary snake goes, awareness of the rope, [which is] the *adhiṣṭhāna* [basis, base or foundation], will not arise, unless perception of the world, which is *kalpita* [a fabrication, imagination or mental creation], departs, *darśana* [seeing or sight] of *svarūpa* [one’s own form or real nature], [which is] the *adhiṣṭhāna*, will not arise.

Paragraph Four

What is called mind is an *atiśaya śakti* [an extraordinary power] that exists in *ātma-svarūpa* [the 'own form' or real nature of oneself]. It makes all thoughts appear [or projects all thoughts]. When one looks, excluding [removing or putting aside] all thoughts, solitarily there is not any such thing as mind; therefore thought alone is the *svārūpa* [the 'own form' or very nature] of the mind. Excluding thoughts [or ideas], there is not separately any such thing as world. In sleep there are no thoughts, and [consequently] there is also no world; in waking and dream there are thoughts, and [consequently] there is also a world. Just as a spider spins out thread from within itself and again draws it back into itself, so the mind makes the world appear [or projects the world] from within itself and again dissolves it back into itself. When the mind comes out from *ātma-svarūpa*, the world appears. Therefore when the world appears, *svārūpa* [one's own form or real nature] does not appear; when *svārūpa* appears [shines], the world does not appear. If one goes on investigating the nature of the mind, oneself alone will end as mind [that is, oneself alone will finally turn out to be what had previously seemed to be the mind]. What is [here] called '*tān*' [oneself] is only *ātma-svarūpa*. The mind stands only by always going after [following, conforming to, attaching itself to, attending to or seeking] a *sthūlam* [something gross, namely a physical body]; solitarily it does not stand. The mind alone is described as *sūkṣma śarīra* [the subtle body] and as *jīva* [the soul].

Paragraph Five¹⁴

Whatever it is that rises in this body as ‘I’, that alone is the mind. If one investigates in what place the thought called ‘I’ first appears in the body, one will come to know that it is in the heart [the innermost core of oneself]. That alone is the birthplace of the mind. Even if one continues thinking ‘I, I’, it will take and leave [one] in that place. Of all the thoughts that appear [or arise] in the mind, **the thought called ‘I’ alone is the first thought** [the primal, basic, original or causal thought]. Only after this arises do other thoughts arise. Only after the first person [namely ego, the primal thought called ‘I’] appears do second and third persons [namely all other things] appear; without the first person second and third persons do not exist.

Paragraph Six¹⁵

Only by the investigation who am I will the mind cease [subside or disappear forever]; the thought who am I [that is, the attentiveness with which one investigates what one is], destroying all other thoughts, will itself also in the end be destroyed like a corpse-burning stick [a stick that is used to stir a funeral pyre to ensure that the corpse is burnt completely]. If other thoughts rise, without trying to complete them it is necessary to investigate to whom they have occurred. However many thoughts rise, what [does it matter]? Vigilantly, as soon as each thought appears, if one investigates to whom it has occurred, it will be clear: to me. If one investigates who am I [by vigilantly attending to oneself, the ‘me’ to whom everything else appears], the mind will return to its birthplace [namely oneself, the source from which it arose]; [and since one thereby refrains from

¹⁴ In paragraph five, Bhagavan underlined a key passage in red ink in his original manuscript, which has since been printed in bold type, drawing attention to the essential practice of self-investigation.

¹⁵ In paragraph six, Bhagavan highlighted in bold type ‘oneself’.

attending to it] the thought that had risen will also cease. When one practises and practises in this manner, for the mind the power to stand firmly established in its birthplace increases. When the subtle mind goes out through the doorway of the brain and sense organs, gross names and forms [the phenomena that constitute both the mental and the physical worlds] appear; when it remains in the heart [the core of oneself, namely one's fundamental awareness, 'I am'], names and forms disappear. The name '*ahamukham*' [facing inside or facing I] or '*antarmukham*' [facing inside] is only for [or refers only to] keeping the mind in the heart [that is, keeping one's mind or attention fixed firmly on the fundamental awareness 'I am', which is the core or heart of ego, the adjunct-conflated awareness 'I am this body'] without letting [it go] out [towards anything else whatsoever]. The name '*bahirmukham*' [facing outside] is only for [or refers only to] letting [it go] out from the heart [that is, letting one's mind move outwards, away from 'I am' towards anything else]. Only when the mind remains [firmly fixed] in the heart in this way, will what is called 'I' [namely ego], which is the *mūlam* [root, foundation, cause or origin] for all thoughts, depart and **oneself**, who always exists, alone shine. Only the place where the thought called 'I' [namely ego] does not exist even a little is *svarūpa* [one's 'own form' or real nature, meaning ourself as we actually are]. That alone is called '*mauna*' [silence]. The name '*jñāna-dṛṣṭi*' ['knowledge-seeing', seeing through the eye of real knowledge or pure awareness] is only for [or refers only to] just being in this way. What just being (*summā-v-iruppadu*) is only making the mind dissolve [disappear or die] in *ātma-svarūpa* [the real nature of oneself]. Besides [this state of just being, in which ego is dissolved forever in *ātma-svarūpa* and therefore does not rise at all to know anything else], knowing the thoughts of others, knowing the three times [past, present and future], and knowing what is happening in distant places cannot be *jñāna-dṛṣṭi*.

Paragraph Seven

What actually exists is only *ātma-svarūpa* [the ‘own form’ or real nature of oneself]. The world, soul and God are *kalpanaiga!* [fabrications, imaginations, mental creations, illusions or illusory superimpositions] in it, like the [illusory] silver in a shell. These three appear simultaneously and disappear simultaneously. *Svarūpa* [one’s own form or real nature] alone is the world; *svarūpa* alone is ‘I’ [ego or soul]; *svarūpa* alone is God; everything is *śiva-svarūpa* [the ‘own form’ or real nature of Śiva, the one infinite whole, which is oneself].

Paragraph Eight

For the mind to cease [settle, subside, yield, be subdued, be still or disappear], except *vicāraṇā* [self-investigation] there are no other adequate means. If made to cease [subside or disappear] by other means, the mind remaining [for a while] as if it had ceased, will again rise up [sprout, emerge or start]. Even by *prāṇāyāma* [breath-restraint] the mind will cease [subside or disappear]; however, so long as *prāṇa* [life, as manifested in breathing and other physiological processes] remains subsided mind will also remain subsided, [and] when *prāṇa* emerges it will also emerge and wander about under the sway of [its] *vāsanās* [inclinations or propensities]. The birthplace both for mind and for *prāṇa* is one [namely *ātma-svarūpa*, the real nature of oneself, which is pure awareness, ‘I am’]. Thought alone is the *svarūpa* [the ‘own form’ or actual nature] of the mind. The thought called ‘I’ alone is the first thought of the mind; it alone is ego. From where ego arises, from there alone the breath also rises up [sprouts, emerges or starts]. Therefore when the mind ceases [subsides or disappears] the *prāṇa* also [ceases], [and] when the *prāṇa* ceases the mind also ceases. The *prāṇa* is called [or said to be] the gross form of the mind. Until the time of death the mind keeps

the *prāṇa* in the body, and at the moment the body dies, grasping it it goes [that is, grasping, stealing or forcibly taking the *prāṇa*, the mind departs]. Therefore *prāṇāyāma* is just an aid to restrain the mind [or to make it (temporarily) cease, subside or disappear], but will not bring about *manōnāśa* [annihilation of the mind].¹⁶ However in sleep, even though the mind has ceased [subsided or disappeared], the *prāṇa* does not cease. It is arranged thus by the ordinance of God for the purpose of protecting the body, and so that other people do not wonder whether the body has died. When the mind ceases [subsides or disappears] in waking and in *samādhi* [a state of *manōlaya* or temporary dissolution of mind brought about by *prāṇāyāma* or other such *yōga* practices], the *prāṇa* ceases.

Paragraph Nine

Just like *prāṇāyāma*, what are called *mūrti-dhyāna* [meditation upon a form of God], *mantra-japa* [repetition of a sacred word or phrase, usually consisting of or containing a name of God] and *āhāra-niyama* [restriction of diet, particularly the restriction of consuming only vegetarian food] are also only aids that restrain the mind [but

¹⁶ The original essay by Bhagavan (1926-27) ends here. The following three sentences were added by him later, either in the mid-1930s or afterwards. These sentences were not in the manuscript handwritten by Bhagavan, reproduced in *The Mountain Path* (June 1993, pp. 43-47), nor were they included in the essay version in the first edition (1931) of *Śrī Ramaṇa Nūṭrirattu*, his Tamil collected works, or in the 1932 editions of either the thirty or the twenty-eight question-and-answer versions. They were also absent in any versions published prior to that, or in Sivaprakasam Pillai's notebooks. The earliest edition including them was the 1936 edition of the twenty-eight question-and-answer version, so it was likely added then and later in the essay version. If these three interpolated sentences were something Bhagavan actually said, he presumably did so in response to someone as a concession to their limited understanding, seeing that they were not willing to accept his teaching that the body, *prāṇa*, world, and all other phenomena exist only in the view of ego and cease to exist whenever the mind ceases to exist, as in dreamless sleep.

will not bring about its annihilation]. Both by *mūrti-dhyāna* and by *mantra-japa* the mind gains *ekāgratā* [one-pointedness]. Just as if one gives a chain in the trunk of an elephant, which is always moving [swinging about trying to catch hold of something or other], that elephant will proceed grasping it without grasping anything else, in exactly that way the mind, which is always moving [wandering about thinking of something or other], will, if one makes it habituated [to holding] on any one name or form, remain grasping it alone [without thinking unnecessary thoughts about anything else]. Because of the way in which the mind spreads out as innumerable thoughts [thereby scattering its energy], each thought becomes extremely weak. When thoughts reduce and reduce, for the mind which, gaining *ekāgrataṇmai* [one-pointed nature], has thereby gained strength *ātma-vicāra* [self-investigation] will easily be accomplished. By *mita sātṭvika āhāra-niyama* [the restriction of consuming only *sattva*-conducive food in moderate quantities], which is the best among all restrictions, the *sattva-guṇa* [the quality of ‘being-ness’, calmness and clarity] of the mind increasing, for self-investigation help will [thereby] arise.

Paragraph Ten

Even though *viśaya-vāsanās* [inclinations to experience things other than oneself], which come from time immemorial, rise [as thoughts or phenomena] in countless numbers like ocean-waves, they will all be destroyed when *svarūpa-dhyāna* [self-attentiveness, contemplation on one’s ‘own form’ or real nature] increases and increases [in depth and intensity]. Without giving room even to the doubting thought ‘So many *vāsanās* ceasing [or being dissolved], is it possible to be only as *svarūpa* [my own form or real nature]?’ it is necessary to cling tenaciously to self-attentiveness. However great a sinner one may be, if instead of lamenting and weeping ‘I am a

sinner! How am I going to be saved?’ one completely rejects the thought that one is a sinner and is zealous [or steadfast] in self-attentiveness, one will certainly be reformed [transformed into what one actually is].

Paragraph Eleven

As long as *viṣaya-vāsanās* exist within the mind, so long is the investigation who am I necessary. As and when thoughts appear, then and there it is necessary to annihilate them all by *vicāraṇā* [investigation or keen self-attentiveness] in the very place from which they arise. Not attending to anything other [than oneself] is *vairāgya* [dispassion or detachment] or *nirāśā* [desirelessness]; not leaving [or letting go of] oneself is *jñāna* [true knowledge or real awareness]. In truth [these] two [*vairāgya* and *jñāna*] are just one. Just as pearl-divers, tying stones to their waists and sinking, pick up pearls that are found at the bottom of the ocean, so each one, sinking deep within oneself with *vairāgya* [freedom from desire to be aware of anything other than oneself], may obtain *ātma-muttu* [the self-pearl, meaning the pearl that is one's own real nature]. If one clings fast to uninterrupted *svārūpa-smaraṇa* [self-remembrance] until one attains *svārūpa* [one's own real nature, namely oneself as one actually is], that alone is sufficient. So long as enemies [namely *viṣaya-vāsanās*] are within the fortress [namely one's heart], they will be continuously coming out from it. If one is continuously cutting down [or destroying] all of them as and when they come, the fortress will [eventually] be captured.

Paragraph Twelve

God and *guru* are in truth not different. Just as what has been caught in the jaws of a tiger will not return, so those who have been caught

in the look [or glance] of *guru* 's grace will never be forsaken but will surely be saved by him; nevertheless, it is necessary to walk unflinching in accordance with the path that *guru* has shown.

Paragraph Thirteen

Being *ātma-niṣṭhāparaṇ* [one who is firmly fixed as oneself], giving not even the slightest room to the rising of any other *cintana* [thought] except *ātma-cintana* [thought of oneself: self-contemplation or self-attentiveness], alone is giving oneself to God. Even though one places whatever amount of burden upon God, that entire amount he will bear. Since one *paramēśvara śakti* [supreme ruling power or power of God] is driving all *kāryas* [whatever needs or ought to be done or to happen], instead of we also yielding to it, why to be perpetually thinking, 'it is necessary to do like this; it is necessary to do like that'? Though we know that the train is going bearing all the burdens, why should we who go travelling in it, instead of remaining happily leaving our small luggage placed on it [the train], suffer bearing it [our luggage] on our head?

Paragraph Fourteen

What is called *sukha* [happiness, satisfaction, joy, ease, comfort or pleasantness] is only the *svarūpa* [the 'own form' or real nature] of *ātmā* [oneself]; *sukha* and *ātma-svarūpa* [one's own real nature] are not different. *Ātma-sukha* [happiness that is oneself] alone exists; that alone is real. What is called *sukha* [happiness or satisfaction] is not found [obtained or available] in even one of the objects of the world. We think that happiness is obtained from them because of our *avivēka* [lack of judgement, discrimination or ability to distinguish one thing from another]. When the mind comes out [from *ātma-svarūpa*], it experiences *duḥkha* [dissatisfaction, discomfort,

uneasiness, unpleasantness, unhappiness, distress, suffering, sorrow, sadness, pain or affliction]. In truth, whenever our thoughts [wishes or hopes] are fulfilled, it [the mind] turning back to its proper place [the heart, our real nature, which is the source from which it rose] experiences only *ātma-sukha* [happiness that is oneself]. Likewise at times of sleep, *samādhi* [a state of *manōlaya* or temporary dissolution of mind brought about by *prāṇāyāma* or other such *yōga* practices] and fainting, and when anything liked is obtained, and when destruction [damage, elimination or removal] occurs to anything disliked, the mind becoming *antarmukham* [inward-facing] experiences only *ātma-sukha*. In this way the mind wanders about incessantly, going outside leaving oneself, and [again] turning back inside. At the foot of a tree the shade is pleasant [comfortable or delightful]. Outside the heat of the sun is severe [or harsh]. A person who is wandering outside is cooled [literally, obtains coolness or cooling] [by] going into the shade. After a short while emerging outside, [but] being unable to withstand [or bear] the severity of the heat, he again comes to the foot of the tree. In this way he remains, going from the shade into the sunshine, and going [back] from the sunshine into the shade. A person who does thus is an *avivēki* [someone lacking judgement, discrimination or ability to distinguish]. But a *vivēki* [someone who can judge, discriminate or distinguish] will not depart leaving the shade. Likewise the mind of the *jñāni* [one who is aware of one's real nature] will not depart leaving *brahman* [that which alone exists, namely pure awareness, which is infinite happiness and one's own real nature]. But the mind of the *ajñāni* [one who is not aware of one's real nature] remains experiencing *duḥkha* [dissatisfaction or suffering] [by] roaming about in the world, and for a short while obtaining *sukha* [satisfaction or happiness] [by] returning to *brahman*. What is called the world is only thought [because like any world that we experience in a dream, what we experience as the world in this waking state is nothing but a series of perceptions, which are just thoughts or mental

phenomena]. When the world disappears, that is, when thought ceases, the mind experiences happiness; when the world appears, it experiences *duḥkha* [dissatisfaction, misery, or suffering].

Paragraph Fifteen

Just like in the mere presence of the sun, which rose without *icchā* [liking, wish or desire], *saṃkalpa* [desire, volition or intention] [or] *yatna* [effort or exertion], a sun-stone [*sūryakānta*, a gem that is supposed to emit fire or heat when exposed to the sun] emitting fire, a lotus blossoming, water evaporating, and people of the world commencing [or becoming engaged in] their respective *kāryas* [activities], doing [those *kāryas*] and ceasing [or subsiding], and [just like] in front of a magnet a needle moving, *jīvas* [sentient beings], who are subject to [or ensnared in] *muttoril* [the threefold function of God, namely the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the world] or *pañcakṛtyas* [the five functions of God, namely creation, sustenance, dissolution, concealment and grace], which happen by just [or nothing more than] the special nature of the presence of God, who is *saṃkalpa rahitar* [one who is devoid of any volition or intention], move [exert or engage in activity] and subside [cease being active, become still or sleep] in accordance with their respective *karmas* [that is, in accordance not only with their *prārabdha karma* or destiny, which impels them to do whatever actions are necessary in order for them to experience all the pleasant and unpleasant things that they are destined to experience, but also with their *karma-vāsanās*, their inclinations to think, speak and act in particular ways, which dispose them to make effort to experience pleasant things and to avoid experiencing unpleasant things]. Nevertheless, he [God] is not *saṃkalpa sahitā* [one who is connected with or possesses any volition or intention]; even one *karma* does not adhere to him [that is, he is not bound or affected in

any way by any *karma* or action whatsoever]. That is like world-actions [the actions happening here on earth] not adhering to [or affecting] the sun, and [like] the qualities and defects of the other four elements [earth, water, air and fire] not adhering to the all-pervading space.

Paragraph Sixteen

Since in every text [of *advaita vēdānta*] it is said that for attaining *mukti* [liberation] it is necessary to make the mind cease, after knowing that *manōnigraha* [restraint, subjugation or destruction of the mind] alone is the ultimate intention [aim or purpose] of [such] texts, there is no benefit [to be gained] by studying texts without limit. For making the mind cease it is necessary to investigate oneself [to see] who [one actually is], [but] instead [of doing so] how [can one see oneself by] investigating in texts? It is necessary to know oneself only by one's own eye of *jñāna* [pure awareness]. Does [a person called] Raman need a mirror to know himself as Raman? 'Oneself' is within the *pañca-kōśas* [the 'five sheaths' that seem to cover and obscure what one actually is, namely the physical body, life, mind, intellect and will]; whereas texts are outside them. Therefore, investigating in texts [in order to know] oneself, whom it is necessary to investigate [by turning one's attention within and thereby] setting aside [excluding, removing, giving up or separating from] all the *pañca-kōśas*, is useless. [By] investigating who is oneself who is in bondage, knowing one's *yathārtha svarūpa* [actual own nature] alone is *mukti* [liberation]. The name '*ātma-vicāra*' is only for [or refers only to] always keeping the mind on *ātmā* [oneself]; whereas *dhyāna* [meditation] is considering [thinking or imagining] oneself to be *sat-cit-ānanda brahman* [the one ultimate reality, which is existence-awareness-happiness]. At one time it will become necessary to forget all that one has learnt.

Paragraph Seventeen

Just as one who needs to gather [or sweep] up and throw away rubbish [would derive] no benefit by examining [investigating or analysing] it, so one who needs to know oneself [will derive] no benefit by, instead of collectively rejecting all the *tattvas*, which are concealing oneself, calculating that they are this many and examining their qualities. It is necessary to consider the world [which is believed to be an expansion or manifestation of such *tattvas*] like a dream.

Paragraph Eighteen

Besides the saying that waking is *dīrgha* [long lasting] and dream is *kṣaṇika* [momentary or lasting for only a short while], there is no other difference [between them]. To what extent all the *vyavahāras* [activities, affairs, transactions or events] that happen in waking seem to be real, to that extent even the *vyavahāras* that happen in dream seem at that time to be real. In dream the mind takes another body [to be itself]. In both waking and dream thoughts and names-and-forms [the phenomena that constitute the seemingly external world] occur in one time [or simultaneously].

Paragraph Nineteen

There are not two minds, namely a good mind and a bad mind. Mind is only one. Only *vāsanās* [inclinations or propensities] are of two kinds, namely *śubha* [agreeable, virtuous or good] and *aśubha* [disagreeable, wicked, harmful or bad]. When mind is under the sway of *śubha vāsanās* it is said to be a good mind, and when it is under the sway of *aśubha vāsanās* a bad mind. However bad other people may appear to be, disliking them is not proper [or

appropriate]. Likes and dislikes are both fit [for one] to dislike [spurn or renounce]. It is not appropriate to let [one's] mind [dwell] excessively on worldly matters. To the extent possible, it is not appropriate to intrude in others' affairs. All that one gives to others one is giving only to oneself. If one knew this truth, who indeed would remain without giving?

Paragraph Twenty

If oneself rises [or appears] [as ego or mind], everything rises [or appears]; if oneself subsides [disappears or ceases], everything subsides [disappears or ceases]. To whatever extent sinking low [subsiding or being humble] we behave [or conduct ourself], to that extent there is goodness [benefit or virtue]. If one is [continuously] restraining [curbing or subduing] mind, wherever one may be one can be [or let one be].

Āṇma-Viddai

The Science of Knowing Oneself

Refrain

Ah, extremely easy, *ātma-vidyā*, ah, extremely easy!

Explanatory paraphrase: Ah [what a wonder], knowing oneself is [so] extremely easy, ah, [so] extremely easy!

Post-refrain

Oneself exists as so very real even for those who are simple-minded that an *āmalaka* fruit on the palm ends as unreal. (Ah, extremely easy, ...)

Explanatory paraphrase: Oneself exists as so very real [and clear] even for those who are simple-minded that [in comparison] [even] an *āmalaka* fruit on the palm ends [declines or fades away] as unreal [and unclear]. ([Therefore] ah, extremely easy, *ātma-vidyā*, ah, extremely easy!)

I

Though oneself exists incessantly and indubitably as real, the body and world, which are unreal, arise sprouting as real. When unreal darkness-pervaded thought is dissolved without reviving even an iota, in the reality-pervaded heart-space oneself, the sun, will

certainly shine by oneself; darkness will cease; suffering will end; happiness will surge forth. (Ah, extremely easy, ...)

Explanatory paraphrase: Though oneself exists incessantly and indubitably [or imperishably] as real, the body and world, which are unreal, arise sprouting [springing forth or appearing] as [if] real. When thought, which is pervaded by [or full of] unreal darkness [the darkness of self-ignorance, namely ego, which is the cause for the appearance of the body and world], is dissolved without reviving even an iota [in other words, when it is dissolved in such a manner that it does not ever revive even an iota], in the heart-space, which [alone] is real, oneself, [who is] the sun [of pure awareness], will certainly shine by oneself [spontaneously or of one's own accord]; darkness [self-ignorance in the form of ego] will cease; suffering will end; happiness will surge forth. ([Therefore] ah, extremely easy, *ātma-vidyā*, ah, extremely easy!)

2

Since the thought 'this, the body composed of flesh, itself is I' alone is the one thread to which the various thoughts are joined, if one goes within thus: what is the place from which I spread out, thoughts ceasing, in the cave *ātma-jñāna* alone will shine spontaneously as 'I am I'. This alone is silence, the one space, the abode of bliss. (Ah, extremely easy, ...)

Explanatory paraphrase: Since the thought 'this, the body composed of flesh, itself is I' alone is the one thread to which [all] the various thoughts are joined [or on which they are all strung together], if one goes within [investigating] what is the place from which I spread out [or: who am I, what is [my] place], [all] thoughts [including the root

thought, ‘I am this body’] will cease [or depart], and in the cave [of one’s heart] *ātma-jñāna* [pure self-awareness] alone will shine spontaneously [or as oneself] as ‘I am I’ [that is, as awareness of oneself as oneself alone]. This alone is silence, the one space [of pure awareness], the abode of bliss. ([Therefore] ah, extremely easy, *ātma-vidyā*, ah, extremely easy!).

3

Without knowing oneself, if one knows whatever else, what? If one has known oneself, then what exists to know? When one knows in oneself that self, which is the undivided light in separate sentient beings, within oneself the shining of oneself alone will flash forth. The shining forth of grace; the annihilation of ego; the blossoming of happiness. (Ah, extremely easy, ...)

Explanatory paraphrase: Without knowing oneself, if one knows whatever else, [so] what? [That is, how can such knowledge be reliable, so how can it have any real value?] If one has known oneself, then what [else] exists to know? When one knows in oneself that self [one’s real nature], which is the undivided light [the light that shines without bhinna: division, separation, difference or distinction] in separate [divided, different or distinct] sentient beings [or souls], within oneself *ātma-prakāśa* [the shining, clarity or light of oneself] alone will flash forth [like lightening]. [This is] *aruḷ-vilāsa* [the shining forth, amorous play or beauty of grace], *aha-vināśa* [the annihilation of ego], *iṅba-vikāsa* [the blossoming of happiness]. ([Therefore] ah, extremely easy, *ātma-vidyā*, ah, extremely easy!)

4

For the bonds beginning with action to be untied, to rise from the devastation beginning with birth, more than whatever path, this path is what is exceedingly easy. When one just is, resting without the least action of mind, speech or body, ah, in the heart the light of oneself alone. The eternal experience. Fear does not exist. The ocean of bliss alone. (Ah, extremely easy, ...)

Explanatory paraphrase: For the bonds beginning with *karma* [that is, the bonds of action and of all that results from it] to be untied, and to rise [or be resurrected] from the devastation beginning with birth [that is, to transcend and become free from the miseries of embodied existence, which begins with birth and ends with death], more than whatever [other] path, this path [of *ātma-vicāra*] is what is exceedingly easy. When one just is, resting [calmly as pure awareness] without the least *karma* [action] of mind, speech or body, ah, in [one's] heart the light of oneself alone [will shine forth clearly as 'I am I']. [Having thereby drowned and lost oneself (namely ego) forever in this perfectly peaceful and infinitely clear state of pure awareness, it will be clear that this is one's] eternal experience. Fear does not [or will not] exist. The ocean of [infinite] bliss alone [will remain]. ([Therefore] ah, extremely easy, *ātma-vidyā*, ah, extremely easy!)

5

In the heart that investigates within, as it is without thinking of anything other, oneself, which is called Annamalai, the one substance, which shines as the eye even to the mind-eye, which is the eye to all the sense organs beginning with eyes, which illumine what begins with space, and as the space even to the mind-space, will

certainly be seen. Grace also is certainly necessary. Be adorned with love. Happiness will certainly appear. (Ah, extremely easy, ...)

Explanatory paraphrase: In the *uḷḷam* [heart or mind] that investigates within, [just being] as it is without thinking of anything other [than itself], *ātmā* [oneself], which is called Annamalai, the one *poruḷ* [real substance], which shines as the eye even to the mind-eye, which is the eye to all the [five] sense organs beginning with eyes, which illumine [the five elements] beginning with space, and as the space even to the mind-space, will certainly be seen. [For one to see oneself as one actually is] grace also is certainly necessary. [In order to be a suitable receptacle to imbibe grace, one should] be adorned with [bound by or possessed of] love [for seeing and thereby just being as one actually is]. [Infinite] happiness will [then] certainly appear [or be experienced]. ([Therefore] ah, extremely easy, *ātma-vidyā*, ah, extremely easy!)

Appaḷa Pāṭṭu

The *Appaḷam* Song

Refrain

Making *appaḷam*, see; eating it, put an end to your desire.

Explanatory paraphrase: Making *appaḷam* [in the manner prescribed in this song], see [yourself as you actually are, namely as ‘I am I’]; eating it [by experiencing yourself as ‘oneself alone is oneself’], put an end to your desire [for anything other than yourself].

Sub-refrain

Without wandering about yearning in this world, in accordance with the unique language without equal or greater, which is the truth that he who is *sadguru*, existence-awareness-happiness, spoke without speaking, (making *appaḷam*, see; ...)

Explanatory paraphrase: Without wandering about yearning [with desire for pleasures] in this world, in accordance with the unique language [namely silence], [which is] without [anything that is] equal [to] or greater [than it], [and] which is the *tattva* [reality, truth or true principle] that he who is *sadguru* [namely Dakshinamurti], [who is] *sat-bhōda-sukha* [*sat-cit-ānanda* or existence-awareness-happiness], spoke without speaking, (making *appaḷam*, see; eating it, put an end to your desire).

1

In the hand-mill of awareness-investigation, who am I, breaking and pulverising the black gram grains, which are the identification ‘myself’ that grows in this, the field of five sheaths, which is not oneself, as ‘not I’, (making *appaḷam*, see; ...)

Explanatory paraphrase: In the hand-mill of *jñāna-vicāra* [awareness-investigation], [which is the practice of being keenly self-attentive in order to see] who am I, breaking and pulverising the black gram grains, which are the *māna* [attachment, identification, pride or conceit] ‘myself’ [the *dēhābhimāna*, the proud identification and attachment ‘this field of five sheaths is myself’] that grows [and flourishes] in this, the field of five sheaths [namely body, life, mind, intellect and will], which is not oneself, [thereby separating that entire field of five sheaths from oneself] as ‘not I’, (making *appaḷam*, see; eating it, put an end to your desire).

2

With juice of square-stemmed vine, which is *sat-saṅga*, with cumin and black pepper, which are *śama* and *dama*, and with that salt, which is *uparati*, mixing asafoetida, which is the good *vāsanā* in the heart, (making *appaḷam*, see; ...)

Explanatory paraphrase: With juice of square-stemmed vine, which is *sat-saṅga* [association with what is real (*sat*), either directly by being self-attentive, or indirectly by dwelling on teachings that repeatedly encourage one to be self-attentive or by lovingly thinking about or being in the company of a *jñāni* who gives such teachings], with cumin and black pepper, which are [respectively] *śama* [tranquillity or calmness of mind] and *dama* [taming, curbing,

restraining or subduing the mind by withdrawing it from both external and internal objects], and with that salt, which is *uparati* [cessation of mental activity by giving up interest in anything other than being self-attentive], mixing [adding or combining] asafoetida, which is the good *vāsanā* [namely *sat-vāsanā*, the inclination to know and to be what one actually is] in the heart, [that is, combining and mixing all these supportive ingredients with the main ingredient, namely black gram, the *dēhābhimāna* or false identification 'I am this body composed of five sheaths', which has been broken and pulverised in the hand-mill of *jñāna-vicāra*] (making *appaḷam*, see; eating it, put an end to your desire).

3

By the pestle of facing inwards without being agitated, incessantly pounding as 'I am I' in the heart-stone, by the rolling-pin, which is peace, on the board, which is equanimity, without weariness always joyfully (making *appaḷam*, see; ...)

Explanatory paraphrase: By [means of] the pestle of *uḷ-mukha* [the practice of facing inwards] without being agitated [or confused] [by allowing one's attention to be distracted away from oneself under the sway of one's *viśaya-vāsanās*], incessantly pounding [the *dēhābhimāna* tempered with the other ingredients] [by recognising oneself as] as 'I am I' [the fresh degree of clarity (*sphuraṇa*) of self-awareness that shines in one's heart as 'I am I' (that is, as awareness of oneself as oneself alone) to the extent that one keenly, calmly and steadily faces inwards to see who am I] in the heart-stone [the pure heart or mind that is imbued with steadfast *titikṣā* (endurance, forbearance and patience), which is unshakably firm like a stone mortar], [and then flattening the resulting *appaḷam* dough (namely the thoroughly pounded *dēhābhimāna*) into round wafers] with the

rolling-pin, which is *śānta* [peace, tranquillity, composure, contentment, resignation or subsidence], on the board, which is *sama* [sameness, constancy, evenness, equanimity, imperturbability or *samādhi*], without *salippu* [weariness, weakness, inattentiveness, negligence or *pramāda*] always joyfully (making *appaḷam*, see; eating it, put an end to your desire).

4

To experience as ‘oneself alone is oneself’, in that, the excellent ghee of *brahman*, which is heated by the fire of *jñāna* in the infinite pan, which is *mauna-mudrā*, constantly frying as ‘I am that’, (making *appaḷam*) composed of that, (see; ...)

Explanatory paraphrase: [In order] to experience [*ātma-svarūpa*, the real nature of oneself] as ‘oneself alone is oneself’ [‘myself alone is myself’ or ‘I alone am I’], in that, the excellent ghee [or pure clarified butter] of *brahman*, which is heated by *jñānāgni* [the fire of *jñāna* or pure awareness] in the infinite pan, which is *mauna-mudrā* [the sign that is silence, namely the infinite space of silence, which is the sign that inwardly reveals the real nature of oneself as ‘I am just I’], constantly frying [the dry wafers of *appaḷam* dough prepared in the manner described in the previous three verses in accordance with the unique language of silence described in the *anupallavi*] as ‘I am that [namely *brahman*, the pure awareness that always shines as I]’, (making) *tanmaya* (*appaḷam* [*appaḷam* composed of *tat*, ‘that’, namely *brahman*], see; eating it, put an end to your desire).

Upadēśa Undiyār & Upadēśa Sārah The Essence of Spiritual Instructions & The Essence of Teachings¹⁷

Prefatory verse (composed by Sri Muruganar)

Know that *Upadēśa Undiyār* is a light of *jñāna* that our father Ramana composed and gave to Muruganar, who said, ‘For the world to be saved, giving up the delusion of *karma*, tell the secret of the nature of the path to experience liberation’.

Explanatory paraphrase: Know that *Upadēśa Undiyār* is a light of *jñāna* [true knowledge or pure awareness] that our father Ramana composed and gave to Muruganar, who said, ‘For [the people of] the world to give up the delusion of *karma* [action] and be saved [from self-ignorance], tell [us] the secret of the *murai* [nature or orderly process] of the path [way or means] to experience liberation’.

Introductory verses (composed by Sri Muruganar)

I

Those who were doing austerities in the Daruka forest were going to ruin by *pūrva karma*.

¹⁷ Bhagavan originally composed these thirty verses in Tamil as *Upadēśa Undiyār*, later rendering them into Sanskrit as *Upadēśa Sārah*. This compilation presents the corresponding Tamil and Sanskrit verses side by side, allowing readers to appreciate both the original Tamil and its Sanskrit counterpart whilst facilitating deeper contemplation of these fundamental teachings.

Explanatory paraphrase: Those who were doing *tavam* [austerities or *tapas*] in the Daruka forest were going to ruin by [following] *pūrva karma* [the path of ritualistic action as interpreted and prescribed by *pūrva mīmāṃsā*].

2

Because of delusive conceit they became intoxicated with intense pride that there is no God except *karma*.

Explanatory paraphrase: Because of [their] delusive conceit [or infatuation] they became [so] intoxicated [or mad] with intense pride [that they fell prey to the arrogant belief] that there is no God except *karma*.

3

They saw the fruit of actions done disparaging God, who gives the fruit of actions. They left arrogance.

Explanatory paraphrase: They saw the fruit of actions done disparaging [spurning or disregarding] God [the *kartā* or ordainer], who gives *karma-phala* [the fruit of actions], [and hence] they left [gave up or lost] *garva* [their pride or arrogance].

4

When they wept, ‘Graciously protect’, attaching the eye of grace, Śiva graciously gave this *upadēśa*.

Explanatory paraphrase: When they wept [repentantly], 'Graciously protect [or save us]', fixing [his] eye of grace [upon them], Śiva graciously gave this *upadēśa* [spiritual teaching].

5

When one imbibes and follows *upadēśa sāram*, happiness will rise from within; miseries within will cease.

Explanatory paraphrase: When one imbibes and follows [this] *upadēśa sāram* [the essence or summary of the spiritual teachings given by Lord Śiva], happiness will rise from within [and thereby] miseries within will cease [die or be destroyed].

6

May the essence of *Upadēśa Sāram* enter within. May joy accumulate, accumulate. May suffering cease, cease.

Explanatory paraphrase: May the *sāra* [essence, substance or import] of *Upadēśa Sāram* enter within [our heart]. May joy accumulate [or be achieved] abundantly. May suffering cease entirely.

Main text (*nūl*)

Upadēśa Undiyār I

Action giving fruit is by the ordainment of God. Since action is non-aware, is action God?

Explanatory paraphrase: *Karma* [action] giving fruit is by the ordainment of God [the *kartā* or ordainer]. Since *karma* is *jaḍa* [devoid of awareness], can *karma* be God?

Upadēśa Sāraḥ 1

Fruit is obtained by the order of God. Is *karma* God? *Karma* is insentient.

Explanatory paraphrase: Fruit [of action] is obtained by the order of God. Is *karma* [action] God? *Karma* is *jaḍa* [non-aware or insentient].

Upadēśa Undiyār 2

The fruit of action perishing, as seed causes to fall in the ocean of action. It is not giving liberation.

Explanatory paraphrase: The fruit of [any] action will perish [when it is experienced as part of *prārabdha*], [but what remains] as seed [namely *viśaya-vāsanās* (also known as *karma-vāsanās*): inclinations to seek happiness or satisfaction in experiencing *viśayas* (objects or phenomena) by doing actions of mind, speech and body] causes [one] to fall in the ocean of action. [Therefore] it [action or *karma*] does not give liberation.

Upadēśa Sāraḥ 2

The cause of falling in the vast ocean of action. Fruit is impermanent. Liberation-obstructing.

Explanatory paraphrase: The cause of falling in the vast ocean of action [is seeds, namely *viṣaya-vāsanās* (also known as *karma-vāsanās*): inclinations to seek happiness or satisfaction in experiencing *viṣayas* (objects or phenomena) by doing actions of mind, speech and body]. The fruit [of any action] is impermanent. [Action is therefore] liberation-obstructing.

Upadēśa Undiyār 3

Desireless action done for God, purifying the mind, it will show the path to liberation.

Explanatory paraphrase: *Niṣkāmya karma* [action not motivated by desire] done [with love] for God purifies the mind and [thereby] it will show the path to liberation [that is, it will enable one to recognise what the correct path to liberation is].

Upadēśa Sāraḥ 3

Offered to God, not done with desire, mind-purifier, liberation-accomplishing.

Explanatory paraphrase: [Action that is] not done with desire [but] offered [entrusted or transferred] to God [is] mind-purifier [and thereby indirectly] liberation-accomplishing.

Upadēśa Undiyār 4

This is certain: *pūjā*, *japa* and *dhyana* are actions of body, speech and mind. One than one is superior.

Explanatory paraphrase: This is certain: *pūjā* [worship], *japa* [repetition of a name of God or a sacred phrase] and *dhyana* [meditation] are [respectively] actions of body, speech and mind, [and hence in this order each subsequent] one is superior to [the previous] one [in the sense that it is a more effective means to purify the mind].

Upadēśa Sāraḥ 4

Worship, repetition and meditation, actions to be done by body, speech and mind, are progressively superior.

Explanatory paraphrase: *Pūjana* [worship], *japa* [repetition] and *cintana* [meditation], [which are] actions to be done by body, speech and mind [respectively], are [in this order] progressively superior [in their efficacy to purify the mind].

Upadēśa Undiyār 5

Worshipping thinking that all eight forms are forms of God is good *pūjā* of God.

Explanatory paraphrase: Considering all the eight forms [the *aṣṭa-mūrti*, the eight forms or manifestations of Śiva, namely the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and space), sun, moon and sentient beings (*jīvas*)] [or all thought-forms, namely all forms, which are just thoughts or mental phenomena] to be forms of God, worshipping [any of them] is good *pūjā* [worship] of God.

Upadēśa Sāraḥ 5

Worship of the world with the idea of God is worship of God having eight forms.

Explanatory paraphrase: Worship of the world with the idea [that it is] God is worship of God having eight forms [namely the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and space), sun, moon and sentient beings (*jīvas*)].

Upadēśa Undiyār 6

Rather than praising, loud voice, rather than *japa* within the mouth, what is done by mind is beneficial. This is called *dhyāna*.

Explanatory paraphrase: Rather than praising [God by chanting hymns], [*japa* or repetition of his name is beneficial]; [rather than *japa* done in a] loud voice, [*japa* whispered faintly within the mouth is beneficial]; [and] rather than *japa* within the mouth, *mānasa* [that which is done by mind] is beneficial [in the sense that it is a more effective means to purify the mind]. This [mental repetition or *mānasika japa*] is called *dhyana* [meditation].

Upadēśa Sāraḥ 6

Rather than the best praise, loud, soft, mental repetition, meditation is best.

Explanatory paraphrase: Rather than the best praise [or praise of the most exalted, namely God] [by chanting hymns], [*japa* or repetition of his name is better]; [rather than *japa* done] aloud, [*japa* that is soft

is better]; [and rather than *japa* that is] soft, mental *japa*, [which is] *dhyāna* [meditation], is best [in the sense that it is a more effective means to purify the mind].

Upadēśa Undiyār 7

Rather than meditating leavingly, certainly meditating unleavingly, like a river or the falling of ghee, is superior to meditate.

Explanatory paraphrase: Rather than meditating [on God] interruptedly [because of being frequently distracted by other thoughts as a result of insufficient love for him], certainly meditating uninterruptedly [without being distracted by any other thoughts because of the intensity of one's love for him], like a river or the falling of ghee, is a better way to meditate [or is superior, when considered] [in the sense that it is a more effective means to purify the mind].

Upadēśa Sārah 7

Continuous meditation, like the flow of ghee, a river, is better than discontinuous.

Explanatory paraphrase: Continuous meditation [meditation on God that is steady, being uninterrupted by other thoughts], like the flow of ghee or a river, is better [in the sense that it is a more effective means to purify the mind] than discontinuous [namely meditation on God that is unsteady, being frequently interrupted by one's thinking about anything other than him].

Upadēśa Undiyār 8

Rather than *anya-bhāva*, *ananya-bhāva*, in which he is I, certainly is the best among all.

Explanatory paraphrase: Rather than *anya-bhāva* [meditation on anything other than oneself, particularly meditation on God as if he were other than oneself], *ananya-bhāva* [meditation on nothing other than oneself], in which he is [understood to be] I, certainly is the best among all [practices of *bhakti*, varieties of meditation and kinds of spiritual practice] [in the sense that it is the most effective of all means to purify the mind, and is also the only means to eradicate ego, the root of all impurities].

Upadēśa Sārah 8

Rather than separating meditation, non-separating meditation, that as 'he is I', is considered purifying.

Explanatory paraphrase: Rather than separating meditation [meditation on God as if he were something separate from oneself], non-separating meditation [meditation on him as not separate from oneself], [in which it is recognised that] he is I, is considered [by sages and scriptures to be] purifying.

Upadēśa Undiyār 9

By the strength of meditation, being in *sat-bhāva*, which transcends *bhāvanā*, alone is *para-bhakti tattva*.

Explanatory paraphrase: By the strength [intensity, firmness or stability] of [such] meditation [*ananya-bhāva* or self-attentiveness], being in *sat-bhāva* [the state of being], which transcends [all] *bhāvanā* [thinking, imagination or meditation in the sense of mental activity], alone [or certainly] is *para-bhakti tattva* [the nature, reality or true state of supreme devotion].

Upadēśa Sāraḥ 9

By the strength of meditation, standing firmly in the state of being, devoid of meditation, is the best devotion.

Explanatory paraphrase: By [or because of] the strength of meditation [on God as not separate from oneself], standing firmly in *sat-bhāva* [the state of being], [which is] devoid of meditation [in the sense of mental activity], is the best [foremost, highest, greatest or ultimate] devotion.

Upadēśa Undiyār 10

Being, subsiding in the place from which one rose: that is karma and bhakti; that is *yōga* and *jñāna*.

Explanatory paraphrase: Being [by inwardly] subsiding in the place from which one rose [namely one's own real nature (*ātma-svarūpa*), which is pure being-awareness (*sat-cit*), 'I am']: that is [the culmination of the paths of] [*niṣkāmya*] *karma* and *bhakti* [as explained in the previous seven verses]; that is [also the culmination of the paths of] *yōga* [as will be explained in the next five verses] and *jñāna* [as will be explained in the final fifteen verses].

Upadēśa Sāraḥ 10

The mind standing as itself in the heart-ground is certainly *kriyā*, *bhakti*, *yōga* and *bōdhā*.

Explanatory paraphrase: The mind standing as itself in the ground [the place or source from which it rose], the heart, is certainly [the culmination of the paths of] *kriyā* [*niṣkāmya karma* or desireless action], *bhakti* [love or devotion], *yōga* [union] and *bōdhā* [*jñāna*, knowledge or awareness].

Upadēśa Undiyār 11

When one restrains the breath within, like a bird caught in a net the mind also will be restrained. This is a means to restrain.

Explanatory paraphrase: When one restrains [curbs, calms or subdues] the breath within, like a bird caught in a net the mind also will be restrained [sink, subside, calm down, become quiet, be dissolved or cease being active]. This [the practice of breath-restraint or *prāṇāyāma*] is [therefore] a means to restrain [curb, calm, subdue, shut down or dissolve] [the mind].

Upadēśa Sāraḥ 11

By restraining the breath, the mind subsides, like a bird in a net. A means of restraining.

Explanatory paraphrase: By [or as a result of] restraining the breath, the mind subsides [or dissolves], like a bird [caught] in a net. [This is] a means of restraining [the mind].

Upadēśa Undiyār 12

Mind and breath are two branches, which have knowing and doing. Their root is one.

Explanatory paraphrase: Mind and breath [or life, which includes breath and all other physiological functions] are two branches, which have knowing and doing [as their respective functions]. [However] their *mūla* [root, base, foundation, origin, source or cause] is one [so this is why when either one is restrained the other one will also be restrained, as pointed out in the previous].

Upadēśa Sārah 12

Mind and *prāṇas* are a pair of branches endowed with knowing and doing. Rooted in power.

Explanatory paraphrase: Mind and *vāyus* [the five *prāṇas*, namely breathing and other physiological functions] are a pair of branches endowed with knowing and doing [as their respective function]. [They are] rooted in [or spring from] [one] power [that is, they arise from one source, namely our real nature, which is *cit-śakti*, the power of pure awareness, ‘I am’].

Upadēśa Undiyār 13

Dissolution is two: *laya* and *nāśa*. What is lying down will rise. If form dies, it will not rise.

Explanatory paraphrase: Dissolution [complete subsidence or cessation of ego or mind] is [of] two [kinds]: *laya* [temporary

dissolution] and *nāśa* [permanent dissolution or annihilation]. What is lying down [or dissolved in *laya*] will rise. If [its] form dies [in *nāśa*], it will not rise.

Upadēśa Sāraḥ 13

Laya and *vināśana* are both stopping. What has gone in *laya* arises again. What has died does not.

Explanatory paraphrase: *Laya* [temporary dissolution] and *vināśana* [destruction or annihilation] are both *rōdhana* [states in which the mind has been stopped or prevented from rising] [in other words, *rōdhana* is of two kinds: *laya* and *nāśa*]. What has gone in *laya* arises [or comes into being] again. What has died [in *nāśa*] does not [ever rise again].

Upadēśa Undiyār 14

Only when one sends the mind, which will be restrained when one restrains the breath, on the investigating path will its form perish.

Explanatory paraphrase: Only when one sends the mind, which will be restrained [become calm or dissolve] when one restrains the breath, on *ōr varī* [the investigating path or one path, namely the path of self-investigation, which is the one and only means to eradicate ego and thereby annihilate the mind] will its form perish. [However, the mind cannot be sent on this path of self-investigation if it has dissolved in *laya*, so if one practices breath-restraint in order to restrain the mind, one should take care to send the mind on this path of self-investigation (which means to direct one's attention back

towards oneself) when it has become calm but before it dissolves in *laya*.]

Upadēśa Sārah 14

Settled down by restraining the breath, the mind will reach annihilation by thinking of the one.

Explanatory paraphrase: [Having] settled down by [or as a result of] restraining [binding or tying] *prāṇa* [the breath], the mind will reach [enter, achieve or attain] annihilation by [or as a result of] *ēka-cintana* [thinking of the one, namely *ātma-svarūpa*, the real nature of oneself, 'I am'].

Upadēśa Undiyār 15

When the form of the mind is annihilated, for the great *yōgi* who remains permanently as the reality, there is not a single doing. He has attained his nature.

Explanatory paraphrase: When the form of the mind is annihilated, for the great *yōgi* who [thereby] remains permanently as the reality, there is not a single doing [action or *karma*], [because] he has attained his [real] nature [which is actionless being].

Upadēśa Sārah 15

The mind annihilated, by the exalted *yōgi* what is there to be done, because of standing as self?

Explanatory paraphrase: [After] the mind has been annihilated, by the exalted *yōgi* what is there to be done [or is there anything to be done], because [they are] standing as self [or because they have attained their own state]?

Upadēśa Undiyār 16

Leaving external phenomena, the mind knowing its own form of light is alone real awareness.

Explanatory paraphrase: Leaving [or letting go of] [awareness of any] external *viśayas* [namely phenomena of every kind, all of which are external in the sense that they are other than and hence extraneous to oneself], the mind knowing its own form of light [namely the light of pure awareness, which is its real nature and what illumines it, enabling it to be aware both of itself and of other things] is alone real awareness [true knowledge or knowledge of reality].

Upadēśa Sārah 16

Kept back from what is seen, the mind seeing its own knowingness is seeing what is real.

Explanatory paraphrase: Kept back from *drśya* [what is seen, perceived or known as an object], the mind seeing its own *cittva* [its real nature as pure awareness or knowingness] is *tattva-darśana* [seeing *tattva*: 'thatness', what actually exists and is therefore real].

Upadēśa Undiyār 17

When one investigates the form of the mind without forgetting, there is not anything called ‘mind’. This is the direct path for everyone whomsoever.

Explanatory paraphrase: When one investigates [examines or scrutinises] the form of the mind without forgetting [neglecting, abandoning, giving up or ceasing], [it will be clear that] there is not anything called ‘mind’. This is the direct [straight or appropriate] path for everyone whomsoever.

Upadēśa Sārah 17

When investigation is done what the mind actually is, there is no mind at all. The path because of straightness.

Explanatory paraphrase: When one investigates what the mind actually is, [it will be clear that] there is no mind at all. [This is] the path because of [its] straightness [or directness].

Upadēśa Undiyār 18

Thoughts alone are mind. Of all, the thought called ‘I’ alone is the root. What is called mind is ‘I’.

Explanatory paraphrase: Thoughts alone are mind [or the mind is only thoughts]. Of all [thoughts], the thought called ‘I’ alone is the *mūla* [the root, base, foundation, origin, source or cause]. [Therefore] what is called mind is [essentially just] ‘I’ [namely ego, the root thought called ‘I’].

Upadēśa Sārah 18

Thoughts are mind. But thoughts depend on the I-thought. Know that 'I' is the mind.

Explanatory paraphrase: *Vṛttis* [thoughts] are mind. But *vṛttis* depend on the *aham-vṛtti* [the thought 'I']. Know that *aham* ['I', namely ego, the thought 'I'] is the mind.

Upadēśa Undiyār 19

When one investigates within what the place is from which one rises as 'I', 'I' will die. This is awareness-investigation.

Explanatory paraphrase: When one investigates within [or inwardly investigates] what the place is from which one [or it] rises as 'I' [ego or mind], 'I' will die. This is *jñāna-vicāra* [investigation of awareness].

Upadēśa Sārah 19

By investigating from where this 'I' arises, ah, 'I' falls down. Self-investigation.

Explanatory paraphrase: By investigating from where this 'I' [namely ego, the thought 'I'] arises, ah, 'I' falls down [in *nāśa*, never to rise again]. [This is] *nija vicāraṇam* [investigation of *nija*: what is innate, natural, constant, permanent or one's own, namely *ātma-svarūpa*, one's own real nature].

Upadēśa Undiyār 20

In the place where ‘I’ merges, that, the one, appears spontaneously as ‘I am I’. That itself is the whole.

Explanatory paraphrase: In the place where ‘I’ [namely ego, the false awareness ‘I am this’] merges, that, the one, appears spontaneously [or as oneself] as ‘I am I’ [that is, as awareness of oneself as oneself alone]. That itself [or that, oneself] is *pūṇḍram* [*pūrṇa*: the infinite whole or entirety of what is].

Upadēśa Sāraḥ 20

On ‘I’ undergoing annihilation, the heart shines forth spontaneously as ‘I am I’. The supreme whole reality.

Explanatory paraphrase: When ‘I’ [ego] is annihilated, the heart [the real nature of oneself] shines forth spontaneously as ‘*aham aham*’ [‘I am I’]. [This is] *parama pūrṇa* sat [the supreme whole existence, being or reality].

Upadēśa Undiyār 21

That is at all times the substance of the word called ‘I’, because of the exclusion of our non-existence even in sleep, which is devoid of ‘I’.

Explanatory paraphrase: That [the one that appears as ‘I am I’, namely pure awareness, which is our real nature] is at all times the substance [or true import] of the word called ‘I’, because of the

exclusion of our non-existence [that is, because we do not become non-existent] even in sleep, which is devoid of 'I' [namely ego].

Upadēśa Sārah 21

This is what the word 'I' always refers to, because of undissolvable being even when 'I' is dissolved.

Explanatory paraphrase: This [the heart, our real nature, which shines forth spontaneously as 'I am I' when ego is annihilated] is what the word 'I' always refers to, because of [our remaining as] undissolvable being even [in sleep] when 'I' [ego] is dissolved.

Upadēśa Undiyār 22

Since body, mind, intellect, life and darkness are all *jaḍa* and *asat*, they are not 'I', which is *sat*.

Explanatory paraphrase: Since [the five sheaths, namely] body [*annamaya kōśa*], life [*prāṇamaya kōśa*], mind [*manōmaya kōśa*], intellect [*vijñānamaya kōśa*] and darkness [*ānandamaya kōśa*, namely the *cittam* or will, which is internal darkness in the form of the dense fog of *viśaya-vāsanās*, inclinations or desires to seek happiness in things other than oneself] are all *jaḍa* [non-aware] and *asat* [unreal or non-existent], they are not 'I', which is [*cit*, what is aware, and] *sat* [what actually exists].

Upadēśa Sārah 22

Body, mind, life, intellect and darkness are not I, the one existence, because that is non-aware and non-existent.

Explanatory paraphrase: [The five sheaths, namely] the physical body [*annamaya kōśa*], life [*prāṇamaya kōśa*], mind [*manōmaya kōśa*], intellect [*vijñānamaya kōśa*] and darkness [*ānandamaya kōśa*, namely the *cittam* or will, which is internal darkness in the form of the dense fog of *viśaya-vāsanās*, inclinations or desires to seek happiness in things other than oneself] are not I, the one *sat* [what actually exists] [and *cit*, what is actually aware], because that [the body consisting of these five sheaths] is *jaḍa* [non-aware or insentient] and *asat* [non-existent or unreal].

Upadēśa Undiyār 23

Because of the non-existence of other awareness to be aware of what exists, what exists is awareness. Awareness alone exists as we.

Explanatory paraphrase: Because of the non-existence of [any] awareness other [than what exists] to be aware of what exists, what exists (*uḷḷadu*) is awareness (*uṇarvu*). Awareness alone exists as we [that is, the awareness that actually exists, namely pure awareness, which is awareness that is aware of nothing other than itself, is what we actually are].

Upadēśa Sārah 23

Where indeed is another awareness to illumine existence? By that, existence is certainly awareness. By that, awareness is certainly 'I'.

Explanatory paraphrase: Where indeed is [any] *cit* [awareness] other [than *sat*] to illumine *sat* [beingness, existence or what actually exists]? Because of that, *sat* [existence] is certainly *cit* [awareness]. Because of that, awareness is certainly 'I'.

Upadēśa Undiyār 24

By existing nature, God and soul are just one substance. Only adjunct-awareness is different.

Explanatory paraphrase: By [their] existing nature [that is, because the real nature of each of them is what actually exists (*uḷḷadu*), which is the pure and infinite awareness (*uṇarvu*) that shines eternally as 'I am', devoid of all adjuncts], *īśa* [God] and *jīva* [soul] are just one *poruḷ* [substance or *vastu*]. Only *upādhi-uṇarvu* [adjunct-awareness, namely ego or *jīva*, the adjunct-conflated awareness 'I am this body', which is what attributes adjuncts not only to itself but also to God] is [what makes them seem] different. [However, though the soul (*jīva*) is aware of itself as a certain set of adjuncts, namely the five sheaths that constitute whatever person it currently seems to be, and consequently attributes certain other adjuncts to God, God always remains just as pure awareness, in the clear view of which no adjuncts exist at all, so the differences between God and soul seem to exist only in the view of the soul and not in the view of God.]

Upadēśa Sārah 24

Between God and soul the difference is costume-thought. By existence-nature, substance is only one.

Explanatory paraphrase: Between God and soul the difference [separation or distinction] is [only] *vēṣa-dhī* [costume-thought, the thought or awareness of their respective costumes, disguises or assumed appearances, namely their *upādhis* or adjuncts]. By [or because of] *sat-svabhāva* [their real nature, which is just existence or being], *vastu* [their substance] is only one.

Upadēśa Undiyār 25

Knowing oneself leaving aside adjuncts is itself knowing God, because of shining as oneself.

Explanatory paraphrase: Knowing [or being aware of] oneself without adjuncts is itself knowing God, because [God is what is always] shining as oneself [one's own real nature, namely pure awareness, which is oneself without any adjuncts].

Upadēśa Sārah 25

By giving up costume, seeing one's own self is seeing God, because of the form of one's own self.

Explanatory paraphrase: By giving up [one's own] costume [disguise or assumed appearance, namely one's *upādhis* or adjuncts], *svātma-darśanam* [seeing one's own self] is *īśa-darśanam* [seeing God], because of [God being] the form [or real nature] of one's own self.

Upadēśa Undiyār 26

Being oneself alone is knowing oneself, because oneself is devoid of two. This is *tanmaya-niṣṭhā*.

Explanatory paraphrase: Being oneself [that is, being as one actually is without rising to know anything else] alone is knowing oneself, because oneself [one's real nature] is devoid of two [that is, devoid of the fundamental duality of subject and object, knower and thing known, and also devoid of any possibility of being divided as two selves, one self as a subject to know the other self as an object]. This is *tanmaya-niṣṭhā* ['steadfastness as that': the state of being firmly fixed or established as 'that' (*tat*), the one infinite reality called *brahman*].

Upadēśa Sārah 26

Being oneself is seeing one's own self, because of oneself not being two. Self-abidance.

Explanatory paraphrase: Being [or standing firmly as] oneself is *svātma-darśanam* [seeing one's own self], because of oneself not being two [that is, since we are not two, we cannot see ourselves as an object, so we can see what we actually are only by being what we actually are, namely pure awareness, *sat-cit*]. [This is] *ātma-niṣṭhatā* [being firmly and steadily fixed, standing or abiding as oneself].

Upadēśa Undiyār 27

Only knowledge that is devoid of knowledge and ignorance is knowledge. This is real. There is not anything for knowing.

Explanatory paraphrase: Only knowledge [in the sense of awareness] that is devoid of knowledge and ignorance [of anything other than oneself] is [actual] knowledge [or awareness]. This [alone] is [what is] real [or true], [because in the clear view of oneself as pure awareness] there is not anything [other than oneself for one either] to know [or to not know].

Upadēśa Sārah 27

Awareness devoid of knowledge and bereft of ignorance is knowledge. Is there another to know?

Explanatory paraphrase: *Cit* [awareness] devoid of *jñāna* [knowledge or awareness (in the sense of knowledge or awareness of other things)] and bereft of *ajñāna* [ignorance (in the sense of ignorance of other things)] is *jñāna* [knowledge or awareness (in the sense of true knowledge or real awareness)]. Is there another [anything other than awareness] to know [or what else is there to know]?

Upadēśa Undiyār 28

If one knows what the nature of oneself is, then beginningless, endless and unbroken existence-awareness-happiness.

Explanatory paraphrase: If one knows what the [real] nature of oneself is, then [what will remain existing and shining is only the real nature of oneself (*ātma-svarūpa*), which is] *anādi* [beginningless], *ananta* [endless, limitless or infinite] and *akhaṇḍa*

[unbroken, undivided or unfragmented] *sat-cit-ānanda* [existence-awareness-happiness].

Upadēśa Sāraḥ 28

On seeing oneself, what one's own real nature is, imperishable unborn full awareness-happiness.

Explanatory paraphrase: When one sees oneself [by investigating] what *svarūpa* [one's own real nature] is, [what will exist and shine is only] *avyaya* [immutable and imperishable], *abhava* [unborn], *āpūrṇa* [full, whole or complete, implying what is infinite] *cit-sukham* [awareness-happiness].

Upadēśa Undiyār 29

Standing in this state, thereby experiencing supreme bliss, which is devoid of bondage and liberation, is standing in the service of God.

Explanatory paraphrase: Standing [remaining, abiding or steadfastly being] in this state [of beginningless, infinite and indivisible *sat-cit-ānanda*], thereby experiencing supreme bliss, which is devoid of [the dyad or duality of] bondage and liberation, is standing in the service of God [or is standing as God directed].

Upadēśa Sāraḥ 29

The divine soul certainly experiences here supreme happiness, which transcends bondage and liberation.

Explanatory paraphrase: The divine soul [the soul that has seen itself without adjuncts, thereby remaining as its real nature, which is the real nature of God] certainly experiences here [and now] supreme [or ultimate] happiness, which transcends [or is beyond] bondage and liberation.

Upadēśa Undiyār 30

‘I ceasing, what if one knows what remains, that alone is good *tapas*’: thus said Lord Ramana, who is oneself.

Explanatory paraphrase: ‘What [exists and shines alone] if one knows what remains after I [ego] has ceased to exist, [just being] that [namely egoless pure awareness] alone is good *tapas* [spiritual austerity or asceticism]’: thus said Lord Ramana, who is oneself [one’s own real nature].

Upadēśa Sārah 30

One’s own shining devoid of ‘I’, this is great *tapas*. This is Ramana’s saying.

Explanatory paraphrase: One’s own shining [or shining as one’s own real nature] devoid of ‘I’ [ego], this is great *tapas*. This is [Bhagavan] Ramana’s saying.

Concluding verses of praise (composed by Sri Muruganar)

1

Touching the feet of God, all the *ṛṣis* paid obeisance; they sang aloud praise.

Explanatory paraphrase: Touching the feet of God [Lord Śiva], all the *ṛṣis* [the 'rishis' or ascetics in the Daruka forest] paid obeisance [and] sang aloud praise [to him].

2

The supreme *guru* who sang *Upadēśa Undiyār*, an assurance to devotees, is the auspicious Venkatan.

Explanatory paraphrase: The supreme *guru* who sang *Upadēśa Undiyār* [as] an assurance to devotees [friends or those close to him, implying those who came to him for salvation] is the auspicious Venkatan [Sri Ramana].

3

Many years, many years, many hundreds of thousands of years, many years may he shine gloriously on earth.

Explanatory paraphrase: [For] many years, many years, many hundreds of thousands of years, many years may he [Sri Ramana] shine gloriously on earth.

4

May those who sing, those who hear and those who flawlessly understand shine gloriously for many aeons.

Explanatory paraphrase: May those who sing, those who hear [literally feed or fill their ears with] and those who flawlessly understand [this *Upadēśa Undiyār*] shine gloriously for many aeons.

5

May those who learn, and those who, learning and understanding, stand accordingly, shine gloriously for long aeons.

Explanatory paraphrase: May those who learn [this *Upadēśa Undiyār*], and those who, learning and understanding [it], stand [remain or abide] accordingly [as beginningless, infinite and indivisible *sat-cit-ānanda*], shine gloriously for long aeons.

Uḷadu Nārpadu

Forty Verses on What Is¹⁸

Introductory verse by Muruganar

When Muruganar asked, ‘So that we may be saved, reveal to us the nature of reality and the means by which to attain [reach or join] it’, the noble Ramana, because he is free from the delusion of the unreal world, joyfully and with certainty, composed *Uḷadu Nārpadu*.

Benedictory verse I

If what exists were not, would existing awareness exist? Since the existing substance exists in the heart without thought, **how to think of the existing substance, which is called ‘heart’? Being in the heart as it is alone is thinking. Know.**¹⁹

Alternative meaning 1: Except as [other than] what exists, does existing awareness exist? Since the existing substance exists in the heart without thought, **how to think of the existing substance, which is called ‘heart’? Being in the heart as it is alone is thinking. Know.**

Alternative meaning 2: Other than what exists, is there awareness to think? Since the existing substance exists in the heart without

¹⁸ See Appendix C for the extended version: *Upadēśa Kalivenbā*

¹⁹ When Bhagavan first composed this verse, he composed only the last two lines, which are made bold. However, when Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri saw the complete work, he remarked that all the verses had four lines except this one. So Bhagavan decided to satisfy him and added the first two lines.

thought, **how to think of the existing substance, which is called ‘heart’? Being in the heart as it is alone is thinking. Know.**

Explanatory paraphrase: If *uḷḷadu* [what is or what exists] were not, would *uḷḷa-v-uṇarvu* [existing awareness, actual awareness or awareness of what is] exist? [Or: (1) Except as *uḷḷadu*, does *uḷḷa-v-uṇarvu* exist? (2) Other than *uḷḷadu*, is there awareness to think [of it, meditate on it or investigate it]?] Since *uḷḷa-poruḷ* [the existing substance or reality] exists in the heart without thought, **how to [or who can] think of [meditate on or investigate] *uḷḷa-poruḷ*, which is called ‘*uḷḷam*’ [the heart]? Being in the heart as it is [that is, as pure thought-free self-awareness] alone is thinking [of it, meditating on it, contemplating it, investigating it or revering it]. Know [or be aware] [of it as it is].**

Benedictory verse 2

Pure-hearted people who have intense fear of death will take refuge at the feet of God, who is devoid of death and birth, as a fortress. By their refuge, they undergo death. Will those who are deathless be associated with the thought of death?

Explanatory paraphrase: Pure-hearted people who have intense fear of death will take refuge at [or surrender to] the feet of Mahēśaṇ [the Great Lord, Śiva or God], who is devoid of death and birth, [depending upon him] as [their protective] fortress. By their [taking] refuge [or as soon as they take refuge], their ego dies [and what remains is only their real nature, which is immortal awareness]. Will those who are [thereby] deathless [or ‘those who do not die’] be associated [ever again] with the thought of death?

1

Because we see the world, accepting one fundamental that has a power that becomes many is certainly the one best option. The picture of names and forms, the one who sees, the cohesive screen, and the pervading light — all these are he, who is oneself.

Explanatory paraphrase: Because we [as ego] see the world, accepting one mudal [first thing, origin, source, base or fundamental reality] that has a power that becomes many [appearances, namely ourself as ego, the seer or perceiver, and all the manifold phenomena that constitute this or any other world that we may see or perceive] is certainly the one best option. The picture of names and forms [namely the world and whatever other phenomena appear in the mind], the one who sees [this picture] [namely ego], the cohesive screen [namely the mind as the background on which it appears], and the pervading light [namely the mind as the reflected light of awareness, which is what illumines its appearance] — all these are he [the one original thing], who is oneself [one's real nature].

2

Each religion initially accepts three fundamentals. Contending 'Only one fundamental stands as three fundamentals', 'Three fundamentals are always actually three fundamentals', is only so long as ego exists. 'I' perishing, standing in the state of oneself is best.

Explanatory paraphrase: Each religion [or theistic system of belief] initially accepts three fundamentals [namely the soul, world and God]. Contending that only one fundamental stands as [these] three fundamentals or that [these] three fundamentals are always actually three fundamentals is [possible] only so long as ego exists. [As a

result of] ‘I’ [ego] perishing [or being destroyed], standing in the [real] state of oneself is best.

3

What is the use of disputing: ‘The world is real’, ‘An unreal appearance’; ‘The world is sentient’, ‘It is not’; ‘The world is happiness’, ‘It is not’? Leaving the world and investigating oneself, one and two ceasing, that state in which ‘I’ has perished is agreeable to all.

Explanatory paraphrase: What is the use of disputing: ‘The world is real’, ‘[No, it is] an unreal appearance’; ‘The world is sentient’, ‘It is not’; ‘The world is happiness’, ‘It is not’? Leaving [all thought about] the world and investigating [or knowing] oneself, [thereby] putting an end to [all disputes about] one and two [non-duality and duality], that state in which ‘I’ [ego] has [thereby] perished is agreeable to all.

4

If oneself is a form, the world and God will be likewise; if oneself is not a form, who can see their forms? How? Can the seen be otherwise than the eye? The eye is oneself, the infinite eye.

Explanatory paraphrase: If oneself is a form, the world and God will be likewise; if oneself is not a form, who can see their forms, and how [to do so]? Can what is seen be otherwise [or of a different nature] than the eye [the awareness that sees or perceives it]? [Therefore forms can be perceived only by an ‘eye’ or awareness that perceives itself as a form, namely the ego or mind, which always

perceives itself as the form of a body.] The [real] eye is oneself [one's real nature, which is pure awareness], the infinite [and hence formless] eye [so it can never see any forms or phenomena, which are all finite].

5

The body is a form of five sheaths. Therefore, all five are included in the term 'body'. Without a body, is there a world? Leaving the body, is there anyone who has seen a world? Say.

Explanatory paraphrase: The body is *pañca-kōśa-uru* [a form composed of five sheaths, namely a physical structure, life, mind, intellect and will]. Therefore all five [sheaths] are included in the term 'body'. Without a body [composed of these five sheaths], is there a world? Without [experiencing oneself as such] a body, is there anyone who has seen a world? Say.

6

The world is a form of five sense-impressions, not anything else. Those five sense-impressions are impressions to the five sense organs. Since the mind alone perceives the world by way of the five sense organs, is there a world besides the mind? Say.

Explanatory paraphrase: The world is a form [composed] of five [kinds of] sense-impressions [sights, sounds, tastes, smells and tactile sensations], not anything else. Those five [kinds of] sense-impressions are impressions [respective] to the five sense organs. Since the mind alone [or since one thing, the mind] perceives the world by way of the five sense organs, is there [any] world besides

[excluding, if not for, apart from, other than or without] the mind?
Say.

7

Though the world and awareness arise and subside simultaneously, the world shines by awareness. Only that which shines without appearing or disappearing as the place for the appearing and disappearing of the world and awareness is the substance, which is the whole.

Explanatory paraphrase: Though the world and awareness [the awareness that perceives the world, namely ego or mind] arise and subside simultaneously, the world shines by [that rising and subsiding] awareness [the mind]. Only that which shines without appearing or disappearing as the place [space, expanse, location, site or ground] for the appearing and disappearing of the world and [that] awareness is *poru!* [the real substance or *vastu*], which is *pūṇḍram* [the infinite whole or *pūrṇa*].

8

Whoever worships in whatever form giving whatever name, that is the way to see that substance in name and form. However, investigating the reality of oneself, dissolving in the reality of that true substance, becoming one alone is seeing in reality. Know.

Explanatory paraphrase: Whoever worships [it] in whatever form giving [it] whatever name, that is the way to see that [nameless and formless] *poru!* [the real substance, *brahman*, the ultimate reality or God] in name and form. However, [by] investigating [or knowing]

the reality of oneself, [and thereby] dissolving [or subsiding] in the reality of that true *poru!*, becoming one [with it] alone is seeing [it] in reality. Know [or be aware].

9

Dyads and triads exist always holding one thing. If one sees within the mind what that one thing is, they will slip off. Only those who have seen have seen the reality. They will not be confused. See.

Explanatory paraphrase: Dyads [pairs of opposites, such as existence and non-existence, life and death, awareness and non-awareness, knowledge and ignorance, happiness and unhappiness, good and bad, liberation and bondage] and triads [the *tripuṭī* or three factors of transitive knowledge or awareness, namely *jñātā* or *pramātā* (the knower or subject, namely ego), *jñāna* or *pramāṇa* (knowing or the means of knowing, such as seeing, hearing, perceiving, experiencing, inferring or believing reliable testimony) and *jñēya* or *pramēya* (whatever is known, namely objects, phenomena, facts, theories and so on)] exist [by] always holding [or depending on] one thing [namely ego, in whose view alone they seem to exist]. If [by looking keenly at oneself] one sees within the mind what that one thing is, they will slip off [run away or disappear] [implying that they will cease to exist, because their support and foundation, namely ego, will itself cease to exist]. Only those who have seen [what remains when all dyads and triads have thereby ceased to exist along with their root, ego] have seen the reality. They will not be confused [by ever again seeing anything else at all]. See [what is real in this way by seeing within the mind what that one thing is that rises as 'I' to know all other things].

10

Leaving ignorance, knowledge does not exist; leaving knowledge, that ignorance does not exist. Only the knowledge that knows oneself, who is the first, as to whom are that knowledge and ignorance, is knowledge.

Explanatory paraphrase: Without ignorance [of other things], knowledge [of them] does not exist; without knowledge [of them], that ignorance [of them] does not exist. Only the knowledge [or awareness] that knows [the reality of] oneself [ego], who is the first [to appear], [by investigating] to whom are that knowledge and ignorance [of other things], is [real] knowledge [or awareness].

11

Not knowing oneself, who knows, knowing other things is ignorance; besides, is it knowledge? When one knows oneself, the support for knowledge and the other, knowledge and ignorance will cease.

Explanatory paraphrase: Instead of knowing [the reality of] oneself [ego], who knows [everything else], knowing other things is ignorance; except [that], is it knowledge? When one knows [the reality of] oneself [ego], the *ādhāra* [support, foundation or container] for knowledge and the other [ignorance], knowledge and ignorance [of everything else] will cease [because the reality of ego is just pure awareness, so when one knows oneself as pure awareness ego will no longer seem to exist, and hence all its knowledge and ignorance will cease to exist along with it].

12

What is devoid of knowledge and ignorance is actually knowledge. That which knows is not real knowledge. Since one shines without another for knowing or for causing to know, oneself is knowledge. One is not void. Know.

Explanatory paraphrase: What is devoid of knowledge and ignorance [about anything other than itself] is actually *arivu* [knowledge or awareness]. That which knows [or is aware of anything other than itself, namely ego] is not real *arivu* [knowledge or awareness]. Since [the real nature of oneself] shines without another for knowing or for causing to know [or causing to be known], oneself is [real] *arivu* [knowledge or awareness]. One is not void [emptiness, desolation, nothingness or non-existence]. Know [or be aware].

13

Oneself, who is awareness, alone is real. Awareness that is manifold is ignorance. Even ignorance, which is unreal, does not exist except as oneself, who is awareness. All the many ornaments are unreal; say, do they exist except as gold, which is real?

Explanatory paraphrase: Oneself, who is *jñāna* [knowledge or awareness], alone is real. Awareness that is manifold [namely the mind, whose root, ego, is the awareness that sees the one as many] is *ajñāna* [ignorance]. Even [that] ignorance, which is unreal, does not exist except as [besides, apart from or as other than] oneself, who is [real] awareness. All the many ornaments are unreal; do they exist except as gold, which is real? Say. [In other words, though ego or mind, which is the false awareness that sees itself as numerous

phenomena, is ignorance and unreal, the real substance that appears as it is only oneself, who is true knowledge or pure awareness, so what actually exists is not ego or mind but only oneself.]

14

If the first person exists, second and third persons will exist. If, oneself investigating the reality of the first person, the first person ceases to exist, second and third persons coming to an end, the nature that shines as one alone is oneself, the state of oneself.

Explanatory paraphrase: If the first person [ego] exists, second and third persons [everything else] will exist. If the first person ceases to exist [by] oneself investigating the reality of the first person, second and third persons will come to an end, and [what then remains alone, namely] the nature [selfness, essence or reality] that shines as one [undivided by the appearance of these three persons or ‘places’] alone is oneself, the [real] state [or nature] of oneself.

15

Past and future stand holding the present. While occurring, they too are actually the present. The present is the only one. Not knowing the reality of now, trying to know the past or future is trying to count without one.

Explanatory paraphrase: Past and future stand holding [or depending upon] the present. While occurring, they too are actually the present. [Therefore] the present is the only one [the only time that actually exists] [alternatively this sentence can be interpreted as meaning: the present alone [is all these three times]; the present alone

[exists]; or [there is] only the present] [so the implication of all these interpretations is that there are not three times, namely the past, present and future, but only one, namely the present, which alone is what seems to be these three]. [Hence] without knowing the reality of today [the present moment, now], trying to know the past or future is [like] trying to count [calculate or evaluate] without [knowing the value of] one.

16

When we investigate, except we, where is time, where is place? If we are a body, we will be ensnared in time and place. Are we a body? Since we are the one, now, then and always, the one in place, here, there and everywhere, there is we, we. Time and place do not exist.

Explanatory paraphrase: When we investigate [ourselves], except we, where is time and where is place? If we are a body, we will be ensnared in time and place. [But] are we a body? Since we are the [same] one [without any change], now, then and always, the [same] one in [each] place, here, there and everywhere, there is [only] we, [the timeless and placeless] we. Time and place do not exist.

17

For those who do not know themselves, for those who have known themselves, the body is actually 'I'. For those who do not know themselves, 'I' is only the extent of the body; for those who have known themselves within the body, oneself, 'I', shines without limit. Consider that the difference between them is only this.

Explanatory paraphrase: For those who do not know themselves [their real nature] and for those who have known themselves, the body is actually ‘I’ [or only ‘I’]. For those who do not know themselves, ‘I’ is [limited to] only the extent of the body, [whereas] for those who have known themselves within the body, oneself [called] ‘I’ shines without limit [boundary or extent] [as the one infinite whole, which alone exists and which is therefore the sole substance that appears as the body and everything else]. Consider that the difference between them is only this.

18

For those who do not have knowledge, for those who have, the world is real. For those who do not know, reality is the extent of the world; for those who have known, reality pervades devoid of form as the support for the world. This is the difference between them. Consider.

Explanatory paraphrase: For those who do not have knowledge [of their real nature] and for those who have, the world is real. For those who do not know [their real nature], reality is [limited to] the extent of [the forms that constitute] the world, [whereas] for those who have known [their real nature], reality pervades devoid of form as the *ādhāra* [support, foundation or container] for [the appearance of the forms that constitute] the world. This is the difference between them. Consider.

19

Only for those who do not have discernment of the root of fate and will is there dispute about which prevails, fate or will. Those who

have known themselves, who is the one origin for fate and will, have discarded them. Say, will they thereafter be associated with them?

Explanatory paraphrase: Only for those who do not have *vidhi-mati-mūla-vivēkam* [ability to distinguish or discern the root of fate (*vidhi*) and will (*mati*), namely ego] is there dispute about which prevails, fate or will. Those who have known [the reality of] themselves [ego], who is the one origin [cause or foundation] for fate and will, have [thereby] discarded them [because ego as such does not actually exist, since its reality is not what it seems to be but just pure awareness, so when one knows oneself as pure awareness the appearance of ego will be dissolved forever, and thus one will have discarded not only ego but also its fate and will]. Will they thereafter be associated with them? Say.

20

Leaving oneself, who sees, oneself seeing God is seeing a mental vision. Only one who sees oneself, the origin of oneself, is one who has seen God, because the origin, oneself, going, oneself is not other than God.

Explanatory paraphrase: Leaving [letting go of, neglecting, ignoring or not investigating] oneself [namely ego], who sees [all things other than oneself], oneself seeing God is seeing a mental vision [a mind-constituted image, phenomenon or appearance]. Only one who sees oneself [one's real nature], the origin [base or foundation] of oneself [namely ego], is one who has seen God, because oneself [one's real nature], [which alone is what remains] when oneself [namely ego], the origin [root or foundation of all other things], goes, is not other than God.

21

If one asks what is the truth of many texts that say ‘oneself seeing oneself’, ‘seeing God’: Since oneself is one, how is oneself to see oneself? If it is not possible to see, how to see God? Becoming food is seeing.

Explanatory paraphrase: If anyone asks what is the truth of many texts that talk of ‘oneself seeing oneself’ and ‘seeing God’ [the reply is]: Since oneself is one, how is oneself to see oneself? If it is not possible [for oneself] to see [oneself], how [is oneself] to see God [who is the real nature of oneself]? Becoming food [to God] is seeing [both oneself and God]. [In other words, ego being swallowed and consumed entirely by the infinite light of pure awareness is alone real seeing.]

22

Consider, except by, turning the mind back within, completely immersing it in God, who shines within that mind giving light to the mind, how to fathom God by the mind?

Explanatory paraphrase: Except by turning [bending or folding] *mati* [the mind or intellect] back within [and thereby] completely immersing [embedding or fixing] it in *pati* [the Lord or God], who shines [as pure awareness] within that mind giving light [of awareness] to the mind, how to fathom [or investigate and know] God by the mind? Consider.

23

This body does not say 'I'. No one says 'In sleep I do not exist'. After one thing, 'I', rises, everything rises. Contemplate by a subtle mind where this 'I' rises.

Explanatory paraphrase: This body does not say 'I' [that is, it is not aware of itself as 'I']. No one says 'In sleep I do not exist' [even though one was then not aware of this or any other body]. [Therefore neither this nor any other body can be what I actually am, but in waking and dream an awareness rises as 'I am this body'.] After one thing [called] 'I' [namely ego, the awareness that rises as 'I am this body'] rises, everything rises. Contemplate [investigate, discern, determine or ascertain] by *nun mati* [a subtle, refined, sharp, keen, acute, precise, meticulous and discerning mind or intellect] where this 'I' rises.

24

The insentient body does not say 'I'; being-awareness does not rise; in between one thing, 'I', rises as the extent of the body. Know that this is the awareness-insentience-knot, bondage, soul, subtle body, ego, this wandering and mind.

Explanatory paraphrase: The *jaḍa* [insentient] body does not say 'I'; *sat-cit* [being-awareness] does not rise; [but] in between [these two] one thing [called] 'I' rises as the extent of the body. This [the spurious adjunct-conflated awareness that rises as 'I am this body'] is *cit-jaḍa-granthi* [the knot (*granthi*) formed by the entanglement of awareness (*cit*) with an insentient (*jaḍa*) body, binding them together as if they were one], *bandha* [bondage], *jīva* [life or soul], *nuṭpa mey* [subtle body], *aḥandai* [ego], this *samsāra* [wandering, revolving,

perpetual movement, restless activity, worldly existence, embodied condition or the cycle of birth and death] and *manam* [mind]. Know.

25

Grasping form the formless phantom-ego comes into existence; grasping form it stands; grasping and feeding on form it grows abundantly; leaving form, it grasps form. If it seeks, it will take flight. Investigate.

Explanatory paraphrase: Grasping form [that is, projecting and perceiving the form of a body (composed of five sheaths) as itself] it comes into existence [rises into being or is formed]; grasping form [that is, holding on to that body as itself] it stands [endures, continues or persists]; grasping and feeding on form [that is, projecting and perceiving other forms or phenomena] it grows [spreads, expands, increases, ascends, rises high or flourishes] abundantly; leaving [one] form [a body that it had projected and perceived as itself in one state], it grasps [another] form [another body that it projects and perceives as itself in its next state]. If sought [that is, if it seeks, examines or investigates itself], it will take flight [because it has no form of its own, and hence it cannot seem to exist without grasping the forms of other things as itself and as its food or sustenance]. [Such is the nature of this] formless phantom [fiend, demon or evil spirit] ego. [Therefore] investigate [it] [or know thus].

26

If the ego comes into existence, everything comes into existence; if the ego does not exist, everything does not exist. The ego itself is

everything. Therefore, know that investigating what this is alone is giving up everything.

Explanatory paraphrase: If ego [the false awareness 'I am this body'] comes into existence, everything [all phenomena, everything that appears and disappears, everything other than our pure, fundamental, unchanging and immutable awareness 'I am'] comes into existence; if ego does not exist, everything does not exist [because nothing other than pure awareness actually exists, so everything else seems to exist only in the view of ego, and hence it cannot seem to exist unless ego seems to exist]. [Therefore] ego itself is everything [because it is the original seed or embryo, which alone is what expands as everything else]. Therefore, know that investigating what this [namely ego] is alone is giving up everything [or is everything ceasing] [because ego will cease to exist if it investigates itself keenly enough, and when it ceases to exist everything else will cease to exist along with it].

27

The state in which one exists without 'I' rising is the state in which we exist as that. Without investigating the place where 'I' rises, how to reach the annihilation of oneself, in which 'I' does not rise? Without reaching, say, how to stand in the state of oneself, in which oneself is that?

Explanatory paraphrase: The state in which one exists without 'I' [ego] rising is the state in which we exist as that [*brahman*, the ultimate reality and infinite whole, the nature of which is pure self-awareness, uncontaminated by the appearance of anything else]. Without investigating the place [namely one's fundamental

awareness of one's own existence, 'I am'] where [from which or in which] 'I' rises, how to reach [achieve or take refuge in] the annihilation of oneself [ego], [the state] in which 'I' does not rise? [In other words, the only way to annihilate ego is to investigate oneself, the source from which it rises, because only when one investigates oneself will one see oneself as one actually is, and only when one sees oneself as one actually is will one forever cease rising as ego, the false awareness that rises and subsides as 'I am this body'.] [And] without reaching [or taking refuge in] [the annihilation of ego], how to stand [stop, stay or abide] in the [real] state of oneself, in which oneself is that? Say [or explain].

28

Like sinking wanting to see something that has fallen in water, sinking within restraining speech and breath by a sharpened mind it is necessary to know the place where the rising ego rises. Know.

Explanatory paraphrase: Like sinking [submerging, immersing or plunging] wanting [needing or in order] to see [find or discover] something that has fallen in water, sinking [submerging, immersing, diving, plunging or piercing] within [oneself] restraining speech and breath by *kūrnda mati* [a sharpened, pointed, keen, acute, penetrating and discerning mind or intellect] it is necessary to know the place [namely one's real nature, which is pure awareness] where [from which or in which] the rising ego rises. Know [or be aware].

29

Not saying 'I' by mouth, investigating by an inward sinking mind where one rises as 'I' alone is the path of knowledge. Instead, thinking 'not this, I am that' is an aid; is it investigation?

Explanatory paraphrase: Without saying 'I' by mouth, investigating by an inward sinking [submerging, immersing, diving, plunging or piercing] mind where one rises as 'I' is alone the path of *jñāna* [the means to experience *jñāna*, real knowledge or pure awareness, which is one's true nature]. Instead, thinking '[I am] not this [body or mind], I am that [*brahman*]' is an aid, [but] is it *vicāra* [investigation (in the sense of self-investigation)]?

30

As soon as the mind reaches the heart inwardly investigating who am I, when he who is 'I' dies, one thing appears spontaneously as 'I am I'. Though it appears, it is not 'I'. It is the whole, the entire substance, the substance that is oneself.

Explanatory paraphrase: As soon as the mind reaches the heart [its core and essence, which is pure awareness] [by] inwardly investigating who am I, when [thereby] he who is 'I' [ego] dies, one thing [or the one] appears spontaneously [or as oneself] as 'I am I' [that is, as awareness of oneself as oneself alone]. Though it appears, it is not 'I' [namely ego]. It is *pūṇḍram* [the whole or *pūrṇa*, which is infinite, eternal and unchanging], the *poruḷ* [the real substance or *vastu*], the *poruḷ* that is oneself.

31

For those who are happiness composed of that, which rose destroying itself, what one exists for doing? They do not know anything other than themselves; who can conceive their state as ‘like this’?

Explanatory paraphrase: For those who are [blissfully immersed in and as] *tanmayānanda* [happiness composed of that, namely *brahman*, one’s real nature], which rose [as ‘I am I’] destroying itself [ego], what one [action] exists for doing? They do not know [or are not aware of] anything other than themselves; [so] who can [or how to] conceive their state as ‘[it is] like this’?

32

When the Vēdas proclaim ‘that you are’, instead of oneself being knowing oneself as ‘what?’, thinking ‘I am that, not this’ is due to non-existence of strength, because that alone is always seated as oneself.

Explanatory paraphrase: When the Vēdas proclaim ‘That is you’, instead of oneself being [as one is] [by] knowing oneself [by investigating] what [am I], thinking ‘I am that [*brahman*], not this [body or mind]’ is due to non-existence [destitution or deficiency] of strength [of *bhakti* and *vairāgya*] [and consequent lack of clarity of heart and mind], because that [*brahman*] alone [or that itself] is always seated [calmly] as oneself.

Saying 'I do not know myself', 'I have known myself', is ground for ridicule. Why? To make oneself an object, are there two selves? Because being one is the truth, the experience of everyone.

Explanatory paraphrase: Saying [either] 'I do not know myself' [or] 'I have known myself' is ground for ridicule. Why? To make oneself *viṣaya* [an object, something known as other than oneself, the knower], are there two selves [a knowing self and a known self]? Because being one is the truth, [as is known by] the experience of everyone. [That is, since we always experience ourselves as one, we are never not aware of ourselves, so *ātma-jñāna* (self-knowledge or self-awareness) is not something that we are yet to attain but is our very nature, and hence what is called the attainment of *ātma-jñāna* is actually not a gain of anything but a loss of everything along with its root, ego, which is merely a false awareness of ourselves (an awareness of ourselves as something other than what we actually are), and when ego is lost there is no one left to say 'I have known myself', because what remains is only our real nature, which is pure, infinite, eternal and immutable awareness.]

Not standing firmly knowing the substance, which always exists for everyone as nature, in the mind that merges within, quarrelling saying 'It exists', 'It does not exist', 'Form', 'Formless', 'One', 'Two', 'Neither', is delusion-mischief.

Explanatory paraphrase: Instead of standing firmly [as pure, infinite, eternal and immutable awareness] knowing *poru!* [the real

substance, namely pure awareness], which always exists for everyone as [their real] nature, in the mind that merges within [or in the heart, where it exists as one], quarrelling [fighting or disputing] saying ‘It exists’, ‘It does not exist’, ‘[It is a] form’, ‘[It is] formless’, ‘[It is] one’, ‘[It is] two’, ‘[It is] neither [one nor two]’, is *māyā*-mischief [mischief, wickedness or defectiveness born of *māyā*, delusion or self-ignorance].

35

Being knowing the substance, which exists as accomplished, is accomplishment. All other accomplishments are just accomplishments achieved in dream; if one wakes up leaving sleep, are they real? Will those who, standing in the real state, have left unreality be deluded? Know.

Explanatory paraphrase: Being [as one actually is] knowing *poru!* [the one real substance, which is oneself], which exists as *siddham* [what is always accomplished], is [real] *siddhi* [accomplishment]. All other *siddhis* [such as the *aṣṭa-siddhis*, eight kinds of paranormal powers that some people try to achieve by meditation or other *yōga* practices] are just *siddhis* achieved [or experienced] in dream; if one wakes up leaving [this] sleep [of self-ignorance], are they real? Will those who, standing [firmly] in the real state [of pure awareness], have left unreality [or illusion, namely the unreal states of waking and dream] be deluded [by such unreal *siddhis*]? Know.

36

If we think that we are a body, thinking 'No, we are that' will be just a good aid for us to stand as that. Since we always stand as that, why thinking 'We are that'? Does one think 'I am a man'?

Explanatory paraphrase: If we think that we are a body, thinking 'No [we are not this body], we are that [*brahman*]' will be just a good aid for [reminding and encouraging] us to stand [firmly] as that. [However] since we always stand [abide or exist] as that, why [should we be] thinking 'We are that'? Does one think 'I am a man' [that is, does one need to always think 'I am a man' in order to be aware of oneself as a man]? [Therefore instead of just thinking 'I am not this body, I am that', we should look keenly at ourself to see what we actually are, because only when we see what we actually are will we see that we always stand firmly as that.]

37

Even the contention that declares, 'Duality only in spiritual practice, non-duality in attainment', is not true. Both when one is eagerly searching and when one has found oneself, who indeed is one other than the tenth man?

Explanatory paraphrase: Even the contention that declares, 'Duality [exists] only in spiritual practice, [and] non-duality [exists only] in attainment', is not true [because even when one is seeking to know one's real nature, what actually exists is only oneself and not anything else]. Both when one is eagerly searching [for the missing tenth man] and when one has found oneself [to be him], who indeed is one other than the tenth man? [Here *daśaman*, 'the tenth man', refers to the supposedly missing man in the analogy of the ten foolish

men who, after fording a river, each counted the other nine but forgot to count himself, and therefore concluded that one of them was missing. Just as each of them was actually the tenth man even while they were anxiously searching for him, we are never actually anything other than the one reality that we are seeking to know, so just as all that each of the ten men needed was to count himself, all that we need is to look keenly at ourself, because when we look at ourself keenly enough we will see that we alone exist and are therefore eternally non-dual.]

38

If we are the doer of action, we will experience the resulting fruit. When one knows oneself by investigating who is the doer of action, doership will depart and all the three actions will slip off. The state of liberation, which is eternal.

Explanatory paraphrase: If we are the doer of action, we will experience the resulting fruit. [However] [by] investigating who is the doer of action, when one knows oneself [as one actually is], [ego, which is what seemed to do actions and to experience their fruit, will thereby be eradicated, and along with it its] *karṭṛtva* [doership] [and its *bhōkṛtva*, experiencership] will depart and [hence] all [its] three karmas [its *āgāmya* (actions that it does by its own will), *saṃcita* (the heap of the fruits of such actions that it is yet to experience) and *prārabdha* (destiny or fate, which is the fruits that have been allotted for it to experience in its current life)] will slip off. [This is] the state of *mukti* [liberation], which is eternal [being what actually exists even when we seem to be this ego].

39

Only so long as one says 'I am someone bound', thoughts of bondage and liberation. When one looks at oneself as who is the one who is bound, when oneself, the one who is eternally liberated, remains as accomplished, if thought of bondage will not remain, will thought of liberation henceforth remain?

Explanatory paraphrase: Only so long as one says 'I am someone bound' [that is, only so long as one experiences oneself as if one were bound] [will there be] thoughts of *bandha* [bondage] and *mukti* [liberation]. When one looks at [observes, examines or scrutinises] oneself [to see] who is the one who is bound, and when [thereby] oneself, the one who is eternally liberated, [alone] remains as *siddham* [what is firmly established or always accomplished], since thought of bondage will not remain, will thought of liberation henceforth remain?

40

If it is said that liberation that one will experience is three, form, formless, form-formless, I will say: know that the ego-form, which distinguishes form, formless, form-formless, being destroyed is liberation.

Explanatory paraphrase: If it is said that *mukti* [liberation] that one will experience [or that one will attain, or that will happen] is of three kinds, with form, without form, or either with form or without form [that is, a state in which one can alternate back and forth between being a form or being formless], I will say: [Only] destruction of the ego-form [the form-bound ego], which distinguishes [these three

kinds of liberation], with form, without form, or either with form or without form, is *mukti*. Know.

Uḷḷadu Nārpadu Anubandham

The Supplement to *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu*

Pāyiram 1

Know that this, the treatise of ambrosial pure sayings that is the suitable name *Sūkti Sudhā*, which shines by explanatory translations of sayings of wise people and by his own perfect sayings, is what Sri Ramana composing graciously gave.

Explanatory paraphrase: Know that this, the treatise of ambrosial pure sayings that is [given] the suitable name *Sūkti Sudhā* [the Ambrosia of Wise Sayings], which shines [as a compilation formed] by explanatory translations [or adaptations] of sayings of wise [noble, excellent or humbly subsided] people and by his own perfect [full or wholesome] sayings, is what Sri Ramana composed and graciously gave.

Pāyiram 2

Those having clarity who, studying and understanding, follow *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu* together with the treatise given as anubandham, combining both his own and what were given in other languages, have attained excellence.

Explanatory paraphrase: Those having clarity [of heart and mind] who study, understand and follow [or conduct themselves and practise in accordance with the principles taught in] *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu* together with [this] treatise given [by Bhagavan Ramana] as

anubandham [a supplement or appendix], combining both his own [original compositions] and [s that he translated from] what were given in other languages, have [thereby] attained excellence [namely the infinite happiness of liberation, which is what alone remains when ego is eradicated].

Benedictory verse

In what all this world steadily exists, of what all are, from what this entire world arises, as well as for what all these are, by what all this world arises, whatever this all is, that itself is the existing substance. Let us hold that svarūpa, which is real, in the heart.

Explanatory paraphrase: In what all this world [seemingly] steadily exists, of what [or whose] all are, from what this entire world arises [appears or originates], also for what [or because of what] all these are, by what all this world arises [appears or originates], [and] whatever this all is, that itself is *uḷḷa-porul* [the existing substance or sat-vastu, the one and only substance that actually exists]. Let us [always] hold [keep, cherish or meditate on] that *svarūpa* [our own real nature], which [alone] is real, in the heart. {Or: That *svarūpa*, which is real, is the [great] treasure [of divine grace] [that always exists] in [our] heart.}

|

By association with being, attachment will leave; when attachment leaves, attachment of the mind will perish; those in whom mental attachment has ceased have ceased in that which is not moving; they have attained *jīvanmukti*. Cherish their association.

Explanatory paraphrase: By association [compatibility or fitting well together] with *sat* [pure being, 'I am', or those who abide as pure being], [outer] attachment [to all other things] will leave [or depart]; when [outer] attachment leaves, attachment of the mind [or will] [namely *viṣaya-vāsanās* (inclinations to seek happiness in objects or phenomena), which are the subtle seeds that sprout as outer attachments] will perish [or be dispersed]; those in whom mental attachment has ceased [perished or been severed] have ceased [or perished] in that which is not moving [namely *sat*, pure being, which exists eternally without ever moving or undergoing even the slightest change of any kind whatsoever]; they have attained *jīvanmukti* ['living liberation', liberation while the body is still living, or liberation from living, implying liberation from *jīvatva* (lifeness, soulhood, egoness or individuality)]. Cherish their association.

2

What exalted state one achieves here by clear investigation, which arises in the heart when one takes refuge in *sādhu*-association, that, which is extolled, is not possible to achieve by a teacher, by the meaning of texts, by virtuous actions, or moreover by any means.

Explanatory paraphrase: What exalted state [namely the supreme state of knowing and being what one actually is] one achieves here by clear *vicāra* [investigation, namely self-investigation], which arises in the heart when one takes refuge in *sādhu*-association [association with a *sādhu*, which in this context implies a *jñāni*, one who knows and abides as *sat*, pure being], that [exalted state], which is extolled [by the Vēdas and other texts as the ultimate goal], is not possible to achieve by [studying under the guidance of] a *bōdhaka* [a teacher of religious or spiritual precepts], by [learning] the meaning

of texts, by [doing any number of] virtuous actions, or moreover by any [other] means [whatsoever].

3

If one adheres to living with those who are *sādhus*, for what are all these restrictions? When the air of the excellent cool southern breeze is blowing, you say, what is the purpose of having a fan?

Explanatory paraphrase: If one adheres to living with those who are *sādhus* [saintly people, which in this context implies *jñānis*, those who know and abide as *sat*, pure being], for what are all these *niyamas* [restrictions or disciplinary practices such as fasting, *yōga* practices, ritualistic worship, *mantra-japa* or meditation on anything other than oneself]? When the air of the excellent cool southern breeze is blowing, you say, what is the purpose of having a fan?

4

Heat will be destroyed by the cool moon, poverty by the good wish-fulfilling tree, and sin itself by the *gaṅgā*. All these three, beginning with heat, will depart just by the great sight of peerless *sādhus*.

Explanatory paraphrase: Heat will be destroyed [or removed] by the cool moon, poverty by the good *kalpaka* [the heavenly wish-fulfilling tree], and *pāpa* [sin or demerit] itself by the *gaṅgā* [the holy river Ganges]. All these three, beginning with heat, will depart [slip off or cease] just by the great *darśana* [seeing or sight] of peerless *sādhus* [namely *jñānis*, those who know and abide as *sat*, pure being].

5

Tīrthas, which are composed of water, and deities, which are stone or earth, are not at all equal to those *mahātmas*. Ah! Those give rise to purity by countless days; *sādhus* as soon as they see by eye; see.

Explanatory paraphrase: *Tīrthas* [sacred bathing places], which are composed of water, and deities [images of God], which are [composed of] stone or earth, are not at all equal [similar or comparable] to those *mahātmas* [great souls or *jñānis*]. Ah! See, those [*tīrthas* and deities] give rise to purity [of mind, heart or will] by countless days [that is, gradually over a long period of time], [whereas] *sādhus* [*jñānis*] [do so] as soon as they see by eye.

6

‘Who is God?’ ‘Who knows the mind?’ ‘My mind is only known by me, who am the soul.’ ‘Therefore, since the Vēdas roar “God alone is the one”, you are actually God.’

Explanatory paraphrase:

[Disciple:] Who is God?

[Guru:] Who knows the mind? [implying that whoever knows the mind is God].

[Disciple:] My mind is only known by me, who am the soul [or spirit].

[Guru:] Therefore, since *śruti* [the Vedas] roar [or declare emphatically] ‘God alone is the one’ [implying that the one who actually exists is only God, so he is ‘one only without a second’ (*ēkam ēva advitīyam*), and hence nothing can be other than him], you are actually God [or God is actually you].

7

‘What is the light for you?’ ‘For me in daytime the sun, in darkness a lamp.’ ‘What is the light that knows the light?’ ‘The eye.’ ‘What is the light that knows that?’ ‘The light is the mind.’ ‘What is the light that knows the mind?’ ‘That is I.’ When the *guru* said, ‘Even the light in light is you’, ‘I am that alone.’

Explanatory paraphrase:

[*Guru:*] What is the light for you?

[Disciple:] For me in daytime the sun, in darkness a lamp.

[*Guru:*] What is the light that knows the [physical] light [from such sources]?

[Disciple:] The eye.

[*Guru:*] What is the light that knows [or is aware of] that?

[Disciple:] The light [that knows the eye] is the mind.

[*Guru:*] What is the light that knows [or is aware of] the mind?

[Disciple:] That is I.

When the *guru* said, ‘Even the light in light [namely pure awareness, which is the light that shines in and thereby illumines the mind, which is the light that in turn illumines all other lights, making them known] is you’, [the disciple replied:] ‘I am that alone [or that indeed]’.

8

In the centre of the cave that is the heart, *brahman*, which is the one, alone shines directly as oneself as ‘I am I’. May you reach the heart by the mind that sinks investigating itself or that sinks with the breath; may you be one who is fixed in yourself.

Explanatory paraphrase: In the centre of the cave that is the heart, *brahman*, which is the one [the only one that actually exists, and hence the one without a second], alone shines directly as oneself as 'I am I' [that is, as awareness of oneself as oneself alone]. May you reach [take refuge in, unite with or merge in] the heart by the mind that sinks [or subsides] [deep within] investigating itself or that sinks with the [sinking] breath; [and] may you [thereby] be one who is fixed in yourself.

9

What awareness is the blemishless, motionless 'I'-form in the heart-lotus, only that awareness, which is 'I', is what will give inner liberation by removing 'I'. Know.

Explanatory paraphrase: What awareness exists [and shines] in the heart-lotus as the blemishless [immaculate or pure] and motionless [hence immutable] 'I'-form [the *svarūpa* or real nature of 'I', meaning 'I' as it actually is], only that awareness, which is 'I' [namely *ātma-svarūpa*, the real nature of oneself], is what will give inner liberation [or liberation, which is 'I'] by removing [expelling or banishing] 'I' [namely ego, the spurious 'I' that rises and subsides]. Know [this by investigating this pure and motionless awareness that shines eternally as 'I' without ever rising or subsiding].

10

The body is insentient like a pot; since the shining called 'I' does not exist for it, since our nature exists daily in sleep, in which the body does not exist, it is not I. Within the heart-cave of those who are,

knowing who is he who is ego, where is he, the omnipresent Lord, Arunagiri-Śiva, will shine spontaneously, the clarity ‘He is I’.

Explanatory paraphrase: The body is *jaḍa* [insentient or non-aware] like a pot; since the shining [or brightness] called ‘I’ [namely the self-shining awareness ‘I am’] does not exist for it [that is, since it is not aware of itself as ‘I’], [and] since our [real] nature [our fundamental awareness ‘I am’, which is our very being] exists [and shines] daily in [dreamless] sleep, in which the body does not exist, it [this body] is not I. Within the cave of the heart of those who [just] are [as they actually are], knowing [or being aware of] [themselves as such] [by investigating] who is he who is ego [and] where is he, the omnipresent Lord, Arunagiri-Śiva, will shine spontaneously [as] the *sphuraṇa* [clarity or clear awareness] ‘He is I’.

||

Who has been born? Carefully investigating where I was born, he who has been born in his source, *brahman*, he alone is he who has been born. He is eternal, the Lord of sages. He is daily new-new. Investigate.

Explanatory paraphrase: Who has [really] been born? He who has been born in [and as] his source, *brahman*, [being firmly established there by] carefully [tenderly or lovingly] investigating [himself, the source] where I [namely ego, the rising ‘I’, which is what is always aware of itself as ‘I am this aging and perishable body’] was born, he alone is one who has [really] been born. He is eternal [being immortal, imperishable and immutable], *muṇīśan* [the Lord of sages]. He is daily [or always] new and fresh [being the ageless and

ever-fresh awareness 'I am']. Investigate [yourself and be born thus as *brahman*].

12

Cease considering the wretched body 'I'. Investigate yourself, who are ever-unceasing happiness. Together with cherishing the perishable body, thinking to investigate oneself is like grasping a crocodile, a raft to cross a river.

Explanatory paraphrase: Cease considering the wretched [base or despicable] body [to be] 'I'. Investigate [or know] yourself, who are ever-unceasing [or imperishable] happiness [or bliss]. Together with [along with or while] cherishing the perishable body, thinking [or intending] to investigate [or know] oneself is like grasping a crocodile [as] a raft to cross a river.

13

The condition 'the body is myself' being severed is giving, austerity, sacrifice, righteousness, *yōga*, devotion, space, substance, peace, truth, grace, silence, firmness, death without dying, knowledge, accomplished renunciation, liberation and happiness. Know.

Explanatory paraphrase: Know [understand or consider] that *dēhātma-bhāva* [the body-self-condition or body-self-conviction, namely ego, the false awareness 'this body is myself'] being severed [ceasing or perishing] is *dāna* [giving or charity], *tavam* [*tapas*, burning, heat, fire, austerity or asceticism], *vēlvi* [*yāga*, *yajña*, offering, sacrifice, sacrificial fire or worship], *dharma* [righteousness, virtue, morality, duty or justice], *yōga* [joining,

yoking or harnessing, particularly in the sense of yoking the mind to the object or target of its meditation or to any spiritual practice], *bhakti* [devotion or love], *vāṇam* [space or sky, implying either the space of pure awareness or heaven], *poruḷ* [substance or *vastu*, in the sense of either the one real substance, namely pure being, or wealth], *śānti* [pacification, cessation, peace, tranquillity, calmness or quiet], *vāymai* [truth or truthfulness], *aruḷ* [divine grace, kindness, tenderness, affection, love, solicitude, compassion, benevolence, pity, mercy or blessing], *mauna* [silence, namely the silence of pure being], *nilai* [standing, fixedness, firmness, stability, permanence or *niṣṭhā*], *sāhāmal sāvu* [death without dying], *arivu* [knowledge, awareness, understanding, wisdom or *jñāna*], *sār tuṛavu* [accomplished renunciation], *vīḍu* [*mukti*, liberation, release, leaving or letting go] and *iṇbam* [happiness or bliss].

14

Investigating for whom are suchlike *karma*, *vibhakti*, *viyōga* and *ajñāna*, is itself *karma*, *bhakti*, *yōga* and *jñāna*. When one investigates, without ‘I’ they never exist. Only being permanently as oneself is what is true.

Explanatory paraphrase: Investigating for whom [or to whom] are those [defects] such as *karma* [action], *vibhakti* [lack of devotion], *viyōga* [separation] and *ajñāna* [ignorance], is itself [or alone] [what will fulfil the purpose and aims of each of the paths of] *karma* [desireless action or *niṣkāmya karma*], *bhakti* [devotion or love], *yōga* [joining, yoking or harnessing, particularly in the sense of yoking the mind to the object or target of its meditation or to any spiritual practice, and in this context referring to practices whose aim is to bring about ‘cessation of mental activity’ (*citta-vṛtti nirōdhaḥ*)] and *jñāna* [knowledge or awareness in the sense of true self-

knowledge, which is awareness of oneself as one actually is]. When one investigates [oneself keenly enough], [the 'I' for whom *karma*, *vibhakti*, *viyōga* and *ajñāna* seem to exist, namely ego, will cease to exist, and] without [that] 'I' they [namely *karma*, *vibhakti*, *viyōga* and *ajñāna*] never exist. Only being permanently as oneself [one's own real nature, namely pure awareness] is what is true [or real].

15

Not knowing the fact that they move by *śakti*, the buffoonery of lunatics who strive thus, 'We shall acquire all *siddhis*', is a match for the story of the lame person who said, 'If anyone helps me rise, what measure are these enemies?'

Explanatory paraphrase: Not knowing the fact that they move [or the manner in which they function] [only] by *śakti* [divine power, namely *cit-śakti*, the power of pure awareness], the buffoonery of lunatics [or idiots] who strive [doing various kinds of *tapas* with the desire] 'We shall [hereby] acquire all *siddhis* [supernatural, magical or miraculous powers]' is a match for the story of the lame person [who could not even stand or do anything else unaided, but] who [nevertheless] said, 'If anyone helps me rise, what measure are these enemies [that is, what match will they be for my strength]?'

16

Since pacification of mind alone is liberation, which is accomplished, how will those whose mind is yoked on *siddhis*, which are not accomplished without activity of mind, immerse in the bliss of liberation, in which turbulence of mind has ceased? Say.

Explanatory paraphrase: Since *citta-śānti* [pacification, cessation or extinction of mind] alone is *mukti* [liberation], which is [eternally] accomplished, how will those whose mind [or will] is yoked [attached or set] on [acquiring] *siddhis* [accomplishments, particularly supernatural, magical or miraculous powers], which are not accomplished [achieved or acquired] without activity of mind, immerse in *mukti-sukham* [the bliss of liberation], in which turbulence [agitation, disturbance or movement] of mind has ceased? Say.

17

When God bears the burden of the world, the spurious soul bearing is a *gōpuram tāṅgi* form mockery; see. Someone travelling in a train that is carrying a great burden, not putting luggage on the train, suffering carrying on head is whose fault?

Explanatory paraphrase: See, when God [always] bears [or supports] the [entire] burden of the world, the spurious [imitation or unreal] soul [imagining that he is] bearing [it or even a small part of it] is a mockery [like] the form of a *gōpuram tāṅgi* [‘temple gate tower supporter’, a plaster statue standing high on the tower above a temple gateway, posing as if strenuously carrying or supporting the top of it]. Someone travelling in a train that is carrying a great burden, not putting [their] luggage on the train [but instead unnecessarily] suffering [or accepting pain] carrying [it] on [their] head is whose fault?

18

Between the two breasts, below the chest, above the stomach, there are six things; the colours are various. Among these, one thing resembling a water lily bud, and what is inside two digits to the right, is the heart.

Explanatory paraphrase: Between the two breasts, below the chest [and] above the stomach, there are six things; [their] colours are various. Among these [six things], one thing resembling a water lily bud, and [which is] what is inside two digits to the right [from the centre of the chest], is the heart.

19

Its mouth is closed; inside exists a tiny hole; in it dense darkness exists residing along with desire and so on; all the major *nāḍis* exist adhering to it; it is the abode of breath, mind and light.

Explanatory paraphrase: Its mouth [the mouth of that bud-like thing called 'heart'] is closed [tight like an intricately entangled knot]; inside [it] exists a tiny hole [or hollow]; in it [that tiny hole] dense *tamas* [darkness, namely the darkness of self-ignorance, which is ego, the false awareness 'I am this body'] exists residing along with desire and so on; all the major *nāḍis* ['tubes' or subtle channels through which mind and *prāṇa* (life, vitality or vital energy) spread throughout the body] exist adhering to [or depending upon] it; it is the abode of breath, mind and light [the fundamental, ever-existing and all-pervading light of pure awareness, 'I am', which shines unaffected and immutably in even the densest darkness, illumining it and all other things, and which is therefore the one real heart, the ultimate centre of everything, in which everything is contained].

20

The Lord shining as ‘I’ in the cave of the heart-blossom alone has been extolled as ‘Guhesan’. By the strength of practice of constant meditation ‘He is I’, namely ‘Such Guhesan is I’, if standing as that Lord like the firmness called ‘I’ that is fixed in your body, the ignorance called ‘The perishable body is I’ will immediately perish like darkness in front of the sun.

Explanatory paraphrase: The Lord shining as ‘I’ in the cave of the heart-blossom alone has been extolled as ‘Guhesan’ [the Lord of the cave]. By the *abhyāsa-bala* [strength of repeated practice] of constant *sōham bhāvanā* [meditation ‘He is I’], namely ‘Such Guhesan [that Lord who shines in the heart as ‘I’] [alone] is I’, if [you] stand [remain or abide] as that Lord [namely ‘I’] as firmly as ‘I’ is [now] fixed in [and as] your body, the *avidyā* [ignorance, in the sense of false awareness] called ‘[This] perishable body is I’ [namely ego] will immediately perish [or be dispersed] like darkness in front of the sun.

21

To Rama who asked, ‘In what great mirror all these appear in front as a shadow, say, what is that which is indicated as that heart for all sentient beings in this world?’, Vasistha Muni says: When considering, the heart for all sentient beings of this world is of two kinds.

Explanatory paraphrase: To Rama who asked, ‘Say, for all sentient beings in this world, what is that which is indicated as that heart in which great mirror all these [namely all phenomena that constitute the mind and world] appear in front as a shadow [image or

reflection]?', Vasistha, the wise one (*muni*), says: When [one] considers, the heart for all sentient beings of this world is of two kinds.

22

Listen to the nature of these two, which are what is fit to accept and what is fit to reject. The organ situated as 'heart' in a place inside the chest of the measurable body is what is fit to reject. Accept within heart that the heart in the form of the one awareness is what is fit to accept. That is what is both inside and outside; it is not what is inside-outside.

Explanatory paraphrase: Listen to the nature [or characteristics] of these two [kinds of heart], [one of] which is what is fit to accept [grasp or hold] and [the other of which is] what is fit to reject [discard, cast off or abandon]. The organ called 'heart' situated in a place inside the chest of the measurable [limited or finite] body is what is fit to reject. Accept within [your] heart that the heart in the form of the one [unique, peerless, incomparable and only existing] awareness [namely *sat-cit*, the pure being-awareness that shines eternally as 'I am'] is what is fit to accept. That is what is both inside and outside [being omnipresent, because (as described in the previous) it is the one great mirror in which the entire world of time and space appears as a shadow]; [yet] it is not what is inside [and/or] outside [thereby implying not only that it is not what exists either only inside or only outside, but also that it is what exists untouched by any distinction such as inside or outside].

23

That alone is the principal heart. In it this entire uni is residing. It is the mirror for all things whatsoever. It alone is the home for all riches. Therefore it, the awareness for all sentient beings, is what is declared as the heart. It is not a small portion in part of the perishable, stone-like insentient body.

Explanatory paraphrase: That alone is the principal [first, foremost, primary and preeminent] heart. In it this entire uni is residing. It is the mirror for all things whatsoever [the mirror in which each and every thing appears]. It alone is the home for all [spiritual] riches [everything of real value]. Therefore it, [which is] the awareness [the original and fundamental awareness, ‘I am’] for all sentient beings, is what is declared as the [real] heart. It is not a small portion in part of the perishable, stone-like insentient body [the body, which is perishable (or mortal) and insentient like a stone].

24

Therefore by the means of fixing the mind on the pure heart, which is composed of awareness, complete dissolution of breath along with inclinations will be achieved automatically.

Explanatory paraphrase: Therefore by the *sādhana* [means or steady and persistent practice] of fixing the mind [attention] on [or in] the pure heart, which is composed of awareness [the clear, infinite and eternal awareness ‘I am’], complete [and hence permanent] dissolution [or cessation] of *vāyu* [breath, *prāṇa* or life] along with *vāsanās* [inclinations, namely *viśaya-vāsanās*, inclinations to seek happiness in anything other than oneself] will be achieved automatically [or spontaneously].

25

By incessantly uninterrupted meditation on the heart, 'What awareness is devoid of every adjunct, that *śivam* is I', dispel every attachment of the mind.

Explanatory paraphrase: By incessantly uninterrupted meditation on [or in] the heart [with the clear understanding], 'What awareness is devoid of every *upādhi* [adjunct, namely everything that one mistakes oneself to be, thereby limiting oneself and disguising one's real nature], that *śivam* [auspicious substance (*maṅgala vastu*), which is Śiva in his ultimate form as the one self-shining awareness-nature (*cit-svarūpa*), meaning awareness as it actually is] is I', dispel every attachment of the mind [heart or will].

26

Having investigated all states, which are of many kinds, what one exists devoid of falsity, the supreme state, incessantly holding that alone firmly by heart, play in the world, hero. What exists in the heart as the reality for all kinds of appearances, since you have known that, without ever abandoning that view, play in the world, hero, as if desirous.

Explanatory paraphrase: [Vasistha said to Rama:] Having investigated [examined or carefully considered] all states, which are of many kinds, what one [state] exists devoid of falsity [deceit or deception], [namely] *paramapadam* [the supreme state, which is the one real state of pure being-awareness (*sat-cit*), which is what shines eternally in the heart as 'I am'], incessantly holding only that [supreme state of pure being-awareness, 'I am'] firmly by heart [or mind], play in the world, hero. What exists in the heart as the reality

for all kinds of appearances [namely *sat-cit*, which alone is what actually exists, and which is therefore the one fundamental reality that underlies and supports the appearance or seeming existence of all other things], since you have known that [the one underlying reality], without ever abandoning that view [namely that clear awareness of the one infinite, indivisible and immutable reality that underlies all appearances], play in the world, hero, as if [having] desire [appropriate to whatever role you play in life, such as the desire to uphold *dharma* or righteousness, which is the duty of a prince or king].

27

Being one who has seeming rising of mind and delight, being one who has seeming agitation of mind and aversion, being one who has seeming effortful initiative, being one who is devoid of defects, play in the world, hero. Being one who is freed from the many ties called delusion, being one who is steadily equanimous in all circumstances, doing actions on the outside to suit the disguise, play in the world as required, hero.

Explanatory paraphrase: [Vasistha continued:] Being one who seemingly has rising of mind and delight [joy or pleasure in worldly matters], being one who seemingly has agitation [anxiety or impatience] of mind and aversion [dislike, disgust, hatred or enmity], [and] being one who seemingly has effortful initiative [that is, one who seemingly initiates and strives with persistent effort in worldly undertakings], [but nevertheless] being one who is [actually] devoid of [all such] defects, play in the world, hero. Being one who is freed from the many ties called delusion [that is, the many ties, attachments or bondages that give rise to delusion, confusion, darkness (lack of clarity of mind and heart) and consequently desire],

[and] being one who is steadily [or permanently] equanimous [equal, impartial, even, calm, tranquil or dispassionate] in all circumstances, [but nevertheless] doing actions on the outside to suit the disguise [that is, outwardly engaging in activities appropriate to your disguise or external roles in this life], play in the world as required [in accordance with each situation], hero.

28

Whoever is one who has destroyed the senses by knowledge, one who is fixed firmly as existence-awareness, is a self-knower; he is the fire of knowledge; one who wields the thunderbolt that is knowledge; declare that he, Kalakalan, is the hero who has killed death.

Explanatory paraphrase: Whoever is one who has destroyed [killed, conquered or vanquished] the [five] senses by *aṛivu* [knowledge, awareness or *jñāna*, namely clear awareness of oneself as one actually is], one who is [thereby] fixed firmly as *uṇmai-aṛivu* [existence-awareness or *sat-cit*], is *ātma-vid* [a self-knower, namely one who knows oneself as one actually is]; he is *aṛivaṅgi* [*aṛivu-aṅgi*, the fire of knowledge or *jñānāgni*]; [he is] one who wields the thunderbolt that is knowledge [namely *jñāna-vajrāyudha*, the divine weapon of *jñāna*, which destroys ignorance (namely ego) and all its effects]; declare that he, Kalakalan [Lord Śiva, who is *kāla-kāla*, ‘death to death’], is the hero who has killed death.

29

Brightness and strength of intellect will increase automatically for those who have seen the reality, just like trees shining with all good qualities such as beauty as soon as spring arrives on this earth. Know.

Explanatory paraphrase: Brightness [brilliance, clarity or wisdom] and strength [power, ability or skill] of intellect will increase automatically [or spontaneously] for those who have seen *tattva* [what is real, namely *ātma-svarūpa*, the real nature of oneself], just like trees shining with all good qualities such as beauty as soon as spring arrives on this earth. Know [or understand this].

30

Like those who hear a story, the mind going far away, the mind in which *vāsanās* have been erased is actually not doing even though doing. The mind that those soak is actually doing even though not doing; even though movement has ceased here, in dream climbing a hill one falls in a pit.

Explanatory paraphrase: Like those who [seemingly] hear a story [even though their] mind [is actually] going far away [and therefore not hearing the story at all], the mind in which [all] *vāsanās* have been erased is actually not doing [any action at all] even though [in the view of others it seems to be] doing [any number of actions]. [On the other hand] the mind that those soak [that is, the mind that is soaked or drenched with *vāsanās*] is actually doing [action] even though [it is seemingly] not doing [any action], [just as] even though movement has ceased here [that is, even though in the waking world they seem to be lying without movement in bed], in dream climbing a hill they fall in a pit.

31

To the knower of reality, who is asleep within the fleshy body, which is like a cart, activity, *niṣṭhā* and sleep are just like, to a person sleeping in a cart, that cart moving, standing or the cart remaining alone.

Explanatory paraphrase: To the *mey-jñāni* [the knower of reality], who is asleep within the fleshy body, which is like a cart, activity [of mind or body], *niṣṭhā* [firmness, fixity, steadiness, motionlessness, inactivity or *samādhi*] and sleep are just like, to a person sleeping in a cart, that cart moving, standing or the cart remaining alone [separated from the bullocks that were yoked to it]. [That is, just as the various states of a cart are not experienced by a person who is sleeping in it, the various states of body and mind are not experienced by the *jñāni*.]

32

For those who experience waking, dream and sleep, waking-sleep, beyond, is called by the name 'turya'. Since that *turya* alone exists, since the three that appear do not exist, *turya-v-atīta*. Be assured.

Explanatory paraphrase: For those who experience waking, dream and sleep, waking-sleep [the eternal and immutable state of pure awareness, in which one is awake to (or clearly aware of) oneself as one actually is and therefore asleep to (or unaware of) everything else whatsoever], [which is] beyond [those other three states], is called by the name 'turya' [or *turīya*, the 'fourth']. [However] since that *turya* alone exists, [and] since the three [states] that appear [or seem to exist] [namely waking, dream and sleep] do not exist, [what

is called ‘*turya*’ is actually] *turya-v-atīta* [*turīyātīta*, what transcends or is beyond the ‘fourth’]. Be assured.

33

Saying ‘*sañcita* and *āgāmya* do not adhere to the *jñāni*; *prārabdha* does remain’ is an answer told to the questions of others. Like, the husband dying, an unwidowed wife not remaining, the doer [dying], all the three *karmas* will cease. See.

Explanatory paraphrase: Saying ‘*sañcita* and *āgāmya* do not adhere to the *jñāni* [but] *prārabdha* does remain [for the *jñāni* to experience]’ is [just] an answer told [as a concession] to the questions of others [namely those who are unwilling or unable to understand and accept the deeper teachings and implications of *advaita*]. Just as [among the several wives of one husband] an unwidowed wife does not remain when [their] husband dies, all the three *karmas* will cease [when] the doer [namely ego, who is the doer of *āgāmya* and the experiencer of its fruit] [dies]. See.

34

For people of little knowledge, others beginning with wife and children are just one family. In the heart of those who have much learning not one, many book-families exist as obstacles to *yōga*. Consider.

Explanatory paraphrase: For people of little knowledge [intellect, understanding or learning], others beginning with wife and children are just one family. In the heart [or mind] of those who have much [abundant or excessive] learning not [just] one [but] many book-

families [namely families in the form of all the books they have studied, which thereby fill and cloud their minds with a dense fog of intense and ceaseless thinking] exist as obstacles [hindrances or impediments] to *yōga* [meaning not only meditation or spiritual practice more generally, but also achievement of the aim of all such practices]. Consider [or know].

35

Those who do not intend to erase the writing, investigating where they were born who have known the writing, knowing the writing for what? Sonagiri, the wise, they have acquired the nature of a sound-recording machine, who else? Say.

Explanatory paraphrase: [For] those who do not intend to erase the writing [namely the writing of fate, which must be experienced by ego so long as it rises, and which can therefore be erased only by eradication of ego], [which cannot be achieved except by] investigating where they were born who have known the writing [namely what is written in books], for what [purpose or benefit is their] knowing the writing [namely what is written in books]? Sonagiri *vittaka* [the wise one, namely the one whose nature is real knowledge or pure awareness], who else [are] they [but those who] have acquired the nature of a sound-recording machine? [That is, though they can repeat what they have learnt, like a sound-recording machine, they do not truly understand the practical implications of it.] Say.

36

Rather than those who have not subsided though learned, those who are not learned are saved: they are saved from the grasping demon of pride; they are saved from the disease of many whirling thoughts; they are saved from running seeking fame. Know that what they are saved from is not one.

Explanatory paraphrase: Rather than those who have not subsided though learned [that is, those who have not humbly subsided back within in spite of studying, learning and mastering a vast range of spiritual and philosophical texts], those who are not learned are saved: they are saved from the demon of pride, which grasps [seizes or possesses] [the mind and heart of anyone who is not willing to humbly subside back within]; they are saved from the disease of many whirling thoughts [which infects the mind of anyone who has learnt a lot but does not turn back within to subside forever in the inmost depth of the heart]; they are saved from running [out towards the world] seeking fame [glory, reputation, esteem and high regard]. Know that what they are saved from is not [just] one [but many such perils and evils].

37

Though all the worlds are straw, though all the sacred texts are within hand, those who have come under the sway of the wicked whore who is praise, escaping slavery is, ah, what is difficult.

Explanatory paraphrase: Though all the worlds [together with all the other pleasures that they offer] are [considered by them to be mere] straw, [and] though all the sacred texts [the Vēdas, *vēdānta* and so on] are within [their] hand [or grasp] [having been thoroughly

studied and mastered by them], [for] those who have come under the sway of the wicked whore who is *puhar'cci* [praise, admiration, adulation, fame or glory], escaping [their] slavery [to her] is, ah, [extremely] difficult [or rare].

38

When oneself always stands without departing in the state of oneself, without knowing as 'oneself' and 'others', who is there besides oneself? If who says what about oneself, what? Even if oneself praises oneself, even if disparages, so what?

Explanatory paraphrase: When oneself always stands [stays or remains] without departing [that is, without ever rising as ego] in the state of oneself [the real and natural state of oneself, in which one exists and shines as pure being-awareness (*sat-cit*), as one always actually is], without knowing as 'oneself' and 'others' [that is, without ever experiencing any distinction such as 'this is myself' and 'those are others'], who is there besides oneself? If whoever says whatever about oneself [whether they praise or disparage oneself], [so] what [or what does it matter]? Even if oneself praises oneself, or even if [oneself] disparages [oneself], so what [or what indeed does it matter]?

39

Always experience *advaita* in the heart; do not even once perform *advaita* in action. O son, *advaita* is appropriate in the three worlds; *advaita* is not appropriate with *guru*. Know.

Explanatory translation: Always experience [or cherish] *advaita* [non-duality] in [your] heart, [but] do not even once perform [display or parade] *advaita* in action. O son, *advaita* is appropriate in the three worlds, [but] *advaita* is not appropriate with *guru* [this is, even though it may be appropriate for one to claim a non-dual status with any of the three Gods, Brahma, Vishnu or Śiva, in their respective worlds by asserting ‘You and I are one’, it is never appropriate for one to claim a non-dual status with *guru*]. Know [this clearly].

40

I shall proclaim truly the essence of the final conclusion of all *vēdānta*: if, I dying, I become that, that I, which is the form of awareness, alone is what remains. Know.

Explanatory paraphrase: I shall proclaim truly *akhila-vēdānta-siddhānta-sāram* [the essence or core of the final conclusion of all *vēdānta*]: if, I dying, I become that [that is, if ego dies by our knowing and being what we always actually are, namely ‘that’, *brahman*, the one infinite space of *sat-cit*, pure being-awareness, ‘I am’], that I, which is the form of awareness [*cit-svarūpa* or *jñāna-svarūpa*, the actual form or real nature of pure awareness, meaning awareness as it actually is], alone is what remains. Know [or be aware of] [this one I that exists and shines eternally as *sat-cit*].

Ēkānma Pañcakam

The Five Verses on the Oneness of Self²⁰

1

[After] forgetting oneself, considering a body alone to be oneself, and taking innumerable births, finally knowing oneself and being oneself is just [like] waking up from a dream of wandering about the world. See.

2

Declare a drunkard who mutters [in confusion] ‘Who am I? What place am I?’ to be equal to one who oneself asks oneself ‘Who am I?’ [or] ‘What is the place in which I am?’, even though oneself exists as oneself [that is, even though one always exists clearly as one actually is, namely as *sat-cit*, one’s fundamental awareness of one’s own existence, ‘I am’].

3

When the body is [actually] within oneself, anyone who thinks that oneself is only within that insentient body is [like] someone who thinks that the cloth [of the screen], which is the *ādhāra* [support,

²⁰ See Appendix D for the extended version (*kalivenḅā*): *Ēkānma Vivēkam* – The Knowledge of the Oneness of Self.

foundation, basis or container] of the [cinema] picture, exists within that picture.

4

Does an ornament exist as different to [or other than] gold? [Likewise] without oneself, where is the body? One who considers oneself to be a body is an *ajñāni*. One who takes [oneself] to be oneself is a *jñāni*, who knows oneself. Stop [be firm or bear in mind].

5

What always exists is only that *ēkātma-vastu* [oneself, that one substance]. If at that time the *ādi-guru* [the original *guru*, Dakshinamurti] made that *vastu* known [only by] speaking without speaking, say, who can make it known [by] speaking?

Śrī Aruṇācala Padigam

Eleven Verses to Sri Arunachala

1

If you, who by grace took charge of me, are not gracious, giving to me sight of you, what will be my state if I leave this body, having pined and suffered intensely in the dark and miserable world? Without seeing the sun will a lotus blossom? Being forever as the sun to the sun, O Love called the great Aruna Hill, from which grace surges as a spring, gushing forth abundantly there.

Explanatory paraphrase: If you, who by [your] grace took charge of me, are not gracious, giving to me sight of you [as you actually are], what will be my state if I leave this body [after] pining and suffering intensely in [this] dark and miserable world? Without seeing the sun will a lotus blossom? [Likewise] being forever as the sun to the sun, O Love called the great Aruna Hill, from which grace surges as a spring, gushing forth abundantly there [will my heart blossom without seeing you?]

2

Arunachala, the form of love, having taken charge, is ruining me befitting, not granting love for you to me, one without love in which one melts, softening like wax in fire thinking of you in the heart? O happiness produced in love, O satiating ambrosia welling up in the heart of devotees, what to say? Your wish is my wish; that is happiness for me, Lord of my soul.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, the form of love [the one whose very form, nature or essence is love], having taken charge [of me], is it befitting [for you] to ruin me [by] not granting love for you to me, [who am] one without [such] love in which one melts, softening like wax in fire thinking of you in the heart [the very centre of oneself]? O happiness produced [born, grown or ripened] in love, O satiating [pervading or enduring] ambrosia welling up in the heart of devotees, what to say? Your *iṣṭam* [wish, liking, desire or will] is my *iṣṭam*; that is happiness for me, Lord of my soul [or life].

3

By the rope of your grace, pulling me, who did not come close to an intention to think of you, the Lord, you stood to kill completely without an iota of life. What wrong did I, ignorant fool, do? What little obstacle now? Thoroughly tormenting me in this way, making half alive, is for what? Arunachala, who are God, fulfilling your intention, may [you] flourish as the one for all eternity.

Explanatory paraphrase: By the rope of your grace, pulling [attracting, dragging or carrying away] me, who did not come close [or adhere] to an intention to think of you, the Lord, you stood [determined] to kill [me] completely without [leaving even] an iota of life [or without God and soul (implying without leaving any distinction between God and soul)]. What wrong did I, [this] ignorant fool, do [to you]? What little obstacle now [prevents you fulfilling your intention to kill me]? For what [reason or purpose] [are you] thoroughly tormenting me in this way, making [me] half alive [stranded between life and death]? Arunachala, who are [the all-pervading yet all-transcending] God, fulfilling your intention [to annihilate me completely], may [you] flourish as the [only] one [the one who alone exists] for all eternity.

4

Among the people living in the world, from me what benefit did you gain? Protecting the worthless wretch so as not to fall into desolation, fixing permanently at your feet, you kept. Lord, who are the ocean of grace, when I think, shame overwhelms excessively. Arunachala, may you flourish. To praise and adore you, my head bows low.

Explanatory paraphrase: [By choosing to save me from] among [all] the people living in the world, from me what benefit did you gain? Protecting [this] worthless wretch [or ignorant fool] so that [I do] not fall into desolation [the desolation of *samsāra* (embodied existence), becoming ensnared in the delusive attractions of this illusory world], fixing [me] permanently at your feet [or in your state], you kept [me thus, safe in this state of eternal bliss]. Lord, who are the ocean of grace, when I think [of your immense grace], shame [shyness or awe] overwhelms [me] excessively. Arunachala, may you flourish [or be glorious]. To praise and adore you, my head bows low.

5

Lord, taking me in a clandestine manner, you kept at your feet till this day. Lord, to those who ask what your nature is, you kept head bent like a statue. Lord, so that I am not like a net-deer, may you seek out the destruction of my weariness. Arunachala, who are the Lord, whatever be the will, who is the destitute person to know it?

Explanatory paraphrase: Lord, taking me in a clandestine manner [secretly and stealthily, unknown to anyone else], you kept [me] at your feet till this day. Lord, to those who ask what your nature is, you kept [me] head bent like a statue [either because your nature is ineffable, being beyond the reach of thought or words, or because

you have not yet revealed to me what you actually are]. Lord, so that I am not like a net-deer [a deer trapped in a net], may you seek out [and achieve] the destruction of my weariness [or suffering]. Arunachala, who are the Lord [God or *guru*], whatever be [your] will [or intention], who is [this] destitute person to know [or understand] it?

6

Ultimate reality, always staying at the feet, I have been a frog on the stem of a lotus. If making be a flower-bee drinking the fine honey of the state of awareness, there will be salvation. If I leave life at the flower of your divine feet, your shame will be a standing column. Light of dawn-red spreading rays in the form of a hill. Space of grace subtler than space.

Explanatory paraphrase: *Tat-para* [ultimate reality], [in spite of] always staying at [your] feet, I have been [like] a frog [clinging to] the stem of a lotus. If [you] make [me] be a flower-bee drinking the fine honey of [your] state of [pure] awareness, there will be salvation [or cessation] [for me]. If I leave [this] life [while still remaining like a frog] at the flower of your divine feet, it will be a standing column of shame for you. Light of dawn-red spreading rays in the form of a hill. Space of grace subtler than [either physical or mental] space.

7

If the elements, space, air, fire, water and earth, and what are composed of the elements, which expand as many living beings, are not other than you, the space of light, who else am I? O blemishless, if shining without another in the heart as that space, who am I who

come outside as if another? May you come outside, Arunachala, placing the fully blossomed lotus-feet on his head.

Explanatory paraphrase: If the [five] *bhūtas* [elements], [namely] space, air, fire, water and earth, and *bhautikas* [everything composed of these elements], which expand [spread out or unfold] as many living beings, are not other than you [or do not exist besides you], the space of light [the light of pure awareness], who else am I? O blemishless, if [you] shine without another in the heart as that space [of pure awareness], who am I who come outside as if another? May you come outside, Arunachala, placing [your] fully blossomed [expansive or all-pervading] lotus-feet on his head [namely on the head of this ego, the spurious 'I' who has come out as if other than you].

8

Destroying the inclination to know the way by which to live in this world, you kept as worthless. If keeping in this condition, it will not be happiness for anyone, only misery. Dying indeed is better than this life. To me, who, madness possessing, am bereft of fruit, graciously give the rare medicine by which to reach your feet, Supreme, who have taken the form of Aruna Hill, which shines on Earth as the medicine for madness.

Explanatory paraphrase: Destroying [in me] the inclination [wish, will, thought, intelligence or understanding] to know the way by which to live [subsist or survive] in this world, you kept [me] as worthless. If [you] keep [me] in this condition, it will not be happiness for anyone, only misery. Dying indeed is better than this life. To me, who, [despite] being possessed by madness [the madness

of love for you], am bereft of fruit [the fruit of such madness, namely dissolving forever in you, the infinite space of *jñāna* or pure awareness], graciously give the rare [or pre-eminent] medicine [namely *jñāna*] by which to reach your feet [or state], Supreme, who have taken the form of Aruna Hill, which shines on Earth as the medicine for madness [the madness of desire for the world].

9

Supreme, supreme among those who are destitute of the supreme wisdom to cling without attachment to your feet. The burden as for you, may you ordain my activity to cease. For you, who bear, what is a burden? Supreme, separating from you and grasping this world on the head, what I have got is enough. Arunachala, who are the Supreme, do not see me henceforth to be away from your feet.

Explanatory paraphrase: Supreme, [I am] supreme among those who are destitute of the supreme wisdom to cling without attachment to your feet. [Taking] the burden [the responsibility for saving me] as for you [or as yours], may you ordain my activity [beginning with my rising to do anything] to cease. For you, who bear [carry or support everything], what is a burden? Supreme, separating from you and grasping this world on [my] head, what I have got [thereby] is enough. Arunachala, who are the Supreme, do not see [or allow] me henceforth to be away from your feet [or your state].

10

I have seen a wonder, the magnetic hill that forcibly seizes the soul. Subduing the mischievous activity of the soul who thinks of it once, pulling to be facing towards its unique self, making it be motionless

like itself, it will take that sweet soul as *bali*. This is what! Souls, be saved thinking of the great Aruna Hill, this killer of the soul, who shines in the heart.

Explanatory paraphrase: I have seen a wonder [something extraordinary and miraculous], [this] magnetic hill that forcibly seizes [pulls or attracts] the soul. Subduing the mischievous [outward-going mental] activity of the soul who thinks of it once, pulling [dragging or attracting] [that soul] to be facing towards itself, the one [reality that shines in the heart as *sat-cit*, pure being-awareness, 'I am'], [thereby] making it be *acala* [motionless] like itself, it will take [and consume] that sweet [spiritually ripened and pure] soul as *bali* [food offered in sacrifice or as alms]. What [a wonder] this is! Souls, be saved [by] thinking of the great Aruna Hill, this killer of the soul, who shines in the heart [as the heart, namely *sat-cit*, pure being-awareness, 'I am'].

||

Like me who considered this hill to be the Supreme, how many are those who have been destroyed! You who are wandering about thinking of a means to give up the body, having given up desire for this life because of immense misery, there is on Earth one thing, a rare medicine, that when thought of once within the mind will kill without killing. Know that it indeed is Aruna Hill.

Explanatory paraphrase: Like me who considered this hill to be the Supreme [or who meditated upon this hill as the Supreme], how many are those who have [thereby] been destroyed! You who are wandering about thinking of a means to give up the body, having given up desire for this life because of [its] immense [pervasive,

expanding or increasing] misery, there is on earth one thing [one means to give up the body], a rare [or pre-eminent] medicine, that when thought of once within the mind will kill [ego, the false identification ‘I am this body’] without killing [us]. Know that it indeed is Aruna Hill.

Śrī Aruṇācala Aṣṭakam

Eight Verses to Sri Arunachala

1

It is seated as if a hill bereft of awareness. Ah, its action is pre-eminent, difficult for anyone to know. Though from the young age bereft of knowledge Arunachalam shone brightly in awareness as what is exceedingly great, I did not know its *poru!* even having got to know from someone that it is Tiruvannamalai. When, enchanting the mind, it pulled close, at the appointed time of coming close I saw as this is *acalam*.

Explanatory paraphrase: It sits calmly as if a hill bereft of awareness [or knowledge], [but] ah, its action is pre-eminent [extraordinary or wonderful], difficult for anyone to know [understand, appreciate or recognise]. Though from [my] young age, [when I was] bereft of knowledge [of anything else], Arunachalam shone brightly [and clearly] in [my] awareness [or mind] as what is exceedingly great, I did not know [understand or recognise] its *poru!* [substance, essence, reality or what it actually is] even [after] getting to know from someone that it is Tiruvannamalai. When, enchanting [or possessing] [my] mind, it pulled [me] close, at [that] appointed time [proper or opportune moment] of coming close I saw as this is *acalam* [motionless, still, steady or a mountain].

2

When investigating within the mind who he who saw is, I saw what remained when he who saw was completely non-existent. The mind

did not rise to say ‘I saw’; in what way would the mind rise to say ‘I did not see’? Who has the power to elucidate this speaking, when in ancient times you elucidated without speaking? Only to elucidate your nature without speaking, you stood shining as a sky-earth hill.

Explanatory paraphrase: When investigating within the mind who the seer is, I saw what remained when the seer was [thereby found to be] completely non-existent. The mind did not rise to say ‘I saw’, [so] in what way could the mind rise to say ‘I did not see’? Who has the power to elucidate this [by] speaking, when in ancient times [as Dakshinamurti] [even] you elucidated [it] without speaking? Only to elucidate your nature [or state, namely pure, silent and motionless being-awareness] without speaking, you stood shining as a hill [or motionlessly] [between] sky and earth.

3

When I approach thinking of you as a form, you yourself have settled as a hill on earth. If one thinks of your form as formless, one is like someone who wanders the world to see the sky. When without thinking one thinks deeply of your form, form will cease to exist like a salt doll touching the ocean. When I know myself, what else is my form? You who were as the great Aruna Hill have been.

Explanatory paraphrase: When I approach [you] thinking of you as a form, you yourself have settled [standing firmly] as a hill on earth. If one thinks of [or meditates upon] your form [or nature] as formless, one is like someone who wanders the world to see [or look at] the [omnipresent] sky [or space]. [But] when without thinking one thinks deeply of your form [that is, when one firmly fixes one’s attention only on ‘I am’, which is your true form or *svarūpa*], [one’s own] form [namely ego] will cease [to exist] like a salt doll touching

[coming in contact with, joining or immersing in] the ocean. When I know myself, [other than you] what else is my form? You who were [or have been] as the great Aruna Hill [alone] have [always] been [or have remained (now that the appearance of my seemingly separate form and everything else has ceased to be)].

4

See, seeking God leaving you, who exist and shine, is just seeking darkness taking a lamp. Only to make yourself, who exist and shine, known, you have been as various forms in every creed. If there are those who do not know you, who exist and shine, such people are just blind people without knowledge of the sun. Gem called the peerless great Aruna Hill, exist and shine in my heart as one without a second.

Explanatory paraphrase: See, seeking God [while] leaving [letting go, forsaking or neglecting] you, who exist and shine [eternally in one's heart as pure being-awareness (*sat-cit*), 'I am', which is God as he actually is], is just [like] seeking darkness taking a lamp. Only to make yourself, who exist and shine [eternally as the sole reality], known [to those who fail to recognise you shining in their heart as they own being], you have been [appearing] as various forms in every *mata* [creed or system of religious beliefs]. If there are those who do not know you, who exist and shine [as the light that illumines the mind, enabling it to know other things], such people are just [like] blind people without knowledge of the sun. Gem [of pure awareness] called the peerless great Aruna Hill, exist and shine in my heart as one without a second.

5

Like the thread in gems, you alone have shone as he who is one in every soul and in every diverse creed. Like grinding a gem, when one grinds the mind on the stone called mind for blemishes to be removed, the light of your grace will shine forth. Like the light of a gem, attachment to any other thing will not come near. When sunlight touches a photographic plate, will an image be imprinted? Aruna, hill of sublime light, is there another thing than you?

Explanatory paraphrase: Like the thread in [a string of] gems, you alone have [forever] shone [or been embedded] as *oruvan* [he who is one and incomparable, namely the one real substance or God] in every soul and in every diverse *mata* [creed or system of religious beliefs]. Like grinding a gem [to polish it, removing its flaws], when one grinds the mind on the stone called mind for [its] blemishes to be removed, the light of your grace will shine forth. Like the light of a [polished] gem [whose brightness and colour are unaffected by nearby objects], attachment to any other thing will not come near [a mind that has thus been polished]. When sunlight touches a photographic plate, will [any] image be imprinted [on it ever again]? Aruna, hill of sublime [intense or abundant] light, is there anything [any *poru!* or thing that actually exists] other than you?

6

There is only you, the one substance, the heart, the light of awareness. In you is an extraordinary power, which is not other. From, together with awareness, series of subtle shadow thoughts in the whirling of destiny have been seen, the mirror, that thought-light, a shadow world-picture both inside and outside via the sense organs beginning with the eye, like a shadow-picture that stands out by a

lens. Hill of grace, let them cease, let them go on, apart from you they do not exist at all.

Explanatory paraphrase: There is only you, the one *poruḷ* [real substance, *vastu* or thing that actually exists], the heart, the light of awareness. In you is an *atiśaya-śakti* [extraordinary, wonderful or pre-eminent power], which is not other [than you]. [Appearing] from [that *atiśaya-śakti*], together with awareness [which is like the light by which pictures are projected on a screen], series of subtle shadow-like thoughts [being spun like the series of picture-frames on a film reel] in the whirling of destiny have been seen [on] the mirror [namely the mind, which is like the screen on which pictures are projected and seen], [being illumined by] that thought-light [namely ego, the reflected light of awareness in whose view all thoughts appear and disappear], [as] a shadow world-picture both inside and outside via the sense organs beginning with the eye, like a shadow-picture [a movie film] that stands out [being projected] by [passing through] a lens [which is like the five senses, the windows through which the seemingly external world is projected and perceived]. Hill of grace, let them cease [or] let them go on, [because] apart from you they do not exist at all [or: Hill of grace, whether they cease or whether they go on, apart from you they do not exist at all].

7

If the thought called 'I' does not exist, even one other thing will not exist. Until that, if other thought rises, merge thus: to whom; to me; what is the place from which I rose. Sinking within, if one reaches the heart-throne, the very one-umbrella-shade-emperor. The dream, namely inside and outside, the two actions, death and birth, happiness and misery, darkness and light, will not exist. Only the

infinite ocean of the light of grace called Arunamalai, which dances motionlessly inside the court of the heart.

Explanatory paraphrase: If the thought called ‘I’ [namely ego] does not exist, even one other thing [anything else at all] will not exist. Until that [namely until the thought called ‘I’ is found to be ever non-existent], if [any] other thought rises, merge [back within by investigating] thus: to whom [has it appeared]; to me; what is the place from which I rose. Sinking [thereby] within, if one reaches the heart-throne, [one will be] the very emperor [seated under] the shade of a single umbrella [namely God, the sovereign lord of this and every other world]. The dream, namely [this entire appearance of multiplicity, which entails pairs of opposites such as] inside and outside, the two actions [good and bad *karmas*], death and birth, happiness and misery, darkness and light, will [then] not exist. [What will exist is] only the infinite ocean of the light of grace called Arunamalai, which dances motionlessly [as ‘I am only I’] in the court of the heart.

8

Water showered by clouds, which rise from the ocean, will not stop if obstructed until it reaches the ocean-abode. The embodied soul, which rises from you, will not stop even though it wanders on many paths that it encounters until it reaches you. Though it wanders in the vast sky, for a bird there is not a place to stay; except the ground, there is not a place; what it must do is to go the way it came. Arunamountain, when the soul goes back the way it came, it will rejoin you, the ocean of happiness.

Explanatory paraphrase: Water showered by clouds, which rise from the ocean, will not stop [even] if obstructed until it reaches [its] ocean-abode. [Likewise] the embodied soul, which rises from you, will not stop even though it wanders on many paths that it encounters until it reaches you. Though it wanders in the vast sky, for a bird there is no place to stay [or rest] [there]; except the ground, there is no place [for it to stay or rest]; what it must do is to go the way it came. [Likewise] Aruna-mountain, when the soul goes back the way it came, it will rejoin [or merge back in] you, the [infinite] ocean of happiness.

Śrī Aruṇācala Pañcaratnam

Five Gems to Sri Arunachala

1

Ocean of *amṛta* [the ambrosia of immortality], which is the fullness of grace, *paramātmā* [my ultimate self], Arunagiri, who swallow everything by [your] spreading rays [of pure self-awareness], shine as the sun that makes [my] budding heart-lotus blossom fully.

2

Red Hill, all this, which is a picture, arises, stands and subsides only in you. Since you dance eternally in the heart as ‘I’, they say your name itself is heart.

Explanatory paraphrase: Red Hill [Arunachala], all this [the entire world-appearance], which is a [mental] picture, arises, stands and subsides [along with ego, the knower of it all] only in you. Since you dance eternally in the heart as ‘I’, they [namely sages and sacred texts] say your name itself is heart.

3

By that immaculate mind that is completely *ahamukham* [inward facing, selfward-facing or self-attentive] investigating where this ‘I’ itself rises and [thereby] clearly knowing the form [or real nature] of ‘I’, one will certainly cease in you, Arunachala, like a river in the ocean. Investigate [or know].

4

Arunesa, who shine [by the light of your own self-awareness], giving up external phenomena and contemplating you in the heart by a mind that stands [motionless] when restraining the breath, the *yōgi* sees the light, [and thereby] attains exaltation in you. Consider this.

5

Arunachala, seeing you by a mind that is surrendered in you, one who always without otherness lovingly [or with otherless love] adores [or worships] everything as your form triumphs, immersed in happiness in you.

Concluding verse ²¹

These, the five verses [in praise] of Arunachala, [which are] a revelation of Srimad Ramana Maharshi by [means of] Sanskrit in *āryā gītā*, are indeed *upaniṣadic* gems.

²¹ This verse was composed by Daivarata and adapted in Tamil by Bhagavan or Easwara Swami.

Śrī Aruṇācala Navamaṇimālai

The Garland of Nine Gems to Sri Arunachala

1

Though being actually he who is motionless, in that assembly hall he dances opposite Mother, who is *acalā*. Know that when that *śakti* subsides back in the motionless form, Arunachalam rises high.

Explanatory paraphrase: Though he [Lord Śiva] is actually *acalan* [he who is motionless, being the one immutable ground from which and in which everything else appears], in that assembly hall [of Chidambaram] he dances [in the form of Nataraja] opposite [the divine] Mother, who is *acalā* [the consort of *acalan*]. Know that when that *śakti* [the divine Mother] subsides [or merges] back in the motionless form [the original, natural and fundamental form of Lord Śiva], Arunachalam rises high [that is, in the motionless form of Arunachalam, which rises high above all his other forms, Lord Śiva shines exalted in his natural state as pure being].

2

When one carefully considers *aruṇācalam*, which is red gold pervading light, and which bestows liberation when one thinks, besides being-awareness-happiness, that ‘That you are’, the meaning of which is the intimate oneness of the Supreme and the soul, is the meaning of *aruṇa*; the meaning of *acalam* is that which is firm.

Explanatory paraphrase: When one carefully considers [the meaning of the name] *aruṇācalam*, which is the all-pervading light [of pure awareness], [whose bright lustre is like] red gold, and which bestows *mukti* [liberation] when one thinks [of it], the meaning of *aruṇa* [which consists of three syllables, namely *a-ru-ṇa*] is not only *satya-cit-sukham* [being-awareness-happiness] but also that [*mahāvākya* (great declaration)] ‘*tat tvam asi*’ [That you are], the meaning of which is *para-v-uyir-sār-ayikkam* [the intimate oneness of the Supreme and the soul, also known as *jīva-brahma-aikya*]; and the meaning of *acalam* is that which is *ghana* [firm, compact, dense, solid, permanent, immutable, complete, full and abundant].

3

From a heart that always seeks clarity, being bereft of desiring and mental delusion concerning wealth, country, relatives, caste and so on, those who are steadfast seeking sublime grace, the red lotus feet of the supreme Lord, the abundant giver of grace, who dwells in Arunachalam, always experiencing grace, the rays of the newly risen sun, achieving destruction of ignorance on earth, will subside in the ocean of bliss.

Explanatory paraphrase: From [out of, because of or motivated by] a heart that always seeks clarity [namely the clarity of pure awareness], being bereft of desiring and mental delusion [namely *abhimāna* (identification and attachment)] pertaining to wealth, country, relatives, caste and so on, those [mature souls] who are steadfast [in] seeking [or earnestly desiring] the sublime grace of the red lotus feet of the supreme Lord, the abundant giver [source, storehouse or abode] of grace, who dwells in Arunachalam, [thereby] always experiencing grace, [which shines brightly dispelling all darkness] like the rays of the newly risen sun, [and thus] achieving

destruction of darkness [namely the darkness of self-ignorance] [while living] on earth, will subside [and drown] in the ocean of bliss.

4

Annamalai, do not think me to pine away looking upwards like one who has not thought of you. It is not at all appropriate to perish as earth thinking that the filthy body, which is earth, is I. Beloved of my two eyes, not making any trick, cool love-filled eyes look. Lord, form of light unreached by forms of male, female and those who are neither, may you abide in my heart.

Explanatory paraphrase: Annamalai [Arunachala], do not think [of leaving] me to pine away looking upwards [with longing or in despair] like one who has not thought of you. It is not at all appropriate [for you to allow me] to perish as earth [or physical matter] thinking that the filthy body, which is earth, is I. Beloved of my two eyes, without playing any trick [mischief or deception] [on me], [may your] cool love-filled eyes look [at me]. Lord, form of light [the infinite light of pure being-awareness, 'I am'] unreached by [or transcending] [the finite appearance of all differences such as the] forms of female, male and those who are neither [entirely female nor entirely male], may you abide in my heart.

5

Lord who are he whose very nature is pure awareness, shining gloriously as the sublime Sonagiri, bearing with all the great wrongs of me, this lowly person, protecting in such a way that this one does not fall again in this desolation, may you give a look of grace, which is a cloud. If not, I will not be able to rise up on the shore from cruel

birth. Is there that which is comparable to the unequalled good that a mother does for a child? May you say.

Explanatory paraphrase: Lord who are *cit-svarūpan* [he whose very nature is pure awareness], shining gloriously as the sublime Sonagiri [the Red Hill, Arunachala], bearing with [overlooking or forgiving] all the great wrongs of me, this lowly person, [and] protecting [me] in such a way that this one does not fall again in this desolation [of *samsāra* or embodied existence], may you give [me] [your] look of grace, which is [always showering abundantly like a dark rain-filled] cloud. If [you do] not, I will not be able to rise ashore from the cruel [ocean of *samsāra*, the recurring cycle of] birth [and death]. Tell [me], is there anything that is comparable to the unequalled good that a mother does for [her] child? [You are my mother and I am your child, so take care of me accordingly.]

6

You are always described by devotees as the slayer of carnal desire. Yes, yes, true. I doubt whether this is suitable for you, Arunachaleswara. If it is suitable, how is that mighty bodiless one, though he is indeed brave and powerful, able to enter within a mind that takes refuge in the fortress of the feet of you, who are the slayer of carnal desire?

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachaleswara [God in the form of Arunachala], you are always described by devotees as *kāmāri* [the slayer of *kāma*, carnal desire]. Yes, yes, true. [However] I doubt whether this [name] is suitable for you. If it is suitable, how is that mighty [or skilful] Anangan [‘he who is bodiless’, namely Kama, the god of carnal desire], though he is indeed brave and powerful, able

to enter within a mind that takes refuge in the fortress of the feet of you, who are *kāmāri* [the slayer of Kama]?

7

Annamalai, that very day you took charge of me, this slave, you took possession of soul and body. Is there any deficiency for me? Both defects and qualities, except you, I do not think of these. My life, whatever be thought, do that. Eye, just give only a flood of love for your pair of feet.

Explanatory paraphrase: Annamalai [Arunachala], that very day you took charge of me, [your] slave [servant or devotee], you took possession of [my] soul and body. [Therefore] is there any *kurai* [imperfection, deficiency, need, want, dissatisfaction or grievance] for me? [Since] both *kurai* [imperfections, flaws, faults, defects, impurities or vices] and *guṇam* [good qualities or virtues] [cannot exist independent of you or as other than you], I do not think of them but only of you. My *uyir* [life or soul, implying my real nature, the soul of my soul], whatever be [your] thought [intention, aim, plan or wish], do that. [My] *kaṇ* [eye, implying both my beloved (the one who is dearer to me than my own eyes) and my own real awareness (which is what is always shining in my heart as ‘I am’)], just give [me] only a flood [surge, increase, overflow or abundance] of love for your pair of feet.

8

In Cuṛi, which among the towns of God in the world is called the surging place, I was born to the virtuous ascetic Sundaraṇ and to the faithful wife Sundaram. The Red Hill God, who adheres in the world

so that what consists of pure awareness glows and so that what consists of that flourishes, gave to me his state, his heart overflowing with joy, so that the miserable distress in the wickedness of the vile senses in the world perishes.

Explanatory paraphrase: In Curi [Tiruccuri, commonly spelt Tiruchuli or Tiruchuzhi], which among the towns of God in the world is called the surging place [because every year in the month of *Māsi* (mid-February to mid-March) the water level in the main temple tank rises up], I was born to the virtuous ascetic Sundaraṅ and to [his] faithful wife Sundaram [Araḥammāl]. God in the form of the Red Hill [Aruṅācala], who adheres [graciously, intimately and steadfastly exists and shines] in the world so that *cinmayam* [that which consists of pure awareness] glows [so brightly that it swallows everything else in its infinitely clear light] and so that *tanmayam* [that which consists of *tat* (that, namely *brahman*)] flourishes [shining as one without a second], gave to me his state, his heart overflowing with joy, so that the miserable distress [of my life lived] in the wickedness of the vile senses in the world perishes.

9

Bearing and tending me in the world as mother and father, before I sank falling in the deep ocean, namely that worldly *māyā*, being forever in my mind, drawing to yourself, you fixed permanently at your feet. Arunachala, who are he consisting of pure awareness, what a wonder of your grace!

Explanatory paraphrase: Bearing [or begetting] and tending me in the world as [my] mother and father, before I sank falling in the deep ocean, namely that worldly *māyā* [the delusion of being a mother or father], being forever in my mind and drawing [me inwards] to

yourself, you fixed [me] permanently at your feet [or in your state].
Arunachala, who are *cinmayan* [he who consists of pure awareness],
what a wonder of your grace [this is]!

Śrī Aruṇācala Akṣaramaṇamālai

The Marriage Garland of Syllables for Sri Arunachala²²

Introductory verse (composed by Sri Muruganar)

The joyful marriage garland of syllables, which gives light like a series of rays of the newly risen sun, is what the noble sage Ramana, the abundant giver of grace, sang with joy for the sake of singing praise so that the delusion of good devotees who seek clarity may be cleared away. As a means, those who sink in the heart with awareness as ‘Arunachalam’ will certainly rule the world of Śiva.

Explanatory paraphrase: Those who sink in the heart with awareness as ‘Arunachalam’ [that is, with remembrance of Arunachala, or with awareness that Arunachala alone is ‘I’], [taking] as a means [or as a refuge] *akṣara maṇa makir mālai* [this joyful marriage garland (or fragrant flower garland) of syllables, or this joyful garland of immutable union], which gives light like a series of rays of the newly risen sun, [and which is] what *karuṇākara muṇi ramaṇa āriyaṇ* [the noble sage Ramana (or sage Ramana *guru*), the abundant giver of grace] sang with joy [or love] for the sake of

²² This devotional hymn consists of one hundred and eight verses expressing Bhagavan’s heart-melting love for Arunachala. Michael has provided detailed translations and explanations for the first twenty-one verses on his website. In the course of these explanations, he has also translated additional verses that were relevant to his commentary. This compilation includes those available translations. Bhagavan willing, Michael hopes to complete the full translation in due course. In the meantime, those wishing to read the complete work may refer to *Arunachala Aksharamanamalai: A Detailed Commentary* by Muhavai Kanna Muruganar, available as a Kindle edition on Amazon.

singing praise [as a prayer] so that the delusion of good devotees who seek clarity [namely the clarity of pure awareness] may be cleared away, will certainly rule the world of Śiva [that is, by sinking deep in the heart with awareness that Arunachala Śiva alone is 'I', they will merge in him in such a way that they will never rise again as ego, and hence they will forever be one with him, who is the eternal sovereign of his own world, namely the heart].

Invocation

Ganapati, giver of grace, may you protect, graciously giving a hand to sing *Akṣaramaṇamālai* to be fitting for the bridegroom, Arunachala.

Explanatory paraphrase: Ganapati, giver of grace, may you protect [this undertaking], graciously giving a hand [to help me] to sing *Akṣaramaṇamālai* so that it may be fitting [or suitable] for [or to adorn] the bridegroom, Arunachala [or for Arunachala Hara (aruṇācala śiva, the one who steals our heart and annihilates ego)].

Refrain

aruṇācala-śiva aruṇācala-śiva aruṇācala-śiva aruṇācalā! aruṇācala-śiva aruṇācala-śiva aruṇācala-śiva aruṇācalā!

I

Arunachala, you will eradicate the ego of those who think that Arunachalam is actually 'I'.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, you will eradicate [or root out] the ego of those who think [within the heart or mind] that Arunachalam is actually [certainly or only] 'I' [or that Arunachalam alone is 'I'].

Alternative meaning 1: Arunachala, you will eradicate the ego of those who think 'Arunachalam' [deep] within the heart [or mind].

Alternative meaning 2: Arunachala, you will eradicate the ego of those who think that Arunachalam is actually [deep] within [only within or within the heart].

2

Arunachala, like *arahu* and *sundaram*, may I and you uniting be non-different.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, like *arahu* and *sundaram* [two words that are different in form but one in meaning, namely beauty], may I and you uniting be [completely] non-different.

Alternative meaning 1: Arunachala, like *arahu* and *sundaram*, I and you will [always] be [or always are] completely non-different.

Alternative meaning 2: Arunachala, like *Arahu* [my mother] and *Sundaram* [my father], may I and you uniting be [completely] non-different.

3

Arunachala, entering the mind, carrying away, keeping captive in the cave of your heart is what!

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, entering [my] mind [or home], [forcibly] carrying [me] away [dragging me out or attracting me to yourself], [you have been] keeping [me] captive in the cave of your heart. What [a wonder of your grace this is]!

Alternative meaning: Arunachala, entering [my] mind [or home], [forcibly] carrying [me] away [or dragging me out], [you have been] keeping [me] captive in the cave of your heart. Why [or for what reason did you do so]?

Inner meaning: Arunachala, entering [my] mind [the nature of which was to always face outwards and thereby wander in the maze of worldly delusion], [attracting and] pulling [my mind inwards to face yourself], [you have thereby been] keeping [me] captive in the cave of your heart. What [a wonder of your grace this is]!

4

Arunachala, for whom did you take charge of me? If rejecting, the whole world will blame.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, for whom [or for whose sake] did you take charge of me? If [you] reject [banish or abandon] [me], the whole world will blame [ridicule or revile] [you].

5

Arunachala, escape this blame. Why did you cause to think of you?
Now who will leave?

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, escape this blame. Why did you make [me] think of you? Now [or henceforth] who will [or can] leave [or let go]? [You cannot leave or let go of me, and I cannot leave or let go of you.]

6

Arunachala, you who bestow *aruḷ* [grace, love, affection, kindness, solicitude and compassion] greater than [that given by] the mother who gave birth [to one], is this your *aruḷ*?

Alternative meaning: Arunachala, you who bestow *aruḷ* greater than [that given by] the mother who gave birth [to one], ah, such is your *aruḷ*!

7

Arunachala, may you be firmly on the mind so that it does not run, deceiving you.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, may you be [remain, sit down, be seated or be enthroned] firmly on [my] mind so that it does not run [out towards other things under the sway of its *viṣaya-vāsanās*], deceiving [or cheating on] you [like a promiscuous wife].

Alternative interpretation 1: Arunachala, may you be [or sit down] firmly on [my] mind so that it does not run [outwards], changing [or transforming] you [by seeing you, who are the one infinite, indivisible and immutable pure awareness, as the numerous objects that constitute both the internal world of mental phenomena and the external world of physical phenomena].

Alternative interpretation 2: Arunachala, may you be [seated] firmly on [the back of this horse, namely my unruly] mind, so that it does not run [away out of control], expelling [or rejecting] you [by throwing you off its back].

8

Arunachala, so that seeing you uninterruptedly the mind, which roams about the world, will subside, show your beauty.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, so that seeing [or looking at] you uninterruptedly [my] mind, which [by its very nature] roams [incessantly] about the world [under the sway of its *viṣaya-vāsanās*], will subside [settle, submit or cease entirely and forever] [thereby being brought under the sway of your grace], show [me] your beauty [the infinite beauty of your real nature, which is unlimited, unalloyed and unceasing happiness].

9

Arunachala, if not now uniting me, destroying me, is this manliness?

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, now [that I am willing to surrender myself entirely to you], if [you] do not unite me [with yourself in inseparable oneness], [thereby] destroying me [destroying my 'virginity', namely ego], is this [your] manliness?

10

Arunachala, why this sleep, when others are dragging me? Is this beauty for you?

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, why this [pretended] sleep [seeing what is happening to me but remaining unconcerned, as if you did not see it, like one who is asleep], when others [who have no right over me, namely *viṣaya-vāsanās*, which rise as likes, dislikes, desires, fears and so on] are dragging [attracting or alluring] me [outwards, away from you, my rightful lord]? Is this beauty [befitting or becoming] for you?

11

Arunachala, when the five sense-thieves enter the heart, are you not in the heart?

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, when the five sense-thieves [namely *viṣaya-vāsanās*, which are the seeds that sprout as desires for the pleasures that are seemingly derived from the five kinds of sense-objects] enter [my] heart [to steal my attention away from you], are you not in [my] heart? [So why do you not protect me from them?]

12

Arunachala, hiding you, who are the one, who can come? This is only your trick.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, hiding [from] you, who are the one [the only one who actually exists], who can come [into my heart]? This [the entry of the five sense-thieves in my heart] is only [or certainly] your trick.

13

Arunachala, substance of *ōmkāra*, you for whom there is not equal or superior, who can know you?

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, [inner and ultimate] substance [reality, import or referent] of *ōmkāra* [the sacred syllable *ōm*], you for whom there is not [anything or anyone] equal [or similar] or superior, who [other than yourself] can know you [as you actually are]?

14

Arunachala, like a mother, giving me your grace, taking charge of me is your duty.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, like a mother, giving me your *aru!* [grace, love, affection, kindness and compassion], taking charge of me [as your own] is your duty [obligation or responsibility].

15

Arunachala, who can see you, who, being the eye to the eye, sees without eyes? See.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, who can [by means of what eye] see you, who, being the eye to the eye [the real awareness that illumines the seeming awareness called mind, just as the sun illumines the moon], sees without eyes [that is, who sees (the reality of) everything without seeing (the appearance of) anything]? See [me] [so that I may see you by seeing myself as you see me].

16

Arunachala, like a magnet iron, forcibly seizing me, uniting without leaving, may you be with me.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, like a magnet [grasping] iron [by its natural power of attraction], forcibly seizing [grasping, captivating or attracting] me [by the captivating power of your grace], uniting [me with yourself] without [ever] leaving [or letting go of] [me], may you be [eternally one] with me.

17

Arunachala, ocean of grace, which is the form of a hill, being abundantly gracious may you bestow grace.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, [who shine in the heart as the infinite] ocean of grace [or compassion], which is [what is seen outside as] the form of [this great] hill, being abundantly [or

intensely] gracious [or compassionate] may you bestow grace [upon me in whatever way you wish, knowing it to be what is best for me, and may you thereby annihilate me, devouring me completely in the infinite light of your grace].

18

Arunachala, gem of light that shines below, above and everywhere, annihilate my lowness.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, gem of light [the infinitely precious light of pure awareness, ‘I am’] that shines below, above and everywhere [that is, that shines within me at all times and in all states, whether my mind is in a low state of impurity and immaturity or an elevated state of purity and maturity], [by drawing my mind inwards to see you as you actually are] annihilate my baseness [the darkness of my self-ignorance, which is what rises as ego, the false awareness ‘I am this body’].

19

Arunachala, who shine as the form of *guru*, eradicating defects completely and making me as virtue, take charge.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, who shine as the form of *guru*, eradicating [removing or cutting off] [all my] defects completely [namely all my *viṣaya-vāsanās* along with ego, their root] and making me as [one who is endowed with every] *guṇa* [virtue or good quality] [especially *sadguṇa*, the ultimate virtue of just being as I actually am without ever rising as ego even to the slightest extent],

take charge [of me as your very own so that I may never again fall prey to the evil demon-ego and its horde of *viṣaya-vāsanās*].

20

Arunachala, so as not to become ensnared in the cruelty of those with sharp sword-eyes, being intensely compassionate be gracious uniting me.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, so as not [to allow me] to become ensnared in the cruelty of those with [alluring] eyes [that pierce one's heart like] a sharp sword, being intensely [or abundantly] compassionate be gracious [by] uniting me [with yourself].

Alternative interpretation 1: Arunachala, so as not [to allow me] to become ensnared in the cruelty of [*māyā*, which attracts, tempts, enchants and deludes the mind like] those with [alluring but malicious] eyes [that pierce one's heart like] a sharp sword, being intensely [or abundantly] compassionate be gracious [by] uniting me [with yourself].

Alternative interpretation 2: Arunachala, so as not [to allow me] to become ensnared in the cruelty of those [wicked people who deceive, ensnare and exploit others with cunning words and other strategies, like hunters who deceive, ensnare and kill animals] with nets and sharp swords, being intensely [or abundantly] compassionate be gracious [by] uniting me [with yourself].

Alternative interpretation 3: Arunachala, so as not [to allow me] to become ensnared in the cruelty of those with eyes [that lack

compassion and kindness and are instead filled with malice] [and who, not caring about the anguish I feel due to my separation from you, gossip about me, taunt me and make fun of me, speaking unkind words about me or to me that pierce my aching heart like] a sharp sword, being intensely [or abundantly] compassionate be gracious [by] uniting me [with yourself].

21

Arunachala, though begging, being a cheat not feeling even the slightest pity. Be gracious saying ‘fear not’.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, though [I have been] begging [beseeching or entreating] [you] [so piteously that it would melt even a stone], being [like] a cheat [fraud or deceiver] [you] do not feel [or show] even the slightest pity [for me]. [At least now] be gracious saying ‘fear not’.

27

Arunachala, sun of bright light that swallows everything, make the mind-lotus blossom.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, sun of bright light [the clear light of pure awareness, ‘I am’] that swallows everything [when the mind is turned inwards to face you alone], make [my] mind-lotus blossom [with all-consuming love for you].

31

Arunachala, the ocean of joy to surge forth, speech and mind to subside, just settle down there.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, so that the ocean of joy [your real nature] surges forth [within me], and so that speech and mind [thereby] subside [or cease] [completely], just [silently, calmly, leisurely, motionlessly or without activity] settle down [be seated, be majestically enthroned or be united (with me)] [as the silence of pure being] there [in my heart].

32

Arunachala, not testing me doing tricks, now show your form of light.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, without testing [examining or tempting] me [hereafter] [by] doing [or playing] tricks [displaying phenomena, which lure my attention away from you, my real nature] [as you have been doing till now], [at least] now [at this very moment] show [me] your form of light [your real nature, the clear light of pure awareness, 'I am'].

43

Arunachala, 'oneself alone is oneself' alone is the reality. Show this yourself.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, ‘oneself alone is oneself’ [‘I alone am I’] alone is the reality [or: oneself alone, oneself alone is the reality]. Show [me] this yourself.

44

Arunachala, what! You said: ‘Turning back inside, see yourself daily with the inner eye; it will be known’.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, what [a wonder]! You said: ‘Turning back inside, see yourself daily [constantly and persistently] with the inner eye [or an inward look]; it [the reality that always shines as ‘I alone am I’] will be known’.

49

Arunachala, sublime treasure of divine grace found without seeking, be gracious, destroying mental delusion.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, sublime [infinitely benevolent and bountiful] treasure of divine grace found without seeking, be gracious, destroying [ending or terminating] [my] mental delusion [namely ego, the primal delusion ‘I am this body’] [and thereby removing my poverty, this state of being seemingly separate from you, my own real nature].

60

Arunachala, showing desire for you to me, who was devoid of love, without you cheating, be gracious.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, [after] showing [the intoxicating taste of] desire for you to me, who [by my very nature as ego] was devoid of love [for you], without [or instead of] you cheating [me now by not giving yourself to me], be gracious [by fulfilling this desire for you that you have planted and nurtured in my heart].

69

Arunachala, for mind, which is world-fragrance, to acquire *pūrṇa*-fragrance, graciously give *pūrṇa*-union.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, so that [my] mind, which is [still pervaded by and polluted with] world-fragrance [namely *viṣaya-vāsanās*, inclinations to experience phenomena, which are what constitute the world], [instead] acquires *pūrṇa*-fragrance [namely *sat-vāsanā*, the inclination to know and to be nothing other than *sat*, pure being, which is *pūrṇa*, the one infinite whole], graciously give [me] *pūrṇa*-union [namely union with yourself, the one infinite whole, which is the real and eternal state of *jīva-brahma-aikya*, oneness of *jīva* and *brahman*].

70

Arunachala, as soon as thought of the name, catching you pulled. Who can know your greatness?

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, as soon as [I] thought of [your] name, catching [me] you pulled [drew, dragged or attracted] [me to you]. Who can know [or comprehend] your greatness?

71

Arunachala, what! Grasping as an unleaving demon so that the demon-nature leaves, you made me a demoniac.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, what [a wonder]! Grasping [seizing or possessing] [me] as an unleaving demon [a demon, ghost, fiend or evil spirit that will never let go of me] so that [my] [hitherto unleaving] demon-nature [namely ego] leaves [me], you made me a demoniac [someone possessed by the demon-like madness of love for you].

74

Arunachala, in the common space devoid of going and coming show the warfare of grace.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, in the common [natural and all-pervading] space devoid of going and coming [namely the heart, the infinite and eternally immutable space of pure awareness, which never goes (ceases to exist) or comes (begins to exist), and in which, having known it as one's own real nature, one will know that one could never have gone out anywhere or come back] show [me] the warfare of grace [in which you do not cease fighting to save me until you achieve victory, destroying in me the vast army of demons, namely ego and all its *viṣaya-vāsanās*].

97

Arunachala, alluring away from home, entering the heart-home, you quietly showed your home. Grace!

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, alluring [or dragging] [me] away from [my false] home [the thought-filled mind], entering [or making me enter] the home of [my] heart [the empty space of pure awareness], you quietly [gently, softly or secretly] showed [me] [that that, namely my heart, is] your [real and eternal] home [the state of liberation]. [Such is the greatness of your] grace!

98

Arunachala, I have let out your doing. Without despising, letting out your grace, protect me.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, [through these s] I have let out your doing [your actions or deeds] [that is, I have openly disclosed all that you craftily and secretly did in my heart in order to save me]. Without despising [me for doing so and therefore abandoning me], letting out [or openly showering] your grace [or revealing the space of your grace (the infinite space of pure awareness)], protect me [by establishing me forever in the state of absolute isolation (*kaivalya*) or liberation (*mukti*)].

101

Arunachala, be gracious, melting me as love in you, the form of love, like ice in water.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, like ice in water, lovingly melt me as love in you, the form of love.

102

Arunachala, as soon as thought as ‘Arunai’, I was trapped in the net of grace. Will the net of your grace fail?

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, as soon as [I] thought [of you] as ‘Arunai’ [Arunachala], I was trapped in the net [or noose] of [your] grace. Will the net of your grace [ever] fail [in its purpose of ensnaring your devotees]?

103

Arunachala, thinking to be trapped in grace, ensnaring and imprisoning like a spider, you devoured.

Explanatory paraphrase: Arunachala, like a spider [that spins a web, ensnares and devours its prey], thinking [deciding or resolving] [that I should] be trapped in [the web of your] grace, ensnaring and imprisoning [me], you devoured [me].

Aruṇācala Tattuvam & Dīpa-Darśaṇa **Tattuvam – The Reality of Arunachala & Seeing Deepam**

Śrī Aruṇācala Tattuvam – The Reality of Arunachala

Oneself, the heart, the centre, which surges when intellect and ego are grief-stricken, is the actual reality of Annamalai, which shone between them, Brahma and Vishnu, pride to be destroyed, not knowing as desired.

Explanatory paraphrase: The actual reality [truth, *tattva*, import or signification] of Annamalai [Arunachala], which shone [forth as a column of light] between them, Brahma and Vishnu, [in order for their] pride to be destroyed [because of their] not knowing [or perceiving its top or bottom] as [they] desired, is oneself, the heart, the centre, which surges [ascends, rises high or is exalted] when intellect and ego are grief-stricken [despairing because of their not being able to know their real nature, and thereby becoming humble and willing to subside and surrender].

Dīpa-Darśaṇa Tattuvam – The Reality of Seeing Deepam

Giving up the mind called ‘this body alone is I’, that mind merging in the heart by looking inside, seeing the light of ‘I’, the non-dual reality, is the actual reality of seeing the light on Annamalai, which is called the centre of the world.

Explanatory paraphrase: The actual reality [truth, *tattva*, import or signification] of seeing the light on Annamalai, which is called the centre of the world, is seeing the light of 'I' [or heart-light], the non-dual reality, having given up the *mati* [mind, which is what is always aware of itself as] 'this body alone is I', [and] that *buddhi* [mind or *dēhātma-buddhi*, the false awareness that a body is oneself] having [subsided and] merged in the heart by *aha-nōkku* [inward look, looking inside, looking at 'I' or self-attentiveness].

Upadēśa Taṇippākka!

Solitary Verses of Spiritual Teaching²³

I

Because of seeing that it is by nature an effect, which is beginning with male, female and those who are neither, one doer who produces exists as the cause of this world. He destroys and creates this world. Consider the doer to be Hara.

Explanatory paraphrase: Because of seeing that it is by nature a *kārya* [effect], which is [a multitude of diverse forms] beginning with male, female and those who are neither [wholly male nor wholly female], one doer who produces [it] exists as the *kāraṇa* [cause] of this world. He destroys and creates this world. Consider [this] doer to be Hara [Lord Siva].

²³ The translations in this collection represent Michael's most recent translations of *Upadēśa Taṇippākka!*. In December 2025, in response to my request, he generously provided updated and previously unpublished translations of eleven verses specifically for inclusion in this volume: verses 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 24, and 25. These represent refinements of his ongoing translation work, including material shared privately in personal correspondence. The remaining verses translated by Michael (2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21, and 27) are drawn from his website. Five verses (6, 20, 22, 23, and 26) have been excluded from this collection, as Michael has not yet completed his translations of these verses. At present, only earlier translations by Sri Sadhu Om (made in collaboration with Michael) are available for these verses. When Michael completes his translations of all twenty-seven verses, this volume will be updated to include them.

2

He who killed Narakan with the discus of knowledge, investigating where is Narakan, who rules the world of hell as ‘the hellish body is I’, is Naranan. That day is the holy day of *Naraka Caturdaśi*.

Explanatory paraphrase: He who killed Narakan [the demon Narakasura, a personification of ego] with the discus of *jñāna* [knowledge in the sense of pure self-awareness] [by] investigating where is Narakan, who rules the world of *naraka* [hell] as ‘[this] hellish body is I’, is Naranan [Narayana, Lord Visnu, in the form of Krisna]. That day [when he killed him] is the holy day of *Naraka Caturdaśi* [the fourteenth day of the waning moon between mid-October and mid-November, the day on which *Dīpāvali* is celebrated in Tamil Nadu].

3

Shining as oneself, investigating and killing the great sinner who is Narakan, who was downfallen as ‘the illusory body-abode, which is the form of hell, is I’, is *Dīpāvali*. Be clear.

Explanatory paraphrase: Shining as oneself [one’s own real nature] [after] investigating and killing the great sinner who is Narakan [ego], who was downfallen as ‘the illusory [or miserable] body-abode, which is the form of *naraka* [hell], is I’, is [what is signified by] *Dīpāvali*. Be clear [that is, consider, investigate and know this clearly].

4

Whatever is birthday? You who make a great celebration, only that day when, carefully attending to where we were born, we are born in the substance, which always shines as one without being born and dying, is birthday.

Explanatory paraphrase: What is [the real] birthday? You who make a great celebration [about a so-called birthday], only that day when, [by] carefully attending to [ourself, the source] from which we were born [as ego, the false awareness 'I am this body'], we are born in *porul* [the real substance or *vastu*], which without [ever] being born or dying always shines as one [namely the one infinite and immutable real awareness, 'I am'], is [the real] birthday.

5

Saying 'Not weeping for birth even on birthday, cherishing birthday as a festival is infatuation of adorning a dead corpse', only subsiding being aware of oneself is awareness.

Explanatory paraphrase: Understanding 'Instead of weeping [or lamenting] for [one's] birth at least on [one's] birthday, cherishing [one's] birthday as a festival is infatuation [like] adorning [or decorating] a dead corpse', only subsiding [and merging forever in one's real nature] [by investigating and thereby] being aware of oneself [as one actually is] is [real] awareness.

7

Though the swarming hornets stung the leg so that it became inflamed and swollen when it touched and damaged their nest, which was spread in the midst of green leaves, and though it was a mistake that happened accidentally, if one did not at least feel sorry, what indeed would be the nature of his mind?

Explanatory paraphrase: Though the swarming hornets stung the leg so that it became inflamed and swollen when it touched and damaged their nest, which was spread [and concealed] in the midst of green leaves, and though it [the act of disrupting their nest] was a mistake that happened accidentally, if one did not at least feel sorry [pity for the hornets and repentant for the trouble caused to them], what indeed would be the nature of his mind [that is, how thoroughly hard-hearted and insensitive it would be]?

8

Even a conjuror will delude the people of this world without himself being deluded, son, whereas a *siddha* deludes the people of this world, himself being deluded. How much wonder this is!

9

Declare those who take as 'I' a body, which eats pure food and converts it into filth, to be worse than a pig that eats faeces.

Explanatory paraphrase: Declare that those who take as 'I' a [human] body, which eats pure food and converts it into filth, are worse than a pig that eats faeces.

10

Only one who is saved can save living beings in the world, whereas anyone else is like a blind person [trying to be] a guide for [another] blind person.

11

The state that is reached in the inward-looking means, which clearly arises within by *sādhu*-association, is not by teachers, texts or good deeds. Go.

Explanatory paraphrase: The state [of knowing and being what one actually is], which is reached [or achieved] in the inward-looking means [namely self-investigation], which clearly arises within by [because of or as a result of] *sādhu*-association, is not [reached or achieved] by [any other means such as] teachers, [sacred] texts or good deeds. [Understanding this to be the case, stop looking outside, and instead] go [back within].

12

Awareness alone is real. Ignorance, which does not exist except as awareness that sees as many, itself does not exist except as oneself, who is awareness. All the many ornaments are unreal; do they exist except as gold, which is real? Say.

Explanatory paraphrase: *Jñāna* [pure awareness] alone is real. *Ajñāna* [ignorance], which does not exist except as [or is not other than] *jñāna* [awareness] that sees [the one real *jñāna*] as *nānā* [manifold or diverse], itself does not exist except as [besides, apart from or as other than] oneself, who is [real] awareness. All the many

ornaments are unreal; do they exist except as gold, which is real? Say.

13

Except we, where is time? If [because of] not investigating ourself we think that we are a body, time will swallow us. [But] are we a body? In the present, past and future times we are always one. Therefore, there is [only] we, we who have swallowed time.

14

[For] those who in [the practice of] *jñāna* cannot abide as [intimately experience or reach] the place where ‘I’ pervades, in [the practice of] *japa* investigating the place where *vāk-parai*²⁴ pervades is appropriate.

15

Self-investigation (*ātma-anusāndhāna*) is supreme devotion to God (*para īśa-bhakti*), because God exists as oneself (*ātman*).

16

The state of sleep in waking will result by subtle investigation, in which one always examines [or keenly attends to] oneself. Until

²⁴ *Vāk-parai* (an alternative form of *parāvākku*) means the ‘word supreme’ or ‘supreme word’, which Bhagavan used to describe ‘I’, the natural name of ourself, the supreme reality.

sleep shines pervading in waking [and] in dream, incessantly perform that subtle investigation.

17

Whoever immerses without action in the holy waters of self, which shine abundantly as blemishless eternal happiness, which, extending everywhere, not caring for direction, time, place and so on, dispels that cold and so on, that firmly established one, being omnipresent and knowing all, is immortal.

Explanatory paraphrase: Whoever bathes [or immerses] without action in *ātma-tīrtha* [the holy waters or sacred bathing place of *ātman* (oneself, here used in the sense of one's real nature)], which shines abundantly as blemishless eternal happiness, which, extending [or pervading] everywhere, without caring for [or being concerned about] direction, time, place and so on, dispels that cold and so on [implying all painful or unpleasant experiences such as cold], that firmly established one, being omnipresent and knowing all, is immortal.

18

If one knows one's real form in the heart, being-awareness-happiness, which is fullness without beginning or end.

Explanatory paraphrase: If one knows one's real form [oneself as one actually is] in the heart, [what will be and shine is only] being-awareness-happiness, which is fullness [completeness, perfection, satisfaction or joy] without beginning or end.

19

[What is experienced as] *śānti* [peace] in inward look itself is [what is experienced as] *śakti* [power] by outward look. For those who investigate and know, they are one.

21

The body is impermanent [and therefore unreal]. Just as a person blinded with the intoxication of toddy [a drink of fermented palm sap] [is not aware whether] the fine cloth with which he was adorned [is still on his body or has fallen off], the *siddha* [that is, the *jnani*] who has known self does not know the body, whether [due to *prarabdha karma* or destiny] it rests or is active, and whether due to [that same *prarabdha*] *karma* it is joined or has separated [that is, whether it lives or has died].

24

There is no becoming, destruction, bondage, desire to untie, effort, those who have attained. Know that this is the ultimate truth.

Explanatory paraphrase: There is no becoming [or coming into being], destruction, bondage, desire to untie [the knot of bondage], effort [made for liberation], [or] those who have attained [liberation]. Know that this is *paramārtha* [the ultimate truth].

25

Questions and answers are only in this language of duality; in non-duality they do not exist.

Explanatory paraphrase: Questions and answers are [possible] only in this language of *dvaita* [duality]; in [the real state of] *advaita* [non-duality] they do not exist.

27

Silence (*mauna*) is the very nature of grace, the one language that rises within.

Explanatory paraphrase: Silence is the very nature [or actual state] of grace, the one [single, non-dual, unique, unequalled and incomparable] language that rises within [eternally surging forth as the clear light of pure awareness, 'I am', waiting to swallow the mind as soon as it turns back within].

Appendix A

Selections from *Bhagavad Gītā Sāram*

The Essence of the *Bhagavad Gītā*²⁵

9

For what does not exist there is no existence. For what does exist there is not what is called non-existence. Therefore, those who have seen that this itself is the nature of the two called what does not exist and what exists are ascetics who have known the reality.²⁶

Explanatory paraphrase: For *illādadu* [what does not exist] there is no existence [at any time]. For *uḷḷadu* [what does exist] there is not [at any time] what is called non-existence. Therefore, those who have seen that this itself is the nature of the two called *illadu* [what does not exist] and *uḷḷadu* [what exists] are ascetics who have known the reality [or who have known themselves, the reality].

27

It is necessary by a courage-imbued intellect to gently gently [calmly and gradually] make the mind achieve motionlessness. Great charioteer, fix the mind [your attention] in [or on] *ātman* [yourself]; do not think even the slightest of anything else at all.

²⁵ Bhagavan translated selected verses from the *Bhagavad Gītā* into Tamil as *Bhagavad Gītā Sāram*. This compilation includes only those verses for which Michael has provided English translations on his website.

²⁶ This is Bhagavan's adaptation of *Bhagavad Gītā* 2.16.

Adaptation of Bhagavad Gītā 6.25: By [an] intellect [a power of discrimination or discernment] imbued with firmness [steadfastness, resolution, persistence or courage] one should gently and gradually withdraw [one's mind] from [all] activity. Having made [one's] mind stand firm in *ātman*, one should not think even a little of anything else.

28

Whatever the mind, which is always wavering without any steadiness, grasps and [wherever it consequently] goes, drawing that mind back from that and fixing it in [or on] *ātman* [yourself], make it be always steady.

Adaptation of Bhagavad Gītā 6.26: Wherever the ever-wavering and unsteady mind goes, restraining [or withdrawing] it from there one should subdue it [by always keeping it firmly fixed] only in *ātman*.

Appendix B

Selections from *Vivēkacūḍāmaṇi*

The Crown-Jewel of Discrimination²⁷

Auspicious Invocation (*maṅgalam*) by Bhagavan

So that the root ignorance called ‘I’ may depart, may we always delight as inner joy in the feet of *ātma-dēva*, who shines without night and day in the heart as ‘I am I’.

Explanatory paraphrase: So that the *mūla avidyā* [root or original ignorance] called ‘I’ [ego] may depart, may we always delight as inner joy in the feet [or state] of *ātma-dēva* [the shining one or God, who is oneself], who shines without night and day in the heart as ‘I am I’.

Introduction by Bhagavan²⁸

Since all living beings in the world desire that they should always be happy [and] devoid of misery, just as [they desire] that they should be happy as always [by] getting rid of those experiences such as illness which are not their own nature, since all [living beings] have love completely only for their own self, since love does not arise except for happiness, and since in sleep [all living beings have] the

²⁷ Bhagavan adapted portions of Adi Sankara’s *Vivēkacūḍāmaṇi* into Tamil. This compilation presents the selections available through Michael’s translations on his website.

²⁸ This is the opening paragraph from Bhagavan’s introduction to his adaptation of Adi Sankara’s *Vivēkacūḍāmaṇi*.

experience of being happy without anything, when what is called happiness is [therefore] only [their own real] self, only due to [their] ignorance of not knowing [their real] self do they rise and engage in *pravṛtti* [extroverted activity], whirling in boundless *samsāra* [the state of restless and incessant wandering of the mind], forsaking the path [of self-discovery] which bestows [true] happiness, [believing] as if attaining the pleasures of this world and the next were alone the path to happiness.

The 'fourfold means' (*sādhana catuṣṭayam*)

Being *mēdhāvi* [one who is extremely intelligent (implying one who has the intelligence to clearly understand and appreciate extremely subtle truths)], being one who has the *sāmarthyā* [skill or ability] to reject the inessential (*asāra*), grasping [just] the essential (*sāra*), one who has achieved to be settled in oneself all the *lakṣaṇas* [signs, characteristics or qualities] that are described in the *sāstras* is *adhikāri* [one who has fitness, worthiness or qualification] in *ātma-vicāra* [self-investigation]. [verse 16]

What [are those *lakṣaṇas*]?

Only for that *adhikāri* who possesses the means (*sādhana*) which are being *vivēki* [one who has the ability to distinguish, discern or discriminate], being *virakta* [one who is free of desire and attachment], being one who is endowed with *sadguṇa* [good qualities or virtues] beginning with calmness (*śama*) and restraint (*dama*), and being *tīvra mumukṣu* [one who has intense desire for liberation], will the fitness (*yōgyatā*) to do *brahma-vicāra* arise. [verse 17]

The means (*sādhana*s) are said by sages to be of four kinds, namely: (1) *nityānitya-vastu-vivēka* [ability to distinguish the eternal from the ephemeral], (2) *ihāmutra-phala-bhōga-virāga* [freedom from desire for enjoyment of the fruit (of actions) either here or

hereafter], (3) *śamādi ṣaṭka saṃpatti* [the sixfold accomplishment beginning with calmness] and (4) *mumuḥṣutva* [desire for liberation].

Only if these are [present] for that *adhikāri* will *brahma-niṣṭhā* [the state of being firmly fixed as *brahman*] be obtained; if not, it will not be accomplished. [verses 18-19]

Among these:

(1) Only the *niścaya* [ascertainment, conviction or certainty reached by careful consideration and investigation] that brahman alone is real and the world unreal is *nityānitya-vastu-vivēka* [ability to distinguish the eternal from the ephemeral]. [verse 20]

(2) By seeing directly the defects of impermanence and suffering (*anitya-duḥkha-dōṣas*) of the impermanent objects of enjoyment (*anitya-bhōgya-vastus*) beginning with the body and extending to *Brahmā*, and by hearing [or learning] [about these defects] from *śāstras*, the *vairāgya* [desirelessness] that arises towards them [those objects of enjoyment] is *iḥāmutra-phala-bhōga-virāga* [freedom from desire for enjoyment of the fruit (of actions) either here or hereafter]. [verse 21]

(3) (i) fixing the mind on its target (*lakṣya*), having achieved detachment (*virakti*) from phenomena (*viśayas*) by repeatedly considering and seeing the defects (*dōṣas*) in them, is *śama* [calmness or tranquillity]; [verse 22]

(ii) making the *jñāna-karma-indriyas* [the organs of knowing and doing (sense-organs and organs of action)], which flow towards phenomena (*viśayas*), to be [or remain] only in their respective spheres (locations), having made them turn back [from flowing outwards], is *dama* [restraint or subdual];

(iii) without thinking again of external phenomena (*viśayas*) due to former inclinations (*pūrva vāsanās*), firmly fixing only on its target (*lakṣya*), the mind [thereby] giving up other activities (*karmas*) is *uparati* [cessation or relinquishment]; [verse 23]

(iv) however many miseries [or afflictions] come, without resisting [trying to prevent or oppose them] and without being perturbed and lamenting over them, enduring them with courage is *titikṣā* [fortitude or forbearance]; [verse 24]

(v) *niścaya* [ascertainment, conviction or certainty reached by careful consideration and investigation] that holds that *vēdānta śāstras* [the sacred texts of *vēdānta*] and the words of *guru* are true is *śraddhā* [trust or confidence], which is *hētu* [a cause, reason, motive, means or requisite condition] for *brahma-sākṣātkāra* [direct experience of *brahman*]; [verse 25]

(vi) by all efforts firmly fixing the mind, whose nature (*svabhāva*) is to be *cañcala* [fickle, unsteady and constantly moving], only on *pariśuddha brahman* [perfectly pure infinite being] is *samādhāna* [being steadily settled in deep contemplation]; except that, leaving the mind to go as it [formerly] went [namely out towards phenomena] is not *samādhi*. [verse 26]

(4) The *icchā* [will, wish, desire or inclination] to destroy by *svātma-jñāna* [self-knowledge, awareness of one's own self] bondage beginning with *ahamkāra* [ego] and extending to the body, which came by *anādi ajñāna* [beginningless ignorance], is *mumuksutva* [desire for liberation]. [verse 27]

Even if that *mumuksutva* [desire for liberation] is *manda* [slow, sluggish, slack, dull, weak, feeble or slight] or *madhyama* [mediocre], growing gradually by desirelessness (*vairāgya*), by calmness (*śama*), restraint (*dama*) and so on, and by the grace (*anugraha*) of *guru*, reaching the proper time it will eventually bear fruit. [verse 28]

In whomever *mumuksutva* [desire for liberation] combined with *vairāgya* [freedom from desire for anything else] exists intensely [as *tīvra* (strong, intense, severe, sharp or acute)], only in the proximity (*samīpa*) of calmness (*śama*), restraint (*dama*) and so on, which coalesce in him, will it give fruit. [verse 29]

But in whomever it exists feebly [as *manda*], in him calmness (*śama*), restraint (*dama*) and so on will occur only as *ābhāsa* [a semblance or false appearance] like water in a desert. [verse 30]

Verse 31²⁹

Investigation (*anusamdhāna*) of one's own (*ātma*) *svarūpa* [the real nature of oneself, meaning oneself as we actually are] indeed is *bhakti say mahātmās*.

The Ultimate Truth of *Vēdānta*³⁰

Like the appearance and destruction of the unreal snake not existing in reality in the rope, in *kēvala-jñānātma-vastu* [the substance that is oneself, who is pure (or isolated) awareness], [which is] free from destruction, eternal, unattached and non-dual, there is absolutely no *māyā*-produced bondage and liberation whatsoever [...]. Because of the non-existence of anything at all as other (*anya*) than *brahman*, it cannot be said that bondage [occurs] because of *āvaraṇa* [covering, veiling, concealing or obscuring] and that liberation [occurs] because of destruction of *āvaraṇa*. If this were said, the failure of *advaita* and the proof of *dvaita* would be achieved [that is, if this were the case, it would mean that *advaita* is false and *dvaita* is true]. This is not *sammata* [consistent with, acceptable or agreeable] to the *Vēdas*. In that extremely tranquil *advitīya* [secondless or otherless] *brahman*, which exists as *niṣkala* [formless, partless or indivisible], *nirmala* [taintless or immaculate], *niṣkriya* [actionless] and *nirañjana*

²⁹ Bhagavan translated this verse as part of the sixth paragraph of his adaptation. It summarises the essence of verses 16-30, indicating that self-investigation (*ātma-vicāra*) is the heart of all the qualifications described in the fourfold means (*sādhana catuṣṭayam*).

³⁰ This is Bhagavan's adaptation of verses 569-575, with portions of verses 571-572 omitted from the first sentence. The paragraph title is provided by the compiler.

[blemishless or pure], and as *pūrṇa* [full, complete, entire, whole or infinite] like space, where is [room for any] *kalpanā* [fabrication, mental creation or imagination]? ‘There is no *utpatti* [birth, origination, arising, occurrence, appearance or coming into being]; no destruction; no one bound; no one who does *sādhana*; no one seeking liberation; not even one who is liberated; this indeed is *paramārtha* [the ultimate truth]’: thus proclaims even the *śruti* [the Vēdas]. This, which is the most secret among secrets, being the *siddhānta* [established conclusion] of all *vēdānta*, O disciple, has been made known to you by me.

Appendix C

Upadēśa Kaliveṅbā

Teachings in *Kaliveṅbā*³¹

Introductory verse by Muruganar

To say that what exists is one so that those who say that what exists is not one but many may understand, consider that Ramana aptly gave [this *Upadēśa Kaliveṅbā* by] making those forty *veṅbās* on what exists into one fine *kaliveṅbā*.

Lines 1-4: the extended version of the first benedictory verse

If what exists were not, would existing awareness exist? Since the existing substance exists in the Heart without thought, how to think of the existing substance, which is called ‘Heart’? Being in the Heart as it is alone is thinking. **May you actually** know.

Explanatory paraphrase: If *uḷḷadu* [what is or what exists] were not, would *uḷḷa-v-uṅarvu* [existing awareness, actual awareness or awareness of what is] exist? [Or: (1) Except as *uḷḷadu*, does *uḷḷa-v-uṅarvu* exist? (2) Other than *uḷḷadu*, is there awareness to think [of it, meditate on it or investigate it]?] Since *uḷḷa-poruḷ* [the existing substance or reality] exists in the heart without thought, how to [or who can] think of [meditate on or investigate] *uḷḷa-poruḷ*, which is

³¹ To assist devotees who wanted to chant *Uḷḷadu Nāṅpadu* alongside Bhagavan’s other works, he linked all forty-two verses (the two benedictory verses and forty main verses) into a single continuous *kaliveṅbā*. The linking words that connect the original verses are shown in bold type.

called *uḷlam* [the heart]? Being in the heart as it is [that is, as pure thought-free self-awareness] alone is thinking [of it, meditating on it, contemplating it, investigating it or revering it]. **May you actually know [or be aware] [of it as it is].**

Lines 4-8: the extended version of the second benedictory verse

Pure-hearted people who have intense fear of death **within** will take refuge at the feet of God, who is devoid of death and birth, as a fortress. By their refuge, they undergo death. Will those who are deathless be associated with the thought of death? **Eternal.**

Explanatory paraphrase: Pure-hearted people who have intense fear of death within [in their heart] will take refuge at [or surrender to] the feet of Mahēśaṇ [the Great Lord, Śiva or God], who is devoid of death and birth, [depending upon him] as [their protective] fortress. By their [taking] refuge (or as soon as they take refuge), their ego dies [and what remains is only their real nature, which is immortal awareness]. Will those who are [thereby] deathless be associated [ever again] with the thought of death? [**They are] eternal.**

Lines 8-12: the extended version of verse 1

Because we, **who have become sight-joined**, see the world, accepting one fundamental that has a power that becomes many is certainly the one best option. The picture of names and forms, the one who sees, the cohesive screen, and the pervading light – all these are he, who is oneself.

Explanatory paraphrase: Because we, **who [by rising as the ego] have become joined with sight**, see the world, accepting one *mudal*

[first thing, origin, source, base or fundamental reality] that has a power that becomes many [appearances, namely oneself as the ego, the seer or perceiver, and all the manifold phenomena that constitute this or any other world that we may see or perceive] is certainly the one best option. The picture of names and forms [namely the world and whatever other phenomena appear in the mind], the one who sees [this picture] [namely the ego], the cohesive screen [namely the mind as the background on which it appears], and the pervading light [namely the mind as the reflected light of awareness, which is what illumines its appearance] — all these are he [the one original thing], who is oneself [one's real nature].

Lines 12-16: the extended version of verse 2

Each religion initially accepts three fundamentals, **the world, God and soul**. Contending 'Only one fundamental stands as three fundamentals', 'Three fundamentals are always actually three fundamentals', is only so long as the ego exists. 'I' perishing, standing in the state of oneself is best.

Explanatory paraphrase: Each religion [or theistic system of belief] initially accepts three fundamentals, **the soul, world and God**. Contending that only one fundamental stands as [these] three fundamentals or that [these] three fundamentals are always actually three fundamentals is [possible] only so long as the ego exists. [As a result of] 'I' [ego] perishing [or being destroyed], standing in the [real] state of oneself is best.

Lines 16-20: the extended version of verse 3

What is the use of disputing **futilely**: 'The world is real', 'An unreal appearance'; 'The world is sentient', 'It is not'; 'The world is happiness', 'It is not'? Leaving the world and investigating oneself, one and two ceasing, that state in which 'I' has perished is agreeable to all.

Explanatory paraphrase: What is the use of disputing **futilely**: 'The world is real', '[No, it is] an unreal appearance'; 'The world is sentient', 'It is not'; 'The world is happiness', 'It is not'? Leaving [all thought about] the world and investigating [or knowing] oneself, [thereby] putting an end to [all disputes about] one and two [non-duality and duality], that state in which 'I' [the ego] has [thereby] perished is agreeable to all.

Lines 20-24: the extended version of verse 4

If oneself is a form, **which is composed of flesh**, the world and God will be likewise; if oneself is not a form, who can see their forms? How? Can the seen be otherwise than the eye? The eye is actually oneself, the infinite eye.

Explanatory paraphrase: If oneself is a form [namely a body], **which is composed of [or packed tight with] flesh**, the world and God will be likewise [that is, they will also be forms]; if oneself is not a form, who can see their forms, and how [to do so]? Can what is seen be otherwise [or of a different nature] than the eye [the awareness that sees or perceives it]? [Therefore forms can be perceived only by an 'eye' or awareness that perceives itself as a form, namely the ego or mind, which always perceives itself as the form of a body.] The [real] eye is actually oneself [one's real nature, which is pure awareness],

the infinite [and hence formless] eye [so it can never see any forms or phenomena, which are all finite].

Lines 24-28: the extended version of verse 5

If one considers, the body is a form of five sheaths. Therefore, all five are included in the term ‘body’. Without a body, is there a world? Leaving the body, is there anyone who has seen a world? **May you say**.

Explanatory paraphrase: **If one considers**, the body is *pañca-kōśa-uru* [a form composed of five sheaths, namely a physical structure, life, mind, intellect and will]. Therefore all five [sheaths] are included in the term ‘body’. Without a body [composed of these five sheaths], is there a world? Without [experiencing oneself as such] a body, is there anyone who has seen a world? **May you say**.

Lines 28-32: the extended version of verse 6

The world **which one sees** is a form of five sense-impressions, not anything else. Those five sense-impressions are impressions to the five sense organs. Since the mind alone perceives the world by way of the five sense organs, is there a world besides the mind? Say.

Explanatory paraphrase: **The world that one has seen [or perceived]** is a form [composed] of five [kinds of] sense-impressions [sights, sounds, tastes, smells and tactile sensations], not anything else. Those five [kinds of] sense-impressions are impressions [respective] to the five sense organs. Since the mind alone [or since one thing, the mind] perceives the world by way of

the five sense organs, is there [any] world besides [excluding, if not for, apart from, other than or without] the mind? Say.

Lines 32-36: the extended version of verse 7

Though the world, **which stands in front of our eyes**, and awareness arise and subside simultaneously, the world shines by awareness. Only that which shines without appearing or disappearing as the place for the appearing and disappearing of the world and awareness is the substance, which is the whole.

Explanatory paraphrase: Though the world, **which stands in front of our eyes**, and awareness [the awareness that perceives the world, namely the ego or mind] arise and subside simultaneously, the world shines by [that rising and subsiding] awareness [the mind]. Only that which shines without appearing or disappearing as the place [space, expanse, location, site or ground] for the appearing and disappearing of the world and [that] awareness is *poru!* [the real substance or *vastu*], which is *pūndram* [the infinite whole or *pūrṇa*].

Lines 36-40: the extended version of verse 8

Whoever worships in whatever form giving whatever name, that is the way to see that substance in name and form; **it is what is appropriate**. However, investigating the reality of oneself, dissolving in the reality of that true substance, becoming one alone is seeing in reality. **May you actually** know.

Explanatory paraphrase: Whoever worships [it] in whatever form giving [it] whatever name, that is the way to see that [nameless and formless] *poru!* [the real substance, namely *brahman*, the ultimate

reality or God] in name and form, **[because] it is what is appropriate [or what happens or is possible]**. However, [by] investigating [or knowing] the reality of oneself, [and by thereby] dissolving [or subsiding] in the reality of that true poru], becoming one [with it] alone is seeing [it] in reality. **May you actually** know [or be aware].

Lines 40-44: the extended version of verse 9

Dyads and triads, **skyness**, exist always holding one thing. If one sees within the mind what that one thing is, they will slip off. Only those who have seen have seen the reality. They will not be confused. See.

Explanatory paraphrase: Dyads [pairs of opposites, such as existence and non-existence, life and death, awareness and non-awareness, knowledge and ignorance, happiness and unhappiness, good and bad, liberation and bondage] and triads [the *tripuṭī* or three factors of transitive knowledge or awareness, namely *jñātā* or *pramātā* (the knower or subject, namely ego), *jñāna* or *pramāṇa* (knowing or the means of knowing, such as seeing, hearing, perceiving, experiencing, inferring or believing reliable testimony) and *jñēya* or *pramēya* (whatever is known, namely objects, phenomena, facts, theories and so on)], **[which are unreal like] the blueness of the sky**, exist [by] always holding [or depending on] one thing [namely the ego, in whose view alone they seem to exist]. If [by looking keenly at oneself] one sees within the mind what that one thing is, they will slip off [run away or disappear] [implying that they will cease to exist, because their support and foundation, namely ego, will itself cease to exist]. Only those who have seen [what remains when all dyads and triads have thereby ceased to exist along with their root, ego] have seen the reality. They will not be confused

[by ever again seeing anything else at all]. See [what is real in this way by seeing within the mind what that one thing is that rises as 'I' to know all other things].

Lines 44-48: the extended version of verse 10

Leaving ignorance, **which is dense like darkness**, knowledge does not exist; leaving knowledge, that ignorance does not exist. Only the knowledge that knows oneself, who is the first, as to whom are that knowledge and ignorance, is knowledge.

Explanatory paraphrase: Without ignorance [of other things], **which is dense [or abundant, crowded, obstructed] like darkness**, knowledge [of them] does not exist; without knowledge [of them], that ignorance [of them] does not exist. Only the knowledge [or awareness] that knows [the reality of] oneself [the ego], who is the first [to appear], [by investigating] to whom are that knowledge and ignorance [of other things], is [real] knowledge [or awareness].

Lines 48-52: the extended version of verse 11

Not knowing oneself, who knows **those that are known**, knowing other things is ignorance; besides, is it knowledge? When one knows oneself, the support for knowledge and the other, knowledge and ignorance will **definitely** cease.

Explanatory paraphrase: Instead of knowing [the reality of] oneself [the ego], who knows **[all] those [things] that are known**, knowing other things is ignorance; except [that], is it knowledge? When one knows [the reality of] oneself [the ego], the *ādhāra* [support, foundation or container] for knowledge and the other [ignorance],

knowledge and ignorance [of everything else] will **definitely** cease [because the reality of the ego is just pure awareness, so when one knows oneself as pure awareness the ego will no longer seem to exist, and hence all its knowledge and ignorance will cease to exist along with it].

Lines 52-56: the extended version of verse 12

What is **completely [utterly or entirely]** devoid of knowledge and ignorance is actually knowledge. That which knows is not real knowledge. Since one shines without another for knowing or for causing to know, oneself is knowledge. One is not void. **May you** know.

Explanatory paraphrase: What is **completely [utterly or entirely]** devoid of knowledge and ignorance [about anything other than itself] is actually *arivu* [knowledge or awareness]. That which knows [or is aware of anything other than itself, namely the ego] is not real *arivu* [knowledge or awareness]. Since one [one's real nature] shines without another for knowing or for causing to know [or causing to be known], oneself is [real] *arivu* [knowledge or awareness]. One is not void [emptiness, desolation, nothingness or non-existence]. **May you** know [or be aware].

Lines 56-60: the extended version of verse 13

Oneself, who is **dense** awareness, alone is real. Awareness that is manifold is ignorance. Even ignorance, which is unreal, does not exist except as oneself, who is awareness. All the many ornaments are unreal; do they exist except as gold, which is real? Say.

Explanatory paraphrase: Oneself, who is **dense [abundant, full, firm and clear]** *jñāna* [knowledge or awareness], alone is real. Awareness that is manifold [namely the mind, whose root, the ego, is the awareness that sees the one as many] is *ajñāna* [ignorance]. Even [that] ignorance, which is unreal, does not exist except as [besides, apart from or as other than] oneself, who is [real] awareness. All the many ornaments are unreal; do they exist except as gold, which is real? Say. [In other words, though the ego or mind, which is the false awareness that sees itself as numerous phenomena, is ignorance and unreal, the real substance that appears as it is only oneself, who is true knowledge or pure awareness, so what actually exists is not the ego or mind but only oneself.]

Lines 60-64: the extended version of verse 14

If that first person **called ‘the body is I’** exists, second and third persons will exist. If, oneself investigating the reality of the first person, the first person ceases to exist, second and third persons coming to an end, the nature that shines as one alone is oneself, the state of oneself.

Explanatory paraphrase: If that first person [the ego] **called ‘[this] body is I’ exists**, second and third persons [everything else] will exist. If the first person ceases to exist [by] oneself investigating the reality of the first person, second and third persons will come to an end, and [what then remains alone, namely] the nature [selfness, essence or reality] that shines as one [undivided by the appearance of these three persons or ‘places’] alone is oneself, the [real] state [or nature] of oneself.

Lines 64-68: the extended version of verse 15

Past and future stand holding the present, **which always endures**. While occurring, they too are actually the present. The present is the only one. Not knowing the reality of now, trying to know the past or future is trying to count without one.

Explanatory paraphrase: Past and future stand holding [or depending upon] the present, **which always endures [remains or exists]**. While occurring, they too are actually the present. [Therefore] the present is the only one [the only time that actually exists] [alternatively this sentence can be interpreted as meaning: the present alone [is all these three times]; the present alone [exists]; or [there is] only the present] [so the implication of all these interpretations is that there are not three times, namely the past, present and future, but only one, namely the present, which alone is what seems to be these three]. [Hence] without knowing the reality of today [the present moment, now], trying to know the past or future is [like] trying to count [calculate or evaluate] without [knowing the value of] one.

Lines 68-72: the extended version of verse 16

When we investigate, except we, **the substance that stands consciously**, where is time, where is place? If we are a body, we will be ensnared in time and place. Are we a body? Since we are the one, now, then and always, the one in place, here, there and everywhere, there is we, we. Time and place do not exist.

Explanatory paraphrase: When we investigate [ourselves], except we, **the [one real] substance, which stands consciously [or as clear awareness]**, where is time and where is place? If we are a body, we

will be ensnared in time and place. [But] are we a body? Since we are the [same] one [without any change], now, then and always, the [same] one in [each] place, here, there and everywhere, there is [only] we, [the timeless and placeless] we. Time and place do not exist.

Lines 72-76: the extended version of verse 17

For those who do not know themselves, for those who have known themselves, this body, **which is flesh**, is actually 'I'. For those who do not know themselves, 'I' is only the extent of the body; for those who have known themselves within the body, oneself, 'I', shines without limit. **May you** consider that the difference between them is only this.

Explanatory paraphrase: For those who do not know themselves [their real nature] and for those who have known themselves, this **[defective]** body, **which is [composed of] flesh [like a corpse]**, is actually 'I' [or only 'I']. For those who do not know themselves, 'I' is [limited to] only the extent of the body, [whereas] for those who have known themselves within the body, oneself [called] 'I' shines without limit [boundary or extent] [as the one infinite whole, which alone exists and which is therefore the sole substance that appears as the body and everything else]. **May you** consider that the difference between them is only this.

Lines 76-80: the extended version of verse 18

For those who do not have knowledge, for those who have, the world, **which is in front**, is real. For those who do not know, reality is the extent of the world; for those who have known, reality

pervades devoid of form as the support for the world. This is the difference between them. **May you** consider.

Explanatory paraphrase: For those who do not have knowledge [of their real nature] and for those who have, the world, **which is [seen] in front**, is real. For those who do not know [their real nature], reality is [limited to] the extent of [the forms that constitute] the world, [whereas] for those who have known [their real nature], reality pervades devoid of form as the *ādhāra* [support, foundation or container] for [the appearance of the forms that constitute] the world. This is the difference between them. **May you** consider.

Lines 80-84: the extended version of verse 19

Only for those who do not have discernment of the root of fate and will, **different**, is there dispute about which prevails, fate or will. Those who have known themselves, who is the one origin for fate and will, have discarded them. Will they thereafter be associated with them? **May you** say.

Explanatory paraphrase: Only for those who do not have *bhēda vidhi-mati-mūla-vivēkam* [ability to distinguish or discern the root of fate (*vidhi*) and will (*mati*), **which are different or distinct from each other, namely the ego**] is there dispute about which prevails, fate or will. Those who have known [the reality of] themselves [the ego], who is the one origin [cause or foundation] for fate and will, have [thereby] discarded them [because the ego as such does not actually exist, since its reality is not what it seems to be but just pure awareness, so when one knows oneself as pure awareness the appearance of the ego will be dissolved forever, and thus one will

have discarded not only the ego but also its fate and will]. Will they thereafter be associated with them? **May you** say.

Lines 84-88: the extended version of verse 20

Leaving oneself, who sees **those that appear**, oneself seeing God is seeing a mental vision. Only one who sees oneself, the origin of oneself, is one who has seen God, because the origin, oneself, going, oneself is not other than God.

Explanatory paraphrase: Leaving [letting go of, neglecting, ignoring or not investigating] oneself [namely ego], who sees **[all] those [things] that appear**, oneself seeing God is seeing a mental vision [a mind-constituted image, phenomenon or appearance]. Only one who sees oneself [one's real nature], the origin [base or foundation] of oneself [namely ego], is one who has seen God, because oneself [one's real nature], [which alone is what remains] when oneself [namely ego], the origin [root or foundation of all other things], goes, is not other than God.

Lines 88-92: the extended version of verse 21

If one asks what is the truth of many texts that say 'oneself seeing oneself', **whom one considers to be a soul**, 'seeing God': Since oneself is one, how is oneself to see oneself? If it is not possible to see, how to see God? Becoming food is seeing.

Explanatory paraphrase: If anyone asks what is the truth of many texts that talk of 'oneself seeing oneself', **whom one considers to be a soul [or living being]**, and 'seeing God' [the reply is]: Since oneself is one, how is oneself to see oneself? If it is not possible [for

oneself] to see [oneself], how [is oneself] to see God [who is the real nature of oneself]? Becoming food [to God] is seeing [both oneself and God]. [In other words, the ego being swallowed and consumed entirely by the infinite light of pure awareness is alone real seeing.]

Lines 92-96: the extended version of verse 22

Except by, turning the mind back within, completely immersing it in God, who shines within that mind giving light to the mind, **which sees everything**, how to fathom God by the mind? **May you** consider.

Explanatory paraphrase: Except by turning [bending or folding] *mati* [the mind or intellect] back within [and thereby] completely immersing [embedding or fixing] it in *pati* [the Lord or God], who shines [as pure awareness] within that mind giving light [of awareness] to the mind, **which sees everything**, how to fathom [or investigate and know] God by the mind? **May you** consider.

Lines 96-100: the extended version of verse 23

Since it is not awareness, this body does not say ‘I’. No one says ‘In sleep I do not exist’. After one thing, ‘I’, rises, everything rises. **When one** contemplates by a subtle mind where this ‘I’ rises, **it slips away**.

Explanatory paraphrase: **Since it is devoid of awareness**, this body does not say ‘I’ [that is, it is not aware of itself as ‘I’]. No one says ‘In sleep I do not exist’ [even though one was then not aware of this or any other body]. [Therefore neither this nor any other body can be what I actually am, but in waking and dream an awareness rises as ‘I

am this body'.] After one thing [called] 'I' [namely the ego, the awareness that rises as 'I am this body'] rises, everything rises. **When one** contemplates [investigates, discerns, determines or ascertains] by a subtle [refined, sharp, keen, acute, precise, meticulous and discerning] mind [or intellect] where this 'I' rises, **it slips away [steals away or stealthily escapes].**

Lines 100-104: the extended version of verse 24³²

The insentient body does not say 'I'; being-awareness does not rise; in between one thing, 'I', rises as the extent of the body. Know that this is the awareness-insentience-knot, bondage, soul, subtle body, ego, this wandering and mind.

Explanatory paraphrase: The *jaḍa* [insentient] body does not say 'I'; *sat-cit* [being-awareness] does not rise; [but] in between [these two] one thing [called] 'I' rises as the extent of the body. Know that this [the spurious adjunct-mixed self-awareness that rises as 'I am this body'] is *cit-jaḍa-granthi* [the knot (*granthi*) formed by the entanglement of awareness (*cit*) with an insentient (*jaḍa*) body, binding them together as if they were one], *bandha* [bondage], *jīva* [life or soul], *nuṭpa mey* [subtle body], *aḥandai* [ego], this *samsāra* [wandering, revolving, perpetual movement, restless activity, worldly existence or the cycle of birth and death] and *maṇam* [mind].

Lines 104-108: the extended version of verse 25

What a wonder! Grasping form it comes into existence; grasping form it stands; grasping and feeding on form it grows abundantly;

³² This is the only verse that did not change at all in the *kalivenḅā* version.

leaving form, it grasps form. If it seeks, it will take flight. The formless phantom ego. **May you** investigate.

Explanatory paraphrase: **What a wonder [miracle or magic]!** [Grasping form [that is, projecting and perceiving the form of a body [composed of five sheaths] as itself] it comes into existence [rises into being or is formed]; grasping form [that is, holding on to that body as itself] it stands [endures, continues or persists]; grasping and feeding on form [that is, projecting and perceiving other forms or phenomena] it grows [spreads, expands, increases, ascends, rises high or flourishes] abundantly; leaving [one] form [a body that it had projected and perceived as itself in one state], it grasps [another] form [another body that it projects and perceives as itself in its next state]. If it seeks [examines or investigates] [itself], it will take flight [because it has no form of its own, and hence it cannot seem to exist without grasping the forms of other things as itself and as its food or sustenance]. [Such is the nature of this] formless phantom [fiend, demon or evil spirit] ego. **[Therefore,] may you** investigate [it] [or **may you** know thus].

Lines 108-112: the extended version of verse 26

If the ego, **which is the embryo**, comes into existence, everything comes into existence; if the ego does not exist, everything does not exist. The ego itself is everything. Therefore, know that investigating what this is alone is giving up everything.

Explanatory paraphrase: If the ego [the false awareness ‘I am this body’], **which is the embryo [womb, efficient cause, inner substance or foundation]**, comes into existence, everything [all phenomena, everything that appears and disappears, everything

other than our pure, fundamental, unchanging and immutable self-awareness] comes into existence; if the ego does not exist, everything does not exist [because nothing other than pure self-awareness actually exists, so everything else seems to exist only in the view of the ego, and hence it cannot seem to exist unless the ego seems to exist]. [Therefore,] the ego itself is everything [because it is the original seed or embryo, which alone is what expands as everything else]. Therefore, know that investigating what this [the ego] is alone is giving up everything [because the ego will cease to exist if it investigates itself keenly enough, and when it ceases to exist everything else will cease to exist along with it].

Lines 112-116: the extended version of verse 27

The state in which one exists without this 'I', **which appears as if the first**, rising is the state in which we exist as That. Without investigating the place where 'I' rises, how to reach the annihilation of oneself, in which 'I' does not rise? Without reaching, how to stand in the state of oneself, in which oneself is that? **May you** say.

Explanatory paraphrase: The state in which one exists without 'I' [ego], **which appears as if the first [or foremost, the fundamental reality, namely oneself]** rising is the state in which we exist as That [*brahman*, the ultimate reality and infinite whole, the nature of which is pure self-awareness, uncontaminated by the appearance of anything else]. Without investigating the place [namely one's fundamental self-awareness] where [from which or in which] 'I' rises, how to reach [achieve or take refuge in] the annihilation of oneself [the ego], [the state] in which 'I' does not rise? [In other words, the only way to annihilate ego is to investigate oneself, the source from which it rises, because only when one investigates oneself will one see oneself as one actually is, and only when one

sees oneself as one actually is will one forever cease mistaking oneself to be ego, the false rising and subsiding ‘I’.] [And] without reaching [or taking refuge in the annihilation of one’s ego], say [or explain], how to stand [stop, stay or abide] in the [real] state of oneself, in which oneself is that? **May you** say.

Lines 116-120: the extended version of verse 28

Like sinking wanting to see something that has fallen in water, sinking within restraining speech and breath by a sharpened mind it is necessary to know the place where the ego, **which rises before**, rises. Know.

Explanatory paraphrase: Like sinking [submerging, immersing or plunging] wanting [needing or in order] to see [find or discover] something that has fallen in water, sinking [submerging, immersing, diving, plunging or piercing] within [oneself] restraining speech and breath by a sharpened [keen, pointed, acute, penetrating and discerning] mind [or intellect] it is necessary to know the place [namely one’s real nature, which is pure self-awareness] where [from which or in which] the ego, **which rises before [everything else]**, rises. Know [or be aware].

Lines 120-124: the extended version of verse 29

Leaving the body like a corpse, not saying ‘I’ by mouth, investigating by an inward sinking mind where one rises as ‘I’ alone is the path of knowledge. Instead, thinking ‘not this, I am that’ is an aid; is it investigation?

Explanatory paraphrase: **Leaving the body like a corpse [ceasing to be aware of it, as one would be if it were dead]**, without saying 'I' by mouth, investigating by an inward sinking [submerging, immersing, diving, plunging or piercing] mind where one rises as 'I' is alone the path of *jñāna* [the means to experience *jñāna*, real knowledge or pure awareness, which is one's true nature]. Instead, thinking '[I am] not this [body or mind], I am that [*brahman*]' is an aid, [but] is it *vicāra* [investigation (in the sense of self-investigation)]?

Lines 124-128: the extended version of verse 30

Therefore, as soon as the mind reaches the heart inwardly investigating who am I **in the above manner**, when he who is 'I' dies, one thing appears spontaneously as 'I am I'. Though it appears, it is not 'I'. It is the whole, the substance, the substance that is oneself.

Explanatory paraphrase: **Therefore**, as soon as the mind reaches the heart [its core and essence, which is pure self-awareness] [by] inwardly investigating who am I **in the above [exalted] manner [or way]**, when [thereby] he who is 'I' [ego] dies, one thing [or the one] appears spontaneously [or as oneself] as 'I am I'. Though it appears, it is not 'I' [ego]. It is *pūṇḍram* [the whole or *pūrṇa*, which is infinite, eternal and unchanging], the *poruḷ* [the real substance or *vastu*], the *poruḷ* that is oneself.

Lines 128-132: the extended version of verse 31

For those who are happiness composed of that, which rose destroying themselves **when it appeared surging up**, what one exists

for doing? They do not know anything other than themselves; who can conceive their state as ‘like this’?

Explanatory paraphrase: For those who are [blissfully immersed in and as] *tanmayānanda* [happiness composed of that [namely *brahman*], one’s real nature], which rose [as ‘I am I’] destroying themselves [ego] **when [or as soon as] it [the one *poru!* referred to in the previous] appeared surging up [as ‘I am I’]**, what one [action] exists for doing? They do not know [or are not aware of] anything other than themselves; [so] who can [or how to] conceive their state as ‘[it is] like this’?

Lines 132-136: the extended version of verse 32

When the Vēdas proclaim ‘that, **which is said to be distant [beyond, remote, other or different]**, is you (*tat tvam asi*)’, instead of oneself being knowing oneself as ‘what?’, thinking ‘I am that, not this’ is due to non-existence of strength, because that alone is always seated as oneself.

Explanatory paraphrase: When the Vēdas proclaim ‘that, **which is said to be distant [beyond, remote, other or different]**, is you’ (*tat tvam asi*), instead of oneself being [as one is] [by] knowing oneself [by investigating] what [am I], thinking ‘I am that [*brahman*], not this [body or mind]’ is due to non-existence [destitution or deficiency] of strength [of *bhakti* and *vairāgya*] [and consequent lack of clarity of heart and mind], because that [*brahman*] alone [or that itself] is always seated [calmly] as oneself.

Lines 136-140: the extended version of verse 33

Besides that, saying ‘I do not know myself’, ‘I have known myself’, is ground for ridicule. Why? To make oneself an object, are there two selves? Because being one is the truth, the experience of everyone.

Explanatory paraphrase: **Besides that**, saying [either] ‘I do not know myself’ [or] ‘I have known myself’ is ground for ridicule. Why? To make oneself *viṣaya* [an object, something known as other than oneself, the knower], are there two selves [a knowing self and a known self]? Because being one is the truth, [as is known by] the experience of everyone. [That is, since we always experience ourselves as one, we are never not aware of ourselves, so *ātma-jñāna* (self-knowledge or self-awareness) is not something that we are yet to attain but is our very nature, and hence what is called the attainment of *ātma-jñāna* is actually not a gain of anything but a loss of everything along with its root, ego, which is merely a false awareness of ourselves (an awareness of ourselves as something other than what we actually are), and when ego is lost there is no one left to say ‘I have known myself’, because what remains is only our real nature, which is pure, infinite, eternal and immutable self-awareness.]

Lines 140-144: the extended version of verse 34

Not standing firmly knowing the substance, which **without a single thought** always exists for everyone as nature, in the mind that merges within, quarrelling saying ‘It exists’, ‘It does not exist’, ‘Form’, ‘Formless’, ‘One’, ‘Two’, ‘Neither’, is delusion-mischief. **May you stop.**

Explanatory paraphrase: Instead of standing firmly [as pure, infinite, eternal and immutable self-awareness] knowing *poru!* [the real substance, namely pure self-awareness], which **without a single thought** always exists for everyone as [their real] nature, in the mind that merges within [or in the heart, where it exists as one], quarrelling [fighting or disputing] saying ‘It exists’, ‘It does not exist’, ‘[It is a] form’, ‘[It is] formless’, ‘[It is] one’, ‘[It is] two’, ‘[It is] neither [one nor two]’, is *māyā*-mischief [mischief, wickedness or defectiveness born of *māyā*, delusion or self-ignorance]. **May you stop (engaging in such disputes).**

Lines 144-148: the extended version of verse 35

The mind merging, being knowing the substance, which exists as accomplished, is accomplishment. All other accomplishments are just accomplishments achieved in dream; if one wakes up leaving sleep, are they real? Will those who, standing in the real state, have left unreality be deluded? **You be knowing.**

Explanatory paraphrase: **[With] the mind merging [taking shelter or concealing itself in] [within]**, being [as one actually is] knowing *poru!* [the one real substance, which is oneself], which exists as *siddham* [what is always accomplished], is [real] *siddhi* [accomplishment]. All other *siddhis* [such as the *aṣṭa-siddhis*, eight kinds of paranormal powers that some people try to achieve by meditation or other *yōga* practices] are just *siddhis* achieved [or experienced] in dream; if one wakes up leaving [this] sleep [of self-ignorance], are they real? Will those who, standing [firmly] in the real state [of pure self-awareness], have left unreality [or illusion, namely the unreal states of waking and dream] be deluded [by such unreal *siddhis*]? **You be [as you are] knowing [the one real substance].**

Lines 148-152: the extended version of verse 36

Confusion being excessive, if we think that we are a body, thinking ‘No, we are that’ will be just a good aid for us to stand as that. Since we always stand as that, why thinking ‘We are that’? Does one think ‘I am a man’?

Explanatory paraphrase: If we think that we are a body [**because of our] confusion [or delusion] being excessive**, thinking ‘No [we are not this body], we are that [*brahman*]’ will be just a good aid for [reminding and encouraging] us to stand [firmly] as that. [However] since we always stand [abide or exist] as that, why [should we be] thinking ‘We are that’? Does one think ‘I am a man’ [that is, does one need to always think ‘I am a man’ in order to be aware of oneself as a man]? [Therefore, instead of just thinking ‘I am not this body, I am that’, we should look keenly at ourself to see what we actually are, because only when we see what we actually are will we see that we always stand firmly as that.]

Lines 152-156: the extended version of verse 37

Even the contention that declares, ‘Duality only in spiritual practice’, **which one practises only not knowing**, ‘non-duality in attainment’, is not true. Both when one is eagerly searching and when one has found oneself, who indeed is one other than the tenth man?

Explanatory paraphrase: Even the contention that declares, ‘Duality [exists] only in spiritual practice, **which one practises [undertakes or attempts] only [because of] not knowing [one's real nature]**, [and] non-duality [exists only] in attainment’, is not true [because even when one is seeking to know one's real nature, what actually exists is only oneself and not anything else]. Both when one is

eagerly searching [for the missing tenth man] and when one has found oneself [to be him], who indeed is one other than the tenth man? [Here *daśamaṇ*, ‘the tenth man’, refers to the supposedly missing man in the analogy of the ten foolish men who, after fording a river, each counted the other nine but forgot to count himself, and therefore concluded that one of them was missing. Just as each of them was actually the tenth man even while they were anxiously searching for him, we are never actually anything other than the one reality that we are seeking to know, so just as all that each of the ten men needed was to count himself, all that we need is to look keenly at ourself, because when we look at ourself keenly enough we will see that we alone exist and are therefore eternally non-dual.]

Lines 156-160: the extended version of verse 38

If we are the doer of actions, **which are like seeds**, we will experience the resulting fruit. Investigating who is the doer of action, when one knows oneself, doership will depart and all the three actions will slip off. **This alone is** the state of liberation, which is eternal.

Explanatory paraphrase: If we are the doer of action, which are like seeds [because they give rise to the vast spreading tree of *samsāra*, the perpetually revolving cycle of births and deaths], we will experience the resulting fruit. [However] when one knows oneself [as one actually is] by investigating who is the doer of action, [ego, which is what seemed to do actions and to experience their fruit, will thereby be eradicated, and along with it its] *kartṛtva* [doership] [and its *bhōkṛtva*, experiencership] will depart and [hence] all [its] three *karmas* [its *āgāmya* (actions that it does by its own will), *saṃcita* (the heap of the fruits of such actions that it is yet to experience) and *prārabdha* (destiny or fate, which is the fruits that have been allotted

for it to experience in its current life)] will slip off. [This is] alone the state of *mukti* [liberation], which is eternal [being what actually exists even when we seem to be this ego].

Lines 160-164: the extended version of verse 39

Only so long as one says, **being a crazy person**, 'I am someone bound', thoughts of bondage and liberation. When one looks at oneself as who is the one who is bound, when oneself, the one who is eternally liberated, remains as accomplished, if thought of bondage will not remain, will thought of liberation henceforth remain?

Explanatory paraphrase: Only so long as one says, **being a crazy [or intoxicated] person**, 'I am someone bound' [that is, only so long as one experiences oneself as if one were bound] [will there be] thoughts of *bandha* [bondage] and *mukti* [liberation]. When one looks at [observes, examines or scrutinises] oneself [to see] who is the one who is bound, and when [thereby] oneself, the one who is eternally liberated, [alone] remains as *siddham* [what is firmly established or always accomplished], since thought of bondage will not remain, will thought of liberation henceforth remain?

Lines 164-168: the extended version of verse 40

If it is said, **so as to be agreeable to the mind**, that liberation that one will experience is three, form, formless, form-formless, I will say: know that the ego-form, which distinguishes form, formless, form-formless, being destroyed is liberation.

Explanatory paraphrase: If it is said, **in order to be agreeable to [each] mind [or so as to be suited to the (maturity or ripeness of each) mind]**, that *mukti* [liberation] that one will experience [or that one will attain, or that will happen] is of three kinds, with form, without form, or either with form or without form [that is, a state in which one can alternate back and forth between being a form or being formless], I will say: know that [only] destruction of the ego-form [the form-bound ego], which distinguishes [these three kinds of liberation], with form, without form, or either with form or without form, is *mukti*.

Appendix D

Ēkātma Vivēkam – The Knowledge of the Oneness of Self

Payiram – Prefatory verse (composed by Sri Muruganar)

Here the Lord, Sri Ramana Guru, who first graciously gave *Ēkāṇma Pañcakam Panchakam*, the Five Verses on the Oneness of Self, has himself again lovingly composed it as a fine *kalivenbā* called *Ēkātma Vivēkam*, the Knowledge of the Oneness of Self as an aid to true devotees in reciting.

|³³

One previously forgetting self, mistaking a body as self, taking innumerable births and finally knowing self and being self, is [just like] waking up from a dream of wandering about the world. Know thus.

2

Declare that he who asks himself ‘who am I?’ and ‘what is the place where I am [coming from]?’, though he **always** exists as self, is equal to a drunkard who asks ‘Who am I?’ and ‘In which place am I?’

³³ Bhagavan composed *Ēkāṇma Pañcakam* (*Five Verses on the Oneness of Self*), then linked them into a single continuous verse using a specific metre (*kalivenbā*). Since *pañcakam* (set of five verses) no longer applied, he renamed it *Ēkātma Vivēkam*. The linking words that connect the original verses are shown in bold type.

3

When in fact the body is within self, [which is] **existence-consciousness-bliss** (*sat-cit-ānanda*), he who thinks that self is within that insentient body is **like** one who thinks that the cloth [of the screen], which is the substratum of the [cinema] picture, exists within that picture.

4

Can an ornament exist as other than gold, **which is the substance** (*vastu*)? Without self [the sole existing reality], where is the body? He who thinks the body to be himself is an *ajñāni*. He who takes [himself] to be self is a *jñāni*, who knows self. Know thus.

5

The only thing (*vastu*) that exists eternally **by its own light** is that one self. When in those [ancient] days the *adi-guru* [the primal *guru*, Sri Dakshinamurti] revealed that *vastu* through speechless speech, say, who can reveal it through speech?

Concluding verse (composed by Sri Muruganar)

Thus in these days *guru* Ramana, who shines as the form of the one self-knowledge (*ēkāṭma-jñāna-svarūpa*), has made clear in this sung by him what the truth of **that** oneness of self is, destroying [thereby] the ‘I am the body’ feeling (*dēhātma-bhāva*) of his devotees.

Appendix E

Sources

The following sources provide the location of each work included in this collection. Most sources on the *Sri Ramana Teachings* website include extensive explanations and commentary by Michael James, offering valuable context and deeper understanding of Bhagavan’s teachings. The *Sri Ramana Teachings* YouTube channel also provides in-depth explanations for the writings available on the website.

Readers seeking to explore Bhagavan’s teachings in greater depth are encouraged to visit these original sources, where Michael’s scholarly insights illuminate the profound meaning and practical implications of these sacred texts.

Aruṇācalaramaṇa

Website: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2022/03/sri-arunacala-aksaramanamalai-payiram.html

***Nāṇ Ār?* – Who Am I? (Essay version)**

Website: sriramanateachings.org/nan_yar.html

Print: Sandra Derksen, *Ramana Maharshi’s Who Am I?*, Based on the Work of Michael James (2024). Available on [Amazon](#).

***Āṇma-Viddai* – The Science of Knowing Oneself**

Website: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2022/01/anma-viddai-tamil-text-transliteration.html

Appaḷa Pāṭṭu – The Appaḷam Song

Website: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2021/11/appala-pattu-appalam-song-tamil-text.html

Upadēśa Undiyār & Upadēśa Sārah – The Essence of Spiritual Instructions (Tamil and Sanskrit)

Website: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2017/09/upadesa-undiyar-tamil-text.html & sriramanateachings.org/blog/2022/03/upadesa-sarah-sanskrit-text.html

Uḷḷadu Nārpadu – Forty Verses on What Is

Website: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2017/10/ulladu-narpadu-tamil-text.html

Print: Sandra Derksen, *Ramana Maharshi's Forty Verses on What Is*, Based on the Work of Michael James (2023). Available on Amazon.

Uḷḷadu Nārpadu Anubandham – The Supplement to Uḷḷadu Nārpadu

Website: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2024/05/ulladu-narpadu-anubandham-tamil-text.html

Ēkānma Pañcakam – The Five Verses on the Oneness of Self

YouTube: youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnw6ACy-wqrykbNZjNLQv_4RVOQadadoD

Śrī Aruṇācala Padigam – Eleven Verses to Sri Arunachala

Website: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2025/03/sri-arunacala-padigam-tamil-text.html

Śrī Aruṇācala Aṣṭakam – Eight Verses to Sri Arunachala

Website: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2025/09/sri-arunacala-astakam-tamil-text.html

Śrī Aruṇācala Pañcaratnam – Five Gems to Sri Arunachala

Sources: Multiple pages on the *Sri Ramana Teachings* website; see individual sources below.

Verse 1: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2019/10/can-we-as-ego-ever-experience-pure.html#apr1

Verse 2: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2022/12/sri-arunacala-aksaramanamalai-verse-18.html

Verse 3: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2019/11/how-to-merge-in-arunachala-like-river.html

Verse 4: youtu.be/nW8YK8A7f84

Verse 5: youtu.be/7CQoF60CNC8

Concluding verse: youtu.be/7CQoF60CNC8

Śrī Aruṇācala Navamaṇimālai – The Garland of Nine Gems to Sri Arunachala

Website: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2025/02/sri-arunacala-navamanimalai-tamil-text.html

Śrī Aruṇācala Akṣaramaṇamālai – The Marriage Garland of Syllables for Sri Arunachala (partial translation)

Website: sriramanateachings.org/articles.html#aamm (scroll down to find translations and explanations of twenty-one verses; additional verse translations are scattered throughout these writings)

Arunācala Tattuvam & Dīpa-Darśana Tattuvam – The Reality of Arunachala & Seeing Deepam

Website: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2024/12/arunacala-tattuvam-and-dipa-darsana.html

Upadēśa Tanippākkaḷ – Solitary Verses of Spiritual Teaching

Sources: Multiple pages on the Sri Ramana Teachings website and one verse sourced from the editor’s previous compilation; see individual sources below.

General source: happinessofbeing.blogspot.com/2009/06/upadesa-tanippakkal-explanatory.html

Verse 2-3: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2020/11/dipavali-tattva-reality-of-deepavali.html

Verse 4-5: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2020/12/bhagavans-verses-on-birthday.html

Verse 7: Chapter 10 of *Happiness and the Art of Being*: sriramanateachings.org/hab-ch10.html

Verse 11: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2024/05/ulladu-narpadu-anubandham-tamil-text.html#ut11

Verse 12: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2023/07/anma-viddai-verse-3-knowledge-of-all.html#ut12; also in print in *Ānma-Viddai: The Science of Knowing Oneself* pp. 111-112

Verse 13: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2014/04/scientific-research-on-consciousness.html

Verse 14: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2015/08/that-alone-is-tapas-first-teachings.html

Verse 15: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2016/02/why-should-we-believe-what-bhagavan.html

Verse 16: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2020/06/we-can-be-self-attentive-in-waking-and.html

Verse 19: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2019/02/in-dream-there-is-only-one-

dreamer-and.html

Verse 21: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2008/06/experiencing-our-natural-state-of-true.html

Verse 27: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2022/11/sri-arunacala-aksaramanamalai-verse-17.html

Appendix A: Selections from Bhagavad Gītā Sāram – The Essence of the Bhagavad Gītā

Sources: Multiple pages on the *Sri Ramana Teachings* website; see individual sources below.

Verse 9: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2022/10/sri-arunacala-aksaramanamalai-verse-15.html

Verses 27-28 (adaptations of Bhagavad Gītā 6.25-26):
sriramanateachings.org/blog/2017/05/how-to-avoid-following-or-completing.html

***Bhagavad Gītā* verses 6.25-26 (original Sanskrit):**

sriramanateachings.org/blog/2020/06/why-did-bhagavan-sometimes-say-heart-is.html

Appendix B: Selections from Vivēkacūḍāmaṇi – The Crown-Jewel of Discrimination

Sources: Multiple pages on the *Sri Ramana Teachings* website; see individual sources below.

Auspicious Invocation (*maṅgalam*):

sriramanateachings.org/blog/2021/08//is-anything-other-than-ourself.html

The ‘fourfold means’ (*sāadhanā catuṣṭayam*) verses 16 – 30, and verse 31: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2025/04/the-fourfold-means-sadhana-catustayam.html

The Ultimate Truth of *Vēdānta*, verses 569 - 572:

sriramanateachings.org/blog/2016/11/what-is-correct-meaning-of-ajata-vada.html

Appendix C: Upadēśa Kaliveṅbā– The extended version of Uḷḷadu Nāṛpadu

Website: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2017/12/upadesa-kalivenba-extended-version-of.html

Print: Sandra Derksen, *Forty Verses on What Is*, Based on the Work of Michael James (2023). Available on Amazon.

Appendix D: Ēkātma Vivekam – the kaliveṅbā version of Ēkātma Pañcakam

Website: sriramanateachings.org/blog/2017/12/upadesa-kalivenba-extended-version-of.html

Glossary

advaita: non-twoness or non-duality

Āṅmā-Viddai: ‘The Science of Knowing Oneself’

appaḷam: a crisp round wafer, in other languages known by a variety of names such as *parpaṭa*, *pappaḍam*, *pāpaḍ*, *papadum*, *papadom* or *poppadom*

ātman: self, spirit, soul, life, essence, also serves as the reflexive pronoun for all persons and genders: oneself, myself, yourself, itself, ourself, etc.

bhakti: love or devotion

bhakti yōga: the path of loving devotion to God

cit: pure self-awareness

darśan: a sacred sight or vision, especially of a deity or enlightened being

dharma: righteousness; the natural order, duty, or moral law that sustains harmony in life and the universe

dhyāna: contemplation, meditation, mindfulness, attentiveness

guru: teacher

Guru Vācaka Kōvai: ‘A Series of *Guru*’s Sayings’, a collection of Tamil verses composed by Muruganar, recording the teachings of Ramana Maharshi

japa: repetition of his (God) name

jñāna: pure awareness, consciousness or knowledge

jñāna yōga: the path of self-investigation or knowledge

kaliveṇbā: an extended version of the *veṇbā* metre

karma: action

karma yōga: the path of selfless action without attachment to results

līlās: play, sport, or divine play

liṅga: symbolic form of Śiva, often represented as a rounded stone or column

- maṅgalam*: auspiciousness, verse composed as an auspicious introduction
- mantras*: sacred syllables or chants used for spiritual focus or invocation.
- Nāṅ Ār*: ‘I [am] Who?’, ‘Who am I?’
- nēti nēti*: not this, not this (a method of negating everything that is not ‘I’)
- niṣkāmya karma*: selfless action done without desire for results; actions done for the love of God
- prāṇāyāma*: breath-restraint
- pūjā*: worship of God
- Purāṇas*: ancient Hindu texts containing myths, legends, and teachings on cosmology, *dharma*, and devotion
- rāja yōga*: the path of mind control through meditation and discipline
- rishis*: sages or seers who realised truth through deep meditation and are traditionally regarded as the inspired authors of the Vēdas
- sadguru*: the real *guru* or being-*guru*, our real nature appearing in human form as a true spiritual teacher to guide us to recognise and be what we actually are.
- sadhu*: a person who has renounced worldly life to focus on spiritual practice and the pursuit of liberation or self-realisation
- tantras*: spiritual texts and practices focused on rituals, energy, and inner transformation
- tapas*: austerities
- Uḷḷadu Nārpadu*: ‘Forty Verses On What Is’
- upadēśa*: Teachings, instructions
- Upadēśa Sāram*: The Essence of Teachings
- Upadēśa Undiyār*: ‘Teachings in [the poetic style called] *Undiyār*’
- Vēdas*: the Hindu scriptures
- vēdānta*: the ‘end’ or final conclusion of the Vēdas, the spiritual philosophy and science expounded in the *Upaniṣads*, *Brahmasūtra* and *Bhagavad Gītā*, elucidated by many sages including Ramana Maharshi

veṅbā: a four-line Tamil poetic metre (see also *kaliveṅbā*)

yāga: elaborate Vedic sacrifice for specific aims

yajña: sacred ritual of offering, often into fire

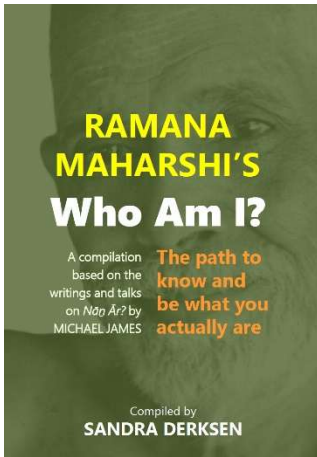
yantras: sacred geometric diagrams used for worship or meditation

yōga: yoking, joining, uniting, union, means [to attain union]

Who Am I?

The path to know and be what you actually are

Compiled independently by Sandra Derksen from
the writings and talks on *Nāṇ Ār?* by Michael James³⁴



Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's *Who Am I?* is a profound investigation into the very nature of our being, leading us to discover the ultimate truth of our existence. Through the practice of self-investigation (*ātma-vicāra*), Bhagavan teaches us to turn our attention inwards to the pure awareness 'I am', which is the infinite source of eternal happiness.

This book explains why self-investigation is the most direct path to liberation, offering both practical methods and deep insights to dissolve

the false identification with ego – the mistaken idea that we are the body and mind – and uncover our unchanging reality as pure awareness. Whether you are new to Bhagavan's teachings or a seasoned devotee, this book serves as a valuable guide on the journey of spiritual awakening.

Michael James, a renowned scholar of Bhagavan's teachings, has dedicated nearly fifty years to studying and elucidating these profound teachings. His clear and precise commentary unravels the intricacies of self-investigation and self-surrender, making this work accessible to all who seek liberation.

³⁴ This book, along with all the recommended titles that follow, is available on Amazon.

Who Am I? is not just a philosophical essay – it is a comprehensive manual for inner transformation, offering practical wisdom to help us discover the lasting peace, love, and happiness that is our true nature.

Free sample

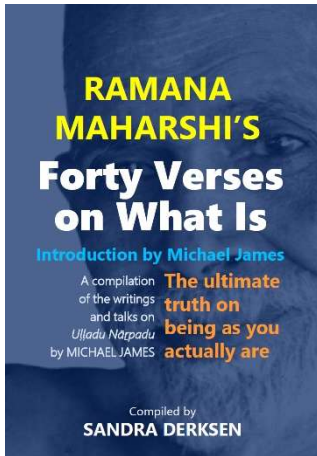
A complementary sample of this book is available in ‘Free Resources’, or here: u.pc.cd/gqEctalK

A complementary sample of the French version is also available in ‘Free Resources’, or here: u.pc.cd/Q6CrtalK

Forty Verses on What Is

The ultimate truth on being as you actually are

A compilation of the writings and talks of Michael James
by Sandra Derksen.



To deeply understand Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings, his philosophical poem *Forty Verses on What Is (Uḷḷadu Nārpadu)* is key. In no other place does he give the core of his metaphysical philosophy of pure non-duality (advaita) in such a simple, complete and coherent manner as he does here. This work shines as the core and crest-jewel of his teachings, being the quintessence of all of them.

The principle aim of this work is to teach the nature of reality and the means to attain it. The nature of reality is equivalent to what we always are: pure, infinite, indivisible, eternal and immutable awareness, which is aware of nothing other than itself. It is the perfectly clear non-dual state of true self-knowledge, which always shines within us as the existence-awareness 'I am'.

However we do not experience ourselves as what we really are, because we rise as ego, the false awareness 'I am the body'. This ego is the root of all duality and problems, and it is only in the view of ego that duality, multiplicity and problems seem to exist. Hence getting rid of ego is getting rid of duality and, by doing so, the solution to all problems.

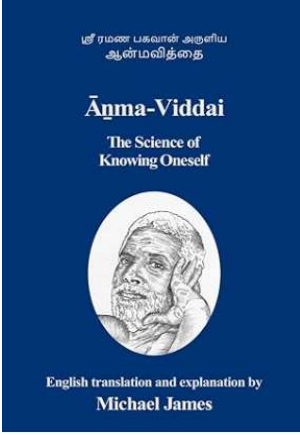
Ramana Maharshi thus explains in a clear and detailed manner the nature of ego, how it rises, the effects of its rising and the means to prevent its rising. He makes it abundantly clear why the simple and direct means of self-investigation (*ātma-vicāra*) is the only means by which we can eradicate ego. In doing so he clarifies in a clear and unique way what the true practice of the entire advaita philosophy actually is. In the absence of this false ego-awareness our problems cease and we alone remain as infinite and hence eternal peace and satisfaction.

Free sample

A complementary sample of this book is available in ‘Free Resources’, or here: u.pc.cd/yDn7

Āṇma-Viddai: The Science of Knowing Oneself

By Michael James



“For the bonds beginning with action to be untied, to rise from the devastation beginning with birth, more than whatever path, this path [the path of investigating and knowing oneself by just being without rising as ego] is what is exceedingly easy. When one just is, resting without the least action of mind, speech or body, ah, in the heart the light of oneself alone. The eternal experience. Fear does not exist. The ocean of bliss alone.” (*Āṇma-Viddai* verse 4)

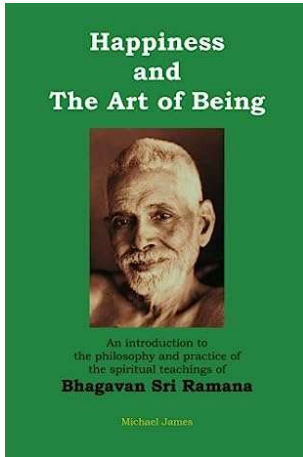
In this and the other four verses of this song Bhagavan Ramana teaches us the nature of the obstruction that seems to prevent us being aware of ourselves as we actually are (verses 1 and 2), the path of self-investigation (*ātma-vicāra*), which is the means to dissolve this obstruction (verses 2, 4 and 5), and the nature of self-knowledge (*ātma-jñāna*), which shines forth when it is thereby dissolved in such a way that it can never rise again (verses 1 to 5).

In this book Michael explains the deep meaning and implications of each of these verses, referring copiously to other passages from Bhagavan’s Core Writings such as *Uḷḷadu Nārpadu*, *Upadēśa Undiyār* and *Nāṇ Ār?*, thereby showing that in these verses Bhagavan has expressed in seed form many of the fundamental principles of his teachings.

Happiness and the Art of Being

An introduction to the philosophy and practice of the spiritual teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana

By Michael James



Happiness is our true nature, our essential being. The transient happiness that we seem to derive from external experiences actually arises only from within ourself, and is experienced by us due to the temporary calming of our mind that occurs whenever any of our desires are fulfilled. So long as our mind is extroverted, attending to anything other than our own essential self-conscious being, we can never experience perfect, permanent and unqualified happiness. To experience true and eternal happiness, we must attain the experience of true self-knowledge – that is, absolutely clear consciousness of our own essential being, ‘I am’. Such is the truth revealed by Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

The philosophy of Sri Ramana derives solely from his experience of true, absolute, non-dual self-knowledge, an experience that transcends all thought, both rational and irrational. However, since we imagine the existence of duality, multiplicity and relativity, we seem to lack the non-dual and absolute knowledge of our own essential self-conscious being that Sri Ramana experienced as his natural state. Therefore he presented his philosophy to us in terms of a rational and logical analysis of our present experience of ourself as

a finite individual consciousness, in order to enable us to be firmly convinced of the absolute reality that underlies and supports this finite consciousness that we now mistake to be ourself.

However, the spiritual teachings of Sri Ramana are not only a rational philosophy, but are also a precise science and art. He intended his philosophy to serve only as the theoretical foundation upon which we should practise the empirical science of self-investigation (*ātma-vicara*), which is the art of keenly self-attentive and therefore perfectly thought-free being.

This book, *Happiness and the Art of Being*, is an in-depth exploration of both the philosophy and the practice of the spiritual teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana. Though it is intended primarily to be an introduction to his teachings, it is not a brief one, because in a clear and simple manner it provides a very detailed and deep insight into their core. Therefore though it has been written with the intention that it should be easily understood even by readers who have no previous acquaintance with any form of spiritual philosophy, it should also be useful to readers who already have a good understanding of his teachings.

Like the aim of his teachings, the aim of this book is to prompt each one of us to think more deeply about the reality of all that we as a seemingly limited individual consciousness experience and know, to help us to understand that the only absolute reality in our entire experience of duality and relativity is our fundamental consciousness of our own essential being, 'I am', and thereby to reinforce our love and effort to attend keenly and exclusively to this essential self-consciousness 'I am' in order to discover its true nature.

The author of this book, Michael James, spent more than eight years studying the original Tamil writings of Sri Ramana and of his foremost disciple, Sri Muruganar, in minute detail under the clear guidance of another close disciple, Sri Sadhu Om. Therefore the

central focus of this book is on the teachings of Sri Ramana as expressed in his own Core Writings, and hence it contains accurate and carefully worded translations by the author of the whole of Sri Ramana's prose treatise *Nāṇ Ār?* (Who am I?) and of most of the verses of his philosophical poems such as *Upadēśa Undiyār*, *Uḷḷadu Nāṛpadu*, *Ēkāṇma Pañcakam*, *Āṇma-Viddai* and *Upadēśa Taṇippākkaḷ*.

Free pdf

A full version of this book is available in 'Free Resources', or here: sriramanateachings.org/happiness_art_being.html

**'If one knows what the [real] nature of oneself is,
then [what will remain shining is only] beginningless,
endless and unbroken existence-awareness-happiness.'**

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
The Essence of Spiritual Instructions, verse 28

For the first time, this volume brings together the core writings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in a single book, based on the meticulous translations of Michael James currently available.

Bhagavan taught that infinite happiness is not something to attain but is what we are — seemingly obscured only by our mistaken identification with the body. His radical yet simple teaching is that by attending to and thereby investigating the fundamental awareness 'I am' — the clear sense of our own being — we can discern what this 'I' actually refers to. When we persistently follow the path he has shown, the false awareness of ourself as ego subsides, and what alone remains is the ever-present reality.

This compilation includes *Who am I? (Nān Ār?)*, *Forty Verses on What Is (Uḷḷadu Nārapadu)*, *The Essence of Spiritual Instructions (Upadēśa Undiyār)*, the devotional hymns to Arunachala, and other writings — the works in which Bhagavan presents the entire teachings of *advaita* (non-duality) in its purest, deepest and undiluted form. The translations of *Akṣaramaṇamālai* and *Upadēśa Taṇippākkal* reflect the current state of Michael James's work; some verses remain to be completed.

Compiled by Sandra Derksen from Michael James's translations, this edition presents Bhagavan's words without commentary.

**A free PDF edition is available through the *Sri Ramana Teachings*
Q&A YouTube channel.**

Part of the series:

*Ramana Maharshi's Wisdom:
Based on the Work of Michael
James*