

# The Maharshi

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## Muruganar In His Own Words – A Journey of Devotion, Surrender and Realisation by Hari Moorthy

*The life of Sri Muruganar was highlighted by his total surrender to his guru Sri Ramana and by his praise of his Lord in the form of exquisite Tamil verses that poured forth spontaneously in an unending cascade. These verses encapsulate in pristine form the teachings of Sri Bhagavan. With the release of this new work, Muruganar In His Own Words, written by Sri Hari Moorthy and published by Sri Ramanasramam, we are offered inspiring and illuminating insights into the life of this great devotee and the grace and compassion of his guru. The prevailing cultural events which influenced Sri Muruganar's journey, and the friendship and support of fellow devotees are also meticulously detailed. The following is an excerpt from the chapter titled, "Inner Turmoil and Journey to Resolution". We are thankful to Sri Hari Moorthy for bringing forward this captivating work and sharing with us some heretofore untranslated verses of Sri Muruganar which will be undoubtedly a boon to all devotees.*

Muruganar embarked on a transformative journey and achieved perfect clarity at the feet of Bhagavan. Following their initial meeting, his inner conflicts gradually dissolved, and his mind grew stronger in Bhagavan's presence. Muruganar firmly decided not to praise any other human or seek another guru for spiritual guidance besides Bhagavan. With this resolution, his attraction to the nationalistic movement waned. While he maintained utmost respect for Gandhi, his primary pull remained directed towards Bhagavan.

When Muruganar presented the initial set of twelve verses, Bhagavan Sri Ramana recognized Muruganar's exceptional talent in composing poetry, reminiscent of the legendary ancient Tamil literary and devotional poets. Following his initial visit, Muruganar returned to see Bhagavan on several occasions. During one of these visits, Bhagavan commented that if Muruganar continued to compose in a similar manner, he could potentially create a treatise akin to Tiruvassagam. Deeply humbled by this statement, Muruganar perceived it as a divine sign

from his Sadguru and embarked on a journey of composing verses dedicated to Bhagavan from that moment onward.

Reflecting on why Muruganar composed<sup>1</sup> so many verses in praise of Bhagavan, he wrote the following verse:

ஊன மகன்ற ஒளிசே ரனுபவமெய்ஞ்  
ஞான மணங்கமழ்செந் நாவினால் – மோனவருட்  
பார்வையா லாண்டகுரு பாதானு பூதிசொலல்  
சேவையாத் தேறுகின் றேன்.

Meaning: Removing the evil mind, his light shone as wisdom, which is the experience of the Self. Such an experience is bestowed upon me because of my Lord's (Ramana's) gracious gaze. I sing his praises through my words, as my sole service and the purpose of my life.

In this verse, Muruganar articulates an important spiritual transformation and the central role that

1. Verse number 20 in Sri Ramana Jnana Bodham, Volume 3.

Bhagavan Ramana played in it. The phrase “removing the evil mind” signifies the purification of one's consciousness from the impurities of worldly desires, attachments, and egoic tendencies. More importantly, his conflict completely disappeared under Bhagavan's gaze.

When Muruganar states, “his light shone as wisdom, which is the experience of the Self,” he is describing a state of realization where the seeker's inner light, representing divine wisdom and Self-awareness, becomes fully illuminated. It signifies the direct realization of one's true nature as the eternal, unchanging, and interconnected Self beyond the egoic identity.

The line, “Such an experience is bestowed upon me because of my Lord's gracious gaze,” underscores the role of the guru or spiritual teacher in guiding the disciple towards Self-realization. Bhagavan Ramana's mere presence had a transformative effect on many devotees, and Muruganar acknowledges that it was through Bhagavan's benevolent gaze that he was blessed with this spiritual experience.

This verse culminates with Muruganar's resolute dedication to his life's purpose: extolling the virtues of Bhagavan Ramana through his poetic expressions. This act of devotion and expression of gratitude serve as his primary offerings, vividly highlighting the great influence Bhagavan had on his life. In these verses, Muruganar masterfully encapsulates the essence of the guru-disciple relationship and the inner transformation brought about by the benevolent gaze of a guru. Although Muruganar never underwent formal initiation as a Hindu monk, permanently relocating to Tiruvannamalai in 1926<sup>2</sup> to live in close proximity to his Guru, Bhagavan Sri Ramana, marked the beginning of Muruganar's new life. He made a solemn commitment to compose exclusively on the subject of Sri Bhagavan and vowed never to worship or pray to any other deity. Until his passing in 1973, he lived as a mendicant, preferring to be recognized as a devoted follower of Bhagavan Sri Ramana above all other titles or accolades.

Upon entering the proximity of Bhagavan Sri Ramana, he dedicated every ounce of his inner attention to him and was blessed with Sri Bhagavan's Grace. His initial collection of verses was published under the title *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai* in 1933, comprising 1851 Tamil verses, totaling well over

14,000 lines, all in praise of Bhagavan Sri Ramana. Subsequently, he continued to compose over 28,000 verses, all dedicated to the singular praise of Sri Bhagavan. In many instances, he would question, “Why should I contemplate praising anyone but you, O Ramana, for you are the embodiment of *Sat Chit Ananda*?”

Muruganar's literary prowess stands on par with the finest poets in Tamil Bhakti literature, a fact subtly acknowledged by Bhagavan Sri Ramana in more than one instance. He composed thousands upon thousands of Tamil verses, with Sri Bhagavan as his sole subject. We are fortunate to have many thousands of these verses in our possession, but we have also lost many more, for they were not written with the intention of being read by others.

In certain instances, Muruganar did not feel the need to preserve these verses; the poetic flow came to him naturally, driven solely by the presence of Sri Bhagavan, or more precisely, the inner Sri Bhagavan residing in the lotus of Muruganar's heart. He would write such verses on a slate with chalk, and when the next verse came to him, he would simply erase the previous one to write the next.

Muruganar held a steady conviction that he did not write any of these verses about Bhagavan. Muruganar realized that these verses were authored by Bhagavan, about Bhagavan, with Muruganar merely serving as a medium through which these verses were penned. He saw himself as nothing more than an instrument carrying out the will of his inner Bhagavan. Bhagavan, on his part, took care of Muruganar at every step of his journey.

To illustrate Muruganar's devotion and Bhagavan's grace, there is an exemplary incident we have learned of through a biography on Muruganar authored by Smt. T.R. Kanakammal.

Muruganar decided to engage in begging to earn his food, firmly believing that it would help diminish his ego. This meant there were days when he might go without food, as he couldn't always undertake a begging round. On one such occasion, when Muruganar was fasting due to not begging, it

2. According to Smt. T.R. Kanakammal's book, the year is recorded as 1926 for Muruganar's move to Tiruvannamalai permanently. However, Kunjuswami mentions 1929 in his reminiscences under the chapter 'Mugavai Kanna Muruganar.'

happened to be Maha Sivaratri, and he was unaware of this fact.

The following day, when Bhagavan Sri Ramana embarked on the girivalam (giri pradakshina), a 14 km circumambulation around Arunachala Hill, Muruganar also joined him. However, due to his continued fasting from the previous day, Muruganar was extremely fatigued. Recognizing Muruganar's exhaustion, Bhagavan remarked, "Did you observe Sivaratri fasting yesterday? Come with me; we shall go to the Ashram kitchen to have a meal."

In this way, Bhagavan kindly invited Muruganar to partake in a meal at the ashram's kitchen. Muruganar was inspired to compose a verse about this incident, which is presented below:

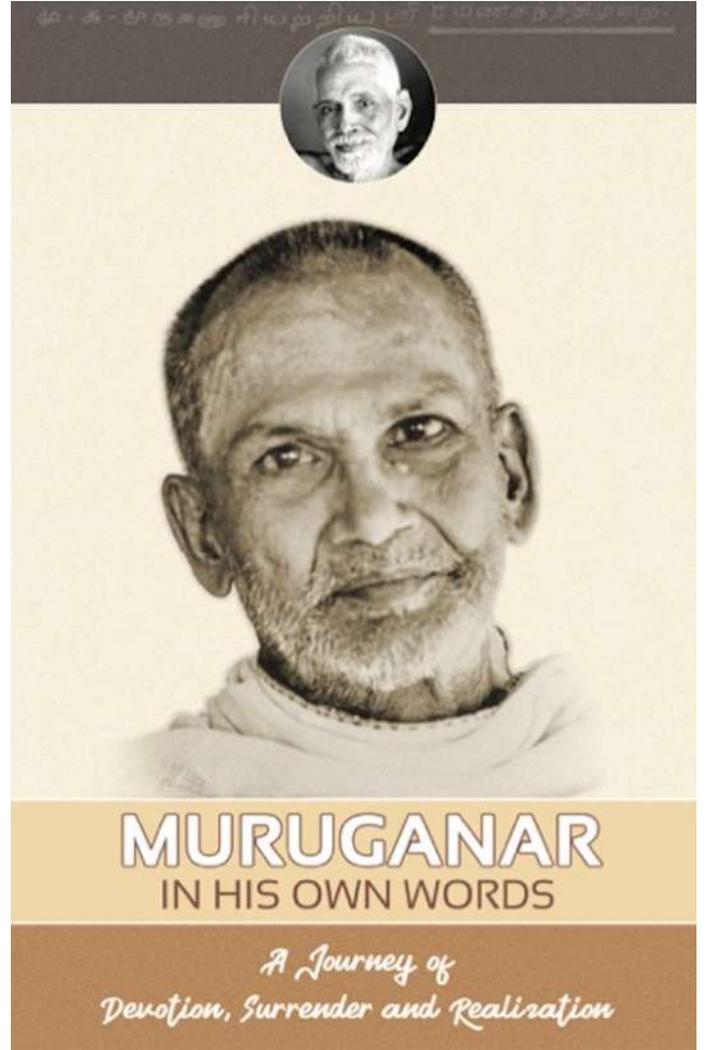
திருநாட் சிவராத் திரியெனத் தெரியாது  
ஒருநாள் பட்டினி யிட்டெனை மறுநாள்  
விசர்புற வலம்புரி வித்தரு ணந்தனைப்  
பசிப்பதம் அறிந்துணண் பரிந்தளிப் பித்தும்.<sup>3</sup>

Meaning: I was not aware that it was Sivaratri. He made me unintentionally fast on that day. The next day, he took me for Giri Pradakshina (circumambulation of the holy hill). Recognizing my hunger, he graciously offered me food. His boundless compassion touched my heart deeply.

Smt.T. R. Kanakammal observed that whenever Muruganar spoke of this incident, he would become emotional and tears would well up in his eyes. He would often find it difficult to continue speaking, so great was his gratitude for Bhagavan's boundless compassion.

Scriptures proclaim that fasting on a Sivaratri day bestows great divine Grace from Shiva. In Muruganar's case, although the fast was unintentional, it granted him the greatest blessing of receiving Bhagavan's compassion and the assurance that Bhagavan indeed watches over his devotees.

Muruganar's inexorable dedication to his master's teachings and his abidance at Bhagavan's feet are emblematic of his spiritual strength and glory. His life shows that genuine spiritual progress cannot be gauged solely by literary accomplishments or scholarly pursuits. Instead, it hinges on the depth of one's connection with their spiritual guide and the authenticity of their inner journey, which is



Muruganar In His Own Words, by Sri Hari Moorthy, has been published by Sri Ramanasramam.

symbolized by Muruganar's attitude: if scholarly pursuits do happen to unfold naturally, they should be allowed to do so without being obstructed by the ego. Bhagavan never forsook Muruganar; it might not have been apparent to others, perhaps even irrelevant to anybody other than Muruganar himself. Repeatedly, Muruganar attests to the fact that Bhagavan looked after his physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being, possibly even more diligently than a mother would protect her cub. Muruganar confirmed Bhagavan's grace in multiple verses, and in one particular verse, he explicitly said how much Bhagavan protected him:

3. Lines 229-232 in Kirti Tiruvahaval, which is the third chapter of Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai.

என்னைத்தன் பாலே யிருத்தியெனக்(கு) இன்னமுதத்  
தன்னருள்பா லித்த தயாசொருபன் – அன்னையினும்  
மிக்கபே ரன்பு விளங்குசிவச் சீர்மையென்னுள்  
சிக்கெனவே தொக்கது சீர்த்து. <sup>4</sup>

Meaning: He drew me into his embrace and retained me to bestow his divine nectar of grace. His very form is an embodiment of love itself. He showered upon me a love so profound, surpassing even that of my own mother, to eternally establish the auspicious glory of Lord Shiva within my heart.

Muruganar's legacy continues as an enduring source of inspiration, reminding us that the path to Self-realization isn't about accumulating knowledge or accomplishments, but about surrendering the ego and experiencing the connection with the divine. His life story continues to inspire and guide us on our quest for liberation, emphasizing the enduring importance of sincere devotion, absolute surrender, and steadfast abidance in the spiritual heart. It teaches us to allow life's events to unfold, be they pleasant or otherwise.

Indeed, along the way, Muruganar arose as one of the greatest poets nurtured by mother Tamil, who endowed him with a magnificent faculty and intellect to employ her beautiful language in singing, worshipping, celebrating, blessing, and immersing himself in the bliss and devotion experienced while worshipping his beloved Lord Ramana.

As we reflect upon his legacy, is there another poet, in any language, from any era, residing in any corner of the world, belonging to any religion, who has displayed such unwavering devotion as Muruganar did, while filling every fiber of their very being with devotion to their living Sadguru and glorifying the divine brilliance of that Sadguru so splendidly?

Muruganar built a poetic monument for his Sadguru, Bhagavan Sri Ramana, unlike any other disciple in history has done for a living guru. This monument stands for all to see, appreciate, and marvel at for ages to come. However, comprehending its significance requires careful perception. Unlike conventional monuments, Muruganar laid the foundation for this monument through his own realization. Each verse he composed serves as a brick, his devotion acts as the mortar, his unconditional love is the water, and Bhagavan's grace is the cement binding it all together. Brick by brick, he constructed his masterpiece, which demands the reader's imagination, devotion, and realization to fully grasp and

admire it. Within this monument, he placed an enormous throne – one that resides perpetually in every heart, yet remains often misunderstood and unrealized. Muruganar spent numerous lifetimes preparing this throne, meticulously crafted through years of solitude, surrender, and, above all, soliciting the grace of his Sadguru. In that throne, his Sadguru, Lord Ramana, is seated in all His glory and radiance, quietly observing, guiding, and embodying the perception of all perceptions. He remains unrelenting, never weary of the antics of egos, sustaining each life with His complete silence, ever ready to assist anyone who surrenders to His grace.

Prof K Swaminathan movingly wrote, “To practice His presence and to explain His teachings the poet uses words, which whether richly sensuous or austere intellectual, are invariably appropriate, while his repertoire of metrical forms is astounding in its vastness, flexibility and power. Like some great temple complex, with its shrines and towers, its tanks and groves, the immense output of this poet constitutes a massive and worthy literary monument to the Master, whose mighty message Sri Muruganar manages to convey, because he is himself a consummate and humble scholar, manipulating with unerring tact and taste the inexhaustible resources of an ancient and still living language unsurpassed in the range, depth and continuity of its devotional and metaphysical poetry.”

Prof. K. Swaminathan aptly encapsulated an extraordinary historical event. No other culture, religion, land, or language had witnessed anything quite like what transpired with Muruganar. No individual had composed over 30,000 verses exclusively dedicated to their living Guru to the exclusion of all else. Muruganar, even though he had forsaken all material possessions and lived a life devoid of worldly attachments, had erected the grandest and most unassailable monument to his Guru and personal deity, Bhagavan Sri Ramana, through his absolute surrender and boundless imagination. He allowed his own master to channel the creation of these verses. This represents the highest form of surrender, wisdom, devotion, and yoga – precisely what Bhagavan Krishna urged Arjuna to embrace.

*(For information on pre-ordering this book for USA readers, please see <https://www.srmh.org/usa-bookstore.html>)*

## Day by Day with Bhagavan

by Devaraja Mudaliar

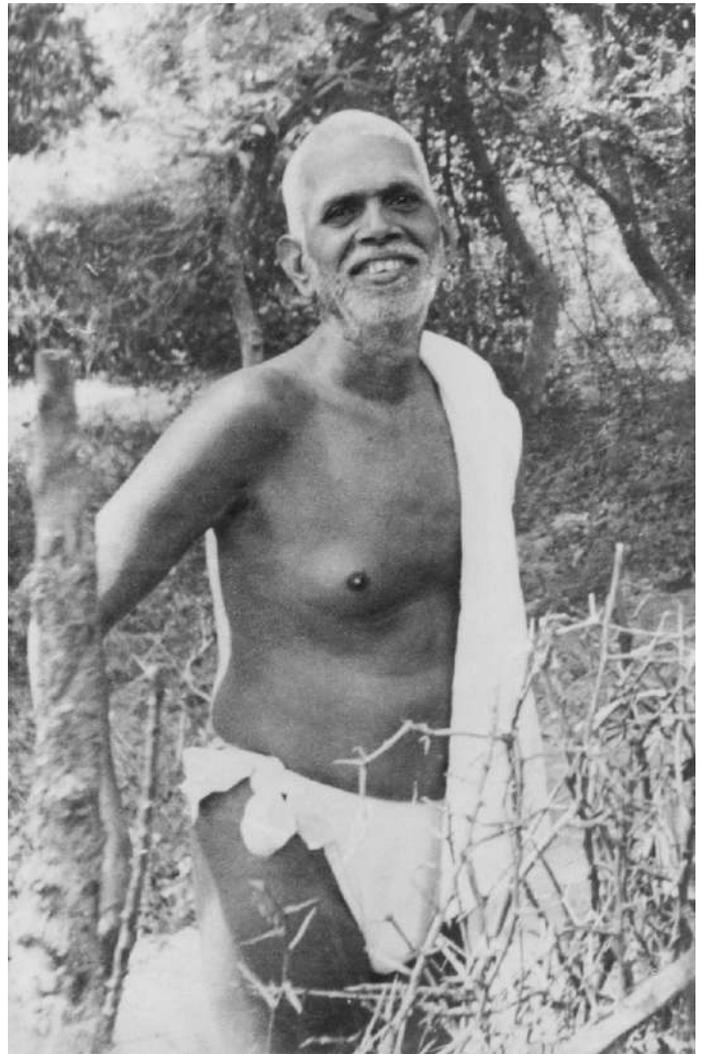
22-11-45, Afternoon

Dr. Srinivasa Rao told the Swami, “I have heard from one, who said he saw it, that when Bhagavan was in Skandasramam, a snake once crept over his body.” Bhagavan said, “Snakes raise their hoods and look into our eyes and they seem to know when they need not be afraid, and then they pass over us. It did not strike me either that I should do anything to it.” Later Bhagavan said, “Even though we usually describe the reality as *Sat, Chit, Ananda*, even that is not quite a correct description. It cannot really be described. By this description, all that we endeavour to make plain is that it is not *asat*, that it is not *jada* and that it is free from all pain.”

Again, Bhagavan said, “We are all in reality *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. But we imagine we are bound and are having all these pains.”

I asked, “Why do we imagine so? Why does this ignorance or *ajnana* come to us?” Bhagavan said, “Enquire to whom has this ignorance come and you will find it never came to you and that you have always been that *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. One performs all sorts of penances to become what one already is. All effort is simply to get rid of this *viparita buddhi* or mistaken impression that one is limited and bound by the woes of *samsara*.”

Later Bhagavan said, “The spark of *jnana* will easily consume all creation as if it were a mountain-heap of cotton. All the crores of worlds being built upon the weak (or no) foundation of the ego, they all topple down when the atomic bomb of *jnana* comes down upon them.” Bhagavan said, “All talk of surrender is like pinching jaggery from the jaggery image of Lord Ganesa and offering it as *naivedya* to the same Lord Ganesa. You say you offer your body, soul and all possessions to God. Were they yours that you could offer them? At best, you can only say, ‘I falsely imagined till now that all these which are yours (God’s) were mine. Now I realise they are yours. I shall no more act as if they are mine.’ And this knowledge that there is nothing but God or Self, that I and mine don’t exist and that only the Self exists, is *jnana*.” He added, “Thus there is no difference between *bhakti* and *jnana*. *Bhakti* is *jnana mata* or mother of *jnana*.”



Talking of the innumerable ways of different seekers after God, Bhagavan said, “Each should be allowed to go his own way, the way for which alone he may be built. It will not do to convert him to another path by violence. The Guru will go with the disciple in his own path and then gradually turn him into the supreme path at the ripe moment. Suppose a car is going at top speed. To stop it at once or to turn it at once would be attended by disastrous consequences.”

The talk then turned to the names of God and Bhagavan said, “Talking of all mantras, the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* says ‘AHAM’ is the first name of God. The first letter in Sanskrit is A ‘अ’ and the last letter Ha ‘ह’ and ‘Aha’ thus includes ‘Aham’, all refer to the same thing. In the Bible also, ‘I AM’ is given as the name of God.” everything from beginning to end. The word ‘Ayam’ means that which exists, Self-shining and Self-evident. ‘Ayam’, ‘Atma’, ‘Aham’, all refer to the same thing. In the Bible also, ‘I AM’ is given as the name of God.”

## A Place of Peace and Serenity

The Valley Wire  
24 April, 2024  
by Joey Fitzpatrick

*Visitors to Arunachala Ashrama in Nova Scotia will certainly recall the friendly and welcoming smile of Darlene Delisi Karamanos, who has been sharing her devotion to Sri Bhagavan with devotees for now over fifty years. We have all benefitted from her kindness and friendship and her unrelenting resolve to keep the Ashrama as a sacred place for those seeking peace. We present an article that was published in our local newspaper recently by Mr. Joey Fitzpatrick, detailing his interview with Darlene about the Ashrama.*

The physical and psychological benefits of meditation have been well documented. A practice that has been used for thousands of years, meditation reduces stress while enhancing self awareness and focusing the mind on the present.

For years, people have been dropping into the meditation hall at the Nova Scotia Arunachala Ashrama in Clarence, just outside of Bridgetown, to find peace and serenity.

The meditation hall dates back to 1879, when it was built as a one-room schoolhouse. At some point, it had been relocated, and when Nova Scotia Arunachala Ashrama purchased the property in 1972, they purchased the building and returned it to its original location.

“Farmers in the area, with their tractors and skids, moved this 40-ton building back to its original spot,” recalls Darlene Karamanos, who oversees day-to-day operations at the facility. “Some of the neighbours who had attended the school when they were young were happy to see their schoolhouse go back to where it belonged.”

Prayers, meditation, readings and chanting of the Vedas, an ancient Sanskrit text, are held throughout the day, and the meditation hall is open to visitors. The readings are from works by or about Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, an Indian Hindu sage and jivanmukta, or liberated being. Arunachala Ashrama



*Darlene Delisi Karamanos*

is a non-profit organization, and the retreat is open to all regardless of religious belief or creed — including those of no particular faith — who seek peace. “There are certain places, like an old growth forest, that you can feel peace, and the thoughts that torture our brains just become quiet,” Karamanos says. “This is one of those places.”

The Ashrama also maintains a temple and retreat facilities with guest rooms for individuals and families who wish to deepen their spiritual experience and stabilize themselves in the practice of self-awareness and surrender.

There are two libraries, along with sitting rooms, and people are welcome to come and read. Books on many different religions, philosophies and spiritual practices are available both to borrow and to purchase.

“We have some really old texts on everything from Christian mystics to Hindu saints to Eckhart Tolle,” Karamanos says. “People are often quite amazed at the books they find here.”

Those wishing to stay overnight are required to make arrangements ahead of time. Visitors are responsible

for cooking their own vegetarian food during their stay and ensuring their rooms have been cleaned before departing. Facilities are normally available from May through October, and visitors can occasionally be accommodated during winter months.

A native of Chicago, Darlene moved to Nova Scotia in 1973 and began teaching at Bridgetown Elementary School, where she worked for 32 years. "Even before coming here, I was interested in

meditation," she says. She met her neighbours at the Ashrama and was invited to come to the centre to meditate.

"I had never heard of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi before, but eventually I started reading some of what he had to say, and it was a perfect fit for me," Karamanos recalls. "The core teaching of all great religion and philosophy is to know yourself."

### Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi - Talk 53 15th June, 1935

A young man, Mr. Knowles, came for darsan. He had read Paul Brunton's two books. He asked: "The Buddhists say that 'I' is unreal, whereas Paul Brunton in the Secret Path tells us to get over the 'I thought' and reach the state of 'I'. Which is true?"

M.: There are supposed to be two 'I's; the one is lower and unreal, of which all are aware; and the other, the higher and the real, which is to be realised. You are not aware of yourself while asleep, you are aware in wakefulness; waking, you say that you were asleep; you did not know it in the deep sleep state. So then, the idea of diversity has arisen along with the body consciousness; this body-consciousness arose at some particular moment; it has origin and end. What

originates must be something. What is that something? It is the 'I'-consciousness. Who am I? Whence am I? On finding the source, you realise the state of Absolute Consciousness.

D.: Who is this 'I'? It seems to be only a continuum of sense impression. The Buddhist idea seems to be so too.

M.: The world is not external. The impressions cannot have an outer origin. Because the world can be cognised only by consciousness.

The world does not say that it exists. It is your impression. Even so this impression is not consistent and not unbroken. In deep sleep the world is not cognised; and so it exists not for a sleeping man. Therefore, the world is the sequence of the ego. Find out the ego. The finding of its source is the final goal.

### Updates

For the latest information regarding Arunachala Ashrama, New York, please visit [our home page](#) . The Ashrama has been having regular satsangs online which can be found on our [events page](#).

The [Nova Scotia Arunachala Ashrama](#) is welcoming overnight guests. Guests are required to make arrangements ahead of time by contacting [nova-scotia@ashrama.org](mailto:nova-scotia@ashrama.org)

Guests will be responsible for cooking vegetarian food during their stay and ensuring that their rooms have been cleaned and their linens and towels are laundered and replaced before they leave.

Wearing a mask while inside the temple is optional. Visitors are advised to have health insurance.

As usual, the Mandiram is open to daytime visitors for prayers and meditation. Tel: 902 824 2297

Please see our [online satsangs](#) page for a listing of other centers that are offering satsangs.

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Arunachala Ashrama, 86-06 Edgerton Boulevard, Jamaica, NY 11432-2937 Tel: (718) 560-3196 / Email: [ashrama@arunachala.org](mailto:ashrama@arunachala.org)