

nāñum tāñum

(I-ego and Self)

Composed by: GuruMa, Shree Mata Swadhaa Devi

Background Note: Nine stanzas were composed by GuruMa, Shree Mata Swadhaa Devi and shown to Swami Virajeshwara Saraswati. These stanzas recently surfaced in December 2025.

Guruve Saranam composed after *ātma sākshātkāra*, came to the attention of Hamsa Ashramam devotees in December 2023. [*Guruve Saranam*](#) was published with translation and commentary in *Sannidhi Samvadam: Conversations with an Enlightened Master*.

These quatrains tell us a story of *nāñ* and *tāñ*. At my request to cover Sadhana, GuruMa revised the ninth stanza and added a stanza on 'nama and seva', that invokes the already existing Grace.

These inspired compositions give us a potent 'knock' to turn within. A careful reader will observe that stanzas one to five are statements and declarations- stanzas six to eight depict bondage and nine and ten cover the fervent effort for Grace and realization.

Stanza 1:

நானே நானாய் இல்லாமல்
தானே தானாய் விளங்கிடவே
தன்னைத் தேடி தன்னில் அமர
நானும் தன்னில் கலந்ததுவே

Transliteration:

Nāñē nāñāi illāmal
tāñē tāñāi vilāñgidavē
taññait tēdi taññil amara
Nāñum taññil kalandhathuvē.

Translation in prose:

நானே நானாய் இல்லாமல்- Not remaining as I-ego. தானே தானாய் விளங்கிடவே- Self (That) shines as Itself. தன்னைத் தேடி தன்னில் அமர- I-ego searching for That and to abide in That. நானும் தன்னில் கலந்ததுவே- 'I-ego' merged in That.

Not remaining as I-ego,

Self (That) shines as Itself;

'I-ego,' searching for That and to abide in That-

'I-ego' merged in That.

Paraphrase:

This stanza refers to multiple stages in a spiritual life: Search, abidance, and dissolution. GuruMa employs *tān* and *nāñ*, which are Tamil spiritual terms for 'That' and 'I-ego.' '*tān*' refers to the Self or Guru or God, primary datum and true nature of the so-called Jiva or ego who parades as '*nāñ*', ignorant of the true nature. A seeker searching for the true nature, which shines as itself, subsides, abides, dwells and finally merges in the Self. Just like rivers seemingly estranged having different names and directions finally mix and merge in the boundless ocean, the estranged ego parading a false identity calls itself as 'I-ego'. What connotes a wrong 'I' begins to seek the real 'I,' which connotes the real Self. The river loses its identity in the boundless ocean.

Stanza 2:

நானும் தன்னில் கலந்ததுமே
நானும் தானும் காணாமல்
தானே தானே தத்துவமாய்
தானே தானே விளங்கியதே

Transliteration:

Nāñum tāñil kalandhathumē
nāñum tāñum kāñāmal
tāñē tāñē tattuvamāi
tāñē tāñē vilañgiyathē

Translation in prose:

நானும் தன்னில் கலந்ததுமே –As soon as 'I-ego' merged in That. நானும் தானும் காணாமல் -the distinction between 'I-ego' and 'That' disappeared. தானே தானே தத்துவமாய்- That Itself is the Truth. தானே தானே விளங்கியதே-That Thatness is Self-effulgent.

As soon as 'I-ego' merged in That,

the distinction between 'I-ego' and 'That' disappeared.

That Itself is the Truth

That Thatness is Self-effulgent.

Paraphrase:

The second stanza is a consequence of the search we saw in the 1st stanza. This stanza refers to that luminous nature of the Self, which is self-effulgent and it is the Tattva that seekers seek within and worldly seek it in the sensory plane. The first stanza shows the seeker seeking That and abides in That. In this stanza, we see the dissolution and consequent erasure of the seeker itself. All distinctions between 'I-ego' and 'That' are resolved in the luminous Self-effulgent Being.

Stanza 3:

விளங்கிய தானும் கலந்திட்ட நானும்
விளக்கிட ஒன்றும் இல்லாமல்
சும்மா இருக்க இல்லை ஒன்றென
சும்மா (ஆ) டிட நான் எழுந்ததே

Transliteration:

Vilaṅgiya tānum kalandhiṭṭa nānum
vilakkida oñdrum illāmal
chummā irukka illai onrena
chummā (ā) dida nāñ ezhundhadhē

Translation in prose:

விளங்கிய தானும் கலந்திட்ட நானும்- The luminous That and the I-ego merged.
விளக்கிட ஒன்றும் இல்லாமல்- Having nothing to explain. சும்மா இருக்க இல்லை ஒன்றென -Just for no reason to be as One, சும்மா (ஆ) டிட நான் எழுந்ததே- Just to dance, the 'I-ego' emerged.

The luminous That and the 'I-ego' merged,

having nothing to explain.

Just for no reason to be as One,

Just to dance, the 'I-ego' emerged.

Paraphrase:

This stanza covers the longing aspect that results in evolution, which is one of the five-fold activities of God: *Shristi* (Evolution), *Sthiti* (Support), *Samhara* (Destruction), *Tirobhava* (Veiling) and *Anugraha* (Grace).

We saw in 2nd stanza that distinctions are resolved in the luminous Self- effulgent Being, there is nothing more to dramatize- the hide and seek is over. The seeker has collected all that is Hers from the stage and abides alone in happiness. However, since the One is without a second, the dance of creation or divine Lila emerges- beginning with the phantom 'I-ego'.

When we fancy why this sport or pastime and wonder if there is a subtle motive, GuruMa often quotes the Brahma Sutra, “लोकवत् तु लीलाकैवल्यम्” (*lokavat tu lila kaivalyam*, 2.1.33): But (creation for *Brahman* is) a mere pastime like what is seen in the world.

"In the night of Brahma, Nature is inert, and cannot dance till Shiva [as Nataraja] wills it: He rises from His rapture, and dancing sends through inert matter pulsing waves of awakening sound, and lo! matter also dances appearing as a glory round about Him. Dancing, He sustains its manifold phenomena. In the fulness of time, still dancing, he destroys all forms and names by fires and gives new rest." (The Dance of Shiva, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Chapter 'The Dance of Shiva', p94-95).

Note: Tamil word, 'சும்மா', which literally is a casual remark for being present 'merely' or 'idly' or 'just for no apparent reason.'

Stanza 4:

தன்னை விட்டு பிரிந்தோடி
நானாய் ஒன்று எழுந்த உடன்
சும்மா உடலும் தோன்றியதே
சும்மா உலகும் தோன்றியதே

Transliteration:

Taṇṇai viṭṭu pirindhōdi
nāṇāi oṇru ezhundha udan̄.
chummā udalum thōṇ̄riyadhē
chummā ulagum thōṇ̄riyadhē

Translation in prose:

தன்னை வீட்டு பிரிந்தோடி -Becoming separate from the Self. நானாய் ஒன்று எழுந்த உடன்- As soon as the 'I-ego' arose. சும்மா உடலும் தோன்றியதே- Just like that the body appeared. சும்மா உலகும் தோன்றியதே- Just like that the world appeared.

Becoming separate from the Self,
as soon as 'I-ego' arose;
Just like that the body appeared,
Just like that the world appeared.

Paraphrase:

In 3rd stanza, GuruMa introduced us to the seed of evolution and in this stanza concisely tells us that body and world simply manifested in unison. Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi instructs in Ulladu Narpadu: 'That' we are, when 'I' has not arisen. When 'I' arises all (other) things arise (verse 27). 'That' is awareness or Self, which never rises or sets. What rises is the thought of 'I', which is the knot of matter and Awareness. This is called as Jiva, subtle body or ego or mind. When 'I' arises from the ground-Self- body and world are seen. Bhagavan in response to the question on nature of the mind in Who am I? (Q 8) teaches: When the ego comes out of the Self, the world appears. When the Self shines, the world does not appear. Therefore, there is no independent entity called the world. The 'I' projects the body and mind out of itself and again resolves it into itself.

Stanza 5:

உடலும் உலகும் தோன்றியதும்
உடலும் உலகும் உண்மை என
உடலாய் இருந்து உலகைக் கண்டு
உவந்திட உளமொன் றெழுந்ததே

Transliteration:

Udalum ulagum thōṇriyadhum
udalum ulagum uṇmai eṇa
udalāy irundhu ulagaik kaṇdu
uvandhida uḷamondru ezhundhadhē

Translation in prose:

உடலும் உலகும் தோன்றியதும்-As soon as the body and world appeared. உடலும் உலகும் உண்மை என -the body and word appear as Real உடலாய் இருந்து உலகைக் கண்டு-Being the body and perceiving the world. உவந்திட உளமொன் றெழுந்ததே-A mind arose to enjoy.

As soon as the body and world appeared,
the body and the world are Real.
Being the body and perceiving the world.
A mind arose to enjoy.

Paraphrase:

In the previous stanza GuruMa illustrates the simultaneous appearance of body and world. Body and world simply manifested for no apparent reason. The appearance taken as true becomes the playground for liking and attachment due to the identification with a body as 'I-ego.' Stanzas 1 to 5 give us summary and declaration on the nature of Reality and on the emergence of the I-ego and ignorance. In this stanza, we see the fulfilled Being with no rhyme or reason has a pastime with appearances.

Stanza 6:

உளமொன்று எழுந்து உவந்ததுவே
உடலாய் இருந்து களித்ததுவே
உலகை ரசித்து மகிழ்ந்ததுவே
உள்ளது ஒன்றை மறந்ததுவே.

Transliteration:

Ulamon̄ru ezhundhu uvandhadhuve
udalāi irundhu kaļittadhuve
ulagai rasitthu magizhndhadhuve
ulladhu oṇ̄rai marandhadhuve

Translation in prose:

உளமொன்று எழுந்து உவந்ததுவே-A mind arose and rejoiced. உடலாய் இருந்து களித்ததுவே-Being the body rejoiced. உலகை ரசித்து மகிழ்ந்ததுவே-World is relished and became happy. உள்ளது ஒன்றை மறந்ததுவே-And 'That which is', it forgot.

A mind having arisen, rejoiced.

Being the body, rejoiced.

World is relished and became happy-

And 'That which is', it forgot.

Paraphrase:

In the previous stanza GuruMa teaches us that the 'I-ego' emerges and simultaneously the body and world appear. There are likings and attachments to the seen or appearance. This ignorant existence continues and is nourished through the notion 'I am this body'. The notion survives by deriving happiness and enjoyment from the world. In this deluded notion, 'That which is' referred as 'Ulladu' is forgotten.

Stanza 7:

உள்ளது ஒன்றை மறந்த வடன்
உவந்திட்ட உள்ளம் வருந்தியதே
களித்திட்ட உடலும் வாடியதே
கசப்பாய் உலகும் மாறியதே

Transliteration:

Ulladhu onrai marandha vudan
uvandhitta ullam varundhiyadhē
kalithitta udalum vaadiyadhe
kasappai ulagum māriyadhē

Translation in prose:

உள்ளது ஒன்றை மறந்த வடன் -Moment 'That which is' was forgotten. உவந்திட்ட உள்ளம் வருந்தியதே-'I-ego, which emerged bemoaned களித்திட்ட உடலும் வாடியதே- the intoxicated body withered. கசப்பாய் உலகும் மாறியதே – Bitter became the world.

Moment 'That which is' was forgotten;

'I-ego', which emerged bemoaned.

The intoxicated body withered,

Bitter became the world.

Paraphrase:

When 'Ulladu' or 'That which is' is forgotten, the mind through its outlets consisting of five sense organs, sees the world as its playground for happiness and is drunk on the polarities of existence. The intoxicated body, with passage of time, withers, and the I-ego, which emerges grieves the bitterness. The world that was the playground for happiness tastes bitter.

Stanza 8:

வாடிய உடலும் வருந்திய உளமும்
உலகைக் கசப்பென உணர்ந்ததுமே
காரணம் தேடி கலங்கியதே
குருவின் திருவடி நாடியதே.

Transliteration:

Vādiya udalum varundhiya ulamum
ulagaik kasappēṇa unarnthadhume¹
kāraṇam tēdi kalangiyadhe
Guruviṇ thiruvadi naadiyadhe

Translation in prose:

வாடிய உடலும் வருந்திய உளமும்-The withered body and grieving mind. உலகைக் கசப்பென உணர்ந்ததுமே – World as bitter is realized. காரணம் தேடி கலங்கியதே- Cause is searched in distress. குருவின் திருவடி நாடியதே- Guru's holy feet are sought.

The withered body and grieving mind-

world as bitter is realized.

Cause is searched in distress,

Guru's holy feet are sought.

Paraphrase:

Sri Adi Shankarcharya in 'Vivekachudamani' states liberation is assured through the Grace of the Lord if only three conditions are obtained: that is a human birth, intense desire for liberation, and association with sages. GuruMa in many Samvads and Satsangs has stated that, 'Till a knock is received in the pursuit of wealth and upkeep in health, the mind will not turn within'. The withered body infested with many cares and lamenting mind worried about happiness seeks the cause for persistent distress. The knock, which is the cause for distress, transforms a *samsari* into a Sadhak. Seeking the cause for bondage in distress, the *samsari* seeks the holy feet of a Guru.

Stanza 9:

குருவின் திருவடி நாடியதும்
உருப்பட நாமம் கிடைத்ததுவே
நாமமும் குருவின் சேவையும் சேர
நம் உளம் சுத்தம் ஆனதுவே.

Transliteration:

Guruviñ̄ thiruvadi naadiyadhum
Urruppada naamam kidaittadhuve
Nāmamum guruvin sēvaiyum sēra
Nam u!am sutham aanañadhuve

Translation in prose:

குருவின் திருவடி நாடியதும்-The moment Guru's holy feet were sought உருப்பட நாமம் கிடைத்ததுவே-To bloom, a divine name was obtained. நாமமும் குருவின் சேவையும் சேர – The divine name and Guru seva combined- நம் உளம் சுத்தம் ஆனதுவே -Our mind, became clean.

As soon as Guru's holy feet were sought;

To bloom, a divine name was obtained.

The divine name and Guru seva combined,

Our mind, wiped clean.

Paraphrase:

The seeker seeks the holy feet of the Guru to cross the ocean of bondage. The seeker is overwhelmed due to the withering body and grieving mind. Guru's Grace is sought to calm the nerves and cool the scorched life. The devotion to the cause evokes the Grace and Guru's gracious words begin to sprout in the seeker. A receptive seeker with *lakshanas* or attributes of seriousness evokes a Deeksha of a divine nama from the Guru and gets opportunities to serve. The ego submits without any barter for results as the Guru is seen not as a merchant but *pratyaksha Bhagavan*, directly perceptible form of God. (*Upasana, Sadhana and Meditation*, Swami Virajeshwara Saraswati, p79)

Professor Nagaraj R. Padaki in 'His Master's Voice' and recollections shared Swami Virajeshwara Saraswati's '*ashtanga sadhana*,' where the paramount and foremost step for a Sadhak is *Sushrusha* (Seva). Following instructions from mundane to esoteric is seva. Professor Padakiji emphatically said, 'Without this seva, Grace will not follow.' (*Ashtanga Sadhana and Jnana Bhumikas*, His Master's Voice-Recollections from Professor Nagaraj R. Padaki, P57-63). GuruMa and Professor Padakiji in multiple Satsang's have given foremost importance to *Seva* and *Sadhanā* to wipe the mind clean.

ಶ್ರಾತುಮ್ ಇಂಚಾ ಶುಶ್ರೂಷಾ (Shrotum Ichcha, Sushrusha)

“The desire to listen [be receptive] and serve” -Swami Virajeshwara Saraswati

Stanza 10:

ನಮ ಉಳಂ ಸತ್ತಮ ಆನತುಮೆ
ನಮ ಗುರು ವರುಣಮ ಕಿಟ್ಟಿಯತೆ
ನಾನುಮ ತಾನುಮ ಓಂರಾಕಿ
ತಾನಾಯ ಉಳಂಂತಹ ಉಣಿರ್ನತತುವೆ.

Transliteration:

Nam uḷam sutham aanadhumē

Nam guru varuḷum kittiyathe

nāṇum tāṇum onṛāgi

tāṇāi uḷlādhai unarnthadhuve

Translation in prose:

ನಮ ಉಳಂ ಸತ್ತಮ ಆನತುಮೆ- Our mind, the moment became clean ನಮ ಗುರು ವರುಣಮ ಕಿಟ್ಟಿಯತೆ – Our Guru’s Grace was obtained. ನಾನುಮ ತಾನುಮ ಓಂರಾಕಿ – ‘I-ego’ and ‘That’ became One. ತಾನಾಯ ಉಳಂಂತಹ ಉಣಿರ್ನತತುವೆ- Self-existing ‘That’ is realized.

Our mind, the moment became clean,

Our Guru’s Grace was obtained.

‘I-ego’ and ‘That’ became One,

Self-existing ‘That’ is realized.

Paraphrase:

In a recent conversation, I asked GuruMa- who comes to a Guru? GuruMa poured out a subtle teaching and said, “When chitta suddhi has begun through virtuous deeds in countless births, a man drowned in samsara seeks a Guru” and in some other context, GuruMa said, “Before expecting results, the seeker should evaluate oneself whether any lakshana is there. Whether the seeker is receptive to receive? Any work given by the Guru is a Sadhana.”

Professor Padakiji in the chapter ‘Ashtanga Sadhana and Jnana Bhumikas’ (ibid) recollected and said, “From Sushrusha to Padārtha Jnana is where the role of personal effort comes in. These are real efforts, though happening in the mode of ignorance as the subtle ego sprouts to say, ‘I am doing Sadhana.’ Tattva Jnana is not in our hands; this is taken care of by the Guru itself. This is Grace or Anugraha. It ends in ātma sākshātkāra (Self-realization).” The ‘I-ego’ is absorbed in That.

The Self-existing ‘That’ is realized.

Transliteration, Translation and Paraphrase: Ramanathan T. (Swadhaa Sei).

