

The Light of Supreme Truth
or
THE COLLECTION OF GURU'S SAYINGS

Prefatory Verses

Obeisance to the Guru

- 1 This Light [i.e., these verses] of the Guru's Teachings, which destroys the base nature of mind – 'I' and 'mine' – shines as Self, illuminating our hearts, whenever we long with increasing despair for Grace.
- 2 The Eternal One graciously took the form of Guru [Ramana] and lovingly claimed me – who was a victim to the delusion 'I am the body' – as His own, reforming me with the sense 'I am not this filthy inert body'. May my head rest beneath the Feet of the Benign, Gracious, Silent Guru.
- 3 The perfect *Jnana*-Guru [Ramana] ably and precisely presents the right meaning in many contradictory statements, and passes apt judgement over various discussions, revealing the One Supreme Truth that lies in harmony among them all. May my head rest beneath his Feet.

1 The Name and Origin of this Work

- 4 This clear *Light of Supreme Truth* was not lit by my innocent, infant mind, which has not seen the Truth. It was lit by the fully ripened Supreme Knowledge of my Master Sri Ramana.
- 5 Many instructions to root out ignorance [i.e. inattention to Self] were given by my Beloved, Eternal, Companion [Sri Ramana] whose Real Form is That [*Sat-Chit*] which exists, shines, and reveals Itself as 'I'. I now recount some of those instructions which my mind has grasped and preserved.
- 6 I, being there where Ramana embraced me, will recount a little of the nature of the Supreme Truth which I have come to know in my life of Divine Union with Him, my Master.

Michael James: *"There where Ramana embraced me" refers to the Supreme State of being firmly established in Self.*

"Supreme Truth" alludes to the title of the whole work, The Light of Supreme Truth.

- 7 I now compose and string together all the Supreme Truth that I come to know through the Divine Glance bestowed upon me by my Lord Guru Ramana, who destroyed my delusion caused by the ego sense, leaving me in a state of clarity.

2 The Benefit or Fruit of this Work

- 8 The benefit of this *Light of Supreme Truth* is the understanding that there is not the least thing such as 'attainment', since the Supreme Self is the Ever-Attained One Whole. Thus the mental wanderings caused by striving towards *Dharma*, *Artha*, and *Kama* are also removed.

Sadhu Om: *Up till now the shastras have prescribed, as the rightful goals of human life, the following four aims:*

Dharma: the practice of righteous social duties.

Artha: the acquisition of wealth through righteous means.

Kama: the satisfaction of desires within righteous limits.

Moksha: liberation, the natural state of abiding as Self.

This work, The Light of Supreme Truth shows us now that the first three worldly aims are futile and transitory, and thus it removes our wandering mental efforts to attain them. We may however still think, “Is not mental effort at least needed to obtain Moksha?” but again this Light shows us the meaninglessness of striving to ‘attain’ Self, which is ever-attained, and instead it recommends the cessation of all mental activity, thereby fixing us in the eternal, motionless and ever-attained State of Self. Is there therefore any Supreme Goal other than that which is given here, through this Light of Supreme Truth? Refer to verse 1204.

- 9 Self, which is one’s own true nature, is the substratum of all happiness in this and in other worlds. Therefore, to be firmly established in Self, unshaken by thoughts concerning the various other paths [Karmas, Yogas etc.,] which will lead only to the pleasures of this and of other worlds, is the fruit of this work.

3 The Submission to the Assembly

Michael James: *It was the tradition in ancient days for a writer to submit his work to an Assembly of learned men. He therefore had to compose a verse of ‘Submission’, requesting the Assembly to correct any error found in his work.*

- 10 When scrutinized it will be found that these sweet verses of *The Collection of the Guru’s Sayings* have not been composed by my dull and deluded thinking mind, but that they have been inspired without thought by the Divine Venkatavan [Sri Ramana].
- 11 Why should I offer a ‘Submission to the Assembly’ for a work which has not been done with the sense of doership, ‘I’? The whole responsibility for this work belongs to Him, the Supreme Lord [Sri Ramana], whom even the Great Ones can realize only through the *Samadhi* of Mystic Silence within their hearts.

4 Dedication

- 12 Since it was my mother who helped me [in giving me this birth] to achieve the Attainment [*Jnana*] dispelling ignorance, I gratefully present this work to Her. “Let this be a dedication to her pure heart which knew not any deceit.”

5 The Author

- 13 Kanna Murugan [Sri Muruganar], who through the look of Grace has seen *Chit*, the grandeur of all wealth, is merely the Divine Feet of his Master [Sri Ramana], strung into a garland some of his Guru’s words and has given it [to the world] as the Supreme Treasure.

PART ONE
AN ANALYSIS OF THE TRUTH

Benedictory Verses

- 14 In response to the great and befitting penance [*tapas*] performed by the ocean-girdled Mother Earth, the nameless and formless Supreme *Brahman* Itself took the glorious name and form of Sri Ramana *Sadguru*. May those spotlessly pure Feet – *Sat-Chit* [Existence-Consciousness] – be in our hearts.

Michael James: The tapas performed by Mother Earth is a poetic way of referring to the intense longing for Truth of many matured aspirants on Earth. This longing naturally brings forth the Supreme in the form of a Sadguru such as Sri Ramana.

- 15 Self, that pure *Brahman* which is Itself the Mono-syllable, shining as the heart of all beings and things, is the excellent and sweet benediction to this *Collection of the Guru's Sayings*, which removes the delusion of ignorant ones.

Sadhu Om: It is worth referring here to one stray verse of Sri Bhagavan Ramana: "One Syllable shines for ever in the Heart as Self; who can write It down?" The One Syllable mentioned in both cases is 'I' [Aham] or Self, which is unwritable, being beyond thought, word or expression.

- 16 The experience of our own Existence, which is the Supreme Reality, *Jnana* Itself, shines as the Mystic Silence and is the True Self behind the fictitious first person 'I'. May that Absolute Supreme Self, [known as] the Feet, be upon our heads.
- 17 For those who turn within, the perfect asset is the Grace of Guru Ramana, whose true form is the sleepless-sleep [*Turiya*]; it is the sweet Fruit whose juice is the supremely pure Bliss that creates in the aspirant an ever-increasing taste, free from aversion, and It is the beautiful Lamp which, without need of kindling, leads one to the Heart.

Sadhu Om: Grace is here shown to be the same as Turiya, the true form of Guru Ramana, which shines eternally as 'I-I', the self-luminous Heart and is therefore called the lamp which needs no kindling.

There are two possible translations of the next verse:

- 18a My Master Sri Ramana has taken possession of me, destroying the miseries caused by my inattention to Self; His beauty is His Oneness with *Jnana* and His True Form lies beyond both attachment and detachment. His Feet are the perfect example of all precepts of the Truth.
- 18b My Master Sri Ramana has taken possession of me, destroying the miseries caused by my inattention to Self. Though He has the beauty of *Jnana* and Renunciation, His True Form lies beyond both attachment and detachment, and His Feet are the perfect example of all precepts of the Truth.

1 The Truth or Reality of the World

- 19 As cause alone is seen as its effect, and since Consciousness [*Brahman*], which is the cause, is as clearly true as an amalaka fruit on one's palm, this vast universe, its effect, which is described in the scriptures as mere names and forms, may also be called true.

Sadhu Om: Brahman has five aspects, Sat-Chit-Ananda-Nama-Rupa [i.e., Being, Awareness, Bliss, name and form]. The first three aspects are real, being eternally Self-shining, whereas name and form are unreal aspects, since they merely seem to exist, depending upon the illumination of Sat-Chit-Ananda.

If, however, one sees the cause, Sat-Chit-Ananda, which is real, one may say, ignoring the apparent names and forms, that this universe is also real.

20 When viewed from the standpoint of the eternally self-existent Cause, even the three, seven or twenty-one worlds will appear to be real. But when one sees only the names and forms of the world as real, then even *Brahman*, their cause, will appear to be absolutely non-existent or void [*sunya*].

Michael James: The three, seven and twenty-one worlds occur in different traditional, cosmological classifications.

21 For the sake of those [ignorant ones] who take the world, which appears before them, as real and enjoyable [it became necessary for the scriptures to say that] it is God's creation. But for those who have obtained unobstructed Knowledge of Self, the world is seen merely as a bondage-causing mental imagination.

22 This world of empty names and forms, which are the imagination of the five senses and an appearance in the pure Supreme Self, should be understood to be the mysterious play of *Maya*, the mind, which rises as if real from Self, *Sat-Chit*.

Michael James: The origin of *Maya*, meaning "that which is not" is unknown; it appears, functioning in man, as mind, and is inferred in God through his actions, sustenance, and dissolution of this whole universe; it ends, on being seen to be non-existent, when the Truth is known.

The seer, known as mind or 'I', and the seen, known as the world, rise and set simultaneously in Self. If Self sees Itself through Itself, it is Self; if It sees Itself through the mind or 'seer', it appears as the world or 'seen'.

23 The Realised who do not know anything as being other than Self, which is absolute Consciousness, will not say that the world, which has no existence in the view of the Supreme *Brahman*, is real.

Michael James: The Tamil word *Iraivan* is usually understood as meaning God, the Lord of this world, and as *Bhagavan* has elsewhere explained, the trinity of soul, world and their Lord will always appear to co-exist in *Maya*, and thus the apparent world does exist in the view of its apparent Lord, God. Therefore, on seeing this verse, *Bhagavan* remarked "Who said that there is no world in God's view?", but when the author, *Sri Muruganar*, explained that he had used the word in the sense of the Supreme *Brahman*, *Sri Bhagavan* accepted this meaning and approved the verse.

24 O man, like a parrot waiting expectantly for the silk-cotton fruit to ripen, you persist in your sufferings, believing this world appearance to be real and enjoyable; if the world is real simply because it appears to your senses, then a mirage would be water.

Michael James: The fruit of a silk-cotton tree always remains green, not turning colour even after ripening; the parrot meanwhile waits expectantly, hoping to eat it when it changes colour, but is finally disappointed when it bursts, scattering its hairy seeds.

- 25 Forgetting Self, which gives you [the seer] light to see, and being confused, do not run after this appearance [the world which you see]. The appearance will disappear, and is hence not real, but Self, the source of you [the seer], can never disappear, so know that That alone is real.
- 26 Is the word 'Real' befitting to this world, which is seen only by the illusory and changeful mind, but not by Self, the source of mind?

Michael James: As Self knows Itself alone to be, any imagination such as this world is entirely non-existent to It, and thus is never seen by It.

- 27 Fear not on seeing this empty world, which appears as a dream in the sleep of Self-forgetfulness. This imaginary and bondage-causing world-picture, [projected on the background] of the dark, dense mind, will not stand in the light of Supreme Knowledge, *Sat-Chit-Ananda*.
- 28 O aspirants who hide yourselves away fearing this world, nothing such as a world exists! Fearing this false world which appears to exist, is like fearing the false snake which appears in a rope.
- 29 This world is only seen without doubts in the waking and dream states where thoughts have risen and are at play. Can it be seen in sleep where not even a single thought rises? Thoughts alone [therefore] are the substratum of this world.
- 30 If it is thus said that this world is a mere play of thoughts, why, even when the mind is quiet, does the world-scene, like a dream, suddenly appear in front of us? That is due to the stored momentum of past imaginations!
- 31 Just as the spider emits the thread [of its web] out from its own mouth and again withdraws it back, so the mind projects the world out from itself and again absorbs it back within.
- 32 When the mind passes through the brain and the five senses, the names and forms [of this world] are projected out from within. When the mind abides in the Heart, they return and lie buried there.
- 33 This world, full of differences of names and forms, will remain as [the undifferentiated] *Brahman* when these are removed. The ignorant one masks the Supreme with imaginary names and forms and, being thereby self-deluded, sees Him as the world.
- 34 The deceptive I-am-the-body idea alone makes the world, which is an appearance of names and forms, seem real, and thereby it at once binds itself with desires [for the world].
- 35 Since this world of dyads and triads appears only in the mind, like the illusory ring of fire formed [in darkness] by whirling the single point of a glowing rope-end, it is false, and it does not exist in the clear sight of Self.
- 36 O worldly-minded man who is unable to understand the wise reasoning and the teachings of Sages about the Supreme Knowledge, if properly scrutinized, this big universe of delusion is seen to be nothing but the illusive play of the *vasanas* [mental tendencies] within you.
- 37 Like the illusory yellow seen by a jaundiced eye, the whole world that you see before you is the product of your own mind, which is full of deceptive vices such as desire [anger, lust and so on]. In reality, however, it is a plenitude of pure *Jnana*.
- 38 Just as 'yellow' fades away in the sunlight, the appearance of this world disappears in the Light of Self-Knowledge, and therefore it cannot be a creation of the Supreme [Self]. It is merely like the beautiful colour designs which appear on a peacock's plumage; that is to say, it is only the reflection of the *vasanas* within you.

Michael James: 'Yellow' in South India refers to turmeric, whose stain fades away in sunlight.

Beautiful colour designs, which are not seen on each individual peacock feather, appear on its plumage, due to the combination and positioning of many feathers.

39 This world is a mere illusion seen in the deluded objective sight of the ego, which is simply the
‘I-am-the-body’ idea. In the sight of Self-Knowledge, however, it is as false as the apparent
blueness in the sky.

40 How does this false and villainous vast world, that cheats and ravages the minds of all people
[except the wise], come into existence? Because of no reason other than our own mistake in
falling away from, instead of clinging to, Self-attention.

41 This life, an illusion based upon [our] likes and dislikes, is an empty dream, which appears, as
if real, during the sleep [of ignorance], but which is found to be false when one wakes up [into
Self-Knowledge].

42 When the mind is least in pure Supreme Self-Consciousness, all the powers which seemed to
function [through the mind], such as ‘*Icheha*’ [will-power], ‘*Kriya*’ [the power of action] and
‘*Jnana*’ [the power of knowing], will cease, being found to be imaginary.

43 The projected picture of this world of triads is a play of *Chit-Para-Shakti* [i.e., the power or
reflected light of Self-Consciousness] on the screen of Supreme Consciousness.

44 The appearance of this illusory world, which is seen as real, is just like the serpent seen in a
rope, the thief seen in a tree-stump or the water seen in a mirage.

45 The various ornaments fashioned out of gold are not different from the gold, and similarly, this
world of moving and unmoving things, manifested out of Self, cannot be other than Self.

46 Self is hidden when the world appears, but when Self shines forth, the world will disappear.
Being different in nature, like the [apparent] dog [seen in] the stone, both cannot be seen
together.

Sadhu Om and Michael James: The nature of Self, the true aspect of Brahman, is not these names and forms, whereas the nature of the world, the false aspect of Brahman, is not Sat-Chit-Ananda, so both cannot be seen simultaneously. See also verses 876, 877, 1216.

47 This world which appears, concealing Self, is a mere dream, but when ‘concealed’ by Self, it
remains as none other than Self.

48 This whole world of triads which deludes us, seeming to be an undisputable reality, is only the
form of the Supreme Power [*Chit-Shakti*], which abides eternally as none other than the
Supreme Self.

49 As the fire shines hidden within the smoke, the Light of Knowledge shines hidden within the
names and forms of this world. When the mind is made clear by Supreme Grace, the nature of
the world is found to be real [as Self], and it will appear no more as the illusory names and
forms.

50 For those who never lose the True Knowledge of Self, which is the base of all sense-
knowledge, the world also is nothing other than Self-Knowledge. But, how can an ordinary
man, who has not gained Self-knowledge, understand the statement of Sages who, seeing
through *Jnana*, say that the world is real?

51 Those who have given up worldly [i.e. sense] knowledge and attachment to it, and who have
destroyed the evil force of mind [i.e. *Maya*], thus gaining Supreme Self-Consciousness, alone
can know the correct meaning of the statement, “The world is Real”.

52 If one’s outlook is changed into *Jnana* [Divine Wisdom], seen through That, the entire
universe, consisting of the five elements such as ether and so on, will be found to be real, being
the Supreme Knowledge Itself. Thus you should see.

53 If one’s outlook is changed into *Jnana*, seen through That, this same world, seen previously as
a hell of misery, will be found to be a heaven of Bliss.

54 As per the saying “The seen cannot differ from the seeing eyes”, the *Jnani*, whose eye [i.e. outlook] has become *Sat-Chit-Ananda* due to the cessation of all mental activities, sees this world also as *Sat-Chit-Ananda*.

Michael James: See verse 343.

55 The appearance of this world, like the illusory appearance of a dream, is merely mental and its truth [therefore] can be known correctly only by the Supreme Consciousness that transcends *Maya*, the mind.

56 O foolish, illusory mind, deluded by seeing the daily dream which is nothing but your [mind’s] own nature, if you discern the true nature of your own Self, which is *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, can this world be anything other than That?

57 This empty world, bewildering with multiplicity, is, in its original state, unbroken uniform Bliss, just as the multi-coloured peacock is, in its original state, the single-coloured yellow egg-yolk. Abide as Self and know this truth.

58 Those who have attained their aim, *Jnana*, do not see this world as a multitude of differences, since the multiple differences of this world are a sportive play of *Chit-Shakti*, the one Whole.

59 For the *Jnani*, who, free from the ‘I-am-the-body’ idea, is established in Self, this world shines as His own Self-Knowledge; and therefore it is wrong for us to see it as something different [i.e. as multiple names and forms].

60 By turning Selfward, you destroy your delusion, this world; what then remains as ‘this is void’ is known by you, Self; so, to destroy this [apparent] void also, drown it in the ocean of Self-Knowledge.

61 If you abide in the Heart as *Sat-Chit* [‘I am’], by which the whole universe exists and shines, then this world will also become one with you, losing its false, frightening dualities.

62 He who knows this world-appearance to be his own form, Supreme-Consciousness, experiences the same Consciousness even through his five senses.

2 The Unreality of the World

63 Some assert, “This world before our eyes, though not permanent, is real enough”. We deny it saying, “Permanence is one of the marks of Reality”.

64 Some people argue, “Though divided, this world we see cannot be devoid of Reality”. We refute them saying, “Wholeness is also a mark of Reality”.

Sadhu Om: Eternal, Unchanging and Self-Shining: these, Sri Bhagavan Ramana used to declare, are the three essential factors of Reality.

65 Because the nature of Reality is Whole, Self-radiant Existence, transcending time and space, *Jnanis* will never deem as real this world, which is destroyed by Time’s Wheel.

66 The One Supreme Bliss, ‘*Sadhasivam*’ [i.e. Self] is alone approved [by *Jnanis*] to be the Whole Reality. This world, seen as full of miseries and defects, is known only by the mind which is unreal and divided with differences.

67 It is the result of the delusion I-am-the-limited-body, that the world, which is nothing but Consciousness, is known as a second entity, separate from Consciousness.

68 Will that which is perceived by the senses of this unreal body be real or unreal? O mind, worried and wearied by worldly ways, consider this thoroughly now and reply.

69 Whatever is seen by the ego who, having fallen from the true state of Self and having been buried deep in dark ignorance, takes the body as ‘I’, is not at all real and is simply non-existent.

70 Though the appearance of the world seems to be very real and attractive, it can only appear in 'Chittam' which is 'Chit-Abhasa' [the reflection of Self-Consciousness]. In pure Self-Consciousness, however, it is non-existent.

Michael James: Just as a cinema picture can be seen clearly only in a limited light on a dark background, and will fade away in the bright sunlight, so also the world-appearance can be seen clearly only in the limited light of the mind and will disappear in the light of pure Self-Consciousness. The limited consciousness of the mind is a mere reflection of Self-Consciousness, conditioned as 'Chittam', the store of tendencies which acts like the roll of film in the cinema analogy. See also verse 244, where this idea is further explained and clarified. See verse 114.

3 The Allurement of the World

- 71 Just as the goat's beard wanders and wags for nothing, people roam about merrily but in vain, doing Karmas for the fulfilment of their worldly desires, while despising the disciplines [followed by aspirants] which lead to eternal *Moksha* in Self. Ah, what a pitiable spectacle is the condition of these worldly people!
- 72 Longing for a tiny grain of pleasure, people toil so hard using the mind to plough the field of the five senses, but they never wish for the flood of Bliss which is the fruit that comes by ploughing the Heart, the Source of the mind, with [simple] Self-attention. Ah, what a wonder!
- 73 The moon-like *jiva* [the mind], ever wedded to the sun-like Self, should always remain in her home, the Heart; to forsake the Bliss of Self and go astray for worldly pleasures, is like the madness of a wife who spoils her precious chastity.

Michael James: See also verses 996.

- 74 Only when the world's allurement is lost will true Liberation be possible [and its allurement cannot be lost unless it is found to be unreal]. Hence, to try to foist reality upon this world is to be just like an infatuated lover who tries to foist chastity upon a prostitute.

Sadhu Om: A lover foists chastity upon a prostitute only because of his infatuation with her, and similarly some schools of thought argue and try to insist upon the world's reality, only because of their immense desire for the enjoyment of this world. Therefore Liberation, which is the fruit of desirelessness, is absolutely impossible for them. Refer also to verse 635.

4 The Aridity of the World

- 75 Only for the mad folk who are deluded, mistaking this fictitious world as a fact, and not for the *Jnani*, is there anything to revel in except *Brahman*, which is Consciousness.
- 76 Will those who are rooted in the Knowledge of Truth stray to worldly ways? Is it not the base and weak nature of animals that descends to the sensual pleasures of this unreal world?
- 77 If you ask, "What is the benefit of sacrificing the innumerable sensual pleasures and retaining mere Consciousness?", [we reply that] the fruit of *Jnana* is the eternal and unbroken experience of the Bliss of Self.

Sadhu Om: Any experience of worldly pleasure is small and interrupted, whereas the Bliss of Self attained through Jnana is eternal and unbroken, and is therefore the greatest benefit.

- 78 Truly there is not the least happiness in any single worldly objects, so how then is the foolish mind deluded into thinking that happiness comes from them?
- 79 Fools are now so proud and happy of the wealth and pleasure of this world, which may at any time abandon them in disappointment and distress.
- 80 Suffering from the heat of the three-fold desires, all living beings wander in the empty and arid desert of this dream-world, which is created by the whirl of past tendencies. The shade of the Bodhi-tree which can completely cool this heat is only Self, which shines as *Turiya* [the fourth state].

Michael James: The three-fold desires are for women, wealth and fame.

5 Playing One's Role in the World

- 81 Realising the truth of Self within your heart and ever abiding as the Supreme, act according to the human role which you have taken in this world, as if you taste its pleasures and pains.
- 82 It is not right for the Wise One to behave improperly, even though He has known all that is to be known and attained all that is to be attained. Therefore, observe the code of conduct which is befitting to your outward mode of life.

The last line refers to religions, caste, and so on.

6 Vivartha Siddhanta (The Doctrine of Simultaneous Creation)

- 83 From his condescending opening words, "Because we see the world", it is to be understood that the Great Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramana, who gives the most practical assistance to aspirants, sets aside all other doctrines and teaches that only the 'Doctrine of *Vivartha*' is suitable to be taken as true.

Sadhu Om: 'Because we see the world' are the first words of verse one of Ulladu Narpadu, Bhagavan's forty-verse poem on the nature of reality.

Though His experience of the Truth can only be adequately expressed by the 'Doctrine of Ajata', Bhagavan Sri Ramana uses only the 'Doctrine of Vivartha' for His Teachings.

Assuming a cause and its effect, religions generally teach that God has created individual souls and the world; some teach the 'Doctrine of Dwaita' [duality], which postulates that all these three [God, souls and the world] will eternally remain separate; others teach the 'Doctrine of Vishishtadwaita' [Qualified non-duality], which postulates that though duality now prevails, the souls and the world will at some later time merge into union with God; others again teach the 'Doctrine of Advaita' [Non-duality], which postulates that even now, though they seem to be separate, these three are in truth mere appearances and are none other than the one Reality; and many other doctrines are also taught by various religions.

Aspirants may be graded into four levels of maturity, dull [manda], medium [madhyama], ripe [teevra] and fully ripe [Ati teevra]; those of the first two grades will readily accept the 'Doctrine of Dwaita' or 'Vishishtadwaita'.

The 'Doctrine of Vivartha' is recommended to explain the standpoint of Advaita, i.e., to explain how the world-appearance, its seer, and the seer's knowledge of the appearance all come into existence simultaneously, unconditioned by cause and effect. However, since this accepts the appearance of the world, souls and God, it is only a working hypothesis to help aspirants. The 'Doctrine of Ajata', on the other hand, never accepts even the appearance of this trinity, but proclaims

that the One Self-shining Reality alone exists eternally and without modification; Ajata is therefore the highest of all doctrines and it is only suitable for the fully-ripened aspirants.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana therefore comes down condescendingly and, setting aside 'Ajata' and the two lower doctrines, He advocates through His Forty Verses on Reality the 'Doctrine of Vivartha' which is suitable for the ripe aspirants who have no faith in the lower doctrines, yet do not have the maturity to grasp the highest, 'Ajata'.

- 84 All that is perceived by the mind was already within the heart. Know that all perceptions are a reproduction of past tendencies now being projected outside [through the five senses].
- 85 Self Itself is seen [due to *Maya*] appearing as the many names and forms of this universe, but It does not act as the cause or the doer, creating, sustaining and destroying this universe.
- 86 Do not ask, "Why does Self, as if confused, not know the Truth that It is Itself which is seen as the world?" If instead you enquire, "To whom does this confusion occur?", it will be discovered that no such confusion ever existed for Self!

Sadhu Om: Through Self-enquiry the confused doubter, who is the ego, will lose his identity and be drowned in Self; it will then be discovered that neither ignorance nor confusion ever existed for Self, but only for the non-existent ego.

- 87 Self appearing as the world is just like a rope seeing itself as a snake; just as the snake is, on scrutiny, found to be ever non-existent, so is the world found to be ever non-existent, even as an appearance.
- 88 In fact, is it not a single deluded thought that creates the snake – which, though appearing to be separate, is truly not other than that thought itself – in a rope; and that then sustains this snake as the cause of its own misery; and that will finally destroy this snake [by obtaining a clear knowledge of its own true nature]?

Sadhu Om: It is thus concluded there that it is not Self but ignorance, due to non-enquiry, which is the real cause of the creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the world. Refer also to verse 91.

- 89 The seed and its sprout seem to co-operate, each being in turn the cause of the other, and yet each effect also destroys its cause; in fact the effect is not really produced by the cause, since both are produced only by the imagination of the ignorant mind.
- 90 If the rope were itself a sentient being, would any other being be needed for it to be seen as a snake? Similarly, as Self is Existence-Consciousness, the world is merely a destruction of this single Consciousness.
- 91 Has Self changed its nature of still Being into that of motion, or how else has this world come into existence? Self has never undergone change or movement; this world seems to exist solely because of ignorance, which is itself false.

Michael James: This same idea continues to be illustrated and developed in the following eight verses.

- 92 When, in the view of the one indivisible space, even the pot has no separate existence, is it not foolish to say that the space inside the pot moves with the movements of the pot?
- 93 Similarly, when, in the plenitude of Self-Consciousness, body and world cannot even exist, being non-Self and incomplete, it is ridiculous to say that Self moves because of the movements of the mutable body and world.

- 94 Though Self, which is ever still because of Its wholeness, seems to move with the movements of the unsteady mirror, the mind, it is never the real Self that moves, but only its reflection, the mind.
- 95 If it is asked, “How did the delusive *upadhis* [attributes such as mind, intellect, *chittam* etc.] [appear to] arise for the Supreme Self, which is One without a second?”, it must be replied that they are seen to arise only in the view of the ignorant *jiva*, and that in reality no attribute has ever arisen for Self. Thus you should know!

Sadhu Om: There is no experience of the upadhis in Jnana, and therefore they appear only to the ignorant and never to the Jnani. Having heard this, the ignorant still ask the Jnani how their wrong outlook has come into being, but they should understand that a Jnani can never admit that upadhis exist for Self, and that it is therefore the responsibility of the ignorant to discover for themselves how and for whom the upadhis appear. Thus, Bhagavan often used to counter-question his devotees, and say, “You claim that upadhis have come into being and are real, and so you alone must find out what they are, and how, from where, and to whom they appear!”

This illustrates why the ‘Doctrine of Vivartha’ [i.e. simultaneous creation] is suited to the questioner’s point of view, which only admits ‘Ajata’ [i.e. non-creation]. The note to verse 83 may also be referred to here.

- 96 A spark of fire can fly out only for a fire-ball of limited size [and it could not do so from a fire which is unlimited and all pervading]. Similarly, it is impossible for *jivas* and the world to arise as tiny separate entities, ‘I’ [and ‘this’], from the Supreme Self, which is the unlimited Whole.

Sadhu Om: This means that the world, God and jivas appear only in the view of the jiva, who is a false reflection of Self, and that, in the supreme viewpoint of Self, there is no creation at all.

- 97 The body exists only in the view of the mind, which is deluded and drawn outwards by the power of *Maya*. In the clear view of Self, which is a single vast Space of Consciousness, there is no body at all and it is therefore wrong to call Self ‘*Dehi*’ or ‘*Kshetrajna*’ [the owner or knower of the body].

Sadhu Om: In scriptures like the Bhagavad Gita, the Divine Masters have condescended to use terms such as ‘Dehi’ and ‘Kshetrajna’, because of the inability of their disciples to understand if the truth were stated otherwise.

- 98 Unless the body is taken to be ‘I’, otherness – the world of moving and unmoving objects – cannot be seen. Hence, because otherness – the creatures and their Creator – does not exist, it is wrong to call Self the Witness.

Sadhu Om: In the scriptures the terms ‘Jiva sakshi’ [i.e. witness of the jiva] and ‘Sarva sakshi’ [i.e. witness of everything] are used only as a formality, but they are not strictly correct. Only when there is something to be seen can there be a seer or ‘witness’ to see it. But in a state of oneness, where no others exist, who will witness what? Therefore Self, which is One without a second, cannot be called the witness.

- 99 The world does not exist apart from the body; the body does not exist apart from the mind; the mind does not exist apart from Consciousness; and Consciousness does not exist apart from Self, which is Existence.

Sadhu Om: Therefore it can be concluded that everything is Self, and that nothing but Self exists.

7 The Doctrine of ‘Ajata’

- 100 Although Guru Ramana taught various doctrines according to the level of understanding of those who came to Him, we heard from Him that ‘Ajata’ alone is truly His own experience. Thus should you know.

Sadhu Om: ‘Ajata’ is the knowledge that nothing – neither the world, soul nor God – ever comes into existence, and that ‘That Which Is’ ever exists as IT is.

- 101 It is this same ‘Ajata’ that Sri Krishna revealed to Arjuna in an early Chapter [two] of the *Gita*, and know that it was only because of the latter’s bewilderment and inability to grasp the Truth, that other doctrines were then taught in the remaining sixteen chapters.

8 The Purpose behind the Diverse Theories of Creation

- 102 Why do the different portions of the *Vedas* describe creation in different ways? Their sole intention is not to proclaim a correct theory of creation, but to make the aspirant enquire into the Truth which is the Source of creation.

Sadhu Om: If creation were true, the scriptures would describe it in only one manner, but their diverse theories make it clear that creation is not the truth. To enable ripe aspirants to discover the falsity of the notion of creation, the Vedas purposely teach contradictory theories. However, such contradictions are found only in the descriptions of creation, they never occur when the Vedas attempt to describe the nature of Self, the Supreme. Concerning Self, they all agree and speak in one voice, saying ‘Self is One, Perfect, Whole, Immortal, Unchanging, Self-shining etc., etc.’ From this we should understand that the deep intention behind such conflicting theories of creation is to indirectly show aspirants the necessity of enquiring into Self, which is the Source of all ideas of creation.

9 The Part Played by God

- 103 By His own Power of *Maya*, the Unchanging One, [though shining more directly than anything else], hides Himself unseen, and throws the rope of the three states into the space of the mind; keeping it upright. He then makes the *jiva*, who mistakes the body as ‘I’, balance on it, and thus He plays His divine game!

Sadhu Om: The three states are waking, dreaming and deep sleep.

*A magician’s trick performed by village entertainers in India is used as a simile here. The magician, hiding himself behind a screen, throws a rope into the air and, making it appear to stand upright, he orders his assistant to climb it and balance on its top. Here, God is equated to the magician; the Heart is His hiding place; the three states are compared to the rope; and the *jiva* is compared to the assistant. But all of this is a game, only appearing in the onlookers’ sight, and hence it is unreal. Similarly, creation, sustenance and dissolution, which appear to be God’s ‘Lila’ [i.e. divine game] are all unreal, as they are seen only by the ignorant.*

- 104 In the view of the ignorant it may sometimes appear as if the Supreme Lord, who gave power of authority to *Maya*, is Himself bound by her deceitful orders [to delude *jivas*].

Sadhu Om: *The significance of saying that the Lord gives power of authority to Maya is the experience of an aspirant who, while abiding as Self, becomes inattentive and allows the 'I'-thought to arise. If this rising of the 'I'-thought is once allowed, it is then no wonder that even God and the Jnani will also appear to be bound by the power of Maya; however, this appearance is false, being only in the view of the illusory 'I'-thought.*

Even in the life of Bhagavan Sri Ramana there were some occasions when it seemed as if He approved of some of the foolish ideas of worldly-minded people, and as if He abided by the unnecessary conditions imposed by them. All these matters, however, only appeared so in the view of the ignorant.

- 105 Just as all beings, moving and unmoving, engage in their own activities due to the mere presence of the sun, which rises without any prior intention, so it is said in the scriptures that all actions are performed by God [who in truth neither acts nor has intentions].
- 106 In the mere presence of the sun, the convex lens emits fire, the lotus blossoms, the water-lily closes, and all creatures rise up, work and rest [according to their nature].
- 107 The five-fold phenomenon functions merely because of God's potent presence, just as the needle trembles near the magnet, or as in the light of the moon, the moonstone drips, the water lily blossoms and the lotus closes.

Michael James: *The five-fold functions are creation, sustenance, dissolution, veiling and Grace.*

The sun does not plan or order that living beings should work, but, each in his own way, makes use of the presence of the sun to do as they wish. So also, the Presence of God (i.e., the Presence of Self) is used by the mind of each person in his own way, either to do karmas and be bound by them, or to inquire into Being and be liberated. Just as the activities of nature cannot continue without the sun, so the five-fold phenomenon cannot function without the Grace (i.e. The Presence) of God or Self.

- 108 In the Presence of the Lord, who has no intention of His own, *jivas* busy themselves outwardly, treading on various paths of action, and reap the fruits with justly result, until finally [realising the uselessness of action] they turn Selfward and attain Liberation.

Sadhu Om: *Though the Lord's Presence is essential for either bondage or liberation to occur – according to our own wishes – He is not responsible for them.*

- 109 Just as the [good and bad] incidents that happen on earth do not affect the sun, and as the properties of the four elements do not affect the vast ether, so also the actions [karmas] of *jivas* will certainly never affect God, who is beyond the mind.

Michael James: *The properties of the four elements are:*

Earth – size and weight
Water – coolness and fluidity
Fire – heat
Wind – movement and speed

10 The Three Prime Entities [God, World and Soul]

110 If one enquires to the very end, “Who is this *jiva*, ‘I?’” it will be found that he is non-existent, and Shiva will be revealed as being nothing but the Supreme Expanse of Consciousness. Thus, when the *jiva* – the seer, who with great desire saw this world – has disappeared, it is ridiculous to attribute reality to the world – the seen.

Sadhu Om: Since the truth of the seer and the seen are one and the same, when the seer [i.e., the jiva] is found to be unreal, the seen will also be known to be unreal. The true nature of Self [which was hitherto conceived, in this trinity, as being God] will then be found to be the only reality.

111 After the above two prime entities [i.e. world and *jiva*] have disappeared, that which alone remains shining is Shiva [i.e. Self]. But although This is the absolute Truth, how can the already dead *jiva* think of It as being non-dual?

Sadhu Om: Since the Truth of Non-duality [Advaita] is beyond thought, Bhagavan Ramana used to say that Advaita cannot be called a religion, because ‘mata’ [religion] is that which is found by ‘mati’ [the mind]. See verse 993.

112 If world and *jiva* are said to be eternal and real, it would then mean a flaw in the Wholeness of the Supreme Lord. Unless we accept that the Lord is imperfect and divided, we cannot say that world and *jiva* are real.

Sadhu Om: Those schools of thought, such as Dwaita and Vishishtadwaita, which say that world and jiva are real, should accept that they are thus degrading God as a partial reality, or else they should give up their dualistic ideas.

113 If *jiva*, the reflected Consciousness, is really an entity separate from the Supreme, then the declaration of the Sage, “Shiva does all, *jivas* do nothing”, would be merely an imagination, and not based upon their experience.

Michael James: As it would be absurd to suggest that Sages make imaginary statements not based upon their experience, it cannot be correct to conclude that jiva is a real entity separate from the Supreme.

114 When the limited light [which is used to project pictures on the cinema screen] is dissolved in the bright sunlight [which enters the cinema], the pictures also will disappear instantaneously. Similarly, when the limited consciousness [*chittam*] of the mind is dissolved in supreme Consciousness [*Chit*], the picture show of these three prime entities [God, world and soul] will also disappear.

Michael James: See verses 10, 11 and 70.

115 Thus, since the Truth of the Source is One, why do all religions [and sometimes even Sages] start their teachings by at first conceding that these three prime entities are real? Because the mind, which is tossed about by objective knowledge, would not agree to believe in the One unless the Sages condescended to teach It as three.

Michael James: See verse 2 of Ulladu Narpadu.

11 Veiling

- 116 Know that the thick veiling of a *jiva*'s forgetfulness about all the troubles caused to others or by others during his innumerable past lives is due to the Grace of God [for his own peace of mind].
- 117 When the remembrance of even a few miserable instances in this lifetime can make one's life a hell, should not forgetfulness alone be loved by all?

Sadhu Om: In the above two stanzas Sri Bhagavan advises us that it is foolish to try to know about our past births. Both pain and pleasure are mere thoughts, originating from the root 'I'-thought, which is misery itself; hence, since no true happiness can come from misery, to forget the pain and pleasures of the past is alone bliss.

12 Individuality

- 118 Individual Gods and Goddesses and their particular powers will appear to be real only in the imagination of those minds which admire them. Such mental delusion is at all times completely non-existent for Self, which transcends the mind.
- 119 It is only due to the false sense-bound knowledge of the ignorant that they say that *Muktas* who have realized the Truth have individuality [*vyakti*]. Truly, universality [*avyakti*] is the real state of a *Jnani*, whose nature is the Expanse of Consciousness; the individuality seen in Him by devotees is a reflection of their own individuality.

Sadhu Om: In this verse it is stressed that people who say, "Not only do we know that the Jnani is an individual, but even He feels that He has individuality" are totally wrong; what they see in Him is merely the reflection of their own nature.

- 120 That which shines in the heart of an earnest aspirant as the Supreme Reality is mere *Jnana* itself. Why therefore, after the annihilation of the ego, point out "This One is a great *Jnani*, and that One is another"? Are They merely the bodies?

Michael James: Appendix 3, 'Who is a Jnani?' in The Path of Sri Ramana, Part 1, will explain in more detail this verse and the following two.

- 121 With great eagerness and wonder you fly to see one Mahatma here and another Mahatma there! If you inquire, attain and know the *Maha-Atma* [i.e. the Great Self] within your own heart, then every Mahatma is none other than that One [within you].
- 122 Whatever high and wonderful state of *tapas* one may have attained, if one still identifies oneself with an individuality, one cannot be a *Sahaja-Jnani* [i.e. One in the State of Effortlessness]; one is only an aspirant of, perhaps, an advanced stage.

Sadhu Om: The intention behind Sri Bhagavan's instructions to us in this verse is that we should each of us see for ourselves whether or not we have the notion of individuality, ignoring the fact that others may call us a Jnani or an ajnani, and that we should try, on this principle, to set ourselves right. This verse is not intended to give us a yardstick with which to measure others as Jnanis or ajnanis.

- 123 Leaving aside that true Self-Consciousness, which is devoid of the least feeling of individuality, and displaying any number of *siddhis*, is a sheer waste. Who but those fools who are incapable of knowing Self, will desire these senseless *siddhis*?

Sadhu Om: A Jnani will not feel himself to be the doer of any siddhis which, according to prarabdha, He may appear to display; they will not therefore make Him proud and happy, and despite them, He will remain as ever, revelling in Self. Refer to verse B 2 (169) of this work, which is also verse 15 of Ulladu Narpadu [Reality Revealed in Forty Verses] Supplement.

124 The *Jnani*, the Formless One who ever abides as the Supreme Self, is a collected totality of all individual *siddhis*. All the *siddhis* which function through them are His alone, since He is the witness of them. Know Him as none other than Lord Dakshinamurti!

Sadhu Om: The Jnani is described as ‘the Formless One’.

Since individual siddhas, even if they possess all the eight-fold siddhis, are unable to display them proudly in front of a Jnani, who possesses Atma-Siddhi [i.e., abidance in Self], which is the highest of all siddhis, they are said to be contained within Him. Since the Jnani is the Self of God, from whom siddhas borrow their powers, all siddhis are here said to be His alone.

The Jnani is neither a Murti [i.e., the form of an individual God], nor even an Avatar or Amsa [i.e., an aspect or part] of the Trimurthis [i.e., the three Gods of Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution]. Since the Jnani, the Guru-Murti, is above the Trimurthis, He is described here as Lord Dakshinamurti, the Primal Guru.

13 Association with the Unreal

B1 Give up thinking that the loathsome body is ‘I’. Know Self, which is eternal Bliss. Cherishing the ephemeral body as well as trying to know Self is just like using a crocodile as a raft to cross a river.

Michael James: Some of the verses in this work were composed by Bhagavan himself. They are numbered independently of the main work as B1, B2, B3, etc. The B stands for Bhagavan. This particular verse also appears as verse twelve in Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham.

Sadhu Om: The phrase “Cherishing the ephemeral body” is liable to be misunderstood by aspirants; Sri Bhagavan merely intends to give a warning through this verse to those aspirants who believe that, in order to realise Self, they must live a long life in a healthy body. Such people sometimes go to extremes and, calling themselves yogis, waste most of their waking life doing certain yoga practices and preoccupying themselves to the point of hypochondria with a concern about sattvic diet, physical cleanliness, handsome appearance, good health and so on. These foolish people, as a result, are merely a trouble to their benefactors and useless parasites on society.

However, Bhagavan does not intend to deny the necessity or wisdom of taking a reasonable and moderate care of physical needs. A wise shopkeeper’s aim should not be merely to pay the rent on his shop, but should be to earn a large profit on top of the rent; similarly, an aspirant’s aim should not be merely to provide food, clothing and shelter [the rent] for his body [the shop], he must remember that his business in this body is Self-enquiry, and his aim is to make the worthy profit of Self-Knowledge. However, if the rent is not paid for this body, the business cannot thrive. On the other hand, however, paying the rent [i.e., providing these necessities] should not become the sole endeavour of our whole life; the major portion of our attention must be aimed directly at attaining Self-Knowledge, while attending to a bare minimum of the necessities. Excessive anxiety about the physical necessities of life is like clinging to a crocodile which, instead of acting as a raft to help us cross the river of samsara, will swallow us, making all our futile efforts come to nothing.

- 125 Those who show great care and love for their bodies, while saying that they are trying to know Self, are like one who tries to cross a river, mistaking a crocodile for a log.
- 126 Instead of attending to *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, the subtlest, which is beyond the reach of speech or mind, to spend one's life attending merely to the welfare of the gross body is just like drawing water with great difficulty from a well in order to water some useless grass [instead of paddy].
- 127 Those who take to the petty life, mistaking the body as 'I', have lost, so to speak, the great life of unlimited Bliss in the Heart, which is ever waiting to be experienced by them.
- 128 Not knowing that the world in front of them brings only great harm, those who take it to be real and a source of happiness will drown in the ocean of birth and death, like one who takes hold of a floating bear as a raft.

Sadhu Om: If someone has caught hold of a floating bear, without knowing its true nature but hoping that it will serve as a raft, he will find it very difficult to leave it, even when he has discovered his mistake, since the bear will also have caught hold of him; similarly, even though someone has heard from the Guru that the world is a false appearance, he finds it very difficult to leave it aside, because of the tendencies of attraction which he created by his great desire for it, when he took it to be real. Such is the strength of the mind's attachment to this world!

- 129 Just as the movements of a vehicle in which one is sitting is wrongly taken to be one's own movements, so also those who do not have Self-Knowledge suffer from the delusion of mistaking the birth and death [i.e., *samsara*] experience by the ego as their [Self's] own [birth and death].
- 130 If the ignorant one, who is clinging to the body and world as real, wants to have peace, he should, giving up his wrong notion, cling like an *udumbu* to Self in his heart.

Michael James: An udumbu is a giant lizard found in India which grows up to three feet in length; its peculiarity is that it is able to cling to the flat surface of a wall so firmly that a man holding it can lift himself up.

- 131 Those who live the life of an ego, desirously entertaining themselves with the pleasures of false sense objects, will be doomed to delusion. The only life worth living is revelling in the Supreme Consciousness – that is, being Self.

14 The Pandit

- 132 Why do many of you call me a Pandit? The correct sign of the real Pandit is the knowledge that the knower of the all the arts and sciences is non-existent, and that all he has learnt throughout the past ages is therefore mere ignorance.

Sadhu Om: Here Sri Bhagavan is objecting to those who call Him a great Pandit simply because they see in Him poetical genius, fluent knowledge of the scriptures, a wonderful power of memory, sharp intelligence, skill in argument, acquaintance with many languages, medical knowledge, architectural skill, and so on. He denies that one who has learnt all the arts and sciences is a true Pandit. The ego, the wrong knowledge that "I am the body" is itself the primal ignorance, so how can the learning acquired by such ignorance be true knowledge? The knowledge of anything but Self is therefore mere ignorance.

However, Sri Bhagavan is Himself the true Pandit, because of His Self-Knowledge. He who is able to discriminate and understand this is alone fit to take to Self-enquiry and gain Self-Knowledge, thus qualifying himself to be called a true Pandit.

- 133 Enquiring, “Who is this ‘I’ that has learnt all these arts and sciences?”, and thereby reaching the Heart, the ego vanishes along with all its learning. He who knows the remaining Self-Consciousness is the true Pandit; how can others who have not realised It be Pandits?
- 134 Those who have learnt to forget all that was learnt, and to abide within, are alone the Truth-Knowers. Others, who remember everything, will suffer with anxiety, being deluded by the false *samsara*.

Sadhu Om: The knowledge of all the sixty-four arts and sciences are nothing but the fruit of thinking, and thinking and forgetting are properties of the mind, which is lost in the State of Self-Knowledge, where Oneness prevails and where neither remembering nor forgetting take place. Bliss alone shines in this State, and only he who has learnt to experience this Bliss is the real Pandit.

- 135 O scholar, you who bow your head in shame in front of a *Jnani* when He asks you, “Oh, poor soul, who are you that has learnt all [these arts and sciences]?”, may your ignorant mind be damned.

Sadhu Om: The strong-sounding words used here by Sri Bhagavan – “may your ignorant mind be damned” – should be understood to be a blessing rather than a curse, since the aim of the aspirant is the damnation (i.e., the total annihilation) of his own mind. Refer also to Upadesa Manjari [Spiritual Instruction] Chapter 1, Question 4.

- 136 One who is permanently established in Self-Consciousness – having destroyed delusion, which is in the form of doubt and misunderstanding – is the Supreme Pandit.
- 137 Know that he who, by annihilating the ego, knows the Supreme Thing as It is – that is as the real ‘I am’, which is the noun ‘I’, Self’s natural name, shining together with the verb ‘Am’ – is the true spotless Pandit.

15 The Poet

- 138 Responding with a melting heart for the past wrong use of his tongue in wretched human praise, let the poet live gloriously, taking to the new resolution, ‘I will no more sing in praise of any human being, but to the glory of God alone’.
- 139 Those who, instead of dedicating to God’s Feet the poetic flow which they achieved by His Grace, squander it in unworthy human praise are, alas, like those who compel their daughter, the tongue’s eloquence, to take to prostitution.

Michael James: The words ‘their daughter, the tongue’s eloquence’ may alternatively be translated as ‘the Goddess of Eloquence [Saraswati]’.

- 140 The divine flow of poetry can spring only from a heart which has become still, being completely freed by Self-attention from all attachment towards the five sheaths, starting with *Annamaya* [the body composed of food].

16 The Vanity of Learning

- 141 After knowing that the purport at the heart of all scripture is that the mind should be subdued in order to gain Liberation, what is the use in continuously studying them? Who am I?

142 If those who are unfit even to live a life of religious morality, take to a critical study of Vedanta, it is nothing but a pollution of the purity of Vedanta.

Muruganar: This verse emphasises that the purity of mind and heart is essential for those who take to the study of Vedanta.

143 For those who are very attached to their filthy bodies, all the study of Vedanta will be as useless as the swinging of the goat's fleshly beard unless, with the aid of Divine Grace, their studies lead them to subdue their egos.

144 To be freed from ignorance by mere studies is as impossible as the horns of a horse, unless by some means the mind is killed and the tendencies are thus completely erased by the blossoming of Self-Knowledge.

Sadhu Om: Readers should remember that Bhagavan Sri Ramana recommended Self-enquiry and self-surrender as the only two means by which the Truth may be known. The result of both these methods is both mano-nasha [death of the mind] and vasana-kshaya [eradication of the tendencies].

145 For the *jiva*'s weak and unsteady mind, which is ever wavering like the wind, there is no place to enjoy bliss except the Heart, its Source; the study of scriptures is, for it, like a noisy *shandai* [a cattle fair].

Sadhu Om: The arts are merely the skilful play of mental modifications [mano-vrittis]; just as flowing rivers roar wildly until reaching their original source, the ocean, where they become peaceful and silent, so also the restlessly moving mind will not find peace and silence until, giving up such vrittis, it returns and abides in its Source. Refer also to verse 8 of Arunachala Ashtakam [The Eight Stanzas to Arunachala].

146 Rooting out useless sense-desires is possible only for those expert enquirers who, giving up the vast *Vedas* and *Agamas*, know through Self-enquiry, the Truth within the Heart.

Michael James: The phrase 'Vedas and Agamas' refers to the portion of the scriptures that teaches ritualistic actions for achieving desired ends.

147 Though one learns the blemishless *Jnana Sastras* perfectly and with great enthusiasm, one has to forget, give up and be free of them when one tries to abide as Self.

Sadhu Om: It is necessary to have great enthusiasm for studying during the time of Sravana [i.e., hearing from the scriptures and the Guru], but this desire and enthusiasm will fade away during the time of Manana [i.e., reflection upon these teachings], because the ideas will then lose their novelty owing to one's complete conviction in them. However, during the time of Nididhyasana [i.e. practice], when the aspirant tries to turn Selfward, he finds that the scriptures learnt by him tend to rise as obstructing thoughts, due to the power of Sastra vasanas. Thus, even the divine scriptures have to be discarded and forgotten, while the aspirant tries to remain alone and merge into the Heart.

17 The Greatness of Vedanta

148 Worldly people, deluded by sensual pleasures which lead to destruction, cannot know of the existence of the Truth. They call the fertile glory of the aspirant's blossoming *Jnana*, which was attained by dispassion towards sense-pleasures, as the 'barren ground philosophy'.

- 149 The experience of Vedanta is possible only for those who have completely given up all desires. For the desirous it is far away, and they should therefore try to rid themselves of all other desires by the desire for God, who is free from desires.

Sadhu Om: The term Vedanta is commonly understood to mean a particular system of philosophy, but its true meaning is the experience of Jnana which is gained as the conclusion [anta] of the Vedas.

The desire for sense objects, which are all 2nd or 3rd persons, is directly opposed to the desire for God, and so it is quite clear that God is not merely one among the many 2nd and 3rd personal objects, but that He must be the Reality of the 1st person. Therefore, we should understand that discarding all desires for 2nd and 3rd personal objects and having love for Self alone is the true devotion towards God. Verse B 13 [731] also asserts this same point.

18 The Workings of Prarabdha

- 150 The Wise, who know that all worldly experiences are formed by *prarabdha* alone, never worry about their life's requirements. Know that all one's requirements will be thrust upon one by *prarabdha*, whether one wills them or not.
- 151 Every *jiva* experiences his own *prarabdha*, which is catalysed by the mere Presence of Shiva as the Witness dwelling in the heart of each one. Hence, the *jiva* who does not delude himself by thinking that he is the experiencer of *prarabdha*, but knows that he is mere Existence-Consciousness, is none but Shiva.

Michael James: Refer here to verse 1190.

19 The Power of Prarabdha

- 152 Just as the dark shadow at the foot of a lamp ever remains unmoving, so delusive egos of some are not lost even though, due to their destiny [*prarabdha*], they live, grow old and die at the Feet of the *Jnana*-Guru, the unlimited Light of Knowledge; this is perhaps because of their immaturity.

Michael James: The immaturity referred to here is the lack of the desire to abandon the ego, because liberation can never be attained without bhakti, which is the strong yearning in the aspirant to lose his ego. Thus this verse could more fittingly be included in chapter 21 'The Power of Vasanas'. Or with verse 605 in Apaka Tiran.

- 153 Why is it that, even if one wishes, it is not possible to achieve the eight-fold *siddhis* as well as Self-Knowledge? Because wealth and wisdom, being contrary to each other, will not generally be gained together in this world.

Michael James: If siddhis appear together with Jnana, they are due to the kamyas karmas performed in a previous life-time, while the individual was still in the dark grips of ignorance. Thus, since siddhis are according to prarabdha [one of the three karmas, which are all based upon the ego], and since Jnana destroys the ego, it is opposed to siddhis. Moreover, as Jnana is based upon Self and not upon the ego, it is not bound by any of the three karmas.

Sri Muruganar: Therefore it is not necessarily true, as some say, that all *siddhas* should be *Jnanis* and all *Jnanis* should have *siddhis*, or, as some others say, that *siddhas* cannot be *Jnanis* and *Jnanis* cannot have *siddhis*.