

# Who am I?

An English translation of *Nan Yar?*  
By Sri Sadhu Om

## INTRODUCTION

In the years 1901 to 1902, when Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was living in Virupaksha cave on the Holy Hill Arunachala, a devotee by name Sri M. Sivaprakasam Pillai was attracted to Him and approached Him with a number of questions. Sri Bhagavan, who was at that time talking very little, not because of a vow but because He had no inclination to talk, answered most of his questions by writing either in the sand, on a plate or on scraps of paper. The teachings which Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai thus received were first published in 1923 in question and answer form under the title *Nan Yar?* (Who am I?). Soon afterwards, Sri Bhagavan Himself rearranged and rewrote these questions and answers in an essay form, thus making *Nan Yar?* into a connected and coherent exposition.

In addition to the question and answer version containing twenty-eight questions, which is nowadays published as a separate booklet, there is another version containing only fourteen questions, which is printed in *Sri Ramana Vijayam* (a Tamil biography of Sri Bhagavan), and an English translation of which is given in *Self-Realisation*. However, it is only the essay version of this work that is included in *Sri Ramana Nutrirattu* (the Tamil collected work of Sri Ramana), and since this version was prepared by Sri Bhagavan Himself, it is to be considered as the principal, authentic and authoritative version.

The essay version was based largely upon the version containing twenty-eight questions and answers, but while preparing it Sri Bhagavan newly wrote and added some portions (such as the whole of the first paragraph), omitted other portions (such as the answers to questions 4 and 5, the first sentence of the answer to question 6, parts of the answer to question 20, and so on) and modified, expanded and improved other portions (such as the answer to question 27). However, most of the sentences He did not change at all, but simply rearranged the ideas and connected them in a more logical and coherent order.

The first question asked by Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai was, “*Nan Yar?*” (Who am I?), to which Bhagavan replied, “*Arive nan*”, which means “Knowledge alone is I”, the Tamil word “*arivu*” being approximately equivalent to the Sanskrit word “*jnana*” or the English word “knowledge”. Sivaprakasam Pillai then asked, “What is the nature of (this) knowledge?”, and Sri Bhagavan answered, “*Arivin swarupam sat-chit-anandam*” (The

nature of this knowledge is existence-consciousness-bliss). Except these two answers, the whole of the second paragraph was not part of the replies actually given by Sri Bhagavan. Therefore, when the manuscript of this work was first brought to Him by Sri Manikkam Pillai, the disciple of Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai, He asked with wonder, “I did not give this portion, how did it find place here?”<sup>1</sup> “When Sivaprakasam Pillai was copying Bhagavan’s answers in his notebook, he added this portion thinking it would help him to understand that first answer more clearly”, explained Manikkam Pillai. “Oh yes, he was already familiar with the scriptural teaching ‘*neti, neti*’, and for that reason he would have thought so”, remarked Sri Bhagavan. Later, while preparing the essay version, Sri Bhagavan did not, however, omit this added portion, but simply marked His own answers in bold type.

Among all the prose works of Sri Bhagavan, *Nan Yar?* holds a place of undisputed an unequalled prominence. Indeed, it may be regarded as the very corner-stone of Sri Bhagavan’s teachings, for within these twenty brief paragraphs all His basic teachings are summarized in a clear and undiluted fashion. Therefore, on account of the importance of this work, for which we owe a great debt of gratitude to Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai<sup>2</sup>, an English translation is given here.

While preparing this translation, an attempt has been made to make it as precise and as faithful to the original Tamil as possible, even if at times this had to be at the expense of an elegant style of English. The division of the text into paragraphs and sentences, and the order of the sentences, corresponds exactly to the original, and as far as possible the structure of each sentence is of the same form as that in the original. All the portions which are printed in bold in the original are also in bold in this translation, while other key sentences which are not in bold in Tamil have here been printed in italics. In the whole of the original text, only one word is within brackets, namely, in the fourth paragraph, the word “shines” (*prakasikkum*) after the word “Self appears”. All other portions which are within brackets in this translation have been included either to indicate the exact Tamil or Sanskrit word used in the original, or to make the meaning of the text more clear, or to complete the sense of a sentence which, when literally translated, does not form a complete or distinctly intelligible sentence in English. The footnotes have similarly been added in the translation and none of them are in the original. While translating, all the other existing translations of this work have also been closely compared in order that none of their good points (such as appropriate words, formations of sentences, and so on) should be missed in this translation.

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<sup>1</sup> Since the nature of Sri Bhagavan is to avoid using the obscure terminology of the scriptures (*sastras*) and thereby confusing the reader, He would not have liked to mention all the scriptural classifications of the non-Self given in this portion.

<sup>2</sup> The reader may be interested to hear the following incident, which indicates that this sincere and whole-hearted disciple attained the goal for which he so earnestly sought. When, in 1948, a telegram was brought to Sri Bhagavan conveying the news of the passing away of Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai, He remarked, “*Sivaprakasam sivaprakasamanar*”, which means “Sivaprakasam has become *Siva-prakasam*, the light of Siva!”

## TEXT

Since all living beings (*jivas*) desire to be happy always, without any misery, since in everyone supreme love (*parama priyam*) exist only for oneself, and since happiness alone is the cause of love, in order to obtain that happiness, which is one's very nature and which is experienced daily in deep sleep, where there is no mind, it is necessary for one to know oneself. For that, **enquiry (*jnana vichara*) in the form "Who am I?" alone is the principal means (*mukhya sadhana*).**

**Who am I?** The gross body, which is composed of the seven *dhatus* (chyle, blood, flesh, fat, marrow, bone and semen), is not "I". The five sense organs (*jnanendriyas*), namely the ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose, which individually and respectively know the five sense-knowleges (*vishayas*), namely sound, touch, sight, taste and smell, are not "I". The five organs of action (*karmendriyas*), namely the mouth, legs, hands, anus, and genitals, the functions of which are (respectively) speaking, walking, giving, excreting and enjoying, are not "I". The five vital airs such as *prana*, which perform the five vital functions such as respiration, are not "I". Even the mind, which thinks, is not "I". Even the ignorance (of deep sleep), in which only the latent tendencies towards sense-knowleges (*vishaya-vasanas*) remain and which is devoid of all sense knowleges and all actions, is not "I". After negating as "not I, not I" all that is mentioned above, the **knowledge** which remains alone, **itself is "I". The nature of (*this*) knowledge is existence-consciousness-bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*).**

If the mind, which is the cause (and base) of all knowledge (all objective knowledge) and all action, subsides, the perception of the world (*jagat-drishti*) will cease. Just as the knowledge of the rope, which is the base, will not be obtained unless the knowledge of the snake, the superimposition, goes, so the realization of the Self (*swarupa-darsanam*), which is the base, will not be obtained unless the perception of the world (*jagat-drishti*), which is a superimposition, ceases.

What is called mind (*manam*) is a wondrous power existing in the Self (*atma-swarupam*). It projects all thoughts. If we set aside all thoughts and see, there will be no such things as mind remaining separate; therefore, thought itself is the nature (or form) of the mind. Other than thoughts, there is no such thing as the world. In deep sleep there are no thoughts, (and hence) there is no world; in waking and dream there are thoughts, (and hence) there is the world also. Just as the spider spins out the thread from within itself and again withdraws it into itself, so the mind projects the world from within itself and again absorbs it into itself. When the mind comes out (rises) from the Self, the world appears. Therefore, when the world appears, Self will not appear; and when Self appears (shines), the world will not appear. If one

goes on scrutinizing the nature of the mind, it will finally be found that “oneself” alone is (what is now mistaken to be) the mind. What is (here) called “oneself” (*tan*) is verily Self (*atma-swarupam*). The mind can exist only by always depending upon something gross (that is, only by always identifying a gross name-and-form, a body, as “I”); by itself it cannot stand. It is the mind alone that is called the subtle body (*sukshma sarira*) or soul (*jiva*).

That which rises in this body as “I” (“I am this body”) is the mind. If one enquires “In which place in the body does the thought ‘I’ rise first?”, it will be known to be in the heart (*hridayam*)<sup>3</sup>. That is the source (literally, birth-place) of the mind. *Even if one incessantly thinks “I, I”, it will lead to that place* (our true state, Self). Of all the thoughts that rise in the mind, **the thought “I”** (the feeling “I am the body”) **is the first thought**. It is only after the rising of this that all other thoughts rise. It is only after the rising of the first person (the subject, “I”, whose form is the feeling “I am this body” or “I am so-and-so”) that the second and third persons (the objects, “you”, “he”, “she”, “it”, “this”, “that”, and so on) appear; without the first person, the second and third persons will not exist.

*The mind will subside only by means of the enquiry “Who am I?”*. The thought “Who am I?” (which is but a means for turning our attention Selfwards), destroying all other thoughts, will itself finally be destroyed like the stick used for stirring the funeral pyre. If other thoughts rise (thereby indicating that Self-attention is lost), one should, without attempting to complete them, enquire “To whom did they rise?”. What does it matter however many thoughts rise? (The means to set aside thought-attention and regain Self-attention is as follows: ) At the very moment that each thought rises, if one vigilantly enquires “To whom did this rise?”, it will be known “To me”. If one then enquires “Who am I?”, the mind (our power of attention) will turn back (from the thought) to its source (Self); (then, since no one is there to attend to it) the thought which had risen will also subside. *By repeatedly practising thus, the power of the mind to abide in its source increases*. When the mind (the attention), which is subtle, goes out through the brain and sense-organs

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<sup>3</sup> As a general rule, whenever Sri Bhagavan uses the word “place” (*idam*), He is referring to our true state, Self, rather than to a place limited by time and space. This is confirmed in the next paragraph of this work, where He says, “The place (*idam*) where even the slightest trace of the thought “I” does not exist, alone is Self (*swarupam*)”. Therefore, when He says in this sentence, “If one enquires ‘In which place in the body...’”, what He in fact expects us to do is to enquire “From what?”, in which case the answer will not be a place in the body, but only “we”, Self, the truly existing Thing (refer to pages 109 to 110 of *The Path of Sri Ramana, Part One*). Hence, as Sri Bhagavan Himself often explained, the true import of the word “heart” (*hridayam*) is not a limited place in the body, but only the unlimited Self (refer to *Upadesa Manjari*, chapter two, answer to question 9). However, since the mind or ego can rise only by identifying a body as “I”, a place for its rising can also be pointed out in the body, “two digits to the right from the centre of the chest”, though of course such a place can never be the absolute reality.

(which are gross), the names-and-forms (the objects of the world), which are gross, appear; when it abides in the heart (its source, Self), the names-and-forms disappear. Keeping the mind in the heart (through the above-described means of fixing our attention in Self), not allowing it to go out, alone is called “Selfwardness” (*ahamkham*) or “introversion” (*antarmukham*). Allowing it to go out from the heart alone is called “extroversion” (*bahirmukham*). When the mind thus abides in the heart, the “I” (the thought “I”, the ego), which is the root of all thoughts, having vanished, the ever-existing **Self** alone will shine. The place (or state) where even the slightest trace of the thought “I” does not exist, alone is Self (*swarupam*). That alone is called silence (*maunam*). To be still (*summa irupadu*) in this manner alone is called “seeing through (the eye of) knowledge” (*jnana-drishti*). To be still is to make the mind subside in Self (through Self-attention). Other than this, knowing the thoughts of others, knowing the three times (past, present and future), knowing events in distant places – all these can never be *jnana-drishti*.

What really exists is Self (*atma-swarupam*) alone. The world, soul and God are superimpositions in It like the silver in the mother-of-pearl; these three appear simultaneously and disappear simultaneously. Self itself is the world; Self itself is “I” (the soul); Self itself is God; all is the Supreme Self (*siva-swarupam*).

*To make the mind subside, there is no adequate means other than enquiry (vichara). If controlled by other means, the mind will remain as if subsided, but will rise again.* Even by breath-control (*pranayama*) the mind will subside; however, the mind will remain subsided only so long as the breath (*prana*) remains subsided, and when the *prana* comes out the mind will also come out and wander under the sway of tendencies (*vasanas*). The source of the mind and of the *prana* is one and the same. Thought itself is the nature of the mind. The thought “I” is indeed the first thought of the mind; that itself is the ego (*ahamkara*). From where the ego originates, from there alone the breath also rises. Therefore, when the mind subsides the *prana* will also subside, and when the *prana* subsides the mind will also subside. But in deep sleep (*sushupti*), although the mind subsides, the *prana* does not subside. It is arranged thus by God’s plan for the protection of the body and so that others may not mistake the body to be dead. When the mind subsides in the waking state and in Self-absorption (*samadhi*), the *prana* subsides. The *prana* is the gross form of the mind. Till the time of death, the mind keeps the *prana* in the body, and when the body dies, the mind forcibly carries away the *prana*. Therefore, *pranayama* is a mere aid for controlling the mind, but will not bring about the destruction of the mind (*mano-nasa*).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Since the mind is able to carry away the *prana* forcibly at the time of death, we have to understand that the *prana* is less powerful than the mind. That is why Sri Bhagavan says that *pranayama* is merely an aid for controlling the mind, but that it cannot bring about the destruction of the mind. If,

Just like the *pranayama*, meditation upon a form of God (*murti-dhyana*), repetition of sacred words (*mantra-japa*) and regulation of diet (*ahara-niyama*) are mere aids for controlling the mind (but will never by themselves bring about its destruction). Through *murti-dhyana* and through *mantra-japa*, the mind gains one-pointedness (*ekagram*). Just as when a chain is given to an elephant to hold in its trunk, which is always wandering (here and there trying to catch hold of things), that elephant will go along holding only the chain instead of trying to catch any other thing, so also when the mind, which is always wandering, is trained to hold on to any one name or form (of God), it will only cling to that. Because the mind branches out into innumerable thoughts, each thought becomes very weak. As thoughts subside more and more, one-pointedness is gained, and for the mind which has thereby gained strength, Self-enquiry (*atma-vichara*) will easily be attained.<sup>5</sup> Through *mita sattvika ahara-niyama*<sup>6</sup>, which is the best of all regulations, the *sattvic* quality of the mind, having been increased, becomes an aid to Self-enquiry.

Although tendencies towards sense-objects (*vishaya-vasanas*), which have been recurring down the ages, rise in countless number like the waves of the ocean, they will all perish as Self-attention (*swarupa-dhyana*) becomes more and more intense. Without giving room even to the doubting thought, “Is it possible to destroy all these tendencies (*vasanas*) and to remain as Self alone?”, one should persistingly cling fast to Self-attention. However great a sinner one may be, if, not lamenting “Oh, I am a sinner! How can I attain salvation?” but completely giving up even the thought that one is a sinner, one is steadfast in Self-attention, one will surely be saved<sup>7</sup>.

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on the other hand, the mind is controlled (made to subside) through Self-enquiry (*atma-vichara*) and right knowledge (*jnana*), that alone will be sufficient, and we need not then bother about controlling the *prana*.

<sup>5</sup> The reader may here refer to pages 73-76 (of *The Path of Sri Ramana, Part One*), where it is explained precisely in which manner the practice of *japa* and *dhyana* may be an aid, making it easy to attain Self-abidance, which is Self-enquiry. In this context, we would also do well to remember the following instruction of Sri Bhagavan: “One should not use the name (or form) of God mechanically and superficially, without the feeling of devotion (*bhakti*). To use the name of God, one must call upon Him with yearning and unreservedly surrender to Him.” (*Maharshi's Gospel*, Book One, chapter four).

<sup>6</sup> *Mita sattvika ahara-niyama* means regulating one's diet by taking only moderate quantities of food (*mita ahara*) and by strictly avoiding non-*sattvic* foods, that is, all non-vegetarian foods such as eggs, fish and meat, all intoxicants such as alcohol and tobacco, excessively pungent, sour and salty tastes, excess of onions and garlicks, and so on. Furthermore, the Sanskrit word “*ahara*” means “that which is taken in”, so in a broader sense *ahara-niyama* means not only regulation of diet, but also regulation of all that is taken in by the mind through the five senses.

<sup>7</sup> The Tamil Word used here is “*uruppaduvam*”, which in an ordinary sense means “will be properly shaped”, “will be reformed” or “will succeed in one's endeavour”, but in a deeper sense means “will attain Self” (*uru* = Self or *swarupa*; *paduvam* = will attain or will be establish in).

As long as there are tendencies towards sense-objects (*vishaya-vasanas*) in the mind, so long the enquiry “Who am I?” is necessary. As and when thoughts rise, one should annihilate all of them through enquiry then and there in their very place of origin. Not attending to what-is-other (*anya*, that is, to any second or third person object) is non-attachment (*vairagya*) or desirelessness (*nirasa*); not leaving Self is knowledge (*jnana*). In truth, these two (desirelessness and knowledge) are one and the same. Just as a pearl-diver, tying a stone to his waist, dives into the sea and takes the pearl lying at the bottom, so everyone, diving deep within himself with non-attachment (*vairagya*), can attain the pearl of Self. If one resorts uninterruptedly to Self-remembrance (*swarupa-smaranai*, that is, remembrance of or attention to the mere feeling “I”) until one attains Self, that alone will be sufficient. As long as there are enemies within the fort, they will continue to come out. If one continues to cut all of them as and when they come, the fort will fall into our hands.

God and Guru are in truth not different. Just as the prey that has fallen into the jaws of a tiger cannot escape, so those who have come under the glance of the Guru’s Grace will surely be saved and will never be forsaken; yet, one should follow without fail the path shown by the Guru.

*Remaining firmly in Self-abidance (atma-nistha), without giving even the least room to the rising of any thought other than the thought of Self (atma-chintanai)<sup>8</sup>, is surrendering oneself to God.* However much burden we throw on God, He bears all of it. Since the one Supreme Ruling Power (*parameswara sakti*) is performing all activities, why should we, instead of yielding ourselves to it, constantly think, “I should act in this way; I should act in that way”? When we know the train is bearing all the burdens, why should we who travel in it, instead of placing even our small luggage in it and being happily at ease, suffer by bearing it (our luggage) on our own head?

What is called happiness (*sukham*) is but the nature of Self; happiness and Self are not different. Self-happiness (*atma-sukham*) alone exists; that alone is real. There is no happiness at all in even a single one of the things of the world. We think we derive happiness from them on account of our wrong discrimination (*aviveka*). When the mind comes out, it experiences misery (*duhkam*). In truth, whenever our thoughts (desires) are fulfilled, the mind, turning back to its source (Self), experiences Self-happiness alone. Similarly, during the time of sleep, Self-

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<sup>8</sup> “The thought of Self” (*atma-chintanai*) means only Self-attention. Though Sri Bhagavan here uses the word “thought” (*chintanai*) to denote Self-attention, it is to be understood that Self-attention is not a mental activity. Attending to Self is nothing but abiding as Self, and hence it is not a “doing” but “being”, that is, it is not a mental activity but our natural state of mere existence. Refer to the first benedictory verse of *Ulladu Narpadu* (quoted on page 94 of *The Path of Sri Ramana, Part One*), in which Sri Bhagavan has revealed that the correct way to “think of” (meditate upon) Self is to abide in Self as Self.

absorption (*samadhi*) and swoon, and when the things that we like are obtained and when evil befalls the things that we dislike, the mind becomes introverted and experiences Self-happiness alone. In this way the mind wanders without rest, going out leaving the Self, and (then again) returning within. Under the tree, the shade is delightful. Outside, the sun's heat is scorching. A person who is wandering outside reaches the shade and is cooled. After a while he starts out, but, unable to bear the scorching of the heat, comes again under the tree. In this way, he is engaged in going from the shade into the hot sunshine, and coming back from the hot sunshine into the shade. He who acts in this manner is a person lacking discrimination (*aviveki*). But a person of discrimination (*viveki*) will never leave the shade. Similarly, the mind of the Sage (*jnani*) never leaves *Brahman* (that is, Self). But the mind of the ignorant one (*ajnani*) is such that wandering in the world it suffers, and turning back to *Brahman* for a while enjoys happiness. What is called the world is nothing but thought. When the world disappears, that is, when there is no thought, the mind experiences bliss (*ananda*); when the world appears, it experiences misery.

Just as in the mere presence of the sun, which rises without desire (*ichcha*), intention (*sankalpa*) or effort (*yatnam*), the sun-stone (the magnifying lens) emits fire, the lotus blossoms, water evaporates and people begin, perform and stop their work, and just as in front of a magnet the needle moves, so it is through the mere influence of the presence of God, who is without intention (*sankalpa*), that the souls (*jivas*), who are governed by the three divine functions (*muttozhi*) or five divine functions (*panchakrityas*)<sup>9</sup>, perform and stop their activities in accordance with their respective *karmas* (that is, in accordance not only with their *prarabdha karma* or destiny, but also with their *purva karma-vasanas* or former tendencies towards action). Nevertheless, He (God) is not one who has intention (*sankalpa*). Not even a single action (*karma*) will affect (literally, touch) Him. That is like the actions in the world not affecting the sun, and like the good and bad qualities of the other four elements (namely earth, water, air and fire) not affecting the all-pervading space (the fifth element).

Since it is said in all the scriptures that in order to attain liberation (*mukti*) one should control<sup>10</sup> the mind, after coming to know that mind-control (*mano-nigraha*)

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<sup>9</sup> According to the different classifications given in scriptures, the divine functions are said to be three, namely creation (*srishhti*), sustenance (*sthiri*) and destruction (*samhara*), or five, namely these three plus veiling (*tirodhana*) and Grace (*anugraha*).

<sup>10</sup> The Tamil Word used here by Sri Bhagavan for "control" is "*adakku*", which literally means "make subside" or "make cease from activity". Such control (*adakkam*) or subsidence (*odukkam*) may be either temporary (*mano-laya* or temporary subsidence of mind) or permanent (*mano-nasa* or complete destruction of the mind), as said by Sri Bhagavan in verse 13 of *Upadesa Undhiyar*. In this context, however, the word "control" (*adakku*) means only "destroy", for Sri Bhagavan has revealed in verse 40 of *Ulladu Narpadu* that destruction of the ego (or mind) alone is liberation.

alone is the final decision (injunction) of the scriptures, to read the scriptures unlimitedly is fruitless. In order to control the mind, it is necessary to enquire who one is, (then) how, instead (of enquiring thus within oneself) to enquire (and know who one is) in the scriptures? One should know oneself through one's own eye of knowledge (*jnana-kan*). For Rama to know himself to be Rama, is a mirror necessary? "Oneself"<sup>11</sup> is within the five sheaths (*pancha kosas*); whereas the scriptures are outside them. Therefore, enquiring in the scriptures about oneself, who is to be enquired into (attended to) setting aside even the five sheaths, is futile. Enquiring "Who am I that am in bondage?" and knowing one's real nature (*swarupam*) alone is liberation (*mukti*). *Always keeping the mind* (the attention) *fixed in Self* (in the feeling "I") *alone is called "Self-enquiry"* (atma-vichara); whereas meditation (*dhyana*) is thinking oneself to be the Absolute (*brahman*), which is existence-consciousness-bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*). All that one has learnt will at one time have to be forgotten.

Just as is fruitless for one to scrutinize the garbage which is to be collectively thrown away, so it is fruitless for one who is to know himself to count the number and scrutinize the properties of the *tattvas* (the principles that constitute the world, soul and God) which are veiling oneself, instead of collectively casting all of them aside<sup>12</sup>. One should consider the universe (one's whole life in this world) to be like a dream.

Except that waking is long and dream is short<sup>13</sup>, there is no difference (between the two). To the extent to which all the events which happen in waking appear to be real, to that same extent even the events which happen in dream appear at that time to be real. In dream, the mind assumes another body. In both waking and

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<sup>11</sup> In this context, the Word "oneself" (*tan*) denotes the ego, which identifies the five sheaths as "I" and "my place", rather than Self, which is beyond all limitations such as "in" and "out". Just as Rama does not need a mirror in order to know that the body called "Rama" is himself, since the feeling "I am Rama, this body" is within that body, so we do not need scriptures to know that we exist, since the feeling of our existence is not within the scriptures but only within the five sheaths, which are now felt to be "I". Therefore, in order to know who we are, we must attend not to the scriptures, which are outside the five sheaths, but only to the feeling "I", which is within the five sheaths. Moreover, since the five sheaths are veiling our true nature, even they are to be set aside (left unattended to) when we thus enquire into (attend to) ourself.

<sup>12</sup> From the opinion of Sri Bhagavan expressed in this sentence, the reader can now understand why it was said in the first footnote of the introduction [page 2, footnote 1], "...He would not have liked to mention all the scriptural classifications of the non-Self (the *tattvas* which are veiling our true nature) given in this portion".

<sup>13</sup> Though Sri Bhagavan says that waking is long and dream is short, He reveals the actual truth in verse 560 of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, where He says: "The answer 'Waking is long and dream is short' was given as a mere (formal) reply to the questioner. (In truth, however, no such difference exists, because, since time itself is a mental conception,) the conception of differences in time (such as "long" and "short") appears to be true only because of the deceitful play of *maya*, the mind."

dream, thoughts and names-and-forms (objects) come into existence simultaneously (and hence there is no difference between these two states).

There are not two minds, a good mind and a bad mind. The mind is only one. Tendencies (*vasanas*) alone are of two kinds, auspicious (*subha*) and inauspicious (*asubha*). When the mind is under the influence of auspicious tendencies it is called a good mind, and when it is under the influence of inauspicious tendencies, a bad mind. However bad others may appear to be, one should not dislike them. Likes and dislikes are both to be disliked. One should not allow the mind to dwell much upon worldly matters. As far as possible, one should not interfere in the affairs of others. All that one gives to others, one gives only to oneself. If this truth is known, who indeed will not give to others?

If oneself (the ego) rises, all will rise; if oneself subsides, all will subside. To the extent to which we behave humbly, to that extent (and that extent only) will good result. If one can remain controlling the mind (keeping the mind subsided), one can live anywhere.