

THE CARDINAL TEACHING
OF THE MAHARSHI
(*Sri Arunachala Pancharatna Darpanam*)

Sanskrit Text of
Arunachala Pancharatna by
BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

AND

the Commentary *darpanam* by
SRI BHARADWAJA KAPALI

with an English translation by
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PREFACE

A *sthithaprajna*, ever settled in divine consciousness, though he was, Bhagavan was intensely human in his dealings. He always showed an understanding which made the smallest feel great in his presence. He responded to all approaches of genuine devotion and love with a compassion that was overwhelming. It was so he came to give to the world his celebrated *Hymn to Arunachala*.

Nayana known as Vasishtha Ganapati Muni, his premier disciple, once asked him to compose some verses in Sanskrit. Bhagavan demurred saying he did not know the language for that purpose. Nayana briefly explained the construction of the *arya* metre. The “Five Gems on Arunachala” were the result. Obviously Bhagavan did not compose them; they welled out of his inner hearing in the manner of the Riks of the Seers of the Veda. The metre was perfect *arya*, the subject was an epitome of his Teaching of the direct Path to the Self, the form was a laudation of Arunachala conceived as the Self of All.

In the first verse the sage invokes the compassion and Grace of the Supreme for it is only by Grace that one is awakened to the necessity of spiritual Quest and by Grace is one enabled to pursue it to a successful culmination.

In the second, the Self — symbolised by Arunachala — is described as the sole Reality, the heart of things, the one Truth at the core of all existence.

In the third and the fourth is indicated the *sadhana*, the inner process by which this Reality is realised within oneself. Withdrawal from the outward senses and a sustained in-going of the mind with the aid of breath, culminating in the revelation of the Light of the Self, brings an utter tranquillity in the being.

In the fifth and the last verse, he celebrates the glory of Arunachala, the supreme Self which comes to be perceived everywhere by the favoured of the Grace. Dedicated to the Self, devoted exclusively to the Self, seeing only the Self, he is immersed in the Felicity that is the Self.

Nayana was ecstatic over this unexpected bounty of the Grace of Ramana. He wanted to write a commentary on these precious gems of verses but somehow it was not to be. His gifted disciple Sri Kapali Sastriar has fulfilled that wish in his commentary entitled *Sri Arunachala Pancharatna Darpanam* — a mirror faithfully reflecting the profound contents of the hymnal treasure.

Both the text and the commentary being in Sanskrit, this significant work has so far remained outside the reach of all who are not conversant with that language. The present accurate rendering in English by Sri S. Shankaranarayanan — a versatile scholar and devoted disciple of Sastriar — meets this need in an ample measure.

M. P. PANDIT

CONTEMPLATION ON SRI RAMANA

Gracious in disposition he resembles the moon who befriends the blue lotus. In lustre he compares with the Sun who claims kinship with the white lotus. In the Brahmic state, motionless, he reminds one of his father taking his abode beneath the Banyan tree. On him we contemplate.¹

Bowing, bowing down to the seat of Lights famed as Ramana, we commence the praise of the five gems of verses.

We salute the dense mass of lights, hostile to the blind darkness of *Samsara*, the embodiment exhibiting the glory of Arunachala's Compassion.

Ever since childhood, the life of this Valorous One was lit up with the thought that something great and wonderful was that denoted by Arunachala.

Just as a nurse would bring to the proximity of the father, this thought brought the boy endowed with the knowledge of his self to the presence of Arunachala.

He, now the Bhagavan Maharshi, sang on the resplendent Arunachala in the *Aryan* speech by means of five *Arya* verses.

Untrained though in the method of embellishment and metres of the Samskrit speech, by a direct perception

¹ From *Sri Ramana Gita* Chapter XIII.

and inner hearing the Sage sang, imparting the principles, though difficult to grasp, in an easily understandable way by fitting them into a lovely poetic frame.

Let us then collect succinctly the lovely wealth of import which is exposed by the glittering light of the five gems.

The invocation of Arunachala in all the five verses is to the utmost delectation of all those attached to the Supreme Self.

Tranquillity in the heart results from the grace of God. So here the first verse praises the ocean of compassion and grace.

The Self of the universe is the mainstay, the eternal; but the universe is transient. He is in the heart, he is the heart itself; these are explained in the second verse.

In the third is mentioned the supreme peace by self-realisation which results from the seeking of the 'I' within with a firm pure thought.

By abandoning the outward senses, by the control of mind and breath the *Yogi* with the inner contemplation sees the light in the Lord.

In the fourth is mentioned the glory of the great God. Thus the Bhagavan the seer, having narrated knowledge and *Yoga*, preceded by the acquisition of grace, as the means of attaining the ultimate well being, talks of supreme devotion in the final fifth verse.

Offering the heart to the Lord of All, seeing the Supreme in All, the one-pointed devotee becomes the *Siddha*; his peerless consummation is extolled.

Indicating the path traversed by himself, which led to the Supreme Self, Ramana the King of Guides thus sang in praise of the Supreme.

Elucidating the Maharshi's own story of self-fulfilment initiated through God's Grace, this laud of regal splendour holds its sway.

* * *

Now these five verses are commented upon — the verses famed as *Arunachala Pancharatnam* sung in Samskrit speech through the *Arya* metre by Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. The *Pancharatnam* is a collection of five gems of verses on Arunachala.

FIRST VERSE

करुणा पूर्ण सुधाब्धे
 कबलित घनविश्वरूप किरणाऽवल्या ।
 अरुणाचल परमात्मन्
 अरुणो भवचित्त कंजसुविकासाय ॥ १ ॥

1. Ocean of nectar, brimming with compassion, whose array of rays has the dense form of the universe for a morsel, O Arunachala, Self Supreme, be the sun for the auspicious blossoming of the heart-lotus.

Karunapurna — Full of, that is, abounding in compassion. *Sudhabdhi-Sudha* : nectar denoted by the word *Amrita*, immortality; *abdhi*, ocean; ocean of immortality which is full of compassion. The case is vocative. *Kiranaavalya* — by a wreath of rays. *Kabalita ghanavis'warupa* — the dense form of the universe has been swallowed up. The owner of the rays is called. It means that he submerges the entire universe in the flood of his own Sunlight. *Arunachalaparamatman* — Arunachala himself is the Supreme Self. He is invoked. Aruna, an attribute of the Sun connotes *Jyotis*, Light. Likewise, the knowers of the *Sthala-Purana* call this the

holy place of the *Taijasa-Linga*, the *Linga* in the form of Light. *Achala*, motionless, denotes as well *Aksara*, firm, fixed. Therefore, it is to be understood that the Supreme Self, the *Aksara Jyoti* is invoked. May that Light, immutable which is spoken of by the word *Paramatma*, Supreme Self, shine forth for the blossoming of the heart-lotus. This is the prayer in the fourth quarter of the verse. *Chittakanjasuvikasaya* — *Chitta*, heart verily is the lotus. Thou become Aruna, the Sun for the full blossoming of the heart-lotus. The heart acts as the lotus. “O Lord, thou actest as the Sun, the friend of that lotus” is the prayer.

In *Karunapurna*, compassion has in view the glance of grace. To denote the opulence with which Grace acts, the fullness of compassion has been stated. The glance of grace may be there : but an apparatus is needed so that fixed in action it may accomplish its purpose. And that is the ready accomplished Form immortal of the Supreme Self : to those who resort to it, the grace goes not in vain. Verily, immortality is the panacea for death which has its origin in grief and delusion. The term ocean is used to denote the inexhaustible, the limitless. It means that the form of the Supreme Self which is abounding with the outlook of compassion is the inexhaustible, illimitable immortality, the destroyer of death which has its origin in grief and delusion.

It was explained that by the word Arunachala the idea of *Aksara Jyoti* is conveyed. ‘Swallowed by the wreath of rays’ — by this it has to be understood that the universe is pervaded and sustained by an non-worldly splendour.

Ghanam, dense, tangible to the senses, intensely gross, almost impenetrable by Light; the dense darkness that is inside is denoted.

The form of the universe which is comprised of multifarious globes moving in this limitless expanse of the sky is taken as a mere mouthful. To signify that he consumes this universe with all the life on it by a mere part of his inborn force, '*kabalanam*' mouthful has been used.

Existing as the One Supreme Self, he is the ocean of immortality for the world which is seized with death originating from grief and delusion, and which has to be propped up by compassion; he is himself the very splendour that swallows up the universe, the unmanifest, unlit, dense, universal form which comprises of the numerous globes; motionless, he is the cause for recognising that this is he in all that moves, the witness of his own entire movements; he is the Sun for the heart which acts like the lotus — Thus the one Supreme Self being delineated in various ways as the Ocean of nectar, the very splendour, the motionless and the Sun appeals to the heart of the men of poetic tastes. This is an embellishment in Poetics called *Ullekha*. By the word *kiranaivali*, the import is extended to (by the figure of *Aksepa*) the Supernatural Sun. There is *Rupaka*, metaphor in the last quarter. Therefore, as *Rupaka* and *Ullekha* are found mixed here like sesamum and rice (that is, each distinguishable from other) the figure of speech is *Sams'rusti*. Thus, having entreated for the grace of the Supreme Self, the ocean of compassion, by the

second verse the poet establishes that it can be realised, that it can be understood as the cause of all, also its form and its name can be determined.

SECOND VERSE

त्वय्यरुणाचल सर्वम्
 भूत्वास्थित्वा प्रलीनं एतत् चित्रम् ।
 हृद्यहमित्यात्मतया
 नृत्यसि भोस्ते वदन्ति हृदयं नाम ॥ २ ॥

2. *O Arunachala, in Thee does all this come into being, get established and dissolved. Wonder! In the heart thou dancest as the I, the Self. They speak of Thy name as the Heart.*

Arunachala, O Lord, the Light immutable! *Twayi*, in thee, as the basis or support, *Etat sarvam*, this all which is seen, *citram*, this picture, *Bhutva*, having come into being, *Sthitwa*, and having itself established, *Pralinam*, becomes dissolved. Thou art he from whom the creation, sustenance and dissolution of this entire picture of the world take place. By this, the form of Supreme Self is denoted with reference to the world. By saying that all this is a picture, the import is extended to *Arunachala* as the canvas on which the picture is drawn.

To denote the distinctness of the world, the word *Jagat* has not been used. It has been pointed out as 'all this' and the qualities of a picture are imposed on it. Therefore, it follows that the picture of the world cannot be held without the canvas of the Supreme Self, *Arunachala*. We

have to say that the point of comparison between the world and the picture lies in the quality of artistic creation. A picture is drawn according to the principles of the art of portrayal. The universe is created according to the principles of the art of creation.

Another interpretation:- In thee, the immovable, all this moving universe takes birth and has an end. This is *citram, vicitram*, a wonder. Moving and unmoving are both contradictory like darkness and light. Even then, it is seen that by a special force which excels in making the impossible happen, out of thee all these rise and set. To denote that there is no material cause other than thee for the picture of the universe, *twayi*, in thee, the locative is used. Even though thy status acts as a basis and support for the picture of the multitudes of universe, thou art the instrumental cause for all that and thou shinest within everything. This is said in the latter half of the verse.

Atmata, the nature of the *Atman*. Thou with the nature of the *Atman*, dancest in the heart, in the subtle space as the 'I'. The forms *Asmi* and *Aham* are both derived from the word *Asmat*. O Lord! thou dancest incessantly in the heart as 'I am'. For that reason, thy name is the heart, so say the learned. Dance means the incessant sparkling as the 'I'. Only when the seer glows as 'I am', the vision of all this takes place. Only there the matter of seeing and not seeing the world-picture is brought about. By this is substantiated the eternal nature of the Supreme Self and the transience of the world. As long as one sees the picture of the external world, one does not get the direct vision

of the infinite form as the basis of this picture. When once the eye is turned away from seeing the picture, the infinite form which is the plank on which the picture is drawn, the absolute limitless vision alone remains. That vision is the heart, the prop of the conviction 'I am'. That is the meaning indicated by the word 'I', the Supreme Self called Arunachala, in whom the worlds rise and set and by whose dance are conducted the internal activities and the external affairs.

In the first half of the verse, it has been established that the relationship between the world and its cause Arunachala is that of a picture and its supporting base. In the second half, the relationship of the Individual soul to its refuge Arunachala is portrayed. The *Jiva* is Arunachala's own form. The status of Arunachala as the support of the world and the form of the *Jiva* confers on him the name of the heart which is the supreme sense of the word 'I'. Therefore, mention has been made of his act of dancing which is born with him. This act, some call as *Maya*; and as said in the *Gita*, deluding all beings with this *Maya*, the Lord stands in the heart.

If Arunachala who dances by the nature of the *Atman* which is the meaning of 'I' is beyond the ken of our perception, how can he be directly perceived? The means is told in the third verse.

THIRD VERSE

अहमिति कुत आयाति

अन्विष्यान्तः प्रविष्टयाऽत्यमलधिया ।

अवगम्यस्वं रूपम्

शाम्यत्यरुणाचल त्वयि नदीवाब्धौ ॥ ३ ॥

3. O Arunachala, seeking the whence of the 'I' through pure thought delving inward and grasping one's true form, one reposes in Thee as a river in the ocean.

From where does the thought or remembrance of 'I' come, or rise rather? One with very pure thought should enter within oneself, search and know the true form of 'I'; then, O Arunachala, the egoistic *Jiva* becomes extinguished in thee. The extinction of the thought of 'I' in the Supreme Self is brought out by the simile of the river merging into the ocean. For searching one's own self, here a direct *Sadhana*, needing no prop has been taught; this does not require investigation by means of the power of expressions like 'I am Brahman'. It is well-known that the fact 'I am' is a conviction to everyone; and there is none other derivable by inference than the conception of 'I-ness'. Therefore, by seeking the 'I', one gets to know oneself. The act of seeking is accomplished only by the thought of 'I'; because only that thought is employed in the perception of oneself. When the thought of 'I' is thrown into the vortex of activities, even the desire to know oneself does not arise. When the thought moves in activities and

sensory objects other than in oneself, its nature becomes impure. The thought of 'I' urged by an intense desire to know pursues the supreme purpose undeluded; pure, it begins to seek the self.

Therefore, it has been said "with very pure thought which enters within".

The sense of the word 'I' alone has to be understood in the triad of *Sadhaka*, *Sadhana* and *Siddha*. The speciality in distinctly understanding is this : The expressed meaning of the word 'I' appearing as the self has been made as the 'I'. One who desires to know one's self is the *Sadhaka*. The thought of 'I' whose nature is pure and which is intent on searching the self is the *Sadhana*. The self whose name is the heart is the mainstay of the faith of existence. Throbbing in the heart as 'I am' it is absolute, a direct experience, the implied meaning of the word 'I' which becomes self-accomplished. Thus in the beginning, middle and end of the *Sadhana* and also in the *Siddhi*, it has to be understood that the 'I' alone incessantly has the unimpaired sense. Then to make one know that the inexhaustible 'I'-sense is the resort of all activities, the simile of the ocean being the resort of rivers is mentioned. Just as there is no separate existence or activity for the river after its merging with the ocean, so also when the 'I' attains the self, the tranquillity becomes indivisible; there is no returning. In order to make one know that there are no two 'I's as I am the *Sadhaka*, I am the *Siddha* and to strengthen the fact that I am He, it has been mentioned that "one reposes knowing one's self".

This direct *Sadhana* in the form of seeking one's self is easy only for a few who are very much mature. The seeking of one's self by means of pure thought going inwards has been taught to those whose inner activities remain turned inwards, unaffected by the outer things. By the fourth verse the author teaches the *Sadhana* for those whose heart is attached to the external.

FOURTH VERSE

त्यक्तवा विषयं बाह्यम्
 रुद्ध प्राणेन रुद्ध मनसाऽन्त स्त्वाम् ।
 ध्यायन्पश्यति योगी
 दीधिति म् अरुणाचलत्वयि महीयंते ॥ ४ ॥

4. *O Arunachala, leaving the outer sensory objects, with the mind controlled by the regulation of the life-breath, contemplating on Thee within, the yogin beholds in Thee the Ray. This is Thy vast field.*

O Arunachala, the Supreme Self! the *Yogi* intent on controlling the mind by controlling the breath first leaves behind the outer sensory world of the waking consciousness. He proceeds to control the *Prana*, perhaps by means of *kumbhaka* and then takes up the mind by mind-control and concentration on thee the Supreme in the heart, he sees, realises, located in thee the Ray, the Light. *Iyam te mahi* — This, thy form of Light which can be realised by inner concentration by the *Yogis* is the field of expression for thy consciousness. The meaning is that this plane of

consciousness is thy greatness, wherein the *Yogi* who has controlled his mind and breath by concentrating on the inner self sees his true form, the light. The indrawn condition of the mind which is sullied by outer senses has to be brought about by abandoning the attachment to outer senses. The purification of *Prana* at times leads to the destruction of the attachment to the sensory objects. Therefore, the control of *Prana* has been spoken of. The *Prana* of a man, not mature, is subject to the desire of enjoyment; and the mind follows suit. Abstention from sensory objects is easily done by means of breath control. By that it is possible to control the mind as well. So the purification of breath and purification of mind are practised by the *Yogi* as a part of the *Yoga* disciplines like *Pranayama*. Impurity is nothing but the attachment to the object of senses. It is desired to get out of it. It has been said that the means is accomplished by the special strength of the *Sadhana* of mind and breath control. The thing is not accomplished by mere control of mind and breath. Therefore inner concentration has been mentioned. If the indrawn condition is by previous cultivation stronger than the drag of the senses, the control of mind to the desired extent will result without effort. It is to be understood that mind and breath aid the inner concentration; not that they are enough to know the self. If they delve deep inside only a kind of *Samadhi* known as *Laya* will result, not the knowledge of the self. That comes by directly experiencing the ultimate meaning of 'I', not by *Yogas* like *Laya* which make one forget the 'I'. Therefore with the idea that all that which makes one go to the seat

of perception of the remembrance of 'I' should be adopted as part of the *Sadhana*, the means of taking up the mind and controlling the breath is favoured by the *Yogi* full of devotion in the path of knowledge.

By saying 'he sees the Ray', it is meant that the vision of light takes place in the heart of one yoked to inner concentration ministered by purified inner instruments. This light is not of this world. It lights up the meaning of 'I' in the 'I am' constantly throbbing in the heart which is the form of Arunachala, the Supreme Self. Here one should not suspect the outcome of duality as a result of the difference between the sight and the seen. The light in the heart which is reached by inner concentration is not different from the Self. The throbbing of 'I' is of course different from the revolving of 'I'. One should know that concentrating on its own form, the revolving 'I' culminates in the throbbing 'I'. It has to be understood that the difference is in revolving and in throbbing, not in the 'I-ness'. Again, the vision of light is not different from the vision of self. And vision is direct realisation. Before the accomplishment of the thing, the vision of light happens only in the heart, in the Supreme Self for one who concentrates. The usage of "Sees in thee" strengthens the conclusion that in the heart are reconciled the duality implied in the one who concentrates and the object of concentration. By *Iyam te mahi* it has been shown that the world of light attainable by the concentration of *Yogis* belongs to Arunachala whose true form is infinite consciousness.

The experience becomes established for the man with one-pointed devotion and endowed with Self-Realisation

that the universe is not different from his own Self. Then within and outside him, the infinite Self is directly perceived. The poet describes the condition and glory of such a perfected being in the fifth gem of a verse.

FIFTH VERSE

त्वय्यर्पितमनसात्वाम्
 पश्यन्सर्वं तवाकृति तया सततम् ।
 भजतेऽनन्य प्रीत्या
 सजयत्यरुणाचल त्वयि सुखे मग्नः ॥

5. *O Arunachala, whoever resorts to Thee with sole love, his mind surrendered to Thee and always seeing all things as Thy form, immersed in Thee, the Felicity, he reigns supreme.*

O Arunachala! Consecrating the mind, the inner instrument to Thee, the Supreme Self and seeing incessantly in time and place the entire universe as thy form, whosoever takes refuge in thee in exclusive satisfaction, with one-pointed devotion, such a person purified and deeply immersed in the Delight that is thee, is victorious. That perfected being reigns supreme as a *Mukta*, as one released, even as he lives. In him the human birth finds its supreme fulfilment. His mind entirely consecrated to the Supreme Self manifests not different from that. His eye sees everywhere the infinite form of the Supreme Self. Within or without, he, directly perceiving the Self serves the Self, sporting in the Self and reigns supreme, immersed in the form of infinite Bliss.

May the author of the five gems of verses on the five faced (Arunachala) be to the weal of the whole world! May Ramana, the Guide, the Lord of those who master the Self reign victorious, yea, reign victorious!

This word of Ramana is that of a Rishi, Seer; verily *Sruti* in another guise. This laud is an ornament to *Vedanta*, bringing delight to those who desire the release.

Its auspicious sense is stimulating to the minds of different tastes. It points out the way to conclude all arguments of duality, non-duality and the like.

By knowledge, Devotion or Yoga by whichever path one aspires for the Supreme State, to him this resolves all conflicts and shows the path of harmony.

To him whose mind is firm on the triad of Devotion, Devotee and the Lord, this verily is a *kalpaka* (wish-fulfilling) creeper accomplishing the sole purpose of worship.

If your mind is set on worship by means of surrender and placing your burden at the feet of the Lord, well, friend, the secret is here; behold and betake to it.

If you are thinking of the threefold classification of *Pati*, *Pasu* and *Pasa*, the truth of the matter is pointed out here; knowing, you will get release from Bondage (*Pasa*).

Or you may make a twofold division of the Ultimate Supreme as Hara and Hari. The terminations alone differ, the root not at all.

Brother, do not let doubt afflict you regarding the Supreme Thing. Seeking the one who doubts, surely you merge in the Supreme.

If you are afraid that by such merging in the form of the Supreme Self, you will be lost, know that the ghost of the 'I' thought is the mother of this fear.

By seeking the 'I', all this delusion takes to heels. Then steadily established in one's self, released from the bondage even as one lives, one will reign supreme.

If you are unable to seek your self, resort to one Superior who has realised his self. His pervading lustre will enlighten those who approach him.

These words of Bhagavan the Sage in the form of the *Pancharatna Stava* are devoted to doing utmost good. Let them hold supreme sway as long as the sun and moon do so.

This slender commentary on the *Pancharatna* is done brief in compass. It goes to the heart of things and draws its nourishment from the laud of the Master.

Here, the crooked path is avoided; the straight and right meaning is sensed; and it is reflected like the orb of the sun in a clear mirror.

It was the desire of the revered Master to write this commentary; but it was not fulfilled during his lifetime. It is now done by his disciple who has got reflected in him the Glory of the Master.

By Kapali of graceful speech, who knows the taste of the nectar in the lotus feet of Ramana and disciple of Kavyakantha Sage, by one who serves even him that serves at Ramana's lotus feet, this commentary is written. May it be to the satisfaction of the good in the same way a virtuous woman would be to her lover.

Rich with the essence of Silence, the Maharshi's lotus feet nourish the lights and steal away the darkness in my heart with lovely rays laden with the sweetness of Grace. May this *Pancharatna Darpana* (Mirror to the five gems of verses) be a worthy offering at those feet.

This is the commentary on the Five Gems called *Mirror to the Five Gems*, work of:

**KAPALI BHARADWAJA, SON OF VISHVESHWARA
AND DISCIPLE OF THE REVERED
VASISHTHA GANAPATI MUNI,
BLESSED BY THE REVERED
MAHARSHI RAMANA.**