upadeshasAram with English translation, Essence of Advice

Document Information

Text title: upadeshasAram Essence of Advice
File name: upadeshasAram.itx
Category: major_works, ramaNa-maharShi
Location: doc_z_misc_major_works
Author: Shri Ramanamaharshi
Transliterated by: Rodrigo Gomes Ferreira rodrigo at vedanta.pro.br
Proofread by: Gloria Arieira; Paula Ornelas at www.vidyamandir.org.br; Rodrigo Gomes Ferreira www.vedanta.pro.br
Translated by: B. V. Narasimhaswami supplied M. Giridhar Formatting help Ravi Nistala nvvnravi at gmail.com
Send corrections to: sanskrit at cheerful dot com

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March 24, 2024

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There is an old legend that a group of Rishis once lived in the forest together, practising Vedic rituals by which they acquired supernatural powers. By the same means they hoped to attain final Liberation. In this, however, they were mistaken, for action can only result in action; rituals can produce powers, but not the Peace of Liberation which is beyond rituals and powers and all forms of action. Shiva, determined to convince them of their error, appeared before them as a wandering sadhu. With him came Vishnu in the form of a beautiful lady. All the Rishis were smitten with loving desire for this lady, and their equilibrium was disturbed and their rites and powers were adversely affected. Moreover their wives, who were living with them in the forest, all fell in love with the strange sadhu. Incensed at this, they conjured up an elephant and a tiger by magic rites and sent them against him. Shiva, however, slew them easily and took the elephant’s skin for a robe and the tiger’s for a wrap. The Rishis then realised that they were up against one more powerful than themselves and they bowed down to him for instruction. He then
explained to them that it is not by action but by renunciation of action that one is Liberated.

The poet Muruganar was writing this legend in Tamil verse, but when he came to the instruction given to the Rishis by Shiva he asked Bhagavan, who was Shiva Incarnate, to write it for him. Bhagavan accordingly wrote the instruction in thirty (verse thirty was composed by Muruganar) Tamil verses. He himself later translated these into Sanskrit, and the Sanskrit version was daily chanted before him together with the Vedas and continues to be chanted before his shrine; that is to say that it is treated as a scripture. He refers to the various paths to Liberation, grading them in order of efficiency and excellence, and showing that the best is Self-Enquiry.

Reproduced from The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi
But acts performed without attachment’s urge
And solely for the service of the Lord
Will cleanse the mind and indicate the way
Which leads at length unto the final goal.

Worship, reciting of God’s Holy Name,
And meditation, mainly are performed
By body, voice and mind, and they excel
Each other in the order here set down.

If we but recognise this Universe
Of eightfold form as form of God, Himself,
And serve in adoration all the world.
This is of God most excellent worship.

Constant repeating of the Holy Name
Is more than praise, at length the voice will sink
To silent repetition in the Heart,
And in this way is meditation learnt.

Better than meditation that recurs
In broken fits and starts is that which is
A steady ceaseless flow, like to the course
Of falling oil or a perennial stream.
Worship of God as in no way distinct
From him who worships, or in other words
Thinking that He is I., is better far
Than any other kind of worshipping.

To rest in the Real Being, that transcends
Our every thought, by reason of the strength
Of our devotion to some thing conceived;
This of supreme devotion is the truth.

To be absorbed again into one’s Source (Heart)
Is Karma, Bhakti, Yoga, Jnanam, all
These things in truth. Or put in other words
Good works, Devotion, Union, Gnosis, too.

As by the fowler birds are caught in nets
So by the holding of the breath within
The mind can be restrained. This a device
That will effect absorption of the mind.

For mind and life expressed in thought and act,
That is with thought and action as their function,
Diverge and branch like two boughs of a tree,
But both of them spring from one single stem.
Suppression of the mind in two ways comes,
Absorption and extinction; mind absorbed
Will live again, but mind which is destroyed
Will never more revive, for it is dead.

When, by the means of restraint of the breath,
The mind has been controlled, then make it flow
Along a single current, that achieved
Its form will then entirely disappear.

For the Great Sage for whom all form of mind
Has disappeared and who is ever one
With the Reality, there is no Karma more,
For He, indeed, the True Self has become.

When mind has given the sense-objects up
Which are external and has drawn within,
And has perceived its own refulgent form,
Then verily alone True Gnosis is.

When pondering with constant vigilance
Upon the actual nature of the mind
One finds that there is no such thing as mind;
This, of a truth, is the straight course for all.
The mind is nothing but a lot of thoughts,
Of all these many thoughts 'tis the thought 'I'
That is the root. So we can see by that
The mind in truth is only the thought 'I'.

अहमयं कुतो भवति चिन्ततः ।
अयि पतत्यहं निजविचारणम् ॥ १९॥

Whence, therefore, does this 'I-thought' have its birth?
With vigilant and ever active mind
Seek this, and crestfallen the 'I' becomes.
The search, itself, the quest of Wisdom is.

अहिमि नाशभाज्यहमहंतया ।
स्मुरति हर्त्त्वं परमपूर्णसत् ॥ २०॥

This search pursued till 'I' has disappeared
There now vibrates the 'I-I' all alone,
The quest is finished, there’s no more to seek.
For this is really the Infinite Self.

इदमहं पदाभिभाज्यमन्वहम् ।
अहिमिन्नकेश्यपूर्णसतया ॥ २१॥

This is eternally the true import
Of the term 'I'. For in the deepest sleep
We do not cease to be. We still exist
Even though here there is no sense of 'I'.

विग्रहेन्द्रियायणश्रीतमः ।
नाहेमेकस्ततंजानं हृसत् ॥ २२॥

As I am pure Existence, I am not
The body nor the senses, mind nor life,
Nor even ignorance, for all these things
Are quite insentient and so unreal.

सच्चाभासिका चित्तक्षेत्रा ।
सत्तया हि चिन्तित्या झाहम् ॥ २३॥
As there is not a second consciousness
To know Existence, it must follow that
Existence is itself that consciousness;
So I myself am that same consciousness.

In their real nature as Existence both
Creatures and the Creator are the same,
The Unique Principle. In attributes
And knowledge only is a difference found.

Realization of the Self alone,
Eliminating all its attributes;
Is God-Realization of a truth,
As it is He that shines forth as the Self.

To be the Self that is to know the Self,
As there is no duality in Self.
This is Thanmaya-Nistha, or the state
Of absolutely being That in truth.

That knowledge is true knowledge which transcends
Knowledge and ignorance both equally.
And this alone is truth. For there is no
Subject or object there that can be known.
If one can only realize at Heart
What one’s true nature is, one then will find
That ’tis Infinite Wisdom, Truth and Bliss,
Without beginning and without an end.

Remaining in this state of Supreme Bliss,
Devoid of bondage and of freedom too,
Is found to be a state in which one is
Rapt in perpetual service of the Lord.

By ardent quest and shedding ego’s veil
Realize the Self, the One that’s ego-less,
And function thus; the sole right penance this.
So teaches Bhagavan Sri Ramana,
Who is the SELF of everything that is.

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Realize the Self, the One that’s ego-less,
And function thus; the sole right penance this.
So teaches Bhagavan Sri Ramana,
Who is the SELF of everything that is.
उपदेशसारं श्रीरमणमहर्षिकृतम्

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॥ इति रमणमर्गार्थमं उपदेशसारम् संपूर्णम् ॥

Encoded and proofread by
Rodrigo Gomes Ferreira rodrigo at vedanta.pro.br, Paula Ornelas and