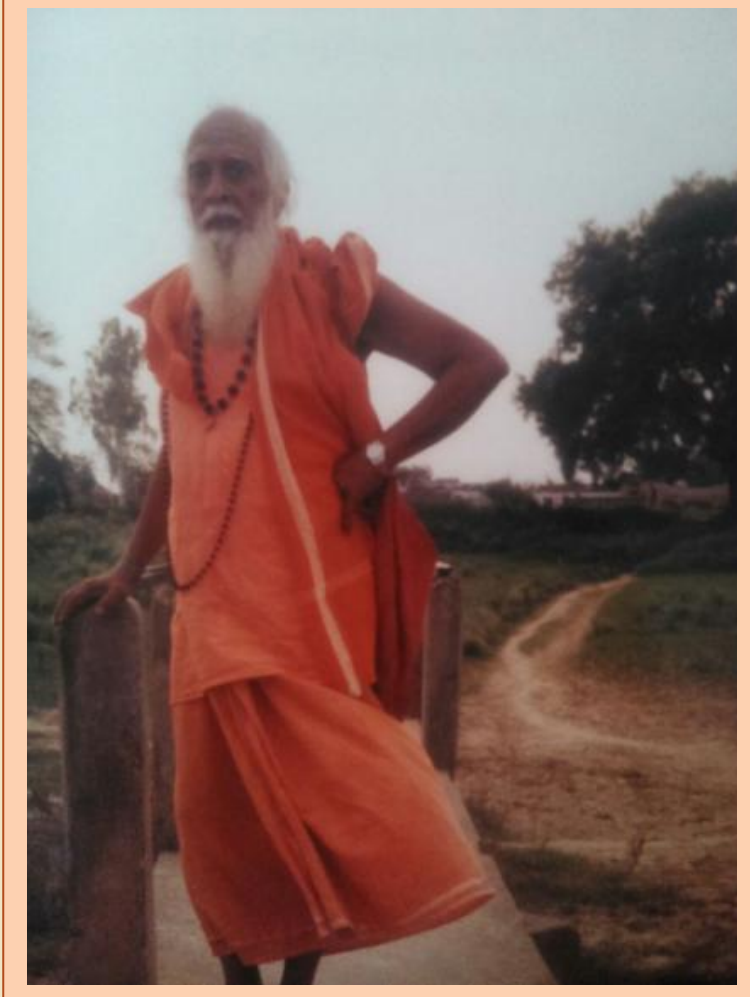


## Letter to a devotee in 2004

*By Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj,  
2004, Tiruvannamalai*



**Questions from the lady:**

**Swamiji, please clarify these matters:**

1. Through worshipping Arunachala [Lord Arunachaleswara], Through receiving His grace, there is no doubt that the Supreme alone exists, we don't exist as egos, as individuals. We are only the tools of Him. Yet there is a feeling of the separation in the mind. "I" have not merged in that Supreme. Please give me further guidance.
2. In the state of Being [without thoughts, doing] just relaxing with myself, there is bliss. There is contentment, there is fullness, there is Love, there is Peace.

In another state, there is one who is aware of this state, in another words, there is one who is objectifying Bliss, etc. Then I'm out of the state of Bliss and there is a sense of nothingness arises. Is this a trap of the mind?

Please clarify these states.

**REPLY OF GURUJI:**

Dear Madam

I am not an all-knowing Master but I shall gladly share my views.

**Q.1:** THE LORD ALONE EXISTS AND IS ALL PERVASIVE. So, so long as we have a Body-sense, we can worship him internally as Self or externally as GOD. The response will be the same. It depends on our temperament, inherited genes, pre-conditionings due to environment, tradition where we were born, education, etc. LOVING and worshipping GOD SEPARATE FROM US and externally [BUT IN THE FULL KNOWLEDGE THAT HE IS THE ULTIMATE FORMLESS SUPREME REALITY] – say, ARUNACHALA is perfectly O.K. What happens is that sometimes our mind revels and enjoys abiding in the Self. There are other times [due to our mind, the atmospheric vibrations, etc.] when we like worshipping him separately as GOD. BHAGAWAN HIMSELF WHO REMAINED AS THE SUPREME REALITY HAS WRITTEN THE MARITAL GARLAND OF LETTERS [AKSHARA MANA MALAI] – where he treats the LORD as the LOVER who has decoyed the beloved – the individual soul and abandoned mid-way. Yes it is a ROMANCE BETWEEN JIVA [INDIVIDUAL SOUL] and the Supreme Lord. Thus Bhagawan here approves the way of SUFI SAINTS AND CONSIDERS HIMSELF SEPARATE FROM GOD. So there is no harm in moving from unity to separateness and vice versa. Both are recognised paths. Till we reach a very high state, the pendulum can swing from one end to another so long as we maintain the awareness that ARUNACHALA being all pervasive is very much seated in our heart as also the hearts of all beings. IT IS NOT THE ARUNACHALA IN TEMPLE ALONE but the one who is in all the beings – from the ant to the elephant and all human beings.

When we worship ARUNACHALA it is better if we consider ourselves as separately existing. THEN WE BECOME A HUMBLE DEVOTEE EGO, A PINING BELOVED EGO AND NOT THE ALL SUPERIOR KINGLY EGO. This Ego as per RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA IS HARMLESS. “LORD, I AM THY BONDED SLAVE. YOU DEAL WITH ME IN WHATEVER WAY YOU LIKE. TO THINK OF YOU CONSTANTLY IN ADULATION IS ENOUGH FOR ME.” Let this be the attitude – This is surrender.

After PRACTICE, the separation will one day vanish. We will merge in ARUNACHALA and forget ourselves – BODY SENSE DISAPPEARS – MIND DISAPPEARS – WE REMAIN AS ARUNACHALA – we get DISSOLVED. EVEN RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA, THOUGH FULLY ENLIGHTENED, REMAINED IN THE DUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH MOTHER KALI. IT IS THE MIND

WHICH HIDES THE TOTALITY AND MAKES US THINK AS INDIVIDUALS. ALL SADHANA IS MEANT TO ELIMINATE MIND.

**Q.2:** BEFORE WE PERMANENTLY SETTLE DOWN, the REGION OF BLISS IS A PICNIC SPOT wherefrom you have to return home where the beauty of the PICNIC SPOT can't be had. IT IS ONLY BY CONSTANT AND REPEATED PRACTICE UNTIRINGLY THAT WE WILL ABIDE PERMANENTLY AT ALL TIMES IN BLISS. IN THAT STATE THE MIND IS ANNIHILATED. IN YOUR STATE IT IS ONLY SUBDUED AND MIND IS NOT RID OF. The state of nothingness is a no man's land between BLISS STATE and our reversal to worldly state.

Actually NOTHINGNESS IS NOT VOID. IN THAT STAGE, WHAT ALL YOU ARE ACCUSTOMED, ALL WORLDLY OBJECTS CEASE TO EXIST. BUT IT IS NOT EMPTY. IT IS FULL OF THE LOVING PRESENCE OF THE LORD – BUT IN THE INVISIBLE UNMANIFESTED STATE. IF ONLY WE COULD SEE THE LIGHT EMANATING FROM THE NOTHINGNESS – YOU COULD SEE THAT BY CONTINUOUSLY OBSERVING THE BLANK WITHOUT JOY OR RESENTMENT, WITHOUT LIKE OR DISLIKE as a witness – then the progress will be automatic. In some of the books of VIMLA THAKKAR [in our LIBRARY] – she is a very old saint still living in MT. ABU – she has dealt with in detail about what to do when the blankness comes. Another way is to imagine Presence of the Lord or Self and keep our attention [not thought or mind] focussed on it when the blankness comes. Then automatically we progress.

I have given my views and I do not know whether I make sense or not.

YOU HAVE TWO GREAT ADVANTAGES:

1. In whichever spiritual realms you wander, BHAGAWAN RAMANA is there to guide you and take you forward [even if your way is NOT “WHO AM I” path]. He is holding your hand.
2. The longing to reach the goal and intensifying it to a volcanic eruptive state – this alone will take you to the Goal.

After reaching you will find that all your efforts were all in a dream and all the while you remained as the perfect Supreme Reality. That is why BHAGAWAN SAYS – TO REALISE THE SELF IS THE EASIEST. WE ARE STRIVING FOR A “FAIT ACCOMPLI”.

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE SRI RAMANAYA

P.S.

So long as we have an iota of attachment or love left for any human being or any object of the World, the progress will be delayed. The Self or LORD is a jealous lover and would not like being shared along with the World. ALL-CONSUMING, ONE-POINTED UNDIVIDED ATTENTION AND LOVE – if we give HIM, HIS RESPONSE WILL BE INSTANTANEOUS.

Note: All the capital words / emphasis / sentences are as written by Swamiji. No editing has been done in order to retain the original form of the letter.

\* \* HARI OM \* \*

Website: <http://www.swamishantanandapurimaharaj.org/>