The Disciplines that are essential in the Spiritual Aspirant
graciously rendered by Sri Muruganar
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In January of 2020 I was approached by devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi to translate a small booklet of 96 sayings, composed for the benefit of sadhakas by Sri Ramana’s most celebrated devotee, Mukavai Kanna Muruganar, a request with which I was willing to comply, having already translated a number of Sri Muruganar’s compositions, both in prose and in verse. I began the work but with always in the back of my mind the idea that I would like to have the opinion of at least one other qualified person as to the accuracy of the translation before I ventured to have it published.

The obvious choice, and my own preferred option, was Michael James, who, as a close associate of Sri Sadhu Om, was involved in the study and translation of Muruganar’s works for many years and continued to be so after Sadhu Om’s passing. I contacted Michael and he agreed to look over the draft and suggest such amendments as he felt necessary. Not only that, he discovered that in his computer archives he possessed a series of scans of the original manuscript of the 96 sayings in Muruganar’s own hand and forwarded copies of them to me. These he had obtained by courtesy of the Sri Ramana Maharshi Archive at Sri Ramanashramam. Michael explained to me that initially Muruganar explicitly left all his manuscripts in the care of Sadhu Om and that eventually, a few years ago, it was agreed that they should be handed over to the Sri Ramanashramam archives for preservation.

By this time I was well advanced in the translation, working from a printed booklet of the sayings, which had first been published by Sri Ramanashramam in 2008 and was now in its third printing. Although available only in Tamil, the little booklet seems to have made quite an impact with devotees as it is now in its third printing of 2000 copies each. As I worked through the sayings I noticed that in just a few instances there appeared to be errors of either sense or grammar or both, and in those cases I made educated guesses as to what the error in the original transcription might have been in order to restore to a given saying its intended meaning. When the scans came into my possession I was able to verify that my guesses, apart from one, were correct and the printed version contained a few errors, due mainly to the fact that at many points Muruganar’s handwriting becomes rather flowing and cursive, such that on occasion certain letters could only be identified with certainty by careful analysis of the written glyph or glyphs, a process which involved enlarging them and comparing them with other instances of the same glyph or grouping of glyphs elsewhere in the text.
It then occurred to me that, since the scans were in my possession and would be of great interest to devotees of both Muruganar and Sri Ramana, I should include them in the translated work, with the scans and printed version in Tamil and English on facing pages.

In the printed version this group of 96 sayings bears the title cāṭakarkkuriya cattāya negikā, which has been translated as The Disciplines that are essential in the Spiritual Aspirant. This title does not appear in the series of scans, which begin merely, as the reader will see, with an Invocation to Sri Ramana followed by a brief, single paragraph Introduction.

Before he came to Sri Ramana as a devotee at the age of 36 Muruganar had been a distinguished Tamil pandit and was deeply versed in the Classical texts of the Tamil language. It is no surprise therefore that these saying are peppered with allusions to and quotations from a number of the great devotional and ethical texts of the Tamil language, such as the Tirukural of Tiruvalluvar, the Tiruvacakam of Manikkavacakar and the Kondrai Ventan of Auvaiyar. These references are not identified precisely in the text and sometimes not at all. Therefore notes have been added at the end to give this extra information. In addition there are notes giving additional, explanatory material, suggested by the content of the saying in question and other notes giving the textual variations between the original MS and the printed version published by Sri Ramanasramam, as explained earlier. Sayings for which a note is present are marked with an asterisk next to the number in the margin.

It is hoped that the publication of this work will be of benefit to all seekers on the spiritual path and that the inclusion of scans of the original manuscript will provide in many cases an added incentive for them to persevere on that path.

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February 2020.

Postscript - July 2020

At the time of publishing Michael has only been able to check the work up to saying 20. However the verses have been checked in full by N. Sankaran in Tiruvannamalai, who also suggested the Dedicatory verse to Bhagavan. I was also able to obtain a version of the verses done some years ago by David Godman and T. N. Venakatsubramanian.
தற்பயன்

அறிவாளியான் தன் மய்ந் பெற்றால் நிைறெவளியா
மம் நிைலக்கட்கனாப்பற்றால்
பிறிணர் லாங்கற் பிதமாகப்
ாைற்ன்ளவியார்ந் தாலகத்ý
ேமானமன்றி வின்ைமேம
பிறிெதன்னில் வின்ைமேசர்
சுத்தவăள் வாலறிவா
கண்ணýதா நந்தமிலாக்
கண்ணாங்ைக வல்லியேம.

If one attains the state in which the reality of one’s own Self, the light of consciousness, blossoms within the Heart, in that true state of all-embracing emptiness, all other knowledge will be revealed as false and disappear like a dream. If one investigates inwardly in the prescribed fashion, it will be known that in the Heart, apart from mauna itself, nothing else exists.

If we say that those who know the Real are not cognisant of anything existing apart from it, then it follows that duality is an empty illusion, like the blue of a blue sky. The eye of truth, which abides as pure consciousness, pure grace possessing power and beauty, is indeed the Absolute, the infinite eye.

The holy feet of the guru, abiding as the path of liberation, sank their roots into my Heart and rose on high as the Mountain of divine silence, so that my thoughts, no longer travelling on the outward path, moved now on the true path of the Reality which is the light of pure awareness.

The Disciplines that are essential in the Spiritual Aspirant
சாதகர்க்குரிய
சத்தானெநறிகள்

1. இரண்டு பற்றி தெரிகிறது அன்னோயே
2. முதல் வாரம் தொடங்கியுள்ளது
3. தொடர்பு நிகழ்வு பெருமை
4. பிப்ரவரி மாதம் விளக்கப்பட்டாலோ
5. தோற்றம் தருமால் எதிர்ப்பு
6. வாருக்கும் மாற்றங்கள் என்று விளக்கம் செய்யப்பட்டாலோ
Although the truth will in the end foster certainty, it will not necessarily be equally pleasing to all when they first hear it. Hence the final truths here expressed may not in some cases, upon a superficial examination, accord with the views of those of every persuasion. Therefore they should be treated with indulgence, even by those who here and there are tempted to disagree with them and reject them.

– Mukavai Kanna Muruganar.

1* உண்ைம்பலர்க்கும் சதுர்க்குங்கால் எல்லார்க்கும் முன்வர் மாலிகாளர். அவ்வியல் வியல் சாரார்.

Of the two forms of God, that which is termed ‘with form’ or ‘with attributes’ is the product of pure māyā; it is not the Supreme. The term ‘transcendental’ is applied to it only in a metaphorical sense.

2 ஆன்மவர்க்கும் கார்மந்த மிதபணணு.

For those who know [the nature of] consciousness there is no danger.

3 உண்வைம்பலர்க்கும் முன்வர் மாலிகாளர்.

For those who come to know the Truth, the Truth itself will foster certainty.

4* ஏரே அறிந்த உண்வைம்பலர்க்கும்; ஆன்மம் அனுபவமாயிரம் பிள்ளை.

Empty disputation is like dry bones. Knowledge born of experience is worth a thousand gold pieces.

5 அகந்ைத வீதாங்காகவன்றி, அறிந்த செது அச்சியையந்தரி.

Eradication of the ego is the state of immortality. Therefore the renunciation of the ego is that which is most rare and precious.

6 கரியான் பிள்ளையான்களான், அறிந்த செது குரல் கொண்ட அனு பிள்ளையான் உண்வைம்பலர்க்கும் ஆகிவியல் ஆர்மான் அடாங்கான்.

Other than for obtaining alms, it is quite inappropriate for *sadhus* to pay regular visits to the houses of their acquaintances and even less appropriate for them to remain there, associating with them in a convivial fashion.
சாதகர்க்குரிய
சத்தான
ெநறிகள்

7. இந்த பக்தக்காரர்கள் மற்றும் அவர்களின் கைவரை கொண்டு வந்துள்ளனர். 
8. இந்த பக்தர்களுக்கு விளையாட்டுகள் நேராக கொடுப்படுகின்றன. 
9. இந்த பக்தர்கள் மற்றும் பாரம்பரியச் செயல்களும் நேராக நடைபெறுகின்றன. 
10. உயர்ந்த செயல்களை எடுக்கும்போது தொடர்புடைய விளைப்பாடுகள் ஏற்பட்டுள்ளன. 
11. செயல்கள் மற்றும் நடவடிக்கைகள் ஏற்பட்டுள்ளன. 
12. விளையாட்டுகள் எடுக்கியது தொடர்புடைய விளைப்பாடுகள் ஏற்பட்டுள்ளன.
The Disciplines that are essential in the Spiritual Aspirant

For sadhus to be seen in such places as ‘the talkies’ or ‘the cinema’ is the kind of shameful sight that will be viewed with disgust by the wise.

Awareness of oneself, one’s real nature, which is the foundation (adhisthana) that shines naturally in the place where the superimposed ego is eradicated, alone is the meaning of what is called ‘grace’.

Delusion (marul) is that which masks grace (arul). Delusion is the mental awareness known as ‘ego consciousness’, consisting of the two states, sakalam (the waking and dream states) and kevalam (the deep sleep state, unconditioned consciousness, which is falsely identified by the jīva as unconsciousness). These equate to thinking and absence of thought. That which is free of these two is the pure state, cuttam (śuddha), which is known as turiyam. From the ordinary perspective in which the ego consciousness is believed to be real, the knowledge of the Self, the Siva-consciousness in which the former (ego consciousness) is annihilated, is described variously as ‘emptiness’ or ‘a void’. This idea is expressed in the compositions of the great ones in such statements as:

Lord, you who in deepest darkness perform your cosmic dance!
In the darkness I grasped you and held you tight.

He only is a Brahmin (Seer) who knows the Supreme Reality.

The ego-self (jīva) is an imaginary appearance in the Self, like the snake [erroneously perceived] in the rope.
12* உவ்வர்த்திக்கொள்ளும் உடம்பொருளின் குடும்பங்கள் விளைந்து கூட்டப்பட்டது அல்லது
குறிப்பிட்டுதலுக்கு. அருங்காட்சியும் ஆலுவல் விளைந்து கூட்டப்பட்டது போன்று
பிறந்து போன்று ஆலுவல் பறவையில் போன்று விளைந்து கூட்டப்பட்டது
குறிப்பிட்டுதலுக்கு. காலம் பாய்வின் ஆலுவல் உள்ளூர் விளைந்து
Because of the love for oneself that naturally shines in each and every jīva, the Self is the very form of bliss (sukha-svarūpa). For those who know the Self (ātma-svarūpa) as it is when the ego is eradicated, [there arises] a naturally heart-melting love for the Supreme which shines as that Self. It is because of this love that knowledge of the Self (ātma-jñāna) is also known by the other name of supreme love (parabhakti). Therefore supreme love and directly intuited knowledge [of the Self] (aparokṣa jñāna) are not different.

13 சாதகர் உலகியற் பத்திரிைக ஒழியக் கடவர். It behoves sadhakas to abandon the [reading of] newspapers and periodicals which lead to delusion.

14 அறிைவத் மற்றகிலெமான் ரிலைல். Apart from consciousness, nothing else whatsoever exists.

15* தன்ைனப் பிறைன் நிைன். There is no deceit which we can conceal from our own heart.

16 உயிர்த்திăக்குமளĈம் அதன்குணāம் மாறாý. All the other three [virtue, wealth and pleasure] are contained within [the fourth, which is] liberation.

17 எனேவ நம்பத் தக்கதன் Ă. There is no state more sublime than liberation.

18 எந்தியி எலைன Ă. Regard others as if they were yourself.

19* மனத்தின் மாற்றுக்கும் மனத்தின் மற்றும். There is nothing so unstable as the mind. Its appearance is entirely untrustworthy. The mind’s very nature is to deceive and mislead. At the very first opportunity it will hog-tie the sadhaka and plunge into the world of phenomena. As long as it exists its nature will never change. Therefore it must be destroyed at the root through unrelenting meditation based on enquiry. Until it is thus eradicated no wise person should be at ease, assuming that his task is complete.
What is called birth and death is a dream born of ignorance. See how Manikkavacagar in his Tamil Veda speaks of, 'The confusion of the mental flux known as birth and death,' and 'the delusion of these two known as birth and death.'
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21  The form of the primordial God is the undivided, non-dual, infinite expanse [of consciousness]. Therefore He knows nothing that is other than Himself. The real nature of divine grace is only that all-embracing, pure, awareness that is his very nature.

22  God and guru (in reality the two are not different) are of the very form of grace. There is therefore not the least necessity for them to intentionally bestow divine grace upon devotees through thought (samkalpa).

23  That those who refuse to joyfully bestow their affection upon the beings they see and meet at first hand will melt and dissolve in love for a God who cannot be seen is indeed the wonder of wonders!

24  To whatever extent they drive from their hearts thoughts of ‘I’ and ‘mine’, to that same extent shall they turn towards the Lord and draw near to Him.

25  Those wicked ones who would deceive the Lord deceive only themselves. If no one can deceive himself, then it follows that no one can deceive the Lord either. Why so? Because there is no evil deed which we can conceal from our own heart and equally because the Lord exists as the witness of that heart.

Praise to the One who exists as the witness of the heart, the heart from which no evil deed can be concealed!

— Sri Ramana Sannidhimurai.

9
சாதகர்க்குரிய
சத்தான
ெநறிகள்

26. ரோம்பொருள் என மூன்று கொன்ரி என்று
இரும்பு மூட்டுவது மண்டம் கொண்டு
வருவது.

27. என்பது, என்று கைவண்டு குறுக்குலம் வந்து
வரும் என்று சொல்லுந்து வந்து, என்று கைவண்டு
செல்குளிய கைவண்டு வந்து கைகளை பாதிக்கும்
செய்யாதொரு என்று வந்துசொல்லுந்து வந்து.

28. முதலிணி கொண்டே கொண்டே என்று
வரும் பதியாதொரு என்று வந்து;

29. முதலிணி கொண்டே என்று

30. நாயங்கள் என்று வந்து நாயகளின் நாய

31. முதலிணி கொண்டே என்று வந்து

32. பதியாதொரு என்று வந்து
Those who live in expectation of the Lord’s grace must needs harbour love for the beloved creatures who share his form.

Although God usually appears in a human form as the embodiment of grace, on occasion He will impart the true knowledge of Reality dwelling within formlessly as the consciousness of consciousness itself. This depends upon the degree of fitness of the aspirant.

It is entirely fitting for those who possess a pure mind that has been thoroughly reformed to conduct themselves taking that mind as their witness.

The first lesson that true sadhakas must learn is to conduct themselves with a firm resolve to maintain their purity of heart.

Whatever abilities they may possess sadhakas should not flaunt them in the least degree. If they do so, it will remain to the very end a great obstacle to their sadhana, their most important endeavour, to attain the refuge for the soul.

To maintain that women and others should not repeat the holy syllable Om (pranava japa) is like prohibiting someone from contemplating the Self.
33 அதி அறிஞராலறேவகடியத்தக்கதாம்; அளக்குமிஞ்சினாலநஞ்சாம்.

Excess should be altogether avoided by the wise. Even ambrosia, taken to excess, is a poison.

34 உதாசீனவாழ்கைகேயுத்தமவாழ்கை.

The life lived in detachment is the noblest life.
Conduct yourself in this world as if in a drama, without attachment and without agitation.

A measure of rice to eat and four cubits of cloth to wear [is all we need]. Is it for just this that we endure such suffering in the world?

Do not speak harshly to, ignore and reject anyone. An unruly bullock will come to bear a [greater] burden, (i.e. he will not escape punishment).

Self-restraint is much more important than knowledge. How we act is more important than what we think.

He who reviles another reviles himself.

Shine with the true awareness that all is one’s Self, free of individuality, which consists of the ego which is an amalgam of the sentient (cit) and the insentient (jada).

Should anyone scorn you and spread slander about you, your attitude should be one of gratitude towards them for giving you the opportunity of recognising and correcting some fault that you might otherwise not easily have noticed yourself. The wise will be aware that, if, conversely, you cling stubbornly to that fault and hate and disparage that person, these are sure presages of the ruin that is destined soon to overtake you.
சாதகர்க்குரிய சத்தானெநறிகள்
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The reason false imagination arises is to reveal the reality that transcends those imaginary appearances by instigating the enquiry as to wherefrom did they arise and what is their source.

That which deludes people into thinking that the ‘death’ in which one dwells as the nature of the Self is actual death is the perverse, erroneous understanding whose nature is the ego-consciousness whose form is the mind. Is it not so, therefore, that as a prerequisite for gaining that liberation, whose nature is pure consciousness, or Siva consciousness (consciousness of the Supreme), it is necessary to destroy that false understanding? Know that that which the scriptures praise as the means for final liberation, using such synonyms as ‘the destruction of the ego’, ‘the offering up of one’s self’, ‘the loss of one’s self’, ‘the annihilation of the mind’ and ‘the destruction of inherited predispositions (vasanas)’ is only that ‘death’. The decad, ‘I have not died’ in the Tiruvacakam illustrates this point. Saint Pattinattar too in a similar vein sings, ‘Go about as ones who have died.’ Such expressions by the great saints are too numerous to count.
People of integrity should exercise great moderation both in what they write and in what they say. Otherwise, it is certain that, knowingly or unknowingly, they will deviate from the truth. Excessive speech will give rise to nonsense.
To express one’s thoughts clearly using just a few words is the ornament of wisdom. Excess verbiage will only highlight one’s ignorance.

Many words they’ll delight to use, who have not learned to make their point with just a carefully chosen few.

— Tiru-k-ṟaḷv. 649.

You should not contradict yourself. Even at risk to your very life, you should behave strictly in accordance with the words you have spoken. [However] it is not possible for anyone to behave with such firm resolve regarding anything whatsoever unless they have perfected the practice of saying something once only after thinking it over twice.

It would seem that the nature and usefulness of learned commentaries (bāṣya) is that they take extremely, brief, practical texts, suitable to be easily and clearly understood by all, and vastly expand them into convoluted sasstraic tangles that are useful, on rare occasions, only to the learned. How good. How good indeed.

Rather than promising as a kindness something they are not able to deliver and then reneging on their promise, the wise will refuse in the first instance,
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saying that it is not within their power, even at the cost of incurring disgrace on that account. Such is the excellence of the wise whose actions are aligned with moral virtue.

Maid whose arms are stacked with bracelets, there is nothing wrong in refusing to give that which it is not within one’s power to grant. That is the way of the world. But to continually offer something without actually giving it, until the person requesting it gives up the desire for it, is equivalent to the sin of one who forgets a good deed done to him — Nālatiyār v.111.

The wise person should restrain and control completely the frenzied state of mind that courts disaster. Not only that, he should behave with extreme caution towards those who are under its control. Otherwise he may needlessly come later to regret it. Therefore he should take the attitude that the best plan is to avoid such people altogether as far as it is possible.

49 அறிஞன் அனர்த்த இலக் இல்லன் அறிஞன் அருங்கியினம் அருள்ள நென்றால் மரணத்தை முன்னிட்டு அதன் சான்றை உரியவால் அனைவற்றுக்கும் நீளம் இல்லாதவையால். நீளம் மிதலாம் பொருங்கள் அதற்கூன்கு உண்டாமல் உள்ளேயும். நீளம் கட்டுவலாம் அத்தையே சிற்பங்களுள்ளது குழிபெயர்க்கப்பட்டது லேகட்டாலாம்.

The wise person should restrain and control completely the frenzied state of mind that courts disaster. Not only that, he should behave with extreme caution towards those who are under its control. Otherwise he may needlessly come later to regret it. Therefore he should take the attitude that the best plan is to avoid such people altogether as far as it is possible.

50* உலகியலில் அதனால் என்றால் இலக் இல்லன் கற்று விளையாட்டை உண்டாமல் முன்னிட்டு பொருங்கக்குழையினம் அனைவற்றுக்கும் நீளம் இல்லாதவையால். நீளம் மிதலாம் பொருங்கள் அதற்கூன்கு உண்டாமல் உள்ளேயும். நீளம் கட்டுவலாம் பொருங்க இல்லாதவையால் உண்டாமல் உள்ளேயும். நீளம் கட்டுவலாம் பொருங்க இல்லாதவையால் உண்டாமல் உள்ளேயும்.

வைத்த துருத்தன்றன் மேற்குத்துக் குழலேயும் செந்தார் பரிமலீனாய் எந்து அறிவு தீட்டாமல் இளிகலேயும் மாற்றால் முன்னிட்டு வைத்ததுக்கு மையவேந்தது அறிவுடன் திருத்தமிழ் எனவே பெறுமலேயும் வைத்ததுக்கு மையவேந்தது அறிவுடன் திருத்தமிழ் எனவே பெறுமலேயும். பார்வேயும் பூமியானாக பூமியானா தொட்டும் பூமியானா எனவே பெறுமலேயும்.

வைத்த துருத்தன்றன் மேற்குத்துக் குழலேயும் செந்தார் பரிமலீனாய் எந்து அறிவு தீட்டாமல் இளிகலேயும் மாற்றால் முன்னிட்டு வைத்ததுக்கு மையவேந்தது அறிவுடன் திருத்தமிழ் எனவே பெறுமலேயும்.
சாதகர்க்குரிய

சத்தான

எநறிகள்
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Just as in worldly affairs nothing can be obtained without paying the appropriate price for it, so, in the realm of the supreme Reality, no one can realise the nature of the supreme Self, being-consciousness-bliss, the source of all that is, without offering up his own self, which is the support of all things [in the world]. Compared to the greatness of the supreme Self which is thus attained, the price of the sacrifice of one’s own self that is paid for it in return, is, when we think about it, an exceedingly small one.

You gave yourself to me and in exchange that gained by you was only me. Then who, O Sankara, is wiser of the two? That which I obtained was utter and unending bliss, but what one thing did you obtain from me in this?

We may judge from such expressions by the great saints exactly how profitable an exchange made on such terms will be.

(Here we are speaking in the language of duality. The advaitic point of view states that, upon the abandonment of the imaginary ego consciousness, the realisation of the eternal Self must occur, just as the Tondaman king appeared once more as a king, once he had removed the disguise of a servant, which he had assumed for a certain purpose. (Personal (*jīva) consciousness is the awareness of individuality, which is of the form of the ego which says 'I'. Due to the attribute whereby it is not continuous but arises and subsides, this is not in its nature real). The ‘bartering’ of oneself must mean the ‘destruction’ of oneself, because of the objection that, [from the advaitic point of view] upon the offering up of oneself, there exists nothing equivalent which is fitting to be accepted in return.)

Like an untamed horse, unrestrained speech also will bring calamity upon a man. Therefore always draw tightly on the bit called self-control, never loosening your grip for a second.

Whatever else you fail to guard, guard your words. Or else, through a slip of the tongue, much misery will be felt – *Tiru-kural* v. 127.
சாதகர்க்குரிய
சத்தான எநறிகள்
By consuming the intoxicating liquor of delusion, which is the mind, human beings, who are in reality immortal, become mentally confused, and, alas and alack, live and die as mortals. The moment they are free of that intoxicating liquor of delusion, they at once recover their former immortality, which is their true nature and glory in it. The truth that our great rishis revealed is that the mind is simply the death which takes the form of forgetting our true nature. The first humans, Adam and Eve, disobeyed the command of the Lord who had created them in his own image, lusting after and relishing the vile fruit, which for their own good he had forbidden them to taste. As a result not only they but their descendants also lost their divine nature and fell from grace for all eternity. The vile fruit referred to in this story from the Old Testament of the Bible is this very mind.
சதாதர்க்குரிய
சத்தான
ெநறிகள்
The Vedas strongly enjoin mankind to obey their command exactly as they command it, without asking why. But the mind possesses a wondrous power of delusion (mâyā sakti), which causes it to associate with that which is forbidden and deceives us into thinking that what is good is bad and what is bad is good. It is for this very reason that it is impossible for anyone employing only such a mind to grasp what is the nature of the eternal lore (sanatana dharma), which is difficult for anyone to grasp. Therefore we might say that in a number of ways man’s association with the mind is entirely to be rejected.

No one who occupies himself in puja to god and service to sadhus and so on with a very active and wandering mind, sacrificing in so doing the calm peace of the Supreme within his heart, will be able to reap the benefits that are the true purpose of those activities. They will be useless like sacrificial offerings poured onto cold ashes. Therefore in all situations the first duty of the wise is to preserve a clarity of mind that is not affected by the least disturbance.

Unless its veiling delusion is destroyed the mind’s wandering will not cease. Therefore it is indispensable always to incessantly perform the inward enquiry into true knowledge, which takes the form, ‘Who am I?’

A thrifty lifestyle will yield great riches.
59* அகத்ைத அலங்கரிப்பார் ஆரியர்; ஆறத்ைத அலங்கரிப்பார் Ēரியர்

The high-minded are those that adorn themselves inwardly. The low-minded are those that adorn themselves outwardly.

60 மனம் பண்பûவதன்ான் வாக்குப் பண்டேவண்ûம்

Before the mind can be purified one’s speech must be purified.
The Disciplines that are essential in the Spiritual Aspirant

61 Impetuous and extravagant speech will not mask the mind’s ignorance but only advertise it.

62 It is only when one has acquired a distaste for charitable works, wealth and pleasure that the true desire to gain liberation will arise in the heart.

63 Since at a certain point hearing the truth (sravana) and reflecting on the truth (manana) become a hindrance to abiding in the truth (nididhyāsana), it is proper for those who desire liberation to recognise when that time has come and abandon them.

64* ‘Sweet Fruit of the wish-granting tree of paradise, consumed by the learned ones!’, ‘Lord who dwells not in the heart of the unlearned!’ Statements such as these by the great ones regarding learning and the lack of it refer, according to the context in which they appear, either to the direct, unmediated experience of knowledge and ignorance or else to the indirect experience of knowledge and ignorance revealed by the scriptures. They do not refer at all to the worldly knowledge and ignorance which takes the form merely of the reading and writing in which those statements are expressed. That which is referred to euphemistically as ‘learning’ in the world of the mind, which is purely a mental creation, is in reality only ignorance. It was on realising this misunderstanding and desiring to correct it that the noble Manikkavacagar rejected that knowledge and those who learn (only) that, declaring, ‘I have no desire for the company of the learned. Of what is to be learned, I know enough already!’
சாதகர்க்குரிய
சத்தானெநறிகள்

14.

65. குறுக்கணங்களை வைத்து கொள்ளக் கூட்டு

66. குறுக்கணங்களை வைத்து கொள்ளக் கூட்டு

67. குறுக்கணங்களை வைத்து கொள்ளக் கூட்டு

68. குறுக்கணங்களை வைத்து கொள்ளக் கூட்டு

69. குறுக்கணங்களை வைத்து கொள்ளக் கூட்டு

70. குறுக்கணங்களை வைத்து கொள்ளக் கூட்டு

71. குறுக்கணங்களை வைத்து கொள்ளக் கூட்டு

72. குறுக்கணங்களை வைத்து கொள்ளக் கூட்டு
He who has conquered desire has conquered all.

It is a virtue in the learned to base their actions on their own experience. However, realising that one man’s sweetmeat is another man’s poison, the wise will not find it appropriate to insist on their own point of view whilst rejecting that of others.

An undisturbed mind is a sign of true knowledge.

Patience is an adornment.

Avoid disputation.

Do not consume intoxicating beverages.

When people who are already naturally held in delusion by the egoic principle (āṇava malam) take opium, ganja and other intoxicating substances and experience happiness as a result, that is the source of ceaseless suffering in both this life and the next.

That which is actually being experienced by all in the many and varied sensory experiences that occur continuously, one after the other, is in reality only one, the bliss of the Self, whose nature is peace. Only those jnanis who have attained the peace [of the Self] will realise this, not those who wallow in sense impressions as if possessed.
சாதகர்க்குரிய சத்தான் ஆறிகள்

73. இலக்கியம் என்று வரும் என்று நம்பியிருக்கிறோம்
74. நம்பிக்கையுடன் கூறிக் கொள்ளும் என்று நம்பியிருக்கிறோம்
75. என்னையும் என்னையுடன் கூறிக் கொள்ளும் என்று நம்பியிருக்கிறோம்
76. நம்பிக்கையுடன் கூறிக் கொள்ளும் என்று நம்பியிருக்கிறோம்
77. மேலும் என்னையுடன் கூறிக் கொள்ளும் என்று நம்பியிருக்கிறோம்
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Unless the thought that one is not experiencing the bliss of the Self is totally eradicated, that experience will not become manifest. It can only be experienced as one’s own authentic nature. It cannot, like the pleasure derived from sense objects, be experienced in conjunction with the movements of the fraudulent mind. The latter is a barrier to the former.

Just as there is no need of a mirror to see a nelli fruit in the palm of the hand, neither is there any need of any external knowledge to know that one is oneself the light of consciousness, the Self, Atma svarupa.

The vast proliferation of holy scriptures is like a broad, dense forest that extends without limit. Therefore those who desire liberation should leave that forest, which is the cause of their mind’s delusion, learn the truth from a realised sage (tattva nāyi) and gain release from worldly bondage.

A contented mind is a golden panacea.

Do not ‘wag your tail’ (act pompously, put on airs), forgetting our Master, the all-pervading, all-powerful Lord.
78* மாந்தர் அறிக்கைப் பல்வேறு நூற்றறிந்த விளையாட்டு
நிலவாரா என்றுக்குத்தொண்டம், புள்ளித் தொகுதியில் மாற்றி சிற்றவான
விளையாட்டுத் துறுதிகளில் நிறுவிகள் பட்டை மாற்றிய பாலசைப்பு
சுழலா அறியுமையில் பருவமய வர்மேனுக்கு மதிப்பு உண்டும் காற
காணளாய (செங்குறுச்சு விளையாட்டு பயன் மறுத்துள்ள வகை).
மாற்றிய அதற்கு காட்டியின் மதிப்பு

32
Human beings, being very weak and lacking the ability to reform their own defective minds, attempt to mould the events of the outside world to suit their desires, even though these events are the sole property of the Lord, whose powers are without limit. Initially it may happen that, unknown to them and quite by accident, the will of the Lord and their own desires coincide, like the crow and the palmyra tree (the story in which the palmyra fruit happens to fall just as the crow alights on it). But by and large such attempts are fruitless and lead only to disappointment.

The essence of the personal self (jīva) is the mind whose form is the ego. The essence of the Self is the Heart, whose form is consciousness.

Birth and death (arising and subsiding) are attributes only of the mistakenly perceived individual (purusa), not of the underlying substratum. In the same way, worldly bondage and liberation are attributes only of the imaginary personal self (jīva), not of the true Self, which is eternally free of all defilement.

Since there exists nothing apart from itself for it to know, to know consciousness is to know everything.

To restrain the attention that wanders hither and thither, so that it remains still and unwavering within one’s heart – that is yoga.

True wealth is the blossoming of awareness.
It is within the Siva lingam that the personal consciousness (jīva) is absorbed.

To whatever degree you possess right knowledge, to that degree will your peace be profound.
'Good deeds’ fall into two categories, those that constitute austerities (*tāvam*) and those that are a waste of time (*avam*). To free the personal self (*jīva*) from its worldly bondage in due fashion by such means as maintaining purity of mind and performing service to the Lord through selfless actions which occur in one spontaneously, constitutes *tāvam*, austerities. But since selfish actions, designed solely to be of benefit to oneself, whether in this life or the next, only further tighten one’s fetters, they are in the highest spiritual sense *avam*, a waste of time.

Those who desire to perform prolonged *sadhana* in the prescribed manner until they accomplish their object should proceed treating the body in a moderate manner, being neither indulgent and over-pampering it nor mistreating it by harming it unnecessarily.

For those of refined intelligence who have gained full mastery over their mind, the mind is a faithful servant, worthy of being employed by them.

No one exists separately from the Lord.

Wherever you place your attention, there the Lord is.
சாதகர்க்குரிய
சத்தான
ெநறிகள்
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93 ேகவலம் தற்பர நிஷ்டயாலன்றித் தற்பரத் அபேராக்ஷமாக யாம் அறிய.

No one can have the direct experience the Supreme Reality other than by abiding as that Supreme Reality (tatpara niṣṭhā).

94 ஒதுகின்ற மாறிக காவு வெவ்வேறுகாக மககா ஸ்ரிது அத்வா

Alas for the fate of those people who have the time only to gather dry leaves but no time to [light a fire and] fend off the cold.

95 ஸ்ரிது காவு மககா அத்வா காவு வெவ்வேறுகாக மன்னநித்தவாக மககா லாபிரிக்காயும் காவு லாபிரிக்காயும் மககா லாபிரிக்காயும் லாபிரிக்காயும்!

What might we say of the state of those people who in old age, during their final moments, when even their wife and family consent to it, refuse to renounce the world even on their deathbed (āpad sannyas)?

96 கவிகரணங்கேளாு சிதாபாசமான ஜீவேபாதம் ஸ்ரிது மாறிக தம் மைனவி மககா ஸ்ரிது மாறிக தாம் ஸ்ரிது மாறிக்காத மககா மன்னநைய என்ப்ப்ளணி!

The nature of the supreme consciousness will manifest only upon the destruction of the individual consciousness (jīva) which is the reflection of that supreme consciousness in the faculties of mind, sense and action.
Notes

The following notes perform a variety of functions: they give the source of the quotations employed by Muruganar in the course of the text, for which generally he gives only the author’s name or the work in which they occur and in some cases, no identification at all; they give glosses for rare or unusual words; they note textual variations between the original MS and the printed version published by Sri Ramanasramam and they give additional, explanatory material, suggested by the content of the saying in question.

1

God ‘with form’ is said here to be a product of pure māyā, a term which in Siddhānta designates the first group of tattvas, universal constituents, to emerge in the process of manifestation and which are unconditioned aspects of the supreme Śivam itself. However, though Muruganar gives room for cutta māyā to be interpreted in a Siddhānta sense, it should primarily be interpreted in an Advaitic one, which is simpler, deeper and more in line both with the import of this passage and with Sri Ramana’s teachings in general. The primary interpretation of māyā in the context of Sri Ramana’s teachings is that it is nothing other than mind, of which the root is ego, so what Muruganar is implying in this passage is that God with form or with attributes is a product of our rising as ego, just as everything else is. As Bhagavan says in verse 26 of Ulladu Narpadu: அகந்தைதுண்டாயின், அைனத்ுண்டாகும்; அகந்தைநியறல், இன் அைனத்தம். அகந்தேய ஆம் – If the ego arises, all else will arise. If the ego is not, nothing else will exist. The ego, truly, is all. The reader is also referred to verse 8 of Ulladu Narpadu in which Sri Ramana makes it clear it that the worship of God in name and form cannot lead to the final truth, which can only be gained be merging with the Supreme through the process of self-enquiry in which the ego is annihilated.

It is therefore not correct to say that God with form or attributes is appirākiritam < Skt. aprākṛta – transcendental, beyond nature and to term it so is a form of aupacārikam < Skt. aupacārika – ‘A kind of metonymy by which the attributes of one are spoken of as those of something or someone connected with it,’ Tam. Lex. The term ‘transcendental’ can strictly only be applied to the Absolute, Paraśivam in Siddhānta or Brahman, the Self in Advaita.
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It may be noted that in giving room for a Siddhānta interpretation while actually expressing an Advaitic view, Muruganar was following a long-established tradition among Tamil Advaitins such as Kannudaiya Vallalar and Tayumanavar.

4

>a thousand gold pieces is here employed in a figurative sense, to indicate something of great worth. The phrase occurs in proverbs such as பாலை கீழ் காணேண்டு வேத ரால்; காணேண்டு வேத ரால் — Living or dead, and elephant is worth a thousand gold pieces.

9

The Tamil quotations are from Māṇikkavācakar’s Śiva Purāṇam, l. 89 and Piṭṭitta Pattu, l.16.

The term sakalam — manifold, divided refers to waking and dream, in which awareness is divided and diversified into awareness of many things and kēvalam — single, solitary, undivided, refers to dreamless sleep, in which awareness remains as the only one indivisible whole. Compare Ulladu Narpadu, v.12, in which Sri Ramana warns against the tendency of people to assume that the Self, since it transcends the world of the senses and the resultant phenomena, must be essentially empty or void in nature, whereas in reality the opposite is the case. It is the infinite potential which makes all universes possible and yet is untouched by them.

Since it shines without anything other which it knows, or which it makes known, the Self is [true] knowledge. It is not a void. Know thus.

See also the words of Sri Ramana recorded by Devaraja Mudaliar in Day by Day with Bhagavan, 21st July, 1946:

In all books on Vedanta you will find this question of a void or of nothing being left, raised by the disciple and answered by the Guru. It is the mind that sees objects and has experiences and that finds a void when it ceases to see and experience, but that is not “you”. You are the constant illumination that lights up both the experiences and the void. It is like a theatre light that enables you to see the theatre, the actors and the play while the play is going on but also remains alight and enables you to say that there is no play when it is all finished.
This saying echoes *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, 594:

D.: Are not the Brahmins considered to be the priests or intermediaries between God and others?
M.: Yes. But who is a Brahmin? A Brahmin is one who has realised Brahman. Such a one has no sense of individuality in him. He cannot think that he acts as an intermediary.

See Muruganar’s *Vritti Urai* to Sri Ramana’s *Arunachala Akshara Manimalai*. In the commentary on v. 41 he says:

[Unlike *bhakti*], *parabhakti* – in which one dwells with the Lord as one’s own nature in the infinite peace of the Self – is not different from *jñāna*. Due to the loss of the personal self, there is in it no trace whatsoever of the ego, the individualised ‘I’, nor of the desire to reach the Lord on the dualistic level, as if he were other than oneself, nor of the fatigue that arises from that. From the point of view of actual experience *parabhakti* is one with *jñāna*. It should be realised that the disparity in names has arisen through the different methods of spiritual practice, which are devotional in nature [in the case of *bhakti*], and through apparent differences on the dualistic level, which occur only in the perception of others, due to their being under the influence of conditioning factors (*upādhi*). Thus the difference between the two is in name only. There is not the slightest difference whatsoever in their actual meaning. Both are the blossoming of pure love, manifesting within the Self as one’s own nature, through the experience of identity with that Self, which is being-consciousness-bliss.

This is saying 54 from *Konrai Vēntan* by Auvaṭṭīr.

**19**

*vyavasthā* means fixity, firm basis, settled principle. Since the mind is purely the imagination of the *jīva*, there is nothing less founded in Reality than it, and therefore nothing with a less firm or fixed basis.

*kr̥tya* means literally one who has done what needs to be done, i.e. one who has accomplished his object.

The phrase *vāṭikā – looking out for the opportunity* is reminiscent of *Tiru-k-kūral* 1187:
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Just as darkness the absence of a lamp awaits, this pallor bides the absence of my Lord’s embrace.

20

The Tamil quotations are from Māṇikkavācakar’s *Tiru-k-kōttumpi* ll. 22-23 and l. 35.

22

The text ஆலயம் has been amended to ஆலயம்.

Since the guru is not different from the Self and since his grace will automatically be transmitted through his mere presence to those who are mature enough to receive it, there is no need for the guru to make any conscious attempt to communicate that grace.

25

The quotation is from பிரார்த்தைனத் திறன்பல், ll. 287-8, the sixth poem in பண்டைக்குத்து, Muruganar’s’s long series of poems in praise of Sri Ramana, which is modelled loosely on the format of the *Tiruvācakam* of Māṇikkavācakar. The quotation is appended by the editor of the printed Tamil edition and is not in the original manuscript.

31

பிரகடனம் < Skt. prakāṭana means announcement, advertisement, Tamil பிரகடனம். Muruganar suggests that, whatever their individual gifts and abilities, *sadhakas* should eschew any form of ‘self advertisement’ as it is known in English.

36

The first part is a quotation from verse 28 of Auvaiyār’s *Nalvali*.

A measure of grain to eat and four cubits of cloth to wear are all a man needs. Yet his thoughts multiply a billionfold. Living life blindly, his domestic life is as fragile as a clay pot, he suffers till the day he dies.
Auvaiyār’s verse in turn reflects verse 189 from the Tamil Sangam collection Puranāṟu, which compares the life of a king to that of a peasant. All either really requires is a measure of food to eat and two sets of clothes to wear, உண்பயநாழி உுப்பைவறணேட. Nothing is certain in life, therefore the only worth of riches is that they can be given to others. In the same way, Muruganar advises the sadhaka to be satisfied with the basics in life, knowing that any further acquisitions will only compound his suffering.

37

Another proverb is quoted here. An unruly bullock which throws off its load will be rewarded only with a greater load later. In the same way a disagreeable person will eventually reap the reward of his behaviour. Therefore there is no need to reprimand or reject him.

43

உண்பயநாழி – I have not died is hymn 23 of the Tiruvācakam, composed after Lord Śiva, in the guise of a Saivite guru, had departed for Mount Kailash after giving him initiation. The verse of Pattinattu Adigal here referred to is as follows:

 смыслம் கோடியாள் அவினங்கடியாள் கூற்றறித்து பாரி காயம் அழிந்தாம் இமதியிலிண்டு பாவி என்கியா பையாேதேமவியசீர் வித்தாராம் கடம் அம் இவண்டாமேடணஞ்ேச

Foolish heart, even if life and body both are lost, do not earn for yourself the name of ‘sinner’ in the world. Whether great wealth or misfortune befalls, be not concerned. Move about like a walking corpse.

45

சுங்கச்சால்லிவிளங்கைவத்தேல் is a slightly amended version of the first line of v. 13 of the grammatical work Nāṇyūl, which lists the ten beauties of style, of which these are the first two given.

50

The quotation is from hymn 23 of the Tiruvācakam, பையாவஹேட்டேகாயில் தியப்பதிகம் – The Sacred Temple Lyric, ll. 37-8.
In the final line of the saying the adjectival participle கூடிய in the printed version which means which is fitting, appropriate (or, if taken as a verbal participle of the form எச்சயிய, means in order to be fitting, appropriate) has been emended to the infinitive கடிய – to be rejected. A close examination of the handwriting reveals that the latter reading, which accords with both the grammatical sense and the gist of the argument that precedes it, is what Muruganar actually wrote.

56

with an active and wandering mind. விக்ஷேபம் is from the Sanskrit vikṣepa meaning casting, throwing, discharging, extension, projection. It refers here to the innate tendency of the mind to projects its own mental world, masking the underlying reality of the Self. For Muruganar the meaning of this word is synonymous with the waking state:

‘…waking state (vikṣepa) projects the imaginary differentiated phenomena, consisting of the triads (seer, thing seen, seeing etc.), like a moving picture show, upon the changeless screen that is the ground of all that is, thus entirely concealing it, so that to the reflected consciousness [of the jiva], they are perceived as real.’ (Footnote to the Pāyiram of Aruṇācala Aksāramāṇamālai Virutti Urai.)

Muruganar’s point is that any activities which merely exacerbate this tendency of the mind to wander and project are self-defeating and should be avoided.

59

The word அகன் – ego in the text has been amended to அகத் – the inner, which is the correct reading of the MS. Moreover, to say that the high-minded adorn the ego is patent nonsense.

64

is the first line of the second verse of Čentaqār’s homage to Śiva at Tiruvilīmīḷālai, Tiruvilīmīḷalai Tiruvicai-p-pā from the 9th Tirumūragai. The second quotation is from Jñāṇasambandhar, 3:40:3:
The Lord dwells not in the heart of those that have not studied [Him].
We shall not remain with those who speak not [his holy name].

The reference to Māṇikkavācakar at the end is from v. 3 of தியாப் ஆலம் – The Sacred Lament.

72
The word அப்ஸூதம் is from Sanskrit anusyūta – woven together regularly and uninterruptedly. All experience is fundamentally experience of the Self. Sri Ramana compares this to the manner in which all sweet things are sweet only because they all contain sugar. Just as all things made out of sugar taste sweet, all experiences are founded upon the bliss of the Self, whose nature is bliss. Thus the Self imparts its bliss to itself, in the form of the jīva.

You make all kinds of sweets of various ingredients and in various shapes and they all taste sweet because there is sugar in all of them and sweetness is the nature of sugar. And in the same way all experiences and the absence of them contain the illumination which is the nature of the Self. Without the Self they cannot be experienced, just as without sugar not one of the articles you make can taste sweet.


Because the flow of experiences is apparently seamless and uninterrupted, the individual rarely gains any hint of this underlying reality, See also Conscious Immortality, pp. 128-9:

You are yourself the source of all your happiness, whatsoever it be, and not external things. Even when you imagine that some external object has given you the happiness, you are mistaken. What happened really is that unconsciously that object brought you back for a flash to yourself, borrowed the happiness and thus presented it to you. The happiness came as a shadow to you, why not look to the source, the Self, and realise it?

73
The printed version differs at two points from the manuscript. The word சுபாவமாகேவ – as one’s authentic experience appears in the printed version as simply சுபாவேம – one’s authentic experience.
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In the phrase சித்தவின்னியேந் கூடி வடி புவதன் – cannot be experienced in conjunction with the movements of the fraudulent mind the adverbial participle கூடி is incorrectly rendered as வடி.

77

The MS has நின்று with a pulli over the ஹ். The printed version corrects this to நிற்று, adding in the missing ஹ்.

78

The story of the crow and the palmyra tree occurs in literature and folklore in many variations and in many contexts. In some versions the story is that the tree falls as the crow lands on it. However the basic idea is that man erroneously tends to assume cause and effect where it is in reality nonexistent. In the over arching context of the Self and the individual this wrong assumption applies to all the phenomena that are perceived, since the source of all activity is the Self and therefore no single cause can be legitimately adduced for anything that occurs, or alternatively, one must assume for everything an infinity of causes, which amounts to the same thing.

The words in brackets are a gloss added in the printed version and are not in the original MS.

88

Following the MS the text has been amended from பலப்பிராப்தி குலாவாம் – (the act of) pampering (verbal noun) to பலப்பிராப்தி குலாவாம் – not pampering (negative adverbial participle) for the sake of both the sense and the grammar. Muruganar’s clear intention is to say that the sadhaka should treat the body neither in too indulgent nor too harsh a fashion.

Skt. phāla prapti = காரியசித்தி – the accomplishment of one’s object.