

# Upadesa Saram

written by Ramana Maharishi ca1950  
English translation is noted from verses of Upadēśa Undiyār  
Word by word Sanskrit translation by Sri Prabhujī

कर्तुराज्ञया प्राप्यते फलम् ।  
कर्म किं परं कर्म तज्जडम् ॥ 1 ॥

karturājñayā prāpyatē phalam ।  
karma kiṃ paraṃ karma tajjaḍam ॥ 1 ॥

Action giving fruit is by the ordainment of God. Since action is non-aware, is action God?

Kartā: the Creator, Doer, Ordainer  
Ājñayā: By the will of  
Prāpyatē: one attains  
Phalam: seeds, vasana, effect of action  
Karma: action  
kiṃ: How then is  
paraṃ: Supreme  
tat: it is  
jaḍa: devoid of awareness

कृतिमहोदधौ पतनकारणम् ।  
फलमशाश्वतं गतिनिरोधकम् ॥ 2 ॥

kṛtimahōdadhau patinakāraṇam ।  
phalamaśāśvataṃ gatinirōdhakam ॥ 2 ॥

The fruit of action perishing, as seed causes to fall in the ocean of action. It is not giving liberation.

kṛti: of action  
mahōdadhau: (generate) a huge ocean (of karma)  
patana: downfall  
kāraṇam: the cause  
phalam: fruits  
aśāśvatam: temporary  
gati: progress  
nirōdhakam: halts

ईश्वरार्पितं नेच्छया कृतम् ।  
चित्तशोधकं मुक्तिसाधकम् ॥ 3 ॥

īśvarārpitaṃ nēchChayā kṛtam ।  
chittaśōdhakaṃ muktisādhakam ॥ 3 ॥

Desireless action done for God, purifying the mind, it will show the path to liberation.

īśvara: Lord  
arpitaṃ: offer to  
nēchChayā: without desire  
kṛtam: perform (action)  
chitta: mind  
śōdhakaṃ: purify  
mukti: liberation  
sādhakam: takes (us) toward

कायवाङ्मनः कार्यमुत्तमम् । इन्द्रमनः  
पूजनं जपश्चिन्तनं क्रमात् ॥ 4 ॥

kayavānmanaḥ kāryamuttamam ।  
pūjanaṃ japaśchintanaṃ kramāt ॥ 4 ॥

This is certain: puja japa and dhyana are actions of body, Speech and mind.  
One than one is superior.

kāya : acts performed by body  
vāṅg : verbal acts, speech  
manaḥ: the mind  
kāryam: actions performed by  
uttamam: better  
pūjanam: ritualistic worship  
japah: repetition of a name of God or a sacred phrase  
chintanam: meditation and contemplation  
kramāt: in that order

जगत ईशधी युक्तसेवनम् ।  
अष्टमूर्तिभृद्देवपूजनम् ॥ 5 ॥

jagata īśadhī yuktasēvanam ।  
aṣṭamūrtibhṛddēvapūjanam ॥ 5 ॥

Worshipping thinking that all eight forms are forms of God is good puja of God.

jagat: the world  
īśa: Lord  
dhī: understanding, realize  
yukta: the manifestation  
sēvanam: to serve  
aṣṭa: eight  
mūrti: form  
bhṛd: who has  
deva: God  
pūjanam: perfect worship to

उत्तमस्तवादुच्चमन्दतः ।  
चित्तजं जपध्यानमुत्तमम् ॥ 6 ॥

uttamastavāduchchamandataḥ ।  
chittajam japadhyānamuttamam ॥ 6 ॥

Rather than praising, loud voice, rather than japa within the mouth, what is done by mind is beneficial. This is called dhyana.

uttama: better than  
stavād: hymns of praise  
uchcha: loud chanting  
mandataḥ: soft chanting (better than loud chanting)  
chittajam: mental chanting  
japa: repetition of Name  
dhyāna: meditation  
muttamam: is the best of all

आज्यधारया स्रोतसा समम् ।  
सरलचिन्तनं विरलतः परम् ॥ 7 ॥

ājyadhārayā srōtasā samam ।  
saralachintanam viralataḥ param ॥ 7 ॥

Rather than meditating leavingly, certainly meditating unleavingly, like a river or the falling of ghee, is superior to meditate.

ājyadhārayā: unbroken flow of ghee  
srōtasā: a flowing stream of water  
samam: just like  
sarala: flows continuously  
chintanam: meditation  
viralataḥ: discontinuous  
param: is better than

भेदभावनात् सोऽहमित्यसौ ।  
भावनाऽभिदा पावनी मता ॥ 8 ॥

bhēdabhāvanāt sō'hamityasau ।  
bhāvanā'bhidā pāvanī matā ॥ 8 ॥

Rather than anya-bhava (meditation on anything), ananya-bhava (meditation on nothing), in which he is I, certainly is the best among all.

bhēda bhāvanāt: (than meditating with) the feeling “I am separate from Him.”

sō'ham ityasau: I am He

bhāvanā: (meditating with) understanding

abhidā: bestows

pāvanī matā: greater purity

भावशून्यसद्भावसुस्थितिः ।

भावनाबलाद्भक्तिरुत्तमा ॥ 9 ॥

bhāvaśūnyasadbhāvasusthiṭḥ ।

bhāvanābalādbhaktiruttamā ॥ 9 ॥

By the strength of meditation, being in sat-bhava, which transcends bhavana (thinking, imagination or meditation in the sense of mental activity) , alone is para-bhakti tattva.

bhāva śūnya: devoid of thoughts (of separation, mental activity)

sadbhāva: in state of true being

susthiṭḥ: established, standing firmly

bhāvanā balād: strength of meditation

bhaktiḥ uttamā: this is supreme devotion

हृत्स्थले मनः स्वस्थता क्रिया ।

भक्तियोगबोधाश्च निश्चितम् ॥ 10 ॥

hṛtsthalē manaḥ svasthatā kriyā ।

bhaktiyōgabōdhāścha niśchitam ॥ 10 ॥

Being, subsiding in the place from which one rose, that is karma and bhakti, that is yoga and jnana.

hṛtsthalē: standing in the heart or Self

manaḥ: mind  
svasthātā: its source  
kriyā: desireless action (kriya yoga)  
bhakti: love, devotion (bhakti yoga)  
yoga: union  
bōdhāścha: jnana, knowledge or awareness (jnana yoga)  
niśchitam: is certainly

वायुरोधनाल्लीयते मनः ।  
जालपक्षिवद्रोधसाधनम् ॥ 11 ॥

vāyurōdhanāllīyatē manaḥ ।  
jālapakṣivadrōdhasādhanam ॥ 11 ॥

When one restrains the breath within, like a bird caught in a net the mind also will be restrained. This is a means to restrain.

vāyu: wind, breath  
rōdhanā: mastery over  
llīyatē: subside  
manaḥ: thoughts in the mind  
jāla: net  
pakṣiva: like a bird  
rōdha: trapping  
sādhanam: by means of

चित्तवायवश्चिक्रियायुताः ।  
शाखयोर्द्वयी शक्तिमूलका ॥ 12 ॥

chittavāyavaśchikriyāyutāḥ ।  
śākhayōrdvayī śaktimūlakā ॥ 12 ॥

Mind and breath are two branches, which have knowing and doing. Their root is one.

chittavāyava: mind and vital energy/breath

chit kriyā yutāḥ: carry out actions in the mind and body  
śākhayōr dvayī: are two branches  
śakti mūlakā: energy from the same source

लयविनाशने उभयरोधने ।  
लयगतं पुनर्भवति नो मृतम् ॥ 13 ॥

layavināśanē ubhayarōdhanē ।  
layagataṁ punarbhavati nō mṛtam ॥ 13 ॥

Dissolution is two: laya and nāśa. What is lying down will rise. If form dies, it will not rise.

laya: temporary dissolution, suspension  
vināśanē: destruction or annihilation  
rōdhana: states in which the mind has been stopped or prevented from rising  
ubhaya rōdhanē: are two ways of mind control  
layagataṁ punar bhavati: what has gone in laya arises, come into being, again  
nō mṛtam: the destroyed never emerge again as it is dead

प्राणबन्धनाल्लीनमानसम् ।  
एकचिन्तनान्नाशमेत्यदः ॥ 14 ॥

prāṇabandhanāllīnamānasam ।  
ēkachintanānnāśamētyadaḥ ॥ 14 ॥

Only when one sends the mind, which will become calm when one restrains the breath, on the investigating path will its form perish.

prāṇa bandhanā: through control of breath  
līna mānasam: the mind is held in suspension  
ēka chintanān: through one pointed attention on ONE Reality  
nāśame iti: must be destroyed  
adaḥ: That (the mind)

नष्टमानसोत्कृष्टयोगिनः ।  
कृत्यमस्ति किं स्वस्थितिं यतः ॥ 15 ॥

naṣṭamānasōtkṛṣṭayōginah ।  
kṛtyamasti kiṃ svasthitim yataḥ ॥ 15 ॥

When the form of the mind is annihilated, for the great yogi who remains permanently as the reality, there is not a single doing. He has attained his nature.

naṣṭa mānasa: whose mind has been destroyed  
utkṛṣṭa yōginah: for that exalted yogi  
kṛtyamasti kiṃ: what action remains  
vasthitim yataḥ: who is established in his true nature?

दृश्यवारितं चित्तमात्मनः ।  
चित्त्वदर्शनं तत्त्वदर्शनम् ॥ 16 ॥

dr̥śyavāritam chittamātmanah ।  
chittvadarśanam tattvadarśanam ॥ 16 ॥

Leaving external phenomena, the mind knowing its own form of light is alone real awareness.

dr̥śya: what is seen, perceived or known as an object  
vāritam: is withdrawn  
chittam: mind  
ātmanah: its own (means the mind)  
chittva darśanam: seeing chittva (real nature as pure awareness, I am.)  
tattva: Truth, thatness, what actually exists or is real  
darśanam: seeing



मानसं तु किं मार्गणे कृते ।  
नैव मानसं मार्ग आर्जवात् ॥ 17 ॥

mānasaṃ tu kiṃ mārgaṇē kṛtē ।  
naiva mānasaṃ mārga ārjavāt ॥ 17 ॥

When one investigates the form of the mind without forgetting, there is not anything called “mind”. This is the direct path for everyone whomsoever.

mānasaṃ tu kiṃ: what is the mind?  
mārgaṇē kṛtē: when one enquires  
naiva mānasaṃ: one finds that there is no mind  
mārga ārjavāt: This is the direct path (to Reality)

वृत्तयस्त्वहं वृत्तिमाश्रिताः ।  
वृत्तयो मनो विद्ध्यहं मनः ॥ 18 ॥

vṛttayastvahaṃ vṛttimāśritāḥ ।  
vṛttayō manō viddhyahaṃ manaḥ ॥ 18 ॥

Thoughts alone are mind. Of all, the thought called “I” alone is the root. What is called mind is “I”.

vṛttaya: these thoughts  
ahaṃ vṛttim: the “I” thought, ego  
āśritāḥ: depend upon  
vṛttayō: thought  
manō: are the mind  
viddhyahaṃ manaḥ: understand that the mind is this “I” thought

अहमयं कुतो भवति चिन्वतः ।  
अयि पतत्यहं निजविचारणम् ॥ 19 ॥

ahamayaṃ kutō bhavati chinvaṭaḥ ।  
ayi patatyahaṃ nijavichāraṇam ॥ 19 ॥

When one investigates within what the place is from which one rises as “I”, “I” will die. This is awareness-investigation.

aham ayaṃ: this “I” thought  
kutah: from where  
bhavati: arise  
chinvaṭaḥ: upon inquiring  
ayi patatyahaṃ: it vanishes  
nija vichāraṇam: This is true self-inquiry

अहमि नाशभाज्यहमहंतया ।  
स्फुरति ह्रस्वयं परमपूर्णसत् ॥ 20 ॥

ahami nāśabhājyahamaṃtayā ।  
sphurati hr̥tsvayaṃ paramapūrṇasat ॥ 20 ॥

In the place where “I” merges, that, the one, appears spontaneously as “I am I”. That itself is the whole.

ahami nāśa bhāji: when the “I” thought or ego is destroyed  
aham ahaṃ tayā: the I-I  
sphurati: shines forth  
hr̥t: the spiritual heart  
svayaṃ: on its own  
parama: supreme  
pūrṇa: the infinite whole  
sat: truth, reality, existence

इदमहं पदाऽभिख्यमन्वहम् ।  
अहमिलीनकेऽप्यलयसत्तया ॥ 21 ॥

idamaḥam padā'bhikhyamanvahaṃ ।  
ahamīlīnakē'pyalayasattayā ॥ 21 ॥

That is at all times the substance of the word called “I”, because of the exclusion of our non-existence even in sleep, which is devoid of “I”.

idam: this

ahaṃ: I

pada: word

abhikhyam: like, similar to

ahaṃ padā abhikhyam: indicated by the word “I”

idam anu-ahaṃ: this I-I (which is unbroken and continuous even in deep sleep)

ahaṃ ilīnakē-pya laya: the I thought dissolves and disappears in deep sleep

sattayā: is the real “I”

विग्रहेन्द्रियप्राणधीतमः ।

नाहमेकसत्तज्जडं ह्यसत् ॥ 22 ॥

vigrahēndriyaprāṇadhītamaḥ ।  
nāhamēkasattajjaḍam hyasat ॥ 22 ॥

Since body, mind, intellect, life and darkness are all jada and asat, they are not “I”, which is sat.

vigraha: physical body (food sheath, annamaya kosa)

indriya: mind in senses ( manomaya kosa)

prāṇa: life force ( pranamaya kosa)

dhī: intellect, buddhi (vijnanamaya kosa)

tamaḥ: ignorance, darkness of desire, means will, cittam (anandamaya kosa, cit: what is actually aware), consists of the dense, dark fog of visaya-vasanas, inclinations or desires to seek happiness in things other than oneself

na: not me

ahaṃ-ēka-sat: “I-I” is the one and only truth/reality

tat-jaḍam: those are inert/insentient

hi-asat: and hence unreal

jaḍa: non-aware

asat: unreal, non-existent

sat: what actually exists

सत्त्वभासिका चित्क्ववेतरा ।

सत्तया हि चिच्चित्तया ह्यहम् ॥ 23 ॥

sattvabhāsikā chitkvavētarā ।

sattayā hi chichchittayā hyaham ॥ 23 ॥

Because of the non-existence of other awareness to be aware of what exists, what exists is awareness. Awareness alone exists as we.

sattva-bhāsikā: to illumine existence

chit: consciousness awareness, what is actually aware

kvava itarā: is there anything

sattayā hi chit: existence is consciousness

chittayā hi-aham: I am consciousness

ईशजीवयोर्वेषधीभिदा ।

सत्स्वभावतो वस्तु केवलम् ॥ 24 ॥

īśajīvayōrvēṣadhībhidā ।

satsvabhāvatō vastu kēvalam ॥ 24 ॥

By existing nature, God and soul are just one substance. Only adjunct-awareness is different.

īśa-jīvayōr: between Jiva and Ishwara

vēṣa-dhī-bhidā: there is a difference only in body/form and intellect (gross and subtle bodies)

sat svabhāvatah: in thir essential nature

vastu kēvalam: they are both the same (absolute reality)

वेषहानतः स्वात्मदर्शनम् ।

ईशदर्शनं स्वात्मरूपतः ॥ 25 ॥

vēṣahānataḥ svātmadarśanam ।  
īśadarśanam svātmarūpataḥ ॥ 25 ॥

Knowing oneself leaving aside adjuncts is itself knowing God, because of shining as oneself.

vēṣa hānataḥ: when the costume (identification with name and form) is shed  
svātma darśanam: seeing one's own true nature, the Self is realized  
īśa darśanam: seeing God  
svātma rūpataḥ: as the Self (is true Self realization)

आत्मसंस्थितिः स्वात्मदर्शनम् ।  
आत्मनिर्द्वयादात्मनिष्ठता ॥ 26 ॥

ātmasaṁsthiṭiḥ svātmadarśanam ।  
ātmanirdvayādātmaniṣṭhatā ॥ 26 ॥

Being oneself alone is knowing oneself, because oneself is devoid of two.  
This is tanmaya-nistha (the state of being firmly fixed or established as “that, tat”, the one infinite reality called brahman.

ātma saṁsthiṭiḥ: being established in the Self  
svātma darśanam: seeing one's own true nature, is Self realization  
ātma nirdvayāt: as the Self is non-dual  
ātma niṣṭhatā: this is abidance in the Self

ज्ञानवर्जिताऽज्ञानहीनचित् ।  
ज्ञानमस्ति किं ज्ञातुमन्तरम् ॥ 27 ॥

jñānavarjitā'jñānahīnachit ।  
jñānamasti kiṁ jñātumantaram ॥ 27 ॥

Only Knowledge that is devoid of knowledge and ignorance is knowledge.  
This is real. There is not anything for knowig.

jñāna varjitā: It is also devoid of knowledge  
ajñāna hīna chit: Consciousness is devoid of ignorance.  
Jñānam asti: What knowledge (instrument of knowledge) is there  
kiṃ antaram: other than (the Self itself)  
jñātum: to know (the Self)?

किं स्वरूपमित्यात्मदर्शने ।

अव्ययाऽभवाऽऽपूर्णचित्सुखम् ॥ 28 ॥

kiṃ svarūpamityātmadarśanē ।  
avyayā'bhavā"pūrṇachitsukham ॥ 28 ॥

If one knows what the nature of oneself is, then beginningless, endless and unbroken existence-awareness-happiness.

kiṃ svarūpam: what is the nature  
ātma: of the Self  
ity darśanē: thus (enquiring) one sees, finds  
avyayā abhavā: (that) it is indestructible, unborn  
apūrṇa chit sukham: ever complete, consciousness, bliss

बन्धमुक्त्यतीतं परं सुखम् ।

विन्दतीह जीवस्तु दैविकः ॥ 29 ॥

bandhamuktyatītaṃ paraṃ sukham ।  
vindatīha jīvastu daivikaḥ ॥ 29 ॥

Standing in this state, thereby experiencing supreme bliss, which is devoid of bondage and liberation, is standing in the service of God.

Bandha mukty atītaṃ: which is beyond bondage and freedom  
paraṃ sukham: attains supreme bliss  
Vindati iha: who realizes here in this very world  
Jīvaha tu: the individual  
daivikaḥ: his divine nature

अहमपेतकं निजविभानकम् ।  
महदिदंतपोरमणवागियम् ॥ 30 ॥

ahamapētakam̐ nijavibhānakam ।  
mahadidaṁtapō ramaṇavāgiyam ॥ 30 ॥

I ceasing, what if one knows what remains, that alone is good tapas: Thus said Lord Ramana, who is oneself.

Aham apētakam̐: destroying the ego  
Nija vibhānakam: and knowing the Self  
Mahat idaṁ tapō: is the greatest austerity  
ramaṇa vāgiyam: this is the teaching of Ramana