

PART TWO

THE PRACTICE OF THE TRUTH

(*Tattuvam Anusantana Viyal*)

1 Chapter Concerning the Greatness of Instruction

(*Upadesa Matchit Tiran*)

- 502 Know that the wise words of the One [the *Sadguru*] who is well established in the Heart are the best guide for the bewildered and deluded minds of the devotees to free themselves from running after the mean senses and to reach inwardly their goal.
- 503 The true knowledge [*jnana*] will not dawn without exploring within the essence of the instruction ‘That Thou Art’ uttered unceasingly through the speech of His glance by the *Sadguru*, Self, the form of Siva [on earth], dwelling in the hearts of His devotees.
- 504 The uninterrupted shining of Self, the life of life, as the natural consciousness ‘I-I’ in the heart is the nature of God’s giving unbroken *upadesa* to the worthy disciple.

Sadhu Om: This verse explains further the ideas revealed in the instruction: “For a few highly mature souls it so happens that the Lord reveals the Reality from within by His being the Knowledge of their knowledge”, given as a reply to the eighth question: “How is it that some great Ones attain the supreme knowledge even without a Guru?”, in the chapter ‘Upadesa’ in the book Upadesa Manjari given by Sri Bhagavan. This verse explains how Self, being the Guru within, teaches the true knowledge to a fully mature soul even without taking a human form outside. The shining of ‘I-I’, the essence of the consciousness ‘am’, is the silent teaching of the inner Guru, Self. Since the supreme, non-dual knowledge is nothing but the Self-consciousness ‘I am’, its shining as ‘I-I’ itself is the silent inner advice of the Guru inducing the disciple [the mind] to abide ever in It. This is how Self acts as Guru from within.

2 Chapter Concerning the Mahavakyas

(*Mahavakkiyat Tiran*)

- 505 Churned out of the many sayings that remove ignorance which are contained in the four *Vedas*, the one essential phrase denoting the absolute truth, Silence, is ‘the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme’ [*jiva-brahma-aikya*].

Michael James: The mahavakya ‘That Thou Art’ (tattvamasi) also denotes this.

- 506 For the highly mature souls who seek the supreme *sat-chit-ananda* in order to free themselves from the scorching heat of birth [and death], it is by the enquiry into

only the word 'Thou', which [out of the three words 'That', 'Thou' and 'Art'] denotes the nature of the individual soul, that the glory of Liberation is attained.

Sadhu Om: *We should remember here Sri Bhagavan's instruction in verse 32 of Ulladu Narpadu as to what an earnest and sincere disciple should do when he hears the Mahavakya 'That Thou Art' from a Guru. As soon as he hears the phrase 'That Thou Art', the disciple's attention should turn to know 'What am I?' This is the real aim with which the Mahavakya was revealed. The one important word that stands in the above Mahavakya to turn the disciple's mind to Self-attention is 'Thou'. Therefore this verse categorically asserts that out of the three words, 'Thou' alone should be taken for scrutiny by a worthy disciple. The following two verses also emphasize the same idea.*

- 507 Only in order to turn inward the minds of less mature aspirants, which will be favourable for the aforesaid enquiry, [the Vedas] added the other two words 'That' [tat] and 'Art' [asi] to the word 'Thou' [tvam], thereby forming the Mahavakya 'That Thou Art' [tat tvam asi]. Thus should you know.
- 508 Verily the enquiry done within oneself to know the real import denoted by the word 'Thou', 'What is it?' ['Who am I?'], is the proper means to know the correct import of the other two words also.

3 Chapter Concerning the Greatness of the Upanishads (Upanisha Matchit Tiran)

- 509 Grace is the form of God, who has never known ignorance [ajnana]. The true knowledge of Brahman [brahma-jnana] is the dais on which the Lotus Feet of God are placed. The Upanishads are the golden sandals of those Feet. For the petty ego [modern man] who is possessed by the madness of scientific knowledge [vijñana], the only worthy duty is to hold on his head the Upanishad-sandals.

Sadhu Om: *The teaching imparted through this verse is that the foremost and immediate duty of the modern mind, which is full of scientific knowledge, is, instead of feeling proud of its petty knowledge, to give up its pride and follow the path of Self-knowledge shown by the Upanishads. Since it is a well-known fact that the knowledge of worldly science, though it has developed more and more, has never yet found an end, this verse instructs that, if it wants to achieve a complete knowledge, the human intellect which engages in science, which will never provide anything but an incomplete knowledge, has to take refuge under the mercy of the Upanishads, which alone teach Self-knowledge, the final and complete knowledge. This is the only way for it to be saved, and this is its foremost duty.*

4 Chapter Concerning *Upasana* (*Upasanait Tiran*)

Michael James: *Upasana means worship, that is, clinging to God through body (by doing puja), through speech (by doing japa or reciting stotras) or through mind (by doing dhyana).*

- 510 Those fortunate devotees who have seen the Lotus Feet of God, which shine supremely pure in their heart, will have all their evil and inauspicious tendencies eradicated and will shine with the Light of Knowledge.
- 511 Devilish qualities [*asura sambat*] will bring only ruin on you. Knowing this well, develop only divine qualities [*deyva sambat*]. *Upasana*, which will cultivate divine qualities in the heart, alone will save the soul.

Sadhu Om: *Here, upasana should be understood to mean clinging to Self, that is, attending to Self, which is Self-enquiry. For, Self-enquiry alone bestows all the divine qualities [deyva sambat]. The word 'sambat' means 'that which is earned'. Since all things earned externally will bring only misery to the jiva, 'deyva sambat' alone is worthy to be earned, and is developed solely by Self-enquiry.*

- 512 Though the non-dual knowledge [*advaita jnana*] is difficult to attain, it becomes easy to attain when the true love, *bhakti*, for the Feet of the Lord [Siva] becomes intense, since His Grace, the revealing Light which dispels ignorance, then begins to flow.
- 513 By firmly fixing with love the Feet of the Lord in the Heart, one can sever the bondage of delusion, and by so cutting the bondage; one can behold the true Light of supreme knowledge, one's Heart-lotus having blossomed.

Michael James: *Readers should here remember the teaching of Sri Bhagavan that Self alone is denoted by the terms 'the Feet of God', 'Grace', and so on.*

- 514 If the head of the *jiva* is fixed at the Feet of Siva, the *jiva* will shine as Siva Himself. Because, the petty ego, losing its nature of moving, remains still in the real state of Self, which is motionless.

Michael James: *The nature of the wave is to move. The nature of the ocean is to remain motionless. If the wandering wave loves the ocean, that is, if it loves the nature of the ocean, namely, to remain still, it will lose its wave-form, subside, drown into the ocean and thereby become the ocean itself, that is, it will become motionless. Likewise, if the jiva, the wandering mind, loves Siva, the Self, he will lose his jiva-nature, that is, the nature of moving and standing as a separate entity, dissolve in Siva and become Siva Himself.*

- 515 In order to sever the strong, long-standing and false bondage and be saved, without wasting any time, meditate always with rousing and intense love on the golden Lotus Feet of the Lord.

Sadhu Om: “Ever practise meditation upon Self [atma-dhyana] and achieve the supreme bliss of Liberation,” says Sri Bhagavan in the concluding chapter of Vichara Sangraham. Thus, we should understand that meditating upon Self is what is recommended in this verse.

516 The true form [nature] of God [Self] cannot be understood except by the mind which stands firmly still in *nishta* [Self-abidance or *samadhi*]. Therefore, without allowing the mind either to wander as a vagabond [i.e. to undergo waking and dream – *sakala*] or to fall into *laya* [i.e. to fall into sleep – *kevala*] due to tiredness, train the mind to be conscious and still on one target [Self].

Michael James: It is indicated in this verse that making the mind still, that is, keeping it unaffected by *sakala* (the state of manyness) and *kevala* (the state of nothingness), is what is called *nishtha* or *samadhi*.

517 Give up all attachments towards the petty sense-objects [*vishayas*], which are caused by the delusion ‘I am this fleshy body’. The silent mind [thus stilled by renouncing sense-objects] is the pure *mani-lingam* [superior form of *Sivalingam*]. If this is adored [i.e. if this mental silence is carefully preserved with great love, which is the real worship of it], it will bestow unending bliss.

518 All days, all planets, all *yogas* and all *orais* are auspicious days, auspicious planets, auspicious *yogas* and auspicious *orais* for an aspirant to do this *upasana* [spiritual practice].

Michael James: *Yogas* and *orais* are particular parts of time in a day, as calculated in astrology.

Sri Muruganar: Since the days, planets, *yogas* and *orais* are within the conception of the mind, some of them may be inauspicious, but only for worldly activities. None of them can do any harm to an aspirant who wants to do Self-attention [atma-dhyana], which is the real worship of God, because it is concerned with Self, which is beyond the mind. The ten verses sung by Sri Jnanasambandhar in order to conquer the effects of planets and also some other songs of Tamil saints assure us that none of these time factors can create any obstacle for a devotee who comes under the power of the Grace of God.

519 It is very rare to get full faith in One [God or Guru]. If such a faith blossoms in the heart [due to past merits], do protect and nourish it, since it is similar to a new-born baby, without spoiling it by giving room to any doubts or suspicion, just as, if one possessed the *Kamadenu*, one would bring it up with great care and love.

Michael James: The *Kamadenu* is a divine cow which will give one whatever one desires. Likewise, complete faith in God or Guru will bestow anything and everything upon a devotee. Such is the wonderful power of faith.

5 Chapter Concerning *Upasana* through Silence (*Maunopasanait Tiran*)

- 520 Installing the Lord on the heart-throne and fixing the mind uninterruptedly in Self in such a manner that it will become one with It, is the true and natural worship through Silence [*maunopasana*].
- 521 The pure state of having very great attachment to Self and having no attachment to any other thing is verily one's state of Silence. Learning to remain as 'I am that Silence' and ever abiding as It is, is the true mental worship [*manasika puja*].

Sadhu Om: Nowadays many among us are under the impression that doing mental worship [manasika puja] means imagining that one is collecting all the necessary things such as flowers, sandal-paste, fruits, garlands and so on, and that one is offering them to God.

However, this is only a mental activity [pravritti]. This verse teaches us that this is not the correct manasika puja, and that Self-abidance, 'worship through Silence' [maunopasana] mentioned above, alone is the real manasika puja.

6 Chapter Concerning the Delusion of Arguments (*Vada Mayal Tiran*)

- 522 Only the ignorant who do not know even a little about the nature of their own [the ego's] rising and setting will engage themselves in a heated war of words: "Fate is more powerful than free-will [the effort of the mind]"; "No, free-will is more powerful than fate"; "Fate is superior to free-will"; "No, free-will is superior to fate".

Michael James: Verse 18 of Ulladu Narpadu is to be referred to here.

- 523 Instead of enquiring and knowing through practical experience the truly existing Thing, and thereby attaining the clear state of supreme Silence, some jump up with egoism, having fanaticism for a particular religion and hatred towards other religions, and make vain and noisy arguments and criticisms.

Michael James: Refer to verse 991.

- 524 The very nature of argument is to veil the truth. Since it is nothing but an art of illusion and imagination, it will delude and confuse the mind. Therefore, no one who has fallen into the dark hole of arguments will see the Sunlight, Self-knowledge.
- 525 Words [and thoughts] do not reveal Self. On the contrary, they veil it completely. Therefore, be alert in controlling both speech and thought so that Self, which is hidden by them, will shine of Its own accord.

Sri Muruganar: 'We', Self, alone are real. Even thoughts [mind] and speech, which is only a gross form of thoughts, are alien to us and therefore unreal. So, the practice of Self-attention, which will subside thoughts and speech, is the worthy undertaking.

- 526 Do not lend your intellect [*buddhi*] as a slave to the gymnastics of eloquence [in the form of speech and poetry] and to the jugglery of arguments. Know the truth, Self, by turning the pure sattvic mind within and thereby destroying the illusion of otherness.

7 Chapter Concerning the Uselessness of Measurements (*Alavai Yavalat Tiran*)

- 527 The measurer, the measure [i.e. the standard or scale of measurement], the measured and the measuring – all these seem to exist and shine because of the shining of existence-consciousness [*sat-chit*] in the heart. What measure is there to measure It [Self, the existence-consciousness]?

Sadhu Om: Everything is measured by the mind, having the imaginary measures [dimensions or standards of measurement] of time and space. Those things which are thus measured [including time and space], the act of measuring them, and the measurer [the mind] – all these seem to have existence only because of and in the presence of Self, the existence-consciousness. Other than this, they have no real existence of their own. Therefore, how can Self be measured by any of these – mind, time, space and so forth?

- 528 Only so long as the measurer [the mind] exists will the measure and the measured also seem to exist as real. But when the measurer [the mind] sees Self, the really existing Thing, and is thereby lost in It, all other things such as the measure, the measured and the measuring will automatically become unreal.

8 Chapter Concerning Indirect Knowledge (*Paroksha Jnanat Tiran*)

- 529 The fire of desires of the *jivas* will be extinguished only by the direct [*aparoksha*] experience of the pure Self-knowledge, in which all the *vasanas* of the ignorant mind are dead. If the thirst and heat of the physical body could be quenched and cooled by a mirage, then the spiritual thirst [the desire for bliss – *moksha*] could also be quenched by indirect knowledge [*paroksha jnana*].

Michael James: Paroksha jnana means mediated or indirect knowledge, that is, the knowledge about Self gathered through books (by sravana and manana) as opposed to immediate or direct knowledge (aparoksha jnana), that is, the direct experience of Self (gained through nididhyasana).

- 530 When thus the direct [*aparoksha*] experience of the pure Supreme Self alone is the true, non-dual knowledge [*jnana*], calling even that which is indirect

[*paroksha*] as a knowledge [*jnana*] is just like calling demons [*rakshasas*] ‘meritorious persons’ [*punya janas*].

Michael James: *In literature, while referring to an unworthy thing, it is a custom to use a worthy name to ridicule it indirectly. It is in this manner that rakshasas, who are well known to be wicked sinners, are sometimes referred to as ‘meritorious persons’ (punya janas). Sri Bhagavan points out in this verse that indirect knowledge (paroksha jnana) is termed as a ‘knowledge’ (jnana) only in this spirit, for it is in truth nothing but ignorance (ajnana) itself.*

- 531 The supreme *Jnana* [Self-knowledge], which destroys deceptive delusion, will be born only out of a true enquiry in the form of an attention towards that which exists as the Reality [‘I am’] in the heart. But know that mere book-knowledge about enquiry, even though learnt from clear scriptures, will be like a picture-gourd drawn on a sheet of paper, which is useless for cooking.
- 532 Is it possible to appease one’s hunger by eating food cooked by a painted picture of a blazing fire? Likewise, an end to the miseries of life and the enjoyment of the bliss of Self cannot be achieved by mere verbal knowledge, but only by the practical knowledge of Self, which is obtained by extinguishing the ego in the heart. Thus should you know.
- 533 The bliss of the *sphurana* of the Supreme Self cannot be obtained by intellectual arguments, but only by the knowledge which shines in the heart as the form of the Divine Lord who lends light to the mind.

9 Chapter Concerning the Oneness of *Jiva* (*Eka Jivat Tiran*)

- 534 Let highly mature and courageous aspirants who have a bright and sharp intellect, firmly accept that soul [*jiva*] is only one [*eka*] and thereby be established deep in the heart [by enquiring ‘Who am I, that one *jiva*?’]. It is only to suit immature minds that scriptures generally say that souls [*jivas*] are many [*nana*].

Sadhu Om:

If the ego comes into existence, all will come into existence; if the ego does not exist, nothing will exist; [therefore] verily the ego is all. – Ulladu Narpadu verse 26.

If ‘I’ rises, all will rise – Who am I?

If the thought ‘I’ does not exist, no other thing will exist – Sri Arunachala Ashtakam, verse 7.

Since it is clear from the above three upadesas of Sri Bhagavan that the rising of the ego, the feeling ‘I am so-and-so’, alone is the cause for the rising and appearance of the whole universe with innumerable jivas living in it, we should conclude without any doubt

that it is only in the ignorant outlook of the ego, the one 'I', the one jiva, alone, and that, by the destruction of this one 'I', through the enquiry 'Who am I?', the existence of all other jivas will come to an end. This is the import of the upadesa contained in this verse.

535 Is there anyone who is born, or is there anyone who has cut the bondage of birth [and death]? During the time when the 'I'-thought [the ego] does not rise [that is, in deep sleep], is there anyone who is bound in the body [that is, who identifies with the body] or who is released from it? Enquire well, now, and tell me!

Sadhu Om: In the absence of 'I', the one jiva, [either in sleep, where the 'I'-thought has subsided, or in Jnana, where it has been destroyed], no other jiva exists, either as a bound one [bandha] or as a released one [mukta]. The oneness of jiva is thus further stressed in this verse.

10 Chapter Concerning Knowledge and Ignorance

(Arivu-ariyamait Tiran)

536 O worldly people who more and more scrutinize one thing after the other and run after each of them thinking that each one is worthier than the other! To scrutinize that one Thing [Self] by scrutinizing which nothing more will remain [to be scrutinized], alone is [true] knowledge.

Sadhu Om: The Tamil word used here is 'nadum', which may mean either 'scrutinize' or 'desire'. However, it is more fitting here to take it in the sense of 'scrutinize' because in the second half of the verse the Tamil word 'aydal', which means only 'scrutinize', is used twice. Furthermore, the verse is in the 'Chapter concerning Knowledge and Ignorance'.

537 For those who can scrutinize [enquire into] and know the subtlest thing [Self], what benefit is there by the research on and knowledge of gross objects? Worthier than the research done [by the mind] through the eye and so on, is the indestructible research done within [that is, Self-enquiry or Self-attention].

Sadhu Om: The import of this verse is that Self-enquiry, by which Self is known, is far superior to scientific researches.

538 (a) To know Self clearly, rejecting all alien things [the universe] as mere nothingness [*sunya*] is the supreme knowledge [*jnana*] transcending time and space, other than which there is no worthy [or superior] knowledge.

538 (b) To know Self clearly, rejecting all alien things [the universe] as mere nothingness [*sunya*] is the supreme knowledge [*jnana*]. The knowing of all times and places or the knowing of others' minds is not worthy knowledge.

539 The truth is that any playful sport of *Sakti* [that is, any glory seen in this universe] cannot be other than *Sakta*, Self [the possessor of *Sakti*]. Hence, having the outlook of thinking that the world, which is [in truth mere] consciousness [*chit*], is different from it [consciousness, 'we'] and being deluded [by likes and dislikes

for the things in the world], is the false *maya*, which causes wrong [i.e. all obstacles and miseries].

540 The knowledge 'I am the body' is the delusive and destructive ignorance. The correct knowledge [the knowledge of *Brahman*], which is worthy to be attained, is the knowledge that even the aforesaid ignorance, which is false, does not exist apart from Self, the unavoidable reality.

Sadhu Om: Though the snake that appears on a rope is false, it cannot have such an appearance, as if existing, without the existence of the rope. So also, though the ignorance 'I am the body' is a false knowledge, even it cannot appear to exist without the existence of the real Self. The teaching given in this verse is the same as that given in verse 13 of Ulladu Narpadu.

541 Just as, on account of mere imagination, the one, unbroken space is called by different names [such as '*gatakasa*', the whole, all-pervading space], so the one, whole, unbroken Self is seen by the immature people as many [that is, as diverse souls and objects]. This is the result of the wonderful *maya*.

542 To see the one Self, the reality which is devoid of anything false, as many and different is what is ignorance. Therefore, whatever thing appears in whatever name and form, to see it in its real nature [as Self] is what is knowledge.

Sadhu Om: The last two lines of this verse are verse 355 of Tirukkural. On reading the Tamil verse of Sri Muruganar, those who know Tirukkural can understand how skillfully he has used this verse of Tirukkural to explain the idea of Sri Bhagavan.

543 Though the worlds outside are with innumerable differences [that is, with different names and forms], the inner reality of all of them is the one Self, just as, though the sesame seeds put into the big whirling oil-expeller are innumerable, the one substance in them is the oil.

544 To know though the real clarity [*chit*] in the state where immense bliss [*ananda*] and the non-dual Self-existence [*sat*] are shining as one, that no such duality as knowing and not knowing has ever existed at all, is the true knowledge.

545 Knowledge and ignorance can exist only pertaining to external, second person objects. But, since they [knowledge and ignorance] do not exist in the real state where Self alone shines, the true knowledge is that one in which the duality of knowledge and ignorance does not exist.

Sadhu Om: Refer to verse 12 of Ulladu Narpadu and verse 27 of Upadesa Undiyar.

546 Some say, "Know thyself" [but] is there anyone who does not know himself? Tell me, is it not equally ignorant to say "I have realized Self" as to say "I have not realized Self"?

Sadhu Om: It is worth reading verse 33 of Ulladu Narpadu here. Jnanis, who have gained Self-Knowledge, never say "I have realized my Self" or "I have not realized my Self". Refer to Sri Bhagavan's saying in the 2nd line of the 2nd verse of Sri Arunachala

Ashtakam, “An ‘I’ does not rise to say ‘I have seen’; how then can an ‘I’ rise to say ‘I have not seen’?” The state in which the ego does not rise is the state beyond knowing and not knowing.

- 547 If one remains merely as consciousness [that is, as ‘I am’, in other words, in Self-abidance, *atma-nishtha*], ignorance [which is one of the dyad of ignorance and knowledge] will not exist. Hence, ignorance is false; Self-consciousness alone is real. When correctly known, it is ignorance to say that there is ignorance. Verily, pure consciousness is our nature. Thus should you know.

11 Chapter Concerning Delusion

(*Marul Tiran*)

- 548 It is only so long as one thinks ‘I know other things’ that the delusion ‘I do not know myself’ will remain. When such a thought is removed by the experience of the ever-existing Self-knowledge, that delusion will become false [that is, will become non-existent].

Sadhu Om: Since whenever anything is known, our power of attention takes the form of a thought [vritti] ‘I know other things’, a false delusion ‘I do not know myself’ prevails. But when the discrimination [viveka] ‘Whenever I know any other thing, it is known because I exist there, and hence every knowledge of my own existence is already there’ shines more and more through enquiry [vichara], the truth ‘There is no time in which I do not know myself’ will dawn. This is the eternal, ever-attained state of Self-knowledge.

- 549 Since the nature of Self is the perfect whole, all, and one without another, knowing all other things instead of enquiring within ‘What is my real nature?’ [in other words, ‘Who am I?’] is but mere delusion.
- 550 In the same manner as a dream appears in the mind-space by mere mental imagination, the scene of this world-picture [as our life] appears in this waking state. Therefore, to abide in Self by firmly knowing thus, by destroying all objective knowledge [the knowledge of second and third persons in this waking state] and by annihilating all the foolish desires for the objective scenes here, alone is worthy.
- 551 Only those ignorant ones who do not enquire and know Heart, the Supreme Thing, will be frightened and deluded by the deceitful *maya*. But bright *Jnanis*, who have experienced the supreme Self, the ocean of bliss, will not be afraid of it [*maya*].
- 552 The crazy people who do not know the non-dual Reality [Self], which exists and shines as one, and who with the jaundiced eye of ignorance see Self as many, are just like those who see many mirages in the desert.

Sri Muruganar: Through this verse, Sri Bhagavan indicates that it is certain that those who have the dual outlook will be disappointed and will suffer much in this life.

12 Chapter Concerning Waking and Dream (Nana Kana Tiran)

- 553 Those who have the eye of *Jnana* [that is, *Jnanis*] declare that both waking and dream are the same in defectfulness. Because, does not even waking, a state of great attachment, disappear just like dream?
- 554 All the karmas that one has seen that one has done in dream, will not give fruit in the waking state. Likewise, all the karmas done in this waking state by the deluded ego-sense will not give fruit in the state of Self-awakening.

Sadhu Om: This verse emphasizes that for a Jnani, none of the three karmas [agamyā, sanchita or prarabdha] remain to be experienced.

- 555 *Jnanis* say that both dream and waking are the creations of the deluded mind. Because, in both of them, thoughts and names-and-forms exist in the same manner.

Michael James: Refer to Who am I? where Sri Bhagavan says, “In both waking and dream, thoughts and names-and-forms [the objects] come into existence simultaneously”.

- 556 When the ego is half blossomed, dream appears. When the ego is fully blossomed, waking, the world-appearance which is the full bloom of ignorance, comes into existence.

Michael James: Refer to verse 10 of Drik Drisya Viveka, a work of Sri Adi Sankara which Sri Bhagavan translated into Tamil prose, where it is said, “In deep sleep, where the body remains insentient [jada], the ego is completely subsided [in laya]. Its half blossoming is dream; its full blossoming is waking”.

- 557 When the experience of the fruits of karmas which had caused the waking state to come to an end, and when the fruits of the karmas to be experienced in dream start, the mind, in the same manner as it had taken a body as ‘I’ in the waking state, will identify and take another body as ‘I’ in dream.

Michael James: Refer to Who am I? where Sri Bhagavan says, “In dream, the mind [merely] assumes another body”.

- 558 If it is asked, ‘[When the dream-body and the waking-body are thus different,] how does the semen in the waking-body drip out when one sees in dream that the dream-body has contacted a woman?’, the answer will be that it is due to the speed of attachment with which one springs from the dream-body to the waking-body.
- 559 When the dream is thus found to be an appearance caused by the wavering mind, waking is also the same. As true as are the happenings in the waking state, so true are also the happenings in dream during the time of dreaming.

Michael James: Refer to Who am I? where Sri Bhagavan says, “To the extent to which all the events which happen in dream appear at that time to be real”.

560 The answer ‘Waking is long and dream is short’ was given as a mere [consoling] reply to the questioner. [In truth, however, no such difference exists, because, since time itself is a mental conception,] the concept of differences in time [such as ‘long’ and ‘short’] appears to be true only because of the deceitful play of *maya*, the mind.

Sadhu Om: Sri Bhagavan refers here to the following answer He gave in Who am I?, “Except that waking is long and dream is short, there is no difference [between the two]”.

561 The glory of *maya*, the mind, which conceives all things within the range of the false darkness of ignorance and deludes, lies in showing and confusing one second as an aeon [*kalpa*] and an aeon as a second.

*Sadhu Om: Only within a dark room and only by means of a limited light is it possible to project and see a cinema picture. It is impossible to do so in a place where the bright sunlight is shining. Similarly, only within the dark ignorance of forgetfulness of Self and only by means of the mind-light is it possible to project the states of waking and dream and to see world-pictures therein. It is impossible to project and experience waking and dream when [in jnana-samadhi] Self shines with all Its splendour. Hence, the instruction contained in this verse is that it is only by means of *maya*, the mind-light, that the differences concerning time and space are seen in waking and dream.*

562 By ever attending to Self, a basic existence, the perfect whole, the eye of the light of knowledge, drive away the two dreams [waking and dream] which are experienced by the ego and which are mere illusory imaginations of differences appearing in the darkness [of Self-forgetfulness].

563 If the mind, which is full of ignorant delusion and which sees the worlds in dreams [in the two dreams, that is, in waking and dream] but which does not see its own truth, enquires who it itself is [in other words, ‘Who am I?’] and thereby loses its mind-nature, it will then shine as the Sun of true knowledge [*jnana*], remaining at the Feet of the Lord.

564 Rightly knowing Self is just like one, on awakening from a dream, knowing that all the whirl of sufferings experienced in that dream have become false and that one is really the same unaffected one who was previously lying safe on the soft bed.

Sadhu Om: In this verse, only the example [upamanam] is clearly described, while the ‘exampled’ [upameyam, that is, what is illustrated by that example], namely the unaffected state of Self, is left to the readers to expand and understand.

The jiva, who has forgotten his real nature, is compared to the one who slept on his bed. The sufferings experienced by the jiva due to the fruits of the karmas done during his innumerable births and deaths, which appear and disappear as dreams in the sleep of the

aforsaid forgetfulness of Self, are compared to the whirl of sufferings experienced in dream during one's sleep. Then, all the appearances of births and deaths of the jiva coming to an end as false through the real awakening as Self, are compared to all the dreams coming to an end as false through one's awakening from sleep. Even though Self, the non-dual one, seems to become a jiva and suffer through many births and deaths, in reality Self is unaffected by these false appearances. This is illustrated by the example of a sleeper, who ever remains really the same, unaffected person who was previously lying safe on the soft bed.

Sri Muruganar: *When one comes to know through Self-awakening that all the dyads and triads are false, they will all disappear, having no base [no ego] to shine upon. The blissful consciousness which then simply sleeps [or: The consciousness which then simply sleeps blissfully], unassociated with the dyads and triads, is the state of rightly knowing Self.*

565 One's attaining liberation after undergoing great sufferings in *samsara* [the mundane state of activity] is just like one's awakening from sleep after seeing, due to illusion, in a dream, oneself losing one's way, wandering in a desert, suffering much and then reaching one's town.

Sri Muruganar: *This verse is a subtle indication by Sri Bhagavan that even liberation is a mere mental conception [that is, it is false]. The truth is that the ever-unbound Self alone exists.*

B9 Forgetting Self, mistaking the body for Self, taking innumerable births, and at last knowing Self and being Self is just like waking from a dream of wandering all over the world. Know thus.

Michael James: *This verse composed by Sri Bhagavan is verse one of Ekatma Panchakam.*

13 Chapter Concerning the Different States (*Avasta Beda Tiran*)

566 If it is possible for the other four elements [namely earth, water, fire and air] to exist really apart from the vast space [the fifth element], then the three states such as waking [namely waking, dream and sleep] can also have a real existence apart from the flawless *turiya* [the state of Self].

Michael James: *The instruction is that waking, dream and sleep are unreal.*

567. a) The difference between the first three dense states [waking, dream and sleep] and the fourth and fifth states [*turiya* and *turiyatita*] are [accepted in *sastras*] only for those who are not able to tear away the dark ignorance of sleep and to immerse and abide firmly in the effulgent *turiya* [the state of Self].

567 b) The difference between the first three dense states and the fourth and fifth states are only for those who are not able to immerse and abide firmly in *turiya*, which shines piercing through the dark ignorance of sleep.

Sadhu Om: The import of this verse is that advanced aspirants should know that all states other than *turiya* which are mentioned in scriptures [i.e. sleep, waking, dream and *turiyatita*] are unreal. In order to understand these two verses, 566 and 567, more clearly, let the reader refer to verse 32 of Ulladu Narpadu – Anubandham and also to the last pages of chapter eight of The Path of Sri Ramana – Part One.

568 Only so long as the one who is attached to the states [the *avasta-abhimani*, that is, the one who identifies himself with a body and thereby feels ‘I am now in the waking state; I was having dreams’] exists, will the [aforesaid five] different states be known as if existing. But when this attached one [*abhimani*], who has risen in the form of an ego-consciousness, is lost through Self-enquiry, all the differences that pertain to the states will also end.

Sadhu Om: The Tamil word ‘arivay’ may be taken to mean ‘know that’, instead of ‘in the form of an ego-consciousness’.

569 The one [the *Jnani*] who has by supreme devotion [that is, by complete self-surrender] attained the kingdom of the supreme state [*para-avasta*, that is, Self], through his natural supreme state never sees that any state other than that really exists.

Sadhu Om: Just as one big open space becomes three parts when two partition walls are newly erected in the midst of it, so when the two kinds of body-identification, namely the identification with the waking-body and the identification with the dream-body, imaginarily rise, our one unbroken Self-consciousness itself appears to become three states, namely waking, dream and sleep. We who experience and name our original state when the body in waking is identified as ‘I’, and as the dream state when the body in dream is identified as ‘I’, also experience and name our original, adjunctless state of pure Self-consciousness, which then remains as if our third state, as sleep.

When the two walls of waking and dream in the form of the two body-identifications are destroyed through Self-enquiry, our unlimited, natural and single Self-consciousness is experienced as the one adjunctless clear state, like the one big open space. Since this is experienced as a new state, completely different from those three states [waking, dream and sleep] experienced till then, it is named by scriptures as ‘the fourth’ [*turiya*]. But when the knowledge ‘This is nothing but our eternal, natural state’ dawns through the well-established experience of the natural state of Self [*sahaja atma sthita*] and when waking, dream and sleep are thereby known to be unreal, the name ‘*turiya*’, the fourth, will also become meaningless, since this state will have thus lost its newness. Hence, since this natural, non-dual, eternal Self-consciousness thus cannot be called ‘*turiya*’ [the fourth state]. The scriptures again named it as ‘*turiyatita*’ [the state of transcending *turiya*, the fifth state]! But all these classifications and differences of states are merely verbal, and in reality they do not exist at all. These five kinds of states are classified and

told to aspirants during their period of ignorance and for their mental satisfaction. The Jnani's experience is the one mere consciousness of Self-existence, which is beyond all states.

14 Chapter Concerning the Two Karmas — Good and Bad

(Iru Vinai Tiran)

570 So long as one thinks 'I, an individual, am existing', it is proper to accept the theory that – on account of egoism, the attachment to the body – one certainly has to do [with a sense of doership] the two kinds of karma [good and bad] and to experience their fruits.

Sadhu Om: *No one can deny the karma theory – the theory that everyone has to do actions [karmas] and reap [experience] their fruits – so long as there exists doership, which is the very nature of the ego. Refer also to verse 38 of Ulladu Narpadu in which Sri Bhagavan says, "Only if we are the doer of actions, will we have to experience the resulting fruit..."*

571 God, the Lord of the soul, has appointed the ghost, the ego, as a strange gaoler [or sentry] to protect the body and extend its lifetime until the soul experiences, without missing a bit, all the fruits of karma allotted to it in *prarabdha*.

572 It is only the results of one's good and bad actions [karmas] done in the past that come in one's present life as one's pleasures and pains, and also as one's friends and mighty foes, who are the instrumental cause for them [one's pleasures and pains].

573 Do not perform any good action [karma] through a bad means, thinking 'It is sufficient if it bears good fruit'. Because, if the means is bad, even a good action will turn out to be a bad one. Therefore, even the means of doing good actions should be pure.

Michael James: *From this verse, we have to understand that the popular saying 'The end justifies the means' should not be taken as a worthy principle to follow.*

574 Those alone are good actions [karmas] which are done lovingly and with a peaceful and pure mind. All those actions which are done with an agitated, desirous and impure mind are to be classed only as evil actions.

15 Chapter Concerning Dyads and Triads

(Irattai Muppudi Tiran)

Michael James: *Dyads (dwandwa in Sanskrit or irattai in Tamil) means the pairs of opposites such as good and bad, pleasure and pain, knowledge and ignorance, and so on. Triads (triputi in Sanskrit or muppudi in Tamil) means the three factors of objective knowledge such as knower, knowing and thing known, experiencer, experiencing and thing experienced, seer, seeing and thing seen, and so on.*

575 The nature of the non-Self is to remain as the base of the imaginary perception of dyads through the senses by the mind, which has slipped down from the real state of Self. There is no room for such dyads [or triads] in Self.

Michael James: The nature of Self is oneness; the nature of the non-Self is to have dyads and triads.

This verse makes clear that the word ‘one’ (ondru) used by Sri Bhagavan in verse 9 of Ulladu Narpadu, where He says, “The dyads and triads always depend for their existence upon the one [ondru]...”, does not denote Self, but only the ego, which is non-Self. Refer to The Path of Sri Ramana – Part Two, appendix 4c.

576 ‘This is a thing’ – pointing out a limitation thus is the indication that a thing is known. Only because of such an indication [only because such an indication is possible, in other words, only because it is possible to point out a limitation for a thing], does it become possible to define a thing. Thus, a definition of a thing is possible only because that thing is within a limitation. But Self, which transcends all, has no limitation [and hence It cannot be known or defined].

Sadhu Om: Since Self is not, like dyads and triads, an object of knowledge, It cannot be either pointed out within a limit or defined as such-and-such.

577 Since the nature of Self is to shine as one without another, attention to other things is impossible for it. When the nature of the seer [the ego] is sought and seen, ‘Who is it that sees all these [dyads and triads]?’ the mind-knot will be severed and hence the dyads and triads will cease to exist.

Michael James: Refer to verse 9 of Ulladu Narpadu.

578 Accept the ever-shining Self-knowledge to be the only reality. Reject all the triads, deciding them to be an imaginary dream.

579 Since Self is the eternal, non-dual Thing and since there is no means to reach It other than Self-attention, know that Self itself is the path, Self itself is the goal, and that they [the path and the goal] are not different.

Sadhu Om: The Sages’ saying, “I am the path and I am the goal”, is to be recalled here.

580 When the delusive mind which sees differences drowns and dies in the state of Self, the one existence-consciousness [*sat-chit*], all the delusive differences will also turn out to be nothing but the consciousness [*chit*] of *Brahman* [Self], the existence [*sat*].

581 Those who know the alien five sense-knowledges say that knowledges are of different kinds. They are ignorant people who cannot rid themselves of the delusion of differences. When the firm true knowledge is obtained by learning how to withdraw the mind from the five senses, which cause the madness [of desire, fear, and so on], the differences will cease to exist.

16 Chapter Concerning the Enjoyment of Sense-pleasures (Vidaya Bhaga Tiran)

582 The Sage Dadhyangatharvana, who had experienced [the bliss of] Self, once said, “The pleasure that Indra enjoys with his wife, Ayirani, is not better than the pleasure enjoyed by a dog with its bitch”.

Sri Muruganar: Indra, the king of the heavens, was proudly thinking that the pleasures he enjoyed in heaven were the highest of all. Dadhyangatharvana, a great Sage, once advised Indra as above so that the latter might gain desirelessness [vairagya].

583 For a ravenous hunger, even a gruel of broken rice or a porridge of wild-rice flour will be the most delicious food. [Therefore,] in this world, the cause of pleasure lies not in the nature of the sense-objects, but only in the intensity of desire for it.

Sadhu Om: The idea is well explained in The Path of Sri Ramana – Part One, chapter two.

584 That which exists [*sat*] itself is consciousness [*chit*]. The consciousness itself is bliss [*ananda*]. Deriving pleasure from other things is mere delusion [that is, the pleasure we suppose we derive from other things is illusory, false]. Tell me, except in the clear and real Self-existence, can there be real happiness in the imaginary sense-objects?

585 A foolish dog crunchingly munching a dry bone with its teeth, making its mouth bleed with wounds and enjoying its own blood, praises, “Nothing will be as tasty as this bone”.

Sadhu Om: Just like the dog which does not know that the blood it tastes is coming only from its own mouth, ignorant people who do not know that happiness comes only from their own Self, seek and amass sense-objects, thinking that happiness comes from them. Refer also to The Path of Sri Ramana – Part One, chapter two [first edition, pages 20 to 21; second edition, page 39].

586 Those interested in arguments [the mere scholars of scriptures], who have not experienced the happiness of consciousness [the bliss of Self], who value only the pleasures – which are other than Self – derived from objects such as women, and who are confused, will finally perish longing for them [the sense-pleasures] even at the time of death.

587 The minds of ignorant people, having forgotten the divine life which is flourishing in the heart and which [alone] is worthy of being known and enjoyed, will meltingly long for the taste of sense-pleasures, which are insignificant fragments.

588 Mean-minded people, being objects of ridicule, will dip only into the pit, the filthy spring of sex; they will never reject it and lovingly take a bath, drowning in the ocean of the supreme bliss of Siva.

589 For those aspirants who have great and intense eagerness to enjoy the ripe fruit of unlimited supreme bliss, the sense-pleasures, which are worthy to be liked and enjoyed only by blind people [people blinded by ignorance] who do not know how to save themselves from ruin, are the lowest and fit only for rejection.

590 When one indeed exists as food [that is, as the contentment which is experienced while eating], not knowing this, if one thinks that one eats food [in order to obtain contentment, and thereby develops the desire to eat more and more], the food [the desire for food] will consume one and make one a slave to an insatiable, great hunger [that is, to an insatiable, great discontentment].

Sadhu Om: Here the word 'food' [annam] denotes not only the food taken in through the mouth [and tasted through the tongue], but also all the other four sense-pleasures taken in through the eyes, ears, nose and skin. We think that the food gives us substantial existence, whereas truly we ourselves are the substance [vastu] or existence [sat]. We do not know that our very nature is existence [sat]. Since we are happiness or contentment itself, it is foolish for us to expect to derive contentment from food [sense-objects]. If we, the existence [sat], the fullness of contentment [ananda], desire to obtain sense-objects for our contentment, our nature of fullness of contentment is made by that desire into a nature of deficiency; thus it [the desire] swallows us [kills us] by creating an insatiable fire of desire.

591 Those who do not know that, whenever they eat, the food itself is eating away their life, thinking that they are eating the enjoyments [bhogas], crave for and run after them.

Sadhu Om: Since food and similar objects of enjoyment make the jivas crave for them more and more as they are enjoyed more and more, they take the jivas far away from the desire for Self. Since death is nothing but being separated from life [in other words, being separated from Self], food and other objects of enjoyment, which separate us from Self, are here said to be eating away our life or killing us [the jivas] as we enjoy them more and more.

592 Just as by [feeding it with] ghee, a fire will blaze forth and will not be extinguished, so by satisfying desires, the fire of desire will never subside.

Michael James: The word here in Tamil is 'kama', which denotes desire in general and lust in particular.

Verse form:

*Not put out, with flaming wrath
The flame by ghee just blazes forth;
The fire of desire ne'er subsides
As more and more 'tis satisfied.*

593 “Oh, is it only by touch [or bite]?” On scrutiny, [the answer will be], “No, even by sight or mere thought of it, the snake of the five-sense-desires kills the soul!” Hence, we have never seen a more poisonous snake than sense-desire.

17 Chapter Concerning Mind, the *Maya* (*Mana Mayai Tiran*)

594 *Maya* proudly smiles over her own victory in completely deluding even the most intelligent people in such a way that they feel that that which is in truth unreal [namely the ego, world and so on] is the only reality.

Sadhu Om: It is the play of maya which makes one feel 'I am so-and-so' [I am a jiva, an individual soul], when in fact the ego is non-existent. Even those who are well learned and who have a sharp intellect, thinking that they are the body [that is, that they are individual souls], crave to acquire occult powers [siddhis] and to perform miracles, and thereby to gain glory for themselves, the so-called individuals. Therefore, Sri Bhagavan points out that maya has deluded, conquered and brought even them under her mighty, vicious sway.

595 When the light of Self-knowledge ['I am'] is experienced within, what will it matter if a flood of darkness [the appearance of the world] prevails outside? That dense darkness can never veil the Self-light ['I am'].

Sadhu Om: However long, dark and dense is a person's shadow on the ground, it cannot veil the sun in the sky. Similarly, however innumerable are the worlds outside, which come into existence only because of the Self-existence, their apparent existence cannot veil the Self-existence, 'I am'.

596 To say that the destructible, non-existent [*asat*] and insentient [*jada*] *maya* had once bound under its sway Self, the Light of knowledge [which is the only *sat* and only *chit*, that is, the only real, sentient and indestructible Thing], is more foolish and ridiculous than to say that a small mosquito had swallowed the vast sky and then vomited it.

Sadhu Om: The Sanksrit word 'maya' means 'that which is not' (ya = what; ma = is not).

597 When it is established [by the experience of the Sages and by the words of the scriptures] that Heart [Self], the form of perfect knowledge [*jnana*], is the only existing and real Thing, is not this [so-called] great *maya* a mere myth? Then how strange is the opinion [held by some] that Self [or *Brahman*] is deluded by the bite of this serpent, the mind-*maya*!

Sadhu Om: Since it is well established from all that has been said in the above stanzas that 'maya' is non-existent, is it not clear that the five functions [pancha-kriyas], namely creation, sustenance, destruction, veiling and Grace, which are said to be the play of maya, are unreal and that ajata is the only correct conclusion [siddhant]?

18 Chapter Concerning Ignorance (Pedaimai Tiran)

598 Ignorant people who identify the body as 'I', seeing *Jnanis* who experience *Brahman* as 'I', remark, as if defining the supreme state of *Jnana*, "See, if these people are in the state of *advaita*, how then do they take food, do activities and so on?" Saying thus, they expose their own ignorance – that of mistaking the insentient body for 'I'.

Sadhu Om: *Since ignorant people experience only the feeling 'I am the body', they can only see even Jnanis, who on the contrary experience the Supreme Self to be 'I', as mere bodies. This is in accordance with the rule 'As is the eye [the seer], so is the sight [the thing seen]'. Refer to verse 4 of Ulladu Narpadu, "Can the sight be otherwise than the eye?". Hence, Sri Bhagavan ridicules such ignorant people who talk, taking the activities of the body, the non-Self, to be the activities of the Jnani, the Self, and says that they are thereby exposing their own ignorance – the ignorance of taking the body to be Self.*

599 A girl who has not attained the age of puberty feels very happy, thinking the grandeur of the celebration of her marriage to be conjugal union. Likewise, the learned who have not enquired within and known Self, feel very proud and happy about the verbal Vedanta they prattle, thinking it to be the non-dual knowledge [*advaita jnana*].

Michael James: *The simile used in this verse refers to the ancient custom of child marriage.*

600 Those who have learnt the supreme science of Self [*atma-para-tattva*] only by reading and hearing from scriptures, who rate themselves very highly because of their power of intellect, yet who have not tested themselves [enquired into themselves], the knowers of the scriptures, thereby losing their individuality and drowning in bliss, test [with the yardstick of their scriptural knowledge] *Jnanis*, who are in Silence. Oh tell me, what a great foolishness is this!

601 Those who do not have the ability to know even their own Self, yet make great efforts [through *tapas*, yoga, scientific or historical research, astrology and so on] to know how was the past and how will be the future, are just like a small child who jumps to catch its own shadow.

Michael James: *How was the past and how will be the future? That is, how was the world in the past and how will it be in the future, who were we in our past lives and who will we be in our future lives, what will be our future in this present life, and so on and so forth?*

602 Those who, because of the faltering of their mind, cannot know the state in which they are at present, meditate deeply in order to find out their state in their distant past and distant future.

- 603 Those who do not have even the least liking to know ‘How are we today?’ [‘What is our true existence today?’], think and worry much about their truth [their condition] before their present birth and after their death. How strange is their attitude!
- 604 “Is it by Siva’s entering there that the mind [*chittam*] becomes pure, or by the purification of the mind that Siva enters there?” Since those who ask thus are so ignorant as to take the one, non-different action as two different ones, we have no answer to give them.

Sadhu Om: Is it not clear that those who ask this question think that Siva’s entering the chittam and the purification of the chittam are two different actions? Unless they really are two different actions, we cannot say that one is the cause and the other is the effect. In truth, however, they are not two but one and the same. In other words, the pure condition of the chittam is itself Siva, and Siva is nothing but the pure chittam, that is, chit [refer to verses 70 and 244]. Because the question is thus based upon a false premise, it cannot be considered to be a meaningful question, and hence no meaningful answer for it can be given. That is why Sri Bhagavan says, “We have no answer to give them”.

19 Chapter Concerning Immaturity (*Apakva Tiran*)

- 605 Why do these people of immature mind, who are melting and weeping with the longing to obtain easily the five sense-pleasures, come and associate with *Sadhus*, who always live the aim of conquering and completely destroying the five sense-pleasures?

Sadhu Om and Michael James: *Do not people who, even though they may hold degrees or high and powerful positions in society, are immature, approach Sadhus with worldly offerings and wait in their holy presence for the fulfilment of their desires? This is not only foolish, but also improper. Since such worldly people are mad after the five sense-pleasures, whereas Sadhus are totally destroying the desire for the five sense-pleasures by the power of their tapas, they have no business with Sadhus. The following incident will throw more light on this point:*

One evening at 4 pm during Sri Bhagavan’s stay at Virupaksha Cave, an old brahmin came there with his daughter and offered a big plateful of costly sweets. Sri Bhagavan accepted a little of it, and the rest was distributed to all the devotees present, who were immensely happy since in those days they were not getting even enough ordinary food to satisfy their needs. The devotees were very happy, but Sri Bhagavan did not seem to be so pleased. On the third day when she came with her usual plate, though all the devotees were very happy, Sri Bhagavan told her with a look of displeasure, “What is this? Why do you bring today also? I did not mind when you brought it once or twice, but why do you daily bring such costly things? If there is any expectation behind these offerings, it is wrong. This is not the place for the fulfilment of worldly desires. If you have any such desire, do not bring these offerings from tomorrow onwards”.

Next day, to the great disappointment of many of the devotees, she did not come. One of the devotees afterwards enquired from her father and came to know that, in spite of having passed the normal age, the girl had not yet attained maturity for her marriage, and that someone had advised her father that if such offerings were made to Sri Bhagavan, their desire would be fulfilled.

20 Chapter Concerning Pramada (Pramada Tiran)

Michael James: *Pramada means inadvertence, that is, giving up an action that has been started. In the spiritual path, it means non-vigilance in Self-attention, in other words, slipping down from Self-abidance.*

606 The *jiva* called *vyavaharika* [the soul in the waking state] who comes into being [due to *pramada*] from the wonderful, naturally existing state of Self-consciousness, who remains in the waking state experiencing the results of his own good and bad actions [karmas], and who subsides, is also a *swapnakalpita* [a soul in dream].

Michael James: *This verse would fit well in the chapter concerning the oneness of jiva (Eka Jiva Tiran – Part Two, chapter 9). To connect it to this present chapter heading, however, the words ‘due to pramada’ are added in brackets.*

In scriptures, the soul (jiva) is described as having three forms, namely (1) kutastha (the soul existing in sleep), (2) vyavaharika (the soul existing in the waking state) and (3) swapnakalpita (the soul imagined in the dream state), which are given importance according to their reality. According to scriptures, kutastha is more real than vyavaharika, and vyavaharika is more real than swapnakalpita, since swapnakalpita is an imaginary being, that is, he is the one who, through imagination, comes into existence in dream. But in this verse Sri Bhagavan declares that not only swapnakalpita, but even vyavaharika, is imaginary, that vyavaharika therefore has no greater reality than swapnakalpita, and that vyavaharika is merely another kind of swapnakalpita, because vyavaharika’s reality is the same as the reality of the world in which he lives and acts. Since this world in the waking state is also nothing but an imaginary, dream-like thing, Sri Bhagavan declares that even vyavaharika is a swapnakalpita.

607 Because they have slipped down from the fearless state of Self, the souls, feeling themselves to be low and mean, undergo the sufferings of birth [and death]. “People who slip down from their status are like a hair which has dropped down from the head”.

Sadhu Om: *In Tamil, the last two lines of this verse, given here within quotation marks, are verse 964 of Tirukkural. Because of the chapter heading, namely ‘Family Prestige’, under which this verse appears in the Tirukkural, it is interpreted to mean that if one of high birth behaves unbecomingly, he will immediately lose all his worth, like a hair that has fallen from the head. However, by adding two more lines at the beginning of this verse of the Tirukkural, Sri Muruganar has given it a much deeper import, namely that by*

falling from the state of Self [in other words, by rising as a jiva] we lose our true glory and become a mean and worthless creature.

608 Instead of knowing the state of Self, which is eternally clear like a mountain in a open plain, and abiding firmly in it, one who wanders away [as a *jiva*] is like one [the tenth man] who counts only the other nine people and forgets to count himself.

Michael James: Refer to the story of the tenth man, given in Maharshi's Gospel, Book Two, chapter one.

609 Instead of keenly enquiring 'Who am I?' within the Heart – the rising place of thought, where the divine Thing, Siva, shines devoid of thought – and knowing It [the divine Thing], merging into It and becoming one with It as 'I am That', it is foolish to slip down from the Self.

610 If we always remain as the perfect and foremost Thing [Self], the Great, how can degradation be caused by others [since there are no others in the state of Self-perfection]? "People who slip down from their status are like a hair which has dropped down from the head."

Michael James: That is to say, only when one slips down from Self does one become a mean and degraded jiva, just as the hair loses its worth only when it falls from the head.

611 One who – believing the mental objects, which appear in front of him on account of delusion, to be real – slips down from Self [that is, gives up abiding as Self], the wondrous, foremost and pure knowledge, is a mad fool.

612 Undeluded by whatever [dyads and triads] appear or disappear in front of you, always unwinkingly attend to Self. For, even if the non-vigilance [*pramada*] that disturbs Self-attention is very small, that evil that results from it will be very great.

Sri Muruganar: To be ever attentively awakened in one's own state, Self, without being glamoured by the appearance of any kinds of dyads and triads, is Jnana-samadhi. That is Liberation too. If, on the other hand, one forgets Self, the consciousness, and thinks even in the least that there are objects to be known, that pramada – no matter how slight it may be – itself will cause great evil, just as even a little drop of poison will do great harm.

21 Chapter Concerning Samsara

(Samsara Tiran)

Michael James: Samsara literally means 'that which is well moving', and denotes the ego's state of mundane activity, in which it undergoes innumerable births and deaths.

613 The impure mind, which functions as thinking and forgetting, itself is *samsara*, the sequence of births and deaths. The pure Self-consciousness in which the

thinking and forgetting mind is dead, itself is the perfect liberation [*mukti*], devoid of birth and death.

Sri Muruganar: The rising of thought (the rising of the first thought, 'I am so-and-so') itself is birth, and the forgetfulness of Self itself is death. The mind's phenomena of such thinking and forgetting is called samsara. When the mind, freed from its impure state of thinking and forgetting, stands ever holding on to Self, that is called the destruction of the mind [mano-nasa], which itself is liberation.

- 614 The big, delusive *samsara* is [nothing but] the mind which leaves its true nature of shining as existence [Self], which mistakes the fleshy body to be Itself, and which is thereby filled with the dense darkness of ignorance and through that deluded outlook sees the sense-objects as if real, like the blueness in the sky.
- 615 In truth, no thing exists except Self. Yet, forsaking the immense, non-dual bliss of immortality, the inner delusion, the thought 'I am the body' [which is the form of *chit-jada-granthi*, the knot between the sentient Self and the insentient body], undergoes the sequence of births and deaths [known as *samsara*].
- 616 One's own *chittam* [the storehouse of tendencies, *vasanas*] itself is *samsara*. Though those [the *jivan-muktas*] who live without *samsara* [that is, without *chittam* and its *vasanas*] are [apparently] sometimes, due to body-karma [*prarabdha karma*] in *samsara* [that is, involved in mundane activities], they are truly ever strolling in the space of true knowledge [*mey-jnana*].

22 Chapter Concerning Obstacles (*Pratibandha Tiran*)

- 617 The many afflictions which occur with severity like thunderbolts in the life of great devotees are only to establish their pure mind more and more firmly [in *tapas*, that is, in Self-abidance] and not to shake them down [from it].
- 618 Discriminating and knowing well that all the sufferings that come by *prarabdha* in his life are sent to him by God's Grace in order to make his mind stronger and thereby save him, let an aspirant bear with them patiently as *tapas* without being alarmed even in the least.
- 619 Just as a gem taken from the mine will not have full lustre if it is not polished on the grindstone, so the real *tapas*, the *sadhana* which one is doing, will not shine well if it is not provided with trials and tribulations on its way.
- 620 For a big temple-chariot to go along the streets and safely reach its destination, not only the strong linchpins but also the obstructing blocks, which prevent it from dashing into anything by running to the sides of the streets, are indispensable.

Sri Muruganar and Sadhu Om: In the whole of this verse, only an example [upamana] is given and the 'exemplified' [upameya] is left to the reader to infer. It should be understood as follows: 'Similarly, for an aspirant to successfully complete his tapas or sadhana, not only a blemishless character and mode of life but also the obstacles that come through prarabdha are indispensable. Hence, an aspirant should accept obstacles

patiently, viewing them as being due to Grace'. For instance, the harsh words, "Why all these for one who is like this?", uttered by the elder brother of young Venkataraman, when patiently accepted, brought forth one great Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi to the world. Not only by unintentional words like these, but even by the intentional troubles caused by wicked people, will great good result in the life of an aspirant.

23 Chapter Concerning the Wonder of Maya (*Maya Vichitra Tiran*)

621 Though that which ever exists is truly only one [namely Self] and though Its nature is non-becoming, what a wonder it is that It appears to have become many *jivas*, to be doing many good and bad karmas and reaping their results, and thereby, from time immemorial till now, to be taking in four ways innumerable births of the seven types, and finally to succeed in attaining Liberation.

Sadhu Om: The four ways of taking birth are through seeds, perspiration, eggs and womb, and the seven types of birth are the devas, human beings, beasts, birds, legless creatures, creatures living in water, and plants.

622 When rightly considered, nothing will be more wonderful and laughable than one's toiling very much through some *sadhana* to attain Self in the same manner as one toils to attain other objects, even though one really ever remains as the non-dual Self.

24 Chapter Concerning the Evil of Fame (*Puhazhchi Navai Tiran*)

Michael James: The Tamil word 'puhazhchi' means both fame and praise.

623 Because it brings one under the great evil of yielding to non-vigilance [*pramada*], through which one is made to think that one is worthless and mean body, while in fact one is the supreme *Brahman*, fame [or praise] is to be rejected with great contempt and is not at all to be aspired for by wise people.

Sadhu Om: Is not the jiva [the ego], who has a name and form as 'I am so-and-so', the one who gains fame or receives praise? Therefore, it is possible to aspire for fame or praise only when we take upon ourselves the state of an ego, a wretched and downtrodden state caused by pramada. Hence, it is advised that those wise people who aspire for Self-knowledge should necessarily reject the possibility of gaining name and fame. It is highly improper for such aspirants [mumukshus] to run madly after name and fame. Verse 263 of Tirukkural states: "Be born to live with fame; for those who do not achieve fame, it is better not be bor.". Tiruvalluvar [the author of Tirukkural] has rightly said that fame is essential only for those who want to be born as a jiva [as an ego]. But since mumukshus are those who do not like to be born, but who like only to put an end to their jiva-hood and to realize Self, the fame which was recommended by Tiruvalluvar is

an obstacle and a great evil for them. That is why Sri Bhagavan says that it should be rejected with contempt by wise people.

- 624 By exposing oneself due to the desire of being praised by others, one is unnecessarily removing one's protection and creating obstacles to the *sadhana* one has undertaken.

Sadhu Om: The desire for the annihilation of the ego is the right sign of atma-sadhana. But fame and praise are things to be gained only by the ego. Therefore, if one has a desire for fame it means that one does not like to destroy the ego. That is why Sri Bhagavan says that the one who has desire for fame is himself creating obstacles to his sadhana. Therefore, if the atma-sadhana is to progress unobstructed and well protected, it is better for an aspirant to live a life of unknown name and unknown place.

25 Chapter Concerning the Evil of Arrogance

(Anava Navai Tiran)

- 625 To be subject to arrogance, the reign of hell, is the great, unacceptable wrong. Who but worthless people will fail to hate the face of that *kalipurusha* [that evil, arrogance], which should never be seen by good people?
- 626 To come and sit with straight back and neck [as if great yogis] in the holy presence of *Jnanis*, who are in Self-abidance [*atma-nishtha*], but [then] yawning, sleeping and snoring – this habit of worldly people is highly improper and bad.

*Sri Muruganar and Sadhu Om: It is indeed true that such incidents as described in this verse actually used to happen in the presence of Sri Bhagavan. This verse deals with the improper and arrogant behaviour of some worldly minded people who come to the presence of Jivan-muktas and pretend to be great yogis. The holy presence of Jnanis like Sri Bhagavan Ramana is very rare on earth. Therefore, on such rare occasions when it is available, instead of using it to eradicate our sleep of ignorance [ajnana], pretending to be in yoga but actually yawning, sleeping and snoring due to *tamas* is highly improper on the part of people.*

26 Chapter Concerning the Birth of Misery

(Dukha Utpatti Tiran)

- 627 Though the nature of Self ever exists as bliss, one is scorched by the burning sun-heat of the misery of birth [and death] solely on account of the rising of the ego and its functioning mischievously with the madness of dense delusion.
- 628 The ego, the vile attachment to the body [as 'I am this'], is the base of all demonic qualities [*asura sampat*]. For those whose illusory ego [*maya-ahankara*] is waxing through contact with the binding 'mine'-ness [*mamakara*], it is indeed impossible to achieve peace.

27 Chapter Concerning the Soul (Jiva Bodha Tiran)

- 629 The petty soul's wandering [through the five senses], his suffering in the world, his again turning his attention within and his resting peacefully in the heart for a while, is just like one's wandering in the hot sun, one's coming back to the cool shade of a tree and the subsiding of one's heat [for a while].
- 630 The discriminative person [*viveki*], having once suffered in the hot sunshine, will not like to go again into the sunshine from the shade. Likewise, those who have suffered in the three-fold heat [of desire for wealth, women and fame] which scorches this world, should not again turn worldwards, leaving the Heart [Self].

Michael James: Refer to Who am I? where the simile of wandering in the scorching heat of the sun, which is used in the above two verses, is given by Sri Bhagavan.

- 631 The embodied souls [*jivas*], who have [apparently] risen from the Real Thing [Self or *Brahman*], cannot, until they merge into the Real Thing [their source], stand [or stop] anywhere in spite of any amount [or kind] of obstacles [in the form of pains and pleasures, that is, they cannot stop making efforts, either resting contented with any amount of pleasures or being dejected with any amount of pains experienced in innumerable births of any kind in any world], just as a bird which flies into the vast sky from the ground cannot stand anywhere else until it returns to earth.
- 632 When the souls [by enquiring 'Whence am I?' or 'Who am I?'] turn and go back to their source along the way they came, since they then merge into their own Self and since the bliss of Self is so clearly experienced there by them, they stand still, being well established for ever in Self.

Sadhu Om: Verses 631 and 632 convey the same ideas expressed by Sri Bhagavan in verse 8 of Sri Arunachala Ashtakam. Refer also to the first seven pages of chapter two of The Path of Sri Ramana, Part Two, where the same idea is elaborately explained.

- 633 Instead of being saved by the Grace of God by thinking of it [the Grace] without thinking [that is, by remaining quiet with the consciousness 'I am'], who can and how to do anything by rising as 'I am so-and-so'? Therefore, by attending to Self and thereby not allowing the ghostly ego to rise and attend to other things, remain in the supreme Silence, where you are That.

28 Chapter Concerning the Powerlessness of the Soul (Jiva Asakta Tiran)

- 634 Except by the pure light of God's Grace, no one living in this world of ignorance, will be able to enjoy the bliss of the supreme *Jnana*, Self, which shines even through the darkness of delusion [that is, which shines as the light of knowledge enabling one to know even the existence of the darkness or ignorance].

Michael James: Refer also to verse 648.

29 Chapter Concerning the Truth of the Objects Seen (*Drisya Unmai Tiran*)

635 When one who does not see the truth himself, the seer, who is indispensable for seeing, sees the world as true, the world which is seen by him itself ridicules him and laughs at him within itself, bringing shame on him.

Sadhu Om: This verse, which declares that the world laughs within itself and ridicules the one who sees it as real, has a unique beauty. We may wonder how an insentient thing called 'world' can laugh. That is the beauty of this verse. We should understand this verse having in mind the idea taught in verse 74 of this work. Will not an unchaste and base-natured prostitute laugh within herself when she hears the appreciating words of her infatuated new lover, who says to his friend, "Oh, this woman, my lover, is the most chaste woman in the world". Likewise, the world laughs within itself at those who think that it is real. Thus this verse personifies the world nicely. Sri Bhagavan gives more emphasis to the fact that the world is unreal by exposing in this verse that the support or evidence of no other is needed to prove the unreality of the world, for the world itself knows that it is unreal. This is the climax of the fun in this verse.

This verse contains the same instruction given by Sri Bhagavan in Maharshi's Gospel, Book Two, chapter three [8th edition, page 63], "Well then, that world, which you say is real, is really mocking at you for seeking to prove its reality while of your own reality you are ignorant".

636 Only those which come within the range of light, and not those which are beyond the range of light, can [be known to] exist. Likewise, only those things [the universe] which come within the range of the mind [the reflected light of Self], whose function is thinking and forgetting, are known to have existence.

Michael James: The world cannot appear where the mind-light is absent. That is to say, in the true light of Self the universe, which consists of objects that are created (by thinking), sustained (by continuing to think) and destroyed (by forgetting), does not at all exist. On the other hand, since Self (or God), the truly existing Thing, is beyond the range of mind-light, to the mind It is non-existent. The reason why Self is said to be beyond the range of mind-light, whose function is thinking and forgetting, is that It is a Thing which can neither be thought of nor forgotten, and which can Itself neither think nor forget.

637 When a thing is known in front [of you], it only establishes that something exists, but does not establish that the form which is made to appear by the contact of the senses with it, is the reality or true nature of that thing.

Michael James: The name-and-form of a thing which we know is created only by the contact of the five sense with that thing. Since name-and-form is a mere imagination of the mind, the true nature of anything we know in the world (or as the world) is in fact nothing but Self.

- 638 If, instead of seeing anything in front [of you] by the mind, you see by the mind the one who sees, all will be found to be oneself, the seer; then all objective knowledges will be found to be foolish.
- 639 If the seer [*drik*, the ego] and the seen [*drisya*, the world] were different in their reality [*sat*], the act of seeing would never be possible. But since seeing is possible, know that they [the seer and the seen] have one and the same reality.

Sadhu Om: If we now view verse 636 through the eye of the idea given in this verse, we will understand clearly that the reason why it was said there that only those things which come within the range of the mind are known to have existence, is that 'seeing' is possible only when the seer and the seen are on the same plane of reality [sat].

In this verse we are taught a unique idea! Do not many of us say, "It is easy to see other things since they are different from us, the seer, but it is difficult for us to see Self since It is not different from us?" However, if we scrutinize the matter in accordance with this verse, we will find that the law of nature about the seer, seen and seeing is quite contrary to this. It is indirectly but firmly instructed here that to know Self is the easiest, because the reality [sat] of the seer [the ego] is in truth Self, the one reality, which we want to see or know.

We should also consider here the fact that the seeing of a dream is possible only because all the objects seen in that dream have the same reality [sat] as that of the dreamer who sees the dream.

One more point is also to be understood here. Since the reality or nature of the knower, the ego is the same as the reality or nature of all the objects known [not only of all the objects known through the eyes, that is, the objects seen, but also of all the objects known through the other four senses, that is, the objects heard, smelt, tasted and touched], a thing as world is known to be existing, which is nothing other than the knowledge obtained through the five senses. And since, because it rises and sets, the nature of the ego is false, the world of names and forms, which also has the nature of rising and setting, is also said to be false. But when the real nature of the ego, which lives only by feeding upon the names and forms, which rise and set, is scrutinized [enquired into] and found to be Self or Brahman, the true reality [sat], which does not have the false nature of rising and setting, then the reality of the world will also be found to be Self. Refer here to verse 4 of Ulladu Narpadu, where Sri Bhagavan asks, "Can the seen be otherwise than the eye (the seer)?" Only then will the absolute truth, namely that even the world is real – that it is Brahman itself - be properly understood [refer here to verses 50 and 52 of this work]. Till then, it is indispensable [and since it will help one to reach the absolute reality, it is also highly recommendable] for the aspirants to take the reality [sat] of the seer, the ego, to be unreal or asat, and also to conclude that, since the world has the same reality [sat] as the seer, it is unreal.

30 Chapter Concerning Objective Attention (*Suttu Unarvu Tiran*)

- 640 Since the divine bliss is such that it will shine of its own accord if one simply remains still [remains as one's own existence-consciousness], instead of enquiring

into oneself and knowing that one is really nothing but the supreme Self, which is devoid of coming and going, and thereby enjoying that bliss, it is, alas, a pity that one unnecessarily wanders [attending to second and third persons, that is, that one unnecessarily toils much in the paths of *puja*, *dhyana* and so on].

Michael James: In this verse, it is said in a ridiculing manner that it is futile to toil and wander in order to obtain bliss, which will be ever available if we simply keep still, doing nothing!

This verse may also be interpreted to have a second meaning as follows: “For the bliss which will shine even when one remains still, wandering in [the sadhana of] proudly knowing oneself as the great Self, which has no coming, is to attain that bliss”. However, since this second meaning is not a coherent sentence and since the reasoning in it is not consistent, it is not a fitting meaning. Moreover, when the later verses in this chapter are read, it is clear that the aim of this chapter is to expose the futility of objective attention (that is, to expose that Self cannot be attained by attention to second and third person objects), and hence only the first meaning given above will be found to be fitting.

- 641 Even though in truth one ever remains as Self, one’s efforts to seek Self as if one were something else and to attain Self, is to subside finally by knowing that the Self [‘I’] shining in anyone, though it now seems to be different from oneself, is not different from oneself.
- 642 One’s thinking that Self, which [in reality] not other than oneself, is other and toiling very much to attain It through one’s own effort [through *sadhanas*], is just like one’s running after one’s own shadow to catch it.
- 643 Since existence itself is clearly shining as the consciousness ‘I-I’ in the heart, that reality, the unfalse eye [or knowledge], and not those objects [*vishayas*] seen by the physical eye, alone is *sakshat* [what is seen directly]. Therefore, seek and know that.
- 644 Those who do not keenly attend to and know the existence-consciousness which shines ever-unsetting in the heart, fall into *maya* through the objective attention caused by the ego, which rises and attacks with dense delusion.

31 Chapter Concerning the Severance of Objective Attention (*Suttu Aruttal Tiran*)

- 645 The real intention of the scriptures in saying “Know the truth of thyself”, is nothing but to make one give up the objective attention, the false knowledge. Why? Because, the truth of oneself ever shines in everyone as ‘I am’, like the sun.

Michael James: Since the truth of oneself is ever shining in everyone as ‘I am’, it is not a thing to be known anew. Therefore, when the scriptures say “Know the truth of thyself”, their real intention is simply to make us turn our attention towards the ever-known ‘I am’, thereby giving up the attention towards second and third person objects, for such objective attention alone is wrong knowledge or ajnana. Thus, the intention of the scriptures is not to make us know anything new, but only to make us give up our wrong

knowledge. In other words, if we merely give up our objective attention, that itself will make it clear to us that we ever know Self.

646 Self, the shining of Grace, which does not reveal itself when sought by the mind, which is merely an objective attention [that is, an attention towards second and third persons], will reveal itself when that objective attention [the mind] ceases to function. “When I look at her, the new bride will only look down towards the ground, but when I do not look at her, will lovingly look at me and mildly smile within with joy.”

Michael James: The last two lines of this verse are a quotation of verse 1094 of Tirukkural. The unusual way of comparing Self to the bride and the ego to the bridegroom is to be noted here.

When one seeks to know Self as an object through the extroverted mind, It is not revealed. But since the cessation of extroversion is itself introversion or Selfwardness (ahamukham), Self will automatically shine forth when extroversion ceases.

Here readers are warned to interpret the simile in the following wrong manner: ‘The bride looks at the bridegroom only when he does not look at her. Therefore, Self will reveal itself only when we do not attend to It, that is, only when we attend to the external world’. This is not the meaning which is intended when giving this simile. The correct interpretation should be: ‘Self cannot be known by mind, but It will automatically shine forth when, and only when, the nature of the mind (namely attending to or knowing only second and third person objects) is destroyed’.

647 Do not look at this, do not look at that. If you simply remain without looking at anything, then by that powerful look at [one’s own] being [that is, by that powerful attention to Self, ‘I am’], you will become the supreme reality which has the outlook of the unlimited space of consciousness [*chit-akasa*].

648 Except by the Lord’s Grace, which begins to function when one surrenders oneself completely to His Feet with sincere devotion, it [the reality] cannot be cognised merely by the skill of the mind of the *jiva*. So subtle is the reality.

Michael James: Refer also to verse 634.

649 Do not search and wander without attaining any [worthy] state in spite of having learnt all arts and having heard all [philosophies] that are to be heard. Simply to remain as love in Him [the Lord] who shines as love, is the state supreme!

Michael James: Verses 983 and 1023 may also be read along with this chapter.

32 Chapter Concerning the Truth of Love (*Anbu Unmai Tiran*)

650 Those who do not know the taste of love, which is in no way inferior to any of the other six tastes, regard love as the seventh taste. [But know that] love is the basic taste which gives life to all the other six different tastes classified [in the past].

Michael James: The six tastes are sweet, bitter, salty, sour, pungent and astringent, and love is sometimes classified along with these as the seventh taste.

651 Only those who do not know the inexpressible taste of love will count the taste as seven [as if love were a taste like the other six tastes]. But since we know well the taste of love, the real taste, we declare that love is the only happy taste [and that none of these others are tastes at all].

652 Only when Self, the truth of love, is known, will the knot of all the severe problems in life be severed. Only when the pinnacle of love [the supreme love or *para-bhakti*] is attained can even liberation be said to be attained. Love is verily the heart of all religions.

Sadhu Om: When the true nature of love is realized, it will completely cease to take the form of desire, which is its 'vritti rupa' [that is, which love is in the form of a vritti or movement]. When desire is thus removed, all its five offshoots, namely anger, miserliness, delusion, arrogance and jealousy, will also cease to exist [refer to verse 375]. Since all the problems of life are based upon only these six vices, it is said that the knot of all problems in life will be severed by realizing the true nature of love. The truth of love is nothing but Self. How? Since the real nature of Self is asti-bhati-priya or sat-chit-ananda, love [priya] or ananda cannot be different from Self. This is why the Sages declare that love is God.

653 The truth behind the saying of wise men, "When one goes to see Sages, who are the treasures of true and clear knowledge [*jnana*], one should take some offering and should not go empty-handed," is that one should go with true love for them in the heart [that is, one should not go simply for sight-seeing or to test them].

Sri Muruganar: Since other kinds of offering may not be available for everyone and at all times, since even those offerings will be worthless if there is no love in the heart, and since if love alone is present it will fill up the deficiency created by the absence of all other offerings, love is here recommended as the supreme offering.

654 Not only by love being obstructed, but also by love being wrongly forced, are all living beings caught in and eaten up by many miseries in life.

Sadhu Om: Evil befalling the things we like is what is mentioned here as 'love being obstructed', while having things that we dislike forced upon us is what is mentioned here as 'love being wrongly forced'. Thus, when love is allowed to function in the form of a movement [pravritti rupa], that is, as petty desires – likes and dislikes – jivas have to undergo untold miseries in life. Therefore, keeping love in its pure form, not allowing it to take a vritti form as likes and dislikes, is both (a) not allowing love to be obstructed, and (2) not allowing love to be wrongly forced. This is why Sri Bhagavan said in the work Who am I?, "Likes and dislikes are both to be disliked".

655 The experience of Self, which is nothing but the form of [supreme] love, is that in which the eyes see only love, the tongue tastes only love and the touch feels only love, which is bliss.

Michael James: This verse describes that the nature of the experience of Self is the one unbroken essence [ekarasa] of love, that is, it explains that this world, which is nothing but the experience gained through the five senses, is transformed into and experienced as Self when the dawn of Self-knowledge takes place. Verse 62 of this work is to be read once again here.

Sri Muruganar: The Self-love which shines naturally in everything when all is known as Self, is completely different from the false and delusive feeling of pleasure which appears through the mental sense-experiences. This divine ecstasy, known as 'prema' or 'bhakti', is what is expressed by Manikkavachagar in his Thiruvandappahuti as his great experience.

33 Chapter Concerning Form

(Sakala Tiran)

656 Those who say that the reality has no form are those who do not know the reality. For the form of the Sage [sahaja nishtha] who correctly knows and abides in the reality, Self, the nature of which is like the [all-pervading] nature of space, is verily the form of the reality. Know this.

Sri Muruganar: Through this verse, Sri Bhagavan disproves the saying, 'The reality has no form'. How? Since the Sage [sahaja nishtha] who has known the reality as it is, is none other than the reality, He Himself is the very form of that reality. This is what is meant by saying, 'Jnani Himself is Self'.

Michael James: Sri Muruganar here refers to the Bhagavad Gita, chapter 7, verse 18, in which Sri Krishna says that the Jnani is Atma.

657 Worship of the formless is possible only for those who have lost the notion 'I am this form [the body]'. Any kind of worship [that is, any effort at formless meditation] being done by those who have the notion 'I am this form [the body]' is nothing but a worship of form. Know this.

Michael James: Refer here to verse 208 of this work.

658 To worship the formless reality through thought-free thought [that is, by attending to the thought-free Self-awareness, 'I am'] is best. If one is incapable of doing this formless worship of God, to worship God in form is proper.

659 Let those who have become a prey to the delusion of action [karma], being unable to follow the original path of the light of Self, existence-consciousness, worship the form of their beloved God. Then they will gradually lose their delusion

[towards names and forms and action] and finally [by the Grace of God or Guru] attain the Supreme Self.

Sri Muruganar: Self-attention alone is the path described in this verse as 'the original path'. But let those who are urged on to action [karma], being under the sway of ignorance [avidya], and who are thereby unable to follow the original path, take at least to the artificial path of worshipping God in form; this will in its course, lead them finally to liberation.

660 O mind performing worship [*puja*] of Lord Siva in form with great Siva-*bhakti* both within and without, do it consciously without forgetting that God exists everywhere in the form of perfect consciousness.

Sadhu Om: Wherever in this work the word 'Siva', 'Hara' or so on is used, it should be taken as referring to God in general and not as denoting only a particular personal form of God called Siva. Refer to verse 1101 of this work.

661 If one daily worships the Siva-yogi [the Sage who has become one with Siva, Self], the mind will become one-pointed, Self-enquiry will rise within, through which one will [by giving up objective attention] be established in Self, the mere consciousness ['I am'], and thus the disease of the delusion of birth [and death] will fly away.

662 If the observances prescribed in the *Vedas* do not abundantly give you real and one-pointed devotion towards the Feet of God, know that all the strenuous efforts made by you to observe them strictly and unfailingly are utterly in vain.

663 Those who always worship the holy Feet of Allah [God] will achieve all benefits and happiness together, having extinguished all the fire of suffering of the imaginary mental life led by them on account of wicked and sinful actions [karmas].

Sadhu Om: Since this is advice given to some Muslims, Sri Bhagavan used the word 'Allah' instead of God.

664 Forgetting everything that has to be obtained either in this world or in the next, enduring perfectly and with patience all the obstacles that come, and not being disheartened by any amount of poverty that comes, live in the way in which God's Grace leads you.

665 For those first-grade *sadhus* who aspire only to reach the Feet of Lord Siva [God], it is better to live as an object to be pitied in the eyes of the worldly people rather than to be envied.

34 Chapter Concerning the Five Functions of God (*Pancha Kritya Tiran*)

666 Know that according to His will, law and plan, every moment of every day the five functions of God [creation, sustenance, destruction, veiling and Grace] will

be going on perfectly and unceasingly in the universe, which is full of moving and unmoving objects.

667 Every moment [i.e., many millions of times in a second] each atom [in the universe] is destroyed and newly created. Since this is going on unceasingly, it appears as if they [the objects of the universe] are the same [objects] existing continuously. Know thus.

Sadhu Om: Though each frame of a cinema film which is projected onto the screen consists of only one unmoving picture, since many such frames are projected in a second and since the speed of their projection is faster than the grasping power of our eyes, it seems to us as if the film contains one continuously moving picture. Likewise, since everything in this universe, which is under the sway of the five functions of God, is created and destroyed by the inexpressible power of God many crores of times in a second, and since the speed with which they are created and destroyed is faster than the grasping power of our mind [that is, since our mind is unable to grasp the interval between each destruction and the subsequent new creation], it seems to us as if the universe is existing continuously.

It will be useful here to note what is in fact meant in this verse by the creation and destruction of each atom of the universe. In verse 6 of Ulladu Narpadu Sri Bhagavan asks, "Can there be a world apart from the mind?", and in Who am I? He says, "Other than thoughts, there is no such thing as the world". Therefore, since the universe is nothing but thoughts, the rising of thoughts is the creation of the universe and the setting of thoughts is its destruction. All thoughts, which are nothing but second and third persons, rise and set only to the mind, which is nothing but the first thought, 'I am the body'. Therefore, since all other thoughts can rise only after the mind rises, and since they must set when the mind sets, their rising and setting must necessarily be even more rapid than the rising and setting of the mind, the thought 'I', which, through the inexpressible and wonderful power of God, itself rises and sets many crores of times in a second. But since the mind is so fickle that it is unable to grasp or cognize even its own rising and setting, how can it grasp the rising and setting of other thoughts? It is because the mind is thus unable to grasp the speed with which other thoughts rise and set, that it appears to the mind as if there is existing continuously something as the universe. Only when the mind scrutinizes itself, the first person, with a keen and subtle attention, and only when it is thereby able to cognize its own rising and setting, will it cease to rise and instead become motionless [achala]. And only in that state of motionlessness, in which the mind is no longer a mind but Self, will it be able to understand the rising and setting of the world, the second and third person thoughts, and will it have the supreme power not to allow any thought to rise. It is because Bhagavan Ramana is such a One who ever remains firmly established in Self as Self, that He was able to discover and thus reveal the truth about creation, sustenance destruction and so on.

35 Chapter Concerning the Actions of the Soul and God

(Jiveswara Seyal Tiran)

668 If it is considered that all the actions of the soul [*jiva*] are the actions of God [Siva], then can the *jiva* exist as an individual entity separate from Siva? But if the

jiva feels that he is separate from Siva, then the *jiva*'s actions cannot be Siva's actions, and the *jiva* will also be independent of Siva.

Sadhu Om: *Not knowing the correct interpretation of the ancient holy words of Sages, "All are God's actions; not even an atom can move without the will of God", many people say whenever miseries come, "All these are the results of God's actions," but whenever they get some pleasures in life, they proudly say, "These are the results of my past meritorious actions [punya karmas]". To rectify such a mistaken outlook of the people, Sri Bhagavan gives this upadesa.*

Sri Muruganar: *This is a very subtle point. If the jiva's actions are accepted to be Siva's actions, then the jiva should not remain different from Siva. In such a state, the jiva will lose all his individual existence and Siva alone will be independent. When the jiva has thus surrendered, there will be no ego [ahankara] in him any more. The state of surrender is the state of the complete destruction of the ego. If one acts with egoism but at the same time says, "All are Siva's actions," then it is to be understood that one has not surrendered oneself to Siva.*

36 Chapter Concerning the Creation of the Soul and God (Jiveswara Srishti Tiran)

669 God's creation does not bind: only the *jiva*'s creation, which is a mental conception, binds. This is illustrated by the story of the father of the dead son being happy while the father of the living son lamented.

Sadhu Om: *The story mentioned in this verse is as follows: Two neighbours called Rama and Krishna, who lived in a small village in South India, went on a pilgrimage to Kasi. On the way Rama died of fever, and Krishna continued alone on his pilgrimage. While proceeding to Kasi, Krishna met another pilgrim who was returning to the south and asked him to convey the news of Rama's death to his parents. The pilgrim duly came to that village, but while telling the news he said, due to forgetfulness, that Krishna had died and that Rama was proceeding towards Kasi. The parents of Krishna wept and grieved over the loss of their son, who was actually alive, while the parents of Rama were rejoicing over the welfare of their son, who was actually dead. Now, was not the wrong knowledge of the parents the cause for their respective misery and happiness? In the same manner, the cause for the miseries of birth and death experienced by the jivas is only the wrong knowledge, the wrong mental conception, that one is the body. Therefore, the conception 'I am the body', which is only a creation of the mind or jiva, is the sole cause of bondage. This is why Sri Bhagavan says in this verse, "Only the jiva's creation, which is a mental conception, binds".*

According to their maturity, does not God bestow upon jivas their allotted prarabdha – the selected and arranged fruits of good and bad karmas – for their own uplift? All that we see as our life in a body and as a world in which we live, is nothing but our prarabdha. Do we not think that such a world, which is arranged according to our karmas and vasanas, is the creation of God? Thus the very purpose of the appearance or creation of the world which we see, is to teach us vairagya by making us experience pains and

pleasures and thereby to turn our mind towards Self. The state in which the mind is ever turned Selfwards is liberation or moksha. Therefore the very purpose of the world, which is said to be God's creation, is not to bind us but only to liberate us. That is why it is said in this verse, "God's creation does not bind".

670 God's vast creation provides the *Jnana-Guru*, God in human form, and enables one to achieve *Jnana-nishtha*, the state devoid of *vasanas*, and hence it is always helping *jivas* to attain liberation.

Sadhu Om: God's creation is due to His unbound Grace, and its very purpose is to enable the jivas to attain liberation [mukti]. Refer to chapter three, 'Karma', of The Path of Sri Ramana – Part Two, where it is elaborately explained how God, due to His benign Grace, allots and arranges prarabdha in such a way as to help the jivas – who are suffering much on account of the fact that they perform agamyas karmas in every lifetime – to attain liberation.

37 Chapter Concerning Negation

(*Neti Seyal Tiran*)

671 The fleshly body, the *prana*, the *indriyas* [the sense-organs and the organ of action], the mind, the intellect and the ego [*ahankara*] are not 'I'. Even the ignorance [of deep sleep], in which only the latent tendencies towards sense-knowledges [*vishayas-vasanas*] remain and which is devoid of all sense-knowledges and all actions, is not 'I'.

Sadhu Om: Refer to the work Who am I? where the ideas in this verse are expressed in prose form by Sri Bhagavan.

672 Since all these [above said alien objects] will lose their existence if not connected with me, the Reality, and since none of them can have either existence or consciousness apart from the Reality, all these, which are to be scorned as non-existent [*asat*] and insentient [*jada*], are not 'I'.

Michael James: Refer to the work Who am I?, where Sri Bhagavan says, "After negating as 'not I, not I' all that is mentioned above, the knowledge which remains alone, itself is 'I'".

673 **Editor's Note:** This verse was missed out on the manuscript I worked with, probably due to a typing oversight sometime in the 1980s when the original was retyped.

674 Whatever thing [among the above-said alien objects, which are not 'I'] acts in whatever way, remain aloof from those activities [that is, from the notion that it is 'I' who acts] and simply be a witness to them.

Sadhu Om: The instructions 'simply be a witness to them' which Sri Bhagavan gives in this verse should be correctly understood. The word 'witness' [sakshi] is used in

Vedantic scriptures in a special sense, and it should be understood accordingly. The scriptures explain that Self or Brahman is a witness to all activities just as the sun is a witness to all that happens on earth, that is to say, all activities take place in and because of the mere presence of Self, just as all that happens on earth takes place in and because of the mere presence of the sun. However, just as the sun is unconcerned with [that is, does not attend to] all that happens on earth, so Self is unconcerned with [that is, does not attend to] all the activities that take place in Its presence. Refer here to the work Who am I? in which Sri Bhagavan has clearly explained this simile of the sun, which is unaffected by and unconcerned with all that happens on earth.

Therefore, when Sri Bhagavan says in this verse that we should simply be a witness to all things, He does not mean that we should remain like the sun, unattached to and unconcerned with whatever happens or does not happen in our presence. This is why He also says in this verse, ‘remain aloof from them’, for one who is truly aloof from something will not be in the least concerned with that thing and will not attend to it. So long as one attends to something, it means that one is concerned with that thing, in other words, that one is attached to it. That is why in the work Who am I? Sri Bhagavan defines non-attachment, the state of remaining aloof from the non-Self, thus, “Not attending to what-is-other [anya] is non-attachment [vairagya] or desirelessness [nirasa]”.

However, unfortunately nowadays many writers and lecturers who have merely read the Vedantic scriptures but have never understood the correct practice by which one can separate oneself from the non-Self, recommend to people that one should witness or observe [that is, attend to] all that happens. Thus they have created a false belief in the minds of many aspirants that to witness or observe objects is a Jnana-sadhana, and that by so witnessing things one can detach oneself from them. In truth, however, such objective attention is only a means of becoming attached to objects, and can never be a means of becoming detached from them. That is why Sri Bhagavan has taught that Self-enquiry, which is an attention to the first person or subject [i.e. a non-objective attention], is the sole means of knowing Self and thereby detaching oneself from the non-Self.

38 Chapter Concerning the State Devoid of Tendencies

(Nirvasanai Tiran)

- 675 Rather than shaving the hair of tendencies [*vasanas*] periodically, shaving them permanently by eternal Self-abidance [*atma-nishtha*], thereby not allowing them to sprout out in the form of thoughts in the brain, is the glory [i.e. significance] of *mundanam*.
- 676 Just like the one thorn which is used to remove another thorn which has pricked deep and is giving pain, even those good tendencies [*subha vasanas*], after removing the bad tendencies [*asubha vasanas*] in the heart, should also be discarded [since they are also a bondage].

Sadhu Om: *Those vasanas which we are here advised to eradicate are only the subha and asubha vasanas, and not the Sat-vasana. The sat-vasana is the force of liking which enables one to remain more and more firmly in Sat, that is, in Brahma-nishtha. Verse 69*

of Sri Aruanchala Aksharamanamalai and the third chapter and the first two appendixes of The Path of Sri Ramana – Part Two will throw more light on this subject.

677 Good tendencies [*subha vasanas*] will be helpful only until all the filthy bad tendencies [*asubha vasanas*] are destroyed. But the pure state devoid of tendencies [*parisuddha nirvasana sthita*], in which the innumerable tendencies of both kinds [good and bad] are extinguished, is our supreme goal.

Sadhu Om: Not only bad tendencies [*asubha vasanas*] but also good tendencies [*subha vasanas*] have to be destroyed. But the reader should not confuse the word *subha vasana* with the word *Sat-vasana*. *Sat-vasana* is different from *subha vasana*, and being essential for Self-abidance [*atma-nishtha*] it should be aspired for. It is this *Sat-vasana* which Sri Bhagavan prays for in verse 69 of Aksharamanamalai.

39 Chapter Concerning the Truth of Fasting

(*Upavasa Unmai Tiran*)

Michael James: The word ‘upavasa’ has two meanings, namely (1) its literal meaning, ‘living near’ (*upa*=near; *vasa*=living), that is, living near God or Self, and (2) the meaning which is generally applied to it, ‘fasting’. In this verse, however, Sri Bhagavan uses *upavasa* in its literal sense, and He uses another word, *unna-vratam*, for fasting.

678 Wise people, knowing that not yielding to the taste for the five sense-pleasures is the truth of fasting and that abiding unceasingly in Self is the truth of *upavasa* [living near God], will always observe [both fasting and *upavasa*] with great love.

Sadhu Om: The true fasting is not refraining from feeding the stomach, but refraining from feeding the five senses [by not providing them with the objects of pleasure]. Since the word ‘upavasa’ literally means ‘living near’, the true *upavasa* is ever abiding in Self without leaving it.

40 Chapter Concerning Diet Regulation

(*Ahara Niyama Tiran*)

679 Since diet-regulation develops the sattvic quality of the mind, it will help a long way in Self-enquiry. Therefore, what is the need for one, due to confusion, to long for any other observances [*niyama*]? Diet-regulation alone will suffice.

Sadhu Om: Diet-regulation [*ahara-niyama*] means taking only sattvic food in moderate quantities.

Sri Muruganar: Aspirants on the path of Self-enquiry often concern themselves about the many other observances [*niyamas*] which may aid their *sadhana*. But diet regulation alone will be sufficient, since it is the highest of all observances.

41 Chapter Concerning Acharas or Cleanliness (Tuytanmai Tiran)

680 The reason why the scriptures recommend cleanliness of the body [*acharas*] is only to make one completely give up the attachment to the body through the *vairagya* gained by knowing practically that, in spite of being repeatedly cleaned, the filthy and fleshly body again and again becomes filthy.

Sadhu Om: A story illustrating the idea in this verse is given in The Path of Sri Ramana – Part Two, appendix three, pages 224 to 228.

681 When the *Vedas* enjoin, “Marry a girl”, is not their inner motive that one should give up the desire for the trivial pleasures of sex? In the same manner, when the *Vedas* enjoin people to do *yagas*, say, is not their hidden motive that one should give up all desire for the pleasures of heaven [which come as a result of doing *yagas*]?

Sadhu Om: When a mother wants to give some medicine to her child, she will call him into the house by showing him some sweets, for she knows that he will not like the medicine but will be attracted by the sweets. Likewise, knowing that immature people will not relish the idea of Jnana but will be attracted if they are offered sensual pleasures, the Vedas at first [in the Karma Kanda] show various means to obtain various pleasures. However, just as the secret aim of the mother is to give the medicine to her son when he comes into the house, so the secret aim of the Vedas is to prepare and mature people for the Jnana Kanda by first bringing them to the path of righteousness. The same ideas is also expressed in verse 31 of Sri Ramana Pada Malai by Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai and also in verses 75 and 76 of the second chapter of Kaivalya Navanitam.

682 Those who happily take as ‘I’ their fleshy and filthy body, which converts even pure food into rotten filth soon after it is taken, are worse than a pig, which feeds on filth.

B 10 Those who take as ‘I’ their body, which takes in pure food and converts it into filth, are worse than a pig which takes in filth and converts it into filth.

Sadhu Om: Just as a man identifies his body as ‘I’, so a pig identifies his body as ‘I’. Though both are equally wrong in identifying a body as ‘I’, Sri Bhagavan points out how the body of a pig is superior to that of a man! That is, the body of a pig eats only filth and excretes it again as filth, whereas the body of human being eats good, pure food and excretes it as filth. Therefore, Sri Bhagavan’s verdict is that those who identify a human body as ‘I’ are worse than pigs!

42 Chapter Concerning Motivelessness (Nishkamya Tiran)

683 Worshipping God for the sake of some gain is nothing but worshipping that gain itself. Therefore, for those who want to attain the state of Siva [the state of

oneness with God], the complete destruction of even a single thought of any gain is indispensable.

- 684 Good people will never squander their elevated *tapas*, which is meant to save their soul, for the attainment of the delusive worldly pleasures [either in this world or the next]. Know that the act of those who do *kamya tapas* with the aim of achieving the pleasures of heaven, is similar to exchanging a very precious gem for poor gruel.

Sadhu Om: The aim of tapas should be Self-realization and not any other thing. Since the tapas of many asuras was done only with the aim of conquering the heavenly worlds and enjoying their pleasures there, it did not lead to their salvation. Likewise, all the tapas done by people with aims other than Self-attainment [atma-siddhi] will not lead to their salvation. Such people are ignorant and do not know what tapas really is.

43 Chapter Concerning Control of the *Karanas* or Instruments of Knowledge (*Karana Tanda Tiran*)

- 685 If the inner instruments of knowledge [the four *antahkaranas*, namely mind, intellect, *chittam* and ego] and the outer instruments of knowledge [the five *bahihkaranas*, namely the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin] have been brought under control day and night [i.e. always], the supreme Reality which shines in the inexpressible state of *turiya* will dawn.

Sri Muruganar: The subsidence [i.e. control] of all the instruments of knowledge [karanas] naturally at all times will be possible only when the ego subsides permanently. Therefore, aspirants should aim only to destroy the ego. Trying to control each of the above said instruments individually is not the direct path.

- 686 Instead of preventing the mind from flowing outwards and holding it firmly within, to break the lock [i.e. to go against the restrictions laid down by Sages for the control of the mind] and allow the mind to run out through the five senses, is as sinful an act as causing the destruction of a city by breaking the city-walls and by breaching the banks of the water-reservoirs.
- 687 It is only this that was illustrated by the ancient story of Brahma and Vishnu who, unnecessarily differing, arguing and quarrelling between themselves, tried to test the Column of Light [Arunachala] with their bewildered minds and failed.

Sadhu Om: Since we experience a separate individual existence only when the existence-consciousness of Self is extroverted through the five senses, it is best to subside that individuality as one in Self, having controlled the five senses.

44 Chapter Concerning the Conquest of the *Karanas* (*Karana Jaya Tiran*)

- 688 By death of the ego – the identification with the body which is composed of the five elements – rejecting with indifference the defects caused by the five elements

[earth, water, air, fire and space], which do not pertain to Self, is the conquest of the elements [*bhuta-jayam*].

Sadhu Om: *This verse should rather come under a separate chapter heading, 'The Conquest of the Elements'.*

Many people believe that conquest of the five elements [bhuta-jayam] means the ability acquired by some siddhas to control and handle these elements, for example, the ability to walk over water, fire or air. However, Sri Bhagavan declares in this verse that the true conquest of the five elements is nothing but not identifying as 'I' the body, which is composed of these elements.

689 The idea 'I am the mind [*chittam*]' having gone, and thereby the confusion of the intellect [*buddhi*] having ceased and the notions of bondage and liberation having been lost, to attain the *siddhi* of firmly abiding in Self-knowledge is the conquest of the mind [*chittam-jayam*].

Sadhu Om: *The belief held by many people that conquest of the mind [chitta-jayam] means one's acquiring the power to achieve whatever one desires, the power to enchant the minds of others, or the power to drive the minds of others according to one's own selfish motives, is wrong. Sri Bhagavan declares in this verse that the power of Jnana which destroys one's own chittam [mind or the storehouse of tendencies] is the true chittam-jayam.*

45 Chapter Concerning Asana or Posture (*Asana Tiran*)

690 Remaining steady without slipping down from the knowledge that the whole universe has only Self, the supreme space of *Jnana*, as its base [*asana*], is the firm and unshakable posture [*asana*] for the good *samadhi* [i.e. *sahaja samadhi*].

Sadhu Om: *For the people of the present day who have been given the gross understanding that folding the legs, straightening the back, directing the eyes towards the tip of the nose and remaining like a log, is the posture of yoga [yoga asana], Sri Bhagavan teaches in this verse the correct posture for yoga [yoga-asana] for jnana-yoga.*

46 Chapter Concerning the Power of Yoga (*Yoga Vali Tiran*)

691 Having made the liking to see through the deceitful senses subside and having thereby ended the mischievous objective knowing of the mind, the jumping ego, to know the lightless light [*prajna* or Self-consciousness] and the soundless sound [the *Atma-sphurana* 'I am'] in the heart is the true power of yoga [*yoga-sakti*].

692 Since it is only one's effort put forth in the past births which afterwards, on ripening, becomes the *prarabdha* [of the present and future births], know that it is also possible for oneself, who had previously put forth that effort, to change the *prarabdha* through the rare effort [of turning towards Self].

Michael James: The words ‘the rare effort’ which Sri Bhagavan uses here are to be understood to mean only the effort of turning the mind towards Self, for this effort is seldom made by jivas and is hence the rarest of all efforts. The words ‘change prarabdha’ are to be understood to mean ‘transcend prarabdha’, for by the effort of Self-attention one loses one’s individuality (together with the sense of doership and that of experiencership, which are inherent in individuality) and hence one can no longer experience the prarabdha. This idea is confirmed in the next verse.

693 No matter what good karmas yield what pleasures or what bad karmas yield what pains as their results, conquer the might of both of them by drowning the mind in your own Self, the supreme Reality.

Sadhu Om and Michael James: When the mind drowns in Self, the sense of doership and that of experiencership are lost. Then, since there remains no one to experience the prarabdha, it is said that the prarabdha has been conquered. Refer also to verse 38 of Ulladu Narpadu and verse 33 of Ulladu Narpadu – Anubandham.

694 When even in worldly affairs success is impossible without proper zeal [*shraddha*] in one’s endeavour, one should not allow the zeal [*shraddha*] in doing spiritual practice to diminish until one becomes one with the limitless Supreme.

695 However great one’s past sins may be, if, instead of bitterly thinking ‘I am a great sinner’ and lamenting over it, one dives into Self with great steadfastness, one will soon achieve Bliss.

Sadhu Om: This verse conveys the same teaching which Sri Bhagavan gave in the work Who am I? where He says: “However great a sinner one may be, if, not lamenting ‘Oh, I am a sinner! How can I attain salvation?’ but completely giving up even the thought that one is a sinner, one is steadfast in Self-attention, one will surely be saved.”

696 Those who have achieved *Jnana-siddhi* [the attainment of knowledge] in this very birth through the power of God’s Grace and without any effort on their part as in the kitten-illustration [*marjala-nyaya*], are those who had devotion towards God in their past births through their own effort as in the monkey-illustration [*markata-nyaya*].

Michael James: Marjala-nyaya means the illustration of the kitten which, without any effort on its part, is carried here and there by its mother, while markata-nyaya means the illustration of the baby monkey which, by its own effort, clings to its mother.

697 For those who uninterruptedly concentrate upon the unlimited and all-pervading space of consciousness [*chitrambalam*], there is not even an iota of fate [*prarabdha*]. This alone is what is meant by the scriptural saying, “Fate does not exist for those who seek heaven”.

Sadhu Om: From this verse we should understand that the world 'heaven' in the scriptural saying, "Fate does not exist for those who seek heaven" does not denote any world of pleasure but only the state of liberation [mukti].

698 Know that *prarabdha* which, like a whirlwind, unfailingly whirls round and round the mind which takes the body as 'I', cannot even in the least stir the mind which knows itself and which shines as the pure space of consciousness.

Sadhu Om: The import of this verse is that there is no *prarabdha* for the Jnani.

699 Tell me, my heart, except attention [*dhyana*] to Self [*swarupa*], which shines unbroken as one's own being, what contrivance is there to burn to ashes the sense of doership [*kartrutva*], the wicked mind [or ego], which drowns the *jiva* deep down at the bottom of the ocean of karmas.

Michael James: This verse emphatically teaches that there is no means to destroy the mind or ego other than Self-attention [*swarupa-dhyana*].

47 Chapter Concerning Breath Control

(*Uyir Orukka Tiran*)

700 Giving up the name and form [the false aspects] of the world – which consists of existence, consciousness, bliss, name and form – is exhalation [*rechaka*], realising existence-consciousness-bliss is inhalation [*puraka*], and ever firmly abiding as existence-consciousness-bliss is retention [*kumbhaka*]. Do [such *pranayama*].

Sadhu Om: *Pranayama* means the practice of regulating the breath. In *raja yoga*, exhaling the breath is called *rechaka*, inhaling the breath is called *puraka*, and retaining the breath in the lungs is called *kumbhaka*. In this verse, the true significance of *pranayama* is described according to *jnana marga*. Refer also to chapter X, 'Jnanashtanga', of the work *Vichara Sangraham* of Sri Bhagavan, where this same idea is given.

Sri Muruganar: Out of the five aspects of Brahman, namely existence, consciousness, bliss, name and form [*sat, chit, ananda, nama and rupa*], the distinguishing features of the world are name and form, and hence completely giving up these two is *rechaka*. When the false name and form are thus given up as a mirage-imagination, what remains are the true aspects [*satya amsas*], namely existence, consciousness and bliss. Since these three, which are the distinguishing features of Self, are the reality of the world, realizing them is *puraka*. Ever abiding in that realization is *kumbhaka*. That is, destroying the tendencies towards the world [*loka-vasanas*], realizing Self and ever abiding as It, is the import of *Jnana-pranayama*. Though *sat, chit and ananda* are named as if three different things, in experience they are truly one and the same. In this context, refer also to verse 979 of this work.

701 Completely giving up the notion ‘I am the body’ is *rechaka*; diving within through the subtle scrutiny ‘Who am I?’ is *puraka*; and abiding as one with Self as ‘I am That’ is *kumbhaka* – such is *jnana-pranayama*.

Sadhu Om: In the previous verse it was said that giving up the names and forms of the world is rechaka. And since unceasingly attending to Self is realizing existence-consciousness-bliss, which is the reality both of the world and of oneself, diving within enquiring ‘Who am I?’ is here said to be the correct puraka. Since existence, consciousness and bliss are not really three different things but the one Self alone, ever abiding as Self is here said to be the correct kumbhaka. Thus in this verse jnana-pranayama according to the path of Sri Ramana is explained in a more practical manner.

702 When one who was deluded into taking himself to be the mind and who was wandering [through births and deaths], giving up his delusive dream-like life, enquires into Self, his own state, and ever abides as Self, that is the truth of *pranayama*. Thus should you know.

Michael James: In this verse, giving up one’s delusive dream-like life is to be understood as rechaka, enquiring into Self, one’s own state, is to be understood as puraka, and ever abiding as Self is to be understood as kumbhaka.

48 Chapter Concerning the Secret of Action (*Karma Rahasya Tiran*)

B 11 The mere enquiry ‘To whom are these defects, karma [i.e. *kamyā* karma, action performed with desire], *vibhakti* [lack of devotion], *viyoga* [separation from God] and *ajnana* [ignorance]?’ is itself karma, *bhakti* yoga and *jnana*! [How?] When thus enquired, ‘I’ is [found to be] non-existent, [and hence] these [four defects] are [also found to be] ever non-existent. The truth is [then revealed] that we ever remain as [the defectless] Self.

Michael James: This verse also verse 14 of Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham.

Sadhu Om: Since all the benefits of the four yogas, which are charted out for the removal of these four defects, are achieved through the path of Self-enquiry, ‘Who am I?’, it is to be understood that if one takes to Self-enquiry none of the four yogas are necessary. Refer also to The Path of Sri Ramana – Part One, pp. 62 to 63.

703 The essence [*tattva*] of karma is to know the truth of oneself by enquiring ‘Who am I, the doer, who begins to do karmas?’. Unless the doer of karmas, the ego, is annihilated through enquiry, the perfect peace of supreme bliss, which is the result of karma yoga, cannot be achieved.

Sadhu Om: The import of this verse is that the greatest and most important karma a karma yogi has to do is to enquire into himself and thereby have the ego destroyed, and that Self-enquiry is therefore the proper karma yoga.

704 He who has known the truth of [i.e. the non-existence of] himself, the doer, alone is the one who has performed all the prescribed karmas without fail. For other than the supreme bliss [which is attained by the annihilation of the ego], what fruit is to be achieved by the hard *tapas* of daily performing the karmas with great care.

Sadhu Om: This verse reveals the secret that annihilating the ego through Self-enquiry is not only doing social service in the spirit of karma-yoga but is also performing all the prescribed daily actions [karmanushtanas] perfectly.

705 Since the defectless non-dual knowledge [*advaita jnana*] alone shines as the goal of the observance of all kinds of *dharmas*, the *Jnani* alone is the one who has observed all *dharmas*.

Sadhu Om: Here Sri Bhagavan explains the correct meaning of the words 'one's own dharma' [svadharma] used by Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, ch. 3, v. 35, while teaching about karmas and dharmas. 'Sva' means Self, and dharma means to be established in it. Hence, Self-abidance [atma-nishtha] alone is the true svadharma, suiting all people. Thus the secret of karma and dharma is taught in this chapter.

49 Chapter Concerning Japa (*Japa Tiran*)

B 11 The mere enquiry 'To whom are these defects, karma [i.e. *kamyā* karma, action performed with desire], *vibhakti* [lack of devotion], *viyoga* [separation from God] and *ajnana* [ignorance]?' is itself karma, *bhakti* yoga and *jnana*! [How?] When thus enquired, 'I' is [found to be] non-existent, [and hence] these [four defects] are [also found to be] ever non-existent. The truth is [then revealed] that we ever remain as [the defectless] Self.

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Sadhu Om: This verse reveals the secret that annihilating the ego through Self-enquiry is not only doing social service in the spirit of karma-yoga but is also performing all the prescribed daily actions [karmanushtanas] perfectly.

705 Since the defectless non-dual knowledge [*advaita jnana*] alone shines as the goal of the observance of all kinds of *dharmas*, the *Jnani* alone is the one who has observed all *dharmas*.

Sadhu Om: Here Sri Bhagavan explains the correct meaning of the words ‘one’s own dharma’ [svadharmā] used by Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, ch. 3, v. 35, while teaching about karmas and dharmas. ‘Sva’ means Self, and dharma means to be established in it. Hence, Self-abidance [atma-nishtha] alone is the true svadharmā suiting to all people. Thus the secret of karma and dharma is taught in this chapter.

49 Chapter Concerning Japa (*Japa Tiran*)

B12 For those who cannot reach through *jnana-marga* [i.e. Self-enquiry] the place [source] where ‘I’ exists, it is better to know during *japa* the place where the supreme Word [*para-vak*] shines.

Sadhu Om: After seeing the following verse composed by Sri Muruganar [which is a venba, a four line verse], Sri Bhagavan composed the above verse [which is a kural venba, a two line verse] giving the same idea in a terser form.

706 For those who cannot dive deep within through silence, the keenest knowledge, seeking “What is the source from which the ‘I’ rises?”, it is better to scrutinize while mentally doing *japa* wherefrom the supreme Word [*para-vak*] comes.

Sadhu Om: In the above two verses, Sri Bhagavan has explained the secret behind the second of the two instructions which he gave to Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri on 18th November 1907.

When Ganapati Sastri approached Sri Bhagavan and prayed for instructions concerning the nature of true tapas, Sri Bhagavan at first remained silent and quietly gazed at him for about fifteen minutes. Then Ganapati Sastri again prayed, “I have read about such mouna-upadesa in sastras, but I am unable to understand it. Graciously instruct me through speech also”. The first instruction then given by Sri Bhagavan was His basic teaching [yathārtha upadesa] ‘Who am I?’, that is, to attend to the source from which ‘I’ rises. But being bewildered by the novelty of this upadesa, Ganapati Sastri

again asked, “Can that same state be achieved through japa also?” Therefore, seeing that the devotee had a great liking for japa, Sri Bhagavan gave His second instruction, namely “If one repeats a mantra and if one watches wherefrom the sound of that mantra starts, there the mind will subside; that is tapas.”

When a rupee coin with a head printed on one side and a flower printed on the other side is shown to a small child and when his father asks him, “Which coin do you prefer, the one with a head or the one with a flower?”, whether the child asks for the head or the flower he will be given the same coin by this father, who will simply turn up whichever side the child likes. Just as the father thereby makes his son happy, so Sri Bhagavan made Ganapati Sastri happy by giving him the same instruction a second time in a different form. How? From where else does the sound of a mantra start, except from the person who repeats it? Therefore, watching the source from which the sound of the mantra starts means nothing but attending to ‘I’, the first person, who is doing the japa. Thus, gently hiding the fact that His second upadesa was the same as His first, Sri Bhagavan gave His devotee the same rupee coin [Self-enquiry] with the other side turned up, as if He were recommending japa-sadhana.

The fact that Sri Bhagavan was in an indirect way recommending only Self-enquiry even in his second instruction, as explained in this note, is confirmed in this verse by the words ‘para-vak’, for in verse 715 Sri Bhagavan explains that para-vak means nothing but ‘I-I’.

707 Since you yourself are the form of *japa*, if you enquire ‘Who am I?’ and know your nature, ah, you will find that the *japa* which you were doing previously with effort will be ever going on effortlessly and untiringly in the heart.

Sadhu Om: *Of all the names of God, the soundless name ‘I’, the first person singular consciousness, is the foremost. Since God shines equally and as one in all living beings, and since all living beings refer to themselves as ‘I’, it is clear that ‘I’ is the true nature of God. That is why Sri Bhagavan says, “You yourself [the Self-consciousness ‘I’] are the form of japa”. Since the doership in the form of effort is destroyed when one’s own nature is scrutinized through the enquiry ‘Who am I?’, the sahaja japa [that is, the ever-shining Self-consciousness ‘I-I’] which then continues without effort is what this verse declares ‘will be ever going on effortlessly and untiringly in the heart’.*

708 Until the objects known merge completely in the knowing subject [i.e. until the sense-knowledges – dyads and triads – merge into the mind and become non-existent] and until one firmly knows what the nature of the true Self is, what use is it to say vainly by mouth, “I am God, I am God”?

Sadhu Om: *Since before knowing Self one identifies oneself with the body, if one says ‘I am God’ it will amount to saying that the body is God, which is not only untrue but also dangerous, for it will increase one’s false sense of egoism. Therefore, before one gives up the identification with the body, it is meaningless and useless to repeat the Mahavakyas such as ‘I am Brahman’ and ‘I am He’. Moreover, since after knowing Self one abides as Brahman [God] alone, it is unnecessary for one to repeat ‘I am Brahman, I am Brahman’, just as it is unnecessary for a man to repeat ‘I am a man, I am a man’. Hence,*

doing japa of the Mahavakyas is dangerous before Self-realization and is unnecessary after Self-realization.

- 709 Instead of wandering about repeating [doing *japa* of] ‘I am the Supreme’, quietly abide as the Supreme. Not by loudly shouting ‘I am That’, but only by abiding as ‘I am That’, will the miseries [of birth and death] go away.
- 710 Diseases will not be cured merely by repeating the name of the medicine, but only by drinking the medicine. Likewise, the bonds of birth [and death] will not leave us merely by doing *japa* of many *Mahavakyas* such as ‘I am Siva’ [*Sivoham*].

Michael James: What is signified by the phrase ‘by drinking the medicine’ is not mentioned in this verse, but since the previous verse instructs us ‘quietly abide as the Supreme’, we should understand that ‘drinking the medicine’ means only ‘abiding as the Supreme’.

50 Chapter Concerning the True Temple (*Mey Koyil Tiran*)

- 711 Those who do not keenly understand that God alone is the temple [i.e. the dwelling place or base] of both the world and soul, build temples for God and – limiting the unlimited God as a small deity and thereby veiling Him – worship Him.

Michael James: The purpose behind this verse is not to condemn temple-worship or to instruct aspirants that they should not worship God in the form of a temple deity. Its aim is only to make them understand the limitation of such worship and to help them go further by turning their attention Selfwards. However, it is clear from verse 208 of this work that Sri Bhagavan does not condemn temple-worship, which has its own value so long as the aspirant identifies his body as ‘I’.

51 Chapter Concerning the Holy Name (*Tirunama Tiran*)

- 712 On scrutiny, when the reality, the Heart [*ullam*], apparently spreads out from the heart in the form of consciousness [‘I am’] to assume many thousands of names, the very first of these is ‘I’. Thus should you know.

Sadhu Om: Since the Tamil word ‘ullam’, which means ‘Heart’, also means ‘am’ – the shining of the Reality, ‘I’ – the Reality is called by the name ‘ullam’. Compare this with the holy words of Sri Bhagavan in the 2nd verse of Sri Arunachala Pancharatnam, “Since you shine as ‘I’ in the Heart, Your name itself is Heart”.

- 713 Since alone with ‘I’, the aforesaid first name [of God], ‘am’ always shines as the light of the Reality ‘I’, ‘am’ is also [an equally great] name [of God].
- 714 Of all the many thousand names, none is so truly apt, so really beautiful, as this name [‘I’ or ‘am’] for God, who abides in the heart without thought.

Sri Muruganar: Of all the thousands of names of God adored in many different religions and in many different languages, there is no other name so beautiful and truly fitting to God as this 'am'. The name 'Jehovah' used in the Hebrew language to denote God means only this.

715 Of all the known names of God, the name 'I-I' alone will triumphantly shine when the ego is destroyed, rising as the silent Supreme Word, [mouna-para-vak] in the heart-space of those whose attention is introverted.

Sadhu Om: Since it is clear from this verse that what Sri Bhagavan means by the word 'para-vak' is only the atma-sphurana 'I-I', the reader can understand that what He meant when He said in verse Bhagavan-12, of this work, "vak parai ar stanam terdal" [to know the place where the para-vak shines], was 'to attend to the source where 'I-I' shines', which is nothing but the method of Self-enquiry. Thus this verse confirms the idea expressed in the footnote to verse 706. See also verse 1197.

716 Even if one unceasingly remembers that divine name 'I-I', it will safely lead one to the source from which thoughts rise, thereby destroying the body-rooted ego.

Sadhu Om: This verse conveys the same teaching that is given by Sri Bhagavan in the following sentence of Who am I?: "Even if one incessantly thinks 'I, I', it will lead to that place [the source of the mind]."

717 [Though the word 'I' appears to denote the embodied soul or ego] since the embodied soul rises and sets, know that on scrutiny only Self, the base of [the rising and setting of] the embodied soul, is [found to be] the true import of the word 'I'.

Sadhu Om: Refer also to verse 21 of Upadesa Undiyar.

52 Chapter Concerning Devotion (*Bhaktimai Tiran*)

718 The best devotee [*bhaktiman*] is only that hero who destroys himself [the ego], who is really a non-existent void and who is denoted by the term 'thou' [*twam*], in *Sadasiva* [Self], who shines as the meaning of the term 'That' [*tat*], through the experience 'am', the peaceful Self-consciousness denoted by the term 'art' [*asi*].

Sadhu Om: He who identifies himself with the body and who feels 'I am so-and-so' is the jiva or ego, who is denoted by the term 'thou' [twam]. That which remains out of 'I am so-and-so' after the ego-portion 'so-and-so' has been destroyed in the blissful Self-consciousness, Sadasiva, is 'I am', which is denoted by the term 'That' [tat]. Thus in this verse the Mahavakya 'That thou art' [tat twam asi] of the Vedanta jnana-marga is explained in the light of the Siddhanta bhakti-marga. Therefore, it is to be understood that

the destruction of the ego, which is the aim of jnana-marga, is also the aim of bhakti-marga.

719 The best devotee is only that hero who, in the incomprehensible ocean of bliss [Self], destroys the false 'I', the thought-form which floats like a bubble in the water.

Sadhu Om: From the above two verses it is clear that the Sahaja Jnani alone is a perfect devotee of God.

720 Those who, with minds matured through *bhakti*, have fully drunk the essence of *bhakti*, will like to attain only the divine nectar of supreme *bhakti* as the fruit of [their] *bhakti*.

Sadhu Om: Devotees of an exalted level will never like to attain siddhis or pleasures either in this world or in heaven as the fruit of their devotion. Since they have tasted the essence of bhakti, they will pray to the Lord to bestow upon them only the boon of ever-increasing devotion towards Him. This subtle secret is revealed by Sri Bhagavan in the last line of the 7th verse of Sri Arunachala Navamanimalai, where He prays, "O my dear Lord, grant me only ever-increasing love for Thy Feet".

721 The silence devoid of the aggressive rising of the ego is Liberation [*mukti*]. The evil inadvertence [of slipping down from that state of Silence] itself is non-devotion [*vibhakti*]. Abiding as one [with Self], with the mind subsiding without rising dividingly [as another], is the true Siva-*bhakti*.

52 The Non-difference of *Bhakti* and *Jnana* (*Bhakti Jnana Abheda Tiran*)

722 On scrutiny, supreme devotion [*parabhakti*] and *Jnana* are in nature one and the same. To say that one of these two is a means to the other is due to not knowing the nature of either of them.

Michael James: Since the state of supreme devotion (parabhakti) is the loss of individuality, it is nothing but the state of Jnana.

723 The reason why even those who have known the truth [that *bhakti* and *jnana* are one and the same], follow only one as if, contrary to what is said above, it were better than the other, is to prevent the aspirants who are following that one, taking it to be better, from leaving it and jumping to the other.

53 Bhakti and Vichara
(*Bhakti Vichara Tiran*)

724 The attainment of Realization [*samadhi*], which results at the end of the practice of enquiry into the beloved true knowledge [*mey-jnana vichara*], is solely due to the Grace of God, who shines as Self, as one's own reality, the Soul of the soul.

Michael James: Since Self is the real life or soul of the pseudo soul, the jiva, It is the real God. Therefore enquiry, which is Self-attention done with great love towards Self, alone is the true worship of God. Thus only through the Grace of God, the Self, does the enquirer become firmly established in Samadhi.

725 Unless the Lord [the God and Guru] who resides within [as Self], by the power of His Grace pulls the mind within, who can, by the mere power of the stealthy and mischievous mind, prevent its out-going nature and reach the Heart and rest in peace?

726 The Grace of God, whose form is eightfold, cannot be obtained without the Grace of Guru. Neither by *vidyas* [arts and learning] nor by any other means will Grace be obtained, but only by *bhakti* [towards Guru].

Michael James: Since God Himself incarnates as Guru, God's Grace is proclaimed to be nought without the Guru's Grace. Since Guru-bhakti is itself God-bhakti, it alone, and nothing else, will enable one to obtain God's Grace.

727 Let one not doubt whether God's Grace, the great support, has been bestowed on one or not, for the fact that one's mind is much interested in enquiry, having a great liking for release from bondage, is itself sufficient proof [that God's Grace has been bestowed].

728 To tell the truth, the Grace of God and the enquiry 'Who am I?', which is the means for abiding within, each being a great help to the other, together lead one to the state of oneness with the supreme Self.

729 Unless the supreme Reality [God or Self] Itself reveals Itself in the Heart, the delusion [*maya*] of this world-dream will not end. The enquiry 'Who am I who sees this dream?' is the worship [*upasana*] which brings forth [the Grace of the Supreme for] this revelation.

Sadhu Om: Therefore Self-enquiry is the proper upasana that one should do in order to gain the Grace of God and thereby awaken from this world-dream.

730 Attending to one's own Self is said to be the supreme devotion to God, who is unattainable by the mind and so on, because these two [the Self attended to by the enquirer and the God worshipped by the devotees] are in nature [*swarupam*] one and the same.

Sadhu Om: Swarupam, Self, God, Guru and Grace are all different words denoting the same reality.

731 Know that the path of *jnana* and the path of *bhakti* are inter-related. Follow these inseparable two paths without dividing one from the other.

B 13 Attending to Self is devotion to the supreme Lord, because the Lord exists as Self.

Michael James: Verse 730 should come as 731 and vice versa.

732 If one sees ‘Who am I who longs to gain the Grace of the Lord?’ the ego [*anava*] will be destroyed and thereby the Grace of the Lord will reveal itself. After the ego has thus been destroyed, in the space of Grace, which is itself the Lord, no other impurity [*mala*] will exist.

733 Since the other two impurities [*karma* and *maya*] grow only by depending upon the ego [*anava*], the [root] attachment, when the ego is destroyed the other two can by no means survive.

Michael James: According to Saiva Siddhanta, the three impurities (malas) are anava, karma, and maya. The word ‘anava’, meaning ego, is derived from the word ‘anu’, meaning atom, and the reason why it is so called is explained by Sri Muruganar below.

Sri Muruganar: The delusion of identifying the body, which is not Self, as ‘I’ is the inner attachment or first attachment. Since this delusion makes us feel Self, which is in truth the unbroken consciousness, as an atom-like thing in the body, it is called ‘anavam’.

55 One-Pointed Devotion

(Ekagra-Bhakti Tiran)

734 Those who have one-pointed devotion towards God, like the magnetic needle [of a ship’s compass] which always stands facing towards the north, will never be perplexed and go astray in the ocean of attachment of this world.

735 Those who live in the world, clinging whole-heartedly to God, are like children who whirl round and round a pillar holding it firmly. Since they have a strong and unshakeable hold on God, they are devoid of ego [*anava*] and therefore will never fall a prey to the delusion of the world.

736 If one fixes one’s mind firmly on that pure Supreme Reality which pervades all activities, one will not be affected by any number of activities that are done.

Sadhu Om: Just as the cinema screen, which is the base pervading all the pictures, is not burnt by a picture of fire or drenched by a picture of a flood, so Self, the Supreme Reality which is the base pervading all activities, is not affected by any number of activities. Therefore, since the one who attends to Self remains as Self itself, he is not affected by any number of activities he may appear to be doing.

Sri Muruganar: (i) The words ‘all activities’ include both worldly activities and religious activities. (ii) Since he who abides in the reality [Self] loses his doership, it is said ‘he will not be affected’. Therefore, though [it may appear as if] he does everything, in fact he does nothing.

737 Among all the rice grains, only those which move here and there will be crushed by the hand-mill, while those which do not move away from the foot of the axle will not be crushed.

Michael James: Likewise, among all the people in the world, only those who stray into worldly desires, leaving the thought of the Feet of God, will be ruined by maya, while those who do not leave His Feet will not be so ruined.

56 Meditation and Enquiry (*Dhyana Vichara Tiran*)

738 Mentally imagining oneself to be the Supreme Reality, which shines as existence-consciousness-bliss [*sat-chit-ananda*], is meditation [*dhyana*]. Fixing the mind in Self so that the seed of false delusion [the ego] is destroyed is enquiry [*vichara*].

Sadhu Om: Dhyana is mental activity, an act of imagination by the mind, while vichara is the state of the destruction of the mind [mano-nasa]. The idea expressed in this verse can also be found in prose form in Who am I?

739 Whoever meditates upon Self in whatever *bhava* [i.e. in whatever form or with whatever feeling of relationship], attains It only in that *bhava* [i.e. in a qualified or *saguna* manner]. Those peaceful ones who remain quiet without any such *bhava*, attain the noble and unqualified state of *Kaivalya* [the *nirguna* state of Self].

Sadhu Om: It is emphasised in this verse that by meditating on God in name and form, one attains God only in that name and form, and that only by remaining still [through Self-enquiry] without thinking or meditating, can one attain the unqualified [nirguna] state of God, the state of oneness [Kaivalya]. From this verse, the reader can understand the correct import of verse 8 of Ulladu Narpadu.

740 One's source [the Self] can be attained only after oneself, the ego [the separate individuality], has been completely annihilated. How to meditate 'I am That' by the ego? Therefore, the ego having been annihilated [through Self-enquiry], to remain silently in Self is the proper way.

Sadhu Om: Verse 32 of Ulladu Narpadu should be studied along with this verse. In the previous verse Sri Bhagavan instructed that worshipping God in name and form will not give the unqualified [nirguna] state, the final attainment. In this verse He instructs that even the practice of meditation upon the Mahavakyas such as 'I am Brahman', which was wrongly believed by people up till now to be meditation on the unqualified [nirguna-upasana], will not give the final state, since it is nothing but a mere mental act of imagination. Sri Bhagavan asserts that silent Self-abidance, which is the correct technique of Self-enquiry, alone will give the final attainment.

741 The reason why one sees Siva as ‘This [form] is He’ by meditating upon Him as if He were one among the sense-objects – though [in fact] He shines as the formless consciousness – and why one laments [when that form disappears], is because of the folly of not knowing oneself by enquiring ‘Who am I?’

Michael James: Refer here to verse 1070, 1072 and 1073 of this work.

Some aspirants meditate upon Siva in a particular form. When, through the strength of that meditation (bhava-bala), they see Him in that form as an object of sight, they believe that they have attained Siva-darshan. But whatever appears at one time will surely disappear at another time, and hence the aspirant will have to lament when the form of his beloved Siva disappears. However, since Siva is in reality the formless, pure consciousness which shines within as ‘I’, if the aspirant wishes to attain a darshan of Siva which will never disappear, he need only enquire within ‘Who am I, the seer of this vision?’ and thereby realize Self.

57 Meditation upon Self

(Swarupa-Dhyana Tiran)

742 He who well and truly meditates upon himself, who is consciousness, will be established in Siva, the Self.

58 Meditation upon Space

(Akaya-Dhyana Tiran)

743 Meditation upon the vast, unexplored and undivided space, will enable one to attain whatever [worldly] greatness one desires in whatever way one desires.

Sadhu Om: Some people, with an eye on some desired results, meditate not upon any of the names and forms of God, but upon the vast space. Even by such practices, desires are fulfilled.

744 Among those who meditate upon space, only those who then give up that meditation upon vast space [by enquiring ‘Who am I who meditates upon space?'] will attain the [true] greatness of birthlessness. Others will fall into the cycle of birth and death.

Sadhu Om: It is to be understood that the phrase ‘attain whatever greatness one desires’ used in the previous verse denotes only the fulfilment of worldly desires [kamyas], whereas the phrase ‘attain the greatness of birthlessness’ used in the present verse denotes the attainment of Liberation.

Though space is not a name and form like that of God, it also has a name [namely space] and a form [namely vastness] of its own. Besides, it is a second person object. Therefore, in this verse it is advised that one should give up such an object of meditation and turn towards Self by enquiring ‘Who am I who know this space?’ Self is the only target of meditation which will bestow the supreme state of birthlessness and deathlessness.

745 To say that one who practised Self-abidance [*nishtha*] by clinging to the Lord, Self, the form of consciousness, lost his balance of mind and became insane, is just like saying that by drinking the nectar of immortality one died. Know thus.

Sadhu Om: It is wrong to say, as worldly people sometimes do, that someone has become mad by following the path of Self-enquiry. In this verse Sri Bhagavan assures us that one will never suffer from any such mental disorder by following this path, and that on the contrary one will achieve greater clarity and strength of mind.

This verse should be read along with the verses in the chapter concerning Self-enquiry.

59 Meditation upon Time (*Kala-Dhyana Tiran*)

746 If you desire to attain the eternal greatness devoid of the defect of birth and death, the correct *sadhana* is to meditate upon that time [namely the present] which does not have the least modification of coming and going.

Sadhu Om: If we scrutinize the meaning of this verse in the light of verse 15 of Ulladu Narpadu, “The past and future exist depending upon the present; they too, while occurring were and will be present. Therefore, [among the three times] the present alone exists...”, we can understand that what is denoted here by the phrase ‘that time which does not have the least modification of coming or going’ is only the present. Thus this verse gives us the rare clue that atma-sadhana can be done not only in the form of attending to the first person [out of the three persons], but also in the form of attending to the present [out of the three times]. In whichever of these two forms one may do the atma-sadhana, both the first person and the present time will disappear, being found to be truly non-existent, and the eternal greatness devoid of birth and death will be attained. Refer also to The Path of Sri Ramana – Part One, pages 135 to 136, where this idea is explained more fully.

747 Those who have given up that conception [the conception of time] – having known [by attending to the present as instructed in the previous verse] that time is nothing but Self [just as the apparent snake is nothing but a rope] – are the great ones who attain deathlessness. All others will die, slain by the sword of time.

Sadhu Om: In this verse it is indicated that the present time and the first person are similar in nature. When one scrutinizes or meditates either upon ‘I’ [the ego, the first person or first place] or upon the present [the first time], the ego and the present will disappear, being found to be non-existent, and our real existence-consciousness [sat-chit], ‘I am’, which transcends time and space, alone will remain. This is what is meant by the phrase “have given up even the conception of time” used by Sri Bhagavan in this verse.

It is worth noting here the warning given by Sri Bhagavan in the alternative version of verse 16 of Ulladu Narpadu, where He says, “Except ‘we’, where is time? If, without

scrutinizing oneself, we mistake the body to be ‘we’, time will swallow us...”. The same idea is expressed in the present verse by the sentence, “All others will die, slain by the sword of time”.

748 Those who are firmly established in their own state [of Self-existence], never see any such thing as time, but only their own Self. They will no longer know the one whole reality [*tattva*] as the three different times [present, past and future].

Sadhu Om: Verse 16 of Ulladu Narpadu is to be read and understood here.

60 Practice (*Nididhyasana Tiran*)

749 If, instead of attending to the outside universe consisting of the earth and so on – which [appears to] exist only so long as one does not enquire [into the truth] and which becomes non-existent when one does enquire – one attends to and knows that which exists in the heart, then there will be no necessity even to have the thought of rebirth.

Sadhu Om: Three points are to be inferred from this verse, namely (1) the world has no real existence, and appears to exist only on account of non-enquiry (avichara), (2) birth and death are mere thoughts, and (3) when one realises Self, that itself is crossing the ocean of birth and death.

The last two lines of this verse are a verse from the chapter ‘Knowing the Truth’ in the section ‘Concerning Renunciation’ in the Tirukkural. The way in which this verse of Tirukkural is handled by Sri Muruganar in the present verse is both apt and beautiful.

750 Whatever one thinks of unceasingly [until one’s death], by the power of such thinking one becomes that. [Since one will therefore become Self if one always meditates upon Self] if with great love one practises [Self-attention] and [thereby] knows the nature of the attachments [‘I’ and ‘mine’] and abides in Self so that the attachments are destroyed, the disease [of *ajnana*] which causes birth [and death] will not approach one.

Sri Muruganar: It is said in scriptures that one becomes whatever one thinks of at the time the life leaves the body. Therefore, in this verse it is instructed that those who want Liberation should think about Self in order to set aside other thoughts, which are the cause of rebirth. Since death can come at any time, any second of our life may be the second prior to death. Therefore, it is Sri Bhagavan’s opinion that meditation on Self should be done every second.

751 Perfect and peaceful clarity is what the *Vedas* declare to be the ultimate goal of *tapas*. On the other hand, whatever abundant and immeasurable benefits are attained [through any particular type of *tapas*], if even then there remains an iota of desire [or wavering of mind], then that *tapas* should be given up at once.

- 752 As long as a thought arises in one that a thing is indispensable, let one have and enjoy it. But when, through some bitter experiences, a thought rises to be rid of it, it should be given up at once.
- 753 Do not determine God's Grace merely by the achievement of various kinds of prosperity [such as wealth, health and so on], which come as a result of meritorious deeds [*punyas*], but only by the peaceful clarity of consciousness, which is devoid of all mental anxieties, which are caused by forgetfulness [of Self].

Sadhu Om: Ignorant people often think that they have obtained God's Grace merely because they are provided with different kinds of worldly well-being such as wealth and health. But these are not the correct signs of God's Grace, since they are given to one merely because of one's own punyas, that is, they are the result of prarabdha. The state of Jnana, in which one knows Self and thereby abides in unbroken peace, devoid of miseries, alone is the true sign of God's Grace. It is also to be noted here that the peaceful clarity of Self-consciousness, which was said in verse 751 to be "the ultimate goal of tapas", is said in this verse to be the true sign of God's Grace.

- 754 Rather than achieving the powerful *sankalpa-siddhi*, which enables one to achieve anything in any way one thinks [or desires], attaining the inner peace – where not even a single thought [or desire] rises – by abiding in the true consciousness [Self], is the most powerful state.

Sadhu Om: Rather than achieving whatever one desires, to have no desire at all is the perfect state of happiness. In other words, since every desire is nothing but a thought, the power of non-thinking is greater than the power of achieving whatever is thought of.

61 Other Sadhanas (*Sadhana Antara Tiran*)

- 755 The life will become very great for *jivas* if they practice Self-enquiry without wasting the days of their life. [If they do so, the feeling] 'The wretched body-form is I' will end and the ocean of supreme enjoyment will surge within.
- 756 Other than Self-enquiry, which is the best [*sadhana*], there is no *sadhana* whatsoever to make the mind subside. If made to subside by other *sadhanas*, the mind will remain a while as if subsided, but will rise up again.
- 757 Even by breath-control the mind will subside, but this subsidence will last only so long as the breath remains controlled. When the breath starts out, the mind will also start out and will wander externally, driven by the *vasanas*.

Sadhu Om: The idea expressed in the above two verses can be found in prose form in Who am I?

61 Aids to Enquiry (*Vichara Sahaya Tiran*)

- 758 The best path to subside the activities of the mind – which springs forth externally as [the triad or *triputi*] the seer, the seeing and the object seen – is to train the mind to see its own nature [in other words, to practice Self-attention].
- 759 Since one's own reality [Self] shines in itself as 'I am', It can know itself. The best aid to enquire into the nature of Self as It is in the heart, is the unrejectable real Self-light.

Michael James: Some people say that it is impossible for one to know oneself, just as it is impossible for the eye to see itself. But in the present verse Sri Bhagavan proves this idea to be wrong. Since the eye is only an insentient instrument through which the sentient mind knows other things, it is unfitting to compare the ever self-luminous Self to the eye. Since Self, the reality (Sat), shines as consciousness (Chit) itself, It does not need any other consciousness in order to know Itself as 'I am'. Hence, the real Self-light (Self-consciousness) is the only aid required in order to enquire into and know Self.

- 760 That [pure] state of mind in between two thoughts, is the supreme Self [*paramartha swarupam*]. Having known thus through enquiry, to abide in the Heart is the [supreme] state.
- 761 By continuously doing *japa* many times, by meditating with love upon a [name and] form of God, and by observing diet restrictions [that is, taking only sattvic food in moderate quantities], the mind will become one-pointed and will gain strength, the past tendencies having been weakened.
- 762 Just as the wandering nature [*chalana*] of an elephant's trunk is easily restrained by the iron chains which it holds, so the stealthy [or illusive] wandering nature of the base and weak mind will be restrained by the name and form [of God which it holds].

Sadhu Om: The idea expressed in the above two verses can also be found in prose form in Who am I?

- 763 Only to such a mind which has gained the inner strength of one-pointedness, Self-enquiry will be successful. But a weak mind will be like wet wood put into the fire of *jnana-vichara*.
- 764 Those advanced souls who have given up all desires, knowing that increasing misery alone is the fruit of desires, will attain the eternal bliss of Self by taking to the direct path of Self-enquiry.

63 The Limit of Sadhana (*Sadhana Ellai Tiran*)

- 765 So long as there is *triputi-bheda* [the experience of the difference between the triad – the knower, the act of knowing and the object known], *sadhana* is

indispensable. From [the experience of] the triad [*triputi*], one can determine that the false delusion, the ego, has not yet been annihilated.

Michael James: From this verse it is clear that the ego is the base upon which the triads (triputis) depend for their existence. Therefore, the reader should understand that the word 'one' (ondru) used in verse 9 of Ulladu Narpadu denotes only the ego and not Self. Refer here to The Path of Sri Ramana – Part Two, appendix 4 (c).

- 766 It is to be understood that as long as in the other two bodies [the gross and subtle bodies] the binding triad [*triputi*] appears as three different things, so long the attachment to [or bondage to] the delusive causal body will not have been destroyed, and hence the illusory rebirth will not end.
- 767 If the ego is destroyed by the *sadhana* [of Self-enquiry], then nothing will be seen as another [that is, the experience of the *triputis* will cease]. Then, as declared by *Advaita*, all that was previously known as deceptive other things, will be [known as] only Self.
- 768 Those who have destroyed the ego, the embryo [of all names and forms], and who have [thereby] seen the reality, know [the names and forms of] this world to be an illusory appearance. Since they shine as the unlimited space of consciousness [which is devoid of names and forms], their decision is that consciousness, their own nature, alone exists.

64 Self-Abidance and Discrimination

(Nishtha Viveka Tiran)

- 769 Self-abidance [*atma-nishtha*], which shines without defect, alone will destroy all bondage, which is non-Self. [On the other hand] discrimination [*viveka*] which distinguishes the real, one's own nature, from the unreal, is only an aid to pure desirelessness.
- 770 If you enquire [you will find that] you are not that [the body] which you now take yourself to be. [Therefore] enquire what you are, drown in the heart and be directly established as 'You are That [Self]'.
- 771 Knowing well that there is no permanent foothold anywhere for the soul except in remaining merely as the one reality, destroy desires towards everything, but without aversion [towards anything], and abide in the Heart as one with the supreme existence-consciousness [*Sat-Chit*].
- 772 Those who have destroyed ignorance by the clarity of knowledge and who are established firmly in Self-abidance [*nishtha*], are completely dead-minded. They will survive as eternal *Muktas*, their mind having been given *jiva-samadhi* [i.e. having been buried alive] at the Feet of Siva.

Michael James: The words "completely dead-minded" (chintai ara settu) used in this verse denote the state of destruction of mind (mano-nasa). Since when the mind thus dies it shines as Self, it becomes eternal. Such a state of being dead while alive is denoted by the word 'jiva-samadhi'. The phrase "They will survive as eternal Muktas" used in the

last line of this verse denotes the state in which the mind thus dies as mind and survives as Self. The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ signifies only this. See verse 365.

65 Being Still (*Summa Iruttal Tiran*)

773 What our Lord [Sri Ramana] firmly teaches us to take to as the greatest and most powerful *tapas* is only this much, “*Summa iru*” [‘Just be’ or ‘Be still’], and not any other duty for the mind to do in the form of thoughts [such as meditation, yoga and so on].

Sadhu Om: Since rebirth is due to the karmas performed by mind, speech and body, Liberation will only be attained by just being still without the least action of these three instruments. Refer to verse 4 of Atma Vidya Kirtanam, in which Sri Bhagavan says, “. . . If we remain being still, without the least action of mind, speech and body, oh what a wonder, the Self-effulgence will be experienced . . .”. Therefore, as indicated in the above verse, the only duty enjoined upon us by Sri Bhagavan is just to be. Refer to Maharshi’s Gospel, Book I, ch. 6, where Sri Bhagavan says, “Your duty is TO BE”.

Michael James: A more literal translation of the Tamil original of this sentence would be, “To be still [summa iruppadu] alone is your duty”.

774 The lazy state of just being and shining [as ‘I am’] is the state of Self, and that is the highest state that one can become. Revere as most virtuous ones those who have attained that lazy state, which cannot be attained except by very great and rare *tapas*.

Sadhu Om: In the above two verses it is taught that being still is the highest state. To ridicule in an inoffensive manner those who deride this state as a lazy and inert one, Sri Bhagavan here says humorously, “Revere as most virtuous ones those who have attained that lazy state”.

66 The Individual ‘I’ (*Vyashti Aha Tiran*)

775 He who behaves as ‘I am so-and-so, the fleshy body, not having the true knowledge “I am is I am”, will vainly suffer when the body dies, being caught by the net of the dream-like delusion that he is also dying.

Sadhu Om: The knowledge ‘I am this body, I am so-and-so’ is not the correct and true knowledge of oneself; it is only the ego, the false sense of individuality. Knowing oneself merely as ‘I am is I am’, without any adjunct such as ‘this’ or ‘that’, is the true knowledge. When Moses saw God in the form of a flame of fire, he asked Him who He was, and God replied, “I AM THAT I AM”; Sri Bhagavan often used to point out this sentence from the Old Testament, which is the only sentence in the Bible the whole of which is printed in capital letters.

776 Since the defectless Supreme Reality, which is the true knowledge, shines as the primal, one and perfect Whole, to rise as an individual separate from the Lord – who cannot be defined as ‘He is this’ – even in order to worship Him is wrong.

Sadhu Om: Non-dual union is the state of perfect love; separation shows a deficiency in love. Hence, however much one worships the Lord after separating oneself from Him as an individual, all such worship shows a deficiency in one’s love for Him. Therefore, true love for God is to lose one’s separate individuality in Him and to become one with Him.

777 To rise up forcefully as the jumping and suffering false ‘I’ different from the Reality, the unbroken space of *Jnana*, is the sin of cutting into two parts and slaying the highest [non-dual] *dharma* [namely *Brahman*].

Sadhu Om: Dividing the one, unbroken Brahman into two, a soul who worships and a God who is worshipped, is here said to be committing the heinous sin of Brahma-hatti [killing Brahman].

778 In the real world [Self] which shines as One, devoid of knowledge [of other things] and movement [*chalana*], how is it possible for a foreign rule to arise except by one’s merely making an empty imagination of a mental world which is [seemingly] different from God [Self]?

Sadhu Om: The state of Self alone is real, and it exists and shines devoid of knowledge and ignorance, since there is no other thing for it to know or to be ignorant of, and devoid of movement, since it is the unbroken Whole. On the other hand, that which appears as a world of multiplicity and as a jiva which knows that multiplicity and moves in it, is nothing but a mental delusion and is not real. Thus this verse teaches us that the one Self, which is ajata [devoid of creating or being created], alone is the Reality.

779 The nature of bondage is merely the rising, ruinous thought ‘I am different from the reality’. Since one surely cannot remain separate from the reality, reject that thought whenever it rises.

*Sadhu Om: Is it not by conceiving an imaginary boundary line in the undivided sheet of the Indian Ocean that we determine ‘This is the Bay of Bengal’? This line is merely a thought. In truth the ocean has never been divided. An imaginary form whose limit is determined by this thought, becomes the Bay of Bengal. Likewise, it is only because the existence-consciousness ‘I’ is wrongly imagined as ‘I am limited to this body’ that the feeling ‘I am a limited and bound individual, separate from the Self’ comes into existence. Is not this bondage merely a thought or an imagination? Hence, since Liberation from bondage is only the removal of the first thought ‘I am the body’, this verse instructs that one should remove that thought by *vichara* whenever it rises.*

780 Leaving the state of Self, do not think any thought [even the first thought, ‘I’]; if you do, repent for it and do not commit the same folly again. “Do nothing for which you will repent; if you do, it is better not to do such a thing again.”

Sadhu Om: The last two lines of this verse are verse 655 of Tirukkural, in which Tiruvalluvar talks about the wrongs that a man does. But since all wrongs are committed only after committing the primal wrong of rising as 'I am a man, an individual called so-and-so', Sri Bhagavan does not merely recommend a way of rectifying other wrongs, but instead He teaches that one should not at all allow the thought 'I am a man' to rise, and that if one once allows it to rise, one should at least repent for it and should not allow it to rise again. Thus Sri Bhagavan deals with the very root of the problem and shows us how to remove the poison in its nascent state.

781 Be not disheartened thinking, "When shall I attain the bliss of yoga, the state of Self?", for the true state of Self-knowledge shines ever the same without [the condition of] a time or a space such as far or near.

Sri Muruganar: Since Self is God, Self-abidance is itself the supreme yoga. For those who have renounced everything only for the sake of obtaining the bliss of consciousness [chit-ananda], the supreme wealth of Grace, the thought in the form of excessive longing itself becomes an obstacle to their attaining it. The difference in times such as past and future and in space, such as far and near, exist only in the mental world of imagination and not in the real world of Self. Therefore Sri Bhagavan says, "Do not lament, 'Ah, when shall I be united with Self?'," for it is better to spend in Self attention that time which one spends in such lamenting.

Sadhu Om: The words 'ever the same' used in Tamil original may also mean 'ever united' or 'ever attained'. Verses 15 and 16 of Ulladu Narpadu, which reveal the unreality of time and space, may also be read here.

67 Retreating to the Source (Mula Munaiva Tiran)

782 Enquiring 'What is our birth-place [source]?' and thereby knowing and reaching that birth-place, is the best of all paths to root out miseries, which can exist only in the place you have entered [and not in the place you were born].

Sadhu Om: From this verse we have to understand the following: The state of Self is our birth-place, and the state of individuality [jivatman], in which the mind, body and world appear, is the place we have entered. In this state of Self there are not miseries; it is only in the state of individuality that all kinds of miseries such as birth and death and all kinds of vices such as desire, can exist. In order to root out all such miseries and defects, Self-enquiry is the best path.

Since a girl has all her rights and all possibilities for enjoying life only in her husband's home, the place she has entered by marriage, it is a common worldly custom to advise her, "Leave your birth-place and go to the place you have entered [i.e. go to your husband's home]". But quite contrary to such worldly advice, in this verse Sri Bhagavan advises spiritual aspirants, "Miseries exist only in the place you have entered, so in order to remove all miseries, go back to your birth-place".

783 O [foolish] mind who wanders [outside] searching [for happiness], not knowing that the state of Liberation is your own right, if you go back the way you came [out], but that way you will regain the state of Liberation, the unending perfect happiness.

Sadhu Om: We should know that the state of our own Self is Liberation, the eternal happiness, and it is ever our own right. We experience miseries only because we turn our attention outwards, leaving Self. Therefore, the sadhana to achieve the seemingly lost happiness is just to turn our attention back towards Self, the source from which we rose and came out as a jiva.

784 Until one's own subsidence in the Heart [Self], the centre [of all], is experienced, the five sense-knowledges will not subside even a little, and until the delusive five sense-knowledges are completely extinguished, happiness, the knowledge of the reality, will not be attained.

Sadhu Om: The note for verse 604 is also to be read here. The removal of ajnana and the dawn of Jnana are not two separate actions, they are one and the same. Thinking these to be two separate actions, one should not be bewildered wondering which is to happen first.

The jiva always has the freedom to desire the loss of individuality or ego. Therefore, it is sufficient if the liking for the non-rising of the ego arises in one's Heart; be sure that the liking will be fulfilled by Grace.

785 O mind, instead of looking at and thereby worrying about that which is imagined [the world], turn towards your source and enter the Heart. In that supreme state of consciousness, all [that you were seeking before] will become the one non-dual Self, your real nature.

68 The Conduct of a Sadhaka (Sadhakar Nadai Tiran)

786 When it is said that even the mere slipping down from [abidance in] the state of the pure non-dual Self is a crime for those who have started to do their duty [namely the true *tapas* of Self-abidance], will it on consideration be proper for them to interfere in the affairs of others?

Sadhu Om: In verse 266 of Tirukkural, Tiruvalluvar says, "Those who do tapas alone are those who do their duties". Therefore, the foremost duty or dharma of an aspirant is to do the true tapas of attending to and abiding in Self. Hence slackness in Self-attention is slipping down from one's duty or dharma; in other words, attending to other things is the sin of adharma. When it is so, how much more sinful will it be if an aspirant interferes in the affairs of others?

787 If one always sees only the good qualities in others instead of seeing any bad, one's life will be very pleasant, having no room for any disgust.

- 788 Unless one follows the principle, “That which is essential to be reformed is only my own mind”, one’s mind will become more and more impure by seeing the defects of others.
- 789 O mind, it is not because you have attained egoless, sweet qualities that Great Ones are kind towards you; it is only because of their greatness of forgiving all your accumulated defects without minding them. Know thus.

Sadhu Om: “I have achieved very high qualities and merits, and that is why even Great Ones are very kind to me” – thinking thus, one should not have a high estimate of one’s own merits and maturity. The Great Ones are always kind to us because they are able to forgive us, ignoring all our bad qualities. Therefore, like them, we should also forgive others for the wrongs they do to us and should always be kind to them.

- 790 To err is human nature; yet if those who are strong in having virtuous behaviour err, it is good for them to admit their errors and to reform themselves, instead of hiding them in order to maintain their prestige.
- 791 Since the prescribed observances [*niyamas*] help one for a long distance, they are fit to be accepted and observed. But when they [are found to] obstruct the highest practice, the enquiry for true knowledge [*mey-jnana-vichara*], give them up as useless.

Sadhu Om: All niyamas are prescribed only to develop the sattvic quality in the mind. Since it is only through a sattvic mind that one can understand that Self-enquiry alone is the real sadhana, the niyamas will help one only up to that extent. Then when the aspirant takes to the practice of Self-enquiry, whatever niyamas are found to be standing as a hindrance to vichara should at once be given up by him. Since the rising of an ‘I’ is necessary to observe niyamas, and since in vichara this ‘I’ should not be allowed to rise at all, the niyamas will leave the aspirant of their own accord, like withered leaves falling from a tree.

- 792 When whatever you desire is obtained as you desire, do not think that it is due to the power of your *tapas*. Knowing that it is because of God’s Grace, love his Feet more and more.
- 793 Let that which happens, happen as it has to happen [i.e. as it is destined by God to happen]. Do not think to go against it even in the least. Without doing anything as a new starting, abide as one with the *Sakshi* [Self] who peacefully shines in the Heart.
- 794 The fruit of [the Guru’s] making a failure of one’s efforts is to make one understand that only by the Guru’s Grace and not merely by one’s own effort can *Siddhi* [the attainment of Self-knowledge] be obtained, and [thereby] to prepare one to seek the Guru’s Grace.

Sadhu Om: The annihilation of the ego is the aim of all spiritual sadhanas. But if it appears as if there is success in an aspirants efforts, will there not be room for that ego to sprout out again and wax with more strength at least in the form ‘I have done great tapas and succeeded’? Therefore, in order to prevent any such thing from happening,

even in the earnest efforts of an aspirant failures are many times made to occur by the Guru's Grace.

795 For those who, like Dattatreya, the son of Atri Maharshi, can learn a lesson from everything [in this world], on account of their mind being not crooked and perverted [but straightforward], the whole life in the world will be a *gurukulam* [a learning centre].

Sadhu Om: In Srimat Bhagavatam it is said that the sage Dattatreya learnt twenty-four good principles from twenty-four things which he came across in this world. Likewise, if we are able to learn one good lesson from everything we seek in this world, then the entire world will be our gurukulam and our whole life will be a life lived at the Feet of the Guru.

So that it may not leave me, graciously retain in me the virtue of seeing in every creature I see, at least one good quality shining more in them than in me and of thereby being humble and submissive towards them.

Sri Ramana Sahasram, verse 31

69 Quietude (*Amaidi Tiran*)

796 Higher than quietude there is no achievement; higher than quietude there is no effort; higher than quietude there is no *tapas*; higher than quietude there is no deathless life.

Sri Muruganar: What is here called quietude is the state of stillness of mind. This can be achieved only by unceasing enquiry [vichara]. When the mind knows that in truth there is nothing to reject or to accept, it will lose its movements [chalana] and will abide in supreme peace [parama-santi]. Since such peace is the seed of the natural [sahaja] state, it is here said to be the "deathless life" [amara vazhu].

797 Agitation is the trouble-giving enemy; agitation drives one to do heinous sins; agitation is drunkenness; agitation of mind is the deep, dark pit.

Sri Muruganar: Since the rapid movement of very subtle thoughts is itself misery, that agitation is described here as drunkenness and as a heinous enemy. Since all the inner enemies such as desire, anger and pride are nothing but the subtle movements of thoughts, he who has destroyed that movement will from that time be devoid of all kinds of enemies, heinous sins, miseries and the pit of ignorance.

70 The Conduct of a Disciple (Sishya Achara Tiran)

798 Yet, the duty of a disciple is, even in dream, to follow steadfastly and to abide by the worthy teaching given from His immortal experience by the Guru, who shines with the highest divine quality, that of uncaused Grace [*avyaja Karuna*].

Sadhu Om: The word 'yet' which starts this verse, alludes to the same yet which is used in the following passage of 'Who am I?': "Just as the prey that has fallen into the jaws of a tiger cannot escape, so those who have come under the glance of the Guru's Grace will surely be saved and will never be forsaken; Yet, one should follow without fail the path shown by the Guru".

Michael James: See verse 284.

799 Though those who steadfastly follow the path to Salvation may sometimes have to swerve from the Vedic codes, either due to forgetfulness or due to any other reason [such as poverty or disease], they should never go against the words of the Guru.

Sadhu Om: Though the Vedas were given by God Himself, for the sake of those who have followed the Vedas through so many lives and who have thereby achieved maturity of mind He finally takes the form of the Guru by His Grace and teaches the path of Self-enquiry so that they may attain non-dual union with Him and thereby enjoy Him, the supreme bliss. When God thus comes in the form of the Guru, His words are to be taken by the disciple as more important and sacred than the words of the Vedas, because the words of the Guru are instructions given to him in his state of maturity whereas the words of the Vedas were instructions given to him to suit his then state of immaturity. Hence in this verse it is implied that if any of the rules of the Vedas stand as obstacles to Self-enquiry, even the words of the Vedas should be given up.

800 The words of Sages say that if one does wrong [*apacharam*] to God, it can be rectified by the Guru, but an *apacharam* done to the Guru cannot be rectified even by God.

Sri Muruganar: The words 'Vedic codes' [veda-neri] mean the observances [acharas] and so on prescribed in the Vedas. For those who swerve from the words of the Guru, even if one swerves from the Vedic codes one should never disobey the Guru's words. Thus it is stressed that devotion to the Guru is greater than devotion to God.

Michael James: When verse 801 was shown to Sri Bhagavan, He composed a verse of His own conveying the same meaning. This verse of Sri Bhagavan is given below as verse B14, and is also included in Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham as verse 39. Since the meaning of these two verses, which are translations of verse 87 of Sri Adi Sankara's work Tattvopadesa, is the same, only a translation of verse B14 is given here.

B14 O son, always have [the experience of] non-duality [*advaita*] in the Heart, but never express non-duality in action. Non-duality may be applied towards the three worlds, but know that non-duality should never be applied towards the Guru.

Michael James: The three worlds are Brahma Loka, Vishnu Loka and Siva Loka, and applying non-duality towards the three worlds means having a mental attitude 'I am not different from Brahma, from Vishnu or from Siva'. However, so long as one's ego or individuality survives, one should not have the attitude 'I am not different from the Guru', since such an attitude would be a mere act of imagination and would make one's ego wax all the more. Thus this verse stresses the same idea as verse 800, namely that whatever wrong one may do to God, one should never do any wrong to the Guru, for the Guru is to be regarded as more sacred even than God.

71 Kindness to Jivas (*Jiva Karunya Tiran*)

802 The *Jnani*, who has saved himself, alone can do good to others. Others, who have not dispelled the darkness of ignorance, are like the blind to the blind.

Michael James: When this four-line verse was shown to Sri Bhagavan, He composed a two-line verse of His own conveying the same meaning, which is given below.

B15 Only one who is saved can save other *jivas*, whereas others are like the blind leading the blind.

803 A *Jnani* who, having destroyed the ego, abides in the state of Self, which is *Jnana*, bestows Self-knowledge upon those who, troubled by miseries, come to Him with faith by destroying the delusion of their body-identification; His doing so is [the real] kindness to *jivas* [*jiva-karunya*]. All other kinds of kindness are of no avail [and hence are not at all real kindness].

Sadhu Om: This verse clearly stresses that bestowing Self-knowledge alone is real kindness in the name of charity, philanthropy or jiva-karunya – even trying to heavenize the world – is not at all real kindness. Since the state of being a jiva is itself the greatest misery, the real kindness to jivas is the Sadguru's bestowing upon them Self-knowledge and thereby removing their jivahood and granting them Sivahood.

Let us suppose that a man is dreaming that he and his comrades have been attacked by a tiger. Some of his comrades are wounded and the tiger is about to attack again, so the man calls out in his dream asking someone to bring a rifle and a first-aid-box. His shouting is heard by a friend who is awake. Now what is the truly kind and useful help that the waking friend can give to the dreaming man? Will it be of any use if he brings a rifle and a first-aid-box? If he merely taps the man and wakes him up, will that not be the best help, both to the dreaming man and his wounded comrades?

*All the miseries of a jiva are experienced by him in a dream which is occurring in the long sleep of Self-forgetfulness, and hence his waking up from that dream is the only solution for all his miseries. Since the jiva can be awakened to Self-knowledge only by someone who is already awake, a *Jnani* alone can do real good to the jiva. If any *ajnani**

tries to relieve the sufferings of another, he will be just like someone in dream bringing a rifle and first-aid-box; since he does not know the real cause of the dreaming man's suffering all his help will be just like one blind man leading another blind man.

804 Since it is said that one must be the doctor for oneself, O doctor, before you come to heal us, first heal yourself and then come to us.

Sadhu Om: This verse paraphrases the English proverb, "Physician, heal thyself". Though this verse is seemingly addressed to a doctor, it is indirectly addressed to the would-be gurus who have merely read the scriptures and who at once come to the public, climb on the lecture platforms and begin to give instructions. To such people this verse advises, "O preachers who come to give instructions to others without having yourself attained salvation, before you start to prescribe to us the medicine to remove the disease of birth and death, first heal yourself from that disease and then come to heal us".

Sri Muruganar: Since Self-knowledge is for all people the only medicine to cure the disease of birth and death, and since no bodily disease can exist without that disease [of birth and death], one should first cure that disease.

72 Duty to Ancestors (Pitirar Kadamai Tiran)

805 When the parents are alive the sons will not protect them [by providing them with food and other necessities], but after the parents pass away those noble and charitable sons will celebrate their annual requiem ceremonies with pomp and glory. How strange is the nature of this world!

73 Doing Good to Others (Paropakara Tiran)

806 He who cheats others is his own enemy and is doing harm to himself.
807 All that one gives to others, one is giving only to oneself. If this truth is known, who will refrain from giving to others?

Sadhu Om: The idea expressed in this verse can be found in prose form in Who am I?

808 Since everyone is one's own Self, whoever does whatever [good or bad] to whomever, is only doing it to himself. [Therefore, one should only do good to others.]

809 By giving alms to Sridhara [Lord Vishnu] Mahabali became great, even though he was pressed and sent to Patala Loka [by the Lord's Feet]. Therefore, "Though it is only a ruin that befalls one by giving, it is worthy to give even at the cost of selling oneself".

Michael James: The last two lines of this verse are verse 220 of Tirukkural.

Sri Muruganar: There is truly nothing in the world which can be bartered for oneself; though it is so, if it is for the sake of giving even that [selling oneself] should be done. Thus giving is so much glorified. The loss that is incurred by giving is not at all a loss. "The world [of good people] will not consider it to be a ruin if a person falls in life by giving to others," says verse 117 of Tirukkural.

74 Compassion to Living Beings (*Bhuta Dayai Tiran*)

810 He who is ever joyous, giving words assuring refuge [*abhaya*] to all creatures and behaving in such a way that they will not be afraid of him, does not fear even Yama [the God of death], since he is established in the state of equality, having the outlook of Self.

Sadhu Om: Since everyone has great attachment towards his body as 'I' and since death separates him from his body, everyone fears death. But since a Jnani has the experience of being separated from the body even while He is living in the body, He alone can have no fear of death and hence can give abhaya or refuge to anyone.

811 When a strong man by his physical strength does harm to a weak person, the *dharma* [of an aspirant] is not to become agitated [or to start angrily attacking the wrongdoer] but is to be compassionate towards the weak, knowing that God, who pities the weak, will punish the wicked properly.

Sadhu Om: In this verse it is taught that rather than the rajasic nature which prompts one to attack the strong and wicked person, the sattvic nature which prompts one to help the distressed is more fitting to an aspirant. In this context it is worth remembering how Sri Bhagavan once prevented a devotee from attacking the thieves who had beaten Him and how He was engaged in applying balm on the bruises of the devotees and the dog who had been beaten by the thieves.

812 One who does not have the power to bring back life to a body from which it has parted, has no right to remove the life from any body for any reason.

813 Those ignorant and worthless people with evil and cruel habits which are contrary to righteousness, will, due to fear in their heart, beat and kill the pitiable and sin-filled creatures such as poisonous hissing snakes.

Sadhu Om: The 'righteousness' mentioned in this verse means compassion to living beings [bhuta daya], which can truly exist only as a result of the fearlessness mentioned in verse 310, namely the fearlessness even in front of death. This fearlessness will dawn in one only when the ignorance 'I am the body' is destroyed. Those in whom this ignorance is not destroyed will naturally experience fear due to their attachment to the body. Those in whom this ignorance is not destroyed will naturally experience fear due to their attachment to the body when they see poisonous creatures such as snakes, and will therefore feel a hatred towards them and will beat them to death. In order to instruct that it is wrong to do so, such habits are described in this verse as 'evil habits' and 'contrary

to righteousness', and people who have such habits are described as 'ignorant and worthless'. Since the very nature of those creatures is to be poisonous and to harm others, they are said to be sin-filled and pitiable. Therefore, even though they do harm to us, to kill them is not a righteous act.

Sri Muruganar: Not only creatures like poisonous snakes, but also people who do sinful acts, are unconsciously motivated by inborn hatred. Therefore, however sinful they may be, we should not be angry with them but should only pity them for their ignorance.

814 The strongest mind [that of a *jnani*], which is never shaken even by chains of miseries that befall it, will melt more and more and weep when devotees and others who come to Him undergo sufferings.

Sadhu Om: It is well known that Sri Bhagavan remained unruffled and His face was as cheerful as ever when some thieves beat Him, when hundreds of hornets stung His thigh, and finally when the tumour on His left arm gave unbearable pain continuously for eleven months. Yet there were occasions on which Sri Bhagavan melted and shed tears when some devotees came to Him grieving over the loss of their children or relatives, or when they were suffering with some incurable disease. Thus Sri Bhagavan Himself exemplified the idea expressed in this verse.

The next verse is a question to Sri Bhagavan that was posed by Sri Muruganar:

815 O Venkata [Sri Ramana], when You touched what You thought to be only a wide-spread, green, leafy bush, many hornets stung that very leg, causing it to swell. How is that You felt repentant [for destroying their nest] as if You had deliberately done that wrong which happened unintentionally?

Sri Muruganar: One day when Sri Bhagavan was strolling on Arunachala, He brushed His leg against a hornet's nest which was hidden in a green bush. At once a swarm of hornets flew around His leg and began to sting the leg as if pricking with needles. Sri Bhagavan stood for some time without moving the leg and said, 'This punishment is necessary for having caused this trouble [himsa]; accept it,' and the leg became swollen. This verse and the next are a question and answer relating to this incident.

Michael James: One day, around the year 1906, Sri Bhagavan was strolling high up on the northern slopes of Arunachala, when He happened to see a very large banyan tree. Wishing to have a closer look at it, He moved towards it, but on the way His thigh brushed against and broke a hornet's nest hidden in a green bush. The angry hornets flew out, swarmed around His leg and violently stung only that thigh which had broken their nest. Taking pity on the hornets, Sri Bhagavan said, "Yes, is it not this thigh that broke their nest? Let it be punished", and patiently allowed His leg to be stung by the hornets. The above verse is Sri Muruganar's question about this incident, and the next verse is Sri Bhagavan's answer.

B16 Though the hornets stung the leg and made it swell when it touched and damaged their nest built in the midst of a green leafy bush, and though it was a wrong that

had happened unintentionally, what indeed would be the nature of his mind [i.e. how stone-like it would be] if he did not at least feel repentant?

75 The State of Equality

(*Naduvu Nilai Tiran*)

816 It is wrong for those who try to live a just life to leave the state of equality and to take specially for themselves some rights which are not available to all alike.

Sadhu Om: It is worth remembering here that Bhagavan Ramana refused to accept for Himself any special food, convenience or importance which was not provided to everyone in the Ashram where He lived. Thus He Himself exemplified what He taught in this verse.

817 If others have some right, then only should one avail oneself of that right. If some right is denied to others, it would be wrong for one to avail oneself of it.

Sadhu Om: Once a foreigner, not knowing the customs of India, was sitting in the Hall stretching her legs towards Sri Bhagavan. An ashramite objected to her doing so, saying, "It is wrong to stretch one's legs towards anyone; please fold your legs". At once Sri Bhagavan, who was sitting on His couch stretching His legs towards the devotees, folded his legs. This incident shows how Sri Bhagavan did not take any special right for Himself if it was not allowed to others.

818 Those who go against the state of equality are those who go against God, who is equality itself. Though they perform due worship to God, they are completely rejecting God-worship.

Sadhu Om: Since equality [samatvam] is the nature of God, God-experience is called samadhi [the state in which the mind stands in equilibrium]. Hence those who deny equality to others, are going against God.

Sri Muruganar: Just like the sun or the rain, God does not reject anyone. Sri Ramalinga Swami addresses, "O Equality, who stands impartial both to good people and bad". Therefore, devotees should also not swerve from the state of equality; if they swerve, then their worship of God is invalid.

76 Conscience

(*Mana-Sandru Tiran*)

819 If one's conscience, according to which one has [always] been acting, once tells one not to live in a [seemingly] good society, it is better for one to live alone rather than to live in that society, rejecting one's pure conscience.

Sadhu Om: This verse is an instruction given to some good devotees like Sri Muruganar who came to live in the Ashram, believing it to be a favourable environment for their spiritual progress, but who soon had to leave and live alone outside the Ashram, having

found for one reason or another that it was not a suitable environment. When a seemingly good society is thus bound by an advanced aspirant to be unsuitable, he should follow his conscience and live alone, and should not continue to depend in any way upon that society.

However, it should be noted that in this verse the word ‘conscience’ means only the conscience of an advanced aspirant, which is why it is referred to as a ‘pure conscience’. Since the minds of immature people are often unable to resist their bad tendencies, their conscience may sometimes decide good to be bad and bad to be good, and hence it is not the conscience of such people that is meant here. Rather than being misled by their wrong discrimination, it would be better for such people to follow the advice of their elders.

Sri Muruganar: *If one’s conscience, being driven by prarabdha, separates and prevents one from living in a good society, it will be better for a wise aspirant to live alone instead of rejecting his pure conscience by trying to live among the same group of people.*

77 Not Uttering Falsehood (Poyyamai Tiran)

Michael James: *This verse can be interpreted in two ways:*

- 820 (a) Failing to keep a promise one has already given to someone would be wrong as lovingly telling the supreme truth about the Self to an *anadhikari* [one who is unfit].
- 820 (b) It would be wrong on one’s part to lovingly tell the supreme truth about the Self to an *anadhikari*, because it would contradict what one had previously taught him and, since it would thus lose its reality [in his view], he would refuse to accept it.

Sadhu Om: *The word ‘tannil’ used in this verse can be interpreted in two ways, namely (i) to mean ‘as [wrong] as’ or (ii) to mean ‘on one’s part’.*

- 821 Since the Supreme Himself, who stands as the Lord in the heart of all, shines as Truth [*satyam*], the abode [of all virtues], one should not break one’s given word, even though it is at a time of danger to one’s life. If one breaks it, unending misery will result.

78 Non-Attachment (Anasakti Tiran)

- 822 The boat may remain in water, but if water enters the boat it will bring great catastrophe. [Likewise] a man may live in the world, but if the world enters [the mind of] the man the whole life will be miserable.

Sri Muruganar: *It is not the world itself but only the attachment towards the world which constitutes samsara-bandha [the bondage of mundane existence]. Attachment is*

caused by the mind, and not by what is outside. No harm will befall one by one's merely living in the world; but all miseries come into existence only because of one's desire to enjoy the world.

- 823 Only the pot, which takes in water, will drown in it, while the log, which does not absorb water, will not drown in it. [Likewise] only those who inwardly attach themselves to the world will be deluded, while those who do not attach themselves to the world will not be deluded, even though they are engaged in worldly activities.
- 824 One who is free at heart from any attachment will never be at any risk, even though engaged in all [activities], because of the clarity with which his mind shines.
- 825 Instead of clinging to this wonderful but utterly false world for refuge [or instead of depending upon it for happiness] and thereby drowning in it, it is wise to renounce it inwardly like a shell of a tamarind fruit and forget it totally.

Michael James: Even while it is in its shell, the tamarind fruit separates itself from the shell and remains unattached to it. Likewise, even while in the world, the mind should separate itself from the world and remain unattached to it. If instead it clings to the world, depending upon it for happiness, it will drown in it like a pot that takes in water.

- 826 A heavy building raised on foundations which are not strongly built, will collapse in devastation and disgrace. Therefore it is essential from the very outset for aspirants who work hard [on their spiritual path] to adhere strictly and at any cost to the preliminary observances.

Sri Muruganar: Preliminary observances [charyas] here mean devotion [bhakti] and non-attachment [vairagya].

Sadhu Om: If an aspirant does not from the very outset develop the necessary strength of character by practising control of the senses, when he is taught the Advaitic truth by the scriptures or Guru, he will be shaken by his worldly desire before attaining Jnana and will experience a downfall.

Sri Muruganar: It is essential in the beginning for aspirants to make an effort to practise controlling the chitta-vrittis [the mind's running after sense-objects]. If a beginner moves closely among worldly objects, pretending as if he is free from attachment, he will at last experience disappointment.

- 827 If one unceasingly and firmly clings to the true Being [Self] and thereby achieves clarity [of true knowledge], the attachments, which are superimposed appearances like the blueness of the sky, will of their own accord go away leaving one pure.

79 The Greatness of Renunciation (Turavu Matchi Tiran)

828 The path of renunciation is a slippery ground. Slipping away even mentally will lead to great ruin. Therefore, it is the duty of one who walks on the path of renunciation, the slippery ground, to protect himself lest the treacherous forgetfulness should stealthily enter his heart.

Sadhu Om: For those who are beginning on the path of renunciation, the word 'forgetfulness' used here will denote the forgetfulness of observances such as sense-control and control of conduct and character, while for those who are well advanced on the path, it will denote the forgetfulness of Self.

829 Since it is impossible to know beforehand the last moment of one's life, it is best for one who has a firm determination [to put an end to birth and death] to renounce at the very moment he gets disgust for the body and world.

Sri Muruganar: Since vairagya, the firm determination to put an end to birth and death, is the correct sign of maturity, one should take to renunciation [sannyasa] as soon as a disgust arises in one for the body and world, no matter to which of the four ashramas [modes of life] one may belong at that time. The ascending order of ashramas is applicable only to ordinary seekers and not to those mature aspirants who have intense vairagya.

830 Just as a fruit falls from the tree when ripe, so an aspirant will certainly renounce his family life like saltless gruel as soon as he becomes fully mature, unless his *prarabdha* interferes as an obstacle.

Sadhu Om: If the prarabdha of such a mature aspirant is to remain at home, it will obstruct his outward renunciation, yet he will remain in his family with complete inner detachment. Since prarabdha controls one's outer life, the ashramas come only according to prarabdha; but since prarabdha cannot obstruct one's inner renunciation, true non-attachment [vairagya] can arise in one no matter to which of the ashramas one may belong.

831 Those who have understood that the multiple objects, which appear in and from oneself like a dream [but which are seen as if an external universe] are mere mental conceptions [projections of one's *vasanas* within] and who have therefore renounced them, alone can destroy *maya* the deceptive defect. Others do not know how to destroy this defect.

Sadhu Om: Until this world-appearance is understood to be one's own mental projection or conception, like a dream, the sense of reality [satya-buddhi] towards it will remain in one, and hence one will not be able to achieve perfect renunciation. The fact that the world is merely an unreal mental delusion is also stressed in the next verse.

- 832 Perfect *Jnanis*, who have experienced Self, the non-dual real knowledge, will not be bewildered by this dual sight [the world-appearance]. They will renounce it as an empty, tricky delusion [*maya*].
- 833 Buddha renounced unlimited wealth because he had understood the transitoriness [of this world]. Therefore, for one who has known the transitoriness of the world visible to the senses, it is impossible to be *laukika* [a worldly-minded person].
- 834 Only those who, considering the world as worthless, have fearlessly renounced it with great courage, are the wise ones who definitely see the Supreme Reality. Others are fools who see only what is unreal.
- 835 “Renouncing the world as ever non-existent even while it appears to exist, is the attainment of Self, the consciousness which appears to be non-existent,” say the Sages.

Sadhu Om: What is meant by ‘the attainment of Self’? Self alone is the ever-existing reality, while the world is an ever non-existent thing [refer to Upadesa Manjari, ch.2, answer to question]. However, so long as the world is known as if it were existing, Self will seem to be hidden or unattained. Therefore, the mere act of renouncing the world-appearance as unreal will itself be the attainment of Self, the Supreme Reality.

- 836 That which remains unrenounced after all that can be renounced has been renounced – that existence shining in the Heart as the real Self, alone is the attainment of bliss abundant.
- 837 For those who have made the rarest renunciation, that of the ego, nothing remains to be renounced.

Sadhu Om: Refer here to verse 26 of Ulladu Narpadu.

- 838 Since the *Sadhu*’s mind [*chittam*] shines as *Sadasiva*, nothing remains [to be renounced or] even to be desired.
- 839 The majestic one [the true renunciant] who wanders carefree, possessing nothing and refusing everything, bewilders and perplexing even the mind of a king who can give anything! Ah, what a wonder!

80 The True Renunciation

(Turavu Unmai Tiran)

- 840 Know that, rather than one’s thinking in the heart ‘I have renounced everything’, one’s not thinking ‘I am limited to the measure of the body, and I am caught in the mean bondage of family life’, is a superior renunciation.

Sadhu Om: So long as a sannyas feels ‘I have renounced everything’, is it not clear that he has a sense of identification with the body, ‘I am so-and-so’, and a sense of doership, ‘I have renounced’? Therefore his renunciation is not a true one. On the other hand, if a family man does not feel ‘I am a householder’ or ‘I have a family’, is he not free from the sense of ‘I’ and ‘mine’? Therefore he alone is the true renunciant. Thus this verse teaches that giving up the ego, the sense of ‘I’, is truly giving up everything.

81 The Oneness of Mind (*Samashti Mana Tiran*)

841 The mind is said to be two [either good or bad] only in regard to the good and bad tendencies that influence it. Know that on scrutiny it is really one mind which functions differently as a good mind and as a bad mind.

Sadhu Om: The same idea is also expressed in prose in the following passage of Who am I?: “There are not two minds, a good mind and a bad mind. The mind is only one. Tendencies [vasanas] alone are of two kinds, auspicious [subha] and inauspicious [asubha]. When the mind is under the influence of auspicious tendencies it is called a good mind, and when it is under the influence of inauspicious tendencies, a bad mind.”

842 Considering ‘This is my mind, that is your mind’ is the cause of bondage. But when the mind shines as it is, [that is, as] the power of the clear supreme Self-consciousness, it is surely only one. Know thus.

843 Know that the one real ‘I’ appears to be many ‘I’s because of the body-outlook [i.e. because of the wrong outlook that each body is an ‘I’]. But through the outlook of Self, the one eternal existence-consciousness, know them all to be one.

82 Annihilation of the Ego (*Ahandai Yozhivu Tiran*)

844 Sever the delusive and sorrow-laden ego by the keen knowledge gained through enquiry, [because] the true happiness of peace [*santi*] cannot prevail except in a heart where this knot [*granthi*] has been rooted out.

845 By the sharp edge of the sword of divine Silence cultivated in the heart by the practice of *jnana-vichara*, one should dig out and cast away the root, the ego, ‘I am the body’. This is the means to attain the over-brimming happiness of peace.

846 Do not make any real and firm effort except to annihilate the feeling ‘I am the body’ [the ego]. Know that the ego, ‘I am the body’, is the sole cause of all *samsara-dukha* [the miseries of life].

847 Know that the rarely attained supreme bliss, liberation, the greatest renunciation, the deathless death and wisdom are all one and the same – the destruction of the ignorant delusion ‘I am the body’.

848 [The destruction of this delusion is also] all these: reading and listening [i.e. *sravana*], reflecting [*manana*], abiding [*nididhyasana*], the attainment of Grace, Silence, the supreme abode, peace, ritualistic sacrifice, devotion, charity, *tapas*, *dharma* and yoga.

B 17 Know that the annihilation of the feeling ‘I am the body’ [*dehatma-bhava*] is charity [*danam*], austerity [*tapas*], ritualistic sacrifice [*yagna*], righteousness [*dharma*], union (yoga), devotion [*bhakti*], heaven [*Swarga*], wealth [*vastu*], peace [*santi*], truthfulness, Grace [*arul*], the state of silence [*mauna-nilai*], the deathless death, knowledge [*arivu*], renunciation, liberation [*mukti*] and bliss [*ananda*].

Sadhu Om: All that are mentioned above will be attained by merely destroying the wrong notion 'I am the body' through Self-enquiry. Therefore Self-enquiry should be understood to be all in all.

849 Though the good *dharmas* [righteous acts] are said to be so many, just as the golden ornaments are many, the sole reality of all those *dharmas* is self-sacrifice [*tyaga*], just as the sole reality of all ornaments is gold.

Michael James: The word tyaga means self-sacrifice, and is generally taken to denote the sacrifice of 'mine'-ness [mamakara]. However, since this verse comes under the chapter-heading 'Annihilation of the Ego', in this context tyaga should be understood to denote the sacrifice of 'I'-ness [ahankara], that is, the giving up of the ego.

Sri Muruganar: Just as the gold, which is the common factor [samanyam], alone is the reality of all the diversity [visesham] of ornaments, so tyaga, which is the common factor, alone is the reality of the diversity of those dharmas. Just as without gold there can exist no diversity of ornaments, so without tyaga there can exist no diversity of dharmas.

850 If the extremely courageous aspirant who has renounced the 'mine'-ness [*mamakara*] – the gateway to all miseries, which are in the form of desires – succeeds in completely renouncing the 'I'-ness [the ego or *ahankara*] through *vichara*, that is the attainment of the fruit of every great *dharma*.

851 Instead of spoiling the wholeness of the existence of the Lord [Self] by proudly rising as 'I [am a separate individual]', to subside within is the correct observance [*niyama*] or *tapas* for entering the sanctum sanctorum, the presence of *Jnana-Siva*.

Sadhu Om: This verse teaches us what kind of tapas or observance is required to enter the sanctum sanctorum of Siva. The rising of the ego in the form 'I am the body' – as if it were a reality different from Self, Lord Siva – is itself spoiling the oneness of Siva. Therefore if, instead of rising thus, the ego subsides in Self, that would be the correct tapas or observance required for entry into the sanctum sanctorum of Siva. It is thus indirectly hinted here that those who do not possess such tapas, whosoever they may be, are not qualified for entry into the temple, the sanctum sanctorum of Lord Siva, since they have the worst impurity, that of a rising ego.

Sri Muruganar: Except the twice born – that is, those who have not only been born physically but have also been born again as Self by enquiring 'Where from was I, the soul, born?' – no one is qualified to enter the purest presence of Lord Siva either to see or to touch His divine form. Therefore, the observance required for temple-entry that is prescribed here is egolessness.

Sadhu Om: It is to be understood here that Self is Siva, the heart is His sanctum sanctorum, and the Self-realized Jnani is the twice-born [the true brahmin].

- 852 In the view of the wise, dispelling the ego, which contracts the perfect wholeness of the Supreme [limiting it to the body by feeling ‘I am the body’], is the real and flawless worship of the Supreme [whose nature is to shine as the unlimited and adjunctless ‘I am’].
- 853 Mad people who, instead of becoming food to God, seek to make God as food to them, will at last through egoism become food to Yama [death].

Sadhu Om: Did not many asuras seek to subjugate God through their worship in order to gain their own selfish ends? It is this kind of attitude towards God which is described in this verse as ‘seeking to make God as food to them’. Through their selfish worship [kama upasana] such people are in fact only courting their own destruction!

- 854 Unless the appearance [of this world] known objectively by the senses, and the wicked ego, the knower of it, die as food to Siva, who shines as the state of supreme consciousness, the supreme reality cannot be attained.
- 855 Can the unmoving state of the real Self be cognised by the petty [wandering] mind? [Therefore] unless the ego-sense in the form of the knot between consciousness and the insentient [*chit-jada-granthi*] is annihilated, [our] real nature cannot be attained.
- 856 Is it not because of the rising of an ‘I’ in between [consciousness and the insentient body] that one’s peace is completely destroyed? [Therefore] unless the wretched *Vritrasura*, the vain ego-‘I’, is killed, *Kaivalyam* [the state of oneness] cannot be attained.
- 857 When the moonlight, the *jiva* or mind-knowledge, merges into the real sunlight, the supreme Self-knowledge, dies and becomes one with It, that is the auspicious time of *amavasya* [the night of the no moon].
- 858 Only by dying and by no other means can one reach *Moksha-loka* [the world of Liberation]. But what is that death? It is [not merely killing the body but] killing ‘I’ and ‘mine’, [for] to kill this body is a crime.

Sadhu Om: Death of the body is not our real death. Sri Bhagavan used to say, “Killing our body without killing our ego is just like beating and breaking a chair instead of punishing the criminal who is sitting on it”. That is, the body is innocent and insentient like a chair; it is our mind or ego that is at fault, having caused all misery, and hence it alone deserves to be punished and destroyed.

- 859 Only those who are dead to desires for [the pleasures of] the vast delusive panorama of the world will have their life transformed into Siva. There will be no bliss by any means other than the dawn of the pure and fresh experience of Self.

Sadhu Om: It is emphasised here that true happiness lies not in the fulfilment of desires, but only in the destruction of desires.

- 860 If you ask, “What is that great death which will not bring any more birth and which will destroy the innumerable births and consequent deaths?”, it is the death of the ignorance ‘I’ and ‘mine’.

Sadhu Om: Every seeming death of the body is nothing but a chance to be born again in another body. Therefore, rather than seeking the death of the physical body, it is wisest to seek the very great and glorious death of 'I' and 'mine', because the petty bodily birth and death will then end forever.

- 861 Only by attention to the reality, 'Who am I?', will the body-bound ego-life die.
862 Destroying one's false ego in [Self-]Knowledge and abiding [in that Self-Knowledge] is the true clarity [i.e. the real waking].
863 Except through the destruction of the false delusive sense 'I' (am the body)', there is no experience of real *Jnana*.
864 He whose delusive ego [completely] subsides in and become one with existence-consciousness, will cease from making the effort of starting [any action or karma] and will shine in the Heart, having attained the natural and peaceful state of bliss.

83 Knowledge of the Reality (*Tattva-Jnana Tiran*)

- 865 Only when the ego-delusion, the sense of individuality [*jiva-bodha*] – which rises from scheming *Maya*, who does many heroic deeds with immense power and authority [as if she were separate from yet equal to the supreme *Brahman*] – is destroyed, will the experience of the supreme Self-knowledge [*Paramatma-bodha*] arise.

Sadhu Om and Michael James: From the false Maya arises the seemingly real sense of individuality, the false conception 'I am a jiva'. Only when this false sense of individuality is destroyed will knowledge of the reality be obtained. Though Maya creates the sense of individuality as if she were having great power and authority, she is in fact 'ma-ya' [literally 'what is not']. Therefore, if knowledge of the reality is to dawn, Maya and all her creation must be found to be non-existent, just as, if the rope is to be known as it really is, the snake must be found to be non-existent.

- 866 When the feeling 'I am the body' [*dehatma-buddhi*] goes, the delusive confusion and anxieties will end. Aha! The 'I' shining in the heart in which enquiry is conducted, is the differenceless supreme consciousness [*nirvikalpa chit-param*].

Sadhu Om: Since the root-cause of all differences [vikalpas] is the dehatma-buddhi, and since the dehatma-buddhi is destroyed by enquiry, that which shines in the Heart as a result of enquiry is the differenceless sat-chit-ananda.

- 867 God, who seems to be non-existent, alone is ever existing, while oneself [the individual], who seems to be existing, is ever non-existent. The state of thus seeing one's own non-existence [*maya*] can alone be said to be the supreme *Jnana*.
868 *Sahaja samadhi*, the silence of *sattva*, alone is the beauty of *tattva-jnana* [the knowledge of the reality].

Michael James: *Sattva is one of the three gunas or qualities of mind. However, in some scriptures such as Kaivalya Navanitham it is said that sattva is the original or primal nature of the mind. Therefore in this verse it is said that in the natural state (sahaja-samadhi) even this sattva – the primal nature of the mind – is silent.*

Sri Muruganar: *Though sahaja samadhi is the state transcending all the three gunas [sattva, rajas and tamas], since sattva alone is the primal nature of the mind, the phrase ‘sattva-mouna’ [the silence of sattva] is used here.*

84 Seeing (Katchi Matchi Tiran)

869 The role [*dharma*] of seeing is ascribed to Self – the space of consciousness, the sun – only in the imagination of *ajnani*s, [because] *maya*, the empty ignorance [of seeing otherness], never exists in Self, the support [*sthanu*], [and also because] Self is without a second.

Sadhu Om: *Since Self is in truth that which transcends all roles and all qualities, and since It exists as one without a second, to glorify It as the ‘witness of all’ [sarva-sakshi] or as the ‘knower of all’ [sarvajna] is merely the folly of ignorant people.*

870 If I feel that I see the world, what is the secret behind this? It is that a world of sense-objects and a seer of it rise in ‘me’, the space of the perfect and true light of unbroken [Self-]Knowledge. Know thus definitely.

Sadhu Om: *This world-appearance, which is composed of the five sense-knowledges, and the jiva who sees it are not real. They are mere false appearances like a mirage, having Self as their base, and they appear only with the help of the light of Self. Moreover, this world-appearance is not even seen by Self, but only by the jiva, who is himself a part of it. Refer here to verse 7 of Ulladu Narpadu, in which Sri Bhagavan says, “Although the world [the objects seen] and the mind [the jiva who sees it] rise and set together, it is [not by Self, but] by the mind alone that the world is seen. [Self, on the other hand, is] the Whole which is the base for [the false appearance of] the world and the mind to rise from and set in, but which Itself shines without rising or setting, [and hence] It alone is the reality.”*

871 The conviction created by the senses that the appearance is real is a mistaken conviction. Know that both the senses, which enable the appearance to be known, and the *jiva*, the knower of it, are of the same degree of reality as the appearance.

Sadhu Om: *Since the knower [the jiva], the known [the world-appearance] and the knowing [the act of perceiving the world through the five senses] form a triad [triputi], all of them are equally false. In other words, since even the jiva who is seen and his act of seeing are both a part of the world-appearance, they are both unreal as that appearance. To illustrate this, let us suppose that a film is taken of a king watching a cinema show;*

when this film is projected, are not the king and his act of watching the cinema show, both pictures in the film? Refer here to verse 160 and its note.

872 He who sees the seer [the knower of the mind, namely Self] will shine as the Supreme Self Itself, having destroyed the sense of difference ‘I am different from the seer of the seer’ and having attained his own nature.

Sadhu Om: *The central idea of this verse is that he who has seen Self will shine as Self, having destroyed his individuality and having attained the non-dual knowledge [advaita-jnana].*

Though in verse 869 and other verses of this work Sri Bhagavan says that it is wrong to ascribe to Self the function of ‘seeing’, in this verse He refers to Self as ‘the seer of the seer’. The reason for this apparent contradiction is that He is here talking from the ordinary level of understanding – the same level of understanding on which most ancient scriptures such as Drik-Drisya Viveka were given. Therefore the reader should understand the expression ‘the seer of the seer’ to be figurative and not literal.

873 Such a seer of the seer [i.e. a *Jnani*] will never see the bondage of karmas. He will rule the space of supreme consciousness as His kingdom. Through the Self’s sight, He will be able to rule [i.e. to view] all that is seen as His own Self. Know thus.

874 When seen through the sight of the supreme space of Self, the illusion of taking births in this mirage-like false world is [found to be] nothing but the egotistical ignorance of identifying a body as ‘I’.

Sadhu Om: *The attachment [abhimani] of identifying a body as ‘I’ is taking birth; unceasingly nourishing this attachment is life in this world; temporarily forgetting this attachment is death; and destroying this attachment for ever is Jnana or Moksha.*

875 When seen not through the petty ‘I’ but through the infinite ‘I’, everything is known to be within Self, the real Supreme. Know that, just like the appearance of many different objects in a dream, Self alone is seen as other things [the world].

Sadhu Om: *What is seen in dream appears only for the one who sleeps. Though all that are seen appear to be objects different from the dreamer [the seer of the dream], are not all of them [including the dreamer] non-different from the one who sleeps? Likewise, it is only we [the Self] that appear in this dream of the waking state as the jiva [the seer] and the world [the different objects that are seen].*

876 Until the false appearance of the snake goes, the real rope, the base, will not be known. [Likewise] until the false appearance of the world vanishes, the real Self, the base, will not be seen.

Sadhu Om: *The same idea is expressed by Sri Bhagavan in the following passage of Who am I?: “Just as unless the knowledge of the snake, the imaginary superimposition, goes, the knowledge of the rope, which is the base, will not be obtained, so unless the*

perception of the world, which is an imaginary superimposition, ceases, the realization of Self, which is the base, will not be obtained". Refer to verses 46, 876 and 877.

877 Only when the knowledge of the world ceases will the knowledge of Self be obtained. Such a glorious life illumined by Self is the true and natural life of the *jiva*; all other kinds [of so-called glorious life] will be useless for him.

Sri Muruganar: *Since the word 'world' [loka] literally means 'that which is seen', the phrase 'the knowledge of the world' used in this verse denotes objective knowledge, the seeing-knowledge which appears with triputi-bheda [the difference of the seer, the seeing and the seen]. The word 'illumined' here denotes the shining of the reality as unqualified knowledge [that is, as the adjunctless consciousness 'I am'].*