

Sat Darshanam
Seeing the truth of existence
Forty verses on reality

- 1 If the nature of experience is examined
There is that which sees and that which is seen
Because these powers exist, we must concede a common source for both.
The seer, the seen & the power of seeing itself
All are this one source merely appearing as many.
- 2 The assumption that there is an individual, a world and God
Is the notion on which religions and creeds are based
So long as the ego reigns, these three will remain as separate appearances
Once the ego subsides then all prevails as one
To know this and abide as this is the supreme state.
- 3 The world is real, no it is an illusion
It is consciousness, no it is matter
It is happiness, no it is sorrow
Such disputes will never end and are of no use
To leave these concerns alone and realise the self directly is the goal.
- 4 So long as one assumes he has form
Then the world and God also have form
When one realises he is the formless self
There is no other to view or see
The self is the very seeing itself, limitless and infinite
- 5 This body is made up of five sheaths that convey perception & experience
This is how nature is arranged
Whilst linked to the body the world appears as it is
When the body ceases this world will not appear
- 6 Experience is created through sense perception
The mind creates the world through these senses alone
The senses cause those perceptions to be experienced as objects
The world of objects as it appears is nothing other than these senses
- 7 The world arises as the mind arises
It is by the light of the mind that the world is known
The source from which both appear and in which both set is perfection
That does not rise and does not set but forever shines
That is reality
- 8 However we may name, frame, or describe this reality
Worship of it leads us to vision of it **
To know ones own self as that, to subside into that and be one with that
This is knowledge of the truth

- 9 Appearances of objects as separate are the result of the ego
This is known as the I thought
If one patiently enquires who am I and realises the answer
Then the I thought subsides and the appearance of separation ends
In those who know this ignorance ceases forever
- 10 There cannot be knowledge without the presence of ignorance
There cannot be ignorance without the presence of knowledge
To search for the source of the individual in whom both appear
And to be as that is true knowledge
- 11 To study & evaluate all objects without knowing the self that knows
Is only perpetuating ignorance
Once the source of being is known wholeness prevails
Then duality of knowledge and ignorance fall away
- 12 Neither the presence of objects nor the absence of objects is knowledge
In the realised state which is different from both
Consciousness shines as wholeness with no sense of separate objects
This state is itself knowledge it is fullness it is not a void
- 13 The self is the heart of all, that alone is real and true
The appearance of separate forms is ignorance
Yet all appearance including ignorance is part of the one self
Just as all golden objects however diverse in form remain as gold
- 14 You and they, he and she, only appear when the sense me prevails
When the nature of me is sought the ego sense ceases to exist
What now shines is the natural state in which all is as one
The perception of you and they, he and she, as separate is then at an end
- 15 However it may appear it is only the present that exists
Past and future are only apparent as ideas
All takes place in the here and now and nowhere else
To seek to dwell in the past or the future whilst unaware of the present
Is like trying to count without the number one
- 16 Space and time only appear because of this body and this life
As a body I am bound by the nature of space, time, objects and things
But am I a body?
No, I exist as the self, formless & timeless, everywhere and always

- 17 In those who know the self and in those who do not the body appears as I
For those living in ignorance this I seems fully contained by the body
Whilst in those in whom the self is known
The I shines boundless and limitless, as the whole, both body and world
Such is the difference between them
- 18 The world exists for all
In those living in ignorance reality is bound by the world
Whilst in those in whom the self is known
Reality shines formless as the source of all that is seen
Such is the difference between them
- 19 The debate does free will prevail or is fate predetermined
Is for those who do not know their common & vibrant source
In those who realise the self
All is taking care of itself and such distinctions have no meaning
As such they remain untouched
- 20 To view God as other than the self is a false projection of the mind
God is not separate from the seer who sees
To abide in the heart of being, the poise of the self
Is true vision and worship of God
- 21 The term seeing the self suggests something else to see
This is false understanding
The self is the whole, the fullness of everything
Seeing the self means becoming absorbed as the self
That is how the self is known
- 22 That which illumines the mind is the self shining unseen
It cannot be detected through the borrowed light of the mind
Turning inward and merging in the source of the minds light
Is the direction to take to have vision of the self
- 23 The body does not denote I
In deep sleep there is no I yet existence prevails
It is apparent that when I is present all things appear
So what is this sense I and from where does it arise
Search with a keen mind
- 24 The body is matter it is insentient
The self is awareness it does not rise or set
Between the two & bound by the body the I thought rises
This knot of matter and spirit is experienced as person, as me
Identifying as this is ignorance & bondage

- 25 The ego is a ghost appearance with no form of its own
Born of forms and feeding on forms
When linked with a body it rises stays and thrives
Leaving one form it takes hold of another
When sought through enquiry it takes to flight
- 26 When the ego rises all things appear
With its subsidence all subside
Relinquishing the ego is the key to freedom
Tracking it to its source is the way to victory over everything
- 27 The self shines clearly, when the ego is not
Without searching from where this ego has arisen the self is not found
To be as the real state the ego must subside
It is the very search for it that dissolves it
- 28 Discover the source of the ego by turning within
Regulate breath, speech and mind
Explore with keen vision & dive deep
Surrender to the source from which the ego springs
- 29 Enquire silently and deeply
Who am I, from whence am I
This alone is Atma Vichara
Ideas such as I am not this or I am that may be aids
But they are not the enquiry itself
- 30 When through enquiring who am I the mind merges in the heart
The one becomes apparent as itself shining as I, I, I
It is not the ego, it is the power of being, the reality
This I, I is the very substance of the self
- 31 For the one who is so realised
There is nothing left to do
Abiding as the self, the self alone is
With ego dissolved never again to rise
Who can understand the nature of this state?
- 32 The texts state "that you are"
To not act on this knowledge
To not enquire deeply and realise the self directly
But instead to debate and think I am that I am not this
Is only due to the weakness of the mind

- 33 There are not two selves one to be known by another
The self is one only
To say I do not know myself or to look for the self elsewhere
Is cause for laughter
- 34 Reality is the heart of all and I am that
Not to seek it there and abide as it
But to theorise about it and quarrel over its properties
Is illusion, the perplexing mischief of Maya
- 35 To abide as the heart is the one complete attainment
Other attainments are like dreams only lasting till waking
Those fully surrendered to the real are firmly rooted
They are beyond delusion or distraction
- 36 So long as it appears that we are the body
To think I am the self is helpful for realising that
Yet as we are always that, what need is there to so affirm
Does a man need to repeat I am a man
- 37 Theories that duality exists during the search
And unity exists at the end of the search are misleading
The one has been the one throughout only appearing as two
Just as the man who lost himself, through clear seeing, found himself***
- 38 As long as you identify as the doer
You will accumulate the effects of action
Through enquiring who am I and realising the truth
The doer vanishes and the sense of intent is lost
Karma is then at an end, this is liberation
- 39 Thoughts of liberation and freedom
Last only as long as one thinks one is bound
By the enquiry who am I, who is bound, the self eternal and free is attained
Thereafter thoughts of bondage or of freedom arise no more
- 40 Scholars may speculate on what prevails after liberation
Some say form, some say no form, some say form coming and going
But I say liberation is the loss of the ego that engages in such debate
It is that and that alone which prevails
The heart of being, the fullness of the one
I am that

Tamil original by Sri Ramana Maharshi Arunachala India 1928

English revision by Derek Thorne Glastonbury Abbey England winter 2006

** Upadesha Sarem v4-8 describes what the worship of reality means

*** this relates to the story of the 10 men who believed one of them was lost as each time they counted they only counted 9, forgetting to include the one who was counting. Once this was pointed out 10 men were once again revealed. Similarly reality is misperceived.