

52 The Guru

266 The Self-Consciousness which shines after the destruction of the [root] thought – the identification with any one of the [three] bodies as ‘I’ – is, the Almighty Power [*Akila Para Shakti*] who resides as ‘I’ in the hearts of all created beings.

Michael James: It is generally supposed that Omnipotence (Akila Para Shakti) is the power of God who creates and sustains the whole universe and the individuals therein. However, this power of creation and sustenance is merely able to limit ‘I’ to a particular body, but since the true Self-Consciousness experienced by a Jnani destroys this limitation, It is a greater Power. Therefore, Sri Bhagavan points out that the Self-Consciousness of a Jnani is the true Akila Para Shakti.

267 This natural Self-Consciousness of mere Existence, without any sense of duality, is the Supreme Silence, which is glorified [by the scriptures] as the perfection of *Jnana*, and which cannot be known by the ego, the foolish demon-nature.

Sadhu Om: The Self-Consciousness referred to here denotes Sat-Chit, and it is described as natural because it is ever-attained, and not something to be newly achieved.

The eight-fold siddhis depend upon the functioning of the ego, which is here said to be a demon nature. These siddhis are, therefore, demonic powers and not divine powers as people generally believe.

In the above two verses no direct mention is made of the guru, but they are given in the beginning of this chapter in order to guide aspirants who are intent upon finding the true Guru. These verses teach that the Omnipotence [Akila Para Shakti] of the Guru lies in His Power to destroy the ego, and that Power is simply His mere Self-Consciousness, and not the ability to perform and display miraculous siddhis.

268 Know and discover that He alone who possesses such *Akila Para Shakti* [i.e., the Power of Supreme Silence which consumes all by remaining as mere Existence-Self-Consciousness], is the Real Guru who can by His unlimited Grace merge any soul who comes to Him into the non-dual Self, the *Jnana* beyond all speech.

Sadhu Om: The words “any soul” are used to stress the point that even non-human creatures will be given liberation by such a Powerful Guru, as, for example, birds and beasts attained Liberation through the Grace of Bhagavan Ramana. Considering this, even immature human beings must be assured of uplift if they come to such a Real Guru.

269 Truly, perfect discipleship – which is the steadfast Supreme Devotion that flares up with the merging of the ego into the Light of Supreme Stillness [i.e. Self-Consciousness] – is alone the right Guruship. Thus you should know.

270 He who turns you towards Self and reveals to you the knowledge of Self, is the Guru. In truth He is Self and He is God. Cling to Him.

Michael James: As the whole universe which we see is but a projection of Self, Self alone is God, the real creator of the universe. It is also Self alone that, after maturing the devotee through so many births, takes the form of the human Guru in order to reveal Jnana to him. Thus God, Guru and Self are one and the same.

271 He who gives ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’ to those who come to him is both Yama [Death] and Brahma [the Creator] to them. But the truly divine Guru is the one who proves to them that nothing is to be newly accomplished by them.

Sadhu Om: The ‘would-be guru’, by ordering those who come to him to perform many actions [Karmas] such as Japa or Dhyana, is only loading a greater burden of new actions upon the aspirants, who come to him for relief, because they are unable to bear the fruits of the actions they have already accumulated in the past. Instead of relieving them, the would-be guru plays the part of Yama [Death] by crushing and killing them with a greater burden of Karmas.

Since individuals have to reap the fruits of their actions through innumerable births, the ‘would-be guru’ plays the part of Brahma [creator], by making them perform more karmas and thus making them take more births in order to reap the fruits of these actions.

However, as the Sadguru knows the truth that Self alone exists without a second, He convinces those who approach Him that they are none other than Self. When, through the power of His Silence, they come to understand this truth, they feel that they have nothing to do, but that they merely have to Be. As doing alone is action [karma] but Being is not, and as it is only karma that brings birth and death, they are relieved from both Brahma and Yama.

Unlike other Gurus who instruct their disciples to do the four yogas [Karma, Raja, Bhakti, or Jnana], Sri Bhagavan Ramana makes us stop doing anything in order to discover, “Who does these yogas?”, and thus He turns our attention towards ‘I’, which is the right clue to keep us quiet. This is the nature of the Real Guru.

272 Since one does not love to listen to the teaching of the Supreme Self, which is ever going on in the Heart, one comes out with great enthusiastic delusion. Because of this, one needs a Guru outside.

273 That Self-Consciousness [*Sat-Chit*] which shines in all, as All, is the Guru.

Sadhu Om: Guru is That which exists and shines as ‘I’ in all, and is the one common factor in all.

274 Those who do not understand that the *Jnana*-Guru is the Formless Supreme Space, though He appears in the human form, are the chief amongst all the vilest sinners and criminals.

53 The Guru’s Grace

275 For those who are suffering here in *samsara*, which has been created by the good and bad karmas that are the result of dark delusion, the only medicine to cure their mental anguish is the great enthusiasm which they feel for the Guru’s Grace.

276 The Guru is the One, who removes the sufferings and bestows the Bliss of Liberation upon those who, when they come to Him, are swept away by the force of various karmas done with the attachment of likes and dislikes.

277 The gracious look of the Guru, the philosophers’ stone, will transmute even the *jiva*’s impure nature, the rusty iron, into pure *Jnana*, the gold. Therefore, the worthiest thing to choose, seek and steadfastly cling to is the *Darshan* of the Guru’s gracious look.

278 To *jivas*, who are deluded into taking the false to be true, the Guru, who is Self, the Light to all the gross lights of the universe, exposes the falseness of their truth.

Sadhu Om: ‘The false’ in this verse denotes the whole universe, including the ego which sees it. ‘Their truth’ means that which appears to be true in their deluded outlook.

The gross lights of the universe [the sun, moon, fire etc.] are seen by the eyes, the eyes are known by the mind, and the mind borrows light from Self; therefore, the Guru who is Self is said to be the Light to all the gross lights of the universe. Refer also to Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham [The Supplement to the Forty Verses] verse 7.

279 The Supreme *Jnana-guru*, the motionless and subtlest Space of Grace, destroys “*Laghu*” – the worthless and wavering *jiva*’s gross notion, ‘I am the body’ – and bestows upon him the true and perfect *Jnana*.

Sadhu Om: *The nouns and adjectives which are used in the Tamil original in this verse, clearly show that the Supreme Jnana-Guru is the extreme opposite of the worthless and wavering jiva; the word “Guru” has the meaning of greatness and heaviness, whereas the word “lagu”, which is used twice, has the meaning of worthlessness and lightness.*

280 Guru, the Lord of *Jnana*, who is the power of the unlimited greatness of Self, is the Supreme Silence which completely defeats the worthless arguments of those who are stained with the delusion of worldly desires.

Sadhu Om: *If one is defeated by the skill of one’s opponents sharp intellect, the defeat is only temporary, since one continues to feel anger and enmity towards him. However, when the arguments of worldly people are defeated by the Jnana-guru’s Supreme Silence their minds are overwhelmed with Knowledge and Bliss, and so, forgetting their enmity, they feel great love for the Guru; thus, the victory won by Silence is eternal.*

281 Without killing the body, but by killing, with the glance of His eyes, the ego which poses as if it were really existing, the Guru in no time exposes the entire fiction [from the body to the whole universe] as non-existent, and reveals the shining of the one Supreme Self as the only real existence.

Sadhu Om: *Just as the bright sunlight exposes the non-existence of the snake, which appeared on a rope in the dim twilight, so the Light of the Guru’s clear Self-Knowledge exposes the non-existence of the entire universe, which appeared in the dim light of the jiva’s mind.*

When a river merges into the ocean, all its attributes, such as its speed, current and shape, are destroyed, yet not one drop of its substance, the water, is lost. Similarly, when a jiva, “I am so-and-so”, meets the glance of the Guru’s eyes, all his attributes, such as “so-and-so”, are destroyed, yet his substance, the Self-Consciousness [Sat-Chit] “I am”, shines unaffected and alone; therefore it is said that the Guru “kills without killing”.

282 It is impossible to see the Divine Dance of Self-Knowledge [the *Sphurana*, “I-I”] in the Heart, until the dance of the rebellious mind is destroyed by the Divine Power of the Sword of *Mei-Jnana* [Right-Knowledge], wielded by the great hero, the *Sadguru*, who has already beheaded the ghost, [His own] mind.

Sadhu Om: *Shiva is said to be dancing in the ‘smasana’ [burial ground] but it is impossible to see His Divine Dance until the dance of the many restless ghosts, who are also dancing there, is stopped. Similarly, we are told in this verse that it is impossible to see the Divine Dance of the Sphurana, “I-I” [which is the true significance of the Dance of Nataraja in Chidabaram], until the rebellious mind-ghost, which dances as ‘I’, is beheaded by the Grace of the Sadguru, who has destroyed His own mind.*

283 Just as the sight of a lion appearing in its dream will awaken an elephant from sleep, so also the *Darshan* of the *Sadguru* will awaken the disciple from the dream of this present waking state, which is merely an illusion, into the state of *Jnana*.

Sadhu Om: *The present waking state is itself an illusory dream; just as a dream can only exist by depending upon the background of sleep [i.e., the loss of waking body-consciousness], so this present dream, our so-called waking state, can only exist by depending upon the background of the sleep of our Self-forgetfulness [i.e., the apparent loss of our natural pure Self-Consciousness].*

This ignorance [i.e., our Self-forgetfulness] is a much prolonged sleep, in which innumerable dreams [i.e., our many lives] take place; refer to Ekatma Panchakam [The Five Verses on the Oneness of Self] verse 1, in which Sri Bhagavan expresses this idea.

What is destroyed by the Sadguru is not only the drama of our present waking state, but also the much-prolonged sleep of Self-forgetfulness, which is the background of all these dreams, our many births and deaths.

Just as the lion seen by the elephant in its dream is false, yet its awakening is true, so the name and form of the Sadguru is false [from an absolute viewpoint], yet the Awakening [i.e., the Dawn of Self-Knowledge] caused by Him is very Real. After the elephant wakes up from his dream, he will know that the lion seen by him was not real, and similarly, after the Dawn of Self-Knowledge, it will be known that even the name and form of the Sadguru is not real [i.e., the notion that the Sadguru is other than Self, 'I', will be known to be false].

284 Just as a deer caught in the jaws of a tiger [cannot escape], so those who are caught by the glance of the *Sadguru's* Grace will never be abandoned, but, having their ego and *vasanas* completely destroyed, they will realize the non-dual Truth.

Michael James: *This well-known simile, which was first used by Sri Bhagavan in Who am I?, is worth pondering over carefully. A deer caught in the jaws of a tiger would generally be considered to be an object of pity, since it will surely be killed, yet Sri Bhagavan uses this as a simile to console devotees and to assure them that they can never escape from the Sadguru, and will surely be saved by Him. The significance of this simile is made slightly clearer in this verse than in Who am I?, as it is said here that the Sadguru will completely destroy the ego and vasanas of His devotees, thus implying that He is the mighty Tiger who will consume the ego, the root of all misery. So, by means of this peculiar simile, Sri Bhagavan is once more stressing that the only true Salvation is the complete annihilation of the ego or individuality; hence, 'to be destroyed' is 'to be saved'!*

285 The disciple's mind which has soaked in the Light of *Jnana* – the Feet of the *Sadguru* – which is abundant like [the light of] the sun, can never be imprinted by the three-fold differences, which appear to exist, as if real, in Self, the Pure Consciousness.

Sadhu Om: *The "three-fold differences" include the triads [e.g. the seer, seen, and seeing], the three states [waking, dream, and deep sleep], the three gunas [sattva, rajas and tamas], etc.*

Once a photographic film has been exposed to the sunlight, it loses forever its ability to receive the impression of any image. Similarly, once the mind of a disciple has been exposed to the Light of the Jnana-Guru's Grace, it can never be deluded by worldly desires, etc. Refer also to Sri Arunachala Ashtakam, verse 5.

Michael James: *There are two possible versions of the next verse:*

- 286a Of what use are spoken words when the eyes of the *Sadguru* – who bestows *Jnana* through His Silence, and who reveals the Light of Self which finally survives – and the eyes of the disciple meet?
- 286b Of what use are spoken words when the eyes of the *Sadguru* – who bestows *Jnana* through His Silence - and the eyes of the disciple meet, since that [meeting of their eyes] will itself reveal the Light of Self which finally survives?

Michael James: The last two lines of this verse are taken from verse 1100 of Tirukkural. The phrase 'who bestows jnana through his silence' may also be translated as 'who silently bestows jnana,' or 'who bestows silence, jnana'.

- 287 Perfect *Jnanis* have always and will always say, “By the mere Grace of the *Sadguru*, the True Thing – the final *Brahma-Jnana*, which shines in the pure Silence, the rarely attainable Vedanta – will dawn of its own accord in the heart as ‘I-I.’”

54 Some Assurances

- 288 Thinking in the proper manner of the Guru’s Grace, which is beyond expression, and Being Still, remaining unattached to the false [world] appearance in front of us, is alone Blissful.

Sadhu Om: Sri Bhagavan often used to say “Grace is Self, which shines in everyone as ‘I-I.’” Therefore, “thinking in the proper manner of the Guru’s Grace” is nothing but attending uninterruptedly to Self. In order to show that this Self-attention is nothing but avoiding second and third person attention, it is described here as “remaining unattached to the false world-appearance in front of us”. Remaining in Self-attention by “Being Still” is neither a state of laziness, nor is it remaining like a stone in kashta-samadhi or laya; it is the state of making an uninterrupted effort towards Self-attention. When this state is understood and experienced as our own Natural State, then Self-attention becomes effortless, and that is Sahaja Samadhi.

- 289 Destroy the stealthy ego, which is the thought “I am the body”, either by enquiring “Who am I?”, or by melting into nothing by always thinking with love of God’s feet. That which will then remain is the Light of *Jnana*.

Sadhu Om: This verse clearly shows that the ego can be destroyed only by Self-enquiry or self-surrender. One should destroy the ego by whichever of these two means appeals to one as better and more suitable. Anyhow, the destruction of the ego is alone recommended as being essential.

- 290 *Shanti* [i.e., Peace or Bliss], which is loved by everyone, cannot at all be attained by anyone, at any place, at any time, or by any means, unless the mind is subdued by the Grace of the *Sadguru*. Therefore, turn towards His Grace with one-pointed devotion.
- 291 If one wants to be saved, one is given the following true and essential advice: just as the tortoise draws all its five limbs within its shell, so one should draw the five senses within and turn one’s mind Selfward. This alone is happiness.

Michael James: The last sentence may also mean, ‘This alone is the happy conclusion.’

Sadhu Om: This important advice, to withdraw the mind from the five senses and to turn it Selfward, is not given to one and all; it is given only for the benefit of those who wish to save themselves, and not for those who are still vainly hoping to save the world. Such people, who want to save the world, will

find no taste for Self-attention, and thus they are not yet fit even to save themselves, let alone to save the world; unless one has first learnt to swim, it is vain and futile to jump into the water to save others.

- 292 Be assured that That which ever shines [for all] is certainly the true Existence of Self, “I am”. When the True God is thus realised as one’s own Self, without doubt or misconception, the Supreme Bliss will brim over.
- 293 Having known for certain that everything which is seen, without the least exception, is merely a dream, and that it [the seen] does not exist without the seer, turn only towards Self – *Sat-Chit-Ananda* – without attending to the world of names and forms, which is only a mental conception.

Sadhu Om: *When it is said “... the seen does not exist without the seer... ”, we should remember that the seer is also an unreal dream, like the seen.*

The instruction: “... turn only towards Self – Sat-Chit-Ananda – without attending to the world of names and forms... ”, should remind us that Brahman has five aspects, Sat, Chit, Ananda, name and form, of which Sat, Chit and Ananda are real, and name and form are unreal; if instead of attending to the unreal names and forms of the world, we attend to Sat-Chit-Ananda [i.e., Self], then the world will be known as Sat-Chit-Ananda, and not as names and forms.

- 294 Attention to one’s own Self, which is ever shining as ‘I’, the one undivided and pure Reality, is the only raft with which the *jiva*, who is deluded by thinking “I am the body”, can cross the ocean of unending births.
- 295 The false delusion of the *jiva* can never be lost, unless Self – the pure *Sat-Chit*, which is the one Reality ever shining within, without a second – is realised.
- 296 Having annihilated the delusive mind which always dwells upon worldly things, having killed the restless ego, and having completely erased the worldly *vasanas*, shine as Shiva, the pure Consciousness Itself.

Michael James: *The ego is called restless because it is always rising, setting or wandering.*

- 297 Do not wander outside, eating the scorching sand of worldly pleasures, which are non-Self; come home to the Heart where Peace is shining as a vast, everlasting, cool shade, and enjoy the feast of the Bliss of Self.
- 298 O aspirant, having come to the Lord’s feet for refuge, with great devotion and with a spirit of self-surrender, give up completely the desire for occult powers and *siddhis*, and aim only to attain and enjoy the Bliss of Liberation, which is Itself *Sada-Shivam* [the Supreme Lord].

Sadhu Om: *This verse is a warning not only for those who desire to acquire siddhis, but also for those aspirants who desire to use the siddhis which they have acquired according to their prarabdha. Women, wealth and fame are the only things that can be gained by occult powers and siddhis, so, by advising us not to desire these powers, Sri Bhagavan is indirectly advising us to give up these threefold desires.*

From this verse, we learn that Shiva and Liberation are one and the same; in Atma-Vidya [The Song of Self-Knowledge], verse 5, Sri Bhagavan also uses the Name “Annamalai” to denote Self, so we should understand that in many places where words such as Hara, Shiva, Shiva’s Feet, the Guru’s Feet, etc., are used in this work, they denote Self and not a personal God. Refer also to verse 1101.

- 299 Having come under the sway of Grace, ever revel in the dense, blazing Mass of Supreme Knowledge, the Feet of Lord Hara, the indestructible Reality, without yielding to the mental activities of thinking and forgetting.
- 300 Man, the deluded ego-mind, cannot be freed from confusion and fear [of birth and death], unless he subdues himself by taking refuge under the protection of Grace; for, [by any other means], the force of past karmas [i.e., *vasanas*] is unconquerable.

55 The Guru's *Uchishtam*

Michael James: When food is offered to the Guru, if the remaining portion is given to the disciple, it is considered to be very sacred, and a sign of the Guru's Blessings and Grace; this remaining portion of food is known as 'uchishtam'.

- 301 The *uchishtam* given by the Guru to the disciple is the enlightening words of instruction, coming from His own Self-Realization; the right manner of partaking of His *uchishtam* is for the disciple to silently abide in Self, as soon as he hears them.
- 302 After offering the ego – the attachment to the body as 'I' – as food to the Supreme Whole – the Silent Guru – the attainment, by the disciple, of Self, which remains shining in the heart is the eating of the Guru's *uchishtam*.

Sadhu Om: The feeling 'I am so-and-so' is the ego, but when this is surrendered or offered to the Guru, only the portion 'so-and-so' [i.e., the attachment to the body] is removed. What then remains is only Sat-Chit, 'I am', which can never be either offered or taken. This 'I am' is Self, which is described here as That "which remains shining in the Heart".

- 303 It is said [by Sages] that the mere life on earth of a great *jnani*, who ever revels in *Sat* [i.e., Self], is itself the supremely pure *uchishtam* of God, which will remove all the sins of the world.

Sadhu Om: The emphasis in this verse is that even the words, teachings and writings of a Jnani are not necessary, since His mere existence on earth is itself enough to remove all the sins of the world.

56 Guru Puja (Worshipping the Guru)

- 304 The habit by disciples of worshipping their Guru, who has taken them as His own, is, if pondered over, only observed as an outward formality, just like a wife's habit of outwardly observing proper reverence towards her husband while in company.

Michael James: In India it is the custom for a housewife to pay formal reverence to her husband by many actions such as always sitting at a lower level than him. In truth however, both of them know that these actions are mere formalities, and that, since they are one in life, she is not really menial or inferior to him. In the same way, even the Self-realised disciple will observe the formalities of outward reverence towards his Guru, even though both of them know that they are, in truth, one in Jnana.

- 305 For those who ever think of and cling to the Feet of the *Sadguru*, who is the blazing flame of pure *Jnana*, through the Grace obtained by such *Guru-bhakti*, their minds will become clear and they will achieve *Mei-Jnana* [i.e., the true Knowledge].

- 306 In those who are fortunate enough to surrender to the Feet of their *Sadguru, Para-Bhakti* [i.e., the Supreme Love] will grow. Such *Para-Bhakti* will itself grow into *Mei-Jnana*, which will completely burn away all other unworthy desires.
- 307 When Sri Krishna, the Ocean of Grace – having Arjuna between Himself and us - tells us “Know for certain that I will release you from the bondage of the two kinds of karmas if you reach me”, He is advising us to reach Self.

Michael James: “... having Arjuna between Himself and us...” means that Krishna is giving all of us instructions through Arjuna, just as an orator talks to a microphone, although he is truly addressing his speech to his audience.

The two kinds of karmas are punya karmas (meritorious actions) and papa karmas (demeritorious actions).

- 308 Worship of [i.e. surrender to] the Feet of the Guru, with *Guru-bhakti*, is the real mantra, which will destroy all the rising *vasanas* and bestow *Jnana*, in which there will be no fear of *Maya*’s delusion. Thus should you know.
- 309 Though one performs all kinds of worship to the Guru, who is none other than the Supreme Shiva walking on earth, losing ‘I’, the ego, and merging into [i.e. uniting with] Him, the Lord of one’s soul, is the best of [the modes of] worship.

Sadhu Om: All other ways of worshipping the Guru involve the use of body, speech or mind, and therefore, - unlike the merging of the ego into Self [i.e. Jiva-Brahma-Aikya] – they are such that they cannot be performed always and without a break. Hence, Jiva-Brahma-Aikya is the best way of worshipping the Guru. Refer also to Upadesa Undiyar verse 30: “Knowing THAT which survives the annihilation of ‘I’ is alone the true Tapas!...”

- 310 The great delusion caused by the ignorant ego creates the sense of separateness, which conceives the differences such as Guru-disciple, Shiva-*jiva*, etc. One’s attainment of the State of Silence, where such a sense of separateness never rises, is the meaningful *Namaskaram* [i.e. obeisance], which one should make towards one’s Guru.
- 311 Having destroyed the dualistic sense ‘I am the disciple’ by the great Fire of the Teachings of the *Jnana-Guru*, the Lord, the shining of the State of Supreme Silence, devoid of all *vasanas*, is the true way of worshipping the *Sadguru*. Thus should you know.
- 312 By being well established in the Supreme Knowledge [*Guru-Bodham*] – which is a perfect experience, attained by means of the inward enquiry “Who is this ‘I’ which is adopted [through ignorance]?” – the fictitious sense ‘I am the disciple’ [*sishya-bodham*] is completely annihilated. This is the right worship of the *Sadguru* to be performed by a worthy disciple.

Michael James: “a perfect experience” means one which is complete, continuous and without doubts.

Sadhu Om: The sense ‘I am a jiva is called jiva-bodham, and its destruction is generally known as Shiva-Bodham. Similarly, the destruction of the sisnya-bodham [the sense ‘I am a disciple’] is called, in this and other verses, Guru-Bodham. Thus Guru-Bodham simply means Atma-Jnana, the State of Self-Knowledge.

In this state, both the individual sense of the first person, ‘I am so-and-so’, and the sense of otherness [second and third persons such as the Guru] are not experienced. Hence the sense ‘I am the disciple’ has no real existence, and thus, in this verse, it is called fictitious.

- 313 Since That which has come in the Form of the *Sadguru* is nothing but the all-pervading – like the sun-light – vast Space of Supreme *Jnana*, the noble attitude of giving no room [in that vast Space] to the rising of the individual mind [‘I’] is the worthy worship to be performed to the *Sadguru*. Thus should you know.
- 314 For a worthy disciple, the proper worship of the Guru is having the firm outlook of *Jnana-Guru-Bodham*, through which the disciple sees the whole universe – which is nothing but the forms of ‘I’ and ‘this’, each bound by desire towards the other – as the Form of his Guru. Thus should you know.

Michael James: *‘I’ and ‘this’ means the seer and the seen.*

For the meaning of Jnana-Guru-Bodham, refer to the note for verse 312.

- 315 The dissolving of the ice – the ego, ‘I am the body’ – in the ocean of *Guru-Bodham*, which shines as the one blissful Self, is the right worship of the Guru. Thus should you know.
- 316 Naturally never giving room to the ego’s sinful outlook – which divides the unbroken, single, all-pervading nature of the Guru into many – is the best worship of the Guru, who ever shines unobstructed.

Michael James: *This verse clearly teaches us the true nature of the Guru; He is not the limited human form, He is the unbroken, single, all-pervading Consciousness.*

The ego’s outlook is said to be sinful because of the great sin which it commits by dividing and seeing the one real Sat-Chit-Ananda as many unreal names and forms of the universe.

- 317 After surrendering one’s body [wealth and soul] to the *Sadguru*, the avoidance of the crime of *dattapahara* – [that is] again mistaking the body, etc. as ‘I’ and ‘mine’ – is the pure worship of the *Sadguru*. Thus should you know.

Sadhu Om: *Dattapahara is the crime of taking back what has already been given.*

So long as a disciple feels ‘I am the body’ and ‘this is my body’, he cannot be considered to be one who has surrendered himself to the Guru. Instead, he should be considered to be one who has stolen the things which he has already given to another. In short, annihilation of the ego is the complete self-surrender, and that alone is the right Guru-puja [worship of the Guru].

- 318 The subsidence of the mind’s mischief – of leaving the Feet of the *Sadguru*, who has taken one as His own by once subduing the three-fold fire, and of straying away into the fiery desert of sense-pleasures – and its merging [into Self], is the worthy worship to be performed to the Lotus-Feet of the Guru.

Michael James: *‘The three-fold fire’ is the three kinds of desire namely for women, wealth and fame.*

When a ripe soul first meets his Sadguru, he at once feels, even without any effort on his part, a great peace in his heart and the removal of all worldly desires; this is due to the power of the Grace which prevails in the Sadguru’s presence. This experience is the right sign by which one can know that the Sadguru has taken one as His own. This feeling of peace may either remain in one permanently or temporarily, according to the degree of one’s maturity, but whichever is the case, there is no doubt that this is the sign that one has been brought under the protection of the Guru’s Grace. In the hearts of the less mature souls, the desirelessness and peace, which have once been induced by the Guru’s Grace, will seem to fade away after a while, and his mind will seem to desire worldly things (refer to Maharshi’s Gospel Book I, chapter 3, p. 18), but the disciple need not get disheartened, thinking that he has been abandoned by the Guru. Just as a deer can never escape once it has been caught in the

jaws of a tiger, so also, those who have been taken by the Guru as His own will never be abandoned, but will surely be saved. It is only as the result of Grace that all the hidden worldly vasanas in the disciple's heart are now churned and brought up to the surface of his mind, in order to be destroyed by the power of discrimination which is bestowed upon him by the Guru, because only then will he be able to understand that unbroken Peace is earned by one's own Self. In this way the Guru makes the peace as the disciple's own, because until it is thus found to be his own nature, the disciple cannot experience it permanently. Therefore, the less mature soul is warned that, though his three-fold desires are once subdued by the Sadguru's Grace, he should not stray away again into the fiery desert of sense-pleasures. This effort of his is described here as the worthy Guru-puja.

Refer also to Who am I?, where the same idea is expressed in the following words: "... those who are captured by the glance of the Guru's Grace will surely be saved and not abandoned. YET, ONE SHOULD FOLLOW WITHOUT FAIL THE PATH SHOWN BY THE GURU!"

319 One's merging into the Heart – through the enquiry into the nature of the ego, which is a delusion in the form of mind – is the right worship of the Lotus-Foot of the supreme *Mouna-Guru*, who is beyond the mind.

Michael James: Since the Guru is nothing but the supreme Mouna (Silence) which is beyond the mind, any worship performed by the mind will not be fitting. By merging the mind into the Heart, Silence alone prevails, and that is the right medium through which He can be fittingly worshipped.

320 The right worship of the Lotus-Foot of the Guru, who shines as the vast Supreme Space, is the prevention of the rising and spreading of the dark cloud of the wrong outlook of the ego, who, though behaving as the body, pretends to be *Sat-Chit* [Existence-Consciousness – i.e. Self].

Michael James: The wrong outlook of the ego, which is described here as a dark cloud, is to see a multiplicity of names and forms, which are all unreal. This dark cloud thus obscures the nameless and formless Reality, which is the true nature of the Guru, and hence the right Guru-puja is the prevention of the ego's rising.

57 The Greatness of the Guru

321 Though one has shaken off all vices, secured all virtues, renounced all relatives, and observed all the austerities prescribed by the *Shastras*, can one reach Eternal Bliss unless one meets the *Jnana-Guru*? [No, one cannot!]

322 It is certainly impossible for one to attain and enjoy the Supreme Bliss of Liberation, the ultimate Gain, unless one receives the Grace of the *Sadguru*, who shines as the one Whole, which puts an end to the differences of [dyads and] triads.

323 The *Sadguru* – the one unlimited Whole, who pervades this and all other worlds, and all time and space, and who shines as 'I' within and as everything outside – is He who resides in the hearts of His intimate disciples as the Pillar of Light of Knowledge, the divine Lamp which needs no kindling.

324 By coming near to the *Sadguru* and by depending completely upon His Grace, with great *Guru-bhakti*, one will have no misery in this world and will live like Indra.

Michael James: Indra is the king of the devas and he has all the enjoyments of heaven at his feet.

- 325 Seated in the heart-throne of His beloved disciples, the Durbar of the *Sadguru* – who has destroyed all the evils of the disciple – has a mountain-like grandeur. Those who have experienced It [through the loss of their individuality] cannot express It, and those who talked about It have never experienced It; this is the verdict of the *Vedas*, given by the real Devotees [i.e. *Jnanis*].
- 326 The grand, natural and sweet Self-abidance [*Sahaja-Atma-Nishta*] of the *Sadguru*, who is devoid of the ego-sense, is the mighty Sword which can cut deep and remove the heart-knot [*hridaya-granthi*] of His loving disciples.

Sri Muruganar: This verse describes the power of the Sadguru's Self-abidance. Because outwardly He is sitting quietly, one should not come to the conclusion that He is not bestowing Grace upon one, since His natural Self-abidance is itself Grace. If one sits quietly before Him, this truth will reveal itself automatically.

- 327 Taking to Self-enquiry – as the result of a proper education and understanding – not straying away through the petty senses, and being firmly established in the Heart as the mere Self-Effulgence, is truly following the *Sadguru's Upadesa*.

58 Association with Sadhus

- 328 Wise people will never associate with those who are vainly argumentative, and who, instead of inwardly subduing themselves through knowledge of the righteous way, munch their empty mouths, due to their lack of any worthy aim.

Michael James: "Those who munch their empty mouths" is a Tamil idiom which means those who talk much, but about worthless matters.

- 329 Many are the evils that can befall one, if one associates with those mad people whose beautiful mouths alone chatter, but whose minds remain confused. The best association to have is only with those who dwell in the Supreme Silence, through having annihilated their minds.
- 330 O mind, immediately give up and cut your connection with those wicked people who go the wrong way, always arguing for the unjust; associate instead with *Jnanis*, who ever abide in the State of Peace, devoid of confusion.
- 331 Since all vices are born only out of the fictitious enthusiasm, which is caused by loss of Self-attention [*pramada*], the Blissful State of *Mei-Jnana* [True Knowledge], where the ego – which is that ignorant enthusiasm itself – is annihilated, is all the virtues.
- 332 Spotless *Jnanis* alone are truly virtuous; others [*ajnanis*] are base-natured. Therefore, to be saved, we should approach only those Virtuous Ones who ever abide in the Truth, by having got rid of the false worldly delusion.

59 The Greatness of the Devotees

- 333 Beyond speech is the greatness of those who have earned the privilege of becoming a prey to the glance of Grace of the *Sadguru*, who has ripened as the Fruit – the Supreme Self – on account of the invincible achievement of Self-Knowledge.
- 334 Hiding His own Form, taking another form as a human being, Lord Shiva enters the group of His enlightened devotees, who have staunch devotion to Him, as if He were one among them, taking immense pleasure in their holy company.

Sri Muruganar: Thus Sri Bhagavan indirectly tells us that the Sadguru is none but Shiva Himself.

335 The greatness of Devotees cannot be limited. Devotees are greater than Brahma and Vishnu, who often serve the Devotees as if they were their slaves. It is only the greatness of Devotees that the *Vedas* proclaim.

60 Brahma Vidya

336 Seers of the rarely seen Truth say, “*Brahma-Vidya*, which is worthwhile for the aspirant to learn, is to see [the truth of] the seer who sees the world, instead of seeing the world which is seen”.

337 *Brahma Vidya* is nothing other than seeing That which remains when all these three – the mirage-like world, the seer of that world, and the bright eye’s seeing – are burnt without a trace.

Michael James: “All these three”, which are referred to in this verse, are the triad (i.e. tripiti), the seen, the seer and the seeing.

61 The Truth In All Religions

338 “Who am I?” – the scrutiny of the indispensable truth of one’s own Self – is the sole life-current passing through all the religions which have come to save us. Thus should you know.

Michael James: The truth of one’s own Self is said to be indispensable because all other things depend upon it, and without it they could neither shine nor exist.

339 Just as the string which is strung through every bead is only one and not many, so the Supreme Lord exists and shines as the one Light in every religion, and so He also exists and shines, not as another, but as the one Self [‘I am’] in all the innumerable creatures.

Sadhu Om: Refer also to Sri Arunachala Ashtakam verse 5.

340 Just as one flame appears to be many lights when it is lit in many lamps, so it is the one Self alone which appears to be many different individuals [*jivas*] when It is seen through many different attributes [*upadhis*].

341 If there were not, in each religion, at least one word which could reveal the transcendental Supreme Thing in the Heart, as clearly as a mountain on a plain, then all the researches and arguments found in the scriptures of that religion would become nothing but the hubbub of a cattle market.

Sadhu Om: It is asserted in this verse that at least one word or saying [Mahavakya] which easily reveals the fact that Self is the Supreme Reality will be found in every true religion existing on earth. Some of those pointed out by Sri Bhagavan are:

in Hinduism, “Tat twam asi”, “Aham Brahmasmi”, etc.

in Islam, “Ana'l Haqq”; [see verse 962]

in Judaism and Christianity, “I AM THAT I AM”.

These words clearly show that God is the Reality of the first person, ‘I’.

342 Various religions teaching various principles have come into existence in order to suit the various levels of maturity of the minds of the people. Therefore it is wisest to have an outlook of equality upon these religions, which should be encouraged [and not condemned].

62 The Vision of Limitlessness

343 For the one who has obtained the Eye of Self-Knowledge by diving deep within himself, there is no other thing to be seen or known. Why? Because, having lost the wrong knowledge that he is the body-form, he has rightly known himself to be the Formless.

Sadhu Om: According to the maxim, “As the eye, so is the sight” [refer to Ulladu Narpadu verse 4], so long as we know ourself as the name and form of a body, we will see the world and God as names and forms, and hence they will also appear to be separate from us. But when we realise that we are not the body-form, then the world and God, which previously appeared as mere names and forms, will disappear, and Self alone will shine as the Formless and Limitless One. For those who are in this State of Self-Knowledge, nothing will remain to be seen or known.

Refer also to verse 54 of this work.

344 Those who have sought for God within the moving temple, this body, and seen Him here clearly and without any confusion, will certainly see Him shining even in the vast temple, this wondrous universe.

Sadhu Om: The Tamil original also gives room for the last line of this verse to be interpreted as: “... will certainly see Him in the idols installed in all the temples which have been wonderfully constructed in this world.”

345 For those who have known without delusion the truth of God – how He resides and shines within, as the Soul to the soul – even the presence of a worm, which is usually rejected by others, will shine as the beloved Presence of the Supreme Lord.

Michael James: “The Soul to the soul” means Self (Atman), which is the Source and Life of the individual soul (jiva).

346 For those who shine as Self, which is Grace – since their mind, which is the form of ignorance, has died – everything and every place will be found to be supremely Blissful in their divine view, which emerged as Self-Existence.

347 To those who see with their physical eyes, God appears to be a lustrous form; to the eyes of great yogis, He appears as their Heart-lotus; to the brahmins who perform *yajnas*, He appears as the fire of the *yajna*; but only to *Jnanis*, who have the Eye of Limitlessness, does He appear everywhere.

Sadhu Om: Those who see God as a lustrous form, a heart-lotus, or a fire, are only seeing a mental image, and thus for them God is only visible in those particular limited places. But since the Jnani’s mind, which was limited by time and space, has been destroyed, He alone attains the True Seeing of God, and hence He sees God everywhere. Thus it is stressed in this verse that only a Jnani is able to truly see everything as God, and that others can only try to imagine the existence of God in everything.

348 Merely remaining as the Eye [i.e. Self], which is the One Space of Consciousness, by having annihilated the idea 'I am the body-form' and by having lost all the conceptions of the mischievous mind, is rightly and perfectly seeing God.

Michael James: Refer also to Ulladu Narpadu verse 8, as explained in The Path of Sri Ramana Part II, Appendix 4b, pp. 232-234.

349 When the tricky senses are controlled, when mental conceptions are removed, and when one is unshakably established as Self in the Heart, then the Knowledge which shines in that State of firm Self-Abidance is the Real God [Shiva].

350 Such a True Seeing, which is devoid of illusion and deception, is the State in which one shines as the Ocean of Bliss. Only in the Supreme Silence which is thus achieved in Self-Abidance, will the soul never again have a downfall.

63 The Loss of Individuality

351 When scrutinized, is there any existing thing such as ego, the troublemaker, except a mere name ['I']? Certainly not! If at all anything exists [for the name 'I'], it is truly Self, just as the thing which exists for the false [name] snake is truly a rope.

Michael James: The falsity of 'I', the ego, is stressed in this verse. Refer also to Upadesa Unidyar verses 19, 20, and 21.

352 When the ego dies, its base, the supreme Self, shines in all Its fullness. No harm comes to You, Self, when the ego dies. Therefore don't be afraid.

Michael James: The final sentence may also mean 'Therefore, don't be worried'.

353 Those who have sacrificed their mind as an offering to Shiva in the blazing fire of the supreme *Jnana-Tapas* [i.e. Self-enquiry], are Shiva Himself. Knowing thus, we should also perform this Sacrifice and attain the State of formless Shiva.

Michael James: The second sentence may also be translated as 'Knowing them [Jnanis] to be Shiva Himself, we should worship them and thereby attain the State of formless Shiva.'

354 Do not doubt, with fear, what will happen when you completely lose your individuality [*jiva-bodha*]. The true State of Self will then Itself be yours, just as one will permanently remain firm on the ground when one loses one's hold on the branch of a tree.

Sadhu Om: Immature devotees often used to ask Sri Bhagavan, "It is only this individual jiva that longs for all kinds of achievements, including moksha, so if this individuality is destroyed by vichara, how can Moksha be achieved, and by whom?" Hence, in this verse, Sri Bhagavan assures such people by saying, "Fear not, when the ego or individuality is annihilated, the State which remains will reveal Itself as the true State of Self, in which everything is accomplished".

There is an old Tamil saying which says that if one loses one's hold on a branch, one will be ruined, and hence it is rather strange and beautiful that Sri Bhagavan uses the same simile to assure us that loss of individuality is the highest attainment, and that it should not be feared. The significance of this simile can best be understood from the following story: A man was once seen standing under a tree, but clinging to a branch above his head, as if for dear life. When his friends asked him why he

was clinging with so much fear to the branch, he replied that if he let go he would fall to the ground. Wondering at his foolishness, his friends pointed out to him that he was already standing on the ground, and that he therefore had nothing to fear; after much trouble they persuaded him to let go of the branch, whereupon he discovered the truth of their assurance. Those who fear to lose their individuality are just like this man; but clinging to their individuality they are gaining nothing, and if they once let go of it they will know for themselves that they are always the Ever-Blissful Self, and that there was never anything for them to fear.

355 Since in sleep, where the world loses its reality, everyone truly knows his existence and the non-existence of 'I am this' [i.e. his individuality], all must accept the Reality of the indestructible Self.

Michael James: Refer to Upadesa Undiyar verse 21.

356 The State in which the thought 'I' [i.e. the ego] does not rise even a bit is the State 'I am Brahman'. Does anyone become non-existent in sleep, where the thought 'I' does not rise?

Sadhu Om: *It is made clear in this verse that, just as we experience no loss of our Self-Existence in sleep, where the individuality subsides, so even in Jnana, where the individuality is permanently destroyed, there is no loss for WE, the Self-Existence. Therefore there is no need for us to fear the loss of individuality.*

The idea in the first sentence of this verse is also expressed in Ulladu Narpadu verse 27.

357 If we scrutinize properly, the state of 'I'-lessness is our Real State of Consciousness, in which the inertness of the fleshy body is fully removed. Does one not survive the loss of individuality [in sleep] without being affected? Know this truth by abiding in the State of Wakeful-Sleep [i.e. *Turiya* or *Jnana*].

358 To remain without 'I' is the State of *Jnana* – Self; truly, it is the blissful and peaceful State 'I am Shiva'. Know that the same is the *Kaivalya* [i.e. Non-dual] State of *Brahma-Nirvana*, which is glorified as the State of transcending birth and death.

Sadhu Om: Refer to Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham verse 13, in which Egolessness alone is said to be the State of all greatness.

64 The Pure 'I' (*Suddhahankara*)

359 When the ego, 'I am the body', is annihilated, the unlimited and unbroken 'I' [Self] shines forth. The shining forth of this 'I' is not fictitious like the ego, which takes birth in a filthy body on earth and suffers in bondage.

Sadhu Om: *The feeling 'I am the body' is the ego. In this mixed consciousness the attribute 'the body' alone is the impurity. When this impurity, the body-identification, is removed, That which remains as 'I am' is Self, which is also called the pure 'I' or Suddhahankara.*

360 Know that the natural, unbroken and ever-existing Heart, 'I', which shines free of delusion, is the *Suddhahankara* [pure 'I'] which is seen in *Jivanmuktas*, since it has no sense of doership in any activity.

361 Those who live a perfect life of *Mei-Jnana*, attained by the destruction of the impure ego – ‘I am this fleshy body’ – will be revelling in Self, unmindful of the body, with great Peace devoid of desire.

65 The Shining Forth of Self

362 Only when one’s own Source, the Heart, is known through enquiry, will the false first person, ‘I’, fall down; and only when that false first person falls abashed, will the true First Thing, Self, spring forth in all its Glory.

363 When the insubstantial ghost, the ego – which rises from the darkness of ignorance and whose dance is itself all this universe – is enquired into, it disappears like the bridegroom’s friend [in the story], and when it disappears, Self, the Sun, rises up tearing away the darkness of ignorance, *Maya*.

Sadhu Om: A stranger once entered a marriage-house and posed before the bride’s party as the bridegroom’s best friend; and with the bridegroom’s party he posed as if he were a member of the bride’s family. Thus for five days he passed his time happily, eating well and bossing the servants, but on the last day when enquiries began to be made about him, he disappeared. Similarly, the ego rises and poses both as Chit [Consciousness – the nature of Self] or as jada [inertness – the nature of the body], though it truly belongs neither to Self nor to the body. Thus it enjoys its special position until it is enquired into, whereupon it disappears.

364 The ending of the ego, by its drowning into the Space of Silence, is our [true life of] living as the Space of *Jnana*. Therefore when the ego disappears, like a false dream, into its Source, the Real ‘I’ [Self] will shine forth spontaneously.

365 This body is the cross. The ego – the identification ‘I am the body’ – is Jesus. The killing of the ego through Self-enquiry is the crucifixion of Jesus. The survival of Self from the death of the ego, and Its shining forth as the Supreme Thing is His Resurrection.

Michael James: Refer to verse 973.

366 The death of the ego in the unlimited Silence – the non-dual Truth – and the shining forth of Self is the *Kaivalya-Siddhi* [i.e. the attainment of Oneness]. In that State of *Jnana*, pure Bliss will gloriously blaze forth as one’s own [true] Nature.

66 Getting Rid of Miseries

367 If the *jiva*, who is ever deluded and is always suffering from a feeling of deficiency, wants to get rid of all his miseries and to be happy, he need only know the Supreme One, his Lord, to be his own Self.

368 Not even the least of one’s miseries will cease unless one knows That, by forgetting Which one becomes deluded by the mighty agent – worldly *Maya*.

369 Let him who weeps over the death of his wife and children, weep first for the death of [his] ego – ‘I am the body’ – and attend to his own Self, then all his miseries will die completely.

370 If you love others only for their bodies or their souls [i.e. their egos], you will suffer from grief when their bodies die and their souls depart. Therefore, in order to be free from such grief, have true Love towards Self, which is the real Life of the soul.

Michael James: A person's soul is nothing but his ego, the identification 'I am the body'. The true Life is Self, and not the soul or ego.

67 Desirelessness (Nirasa)

- 371 Desire makes even an atom appear as great as Mount Meru before it is achieved, and vice versa after it is achieved, and thus [desire] makes one always poor. Hence we have never seen any bottomless abyss that is as impossible to fill as desire, which can never be satisfied.
- 372 O good-hearted aspirants who want perfection, instead of trying to avoid poverty – which is a deficiency created by the mind – by acquiring wealth, it is better to acquire *shanti*, mental peace.

Muruganar: Poverty is truly created not by a deficiency of wealth, but by the deficiency of the wandering and desirous mind. Hence, poverty is not removed by acquiring wealth, it is removed only by subsiding the mind.

- 373 Will the mind which drowns in love for the Feet of the Lord start to dance in ecstasy, jumping as before into the delusion of married life and sexual pleasure?
- 374 Sages, the Knowers of the Truth, declare that the destruction of all mental activities [*chitta-vrittis*] is alone the greatest Happiness. Therefore desirelessness [i.e. the attitude of indifference], which is devoid of both likes and dislikes, is the best means.
- 375 Those who have desire are afflicted by the wretched anger when their desire is obstructed, and so it is certain that desire is inherent in anger. Therefore, when all the [six] vices are dying, desire dies last.

Michael James: The six vices are desire, anger, miserliness, confusion (i.e. the inability to discern the truth), pride and jealousy.

- 376 When it is said that having a desire even for the supreme State of Silence is failing to observe the great *Sat-Achara*, is it *Achara* to have desires for the worthless body and other worldly things?

Sadhu Om: *Achara means observing high principles in life, and having any kind of desire is anachara. The greatest of all principles is Sat-Achara [or Brahmachara], which is nothing other than abiding as Sat [i.e. Self].*

For one who is observing Sat-Achara, which is the perfect state of Love, even the desire for Liberation should be considered to be wrong, because desire implies a movement of the mind towards a second or third person, whereas Love has the form of unbroken and unmoving Existence. This is the significance of the ancient saying, "Cut the desire even for God".

Though the meaning of Achara should be understood in this way, we find in our midst people who boast that they are observing acharas and that they are therefore certainly above all others in life. They maintain untouchability, they hide themselves while eating, they take great care in wearing their clothes in a particular manner, etc., yet at the same time they are mistaking the filthy body to be themselves and they have innumerable ugly desires. Can their behaviour be considered to be Achara? Surely not. Therefore, unless one attains Atma-Nishta [i.e. perfect Self-Abidance], all one's boasting about observing acharas is meaningless.

- 377 He who never thinks, “I want this; I do not have that”, will be ever contented with only those things which come to him according to his *prarabdha*. Will such a person leave his state of contentment and worry himself foolishly?
- 378 Except for the one who has completely cut the tie of desires, the false appearance [that he is a suffering *jiva*] will not cease. Therefore, without any hesitation, one should cut even the desire for the great Divine Happiness.

Michael James: Refer again to verse 376 and its note.

- 379 O foolish mind who is suffering due to the desire for the petty pleasures of this world and of the next, if you remain quiet [i.e. without desire] you will certainly attain that State of Bliss which surely transcends the pleasures of these two.

68 Bondage and Freedom

- 380 The annihilation of the delusion of the freedom of the individual is the attainment of the painless Freedom of Self. This is the one supreme Knowledge which exists equally in all religions, which have so many branches.

Sadhu Om: Since Dharma [i.e. righteousness] is the root of all religions and since Egolessness alone is the essence of all dharmas, it is shown here that egolessness is the only Truth, existing equally in all religions.

- 381 The [repeated] births, which are caused by [the ignorance of] not knowing Self, will not cease by any other means [but knowing Self]. Only the real Self-Knowledge, which shines after the annihilation of the dense delusion – the ego, ‘I am the body’ – will cut bondage.
- 382 Great *Jnanis*, who never see anything as bondage except the rising of innumerable *chitta-vrittis*, do not see anything as Liberation either, except the death of all *chitta-vrittis*. This is the Truth!
- 383 The [impure] mind, which deludes itself as if it were limited, is the *jivatman* [i.e. individual soul], who suffers as if he were bound. If it remains still, without likes, dislikes or wonder, that [pure] mind is itself the *Paramatman* [i.e. Self].

Michael James: The Tamil phrase translated here as ‘as if it were limited’, may also mean “...as if it were a drunkard, ...”.