



Arunachala Pancharatna

Ramana Maharshi

Published: 2010

Categorie(s): Non-Fiction, Philosophy, Eastern, Health & fitness, Self-help, Esotericism, Occult, Spirituality

Tag(s): "Ramana Maharshi" "Atma vichara" Ramana advaita Self-enquiry
Arunachala Maharshi

Introduction

A translation of Ramana Maharshi's Arunachala Pancharatna from Sanskrit into English by Miles Wright with comments and a preceding article by him on the practice of atma-vichara (self-enquiry) as taught by Ramana Maharshi, edited by Gabriele Ebert with his permission.

The cover-painting of Arunachala with its five peaks is also by Miles Wright.

further translations, notes etc. see:

<http://sites.google.com/site/nanyar/>

The books referred to, see bibliography.

Books for free download see:

<http://www.sriramanamaharshi.org/bookstall/downloadbooks.html>

(Gabriele Ebert, editor)

Arunachala Pancharatna are five bhakti stroked stanzas richly infuses with symbology about Aruanchala as Guru, written by Sri Ramana Maharshi, at the request of the devotee Ganapati Muni. The Muni embraced qualified advaita philosophy.

How to do atma-vichara (self-enquiry)

Atma-vichara - Instructions for the practice of self-enquiry - all one needs to know, to begin, and end, is contained below. Re-focus your life!

A South Indian Sage advised, "Pursue the enquiry "Who am I?" relentlessly! Seek out the root of your personality! Find out wherefrom the I-thought arises! Turn the mind within. With practice, the current of thoughts will slow down and an unerring intuition will be felt. Yield to that intuition, let your thinking stop, and it will pull you to the goal."

Vichara is often confused with meditation. Meditation however requires subject and object whereas vichara eliminates the obsession with object completely.

Ramana Maharshi said, "Dhyana [meditation] is concentration on an object. It fulfils the purpose of keeping away diverse thoughts and fixing the mind on a single thought, which must also disappear before Realisation. But Realisation is nothing new to be acquired. It is already there, but obstructed by a screen of thoughts. All our attempts are directed for lifting this screen and then Realisation is revealed."

"If a true seeker is advised to meditate, many may go away satisfied with the advice. But someone among them may turn round and ask, 'Who am I to meditate on an object?' Such a one must be told to find the Self. That is the finality. That is Vichara." (Talks 390)

"Do not spread out the mind inquiring, 'Who may you be?' and 'Who is he?' Turn it inward questing, steadily, keenly, 'Who am I?'" (from Ramana Mandiram, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai - for ordering details and information on other publications see the official website: <http://www.sriramanamaharshi.org>).

Atma-vichara (self-enquiry) should not be considered as a mere yogic exercise to be done at certain times of the day and then forgotten until the next session, although that is certainly a valid way of introducing the mind to enquiry [but don't get lost in the introduction - how long does it take to shake hands?] Nor is vichara a hobby, it becomes a way of life.

The vichara method focusses on the meditator (the thinker) from the very outset. It is radical.

When, through self-enquiry, brought about by intense practice, thoughts subside, there stands revealed an unbroken, eternal awareness, 'I'-'I'. It is not a watched awareness. Who is the subject that can claim such dualistic nonsense! The snake in the rope will never see the rope. 'I'-'I' is both herald and death knoll.

"In the course of tracing ourselves back to our source, when all thoughts have vanished, there arises a throb from the Hridaya on the right, manifesting as 'Aham' 'Aham' 'I'-'I'. This is the sign that Pure Consciousness is beginning to reveal itself. But that is not the end in itself. Watch wherefrom this sphurana (throbbing) arises and wait attentively and continually for the revelation of the Self. Then comes the awareness, oneness of existence." (from a reply, approved by Bhagavan, which was sent to an English devotee; recorded in 'Moments Remembered' by V. Ganesan)

"Thoughts must cease and reason disappear for 'I'-'I' to rise up and be felt. Feeling is the prime factor and not reason." (Talks 24)

"That which is does not even say 'I am'. For, does any doubt rise that 'I am not'. " (Talks 197)

Method

"When other thoughts arise, one should not pursue them, but should inquire: 'To whom do they arise?' It does not matter how many thoughts arise. As each thought arises, one should inquire with diligence, 'To whom has this thought arisen?'. The answer that would emerge would be 'To me'. Thereupon if one inquires 'Who am I?', the mind will go back to its source; and the thought that arose will become quiescent. With repeated practice in this manner, the mind will develop the skill to stay in its source." (from "Who am I?" - available as a PDF download at the link given above)

Maharshi makes it very clear that there is no advanced method only maturation of the vichara. Vichara is the direct method. "There is nothing

more to be known than what you find in books. No secret technique. It is all an open secret, in this system." (Day by Day, 8-10-46)

Chapter 1

Stanza 1

**|1| Ocean of nectar, full of grace, engulfing the manifold universe
with boundless light,
O Arunachala, Self supreme, be the dawn in order that the lotus of
the heart may bloom.**

Arunagiri [Arunachala] is considered by many to be a physical embodiment of Sat - i.e. Reality. As such, it stands unmoving, radiating boundless grace. All that is needed is for the outgoing mind, bounced into action by this manifestation, to about turn.

"By seeing Chidambaram, by being born in Kasi, or merely by thinking of Arunachala, one will surely attain liberation." (Arunachala Mahatyam)

"When the mind, having pure sattva as its characteristic remains attending to the aham-sphurana, which is the sign of the forthcoming direct experience of the Self, the downward facing heart becomes upward facing, blossoms and remains in the form of that (the Self); (because of this) the aforesaid attention to the source of the aham-sphurana alone is the path. When thus attended to, Self, the reality, alone will remain shining in the centre of the Heart as 'I am I.'" (Sri Bhagavan's letter to Ganapati Muni, The Mountain Path, April 1982)

As the sun shines at all times even when we cannot see it, so Arunachala, as Self alone, shines in the hearts of all living beings, irrespective of any limited perspective. As the life-giving sun seems to 'appear' at dawn, allowing the bud of the Lotus, at last, to burst open, the plant having matured and the murky waters having been left behind, similarly, although the grace of Arunachala is forever radiating, the knot of the heart

'appears' to remain tightly bound until the maturing effect of Atma-vichara [i.e. self-enquiry] purifies the mind effecting the irresistible pull towards the Heart-centre, its source. Then... the boundless light of the Self shines, as universe complete, as always, as ever, as 'I am I'. This is the dawn longed for and requested by the devotee. Grace is never conferred. It always is. When the devotee strives hard for realisation, thereby dispersing the cloud of mindstuff, boundless grace remains.

note: Arunachala Mahatyam is the legend of Arunachala

Chapter 2

Stanza 2

**|2| In You , O Arunachala, all this, the phenomenal picture, having
been created and sustained, is absorbed.
By nature, you dance as 'I' in the Heart. O Lord, they call you by
name 'Heart'.**

"Like the spider spreading out its web from its own mouth and then withdrawing it into itself, the mind puts forth the blossom of the world and ingathers it again.

When the mind turns towards the brain and senses, forms and names are thrust out from within. and when it rests abiding in the Heart, they enter and lie buried there again." (Ramana Mandiram; Sri Muruganar)

"I am the Self, O Gudakesa, dwelling in the Heart of all beings, I am the beginning, the middle, and also the end of all beings." (Bhagavad Gita; 10, 20)

For both the ajnani [the ignorant] and the jnani [the sage], the universe exists. The ajnani sees the visible universe alone, in separation, whereas the jnani understands the formless truth underlying all things, that is, the circumferenceless centre, the source of 'I', the base and support of the visible universe. Understanding the source of his identity, He (the jnani) calls it 'Heart'. This is the final goal ... sat-chit-ananda [being consciousness bliss]. As long as one believes in the body/mind complex, so long the myriad universe is seen in separation. Where would the picture be without the canvas on which it is painted?

Chapter 3

Stanza 3

**| 3 | He, who seeks from where the 'I' arises, with pure mind, turned
inwards, realising his own nature, O Arunachala,
merges in you... like the river in the sea.**

*"Do not spread out the mind inquiring 'Who may you be?' and 'Who he?'
Turn it inward questing steadily, keenly, 'Who am I?'
Birds in the sky and fish in water dart and leave no track behind. And none
can trace the path by which the sages journeyed to the Self."
(Ramana Mandiram; Sri Muruganar)*

Blazing, Sri Arunachala, a seeming insentient hill, silent, seen as the very embodiment of Siva/Paramatman, the Self of all, stands revealed, in all Its glory, to the one who enters through the purifying fire of atma-vichara [self-enquiry].

Atma-vichara is the means and the goal. The 'I' that rises and sets is not the real 'I'. It is nothing more than the meandering cloud, which moves, changes, and finally empties when at last it approaches the mountain. When the mind becomes pure, it, naturally, rushes to its source, like a mountain stream rushing towards the sea, effortlessly overcoming all obstacles in its path. Atma-vichara is the purifying process which rids the mind of all impurities (mindstuff). Take up the quest 'Who am I?' Seek the impostor (ego-"I"). In the end, he is nowhere to be found!

Chapter 4

Stanza 4

**|4| Having rejected external objects, with breath and mind controlled,
meditating on you within,
the yogi sees the splendour, O Arunachala, and... in you... enjoys
bliss.**

"A floating body does not readily sink unless some means are adopted for making it do so. Breath-control makes the mind quiescent. The mind must be alert and meditation pursued unremittingly even when it is at peace. Then it sinks into the heart. Or the floating body might be loaded with weights and made to sink. So also association with the wise will make the mind sink into the heart." (Talks 223)

"Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the Heart, Oh Arunachala!" (The Marital Garland of Letters, v.1)

Seeking pleasure the mind floats out to object after object. In this way, it believes it will attain happiness. Having gained a quickly fading, temporary pleasure from one thing, again and again, it urgently flits to another and yet another, ever-seeking elusive happiness. Through meditation on Sri Arunachalaramana [atma-vichara], in due course, one learns to abide sufficiently quiet to hold the thinker (ego-"I") and sink, once and for all. The true nature of happiness (bliss) is Self-revealed.

"There is a space within the heart in which all space is contained within it. Fire, air, sun, moon, lightning and stars - everything exists within. When we pass beyond the mind with its measuring faculties, with its categories of time and space, we find the very ground of the universe. There

all things are not dead matter as Western science has told us for so long. They are life and intelligence. Western man has been turning outwards to the world of senses for centuries and losing himself in outer space. The time has now come to turn inwards, to learn to explore the inner space within the heart, and to make that long and exciting journey to the Centre. Compared with this, the exploration of the moon and planets is the play of children." (Daily Readings with Bede Griffiths)

Chapter 5

Stanza 5

| 5 | With mind surrendered to you, forever seeing all things as your appearance, he worships you with love for no other, he is victorious, O Arunachala, in you ... immersed in bliss.

In the Narada Bhakti Sutras, "Narada concurs when he proclaims, 'now that (Supreme Devotion) comes about when one rejects the visible universe (that separation which validates seeing 'things' as objects of the ego) and completely renounces objective attachment.'" (sutra, 35) This Bhakti is synonymous with Self realisation; it is devotion without desire.' (MWright, Commentary on Upadesa Saram)

Q. : How does one surrender completely to the Supreme (Arunachala)?

A. : If the thought arises, 'I do this', there is no surrender. Surrender brings an end to all effort. If you feel that you serve the Supreme, there is still no surrender.

"The karma which takes place without effort, i.e. involuntary action, is not binding. Even a jnani is acting as seen by his bodily movements. There can be no karma without effort or without intentions (sankalpas). Therefore there are sankalpas for all. They are of two kinds (1) one, binding — bandhu-hetu and the other (2) muktihetu — not binding. The former must be given up and the latter must be cultivated. There is no fruit without previous karma; no karma without previous sankalpa." (Talks 116)

As long as one hangs on to individuality, so long does the enjoyer and doer hold sway. He, who has truly surrendered, has no sankalpas. Give up 'I' and 'Mine'. "Supreme Bhakti is invigorated by the strength of meditation which is facilitated when the meditator and the object of

meditation are not differentiated (as in the meditation... so'ham). This Bhakti is not different from atma- vichara (self-enquiry)." (Wright, Commentary on Upadesa Saram) "Bhakti and Self-Enquiry are one and the same. The Self of the Advaitins is the God of the Bhaktas." (Talks 274)

*"As in the ocean salt Dissolves and disappears, So in the body lost I lay.
But now I long to be absorbed In the brightness of your Grace. Eat me as
food, O Lord, Digest both Me and Mine. Convert my being wholly Into
your true body, Light."* (Ramana Mandiram; Sri Muruganar)

Glossary notes on Sphurana and Hridaya

(Aham)-sphurana:

D.: What is sphurana (shining)?

M.: (Aham, aham) 'I-I' is the Self; (Aham idam) "I am this" or "I am that" is the ego. Shining is there always. The ego is transitory; When the 'I' is kept up as 'I' alone it is the Self; when it flies at a tangent and says "this" it is the ego. (*Talks 363*)

Hridaya - the spiritual heart:

Hridayam = hrit + ayam - This is the centre. (*Talks 97*)

'*ayam*' is used to talk of what is present - here and now. The word can derive from two stems - 'a' and 'i'. From these two stems we get 1) '*atra*' - 'here' and 'in this'; 2) '*iha*' - 'here' or 'in this world'.

"The Heart of the Upanishads is construed as Hridayam, meaning: This (is) the centre. That is, it is where the mind rises and subsides. That is the seat of Realisation. When I say that it is the Self the people imagine that it is within the body. When I ask where the Self remains in one's sleep they seem to think that it is within the body, but unaware of the body and its surroundings like a man confined in a dark room. To such people it is necessary to say that the seat of Realisation is somewhere within the body. The name of the centre is the Heart; but it is confounded with the heart organ." (*Talks 467*)

There is some controversy, however... regarding Sri Ramana's comments on the physical manifestation of the Heart... and some *confusion!* However there really need be none. What is one's perspective right now? Is it that of the jnani? If so then the omnipresent Heart, the Centre, without circumference, exists right here, '**in this**' (*cf. Talk 273*). However if one operates from the position of a limited centre, here, '**in the world**' (*cf. Talk 97*) then what is the justification for arguing over Sri Ramana's words.

You just have to be honest about your perspective and cut away the bull.

In Chapter 10 of his book 'Reflections on Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi', while commenting on *Talk 29*, S. S. Cohen elucidates, "To the highly critical mind there appears a contradiction in the statements of Bhagavan, who on the one hand makes Heart to be everywhere and nowhere, and on the other fixes it in the right chest, from which the sushumna nadi rises, and where the jiva retires in sleep, etc. The apparent contradiction is due to the perception of the body, which has to be related to the mind, or the intelligent principle which acts and perceives through it. The mind has thus to be shown in a dual aspect, the one as the pervader of the body, and thus hypothetically limited to its shape, and the other as limitless and free."

Anomalies remain only as long as one pays mere lipservice to the practice. Once one ends such pretense, vichara [self-enquiry] is the single means by which the inconsistencies, based on cherished beliefs and attitudes of mind, can be eliminated.

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From the same author on Feedbacks

Arunachala Pancharatna - Fünf Verse für Arunachala (2010)

Die fünf Bhakti-Verse, in denen Arunachala als Manifestation des höchsten Selbst verehrt wird, sind reich an Symbolik. Sri Ramana Maharshi hat sie 1917 auf die Bitte von Ganapati Muni hin geschrieben. Von seinen fünf Gedichten für Arunachala ist es das letzte und einzige in Sanskrit.

Dies ist die deutsche Übersetzung von Arunachala Pancharatna, die Miles Wright aus dem Sanskrit ins Englische übertragen und kommentiert hat, siehe:

<http://sites.google.com/site/nanyar/home/arunachalapancharatna>.

Das Cover-Bild von Arunachala mit seinen fünf Bergspitzen ist ebenfalls von ihm.

Die Beschreibung der Übung des Atma Vichara vom selben Autor wird vorangestellt.

Essence of the Bhagavad Gita (2011)

Translated from Sanskrit into English by Miles Wright, ed. with permission by Gabriele Ebert.

A running prose translation of 42 verses from Bhagavad Gita, selected and set in order, by Ramana Maharshi, for use of those interested in Self Enquiry. In these verses Bhagavan reveals the seeker, that which is sought and the means by which one seeks.

Die Essenz der Bhagavad Gita (2011)

Eine Prosa-Übersetzung von 42 Verse aus der Bhagavad Gita, die Ramana Maharshi für jene, die an der Selbstergründung interessiert sind, ausgewählt und neu geordnet hat. In diesen Versen zeigt Bhagavan dem Sucher auf, was und mit welchen Mitteln er suchen muss.

Diese Übersetzung aus dem Sanskrit von Miles Wright wurde von Gabriele Ebert ins Deutsche übertragen.



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