

A Letter to Myself

Sai Venkatesh Balasubramanian

The following is a useful briefing of the most essential facts of life.

Dear Me,

Everybody encounters information everyday in various ways, over many many years that they live, including valuable experiences. However, all these are close to useless if they do not go into a solid, thorough understanding of the world around us and what our life objectives as humans are.

Here is an essence of the most valuable information that I have managed to collect over the years – scriptural references, logical analysis, sense based information from the real world, and experiences.

If you do find yourself ever forgetful of your objectives, or confused, or even at loss of memory, from say, amnesia, do not bother about getting the old stuff back. Just read this letter and follow sincerely. Your life will be fulfilled, complete, and better than it ever has been or can ever be.

We start with some useful references from well-established, time-tested scriptures.

Ramana Maharishi Talk 219: The **only useful purpose** of the present birth is to turn within and **realise the Self. There is nothing else to do.**

Ramana Padamalai 178: Forget and forsake the **waking state, regarding it as a dream** concept that has taken place merely as a manifestation of the obsessive behaviour of the mind.

Ramana Padamalai 28: Only **Bhakti Sadhana** performed continuously with love will facilitate easily, in a gradual way, this union.

Ramana Maharishi Talk 427: The present state is mere illusion. **Disillusionment is the goal** and nothing more.

Atma Bodha 46: **Knowledge** arising of the experience of reality immediately **destroys the ignorant perception of 'I' and 'mine'**, which resemble the delusion of direction in darkness.

Ramana Maharishi Talk 43: If you have surrendered, you must be able to **abide by the will of God**, and not make a grievance of what may not please you.

Ramana Teachings Ch6: To know God is to love God, therefore the paths of **Jnana and Bhakti come to the same.**

Ramana's reply to Mother: The One whose function it is to ordain makes each to act. What will not happen will never happen, whatever effort one may put forth. And what will happen will not fail to happen, however much one may seek to prevent it. This is certain. The part of wisdom is therefore to **stay quiet.**

Maharishi's Gospel B.1:VII: The Guru is both outer and inner. From outside, he gives a push to the mind to turn inward, while from inside he pulls the mind towards the Self and helps in quieting it. That is the **grace of the Guru.**

Akshara Mana Malai 14 Oh Arunachala, It is your bounden duty, To control me after giving your grace , just like my mother.

Akshara Mana Malai 30 Oh Arunachala, Remove the cloth that covers my mind, denude me and again grace me with your cloth of grace.

Akshara Mana Malai 69 Espouse me, I beseech Thee, and let this mind, now wedded to the world, be wedded to perfection, Oh Arunachala!

Akshara Mana Malai 108 Oh Arunachala! My Loving Lord! Throw Thy garland (about my shoulders) wearing Thyself this one (strung) by me, Arunachala!

The Bible Psalm 46:10: He says, 'Be still, and **know that I am God**; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the Earth'.

The Bible Luke 17:21: For, behold, **the kingdom of God is within you**.

Quran Surah 13:28: Those who believe and whose heart find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah. For without doubt, **in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction**.

Yoga Vasishtha VI.2.151/9: **Your dream has materialised into the waking reality**. All of us here are your own dream-objects.

Yoga Vasishtha IV.59: What else is there in this world, O Rama, except eating, drinking and sensual pleasure? Hence, what is there in this world that a wise man would find worthy of seeking? This **world of five elements and the body composed of flesh, blood, hair and all the rest of it**, are considered real by the ignorant, and they exist for his entertainment. The wise see in all this an impermanent and **unreal but terrible poison**.

Bhagavad Gita 3:17-18: **He, who takes delight in the Self alone** and is gratified with the Self and is contained in the Self, **has no duty**. **In this world, that great soul has no use whatsoever** for things done nor for things not done; **nor has he dependence of any kind** on any creature.

Bhagavad Gita 9:14: **Constantly chanting My names** and glories and striving for My realization, and bowing again and again to Me, those **devotees of firm resolve, ever united with Me** through meditation, worship Me with **single-minded devotion**.

Bhagavad Gita 12:6-7: Those who **depending exclusively on Me** and surrendering all actions to Me, worship Me, **constantly meditating on Me with single minded devotion**. These, Arjuna, I **speedily deliver from the ocean of birth and death**, their mind being fixed on Me.

Bhagavad Gita 12:18-19: He who is **alike to friend and foe**, as well as to honour and ignominy, who remains balanced in heat and cold, pleasure and pain and other contrary experiences, and is free from attachment. He who takes praise and reproach alike, and is **given to contemplation and contented with any means of subsistence whatsoever**, entertaining **no sense of ownership and attachment in respect of his dwelling-place**, and **full of devotion to Me**, that man is dear to Me.

Tripura Rahasya Vidya Gita 20:122-123: Unbroken **supreme awareness even in the dream** is the mark of the hishest order. The person who is not involuntarily made the end of his **mental predispositions**, but who **invokes them at will**, is of the highest order.

Sai Satcharita Ch2: **Hearing My stories and teachings** will create faith in devotees' hearts and they will easily get Self-Realization and Bliss.

Shiva Rahasya Ribhu Gita 38:7: One is solely **responsible for one's own liberation or bondage**, since the choice of destroying the restless mind or allowing it to roam at large rests with that one only. Therefore, one should conquer the restless mind by **steady abidance in the pure thought free Alert-Awareness-Self Only**. This steady abidance is Moksha.

Shiva Rahasya Ribhu Gita 38:24: All charitable gifts, all pilgrimages to sacred places, all sorts of Mantra-Japa and worship of diverse Gods must be **firmly given up in favour of steady practice** of the teachings of Ribhu Gita only.

Here is a little exercise you must do, as frequent as necessary, to be in constant abidance in the Self. The exercise lies in asking yourself the following questions to yourself, and reaffirming the following answers, backed by obvious observances, logical reasoning, and scriptures.

What is the aim of life?

To Realize the Self, called Aatman and merge in it completely. The Self is Bliss – Anandam, is the Supreme – Venkatesha, is what one feels in deep sleep, is Pure Love, is truth.

Why?

Three Reasons: First, it is what the scriptures say (see above). Second, it is what you desire, since it is pure, unalloyed bliss. Third, it is what the Lord desires. Ever since you were born, and even since countless previous births, He has been looking at you, from above, every second, patiently but eagerly waiting for that special day, when you will realize the truth and be united with Him forever, in life and death. Look at His sweet smiling face, waiting eagerly for you. You cannot deny Him this union, or delay it any longer. Every moment you waste is a big loss.

There is a bigger reason than these three though. Everything happens purely by the will of the Lord. The very fact that you think of Self-Realization, or even read this letter, is through His grace. Nobody can stop or alter His will. So, this, combined with the earlier three reasons, firmly establishes the one and only aim of life: **Self-Realization**.

What is the Truth?

Whatever is permanent alone can be considered real. Thus, truth is what is present in all three states of existence – wakefulness, dream and deep sleep.

Now, look around, outside you and within you. **What do you see?**

World, People, relatives, things, responsibilities, body, mind, thoughts, memories, feelings.

Did these exist in deep sleep?

No. This is obvious. So all of these are not real, are not truth.

Then, what are these?

Bundles of thoughts. Creations of the mind, nothing more valid than a dream.

Let us expound on these 'unrealities'.

These is a popular legend of Gajendra Moksha. The king of elephants Gajendra, is once dragged into a pool of water by a crocodile whose jaws clasp firmly Gajendra's legs. The elephant cries out to the Lord "Aadi Moolame, Abhayam". Lord Narayana arrives, mounted on the eagle Garuda, slays the crocodile with the Sudarshana Chakra, and graces Gajendra with liberation.

So too, Narayana is the Self, and the ardent seeker of the Self is Gajendra. All the unrealities listed above are the crocodile with its sharp jaws, pulling you into the ocean of Maaya, delusion and Samsaara. **Act quick, or else you will certainly drown** without chances of redemption.

People around you, parents, relatives, friends, and to a lesser extent others, seem harmless, don't they. Do not be fooled! **These people are all delusion personified, and are deluded themselves.** They are the same lot who cry bitterly and mourn other's deaths, not realizing that they themselves aren't permanent.

People will try to set you up into various kinds of engagements: relations, friendships, contracts, marriages, jobs, career, responsibilities, some of them seemingly harmless. What they don't realize is that nobody is permanent. They will set you up, and when their time comes, they shall happily depart to the other world.

For you though, a seeker of the Self, who could have spent days and years in constant blissful union with the Lord, **you will find yourself caught in responsibilities** and engagements, curtailing and impeding, if not completely **diverting you from the real pursuit - Moksha.**

This doesn't stop with engagement alone. Even talking to these people is hazardous, for the simple reason that, talking, especially on loving and friendly terms cultivates relationship, just like walking you up the gentle slopes of a cliff. The moment they depart, **you are literally pushed down the steep cliff.** Will you enjoy the brutal fall?

The scripture says these are all unreal and terrible poison (see above). So, when you see people trying to 'help' you by means of such engagements, even if they are your parents, **beware, be very alert and desist strongly! See in them, the wide open mouth of the fierce crocodile with its sharp bloody teeth trying to devour you.**

However, there are exceptions to these characters: People, parents, friends, or others who are happy for your spiritual progress alone, and don't give a shred of value to your worldly responsibilities. These people, irrespective of age, gender and character, are true Sadgurus. After all a **Guru that guides you towards Sat** or Satya or Truth is a Sadguru, and these people, **should be revered** as the Self itself. An ideal lifestyle would be one where the closest people, as parents and spouse would be such Sadgurus. However, that hardly happens.

I am not saying people that set you up into engagements are doing it on purpose, always. Sometimes it is beyond their control too. After all the crocodile too was graced with Moksha, along with Gajendra. However, **a venomous snake is venomous**, whether the poison is in itself or inherited is immaterial. Being near a snake, you risk the chance of being killed. Trying to attack it, you make the chance event of your dying a certainty. Neither is a wise choice. The only valid choice is to back away from it, and **strongly desist any interaction with it whatsoever.**

On the other hand, the Lord has been waiting for ages to be united with you. Respect that. He knows what you have been through and what is in store for you, something which nobody else, even your parents know. **He knows how to sustain your life**, and what to provide when. **He will do the right thing at the right time.** Trust Him alone, and if He talks you into some engagement, do it with full dedication, surrendering entirely to Him alone.

If people around you are the manifestations of Maaya, trying to drag you in, **the mind is the very creator of this Maaya. Nay, the mind is indeed Maaya itself.** Such a powerful enemy at such close quarters!

Don't worry. The Lord has given you the best of His weapons, the sword or Khadga. This Khadga has the sharpness of logic and reasoning, with the fiery nature of Aatma-Jnaana. Whenever you are aware of the mind's thoughts, stop and ask yourself: where is this chain of thoughts or feelings

going? Is it going to end in some interaction with somebody? Is it going to result in some new engagement? Is it leading to a worthless nostalgia, or anxiety, or fake 'iffy' 'should-would-could' constructions? Is it resulting in a situation where atleast for sometime, you would think of the world, Maaya and its contents, rather than in blissful union with the Lord?

If the answer is yes to any of these, you are walking into the crocodile's mouth. Desist and step back immediately. **Remember, the Lord is waiting for you, and every minute is precious.**

The Lord is your family. He is the mother father sibling and spouse. He is the first, last and best love. Completely disregarding the unreal characters of Maaya and living a life of continous intense love in the Lord alone - this alone is true life.

Returning back.

See around the world. Now completely convinced of the nature of people around you, as well as your own mind, take an objective stance. Look at all of these. The mind itself, plus all its creations around it. **Where do they go in deep sleep? They Vanish.** Like thin threads blown by a strong wind, or like dew drops at dawn on a leaf, don't these just vanish when the sun rises?

Visualize everybody, everything, the world, mind, body, thoughts, feelings, the idea of 'me', 'you' etc all just dematerialize and vanish. Destruction of this 'I' and 'Mine' is the highest goal of wisdom that is Jnaana. The Lord's Khadga has thus been put to good use.

What remains? **That smile.** That sweet, endearing, innocent, blissful smile of the Lord. That same smile with which the Lord has been waiting for ages. **This is Truth.** This is Bliss. This is Atman. This is Self. **This is Moksha.** This is the **consummation of Life.** Revel in this smile. Immerse yourself in this bliss. Every breath you take, let this freshness spread all over. Atleast spend sometime feeling this bliss.

So experienced, Rejoice! You have **killed the mind.** Just as one conclusively knows that a crow is black, you conclusively know that the sole Truth is the Self and Bliss. Everytime somebody narrates to you about crows sighted in some location, you don't need a photograph to visualize it. You can picture these black things right in your head, because that's how they are, and that's how strong you are convinced. So too, **you shall always remain convinced** of the Blissful Truth as the Self, as well as the dangerous deluding nature of Maaya. This conviction, called Nishtha will never vanish, and will always form the intellectual backdrop of every information you encounter, of every experience you have. However, to really feel this bliss, you can perform this above exercise anytime.

Who is this Venkatesha?

Venkatesha is the Self.

The Blissful Self is the sole truth that appears in all and transcends the three states of wake, dream and sleep. Seen as three cities Tripura, the Self is called Tripurasundari. In the temple of Thirukodikkaval, there is the shrine of this Tripurasundari giving Darshan to the Alwar saints as Venkatesha.

The evils of Maaya and the material world are viewed as the present age of Kali Yuga. As such, Venkatesha is Kali Yuga Varadha or One who redeems us and gives salvation in the evil age of Kali.

Every God that every scripture claims, is Venkatesha Himself. In Annamacharya's Entha Maathramuna, one finds this:

...

Koluthuru Vaishnavulu Koorimito Vishnudhani

Palukudhuru Vedaanthulu Parabrahmam Anuchu

Thalathuru Shaivalu Thagina Bhaktulanu Shivudanuchu

Alari Pogaduduru Kaapaalikulu Aadi Bhairavudanuchu

Sari Nammuduru Shaaktheylu Shakthiroopa Neevanuchu

...

Sri Venkatapathi Nivaithe Mamu Chekoninunna Daivamu

Neevalane Neesharana Nedunu Idhiye Paratattvamu Naaku

Excerpt: The Vaishnavas praise You as Vishnu. The Vedaanthas speak of You as Parabrahmam, the Absolute. Shaivas and other great devotees regard You as Shiva. Kapaalikas celebrate You as Aadi Bhairava. Shaakthas firmly believe that You are Shakthi. If you are Lord Sri Venkatapathi, You are the one that unites me into You. Even my surrender unto you is because of You alone. This alone is the ultimate and most supreme Truth and Concept for me.

Thus, in conclusion, is the essence of the most famous prayer to Lord Venkatesha:

Vinaa Venkatesham Nanaatho Nanaathah Sadaa Venkatesham Smaraami Smaraami

There is no other Supreme than Venkatesha, and Him I shall constantly remember and contemplate.

Love,
Me