

# Abide As the Self: The Essential Teachings of Ramana Maharshi

## VIDEO SCRIPT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Allan W. Anderson

\*\*\*\*\* TELEPROMPTER VERSION \*\*\*\*\*

ONE

Like the poetry of other sages, the verses of Ramana Maharshi's differs from traditional written prose or oral teachings, by reason of its content. The words of a sage disclose to the inner eye and ear the ineffable, unconditioned, infinite, eternal and free. In *Upadesa Saram*, The Essence of Instruction, the Maharshi writes in the 8<sup>th</sup> verse:

The lofty attitude "He am I" is preferable to  
the attitude "He is not me."

The reader need not grasp the deep meaning of these words in their entirety to be moved by them, for they also speak directly to the heart. Ramana speaks to both heart and head in the same instant. Such discourse works to directly transform the heart of the hearer.

TWO

The written verse of the Maharshi, represent a special contribution to the traditional teachings of *Advaita Vedanta*. We find in Ramana an abiding emphasis on the Heart. Take, for instance, these lines from his *Atma-Vidya*, Self-knowledge:



Therefore on diving deep upon the quest  
"Who am I and from whence?" thoughts disappear  
And consciousness of Self then flashes forth  
As the I-I within the cavity  
Of every seeker's Heart. And this is Heaven,  
This is that Stillness, the abode of Bliss.

Many consider the teachings of *Advaita*, or non-duality, to be an arid, unfeeling spirituality.  
Sri Bhagavan provides a powerful and winning corrective to this misunderstanding.

Both wisdom and love were equally present in all aspects of his life. This aspect is reflected in his outpourings of verse to the sacred hill Arunachala. His understanding of the physical hill as the Supreme Consciousness is both profound and mysterious. In *The Marital Garland of Letters*, Ramana's verse reflects the longing of the mind to merge in the Heart and abide in the state of bliss:

"As snow in water, let me melt as love in Thee,  
Who art love itself."

Look within, ever seeking the Self with the inner eye,  
Then will it be found. Thus didst Thou direct me, beloved Arunachala.

There in the Heart lie quiet! Let the sea of joy surge,  
Speech and feeling cease O' Arunachala."



### THREE

While there appears to be apparent contradiction in expression between devotion (*bhakti*) and the more intellectual teachings on Self-Knowledge, there is, in truth, no separation between these two.

Sri Bhagavan's emphasis on one's unflagging concentration on the quest "Who am I" and from whence?, entails the most persevering devotion to self-enquiry. The essence of devotion, *bhakti*, is singleness of mind. One recalls the words of Jesus, another sage, who is recorded to have said: "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be filled with light." One thinks of the eye of light as typical of the *jnanin*, the self-realized person, but it is the *bhakta*, the devoted one, who keeps it there, who earnestly keeps on keeping on. Indeed, *jnana* and *bhakti* are distinct but not on that account are they separate.

One of the most poignant statements of Ramana on this subject is: "Bhakti is the mother of Jnana."

In *Upadesa Saram*, Ramana writes in verse 10:

"Absorption into the Source or core of Existence (or the Heart)  
is what the paths of *Karma*, *Bhakti*, and *Jnana* teach."

### FOUR

Throughout the written works of Ramana, there is regular reference made to the Heart as the Source of one's existence.



In the Invocatory verse of The Forty Verses on Existence (*Ulladu-Narpadu*), the Maharshi writes:

“If Reality did not exist, could there be any knowledge of existence? Free from all thoughts, Reality abides in the Heart, the Source of all thoughts. It is, therefore, called the Heart. How then is one to contemplate it? To be as *It* is in the Heart, is *Its* contemplation.

In the practical or behavioral order the significance of this verse *turns* on recalling the aspirant or seeker to the source of all thoughts. The Source or Heart is not cognizable. It can only be intuited. Thus, it is “free from all thoughts.” As such it cannot be realized through imagination or self-serving maneuvers. The statement is both one of principle and a corrective at the same time.

In verse 2 of the *Arunachala Pancharatna*, Five Verses to Arunachala, Ramana writes:

“O Arunachala! In Thee the picture of the universe is formed, and has its stay, and is dissolved;

This is the sublime truth. Thou art the inner Self, Who dancest in the Heart as ‘I.’

Heart is they name, O Lord.”

## FIVE

In the Maharshi’s teachings concerning the Heart, he often refers to “The Knot of the Heart,” *Chit Jada Granthi*. In the book *Guru Ramana*, S. S. Cohen recorded a conversation in which the Maharshi spoke of this phenomenon as the “knot of ignorance which ties the body to consciousness.”



In Verse 24 of, The Forty Verses on Existence, Ramana clearly explains its place quite precisely:

"The inert body will not say 'I'. The Being-Consciousness will not rise (and set).

Between them and limited to the measure of the body something emerges as 'I.' It is this that is known as the knot (*granthi*) between the Consciousness and the inert and also as bondage, individual being, subtle body, ego, the samsara, mind. This know."

This verse sets out a third term: the something that emerges as 'I' -- which is known as ego, a "pseudo-I" -- since it is not in itself a substance. This verse prepares the way toward enquiry into the real character of this "pseudo-I."

When the Hearts' knot is "broken" or permanently "opened" or "loosened," the Self is realized. This aspect of the heart is also revealed in the Mundaka Upanishad.

6-7

SIX - Statement

The Maharshi's teachings help to reveal the illusory existence of a separate individuality while simultaneously revealing the reality of one's real Self.

In verse 14 of The Forty Verses, Maharshi writes:

"If the first person, 'I' exists, then the second and third persons, 'you' and 'he,' will also exist. By inquiring into the nature of the 'I,' the 'I' perishes. With it 'you' and 'he' also perish. The resultant state, which shines as Absolute Being, is one's own natural state, the Self."



In the path of Self-Inquiry, what perishes is the illusion that the false "I" is a substance. The false "I" arises as a function only. It has no existence whatever as a substance.

## SEVEN

Like the great sage Shankara, Ramana also expresses the essence of his teachings in a single verse, called *Eka Sloki*. Along the exposition of the Truth, Sri Bhagavan also indicates the paths to its realization.

"In the interior of the Heart cave *Brahman* alone shines  
in the form of Atman with direct immediacy as I, as I.  
Enter into the heart with questing mind or by diving deep within  
or through control of breath, and abide in the Atman."