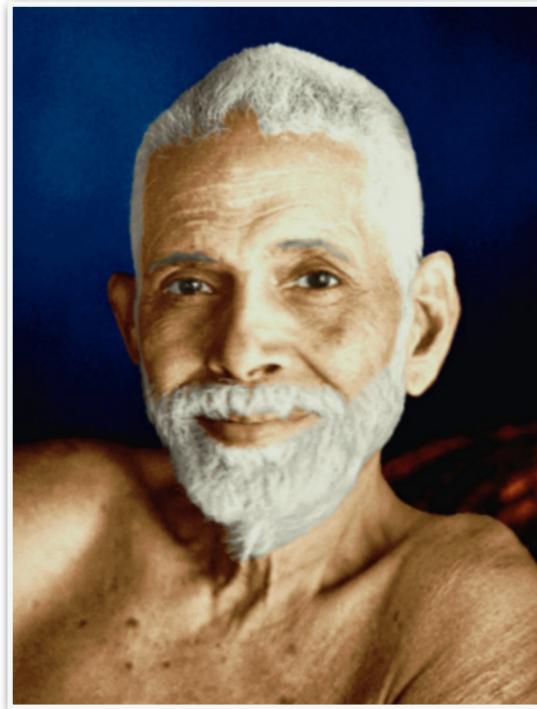


# Ulladu-Narpadu

*Forty Verses on Reality*

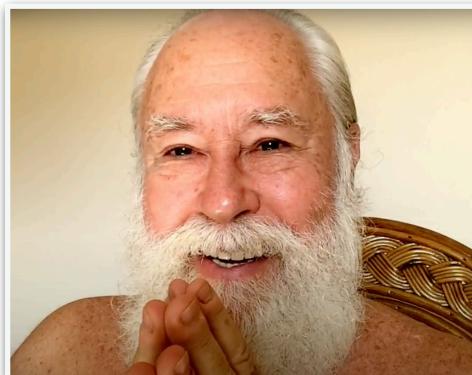


—by—

**Bhagavān Śrī Rāmana Mahārṣi**

—Translation by—

**S.S. Cohen and Sadhu Om**



—Editing and Commentary by—

**Ādyaśakti Svāmī Bhagavān**

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>3</b>
What is Awareness?	3
Immortality	6
<b>Verse 1: Reality</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Verse 2: Trinity</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Verse 3: 'I-I'</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Questions From Viewers</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Verse 4: The Seer</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Verse 5: Sheaths</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Verse 6: The World</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Verse 7: the Whole</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Verse 8: Worship</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Verse 9: the Peak</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Verse 10: Knowledge 1</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Verse 11: Knowledge 2</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Verse 12: Knowledge 3</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Verse 13: Knowledge 4</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Verse 14: Real Self</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Verse 15: Past &amp; Future</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Verse 16: We (Self)</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Verses 17-18: To Know</b>	<b>86</b>

<b>Verse 19: Fate</b>	93
<b>Verse 20: God</b>	97
<b>Verse 21: Seeing = Being</b>	102
<b>Verse 22: Realization</b>	106
<b>Verse 23: 'I Am'</b>	111
<b>Verse 24: Body or Soul</b>	115
<b>Verse 25: Magic</b>	120
<b>Verse 26: Everything</b>	125
<b>Verse 27: 'I am That'</b>	130
<b>Verse 28: Dive Deep</b>	135
<b>Verse 29: Experience</b>	140
<b>Verse 30: the Reality</b>	145
<b>Verse 31: the Yogi</b>	150
<b>Verse 32: Nonduality</b>	154
<b>Verse 33: One Self</b>	158
<b>Verse 34: Self-Abiding</b>	162
<b>Verse 35: Siddhis</b>	166
<b>Verse 36: 'I Am That'</b>	170
<b>Verse 37: the Tenth Man</b>	174
<b>Verse 38: Akarma</b>	179
<b>Verse 39: Liberation</b>	184
<b>Verse 40: Conclusion</b>	189

# Introduction

Namaste  One of the ironies of writing is that the Introduction, which is the first part of a book read, is usually the last thing written. Why? You don't really know what you're introducing until it's done!

In this case, the material was assembled from transcriptions of videos made years ago—long enough that I had mostly forgotten their content. I was pleasantly surprised to review them. I found that five-years-ago me really knew a thing or two!

But the real value of this book, of course, is that it's based on Bhagavān Śrī Rāmana Mahārṣi's magnificent Tamil classic, *Ulladu-Narpadu*. The meaning of the title will be explained fully in the text, so I won't define it here.

Much has been written on and about *Ulladu-Narpadu*, especially in the context of Advaita and Tiruvannamalai. Who am I to join that elevated discussion? You see, by inclination and intent I am not a member of any of the various cults derived from Rāmana's life and teaching. That makes me an outsider, and in that *milieu*, outsiders are looked down upon rather scornfully by the elite insiders.

In fact, one gets the distinct impression that they wish we didn't exist—because that is certainly the way they behave. In the five years I lived more or less full-time in Tiruvannamalai, not one of the Rāmana cult members offered their association or friendship.

I view that as a complement, an endorsement of authenticity.

People who rely on organizations to navigate life are seldom fond of independent, broadminded free-thinkers. One never knows when we are going to question prevailing beliefs, think outside the box, or—most bothersome of all—question the authority or integrity of the leaders.

The life and teaching of Bhagavān Śrī Rāmana Mahārṣi is the rarest of gems. For he is offering, quite literally, the solution to all the problems of life. The

prime duty of the disciples and followers of such a great teacher is to protect and preserve the teaching and reputation of the Master, without caring for their own personal benefit.

Thus I found the atmosphere in and around Tiruvannamalai quite disturbing. For I saw those who were responsible for preserving Rāmanā's teaching, instead changing it to suit popular opinion. And I saw those charged with protecting his legacy misusing it for their own economic profit and social advantage. And even though the intelligent, educated circles in Tiruvannamalai were well aware of this, they kept quiet because everyone was making so much money.

My response to this was to keep my head down, dive deep into Rāmanā's teaching and realize it for myself. For the opportunity to do so is fast disappearing. In another generation or so, I doubt whether it will be possible to penetrate the screen of disinformation and arrive at a clear understanding of Rāmanā's intent.

If it is possible at all, it will be by independent study, at a distant remove from the various deviant cults and groups that have grown up around the teaching. Of course, the Internet is ideal for this. Thus I set myself the task of making video series on Rāmanā's important books, especially *Ulladu-Narpadu* and *Upadeśa-Undiyār*.

That is now complete, and much more as well. I strongly urge readers, viewers and hearers of this work to take direct shelter of Rāmanā's teaching and work it out for themselves. For the various cult groups promoting themselves as representing this teaching, as far as I can tell, have deviated from it substantially in important ways.

*Ulladu-Narpadu* bears repeated reading and hearing. You probably won't get it on the first pass. We link to several versions of each video so you can access them in whatever way is most convenient. There are certainly mistakes herein: I make no claim of perfection, only to being perfectly mySelf.

Śrī Ādyasakti Svāmī Bhagavān  
Negombo, Sri Lanka 2022  
Āūṁ tat sat

# Preface

## What is Awareness?

[Download Ulladu-Narpadu](#) complete text

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

*Namaste*  Welcome to our series on *Ulladu-Narpadu*. *Ulladu-Narpadu* means '40 Verses on Reality'. These are verses written by Bhagavān Śrī Rāmana Mahārṣi, over a period of several years apparently; later on collated into a book, and arranged in sections according to topic. Thus, *Ulladu-Narpadu* was never intended to be an anthology or a philosophical work in itself; it was simply composed of verses that occurred spontaneously to Rāmana; then he wrote them down, and they were collected later. So it does have that weakness that it's not all one piece. It wasn't conceived as a comprehensive work on philosophy or on Rāmana's viewpoints, but it just kind of happened. Nevertheless *Ulladu-Narpadu* is considered one of the seminal works on Rāmana's views, and it really does have a lot of good stuff in it. Rather than try to introduce it any further, I'm going to jump right into the Prefatory Verses:

**"Without awareness of Reality, can Reality exist?  
Because this awareness-reality, itself free from thought,  
exists as the source of all thoughts,  
it is called Heart. How to know it?  
To be as it is (thought-free) in the Heart, is to know it."**

First of all, let's talk about awareness—awareness, not consciousness: there's a distinction. And the distinction between awareness and consciousness is that awareness does not necessarily have an object. Consciousness always has an object—consciousness *of* something—and consciousness is basically of the six senses: that is, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touch, and the mind. And of course the mind, the last one, is the most important, because it's through consciousness of the mind that we get most of our ideas about reality—whether they're true or not is another thing!

The mind, of course—like any abstract entity, such as an organization or bureaucracy—exists mainly to perpetuate itself; so the mind is going to tell us what it thinks we need to hear not to get rid of it. Because actually it's perfectly possible to exist quite happily without one. Why do we really need the mind? Well, the mind is sort of like a cinema show, or movie theater in Western language. In a movie theater you have a screen, and you have a projector, and then you sit there in the dark, and the projector throws pictures on the screen, one after another, and from those pictures we construct a narrative, a story, as if it was actually happening. And of course it's all an illusion, it's literally smoke and mirrors, just light and shadow on a screen.

This is very similar to what we call consciousness. Now, consciousness has three phases: they are called waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, and in all three of those we are aware of something. To use the illustration again of the movie theater, it's like in waking consciousness we're viewing one movie called waking life. And then that's over, we go to sleep, and then we dream, and we dream another movie called sleep or dreams. And then when we enter dreamless sleep, it's like the projector shuts down, and we're left sitting there in the dark, with nothing to look at. We're still conscious of the screen, but the screen is blank—that's the only difference. Otherwise, the screen is still there, the projector is still there, there are plenty of movies up in the projector room, waiting to be shown... but the projector is just turned off for a while. Then after some time the projector turns on, we go back into the dream movies, and then we come out into so-called waking consciousness. But is waking consciousness really awake? Not usually. Because, in most cases, we are not aware of awareness, we are not conscious of being conscious—in other words, we're not aware of ourselves.

What are we really, if not awareness, if not the source of consciousness? And what is this awareness? What is it really? Every time you ask a scientist or philosopher what is consciousness, they'll jump into a whole complicated expression with lots of big, long words and complicated ideas—which is another way of saying they don't know. Because if you really know something, you can explain it very simply, directly, and practically. So, what is awareness? Awareness is a space where things show up. That's it, that's all you need to know! It's a space, isn't it? It can be small, or large, or in between. But however you slice it—if it's possible to slice it—awareness is a space, and stuff shows up in it, and when they do you're aware of them—that's it!

When awareness has things to be aware of, it becomes consciousness, and when awareness is no longer interested in looking for things to be aware of, to be conscious of, then it's pure awareness.

Now, let's take a look at this pure awareness. What is a space? A space is an emptiness. It's like you say, "I want to rent a space in this building." Well, how much space do you want? 1,000 square feet, 2,000 square feet? 10, 20? How much space do you want to rent? Because that's what you're renting: you're renting the area inside of the walls.

Then there's this same question about awareness. How much awareness do you want? How much space do you want? How much emptiness do you want? Well, it's really hard to measure emptiness, because there is nothing. In emptiness, there's nothing to use as a unit of comparison. See, just like if you have to measure something—and I've seen carpenters do this all the time—if you don't have a ruler handy, use your arm. Just put a mark on one finger, and another mark here, when you can measure it, and then you can take it back to the shop and cut a piece to fit. But in emptiness there's nothing: there's no body, no mind, no senses, no matter, no energy, no time, no space, no dimension, or even the concept of dimension—in fact, no concept at all.

You see, for awareness to be aware, it has to be like a mirror, it has to simply reflect whatever is put in front of it. That means it can't have any preconceptions about what that is. That's not awareness' job, preconceptions; that's the mind's job, and that's a whole other subject. But awareness is like a perfect mirror that simply reflects whatever is put in front of it—or rather into it, because it's a space. So, does this mean awareness is a one-dimensional space? A two-dimensional, a three-dimensional space? Four, five? 17? 23? How many dimensions does this space have? Well, the only way to know is to put something of that dimensionality into it. There's no way to know natively, or by itself.

This is the difference between consciousness and awareness: awareness is that space of being which has nothing in it, nothing to measure or to bound it, no way to conceive or determine its size or nature, so for all practical purposes it has no nature. Only when you put something in it, then it starts to

reveal the qualities not of itself but of the object, and then you have consciousness.

Let me ask you this: can you tell the difference between one emptiness and another? Can you tell the difference between one awareness and another? Of course, the answer is no. Every awareness, being a space of emptiness, is absolutely identical to every other awareness, to every other space of emptiness. In other words, this proves the theory of Advaita, that there is no difference—at all—between you and me and “God” and “the universe” or whatever. Awareness is awareness, space is space, emptiness is emptiness, and there’s no way to cut and slice it into pieces.

When somebody says, “Awareness...” Who is aware? Just think over this a little bit, if you want to blow your mind: who is aware? Once you have a space of emptiness, who is that? Is that the little, tiny, conditioned ego that gets born, and then struggles through life, and suffers and dies, and maybe gets reborn or whatever? Or, is it something more than that? Is there something bigger that’s simply being reflected in this limited, conditioned consciousness that comes along with a body? In other words, is there any such thing as a number of different emptinesses? Or, is it just one biiiig empty space...

## Immortality

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

*Ulladu-Narpadu* was not planned; it doesn’t have an intentional structure. The structure came afterwards, after all the verses were collated, collected together and put in order. Even though that’s a fact, still *Ulladu-Narpadu* is one of the definitive works on the philosophy and outlook of Śrī Rāmana; and the reason that’s so, or the reason that it’s possible, is that a sage does not live in time; a sage lives in eternity, in consciousness, in silence. Not in an ego, but lives as the Supreme, as Brahman. In other words, he is not limited by ordinary linear time; it’s not something that conditions him the way it does an unrealized being. With that little introduction, let’s read the second Prefatory Verse:

**"Those who have an infinite fear of death  
take refuge in the Feet of the supreme Lord  
Who is without birth and death.  
Can the thought of death occur to those  
who have destroyed their 'I' and 'mine'  
and have become immortal?"**

This highlights a very important theme in Rāmana's teaching, which is that death is a thought. Time is a construct of our minds, and whatever exists in time has a beginning and an end. This is unavoidable. Whatever is born must also die; that is the law. And it is so because of the three phases of time: past, present, and future. These are all just thoughts; they only exist in the mind, they don't really exist. And to the Absolute, to the Supreme, to the Lord, certainly past, present, and future are illusory. There only is what is, and what is, is Him. And what He is, is Awareness, as we discussed above.

To Awareness there is no birth, there is no time, there is no death, there are no conditions. I like the way the *Rbhu-gītā* explains it: Brahman, or the Self, is a solid chunk of consciousness or awareness, a solid block of awareness. If you can imagine a solid block of awareness, there is no inside, no outside, no object, no subject: the only thing to be aware of is awareness. This is the Absolute, this is the ground of being, this is the Supreme, this is the Lord, Brahman.

Of course, from our conditioned point of view there are personalities and beings, and God manifests in the world to perform specific tasks. The way the *Vedas* express this is 'scheduled incarnations for specific functions.' Those personalities, although they have forms and names and activities, are not conditioned by this material world; they don't see things in the same way, and neither do the sages who have realized God. Those who have realized God also see Reality as an infinite, solid block of awareness. They don't see things in terms of 'I', 'mine', time, death—all these things are foreign to them. They have transcended them, because they have transcended time itself.

But for one in conditioned existence, there has to be an object of worship which is transcendent, otherwise there's no way out of the birth and death in the material world of time. Cohen, in his translation here, has titled this verse

"Fear of death is the driving force behind the quest for immortality." The spiritual path is nothing less than the quest for immortality. Why? Because we see death.

Actually, everyone knows this. Everyone knows that at some point they're going to die. Usually this awareness comes around the same time of life as sexual maturity, around the age of 16 or so. One realizes "Oh my God, I'm going to have to die! Everybody else before me has died, so there's no way out of it. I'm going to have to go through this too!"

And it's true: 'I', the ego, the personality, the body has to die, and it will die. However, the Self is transcendent, the Self is beyond all this by its very nature. But in the beginning, we have to have a form, we have to have a person, we have to have, if you will, a communications terminal to relate to, to plot our course out of this conditioned existence to the Absolute, and that is God. Now, God, as you know, comes in all shapes and sizes, all different forms. I don't take this all so seriously. It's beautiful, and it's a great story, the drama of the fear of death, and salvation from it! It's a wonderful drama, but it's not something that has to be taken dead serious—that comes from the ego.

Life tries to get us to work very hard, to build up the ego and the personality, to accumulate money, acquire different titles and designations, to gain status in the community, and so on and so forth—you know all that nonsense. The problem is the harder we work for that, and the more successful we are in that quest to be a success in the outer world, then that means the more of a failure we are when it comes to the inner world and death.

And now we see, this whole thing of avoiding death or postponing death has become such a fetish! The people are ready to bankrupt their whole families just to hang on to another few days of miserable existence, full of drugs and tubes and operations, and all kinds of nasty things. I can't understand it. When it's time to go, and the body is disintegrating, it's just time to move on—let it go, drop it, man! It's not worth making yourself miserable, and making everyone around you miserable, just to hang on to another few days or weeks of this miserable material life—it's not worth it!

Of course, I do understand that to have this kind of view, you already have to know that there's something better, there's something beyond this life, and it's wonderful! But it's not something that you can discover overnight. The person who is successful in transcending death doesn't do it on their deathbed—by that time, it's too late to do anything.

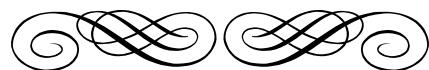
There's a saying in India that "A saint in truth is a saint in youth." In other words, the urge towards Self-realization has to begin while one is still young enough to learn and change. Because it's a radical thing, it's a complete rebellion, it's a complete revolution against the aims and values of society. Because you will not become a success in ordinary society if your highest priority is working on yourself to transcend death. How can it be? Everything that society wants us to do only sends us toward death! It only makes death that much more real, that much more of a problem. And all the things that we do for transcendence of death lead us away from success in the material world.

Instead of hoarding our money, we should give in charity, to those who deserve it, and those who don't deserve it. Instead of piling up investments for our old age, we should instead do nice worship of the Supreme Lord, in whatever manner or flavor or style that we have faith in. We should spend time chanting prayers and *mantras*. We should go to temples, not just for the ceremonies and the culture, which are nice, but the holy places and temples are where people of spiritual knowledge hang out. Those people can be found, identified, and we can approach them. Because we need to learn this art. And it's a great art; it takes many years to reach its perfection. So this art of Self-Realization is really about transcending death.

Once when I was a Buddhist monk I wrote a blog post, and the title of the blog post was *Die Now, Avoid the Rush*. In other words, at the time of death, when the body is falling apart, the mind is coming apart at the seams, that's not the time to start your Self-Realization process, that's not the time to start trying to dismantle the ego and so on. The time to start is now, or as soon as possible, as soon as you realize the necessity for it. But of course, like I said, the society puts so many obstacles in the way of this quest that only the person who is willing to sacrifice and give up their chances of material success can be successful.

This is why Jesus said, “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than a rich man to attain the kingdom of God.” How is that? Because the rich man has spent his time accumulating wealth and power, and that is not going to get you anywhere when it comes to spiritual life; that is not going to help you at the time of death. And death is coming, but we don’t know when. It could come today, tonight, tomorrow, next week, next year, 10 years from now or 100—we don’t know. Nor do we know *how* it’s going to come. So, we have to be prepared for death now, and prepared for it in any way that it might occur. And not plan to spend the last few days and weeks of our life in a futile struggle against death, but to accept it with grace and dignity, and depart this world nobly.

And the only way we can do that is if we transcend this ego now. That which is destined for death—that which is born—must also die. So we have to transcend it, we have to find another platform, another plane of existence. And of course this is the Self, this is pure awareness. This is the last verse of the Preface, and the next one will be the first verse of the body of the book. The rest of this book deals with this science of the Self, and how we can attain freedom from death, and guarantee of immortality even in this life.



# Verse 1: Reality

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Here's where we start the actual 40 verses that are the body of the work; let's just jump right into it!

**"From our perception of the world  
there follows acceptance of a unique First Principle:  
a common cause or Supreme Lord,  
possessing various powers.  
Pictures of name and form, the person who sees,  
the screen on which he sees,  
and the light by which he sees:  
He Himself is all of these."**

Awareness is everything. What's going on in this verse is that Rāmanā is accepting the fact that most people perceive the world as real, and he's starting from that point. Let's say we are in the world, and perceiving it as real in itself. Naturally this brings up the question: where did all this come from? I mean, look at all this stuff, this incredible variety of phenomena!

First we have to understand that the world in and of itself is not real. Why do I say that? Because the highest standard of reality is that something exists eternally, both in the past and the future, and without change. If something comes into existence at a certain point in time, then for sure it's going to go out of existence again, so it's not fully real. Also, if something changes—beyond coming and going—if it changes in the middle, it's also not fully real. Only that which is changeless and eternal is real enough to serve as the First Cause: the Lord, the Creator, the source of everything. In other words, as long as we accept the existence of the world, as long as we accept the existence of myself as an ego being in the world, and an identity which is derived from the world, then we have to accept that there is something higher. Because the existence of this world, and all the phenomena in it, including ourselves, is only relative; it's temporary and changeable.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, "You cannot step in the same river twice." What does he mean by that? That between one step and the next step the river has flowed so much downstream, and so that river is gone, and now there's a different river there—the river has changed. This world changes constantly. Just look at what science has revealed about matter: matter is nothing but a conglomeration of atoms and subatomic particles that are vibrating at some incredible frequency. Changing, constantly changing, vibrating, moving, going in and out of different quantum states; in some cases going in and out of existence, on subatomic, micro-timescales. Even this planet, even the Sun, or the galaxy in which we live came into existence at a certain point, went through lots and lots of changes, and at some point in time it's going to disappear.

The cause of all this has to be something higher. It has to be something beyond these temporary changes, beyond this process of creation, maintenance and destruction. Therefore, this implies the existence of an entity of a higher nature than this world, which we call God, or the Supreme, or the Lord, or Tao, or any number of names—it's not an issue what we call it. But the fact is that if there is the existence of this world, there has to be the existence of something higher that caused it. That's a very, very simple inference from the fact that all of this exists. This may seem like Philosophy 101, but to a lot of people it's really something that makes them pause for thought.

If this thing exists—this God, this First Cause—then what would be Its nature? First of all, It would have to be eternal: never coming into existence, and never going out of existence, being always, and without change. Now, this becomes a difficulty for the theists. The theists want to dress God up in a personality, give Him a name and form, and say that He has all these activities. But, that would mean that He has to change. Because to act is, first of all, to have an intention, a desire, and then to start something, do some kind of work, and then finish it. So all these would require God to change, to have a personality, a form, a name, to have intentions and actions—and that brings God down the scale from absolute to relative. Therefore, we cannot accept this as the final conclusion. There has to be something higher than a personality. Even if there is such—even if there is an old man with a beard up in the sky, creating the world and all this—there has to be something higher. What could that be?

Of course Rāmaṇa gives the clue already in the Preface, where he says, “Awareness is everything.” And how do we square that with our experience? It’s very simple: first of all, the relative existence of this world is explained by the example of the rope and the snake. We see a curling shape in the twilight, and at first we think “Oh my God, it’s a snake!” but then on closer inspection we find “Oh, it’s just a rope.” What happened to the snake? There it was, all ready to bite us...

I remember one time I was hiking through the woods in the middle of the night, it was very dark. I had to get from one place to another, and I was staying way out in the woods at that time, so I was walking along a narrow path, on either side there was a ditch so I couldn’t go to the side, I could only go forward or back. And I came to a tree, and something hit me in the head, and in that split second I saw, like, vampire bats with glowing red eyes... I wasn’t high or anything; it was just my mind! So, after I calmed myself down, I ran back about 50 yards, and then I went, “Wait a minute: It’s the middle of winter. There can’t be any bats out here, that’s crazy! What really was that?” So I went back, soberly, carefully to the tree, and I investigated, and what did I find? Just some loose branches and old dry leaves that had happened to be at about head level, and when I brushed it with my hat, the leaves rattled and moved, and that’s what I saw! But the mind made up this whole story.

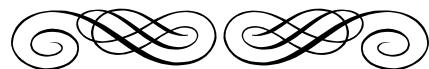
The same thing is going on with the world: we have a few little sense perceptions, really not very much at all, and out of that we conjure up this whole tale about God and the world and *karma* and ‘me’ and ‘I’, and ‘you’ and ‘them’, and this and that and the other thing, and nations and countries and politics and religions and, oh my God: all this stuff! But it’s just the froth of the bubbles of the ocean of the mind, breaking on the shore of the world. That’s all it is.

Now, do you think when there are waves breaking on the beach, by the ocean, do you think that if some of the bubbles in those waves maybe collide with each other, and maybe one breaks, and then the other one then takes over its spot—do you think that affects the ocean at all? No, of course not. There’s nothing about that phenomenon that could affect the ocean. The ocean is such a bigger entity, such a more powerful force than those tiny little bubbles.

Similarly, do you really think that our hallucinatory realities of “I am Mister So-and-so, and my bank balance is such-and-such, and I have this position and this title, and I’m married to So-and-so, and we have this family, and we own this property... And then maybe I get into a fight with somebody else, and then I’m driven to bankruptcy, or maybe even suicide, or something else terrible happens...” Do you think that makes any difference to the ultimate reality? You’d be dreaming if you did! No.

All this imaginary story that we make up about life and the world is really of no consequence at all, of no account at all. But we have to see that in the light of the existence of God, or the Absolute, or actually the Awareness, Brahman, the pure consciousness at the basis of reality, all this is just a fairy tale. It’s something we make up, like the example I gave in the comments on the Preface last time: the projector and the movie screen in the theatre.

So, by meditation, by practice of Self-realization, we can rise above this illusion, we can drop out of the story, we can stop creating the hallucination of the conditioned reality, and we can become aware of actual reality, which is eternal and changeless. That is pure Awareness, or Brahman.



# Verse 2: Trinity

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Verse Two is very interesting:

**“All religions postulate three fundamentals:  
the world, the soul, and God.  
But these three are only manifestations of the one Reality.  
One can say “The three are really three”  
only so long as the ego lasts.  
Therefore to transcend the ego  
and remain in one’s own Being is the perfect State.”**

This is another wonderful verse—actually, they’re all wonderful! The last verse talked about the world, and the unreality of the world. The world is impermanent, and doesn’t have real existence because its existence is only derivative of some prior First Cause. And because of this it can’t be accepted as absolutely real. Nevertheless, most people see the world as the world—they see it as permanent and real. And why is that? Because the nature of the seer is similar to the nature of the seen. In other words, if the world is illusory, if it’s just temporary and relative and so on, then what kind of being does it require to see that unreality as real?

The ego, or what most people accept as their self, is just an unreal as the world! And it has to be that way. It has to be, because only an unreal seer would see an unreal world as being real. But these are the triad, the inescapable result of being in illusion, or being attached to illusory being, being in the world. One of our first video series way back in 2011, was [Being in the World](#), and it goes into this from the standpoint of existentialism. Now, existentialism is very interesting, because it’s based on experience: phenomenology, or observation of one’s own experience. And this is very close to the principle of meditation advocated by Rāmaṇa, to look into one’s own self, one’s own consciousness, and say, “Where does this ‘I’ arise from? Where does this ‘mine’, where do these thoughts come from? Where do they

originate?" and by looking into that one thought, "I am", one can transcend it.

But what you see when you first look at the self, you think "Oh, this is me! This is 'I', Mister So-and-so, and I have this designation on my job, or in my community. I am a this, I am a that. I am somebody's husband, or somebody's wife, or somebody's girlfriend or boyfriend; I am the owner of this property and that car and this thing and that thing." Isn't it so? That's how we think when we're naive, when we don't know anything about spiritual life, or the philosophy of reality. But the more we look into this, the more we meditate on this "I am. I am this, I am that, I am so-and-so, I am such-and-such," we start to see that this is actually just an illusion. It's actually just words, and we're attached to those words, and we think those words are real—in other words, that words are things, or that symbols are reality.

Remember when you graduated from school? You got to put on robes and a funny hat, and walk down the aisle, and then say a bunch of silly words, and then you got this piece of paper that says, 'Now you're a graduate.' "Yay!" everybody throws their hats up in the air. Remember how you felt? It was something, wasn't it? It was a thing! "Now I am a graduate, and I can put these letters after my name, and this is who I am." But actually, who you are has nothing to do with that, nothing to do with it whatsoever. It's only because we accept the mind as real, we accept thoughts as real, we accept words and symbols as being real, therefore we also accept the world as being real, even though the world that we perceive is mostly just words and symbols, names and forms. So, if we're going to attain emancipation, freedom, liberation, *mokṣa*—whatever you want to call it—we have to look into this.

As we mentioned, the triad—which is accepted by almost all schools of thought, certainly by all religions and all spiritual paths, with very few exceptions—is the world, the soul, and God. We went deeply into the unreality of the world last time, but what about the soul? Isn't the soul real? Isn't it eternal? Isn't it the source of consciousness and so on? Isn't it actually the source of life, and so on and so on? The *Vedas* go into this in great detail, how the soul arises, and how it's eternal. Even though it comes into being, or into the world at a certain point, it's actually eternal and so on and so on and so on.

If you really think about all of these ideas, they don't add up, they don't make sense. If the soul is eternal, without beginning, then why does it come into the world at a certain point in time? Why is there a beginning to life? If the soul was eternal, then life would also be eternal, consciousness would also be eternal, but we see that this is not so. Consciousness of something only lasts as long as that phenomenon lasts, or as long as our intention lasts, and then we get interested in something else. Or that thing ends, and that consciousness is finished. Or, some theories are that the soul lives in the heavens or with God, in full knowledge, and then at a certain point falls down into material existence. Well, if the soul is in full knowledge, then why does it fall down? How is that possible? And then there's a bunch of hand-waving and mumbo-jumbo to explain how that happens, but it's not very satisfying. It's not simple, it's not direct, so by Occam's razor it's not true. Occam's razor is the principle of logical deduction that says if there are two explanations for something, the simpler is probably more true.

Then, what is the simple explanation? The simple explanation is that the 'soul' or individual identity is part of the world, and that it has a similar origin. Now, we mentioned God. God is the third member of the triad, and God gets the blame for everything, doesn't he? God is the prime cause, he's the beginning of everything, he starts everything going. He's the Creator, and he maintains everything, and he creates all the universal laws, the law of *karma* and so on. He's a busy man, isn't He? No wonder he's so cross and angry all the time! He has so much work to do!

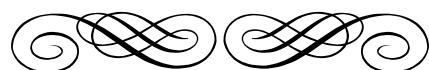
This is actually just a complicated explanation for a very simple and uncomplicated situation. Just look at your experience: what is our experience of life? Our experience is that we are aware at all times, but we're only conscious when we have an object for our consciousness, and usually that object is the body. When we're in deep sleep, we're not aware of the body, and so we say, "I was unconscious." No dreams, no perceptions, no memories; the only thing you know is that you were in deep sleep, and then you come out of it, and you're in the world of dreams. In the world of dreams you have a body, you have a mind, you have feelings, activities and so on, but that's also very temporary. And when you come out of that, and you 'wake up' in the 'real world'. Then again the body becomes the definition of who I am. We see everything in relation to the body, we evaluate everything, good

or bad or whatever, in terms of the body, in terms of bodily sensation and so on, or the concept of the body, our situational awareness, how we're doing in life. But, in order to see this illusory world as being real, that means this awareness of 'I am the body' must also be unreal—and so it is.

If awareness is eternal, then this awareness of the body comes and goes. The consciousness of the body has a beginning and an end, therefore it's illusory. The ego, which is based on the thought 'I am the body' or 'I am', is also illusory, and there's a very simple way we can prove this to ourselves, which is to trace back this thought 'I am' to its source, to its origin. The next time you have a thought, like 'This is my camera', whose camera is that? Well, that's 'my' camera. Well, who am I? Well, I am... I am...

Where does that thought come from? 'I am' is not just a thought, it's also a sensation, a specific gestalt, a combination of thought and feeling, a moment in which we become aware of a whole context, a whole situation, and that context is defined by the thought 'I am this body.' Find out where that thought originates, and then something very interesting happens: the whole mind disappears. And this is one of the most powerful and beautiful meditations.

Now, we're not talking about the words 'I am' in the mind; we're talking about the sensation, the gestalt 'I am.' Find out the origin of that, not just by thinking about it but by actually feeling it, and tracing it back, tracing back this sensation of 'I am' to its source, and you will have found the source of you. This is the meditation that Rāmaṇa prescribes to almost everyone: how to stop the mind, how to make the illusion of the mind go away. In the next verse we'll talk more about this meditation and its effects, and how to get the tremendous benefits that come from it.



# Verse 3: ‘I-I’

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Now we're going to look into Verse Three. This is when it really starts to get good!

**“What use is it to debate  
whether the world is real or unreal,  
sentient or insentient, pleasant or unpleasant?  
That State where, having given up the objective outlook,  
one knows one’s Self and loses all notions  
either of unity or duality, of oneself and the ego,  
is agreeable to all.”**

Everybody is looking for something. All our activities, all our desires, all our hopes and dreams, our thoughts, our plans, etc. are based on this universal impetus towards Self-realization. We may know it, or we may not know it; it doesn't make any difference—we can't stop, until we attain it. Suffering is the goad. In Vedic culture there's one *mudrā*, *Aṅkūṣa-mudrā*, which is like this (photo at right):

No, I'm not giving you the finger! It's indicative of an elephant driver's goad, which is a pole with a sharp end that he uses to get the elephant to move, sort of like spurs on a horse rider. Because of this goad of suffering, or ambition, desire, we can't stop, we can't help ourselves. We have to act, we have to move, we have to do something to better our condition—as long as we have a condition, as long as we are conditioned.



Let's look into this verse a little deeper. First he said, “What use is it to debate?” My level of realization, my level of insight, my level of consciousness is going to be different from yours and from everybody else's. We're all unique individuals; we see things in our own ways. What use is it to debate? Are we really going to change anybody else's mind? The only way

we can force someone to do things is by coercion, by some kind of force; and of course that immediately rules out any change in consciousness, or any change in outlook. So the greatest teachers, the master teachers of the world, have never used force.

Now, at a lower level of religious teaching there are moral principles: rewards and punishments to get people to do, or believe, certain things. But these are inferior. Why? Because they use force and coercion. Rather than allowing a person to work on themselves, and giving them methods by which they can get deeper insights, the religions try to set a code of what's right and what's wrong, what's good and what's bad, and force people to fit it. This is the Procrustean bed of morality.

Procrustes was an ancient king, and he had this bed. And you had to fit in the bed. If you were too long, he would chop things off until you were short enough; and if you were too short, he would stretch you until you fit! Either way, it wasn't a very nice, pleasant stay. And the same is true of morality: morality is man-made laws. The religionists say they come from God, but it's really from our tastes. And my taste is different from your taste, which is different from everybody else's! Because we're all unique, we're all individual, we're all at a particular stage of advancement in our march toward Self-realization.

The real source of motivation, as we've talked about in another series, is Savitṛ-Śakti, which is mentioned in the *Gāyatrī-mantra*: *tat savitur varenyam*. "We accept this Savitṛ, this Śakti as our master." Why? Because it's the source of our life. The very source of our life drives us towards Self-realization, if we're honest. If we're not honest, if we're insincere, that's another story. We're not trying to reach or talk with those people. We only want to talk about and with people who are sincere. So we don't offer any prizes, we're not having a raffle this week, we're not doing any fundraising. Because you can't force anybody to do anything, and you can't create motivational factors without distortion. That's why we don't try to sell these videos, even if we could. What's the use of it? Or, we don't try to give expensive workshops or seminars or counseling. Because even if people were to go for it, it would create some bias in the presentation. As soon as you know that somebody is paying money for you to say a certain thing, then you're going to say that

thing just to get money; and there are very, very few people who would be immune from that kind of motivation.

As soon as somebody starts to charge for knowledge about Self-realization, it's a sure sign that they are motivated, that they are not fully Self-realized themselves. And of course, the greatest masters never charged. In fact, my *ādi-guru* supported me for many years: I was able to live in his temples, and I had complete freedom. Because he understood that I was after the inner teaching, the esoteric side of the teaching, and not the exoteric, religious side.

What we're talking about here is 'why should we debate with others, why should we argue?' Why should we give explanations and explications? Why do we do our videos and take so much trouble? Actually it's no trouble at all. For me, the reason I do this is to help make my thinking clear to myself. If I can't explain something clearly and simply, it means I don't understand it, I haven't realized it myself. So I make these videos to help my own comprehension of this material given by Rāmanā.

Because if we put it into practice—not just read about it, not just think about it, not debate or discuss or argue about it, but actually **do** it—then we get the result. And what is that result? "That State, where having given up the objective outlook..." What is the objective outlook? 'I am.' Because, as the *Rbhū-gītā* points out, as soon as you have 'is', it implies 'that'. 'I am that' is a complete sentence. "I am a man, I am an old guy. I am from America. I am silly sometimes." These are all statements of being.

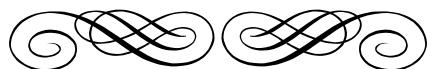
And, as we have gone over many times in these series on this channel, being requires triplexity: trinity, triad. There are always three factors involved in being: the subject, the object, and the predicate. The subject is the one who is being or becoming, the object is what he is being or becoming, and the predicate is how, or the relation: either the action, or the relation, or the quality, or some descriptive phrase. So, as soon as I say, "I am," 'I am' requires an object: "I am that." That's why the *Rbhū-gītā* says, "As soon as there is a little bit of mind, it becomes everything." As soon as we admit even 'am,' "I am", then it begs the questions, "What are you? Who are you? Where are you?" and so on.

We don't even want to go that far; we want to get rid of the objective case entirely. So we can't even say 'I am,' we can only say 'I', 'I-I.' And this is where the expression that Rāmanā uses all the time, 'I-I,' comes from. It's an ontological statement of being, beyond being and becoming. Our language isn't equipped to actually discuss this. We're taking language beyond its actual realm of usefulness and meaningfulness. To say, "I am being beyond being and becoming." "What?" "Ah, you know what I mean, right?"

What it means is there is a state, and it's neither a state of being nor a state of nonbeing. Because one who is in this state, this original state, is beyond being and becoming, beyond being and nonbeing, beyond action, beyond even consciousness; but is in a state of pure awareness, and there is no object to this awareness, only the subject 'I,' so 'I-I.' Not 'I am that,' or not even just 'I am,' but 'I-I.' That's why Rāmanā says the primary *mantra* is 'I.'

And we find this in practice to be true; that as soon as you say, 'I am' it begs the question: 'I am this, I am that, I am somebody, I am something or other.' That's the objective mood. But if we just say, 'I... I... I...' the mind stops cold. It doesn't have anywhere to go. This is the pure, subjective nature of real being, unconditioned being, unconditioned awareness, unconditioned nonduality. And this is Self-realization, this is the actual aim of Advaita. And in this state one feels, as *Bhagavad-gītā* says, *na socati na kañcati*: "No hankering or lamentation." The natural love and bliss come out, because this is our real nature: 'I-I'

This state, beyond all notions of duality or unity of oneself or the ego, is agreeable to all. Nobody has ever been found who didn't like this state! Because it's just totally pleasant. Another quotation from *Rbhu-gītā* says, "I am amiable." When you know that all is Self, (and we'll get into how the person in this state perceives the world and other beings a little later) when one is in this state, one sees all as Self. There is no object; there is only subject, and because of that there is full affinity, full affirmation of being, in all states and conditions. Because one is aware of the root, 'I-I.'



# Questions From Viewers

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

This chapter is about questions that some of our viewers emailed me. I'm always really happy to get questions, because it means people are paying attention: they're taking it seriously, they're actually trying to implement the teaching; and of course that's how you get the benefits! So it's in everyone's interest to clear up any questions that you have, either by posting them in the comments, or just send me an email, and of course I will protect your anonymity.

## How do you do it?

The first question is from RJ, my old friend. We were talking the other day, and I was telling him my experiences, and he said, "Wow, that's interesting... But, how do you do it? How do you do it?" This is one of the most frequent questions that I get asked. It doesn't occur to me that it's very difficult to put this teaching into action. But then, I have training in physics, and for many years I was a troubleshooting field service technician, later on I became a self-taught software and hardware engineer, digital logic engineer, so I was designing computer parts and stuff like this. It was never a problem for me to put theory into action. But I guess for people who don't have training or background in engineering, it could be a problem.

Let me tell you my story, as quickly as possible. Because I don't really know about anybody else; I only know about myself. So, it's only been about three months since I contacted Rāmanā's teaching, but those have been a really intense, really fast three months! In December I was feeling sick, I had a fever and I just couldn't get rid of it, and finally in desperation I went to see an astrologer. He turned out to be a really excellent astrologer, a real *brāhmaṇa*, a temple devotee, a temple priest, and I gave him my chart. I play around with astrology a little bit too, so we were talking about how when you read someone's chart, sometimes you go into a trance, and suddenly you can see

right through their chart and see their lives, and you can almost just reach right in and touch it, and understand exactly what's going on.

So he was reading my chart, and I saw him go into this trance, and he starts to tell me "You have very good fortune, you're up for liberation. You should go to a different place; you're in the wrong place. You should be in a fire place, a mountain place," and right away I said, "Tiruvannamalai!" and he said, "Yes, yes—that would be perfect!" I had been thinking of coming to Rāmana's place, but various things kept me away from it, made me doubtful and this and that. But then, when I got this news, I said, "Okay. I'm really going to do it," so he said, "Be ready to give up everything, be ready to lose everything, whatever it takes. Because that's what *mokṣa* means, that's what liberation means."

So I came here to Tiruvannamalai, and at first I started chanting Gāyatrī *mantra*, and that whole [Gāyatri series](#) that I did recently came from that experience. I did a deep study on Gāyatrī, and I was also practicing it, chanting as far as possible, 24 hours a day, from the moment I woke up to the moment I went to sleep at night. That led to some very interesting experiences, which I'm not going to go into too much detail on, but just let me say that Gāyatī is like a fountainhead of bliss. It's a really beautiful *mantra*.

So, once Gāyatrī had purified my mind to a certain degree, I got very interested in Rāmana's practice of *vichārana*, self-inquiry. Self-inquiry means looking into "Who am I, what am I?" Not verbally, not intellectually, but experientially. So, I began to do this practice, and—trying to make a long story short—at first, I had to do it on the verbal level. Most people do I think, but then gradually it began to open up into experiential, and I began to glimpse a landscape of the silent mind, where the mind would just stop. And at first it took an effort of will, and that became like a strain, I started getting a feeling of tension in my head, as if I was almost going to get a headache or something like that. I said, "No, wait a minute. I'm trying too hard," so I backed off from that.

Then I remembered something that Rāmana said, that there are three stages of consciousness: waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, and that *samādhi* is like deep sleep plus awareness. So I started trying to access this state of deep

sleep, *susupti*, and at first I started sleeping a lot. But I was going into meditation, deep meditation—*nirvikalpa-samādhi*—and then going to sleep from that, and then waking up in it again, and meditating some more. So sometimes I would wake up two or three times at night, and just be in deep meditation—no senses, no thoughts—but it was still an effort of will. Finally, I’m not sure exactly what happened, but I mentioned in one of the last videos that I had kind of a mini death experience: my heart rate and blood pressure started going up, and I was feeling really weird, but I wasn’t worried at all, there was no fear; in fact, there was a kind of excitement, like “Oh wow, something new is happening! What’s this going to be like?”

And so I did what any intrepid adventurer would do: I took a nap! And when I woke up from the nap, something was different. I’m going to make any big claims, but definitely something had died. Since then I noticed specifically that I haven’t had any fear, at all, not even fear of death or anything—it’s been really wonderful. Then this experience of ‘I-I’ became accessible to me, and I started experiencing that on a regular basis. And I found it possible to stop thinking, stop the mind from chattering simply by meditating on ‘I-I,’ as I went over in the last video, how to do that, and it’s by changing our self-concept from the ego to pure Awareness. As long as the mind exists, at all, like *Rbhu-gītā* says, “As long as there’s even a little of the mind, it’ll become everything.” Because as soon as duality occurs, then all the stuff that comes along with it too. But then, when actual nonduality is... achieved? Experienced? These are all the wrong words, because they all refer to dualistic states. When you become ‘I-I’, not even ‘I am,’ just ‘I-I,’ then the experience of the Self is there. And it’s not an experience in terms of subject and object—our language makes it so hard to express these things!—but it’s simply being, the state of being ‘I-I,’ the real Self.

## How can I verify it?

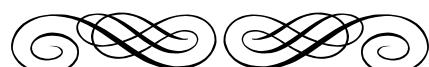
That leads us to our second question from Rick, RE—you know who you are! He says, “I’ve been practicing Rāmaṇa’s teaching for a couple of years, and I think I had an experience of the Self, but I’m not certain. How can I verify it?” Well, my answer to him is if you are really the Self—and you are the Self, you are nothing but the Self—you know when you have an authentic, valid experience. You know. Nobody has to tell you, you don’t have to go to some authority figure, to some “official” to verify your experience. You know. You

know whether it's real or not. And so, for those who haven't got to that point, knowing the Self, or being the Self is not an 'experience.' In an experience there is an experiencer, and then there's something that you experience. But that's not the case with being the Self, because in being the Self there is nobody—there's no ego, no mind, no experiencer—and there's no object to be experienced. 'I-I' means the Self, the Self being the Self. So you can't really see yourself. It's not like you see a light, or a glowing figure in the air or something like that. That's all mind-stuff. But when you are in the Self, you experience being I, the real Self, the unconditioned Self: pure Awareness without an object. And this has to be experienced to be understood.

It's not a matter of practice either. It's not like you can practice being 'I-I'; you simply have to **be** 'I-I,' based on your own understanding and realization of this Teaching. When you are being 'I-I,' you are perfectly aware of what's going on, and you know yourself that it's a genuine experience, you don't need anyone to validate it. But if you want, you can read in Rāmanā's teachings many, many descriptions of this state, and you check it yourself: was it a real experience, or was it Memorex? Was it a real experience, or was it something that you projected from your mind? You have to be honest with yourself; nobody can tell you. Because you can go and tell your story to somebody, and who knows, maybe it's in their interest, or they feel it's in their interest to tell you it was real, or it wasn't real, depending on what they want to know, what they want to see, what they want to hear.

Ultimately you are the Self; you are Brahman, you are the Knower. You know. You see. So verify it yourself.

That's all I have to say about these questions. Thank you very much, these are great questions! Keep them coming, and I'll do my best to help you understand this great teaching of Rāmanā.



# Verse 4: The Seer

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

I never know, when I sit down to do these, what I'm going to say. Sometimes, especially right in the beginning, I'll make some really funny mistake, and have to do it over again! This time it didn't happen, but I was ready to laugh if it did!

Before we get to the verse today, I want to thank Bhuvana, one of our viewers, a regular viewer, who referred me to the *Srī Rāmanopadeśa Noonmalai*, a book by Sadhu Om. This book is wonderful because it has the original text and word-by-word translations of the original work. I'm very pleased to get it, because it has much richer and deeper translations that bring out the natural ambiguity of the Tamil language. Tamil is similar to Sanskrit, in that there are more than one way to interpret almost everything, almost every sentence. So that makes it wonderful and deep, because all the layers of meaning are relevant. And in a work like this, true. So thank you very much, Bhuvana! I'll be using the translation sourced from this book from now on. Of course I do edit them a little bit, to make them into better English, but I'm drawing on the depth and richness for the talks. So, today's verse...

**“If oneself is a form composed of flesh,  
the world and God will also be forms;  
if oneself is not a form,  
who can see their forms, and how?  
Can that which is seen be otherwise than the seer?  
Self, the real eye is limitless—the eye which is devoid  
of the limitation of name-and-form.”**

We've talked about this many times—not only in this series but in previous series, like the *Nibbāna Series* and the *Golden Flower Series*—how name-and-form makes the world that we see. Not only the names and forms that we ascribe to the world, but especially the one that we give to ourselves. To clarify this, the Buddha's teaching of *Paticca-Samuppāda* is very useful.

*Paṭicca-Samuppāda* says, in the beginning there is ignorance. The step before that is that we are all the Self, always. We are nothing but the Self, we are nothing but Brahman—always, forever, unconditionally. Yet, out of ignorance... And what is ignorance? Ignorance is actually three things. Ignorance in itself means that we don't know, or don't foresee the consequences of our actions. We do something because it seems to be a good idea, but we don't really understand the implications, and how it will affect us in the future.

Not only ignorance, but also desire: we want something. We want something, so overlooking the possible consequences we go ahead and do it anyway—then afterwards, of course, we suffer. And one more thing: delusion. Delusion means seeing something as something else, not understanding what it really is. The rope and the snake, for example.

These three things are at the root of all our problems: ignorance, desire, and delusion, and they all support each other. The Buddha uses a very good example of bundles of straw. Here in India especially, when they harvest the straw from the fields, then they'll make bundles, and they'll stand those bundles against each other up off the ground, to keep them dry. So if you have three bundles of straw, leaning against each other like this, and you pull one of them out, the other two will fall down too. And it's the same way with ignorance, desire and delusion: as soon as you get rid of one of them, the other two collapse automatically.

But we're looking at it now from the top down. From the top, where we are one with the Self. Because Self is only one, it has no divisions, no boundaries, internal or external, no limitations either. But then because of ignorance, because of desire, because of delusion, then we fabricate name-and-form. In other words, nothing actually has a name, and there really is no form in the Self; the Self is formless. Because form depends on divisions, on boundaries: "This is me, and this is not-me." So, based on this idea of divisions and boundaries between one thing and another, we create forms, and then we give them names. Name-and-form go together to make mind, and mind of course is the basis of ego, and then consciousness.

As he says in the verse here, if we think of ourselves as a form composed of flesh, then the world and God that we see are going to be like that too. And

indeed, we see how people make God in their own image. They project, they imagine a form of God that really is just like them. But we need God to explain away how we got ourselves in this position, in this condition where we're suffering. Because, after all, if we take responsibility for it, that means that we could get out of it. But no, the ego wants to blame somebody else: "I didn't do it! It was God!" We imagine a whole landscape of forms and names, with God and the world, with boundaries and divisions and differences, and this becomes our world. Why? Because of those three: ignorance, desire, and delusion.

Now what do we do? Well, first of all, we have to attack this problem at the root; if we try to cut the branches and leaves, it will only make it worse. This is why when people ask questions like "How do I stop my bad *karma*?" Bhagavān, Rāmana, would answer "You can't, or it's not worth the effort." Because everything you do to try to adjust your *karma* is simply going to create additional *karma* in the future. See? That question is asked out of ignorance, it's like "Oh, I'm having a run of bad luck. What can I do to have good luck instead?" The problem is if you do anything at all, take any action whatsoever, that becomes a cause of further *karma*, further rebirths and so on.

You can't attack it from that angle. You have to go to the root of the problem, and the root of the problem is ignorance: not knowing, or having forgotten, that one is actually Brahman, that one is actually pure Awareness, not even consciousness. Because awareness has no object, it simply is what it is. That's why we say 'I-I,' not even 'I am.' Because 'am' implies 'that': if you have a subject and a predicate, then it implies there must be an object too.

To get around this ontological difficulty, we have to use knowledge. That's why this path is called *jñāna*. *Jñāna* means knowledge. Not just book-knowledge, not just knowledge of words and concepts, but experiential knowledge. By experience, everyone can understand that 'I am I. I am; I'm aware of my existence.'

Now, if I am aware of my existence, that means I am not simply a lump of flesh; I'm something more than that. And I'm not a mind either, because a mind cannot be aware; it's simply a computer; it's just mechanical, like the body. The body has no awareness in and of itself; but we come into the body, or we associate ourselves, or identify ourselves with the body; and because of

that the body seems to be alive, it seems to have awareness and identity and so many things. But these are all illusions, or actually delusions of seeing one thing as another, seeing a rope as a snake. Really, we are only Brahman, we are only pure Awareness. But then we see ourselves as being so many things: a mind, a body, desires, possessions, relationships—on and on and on it goes. These are all basically imaginary, name-and-form, dreams.

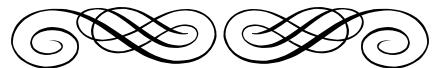
Because of these dreams we are captivated, and we think these things are real. But even if you accept only that you're a body, a bag of meat and bones, consider this: everything we see, everything we hear, everything we experience through our senses—and the mind is also a sense—has to go through our nervous system. It has to go through the ganglia of the nerves and then into the brain, where it gets processed in various ways so that we don't get overwhelmed.

The amount of data coming in through the senses is enormous. If we had to process each and every bit of it, parse through it all on our own, it would be overwhelming, it would be too much. Just vision, for example. I calculated one time that just the input from one eye is approximately 100 megabits a second. Who can process all of that information? It has to be abstracted, and this is another function of name-and-form. We identify something, and say, "Oh, that's a camera," and now I don't have to deal with all of these details, of the shape, the form, the controls. It's just a camera, and so then I deal with the thing as a token, a semantic tag, the name 'camera,' so that makes things a lot easier to deal with. And we think in terms of these tags, rather than in terms of the actual experience of the thing.

Anyway, it's all illusion. This all takes place within consciousness. After all, if we weren't conscious of these objects, like cameras and so on, we couldn't do anything with them. They all only exist in our consciousness. When we're asleep at night, the whole world goes away; we wake up in the morning, it all comes back. That's proof that it only exists in our consciousness.

The real Self, the real 'I' only sees in terms of itself, pure Awareness. That's why we say, 'I-I, I see only I.' That doesn't mean that we only see, for example, a vast light or something like that. Yes, there is that level; but we also see what other people call the world as only our own consciousness, with some overlay of name-and-form. So it's not that the Enlightened person,

or the Self-realized person goes into a trance and is unaware of the world. Yes, there are different forms of *samādhi* and trance. *Nirvikalpa-samādhi* is like that, where you have no awareness of the outside world. But then there is *Savikalpa-samādhi*, and in *Savikalpa-samādhi* we're aware of the world, but we're not aware of it as the world *per se*; we're only aware of it as our own consciousness, and that is the state of Self-Realization.



# Verse 5: Sheaths

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Today we're going to again talk about the sheaths, like we did back in the last series, and how they make the world.

**"If we scrutinize, the body is a form composed of five sheaths (*pañca-kośa*). Therefore, any or all of the five sheaths may be denoted by the term 'body'. Without the body—that is, in the absence of the five sheaths—does any world, subtle or gross, exist? Is there anyone, having given up identifying the body as 'I' —in sleep, death or Self-realization—who has seen the world?"**

This is a deep truth, which we have to understand before we can actually comprehend the position of someone like Rāmana, who has attained Self-realization. Because he's going to say a lot of things that don't make sense to us. "Without the body, there is no world." What does that mean? For all practical purposes, the body *is* the world. And indeed, when we perceive the world, we do so through the senses of the body, subtle or gross. For example, in dreams we're in the mental body, so we perceive a world which is made up by our ideas, our feelings, our memories, our fears, our desires, and so on. And this dream world is even populated with other beings, apparently. Yet, we know we're just there sleeping. There's nobody else around. So, where do all these people come from? Where does this whole world come from? The mind-sheath, the mental body.

I should digress for a moment, for those who haven't seen our previous series on [Upadesa-Undiyar](#). The five sheaths are: the *annamayakośa*, the sheath of food; that's the meat body, the one you can see. *Anna* means food, or specifically it means grains; *maya* (not *māyā*)

## The five sheaths:

- *annamayakośa* (food)
- *prāṇamayakośa* (energy)
- *manomayakośa* (mind)
- *vijñānamayakośa* (intellect)
- *ānandamayakośa* (bliss)

is a state of being or existence; and *kośa* of course is sheath, literally ‘coat.’ So we’re wearing this coat of food.

Then beyond that there’s the *prāṇamayakośa*. The *prāṇamayakośa* is the energy body. Some people call it the etheric body, or the astral body. It’s not real clear what they mean by that. But anyway, *prāṇa* or *chi* or *Qi* is vital energy, life energy; and according to our state of being, we have more or less control over it. Those who are advanced, and specifically who know arts like *yoga*, Tai-chi, Qigong, can exert a remarkable amount of control over their *chi*, their *prāṇa*.

I remember, my Qigong teacher was a little old Chinese lady. When I met her she was 83 years old, and honestly, she could floor a roomful of young, strong guys in about 10 seconds. I’ve seen her do it. She didn’t even have to touch them; she did it all with energy. I mean, it’s sort of like Darth Vader using the force. And then, at 85 years of age she broke her hip, slipped on the ice in San Francisco. She’d never been in a snowstorm in her life, so she fell on the steps of her house and broke her hip. Now, most people at that age will require hip replacement surgery, or extensive physiotherapy, or lots of treatment by doctors. She said, “No, no, leave me alone,” and she just went and gave her hip a lot of *Qi* treatments, flowing the energy through the affected area. Within a few weeks she was walking again, and by six months later she was fine. 85, 86 years old! So, *Qi* is life energy.

Then there’s the *manomayakośa*, the mental sheath. The mind of course, thinking and memory and all of that are functions of the *manomayakośa*. Then we have the *vijñānamayakośa*, the sheath of intellectual and reasoning faculties. Beyond ordinary thinking—which is basically associative, driven by similarities and emotions and perceptions—this sheath is more driven by logic, and of course we addressed that through our study of [ontology](#), which is the highest form of logic, based on being. And of course if you look at our earlier series, we go deeply into ontology. Because as long as you are stuck with a mind, it’s really the most powerful way to understand thinking.

The next sheath is the *ānandamayakośa*. Now, *ānanda* means bliss, and the *ānandamayakośa*, even though it’s called *ānanda* or bliss, is actually made of pure ignorance. In deep sleep we drop the other four *kośas*, and we’re only in the *ānandamayakośa*, and this is the sheath that restores us, heals us, that makes us fit and strong, and able to go out into life again, and deal with all

the problems and sufferings that we have to experience in life. That's why people need sleep: it's to heal from life, to heal from being involved with the other four *kośas*!

Each of these *kośas*, each of these sheaths gives a particular set of perceptions, and because of these perceptions we see the world as it is. And of course if something changes in one of these sheaths, then the world that we see is going to change too. For example, in dreaming sleep we have the *ānandamayakośa* and the *manomayakośa*. The *manomayakośa* is the one that generates all these dreams and worlds and characters and so on that populate our dreams. That's why I wanted to interrupt that explanation to introduce these different sheaths. So now, with these five sheaths we perceive a world, and the world we perceive is the combination of these five, or however many we are engaged with at any given time. So during deep sleep it's only the *ānandamayakośa*, during dreams it's that plus the *manomayakośa*, and then in waking, all five *kośas*.

The world that we see is dependent on the quality of these *kośas*. This is the difference between heaven and hell: people who have no *annamayakośa*, no gross body, can have a subtle body, in which they can go either to a heavenly place, a heavenly world, or a hellish world. Now, they may be present in the same physical space, but we would never know they're there. We can only see things through the *annamayakośa*, the gross senses, so anyone who's limited only to the gross senses won't see these other worlds that are possible. Now, is it any benefit to try to attain these worlds? Not really. Because we are still bound by the other sheaths, and because those lifetimes also have a beginning, they will have an end. So there's really no escape from the necessity for Self-realization, in any world. Even by going to the highest heaven, even by becoming a demigod like Brahmā. Brahmā is born, so he also has to die. The only real escape from the inevitability of our disintegration is Self-realization.

Now, in the case of a Self-realized person, they do not perceive the world. You might say, "Well, what about someone like Rāmana, who is apparently aware of events and things around him, and who can answer questions, and write books, and do all kinds of things like that? Isn't he aware of the world?" and the answer is no. He is only aware of the Self, Brahman. I suppose you could say it's sort of like seeing a balloon from the outside, or seeing it from the

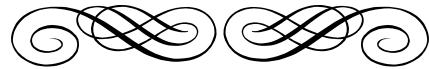
inside. Actually, everything is Brahman, including you and me, and we have always been Brahman. It's not that we become Brahman at the moment of Self-realization; we're always Brahman: past, present and future.

Once we realize ourselves, we realize that everything is Brahman. Therefore everything is the Self, there's no difference. You see? Just because by nature there is some superimposition of these different worlds on Brahman, these different *kośas* or sheaths, doesn't mean that we cease to be Brahman. We're still Brahman; just there's this additional shell. So, from the outside of the balloon we may see some pattern or design; from the inside of the balloon we're going to see the same design, but from the inside. It's a very crude example, I can't really come up with a better one right this second. It means that the person who is Self-realized, who is not identified with any of these sheaths sees, so to speak, the same reality that we do, but sees it in a different way; he sees that everything is consciousness.

Here's a good example: in 1984, I had spent over six months with Rajneesh in Oregon, and then I got into a dust-up with some of the mucky-mucks in authority positions there, and got kicked out. See, Osho had given me a very unique position, where I had nothing to do. I stayed in nice quarters, way out in the desert, far away from everything and everybody, and I had no work to do or anything; I was just to meditate. Well, of course some people didn't like this, and they became jealous, and to make a long story short, they booted me out. The best thing to ever happen to me! Because I went home to Portland, and I meditated like crazy for six weeks, and I attained the same Enlightenment experience that Osho describes. What did I see? I saw that everything is Brahman, everything: down to the stones and dirt, and trees and grass and everything. Everything is conscious, to some degree, in a different way. Brahman is the root substance, or the substrate of all reality. And ever since then I have seen like that, even though the experience itself faded, because who can live on that peak of energy and consciousness? It's very difficult; it puts a lot of strain on the body, and you have to get on with life, you know, you can't sit there and meditate forever.

Still, having seen that, I always see things that way now. I don't see that "I am I, and you are you, and never the twain shall meet." No, I see that I am this consciousness, Brahman, and you are this consciousness, Brahman, and so are the dogs sleeping outside—I'm very happy they didn't start any ruckus!

—and all other things and creatures are also Brahman. This is what it means not to see the world. We don't see the world as world; we see the world as consciousness only—that's the difference.



# Verse 6: The World

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Now we're going to talk some more about the bodies, the sheaths, the mind, and the world. Let's take a look at the verse:

**"The world which is seen is nothing other than  
the form of the five sense-knowledges  
(sight, sound, smell, taste and touch).  
Those five sense-knowledges are sensations  
known to the five sense-organs.  
Since the one mind (or the mind alone)  
knows the world through the five sense-organs—  
say, without the mind does the world exist?"**

This is the view of a Self-realized being. This is the way someone like Rāmana sees. In other words, the mind is proven to be false. Because we saw there are thoughts and thoughts and thoughts, but there's not any such thing as a mind. You cannot go into your brain and find this thing called a mind. Yes, you can see many different thoughts coming and going, like the frames of a movie or a television, a video show, but you can't find any such thing called mind.

Now, this is because the mind is an abstraction that we create. Just like for example you can say 'the people.' What does it mean? Well, there's this person, and that person, and the other person, and so many people, right? So it becomes 'the people.' But you can't go anywhere and find 'the people.' It's an abstraction, it's something we create, it's an idea only, it doesn't really exist, there's no concrete manifestation of it.

Or let's say for example a corporation, or a government. Well, you can say, "Here's the buildings, and here's the factory, and here's all the workers doing their things. What do you mean there's no corporation?!" Well no, there is no corporation; there's a building, there's a factory, there are workers, but where's the corporation? See, the idea of a 'corporation,' or a 'nation,' or so

many things that we deal with every day are just handles; they're just an abstraction that we use to refer to a collective of a bunch of actual things, they have no real existence. Yet, we act and think as if they do. See, that's our insanity, that's our madness, that is our unenlightenment. The mind is like that, and also the world is like that.

One of the verses a few episodes ago was basically saying that we see the world according to how we are. So, how are we? Well, we have this habit of rolling things up in these abstractions, and then lighting them and smoking them! So, naturally we're going to be affected by this, and the insanity, the madness that affects us by getting high off of these abstractions is that we deal with words as if they're things. Words can even cause profound emotional, and even physical reactions in us: "Look, it's a snake!" No, it's just a rope.

Earlier I brought up the example of graduation: after so many years of torture in school, you go to this ceremony, and somebody puts a funny hat on you and gives you a piece of paper, and you feel "Wow!" But isn't it that you just stopped hitting yourself over the head with school?

You see, the reactions that we get to these abstractions are real. Just like when a person sees a tiger in a dream, he really becomes afraid; but as soon as he wakes up from the dream, it's like "Oh, phew! It was just a dream!" So, the relief that we feel by coming out of illusory abstractions is so profound that it gives a memorable experience of relief that we look back on, and we think "Well, that was Enlightenment." But what is it really? It's just that we stop beating ourselves up with these illusory abstractions!

The same thing is going on, like in a movie theatre, or watching a video, where many, many still pictures are flashing on the screen in a very short time, and so our brain, unable to cope with the flood of information, abstracts it into a story. A child going into a movie theatre and seeing a movie is going to think that it's real. The child has no idea of the mechanism behind it, that there's a screen reflecting a projection, which comes from a projector, which is running a reel of film or a video program or something like that.

Here's a funny story: I remember when I was not quite five years old, it was Thanksgiving and I lived at my grandma's house, so the whole family would

come on Thanksgiving and Christmas. On this particular Thanksgiving they were installing a television, the first television! We had one of the first televisions on the block, as I recall. So, my uncles are up there on the roof, for hours, cursing and doing stuff, banging and getting things set up. Finally they got the antenna up, and we could receive stations, and so after much fiddling and twiddling with the knobs we saw our first TV program, and it just happened to be a documentary program about the New York subway system.

So, here I am, almost five years old, not quite, seeing trains! Oh, it was great! But because I was unaware of the whole infrastructure behind the whole thing, I thought we were really seeing trains! I thought, "This is a great idea, man! You just twiddle these knobs, and you get to see trains!" not knowing that it's not so simple. So I was, to put it mildly, very disappointed when the show ended, and there were no more trains; there was just this guy speaking about something or other. "How boring! I want the trains back!" so I started twiddling the knobs, [and my uncles were like] "No, no—don't touch that!"

This is the way we are with the world. Just like the mind is a projection of many, many impressions coming in through the senses, the world is like that too. We think there is 'a world.' Just like the child in the movie theatre, or watching the TV thinks the trains are real, and that we're seeing them at a distance or something. We think we see a world of solid things out there. But what are we really seeing? We're really seeing impressions reflected in consciousness—sense impressions, that's all. We have no direct access. Even if there is a solid world out there, we have no way to know it, because we don't have any direct access to it.

Now I know, you're going to bring up all this empirical evidence about science and blah-blah-blah. But, what are those people seeing? We know from quantum mechanics that the observer influences the system under observation; every measurement changes its behavior. What does that mean? That means that what we're seeing is what we set out to see; we're seeing a reflection of how we're looking. Just like if I look there out the window, I see trees and grass and animals and stuff. But if I look over here, I see shelves and clothes and stuff like that, and if I look over there I see something else. What I see is depending on how I look—that's a very gross example.

But on a more subtle level, the categories of possible things that can happen or exist in our minds pretty much determine what we're going to see. And if we happen to see something that is not in that list of categories, it won't register, we won't recognize it; we'll blow it off, we'll just throw it in the trash can. "Oh, didn't recognize that! Ah, that's not really there."

Do you think that's an extreme? No. It happened in history. When the Spanish conquistadors came in their ocean-going galleons, and parked off the shore of Central America, the Mayans certainly saw them, but it didn't register, because they had never seen an ocean-going ship before, so they just went on about their daily business, like "Oh, that's not really there..." Maybe only a few medicine men or so had seen it, or really recognized it, and went "Hey, this is something weird."

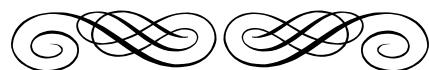
Similarly, when they got down off their ships, with their horses and their armor, the people just had no defense against it whatsoever. There were hundreds of thousands of Mayans, but they were conquered by a cavalry division of no more than 500! The entire empire, including up to Mexico City, was just steamrollered by a few ships full of conquistadors! Because the Mayans had no mental category for armored horsemen! They had never seen horses before, what to speak of armored soldiers, and they just freaked, they couldn't deal with it. Actually, they could have won; they vastly outnumbered the invaders, but they couldn't deal with it so they were steamrollered.

Now there's an invention, Elon Musk is working on neural lace. Oh boy! He's worried about AI. But what about neural lace? It'll be the most invasive thing ever! You think that it's a problem that governments are watching the Internet? What about when they can watch your brain! Of course they're going to abuse it, of course they're going to misuse it, of course they're going to use it for controlling people—that's what governments do!

All these things show that what we're seeing out there might be something or other, but the *way* that we're seeing it is certainly not the way it is. We see according to how we look. So when we're expecting to see solid objects – time, dimensions, cause and effect, and so on—that's what we see, and our world is built on those abstractions.

Consequently, when someone becomes Self-realized, and they understand that consciousness alone exists, they don't see that other world anymore. And that's why it's said that someone who is Self-realized doesn't perceive 'the world.' They perceive something alright, but it's not the same world that other people perceive. Because what they're seeing is that "Oh, there's some little overlay on consciousness," just like "Oh, there's some little overlay of bubbles of foam on the ocean when it hits the shore. It's inconsequential. Don't take it seriously. Because those bubbles can just be brushed aside, and there's the ocean. You see? They're only temporary, they come and go. Not to worry."

This is how a Self-realized person views the world. It's all software; it's just how we look at it! So don't get all entangled in it, because at the end of the show, it's all going to go away.



# Verse 7: the Whole

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

I have so much fun doing these, really I'd like to do another episode every day—there are plenty of verses to go through—but I find that it takes a couple of days for people to digest each one, and maybe they're not ready for another one the very next day, so I do one about every other day. And now we're getting into some really interesting concepts, so it's worth taking the time to digest them, and contemplate them thoroughly. Let's look at today's verse:

**“Although the world, which is seen before us,  
and the mind which sees it  
arise and disappear simultaneously,  
the world exists and shines only because of the mind.  
That which is the Whole (*pūrṇa*)  
and which shines without appearing and disappearing  
is the base for the appearance and disappearance  
of the world and mind. That Self alone is the Reality.”**

We've said this many, many times, and you're probably going to hear it again and again here, that **context determines meaning**. People say, "What is the meaning of life, Mr. Natural?" The meaning of life is determined by its context. If we see the world and the mind as being something separate, and especially as being something separate from ourselves, then the world and the mind are both out of our control, just going on like a machine. And especially the world, when seen this way, seems to be overwhelming: it's so complicated, and so powerful! How can we live happily in a world which seems like any minute it could eat us up? Any minute something could happen that just destroys all of our peace and tranquility. This is the meaning which comes from the context of seeing the world as separate.

And the same thing with the mind: if the mind is separate from, or different from the self, how can we ever control it? Aren't we always going to be subject to stray thoughts? I just read an article yesterday, they are saying that

one-third of the population of the world suffers from depression. And what is depression? I've experienced it myself, a long time ago, but I kind of remember what it was like. Basically, it feels like a loss of control, that you lose control over your life, the world that you live in, your relationships, your mind, your thoughts. Your own mind betrays you; it starts to think all these negative thoughts in a self-repeating, self-reinforcing circle or cycle, a spiral of negativity.

This depression, this malady, if you look into it, go to its root, you'll find it's due to alienation. There's a special word anomie—anomie means alienation from oneself. So, people see that they themselves are out of control, that there are all of these thoughts in their minds, feelings in their bodies, things happening in their lives that they don't want, and so this leads to overwhelming emotional crash.

What is really the root of this problem? It's putting things in the wrong context. Our first series, so many years ago, [Matrix Learning](#) is all about this, about putting things in the correct context so that you understand their true meaning. And now we've gotten to the logical end, or highest application of that principle, where we're looking at what is the context that we put the whole world in? If the world is something alien, something separate, something other than ourself, then what hope do we have?

This is a different view, coming from Mahārṣi, Rāmana Mahārṣi. He's saying that the world comes into existence along with the mind, simultaneously. Just look: when you wake up in the morning: there you are, off in dreamland, and suddenly the alarm goes off—and boing, there's the world and the mind, just waiting for you! But it doesn't have to be like that.

Even though the world and the mind come into existence together, the mind is the cause of the world. How is that? Because the mind is the context in which we see the world: it's a set of meanings, abstractions, categories, an ontology, a model, a model of meanings, of semantic tags. But it determines how we see the world: it's a filter, like colored glasses. If we have rose-colored glasses, then we see everything as being beautiful, right? But if we're realists, we see that the world is full of suffering and pain and so on like that. At any rate, the particular set of meanings in our mind determine how we see the

world; it's like a filter, and they come into existence simultaneously, yet the mind is the cause of the world. Why? Because it gives meaning to the world.

But we can go still further. The mind and the world exist in a bigger context, which is our space of awareness. We talked about this right in the beginning of this series, that this space of awareness is the Self. Anything that comes into that space, we become aware of it. Just consider for a moment how big is this space. The whole universe fits into it, God and everybody fits in your space of awareness! Hmm. So, what does that make you? See, we get so caught up in the world, and all the stuff that's happening, and the mind, and all of our thoughts and stuff... But this is all external, this is all not-Self, this is all temporary: it comes and goes, it arises and passes away. If not otherwise, every night when we go to sleep, every morning when we wake up, the world goes away, and then it comes back again. So, who are we? If the whole world comes into existence in our mind, in our space of awareness, who are we? Think about it!

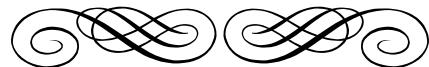
There is no difference between my space of awareness and your space of awareness: it's exactly the same. One space is the same as another space, one emptiness is equivalent to another emptiness. There is no difference, there are no boundaries between them. There's no way to tell them apart; they have no characteristics, one mirror is as good as another mirror—they're all the same. So, at the very least, qualitatively everyone's consciousness is identical. See where this is going? And if the whole world is coming out and going back in again to this space of awareness, then what does it mean? That space of awareness is the context for the world! In other words, we determine the meaning of the world, we determine the nature and quality of the world, by the nature and quality of our awareness. Try to understand.

Heaven and hell are simply the way we look at things, the way we interpret life, the meaning that we give to the world through the mind, within our awareness. So, there's no need to be depressed, no need to suffer; suffering is a choice. Pain is inevitable, but pain simply is the other side of the coin of pleasure, it has to be there. Pain is simply the absence or the covering of pleasure; and when pain goes away—which it will—then what's left is only pleasure. Or when ignorance or sleep goes away, what's left is only knowledge or consciousness.

The natural state of every being is this knowledge: *sat* meaning being, *cit* meaning consciousness, *ānanda* meaning pleasure, enjoyment. This is the natural state. When all the coverings are removed, there's no difference between our awareness, my awareness, your awareness, God's awareness. Awareness is awareness: it's just a space.

Try to understand what's really going on here: we are actually pure awareness, or Brahman. Brahman doesn't mean God in the ordinary sense. Because the concept of God comes into existence along with the ego and the world. The ego says, "Well, *I* didn't create the world, it's not *my* fault! Everything's so messed up. It has nothing to do with *me*! So, there must be a God! Yeah, that'll fix it!" But it doesn't fix it, because the God that we manufacture is also imperfect. After all, He created all these problems, right?

The real answer is that the Self is Brahman, and Brahman is the context, the space of awareness within which the whole world shows up. We get all entangled in the object, and we forget the subject—the person or being who is aware of these objects! We get all entangled in the world, and we forget about the Self. But the Self gives meaning to the world, the Self is what gives existence to the world. The Self is Brahman.



# Verse 8: Worship

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Welcome to the eighth verse of *Ulladu-Narpadu*. Today we're going to get into a subject that's very dear to my heart, and so let's go right into the verse.

**"Know thus: Whoever worships the nameless  
and formless Reality in whatever form,  
giving it whatever name, that is the way to see  
the nameless and formless Reality in that name-and-form,  
because it is possible to see it thus.  
However, becoming one with the Reality,  
having known one's own truth, alone is seeing in truth—  
that one is not the ego, the individual who worships  
and sees names and forms—but only the real Self,  
who never sees names and forms;  
and having thereby subsided in the nameless and formless  
truth of that Reality. In other words, *being* the Reality  
alone is truly *seeing* the Reality."**

What a wonderful verse! And this brings up one of the most beautiful, delightful, lovable, exalted features of Rāmanā's teaching, which is that it's not about what you do for a living, or how renounced you are, or your diet, or your sexuality, or your professed beliefs in any particular system. It's not about that at all. You can believe any way you want, you can worship any way you want—any name, any form is as good as any other. Why? Because Brahman is everything, in everyone. It is the substrate, the indwelling consciousness, the awareness of all.

What is it that gives us so much distress in life, that we have to seek Self-realization as a remedy? Well, out of ignorance we go chasing desires: "I want this, I want that," and conventional religion would say, "No-no-no, don't chase that desire, don't chase that other desire. Those are bad desires! Chase this desire, and this other desire! Those are good desires!" That's a step on the way I suppose. But really, the problem is in the 'I' that desires. That is the

ignorance: seeing the individual, seeing the self as being separate—that is the root cause of everything else.

Now, of course there's *karma* and all of that, and going chasing after those desires is going to cause a lot of people a lot of stress and misery. And so of course that stress and misery comes right back to us in the form of *karma*, and because we want to have an 'I', that *karma* has an address, it comes right back to the same 'I' that created it. Now, we may not remember things we did in past lives, but still we have to suffer and deal with the consequences. That is the law.

If we want to be free from that, from wherever we start, from whatever position we find ourselves at the time that we realize the necessity of Self-realization, that serves as our launching pad, that serves as the beginning of our journey back to the Self, back to Brahman. It's not necessary to convert from one religion to another. Rāmaṇa doesn't expect people from the West, for example, to come here and become Hindus; he doesn't want that at all. He respects whatever you are, but he's saying there's something deeper. He's saying worship the nameless, formless reality in whatever way you want, that's fine, he doesn't care about that. But come closer to the real Reality.

In other words, any way that we see God as name-and-form is like a dress, it's like a mask that we put on top of God. After all, that's what we do with the whole world, isn't it? We have our system of names and forms, our ontology, our worldview, our philosophy or whatever—oh, and of course our precious desires!—and we lay that over the substrate of the nameless, formless reality, and then we have our own little private Disneyland, our little entertaining world that we run around in, being this and that, and such and such, an 'I'. It really doesn't make any difference what flavor our overlay is, what color our filtered glasses are, our colored shades—they still block out the real Reality underneath it all.

So Rāmaṇa is saying 'Come closer, from wherever you are, and realize this, realize that you are actually the One, you are actually the Brahman, you are actually the Self.' And when you do, then there's no more need to run after these desires. Why? Because you can have ecstasy all the time. I talked about this back in the series on [\*Secret of the Golden Flower\*](#), how when you have a process or a technique that delivers, basically, ecstasy on demand, it changes

your relationship with ecstasy; all of a sudden, ecstasy is a lot cheaper. You know about market forces, supply and demand, in economics? If there's a big supply of something, the price goes down, assuming that demand remains constant. So we all have a demand for ecstasy, we all have a desire, a need actually, for happiness and bliss and ecstasy. How do we supply that need, that demand?

Well, chasing after desires is one way: intoxication, sex life, power, all the little flashes of ecstasy that we can get from sense enjoyment. But that's very temporary, and it's incomplete also; it doesn't really go to the root of our being—it's very peripheral, it's very much on the surface.

Then, when we get into yoga and meditation, that goes a little bit deeper, that goes into the mind, and then we're able to manipulate the mind, set up the mind in a certain way, and those quaffs of ecstasy are a lot deeper, because they go deeper into one's being.

But the best ecstasy, the best happiness is that which comes effortlessly, as a result of simply being. It doesn't require us to do anything; in fact, doing just kind of takes away from it! Better to just sit and do nothing, and be happy! There's nothing to it! That's the kind of bliss, that's the kind of ecstasy that comes from Self-realization, from knowing what we are, in reality: that nameless, formless, boundary-less Self of pure awareness, with no object: Brahman.

When we realize that we are the Brahman, then all of these other secondary and tertiary forms of attaining happiness and ecstasy seem to be more or less useless—or at least, to use a programming term, deprecated. They're still there, and they still work; but, who needs just a little shot of ecstasy now and then, when you can have it all the time, and a better quality—the real thing? Uncut, 200-proof ecstasy!

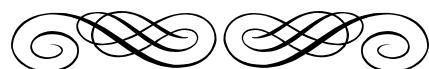
A lot of people who imitate Bhagavān, who go around talking about Self-realization, and making huge fees from it, are influenced by their audience. You can tell because they talk a lot about love, and all these other things. But those are secondary, those are on the surface. Yes of course we should love people, but what better love than to be the root of the Self? Then from there,

love and compassion and ecstasy and happiness and everything spring naturally, without a need for an object.

In other words, being loved is nice, when it happens, but it's always temporary. Loving is better. Why? Because when you love, you're in control of it, you turn it on and off. Better to just leave it on! But love has an object, doesn't it? Therefore, it's a step down from the pure ecstasy of Brahman, which requires no object, and is love itself.

The best love for everyone, the best service for everyone is to introduce them to the process, to the method for attaining Brahman themselves. Now, during this process, during the *sādhana* there may be a need to restrict one's activities somewhat, as much as practical. In other words, it's not for everybody to go sitting in a cave, dressed in a loincloth; that's not for everybody. Maybe a few, very rare people. One has to follow one's *prārabda-karma*, the ripened *karma*.

So, Bhagavān never told people to leave their job, to leave their families, to change their place of residence or anything like that. But rather, right where you are, as you are right now, begin to inquire "Who am I? What am I? From where is this thought 'I' arising?" And by concentrating on this thought 'I-I', the whole tree of ego is cut. And when it falls, it doesn't regrow again. And that's the real cure for all the suffering of life.



# Verse 9: the Peak

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

This time we're going to read a verse that I consider to be the topmost.

**"See thus: The dyads (such as the duality of subject and object) and the triads (such as the triple of seer, sight, and seen), which are unreal appearances like the blueness of the sky, exist by always clinging to the one: the ego or mind, the thought 'I am the body'. If one looks within the mind for that one by inquiring 'Who am I?' the dyads and triads will slip off. Since their base, the ego, will be found to be nonexistent, they will disappear. Only those who have thus seen the nonexistence of the ego and its products, the dyads and triads, are those who have seen the truth: the real Self, which is the source and absolute base upon which the unreal ego seems to exist. After seeing thus they will not be perturbed by the unreal appearances of the dyads and triads, because in their outlook those dyads and triads will be nonexistent."**

A lot of people read nondual philosophy; and because they don't want to accept the consequences, they make some compromise misunderstanding. But if one is willing to go all the way, then one reaches the top of the mountain. What is that? Well, let's go back to the beginning, dyads and triads. We have talked in these series, going back five years or more, about the duality, the sets of complementaries—up/down, in/out, good/bad, right/wrong, black/white, etc.—and the triads or triples, which are necessary for real being. The dyads are only abstracts; the triads are descriptions of something that actually exists. But of course all of them are simply abstractions, simply words, symbols; and those are arbitrary, we create them, they're not real. And this is the mind, this is thought.

When we see this, we have to ask ourselves, "Well, then who am I? What am I? Where does this thought 'I' come from?" Like I said, this is the top of the mountain. In the beginning, climbing the mountain, you can walk on two

feet, that's the dyads. Then, as you get higher up, you need a walking stick, that's the triads. But eventually, as you near the summit, and it gets steeper and steeper, you have to crawl, on all fours, and you finally get to the top, and you can sit. No more need for dyad, triad or whatever; just the one. Now, what is this one? Let's look at that. The one is basically also a thought, the ego, the 'I', what we think of as the self. It's not really the self, because it also depends on something else. What is that? The real Self, Brahman, pure consciousness. And that is the reality: consciousness without an object, consciousness that is pure ecstasy.

When we get to that stage, the dyads and triads disappear. They slip off, as the *śloka* says, they can't stick, they can't cling anymore to the 'I', because the 'I' is also seen to be an illusion. It's a very fascinating illusion, and one that we create many times a second, by adding this overlay of 'I' and 'mine' to our perceptions, our impressions. Nevertheless it is an illusion, it's a conception. A conception is something that didn't exist before, and then it comes into existence. So concepts are those things which are conceived, which are brought into existence, that don't exist prior. So anything that has a beginning also has an end: all these concepts, all these projections, all are imagination.

Now I suppose if we are content to live in a world of imagination, that's fine. But we find it's hollow, and we also find it's temporary. The ego, the mind, the thoughts, the dyads and triads, all these constructions based on the concept of 'I' are all temporary and unsatisfactory, and they're actually not Self; this the Buddha taught. The real Self is simply the pure awareness in which they arise and pass away. We're trying to reach that real Self, we are trying to become, or to be, to realize that real Self. But as Rāmanā says, what is the necessity of realization? We are already the Self, Brahman is already everything and everyone, including ourselves. So, the only process, the only effort is to see this. And once we have seen, then from that point on our view changes, from that point we are sitting on the top of the mountain. The dyads and triads are there, scurrying around on the face of the mountain, but they can't reach us, they have no access to that level.

So all concepts are basically false. That means all experiences are also false, and that means all the objects which are experienced are false. The whole world is simply *māyā*, everything we experience. So, this philosophy is actually very simple. I'm making so many videos, and talking so much, but

it's actually a very, very simple, basic philosophy. Śrīpād Śāṅkarāchārya expressed the whole thing in three lines:

*brahma satyam*—Brahman is truth, Brahman is ever-existent, Brahman is pure consciousness, pure being, *sat-cit-ānanda*: being, consciousness, bliss.

*jagan mithyā*—the whole world is an illusion, everything you can experience is false; only the experiencer is real.

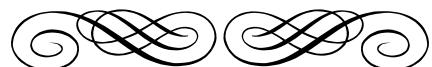
*jīvobrahmaivanaṃparah*—the individual self is essentially nondifferent from Brahman. What does that mean? We are Brahman, reflected in a tiny little mind and body. Just like the sunlight reflected in the puddle in the footprint of a calf. It's the same sunlight, the same brilliance, even the same image is there of the sun. But because it's reflection, it's not real. Only the source is real, only the sun is real.

Let's turn this all around, and now look from the point of view of Brahman. From the point of view of Brahman, all is illusion, including the reflections. Actually, there is nothing but Brahman. This is the very simple philosophy, three lines, and once we put this philosophy into practice, we find we're full of bliss, *sat-cit-ānanda*, because Brahman is bliss.

This is the top of the mountain; it doesn't get any better than this. But as I said, there are consequences. It means we have to give up the whole game of ego and mind, thoughts and fancy words and symbols, concepts, ideas, philosophies, blah-blah-blah. Yes, this simple philosophy does have deep consequences, and those consequences can be explained elaborately, and they are. Read the *Upaniṣads*. There are plenty of free files on the Internet of the different *Upaniṣads*, especially the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, and the *Māndukya Upaniṣad*; *Īśopaniṣad* is also good, but it's a little harder to understand. They describe this philosophy very, very simply, but more elaborately than we do here, that once you realize your Self, you are, for all practical purposes, identical with Brahman.

Now don't mistake this to be that "I am God;" that's totally wrong, totally wrong. Because in realizing Brahman the ego is lost; there is no 'I' to be God. On that level, there is no individual self. So don't deceive yourselves, like many do. They just want to justify their entitlement: "I can do anything, I can

say anything, I have or be anything I want.” No, that’s childish. That’s like a spoiled two-year-old throwing a tantrum to get some favorite toy—don’t fall for it. A lot of people take psychedelics, and then they delude themselves into thinking that they have become enlightened, or that they have become God or something like this. It’s not so. When one actually realizes the Supreme, all desires evaporate. He is not willful, he doesn’t start anything. He basically does nothing, and allows life to come to him, sitting on the top of the mountain.



# Verse 10: Knowledge 1

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

*Narpadu* means a specific poetic form in classical Tamil poetry. And *ulladu* has many shades of meaning, but what it comes down to is the way it is, the reality. Of course, we know the world is the way it is, because that's the way it is, right? And we have to accept that. But what we usually don't accept is that the way it is, is that the ego is false and illusory. The whole world is in the business of manufacturing a false ego, and blowing it up into the biggest thing possible.

When we encounter a teaching like Rāmaṇa's, it really cuts the ego down to size, and so the ego is definitely going to feel pinched by it. Many people will reject it, other people, the ones that are a little more clever, will deliberately misunderstand it. And the really clever ones will embrace it, and go deep into it until they get the result.

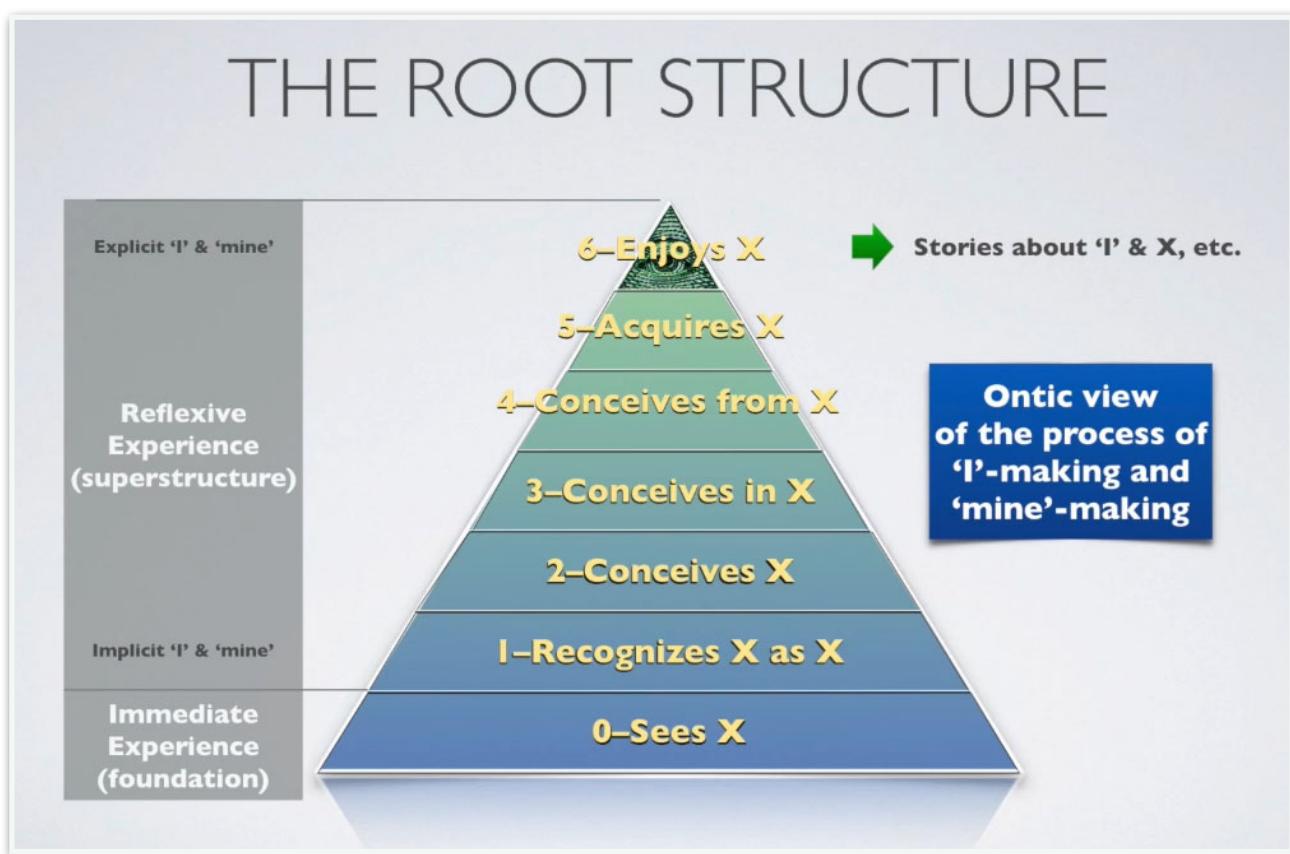
This verse begins a series of four verses about knowledge—specifically how we get our knowledge, our quality of knowledge. This is usually known as epistemology: how do we know what we know? So, let's look into the verse.

**"Without ignorance about objects,  
which is dense like darkness,  
knowledge about objects does not exist;  
similarly, without knowledge about objects,  
that ignorance does not exist.  
Only the knowledge gained by enquiring  
'To whom are that knowledge and ignorance?'  
which knows the nonexistence of the individual self  
(the ego), who is the base of knowledge  
and ignorance about objects, is true Knowledge."**

The tl;dr here is, what is seen reveals the nature of the seer. The ego is false, and so what it sees is knowledge and ignorance, and that knowledge and ignorance is also false. It's relative, and it's based on a false premise, which is

the existence of the individual. Thus knowledge and ignorance form a dyad, a set of complementaries; both abstractions, and both assume the nature of the self or the ego to be real. That's self with a small s, because it's temporary, and it is also an abstraction.

I've been waiting for a chance actually to go into the Buddha's explanation of how the ego is created, and many times Rāmana compared it to a movie projector, and consciousness to a screen. The projector is projecting many still frames per second, and then the consciousness is reflecting them, the way it reflects everything that you put in front of it. But in this case it creates the illusion that the 'I' has real existence, or permanent existence.



Let's take a look at the *Mūlapariyāyasutta* (MN 1). *Mūlapariyāya* means the root-structure, and here we're going to display the root structure as a pyramid. The reason for that is each layer, each stage of the pyramid builds upon the next lower one, until at the top you have the ego, the 'I'. When we first experience something, we experience it as **immediate experience**. Immediate experience means raw sense data; the eyes see a form. I'm going to use the example of a car: you're walking along the street, and here comes a car, and the first thing that your eyes see is simply the form of the car, the

shape of the car. This is called immediate experience. Immediate experience has no conceptual component; it's raw sense data, it's a sensation, the sensation of seeing in this case.

We're seeing this car, and the eyes simply take in the light and deliver it to the brain, and that's like "Here it is." That is the foundation: that sense data, that impression, that perception is the foundation of the *mūlapariyāya*, the root-structure of the mind. Rāmana points out that the root thought is 'I', the root thought of the mind. So now we're going to see how this sense of 'I am', the false sense of 'I am' as ego, 'I am this body,' is constructed.

The next layer is called **reflexive experience**, and that forms a superstructure that lays on top of the foundation of direct perception, or immediate experience. In the beginning, the thought of 'I' and 'mine' is implicit—in other words, it's not directly stated—but by the end it becomes explicit 'I' and 'mine.' And this is actually the ontic view of the process of I-making and mine-making, and *ontic* means 'as actually experienced,' as opposed to *ontological*, which means a system that describes our experience. So ontic experience is directly from the senses, but in ego consciousness we overlay a superstructure of 'I' and 'mine,' and now we're going to see exactly how this takes place.

So there we are, walking down the street, and we see a car. What happens? In the first step, **recognition**, we recognize that this is a car, or maybe a specific kind of car. Why is that? We have some memories in our mind of other cars, or maybe even of the same car, and when we see it, we recognize it, we assign a label to it. "This is such-and-such a car, this is a desirable type of car, or an undesirable type of car," as it may be.

Then what happens? The second step is we **conceive** the car. In other words, we take all of the tags, the semantic labels that we associate with that particular car, whether by direct perception or from memory, and we form that into a gestalt. We conceive this thing called car as a complete experience—in other words, something in relation with 'I'—and now this has become a constellation of immediate experience, along with the reflexive experience of attaching a bunch of tags to it.

Then what? Then the third stage is that we **conceive in X**, we conceive in the car the thought 'I' and 'mine.' We project, in other words. When you conceive something, it's like conceiving a child: something new arises that wasn't there before. In the original perception of the car, there was no 'I' or 'mine'; it was just a car, or actually just the form. Then we come up with the label "car" when we recognize it, and then we attach so many other labels by association. And then finally we project 'I' and 'mine' into the car, into the object or whatever it might be. That wasn't there before. The car as it is doesn't have any conception of 'I' and 'mine'; we add it, we conceive it, and we project it into the car.

Then what? The fourth step is we **conceive from X**, we conceive from the car, we imagine ourself in the car, we imagine that the car is 'mine.' We imagine ourselves maybe driving down the street, and waving to all the pretty girls from our wonderful car. We begin to fantasize about it, we begin to imagine what it would be like to have such a car, or to experience such a car. And so you see, this rapidly turns into a dream movie which runs in our mind, that we conceive on the basis of or in relation to the ego, 'I' and 'mine.'

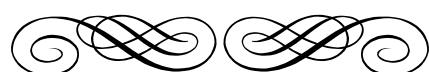
Then what? We **acquire** the car. Does that mean we go and buy it, or take possession of it? No. It means we assume the car is 'mine.' "This is my car," it's like "I want this car, I'm going to have this car. This is my car. This is the kind of car I was meant to have. I'm entitled to have this car. This car is the perfect car for me. It's all mine." But of course that is just a dream, a waking dream. But, this is the sum and substance of our entire experience in egoic consciousness. Therefore, it is said that the ordinary state of mind is an illusion, a dream from which we must awaken.

And finally, the last step is we **enjoy** the car. Even if we don't actually physically possess it, we think we own it, and so we imagine ourselves in all kinds of situations in relation to the car, and we make up all kinds of stories about it, and maybe we even share them with others and so on, telling them all about our wonderful car. This is how most people live, every day! They talk about "My body, my self, my hair, my feelings, my job, my family, my relationships, my this, my that," on and on and on and on; that's all they think about. Everything is in relation to the 'I', and this is the root structure, *mūlapariyāya*, the root of the mind.

Now, this root has to be cut. What does that mean? This process has to be stopped, and the key to stopping this process is simply to become aware of it. If you can observe this process in yourself, if you're sane, you'll be so embarrassed that you won't be able to keep doing it! You'll have to make it right, and say, "Actually, that car is not mine. Actually, I probably can't even afford it. And actually, I'm not going to identify with that car, because it has nothing to do with me. This 'I' is nothing but a fantasy. It's simply a dream that I project on the actual reality, and so I've been living in a dream. But I'm not going to do that anymore, because that's stupid!" When we get tired of being stupid, we look into it, and we realize how we're creating this dream, this movie. The movie is already there, in the inputs from the senses, and it's like then we're adding subtitles, a dream within a dream.

The body and the senses are already a dream because they're impermanent. As we talked about several episodes ago, they don't have actual reality because they come and go. At least they come and go every night when you go to sleep, and then you wake up in the morning and they come back. So they're not real, anymore than your dreams while sleeping are real. Therefore, to add another dream on top of that is even more aberrating, and more unconscious, and more stupid.

Look into it in yourself, see it for yourself, see for yourself how your mind is built on this *mūlapariyāya*, this root structure, and give it up already! Stop cheating yourself, and stop cheating others, by claiming "This body, this mind, this life," and so on and so on is 'I' and 'mine,' and wake up from the dream.



# Verse 11: Knowledge 2

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

This is the second of four episodes about knowledge, and the short version is: the quality of knowledge is determined by who knows; the quality of seeing is determined by who sees; the nature of the seer is revealed by what is seen. And the bottom line is, if we're seeing objects separate from the Self, then we're in illusion. So, let's take a look at the verse:

**"Knowing other things without knowing oneself  
—the mind or ego who knows the objects known—  
is only ignorance; can it ever be true knowledge?  
When, through the enquiry 'Who am I' (the individual  
who knows the objects known) one knows the  
nonexistence of the knowing ego,  
the base for knowledge and ignorance  
about objects will cease to exist."**

This is the difference between someone who is in ignorance and someone who is Self-realized. Someone who is in ignorance is aware of objects, other things, and not aware of his own self, who he is, what he is, wherfrom this self arises, and where it passes away.

One who is in knowledge may still perceive, but he doesn't perceive objects; he perceives himself as consciousness in all. That's the difference, that's what makes someone Enlightened. Because actually, everything we see and experience is nothing but consciousness! Whose consciousness? "My consciousness. I have consciousness. Others don't," at least not as far as we know. As long as we remain separate, we will see other things as separate. As soon as we realize the Self, then we become everything, because everything that we experience is nothing but consciousness, and consciousness is only 'mine,' consciousness is always personal. Even God shows up in our consciousness as personal, and God is the Self, Brahman, the Universal Being. Try to understand.

Last time we were talking about *Mūlapariyāyasutta*. *Mūlapariyāya* means the root structure, or the root sequence, and it gives in detail how we create the 'I', the ego, the sense of a separate self, a separate being, separate from Brahman. Of course that is unreality, because there is nothing separate from Brahman; Brahman is everything. That's like the bubble in the ocean saying, "I'm separate from the ocean!" when he's nothing but ocean; and as soon as the bubble pops, there's nothing but ocean. Similarly, as soon as we let go of this sense of separate being, or separate identity, then we know we're nothing but Brahman, we're nothing but the Whole itself, and everything that shows up in our space of awareness is also our Self, because again, we are aware of nothing but consciousness.

This is very difficult for an egoistic person to conceive or accept, because the process of I-making and mine-making, which is described in *Mūlapariyāyasutta* that we went into last time, has become a habit. And it's become so deeply ingrained that one is totally unconscious that he's doing it, yet it's going on with each and every sense perception. If you examine this, you will find that every second there are dozens, if not hundreds of sense perceptions, and in each one of them we inject an overlay of 'I' and 'mine.' Remember that song *Paint It Black*? "I see a red sign and I want it painted black..." That's all it is: we're painting the world, painting every perception with this idea of the ego, and because of that we experience alienation, separation, dissociation, and so many things, and in extreme cases, psychopathy.

Instead of being a psychopath, one should become an Enlightened person, and then all this suffering will disappear. It'll just evaporate like it was never there! This is the purpose of Self-realization. The motivation for it comes from the fact that we're all suffering, and the more egoistic we are, the more we feel separate from everything, and the more we suffer. Because, after all, we are a person, but when we have an ego, we see ourselves in a world of objects; even other people are objects to us. But in Self-realization, we see ourselves in a world where we are not separate, where everything is part of us, everything is part of Brahman, everything is conscious, everything is alive.

Now, of course modern civilization has come up with various demeaning terms for this, such as animism, tribalism, pantheism and so on, and criticized

ancient tribal peoples as being ‘primitive.’ But actually, they may all be Enlightened. Now, if something like the spontaneous Enlightenment that Rāmāna Mahārṣi experienced happened to a person in contemporary society today, they’d probably wind up in the psych ward, and be tortured with drugs, until they either became brain-dead, or agreed to construct a false personality again. Because our definition of mental health is a healthy ego that’s adjusted to the world—and the world is very sick. The symptom of the sickness of the human world is that we are destroying the environment, we are sawing off the branch on which we are sitting, we’re destroying our very means of life. And yet, somehow or other, no one can seem to muster the will to stop it. That’s sick, that is psychosis, that is psychopathy.

It’s all due to ego, and ego is false. Because if you look into it, and you see how you are applying this ego—like painting everything with the nature of an object—that’s false, that’s wrong, that’s sick. I’ll come right out and say it.

We have to cure ourselves from this sickness of alienation, and how we do it is simply by seeing the truth, and the truth is we create this ego many times a second, and just like the frames of a movie, we string together those isolated creations of an ego into something that seems like a continuous existence. But actually, the continuity is only an illusion. In fact, the existence of the individual is also an illusion. But since the illusion is repeated many times a second, it has the illusion of continuity and reality, just like a movie projected on a screen: the ego is the projector, the mind is the light, and the screen is the consciousness. Consciousness simply reflects whatever is put in front of it, so if you put a flashing light with different pictures, that’s what it’ll reflect.

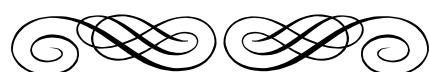
We’re watching this movie, and we’re fascinated with it, and the mind even offers up comments, like somebody is sitting there, munching popcorn, watching our life and going “Hey, that was a good comeback!” and “Oh, you really screwed up that time, didn’t you?” making all these supercilious comments about our experience, about our self! This is the ego, this is the mind, and it’s torture! First of all, it’s an effort to have to do all this extra mental work. Now, of course it’s become a habit, it’s become a bot basically. We create it when we’re very, very young, in order to survive in a sick society, and then it becomes automatic and unconscious. But it still requires effort, and that effort reduces the amount of energy and attention that we have for

being alive, for being real. So it's like an energy-sucking machine that's stuck on automatic pilot, and we don't know how to turn it off.

That's why in future episodes we're going to go deep into the yoga—the *Mahāyoga*, as Rāmana called it—of how to turn this machine off, how to stop this runaway artificial intelligence computer that we've accidentally created as our mind.

There are no objects. If one is seeing objects separate from oneself, one knows he is sick. He needs the medicine of the silence of the Realized being, to bring him back to reality, to wake him up, to show him what is real again. And then, by taking this medicine steadily for a long time, like “Don’t forget to take your meds! Meditate every day, do your *sādhana*,” you’ll finally get to the point where you realize this object is an illusion. And if the object is an illusion, so is the subject that sees it. To go back to the main point here, what is seen reveals the nature of the seer. So if we see objects, if we see separation, if we see differences, these are all an indication that we are ill, and we need treatment, we need to take our medicine.

The medicine is this inquiry, “Who am I?” *ātmā-vichāra*. So by *ātmā-vichāra* we come to realize the nature of the seer. And of course when the seer is the ego, we’re going to see all this separation and duality, and we have to realize that not only the objects but the seer also is an illusion. That’s how we know we’re on the road to recovery!



# Verse 12: Knowledge 3

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Welcome to another exciting episode of *Ulladu-Narpadu*! Well, it's exciting for me, because I'm very excited about this teaching. Rāmanā's teaching really rescued me from relative knowledge, dualistic knowledge of *yoga* and meditation, and introduced me to the nondual knowledge, direct realization of Brahman, the Self; and I'm very pleased with the result, I have to say. Just look at this video, or any of my recent videos, and compare with my videos from a year or two ago, and you'll see the difference right away! So, if you want to be like this, then you just practice this method. This is really just an extended commercial for the process of *ātmā-vichāra*, self-inquiry: "Who am I? What am I? Whence am I? Where is this ego coming from? Where is this mind coming from? Where does it arise?" Take a look into that, within yourself. Nobody can do that work for you. We can talk and talk about all of this different philosophy and stuff, but really the proof of the pudding is in the tasting.

Let's take a look at today's verse, the third verse about relative and absolute knowledge:

**"Know thus: That state which is completely devoid of knowledge and ignorance about objects is true knowledge.**

**That which knows anything as other than itself is not true knowledge.**

**Since Self shines without another for it to know or to make it known, it is true knowledge; though devoid of both knowledge and ignorance about objects, it is not a void."**

Oh, that's for sure! It's rather a plenum or fullness of objectless awareness, nondual knowledge of itself. This is the nondual state, this is absolute knowledge, the absolute truth, or whatever you want to call it. This is also God-realization, *Nibbāna*, the Kingdom of Heaven, whatever name you want

to give it, Vaikuṇṭha—many religions, many names. But it's the same state: it's the ultimate state attainable by a human being.

What is so special about this state? Why do we call it nondual and absolute and all these other fancy names? Well, first of all, it's completely devoid of knowledge and ignorance about objects. Knowledge and ignorance depend on each other, they're complementaries. Before, when I didn't know about Rāmanā's teaching, I was ignorant; now I know about Rāmanā's teaching. So the knowledge that I have now, in my mind, about Rāmanā's teaching is based on the fact that I had ignorance before. And likewise, the ignorance that I had before was based on the lack of the knowledge that I have now.

But that knowledge is relative, because it is of the mind; and the mind can only know objects which are out there, which are separate, which are different from the Self. That's duality, and as *Rbhu-gītā* says, as soon as you have even a little of the mind, then it takes over everything. Why? Because mind is duality. As soon as you have a little duality, well, you have duality. And duality is the cause of suffering, this separation from our real Self, this creation of an artificial me, the ego, and of course the mind, which likes to keep us busy 24 hours a day, chasing after its never-ending stream of thoughts.

Instead, Rāmanā teaches us to do this practice called *ātmā-vichāra*: "Who am I?" Not just asking the words "Who am I?" but looking into it as an experience. What is the experience of 'I'? Where does it arise? It's a particular sensation. Where do you feel it? Where does it come from? What is its source? And of course the source is the Self, the real I. That's the absolute layer of knowledge, the substrate beneath all others. But when we attain that, then we no longer perceive objects, we no longer perceive anything as different from the Self. Rather, we see that there's this ocean of consciousness, and "I am that consciousness, and everything I perceive is simply a form and a name overlaid on that consciousness," like a mirror that reflects all kinds of forms and colors put before it, but it doesn't have any particular form or color itself.

Knowing that to be I, "I am That," *so'ham*, "I am that Brahman, I am that pure consciousness." And that consciousness is everything, that consciousness is not limited to this body. So many things begin to open up, so many perceptions, so many doors that were closed to us before suddenly become

available, and one senses the purity, the naturalness and the rightness of this state. This is Realization, this is Enlightenment, this is Self-knowledge.

There's another verse in the *Upadeṣa-Uṇḍiyār*, which we covered in the [previous series](#), verse 27:

**“The knowledge which is devoid of both knowledge and ignorance about objects, alone is real knowledge. This is the truth, because in the state of Self-experience there is nothing to know other than oneself.”**

This is the truth. All we know, all we *can* know, is our own consciousness. If something is not present in our consciousness, we don't know it, we *can't* know it. But as soon as it shows up, then we know—there it is. The thing about Realization that tends to throw people off, the common misunderstanding of reality is that there's a world out there full of all these different objects, and those exist more or less permanently—which of course all this so far is not true at all, but anyway—it exists permanently, or they exist, these different objects, and when we go to sleep at night, the whole thing persists, and it's the same world that we perceive the next morning when we get up.

Well, good luck with that! Because, as we know, in reality, everything changes, all the time! You can't put your foot in the same river twice. Osho says you can't even put your foot in the same river once! The river that you put your toe into, by the time you put your heel into it has changed! So everything is changing constantly, and we know from physics that atoms are in constant vibration, always moving, changing quantum states, reflecting and transmitting different kinds of energies.

Nothing stays the same, even for a very short time. Who are we kidding, folks? There is no world out there! There is only consciousness, and everything that we perceive, everything that we experience is through consciousness. As far as we know, it doesn't have any separate existence, and it can't be proved that it does. That requires a long, very philosophical explanation. Which we will get to, I promise, when we go through the book *Mahā-Yoga*, which is a future series.

In the meantime, take it as an assurance from Rāmaṇa himself, who is the most highly Self-realized person in thousands of years of history. Because he attained Realization spontaneously at the age of 16, without any *sādhana*, without any study! Nobody can match that. This is called *nitya-siddha*, always Enlightened. He was never not Enlightened. As soon as his body grew to the point where he could withstand the energy, Enlightenment happened to him. There's no other person within recent memory or recent history to manifest Enlightenment like that.

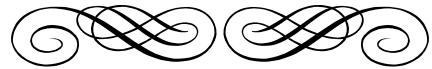
He is saying there is no world out there, folks; there is only what we see in our consciousness. So if we're seeing only consciousness, and consciousness is nondifferent from the Self, that means the world is the Self; the Self is the world! That is nonduality. It's not monism. Monism means everything is one, and it's all the same. But obviously it's not the same: there's day and night, there's morning and evening, there's hot weather and cold weather.

Everything changes. Well, that's okay. Because it's still all coming to us through consciousness, and consciousness is one. The only consciousness there is, is my consciousness, I-consciousness, the Self. It's so simple.

It's too simple! People with complex minds and thoughts and agendas can't grasp it. What to do? Well, you have to do the *sādhana*, you have to do the process, the process of *ātmā-vichāra*. All the very complex, philosophical explanations of the *Vedānta* and the *Dhamma* and the *Vedas* and so forth, the *Upaniṣads* and whatever, are from intellect, and intellect is part of ego. It may be a very refined, very high expression of it, but it's basically the same thing: Dualism. And because of dualism we have to split the world into self and non-self. And that hurts, that creates suffering, because then we have all these things that are not my self, and have to adjust and adapt to them, and that's painful.

But, if the world is nondual, that means everything is within the Self, so it's me. I don't have to adjust or adapt to it, because "It's myself, eh?" You know, I don't care anymore about trying to seem intellectual, or trying to be impressive, or trying to make complicated arguments and stuff. What I care about is expressed here in the verse, in the word *arivadarku*. *Arivadarku* has basically four meanings: "to make something known" is the root meaning. So you can make something known to another, you can make something known

to yourself, you can make oneself known to another, or you can make oneself known to oneself. And that's what we're looking for, the fourth definition of *arivadarku*, making oneself known to oneself.



# Verse 13: Knowledge 4

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

This is the fourth episode on real knowledge. The first three were the setup, and now this one is going to be the punchline, and I'm going to drop the bomb! Ready? Here's the verse:

**“Self—‘I am’—which is clear and abundant knowledge (*jñāna*), alone is real. Knowledge which is many—which knows the many objects of this world—is ignorance (*ajñāna*). Even that ignorance—the knowledge of the many objects of this world—which is unreal, does not exist apart from Self, which is only real knowledge.**  
**All the many ornaments are unreal; say, do they exist apart from the gold, which alone is real?”**

This is the “Gotcha!” He has been setting up this trap in the last three verses, and this verse is to trap all the unrealized people who propagate book-learning in the name of his teaching—you know who you are. That knowledge is false, and the proof is that they don't become realized! Only the people who are down-to-earth and simple and non-neurotic become realized. And they are usually denied the recognition or fame, because they don't have the symptoms of book-learning demanded by the marketplace, which has been created by the false *jñāṇīs*.

There's a difference between *vidyā*, which is ordinary knowledge of the world, and *jñāna*. First of all, *jñāna* cannot be expressed in words; it's only an experience. Yeah, we can talk *about* it, we can create pointers to it, but we cannot really express *jñāna* in direct terms; it's only a knowingness. However, intellectual knowledge, *vidyā*, can be written, because it's only symbolic, it's only name-and-form, therefore it's ignorance.

Here's what happens: a Realized being like Rāmanā comes along, and he spends 50 years giving a wonderful teaching, which is an experience. And

then a bunch of his direct followers write books about it, and instead of teaching the experience start teaching from the books! And the actual teaching gets lost behind a curtain of literature, and this literature is all wrong, it's all ignorance. I mean, the experience of awakening or Enlightenment is completely different from reading about it—there's just no comparison!

But what happens is the *brāhmaṇas* come in, the false caste priests, and they make a dry religion out of a living teaching. Then they become booksellers, they make their living by selling books about the real teaching, which they keep hidden, or actually they don't even have, because they lost it. They believe in their own bullshit, they believe in their own lies, and so they fall into the trap of throwing out the baby with the bathwater. They don't practice the real teaching—or if they do, they don't practice successfully—they don't attain Realization, and they can't pass it on to their disciples; and if there's anyone who does, they band together and fight against him.

This is what's going on. They don't want you to become Realized, because then you'll stop buying their books! You'll stop coming to their temples, you'll stop participating in their dry rituals! You will have found something better, something more satisfying, something real, authentic. This is how it works. I want to read this quote by Rāmaṇa:

**A visitor asks:** 'Can one realise the Truth  
by learning the scriptures and study of books?'  
**Mahārṣi:** 'No. So long as predispositions remain  
latent in the mind, realisation cannot be achieved.  
*śāstra* learning is itself a *vāsana*.  
Realisation is only in *samādhi*.' — Talk 230

*Samādhi* is beyond the mind, *samādhi* is ecstasy. Why can't a book-learned person attain this ecstasy? Here's a good story—I love this story! [chuckles] When a person inhibits himself sexually, and does not explore his complete sexuality all the way to the bottom, all the way to the end, he becomes angry. The frustration of not being able to satisfy the most primal desire in life, especially during adolescence, becomes a deep anger, which is then acted out and dramatized in different ways, all of which have the effect of inhibiting others as well: shaming, morality, judgementalism, entitlement. "Oh, we are

from the holy caste, and nobody else is pure. Especially those terrible people who enjoy sex!"

So all the religious scriptures, those written by the *brāhmaṇas*, by the religious people, condemn sex. Now, you'll notice something: if you read the *jñānaśāstra*, books written by realized people, they don't mention sex at all. It's not even an issue, what to speak of a big deal! Janaka for example, a great king who attained the perfect Realization, realized while in his harem! So, by the way, did Buddha's father, and many others. You just don't hear of them, because there's a conspiracy to suppress that information. Somehow or other a few slipped by the curtain, the saffron curtain. It's so ridiculous.

Anyway, an inhibited person who has not experienced his full sexuality, or her full sexuality, is going to be neurotic, is going to have a deep anger, and because of that will inhibit their energy. In other words, there is a certain amount of energy in the human body, in the human being, and that energy is based on sex energy; so if the sex energy is inhibited, there's less than the full amount of energy available. In the second *cakra*, which is the energy *cakra*, there is not a sufficient amount of energy to reach the full human potential and express it in other ways. The energy becomes stunted, weak, less than complete, and because of that one never experiences the full ecstasy of movement. And because one never experiences the full ecstasy of movement, then the heart cannot develop the complete expression of love, ecstasy of love. Because love ecstasy is best expressed by dancing!

And because the full ecstasy of love is not developed, then the speech, the fifth *cakra* becomes blocked. One cannot say what one really feels, one cannot express what he really means, one speaks only indirectly, makes it impossible to resolve any issues. One becomes passive-aggressive, neurotic, and involved in an endless series of complex misunderstandings that are irresolvable, because nobody is speaking what they really think. That's why I have to do it, so you don't have to.

But then, because the speech is inhibited, because the full expression of the love that should be in the heart is held back, then also the thinking is wrong. As he says here, the knowledge which is based on the many objects in the world is false. Why? Because they're unreal! In fact, the whole world is unreal! It always comes into existence: every morning, right on time, as soon

as you wake up, there is the whole world, boom. So because it's newly arisen, it can't be real. That which is born also must die, that which has a beginning also has an end; and when you go to sleep at night, that world disappears, then you find yourself in another world, in the dream world.

Similarly, when the dream world disappears and you go into deep sleep, there's no world at all, there's no other at all, no objects at all. But because you're ignorant, because you're not Self-realized, you can't see this. You block it from yourself, you don't realize it, and so you can't think rightly. Because you can't think rightly, you can't understand the Scriptures, the *jñāna-sāstras* rightly. So many people tell me, and comment on my videos that "Gosh, you make it sound so easy and simple!" Well, it *is* easy and simple! But you're too complicated, because you've been reading those other books, and listening to those other people who aren't Realized, and really don't know their ass from a hole in the ground, quite frankly.

Because of that you miss what is right in front of your nose, or right in back of your nose: your real Self. I feel sorry for people like that, I really feel sorry for them. But what can I do? They choose to follow the wrong path, they choose to become neurotic. Or, even when hearing from someone who is not neurotic, they refuse to do the work to get out of it. And so everything else is broken, everything else is inhibited, and then they wonder "Why can't I become Realized? Oh, it's so hard..." No, it's not hard! But you have created an artificial situation by suppressing your own energy. Nobody can help you with that. You have to undo what you have done, you have to destroy what you have made, you have to come back to your original state.

Once I had a Buddhist meditation teacher who told me "Whatever you have done, that you must undo." Very good advice. So, look at what you have done: you've been following the wrong path all these days, put yourself in an artificial condition, as Rāmaṇa says—there's a nice Rāmaṇa quote on this, I'll have to dig it up for the next time—that you have put yourself in an artificial position, and then you make artificial efforts to overcome it. And of course you don't attain Realization, because the opposition and the efforts are completely nullifying each other: useless, completely useless. The only thing you can do is drop it. That's why Rāmaṇa says in another quote "Your effort is your disease." It's easy, it's simple, it's natural, it's whole, it's complete—it's the Self

# Verse 14: Real Self

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Welcome to another episode of *Ulladu-Narpadu*. [crow calls loudly] Yes! One of our neighbors perched on the water tank. I'm up here on the roof, it's just before dawn, a beautiful morning in South India, and my buddy Aruṇāchala here in the background.



You cannot understand this teaching, really, without understanding Aruṇāchala. *Aruṇ* means red, and *acala* means non-moving, and his whole name is Aruṇāchala-Śiva, so He's a form of Śiva. The story is, Brahmā and Viṣṇu were having a fight, an argument, who is the best, so they said, "Well, only Śiva can resolve this." Śiva appeared as a column of fire, deeper than the deepest ocean, higher than the sky, and he said, "Okay, whichever one of you can find the top or the bottom, then he's the best." Viṣṇu turned himself into the boar form, and Brahmā took his swan form, and so the boar began tunneling down, down, and the swan began flying up, up, and they went for a long time, a long time.

Brahmā was getting tired, flying up and up and up, and finally he saw a flower falling down, and he said, "Hey, flower, how far is it to the top?" and the flower said, "Well..." I guess flowers in those days could talk. "Well, I was offered to the head of Śiva, a garland, and I fell off, and I've been falling for 40,000 years," and because this is Brahmā, it means 40,000 years of the demigods, which is like a thousand years of ours. So Brahmā said, "Look, tell

you what: I'm having a fight with Viṣṇu. Just come with me, and tell them what you just told me, okay? So, I know the top because you told me, right?" so they went back down. Meanwhile, Viṣṇu got tired and came back up, and they met in the middle again. And Brahmā told his story, and then Śiva spoke "Brahmā, you lie," and because of that Śiva cursed Brahmā that he would not get any worship, he would not get any offerings. And even today, there are only three or four temples of Lord Brahmā in all of India. I used to live near one of them in Kumbakonam, and there's another one somewhere up in the Himalayas, Nainital or somewhere way out of the way. I forget where the other ones are.

But anyway, the column of fire form of Śiva then made Himself into a hill, because Pārvatī prayed "Please keep this form, and make it confidential, so that only your devotees can see. And give them the opportunity to go around you, *pradakśinam*, and worship you by circumambulation, and that way they can get their hearts' desires." Śiva agreed, made himself into this form of this hill, this red hill, and then Pārvatī circumambulated him, and got Her wish, which was to be incorporated into his form. This is how the Ārdhanārīśvara form of Pārvatī and Śiva combined came into existence. I used to live right across the street from the temple where that happened, that commemorates that spot, so really cool.



Anyway, here we are, up on the roof, it's almost dawn, and I've got another verse for you. Here we go:

**"If that first person, the ego or subject 'I' named  
'I am the body' exists, the second and third persons  
—the objects 'you', 'he', 'she', 'it', 'this', 'that' and so on—  
will also exist. If the first person ceases to exist  
by one's scrutinizing the truth of the first person,  
the second and third persons will also cease to exist,  
and the state which will then remain shining as one  
—that is, as the one real Self  
and not as the unreal three persons—  
is indeed one's own nature:  
the real nature or state of Self."**

Self with a capital S. And this is what we're all after: we may realize it, or we may not realize it, but what we really want is to become the Self. Because to become the unreal self is to introduce complexity. Suddenly, there are all these second persons and third persons, and all the problems and difficulties of life arise from that. How many love songs are about "You... You did this to me, you did that to me... All because of you..." Then there's 'them,' the ubiquitous 'them,' the third person. And of course those people are completely out of control, so who knows what they're going to do, and it's probably going to be unpleasant.

So here we are, in a world of our own creation, and the way we create this world is that we split off from the Self, the universal consciousness, as an individual being. And because of that, the whole world of name-and-form comes into existence. You might say, "Well, wasn't the world there before we split off?" and the answer is no, it wasn't. No. Just like at night, when you go to sleep, dreamless sleep, is there any world? No. There's consciousness... [the crow corrects] or rather, awareness... Thanks! [the crow acknowledges] Awareness. And that awareness is "Ah, I'm sleeping so nicely! Sleeping so deeply," and then we wake up in the morning, and we say, "Oh man, I had such a good sleep!" So we remember. How could we remember, if we weren't aware?

Consciousness means difference; it means a split between the subject and the object. The subject is the first person, the objects are the second and third persons. Because of this split, all the experiences, perceptions, and especially the suffering of life manifest, and that's the world.

Now, there are certain places that have a particular kind of energy that feeds the process of getting free from this split. Aruṇāchala is one of them, and probably the best of them, at least according to my experience. And what is that energy? It's the energy of inquiry into the Self, "Who am I?" And not just who am I as a matter of name and form, but who am I as a reality, as an experience. This is the process that leads to reunification of the Self: the subject and object merge back into the original substrate of awareness—objectless, unconditioned, eternal awareness—and that is Śiva. So, when He appears in the form of a hill, it creates a magnetic center, a place of extreme energy, extreme consciousness, and this influences us in many subtle ways that are kind of hard to talk about, hard to define, because they're so personal.

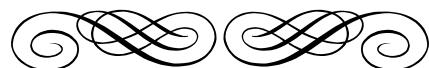
For me, it means the end of chasing ecstasy as an antidote to suffering. If you've been following these series, you know that I was really into *Nibbāna*, and *samādhi*, all different kinds and flavors of *samādhi*. Why? Because we need joy to counteract the suffering of life, and especially the failure of relationships, the failure of love. This is the greatest suffering. Because we come into this world with a desire for love: we want to love others, and we want others to love us, that's natural. But what happens is because our desires conflict, there's never really perfect agreement. The only perfect love is with oneself. This self-love is not narcissism, because it's not love of the ego; it's love of the pure awareness underlying the consciousness of subject and objects, the world.

What do we really want? We really want happiness, that's all. And happiness is simply the absence of suffering, because our nature is happiness. But when our awareness becomes covered with duality, this split between subject and object, between the first person and the second and third persons, we suffer. Why? Because our original happiness has become covered: covered by name-and-form, covered by conditioned consciousness, covered by desire.

The process of *yoga*, the process of Self-realization is to give up this consciousness 'I' and 'mine', 'Me and you and them,' and return to the original awareness, the undivided awareness of Self. This is called Brahman, Śiva, Self-realization, *samādhi*, *yoga*, *Nibbāna*, Kingdom of Heaven, etc., etc., etc.—there are so many names for it, but it's really the same thing.

When one experiences this, he thinks “Ah, this is it! There’s nothing better than this!” And really it’s true, there *is* nothing better than this. Because there can’t be anything as wonderful as our original Self.

So please put this advice into practice in your life, and you will immediately begin to feel relief from the suffering. Because we are the ones causing the suffering, we are the ones creating the *karma* that comes back around and bites us, and the only way to let it go is to just give everything to Him, give everything to the Self, give everything to Śiva, Aruṇāchala.



# Verse 15: Past & Future

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Welcome to another episode of *Ulladu-Narpadu*. Today we're going to look at verse 15, about time.

**"The past and future stand only by depending upon the present, which remains always. While occurring, the past and future are both only the present.**

**Therefore the present is the only time.**

**In other words, there are not three times**

**—past, present and future—**

**there is only one time: the present.**

**The truth is that the present is nonexistent as one of the three times, and the sole Reality underlying the sense of present time is the ever-existing Self.**

**Trying to know the past and future without knowing the truth of the present is like trying to count without knowing the value of the number one."**

Elementary, my dear soul! We see here a parallel between the previous verse talking about the three persons—first person, second person, and third person—and the three phases of time—present, past and future.

Let's look at time for a little bit. Time really is only the present. Whatever is happening is only happening now. The past is just a memory, the future is just imagination—they both have the quality of dreams. And even the present! Because when we look at it in name-and-form, the present seems to be a bridge between the past and future. But when we look at it in reality, it's simply dependent on the ever-existing Self. The Self never comes into existence at a particular time, nor does it ever cease to exist later on. It is beginningless and endless, therefore it is eternal—or better, timeless.

Of course no conditions attach to the Self, including the condition of being limited by time. Therefore, the Self not only is eternal and ever-existing, but

also it's the only real existence, because it is the only thing whose existence is unconditioned. Everything else is limited by time, cause and effect, *karma*—so many things—qualities, the personality...

The present is like the first person. The first person is 'I': the ego, the mind. And it is basically an imaginary thing, which is created by covering the original Self. Covering it with what? Well, the Buddha gives three things: ignorance, desire, and delusion. Because we cover the original, unconditioned Self with these three things, we create something called the ego, our sense of 'I am'; not just 'I am' but "I am this, I am that, I am a man, I am an American, I am a writer, I do videos," and blah-blah-blah like that. That's the ego.

When the ego becomes the master, we suffer. Why? Because it's built on a lie: ignorance, desire, and delusion. Therefore, the world, the second and third persons, that is built upon the ego is also a lie, and we experience this every day. "Oh yeah, I'm going to meet you at four o'clock!" Right? And they're never on time, maybe they don't show up at all. False promises. False promises are *māyā*, the illusion. *Māyā* says, "Oh, you're going to enjoy so much, it's going to be great, everything is going to be peachy, it's going to be wonderful," right? And then what happens? Suffering. Even if you get the object of the desire that you're following, chasing like a dog after a bone, then it's never fully perfect; there's always something wrong. And even if you get it and it is perfect, it's temporary, and it will go away.

And then of course anything that's worth desiring, somebody else also desires it, and they're willing to fight you over it, and of course they don't follow any rules, it's a dog-eat-dog world. Why? It's based on a lie. So, though we may have nice, high-sounding words about principles and ethics and all this stuff, in reality it's a dog-eat-dog world, just total competition.

Now young people are being deceived into thinking they have to go to college, and rack up a huge debt, and learn all kinds of skills so that they can get into a startup company, and make all this money, and then retire at age 25, and all of this. It's nonsense, it's a dream. Maybe one in a million gets to do that. And what about the rest? They're saddled with crushing debt, working a job they're overqualified for, a dead-end service position in some ridiculous company... Most of these jobs are just bullshit. Oh, I have to use the Sanskrit term for bullshit now, so that we can have a high-class video series here:

*anartha-ka vākya*. *Anartha* means useless, false, sinful, deceptive, and so on, in that vein; and *vākya* is speech, talking. So, useless speech, untrue speech, deceptive speech, ugly speech, offensive speech, *anartha-ka vākya*.

We are getting so much of this now, and even channels of communication that we used to rely on for truth and integrity, like the news, has become hijacked by corporate interests, who are just using it to disseminate their propaganda. Everyone is being taken for a ride. This is *māyā*, *māyā*. *Mā* means not, and *yā* means what exists. So *māyā* doesn't really exist; in other words, it's deception, it's a lie.

The world of *māyā* has these three persons: I, you, and him. And similarly, the time of that world has three phases: now, then, and the future. Past and future don't really exist; they're just mental phenomena. Just like you and he don't really exist; they're just mental phenomena, concoctions of the mind. Why? To justify the meaning of 'I'—'I' as separate from 'you' and 'him.' Similarly, our concept of the present is simply that which is separate from past and future. We see it like a river, always flowing, from the past to the future, and there's no way for us to stop it, it's linear.

They are all artifacts of our conceptions of reality, our Aristotelian, two-valued logic, our Newtonian space-time, linear space and time, as if space was something rigid and at rest, and that everything moves around within it, but space itself stays still. No. You can't measure space, there is no way to tell whether space is still or not. There's only a coordinate system, which is based on some piece of matter, like your body. And so Einstein came up with the idea of an observer. He invented the three-dimensional coordinate system (Cartesian coordinates), where all three dimensions are at right angles to one another.

The theory is that time is another, fourth dimension, which is somehow or other at right angles to all the other three. I don't know how that's possible. But the whole thing is simply a speculation, it's simply a thought. There are many, many—in fact, there are probably unlimited different coordinate systems (polar coordinates, scalar coordinates, logarithmic coordinates, spherical coordinates, etc.) that could easily describe the same world that we're looking at. It really makes no difference whether our coordinate system

is Earth-centered, or Sun-centered, or centered between my eyes—it doesn't really matter.

So we might as well take the one that most closely matches our experience, which is that "I am conscious, and everything else appears within my consciousness as a phenomenon." This is the viewpoint of Brahman, this is the viewpoint of the Self-realized being. In fact, to adopt this viewpoint is Realization. And actually, everybody has this viewpoint! Isn't it? And the only reason we translate from the Realized viewpoint to any other viewpoint, or any other coordinate system, is to communicate with others. And in doing so, we invoke the whole space-time phenomenon of past, present, future, first, second, third person ontology!

You have to understand this: it's a filter. It's like if I want to observe clouds. This is a really interesting example: try to lie on your back one day, and watch clouds passing over. You can see that they're passing over, but it's hard to actually measure their velocity or direction, because they move so slowly. What actual weather observers do is take a mirror, and then they have the mirror scribed with a grid coordinate system, and they don't look at the clouds directly; they look through the mirror at the clouds, and that way they can tell, or they can measure how the clouds are moving. We do the same thing. The mirror is artificial: if you look at the sky, there's no lines! The lines are something we invent so we can measure things that are hard to grasp.

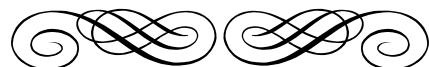
In the same way, we create these lines called dimensions and directions and measures, like measures of distance, measures of time, measures of weight, of mass, of energy, and so on, so we have these different measurement systems. And even then we get into trouble, because one country has one system, and all the other countries have another system, and so on—what a mess!

We create all these artificial things, up to and including the world, and we think that "I am this body, existing within this world," and then we wonder "Why am I suffering? Why can't I fulfill my desires? Why aren't I happy?" Because we have defined happiness as fulfilling the desires, and the desires can't be fulfilled because they're a lie, and the whole world that they're based on is also a lie.

The truth is the world exists within our consciousness, and it is what it is. We can't change it, we can't bend it to our will, the will of our tiny ego. Because it is really existing like the grid on the mirror, it's existing as a coordinate system on top of Brahman, on top of the Self. It's artificial; that means it doesn't really exist.

Any questions? If you accept this point of view, you will go completely into another space, and you will be so blissful you will not be able to believe it! Don't just blow it off because it's not what you heard in school—those people in school just want to exploit you anyway.

So try it. Try looking from this viewpoint, from the viewpoint of the Self, Brahman, and you'll see.



# Verse 16: We (Self)

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Welcome to another episode of *Ulladu-Narpadu*. It's Sunday morning, we have another verse for you. It's so nice and cool up here, I don't want to be downstairs in the studio, with all the hot lights on and everything. I'd have to turn on the AC—what a bummer! This is beautiful up here, so just put up with the background noise. Okay, today's verse, very interesting verse:

**"When we scrutinize, except 'we'—the known existing reality ('I am')—where is time and where is place?  
That is, when we keenly scrutinize ourself through the enquiry 'Who am I?', it will be found that there exists no such thing as time or place, but only 'we', the reality or Self. If we are the body—that is, if we mistake oneself to be the body—we shall be caught in time and place. But are we the body? If we enquire 'If I am not the body, then who am I?' we will realize that since we are the one Reality—now, then and always; the one Reality here, there and everywhere—the 'we' or Self who is devoid of time and place alone exists, and time and place do not exist."**

It's an amazing verse, isn't it? First of all, the syntax is very complicated, and there's a reason for that. The Tamil language that Rāmanā wrote this in is not ordinary Tamil, not everyday street Tamil. It is high, literary, or poetic Tamil, and many of the words have redundant meanings, or self-referential meanings, recursive meanings, and so on, so the syntax becomes very convoluted, especially when rendered in English. So, this rendering is by Śrī Sadhu Om, who is one of the great scholars who has interpreted Rāmanā's work for us, and because of this it sounds almost... I mean, it sounds implausible, especially on first hearing. I'm sure many of you are thinking "What is he talking about?! Time and place doesn't exist?! What kind of nonsense is this?!" Hold on, and listen.

What is time? And what is place? Place is a location in space and time. We call our location in space ‘here,’ and we call our location in time ‘now.’ But is that all there is to space and time? No; no. Space and time are practically unlimited. I say practically unlimited, because everything there is, including space and time, has to have a beginning and an end. Space and time don’t exist independently; they have a cause. And because they have a cause, that means they’re dependent. And because they’re dependent, it means their reality is only relative, it’s not absolute.

Then what is the absolute on which time and space depend? Well, it can only be one thing: the Self. The Self is pure awareness. Absolute, objectless, nondual awareness, without boundaries, without a second thing to be aware of, and so on. You might say, “Well, then what about this time and space, and all this phenomena, and the worlds and everything that we see and experience?” Well, as we have pointed out—or as Rāmaṇa has pointed out, and we try our best to discuss it—the world comes into existence along with the ego, along with the body, the idea “I am the body.” Whether the body is subtle or gross, it has to have a location, so that necessitates the existence of time and space: location in time, location in space. And that is a big part of who we are, or who we think we are, because the mind is also something that we will into existence by means of desire and our concept of who we are.

All these things are mutually interdependent. You can’t have time and space without a body, nor can you have a body without an ego, nor can you have an ego without a mind. Without mind, no ego; without ego, no body; without body, no time and place.

This is not just sophisticated philosophy; try to understand. People think that ‘You’re a monist,’ which we’re not; we’re non-dualists, and “You have a certain view, you have a certain philosophy that everything is all one.” Actually, we don’t. But anyway, that’s what people think. And, “Because of that you say that time and space aren’t real, the worlds aren’t real, there is no God in this sense of it...” Just hold on. We’re not saying that time and space, or location and temporality don’t exist; we’re saying that they don’t exist absolutely, as a context. Rather, they exist within the context of ‘I am,’ meaning “I am the ego, I am the body.” It’s a package, the whole thing comes into existence at once. What’s the proof? When you sleep at night, the whole mess disappears: the body, the mind, the ego, and all the ideas and thoughts

and desires associated with them, the world, the senses, the body, space, time... Gone! What is there? Only the Self, only this pure, objectless awareness.

But you might say, "Well, then why don't I remember that?" Because now you're covered with ego, you're covered with ignorance, you're covered with desire. And so there's nothing to desire, if there's no world, if there's no senses or body, so it just looks like pure ignorance. This is called the *ānandamayakośa*. The *ānandamayakośa* is the last and most subtle covering on the Self.

We can experience these things—it's not theory. In fact, it does not originate from someone's mental speculation at all. Rather, it originates from Rāmāna Mahārṣi's experience—his spontaneous, complete Enlightenment at age 16. Then later on, when scholarly, intelligent people began to learn of his existence, they came to him and showed him the holy books, showed him the Scriptures by Śaṅkarācārya and others that describe these states, and he said, "Oh yeah, yeah, that's it! That's what I experience!"

In other words, it's not theory, it's not philosophy, it's not mental speculation, it's not theology or religion, it's not any of that. It's experiential, it's phenomenological self-observation. Just like a few episodes ago we talked about Buddha's description of the Root Sequence, the *Mūlapariyāya*. The *Mūlapariyāya* is the root sequence of thoughts that creates the ego, and we had a nice [illustration of a pyramid](#), with the eye on top, and all the layers and everything supporting it.

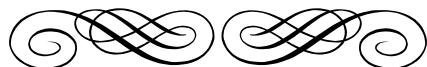
Was that just mental speculation by the Buddha? No. It came from his personal self-observation, how the mind creates this phony thing called an ego, an 'I,' and it does it by identifying certain perceptions as 'mine.' "After all, if all of this stuff is mine—my body, my eyes, my ears, my tongue, and so on, my senses, my mind, with all of my thoughts—there must be an 'I,' right?" That's called an inferential proof. There's no direct evidence for the existence of this 'I.' But indirectly, by creating all these things that are 'mine,' or rather labelling all these objects as 'mine,' one creates the sense or feeling that "Well, there must be an 'I.'" But, not really.

The Buddha is saying, “If you look into it, if you look into yourself, if you look into your own mind, you will see this is what’s going on.” It’s meant as a guide for self-observation. Similarly, when we say, “Time and place do not exist, the ‘I,’ the ego, the mind do not exist, only the pure, objectless awareness, the unconditioned consciousness exists, and everything else is more or less dependent on it, like the froth on the waves of the ocean of awareness”—this is not a theory; this is our experience! That’s why we can talk about it so clearly. We don’t have to think about it; we directly see it, we experience it every moment!

This is called Self-realization, we have realized the Self. And it’s easy, it’s effortless in fact: all you have to do is adopt the right view. It’s like we’re up here on the roof, and you can see the holy mountain, you can see the hotel in the background, and all the trees and stuff back there, you can hear the birds, and hear the nice music coming from the temple. Why? Because we’re up here on the roof: this point of view exposes all of that, and it’s no effort at all—we just look around, and it’s there! If we go downstairs in the house, we don’t see all this, we don’t hear all this—it’s cut off by the walls.

Similarly—you can see where I’m going with this, right?—if we stay within the walls, the narrow little confines of our ego—please, don’t make me stay there!—we don’t get to see all these things that Rāmaṇa is talking about. But once we follow his instructions and inquire into this ‘I’: “Where is this ‘I’ coming from? Where is it?” and not just out of words “Who am I? Oh, I’m Joe Blow from Kokomo...”

No, no. Not just words. But to sense the reality of “Where does this ‘I’ arise from? How does it come into being? Where are the steps of Buddha’s *Mūlapariyāya*? ” Can you see them, can you observe them in yourself? Because if you do, you’ll have to come to the same conclusion, that the ‘I’ doesn’t exist, and along with the ‘I’ not existing, all the stuff that’s dependent on it also doesn’t exist. Thus by adopting this point of view, then all of the details of Self-realization are revealed automatically—just by looking, just by being, just by seeing.



# Verses 17-18: To Know

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Now we're going to talk about those who have known, and those who have not. We're going to read two verses, because they make a complete thought:

**"To those who have not known the Self and to those  
who have known, this defective fleshy body is 'I'.  
But to those who have not known Self,  
'I' is limited to only the measure of the body;  
whereas to those who have known Self  
within the lifetime of the body,  
'I', the Self, shines without limit.  
Know that this indeed is the difference between them.**

**"To those who do not have knowledge of the Self  
and to those who do have knowledge of Self,  
the world is seen in front of them as real.  
But to those who have not known Self,  
the reality is limited to the measure of the world  
—its names and forms—  
whereas to those who have known Self,  
the Reality abides devoid of name and form  
as the substratum of the world.  
Know that this indeed is the difference between them."**

In *Bhagavad-gītā* 7.3 it is said, "Out of many thousands among men, only one may strive for Self-realization, and out of many thousands who strive for it, only one may know it in truth." It means out of millions and millions of men, maybe one in 10 million will actually get it.

Most of those who live have not known; they have not seen the Self within themselves. They have only seen the world, which appears to be outside. But those who have seen the Self know that the world is actually within the Self.

It's a dream, a mechanical device, a construction, similar to a house of cards, but instead of cards it's made of name-and-form.

If we think about the world, what we're really thinking about is a model, a construction. Within our minds we have constructed a model made of names and forms, and these are stacked on top of each other, like a house of cards. It's a beautiful example, that the Self is actually the substratum, like the table, and then the house of cards is built on top of that table. The reality is there, but it's hidden by the construction, this artificial mechanism, this clockwork machine called the world.

"Those who have known the Self"—and it's interesting, the expression 'have known.' In the original Tamil, he doesn't mention the word 'Self,' he says just "those who have known, and those who have not known." Because in the previous verses he already established that the only knowable thing, the only real knowledge is knowledge of Self.

"For those who have known..." Why doesn't he say, 'for those who know'? Because when we are in action in the world, it's impossible to also remember the Self. Why is that? Because to remember the Self means we drop all ideas of location, movement, objects, anything other than the Self. So, when we're immersed in the Self, this is called *Nirvikalpa-samādhi*. Now, there's also a kind of *samādhi* called *Savikalpa-samādhi*, and in *Savikalpa-samādhi* one sees the world as within the Self, and in that *samādhi* action is possible. But it's not like one is thinking of the Self; one is still thinking of the world, but not as a world.

One who has not known the Self thinks of the world as a world, and that he is a tiny living being within that world. But one who has seen, one who has known knows that actually the world, what we call 'the world,' exists within the Self. What is the proof? At night, when we dream, so many self-consistent worlds are created, full of people, animals, trees, buildings, landscapes, everything. Anything and everything that exists in the waking world can also exist in the dream world, and also many things that do not exist in the outside or waking world exist within the dream world.

Now some people are going to say, "Well, the real world is self-consistent, it's even mathematically consistent, and we can derive scientific laws from its

observation.” Well, yeah, sure. And if you go in your dream world, and start observing and performing scientific experiments, they will also be self-consistent. Why? Because the same mind makes both of them. But when you go into the world of deep sleep, without mind, without ego, there is no world; there is only Self. And when most people go into that world, they’re still wearing their *ānandamayakośa*, which is the shroud of deepest ignorance, so they don’t perceive anything. But if you go into it with awareness, then you will perceive the Self.

Sometimes people ask me “How do you do this?” Everybody wants to know *how*. First you have to know *what*, then only you can talk about *how*. That’s why in these videos we concentrate on the *what*. Actually, Rāmana is leading, because he’s writing the verses that we’re talking about, and he talks extensively about *what*. He talks more about *how* in [\*Upadesa-Undiyār\*](#), but here he’s talking about *what*: what is the world? What kind of existence is it, really? It’s certainly not as we usually think of it, because we know we’re in illusion. But it’s not really that different either.

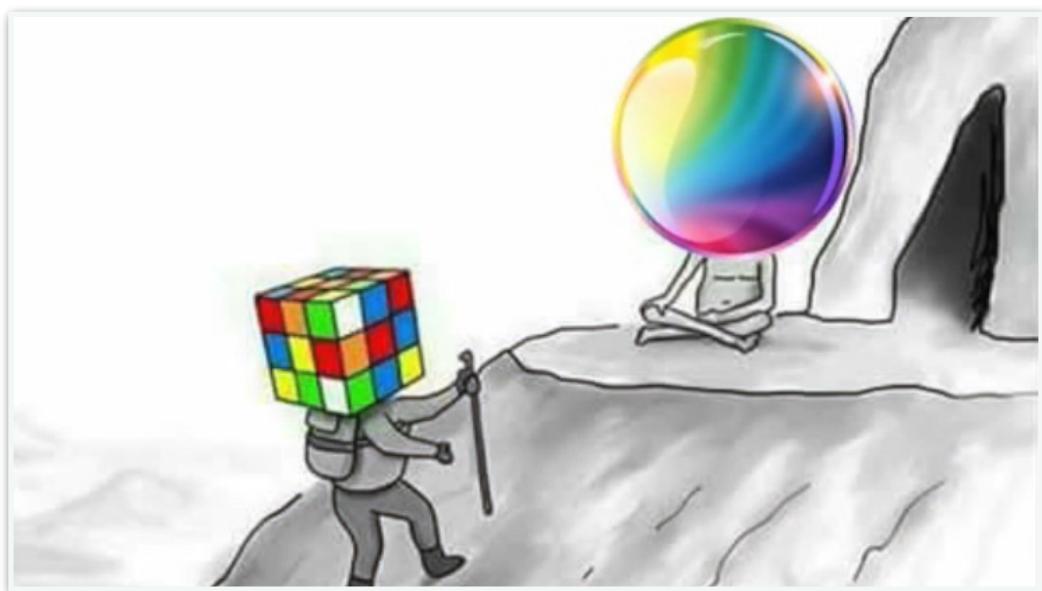
The example is given of the rope and the snake. One who is dreaming, hallucinating, in ignorance, deluded, sees the snake. But one who is awake, who is sane, who is in knowledge, sees that it’s just a rope. Now, both of them think that the snake or rope, whatever they happen to see, is real; they both are convinced of the reality of their experience. Why? Because to them it seems self-consistent, to each one. The one who sees the snake also feels the fear, and also experiences running away and hiding and so on. The one who sees the rope is not disturbed, and his world also exists in congruence with his experience.

So, what is it, really? Both those with knowledge, and those without knowledge are convinced that their experience is real. How can we tell the difference? Well, the difference is that one has an experience of the Self, the other doesn’t. That’s really the simplest thing, really the simplest difference.

Why do some few people become Enlightened, and most people don’t? This is really the point that I want to make in this video, since Rāmana brings it up here, very conveniently. Because most people don’t want to mess with their house of cards. They’re afraid to disturb the cards at the bottom, because the whole thing may fall, isn’t it? “Oh my God, what if I discover that there really

isn't any such thing as a world out there?! What am I going to do?!" I know what you're going to do, because I've already been through it! It's alright, it's not going to hurt you. But try to convince someone of that who has never had any experience in transcendence. They're going to be frightened, they're going to be scared to death, that "What if I mess with my worldview, what if I disturb the cards in the bottom of the stack, and the whole house of cards collapses? Then what am I going to do?!"

That's not the right question to be asking, but let's take a look at it anyway. Let's say somebody comes to a master—and this happened hundreds of times, if not thousands of times in Rāmāna's lifetime—someone came to him, began to ask questions about Enlightenment, and he gave them answers that just blew their minds. They were expecting to be told... Well, there's a wonderful cartoon which I'm going to put up on the screen here:



And of course this is one of the variations on the theme of climbing the mountain, and meeting the Master. "What does it mean, Mr. Natural?!" The guy climbing the mountain has a head which is like a Rubik's Cube, and it's all scrambled. In other words, he's confused, he needs to know what is what, and he's coming to the *guru* to get his cube solved. And he climbs up there, and he meets the Master, and whoa, the Master's head is a sphere, filled with swirling colors! Not what he expected, at all.

What does it mean? It means there's a gap in the beingness between an unenlightened and an Enlightened person. It means there's a gap, a huge

difference in the way they see the world, in the way they think, and in the way they are inside. One of them has this model, the mind, which is supposed to be a mirror of the world, and the other one doesn't really need it. "So what if the cards all fall down? Don't really need it anyway!"

A person who lives in knowledge sees the cause or the substrate on which everything is built, directly. There's no need for inferential knowledge. Everything we think we know about the world is just an inference; it's just an assumption, based on something that we were told. Has anybody listening to this video gone out and proved that space exists, that time exists, that the world exists in reality? Or do you just assume it, because everybody says so? And are you afraid to question these assumptions, because "Oh my goodness, what will people think!"? Are you afraid to look into it, because you might find out that they are simply assumptions, that they're not proved, they're not written in stone? What would happen to your little world? See, everybody here has this tremendously delicate structure, which is built up of other tremendously delicate structures, and so they're very much afraid that any little change will destabilize the whole thing.

Now you have a situation in the world where the actual Enlightened people are not believed, and cannot get a following, because "Oh my god, they might say something that's going to destroy our little world!" I'll tell you what: I live in a holy place which was established by the highest teacher in 2,000 years, at least, and all of his direct disciples are in hiding, the few that are still alive, just a handful of them. They don't see anybody, they don't give public talks, they don't grant interviews; they live in isolation, in seclusion. Why? Because the last few generations have seen the arising of a whole milieu of phony spiritual teachers, performance artists, who talk the talk but don't walk the walk. And how is that? Because they're telling people what they want to hear, instead of the truth; and they have the PR staff, and they have the event-management staff, and they have all the stuff that it takes to get by in today's business world. And they've turned it into a business, and they're making thousands and thousands of disciples, and thousands and thousands of dollars. And the real, authentic Enlightened people are sitting alone, because nobody is willing to come to them, and hear the truth that it's going to destroy their little house of cards.

This is what's going on now, and the only reason it can happen is that people are afraid. Well, what are you afraid of? You're going to lose the status quo? Big deal—you're going to lose it anyway! There's nothing that you can lose from approaching a real Master that you're not going to lose anyway just by the influence of time. Right now we live in a very precarious time. The old order is about to shatter, or it's actually in the process of shattering. The system of civilization, the system of culture all over the world is unsustainable, and it must change radically, it will change radically. Everyone's lives are going to be uprooted—yes, even the rich. There is no escape, it's going to be a global transformation of everything, from one house of cards to another, that's all. But the point is everybody's house of cards is going to fall. It's been a long time coming, but now is the time.

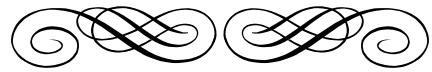
So if you become Enlightened, or you approach a teacher and you get your little house of cards shaken up, there's no loss. But rather, if you really want Enlightenment, do it now. There isn't any more time to waste. You won't be able to coast anymore. Time is very short, the change is overdue. We're about to get billed for all that stuff we've put on the card.

So, my advice to anyone who is really sincere is to contact someone who has known the Self, contact someone who sees. Oh yeah, I was going to say something about *how*, just to make sure you stay tuned until the end of the video. In the interval between sleep and waking, there is a moment where there's nothing but the screen, the background, the substrate, the Self. You have to catch that moment, and then hold on to the Self. This is the best method, this is what I do, and this is recommended by Rāmāna too.

So just falling asleep at night, when the mind becomes quiet, and then the dream starts—then stop the dream. Don't wake up; just stop the dream, and only the substrate remains. Or first thing in the morning, the dream ends, but waking consciousness hasn't begun. So the same thing: let the dream end, don't wake up, but just hold to the substrate, hold to the Self.

Now I gave away all my secrets. But you know what? I would bet 99% of you will be unable to do this method. Why? Because all kinds of preliminary training are necessary first, and you haven't done it. And the reason you haven't done it is because you don't have a Master, and the reason you don't have a Master is because you're chicken, that maybe you're going to disturb

your little house of cards. So you miss. Oh well, there's always next lifetime, right? No. There is only now. So you can get it, or you can miss—it's up to you.



# Verse 19: Fate

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

To distinguish reality from illusion means to distinguish nonduality from duality. So today we're going to look at one of those dualities, how it arises, and how it resolves in Realization.

**“The dispute as to which prevails—fate or freewill—is only for those who do not have correct knowledge of the root of fate and freewill. That is, this dispute arises only for those who do not know that the ego, who is the experiencer of fate and the wielder of freewill, is truly nonexistent. Those who have known the nonexistence of the individual self, the ego, who is the one and only base of fate and freewill, have discarded them. That is, they have discarded fate and free will along with their root and base, the ego. Say, will they again become entangled in fate and free will, or in the dispute about them?”**

“Ain’t likely, McGee!” Why? Because the root of duality is separation, distinction, boundaries. And Self, Brahman, or nondual consciousness, nondual awareness without an object, has no boundaries. That’s not to say that it’s all one, but it’s nondual. You see, we are conditioned or programmed with beliefs—shaped by our language, our logic, our body, the nature of our minds, and so on—and one of those beliefs is that everything has an opposite. So if there is such a thing as fate, there must be something like free will, and vice versa also. But what does it really mean? Fate means things that happen that we can’t control, and free will means things that we can control.

On the level of the existence of the body and mind and ego, there are some things we can control, and some things we can’t. There’s even a saying about it, something like “Lord, give me the intelligence to distinguish between what I can and can’t control—and the intelligence to know the difference!” Because

why should you knock your head up against the wall, trying to influence or manage something that is out of your control? It's a waste of time and effort.

The truly wise person doesn't really see a difference; the sage, the Self-realized person doesn't see a difference. Why? The measure of whether something is fate or freewill is based on the ego. If 'I,' the ego, can control it, it's freewill, and if 'I' can't control it, it's fate. But if the ego doesn't exist, then where is the distinction? Stuff happens, that's all. Whether I control it or not doesn't really make much of a difference in the end.

Let's go back again to good old *Mūlapariyāyasutta*. *Mūlapariyāya*, the Root Sequence says that for every perception, every experience, we create, conceive or inject the thought 'I' and 'mine' into it. And since many, many perceptions are coming every second, this creates the illusion of a continuous existence of 'I,' just exactly in the same way as a continuous succession of movie frames creates the existence of a persisting character on the screen.

Because of this we ourselves create, by our own effort, with the mind, this illusion of 'I,' the ego, the separate self, the individual. When we see this, we stop. Why? Because it's embarrassing! It's stupid! It's like, here come all of these items down a conveyor belt, and we have this big stamp that says 'I—boom—'I—boom—'I—boom... We've become a machine, we've become a habit-driven ego-monster, simply stamping events and perceptions with our little red stamp of 'I'! So, what is the meaning of free will, if we have to be a robot to create this 'I' that experiences it, or that claims it?

Now on the other hand, *karma* is coming. Everybody—I mean, literally every body is born with certain *karma* called *prārabdha-karma*. *Prārabdha* means ripe, it's ready to manifest. And as the planets and moon go around, like hands of a big clock, they'll tick off certain aspects, and boom, *karma* will happen. It's out of our control; it's fate, destiny, or what have you, especially the big things in life: how and in what circumstances one is born, what kind of parents one has, the situation around one at birth, economically, politically, socially and so on. Obviously, these are out of our control. Some people say it's like a gigantic lottery, but it's more than that. It's personalized, and it's based on our actions, our 'free-will' choices in a previous life. Of course we don't have access to that information, at least in a default consciousness, so we don't know exactly what we did to deserve what we got. But, there is no

injustice in this universe: if someone comes into a bad situation, it's because they deserve it; or vice versa, if they come into a good situation.

I used to do a bit of astrology, *jyotiṣa*, not ordinary astrology but Vedic astrology, and it's very easy to get a sense of what a person has done in their past lives, within two minutes of casting their chart. How? By looking at their *yogas*, particularly the *rāja-yogas*. *Rāja-yogas* are those *yogas* that give you the opulences of a king. And so if someone has acted piously in past lives, they get a lot of *rāja-yogas*. My *ādi-guru* had like 16 of them, 16 *rāja-yogas* in this chart, so he was literally a great king, *mahārājah*. Most people in developed countries, in Western countries have 6-7, 8 maybe, *rāja-yogas*, and people in difficult situations in life will have one or two, and this is really obvious from the astrology.

If it can be read in an astrological chart, then it means the cause is outside this life, previous to this life, and comes into manifestation at birth. From that you can go and extrapolate a person's whole life, and in many cases the person's whole life will be very predictable, based on those initial indications.

However, this is a really interesting point: the more *sādhana* a person does, the more spiritual growth a person attains within their life—you ask any astrologer—the harder it is to predict what's going to happen simply by astrology. There are other ways to predict, but astrology will not give you—in fact, the astrology chart becomes more and more irrelevant, until, at the point where a person attains complete Enlightenment, it's practically meaningless. What does that mean? They're running on pure free will, they have transcended their chart. And how does that work? Well, again the Buddha comes to our rescue, and he described it like this.

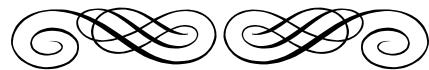
Someone asked "How is it that when you become Enlightened, your *karma* ceases to act on you?" and he described it like this: "Suppose you have a hut, and in the wall of a hut there's a window, and the sun is just coming up, and the rays of the sun are coming in through the window. Where do they fall?" and so the questioner said, "Well, on the wall, the opposite wall," and the Buddha says, "Right. Now, what if I take out that wall? Then where do they fall?" and the questioner says, "Well, I guess in that case they would fall on the ground," and the Buddha says, "Very good. What if we take out the ground? Then where do they fall?" and the guy says, "Well, I guess they would fall on the ocean," and finally the Buddha says, "And what if we

remove the ocean? Where do they land?" "Hmm..." the questioner had to say, "Well, I guess they don't land, they don't land, they don't have any place to land."

This is the situation with *karma*. The analogy used by the Buddha has a certain meaning: the wall of course represents the ego, the individuality saying, "I am different from that," and the ground represents the body, the body-mind, which is the basis or foundation of the ego. So if we take that away, then what's left? The ocean. The ocean is the consciousness, water is an ancient symbol for consciousness, and if we take that away too, no place for it to land. It's just like when you send a letter through the mail to a nonexistent address, and it comes back stamped "undeliverable, cannot deliver, no addressee," that's another one, or "no address, no such address—sorry, can't deliver!"

In the same way, the *karma* that's due to a very Enlightened person has no address, so how can it be delivered? But really, see, the essence of this is a very recondite point, that when one transcends duality, when one realizes the nondual consciousness of the Self, Brahman, then duality simply ceases. And it's not that one becomes 'one with everything'. That's such a puerile misunderstanding. No, there is no number: not one, not none, not three, not 17. There is no number, and certainly not two. But the duality that's built into our conditioned consciousness comes from our binary logic: true/false, black/white, up/down, in/out, free will or destiny. And when the ego is seen to be illusory... This happens in Buddhist meditation at the Third Path. In fact, this is Third Path realization, that one sees that not only is the ego illusory; it was always illusory, it never really existed!

Consequently, ignorance, conditioning, dualistic logic, delusion, egotism, desire, loving, hating, wanting, owning, being the cause, or being the effect, or any number of dualities not only do not exist, they never existed! They're not only illusory now; they were always illusory! Only the reality, only the nondual, boundary-less, unconditioned, objectless awareness ever exists.



# Verse 20: God

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Today we're going to look into something very interesting, and something we've been actually working toward for a few verses here, which is the nature of God. Everybody talks about God, but nobody does anything about it! What really is God, and how can we experience or realize God is discussed in this verse:

**"Oneself seeing God without seeing oneself,  
the ego, who sees what comes in front of one,  
is merely seeing a mental vision:  
a *mānasikā-darśanam* or imaginary appearance.  
He who, through the enquiry 'Who am I?'  
sees the real Self, the source of the individual self,  
alone is he who has truly seen God,  
because the real Self—  
which shines forth after the base,  
the individual self or ego, has perished—  
is not other than God."**

What do we mean by God? Well, there are various definitions: the source of everything, the Creator, the sum total of all existence, the Controller, Īśvara, the Supreme Personality—there are many, many definitions. Brahman, the root substance of everything, the unlimited, the one without a second, and so on and so on—many, many definitions. But, those definitions are just words. What do we really mean by God?

According to Rāmacandra, and according to my experience also, what we really mean by God is what is left over after all conditioning is removed, after we go beyond all limitations, and take off all masks that hide the reality, then what is left is God. So, in the comments on this verse, Śrī Sadhu Om mentions Verse 25 of [Upadesa-Undiyār](#), so let's go back and take a look at that:

**“Knowing oneself, having given up  
one’s own adjuncts [*upādhis*],  
is directly knowing God,  
because He shines as oneself,  
as one’s own reality: ‘I am’.”**

Let me read the commentary too:

**“Knowing this ‘I am’, which is one’s own real Self,  
without adjuncts (*upādhis*) is itself knowing God.  
That which exists and shines in one as ‘I am’  
is the true nature of God, and it is only  
one’s own adjunct-knowledge (*upādhi-unarvu*)  
that veils one’s knowledge of this ‘I am’.”**

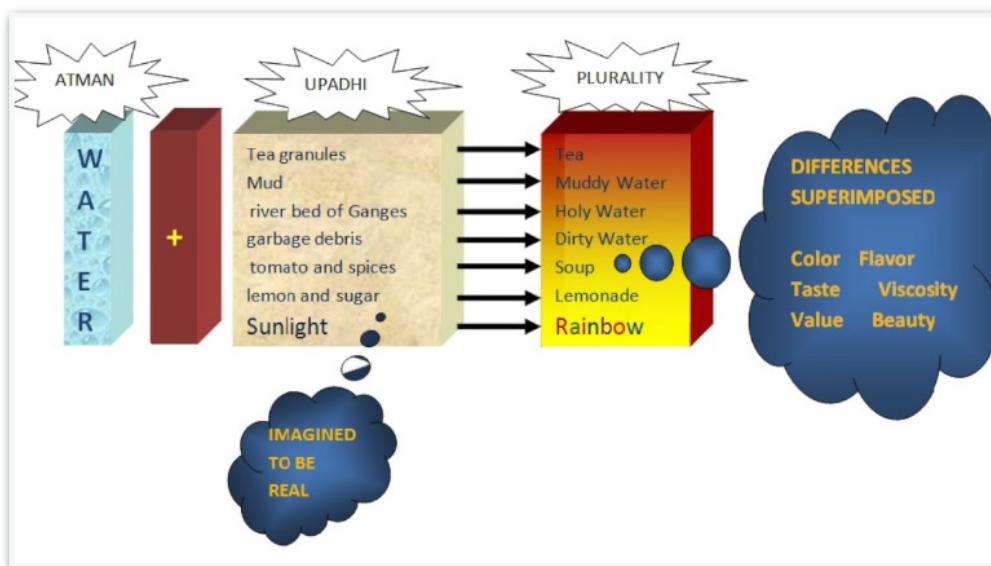
Now we have to look at what is *upādhi*. The meaning of *upādhi* in *Vedānta* is a limiting adjunct. An adjunct is something that’s next to something else, or an attachment, or a subordinate part of something. The Sanskrit definition is “By staying near something, it transfers its property to something else,” and the example is given of a crystal, a transparent crystal, which is kept on a blue cloth, takes on the appearance of being blue.



This is the principle of association. By positioning, or association with something that has a definite quality, that which lacks that quality, such as the transparent crystal, takes it up and appears blue. The example is given by Ādi Śaṅkarāchārya, in his book Ātmābodh:

It is important to know about the nature of *upādhi* to get free from it, because all our sufferings are caused by it. In Ātmābodh Bhagavān Ādi Śaṅkarāchārya says,

**“Because of its association with different conditionings (*upādhis*), the idea of caste, color, position and so on, are superimposed upon the *ātma*, just as flavor, color, and so on are superimposed on water.”**



Here we have a nice diagram illustrating this. Water in its native state is pure and clear, but when it becomes associated with other things, such as tea, mud, the riverbed clay, garbage, foods and sunlight, it acquires qualities based on those associations. You see what we're getting at here: similarly, the pure Self becomes associated with the body, and the mind in relation with it, and takes on their qualities, reflects them, or absorbs them, like the water, or like the crystal on the colored cloth. And in that way it loses its own original nature, or rather that original nature becomes covered by something else. The crystal is still transparent, but now it has adopted this blue color, by being next to the cloth. The water is still clear, and yet it acquires so many different qualities, by association with different things.

For example, space has no qualities at all, space is simply empty. But yet, it gets filled with so many things: air, dust, smoke, airplanes, clouds. Sometimes the sky may appear pure and empty, and at other times it may be filled with clouds, rain, lightning, wind, so many things. But yet, after that all passes, the sky remains in its original condition.

The same thing is true of the Self. The Self in Its native state has no qualities at all, except unconditioned, nondual, objectless awareness—that is also bliss, by the way. But when the Self through association becomes covered by different qualities—such as what Śaṅkarācārya mentioned: race, caste, nationality, family designations, this, that and the other thing—then it becomes subject to those conditionings. And because it is limited by those conditionings, then it appears to be of a similar nature to the coverings. This is *upādhi*. So *upādhi* is indeed the cause or source of all our suffering.

Would we, for example, suffer, if we didn't accept this body as a covering? Or, if we didn't accept the mind that says, "I am the ego, I am a person, I am a man, I am this, I am that, so many things..." All those are conditions that lead to suffering. Because if one, for example, accepts the body as the self, the body is going to get old and sick and die: that's suffering, and that suffering is born along with the birth of the body; or even previous to that, with the acceptance of the body as the self.

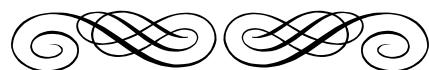
Therefore, the process of Self-realization involves one-by-one throwing off these coverings, becoming free from these conditions, these *upādhis*, these limiting adjuncts. And when one is completely free, then the Self shines forth in Its natural glory, in Its original condition. And, as I said before, Its original condition is unlimited, nondual, which means not divided, with no boundaries, with no edges, with no limitations whatsoever; just a solid, unlimited chunk of pure awareness, with no object except itself, from which comes the expression 'I-I.'

With Self we don't even have to say, 'I am,' because 'am' implies 'that': "I am that," but we don't even have to say, 'am'; we can just say 'I-I.' Because there is no object to become or be; it is only subjective, and this subjective awareness is the root cause of everything. When we go to sleep at night, the whole world disappears. Try it: when you're going to sleep at night, or when you wake up in the morning, there is a moment, there is a time between sleep and waking. If you go towards sleep, dreams begin; if you go towards waking, thoughts of the body and the mind begin. And from that vantage point, exactly between sleep and waking, you can very easily see that the quality of the dreams of sleeping, and the quality of the dreams of the body

and mind are nondifferent. They're both just dreams, they're both just thoughts. They're not realities; they're visions.

This is real *yoga*, this is real Self-realization, to stand in the middle between sleep and waking, and drop all dreams, and simply be the substrate, the original, source, which is God. In other words, God is not something separate from ourselves. The source of everything, the substrate, the root from which everything comes is the Self; not other self, our Self! But because of these limiting adjuncts, we think "Oh, I am not Enlightened. Oh, I have to do so much *sādhana*. Oh, I have to purify this, and transform that, and acquire something else," and blah-blah-blah. This is all part of the illusion. Actually, everyone is fully Enlightened at every moment! But because we accept these conditionings, these adjuncts, these *upādhis*, because we position ourselves in association with them, then we start to believe all these false things "I am this, I am that, I am not Enlightened," blah-blah-blah.

Just like the existence of the body as self or the mind as self is simply an assumption that we make, because it's not true; similarly, Self-Enlightenment, Self-realization, God-realization is simply an assumption that we make. "I am the nondual root substance of the entire universe. After all, the entire universe shows up in my consciousness! So, why not?" You'll find, if you make that assumption, that you are instantly Enlightened, and have realized God.



# Verse 21: Seeing = Being

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Today we're going to start a series of verses about actually how to realize God. God-realization or Self-realization mean the same thing. And the meaning of this is very difficult to get across to someone who has never gone beyond the mind, beyond the ego, the small self, the conditioned self—in fact, it's impossible. Why is that? Well, as Rāmaṇa says, "Are there two selves? Who is going to see the Self? There's only one Self, and it can't see Itself." So, the only way to *see* the Self is to *be* the Self, and we're going to enlarge on that after we read the verse.

**"If it is asked, 'What is the truth of the many scriptures which speak of oneself seeing oneself, whom one thinks to be an individual soul, and seeing God?'**

**The reply will be as follows:** Since oneself—the first person feeling 'I'—is one and not two, how is one to see oneself? Then if it is impossible for one to see one's Self, how is one to see God who is the substratum or Reality of oneself?

**To become a prey to God, who is the real Self, is seeing God."**



My devotion, my—the term is *iṣṭa-devatā*, the ideal form of God that one keeps within one's heart, is Narasiṁhadeva. Narasiṁhadeva is a form of half-man, half-lion. So, this verse is completely understandable, and clear and real to me. Because God is like a lion, he is like a hungry cat. Have you ever watched a hungry cat stalk its prey? Very carefully, sneaking up, waiting, very still until just the right moment... to pounce! Sneaky cat. So this is totally real to me.

In the beginning of spiritual life, we can't see anything. I was talking with one Swami the other day, and we were laughing about this, how when we first started meditating, and looking inside, all we see is black, nothing—we were laughing and laughing about this! Because of course in our present state, we see the opposite; we see nothing but light, too much light! Like thousands of suns. But, because one is the Self, even though there are thousands of suns in Brahman, their light is like the moon: cooling, pleasant, soft.

This Brahman, this Self, according to *Rbhu-gītā*, is amiable. He's very friendly. He likes to be close to his devotee, He likes to be involved with His devotee's life—very intimately, in tremendous detail. He doesn't miss anything; He's super-aware of everything, and so the reciprocation with Him in a mood of love is very, very satisfying. This is *bhakti*.

In higher stages one realizes one's identity with God. That is: the ego, the world and God come into being simultaneously. Why? Because the ego is separate from the Self, making a separate self, an individual self apart from the whole, Brahman. This introduces the principle of duality, and again to quote *Rbhu-gītā*, once you have a little duality, you have the whole package! There's no such thing as a little duality. Once you admit to duality, then the whole world exists, and all of its parts, and all its phenomena: time, space, distance, motion, all kinds of phenomena. And also God has to exist, because there has to be a Creator, there has to be a Controller, and there has to be a Knower of the whole thing. Because our individual consciousness is very tiny, our knowledge—at least we think, in individual consciousness—that our knowledge is very small, very limited and imperfect. And indeed it is, as long as we have this duality.

Bhagavān Rāmana here advises us to become the prey of the Self, and he tells a story with that: once there was a man who heard about an old tiger living in

a cave, and he decided to go and try to find it. So he inquired from the village people where is this cave, and he went and searched it out, and at first, waiting outside the cave, he was afraid, and he said, "Oh my goodness, what if this tiger gets me?" But the tiger was so old that it couldn't come out of the cave; it would just wait there for others to come in. Eventually the man got up his courage, and he said, "Well, I can go in there and see him and escape, because I know he can't come out." So he went in the cave, and at first he couldn't see anything. And gradually he went deeper and deeper in the cave, he still couldn't see. And finally he got close enough, and the tiger jumped on him and ate him up!

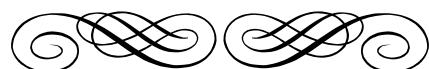
This is how we realize the Self. Metaphorically, the cave of course represents meditation, and the tiger represents the Self. Well, I prefer lion, so let's use the lion example. So to go into meditation, at first one is afraid: "Oh, what if I lose control? What if I lose my self? What if I lose my identity, my individuality or control over my life?" or whatever. But then, after seeing so many examples of great sages who went into meditation and were successful, and hopefully including one's own *guru*, then one enters the cave very slowly, looking and looking for "Where is this Self?" But he can't see, his eyes aren't adapted to the dark in the cave. He thinks there's nothing there—it's just blank, empty. But then, as he gets a certain amount of distance into the cave, he comes within range, and the Self pounces on him and gets him, and after that there is no escape.

Bhagavān here is saying, "Make yourself the prey of the Self, put yourself in a position where He can get you." Because you can't do it by yourself. This self, this individual who you think you are, cannot enter into those realms, the realm of nonduality. It's not oneness, by the way; it's nonduality—let's get that straight, right off the bat. We're not trying to become one with the Self, because that's impossible. The ego has to go away, it has to be shed, it has to be killed, lost, or somehow done away with. And of course the mind cannot overcome the mind, the mind cannot overcome itself. So we approach the Self, and allow the Self to overcome the mind. How is that possible? Because the Self is pure bliss, pure awareness. There is no division within the Self, there is no boundary, there is no edge or end to the Self. It's unbounded, infinite, there's no end to it. Because this condition of being Self is nondual, there's no difference between the small self and the big Self, but in ego-consciousness we think there is.

Until we give up this ego, the mind that it's based on, and the principle of duality at the root, we can't realize the Self, we can't even understand it—it's not possible to understand. But, we can point some fingers, we can say it's absolute, nondual, objectless awareness, and so on. But these are just indications; without the actual experience of the Self, they're meaningless.

In other words, it's not that one becomes the Self. There are several misunderstandings concerning Self-realization, that one becomes the Self. No, you can't become something that you already are. Or that we create the Self by meditation; again, we can't create something that we already are. Or, that we attain, or procure, or get the Self. No. We can't get it, because we *are* the Self! So if we already are the Self, then we can't purify the mind or the ego to become the Self; so that's not a valid concept either. Nor is Self-realization a matter of any practice. Well, then why do all the *gurus* and Scriptures recommend different practices for 'attainment' of the Self?

Actually it's a trick, you see. It's a trick to get you in the cave! Once you're in the cave, eventually you'll come within range, and the Self will strike and get you! But really, all we have to do is take away the coverings—the *upādhis*, the *vāsanas*, these superimpositions that we have created on the Self—and the mental tendencies, the habits that we've developed, to cover up the Self. That is the purpose of *sādhana*, and we'll talk more about *sādhana* in the next episodes.



# Verse 22: Realization

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Today we're going to talk about Realization, and there's a very nice verse:

**“How is it possible to know or to meditate upon  
the Lord by the mind, except by  
turning the mind inwards, towards the feeling ‘I am’  
and thereby sinking it in the Lord,  
who shines within that mind as its substratum,  
giving the light of consciousness to the mind,  
which sees everything other than itself. Consider thus.”**

The problem of Self-realization is not exactly with the Self. The Self is open on all sides; there are no boundaries, no gate, no fence. But *we* are closed, *we* have put up walls, *we* have created boundaries—“This is my self, and everything else is something other”—because we want to be an individual, we want to have our identity.

To break through these walls, these self-created boundaries isn't easy. We have a fear that if we do that, if we actually merge with the Self, that we'll lose ourselves. Completely wrong. But I remember, that's how it felt. What's actually happening is that we're gaining our real Self, which is everything. We're not losing anything; we're only losing something that never really existed in the first place: this illusory individual 'I,' the ego.

How does it work? Rāmananda says, “Turning the mind inwards.” There are thousands of techniques of meditation, and they all use the mind, and they all turn it inwards. Usually, at first, the mind is concentrated on something other than the Self. In other words, there's like a decoy. Some use the inner sounds or the inner lights, some use a thought or a *mantra*, some use a form of God or something else. But all meditation techniques try to turn the mind within. Why is that? Because when our mind is compulsively extroverted through the senses, then in every moment it's being deluged with sense impressions,

and these sense impressions distract us from who we really are, what we really are, which is nothing but consciousness.

When we have consciousness of something, especially consciousness of the senses, we tend to lose consciousness of ourselves, and ultimately of the Self, because we get all caught up in what's outside. Now, school and society, media, work, family life, and so many other things try to make us extroverted, try to keep our attention going outward, the opposite of meditation. So when someone first begins to meditate, they feel this tremendous resistance. This is like going against everything, it's like the ultimate revolution, the ultimate rebellion against the order of the world. Because the world tries to keep us distracted, it tries to keep us extroverted and engaged in things outside.

There are many ways to counteract this, thousands of techniques. I mean, in *Vijñāna-bhairava-tantra* alone there are 112 techniques. The Buddha taught 84,000 *Dharma* Doors. What does that mean? That means that any experience, any perception can be used as a fulcrum to turn the mind within. I'll give some famous examples: Janaka, the father of Lord Rāma's consort Sītā, was a great king, and he attained Self-realization in his harem, surrounded by beautiful women! And of course there's a whole science of *Tantra* based on that, but most of it is quite misguided, and usually has the opposite effect of making someone more attached to the senses. But we want to get less attached.

In *yoga*, after *āsana* the next stage is *prāṇāyāma*, control of the breath. Well, what does it mean to control the breath? Most of the breath control taught as part of *yoga* leads to powers—extraordinary strength, or some mystic powers or something like that—and so it doesn't really help us go within. There is one exercise with the breath, however, which is called *Ānāpānasati*. Again it comes from the Buddha, and this is what the Buddha himself used to attain Enlightenment, which is simply watching the breath. Now, at first when you watch the breath, there is going to be some interference, one will try to control the breath, just out of habit. But normally, we don't control the breath, and nothing much happens. I mean, during sleep we're completely unaware of breathing, yet breathing goes on somehow or other.

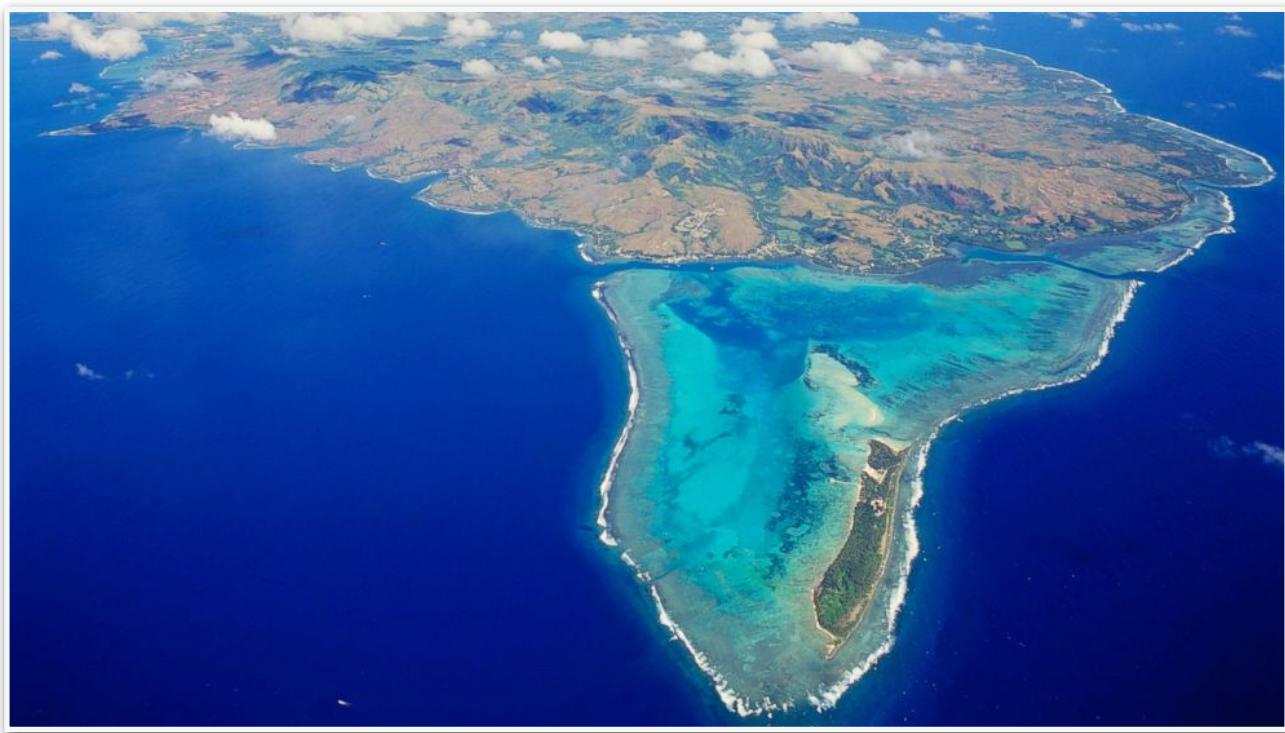
The actual idea and goal in *Anāpānasati* is to allow the breath to breathe on its own, just like during sleep. Basically what we do in *Anāpānasati* is watch the breath, and allow it to subside naturally. That means we don't try to hold the breath in or out, but just let it go, not put any effort into it at all, and watch, be aware. The combination of these things leads to a state called waking sleep, where the body is asleep, but the consciousness is awake and aware—this is a beautiful state. I've been talking in the last few episodes about the interval between dreaming and waking, dreaming sleep and waking sleep, sleeping dream and waking dream, and how that leads to awareness of the substrate. As Rāmana talks here, the mind, when turned inwards, toward the feeling 'I am,' begins to cognize consciousness itself.

I discovered this back in 2005, sitting in a park in Mexico City, and thinking "You know, this consciousness really is a wonderful thing. How is it that we can be aware of this material world, when we are actually pure spirit?" and I was just contemplating this, and looking at consciousness and turning it over in my mind, and in the process I noticed I was feeling very blissful, and this was really wonderful! Unfortunately, at the time I didn't have much knowledge of Advaita, so I didn't give it much significance. But actually, I had discovered this method of *ātmā-vichāra* that's given by Rāmana. And this is the most wonderful thing, to focus on this feeling 'I am'—not the words "I am"—but there's a particular sensation in the mind, right in the center of the head, that 'I am,' and it's intimately connected with consciousness, with awareness.

Somehow or other, to counteract the compulsive extroversion to the senses, one of the best methods—it seems to me, from my experience—is right after the satisfaction of a big desire. Sex desire for example, right after a very satisfying sex experience, to turn the mind inwards, and look at this 'I am,' this consciousness. Or, in the second *cakra*, after a feeling of tremendous energy, then relaxing afterwards, look inwards. Or, a beautiful experience of movement, dance maybe, or running, then sit. After Qigong exercises our teacher always had us sit and look within, and she didn't explain any technique. But if you just sit without any plan for long enough, things will start to happen by themselves. I'm talking about four, five, eight, 10 hours a day, just sitting. No plan, no technique, no nothing; just sit, and see what happens.

Or, after a beautiful emotional experience, if emotions are your thing, after a very satisfying experience, maybe playing music, or doing some other artistic activity, or in love, or whatever emotion is most satisfying to you, after that experience then sit down quietly, and look within: who is having this experience? ‘I. I am.’ Or, after a very beautiful experience of communication, being able to really speak your heart or your mind, and really express yourself—oh, it’s so satisfying—and then sit down, and simply contemplate “Who is speaking? Who is communicating? Where is this coming from? Who am I?” Or, if you like thinking, after thinking, or coming to a very satisfying conclusion of thought, stop, and focus inwards, on “Who is thinking? Who is reasoning? Who is coming to these wonderful conclusions?”

Or finally, in the seventh *cakra*, just bliss out! I did this last night: last night was Friday night, and I said, “I’m going to party!” [laughs] So I laid down so I could completely relax my body, forget all about it, and I simply went up into the seventh *cakra*—the Thousand-Petalled Lotus, *sahasrāra*, which is nothing but light and ecstasy of consciousness—and I just dove in!

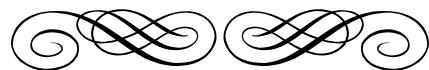


When I used to live on Guam, Guam has a beautiful lagoon, a saltwater lagoon inside the reef, with millions of fish. It’s where all the fish go to breed, so there’s every kind of fish, every kind of sea life in there. I used to go there, and just swim for hours. I had a snorkel, a mask and flippers, and I would

just go in there, it was a couple of miles long and wide, and I would just splash around to my heart's content!

This felt the same way: going into this ocean of light, and just jumping in and splashing around, and having a great old time in this ocean of bliss! Of course you lose yourself, you're not conscious anymore of 'I am,' but you're conscious of consciousness, you're conscious of the Self, 'I-I.' No more 'I am,' because the Self is sufficient unto Itself.

This is the method I use, but it may not be suitable for beginners. Don't try this at home, kids! No, actually there is no danger in meditation, there's no downside to it. If you're afraid of losing the ego, it's only because you think it's real, but it's not; it's an illusion that you create. The mind sees everything other than itself, it's extroverted. In meditation, we're introverted, and we see nothing but the Self—that is real Self-realization.



# Verse 23: ‘I Am’

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

I don't know what it is; every time I start these things, I just get such a rush of bliss. I'm not laughing at you; I'm just happy—what can I say? This process works! This meditation, this philosophy, this way of life, it really works and delivers the bliss that we've all been waiting for, that we've all been wanting forever and ever. So let's pay attention to what Bhagavān says, he really knows what he's talking about!

**“Since it is insentient, this body does not say ‘I’.  
That is, it does not have any inherent self-consciousness.  
No one says, “In sleep—where the body does not exist—  
I do not exist.” After an ‘I’ arises from sleep as  
‘I am the body’, everything—all the second- and  
third-person objects of the world—arises.  
When one scrutinizes with keen mind  
“Where does this ‘I’ arise?”, it will slip away,  
being found to be nonexistent.”**

When the ‘I’ is nonexistent, also the world is seen as nonexistent, and the body. There's a reality test that the sages use to determine what is real and what is not real, and it's given in the *Vedas*: that which is, is always, without change. If we look at this world, if we look at this body, they're always changing, and they come and go. Not only at birth and death does the body come and go; it comes and goes every day in the morning, and every night when we go back to sleep!

In dreams, while sleeping at night, we have another body. It's not the same, and the reason it's not the same is that it has all kinds of powers that this body doesn't have. It can change into this or that form or shape, it can fly. So many things that dream body can do. Why? It's the *manomayakośa*, it's the mental sheath. It's not this physical body made of food, *annamayakośa*; it doesn't have the limitations that this body has either, that's natural. So, we have one body in this waking life, and then we have another body in sleep,

and then in deep sleep even that body disappears, and there's nothing: no world, no senses, no forms, no existence, except good old unconditioned awareness, the Self, Brahman.

That is what we really are. Bhagavān talks about two kinds of 'I' here: he talks about the original 'I am,' the Self, which does have real existence, because it always is, and it never changes. And then he's talking about the 'I' that arises as "I am the body." Which body? The body that we have in dreams, or the body that we have in the waking dream? They're both illusory. Why? Because they're always changing! This body is born as a squirming infant, and then it goes through several stages of growth, up to adulthood, and then it gradually begins to decline, until finally it disintegrates at death. Now, is this body a real thing? No. We can't say it's real, because it's always changing. Doctors say every seven years all the body cells change: they either reproduce, or die off.

What is there that's real? Only this awareness, and by awareness I don't mean consciousness. Consciousness means consciousness of something, usually through the senses. But when consciousness goes, there is still awareness underneath. Try to understand: we live a world of illusion, we live in a world of dreams. All the sages say this. Why do they say it? Because they're watching. Not from 'I,' the ego, but from 'I am,' the eternal awareness of Brahman. From that point of view, one sees that all changes and passes away. So, if all changes and passes away, it's all a dream. Some dreams are shorter, some dreams are longer. Doesn't matter: they still have the same quality.

That's why this world is said to be an illusion, the world is said to be a dream, because it's based on the dream of "I am the body", the false ego, *ahaṅkāra*, which can only arise as an adjunct to a mind, and a mind is also a false existence. Basically, it's a bucket in which we just throw all our thoughts, and—as we have pointed out, and the Buddha has pointed out, and Bhagavān, Śrī Rāmana has pointed out—all these thoughts begin from the root thought "I am the body."

If we actually look at this mind of ours, and we try to see where does this thought 'I am' arise—not the words 'I am' but the actual thought, the actual conception, the concept. 'Conception' means something new coming into existence that didn't exist before, like the conception of the body has to

happen first, then there's a period of gestation, and then the body is born. Similarly, the self, or 'I as the body' is also conceived, and it gestates in the mind as fabrications, and as name-and-form, and then it becomes a contact with the senses, and at that point it's born.

Because we have this false 'I,' which we believe in passionately—if we only had such faith in the truth!—because we believe in this false 'I,' when the body dies we think "I am dying." But, as Rāmana points out, death is just a thought. Why? Because it's based on a thought, "I am the body." "If I am not the body; if I am the awareness that gives rise to the body—within which the whole world appears and disappears every day, and if you take a nap, twice a day!—how can that be anything but the ultimate reality?" How can that awareness, that pure, unconditioned, nondual, objectless, eternal awareness, unlimited, unbounded, how can that be anything but the absolute truth? How could that be anything but the reality on which the dream is based? You see?

What does it take, actually, to transfer our sense of 'I am' from the body, the false identity, to the Self, the real identity, the real 'I am'? Well, ultimately it's an act of faith. Yes, you can go at it stepwise, gradually, and that's how most people approach it. In the beginning, for example during the stage of *bhakti*, we advise everyone to chant the *Gāyatrī-mantra*, and this *Gāyatrī-mantra* we've gone into in great detail in another series. This simply is worshipping the Brahman, but it's worshipping the Brahman from the point of view that "I am different from Brahman."

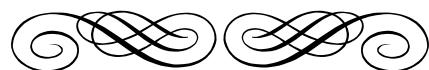
What has to happen? At some point, we have to start thinking of the Brahman as "I am. This is my Self. I am the Brahman." Nobody can do this for you, nobody can lay their hand on your head, and say, "Okay, now you're the Brahman—boom," that's not going to happen. You are not going to be given your real identity, your real Self, it's impossible. Because you already *are* your real Self, you already are the Brahman, you already are the 'I am,' the eternal awareness underlying everything, and you have always been the Brahman.

All that's necessary really is to clear away all of the stuff that's covering it up, all of the false conceptions of 'I am.' And what are these? *Vāsana*. *Vāsana* means a psychological tendency that lies dormant in the mind until an

opportunity arises, and then it becomes active by the process of association. Like, you see a desirable object, and then immediately, boom, a *vāsana* arises that makes you want to possess and enjoy that object; and so a bunch of mental processes spring up that make you think that you can acquire this object. The whole idea of ownership is completely bogus! Anyway, we've gone through that as the Root Sequence, the *Mūlapariyāya*. The Root Sequence is the sequence of thoughts that occurs, that is overlaid upon every single perception and action, to make it 'mine.' And why is that? So that we can justify the existence of this false ego, this *ahankāra*, this "I am the body."

Just like a movie is nothing but a succession of still frames, like this video, yet there seems to be motion and continuity and so on. That's all just an illusion. The sound is going at 48,000 samples a second, and so even though it's just a series of blips, because it's strung together very fast there is an appearance, an illusion of continuity. And similarly with this 'I am.' Because 'I have' or 'I think I have, I own, I have acquired this object, this thing outside,' then I also think that there is an 'I' who has acquired it. It's an indirect proof.

But the direct proof of our existence as Brahman is simply by thinking ourselves so, it's an assumption we make. Just like the assumption that "I am the body", even though the body is just a piece of meat, the assumption that "I am Brahman" is the essence of Self-realization. It's an act of courage, it's an act of will, and it's an act of accepting what we really are.



# Verse 24: Body or Soul

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Today we're going to talk about the 'I': the real 'I' and the false 'I.'

**"The insentient body does not say or feel 'I'. Existence-consciousness—*sat-cit*, the real Self—does not rise or subside. But in between the body and the real Self a limited 'I' rises as the measure of the body. Consciousness in the form 'I am this body' rises in waking and subsides again in sleep. Know that this 'I am the body' consciousness is called by various names such as the knot between consciousness and the insentient (*cit-jada-granthi* or *hṛdāya-granthi*), bondage (*bandha*), the individual soul (*jīva*), subtle body (*sūkṣma-śārīra*), ego (*ahantai*), this mundane state of activity (*samsāra*) and mind (*manas*)."**

I always used to think, "It's really amazing, it's really kind of strange that spirit, which is pure consciousness, can be in relation with, or be conscious of this material existence, which is basically inert." They are so completely different in character, in their basic nature and in their activities, so how is it that they can even be related to one another? Well, this is called the *granthi*, the knot, this very-hard-to-explain, very-hard-to-understand connection that ties these two completely dissimilar things together.

This knot is of the nature of *ahaṅkāra*, false ego. It says, 'I, I am,' but actually it is not. What is that? Well, it's called by many different names, but basically it's a measure of the body, it's like a status indicator. "How am I doing? How is the body doing? Is it okay?" And we measure the body against the body as it was in the past, or how we would like it in the future, or against other bodies, so in that way we get an indication of how we're doing: are we doing okay? Are we in trouble?

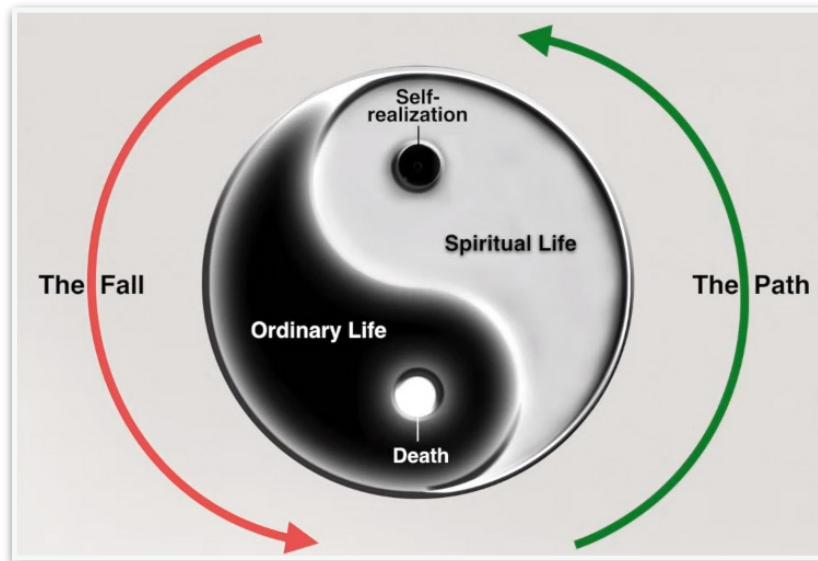
The mind is based on fear, fear for the body. "Is there anything in the present situation that resembles a previous situation in which there was some threat, or some suffering in the body, some diminution of the body's condition or status? If so, then we better do something, we better have a plan, or we better take action!" This is the mind, the mind is always worrying: "What if this happens? What if that happens? Oh, what are we going to do!?" you know, the mind is a worrywart, and it gossips too.

The mind is full of all kinds of nonsense—verbal expressions, verbal knowledge—which it passes off as actual knowledge. But it isn't really knowledge because it's not based on experience; it's only based on words, in most cases heard from others. Heidegger called this 'idle talk,' and it begins in the mind. The mind wants to pose as 'I,' and it's based on identifying the body as 'I,' but the body is basically just a piece of meat. I mean, it's a wonderful mechanism, and it's amazing in so many ways, but basically it's just a machine. So, there's nothing really too wonderful about the body.

What's really wonderful is the real Self, the real 'I am,' the *sat-cit*, the real Self, existence and consciousness. Real existence means eternal and unchanging, and real consciousness means always on. The Self is always awake, always aware. In deep sleep there isn't anything for it to be aware of, but at all other times the Self is aware of the dreams in sleep, and of the dreams while waking. And this is what the mind is: it's actually a dream, a dream that "I am this body," even though actually we have nothing whatsoever to do with the body; the body is just a piece of meat, and we are the actual living eternal Self.

How is it that these two completely dissimilar things are connected? Well, this is called identification. Identification means that we identify, or we take one thing to be something else. For example, taking the body to be the self, or taking the mind to be 'I.' This is identification, and projection, projecting our sense of 'I am' on the body and mind, when it is obviously neither of them. I say "obviously," because if you actually look at your experience, it's clear that the mind and body are different from the Self, because they are not aware. The body is a biocomputer, and the mind is another kind of computer, the subtle body, *manomayakośa*, and they are responsible for certain functions, but you can't say that they're alive, exactly. They're not conscious, they're not aware, and without awareness what's the meaning of 'I'? 'I' is a symbol that

means being aware; without awareness there is no 'I,' there is no one to say 'I am.'

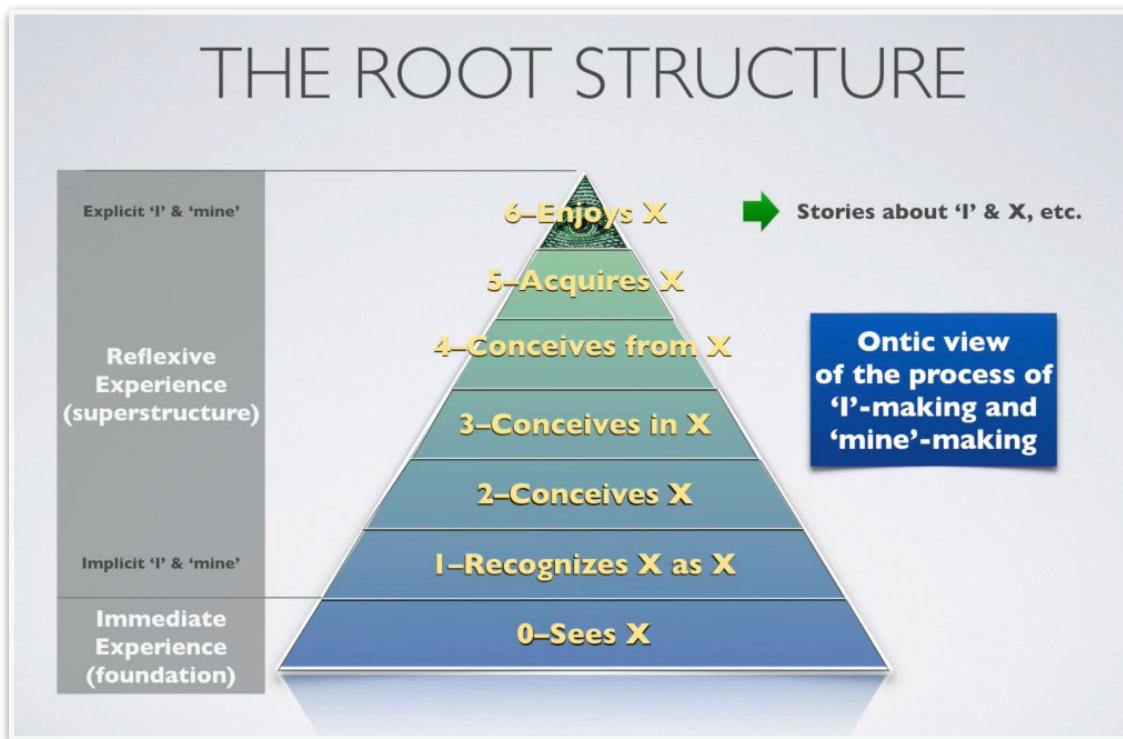


In other words, this idea of being an individual self based on the body is the essence of illusion. We call this the Fall: the being falls from being the real 'I am' into a condition of false 'I,' false identification with the mind and body, and this goes on and on until one takes to the Path. Now, the Path is the exit from this improper, unhealthy, wrong condition and understanding, and it begins with education, it begins with learning, not necessarily book-learning but learning about the real facts of life, and acquiring what is called Right View.

All the things that Rāmaṇa talks about in these verses are the pieces, the elements of Right View. If one views the mind and body rightly, he won't say, "I am the body," and he won't consider the mind to be the self; he'll accept only consciousness as the self. Now, does that really change anything? No. To know that will prevent us from making certain mistakes, and that's valuable, but it's only the beginning of Self-realization. To actually attain Self-realization one has to meditate, and this is a process that, well, takes a whole lifetime, unless you're really fortunate, and have already spent many lifetimes on the Path.

What does meditation mean actually? It means *neti-neti*, looking at the contents of the mind that we normally identify as 'I,' or project as 'I,' and severing our link with them, stopping the identification, stopping the projection, and saying, "No, this is not 'I.' This is the mind, or this is the body,

or this is some possession that I had identified with myself, as part of 'I'-making and 'mine'-making."



We went over that earlier, the *Mūlapariyāya*, the Root Sequence: we identify something as 'mine' in order to base the inductive conclusion that 'I' exists. I can say, "Oh yes, this is my body. Because this is my body, there must be an 'I' who owns it." Well, there is really an 'I,' but the real 'I' doesn't have anything to do with the body. The real 'I' is nothing but the awareness within.

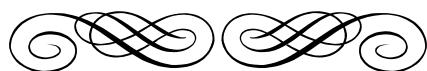
How do we recognize, how do we realize this real 'I'? Well, as I said, meditation is involved, and sometimes a little austerity is involved. Not too much austerity—don't go out of balance—but simply refrain from some of these identification activities for some time, so you can more easily realize that they are not the Self, they are not 'I,' the body is not the Self, the mind is not the Self, these thoughts, these identifications, these aren't the real Self; the real Self is something else.

What is that? Well, here's the kicker, this is the punchline to this video: the real Self is not an *experience*; the real Self is the *experiencer*, the one who is aware, not the things that one is aware of. What does that mean actually? It means that when people have a so-called 'Enlightenment experience,' and then they say, "Okay, I'm Enlightened, I had the experience!" No. No, you're

not Enlightened because you had an experience. Experiences come and go, even Enlightenment experiences come and go. Okay, so you visited the top of the mountain. [points at *Arunāchala*] Right now if you go there, you wouldn't see anything! It's totally surrounded by fog. But on a clear day, you go up there and you can see very far, yes. But guess what, there's no food or water up there, you have to come down.

We may have a peak experience, and before, in our analysis of *yoga*, we found that you can reach *samādhi* based on any of the centers in the body. The Buddha talked about 84,000 *Dharma* Doors, and what are they? They're the 84,000 *nādīs* or energy vortexes in the body. Based on those, you can leverage any one of those to reach *samādhi*, but you have to come out of *samādhi*, you can't live in *samādhi*; if you stay in *samādhi*, the body will die. And there is a class of Enlightened people who just go into *samādhi* and don't come out, and they drop the body. But the original attainment of Enlightenment is not based on *samādhi*, it's not based on any experience. Rather, it's based on recognizing who is actually the experiencer. Is it the body? No, because the body is just a piece of meat. Is it the mind? No, because the mind is also just a machine, just a computer. So, who is the experiencer actually? Is it this *jīva*, is it this soul, or all of these different false entities that claim to be 'I'? No, it's not any of those.

It is only the real, unconditioned, objectless, nondual awareness: 'I,' the Self, Brahman, not any individual. The minute you talk about an experience, you're talking about an individual, so that can't be Enlightenment, that can't be Self-realization. The real Self-realization is when you realize who you really are, and then there's no more chasing these different experiences, or identification with these alien things: the body, the mind, objects, experiences, the senses, memories, desires—all these things go away. Or they may still be there, but you don't think of them as 'I.' The body is going to exist for a certain time; okay, let's just ride it out, let it do its thing for a few more years. But, one who is Self-realized knows well who he really is: *aham brahmāsmi*.



# Verse 25: Magic

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

This episode is about the ego, and how the ego forms and maintains itself, and, surprisingly enough, it's exactly in agreement with the Buddha's teaching.

**"What a wonder! This ghostly ego, which is devoid of form  
(that is, which has no form of its own),  
comes into existence by grasping a form  
(that is, by identifying the form of a body as 'I');  
it endures by grasping a form  
(that is, by continuing to cling to that body as 'I');  
it waxes more by grasping and feeding upon forms  
(that is, by attending to second- and third-person objects  
which it cognizes through the five senses);  
having left a form, it grasps a form (that is,  
having given up one body, it grasps another body as 'I');  
but if one searches for it by enquiring  
'Who am I, this formless ego?', it will take to flight,  
being found to be nonexistent! Know thus."**

We should know. After watching all these videos, you should know by now, right? You should know. And not just intellectually, not just by words, but by experience, by looking into yourself, and by observing 'where does this ego arise? Where does it come from? How does it form? How does it maintain itself? And how does it disappear?'

The ego is a transient thing because its existence is dependent on other things. Try to understand. It cannot have real existence, because it is always in relation with one or more forms, and of course the principal form is the body. The body comes into existence at a certain stage, therefore it is also unreal, it is also just a dream! And then the ego grasps or clings to this body as 'I.' So, what is the ego? A dream within a dream. The world is a dream, the body is a dream, the ego is a dream. Yet, people spend so much time and

energy trying to build up this ego, by giving it more and more objects to feed on. We described this process in detail in the episodes on the *Mūlapariyāya*, the Root Sequence, how the mind actually creates the ego by sleight of hand.

Did you ever watch a magician? Well, if you watch the magician from the point of view of the audience, you will never get to see how he does his tricks, because he sets everything up very carefully to conceal the actual means by which he pulls a rabbit out of a hat or whatever. However, if you go backstage and you look through the curtain, behind the magician, you can very easily see how he does his tricks: the hidden trap doors, and the strings that he pulls and so on, where he stashes his extra deck of cards.

In the same way, depending on our point of view, we can actually see how the mind operates. If we take the point of view of the audience, who want to be cheated... Everybody knows a magician is cheating, there is no real magic in this world; everything is explainable by the laws of physics. But, because the magician is expert at misleading our attention, to make us look over there when he's doing something over here, therefore he is able to cheat us; he's able to make it seem like he's doing the impossible. But, if we again go behind the magician, where he hasn't prepared people to look, we can very easily see it's sleight of hand: he's got the card hidden up his sleeve, and he makes a certain motion with his hand, and it comes out.

Depending on the point of view that we take: if we take the ordinary point of view, where we're not critical of the ego, where we're not even suspecting the ego is doing anything wrong, then the ego will always be able to deceive us; we'll never see through it. Just like if we sit in front of the television all day, we might think that that's a window into a little room, with all these little people running around. But if we go around the back and take the cover off, we can see it's just a bunch of electronics; it's just an illusion, in other words.

In the same way, if we look at the ego from the angle of analytical intelligence —how is the ego functioning, how is it created, how is it maintained—we see that it's always dependent on grasping onto forms other than itself. It has no form! It's like a mirror, a mirror that can cling, and when some form comes in front of it that it likes, it assumes the shape of that form, and then clings to it. "This is 'my' form! And because this is 'my' form, well then 'I' must exist, right?" That's an inductive conclusion. That's like saying, "Because every

swan we have ever seen is white, there are no black swans;" like saying that, "Because every sheep that we have ever seen is white, there are no black sheep." But then one day we see a black swan, or a black sheep, and the whole illusion is destroyed.

Inductive reasoning always leads to black swans and black sheep, because we are not seeing all the evidence. If we could see exactly how the mind operates, it could never deceive us, it could never let us think that there is an individual, 'I,' a separate being. Yet, the whole civilization that we live in—its customs, its language, its literature, its schools, its businesses—everything is predicated on the idea of a separate individual, an entity, an ego. An entity means an existence that has its own separate being, and an agent, so one who has agency, means an entity that can perform actions.

This is the ontology of illusion, this is the ontology of the material world, that every being is a separate individual ego, who is an entity, a self-existing being, who has agency, or the ability to act on his own. Now we know this is false. How do we know? Two things: the Scriptures and the sages tell us so. And if we investigate even a little bit, we can see the truth of it for ourselves, in ourselves. We can see, for example, the sleight of hand that the mind uses to create the ego, when there's actually nothing there at all. It's just information, it's just a picture on a screen: the mind is like the screen, and the ego is like some character who comes on the screen, and talks and does things to entertain us.

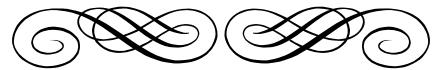
In the same way, in the screen of the mind there is the image of the ego, which is the same as the image of this body. And then this body goes here, and goes there, and says this, and does that. And then—here's the kicker—it creates *karma*, and we have to accept the results of that *karma*, we have to accept good and bad reactions, the consequences of our actions. Didn't bargain for that, did we? No, we just wanted some enjoyment, some nice sense enjoyment, or some power, or wealth, or fame, or beauty, or knowledge, or renunciation. We go chasing after all these things, and even if we get them, we find that: number one, they're not perfect; number two, they're not permanent; and number three, they give reactions, and some of these reactions are really nasty, like having to take another body.

When this body is finished, now the ego can't grasp it anymore. So, what does it do? It runs off and creates another one! And we're going to get, in the *Esoteric Teaching Series*, to a detailed explanation of exactly how that happens—it's going to be very interesting! A little bit intellectual, but I think in this case it's justified, to give so much knowledge and form in words. Because it really shows us how the ego works, how the mind is creating these forms. Not that the mind lives in the body, but that the body is created within the mind! The *annamayakośa*, this material, fleshy body lives within the cocoon of the *manomayakośa*, the mental sheath. Try to understand. And they live within the *vijñānamayakośa*, and that lives within the *ānandamayakośa*. Try to understand: this world that we see through the senses of the body lives within the body, and the body lives within the mind, and the mind lives within the intelligence, and the intelligence lives within what we might call the soul.

Our ordinary view of life is just like the people who sit out in front, the audience in the magic show: they're getting entertained by the magician, and they could never see how he does his tricks. But, once we start listening to this teaching, once we start taking the point of view of the *jñāṇī*, the one who knows, then we can see—like going behind the curtain at the magic show—exactly how the mind does its tricks, and after that it can never fool us anymore, we can never be entertained. Just like once we know how the magician does his tricks, he's not going to entertain us anymore, because now we just think that "Oh, he's a cynical rascal who is profiting off the ignorance of his audience."

In the same way, the mind is just another cynical rascal, exploiting us—us being the Self, the pure awareness within—and putting on this whole magic show of the body and the mind, and all this stuff happening. But, the price of admission is *karma*, being stuck in *samsāra*, the wheel of birth and death. And in the succeeding episodes, and especially in the Esoteric Teaching series, we're going to go deep into the exactly how this works. Just like once you know how a car engine works, then it can never mystify you, you could never think that it was magic. Or a telephone, or a TV: you could never think that they're magic, because you know basically how they work. You know you could take one apart, and fix it, and put it back together again. And actually, we do this all the time, we actually know all these things, deep down, but we forget them: they get covered over by the mind's tricks.

This teaching is all about how to remove those tricks, how to see through the indirection of the mind, how to penetrate the sleight of hand, the magic of the mind, and see the real truth.



# Verse 26: Everything

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Today we're going to talk about the right view of the *jñāṇī*.

**"If the ego, which is the embryo, comes into existence, everything—the world, God, bondage and liberation, knowledge and ignorance, and so on—will come into existence.**

**If the ego does not exist, everything will not exist.**

**Hence the ego itself is everything.**

**Therefore, know that scrutinizing 'What is this ego?' is alone giving up or renouncing everything!"**

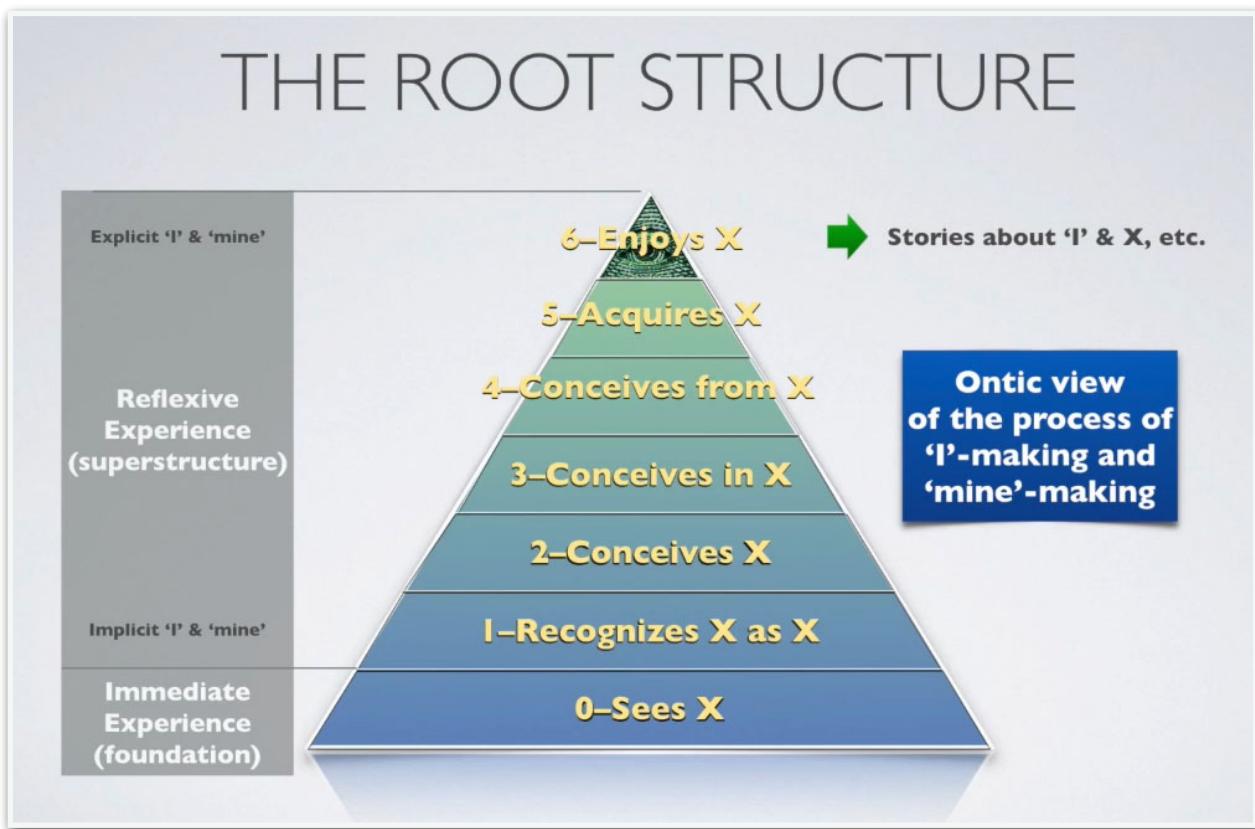
Normally, people think that we are in the world, but actually the *jñāṇī* sees very clearly that the world is in us. The whole world is a dream, and as soon as one looks into where does it come from, how does it arise, what is the seed, the whole thing unravels, it just evaporates, it disappears, and what's left is only consciousness and joy, *sat-cit-ānanda*. I know this is hard to take, because it contradicts so many fixed beliefs that we have. Yet, if you go into it as a meditation, if you experience it for yourself, you'll find that it's true. But people are very afraid to look into the ego, they're very afraid; instead, they want to do years and years and years of *sādhana*.

I love to tell this story: I know this guy from New York, a psychiatrist—a rather famous guy, he's got a couple of books out and this and that, runs in the high society Esalen crowd—and he's been going to Thailand every summer for a long time. One time he told me he's been to the Rains Meditation in a Buddhist monastery for 25 years, every summer. So I said, "Wow, you must be really Enlightened!" and he says, "No. I am still working through my childhood traumas."

The poor guy, he's totally hung up on his ego! So, what to do? He's not hearing the Buddha's instructions, saying that this whole thing doesn't exist, and he's certainly not working his way up the ladder of meditation, to

emptiness, nothingness; he's staying within the ego. Why? Because he's afraid. And we are all afraid, that if we dismantle the ego, everything will fall apart. And it will! [laughs] That's the thing, it will. But then, we'll be in an ocean of delight, swimming in an ocean of unlimited consciousness and bliss! Try to understand.

So how do we approach this ego? Well, if we try to attack it directly, and say, "No, you don't exist!" of course that just makes it stronger. Instead we attack indirectly, by looking into how the ego arises: where does it arise, how does it come into being?



We talked several times now about the *Mūlapariyāya*, the Root Sequence or root structure of the mind, and observing that in oneself. Not just talking about it like a philosophical argument, but actually going inside and watching it, as a fresh impression comes in through the senses, how we overlay it with this sense of 'mine.' "I'm looking out the window, I'm seeing the tree: this is 'my' window, this is 'my' tree." No, it's not! But we imagine it so, we think it so. "'My' window, 'my' tree, 'my' clouds, 'my' sky, 'my' world!" It goes to that ridiculous extreme.

And it is so, because as soon as we designate something as ‘mine,’ we have reinforced the idea of ‘I.’ “I exist as a separate individual, identified with this body and this mind,” and then we go on to build all kinds of stories, a whole soap opera based on that! Here in India the soap operas, they have a recurrent emotion or mood, which is the shock of finding out that one has been betrayed. The characters will go along, and then something will happen, and they’ll be shocked! And the camera will zoom in on the face, and just hold it for a while: “I’m shocked! Shocked!” But that’s how we feel when we discover the truth, that all this time we have been serving this imaginary god of ‘I,’ the ego. Because along with the ego come space, time, matter, energy, motion, work, all the properties of physics, and then of course the human world, with names and forms, and different grades of persons—who is on top, who is on the bottom, whatever caste system we subscribe to, whether it’s by birth, or economics, or some social structure—and then it goes on, and there’s always some drama, some conflict that keeps us engaged, and keeps us in our role, whatever role we have chosen.

Now, one way to look at these things is that it’s all *karma*, it’s all coming from our previous births’ activities. Another way to look at it is it’s just a choice: the being is always free, but we choose a certain lifestyle, even a certain family to take birth in, based on our own memories of what we did in the previous lives. It’s not that there’s some angel up there with a book, recording everything and determining what the *karma* will be. No. We ourselves determine what the *karma* will be, because we alone remember what we did. There’s no need for an external bookkeeping agency—what a ridiculous idea. Or, Akashic records. The Akashic records is in your own mind! We bring the seed of the next body with us in the *manomayakośa*. When we leave this body, this *annamayakośa*, we go to the next body. We don’t really change bodies; we keep most of it with us: the *manomayakośa*, the *vijñānamayakośa*, the *ānandamayakośa*, the *prāṇamayakośa*. We take them with us when we go to the next body. Only the *annamayakośa*, this meat bag here, is dropped.

Try to understand what’s going on: we bring our whole history with us; we bring our whole concept of existence with us into the next life, and use that to construct a new body, and take on another false identity, another false ego. And with that the whole world springs into being. Try to understand our power. Right now most of you are living in a reality where you have a very limited, fixed range of power and options and choice. And so what do you

do? You look at life from this viewpoint, and then you go through so much *sādhana* and, self-analysis, and different kinds of struggles and so on, to try to break out of it and attain Realization. But who put you in that situation in the first place? You did! So from the point of view of a Realized being this is ridiculous! It's laughable, it's ludicrous! Because we ourselves put ourselves in this situation, although we're actually free at all times. Why? Because we are trying to preserve the myth of the ego, the myth of the individual self.

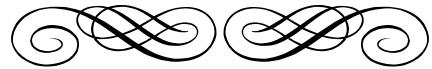
But there is no individual self. It's like the bubble of foam in the surf at the beach saying, "I'm going to remain a bubble of foam forever! I don't care what happens! Even if another wave breaks and smashes me to nothing and I merge back into the ocean, I'm going to come out again as another one, another bubble!" and then we have all these bubbles fighting each other. It's just ridiculous. When you see it from the height of Self-realization, it's a comedy, it's a farce, because it's all not true.

The whole world, the material world is built on a lie, and that lie is the individual existence. There is no individual; there is only God, there is only Brahman, there is only pure consciousness, nondual existence. But we invent duality, and then we customize it to meet the needs of our story. Really what we're committed to is our story, and to have our story, to have our little soap opera of being an individual, we're willing to sacrifice everything, including our happiness, our well-being and so on, just so we can be right. I don't think that's a good deal.

So how do we get out of it? Well, yeah, we can play the game of doing *sādhana*, and having a *guru*, and going through the whole thing, and usually that's what's required. But in the end, we simply change our point of view, from being a body stuck in this world, and being an ego stuck in this body, to being free, and just watching the whole thing as a play, as a comedy show. Because it is! It's a bunch of free beings who have chained themselves into this bondage in the material world, and it's all self-created. So it's really, really a hoot.

Look at it this way: if you want to be free from your suffering, you have to be free from your ego. Then who suffers? There isn't anybody to suffer. Objectless, pure, nondual awareness certainly doesn't suffer. So, who are you gonna call? You are it, you decide: do you want to suffer, or you want to be

free? Do you want to be a tiny, limited ego in a world of lies and false promises, *māya*? Or, do you want to be a free spirit, a completely unbounded consciousness in a world of bliss? It's up to you.



# Verse 27: ‘I am That’

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Some of my friends were asking me “Why haven’t you posted a video lately?” and the reason is I was doing research for this verse. This is a pretty heavy verse, and I felt I had to experience the states described in the verse, before I could speak on it.

That’s been quite a process, a week or 10 days of intense *sādhana*, and fortunately I had some good astrological transits that helped me, so I went deep into the *sādhana* and actually experienced this. This is a principle of mine: I don’t speak on things which I haven’t experienced, I don’t talk about theory; I only talk about my experience. That’s why there’s been quite a delay, I had to go into Śaṅkarāchārya and everything to get this. So, the verse:

**“The state in which this ‘I’  
—the ego, which arises as if the first—  
does not arise, is the state in which ‘I am That’.  
Unless one scrutinizes the source  
—the real Self from which ‘I’ arises—  
how to attain the state of egolessness  
—the destruction of the individual self—  
in which ‘I’ does not arise?  
And unless one attains that non-arising of ‘I’,  
say, how to abide in one’s own real state:  
the natural state of Self, in which ‘I am That?’”**

This is another one of those convoluted, classical Tamil verses. But I prefer Sadhu Om’s translations, because he gets into all the nuances, and supplies the inferred words and meaning, as well as the literal. He doesn’t try to simplify it, but he gives the whole meaning, and I really like that. Sadhu Om goes on to comment, on a note in this verse:

**“In scriptures it is taught that,  
instead of feeling ‘I am this body’,**

we should experience 'I am That':  
 in other words, 'I am Brahman, the absolute Reality.'  
 The state of experience which is thus referred to as  
 'I am That' or 'I am Brahman,'  
 is only one's real and natural state,  
 in which one abides as the pure,  
 adjunct-less existence-consciousness 'I am'  
 without rising as the adjunct-mixed  
 feeling 'I am this body.'

Therefore, in order to experience the truth  
 denoted by the words 'I am That,'  
 one must attain the state in which the ego  
 (the feeling 'I am this body') does not arise.  
 And in order to attain this state of egolessness,  
 one must scrutinize the source of the ego;  
 for only when one scrutinizes its source  
 (the real Self, the pure consciousness 'I am')  
 will the ego subside and be found to be nonexistent."

This is the *sādhana*, this is the process by which one arrives at Self-realization. This Self-realization in the beginning is momentary. In the *Vedas*, and also to a certain extent in Buddha's teaching, the word *this* refers to the body, and *That* refers to the Reality, the Brahman, *Nibbāna*, *Nirvāṇa*, the Absolute. Instead of thinking 'I am this,' one should think 'I am That.'

However, as pointed out in the previous verse, there are not two selves; there's only one Self. When we see, in meditation for example, the vision of Brahman, or the light... If you're meditating properly, with good concentration, you should see light. I've been seeing nice, bright light in my meditation now since, oh my God, 1982? A long time. So, what does that mean? Are we really seeing the Self? No. What we're seeing is *ātmā-ābhāsa*, or the reflection of the Self in the purified mind. By meditation one purifies the mind so that, at least temporarily, it does not give rise to incorrect identification, such as 'I am the body.' 'I am the body' is called an *upādhi*, a limiting adjunct, and the limiting adjunct of the *jīva*, the individual being, is 'I am the body,' whereas the limiting adjunct of Brahman is 'I am Īśvara, I am the God, the Controller, Creator,' and so on.

When these adjuncts, when these *upādhis* are taken away by the process of Self-realization, then one realizes the real situation, 'I am That.' In other words, we don't see 'That,' the Brahman, or the Self as something separate. As Rāmaṇa is fond of saying, the only way to *see* That is to *be* That. In other words, we become Brahman, we actually realize or experience ourself as Brahman.

Some people misinterpret this, and they want to say, "I am God." No, no. Because in that state one has no conception of 'I' at all. Why is that? Because in Brahman there are no differences; it's called undifferentiated, unbounded, one without a second. If there's nothing to distinguish Self from not-Self, then there's no such concept as 'I,' because 'I' is only real in distinction to 'that.' You follow? In other words, in duality we have the concept of self and not-self, 'I' and 'others,' 'you' and 'he.' "I am the first person, you and he are the second and third persons," and of course there's 'that,' which is also third person. In Self-realization we no longer make this distinction, therefore 'I' becomes meaningless, and also 'you' and 'he' and 'that' all become meaningless. In the nondual state there is no difference, so how can we assert these delimiting adjuncts, *upādhi*? See?

In that state of pure subjectivity, one is only aware of being, not identity. Because identity means thinking that two different things are the same, isn't it? In the world of Brahman there is no identity, because there are no two things, there's no duality. In this way one simply feels 'amness': beingness, pure consciousness. And this is not seen outside oneself, but felt within oneself, as a warm effulgence or radiance coming from the heart, and it has a kind of transcendental emotion of lovingness associated with it.

As the *Rbhu-gītā* says, speaking in the voice of Brahman, "I am amiable, friendly. Not attached, not possessive, but simply friendly, amiable, to all. And I am not against any action." We see that people who have realized Brahman do not have hard-and-fast rules about what is right, what is wrong, what one should do, what one should not do. They're very open, very broad-minded, very accepting; and it has to be like that. Because again, without *upādhis*, without limiting adjuncts, then everything is cool, right? Because nothing can hurt Brahman, nothing can hurt one who has realized Brahman either. [car horn] Confirmed!

There's a story about Alexander the Great. He was in India, and he was about to leave, and before leaving India he wanted to find a real sage, so he had his men go out and inquire who is a real sage. And after searching high and low, asking everywhere, they finally found this one man, sitting naked by the side of the river, doing nothing, and they said, "Ah, you're a real sage, everyone tells us! You come with us, Alexander wants to speak with you," and the sage says, "No. I am That. I am Brahman. I do not take orders from anybody," and they said, "Well, you have to come, or we're going to kill you," and he said, "You can kill this body, but that has no effect on Me," because he was quite aware that he was not the body.

The men went back, scratching their heads, and said to Alexander what happened. Alexander came himself, and he spoke with the wise man, and the wise man said, "I feel sorry for you. You are so poor," and Alexander said, "What do you mean? I have this huge empire, and I have thousands of men ready to do whatever I say, even die for me! And I have so much wealth, and so much this and that!" and the wise man said, "That's nothing. I am everything. I am Brahman." One begins to feel this sense of Lordship in this state. I'll read you an excerpt from Śaṅkarāchārya's *Dakṣināmūrti-stotra* verse 10:

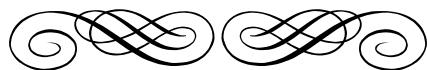
**"Since the All-Self-hood has thus  
been explained in this hymn,  
by hearing it, by reflecting  
on its purpose and meaning,  
by meditating on it, reciting it aloud  
and chanting it congregationally,  
there will naturally manifest Lordship  
(īśvaratvam), the supreme splendor  
of All-Self-hood, and the eight forms  
of imperishable supernormal power."**

I'm thinking to do a series on this *Dakṣināmūrti-stotra*, it's so wonderful! I've been practicing it in the way that's indicated here—by reciting, by contemplating, meditating upon it—and also chanting *Gāyatrī-mantra*. But even *Gāyatrī-mantra* still is from the platform of 'I am That'; in other words, some difference, some distinction or duality between oneself and Brahman. Whereas all of Śaṅkara's work is perfectly on the platform of nonduality, and

this results in Lordship, *īśvaratvam*, and that of course is Lordship without desire, without identification, without ownership.

The people who blithely say, “I am That’ means I am God,” are completely bogus, because you can see they are not without desire, they are not without identification, they still think they’re their bodies, and they still want recognition and so on like that, so in this way they’ve exposed that they haven’t really actually realized.

In fact, one of the reasons why I didn’t make this video sooner was that every time I thought about it, I could feel like slipping into duality again. Because I have to talk with you, and I have to make a distinction between myself and you. Otherwise, I’m just talking to myself, and what’s the use of that? So I had to wait until an opportune time, when I was more or less coming out of that state, down into more ordinary consciousness so I could make this video.



# Verse 28: Dive Deep

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

**“Know thus: Just as one would dive,  
restraining one’s speech and breath,  
to find something that has fallen into the water,  
one should dive within oneself,  
restraining speech and breath with a keen mind  
—that is, with keen and penetrating attention  
fixed on the feeling ‘I’—  
and know the real Self, which is the arising-place  
or source of the ego, which arises first.”**

People ask me ‘How?’ a lot. “How do I meditate, how do I realize the Self, how do I know I’m not fooling myself or kidding myself?” The mind is very deceptive, and can often give us an illusion of Self-realization that we don’t really have. So, how do we keep from self-deception? Well, the answer is here: if you can dive deep within yourself. I don’t know about anybody else, but I’ve done a lot of free-diving, skin-diving as it’s called, and of course you have to hold your breath, and dive down into the water, and look around or whatever you’re going to do. It’s like that: the truth is hidden within us, but it’s not on the surface; one has to dive deep. And it feels like that: it feels like restraining the breath, concentrating the mind, and making a one-pointed effort.

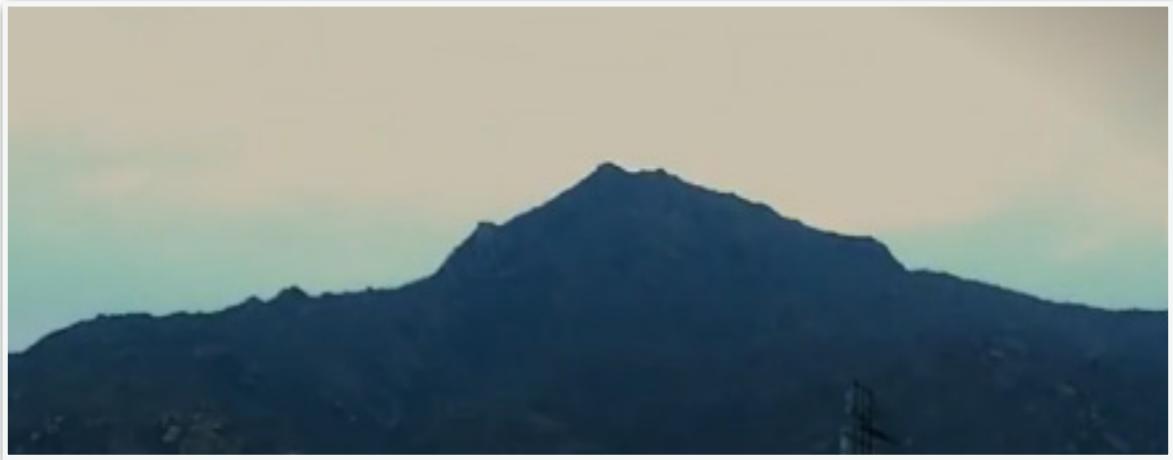
When people ask ‘How?’ I like to refer them to the [Esoteric Teaching](#) system, where we’re talking about holographic meditation. Holographic meditation means that one approaches the subject or the theme of the meditation from many different angles at once. If the theme is the Self, then one approaches from a pragmatic and practical point of view, one follows the instructions of one’s spiritual master, one also cultivates *bhakti*, love for the Self, and then there’s a *mantra* you can chant, and specific types of meditation designed to reveal the Self—that’s what this verse is about.

In *rāja-yoga*, the reference is often made to controlling the breath, but that doesn't mean that we control the breath and then meditate, or that controlling the breath is a cause of meditation or Enlightenment; it's not. What it means is that when the mind is one-pointed, and directed toward the actual topic, the actual subject of the meditation—'I,' 'I am,' the Self, consciousness, or Brahman—then automatically the breath comes under control, we don't have to make a separate effort. My Chinese Qigong teacher always said "The Qi follows the Yi." What does that mean? Well, Qi is *prāṇa* or breath, life energy, and Yi means the directed intelligence, the intention. If the intention is properly formed, then the breath and energy will follow, that's automatic. I encourage you to review the Esoteric Teaching series on holographic meditation (linked above).

And of course somebody is going to ask "Well, how do you do it?" Well, you begin by taking care of business, *karma-yoga*. *Karma-yoga* means creating the conditions where meditation is possible. It means having a silent, private space where you can meditate, whatever that takes, and also keeping it clean, and keeping your body clean and healthy, not allowing things to slide so that they become worries, but taking care of things timely and efficiently so that the business is complete in the present. Then you don't have to worry about anything, you can meditate without a care in the world.

And then, Right View. One should receive instructions from one's spiritual teacher, guide or *guru*. And what does that mean? It means hearing, hearing and repeating them to yourself, at least, or to others, until you're absolutely certain you understand. Because the best way to learn something is to teach others, so in that way one can be sure one has Right View, and then form the intention based on that Right View.

What's the next step, after *karma-yoga*? *Bhakti*. *Bhakti* means developing love and affection. For what? Well, whatever is the subject of your meditation. If you're focused on *bhakti*, you may select some form of God. God has eight basic forms that are given in the *Dakṣināmūrti-stotra*: earth, water, fire, air, ether, the moon, the sun, and the *jīva*, the living entity. One can worship God in all of these forms, in any of them, whatever is convenient. If, for example, one's ideal of divine personality is Śiva, one can worship Śiva in the temple, or in the form of the hill, Aruṇāchala.



Or, if one prefers Viṣṇu, any of the incarnations of Viṣṇu, there are so many, so many forms of God, different personalities which have divine qualities. One can worship one's *guru*, *guru-pūjā* or *guru-bhakti*, this is a very good form, or one can worship one's Self. Not the petty little individual ego, but the real Self, which is actually the goal of this meditation.

Then one moves on from *bhakti* to *rāja-yoga*. Now, *rāja-yoga* does talk about controlling the breath, but not by effort; that's *haṭha-yoga*. *Haṭha-yoga* is way down the list on *karma-yoga*, taking care of the body. It may be helpful to do some breathing exercises, if, for example, your breathing capacity is low, or your cardio stamina is low, one should do some breathing exercises to increase lung capacity and like that, that's alright. But that's not *prāṇāyāma*, don't fool yourself. Real *prāṇāyāma* means controlling the *prāṇa*, not just the breath. The *prāṇa* should be tranquil, calm, focused, easy, smooth, gentle, and full of pleasure—that's real control of the breath.

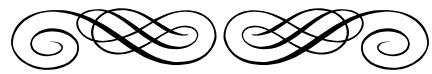
What you can do is simply watch the breath, and of course in the beginning you're going to try to control it. The trick here is to watch the breath, but also be watching for other things, such as light. When light comes in meditation, that's a very good sign: that means your concentration is getting good. Not just watching the breath, because that's going to put too much attention on the body, but also watching the mind, watching thoughts, watching for light, watching for one's attention. And if you can watch your watching, that's really excellent! Attention of attention, consciousness of consciousness, awareness of awareness. This is the sublime height of *rāja-yoga*, and what that leads to is *jñāna-yoga*. *Jñāna-yoga* means being aware of the Self, not just the ego but the real Self, the source of the ego.

You can begin *jñāna-yoga* once you've understood its principle, which you can very easily understand by this series, *Ulladu-Narpadu*, or *Upadeśa-Undiyār*, and see where the ego arises. Now, when Bhagavān says 'where,' he doesn't mean a physical location; he means the psychological or spiritual origin of the ego. Where does ego come from? Ego is a lie, ego is an illusion, but it's based on something real, and that is the real Self. The only reason ego has any standing at all, or seems to be a reality at all, is because it's based on the Self. When the Self is found, ego disappears, and that's the actual conclusion or aim of *jñāna-yoga*. Not that we should try to artificially repress breathing or any of our energies. But when we concentrate the mind, and aim it properly at realizing the Self, then our energy becomes very smooth and light, gentle, amiable and kind, and we automatically experience calmness, centeredness, focus, enthusiasm, and pleasure within the mind. That's real meditation, and that cannot be shaken by anything outside.

As it's said: "The dogs may bark, but the king's caravan will pass." What does that mean? That once you attain or grasp the actual subject of meditation, then nothing can disturb it. How is that? There's so many distractions in life. Every day we go through so many experiences: waking, dreaming, sleeping, different kinds of activity, we experience different kinds of sense impressions and so on. But there's one thing that's always there, and that is awareness. Even during deep sleep, although there's nothing to be aware of, we are still aware, and we can be aware of being aware, even in deep sleep.

One should train oneself, beginning at the moment of awakening in the morning, to try to stay in that space of deep sleep without any dreams. On the one side you have the dreams of sleep, and on the other side you have the dreams of awakening, in the body. Stay between them, don't go to either side, sleeping or waking, but stay in that sweet space right in between, and you'll find something wonderful: which is that all these experiences are simply dreams. We can dream while asleep, and then that whole world disappears, that body disappears, those senses and all the people and so on that we interact with in dreams, and then another dream body comes, and another dream world, and another series of dream interactions with dream people. And why are they dreams? Because they're temporary. In other words, this world of the senses disappears when we enter sleep, and another world appears, and then that world disappears when we enter deep sleep, *susupti*.

So they are both temporary, they're both unreal, they are both a dream. And that is *jñāna*, that is knowledge, that is Self-realization.



# Verse 29: Experience

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

This verse follows very closely to the previous verse, which you should also take a look at before, if you haven't already seen it.

**"Having discarded the body like a corpse  
and without uttering 'I' by mouth,  
scrutinizing with an inward-diving mind,  
"Where does this feeling 'I' arise?",  
is alone the path of knowledge (*jñāṇa-mārga*).  
Merely thinking or meditating, "I am not this body  
composed of five sheaths, I am That:  
the Absolute Reality or Brahman," is in a roundabout  
way an aid to the path of knowledge or enquiry;  
but is it really correct practice of Self-enquiry,  
*ātmā-vicāra*, the direct path of Knowledge?"**

No! And why is that? Because, as my Buddhist meditation master once said to me, "*Nibbāna* is non-conceptual." Boom! It hit me like a ton of bricks, I instantly went into deep meditation! It took me a year and a half to work out the consequences, or the deep meaning of that. And similarly, when Rāmaṇa gives an instruction like this, it should hit us really hard. Because what have we been doing? Reading books, going to talks and lectures, maybe going to workshops, maybe sitting in meditation, and just thinking "I am That, I am That. I am not the body..." "

The very first thing my *ādi-guru* taught his disciples is "You are not this body." Did any of them realize it? Because we see them later on, competing for positions of power in a religious organization, trying to make money, by hook or by crook, to shore up their positions in a religious organization, and to purchase name and fame and disciples. What kind of realization is that? Why didn't they get it? Because they were in the realm of thought. Thinking "I am not the body," is very different from *realizing* "I am not the body." I know what you're going to say: "Well, how do you do that?!"

The Buddha gives the eight *jhānas*, the eight platforms or bases of meditation, and so by going into these bases one by one, they become subtler and subtler, until one completely forgets about the body. The first one is directed thought, and the second one is directed thought without words, and so on and so on, and they get really subtle. Like, the fifth *jhāna* is unlimited space. Now, if you really realize unlimited space, where is this body? The whole universe shrinks down to a tiny dot, and then disappears, lost in unlimited space. Because no matter how big the creation is, it's still limited, and 'unlimited' means unlimited! In unlimited space the creation can't even be found!

Then what? Unlimited consciousness. Well, of course that's Brahman. But a funny thing happened on the way to the meditation hall... If you actually realize unlimited space, emptiness, no-thingness, what's going to happen? Brahman is going to manifest right in the middle of that. Why? It's a rule, it's a law of the universe, of consciousness, of existence, that when you take something to an extreme, the opposite manifests. So if you take emptiness all the way to the point of nothingness, what happens? You get everything-ness, or Brahman!

This is the extraordinary thing about the Buddha's path: it's not really different from the Vedic path at all. In fact, the whole teaching of the Buddha fits very nicely in the category of *rāja-yoga*. Because what is the ultimate in *rāja-yoga* is the destruction of the mind and ego, and I don't think you can find a better method or approach to it than the one taught by the Buddha. The final stage, the highest *jhāna*, is 'neither-perception-nor-non-perception.' It's a really tricky one, I'm not going to try to describe it here. I already talked about it in the earlier [series on Nibbāna](#), so you should take a look at that if you're curious.

But to get rid of this idea of 'I' as an individual ego is the whole point of meditation. So, if you come out of meditation, sitting in your Zendo or whatever, and then you're going out in the world, trying to make a name for yourself, trying to collect money and followers, writing and selling books, and after name and fame, giving interviews, and so on like this... What is that? That means you haven't realized it. Because if you really realize non-self, or the destruction of the mind through emptiness, you're just going to sit around and bliss out—there's nothing else to do! Why? For whom? You see?

So these people who sit down and meditate for a few minutes, and then go run around with an active social life and business and all that, are just fooling themselves. They're simply saying, "I am That, I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am not this ego," but they're not realizing anything. Why? Because they're stuck on the conceptual platform, the verbal platform, the mental platform, and on the mental platform of name-and-form, the name or the word is the thing.

But when I started this series more than five years ago, this YouTube channel, I was coming from being in a faith-based process for over 20 years, and it just didn't work. And the reason it didn't work was precisely this, that we were not getting beyond the name-and-form. In fact, we were encouraged to cling to the name-and-form; and dualism, dualistic philosophy is like that. But it doesn't bring Self-realization. So, I said, "Wait a minute. I'm going to start my search all over again, and this time, instead of basing it on faith or information or verbal knowledge, I'm going to base it on experience." And so I began to cultivate the experience of meditation rather than the knowledge or the words about meditation—it makes all the difference in the world.

If you're not getting this, if you're having trouble understanding what I'm talking about, look up phenomenology. It's a closely allied discipline to existentialism. Existentialism is about what is, and phenomenology is about experiencing what is. Not what I think it is, or what somebody said it is, or what is written in this book that it is, but what it is, how I experience it, and that is the only platform. Although it may be slower in the beginning, [Being in the World](#) is the only platform that leads to actual Realization.

Now, what does he here say? "Where does this feeling 'I' arise?" Not the word, not the concept, not the idea of 'I,' but the feeling 'I,' the feeling of egotism. What is it? You have to look into it for yourself, nobody can tell you, because it's an experience! I could have an ice cream cone here, and I'm going "Yeah, this vanilla ice cream"—vanilla is my favorite—"This vanilla ice cream tastes really, really good!" but are you going to experience that from my description? No, that's impossible.

So, the real path, *jñāna-mārga*, not *vidyā-mārga*... *Vidyā* is verbal knowledge; *jñāna* is experiential knowledge, phenomenological experience, where one is

aware of one's awareness. So, he says, "Merely thinking or meditating 'I am not this body, composed of five sheaths—the *annamayakośa*, the *prāṇamayakośa*, the *manomayakośa*, the *vijñāṇamayakośa*, and ultimately the *ānandamayakośa*—these different sheaths. I am not this body, I am not this mind. Then, what am I?" Well, what's left? Only pure consciousness.

That's what I was talking about in my series *Apophatic Antifragility*, that the Buddha was teaching something by not talking about it. He was teaching something that could not be spoken about, so he didn't speak about it! Instead, he spoke about the way to experience it. And if you're awake, if you're thinking, if you're intelligent, then by doing those methods you would experience it, and you would recognize, "Oh, this is it!" *Nibbāna*, or, as Rāmaṇa calls it, the Self, as the *Vedas* call it, Brahman, is a real experience. It's not a thing, because it does not come into being; if it came into being, if it had a beginning, it would also have an end.

Brahman or the Self exists outside of time. You can call it eternity if you want, but what it really means is it has no beginning, or no end, no boundaries whatsoever, no divisions, it's one without a second. So when people talk about being one with God or "I am That", you still have 'I' and 'That': duality. So they haven't realized it. Because if they had realized it, like Rāmaṇa, they would be saying 'I-I,' not 'I am,' because 'I am' requires a predicate. "I am that, I am this, I am that, I am something else, I'm all these other things," whatever—that's duality. But real nonduality is 'I-I,' 'I am I,' whatever that is!

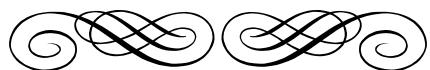
To think that "I am not this body, I am not this mind," is a very indirect, very preparatory stage. It's just the theory; it's not the practice. If you're sitting there and trying to meditate, and you're just thinking "Neti-neti, I'm not this, I'm not that," or "I am That," that's... you're not there yet. That's not the right way to do it. The right way to do it is to say, "Okay. Set aside all those words, and just sit there and do nothing, and feel where is this 'I' coming from?" And if you trace it down to its source... I'm going to go a little over time, because this is a story well worth telling.

In the beginning of the creation as described in the *Vedas*, Brahmā found himself seated on a lotus flower, and all around was this churning ocean, as far as you could see. And so he's trying to understand "What am I doing here? What is this? Where did I come from? What am I supposed to do?" and

so he went—because there was no other place for him to go—he went down the stem of the lotus, to the very root, and he heard the word *tapa*. *Tapa* means austerity, it means *sādhana*, it means meditation. So he came back up out of the root of the lotus, and sat on the blossom for 10,000 years and meditated, and at the end he became Self-realized.

What does this mean? I was just reading in the commentary of Śaṅkarāchārya's *Śrī Dakṣināmūrti-stotra* that in the spine, according to the *yoga* system, there are three channels: the *ida*, the *pingala*, and the *suṣumṇa*, and they are on the left, the right, and the center of the spine respectively. And then I found a remarkable statement, that the Thousand-Petalled Lotus, the *sahasrara-cakra* is linked to the root of the spine, the *mūlādhāra-cakra*, by the stem of the lotus, which is the *suṣumṇa*.

In other words, the story given in the *Purāṇas* is actually an allegory, a metaphor. It is we who are seated on the lotus, and it is we who have to go down the stem to the root, to find the source of energy. And it's not Brahmā; it's *we* who have to sit, contemplating that energy wordlessly, for as long as it takes to reach full Realization.



# Verse 30: the Reality

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

I think this is the longest series I've done, at least as far as number of episodes; I've tried to keep them short so that they're easy to watch and understand. But today, this verse is going to complete the thought that began in the last two verses, so if you haven't already seen those, go back and take a look at them, before you hear this verse.

**"Therefore, when the mind reaches the Heart  
by inwardly scrutinizing 'Who am I?'  
in the above manner and when the ego or mind  
—which rises in the form 'I am the body'—  
dies, the one existence-consciousness  
appears spontaneously as 'I-I.'  
Although it seemingly appears anew,  
it is not the arising 'I' or ego;  
it is the Whole Reality (*pūrṇa-vāstu*),  
the Reality which is Self."**

This, as in many of these verses, is talking about the ultimate stage of Self-realization: realization of Self. When we say 'Self,' we're not talking about the ego. The ego is something which arises, and therefore it also passes away. Death is the ultimate passing away of the ego. But actually, the ego arises and passes away many times a second, and if you go back and look at some of our videos in the past, about [Paticca Samuppāda](#) and also the Root Sequence, [Mūlapariyāya](#), then you'll understand that the creation and destruction of the ego is simply a thought, and that thought is based on the idea "I am the body." If we attend to that thought, if we devote our attention and meditate on that thought, and follow it to its source, then we will reach the real Self, pure consciousness, awareness, subjective Self which is aware of everything, and which cannot be distinguished from any other Self, because there's only one: the Self.

When the being comes to be reflected in a body and mind, it appears to be an individual, but this is simply this objectless awareness being reflected in a finite body. Actually, awareness has no boundaries; there's only one. Just like there's a theory kicking around among physicists now, that there is only actually one electron, and it bounces around space and time, and makes believe that it's everywhere, and in everything. It's not too far away from the truth: the truth is there is one being, the Self, Brahman, the Absolute, and when we come into this world, it gets reflected in a body and mind, and appears to be the ego, but it's not—that's an illusion.

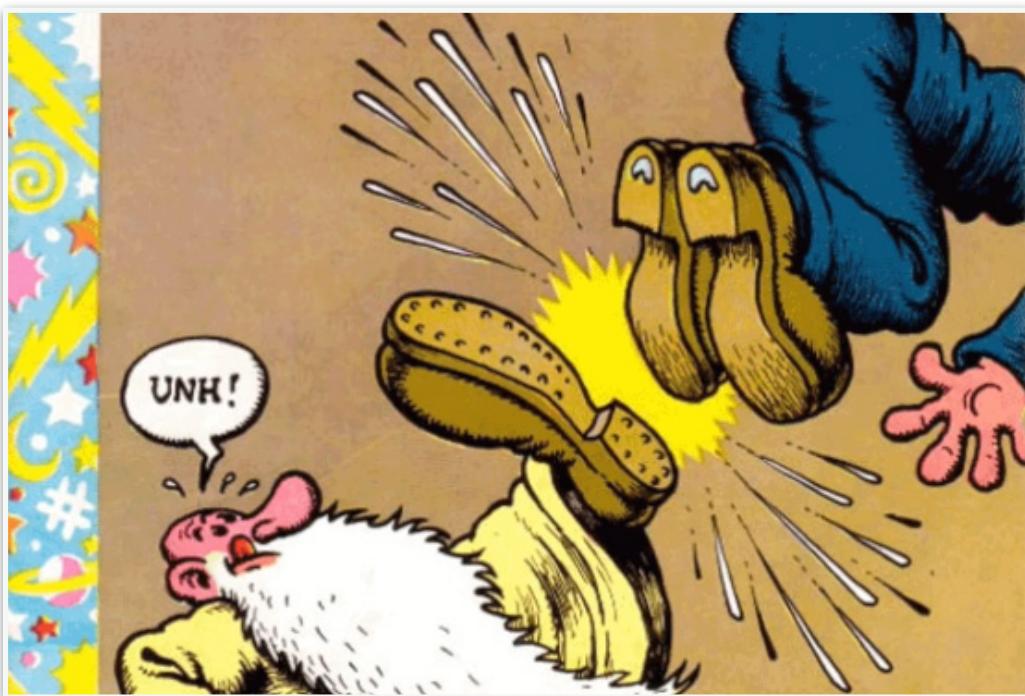
Just like when one mistakenly sees a rope to be a snake, when the illusion passes away, and he sees "Oh, actually it's a rope," that vision of the snake was never real; he was looking at the rope all the time. There never was a snake; it only seemed to be—in other words, it was an illusion. In the same way, this individual self or ego, this mind and body arise, exist for some time, and then pass away. And how we respond to this determines whether we remain in conditioned existence—temporary existence, suffering—or we get out of it and we attain *mokṣa*.

How do we respond when the ego passes away, or when the mind or the body pass away? If we struggle to attain another one, we wind up right back in the same fix: we wind up right back in temporary, conditioned existence, suffering like anything. It's miserable! Because our real nature is eternal, unconditioned, objectless, absolute awareness, and when we go away from that we suffer. Just like if you have to pretend to be somebody else—a fugitive for example has to pretend to be someone he's not—it's very stressful, it can't be maintained for very long, ultimately they wind up giving up. Because why? It's just too difficult to live a totally fabricated existence.

In the same way, sooner or later we get tired of this suffering. We've been going through many, many lives, many, many embodiments, pretending to be something we're really not. We're pretending to be this body, and we're exhausting ourselves with tremendous efforts to maintain this illusion. But actually, the Self is there all along, just like the rope, and when the mistaken vision of the snake passes away, the rope is there, waiting for us. In the same way, when this mistaken idea that "I am the body, I am the mind, I am an individual, an ego, by the name of So-and-so," and so on. When that passes

away, we see what we really are, and our real nature has been waiting all this time underneath.

That's why this conditioned existence is called *upādhi*. *Upādhi* means a limiting adjunct, it means a layer of conditioning, a layer of illusion that is overlaid on the real Self, on the real truth. And because of that, oftentimes the spiritual master or teacher or guide has to be very severe, he has to be hard, he has to say, "You rascal! You're pretending to be this limited, weak, stupid person. But actually, you're the Self: unlimited, strong, with infinite power, and unlimited knowledge and intelligence! So what are you doing, you idiot?"



I used to like the old Mr. Natural comics: he's got this one disciple named Flakey Foont, and Flakey Foont is always playing this game, that "Mr. Natural, actually you know everything, and you can tell me the secret of the universe!" and he's always bugging Mr. Natural, and Mr. Natural is always kicking him away! "You stupid, you idiot! Why do you want to know that?" And of course the implied meaning is "Don't you want to know who you really are?" That's the greatest secret.

This universe is actually not a very nice place. Yes, it has its beauty at times, and this serves to help to seduce us into thinking that it's worthwhile to be here. And it's not bad, you know, if you remember who you really are.

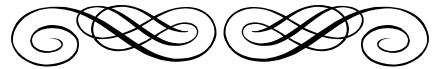
Because that means that you open the door to the unconditioned life, the real Self, the true awareness of who we really are.

If we're trying to represent this teaching, then we have to be very sober, and very acutely aware of the actual situation, and that means sometimes we have to be, or actually most of the time we have to be not so entertaining. It's hard, it's tough—I know, I've been through it all, and I can remember a lot of it. How you first come in contact with this teaching, and it seems so alien, it seems so hard. "What?! You're telling me that who I think I am is an illusion?! That 'I' don't really exist as an individual, that this is all bullshit?!" Yeah. Yeah. And that's why this teaching is not so popular, that's why we only have 60 or 70 or maybe 100 views on these videos, that's why people aren't recommending them to their friends. Because it's tough. It goes against the whole illusory struggle to be somebody in this world, and people are looking for advice and encouragement so that they can be somebody and satisfy their desires. But even if they do, it means a tremendous struggle, lots of hard work. And then, even if you're successful and you get the object of your desire, it's not going to be perfect. There's going to be strings attached, you can bet on it, it's not going to be like your fantasy. And, worst of all, it's temporary, it's going to go away.

So I'm not going to tell you any of that stuff; it's nonsense, and anybody who does is a rascal who's just exploiting you. I'm going to be tougher. I'm not going to flatter you, I'm not going to tell you you're beautiful, and it's all about love, and all this stuff. Because even if it is, the only way you're going to reach that is by some tough self-discipline, *sādhana*. *Sādhana* means giving up these temporary pleasures, giving up the struggle to *be somebody*. Just being content with whatever comes of its own accord, not struggling to make things 'better,' but being content with how they really are. And going inside, and finding the real enjoyment, the real pleasure, the real bliss of Self-realization—that's what's really going to make you happy. Not maintaining in this material world, because you can't; it's a lost cause. Everything in this world passes away. Why struggle, why hold on to it, why resist the inevitable? It's simply a waste of time and energy.

Maybe we're not going to be so popular, but we're always going to tell you the truth, and we're always going to speak with integrity, and we're always going to mean what we say, and say what we mean, and walk the walk, as

well as talk the talk. That's what you can expect here. And yes, the love is there; yes, the beauty is there, but we don't just talk about it; we give you the tools to experience it for yourself.



# Verse 31: the Yogi

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

This is a tough one, so let's just jump right into the verse:

**"When the Reality surges forth and appears as 'I-I',  
for the *jñāṇī* who enjoys the bliss of Self,  
which has arisen by destroying the individual self  
—the ego—what single thing exists to do?  
He does not know anything other than Self,  
which shines as the one Reality;  
who can conceive what His state is?"**

This is really a tough one! I've been thinking over it for a long time, how to express. Because, as Kabir said, "In Enlightenment, the drop merges into the ocean, but the ocean also merges into the drop." This is an inconceivable state, it boggles the mind. The poor mind, trying to wrap itself around this paradoxical, inconceivable state.

Let's see, how can I express? Well, there's two ways that I can express it: as the drop, the individual who becomes Enlightened, or as the ocean, as the Self. Let's start with the drop, from the point of view of the drop. I'm going to read a verse from *Upadeśa-Undiyār*, which is referenced in *Ulladu-Narpadu* Verse 15:

**"For the great *yogī*  
who is established as the Reality  
due to the death of the mind-form,  
there is not any action to do,  
because He has attained His nature:  
His natural state of Self-abidance."**

And there's a note by Sadhu Om:

**"The sense of doership,  
the feeling 'I am doing this action'  
can exist only so long as the mind,  
whose form is the feeling  
'I am this' or 'I am that,' exists.  
Therefore when the mind is destroyed,  
the sense of doership is also destroyed.  
Hence the *yogī* whose mind is dead  
and who thereby abides as Self,  
the Reality, cannot be the doer of any action.  
Whatever action He may appear to do  
exists only in the outlook of those  
who mistake Him to be the body which does the action."**

From your point of view, I am this body and this mind, and I'm talking to you on the video. Let's start there, because that's already your point of view, that I'm doing this. Well, I'm not doing anything. I'm just sitting here, enjoying the incredible beauty! There's a Zen *haiku* that "This very body, the Buddha; this very world, the lotus paradise." What does that mean? It means Enlightenment is bliss, man! Enlightenment is fabulous, it's ecstasy!

An Enlightened person feels, "There's nothing for me to do, nothing for me to strive for, nothing more to learn, to understand, or to realize. Everything is here. Everything is as it is, and as it is it's perfect, it's beautiful." The Enlightened person, the drop who merges with the ocean, doesn't feel any lack, doesn't feel any desire, he doesn't feel that anything is missing or wrong. Even the parts of the world that are unsavory or in darkness, he feels "This is necessary; otherwise, there would be no incentive to attain Self-realization."

The person who reaches Enlightenment feels "Other than just maintain this body that I've been given, and if anybody needs some help to understand all this, I'm very happy to offer it; but otherwise there's nothing to do." This is renunciation, this is retirement, *sannyāsa*. It doesn't mean that you go through some ceremony, and you change the color of your cloth, and then you walk around with a big stick and think that you're superior to everybody. No. It just means that you realize that there is nothing but the Self, and "I am That." Even though there is still a sense of 'I am,' that is experienced as 'I-I.' This is

very hard to explain; even for someone like me who for many years has studied communication and so on, it's really hard.

We're dealing with absolutes. The absolute is the irreducible, indivisible, always-awakened ocean of being and nondual awareness. That is everything. Even though forms may appear in that ocean, just like foam on the waves, when they break at the shore they dissipate very quickly. So, what is there to be attached to? Or what is there to judge, and say, "This is right, this is wrong, this is good, this is bad"? Only in terms of purpose. You can say, "If you want to become Enlightened, then you should do this, and you should not do that," *yāma, niyāma*, you can say like that. But that has no absolute value, that can change. It can be different for different individuals, it can be different at different stages of the Path. It's all just impermanent, it's all just bubbles in the waves.

Nevertheless, it's beautiful. Why is it beautiful? I have a friend, and my friend is very powerful, and very rich, and anything that I need, or anything that I want, he can very easily provide or deliver it. And of course the best thing about having this friend is our relationship, our wonderful, sweet, affectionate relationship. He is very amiable, very understanding, and very kind by nature. He doesn't make any rules, he doesn't say, "You can't do this, you can't do that," there's no restrictions on my individuality, I can be as I am, and that's fine. This is a wonderful relationship! And of course I'm talking about my relationship with the Self, with Brahman.

Now let's look at it from the other side. From the other side, I am pure awareness, nondual, totally subjective, indivisible, always awake. I have everything—indeed, I *am* everything. I create this world as a dream, when I want entertainment. It's just a play, don't be attached to it. It's like I want to see myself, I want to understand what I am, so I make a bunch of mirrors, the individual beings, who reflect my beingness in many different ways. Now, in the ocean, near the surface it's very light, and you can see everything, and the beings that are near the surface of the ocean are the more Enlightened beings, and they see reality as it is. They reflect the reality, they're awake, they're Enlightened.

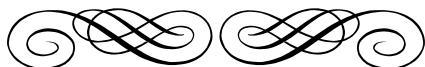
But the ocean also, as it gets deeper and deeper, becomes murky and dark, and in the bottom there's mud; so the beings who are unaware,

unenlightened, sink down further and further, and maybe they even go into the mud, and they lose self-consciousness entirely, blinded by the murk and the darkness at the bottom. What to do? They have chosen that kind of existence by their actions. They are not reflecting an accurate view of what I am, so I don't give them much attention. I simply maintain them, that's my duty. But they're there by choice, by their previous actions and their *karma*.

Each and every individual being is simply a reflection of my being, my absolute being, and within that being and that awareness they create the world, each one for himself, the way he sees it. So, the body, the senses, the mind, the world, the ego, all these are illusion, they're simply a reflection of my absolute being. Know this to be true: there is nowhere to go, nothing to do. You are already Enlightened, you are already Self-realized, because you are aware of yourself. Is it not? As soon as someone says 'I am,' they are saying "I am one with the infinite. I am consciousness. I am being."

Then, what is this feeling of lack, of something missing, of something incomplete? It is only the hunger to be filled with my completeness. And as soon as you come into relationship with me, and begin to reflect me, the more accurately and fully you reflect my being, the more you approach perfection, your perfection as an individual; and as abstract beingness, that every being is a reflection of God. As above, so below. These ancient truths are there in the tradition, the ancient scriptures, the teachings of the sages and so on. They're there in the world, you can find them, and by a very small effort, in a comparatively short amount of time, you can realize them for yourself. So I have made this world actually completely perfect; now it's up to you to realize it. See?

The Self, the Absolute, Brahman is actually very friendly, very helpful and supportive. We are the ones who turn away from Him, trying to have our own individual world and self, and so He gives it. But because our knowledge is incomplete, we make it hell: it's imperfect, it's unsatisfying, it's incomplete. The only thing we need to do to make it complete is to turn inward and realize the Self.



# Verse 32: Nonduality

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Today we're going to tackle one of those persistent misunderstandings that a lot of people who don't think deeply fall into on the Path.

**"When the holy scriptures proclaim,  
'You are That—which is declared to be the Supreme,'  
if you think, 'I am That—the Supreme—and not this—  
the body composed of five sheaths'  
instead of oneSelf knowing and being oneSelf  
by scrutinizing 'What am I?'  
it is due to absence of strength and maturity of mind,  
because That indeed always exists as one's own Reality."**

Now the sentence structure, the syntax there is kind of tangly, and I had to edit it quite a bit, and it's still difficult in English—in Tamil I guess it makes sense. But what he's saying here is that, okay, people read in the Scriptures, in the *Upaniṣads* "You are That," *tat tvam asi*; so they think "Oh, I am That, and that's it!" No, that's not it.

The problem is the structure of language itself is dualistic, "I am That." When we're talking about ontology, we always talk about a sentence having three parts: the subject, the object, and the predicate. So, what have we got here? "I am That": subject, object, predicate. In other words, this is still duality, this is still making a distinction between 'I' and 'That,' so if you self-consciously assert "I am That," it means you are different from That. You see the point? There's still duality, you have not arrived. Granted, it may be the last stage of duality, it may be the final, last gasp of duality, but all of the *Mahāvākyas* are like that. *Savikalpa tam brahma* means everything that be is Brahman, the Absolute. But then there's still a distinction between the things that are, and the Absolute, you see? That's still duality.

Even the magnificent [\*Gāyatrī-mantra\*](#) is still duality. Because it goes *ātūm bhūr bhuvaḥ svāḥ tat savitur varenyam*. *Tat savitur varenyam* means that Supreme, or

that origin or source of all energies we accept as the qualified one. See, this is even more elementary, or more far away from actual duality. So, even though *Gāyatrī-mantra* is wonderful, and highly beneficial in so many ways, it's still not the ultimate truth. So, what is?

Rāmana says it here, "Knowing and being oneSelf by scrutinizing 'What am I?'" What am I? Who am I? Where have I come from? Where is my origin, my source? What is my real nature? And all of these questions have to be gone into, not verbally and philosophically but experientially. That means looking within oneself. Yes, in the beginning you can contemplate the question "What am I? What am I? Am I this body? Am I this energy of life? Am I this mind? Am I this intelligence? Am I something beyond even that? Maybe I'm pure bliss?" These are the five sheaths: the *annamayakośa* is the physical body, the *prāṇamayakośa* is the energy body, *manomayakośa* is the mind, *vijñānamayakośa* is the intelligence, and *ānandamayakośa* is pure bliss, but it's also mixed with ignorance.

Discarding those five sheaths, *neti-neti*: "This is not it, this is not it, this is not it..." Then, what am I? Am I these thoughts? No, that's part of the mind. Am I this life that moves from body to body, animating the body, and making it appear to be alive and real? No, that's the *prāṇamayakośa*. Am I this analyzing and ontologically-contemplating process of meditation, *rāja-yoga*? No, I am not that either; that's the *vijñānamayakośa*. And finally, am I this bliss?—ignorance is bliss, right? The *ānandamayakośa*, am I this ignorant bliss that thinks 'Duh, everything's okay'? No, I'm not that either. I am beyond all of that. I am beyond all conceptions. Because conceptions always involve distinctions, and distinctions are duality.

To get beyond dualistic thinking and conceptual thought, the Buddha for example prescribed the *jhānas*, the eight types of meditation that he called mental bases. They're bases, they're platforms, and on those platforms certain cognitions take place. For example, the first *jhāna* is directed thinking: one takes up a topic, and thinks it through from beginning to end, and the Buddha's discourses, the Buddha-suttas are wonderful examples of this first *jhāna* in action. You should read them, go to [suttacentral.net](http://suttacentral.net) and read some of these, they're wonderful! But, that's only the first *jhāna*.

The second *jhāna* is directed thinking, without verbalization. And then so on: it goes through ecstasy, and bliss, and then it gets to emptiness, nothingness, infinite consciousness, and finally to neither-perception-nor-non-perception, that's the eighth *jhāna*. Well, if you're in nothingness, if you are beyond all distinctions, beyond all conceptions, what is there to be aware of? Nothing. And so then, is there any way to tell if we are aware or not? No. So, we might be percipient, and we might not be percipient, or maybe somehow both, or neither percipient nor-non-percipient—that's the eighth *jhāna*. What comes after that? *Nibbāna*.

Then you might say, "Well, if a person reaches that stage, where the whole idea of 'Who am I?' or 'What am I?' becomes moot—because there is no other thing, there is no distinction, there is no difference, there's no way to tell even if your perception is going or not—then what is that? Is that oneness?" No, it's not oneness, no. That's another trap that people fall into, thinking "Oh, it's all one." No. Because if you can think that "It is one," you have duality again. If you can think that "I am one with Brahman," let's say—well, that's a nice thought, but it still makes a distinction between 'I' and 'Brahman,' so it's still duality, see? Real oneness means, first of all, nothingness, because there's no other thing to be aware of: no more divisions, no more distinctions, no difference between 'I' and 'That.'

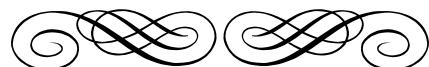
That's why Rāmana says, "Knowing and being..." There's nothing to know but oneSelf, is what it comes down to. We have been so used to, so conditioned to being aware of other things outside, that even if we get ourselves into the eighth *jhāna*, and there's nothing else to be aware of, to the point where we're not even sure if we're aware or not, there's still ourSelf!

The whole point is, as we've discussed so many times before in our earlier series the [Secret of the Golden Flower](#): turn around the flow, turn the energy, turn the attention around back to your Self, and be only aware of your Self, which is pure awareness. Being aware of awareness is Enlightenment. Just like Rāmana used to say, if somebody was having a hard time getting this, he would say, "Do you exist?" and of course the person would say, "Yes," and he'd say, "Well, thank you for admitting that. That proves you're Self-realized, you've already realized the final point, 'I am.'" To be aware of oneSelf is Brahman, that is what Brahman does, or is: Self-awareness.

Brahman is pure, unconditioned, nondual awareness aware of Itself. That's how come the experience of Brahman is 'I-I.' Not even 'I am.' Because as soon as you have 'I am,' it implies 'I am That,' which is duality.

When one is actually in an Enlightened state, there's no keeping score. "Well, there's I, and there's That, and then there's the other thing... One, two, three, four, five..." As soon as you say "I am one," well, then you have one, right? So you could easily have another one, and another one, and another one—and there goes your nice nondual state.

Beyond even the concept of oneness is the concept 'I-I.' Actually, it's not even a concept; it's only an experience. What is there to say about it? 'I-I.' "Hi, I!—I-I." There is only I on that level, and there is only Self-awareness, there's no other phenomenon. That is the real Self-realization, that is the real state, and that is the mature and strong state of actual being.



# Verse 33: One Self

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Today's verse is very much connected with the previous one; so if you haven't watched it, go back and check it out; then we can talk about this one, and it'll have more context and make more sense.

**"Besides that: saying either 'I do not know my Self'  
or 'I have known my Self' is a wide ground for ridicule.  
Why? To make oneself an object known,  
are there two selves, one of which  
can be known by the other?  
Because being one is the truth of everyone's experience  
—that is, whether they be a *jñāṇī* or an *ajñāṇī*,  
everyone experiences the truth 'I am one.'**

One without a second: God made each one of us, and threw away the mold! But it's true: people don't think things through. They take a superficial hit on it, and just blurt it out, and don't realize what they're really saying. To say, "I have seen the Self," is as ridiculous as saying, "I have not seen the Self." Who are you? Who is the seer? The Self. Unless you have some kind of mirror that can reflect a transcendental being, you can't see—you can't see. At the most, you can infer the existence of the Self by its illumination of other things, indirectly. For example, in the high states of meditation called *jhānas*, one can see a light, sometimes very brilliant light. Well, what is this light? It's actually the Self, reflected in the purified mind. You have not seen the Self directly; you have only seen Its illumination when it's reflected from the mind, and the mind has to be in a certain state too, otherwise you can't see. Just like if you take an ordinary mirror and use it to reflect the moon, you won't see very much, just a kind of a bright spot. But, if you carefully grind it into a certain shape and put it in a telescope, then you can see all kinds of details.

Similarly, the ordinary mind in the ordinary state is opaque, it cannot reflect the light of the Self. Even though the Self is always there, the Self is always brilliant and illuminating everything that we perceive, the mind in its

ordinary state blocks that out. And you'll see in meditation, if you get to the state where you're seeing the light, and then you have a heavy thought, it's like a cloud goes across the sun. But the mind, when polished and formed in a certain way, can reflect a remarkably detailed image of the Self. But it's still you're not seeing the Self directly; you're only seeing the mind.

Ultimately, this attempt to see one's Self has to be given up, and one has to simply *be* the Self. Because really, there's nothing that can reveal, nothing that can reflect or image the Self. And certainly there's no second Self by which we can see ourselves. If we think there is, that means we're identifying with the mind and ego. That's why Bhagavān says it's a wide ground for ridicule. And you can read, if you look in the *Talks with Rāmāna Mahārsi*, you can see there are many conversations where he will ask someone "Do you exist?" Well, what does that mean? He's saying, "Are you the Self? Are you one? Are you self-aware? Are you aware of your existence?" and of course people say, "Yes," so he goes "Ah. So you're already Self-realized! You just don't recognize it for what it is." Why? You haven't thought it through. You haven't understood the meaning of the fact that you are percipient, that you are conscious, and most of all, that you are self-aware, conscious of being conscious, aware of awareness. This means you are the Self, you are Brahman. Because that's the definition of Brahman: pure, objectless awareness, nondual.

Similarly—we'll get into this in the next verse—arguing whether the Self is dual or nondual, or whether reality is one or two or three or whatever it is, is ridiculous. Because there is only the Self, and everything else that we experience is within the Self, and is a result. Not caused by exactly the Self, but a result of the Self's existence.

Just like a catalyst in a chemical reaction: often there is a substance that has to be present for a particular reaction to take place, and the substance, the catalyst is not consumed in the reaction; it merely has to be present. Like a catalytic converter in a car: it gets rid of the carbon in the exhaust by combining it with other things.

How is it doing that? Simply by its presence. Simply by the presence of the Self, the whole universe comes into being. This is our experience, if we're honest, if we don't buy into the whole story of objective reality and all that,

that the so-called ‘Enlightenment’ came up with, the so-called ‘scientific’ point of view of objective reality. No. All reality, including your scientific experiments, is subjective only. The scientist, when he sees or observes the result of his experiment, is the Self, and he’s observing it within his consciousness, subjectively. The idea that there is an objective world out there is simply a theory, it cannot be proven. Let that sink in for a minute. The theory that there is an objective universe that exists, whether we’re there to observe it or not, is simply that: it’s just a theory, it’s just an idea, and it cannot be proven. Why? Because who is going to perceive and recognize the proof? You and me, right? And we are the Self!

It’s ultimately subjective. All reality, all existence, all consciousness and observations and experience is subjective only. It cannot be objective, because there’s no proof of it. Try to understand. See, this whole teaching is going to bust the bubble of Western civilization, which is built on the idea that there is some separate objective reality, and eternal scientific laws. I love this. How do we know this? We can’t know. Anything we know is only subjective, and there is no objective observation. Well, what if we use instruments? You still have to read the instruments! Or if you use computers, you still have to read the printout or the display or whatever it is, and that’s subjective awareness. You can’t get out of this one. Just like you can’t get out of the idea that there is no second self with which to see the Self. So you can only *be* the Self; you can only experience Reality, it can’t have a separate existence beyond your experience.

Somebody will argue, “Well, if you go to sleep at night, and then you wake up in the morning and ask the people who are up all night ‘Was the Reality there the whole time?’ they’ll say, ‘Yes,’ so actually there is an objective reality!” No, no. If you’re in a dream, and you ask the people in the dream “Is this reality?” they’ll say, “Yes!” and “Was this existing while I was awake, before I came into my dream?” they’ll say, “Of course, this is reality!” But then you wake up, and you’re in a different reality, in a different body, a different place and time.

Try to understand: Reality, absolute Reality is only subjective. Every kind of reality that is so-called objective is relative and temporary, therefore it’s not real at all, by the standards of the *Upaniṣads*. Because the standard of the

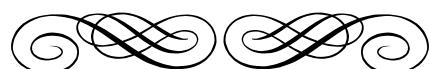
*Upanisads* is that whatever is real must exist always, without change. The only thing that meets that criteria is the Self.

Try to understand. People don't think things through. Just like I sometimes will omit a very important concept from a discussion, just to see if anybody picks up on it, if anybody is thinking things through, and will write me and point it out, and they almost never do. Just like the other day when we're talking about *karma-yoga*, and *karma-yoga* of course, is how you neutralize your *karma*. Each of us is bound to have certain things happen in our life, this is called *prārabdha-karma*, meaning ripened *karma*. It's the *karma* that we created in a previous life, and now this body, and all of its activities and so on, are going on by this *prārabdha-karma*.

Then people are going to say, "No, no—it's by my will! I decide what I'm going to do, and then I do it!" But, if we really observe ourselves, it's not so. What happens is we'll make plans—or we'll have desires, which amount to the same thing—and then most of the time it doesn't work out, does it? Be honest! Most of the time, our plans and desires don't work out. That's because they're not part of our *prārabdha-karma*. And then the few times when we guess right, we want to take credit and say, "I did that!" But as soon as you do, guess what? That becomes another cause of more *karma* in the future.

*Karma-yoga* is the art of withdrawing the idea of 'I did it' from the things that happen, because actually that idea is just an illusion anyway.

Anyway, only one out of so many viewers wrote me about that, "How do you do that?" And of course this video is my *karma-yoga*, this is how I engage the things that I love to do, and would be doing anyway. But instead of doing them for my own good, I'm doing them for the benefit of others, and that's my *karma-yoga*.



# Verse 34: Self-Abiding

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

I'm telling you what, making these videos is such an incredible journey, because it takes me deep into the meaning and the practice of Bhagavān's *ślokas*. I have this principle that I don't speak on anything that I haven't tried or experienced; so I get to go into every one of these *ślokas* really deeply before doing a video on them, and I hope that makes it more authentic and immediate for you. Let's look at today's verse:

**"Disputing: 'The Reality exists', 'It does not exist',  
'It has form', 'It is formless', 'It is one (nondual)',  
It is two (dual)', 'It is neither nondual nor dual', etc.  
is ignorance born of illusion: *māyā*.  
Give up all such disputes! Firmly abide as the Reality,  
which always exists without even a single thought  
as the nature of everyone, knowing that Reality  
in the Heart by the mind merging within."**

If you go back a few years to the beginning of this YouTube channel, when I was a Buddhist monk, at least externally, some of these discussions came up. Because people were asking "This *Nibbāna* or *Nirvāṇa* that the Buddha was talking about, is it real? Or is it something just like a carrot for the donkey, a goal to lead us in a certain way?" and of course I came to the conclusion that yes, it's real, but in a way it's also a fabrication. Why? Because the state of *Nibbāna*, being a non-conceptual state, is also an objective state. In other words, it seems to exist outside of oneself, and one can perceive it as something separate from oneself. Of course it's wonderful and blissful and amazing and beautiful, and all kinds of wonderful things. But, it's not the end —actually, it's only the beginning!

Every experience we have, we have two ways to approach it, two ways to look at it or experience it. For example, I'm looking out the window here, and I could say, "I see a field, I see some trees, I see a fence, and some buildings

off in the distance, birds flying past, clouds in the sky, and the beautiful afternoon light in the rainy season."

What did I just do? I deconstructed this experience into symbols, and I made it separate from myself, I made it something that I can look at and consider as a bunch of pieces: the ground, the trees, the fence, the sky. I made them all separate by using symbols. Now, in reality, the other way to look at it is as a single whole, a gestalt as the psychiatrist would say, one perception. And actually, it's not clear where does the ground end, and where does the tree begin; where does the tree end, and where does the sky begin; where does the sky end, and where does the bird begin. See? There is no word for that whole, because each whole that we encounter we'd have to invent a new word for. I mean, it's bad enough that people manufacture all kinds of useless things, and then give them new names as if they were actually something new. So now we have all these brand names, Coca-Cola and Chevrolet and all these different names, but what do they actually mean? Because the things that they designate are actually a collection of hundreds or even thousands of parts, all made by different people, assembled and sold as a unit.

Well of course, the name is not the thing, the name is never the thing. But when we use names, we are talking about either an artificial fabrication, putting a bunch of pieces together into one unit, or an artificial deconstruction, taking one perception and breaking it up into a bunch of symbols that we can manipulate easily in our minds. See, it's very easy to assign names to this view out my window and then talk about it as names, but it's very difficult to go into the actual experience of what it is, and encounter each thing as it is, without names, without thoughts.

Now, *Nibbāna*, *Nirvāṇa*, Enlightenment and similar high states of mind are in some ways fabrications. Because we're putting together a lot of separate things: our state of mind, our way of thinking, our way of looking at things, the way we feel about it, how it affects us and so on, and we're trying to give it a name, *Nibbāna*. But are any two experiences alike? No. So even *Nibbāna* is not one thing; it's many, many things, many, many experiences. But all those experiences have, how could I say, a certain flavor, a certain taste, and that taste is we are not using words, we're using symbols. We're neither separately assigning names to everything and breaking it up by analysis, nor are we concatenating it together by means of some kind of synthesis. The

thing just is what it is, and it can't really be described. And to attempt to describe it means we lose the immediate experience of it. It becomes an abstraction, it becomes something separate from ourself, from our being, it loses the immediacy and the aliveness of the authentic encounter.

All these high states of being—*Nibbāna*, or contemplation of the Self—are indescribable by nature, so what's the use of arguing about them? The only use words have in this connection is to describe how to attain these states, or at least kind of point a finger in a certain direction, and say, "Go over there and take a look. Go that way and just explore. There's something cool over there, something wonderful."

When we argue about these things... You know, there are a lot of people teaching and presenting about spiritual subjects on the Internet, and here where I live, and so many other venues. I don't get involved anymore with trying to say, "Well, your teaching is different from my teaching, and it says in this book that blah-blah-blah-blah-blah." I just don't get involved in, there's no juice in it anymore. Because what everyone is experiencing is in many cases different, and in many cases it could be the same, but maybe they speak about it differently, or maybe they don't speak about it at all.

Then how are we to know? Am I sharing my inmost heart with you? Not really; not really. It would be difficult, because where are the words to describe it? If all we have is words, and on the Internet basically that's all we have to share, is words. And you can maybe get a little taste of some energy. But words alone will not give us the real juice that we're looking for. That's why I don't try to perform or emote or share anything beyond just, you know, the way I am. And you can ask anybody that really knows me, like Skanda Murti, I'm this way all the time. It's not like this is a face that I put on for being on video; this is just my ordinary way of being.

So, what can I say about people who want to argue philosophy? Bhagavān says here it's ignorance, born of illusion, *māyā*. What is *māyā*? *Māyā* is the idea that we can express or describe or share or manipulate things by means of words and symbols. It's a false promise. Just like the whole idea of selfish action, *karma*, *kamya-karma*. *Upadeśa-Undiyār* begins with the description of a bunch of priests out in the forest performing *karma-kāṇḍa* rituals for their own selfish benefit—they wanted wealth, fame, knowledge, mystic powers and so

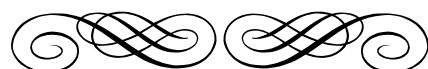
on—and he describes this as ignorance. Now, maybe these guys were using a spiritual or a semi-spiritual technology that is far ahead of what anybody has today, but they were still ignorant. Why? They were using it for their own selfish benefit. They were not using it to help others, they were not using it to improve the world. They were only using it for their own benefit—greedy, selfish, self-centered.

We have a similar situation today, where a very small group of people, comparatively small group of people, own most of the wealth in the world, and control most of the assets on the planet. Are they doing it for the good of humanity? No, they're doing it for their own good! This is ignorance, this is *māyā*. They think that by doing this they're going to get happiness, but actually all they get is trouble. Once you obtain something, once you acquire something, then you have to struggle to get it. And once you get it, you have to struggle to keep it! And guess what? Ultimately it's not possible, ultimately that thing is going to go away. That's just the way the world is.

The only thing that doesn't go away is consciousness, is the Self, pure Awareness. That is what we should be cultivating, that is what we should be looking into. Because everything is going to go away, even this body, what to speak of the whole world that we see, and we're going to have to go someplace else and start all over again.

The Reality is a state of mind, devoid of words and symbols, and we can abide in this reality. The Buddha called it pleasant abiding. We can abide in this Reality as the seer, not the seen, because the seen is always changing. Even if it's something very wonderful and exalted, like visions of heaven, or angels, or *Nirvāṇa*, *Nibbāna*, meditation, ecstasy—all these things come and go.

So, why should we occupy our time with these temporary things? Instead, cultivate the Self, the seer, the knower instead of the known, the seer instead of the seen. That is the gateway to real, durable happiness.



# Verse 35: Siddhis

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

You know, this book is so foundational, it's so important, because it gives the real standard of authentic nonduality, authentic Advaita. Don't fall for this New Age neo-Advaita... [car horn in the background] Confirmed! Because it sells you duality as nonduality, and this verse actually points out exactly how that works:

**"The mind having subsided,  
knowing and being the Reality,  
which is always attained,  
is the true attainment (siddhi).**

**All other siddhis are merely like powers acquired in dream;  
if one wakes up from sleep, will they be real?  
Will those who have discarded the unreal state  
of Self-forgetfulness by abiding in the real state  
of Self-knowledge, be deluded by those unreal siddhis?  
Therefore know and be as you—the Reality—are."**

This is the thing: this verse and the next verse talk about phony nonduality versus real nonduality, and this is a theme that comes up again and again in *Ulladu-Narpadu*, because it's a very common error. Merely to think 'I am That' is different from actually *being* That. If you are actually the Self, you're not thinking in terms of attaining anything, because you're already being That! So there's no difference between 'I' and 'That, I am That.' Not that I have to become That, or that I even have to state the relationship that 'I am That.' No—I just am! It doesn't have to be stated or thought.

That's the difference between thinking-about-ness and being. When someone is thinking about, it's always in terms of words, concepts, some artificial thing, some conceit: 'I am That.' Well, good for you, buddy. That may be actually the penultimate stage before actual Enlightenment, when it's real; when it's an affectation, of course it's completely bogus.

What's the difference? One who really has attained doesn't feel the need to claim it, doesn't ride on a high horse of "I am That, buddy." Just like the other day we were watching a video Skanda recommended, and we found that here's a guy who is teaching, trying to express the nondual point of view, and he's being interviewed by this other guy, and the interviewer just doesn't get it, he can't get it. "What? You mean there's no objective reality? There's only the Self? I don't get it!" he admits. But the guy who's being interviewed, instead of humbly getting down off his high horse and saying, "Well, okay: if you don't get it, then you need to begin at a lower stage," and then questioning him, having a back-and-forth dialogue to find out where he is really at, what does he perceive as real, and starting from there.

If you read [the Talks book](#), Rāmanā always would meet people halfway. If someone could not cognize the highest truth, he was willing to come down, to find out what they could understand, and then begin from there, to go higher. That's a real Master. The reason I broke off with Osho was because I found out he has a very low opinion of Rāmanā as a Master—he doesn't get it, or he's trying to hide something. I think he was afraid that if people really understood, if his disciples specifically really understood what a great Master Rāmanā is, that they would leave him and go to Rāmanā, like I did.

Because there's one thing about Osho: he never explains actually how things work. I noticed this very, very clearly when I was working on the [Secret of the Golden Flower Series](#). Because in Osho's presentation of *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, he never really explains what goes on under the hood. He presents it in a very polished way, a very intellectual way, and it seems really good, but if you actually sit down and try to practice it, it's like "How do you do this?!" In my presentation I tried to give many examples from my own experience, that this is how it came up, this is how it looked to me, and this is how I did it, and actually you can reverse the flow in any of the *cakras*, not only the *ajñā-cakra*. But of course reversing the flow in the *ajñā-cakra* leads immediately—almost immediately anyway—to real ecstasy, so that's the normal way to practice it.

But anyway, getting back to the subject, Rāmanā always goes into the mechanism under the hood, how things really work, and in this verse he's talking about *siddhis*, and he's saying the ultimate *siddhi* of realizing the Self is already attained. And he used to tease people who came to him and were

being obtuse, he said, "Do you exist?" and of course they'd say, "Yes," and then he says, "Ah, so you do recognize that you are the Self!" Because what else is there, really? What else could you be? If you identify as the mind, if you identify as your feelings, if you identify as sensations, or as the body, or as, even worse, your name, your position in some social structure, your function in some business or corporation, or your social standing, like "I'm the husband of So-and-so," or "I'm the wife of So-and-so," these are all artificial, these are all conceits, and they're causes of suffering because they're temporary.

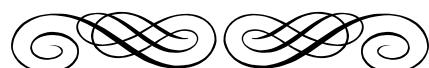
What happens when we think we're something that we're not is that we're inevitably disappointed. And this is why striving for these *siddhis*... There are *asṭa-siddhis*, eight *siddhis*: *laghima*, *mahima*, *prāpti*, and so on; becoming greater than the greatest, smaller than the smallest, able to see and hear things far way, able to actually take something from a remote location and bring it, like that. And of course these are great powers that can be used not only for good but for evil, not only for unselfish purposes but for very selfish purposes as well. And this is what always happens: people who get *siddhis*—if they even can get them, because they're very difficult to obtain—once got, most people will misuse them for their own selfish purposes, and of course that always leads to falldown. Why? Because doing anything for selfish gain creates *karma*, and because of the *karma* then you have to fall down, take birth again, go through the whole nonsense suffering of childhood and relationships and marriage and children and work and... Do you really want to do that? I don't! I want to get out of here! "Let me out of here!"

What that means is no more selfish actions. Really, that's the standard of *karma-yoga*. In *karma-yoga*, one does not act anymore for one's own pleasure, or one's own benefit, but one's actions are calculated to benefit as many people as possible. Ultimately, the greatest benefit you can do is to realize the Self. Why is that? Because every person who becomes Enlightened increases the vibration of the whole universe. The whole world, the whole universe becomes a better place with each person who becomes Enlightened. The greatest cause, the greatest mission, the greatest help that one can be to others is to help them realize the Self. That's the real *siddhi*, that's the real power, the greatest mystic power of all.

That's what we're trying to do, we're trying to create conditions where people can actually realize the Self. But what we find is most of them—in fact, all of them that we have encountered so far—cannot give up selfish action, they cannot give up *kāmya-karma*, acting out of self-interest, or, to put it plainly, lust. And because of this they can never really get to *bhakti*, because their *bhakti* is always going to be tinged with selfish interest. "What can I get out of loving God? Maybe he'll give me some special powers... Yeah," twirl the moustache... That's not real *bhakti*. Real *bhakti* means I love God just for the beauty of it, because it's beautiful! That's all! And it's more beautiful than any other form of love. Because every other form of love is local or extended selfishness. "I love my body, I love my family, I love my country, I love my religion, I love my culture, I love the planet," whatever. These are all extended selfishness. And of course "I love myself, I love my body," this is local selfishness; this is really, really low.

If you have these aspects in your personality, then you have to find a way to overcome them, and of course the only way really to overcome them is to practice unselfishness, which means giving. That's why we have always given our materials for free, we have never sold books or videos or CDs or anything like that. That means we are not benefitting from this work; the whole world can benefit from it! But if there's any benefit for us, it's that we get to engage in *karma-yoga*, and clear our path for higher stages of Self-realization.

This is what everyone should do. These books by Rāmanā Mahārṣi are available online for free: *Ulladu-Narpadu*, *Upadeṣa-Undiyār*, and so many others; and we'll be going into them gradually, one by one. So please read them, study them, meditate on them, and realize them, and that will be the greatest benefit for the whole world.



# Verse 36: ‘I Am That’

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Today and in the next few verses we’re going to wrap this up, and Bhagavān is making some really salient points that apply to almost everybody in the Advaita scene. Let’s read the verse:

**“If in delusion we think that we are the body,  
then thinking,  
‘No we are not this body, we are That: the Reality,’  
will be a good aid for reminding  
and encouraging us to abide as That.  
However since in truth we ever abide as That,  
why think always, ‘I am That’?  
Does one always think, ‘I am a man’?  
That is, to be a man, does a man always need  
to meditate, ‘I am a man, I am a man?’”**

“I am what I am, and what I am is a man.” But I am also That. Now, how does that vibe, or how does that mood square with the typical practice or the typical understanding of people who are into spiritual life or Advaita? Well, unfortunately most of them are on the mental platform, and so they think that simply repeating ‘I am That, I am That’ is the same as *being* That, but they don’t get it. And the reason they don’t get it is that, again, they are mistaking the symbols for the reality.

I remember one time I was at a national Rainbow Gathering in the US, way up in the mountains in Colorado. Oh, by the way, if you’ve never been to one of these, you really should check it out; it’s major fun! But one night there was a big drum circle, and everybody started chanting “We are all one with the infinite sun, forever and ever and ever!” and I was going “Hmm... Actually, as soon as you say, ‘I am That’ it means you’re *not* That, it means there’s a difference between you and That.” Try to understand. In real oneness, if there is even the perception of who I am or what I am, it is just a feeling. It’s not something that you could verbalize, it’s not something that

you could make into a slogan or into a *mantra*, it's not something that you want to sing in a fireside chant.

That's why seven years ago I made the determination that I'm not going to go any more on faith, I'm not going to base my beliefs or my practices or my understanding on what somebody said, some authority. Instead, I'm going to look inside myself and be ruthlessly honest, and see what am I experiencing, what is my actual perception. Not just a thought, not something I read in a book, not something that some authority said, because that will just lead you astray. If you look at these religious groups, if you look at these spiritual societies, they always have a leader, a role model, a *guru*, somebody who says what to think, what to feel, what to do, and the legitimacy of the followers is derived from the authority of the founder, not from their own experience, but by how closely they follow the rules. Now, there's a thing about rule-followers: they never do anything original; they always just follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before. There's a certain value to that, absolutely. But, there comes a point where one has to go off on one's own and discover the truth for oneself. Otherwise he never arrives, he never makes it.

In the past, I was always in trouble in these different religious groups, because I already had the tendency to go off and discover things on my own. Although again for legitimacy, for the sake of credibility and membership in the organization, I would have to follow the leader, you know, at least to some degree, right? But toward the end it got really outrageous, because we were dealing with *rāgānuga-bhakti*, spontaneous love. Now, spontaneous and rules never meet! If you're following authority, you're not going to do anything spontaneous! How can you? But their idea of spontaneous was to apply rules even to your emotional life, which is ridiculous! So, of course I got into conflict with these guys.

And I was doing some really good... If I say so myself, I was doing some really good creative work, but could I get credit for it, could I get recognition for it? No. Why? Because I wasn't following the rules. I had experimented with things that were outside the purview of their philosophical rules, especially *Tantra*. I experimented with *Tantra*, and I had quite a reputation because of that. Big deal! I did some workshops for two or three years, and then I dropped them. Why? Because if you go into *Tantra*, if you go into sexuality all the way to the end, what you will find is love of God.

The real breakthroughs, the real innovations, the real creative work in any field, but especially in spirituality, is only going to come from those who break the rules. I mean, okay, now we're following Rāmanā, or we're in the sphere or the circle of Rāmanā, so let's look at Rāmanā, for his example. He never followed any *sādhana*, he never read any books, he never went to any teacher. But, he got Enlightenment experientially at the age of 16 by intuition, by following his own awareness. How is this? How is it? Well, I maintain that anybody *could* do this. Not everybody *does*, because they are stopped by this conditioning of following the rules, of being like everybody else, following the leader and so on. But everybody could, theoretically.

What does it have to do with this verse? Well, people on the mental platform, people who are following rules, people who are just chanting verbal formula to themselves: "I am That, I am That, I am That..." they never get Self-realization. Why? Because to get Self-realization one has to actually *be* That. Now, of course we're all always ever That. But, as soon as we say, "I am That" then we're not. Because the statement "I am That" contains the assumption that "I am not That, I am different from That." You see? It's paradoxical, it's an oxymoron to say, "I am That." No. I am I, I am always I, I am never anything but I, I am, I-I.

How does one attain this Realization? Not by following rules, not by listening to authorities, not by doing whatever everybody else is doing, but by making a radical decision that "I am That." It's simply an assumption, just like "I am not That" is an assumption. It's a background decision that we make, and then everything else that we do and say comes off of that. "Well, I am not That, so I am not Enlightened, so I have to do some *sādhana*, so that means I can never attain it," and people like that don't attain. The people who attain are the rule-breakers, the creative ones, the experimentalists, the experientialists, the people who dare to go beyond what they've been told.

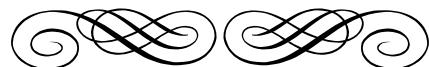
It's just like leadership. Do you think anybody is going to come up to you and ask you to be a leader? No, it doesn't work that way. And if it does, then you're not really a leader; you're just a big follower. Actual leadership, actual authority is never given; it's always taken. That's the way the world works, people. Real Self-realization is never given; the *guru* is never going to give you something that you already have. The real *guru* is going to take away

from you what you are not. So by negative logic, by negative statements “You’re not this, you’re not that, you’re not this other thing, you’re not these five *kośas*, you’re not this mind, you’re not this ego,” so on and so on, until there’s nothing left. All you can be is you! All you can be is the Self.

It is an act of bravery, an act of courage, an act of rebellion against all rules, against all authority, against following and against imitation, to take Enlightenment, to take Self-realization, and say “I am That, I am, I-I.” That’s the only way that anybody is going to make it.

In other words, we’re not always sitting here, thinking “I am this, I am that...” Well, maybe some very narcissistic people are. Someone was doing research on L. Ron Hubbard, and found out that in his early works, before he stole and plagiarized Scientology, he had used affirmations, and so he was going around all day saying to himself, “I am great, I am intelligent, I am powerful, people want to do what I tell them to just because of my presence,” and so on and so on and so on. So this guy, who was notoriously insecure and fanatical... Well, let’s call him a misleader, not a leader but a misleader. Because he was putting things out that he claimed to be original, but were actually originated by others. So, actually he’s a follower, he’s not a leader, okay?

I admit to being a follower of Rāmanā; but I’m also original, I also dare to create my own reality, and I’m going to tell you, I’m not going to talk about what it is, because it’s none of your business. But the devotee, one who actually loves God will always be original, will always be outside the box, will always be unique and inventive and creative, and not simply a follower.



# Verse 37: the Tenth Man

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Today we're going to take the 37th verse, and this is about the tenth man:

**"Even the argument which says,  
'Duality during *sādhana*—which one undertakes due to  
not knowing the truth that one is always Brahman—  
and non-duality after attainment (that is, duality is true  
during the time of practice and non-duality becomes  
true only after the attainment of Self-realization),'  
is not true. Who else is one except the tenth man,  
both when one is anxiously searching for the tenth man  
and when one finds oneself to be the tenth man."**

What is this about the tenth man? Well, first let's take a look at this theory. This theory by some schools, this *viśiṣṭādvaita*, conditioned unconditionality, which is of course self-contradictory, but let's not go into that. They say that nonduality is true as long as one is not Enlightened. In other words, the world is real, the ego is real, the body, all these activities, *karma*, God, all of this is real—not just *seems* real but it's *really* real—until one attains Enlightenment, and then all of a sudden nonduality is real, and everything else is an illusion.

Bhagavān, of course, doesn't accept this. He says that nonduality is always real, and duality is always unreal. How is that? Because we are always the Self! We are never not the Self, and the impression that one is something other than the Self of all, Brahman, is an illusion. And the proof of that is it's temporary, it comes and goes. The fact that one can attain Enlightenment, can realize nonduality means that duality is false, because it has an end. One might say, "Well, it seems like nonduality has a beginning at the time of Realization, so doesn't that also make it temporary?" No. Because nonduality was actually the case the whole time; it was just covered by the illusion of duality. That is the actual Advaita theory.

Now let's talk about the tenth man. The story goes there was a group of ten men, not too bright... Anyway, they were on a trip, and they came to a river, so they had to cross the river. The river was flowing very fast, and if you've had any experience crossing swollen rivers, it doesn't take much to sweep someone off their feet, knock them into the current, and they just disappear. Especially up in the Himālayas, you have to be careful about this.

Anyway, the men went across the river, and when they reached the other side, they said, "Oh, we better count everybody, and make sure that everybody made it." So the first one starts counting: "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine... There's only nine! Wait, you try it," and so then the other one counts too: "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. Oh my God, we lost somebody in the river! There used to be ten! What happened?!"

They were all upset, and then another traveler comes along, and he hears them lamenting, and he says, "Wait a minute, there's ten of you! I count ten of you," and they said, "Well, we all tried, and we only counted nine!" and he goes "Wait a minute. You all line up, and I'm going to come and slap each man on the back, and then you all count off. Okay, here we go: [slaps] one, [slaps] two, [slaps] three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine... [slaps] ten!" and they're going "Oh, duh, wait a minute... I guess we are ten men. But what happened to the tenth man when we were counting?" and the traveler says, "You dummies... Each of you was counting the others, and not counting yourselves!"

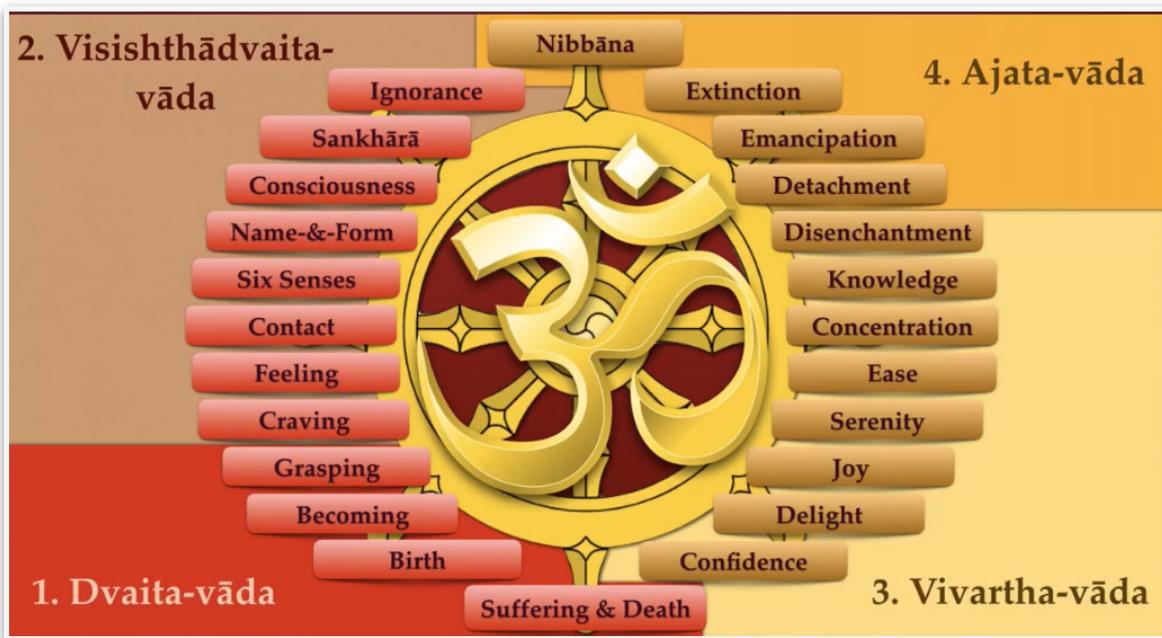
The answer to the problem of the tenth man, the riddle, is how we go through life. Our culture trains us to be compulsively extroverted, and we count everything outside of ourselves, but we don't count ourself. We're conscious of so many things—objects, people, actions and so on—but we're not conscious of our consciousness! We're even conscious of the mind and the body and so many things, but we're never conscious of ourself, of our real Self, our consciousness. The body, the mind, all those things are actually external to the Self. And of course again the proof is they come into being at a certain point, and they pass away later on. But the consciousness that's aware of them is always there, without beginning, without end.

That's our problem, that's why we're not Enlightened: we're not fully aware of our own Self! This has led to some very strange phenomena. For example, one thing came up just this morning: the myth of the "Enlightenment experience." In Zen it's called *kenshō*, in *yoga* it's called *samādhi*.

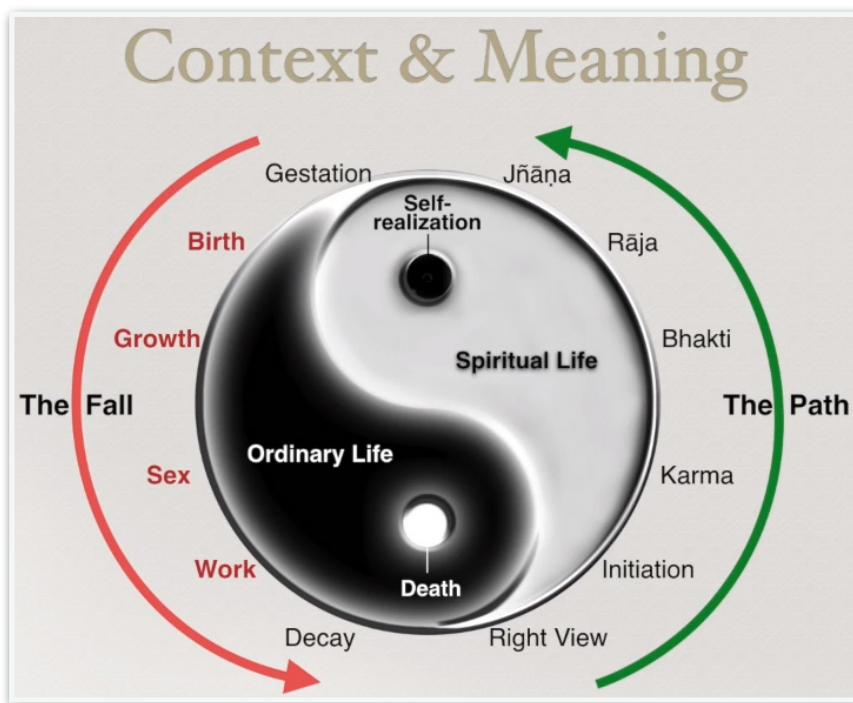
'Enlightenment experience' is actually an oxymoron. An oxymoron means a term or expression that is inherently self-contradictory. Because Enlightenment is not an experience. Experiences come and go: they begin, they happen, and then they pass away. I don't care, even the greatest Enlightenment experience, you know, seeing God or whatever, is going to be like that, just temporary.

You can't hold on to it and say, "Oh, now I'm Enlightened, I had this experience!" because the experience passes away. You don't pass away though; you remain—'you' meaning consciousness, the Self. But many unrealized teachers teach this myth of the Enlightenment experience. Why? Because it gives their students maybe something to cling to, or something to chase after. It gives them a way to sell themselves, and sell their teachings and so on. Because it seems tangible, you know, it seems legit, right? "Seems legit..." But it's not. It's a con, and the reason it's a con is because everyone is suffering from the tenth-man syndrome. Everyone is looking outside themselves, counting all these things—"Body? Yeah, check. Mind? Check, yeah. Ego? Check... Possessions? Check. Activities? Check. Karma? Well, check..."—but where is the Self? Where is the one to whom all these experiences happen? What about that one? What about the 'I am'? What about, even better, 'I-I,' objectless awareness? See, this is the real unconditioned nature of the being: no outside experiences or objects at all.

In this way unrealized teachers are fooling people, selling them on these experiences which aren't Enlightenment at all. Now, granted, they can be a milestone on the Path. Especially the Buddha, he talked about these four Paths, and also the Noble Eightfold Path. But one time a lady came, a visitor, I think she might have been a monk, and asked the Buddha "Is the Eightfold Path a fabrication?" [[Culavedallasutta](#), MN 44] and the Buddha said, "Yes." "Aaaaa, what does that mean?!" Well, we talked in the [Esoteric Teaching Series](#) about the Path being a process of becoming:



A process of becoming, any process of becoming has the same steps, and it begins from fabrication, gestation. Remember, we broke up the stage of gestation into fabrication, then name-and-form and consciousness.

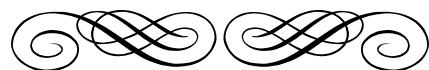


It begins from ignorance, in the Fall, but the process of becoming in the Path begins from knowledge, it begins from Right View, and then at the time of initiation fabrication takes place, fabrication of the becoming of an Enlightened being, the real Self, and then the rest of the Path is simply working that out through the other stages. This is something you have to

figure out for yourself, and if you don't get it then you have to ask someone who does.

Anyway, these stages on the Path are not Enlightenment themselves; they're simply experiences that show you have reached a certain level in the process of becoming, a certain stage in going back to your original Self, your real Self. Actually, it's not so much a process of becoming as a process of *unbecoming*, letting go of all the false identities of body, mind, intellect, ego, desire, ignorance and delusion. Once we can let go of all these things, the real Self is uncovered. It's been there all along. Just like the tenth man was there the whole time. But just because the others were caught up in extroversion, not counting themselves, they missed it.

And we're the same way: when we're caught up in compulsive extroversion —enforced by schooling, culture, family life, work, finances, politics, and all this crap—we think "Oh, I don't count. I'm nothing," so we don't count ourselves, we're not even aware of ourselves. But when we finally clear away all these coverings, then we see "Oh, actually I'm the one who's doing the counting, I'm the one who is aware. I am the Self."



# Verse 38: Akarma

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Today we're going to look into verse 38:

**"If we are the doer of actions (*karmas*) which are like seeds,  
we shall experience the resulting fruits.  
But when one knows oneSelf by enquiring  
'Who is the doer of actions?'—in other words,  
'Who am I?'—the sense of 'I am the doer' will disappear.  
Hence all three types of *karma* (*agamya*, *sanchita* and  
*prārabdha*) will slip away, since the ego—the doer of  
the actions and the experiencer of their fruits—  
will no longer exist. The resulting state  
which is devoid of ego, and which is consequently  
devoid of the bondage of *karma*, indeed is  
the state of liberation, which is eternal—  
that is, our ever-existing natural state."**

*Ulladu-Narpadu* is about what is, the nature of reality. *Ulladu* in Tamil means 'that which is,' what is real, what always is, and what cannot not be. But we are separated from that by ego, by the sense of individuality, and so we assign ourselves—in the sense of the ego, the individual identity—the role of the doer, not realizing that that also assigns us as the recipient of the resulting *karmas*.

There are three types of *karma* discussed in this verse. *Agamya-karma* means the actions newly performed in this life through the sense of "I am the doer, the ego." *Sanchita-karma* means all the results of all the past *agamya-karmas* which are in storage so to speak, and which have not been selected for experiencing in this life. And finally the *prārabdha-karma* is the share of the *karmas* selected by Īśvara—not by us but by Īśvara—to be experienced in this life.

Remember, in the life of the ego, in the individual existence there is God, Íśvara; there is the world, *māyā*; and there is the body; and the body is taken as the self. In this world the body is moved around, and apparently does various things which we take credit for, “I’m the doer,” and because of this we have to receive the *kārmik* results. This is bondage. Why? Because it means we lose our freedom; and our life, our existence and everything that happens becomes determined by *karma*. And also because of ignorance, we don’t understand what kinds of results these *karmas* will bring. We’re only thinking “Oh, I want to enjoy! I want to do this, I want to do that! I want to own things, I want to possess things, and I want to enjoy them through sense contact.” Well, okay, but there are three modes, *guṇas* of material nature: *sattva-guṇa* or goodness, *rājo-guṇa* or passion, and *tamo-guṇa* or ignorance, and the results of actions performed in these three modes are of the same quality as the actions themselves.

In other words, if one performs actions in goodness—charity, religious worship, study of the Scriptures, different kinds of *pūjā*, different kinds of beneficial activities in general, acquisition of knowledge, and so on—these will lead to what we call good results, and what we really mean by that is results in the mode of goodness. Now, these results are just as binding as any other kind of *karma*, but because they lead in the general direction of liberation, the wise encourage people to perform them. Thus, even though we are engaged in *jñāna-yoga*, we advise people who aren’t ready for this topmost level of Realization to engage in *karma-yoga*, *bhakti-yoga* and *rāja-yoga*, in that order. Actually, one *yoga* will naturally develop into the next, just by becoming mature. One should have Right View on this. That’s why we gave in our [\*Esoteric Teaching Series\*](#) the instructions of Bhagavān, in the [\*Upadesa-Sāram\*](#), that one should begin from *karma-yoga*. So do good things, perform charitable works.

The other kind is *rāja*; *rāja* means passion. Because kings of course, to be a king you have to fight, and to fight you have to be passionate, so anyone who wants to dominate and control the material world, who wants to satisfy their desires is acting in *rājo-guṇa*. *Rājo-guṇa* is characterized by unlimited longings and desires: “I want this, I want that, I want to do this, I want to go there, I want to enjoy this, I want to experience that!” One becomes the doer and the enjoyer, the controller and the owner, and as a result one has to experience so much suffering! Why is that? Because the acquisition of material goods

causes suffering for others. Who are those others? The people who have to create them.

Why does everybody hate the rich? Why does the 99% hate the 1%? Because the 1% owns the factories that produce the goods that all are craving, but only the rich can afford. These people are working so hard, under such debilitating conditions: often lots of pollution, noise, overwork, bad management, being bullied, and so on like that. Of course, they are doing it because they also want to enjoy, and they're motivated by material gain. So it's a circle: the people who are the capitalists, who want to have a flourishing economy so they can become super-rich, create this atmosphere where everybody has to work just to get the basic necessities of life, which are actually luxuries, viewed from the big context of human existence.

And actually, people in the past who simply worked on a farm, who owned their own land, who had their own family working with them were much happier, because they were more situated in the mode of goodness. The result of the mode of goodness is happiness in general—material happiness, but still, it's better than the mode of passion, because the mode of passion leads to suffering, especially when the results of the *karma* in the mode of passion are finished. Then what happens? Things go away. Whatever we have acquired will disappear, whatever we have done will come to an end, whatever we have enjoyed will stop. We see people, at the end of life especially, suffering very much, because they can no longer do all the things, and go all the places, and have all the stuff that they enjoyed. For example, even if they're married their whole life, the wife or husband may die, and this is tremendous suffering. Try to understand. Much better to counteract those attachments with *sādhana*, and let them go.

But then there's the mode of ignorance. The mode of ignorance says, "Oh, all this knowledge is too much trouble. I don't need to study the Scriptures, I don't even need to work. I can just hang around and get stoned, and do the minimum. I don't have to really do anything, or have any goal in life, except for the basic satisfaction of the senses." Now, this is basically animal life: there's no higher purpose, no knowledge, no big view of the whole purpose of life or anything like that. They're simply devoid of what we call human qualities, and because of that the result of actions in the mode of ignorance is

being born in an animal body in the next life—it's really terrible. But we can see the animal mentality developing, as people do all these terrible actions.

For example, meat-eating: meat-eating is horrible, horrible! Bad, bad *karma*! Because why? So much resources are used to produce, especially beef for human consumption, that if everybody was to stop eating meat tomorrow, we would be 70% of the way to the goals of the Paris Environmental Accord, 70%! 70% of what it would take to clean up this planet could be accomplished simply by everyone becoming vegetarian. That's heavy *karma*: they're destroying the planet just for the pleasure of their tongue. What's really going on is that they're addicted to the adrenaline released by the dying animal, in its fear and panic at being killed. They're actually drug addicts, speed freaks, just addicted to adrenaline, and craving that drug.

What happens though if we do our *sādhana*, we reach the perfection of the various *yogas*, and we go beyond the mind and ego? What happens then? Then there's *akarma*, or sometimes called *naiśkarmya*. That means the *karma* is still there, but it doesn't affect us. Why? We are not the body, we are not the ego, we are not the mind. So where is the *karma* going to come? Maybe it will affect the body, but if we're not the body. Then who cares? There's a nice quote by the Buddha that I have paraphrased several times, but now I want to read the actual quote, because it's very, very salient to this point:

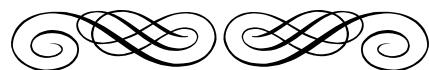
**"Where there is no passion for the nutriment of consciousness, where there is no delight, no craving, then consciousness does not land there or increase.  
Where consciousness does not land or increase, there is no alighting of name-&-form. Where there is no alighting of name-&-form there's no growth of fabrications.  
Where there is no growth of fabrications, there is no production of renewed becoming in the future.  
Where there is no production of renewed becoming in the future, there is no future birth, aging, & death.  
That, I tell you, has no sorrow, affliction, or despair."**

**'Just as if there were a roofed house or a roofed hall having windows on the north, the south, or the east. When the sun rises, and a ray has entered by way of**

**the window, where does it land?’**  
**‘On the western wall, lord.’**  
**‘And if there is no western wall, where does it land?’**  
**‘On the ground, lord.’**  
**‘And if there is no ground, where does it land?’**  
**‘On the water, lord.’**  
**‘And if there is no water, where does it land?’**  
**‘It does not land, lord.’”**

—[Atthiragasutta](#) (SN 12.64)

In other words, there is no place for the *karma* to land, so it doesn’t land. If there is nobody saying, “I am the doer, I am the recipient of the results of action,” then where is the results of action going to land? Yes, it may hit the body, it may hit the mind, but if we’re not identified with them, it doesn’t affect us. One simply goes on, chanting the *mantra*, being in loving devotion with one’s deity or object of love, and of course the ultimate object of love is the Self. This is [ananya-bhakti](#), and this is what we’re going to be going into in the next series coming up. This means *bhakti* or love, in the context of Advaita. That’s coming up in just a few days, after we finish *Ulladu-Narpadu*.



# Verse 39: Liberation

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Now we have a very interesting verse:

**“Only so long as one is a madman—that is,  
devoid of true knowledge, feeling ‘I am bound’—  
will there exist thoughts of bondage and liberation.  
But when one sees one’s Self by enquiring  
‘Who is the bound one?’—in other words, ‘Who am I?’—  
and when thereby the ever-liberated one—the real Self—  
alone remains as the established truth,  
since the thought of bondage cannot remain,  
can the thought of liberation remain?”**

This is the real reason why actual Enlightened people never claim to be Enlightened. And it's also the reason why Enlightenment is not an experience. Let me explain those in detail. An actual Enlightened person is not thinking "I am Enlightened," because there is no thought of Enlightenment when one is actually Enlightened! When someone attains liberation, *mokṣa*, freedom, they're not anymore thinking of "My self, my body, my mind, my name, my form, my activities, my possessions, my relationships, my activities," and so on. They're not really thinking at all. There's no need to think, because everything is just obvious!

In other words, an Enlightened person, an actually Enlightened person does not need to take a position. One of the sayings by the Buddha that I really love is quote from [Aggivacchasutta](#) (MN 72)

“A ‘position,’ Vaccha, is something that a Tathāgata has done away with. What a Tathāgata sees is this: ‘Such is form, such its origination, such its disappearance; such is feeling, such its origination, such its disappearance; such is perception...such are fabrications...such is consciousness, such its origination, such its disappearance.’ Because of this, I say, a Tathāgata—with the ending, fading away, cessation,

renunciation, & relinquishment of all construings, all excogitations, all ‘I’-making & ‘mine’-making & obsessions with conceit—is, through lack of clinging/sustenance, released.”

That means he no longer is attached to name and form, he doesn’t anymore think of himself that “I am a Buddha,” that’s a ridiculous idea! But, he still tries to help people, and of course to do that he has to use conventional language. But if we were to really just be who we are, and not have to compromise with the consensus reality, we wouldn’t need to speak at all—everything is just so clear!

I remember back in the days, I was on a *pādayātrā*, which is a walking tour, in South India, and we had come sort of south-southwest out of Hyderabad, and we were crossing some really backcountry areas, and we were traveling with two oxcarts and an elephant—seriously—and we came to places, villages where there had never been a motorized vehicle, especially a car; maybe a couple of people on motorcycles made it back that far, but that’s about it. In these villages of course nobody spoke English, yet we never had any problem communicating. Just sign language, and a few grunts, and pointing a lot was enough. Why? These people were not attached to words; they were living in the old ways, so they were much more enlightened, much more receptive, much more understanding. They had time.

When I look at people today, I think they’re mad, they’re just mad. They’re attached to all these names and forms. “I am this, I am that, I am So-and-so, I am this person’s husband or wife,” etc. And the people in the ‘enlightenment’ game are not immune to that at all. They are fully caught up in it, just as much as ordinary people—don’t kid yourselves—and because of that they can be very easily exploited and deceived. And believe me, there are people making a lot of money on that. For example, there are workshops, retreats and seminars that you can go to, they’re very pricey, and when you go there...

Well, let me explain what happens in terms of a medicine show. In America, back in the old days you had these medicine shows, and they would go around with a couple of wagons and a big tent, and they’d set up, and they had different themes: some of them were Chinese, Oriental medicine, some of them were Black Soul medicine, some were Native American Indian type

medicine, some were Christian, and so on. But, they all had one thing in common: they were phony, and they used psychological tricks to make people have an ‘experience’, a healing experience. One of the tricks is they had shills. A shill is a person who pretends to be a member of the audience, but they’re secretly in cooperation with the operator. The operator will get up there, and give his ‘Come to Jesus!’ speech, whether it’s Jesus or whatever, he’s going to encourage people to come up and get healed. Of course the first people who stand up and come up and get all excited and act like they’ve been healed and so on are the shills.

Then of course at the back of the tent there’s all these tables with medicines for sale, and some of them had some actual content; most of them didn’t though, they were just phony, bottles full of colored water. The expression ‘show-bottle’ comes from that. Because in the pharmacies, in the old days they would take the patent medicines and display them in the window. But of course any medicine that’s exposed to light will lose potency, so they put colored water in instead, and these are called show-bottles, as opposed to the actual bottle of medicine.

These operators, these medicine-show operators would sell show-bottles, literally, in the back of the tent, and also figuratively, upfront on the stage. They would bring people up, and the people would pretend to be healed and get all excited, and then ordinary people would come up, and they would use a technique called love-bombing. Love-bombing is a very well-known technique of psychological manipulation, which is used by fundamentalists, healers and showboaters of all different kinds, and is still going on in the so-called ‘enlightenment’ business today. How does it work? Well, everybody has what’s called a ruin—the suffering, the problem that ruins their life—and astrologically it has to do with the position of Saturn in their chart. If you can find out what somebody’s ruin is, if you can find out—whether by astrology, or by questioning them—what is the problem that’s ruining their life, then you can very easily manipulate them by pretending to solve that problem.

In a medicine show you have somebody coming up, and they’re very shy, and then the operator will question them, find out their ruin, and then just love-bomb the heck out of them. And usually what happens is they break down, emotionally they become very vulnerable and suggestible, and so then the operator can suggest to them what they want to believe all along, that

"You're Enlightened," or "You are the Self," or whatever the particular mood is. If it's Christian, well, you've found Jesus, right, and so on. Then the person has this terrific feeling! Well, of course: they just emotionally unburdened themselves—which is, by the way, the cause of 90% illness anyway, emotional stress—and so they feel like "Oh yeah, I'm Enlightened, I got it! Wow!" you know. And so chalk up another successful medicine show! This is going on, and people are actually paying a lot of money to be deceived like this.

What is the takeaway? Enlightenment is not an experience. Experiences are all external. Even experiencing one's own mind is actually external, because the intention is focused outside, something different from oneself. Actual Enlightenment has to do, not with what is seen externally, but with the seer, the one who sees. That's why the technique of turning around the light—or reversing the flow, sometimes called different names—in *The Secret of the Golden Flower* is so powerful.

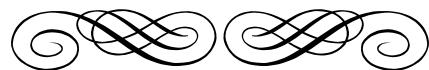
What this means is that Enlightenment does not happen in an experience. Yes, there are certain experiences—and they're actually rather predictable—on the way to Enlightenment. But actual Enlightenment itself is a realization. It is a change in point of view, it is an understanding of "Who I am, what I am." And this doesn't happen in a big flash; it happens in maybe dozens or hundreds of little realizations, until one day they all add up, and you go "Oh, I got it! This is it, this is what they're all talking about!" and then boom-boom-boom-boom-boom, all the pieces fall into place. So don't be fooled.

Sadhu Om makes a note here:

**"Note: When one knows oneself by enquiring  
'Who am I, the individual who is in bondage?'  
one will find that the individual or ego is nonexistent and  
that the real Self, which is ever-liberated, alone exists.  
Since bondage and liberation are both mere thoughts,  
and since all thoughts depend for their seeming existence  
upon the first thought, which is the ego, the feeling  
'I am so-and-so', when the ego is found to be nonexistent  
the thoughts of bondage and liberation  
will no longer be able to stand."**

Because they have no place to stand. Just like yesterday we were discussing the Buddha's *Atthiragasutta*, where he says, "When the light comes through the window, and there's no wall, there's no ground, there's no ocean, where does it land?" It doesn't land, there's no place for it to land. Similarly, there's no place for thoughts of bondage or liberation to stand in the absence of the ego, in the absence of the 'I.'

Nobody can do this for you. I don't care how much money you pay them, I don't care how psychologically skilled they are at emotional manipulation, they cannot make you Enlightened. You are already Enlightened! You just have to see it! And I don't mean see it in the sense of an experience; I mean to realize it in the sense of a change of point of view, which you have to do yourself. Nobody can do it for you. That's why I talk and talk and talk, to try to give you the sense of what Enlightenment really is, and who you really are. I know who you really are! [car horn] Confirmed!



# Verse 40: Conclusion

Video link: [YouTube](#) | [archive.org](#)

Audio link: [archive.org](#)

Welcome to the conclusion of *Ulladu-Narpadu*. It's a beautiful, dramatic sunrise this morning, so I just had to show off the hill, and thank you all for your attention and your time, for watching all these episodes.



And finally, one last verse:

**“Know thus: If it is said, to suit the maturity of the mind,  
that the liberation which one will attain is of three kinds—  
with form, without form, or with or without form—  
I will say that liberation in truth is only  
the destruction of the form of the ego  
which distinguishes liberation as being of three kinds:  
with form, without form, or with or without form.”**

This is the last word. This is the conclusion. If we read the various scriptures of the world, they describe liberation in different ways. But actually, just like the concept of liberation itself depends on the existence of the ego, similarly, the various distinctions or grades of liberation only depend on the existence of the mind. And if the mind is dissolved by proper *sādhana*, then there's no

more argument about whether one is liberated or not, or if one is liberated what kind is it, there's just no more discussion, on what the activities of a liberated person should be. These things are more or less just academic, just mental speculation.

If we look, for example, at the history of the Enlightened beings, then we see that there's tremendous variety; no two are alike. They may reach some consensus about what is advisable to help others reach liberation, but each liberated being, each *jīvan-mukta* reaches in his own unique individual way. That seems rather paradoxical, because the state of liberation is always the same. But it's not up to me to explain all this stuff. It's up to me to experience it for myself, and then just try to give you an idea of what Enlightenment is not. That's the only way it can be described.

What it is not is, it's not a stereotyped, standardized thing. No description that we give can be true generally, but what we can say is that the particulars, the details only matter if we have some rigid concept of ourselves, the ego, and the nature of the mind, liberation, the spiritual path, and so on. Now, any concept that we have [Mr. Crow doing crow things] is going to be defeated by the reality, because the reality is always unpredictable, spontaneous, and non-conceptual. [Mr. Crow agrees]

When we try to understand... My friend [Mr. Crow] is up here, waking everybody up. When we try to understand what is this liberation, we have to understand that it's complete freedom. I just want to tell you, from my own point of view, my own perspective, that since I have been on this path of Aruṇāchala Rāmaṇa, I feel so good. There's no question about whether this is the ultimate teaching or not, whether this is liberation or not, whether this is even right or wrong—there's just no question, the question doesn't even arise. Because it just feels so good. And that's really the bottom line, you know. If it makes you happy, if it makes you so happy that you lose all desires for everything else, then that's it; that's the thing, stick with it.

But of course in most cases we find that we aren't fully satisfied, and even though some solution to the problems of life may satisfy us for some time, that it can't do so unlimitedly or unconditionally. For example, when I first got into this Vedic culture, I subscribed to a model of liberation that was called *sa-rūpa*, with form. In other words, that when you attain liberation or

Enlightenment or whatever you want to call it, you get a form, a spiritual form which is permanent, and then you exist in that form in some spiritual world, along with God and other devotees who are also liberated. And then I found that one of the corollaries of this viewpoint was rigid organizations, rigid egos, rigid beliefs, which led to all kinds of abuses of power, and emotional and verbal abuse of the people involved in the community, what to speak of outsiders.

One warning flag for me was that people who have this belief of Advaita were demonized, and were called all kinds of nasty names. And indeed, as far as the philosophy of Advaita, and even the philosophy of Buddhism, even in the scriptures there are... Well, to put it plainly: it's a pack of lies. A bunch of stories made up to make them sound bad—but they're not accurate at all. The description of the Buddha's philosophy, even in the *Vedānta-sūtra*, is completely counterfactual. And what to speak of other descriptions of Jainism, and philosophy of Advaita, and so on like that—they're just wrong, they're not true.

When people start making up pejorative names, and calling people with different beliefs bad, ill names, you know that something is wrong. Because someone who's really Enlightened sees everybody as at least potentially the same, potentially divine, potentially Enlightened just like them, and so they don't condemn. They may analyze, but they don't really criticize, there's no venom in it; it's just to understand the relative values.

For example, if I say about someone that he's like this and like that, what am I doing? I'm comparing him with somebody else, or maybe many other people, or with my expectations, or my particular rules about what things should be like, or what people should be like. So if I call someone ill names and put them down, that says really more about me than it does about them. If I make up stories about somebody, and spread them around, and try to cause divisions between people, then that says more about my character than it does about the person I am criticizing.

An actual Enlightened person doesn't think like this. He thinks "Well, some people need the security of rigid ideas and beliefs. Some people need the security blanket of a very firm ego identity, and like that." Some people are uncomfortable with full freedom, so they need to limit themselves. But you

can't limit me. You can't even describe me. You have no idea what I'm like on the inside.

This is everybody's point of view, actually. We all know that each one of us is completely unique, beyond description, beyond categorization, and certainly beyond any kind of criticism. Because each of us is the Self, each of us is pure consciousness, unconditioned, eternal, boundless, without any limitations.

Try to understand who we really are. That's the nature of the Self, and that's what I've been trying to communicate in these episodes. And I hope you got something from it, I hope you got some more insight into the real nature of the reality, *ulladu*: what is, the way it is, and why it is the way it is. And who you are, who I am, who everybody really is: the Self, Brahman, the ground of being, the substrate of unconditioned consciousness.

Now I'm going to read one last line, which comes at the end, the very, very end of all the Forty Verses on Reality:

**"This *kalivenba* (*Tamīl* poetic meter) which is all  
the Forty Verses on Reality (*Ulladu-Narpadu*)  
joined together as one single verse  
by the gracious *Śrī Rāmaṇa*,  
is the Light which reveals the Reality."**

—[Mr. Crow doing crow things] Yes, I know you like *Rāmaṇa*!

This is the reality. And I hope that you can join me very soon in this wonderful stage of Enlightenment, this Self-realization, that to know your real being is the satisfaction of all desires, and the source of real happiness [Mr. Crow agrees] and life.

Let's say it together, Mr. Crow!

*Āūm tat sat* [Mr. Crow doing crow things]  
*Āūm Hariḥ Āūm* [laughs]

