



JNANA GANGA

Ganga Maa



Ganga Maa,

fondly and reverentially addressed as "Amma", who is embraced by Bhagavan's Grace, is a living embodiment of 'Truth' in human form. An infinite ocean of compassion, Amma is *Guru Tattvam* personified whose boundless Grace has enveloped and transformed the lives

of many. Amma is a rare combination of Guru in Mother's form, endowed with pure love and supreme knowledge. One naturally experiences peace and silence in Her divine presence.

In Amma's own words, **"Guru does not give an answer to your question, but takes you to the answer within"**. This was the experience of several devotees and seekers who put forth various questions, genuinely seeking clarity. The 101 *upadeshas* in "Jnana Ganga" are some of the responses that came from Amma's Heart which were transmitted directly into the hearts of the questioners, shattering ignorance and instilling direct wisdom.

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First Edition : March 2021
Second Edition : March 2022
Third Edition : October 2022
Fourth Edition : December 2024

Published by Hridaya Kshetram Trust

110/73 R.S. Nagar

Tiruvannamalai - 606 603

Tamil Nadu - India

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Introduction

From a spiritual standpoint, all the people in this world can be categorized into three distinct groups:

1. Those ignorant of the Truth (*ajnani*)
2. Those seekers striving to know the Truth (*jijnasu*),
and
3. Those who know the Truth (*jnani*)

Interestingly, those in complete ignorance and those who are established in the wisdom of the Self have no doubts about the nature of this world. Only the seeker who is plagued by uncertainties, inquires further.

A sincere seeker is led to the Guru by Divine Providence. When he comes in contact with a Master, the seeker slowly drops all other pursuits, gains a healthy level of discrimination or *vairagya*, and is willing to surrender at the feet of the Guru and subjects oneself to the Guru's teaching and guidance. In other words, the seeker chooses the Self to the exclusion of all else. There is a famous statement in the Katha Upanishad that says, '*Yam Eva Eshah Vrinute Tena Labhyah*', meaning the one who chooses the Self exclusively, obtains the Self.

In the holy temple town of Tiruvannamalai we find our dear Ganga Maa, fondly called "Amma", who is usually hidden from common sight. However, She

can easily be spotted by those eyes that are thirsty for the highest knowledge. During the course of the past few years, several devotees wanted to get their doubts cleared and needed clarifications with respect to their spiritual practices. Few of Amma's *Upadeshas*/guidance to the devotees form the content of this text.

The pearls of wisdom embedded in this short text are meant for those of us who are constantly striving to seek the Truth and gain everlasting abidance. They are in the form of aphorisms, also called '*Sutras*' in Sanskrit – short sentences that carry a lot of meaning. Obviously, they are not meant for casual reading. They are statements for contemplation and could drive one deep into the innermost core of one's being. Most importantly, these statements reveal Amma's direct experience of the Truth as She revels in the Blissful Self.

I pray to the almighty Lord that all sincere seekers derive maximum benefit from this text and achieve the highest goal of human life through spiritual unfoldment.

Hari Om.

Subbu Venkatkrishnan

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Inana Ganga

Guru

1. There are only two ways to reach the Truth: either to see the whole world as your Guru or to see your Guru as the whole world.
2. The Guru (as the Self) through Grace, pulls one towards Him like a magnet, and the effortless and natural movement towards the Guru (Self) is the path. Guru, Grace and the path are one.
3. The Guru does not support *dvaitam* (duality). If anyone carries the duality within them, He removes it.
4. Real closeness to Guru/God is giving Him the freedom to mould you the way He pleases.

5. With Guru's Grace, many lifetimes of teachings (lessons) can be given within a short span of time.

6. If there is perfect *viveka* (discrimination) within, no Guru is needed outside because *viveka* is the inner Guru.

7. There is no difference between a Master and His teachings. Love for the Master is love for His teachings, and love for His teachings will naturally lead to love for the Master.

8. Guru does not give an answer to your question, but takes you to the answer within.

9. You cannot please your Guru with your scriptural knowledge. He wants 'you'.



Bhakti (Devotion)

10. The longing for the Truth itself will lead to *Guru bhakti*. When the thirst for the Truth is intense and when Grace gives the experience of the Atman, gratitude flowers within the heart, which itself is *Guru bhakti*.

11. Real *bhakti* happens when the *bhakta* is non-existent and God alone remains.

12. Knowledge remains incomplete without devotion and devotion cannot attain fullness without knowledge. When they come together, there is completeness.



Surrender

13. We need to become zero before becoming full.

14. When *cit* (consciousness) comes in contact with *jadam* (ego/mind), it (*jadam*) loses its nature. This is surrender.

15. When one surrenders unconditionally to Guru or God, then the complete surrender is a happening through Grace. The responsibility of the *jiva* is to be in unconditional surrender and then the Grace makes the complete surrender happen by its own power. Grace is always unconditional. Only when we are in unconditional surrender, we are able to receive it fully.

16. '*Shishyatvam*' (being a disciple) is a quality where one does not want to exist as a separate entity.



True Knowledge

17. '*Atmajnanam*' is the only thing which is equally available to all. It is not something new to be taught or given from one's hand.

18. When real knowledge dawns, devotion, surrender and humility naturally flower within, like how the branches of a tree bend down on their own when it yields fruits.

19. To know 'who I am' is to know God and to know God is to know 'who I am'.

20. If I identify myself with anything, even with God, I become limited. When no identification is held on to, I realize my eternal and unlimited nature.

21. To know the unknowable, you must understand that you do not know what you think you already know. You must remain in the state of unknowing and drop what you already know.

22. Cause and effect are only in this relative plane. Holding on to a cause is holding on to illusion. Your birth itself has no cause. You were never born.

23. Awakening happens only if there is a dream. When the dreamer is found, the dream ends. Likewise, the dream of life ends when the source of the dreamer is found. The reality has neither dream nor awakening.

24. The only way to come out of bondage is to realize the falsity of attachment. You have nothing to hold on to and nothing to leave. Remain as

you are. The very nature of *Atma* is non-attachment.

25. Whether doing the highest *sadhana* or very gross *vyavahara*, the *Atma* remains the same. Neither does the *Atma* gain anything through the highest spiritual practice nor does it lose anything through gross actions. Knowing this, continue your *sadhana*.

26. When the Seer is seen, I am free. When the objects are seen, I am bound.

27. Oneness is not external. How can two objects become one? It can never happen at the level of body, mind or ego. It is at the level of Awareness where there is not even oneness, but just one.

28. *Jnanam* (knowledge about the Self) is not for debating knowledge but for experiential knowledge.

29. Complete knowledge alone gives relief and freedom.



Death

30. Desire for living is the cause of fear of death.

31. Fear of death is also a thought whereas death is a natural happening.

32. If you admit the cause of the birth, then the effect is death.

33. Whenever the ego loses its hold on something thought of as 'mine', it is a small death of the ego.

34. Unconscious death of the ego is death of the body. Conscious death of the ego is *samadhi*.



The Self

35. The Self is neither attached nor detached. It is as It is.

36. My separate existence away from Consciousness is selfishness. The realization of the Self is selflessness.

37. We cannot experience the Self because the Self is the experience of all experiences.

38. We cannot think about Bhagavan (Self) because He is not an object to be thought about. All other things can come under a thought. He is the very existence in us. Anything and everything else can be a thought, feeling, experience or enjoyment, which have no separate existence apart from Him.

39. Fulfillment is the nature of the *Atma*, not of the body or mind.

40. If everything were perfect in this world, nobody would seek God or Self. Because the world is imperfect, we seek perfection which is God or Self.

41. Only because 'I' exist is there even a spiritual journey. 'I' am the witness of all spiritual efforts and *sadhana*, and 'I' attain myself in the end.



Strength in Spiritual Path

42. The real strength is not of the ego but of the Truth.

43. When 'I' without any attributes is meditated upon, mind comes to stillness. But mind cannot stay there and comes out with a force to catch an external object (*vishaya*). Bringing mind back again to the pure 'I' is *vairagyam*.

44. Inner strength is seeing things through the light of knowledge.

45. Even when the world shakes, keep your attention on the unshaking Truth. That is the only protection you have.



Guidance for Seekers

46. The reason one desires to read more and more scriptures is due to a restless intellect. Only when this ceases can one actually turn inward and reach the state of contentment of abiding in the Self.

47. '*Shraddha*' (awareness) is neither concentration nor focus on any object. When the mind loses all its focus points (concentration), you are naturally in awareness. That awareness includes everything.

48. '*Summa Iru*' (Be Still) is an instruction neither for the Self nor for the body, but for the ego.

49. Fulfillment gives the real *sannyasa* and not any lack within.

50. Discipline is to refrain from moving with the tendencies of the mind (*vasanas*). The ego must be kept under the watchful eye of awareness. All external and yogic disciplines come under this. This internal discipline is direct and the only way to bring about an essential change.

51. Don't mix 'I am *Brahman*' idea with the one (ego/mind) who thinks he knows and understands about the Self. When the knower is non-existent, what exists is only *Brahman*.

52. While reading the biographies of Saints and Sages, sometimes, one may unknowingly fall into imitation. The mind compares and forms false ideas, believing that it must do the same actions as the Saint to attain freedom,

as though it is a fixed path. Each person's journey is totally unique. Rather, one should read about the lives of Saints, draw inspiration from it and channel that into one's own *sadhana*.

53. When *mukti* is a desire, the one who desires remains to gain something. When it is a need, the necessity to come out of the bondage is natural.

54. When I love the Truth and its attainment is a necessity for me, all actions leading to it are totally effortless.

55. What is the right action? Whenever I lose my identity as a separate entity, the right action happens through me because the doer is absent.

56. Only if I have had enough of all worldly interests, my total attention will fall on the Self.



Jnani

57. Pure Consciousness does not have arms, legs or a mouth to speak of Its existence. Luckily, the *Jnani* who is no different from consciousness, by His own experience, describes what and how that state is.

58. The *Jnani* is full and empty at the same time. He is totally empty of the mind and full of *Brahman*.

59. The *Jnani* is not indifferent. He only appears so to those whose mind knows only difference. Indifference is seen only if there is difference. Indifference is also a mental mode whereas a *Jnani*'s state is all inclusive, where there is neither difference nor indifference.

60. We live our lives with our opinions, attachments and desires. These are resistances to life. Life flows one way, but we want it to be different. Whereas a *Jnani* completely moves with the flow of life.

61. The most ecstatic experience, even if it is spiritual, is also a disturbance for the *Jnani*.



Grace

62. Grace is the *Atmashakti* (power of the Self) which gives recognition of the Self, makes one abide in it and destroys the ego completely. The personification of Grace is Guru.

63. The work of Grace is to constantly reveal 'who I am not'.

64. There is only one sign to understand that the Grace has entered our life after unconditional surrender. When Grace starts working, life becomes a happening beyond all our plans and expectations. We totally lose our hold on anything; or rather Grace takes over everything and makes us a witness to it.

65. The mind and the intellect can only assume about the Self. Only the pure intelligence of the Self can reveal it and give the “Yes” (conviction) from within.

66. Self-realization can happen at any time if the pure intelligence of the Self invokes its presence within to reveal ‘who I am’.

67. Everything that appears in front of you is within the field of Grace. So, accept them all as blessings.



Compassion

68. Compassion is an act of giving without a giver.

69. The highest expression of compassion is the principle of Guru (*Guru Tattvam*).

70. Real compassion comes out of true dispassion.

71. God cannot show you compassion out of sympathy. He can show it only looking at your forbearance (*titiksha*).



Jiva

72. *Jiva* is *Ishvara* Himself. A *jiva* identifies itself with its body, with the ones around it as 'mine', and limits itself to this lifespan. When these identifications are dropped, what remains as *jiva* is not different from *Ishvara*.

73. Every *jiva* takes ownership for its own actions but questions God for its unfavorable results.

74. Whenever we fail with ego, we are unhappy. Whenever we fail without ego, we are happy. When we fail with ego, we have no acceptance of the failure, but have the desire to win, and so, we are unhappy. When we fail without ego, we accept the

failure and have no expectation of success, so we are happy. Or, we understand that the failure is for the ego and not for me (Self).

75. When there is fear, doubt, faithlessness and misery, understand that the ego is working. When there is peace, contentment and bliss, know that the Self is shining and the ego is absent.

76. Only when the total inability of the ego to do anything is realized, it (ego) submits to the power of Grace. The experiential knowledge of the powerlessness of the ego is also given by Grace because the ego can never accept its own defeat.

77. Objects lie within the subject ('I' – the ego). By renouncing the subject, the reality of existence of objects

naturally disappears. Real renunciation is the realization that the subject never existed.

78. The cause for objective reality is the subjective reality ('I' - sense).

79. The idea of 'I' (individuality) is always related to the past, stuck in its own story. Whereas in the present it has no story.

80. *Ahankara* is not a mistake, it's a false veiling. Understanding this is *jnanam*.

81. '*Jiva Samadhi*' happens when the ego subsides in the heart. We have to build the *samadhi* for the *jiva* within, while living. For such ones, what does it matter whether the body is cremated or buried?



Patterns of Mind

82. Holding on to anything (with the mind) is of the past. The Truth is always in the present.

83. The desire for performing an action when there is no need for it invites *karma*. Keeping oneself inactive when a step needs to be taken, also invites *karma*.

84. If the mind is recognized only as a force that arises from the Self, there will be no worry.

85. The nature of the mind is exclusion. Awareness is all inclusive.

86. The intellect and the mind split things; the heart unites things.

87. Apparent action of the body (movement of the limbs) is not real action. The thought 'I am the doer' makes it an action

88. The expectation and the thought of action only makes the action bound but the action itself is not binding.

89. Inside and outside exist only to the body or mind, which act as reference points. When there is no reference point, where is inside and where is outside?



Wisdom

90. An unconscious life is ignorance.
A very conscious life is wisdom.

91. When I really know 'I do not know', I am opening all the doors of possibilities.

92. We always smile during the good times, but if we smile during the times of adversity, that is knowledge.

93. The *shraddha* (attention) you put on something is the value you give for it.

94. The one who values time and life goes beyond both.

95. Being the source of all joy, we have forgetfully wandered outside, identifying happiness with different

objects. In life, suffering (from any objects/person) comes to indicate that happiness is not present there. It is our wrong vision which gives reality to suffering. To realize and recognize this is possible only through Grace.

96. Demanding respect will not bring respect. Respecting everything around you makes you respectable.

97. The peace that is present when I am 'nobody' can never be experienced when I become 'somebody', however great it ('somebody') may be.

98. Real freedom is freedom from the body, mind and ego, and not freedom of the body, mind and ego.

99. Keeping oneself in the Truth as well as facing the situations and acting according to the knowledge and receiving lessons out of them,

keeps your practice balanced and makes it full.

100. True learning starts when the teaching stops.

101. There are many speakers in this world. Those who walk are rare. The walkers remain silent.

