

## *Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Arunachalaramanaya*

### INTRODUCTION

By MICHAEL JAMES

Like *Ulladu Narpadu (The Forty Verses on Reality)* and some of the other important Tamil works of Bhagavan Sri Ramana, *Upadesa Undiyar* was composed at the request of Sri Muruganar. In order to understand the contents of *Upadesa Undiyar* in their proper perspective, it is necessary for us to know the circumstance under which Sri Bhagavan came to compose this work.

Sri Muruganar, who was a great Tamil scholar and poet and who later became the foremost disciple of Sri Bhagavan, first came to his Guru in September 1923. Before coming to Sri Bhagavan, he composed a song entitled 'Desika Patikam', which he offered to Him on his arrival. Soon after that he composed another song entitled 'Tiruvembavai', and on seeing the poetic beauty of these verses and the lofty ideas contained in them, Sri Bhagavan remarked, 'This is in the style of Manikkavachakar. Can you sing like Manikkavachakar?' Sri Muruganar was taken aback on hearing these words, and exclaimed, 'Where is my ignorant mind, which is as blind as an owl in daylight, and which is darker than the darkness of night? And where is the Self-experience (*atma-anubhuti*) of Manikkavachakar, in whom the darkness of delusion had vanished and in whom true knowledge (*mey jnana*) had surged forth? To compare my base mind with his exalted experience is like comparing a fire-fly with the bright stars.' When Sri Muruganar thus expressed his own deeply felt unworthiness, by His glance of Grace Sri Bhagavan shone forth in his heart, thereby making his mind blossom, enabling him to compose the great work *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai*, which in later years Sri Bhagavan Himself declared to be equal to Sri Manikkavachakar's *Tiruvachakam*.

*Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai* is a collection of more than 120 songs composed by Sri Muruganar in praise of Sri Bhagavan, and many of them are sung in the same style and metres as the songs in *Tiruvachakam*. Among the songs in *Tiruvachakam*, there is one song of 20 verses entitled 'Tiruvundiyar', in which Manikkavachakar sings about some of the *lilas* or divine sports played by Lord Siva. Therefore, in the year 1927, when Sri Muruganar began to compose a song called 'Tiruvundiyar' in praise of Bhagavan, he decided to follow a theme similar to that found in Manikkavachakar's 'Tiruvundiyar', and thus he started to sing about various *lilas* performed by various Gods, taking all those Gods to be Sri Ramana Himself.

Once some devotees asked Sri Sadhu Om, 'Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri declared that Sri Bhagavan is an incarnation or avatar of Lord Subrahmanya. Other devotees say that Sri Bhagavan is an incarnation of Lord Siva. What was Sri Muruganar's opinion? According to him, of which God was Sri Bhagavan an incarnation?' To which Sri Sadhu Om replied with a smile, 'According to Sri Muruganar, it is the other way around. His conviction was that all Gods are incarnations or manifestations of Sri Bhagavan.' This conviction of Sri Muruganar is beautifully expressed by him in his song 'Tiruvundiyar'.

Having attained Self-knowledge by the Grace of Sri Bhagavan, Sri Muruganar knew from his own direct experience that Sri Bhagavan is the one unlimited Supreme Reality, and that all Gods and Divine Incarnations are truly manifestations of that same Supreme Reality. Although the Supreme Reality can manifest itself in any number of divine names and forms, the highest of all those manifestations is the name and form of the *Sadguru*. Therefore being an exemplary disciple, Sri Muruganar was drawn in devotion only to the name and form of his *Sadguru*, Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

It is not that I do not know that all the Gods, who appear to be many, are truly manifestations of the one reality. Though I know this, among all the Gods, my mind is drawn in love only towards Siva-Ramana.

Thus sings Sri Muruganar in *Sri Ramana Jnana Bodham*, volume three, verse 1023. Hence, even when he had occasion to sing about the *lilas* of some of the different names and forms in which the Supreme Reality had manifested itself, he was able to sing about those names and forms only as various manifestations of his Lord and *Sadguru*, Sri Ramana.

Thus in ‘Tiruvundiyar’ Sri Muruganar sings about the *lilas* of Lord Vinayaka, Lord Subrahmanya, Lord Vishnu and His various incarnations such as Sri Rama and Sri Krishna, Lord Siva, Lord Buddha and Lord Jesus Christ, taking all these Gods to be manifestations of Sri Ramana. ‘Tiruvundiyar’ is divided into two parts, the first part consisting of 137 verses (*Sannidhi Murai*, vv. 1277-1413) which relate the *lilas* of various Gods which are narrated in the Hindu *Puranas*, and the second part consisting of 7 verses (*Sannidhi Murai*, vv. 1414-1420) which relate about Lord Buddha upholding the *dharma* of compassion (vv. 1-5) and about Lord Jesus Christ suffering crucifixion to expiate the sins of others (vv. 6-7).

In the first part of ‘Tiruvundiyar’ Sri Muruganar sings about Lord Vinayaka breaking the axle of his father’s chariot (1-2), about Lord Subrahmanya subduing the ego of Brahma (3), giving *upadesa* to Lord Siva (4-9) and playing with Lord Vishnu (10-11), about Lord Vishnu killing Hiranaya (12) and bestowing Grace upon Mahabali (13-16), about Sri Rama being merciful to Ravana (17), about Sri Krishna teaching Arjuna his duty (18), and about Lord Siva drinking poison (19), subduing Kali by His dance (20-21), plucking off one of the heads of Brahma (22), killing Andhakasura (23), burning the *Tripurasuras* with a mere laugh (24-34), punishing Daksha (35-36), destroying Jalandharasura (37), flaying the elephant (38), burning Kama (39-51), kicking Yama (52-61), showing compassion to Ravana (62-66), blessing Brahma and Vishnu when they worshipped Him in the form of Annamalai, having failed to reach His Head and Feet (67-69), and finally enlightening the ascetics in the Daruka Forest (70-137). While singing about these *lilas*, Sri Muruganar sings of them as the *lilas* of Sri Ramana, who had manifested as all these various Gods.

It was in the context of the last *lila* related in the first part of ‘Tiruvundiyar’ that the work *Upadesa Undiyar* came into existence. Having sung in verses 70 to 102 how Sri Ramana, in the form of Lord Siva, had appeared in the Daruka Forest to subdue the pride of the ascetics (*tapasvis*) and to bring them to the path of liberation, Sri Muruganar came to the point where Lord Siva was to give them His spiritual teachings (*upadesa*). Thinking that it would be wrong on his part to decide the subtle details of the teachings given by Lord Siva in order to lift the ascetics from their then-existing level of maturity, in which they were blinded by their attachment to the path of ritualistic action or karma, and to elevate their minds gradually higher and higher till they would be fit to come to the direct path to liberation, Sri Muruganar prayed to his *Sadguru*, Bhagavan Sri Ramana, to reveal the essence of the teachings which He had Himself given to the ascetics in those ancient days, when He had manifested in their midst in the form of Lord Siva. Acceding to this sincere prayer of Sri Muruganar, in verses 103 to 132 of the first part of ‘Tiruvundiyar’ (verses 1379 to 1408 of *Sannidhi Murai*) Sri Bhagavan Himself composed the essence of the *upadesa* which was given by Lord Siva to the ascetics in the Daruka Forest.<sup>1</sup>

These thirty verses which Sri Bhagavan thus came to compose in Tamil in the *undiyar* metre form the main text or *nul* of *Upadesa Undiyar*, and they were later translated by Sri Bhagavan Himself into Telugu, Sanskrit and Malayalam under the title *Upadesa Saram (The Essence of Teachings)* In Tamil the entire work *Upadesa Undiyar* consists of a prefatory verse (*payiram*) composed by Sri Muruganar, six introductory verses (*upodghatam*) which Sri Bhagavan selected from Sri Muruganar’s ‘Tiruvundiyar’ in order to present the teachings in their proper context, the main text (*nul*) of thirty verses, and five concluding verses of praises (*vazhttu*), which are the last five verses of the first part of ‘Tiruvundiyar’.

In order to understand the contents of *Upadesa Undiyar*, and particularly the contents of the first fifteen verses, it is important for us to read and ponder carefully over the *upodghatam* and

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<sup>1</sup> While composing these thirty verses, which He did in one sitting, Sri Bhagavan discussed in detail with Sri Muruganar all the ideas which were to be presented one after another in a carefully arranged and balanced sequence, and in the course of these discussions the original drafts of verses 16, 28 and 30 were composed by Sri Muruganar and were then revised by Sri Bhagavan. Such was the close co-operation with which Sri Bhagavan and Sri Muruganar worked together.

the summary of the story contained in it. Though in the *Puranas* the ascetics who were living in the Daruka Forest are described as *rishis* who were performing *tapas* or austerities, what actually was their state of mind, what kind of *tapas* were they performing, and what was it that they were seeking to attain through their *tapas*?

These so-called *rishis* were following the path of *kamya* karmas or ritualistic actions performed for the fulfillment of temporal desires, which is the path prescribed by the Purva Mimamsa, a traditional school of thought which is concerned with the interpretation and practice of the *Karma Kanda*, the portion of the *Vedas* which relates to ceremonial acts and sacrificial rites. Not knowing that the true goal of life is liberation or loss of individuality, they exhibited their ignorance by their actions such as the performance of various kinds of *yagas* and *yagnas* (sacrificial rites), whereby they sought to attain powers, *siddhis* and other sources of material enjoyment both in this world and the next. Being adepts in the performance of such sacrificial rites and in the use of other techniques such as mantras, *yantras* and *tantras*, they had become intoxicated with self-conceit. Their pride in the power and efficacy of their karmas or ritualistic actions was so great that they had even come to believe that there is no God except karma.

‘Karma alone is of foremost importance. The efforts we make in performing karmas have the power to yield their own fruit; they must yield their fruit; even God cannot prevent them from yielding fruit. So there is no need for us to be concerned about any God other than our own karmas’ – such was their arrogant attitude.

Thus, though in the *Puranas* they are politely referred to as *rishis*, their state of mind reveals that they were in fact only students in the first standard of the school of *bhakti* described in *The Path of Sri Ramana, Part Two*, chapter two. Can the karmas which they were performing for the fulfillment of their own selfish desires be called real *tapas*? As revealed by Sri Bhagavan in verse 30 of *Upadesa Undiyar*, real *tapas* is nothing but the complete subsidence of the ego or sense of separate individuality, whose form is the feeling ‘I am the body’, which gives rise to the sense of doership, the feeling ‘I am performing karma’.

When the ascetics had thus strayed so far away from the path which leads to the real goal of egolessness, was it not the duty of the all-merciful Supreme Lord to make them understand the error of their ways and to guide them back towards the proper path? Therefore the Supreme Lord manifested in the form of a mendicant and made the ascetics understand that even the most powerful of their karmas were rendered powerless in front of Him. Thus their pride was subdued and they prayed to Him to save them.

Knowing how gross and unrefined the minds of the ascetics had become due to their long-standing attachment to karma, Lord Siva knew that it would not be possible to bring them immediately to the path of Self-enquiry, which alone is the direct path to liberation. Therefore He had to guide them towards the path of Self-enquiry in a gradual and roundabout way. That is why in the first fifteen verses of *Upadesa Undiyar* it was necessary for Sri Bhagavan to summarize the paths of *nishkamya* karma, *bhakti* and yoga, which Lord Siva first had to teach to the ascetics in order to elevate their minds gradually to the level of maturity in which they could understand that liberation can ultimately be attained only through the path of Self-enquiry. Only after summarizing those paths could Sri Bhagavan begin in verse 16 to summarize His own path of Self-enquiry, which is the true path of *jnana*.

Either due to their not knowing the story which led to the origin of *Upadesa Undiyar*, or due to their not having deeply pondered over the connection which exists between that story and the content of *Upadesa Undiyar*, many devotees have wrongly assumed that *Upadesa Undiyar* or *Upadesa Saram* is the essence of Sri Ramana’s teachings. However, from the facts which we have seen above, it will be clear to the reader that Sri Bhagavan did not write this work with the intention of setting forth the essence of His own teachings, but only with the intention of setting forth the essence of the teachings which Lord Siva gave in ancient days to the ascetics in the Daruka Forest according to their own level of mental maturity.

As Sri Bhagavan often used to say, spiritual teachings must always be given in such a manner as will be suited to the grasping power and maturity of the individuals to whom they are

given.<sup>2</sup> Since the ascetics to whom Lord Siva gave His teachings were to be elevated by Him from a very low level of spiritual maturity, He naturally had to begin by giving them teachings which would be within their power of grasping and putting into practice, and then He had to lead them gradually from the grosser methods of spiritual practice such as *puja*, *japa*, *dhyana* and *pranayama* towards the most refined method of practice, namely Self-enquiry or Self-attention.

Therefore, all the *sadhanas* or methods of spiritual practice expounded by Sri Bhagavan in *Upadesa Undiyar* should not be taken to be His own direct teachings. Though it is true that in His lifetime Sri Bhagavan had to give instructions concerning almost every kind of spiritual practice in order to clear the doubts of those who were already following such practices and who were not yet ready to come to the direct path of Self-enquiry, what actually was the central theme and essence of His teachings? Can it be said that *puja*, *japa*, *dhyana* and *pranayama* form part of the central theme of His teachings? Was it to teach such spiritual practices that Sri Bhagavan appeared on earth in our present age?

Though Sri Bhagavan no doubt accepted the validity of such spiritual practices as indirect and roundabout means, which if practiced with devotion and without the desire for attaining any selfish end, would gradually purify the mind and would thereby sooner or later lead an aspirant to the direct path of self-enquiry (as indicated by Sri Bhagavan in verse 3 of *Upadesa Undiyar*), the main purpose of His assuming a human form in our present age was not merely to give an approval to those ancient indirect practices. The main purpose of His life was to teach to the world the correct method of practising the simple and direct path of Self-enquiry, which is not only the only path which can ultimately lead one to the goal of Self-knowledge, but which is also the spiritual path which is most suited to the rational and scientific temperament of modern man. That is why Sri Bhagavan always put the main emphasis of His teaching upon the path of Self-enquiry, which is a short-cut means that bypasses the need for all other kinds of spiritual practice.

In 1928, one year after the composing of *Upadesa Undiyar*, Sri Muruganar prayed to Sri Bhagavan, 'Graciously reveal to us the nature of reality and the means of attaining it so that we may be saved' (*Ulladu Narpadu*, prefatory verse 1), whereupon Sri Bhagavan composed *Ulladu Narpadu*, in which He expounded only the path of Self-enquiry and in which He made no more than a few indirect references to other paths such as *puja*, *japa*, *dhyana* and *pranayama*. Therefore, the real essence of Sri Bhagavan's teachings is only the path of Self-enquiry, which He has expounded both in *Ulladu Narpadu* and in the last fifteen verses of *Upadesa Undiyar*.

Though in the first fifteen verses of *Upadesa Undiyar* Sri Bhagavan has given a very brief exposition about *puja*, *japa*, *dhyana* and *pranayama*, if we study these verses carefully we will be able to understand that He has in fact revealed how these other forms of spiritual practice must all ultimately lead an aspirant to the path of Self-enquiry, which alone can lead one directly to the state of Self-knowledge.

In the first two verses Sri Bhagavan begins by condemning *kamya*-karmas or actions performed for the fulfillment of temporal desires, declaring that they will not lead to liberation but will only immerse the doer deeper and deeper into the ocean of karma or action. In verse 3 He teaches that action can be conducive to the attainment of liberation only if it is done without any desire for its fruit and with the devotional attitude of offering the fruit to God. In verses 4 to 7 He teaches the various forms of desireless action or *nishkamya* karma, namely *puja* (worship of God), *japa* (repetition of a mantra or a name of God) and *dhyana* (meditation upon a name or form of God), which are done respectively by the body, speech and mind, and each succeeding one of which is more efficacious than the preceding one. Then in verse 8 He says that rather than meditation upon God as other than oneself, it is better to meditate upon Him as not other than oneself, and thereby He reveals how the paths of *nishkamya puja*, *japa* and *dhyana* must ultimately lead to the path of Self-enquiry or Self-attention. Having come to this point, in verse 9 Sri Bhagavan declares that to abide in one's own true state of mere being, which is attained by the strength of such *ananya bhava* or Self-attention and which transcends meditation, is the truth of

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<sup>2</sup> Compare *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, p. 103, where Sri Bhagavan is recorded as saying that the instruction given 'differ according to the temperaments of the individuals and according to the spiritual ripeness of their minds'.

supreme devotion or *para-bhakti*. Thus in verses 3 to 9 Sri Bhagavan reveals how the paths of desireless action (*nishkama* karma) and devotion (*bhakti*) lead to the path of Self-attention, which in turn establishes one in the state of Self-abidance, which is the true state of liberation. Sri Bhagavan then concludes this series of verses by saying in verse 10 that to abide in Self, having subsided in the source from which one had risen as a doer of action, is not only the essence of karma yoga and *bhakti* yoga, as described in the preceding verses, but is also the essence of *raja* yoga and *jnana* yoga, as described in the subsequent verses.

In verses 11 to 15 Sri Bhagavan teaches the essence of the path of *raja* yoga. In verse 11 and 12 He teaches how breath-control or *pranayama* is an aid which is effective for making the mind subside, and in verse 13 He warns that the subsidence of mind is of two kinds, one being temporary and the other being permanent. By *pranayama* only a temporary subsidence of the mind can be achieved, so in verse 14 Sri Bhagavan teaches that the mind which has thus subsided should then be directed on the one path of knowing Self, for then only will it attain the state of permanent subsidence or *mano-nasa*. Thus Sri Bhagavan reveals that the path of *raja* yoga must also lead one to the path of Self-enquiry if it is to enable one to achieve the final goal of liberation. Sri Bhagavan then concludes this second series of verses by saying in verse 15 that the yogi whose mind has thus been destroyed and who thereby abides as the reality, has no more action to perform, because he has attained his natural state.

Thus, though in verses 3 to 15 Sri Bhagavan approves the validity of *nishkama puja*, *japa*, *dhyana* and *pranayama*, He does not accept any of these *sadhanas* as being substitutes for Self-enquiry. In these verses He puts each of these *sadhanas* in its own proper place, and He reveals how each of them must finally lead one to the direct path of Self-enquiry in order to enable one to attain the final goal of Self-knowledge or liberation.

Having thus briefly summarized the paths of karma yoga, *bhakti* yoga and *raja* yoga in the first fifteen verses, Sri Bhagavan devotes the last fifteen verses entirely to an exposition of the path of *Jnana* yoga, which He explains to be nothing other than the direct path of Self-enquiry, the practice of attending to and knowing the true nature of 'I'.

The word-for-word translation of *Upadesa Undiyar* given in this book was made by the late Swami Sri Sadhu Om, who was one of the foremost disciples of Sri Bhagavan and a close associate of Sri Muruganar. The above introduction and the notes which accompany each verse were written by me, but were based largely upon the explanations given by Sri Sadhu Om. Sri Sadhu Om has written a Tamil commentary upon *Upadesa Undiyar* entitled *Upadesa Undiyar Vilakkavurai*, in which he has given much more detailed explanations about each verse. This commentary has not yet been translated into English, but if it is the will of Sri Bhagavan it may be translated and included in the next edition of this book.

While reading the word-for-word meaning given in this book, the readers who know Tamil script will notice that at the end of the second and third lines of each verse there occurs the word *undipara* (உந்திபற), which is not translated in English. This word is the imperative form of a verb which literally means 'leap and fly', and which was used in an ancient game that probably consisted of jumping and singing. The 'Tiruvundiyar' song composed by Manikkavachakar was perhaps intended to be sung while playing this game, and hence he adopted a metre in which this word occurs at the end of the second and third line of each verse. This word is obviously to be treated as an expletive while translating into English, though it is worth noting the fact that it does lend a very joyful and playful spirit to the profound spiritual teaching given by Sri Ramana Bhagavan in *Upadesa Undiyar*.

*Sri Ramanarpanamastu*

உபதேச வந்தியார்

## UPADESA UNDIYAR

*Payiram* – Prefatory Verse

கன்மமய நீர்ந்துகதி காண நெறிமுறையின்  
மன்மமுல குய்ய வழங்குகெனச் - சொன்முருகற்  
கெந்தைரம ணன்றொகுத் தீந்தா னுபதேச  
வந்தியார் ஞானவிளக் கோர்.

Know that *Upadesa Undiyar* is a light of knowledge [*jnana*] which our Father Ramana composed and bestowed upon Muruganar, who entreated, '[Graciously] reveal the secret of spiritual practice [*sadhana*] so that [the people of] the world may attain liberation and be saved by giving up the delusion of action [*karma*]'

**Note :** This verse is not a part of 'Tiruvundiyar' but was composed by Sri Muruganar separately as a prefatory verse to *Upadesa Undiyar*.

உபோற்காதம் -*Upodghatam* – Introductory Verses

1. தாரு வனத்திற் றவஞ்செய் திருந்தவர்  
பூருவ கன்மத்தா லுந்தீபற  
போக்கறை போயின ருந்தீபற.

Those who were performing austerities [*tapas*] in the Daruka Forest, were heading for their ruin by [following the path of ] *Purva-karma*.('Tiruvundiyar' 1.70)

**Note:** *Purva-karma* here means the path of *kamya-karmas* (actions performed for the fulfillment of temporal desires), which is the path prescribed by the *Purva Mimamsa*, a traditional school of thought which interprets the *Vedas* in its own way, emphasizing only the *Karma Kanda* (the portion of the *Vedas* which teaches the path of ritualistic action). This school of thought elevates action or *karma* to a level of such paramount importance that, as expressed in the next verse, it even goes so far as to deny that there is any God except *karma*, that is, except the actions which are performed by an individual. This doctrine that there is no God except *karma* is emphatically refuted by Sri Bhagavan in the first verse of *Upadesa Undiyar*.

2. கன்மத்தை யன்றிக் கடவு ளிலையெனும்  
வன்மத்த ராயின ருந்தீபற  
வஞ்சச் செருக்கினா லுந்தீபற.

Because of their deceptive self conceit they became intoxicated with excessive pride, saying, 'There is no God except *karma*. ('Tiruvundiyar' 1.71)

**Note:** The following is a summary of the story related in verses 72 to 98 of the first part of 'Tiruvundiyar':

Therefore in order to bring these deluded ascetics to the path of liberation (*moksha*), Lord Siva graciously took the form of a mendicant and entered the Daruka forest accompanied by Lord Vishnu, who had taken the form of a beautiful enchantress (*Mohini*). As soon as they saw the enchantress, the ascetics were overwhelmed with lust, which is so powerful by nature that it can overthrow even the most dispassionate people in spite of any amount of austerities (*tapas*) they might have performed, so long as they have not attained the true knowledge of reality. Hence, forgetting their daily ritual practices (*nitya-karmanushtanas*), the ascetics began to follow the enchantress, but soon she eluded them and disappeared. In the meanwhile, seeing the divine lustre

of the mendicant, who was Lord Siva Himself, the wives of the ascetics forgot themselves and began to follow Him. Having come to know of this, the ascetics became furious with rage and started to perform an *abhichara-yaga* (a sacrificial oblation intended to bring harm upon others), from which arose a wild tiger, an elephant, a fire, a trident and other such weapons, which they set upon the mendicant in order to kill Him. However the mendicant killed the wild animals and wore their skins as clothing, and held the other weapons such as the trident and fire in His hands. Thus the ascetics saw that even the weapons which arose from that *yaga*, which was the most powerful karma, were rendered useless in front of the mendicant, and hence they understood that He was God Himself.

3. கன்ம பலந்தருங் கர்த்தற் பழித்துச்செய்  
கன்ம பலங்கண்டா ருந்தீபற  
கர்வ மகன்றன ருந்தீபற.

They saw the fruit of actions done spurning God [the *karta* or Ordainer], who gives fruit of actions [*karma-phala*], and [hence] they lost their pride. ('Tiruvundiyar' 1.99)

**Note:** As explained by Sri Bhagavan in the first verse of *Upadesa Undiyar*, an action cannot bear fruit (that is, it cannot give the desired result) unless and until that fruit is ordained by God.

4. காத்தரு ளென்று கரையக் கருணைக்கண்  
சேர்த்தருள் செய்தன னுந்தீபற  
சிவனுப தேசமி துந்தீபற.

When they wept [prayerfully], 'Graciously save us,' Siva bestowed the glance of His Grace [upon them] and graciously gave these instructions [*upadesa*]. ('Tiruvundiyar' 1.100)

5. உட்கொண் டொழுக வுபதேச சாரத்தை  
யுட்கொண் டெழுஞ்சுக முந்தீபற  
வுட்டுன் பொழிந்திடு முந்தீபற.

[By one's] imbibing and following [this] *Upadesa Saram* [*The Essence of Spiritual Instructions*], bliss will rise from within and the miseries within will be destroyed. ('Tiruvundiyar' 1.101)

6. சார வுபதேச சாரமுட் சாரவே  
சேரக் களிசேர வுந்தீபற  
தீரத் துயர்தீர வுந்தீபற.

May the import [*saram*] of *Upadesa Saram* enter our heart; may abundant joy be attained; may suffering cease, may it cease. ('Tiruvundiyar' 1.102)

## நூல் - Nul – Text

1. கன்மம் பயன்றால் கர்த்தன தானையாற்  
கன்மங் கடவுளோ வந்தீபற  
கன்மஞ் சடமதா லுந்தீபற.

கன்மம்	<i>kanman</i>	karma or action
பயன்	<i>payan</i>	fruit
தரல்	<i>taral</i>	giving
கர்த்தனது	<i>karttanadu</i>	of God (the <i>karta</i> or Ordainer)
ஆணையால்	<i>anaiyal</i>	by the ordainment
கன்மம்	<i>kanman</i>	karma
கடவுளோ	<i>Kadavulo</i>	can (it) be God
கன்மம்	<i>kanmam</i>	karma
சடம்	<i>jadam</i>	insentient
அதால்	<i>adal</i>	since

Karma giving fruit is by the ordainment of God [the *karta* or Ordainer]. Can karma be God, since karma is insentient [*jada*]?

**Note:** The word karma here means any action, whether ritual or otherwise, and the word ‘fruit’ (*payan* or *phala*) denotes the resulting pleasure or pain which has to be experienced by the person who does that action. The word *karta*, which literally means ‘doer’, here denotes God, who is the Ordainer of the fruits of karma.

Action or karma does not give fruit by itself but only in accordance with the ordainment of God. That is, the time when and the way in which each action gives its fruit is decided not by that action itself but only by God. Thus in this verse Sri Bhagavan emphatically refutes the Purva Mimamsa philosophy, which was espoused by the ascetics in the Daruka forest and which maintains that an action’s giving fruit is independent of God, and that there is no God except action (karma). Since action is insentient, how can it be God?

2. வினையின் விளைவு விளிவுற்று வித்தாய்  
வினைக்கடல் வீழ்த்திடு முந்தீபற  
வீடு தரலிலை யுந்தீபற.

வினையின்	<i>vinaiyin</i>	of action
விளைவு	<i>vilaiyu</i>	the fruit
விளிவுற்று	<i>vilivutru</i>	having perished
வித்தாய்	<i>vittay</i>	as seeds
வினை	<i>vinai</i>	action
கடல்	<i>kadal</i>	ocean
வீழ்த்திடும்	<i>vizhttidum</i>	will make (one) fall
வீடு	<i>vidu</i>	liberation
தரல்	<i>taral</i>	giving
இலை	<i>ilai</i>	not

The fruit of action having perished [by being experienced in the form of pleasure or pain], will as seeds make one fall into the ocean of action and [hence] will not give liberation.



**Note:** When a seed is planted, it grows into a tree, and the tree in turn yields fruit. But the fruit consists of two parts, namely the edible part and the seeds. Though the edible part of the fruit is eaten, the seeds remain to develop into new trees and to yield more fruit.

Similar is the case with the fruit of actions or karma-*phala*. If we do a good action, its fruit will in due course be experienced by us in the form of some pleasure, while if we do a bad action, its fruit will in due course be experienced by us in the form of some pain. By thus being experienced in the form of pleasure or pain, the fruit of an action will perish, like the edible part of a fruit when it is eaten. But having perished thus, the fruit of that action will still remain in the form of a seed, that is, in the form of a tendency (*vasana*) or the liking to do such an action again. Such seeds or tendencies make one fall into the ocean of performing more and more actions. Hence the fruit of actions of any kind cannot give liberation (*moksha*).

3. கருத்தனுக் காக்குநிட் காமிய கன்மங்  
கருத்தைத் திருத்தியஃ துந்தீபற  
கதிவழி காண்பிக்கு முந்தீபற

கருத்தனுக்கு	<i>karuttanukku</i>	to God
ஆக்கும்	<i>akkum</i>	dedicated or offered
நிட்காமிய	<i>nitkamiya</i>	desireless ( <i>nishkamyā</i> )
கன்மம்	<i>kanmam</i>	action
கருத்தை	<i>karuttai</i>	the mind
திருத்தி	<i>tirutti</i>	will purify
அஃது	<i>ahthu</i>	it (desireless action)
கதி	<i>gati</i>	liberation
வழி	<i>vazhi</i>	the path
காண்பிக்கும்	<i>kanbikkum</i>	will show

Desireless action [*nishkamyā karma*] dedicated to God will purify the mind and it will show the path to liberation.

**Note:** No action (karma), whether done by the body, speech or mind, can give one liberation. But if action is done without any desire for its fruit and with the devotional attitude of offering the fruit to God, it will purify the mind and thereby make the mind fit to understand that Self-enquiry – which is not an action but a stillness of the mind – alone is the direct path to liberation. Thus, in the light of the words *gati vazhi kanbikkum* (will show the path to liberation) in the Tamil original, the words *mukti sadhakam* (is an aid or means to liberation) in the Sanskrit version should be understood to mean not a direct means but only an indirect aid to liberation. Sri Bhagavan used to say that whatever other path one may follow, one must at least at the last moment take to the direct path of Self-enquiry or Self-attention in order to know Self and thereby attain liberation (*mukti*), because ‘Self-enquiry (*atma-vichara*) alone can reveal the truth that neither the ego nor the mind really exists’ (*Maharshi’s Gospel, Book Two, chapter one*).

In this verse Sri Bhagavan begins to expound karma yoga (the path of desireless action) and *bhakti* yoga (the path of devotion). It is important to note here that He does not take karma yoga to be a path which is separate from or independent of *bhakti* yoga. Unless the fruit of one’s action is wholeheartedly offered to God due to one’s sincere love for Him, that action cannot be considered to be a practice of karma yoga and hence it will not purify one’s mind.

Then in the next five verses Sri Bhagavan summarizes the various practices of karma yoga and *bhakti* yoga in their ascending order of worth, each succeeding form of practice being more purifying than the preceding form of practice, and in verse nine He shows how such practices finally merge in Self abidance, which is the truth of supreme devotion (*para-bhakti-tattva*).

4. திடமிது பூசை செபமுந் தியான  
முடல்வாக் குளத்தொழி லுந்தீபற  
வுயர்வாகு மொன்றிலொன் றுந்தீபற

திடம்	<i>didam</i>	certain
இது	<i>idu</i>	this
பூசை	<i>pujai</i>	<i>puja</i> or worship
செபமும்	<i>jepamum</i>	<i>japa</i> or repetition and
தியானம்	<i>dhiyanam</i>	<i>dhyana</i> or meditation
உடல்	<i>udal</i>	body
வாக்கு	<i>vakku</i>	speech
உள	<i>ula</i>	mind
தொழில்	<i>tozhil</i>	action
உயர்வு	<i>uyarvu</i>	higher or superior
ஆகும்	<i>ahum</i>	is
ஒன்றில்	<i>ondril</i>	than one
ஒன்று	<i>ondru</i>	one

This is certain, *puja*, *japa* and *dhyana* are actions of the body, speech and mind [respectively]; rather than [each preceding] one, [the succeeding] one is superior.

**Note:** *Puja* means ritual worship, *japa* means repetition of a mantra or a name of God, and *dhyana* means meditation.

In verse 2 of this work Sri Bhagavan teaches that *kamya*-karmas (actions performed for the fulfillment of desires) will only throw one into an ocean of more and more action and hence cannot lead to liberation, and in verse 3 He teaches that *nishkamya*-karmas (actions performed without desire for any fruit or result) will purify the mind and show the correct path to liberation. Therefore it is to be understood that the *puja*, *japa* and *dhyana* mentioned in this and the subsequent verses is only *nishkamya puja*, *japa* and *dhyana*, and not *kamya puja*, *japa* and *dhyana*.

5. எண்ணுரு யாவு மிறையுரு வாமென  
வெண்ணி வழிபட லுந்தீபற  
வீசனற் பூசனை யுந்தீபற.

எண்	<i>en</i>	eight (or thought)
உரு	<i>uru</i>	forms
யாவும்	<i>yavum</i>	all
இறை	<i>irai</i>	God
உரு	<i>uru</i>	forms
ஆம்	<i>am</i>	are
என	<i>ena</i>	that (or thus)
எண்ணி	<i>enni</i>	thinking
வழிபடல்	<i>vazhipadal</i>	worshipping
ஈசன்	<i>isan</i>	God
நல்	<i>nal</i>	good
பூசனை	<i>pujanai</i>	worship

Worship [any of the eight forms] thinking that all the eight forms are forms of God, is good worship [*puja*] of God.

**Note:** The eight forms mentioned in this verse are earth, water, fire, air, space, sun, moon and living beings (*jivas*), all of which are forms of God, the one reality underlying the appearance of this whole world.

The Tamil words *en uruyavum*, which are here translated as ‘all the eight forms’, may also mean ‘all (things), which are forms of thought’.

The words *vazhipadal* (worshipping) in the Tamil version and *sevanam* (worship or service) in the Sanskrit version may mean either performing ritual worship or rendering appropriate service. But whereas performing ritual worship can be applicable to all the eight forms of God, rendering appropriate service can be applicable only to living beings (*jivas*) and not to the other seven forms of God. That is, one can worship living beings either by ritual worship or by rendering some appropriate service to them, such as providing them with food, clothing or shelter, but one can worship the other seven forms of God only by ritual worship, since there is no appropriate service which one can render to the five elements, the sun or the moon.

6. வழத்தலில் வாக்குச்ச வாய்க்குட் செபத்தில்  
விழுப்பமா மானத முந்தீபற  
விளம்புந் தியானமி துந்தீபற.

வழத்தலில்	<i>Vazhuttalil</i>	than praising
வாக்கு	<i>Vakku</i>	voice
உச்ச	<i>ucca</i>	loud
வாய்க்குள்	<i>vaykkul</i>	within the mouth
செபத்தில்	<i>jepattil</i>	than <i>japa</i> or repetition
விழுப்பம்	<i>vizhuppam</i>	good
ஆம்	<i>am</i>	is
மானதம் ( <i>manasikam</i> )	<i>manatam</i>	that which is done by mind
விளம்பும்	<i>vilambum</i>	what is called
தியானம்	<i>dhiyanam</i>	meditation
இது	<i>idu</i>	this

Rather than praising [God], [*japa* is good]; [rather than *japa* done in] a loud voice, [*japa* faintly whispered within the mouth is good]; and rather than *japa* within the mouth, that which is done by mind is good; this [mental repetition or *manasika japa*] is what is called meditation [*dhyana*].

7. விட்டுக் கருதலி னாறுநெய் வீழ்ச்சிபோல்  
விட்டிடா துன்னலே யுந்தீபற  
விசேடமா முன்னவே யுந்தீபற

விட்டு	<i>vittu</i>	interrupted
கருதலின்	<i>karutalin</i>	than meditation (or thinking)
ஆறு	<i>aru</i>	river or stream
நெய்	<i>ney</i>	<i>ghee</i> (clarified butter)
வீழ்ச்சி	<i>vizhchi</i>	the falling
போல்	<i>pol</i>	like
விட்டிடாது	<i>vittidadu</i>	uninterrupted
உன்னலே	<i>unnale</i>	meditation (or thinking)
விசேடம்	<i>visedam</i>	excellent ( <i>visesha</i> )
ஆம்	<i>am</i>	is
உன்னவே	<i>unnave</i>	to do (literally to meditate or think)

Rather than meditation interrupted [by other thoughts], uninterrupted meditation [upon God], like a river or the falling of *ghee*, is excellent to do.

8. அனியபா வத்தி னவனக மாசு  
மனனிய பாவமே யுந்தீபற  
வனைத்தினு முத்தம முந்தீபற.

அனிய	<i>aniya</i>	what-is-other ( <i>anya</i> )
பாவத்தின்	<i>bhavattin</i>	than meditation
அவன்	<i>avan</i>	He
அகம்	<i>aham</i>	I
ஆகும்	<i>ahum</i>	is
அனனிய	<i>ananiya</i>	what-is-not-other ( <i>ananya</i> )
பாவமே	<i>bhavame</i>	meditation indeed
அனைத்தினும்	<i>anaittinum</i>	among all
உத்தமம்	<i>uttamam</i>	best

Rather than *anya-bhava*, *ananya-bhava* [done with the conviction] 'He is I' is indeed the best among all [the various kinds of meditation].

**Note:** *Anya-bhava* means meditation upon God as other than oneself, while *ananya-bhava* means meditation upon Him as not other than oneself. In order to meditate upon God as not other than oneself, it is necessary to have the firm conviction that He is that which exists and shines within one as 'I'. When an aspirant is endowed with such a firm conviction, he will clearly understand that the best way to meditate upon God is to meditate upon Him merely as 'I', the reality of the first person.

Therefore, it should be understood that the words *avan aham ahum* (he is 'I') which Sri Bhagavan has used in this verse in apposition to the words *ananya-bhava*, are not intended to indicate that one should meditate upon the thought 'He is I', but are merely intended to denote the conviction with which one should meditate upon Self. That is, since Self alone is *ananya* (that which is not other than oneself) and since all thoughts, including the thought 'He is I', are *anya* (other than oneself), the *ananya-bhava* recommended in this verse should be understood to mean meditation upon Self or Self-attention rather than mere meditation upon the thought 'He is I'.

Thus in this verse Sri Bhagavan reveals how all the practices of karma yoga and *bhakti* yoga mentioned in the previous four verses must finally merge in the practice of Self-attention or Self-enquiry, and in the next verse He reveals that by the strength of such Self-attention one will attain the state of Self-abidance, which is the truth of supreme devotion.

9. பாவ பலத்தினாற் பாவனா தீதசற்  
பாவத் திருத்தலே யுந்தீபற  
பரபத்தி தத்துவ முந்தீபற.

பாவ	<i>bhava</i>	meditation
பலத்தினால்	<i>balattinal</i>	by the strength
பாவனாதீத	<i>bhavanatita</i>	which transcends meditation
சற்பாவத்து	<i>sat-bhavattu</i>	in the state ( <i>bhava</i> ) of being ( <i>sat</i> )
இருத்தலே	<i>iruttale</i>	abiding or being alone
பரபத்தி	<i>para-bhatti</i>	supreme devotion ( <i>para-bhakti</i> )
தத்துவம்	<i>tattvam</i>	truth ( <i>tattva</i> )

By the strength of meditation [that is, by the strength of such *ananya-bhava* or Self-attention], abiding in the state of being, which transcends meditation, alone is the truth of supreme devotion [*para-bhakti-tattva*].

**Note:** Having gained the firm conviction that God is that which shines in him as ‘I’, the meditator will try to meditate upon ‘I’, which alone is *ananya* or not other than himself. But since the meditator can remain as an individual only so long as he attends to what is *anya* or other than himself, he will automatically subside in his source when he completely withdraws his attention from what is *anya* and tries to fix it upon ‘I’. Therefore what results from such *ananya-bhava* – the effort made to attend to ‘I’ – is that the meditator himself becomes non-existent by merging in the state of being (*sat-bhava*). When the meditator thus becomes non-existent, no meditation can take place, and hence that state is here said to be *bhavanatita*, that which transcends meditation. And since God is in truth nothing but the real Self, which is the state of being (*sat-bhava*), abiding in that state without ever leaving it, is itself the supreme devotion to God.

10. உதித்த விடத்தி லொடுங்கி யிருத்த  
லதுகன்மம் பத்தியு முந்தீபற  
வதுயோக ஞானமு முந்தீபற.

உதித்த	<i>uditta</i>	rising
இடத்தில்	<i>idattil</i>	in the place
ஒடுங்கி	<i>odungi</i>	having subsided
இருத்தல்	<i>iruttal</i>	abiding or being
அது	<i>adu</i>	that
கன்மம்	<i>kanmam</i>	karma
பத்தியும்	<i>bhattiyum</i>	and <i>bhakti</i>
அது	<i>adu</i>	that
யோகம்	<i>yoga</i>	yoga
ஞானமும்	<i>jnanamum</i>	and <i>jnana</i>

Abiding, having subsided in the place of rising [in one’s source, the real Self] – that is karma [desireless action] and *bhakti* [devotion], that is yoga [union with God] and *jnana* [true knowledge].

**Note:** When, by attaining the above-said state which transcends meditation, the mind – which had to rise in order to do the actions of *nishkamya puja*, *japa* and *dhyana* – remains subsided in the source (the real Self) from which it had risen, that is the culminating point of karma yoga (the path of desireless action) and *bhakti* yoga (the path of devotion); it is also the culminating point of *raja* yoga (the path which seeks union with God through various methods of mind-control) and *jnana* yoga (the path of knowledge).

How such Self-abidance is brought about by karma yoga and bhakti yoga has been explained in the preceding verses; how it is brought about by *raja* yoga is explained in the following five verses; and how it is brought about by *jnana* yoga is explained from verse 16 onwards.

Compare here verse 14 of *Ulladhu Narpadu Anubandham* in which Sri Bhagavan says, ‘Scrutinizing “To whom are these [defects], karma [action], *vibhakti* [non-devotion], *viyoga* [separation] and *ajnana* [ignorance]?” is itself karma, *bhakti*, yoga and *jnana*, [because] when one scrutinizes thus, [the ego or individual ‘I’ will be found to be non-existent, and] without ‘I’ these [four defects] can never exist. Abiding as Self, alone is the truth.’

11. வளியுள் ளடக்க வலைபடு புட்போ  
லுளமு மொடுங்குறு முந்தீபற  
வொடுக்க வபாயமி துந்தீபற.

வளி	<i>vali</i>	breath
உள்	<i>ul</i>	within
அடக்க	<i>adakka</i>	by restraining
வலை	<i>valai</i>	net
படு	<i>padu</i>	caught
புள்	<i>pul</i>	bird
போல்	<i>pol</i>	like
உளமும்	<i>ulamum</i>	the mind also
ஒடுங்குறும்	<i>odungurum</i>	will subside
ஒடுக்க	<i>odukka</i>	to restrain
உபாயம்	<i>upayam</i>	device, means, stratagem or contrivance
இது	<i>idu</i>	this

By restraining the breath within, the mind will also subside, like a bird caught in a net. This [practice of breath-restraint] is a device to restrain [the mind].

**Note:** The reason why the mind subsides when the breath is restrained is explained in the next verse.

12. உளமு முயிரு முணர்வுஞ் செயலு  
முளவாங் கிளையிரண் டுந்தீபற  
வொன்றவற் றின்மூல முந்தீபற

உளமும்	<i>ulamum</i>	mind
உயிரும்	<i>uyirum</i>	and breath (or <i>prana</i> )
உணர்வும்	<i>unarvum</i>	knowing
செயலும்	<i>seyalum</i>	and doing
உளவாம்	<i>ulavam</i>	which have
கிளை	<i>kilai</i>	branches
இரண்டு	<i>irandu</i>	two
ஒன்று	<i>ondru</i>	one
அவற்றின்	<i>avatrin</i>	their
மூலம்	<i>mulam</i>	origin

Mind and breath are two branches which have knowing and doing [as their respective functions]; [but] their origin is one.

**Note:** The mind is a power of knowing or thinking (*jnana-sakti*) whereas the breath or life-force (*prana*) is a power of doing or action (*kriya-sakti*). But the original power which functions in the form of the mind and in the form of the *prana* is one, and is like the trunk of a tree having the mind and *prana* as its two branches.

The mind and *prana* may also be compared to a light and a fan which are both activated by the same electric power and which are operated by only one switch. If we operated the switch with the intention to switch off either the light or the fan, the other will automatically be switched off. Similarly, if we make an effort to restrain either the mind or the breath, the other will automatically be restrained and made to subside.

13. இலயமு நாச மிரண்டா மொடுக்க  
மிலயித் துளதெழு முந்தீபற  
வெழுதுரு மாய்ந்ததே லுந்தீபற.

இலயமும்	<i>ilayamum</i>	abeyance ( <i>laya</i> ) and
நாசம்	<i>nasam</i>	destruction ( <i>nasa</i> )
இரண்டு	<i>irandu</i>	two (of two kinds)
ஆம்	<i>am</i>	is
ஒடுக்கம்	<i>odukkam</i>	subsidence
இலயித்து	<i>ilayittu</i>	in abeyance
உளது	<i>uladu</i>	that which is
எழும்	<i>ezhum</i>	will rise
எழாது	<i>ezhadu</i>	will not rise
உரு	<i>uru</i>	form
மாய்ந்ததேல்	<i>mayndadel</i>	if (it) dies

Subsidence [of mind] is of two kinds, abeyance [*laya*] and destruction [*nasa*]. That which is in abeyance [*laya*] will rise. [But] if the form dies, it will not rise.

**Note:** The various states in which the mind may subside are of two kinds, namely abeyance of the mind and destruction of the mind. If the mind subsides in a state of abeyance or *laya*, it will rise again in due courses, but if its form dies by subsiding in the state of destruction or *nasa*, it will never rise again.

The subsidence of mind gained by breath-restraint, like the subsidence of mind gained in states such as sleep, death, swoon and coma, is temporary and is thus only *mano-laya* or abeyance of the mind. From such abeyance the mind will rise again. Since happiness is experienced only when the mind subsides, and since the rising of the mind is misery itself, if we are to enjoy happiness for ever, it is necessary that the mind should subside permanently. Such permanent subsidence of the mind, which is the true goal of all spiritual endeavor, is called *mano-nasa* or destruction of the mind. Refer to *The Path of Sri Ramana, Part One*, chapter three, for a more detailed explanation.

The reason why breath-restraint or *pranayama* cannot bring about the destruction of the mind or *mano-nasa* has been explained by Sri Bhagavan in the eighth paragraph of *Nan Yar? (Who am I?)* as follows:

For making the mind subside, there is no adequate means other than enquiry [*vichara*]. If made to subside by other means, the mind will remain as if subsided, but will rise again. Even by breath-restraint [*pranayama*], the mind will subside; however so long as the breath [*prana*] remains subsided, the mind will also remain subsided, and when the *prana* comes out, it [the mind] will also come out and wander under the sway of tendencies [*vasanas*]... Therefore, *pranayama* is a mere aid for restraining the mind, but will not bring about the destruction of the mind [*mano-nasa*].

In order to bring about the destruction of the mind, it is necessary for the mind to scrutinize itself, the first person feeling 'I', and thereby to know its own true form of consciousness. This path of Self-enquiry is the 'one path' mentioned by Sri Bhagavan in the next verse.

14. ஒடுக்க வளியை யொடுங்கு முளத்தை  
விடுக்கவே யோர்வழி யுந்தீபற  
வீயு மதனுரு வுந்தீபற

ஒடுக்க	<i>odukka</i>	by restraining
வளியை	<i>valiyai</i>	the breath
ஒடுங்கும்	<i>odungum</i>	which has subsided
உளத்தை	<i>ulattai</i>	the mind
விடுக்கவே	<i>vidukkave</i>	when one sends or makes (it) go

ஓர் வழி	<i>or vazhi</i>	the one path, the path of knowing, or the path of becoming one
வீயும்	<i>viyum</i>	will die
அதன்	<i>adan</i>	its
உரு	<i>uru</i>	form

When one makes the mind, which has subsided by restraining the breath, go on the one path [of knowing and becoming one with Self], its form will die.

**Note:** The Tamil words ‘*or vazhi*’ used by Sri Bhagavan in this verse may mean either ‘the one path’, ‘the path of knowing [Self]’ or ‘the path of becoming one [with Self]’. However, all these three meanings should be understood to denote one and the same path, namely the path of Self-enquiry, because the path of Self-enquiry is not only the path of knowing and becoming Self, but is also the one and only path which will destroy the mind, as explained by Sri Bhagavan in *Maharshi’s Gospel*, book two, chapter one.

The fact that the one path mentioned in this verse is nothing but the path of Self-enquiry, is also made clear by Sri Bhagavan in verse 392 of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, in which He says:

With the mind whose five knowledges have become one [that is, with the mind whose attention has become one-pointed instead of being scattered out through the five senses] in the [state of] peace which has come into existence due to the activity [of the mind] having ceased through abeyance of mind [*mano-laya*], which was effected by restraining the breath within, keenly scrutinize and know the defectless *sat-chit* [the pure adjunctless existence- consciousness ‘I am’] in the heart.

That is to say, when the mind rises from abeyance [*laya*], it will be calm and peaceful, so one should make use of that peaceful state by turning one’s attention to scrutinize and know ‘Who am I?’, its form will die, for it will be found that there is truly no such thing as mind at all.

15. மனவரு மாயமெய்ம் மன்னுமா யோகி  
தனக்கோர் செயலிலை யுந்தீபற  
தன்னியல் சார்ந்தன னுந்தீபற

மனவரு	<i>manavuru</i>	the mind-form ( <i>mana-rupa</i> )
மாய	<i>maya</i>	due to (its) death
மெய்	<i>mey</i>	the reality
மன்னும்	<i>mannum</i>	who is established
மா யோகி தனக்கு	<i>ma-yogi-tanakku</i>	for the great yogi
ஓர்	<i>or</i>	one (or any)
செயல்	<i>seyal</i>	action
இலை	<i>ilai</i>	there is not
தன்	<i>tan</i>	His
இயல்	<i>iyal</i>	nature
சார்ந்தனன்	<i>sarndanan</i>	He has attained

For the great yogi 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].

**Note:** 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 yogi 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. Compare here verse 31 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, in which Sri Bhagavan says, ‘For Him who enjoys the bliss of Self, which has risen by destroying the [individual] self [the mind or ego], what single thing exists to do? He does not know anything other than Self; [therefore] how to [or who can] conceive what His state is?’

In this verse Sri Bhagavan concludes the teachings about the path of *raja-yoga*, and from the next stanza onwards He teaches the path of Self-enquiry as the true *jnana-marga* or path of knowledge.

16. வெளிவிட யங்களை விட்டு மனந்தன்  
 னொளியுரு வோர்தலே யுந்தீபற  
 வுண்மை யுணர்ச்சியா முந்தீபற.

வெளி	<i>veli</i>	external
விடயங்களை	<i>vidayangalai</i>	objects ( <i>vishayas</i> )
விட்டு	<i>vittu</i>	having given up
மனம்	<i>manam</i>	the mind
தன்	<i>tan</i>	its own
ஒளி	<i>oli</i>	light
உரு	<i>uru</i>	form
ஓர்தலே	<i>ordale</i>	knowing alone
உண்மை	<i>unmai</i>	true
உணர்ச்சி	<i>unarchi</i>	knowledge
ஆம்	<i>am</i>	is

The mind knowing its own form of light [its true form of mere consciousness, the real Self], having given up [knowing] external objects, alone is true knowledge.

**Note:** When, having given up attending to and knowing external objects, the mind attends to and knows Self (its own true form of consciousness, from which it was deriving light to know those external objects), that alone is true knowledge or *Jnana*.

The Sanskrit version of this verse has been misunderstood by some people to mean, ‘The mind which is withdrawn from what-is-seen, is the seeing of one’s own nature of consciousness; (that itself is) the seeing of the reality’. However, in the original Tamil version of this verse Sri Bhagavan has left no room for any ambiguity since He has clearly placed emphasis only on the positive aspect of Self-enquiry (‘the mind knowing its own form of light’), and He has mentioned the negative aspect (‘having given up external objects’) only as a preliminary requisite. Merely giving up knowing external objects (or withdrawing the mind from what-is-seen) is insufficient by itself, because even though the mind gives up knowing external objects when going to sleep, it does not thereby attain true knowledge. If it is to attain true knowledge, the mind must not only give up knowing external objects, but must also make the positive effort of attending to its own form, the first person feeling ‘I’, in order to know ‘Who am I?’

Therefore, in the light of the original Tamil version of this verse, the Sanskrit version should be understood to mean, ‘The mind, which is withdrawn from what-is-seen (*drisya*), seeing its own nature of consciousness, is the seeing of the reality (*tattva-darsanam*)’.

17. மனத்தி னுருவை மறவா துசாவ  
 மனமென வொன்றிலை யுந்தீபற  
 மார்க்கநே ரார்க்குமி துந்தீபற.

மனத்தின்	<i>manattin</i>	of the mind
உருவை	<i>uruvai</i>	form

மறவாது	<i>maravadu</i>	without forgetfulness
உசாவ	<i>uchava</i>	when one scrutinizes
மனம்	<i>manam</i>	mind
என	<i>ena</i>	as
ஒன்று இலை	<i>ondru-ilai</i>	there is not one (there is no such thing)
மார்க்கம்	<i>markkam</i>	path (marga)
நேர்	<i>ner</i>	direct
ஆர்க்கும்	<i>arkkum</i>	for all
இது	<i>idu</i>	this

When one scrutinizes the form of the mind without forgetfulness [that is, without *pramada* or slackness of attention], [it will be found that] there is no such thing as mind; this is the direct path for all.

**Note:** In the previous verse Sri Bhagavan taught that the mind knowing its own form of light (or consciousness) is true knowledge, and in this verse He teaches how the mind is thus to know its own form of light. When one vigilantly scrutinizes the form of a snake seen in the twilight, it will be found that there is no such thing as a snake at all, and that what was appearing as a snake is nothing but a rope. Similarly, when the mind scrutinizes its own form without forgetfulness – that is without *pramada* (slackness of attention) resulting either in the rising of thoughts or in sleep – it will be found that there is no such thing as mind at all, and that what was appearing as the mind is nothing but Self, the pure existence-consciousness ‘I am’. Just as the rope is the sole reality of the unreal snake, so this existence-consciousness, which is the form of light mentioned in the previous verse, is the sole reality of the unreal mind. What then is that unreal and non-existent entity which is now called mind? The answer to this question is given by Bhagavan in the next verse.

18. எண்ணங்க ளேமனம் யாவினு நானெனு  
மெண்ணமே மூலமா முந்தீபற  
யானா மனமென லுந்தீபற.

எண்ணங்களே	<i>ennangale</i>	only thoughts
மனம்	<i>manam</i>	the mind
யாவினும்	<i>yavinum</i>	of all
நான் எனும்	<i>nan enum</i>	‘I’
எண்ணமே	<i>enname</i>	thought alone
மூலம்	<i>mulam</i>	root
ஆம்	<i>am</i>	is
யான்	<i>yan</i>	‘I’
ஆம்	<i>am</i>	is
மனம்	<i>manam</i>	mind
எனல்	<i>enal</i>	what is called

The mind is only [the multitude of] thoughts. Of all [these thoughts], the thought ‘I’ [the feeling ‘I am the body’] alone is the root. [Therefore] what is called mind is [this root-thought] ‘I’.

**Note:** The term ‘mind’ is generally used as a collective name for the multitude of thoughts. Of all thoughts, the thought ‘I am the body’ alone is the root, since it is the one thread on which all other thoughts are strung (as stated by Sri Bhagavan in verse 2 of *Atma-Vidya Kirtanam*) and since no

other thought can exist in its absence. Therefore what is commonly called mind is reduced on analysis to this root-thought 'I am the body'.

It is important here to note the difference between this thought 'I', which is the mixed feeling 'I am the body', and the real 'I', which is the pure existence-consciousness 'I am'. When 'I am this' or 'I am that', it is the mind or ego. Refer here to *Maharshi's Gospel*, Book One, chapter six.

The thought 'I' is the knowing subject, whereas all other thoughts are objects known by it. Hence, though other thoughts come and go, the thought 'I' always remains as the background upon which they depend, and when the thought 'I' subsides, all other thoughts must subside along with it. Thus the thought 'I' is the one and only essential characteristic of the mind. Therefore, the ultimate truth about the mind can be discovered only when one scrutinizes the truth of this first person thought 'I'. Hence, when Sri Bhagavan says in the previous verse, 'When one scrutinizes the form of the mind...' we should understand that He means, 'When one scrutinizes the nature of the thought 'I'...', because only when the nature of the thought 'I' is thus scrutinized will the ultimate truth that the mind has no existence whatsoever be realized. This point will be explained in more detail in the forthcoming third edition of *The Path of Sri Ramana Part One*, chapter seven.

19. நானென் றெழுமிட மேதென நாடவுண்  
ணானறலை சாய்ந்திடு முந்தீபற  
ஞான விசாரமி துந்தீபற.

நான் என்று	<i>nan endru</i>	'I'
எழும் இடம்	<i>ezhum-idam</i>	the rising place (or source)
ஏது	<i>edu</i>	what
என	<i>ena</i>	thus
நாட	<i>nada</i>	when one scrutinizes
உள்	<i>ul</i>	within
நான்	<i>nan</i>	the 'I'
தலைசாய்ந்திடும்	<i>talai-sayndidum</i>	will die
ஞான விசாரம்	<i>jnana-vicharam</i>	Self-enquiry (literally, Knowledge-enquiry)
இது	<i>idu</i>	this

When one scrutinizes within thus, 'What is the rising-place of 'I'?', the 'I' will die. This is Self-enquiry [*jnana-vichara*].

**Note:** When one inwardly scrutinizes this root-thought, the feeling 'I am the body', in order to find out from where (or from what) it rises, it will subside and disappear because, like the snake, it has no reality of its own and hence can appear to exist only when it is not keenly scrutinized. This vigilant inward scrutiny of the source of the thought 'I', alone is *jnana-vichara*, the enquiry which leads to true Self-knowledge.

The words *ezhum-idam*, which literally mean 'the rising-place', here denote the real Self, the existence-consciousness 'I am', which is the source from which the thought 'I am this body' rises, and do not denote any place limited by time and space, which are only thoughts which rise after the rising or this root-thought.

The words *talai-sayndidum* literally mean 'will bow its head', but is commonly used in a colloquial sense to mean 'will die'.

20. நானொன்று தானத்து நானானென் றொன்றது  
தானாகத் தோன்றுமே யுந்தீபற  
தானது பூன்றமா முந்தீபற.

நான்	<i>nan</i>	'I'
ஒன்று	<i>ondru</i>	where (it) merges
தானத்து	<i>tanattu</i>	in the place ( <i>sthana</i> )
நான் நான்	<i>nan nan</i>	'I-I' (or 'I am I')
என்று	<i>endru</i>	as
ஒன்று அது	<i>ondru adu</i>	the one
தானாக	<i>tanaha</i>	spontaneously
தோன்றுமே	<i>tondrume</i>	appears
தான்	<i>tan</i>	itself
அது	<i>adu</i>	that
புன்றம்	<i>pundram</i>	the whole ( <i>purna</i> )
ஆம்	<i>am</i>	is

In the place where 'I' [the mind or ego] merges, the one [existence-consciousness] appears spontaneously as 'I-I' [or 'I am I']. That itself is the Whole [*purna*].

**Note:** When the mind or ego, the feeling 'I am this' or 'I am that', thus subsides and merges in its source, the real Self, the one true existence-consciousness shines forth spontaneously as 'I-I' or 'I am I', devoid of all superimposed adjuncts such as 'this' or 'that'. This adjunctless 'I-I' is Self, the absolute reality, the Whole.

The words *nan nan*, which are usually translated as 'I-I', may also be taken to mean 'I am I', since in a Tamil sentence such as 'I am this' (*nan idu irukkiren*) the word '*am*' (*irukkiren*) is generally dropped.

The ideas expressed in the above two verses are also expressed by Sri Bhagavan in verse 30 of *Ulladu Narpadu*.

21. நானெனுஞ் சொற்பொரு ளாமது நாளுமே  
நானற்ற தூக்கத்து முந்தீபற  
நமதின்மை நீக்கத்தா லுந்தீபற.

நான் எனும்	<i>nan enum</i>	'I'
சொல்	<i>sol</i>	the word
பொருள்	<i>porul</i>	the import
ஆம்	<i>am</i>	is
அது	<i>adu</i>	that
நாளுமே	<i>nalume</i>	always
நான்	<i>nan</i>	'I'
அற்ற	<i>atra</i>	which is devoid of
தூக்கத்தும்	<i>tukkattum</i>	even in sleep
நமது	<i>namadu</i>	our
இன்மை	<i>inmai</i>	non-existence
நீக்கத்தால்	<i>nikkattal</i>	because of the absence

That ['I-I', the whole] is always the import of the word 'I', because we exist [literally, because of the absence of our non-existence] even in sleep, which is devoid of 'I' [the thought 'I', the mind].

**Note:** Since we do not become non-existent even in sleep, where the mind (the feeling 'I am the body') does not exist, and since we are conscious of our existence in sleep as 'I am', that one reality which shines forth as 'I-I' or 'I am I' when the mind merges in its source and dies, is always – in all the three states (waking, dream and sleep) and in all three times (past, present and future) – the true import of the word 'I'.

22. உடல்பொறி யுள்ள முயிரிடு ளெல்லாஞ்  
சடமசத் தானதா லுந்தீபற  
சத்தான நானல்ல வந்தீபற.

உடல்	<i>udal</i>	body
பொறி	<i>pori</i>	mind (literally, senses)
உள்ளம்	<i>ullam</i>	intellect
உயிர்	<i>uyir</i>	breath
இருள்	<i>irul</i>	darkness
எல்லாம்	<i>ellam</i>	all
சடம்	<i>jadam</i>	insentient
அசத்து	<i>asattu</i>	unreal ( <i>asat</i> )
ஆனதால்	<i>anadal</i>	since (they) are
சத்து	<i>sattu</i>	the reality ( <i>sat</i> )
ஆன	<i>ana</i>	which is
நான்	<i>nan</i>	'I'
அல்ல	<i>alla</i>	(they) are not

Since the body, mind, intellect, breath and the darkness [of ignorance which remains in sleep] are all insentient [*jada*] and unreal [*asat*], they are not 'I', which is the reality [*sat*].

**Note:** The word *pori* used in the Tamil version of this verse and the word *indriya* used in the Sanskrit version, both of which literally mean 'senses', are used here to denote the mind, because that which functions through the senses is only the mind.

All the five sheaths or *panchakosas* – namely the physical body (*annamaya-kosa*), the breath or the life-force (*pranamaya-kosa*), the mind (*manomaya-kosa*), the intellect (*vijnanamaya-kosa*) and the darkness of ignorance (*anandamaya-kosa*) which is experienced in sleep due to the disappearance of the other four sheaths – are insentient and unreal, because they do not possess any inherent consciousness or existence of their own. Hence they cannot be 'I' the reality which is both self-existing and self-shining.

By means of the sequence of the ideas presented in verse 16 to 22, Sri Bhagavan reveals to us the true and practical import of the scriptural teaching known as *neti-neti* (not this, not this). This teaching is generally misunderstood to mean that an aspirant should try to negate the five sheaths by meditating, 'I am not this, I am not this'. However, in the above seven verses Sri Bhagavan reveals that *neti-neti* is not intended to denote a method of practice, but only indicates the final state of experience. That is, in verses 16 to 19 Sri Bhagavan teaches us the method of practicing Self-enquiry; in verse 20 He teaches us that as a result of such practice the reality will shine forth spontaneously as 'I-I' or 'I am I'; in verse 21 He declares that the reality which thus shines forth as 'I-I' is always the true import of the word 'I'; and finally in verse 22 He concludes by saying that since the five sheaths are insentient and unreal, they cannot be 'I', the reality whose nature is existence-consciousness. In other words, the true knowledge that the five sheaths are not 'I' is an experience which can be attained only by knowing the real nature of 'I' through the practice of Self-enquiry.

The reason why the scriptures begin by teaching that the five sheaths are not 'I', is that in order to practise Self-enquiry it is useful for an aspirant to understand intellectually that the 'I' which is to be attended to is not the body or any of the other adjuncts which are now felt by him to be mixed with the feeling 'I'. But since Sri Bhagavan does not want us to fall a prey to the misunderstanding that pondering intellectually over the truth that the five sheaths are not 'I' is itself the method of negating the five sheaths, in this work He has carefully taught us the method of practising Self-enquiry before revealing to us the conclusion that the five sheaths are not 'I'.

In the remaining eight verses of this work, Sri Bhagavan reveals more conclusions which will be useful in helping us to put Self-enquiry into practice, but which can be realized through direct experience only when we actually attend to 'I' and thereby realize its true nature.

23. உள்ள துணர்வுணர்வுவே நின்மையி  
 னுள்ள துணர்வாகு முந்தீபற  
 வுணர்வேநா மாயுள முந்தீபற

உள்ளது	<i>ulladu</i>	that which exists
உணர்	<i>unara</i>	to know
உணர்வு	<i>unarvu</i>	consciousness
வேறு	<i>veru</i>	another
இன்மையின்	<i>inmaiyyin</i>	because of the non existence
உள்ளது	<i>ulladu</i>	that which exists
உணர்வு	<i>unarvu</i>	consciousness
ஆகும்	<i>ahum</i>	is
உணர்வே	<i>unarve</i>	consciousness itself
நாமாய் உளம்	<i>namay ulam</i>	is 'we' (literally, exists as 'we')

Because of the non-existence of another consciousness to know that which exists, that which exists [the reality or *sat*] is consciousness [or *chit*]. [That] consciousness itself is 'we' [the real Self].

**Note:** That which truly exists is only 'we', the real Self or 'I' which shines forth spontaneously when the mind dies. Since this 'we' is the only true existence or reality, there cannot exist any consciousness other than it to know it, and hence it is itself the consciousness which knows itself. Therefore 'we', the reality (*sat*), are also consciousness (*chit*). In other words, our existence and the knowledge of our existence are not two different things, but are one and the same reality.

24. இருக்கு மியற்கையா லீசீ வர்க  
 ளொருபொரு ளேயாவ ருந்தீபற  
 வுபாதி யுணர்வேவே றுந்தீபற.

இருக்கும்	<i>irukkum</i>	existing
இயற்கையால்	<i>iyarkaiyal</i>	by nature
ஈச	<i>isa</i>	God
சீவர்கள்	<i>jivarkal</i>	souls
ஒரு	<i>oru</i>	one
பொருளே	<i>porule</i>	substance only
ஆவர்	<i>avar</i>	are
உபாதி	<i>upadhi</i>	adjunct
உணர்வே	<i>unarve</i>	knowledge alone
வேறு	<i>veru</i>	different

By existing nature [that is, in their real nature, which is existence or *sat*], God and souls are only one substance [or *vastu*]. [Their] adjunct-knowledge [or adjunct-consciousness] alone is different.

**Note:** The existence-consciousness 'I am' is the real nature both of God (Iswara) and of the souls (*jivas*). But on this 'I am' adjuncts or *upadhis* are superimposed, and these adjuncts, which are a form of wrong knowledge or ignorance, give rise to the seeming differences which exist between God and the soul. For example, the soul feels, 'I possess little knowledge, but God is all-knowing;

I am powerless, but God is all-powerful; I am limited, but God is all-pervading.’ Such feelings of the soul are what are here called the ‘adjunct-knowledge’ (*upadhi-unarvu* in the Tamil version and *vesha-dhi* in the Sanskrit version). It is important to note here that this ‘adjunct-knowledge’ is an imagination which exists only in the outlook of the soul (*jiva-drishti*) and not in the outlook of God (*Iswara-drishti*).

25. தன்னை யுபாதிவிட் டோர்வது தானீசன்  
றன்னை யுணர்வதா முந்தீபற  
தானா யொளிர்வதா லுந்தீபற.

தன்னை	<i>tannai</i>	oneself
உபாதி	<i>upadhi</i>	adjuncts
விட்டு	<i>vittu</i>	having given up
ஓர்வது	<i>orvadu</i>	knowing
தான்	<i>tan</i>	itself
ஈசன் தன்னை	<i>isan-tannai</i>	God
உணர்வது	<i>unarvadu</i>	knowing
ஆம்	<i>am</i>	is
தானாய்	<i>tanay</i>	as oneself
ஒளிர்வதால்	<i>olirvadal</i>	because He shines

Knowing oneself having given up [one’s own] adjuncts [*upadhis*], is itself knowing God, because He shines as oneself [as one’s own reality, ‘I am’].

**Note:** Since that which exists and shines in one as ‘I am’ is the true nature of God, and since it is only one’s own adjunct-knowledge (*upadhi-unarvu*) that veils one’s knowledge of this ‘I am’, knowing this ‘I am’, which is one’s own real Self, without adjuncts (*upadhis*) is itself knowing God.

Compare here verse 20 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, in which Sri Bhagavan says, ‘... He who sees the [real] Self, the source of the [individual] self, alone is He who has seen God, because the [real] Self – [which shines forth] after the base, the [individual] self, has perished – is not other than God’.

26. தானா யிருத்தலே தன்னை யறிதலாந்  
தானிரண் டற்றதா லுந்தீபற  
தன்மய நிட்டையீ துந்தீபற.

தானாய்	<i>tanay</i>	Self (literally, as Self)
இருத்தலே	<i>iruttale</i>	being itself
தன்னை	<i>tannai</i>	Self
அறிதல்	<i>aridal</i>	knowing
ஆம்	<i>am</i>	is
தான்	<i>tan</i>	Self
இரண்டு	<i>irandu</i>	two
அற்றது	<i>atrada</i>	that which is not
ஆல்	<i>al</i>	because
தன்மய	<i>tanmaya</i>	as the reality
நிட்டை	<i>nittai</i>	abidance ( <i>nishtha</i> )
ஈது	<i>idu</i>	this

Being Self is itself knowing Self, because Self is that which is not two. This is abidance as the reality (*tanmaya-nishta*).

**Note:** Since we do not have two selves, one self to be known by the other self, what is called Self-knowledge is nothing but the state of being Self – that is, the state of abiding as we really are, as the mere existence-consciousness ‘I am’, instead of rising as ‘I am this’ or ‘I am that’. This state of being Self is what is called ‘Self-abidance’ (*atma-nishta*) or ‘abidance as the reality’ (*tanmaya-nishta*).

27. அறிவு யாமையு மற்ற வறிவே  
யறிவாகு முண்மையீ துந்தீபற  
வறிவதற் கொன்றிலை யுந்தீபற

அறிவு	<i>arivu</i>	knowledge
அறியாமை	<i>ariyamai</i>	ignorance
உம்	<i>um</i>	both
அற்ற	<i>atra</i>	which is devoid of
அறிவே	<i>arive</i>	the knowledge alone
அறிவு	<i>arivu</i>	knowledge
ஆகும்	<i>ahum</i>	is
உண்மை	<i>unmai</i>	the truth
ஈது	<i>idu</i>	this
அறிவதற்கு	<i>arivadarku</i>	to know
ஒன்று இலை	<i>ondru-ilai</i>	there is nothing

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].

**Note:** The mere consciousness of one’s own existence, ‘I am’, which is devoid both of the feeling ‘I know’ and of the feeling ‘I do not know’, alone is true knowledge.

Compare here verse 12 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, in which Sri Bhagavan says, ‘That which is completely devoid of knowledge and ignorance [about objects], is [true] Knowledge. That which knows [anything 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; it is not a void [though devoid of both knowledge and ignorance about objects]. Know thus.’

28. தனாதியல் யாதெனத் தான்றெரி கிற்பின்  
னனாதி யனந்தசத் துந்தீபற  
வகண்ட சிதானந்த முந்தீபற.

தனாது	<i>tanadu</i>	one’s own
இயல்	<i>iyal</i>	nature
யாது என	<i>yadu-ena</i>	what
தான் தெரிகில்	<i>tan terihil</i>	if one knows
பின்	<i>pin</i>	then
அனாதி	<i>anadi</i>	beginningless
அனந்த	<i>ananta</i>	endless
சத்து	<i>sattu</i>	existence
அகண்ட	<i>akhanda</i>	unbroken
சித்	<i>chit</i>	consciousness



ஆனந்தம்

*anandam*

bliss

If one knows what one's own nature is, then [what will remain and shine is only] the beginningless, endless and unbroken existence-consciousness-bliss [*anadi ananta akhanda sat-chit-ananda*].

**Note:** This verse may also be interpreted to mean, 'If one knows what one's own nature is, then (it will be found to be ) the beginningless, endless and unbroken existence-consciousness-bliss'.

29. பந்தவீ டற்ற பரசுக முற்றவா  
றிந்த நிலைநிற்ற லுந்தீபற  
விறைபணி நிற்றலா முந்தீபற.

பந்த	<i>bandha</i>	bondage
வீடு	<i>vidu</i>	liberation
அற்ற	<i>atra</i>	which is devoid of
பரசுகம்	<i>para-sukham</i>	the supreme bliss
உற்றவாறு	<i>uttravaru</i>	having attained
இந்த	<i>inda</i>	this
நிலை	<i>nilai</i>	state
நிற்றல்	<i>nitral</i>	abiding
இறைபணி	<i>irai-pani</i>	the service of God (or enjoined by God)
நிற்றல்	<i>nitral</i>	abiding
ஆம்	<i>am</i>	is

Abiding in this state [of Self], having attained the supreme bliss [mentioned in the previous verse], which is devoid of bondage and liberation, is abiding in the service of God [or is abiding as enjoined by God].

**Note:** Bondage and liberation are both mere thoughts, and hence they can exist only in the state of ignorance (*ajnana*) and not in the state of true knowledge (*jnana*), the state of Self-abidance. Compare here verse 39 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, in which Sri Bhagavan says, 'Only so long as one, being a madman [a person devoid of true knowledge], feels "I am a bound one", will there exist thoughts of bondage and liberation. [But] when one sees oneself [by enquiring] "Who is the bound one?" 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?'

Since God is the perfect Whole, He does not need or want any service from us. But when we rise as a separate individual feeling 'I am this body', we experience endless misery, and hence it becomes necessary for the all-merciful God to run to our rescue in order to save us from our own self-created problems. Thus, by our rising as 'I am so-and-so', we make it necessary for God to serve us. Therefore, the only true service we can render to God is to cease rising as an individual and thereby to refrain from making it necessary for Him to serve us. Hence, to abide eternally as Self instead of rising again as an individual is truly to abide in the service of God.

In the Sanskrit version of this verse, the meaning of which is, 'The soul [*jiva*] who attains here the supreme bliss which transcends bondage and liberation, is indeed divine [*daivikah*]', Sri Bhagavan has made no direct mention of 'abiding in the service of God', which is the central idea in the original Tamil version of this verse. However, Sri Bhagavan once explained that the word '*daivikah*' (divine) which He used in the Sanskrit version of this verse is intended to imply 'one whose actions are the actions of God', because he who has attained the state of supreme bliss has lost his individuality and is hence not other than God, the one supreme reality. Compare verse

1139 of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, in which Sri Bhagavan says, ‘If it be asked, “If they [those who abide as Self] have lost the sense of doership, how can the actions [of their body, speech and mind] go on? We do see such actions going on,” rest assured that, since their inner attachments have died, they have God Himself residing in their heart and doing [all those actions].’

30. யானற் றியல்வது தேரி னெதுவது  
தானற் றவமென்றா னுந்தீபற்  
தானாம் ரமணேச னுந்தீபற்.

யான்	<i>yan</i>	I
அற்று	<i>atru</i>	having ceased to exist
இயல்வது	<i>iyalvadu</i>	that which remains
தேரின்	<i>terin</i>	if one knows
எது	<i>edu</i>	what
அது	<i>adu</i>	that
தான்	<i>tan</i>	alone
நல்	<i>nal</i>	excellent
தவம்	<i>tavam</i>	austerities or <i>tapas</i>
என்றான்	<i>endran</i>	thus said
தான்	<i>tan</i>	self
ஆம்	<i>am</i>	who is
ரமணேசன்	<i>ramanesan</i>	Lord Ramana

‘What [is experienced] if one knows that which remains after ‘I’ has ceased to exist, that alone is excellent *tapas*’ – thus said Lord Ramana, who is Self.

**Note:** The state which is experienced when one knows and abides as the real Self, which is that which remains after the individual ‘I’ or ego has ceased to exist – that state of the non-rising of the ego alone is real *tapas*.

The so-called austerities or *tapas* which were performed by the ascetics in the Daruka Forest, were not at all true *tapas*, because they were performed only with the aim of gaining power, fulfilling desires and thereby enhancing the ego. True *tapas* as taught by the Lord Siva to those ascetics and as defined by Sri Bhagavan in this work is nothing but the state of egolessness (the state of perfect self-denial), in which one knows and abides as the real Self instead of rising as an individual to do or to achieve anything.

The Tamil version of this last verse was composed by Sri Muruganar. The five verses which follow are the final five verses of the first part of Sri Muruganar’s ‘Tiruvundiyar’, and they were appended by Sri Bhagavan to the main text of *Upadesa Undiyar* as concluding verses.

1. இருடிக ளெல்லா மிறைவ னடியை  
வருடி வணங்கின ருந்தீபற்  
வாழ்த்து முழங்கின ருந்தீபற்.

Touching the Feet of God [Lord Siva], all the *rishis* [the ascetics in the Daruka Forest] paid obeisance [to Him] and sang His praises. (‘Tiruvundiyar’ 1.133)

2. உற்றார்க் குறுதி யுபதேச வந்தியார்  
சொற்ற குருபர னுந்தீபற்  
சுமங்கள வேங்கட னுந்தீபற்

The supreme Guru who sang *Upadesa Undiyar* as an assurance to the devotees [who came to Him for salvation], is the auspicious Venkatan [Sri Ramana]. ('Tiruvundiyar' 1.134)

3. பல்லாண்டு பல்லாண்டு பற்பன்னூ றாயிரம்  
பல்லாண்டு பல்லாண்டு முந்தீபற  
பார்மிசை வாழ்கவே யுந்தீபற

May He [Sri Ramana] shine gloriously on earth for many hundreds of thousand of years. ('Tiruvundiyar' 1.135)

4. இசையெடுப் போருஞ் செவிமடுப் போரும்  
வசையறத் தேர்வோரு முந்தீபற  
வாழி பலவழி யுந்தீபற

May those who sin, those who hear and those who flawlessly understand [this *Upadesa Undiyar*] shine gloriously for many aeons. ('Tiruvundiyar' 1.136)

5. கற்கு மவர்களுங் கற்றுணர்ந் தாங்குத்தா  
நிற்கு மவர்களு முந்தீபற  
நீடுழி வாழியே யுந்தீபற.

May those who learn [this *Upadesa Undiyar*] and those who, having learnt and understood it, abide there [in Self], shine gloriously for long aeons. ('Tiruvundiyar' 1.137)

*Sri Ramanarpanamastu*