

The Path of Sri Ramana

An introduction and overview of Parts One & Two

by

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www.happinessofbeing.com

This printing : 24/12/07

The Path of Sri Ramana

Introduction

The Path of Sri Ramana is an English translation of *Sri Ramana Vazhi*, a Tamil book written by Sri Sadhu Om, in which he explains in great depth and detail the philosophy and practice of the spiritual teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

Sri Ramana taught us that the only means by which we can attain the supreme happiness of true self-knowledge is *atma-vichara* – self-investigation or self-enquiry – which is the simple practice of keenly scrutinising or attending to our essential self-conscious being, which we always experience as ‘I am’, in order to know ‘who am I?’

However, he also described this practice of *atma-vichara* or self-investigation as the path of *atma-samarpana* or self-surrender, because unless we give up our false self we cannot truly know or be clearly conscious of our real self.

Our false finite self or mind rises by imagining itself to be a physical body, and it sustains its imaginary existence by constantly attending to thoughts or objects, which it experiences as other than itself. Without attending to otherness, we cannot continue imagining ourself to be this mind. Therefore when we turn our attention away from all otherness towards our own essential self, our mind will subside and lose its existence as a seemingly separate entity.

Since our true nature is not thinking, doing or knowing anything other than ourself, but is just self-conscious being, we will become clearly conscious of our true nature only to the extent to which we willingly surrender our constantly thinking, doing and object-knowing mind. The reason why we think and know objects

other than ourself is that we love to do so, and we love to do so because we wrongly imagine that we can obtain happiness thereby. Therefore we will surrender our thinking mind and remain as our true self-conscious being only when we understand that happiness does not exist in anything other than our own real self, and when our love just to be our real self thereby becomes greater than our love to think or know any other thing.

In other words, in order to succeed in our efforts to know our real infinite self and thereby to surrender our false finite self, we must be consumed by overwhelming love for our own true self-conscious being, 'I am'. True *bhakti* or devotion, therefore, is the perfectly non-dual love that we should each have for our own real self or essential being.

Therefore, though Sri Ramana taught us that in order to experience the infinite happiness of true self-knowledge we must attempt either to know our real self by investigating 'who am I?' or to separate ourself from our false self by surrendering it to God, he also repeatedly emphasised the truth that in essence these two paths are one, because we cannot know our real self without surrendering our false self – our illusory sense of being this body-bound mind – and we cannot relinquish our false self without knowing who or what we really are.

Thus self-enquiry and self-surrender – the path of *jnana* or true knowledge and the path of *bhakti* or true love – are not two different paths, but are just two inseparable aspects of the same single path – the one and only path by which we can experience the infinite happiness of true self-knowledge.

In Part One of *The Path of Sri Ramana* Sri Sadhu Om explains the first of these two aspects of this one path, namely the practice of self-enquiry, while in Part Two he explains various other closely related aspects of Sri Ramana's teachings, including the practice of self-surrender.

The Path of Sri Ramana - Part One

Sri Sadhu Om begins Part One by explaining in the first three chapters the real nature of happiness and the reason why we can attain the eternal experience of infinite happiness only by practising *atma-vichara* – self-enquiry or self-investigation. In the fourth chapter he completes laying the theoretical foundation of self-enquiry by explaining what we are and what we are not, and in the next four chapters he clarifies what true *atma-vichara* is and what it is not, explaining in great detail why we can know ourself only by attending to ourself – our own essential self-conscious being, ‘I am’ – and not by attending to any other thing. Thus he leaves us in no doubt that the correct technique of *atma-vichara* taught by Sri Ramana is only keen and vigilant self-attention or self-scrutiny.

Thus Part One of *The Path of Sri Ramana* contains the following eight chapters:

1. Eternal Happiness is the Goal
2. What is Happiness?
3. Self-enquiry is the Only Way to Happiness
4. Who Am I?
5. The Enquiry ‘Who Am I?’ and the Four Yogas
6. ‘Who Am I?’ is not *Soham Bhavana*
7. Self-Enquiry
8. The Technique of Self-Enquiry

In the **first chapter**, ‘Eternal Happiness is the Goal’, Sri Sadhu Om explains that happiness is the natural and legitimate goal of all sentient beings, but that the means by which we all seek to obtain happiness are wrong.

In the **second chapter**, ‘What is Happiness?’, he explains that happiness is our real nature, and that the transient happiness that we seem to derive from external experiences actually arises only from within ourself, and is experienced by us due to the temporary calming of our mind that occurs whenever any of our desires are fulfilled.

In the **third chapter**, ‘Self-enquiry is the Only Way to Happiness’, he explains why we can attain true and infinite happiness only by practising *atma-vichara* or self-enquiry. That is, happiness is experienced by us only to the extent to which our mind subsides, because the activity of our mind disturbs us from our natural state of peaceful happiness, distracting our attention away from our mere being. Therefore when our mind subsides partially or temporarily, we experience partial or temporary happiness, and if it subsides completely and permanently – that is, if it is destroyed or annihilated – we will experience complete and permanent happiness.

Our mind is a thought, the primal thought ‘I’, and it rises or becomes active only by attending to other thoughts. Without attending thus to thoughts other than itself, it cannot stand. Therefore when it turns its attention away from all other thoughts towards itself, it subsides and disappears. Thus we can destroy our mind only by keenly vigilant self-attention. Therefore self-enquiry or self-scrutiny is the only means by which we can attain the experience of infinite and eternal happiness.

In the **fourth chapter**, ‘Who am I?’, after clarifying why we are neither this body nor this mind, nor any other such transitory adjunct, Sri Sadhu Om explains that our real nature is only our fundamental consciousness of our own essential being – the one true adjunctless being-consciousness or *sat-chit* – and that this non-dual being-consciousness is itself true happiness or *ananda*.

In the **fifth chapter**, ‘The Enquiry "Who Am I?" and the Four Yogas’, he explains why this simple practice of self-enquiry – investigating ‘who am I?’ by keenly scrutinising our own essential being-consciousness, ‘I am’ – is itself the essence of all the four yogas, the four traditional types of spiritual practice, namely *karma yoga* (the path of *nishkamyā karma* or ‘desireless action’, that is, the practice of doing action without desire for any sort of personal benefit but only out of love for God), *bhakti yoga* (the path of love or devotion to God), *raja yoga* (the practice of a system of tech-

niques that include specific forms of internal and external self-restraint, *pranayama* or breath-restraint, and various methods of meditation, the ultimate aim of which is to attain *yoga* or ‘union’ with God), and *jnana yoga* (the path of knowledge, the aim of which is to know God as he really is).

The practice of investigating ‘who am I?’ is not only the essence of all these four yogas, but is also the only effective means by which we can achieve the goal that each of them aims to attain. Though the traditional practices of these four yogas will gradually purify our mind and thereby ultimately lead us to the practice of self-enquiry, it is in fact not necessary for us to do any such traditional practices, because the simple practice of self-enquiry is itself the most effective means by which we can achieve the purity and strength of mind that we require in order to practise it perfectly.

Therefore if we practise self-enquiry from the outset, we will never need to practise any other form of *yoga*, as Sri Ramana makes very clear in verse 14 of *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham* and verse 10 of *Upadesa Undiyar*, in which he says:

Scrutinising ‘To whom are these [four defects], *karma* [action], *vibhakti* [non-devotion], *viyoga* [separation] and *ajnana* [ignorance]?’ is itself *karma*, *bhakti*, *yoga* and *jnana*, [because] when [we] scrutinise [ourselves thus], [our ego or individual ‘I’ will be found to be non-existent, and] without [this finite] ‘I’ these [four defects] do not ever exist. Abiding [or being fixed permanently] as self is alone *unmai* [the truth, which is *sat-bhava*, our real state of being or ‘am’-ness].

Being [firmly established as our real self] having subsided in [our] rising-place [our ‘heart’ or the core of our being, which is the source from which we had risen as our mind], that is *karma* [desireless action] and *bhakti* [devotion], that is *yoga* [union with God] and *jnana* [true knowledge].

In the **sixth chapter**, ‘“Who Am I?” is not Soham Bhavana’, Sri Sadhu Om explains the difference between this practice of investigating ‘who am I?’ and *soham bhavana*, the practice of meditating ‘I am he’ (that is, ‘I am God’ or ‘I am brahman’), which is an incorrect practice of *jnana yoga*, but which has traditionally been mistaken to be the correct practice.

While explaining the crucial difference between these two practices, and the reason why *soham bhavana* cannot enable us to know ourself as we really are, he enables us to understand that the teachings of Sri Ramana have breathed a fresh life into the ancient texts of *advaita vedanta*, restoring to them their true and original spirit and import, by clarifying the essential practice that they intended to teach us, namely *atma-vichara* – the thought-free practice of non-objective self-investigation or self-scrutiny.

In the **seventh chapter**, ‘Self-Enquiry’, Sri Sadhu Om explains in great detail the correct meaning of the term *atma-vichara* – self-enquiry or self-investigation. That is, in essence he explains that *atma-vichara* is the simple practice of self-attention or self-scrutiny – focusing our attention keenly and exclusively upon our own essential self-conscious being, ‘I am’.

This practice of *atma-vichara* or self-attention is not an action or a state of thinking, but is our natural thought-free state of just being. Thinking is an action, because it is an active process of paying attention to things other than ourself, but self-attention is not an action, because it is a passive state of perfectly peaceful being in which our attention rests naturally in its source, which is our own essential being – our fundamental self-consciousness, ‘I am’.

Finally in the **eighth chapter**, ‘The Technique of Self-Enquiry’, Sri Sadhu Om discusses the practice of *atma-vichara* in greater depth and detail, disclosing many subtle clues to help, guide and encourage us in our practice.

In addition to these eight chapters, which form the main body

of the book, Part One also contains ‘A Brief Life History of Sri Ramana’ as an introduction, and three appendices.

Appendix One contains an English translation of *Nan Yar?* (Who am I?), the most important prose work of Sri Ramana, which explains in detail the philosophy and practice of *atma-vichara* or self-enquiry.

Appendix Two contains an English translation of four poems from *Sadhanai Saram* (The Essence of Spiritual Practice), a compilation of Tamil verses by Sri Sadhu Om giving clear guidance and many valuable clues regarding the practice of self-enquiry and self-surrender. These four selected poems are *atma-vichara Patikam* (Eleven Verses on Self-Enquiry), *Yar Jnani?* (Who is Jnani [a sage who knows self?]), *Sandehi Yarendru Sandehi* (Doubt the Doubter) and *Japa* (repetition or remembrance of a name of God).

Appendix Three is an essay entitled ‘Sadhana and Work’, which was adapted from a letter that Sri Sadhu Om wrote in reply to a friend who had written asking, ‘How is it possible in practice to maintain unceasing self-attention when, in the course of a day, various activities demand some or all of one’s attention?’

The Path of Sri Ramana - Part Two

Whereas in Part One Sri Sadhu Om discusses only the philosophy and practice of *atma-vichara* or self-enquiry, in Part Two he discusses many other important and closely related aspects of Sri Ramana’s teachings such as the reality of the world and God, *bhakti* or devotion, and *karma* or action.

Thus Part Two is a very useful supplement to Part One, because by discussing in it such subjects and relating them constantly to the practice of self-enquiry, Sri Sadhu Om repeatedly emphasises the need for us to know ourselves, and the truth that in order to know ourselves we must persistently practise the one true spiritual

path of self-enquiry and self-surrender – the simple practice of sinking within, subsiding in our natural state of thought-free self-conscious being.

The main body of Part Two of *The Path of Sri Ramana* contains three chapters:

1. The World and God
2. Love or *bhakti*
3. *Karma*

In the **first chapter**, ‘The World and God’, Sri Sadhu Om explains that the world and the ‘God’ whom we imagine to be other than ourself are both mental projections – creations of our own mind or power of imagination – as indeed is our own finite self or ‘soul’. The root cause of the appearance of these three seemingly separate entities, the world, soul and God, is our own *pramada* or self-forgetfulness. Because we have used our infinite freedom to choose to ignore or forget what we really are, we now imagine ourself to be this finite body-bound mind or soul, and hence we imagine the existence of otherness, which appears as this seemingly external world, which is governed or controlled by a power that we call ‘God’.

However, though God as a seemingly separate entity is no more real than our mind, which imagines his separateness, he is absolutely real as our own true self. He appears to be other than ourself only because we have imaginarily separated ourself from his infinite being by imagining ourself to be this finite object-knowing consciousness that we call our mind.

Since ourself, the world and God all appear to have come into existence as seemingly separate entities only because we have chosen to ignore our true nature, which is thought-free and therefore adjunctless self-conscious being, all this duality will cease to exist only when we know ourself as we really are, and we can know ourself thus only by withdrawing our attention from all otherness

and focusing it keenly and exclusively on ourself. That is, since self-forgetfulness is the root cause of all this seeming multiplicity and consequent misery, self-remembrance or self-attention is the only means by which we can restore ourself to our natural state of absolutely non-dual self-conscious being.

In the **second chapter**, ‘Love or bhakti’, Sri Sadhu Om explains how our devotion or *bhakti* takes different forms at the various stages of the development of our spiritual maturity, using the example of the different standards that a child progresses through in school. In the ‘school of *bhakti*’ there are **five ‘standards’**, each of which represents a certain type of religious or spiritual devotion that characterises a particular stage in our spiritual development.

The first standard is characterised by faith in ritualistic actions – a faith that is often so blind that it attaches so much importance to such actions that it overlooks God, the real power that ordains the fruit of action. This is the type of faith that was personified by the so-called *rishis* or ‘ascetics’ living in the Daruka forest, in the story that formed the context in which Sri Ramana composed *Upadesa Undiyar*.

The second standard is characterised by faith in many different deities (such as the many names and forms in which God is worshipped in the Hindu religion, or the many saints to whom a devout Catholic or Orthodox Christian might pray), each of whom is supposed to have some particular power to fulfil a particular type of desire or to ward off a particular type of evil.

The third standard is characterised by faith in and single-minded devotion to only one particular name and form of God. However, this third standard is divided into two stages, standard 3(a) and 3(b), because it is in this third standard that the most significant change of heart takes place within us.

That is, in standards 1, 2 and 3(a), our devotion is not real devotion to God, but is only devotion to the material and other per-

sonal benefits that we hope to achieve from our ritualistic actions, worship and prayers. In other words, it is *kamyā bhakti* – devotion practised only for the fulfilment of our personal desires. This is the spirit of devotion with which most so-called religious people practise their respective religions.

However, when we practise such *kamyā bhakti* for many lives, our mind gradually gains spiritual maturity – the clarity of mind that enables us to discriminate and understand that true happiness does not lie in the mere fulfilment of our personal desires – until in the final stages of standard 3(a) we come to understand that the real source of our happiness is not any of the benefits that we seek to gain from God, but is only God himself, who has so much love for us that he grants our prayers and wishes. Thus we progress from the *kamyā bhakti* of standard 3(a) to the *nishkamyā bhakti* of standard 3(b) – that is, true devotion to God, not for the sake of anything that we may gain from him, but for his own sake alone.

It is at this stage in our spiritual development that God manifests himself in the form of *guru* to teach us the truth that happiness does not exist outside oneself – not even in the all-loving God whom we imagine to be other than oneself – but only in oneself, as oneself. Thus in the form of *guru* God directs us to turn our mind selfwards and thereby to sink into the innermost core or depth of our own self-conscious being, which is his true form – the form of infinite *sat-chit-ananda* or being-consciousness-bliss.

This stage at which we sincerely and wholeheartedly attempt to practise this path of self-enquiry and self-surrender that *guru* has taught us is true *guru-bhakti*, which is the fourth standard in our ‘school of *bhakti*’.

Finally when, as a result of our devoted and perseverant practice of self-enquiry, our self-surrender becomes complete – that is, when we merge and lose our finite self in the infinite clarity of thought-free self-conscious being – we will experience the non-

dual state of true self-knowledge, which is our natural state of *svatma-bhakti* or true self-love. This *svatma-bhakti* is the fifth standard – the final goal of our ‘school of *bhakti*’ – beyond which nothing exists to achieve or know.

In the **third chapter**, ‘*Karma*’, Sri Sadhu Om explains the truth of action or *karma*, but while doing so he begins from a perspective that is radically different to the perspective from which we normally understand *karma*. That is, *karma* is usually explained and understood from the perspective that we are a finite self, a body-bound mind or ‘soul’, whose nature is to do action by mind, speech and body, whereas Sri Sadhu Om begins by explaining that we are in truth the one infinite self, the absolute reality or *brahman*, whose real nature is just to *be* and not to do anything.

Having begun from this perspective, he explains that as the one infinite reality we are perfectly free and all-powerful, because there is nothing other than ourself that could limit either our freedom or our power. Thus we are free to will or choose either to be as we really are, or to imagine ourself to be a finite self that does action or *karma*.

In order to imagine ourself to be a finite self, which we are not, we must first ignore or forget ourself as we really are. Therefore our present condition as a seemingly finite body-bound mind is the result of our misusing our infinite freedom to choose to forget our real self and thereby to imagine ourself to be this false self. Having thus imagined ourself to be this limited mind and body, our perspective is now distorted, as a result of which we see our true ‘being’ as ‘doing’ or *karma*.

Thus all our ‘doing’, action or *karma* is merely an unnatural distortion of our natural state of just being. Therefore if we investigate ‘who is doing these actions?’ – that is, if we keenly scrutinise ourself, the ‘I’ whom we now imagine to be thinking, speaking and doing bodily actions – we will discover that the one reality under-

lying this entire illusion of action or *karma* is our own essential being, our real self, which in truth never does anything, and which therefore never knows anything other than our own natural state of being.

Having thus established that the underlying reality and basis of all ‘doing’ or *karma* is only our own true being, and that the appearance of *karma* is caused only by our ignoring or forgetting our real nature as simple non-dual self-conscious being, Sri Sadhu Om proceeds on this basis to explain the entire web of *karma* that we have thus woven for ourself.

That is, he explains the three forms of *karma*, namely *agamyā karma* or the actions that we are constantly doing by our own free will (which is a limited form of our original infinite freedom to will and act), *sanchita karma* or the accumulation of the ‘fruits’ (or moral results) of our past *agamyā karmas* that are yet to be experienced by us, and *prarabdha karma* or our present destiny, which is those ‘fruits’ of our past *agamyā karmas* that God has selected from the vast store of our *sanchita karma* for us to experience as pleasures and pains in the lifetime of this present body that we now imagine to be ourself.

In addition to these three chapters, Part Two of *The Path of Sri Ramana* also contains the following **four appendices**:

1. Self-Effort (Personal Effort)
2. The Resumption of Actions Birth after Birth
3. Personal Cleanliness (Acharas)
4. Explanatory Notes on (a) Verse 6 of *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam*, (b) Verse 8 of *Ulladu Narpadu* and (c) Verses 9, 10, 11 and 12 of *Ulladu Narpadu*

The first two appendices are a continuation of some of the important truths discussed in the third chapter.

In **Appendix One** Sri Sadhu Om explains that effort can take either of two forms, namely the form of *pravritti*, which is the ef-

fort that we make in doing actions or *karmas* by mind, speech or body, thereby entangling oneself further in the dense web of *karma*, or the form of *nivritti*, which is the effort that we make to attend to our own essential being, our real self, thereby weakening our attachment to our mind and body, and thus cutting the very root of all *karma*.

In **Appendix Two** he explains that whenever we take a new birth (that is, whenever having ceased to imagine oneself to be one body we begin to imagine oneself to be another body), we take with us not only all our *karma-phalas* or accumulated fruits of our past action that are yet to be experienced by us, but also all our *karma-vasanas* – our latent desires, impulses or propensities to do particular actions. Our *karma-phalas* are like the edible part of a fruit, while our *karma-vasanas* are like the seeds contained in that fruit.

However, there are two types of *vasana* that we can cultivate, namely *karma-vasanas*, inclinations or desires to do actions, and *sat-vasana*, the inclination or love just to be. By doing actions we cultivate *karma-vasanas*, and by practising self-enquiry or self-surrender, which is the art of just being, we cultivate *sat-vasana*. Therefore if we have a liking in this life to attend to our real self and to surrender our false self, we must have been gradually cultivating this *sat-vasana* in our previous lives.

The experience of true self-knowledge cannot be attained as the result of any action or *karma*, so it is in no way related to or dependent upon our destiny or *prarabdha* – that is, it cannot be either caused or obstructed by our destiny – because our destiny is just the fruit of our past actions, which we did due to the impulsion of our *karma-vasanas*. Therefore the truth is that we can attain self-knowledge only by cultivating *sat-vasana*, the true love to know and to be nothing other than our own real self – our action-free being, ‘I am’.

In **Appendix Three** Sri Sadhu Om narrates a story that Sri Ramana told in order to explain the true inner purpose of *acharas* (orthodox codes of personal cleanliness prescribed in certain Hindu scriptures), the essence of which Sri Muruganar recorded in verse 680 of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*.

In **Appendix Four(a)** Sri Sadhu Om explains the meaning of verse 6 of *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam*, in which Sri Ramana uses the analogy of the projection of a cinema film to illustrate how our mind projects the appearance of the world through the medium of this body (which is like the projector) and its five senses (which are like the lenses in the projector).

In **Appendix Four(b)** Sri Sadhu Om explains the meaning of verse 8 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, in which Sri Ramana says that though by worshipping the nameless and formless essential reality that we call ‘God’ in name and form it is possible for us to see him in name and form, becoming one with him by scrutinising and knowing our own truth (our formless essence or ‘am’-ness) and thereby subsiding and merging in his truth (his formless essence or ‘am’-ness) is alone seeing him in truth.

Finally in **Appendix Four(c)** Sri Sadhu Om clarifies a confusion that has occurred in some translations and interpretations of verses 9, 10, 11 and 12 of *Ulladu Narpadu*. That is, in these verses Sri Ramana has taught us that our mind or ego is the cause and supporting base of the appearance of all the ‘dyads’ and ‘triads’, that is, the pairs of opposites such as knowledge and ignorance and the three factors of objective knowledge (namely the ‘knower’, the ‘knowing’ and the ‘known’, that is, our knowing mind, its act of knowing and the objects known by it), but unfortunately some people whose understanding of his teachings is rather superficial have wrongly interpreted these verses as meaning that our real self is the cause and base of them.

Though the ultimate base or reality underlying the appearance

of our mind and hence of these ‘dyads’ and ‘triads’ is indeed our real self, the immediate base of them is our mind, because they are experienced only by our mind or ego, and hence they exist only in its perspective and not in the non-dual perspective of our real self. This is the reason why Sri Ramana says in verse 26 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, “If ego comes into existence, everything comes into existence. If ego does not exist, everything does not exist. [Therefore] ego itself is everything. ...”

Printed copies of these books

The two parts of *The Path of Sri Ramana* are currently available in two separate volumes.

Though the present English translation contained in these two volumes does convey much of the import of the original Tamil text, *Sri Ramana Vazhi*, it is unfortunately neither a complete nor an entirely satisfactory translation. There are several reasons for this, which can best be explained by giving a brief outline of the evolution of this book.

Most of the material in this book was compiled over a period of time from notes that friends of Sri Sadhu Om had made of explanations that he had given orally and from letters that he had written in answer to questions that he had been asked about various aspects of the teachings of Sri Ramana. Many such notes and letters were copied by a friend, Dr R. Santanam, who wished to publish them as a book, and who therefore requested Sri Sadhu Om to compile them into a form suitable for publication.

Sri Sadhu Om felt that the explanations that would potentially be most useful to fellow devotees of Sri Ramana were those that related specifically to the philosophy and practice of *atma-vichara*, so he selected only such explanations and compiled them into eight chapters, which form most of what is now the main body of Part One of *Sri Ramana Vazhi*. Therefore in 1967, when *Sri Ramana*

Vazhi was first published in Tamil, it consisted only of a briefer version of Part One of the present book. Later, at the request of many devotees of Sri Ramana who did not know Tamil, this original version of Part One was translated into English, and the English translation was published in 1971.

The Tamil and English versions of this book soon became very popular among the devotees of Sri Ramana, because many people found it to be the clearest available explanation regarding the practice of *atma-vichara*. However some devotees felt that it was incomplete, because it concentrated only on *atma-vichara*, which is the core of Sri Ramana's teachings, and did not discuss many other closely related aspects of his teachings, so they requested Sri Sadhu Om to write a sequel discussing such matters as God, *bhakti* and *karma*.

Therefore from the notes and letters that he had discarded while compiling Part One, Sri Sadhu Om compiled Part Two. However, since there were no funds at that time to publish it, Part Two remained in manuscript form for some years, until a friend in America offered to finance the publication of an English translation of it. Thus Part Two was first published in English in 1976.

In 1979, when the second Tamil edition of Sri Ramana *Vazhi* was published, it contained Parts One and Two in a single volume. After all the copies of this second edition had been sold, we began to make arrangements for the publication of a third edition, and at that time I requested Sri Sadhu Om to incorporate in it many additional explanations that I had heard him giving either to me or to other friends, so when the third edition was published in 1985 (shortly after his passing away) it was a revised and enlarged version of the earlier editions.

Since most of the friends who helped Sri Sadhu Om translate *Sri Ramana Vazhi* into English were not native English-speakers, the present translation of it is not very satisfactory. Though the

translation in the first English edition of Part One had been thoroughly revised in preparation for the second edition, the revised translation was not actually a very great improvement, so shortly before it was published in 1981, Sri Sadhu Om asked me to check it and make any corrections that I felt to be necessary. If I had had sufficient time to do so, I would have liked to work with him to make an entirely fresh translation, but since the time available was very limited, all I could do was to correct the most obvious errors in the rather clumsy existing translation.

The translation of Part Two in its first English edition was even more clumsy than the translation of Part One, so in the early 1980's Sri Sadhu Om and I began to make an entirely fresh translation of Part Two, but unfortunately we had time to retranslate less than three-quarters of the first chapter (that is, up to about page 38 or 39 of the present third edition). Therefore except for these first 38 pages or so, the rest of Part Two is still the same unsatisfactory translation that was published in the first edition.

Moreover, since the existing English translations of both parts were made before Sri Sadhu Om incorporated the final additions in the 1985 edition of the Tamil book, the translations are not only a rather poor reflection of the original Tamil text, but are also not a translation of it in its present complete form. Therefore, if I ever have the time to do so, I would like to make an entirely fresh translation of the entire Tamil book, in order to convey as well as I can full import and spirit of this rich and profound book.

However, as I said above, though the present English translation of Parts One and Two is neither complete nor entirely satisfactory, it does nevertheless succeed in conveying – albeit in a not very elegant manner – much of the import of the original Tamil text, and over the years many devotees who do not know Tamil have derived great benefit from reading it. Therefore even in its present form, *The Path of Sri Ramana* is a book that should be read by any spiritual aspirant who wishes seriously to practise the path

of self-enquiry and self-surrender that Sri Ramana has taught us as the only means by which we can experience the infinite happiness of true self-knowledge.

Information about where the two parts of *The Path of Sri Ramana* can be purchased is given by David Godman on his website www.davidgodman.org/books/pathofsriramana1.shtml and www.davidgodman.org/books/pathofsriramana2.shtml.

E-book copies for free download

Part One of The Path of Sri Ramana is also available for free download as a PDF e-book at:

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I would like here to express my gratitude to all those friends who helped me to obtain this PDF copy of the printed book, especially N Sankaran, who supervises the publication of most of the Tamil and English books of Sri Sadhu Om, and who obtained this PDF copy from the press that printed the book, and John Manetta, who rectified some defects in it and added the bookmarks.

Sometime in the near future I also hope to be able to post a similar PDF e-book copy of Part Two of The Path of Sri Ramana at www.happinessofbeing.com/path_ramana.html.

