

THE SEVEN STEPS TO AWAKENING

second edition

by

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INTRODUCTION

You, dear reader, have a choice.
Choice A is to bring the impostor self and all forms of suffering to a final end and thus enjoy the perfect Awareness-Love-Bliss of your true Self forever.

Choice B is to continue to be controlled by the impostor self; identified with a temporary physical body that is subject to hundreds of diseases while living in a world that has had more than fifteen thousand wars in the last five thousand years.

As soon as there is any mention of bringing the impostor self to a final end, the impostor self in most humans immediately begins to generate thoughts, concepts and reasons for why the impostor self should not be brought to a final end.

The impostor self is very cunning and can use thoughts in thousands of different combinations to prevent you from bringing it to a final end. There are almost no spiritual teachings that effectively deal with the problem of the cunning tricks of the impostor self and thus almost no humans succeed in bringing the impostor self to a final end. Therefore it is essential to begin by facing the fact that almost no human really wants to bring the impostor self to a final end.

Why would anyone want to bring the impostor self to a final end? Because the true Self has never experienced any suffering in all eternity.
The true Self is Infinite-Eternal-Awareness-Love-Bliss.

Eternal-Awareness-Love-Bliss is an infinitely better choice than being controlled by an impostor self that pretends to be you, but is not really you.

Some teachings call the impostor self “ego.” Other teachings call the impostor self “mind.” The term “impostor self” is a better term than “ego” because the word ego has so many different definitions. Psychology defines ego in one way, the dictionary defines ego in another way and these definitions are not the same as what the awakened sages mean by the word “ego.”

The impostor self is thought. The impostor self is the words in your mind. Those words of the language or languages you are fluent in came from outside of you. That is why you cannot speak fluently in one hundred languages, because language comes from the outside. You existed before you learned the languages you now think in. Therefore you are not thought. However, thought pretends to be you.

One reason to make choice A is so that you can experience your true Self. In other words choice A is a choice to end the false and eternally live in the True.

The most effective means to stop the tricks of the impostor self is to increase your desire for liberation. The desire for liberation is the desire for freedom from:

1. The impostor self.
2. This false dreamlike world.
3. All forms of suffering.

The desire for liberation is also the desire to live as the true Self so that you can enjoy Awareness-Love-Bliss forever.

The importance of increasing your desire for liberation has been pointed out by many awakened sages such as Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj and Sri Sankara.

The question is how to make your desire for liberation increase? There are positive and negative ways to increase your desire for liberation. In *The Seven Steps to Awakening* one of the categories quotes have been placed under is Step Five; "Be inspired, encouraged and motivated to actually practice all seven steps." Reading those quotes repeatedly is a positive way to increase your desire for liberation. All of the quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening* have the potential to increase your desire for liberation.

Facing the negative aspects of the life the impostor self leads is a negative way to increase your desire for liberation. Comparing choice A with choice B is also a way to increase your desire for liberation.

When the desire for liberation becomes extremely intense:

1. Self honesty becomes intense.
2. Suddenly you can see the thousands of ways the impostor self tricked you in the past.
3. Suddenly you see the significance of the quotes that the false self never allowed you to see before.

Historically, not even one in a million humans have succeeded in bringing the impostor self to its final end. That is because of the cunning tricks the impostor self uses to preserve its imaginary self. Those cunning tricks are mostly in the form of thoughts, concepts, ideas, desires, emotions, etc. Some of the quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening* were selected for the purpose of helping you to put an end to the tricks (preservation strategies) that the impostor self uses.

Some of the quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening* were selected to help put you back on track when the impostor self derails you from your journey to Awakening.

When one who is not free from the impostor self selects quotes, usually many of the quotes they select are quotes that will help the impostor self to continue. Even if they select some of the most powerful quotes, the impostor self does not let them see the significance of the quotes. Increasing your desire for liberation will help you to see the significance of the quotes and why the specific quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening* were selected.

Most people tend to think that everything an Awakened Sage says is a part of his or her teaching and therefore helpful for awakening. This is *not* true as the following saying of Sri Ramana Maharshi illustrates:

“The sage’s pure mind which beholds as a mere witness the whole world is like a mirror which reflects the foolish thoughts of those who come before him. And these thoughts are then mistaken to be his.”

That quote comes from the book *The Garland of Guru’s Sayings* translated into English by K. Swaminathan. It is Garland quote number 1106. In *The Seven Steps to Awakening* it is quote number 34.

Thousands of pages of quotes have been printed because of the mistaken view that everything a sage says is a part of his or her teachings. Garland quote number 1106 corrects that mistaken view.

The quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening* are a loving transmission from your true Self. Through these quotes your true Self is communicating to you:

“I really love you and want the best for you. I don’t want you to continue to suffer needlessly. Here in these quotes I am showing you the way to bring the illusion to an end and to awaken into the Reality of Eternal-Awareness-Love-Bliss. Here in these quotes I am showing you what most aspirants cannot see, even if they have read some of these quotes before.

Here I have collected the quotes that are most essential and most helpful for those who really wish to awaken in this lifetime. Here I have collected the quotes that have no detours or distractions. Here I have collected the quotes that reveal the most direct means that brings the impostor self to its final end."

The quotes have been placed in various categories that are steps to awakening. The categories have been selected to be most helpful to show how to remove the obstacles that prevent most aspirants from bringing the impostor self to its final end.

The first step is to know that a journey that never goes beyond thought is *not* a journey to Awakening. Know the difference between:

- A. Using the teachings as practice instructions.
- B. Getting lost or stuck in concepts.

People often study spiritual teachings just because they find the concepts interesting. They like to discuss the teachings, argue about the teachings, think about the teachings, go on and on asking questions but missing answers, etc. Most people fail to distinguish between that which is essential and that which is merely a distraction or detour, like a group of people who meet in an automobile once per week to discuss various maps without ever putting the key in the ignition and without ever moving the car even one inch. Approaching the teachings this way assures failure to Awaken. Most people approach the teachings this way and most people fail to bring the impostor self to its final end.

In most people the desire to allow the impostor self to continue is much greater than their desire for liberation. Until that problem is honestly faced and corrected the impostor self will create many preservation strategies such as:

1. Distorting the teachings.
2. Choosing teachings that are not effective.

3. Avoiding the practice that leads to the impostor self's final end. 4. Staying in the realm of concepts. 5. Pretending to its imaginary self that it is not engaged in preservation strategies, etc. The impostor self directs the study of the teachings in a way that will insure that the impostor self can continue its imaginary existence.

When Sri Ramana Maharshi was in his teens a spontaneous experience came upon him that removed the impostor self from him forever. Sri Ramana Maharshi's body passed away in 1950.

Sri Muruganar was liberated from the impostor self soon after meeting Sri Ramana Maharshi. Sri Muruganar spent decades in the company of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Because Sri Muruganar was a liberated sage while collecting Sri Ramana Maharshi's sayings, *The Garland of Guru's Sayings* is the best source of Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings. When the teachings are seen through the eyes of one who is not free from the impostor self, the teachings are distorted. Since Sri Muruganar was free from the impostor self while collecting Sri Ramana Maharshi's sayings, the teachings were seen clearly.

All of the Sri Ramana Maharshi quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening* come from K. Swaminathan's English translation of *The Garland of Guru's Sayings*. While probably not the most literal, it is the best translation for sincere aspirants who are truly dedicated to being liberated in this lifetime. It is a divinely inspired translation.

The intellectual and scholarly type of people tend to prefer the most literal translations. The intellectual and scholarly type of people almost never become free of the impostor self unless they cease to be the intellectual and scholarly type. The motivations of the sincere aspirant and the motivations of the intellectual and scholarly people are almost always quite different.

Not only avoiding arguing about spiritual teachings, but even avoiding the company of those who do spend time arguing about spiritual teachings has been advised by Sri Ramana Maharshi and other sages. Most people who consider themselves to be “devotees” do not even attempt to follow the advice given and that is an example of one of the impostor self’s many tricks.

The Sri Muruganar quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening* come from the book *Sri Guru Ramana Prasadam* translated into English by Robert Butler.

Sri Sadhu Om spent many years in the company of Sri Ramana Maharshi and decades in the company of Sri Muruganar. The Sri Sadhu Om quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening* come from the book *The Path of Sri Ramana, Part One*. Many pages in *The Path of Sri Ramana, Part One* are devoted to explaining why Self-inquiry is really Self-attention.

Here is a quote by Sri Sadhu Om:

“In Sanskrit, the terms ‘atman’ and ‘aham’ both mean ‘I’. Hence, ‘atma-vichara’ means an attention seeking ‘Who is this I?’ It may rather be called ‘I-attention’, ‘Self-attention’ or ‘Self-abidance.’”

Often English translations of these teachings have so many non-English words that the book becomes a foreign language course instead of a spiritual teaching. The quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening* contain almost no non-English words. This was accomplished by selecting quotes that contain only English words, with a few exceptions such as the words *Guru* and *Yoga* which are already familiar to most English readers.

In the book *The Supreme Yoga* Swami Venkatesananda writes the following two definitions of the word vichara:

1. “Vicara or inquiry is not reasoning nor analysis: it is directly looking into oneself.”

2. “Vicara, usually translated ‘inquiry’ is direct observation.”

The spiritual meaning of the term “Self-inquiry” is directly looking into one’s Self, which can also be described as Self-attention. Since the true Self is awareness, this can also be described as attention to Awareness or Awareness aware of itself. This is *not* two awarenesses, one watching the other. This is just *one* Awareness aware of itself. And what is itself? Itself is Awareness. Thus, Awareness of Awareness. Directly looking into one’s Self is directly looking into Awareness because the Self is Awareness. Sometimes the quotes refer to “Self-knowledge.” “Self-knowledge” in these teachings does *not* mean conceptual knowledge. “Self-Awareness” or “Self-Experience” are closer to the spiritual meaning. When the quotes are warning against false knowledge, the word “knowledge” *does* mean conceptual knowledge.

Sri Annamalai Swami spent many years in the company of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Sri Annamalai Swami said that his years of constant meditation in the 1950’s and 1960’s finally brought him to a continuous awareness of the Self. The Sri Annamalai Swami quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening* come from the book *Annamalai Swami Final Talks*.

Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj’s Guru told him to focus his attention on the ‘I am’ to the exclusion of all else. Sri Nisargadatta spent all of his free time doing that and after three years he realized the Self. The Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening* come from the book *I AM THAT*.

Sri Sankara was one of the most prominent teachers in what the West calls “Hinduism.” Some scholars say that Sri Sankara lived from 788 to 820 CE. The Sri Sankara quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening* are from *The Crest Jewel of Wisdom*.

Some of the quotes are from Charles Johnston's English translation. Other quotes are from John Richard's English translation.

The *Yoga Vasistha* is an ancient scripture from what the West calls "Hinduism." Swami Venkatesananda's English translation of the *Yoga Vasistha* was published in 1976 under the title *The Supreme Yoga*.

Self honesty and a great increase in your desire for liberation are the two great keys that can make you one of the very few who succeed at bringing the impostor self to its final end.

If the direct practice that brings the impostor self to its final end is not clear to you from reading the quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening*, then you might consider reading the book *The Direct Means to Eternal Bliss*. For more information about *The Direct Means to Eternal Bliss* go to www.seeseer.com.

In the book *The Direct Means to Eternal Bliss* there are detailed descriptions of:

1. The Awareness Watching Awareness practice.
2. How to awaken the extremely intense desire for liberation.
3. What the impostor self is and much more.

The Seven Steps to Awakening and *The Direct Means to Eternal Bliss* are two books that work very well together.

The teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi, Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj and Sri Vasistha have a huge number of contradictions.

The quotes selected for *The Seven Steps to Awakening* have kept the contradictions to a minimum. The quotes selected for *The Seven Steps to Awakening* are like a seamless unity that work very well together. The quotes selected for *The Seven Steps to Awakening* are helpful to all humans regardless of which spiritual path they are on.

HOW TO READ THE QUOTES

Read the quotes *very slowly*. Read *every* quote at least three times *before* going on to the next quote. Those who are very serious about awakening in this lifetime will read the quotes hundreds of times.

After you read a quote ask yourself these two questions:

- A. "What is the purpose of this quote?"
- B. "What would I have to do to put this purpose into practice?"

Ask those questions with *every* quote and then take the time to answer those questions. Write the answers down on paper and then read what you have written many times repeatedly. Or make an audio recording of your answers and play them back and listen to them many times repeatedly. Use a highlighter pen to circle or underline the quotes you find most helpful. Then go back and read those quotes hundreds of times very slowly. After reading all of the quotes, read all of the quotes in the book again very slowly. As your awareness expands you may be able to see great value in some of the quotes that you did not see great value in before. The quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening* reveal the detours to be avoided and the direct path to take. The quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening* are practice instructions. The quotes in *The Seven Steps to Awakening* are doorways to Liberation. Liberation is eternal bliss and love, free from all forms of suffering. Wishing you success.

STEP ONE

*Know that a journey that never goes beyond words, ideas, thoughts or concepts is **not** a journey to awakening.*

Know the difference between A. The final direct experience of infinite consciousness where all suffering, the body, the universe, etc. disappear forever and only infinite-eternal-awareness-love-bliss remains.

B. Thinking about infinite consciousness or any other spiritual topic.

*Thinking is **not** Liberation or Realization.*

Know the difference between:

A. Using the teachings as practice instructions.

B. Getting lost or stuck in concepts.

*The words and concepts taught in The Seven Steps to Awakening lead to the final awakening **only** if they are actually practiced.*

***Every** time you read a quote in The Seven Steps to Awakening ask yourself these two questions:*

A. "What is the purpose of this quote?"

B. "What would I have to do to put this purpose into practice?"

Write your answers to those questions or make an audio recording of your answers and play them back many times repeatedly. Then actually practice the teachings.

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

(1 – 40)

1. Why do people call me learned? What is the mark of real learning? Learning that all garnered knowledge of things is empty ignorance and that true knowledge is the search for the Knower.
2. Those who, learning to forget completely all objective knowledge, turn inward firmly and see clearly the truth, abide serene. Those who try to recall forgotten things pine bewildered, fretting over false phenomena.
3. When knowledge marred by doubt and error disappears in true Awareness clear and pure, one thus established firmly in Self-Being, free from falsehood, has crossed over to the further shore of the river of knowledge.
4. Even the knowledge sense-perceived of the world without has for its ground the Self above. To search for knowledge somewhere else apart from That is but to grasp the shadow, not the substance.
5. Whatever notion may arise, never to let it live or grow, but to turn it that very instant, firm and stern, back to its source and merge it there, this is robust, intense detachment.
6. Many are the ills that flow from mixing with mad folks afflicted with turbid minds and rattling tongues. Best friendship is with those good men whose minds are dead and who abide in the pure silence of awareness.
7. Those who do not dive into the Heart and there confront the Self in the five sheaths hid are only students answering out of books clever questions raised by books, and not true seekers of the Self.

8. The knowledge that ignores the Self, the knower, and holds as true the field perceived, is but illusive folly. No matter how much one has learned, true knowledge is the merging of all indicative knowledge in awareness of the Self.
9. The one true light there is, is pure Awareness. Other kinds of knowledge clinging to it and claiming to be real are ego-born conceptual clouds. To trust them is sheer folly.
10. All other kinds of knowledge are base, trivial. The only true and perfect knowledge is the stillness of pure awareness. The many differences perceived in the Self whose nature is awareness are wrong attributions and not real at all.
11. What sort of knowledge is this wretched bodily-mental knowledge of objects? Would those who long for pure awareness hanker after this? To know pure awareness is true wisdom. All other knowledge is mere folly.
12. What if one knows the subtle secret of manifold inscrutable mysteries? Until one knows the awareness which reveals all other knowledge, does one know the Truth?
13. How can any treatise thrust some wisdom into that human-seeming heap of clay which keenly watches things perceived and not at all the Self, Awareness?
14. What is worth seeking and discovering is the truth of Self. Such knowledge comes only to the still, clear intellect not muddled by strenuous search without but questing for the Truth in silence.
15. "Of fate and effort, which is stronger? Which will yield? Which will prevail?" Those who wage this war of words are wholly ignorant of That from which the world and the ego both appear and into which they disappear.

16. Some there are who endlessly jump and, sweating, shout full-throated refuting or elaborating doctrines instead of biding in clear silence inquiring into that which is and in the heart enjoying it.
17. None can perceive the Sun, the Self, by arguments. Vexatious mental disputes are but conceits that cloud the light of truth and make the eyes in dizziness swim.
18. Far from revealing Truth words only darken and conceal It. To let the Truth shine of itself instead of burying it in words; merge in the heart both word and thought.
19. Let not your intellect become a slave to the mere sound and fury of controversy. Enter the heart with mind pellucid, concept-free, and realize your natural Being as the Truth.
20. From questing inward in the heart comes knowledge which destroys all false illusions.
21. Can hunger be appeased by eating food cooked over a painted flame? The end of pain, the bliss of peace results from egoless awareness, and not at all from verbal wisdom.
22. Never through argument, but only by abiding in the heart as pure awareness which lights up and shines within the mind, can one enjoy the thrill, the throb, the bliss supreme of being the Self.
23. Knowing aright the nature of the Self and abandoning the non-self as void, unreal, is wisdom true. All other knowledge is ignorance, and not wisdom.
24. Even like a dream this waking world is but a mind-conceived appearance in mind space. Hence greatness lies in firmly ending indicative knowledge and the folly of fondness for outer objects.

25. Knowledge is manifold, say they who know objects, but not freedom from the dire delusion of differences. When the senses five, driven outward by desire are pulled back, then true, full Awareness comes, and there is no "other" to be known.

26. Those whom from books have learnt about the truth supreme esteem themselves supreme in wisdom, and fail to seek the knower and taste the bliss of Self, but test and measure the silent sage. What folly this!

27. "Mine is the only mind
amenable to my correction."
If one forgets this truth and broods o'er others' faults
one only fouls one's own mind more and more.

28. Only he who has attained immortal life can save the world. For the ignorant one to help another is but the blind leading the blind.

29. One has to blame oneself alone if one should try to teach the Truth supreme to those who are immature. These might reject the highest Truth as false because it contradicted what they had been told before and had believed as true.

30. As in the sky with thick clouds covered
no eye can see the glorious sun,
one fails to see one's own Self when the mind firmament is darkened by a dense cloud of thoughts.

31. For those whose mind has not completely subsided, the false knowledge theirs already has only served to pile up sorrows. Gaining more such so-called knowledge only deepens illusion's darkness, and helps not life at all.

32. While mind exists, creeds too exist.
When mind turns inward in Self-quest
and gets caught up in the heart,
no creed can in that peace serene survive.

33. Being alone shines and rejoices as Awareness.
Hence till all thought merges
in absolute Being-Awareness, the poor conceptual mind
can never know true Being, supreme Awareness.

34. The sage's pure mind which beholds as a mere
witness the whole world is like a mirror which reflects
the foolish thoughts of those who come before him. And
these thoughts are then mistaken to be his.

35. The learned man who, letting go the Self, the real
Being, sees and cherishes this dream, this false, illusive
world, may be a scholar. Something different is he
who has gained the clarity of Knowing the Self;
he is a Knower.

36. Holding in their hands the mirror, the scripture
which declares "The Self alone is to be known",
many alas, study with care the text and commentaries;
only few seek the Self and gain true life.

37. Far different from the scholar learned in books of
wisdom is the Seer. Those who seek freedom from
bondage of ignorance had better leave scholars alone
and enter the presence of Seers established in the Self
supreme.

38. What is true religion? It is not speculating with
that inconstant mind and endless speaking:
"That is Being. No, that has no being. That has form.
No, that is formless. That is non-dual. No, it is dual."
It is the silence,
the experience of deathless Being-Awareness-Bliss.

39. In the language of duality alone are questions
and answers. In non-duality they are not.

40. He, who by questing inward for the Knower, has
destroyed the ego and transcended so-called knowledge
abides as the Self. He alone is a true knower, not one
who has not seen the Self and therefore has an ego still.

SRI SADHU OM
(41 – 45)

41. Thoughts are the enemy of happiness!
Happiness reigns when thoughts subside! In fact,
thoughts are the veil that covers over the happiness;
when this veil is removed, happiness is revealed.

42. Where thoughts cease, happiness reigns supreme;
such is the truth about happiness.
Although the thought-free state is gained
and happiness is experienced for a while,
such a thought-free state obtained by contact with
external objects does not last long. Therefore, it is clear
that one can never achieve the thought-free happy state
permanently with the help of the five senses.

43. However learned, rich or powerful he may be,
if a man has no clear knowledge of what he really is, all
his learning, greatness and power are merely fictitious!
Hence, the first lesson to be learnt
is about one's own Self.

44. Whatever doubt may rise, it cannot rise without
the rising of you – the first to have risen – who raised it.
Therefore the primal doubt,
namely that of not knowing who you are,
is the root of all doubts!

45. Until this primal doubt is cleared,
replying to your other doubts will be just like cutting the
leaves off the branches of a tree,
because they will sprout again and again!
But if the root is cut, they will not sprout again!

SRI MURUGANAR

(46 – 53)

46. As the gracious light of inner realization entered my heart, all knowledge acquired through learning was exposed as merely a creation of the mind and as it fell away, my consciousness – free of attributes, shining in its natural state of attachment to the Self, that shines without attachment to anything – gained its final victory as the consciousness that is absolute and all-embracing.

47. The Self abides as the fullness of consciousness within the mind and it alone illumines as the mind. Therefore only the science of (knowing) the grace of the Self that shines as pure consciousness is true science. All other sciences are false.

48. If we apprehend the non-dual reality it will be seen that, within the Self that shines in the heart as the pure knowledge that it is our duty to learn and know, all other forms of knowledge have come into being through the illusory play of the mind.

49. Through the miracle of grace that penetrated me in the form of true all-embracing consciousness, so that the ghostly charade created by the evil ego was abolished, I perceived that there was nothing that I needed to learn through the intellect.

50. The heart in which words and thoughts have subsided and which remains as the all-pervading reality in which there is no going, no coming, no contact with anything whatsoever, will overflow with the ambrosial clarity of the supreme.

51. The practice of abidance in the Self is to firmly hold the mind in abeyance within the heart. It is not an act of thinking.

52. The Self shines through its very nature as a beautiful radiance within the Heart, as all thought subsides. Realizing that the power of thought could never truly grasp it, you should abandon all such conceptualization.

53. The enduring attainment is to become established in the Heart, abiding as the pure 'I', unruffled by the fierce gale whipped up by all the various branches of knowledge that are apprehended through the mind and senses, and cause us agitation.

SRI ANNAMALAI SWAMI
(54 – 55)

54. All the information the mind accumulates and all the experiences it collects are ignorance, false knowledge. Real knowledge cannot be found in the mind or in any external location.

55. Don't be interested in the words that the mind is serving up for you. It is putting them there to tempt you into a stream of thoughts that will take you away from the Self. You have to ignore them all and focus on the light that is shining within you.

SRI NISARGADATTA MAHARAJ
(56 – 119)

56. Those who know only scriptures know nothing. To know is to be. I know what I am talking about; it is not from reading, or hearsay.

57. On the verbal level everything is relative. Absolutes should be experienced, not discussed.

58. Truth is simple and open to all.
Why do you complicate?
Truth is loving and lovable.

59. Give up all questions except one: 'Who am I?' After all, the only fact you are sure of is that you are. The 'I am' is certain. The 'I am this' is not. Struggle to find out what you are in reality.

60. All these questions arise from your believing yourself to be a person. Go beyond the personal and see.

61. The realized man knows what others merely hear, but don't experience.

62. My stand I take where nothing is; words do not reach there, nor thoughts.

63. The real is experienced in silence.

64. Maharaj: Remember facts, forget opinions.

Questioner: What is a fact?

Maharaj: What is perceived in pure awareness, unaffected by desire and fear is fact.

65. You must know your own true being as indomitable, fearless, ever victorious. Once you know with absolute certainty that nothing can trouble you but your own imagination, you come to disregard your desires and fears, concepts and ideas and live by truth alone.

66. It is the earnestness that liberates and not the theory.

67. Your sincerity will guide you. Devotion to the goal of freedom and perfection will make you abandon all theories and systems and live by wisdom, intelligence and active love. Theories may be good as starting points, but must be abandoned, the sooner – the better.

68. There is no need to turn round and round
in endless questioning; find yourself
and everything will fall into its proper place.

69. Yours is a make-believe talk,
all hangs on suppositions and assumptions. You speak
with assurance about things you are not sure of.

70. Words are of the mind and the mind obscures and
distorts. Hence the absolute need to go beyond words
and move over to my side.

71. You give reality to concepts,
while concepts are distortions of reality.
Abandon all conceptualization
and stay silent and attentive.
Be earnest about it and all will be well with you.

72. Try to go beyond the words.

73. Unready means afraid.
You are afraid of what you are.
Your destination is the whole.
But you are afraid that you will lose your identity.
This is childishness, clinging to the toys,
to your desires and fears, opinions and ideas.
Give it all up and be ready for the real to assert itself.

74. Do not worry about others.
Deal with your own mind first.

75. Learn to look without imagination,
to listen without distortion.

76. Your questions are about a non-existing person.

77. The silence of the mind
will dissolve and absorb all else.

78. Do not ask superficial questions; apply yourself to
fundamentals, to the very roots of your being.

79. There are so many theories devised for explaining things – all are plausible, none is true.
80. To see that all knowledge is a form of ignorance is itself a movement of reality.
81. You want immediate results!
We do not dispense magic here.
Everybody does the same mistake:
refusing the means, but wanting the ends.
82. I cannot solve your problem by mere words.
You have to act on what I told you and persevere. It is not right advice that liberates, but the action based on it.
83. By doing you succeed, not by arguing.
84. Now I know nothing,
for all knowledge is in dream only and not valid.
85. All experience is born of imagination;
I do not imagine, so no birth or death happens to me.
86. Let us not proceed by verbal logic.
87. The most difficult are the intellectuals.
They talk a lot, but are not serious.
88. Merely talking about Reality
without doing anything about it
is self-defeating.
89. You are entangled in the web of verbal definitions and formulations. Go beyond your concepts and ideas; in the silence of desire and thought the truth is found.
90. Whatever is conceived by the mind must be false, for it is bound to be relative and limited.
91. No university can teach you to be yourself.
The only way to learn is by practice.

92. You need to return to the state in which I am – your natural state. Anything else you may think of is an illusion and an obstacle.
93. Stay beyond all thoughts, in silent being-awareness.
94. The answer is not in words.
95. Some events purify the mind and some stain it. Moments of deep insight and all-embracing love purify the mind, while desires and fears, envies and anger, blind beliefs and intellectual arrogance pollute and dull the psyche.
96. All thinking is in duality. In identity no thought survives.
97. Go forth, unburdened with ideas and beliefs. Abandon all verbal structures, all relative truth, all tangible objectives. The Absolute can be reached by absolute devotion only. Don't be half-hearted.
98. Too much analysis leads you nowhere. There is in you the core of being which is beyond analysis, beyond the mind.
99. Mere listening, even memorizing, is not enough. If you do not struggle hard to apply every word of it in your daily life, don't complain that you made no progress.
100. Do understand that the mind has its limits; to go beyond, you must consent to silence.
101. To see reality is as simple as to see one's face in a mirror. Only the mirror must be clear and true. A quiet mind, undistorted by desires and fears, free from ideas and opinions, clear on all the levels, is needed to reflect the reality.

102. Realize that no ideas are your own;
they all come to you from outside.

103. Reality is not a concept,
nor the manifestation of a concept.
It has nothing to do with concepts.

104. As the mind is made of words and images,
so is every reflection in the mind. It covers up reality
with verbalization and then complains.

105. Questioner: How can I break through the barrier
and know personally, intimately,
what it means to be immutable?

Maharaj: The word itself is the bridge. Remember it,
think of it, explore it, go round it, look at it from all
directions, dive into it with earnest perseverance:
endure all delays and disappointments till suddenly the
mind turns round, away from the word, towards the
reality beyond the word. It is like trying to find a person
knowing his name only. A day comes when your
inquiries bring you to him and the name becomes reality.
Words are valuable, for between the word and its
meaning there is a link and if one investigates the word
assiduously, one crosses beyond the concept into the
experience at the root of it. As a matter of fact,
such repeated attempts to go beyond the words
is what is called meditation.

106. Be careful. The moment you start talking you
create a verbal universe, a universe of words, ideas,
concepts and abstractions, interwoven and
interdependent, most wonderfully generating,
supporting and explaining each other
and yet all without essence or substance,
mere creations of the mind.
Words create words, reality is silent.

107. Once you are beyond the person,
you need no words.

108. Words and questions come from the mind
and hold you there. To go beyond the mind,
you must be silent and quiet. Peace and silence;
silence and peace – this is the way beyond.
Stop asking questions.

109. The words are most appropriate,
but you do not grasp their full import.
Go deep into the meaning of the words:

being, living, conscious,

and you will stop running in circles,
asking questions, but missing answers.

110. You need not know all the 'why' and 'how',
there is no end to questions.

111. Knowledge by the mind is not true knowledge.

112. The idea that you know what is true is dangerous,
for it keeps you imprisoned in the mind.
It is when you do not know,
that you are free to investigate.

113. Words can only give you the idea
and the idea is not the experience.

114. It is earnestness that will take you through,
not cleverness – your own or another's.

115. There is no reality in ideas.

116. As long as you have all sorts of ideas about
yourself you know yourself through the mist of these
ideas; to know yourself as you are, give up all ideas.

117. Learning words is not enough. You may know the
theory, but without the actual experience of yourself as
the impersonal and unqualified center of being,
love and bliss, mere verbal knowledge is sterile.

118. So many words you have learnt, so many you have spoken. You know everything, but you do not know yourself. For the Self is not known through words – only direct insight will reveal it. Look within, search within.

119. Whatever you can know with your mind is of the mind, not you.

THE SUPREME YOGA (120 – 200)

120. The fool asks irrelevant questions irreverently; and the greater fool is he who spurns the sage's wisdom. He is surely not a sage who responds to the vain questions of a foolish questioner.

121. One should positively strive to enthrone wisdom in one's heart, for the mind is unsteady like a monkey. And, one should then avoid unwise company.

122. Only he would wish to hear this who is ripe for liberation.

123. Even as the ocean is the substratum of all the waves, direct experience is the basis for all proofs – the direct experience of truth as it is.

124. Consciousness is pure, thought is subject to confusion.

125. People like to argue and confuse others; they are indeed confused.

126. All this discussion and argumentation take place only in and because of ignorance; when there is knowledge there is no duality. When the truth is known, all descriptions cease, and silence alone remains. Then you will realize that there is only one, without beginning and without end. But as long as words are used to denote a truth, duality is inevitable; however, such duality is not the truth. All divisions are illusory.

127. Ideas and experiences leave their mark on the mind which form the impressions or conditioning tendencies which are for the most part latent or dormant. But, when the mind is rid of these, the veil vanishes in a moment, like mist at sunrise, and with it the greatest sorrow also vanishes.

128. Conceptualization or imagination is productive of error and sorrow; and it can be so easily got rid of by Self-knowledge – and when it is got rid of there is great peace.

129. Ideas and thoughts are bondage; and their coming to an end is liberation.

130. Give up mental conditioning which alone is responsible for the perception of duality and remain totally unconditioned.

131. A painted pot of nectar is not nectar, nor a painted flame fire, and a painting of a woman is not a woman: wise words are mere words, not wisdom.

132. They who are established in the state of liberation, as pointed out by the scriptures, surely cross this ocean of world-appearance as their consciousness flows towards the Self. But, they who are caught in the net of polemics which are only productive of sorrow and confusion, forfeit their own highest good. Even in the case of the path shown by the scriptures, only one's direct experience leads one along the safest way to the supreme goal.

133. When you realize that which is indicated by the words, then naturally you will abandon the jugglery of words.

134. Give up notions, thoughts and intentions. When they cease, the mind naturally turns to what is truly beyond the mind – the infinite consciousness.

135. Ideation multiplies naturally by itself.
This leads to sorrow, not to happiness.

136. Do not entertain ideas.

137. There is no cause for fear
in the destruction of all ideation.
When there is no thought, notion or ideation ceases.

138. When thus all notions cease, there is great peace,
and sorrow is destroyed to its very root.

139. Remove all thought:
do not waste your life and effort in other endeavors.

140. Bondage is bondage to thoughts and notions:
freedom is freedom from them.

141. There is no salvation
without the total renunciation of all notions
or ideas or mental conditioning.

142. Though appearing to be intelligent,
thought is unable to comprehend anything really.

143. Craving is the root of all sorrow,
and the only intelligent way
is to renounce all cravings completely
and not to indulge them.
Even as fire burns all the more fiercely
when fed with fuel, thoughts multiply by thinking:
thoughts cease only by the extinction of thinking.

144. Never again fall into the mire of conceptualization
which is the cause of all sorrow.

145. Do not be led astray
by the long-winded empty statements
of the wicked self-appointed teachers
who have no direct experience.

146. When consciousness abandons the perception of the three modes of time, when it is freed from the bondage of objectivity or conceptualization, it rests in utter tranquility.

147. Because you are not fully enlightened your mind clings to the illusion of objective perception, of concepts.

148. Mind is like a cloud of ignorance: dispel it by the repeated renunciation of all concepts and percepts.

149. You have woven the web of your own concepts and are caught in it. If you can get rid of all that, attain purity, overcome even the fear of life and death and thus attain to total equanimity, you have achieved the greatest victory. On the other hand, if you cling to this ever-changing phenomenon called the world, you will surely perish in sorrow.

150. The mind abandons everything when the vision of the supreme is gained. Hence, one should resolutely renounce everything till the supreme vision is gained. Not till one renounces everything is Self-knowledge gained: when all points of view are abandoned, what remains is the Self.

151. At all times, everything is known only by direct experience.

152. Just as a lamp utterly dispels darkness, the knowledge of truth completely uproots concepts and conditioning.

153. If you conceptualize this teaching for your intellectual entertainment and do not let it act in your life, you will stumble and fall like a blind man.

154. He in whom all concepts and habitual tendencies have ceased has overcome all mental conditioning and bondage.

155. Since the ignorant are bound fast to their own false notions, neither the transiency of the world nor the hard blow they suffer in their life is able to awaken them.

156. The truth or existence-consciousness-bliss absolute is beyond thought and understanding, it is supreme peace and omnipresent, it transcends imagination and description.

157. When non-dual being is known, the duality vanishes instantly. Belief (or imagination) gave rise to diversity; when that belief is dropped, diversity goes. Thought, imagination or belief gives rise to sorrow; to abandon such thinking is not painful! It is feeding these thoughts and beliefs that has brought about this sorrow; and this comes to an end by not entertaining those thoughts and beliefs.

158. All thoughts and beliefs lead to sorrow. Whereas no-thought and no-belief are pure bliss. Therefore, with the help of the fire of wisdom, vaporize the waters of your beliefs and become peaceful, supremely blissful. Behold the one infinite consciousness.

159. Objectification (or conceptualization) leads to Self-forgetfulness.

160. It is absolute truth and therefore not truth as a concept.

161. It is pure, absolute consciousness, naught else.

162. Abandoning all limited concepts, abandoning even the division between the worshipper and the worshipped, worship the Self by the Self. Be at peace, pure, free from cravings.

163. Conditioning is sorrow. But conditioning is based on thoughts and notions. However, the truth is beyond such experience and the world is an appearance like a mirage!

164. An imaginary object is imaginatively described by someone; and one understands in one's own imagination and imagines that he understands it.

165. Abandoning mental conditioning,
be a liberated soul.

166. Ignorance and mental activity
are perpetuated by each other.

167. Remain for ever established in that state
of utter freedom from movement of thought.

168. Bhagiratha asked: I know that the Self alone
is real and the body, etc. are not real.
But how is it that it is not perfectly clear to me?

Tritala answered:
Such intellectual knowledge is not knowledge!

169. Vain argumentation is like boxing with space.

170. I shall instruct you if you are in a receptive mood
and cherish my words. If one playfully instructs another
merely in answer to a query, when the latter does not
intend to receive, cherish and assimilate the teaching,
it becomes fruitless.

171. A notional existence ceases only by the dawn of
right knowledge and the cessation of all notions.
Since the notional existence is unreal
it ceases naturally when the truth is realized.

172. Give up all your doubts. Resort to moral courage.

173. One's limited understanding and one's own
notions are the cause of bondage,
and liberation is their absence.
Hence, abandon all notions.

174. The thought-free, notion-less state is the best.

175. You are deluded
because you do not recollect repeatedly and frequently
the truth concerning the infinite consciousness,
but you partake of the poison of self-limitation
and the consequent psychological conditioning.

176. As and when the perception of an object
arises within you,
meet it with the understanding "I am not this."
Such ignorant perception will immediately cease.
In fact, there is nothing to be known in all this:
there is need only to get rid of confusion or deluded
understanding. If this delusion is not repeatedly revived,
it ceases to be. Whatever notion arises in you, even as
movement arises in wind, realize that "I am not this"
and thus deprive it of support.

177. Thinking, mental conditioning and imagination
are meaningless and are productive only of psychological
distress. All the sorrows and misfortunes of life are
rooted in and rest in sense-experience and thinking.

178. The mind is like a forest in spring.
It is so dense with very many notions and concepts
that dense darkness prevails in it.
On account of self-limitation or ignorance,
people undergo countless experiences
of pleasure and pain in this world.

179. I was not silent because I could not answer
but because silence is the only answer to your question.

180. All verbal statements (whether they are verbose or
brief, whether their purport is subtle or transcendental)
are limited by logic, by duality and division.

181. The supreme Self is free from all notions.
Notions give rise to objects
and when the notions are abandoned
the objects cease to be.

182. Do not fall into the net of duality and non-duality, etc. All such controversy and polemics only lead to sorrow and despair. When one pursues the unreal or impermanent, there is sorrow. When the conditioning of consciousness drops away, there is no sorrow even as in sleep there is no sorrow. The consciousness that abandons conditioning realizes its unconditioned nature. That is liberation.

183. The total abandonment of all notions or ideas is liberation and such an abandonment is possible when the pursuit of pleasure is abandoned.

184. To rest content with the knowledge gained from the scriptures, considering oneself to be enlightened is like the vain imagination of the born-blind.

185. Do not get involved in notions of matter and mind for they are false. Rest in your own Self.

186. Ignorance is not dispelled by half-knowledge, even as there is no relief from cold when one sits near a painting of fire.

187. The ignorant engages himself in endless arguments.

188. At the end of the world-cycle, all these objects of perception cease to be. The one Self which is consciousness alone remains, and this is indescribable, being beyond thought and description. Only the sage of Self-knowledge experiences this: others merely read these words.

189. There is something wrong with the scholars.

190. When all mental activity ceases, you are that which is.

191. Since he had not engaged himself
in the persistent practice of the teachings,
his heart was not fully established in the supreme state.
192. He is surely a fool who thinks
"I know this and I have nothing more to know"
after once reading this.
193. Abandon the words
but remain established in the experience
of the truth they indicate.
194. That supreme state is beyond all concepts.
195. When one thoroughly investigates all this,
it is clearly seen that the pure consciousness alone exists
and nothing else. It is beyond description.
At the end of the investigation
utter silence alone remains.
196. The truth does not become clear in you
until it is heard again and again
and meditated upon again and again.
197. Enough of this confusing argumentation
concerning unity and diversity.
198. The hall-mark of enlightenment
is cessation of craving.
When the latter is absent,
there is no enlightenment but scholasticity
which is in fact ignorance or viciousness.
199. This supreme truth is established
only in total silence,
not by logic, discussion and argumentation.
200. Thus, O sage, it is clear that Self-knowledge
is beyond the reach of the jugglery of words.

SRI SANKARA
(201 – 213)

201. The veiling effect only disappears
with full experience of Reality,
and the elimination of false knowledge
leads to the end of suffering caused by that distraction.

202. There is no such thing as ignorance
beyond the thinking mind.
Thought itself is ignorance,
the cause of the bondage of becoming.
When thought is eliminated,
everything else is eliminated.
When thought increases everything else increases.

203. While the scholar does not overcome
his sense of 'I am this' in the body and its faculties,
there is no liberation for him, however much
he may be learned in religion and philosophy.

204. Reality can be experienced
only with the eye of understanding, not just by a scholar.
What the moon is like must be seen with one's own eyes.
How can others do it for you?

205. Speech alone, even a deluge of words, with
scholarship and skill in commenting on the scriptures,
may achieve some personal satisfaction
but not liberation.

206. The tangle of words is a great forest
which leads the mind off wandering about,
so wise men should strive to get to know the truth
about their own nature.

207. In the silence is the highest peace because
wavering is the intellect's unreal work; there the knowers
of the Eternal, mighty-souled, enjoy unbroken happiness
of partless bliss, recognizing the Self as the Eternal.

208. There is no higher cause of joy than silence
where no mind-pictures dwell;
it belongs to him who has understood
the Self's own being;
who is full of the essence of the bliss of the Self.

209. Through unwavering ecstasy is clearly understood
the reality of the Eternal, fixed and sure.
This cannot be when other thoughts are confused with it,
by the motions of the mind.

210. Whose being neither intellect nor reason knows –
this is the Eternal, THAT THOU ART.

211. Freedom is won
by a perception of the Self's oneness with the Eternal,
and not by the doctrines of Union or of Numbers,
nor by rites and sciences.

212. An eloquent voice, a stream of words,
skill in explaining the teaching,
and the learning of the learned;
these bring enjoyment but not freedom.

213. Through information, digging,
and casting aside the stones,
a treasure may be found,
but not by calling it to come forth.