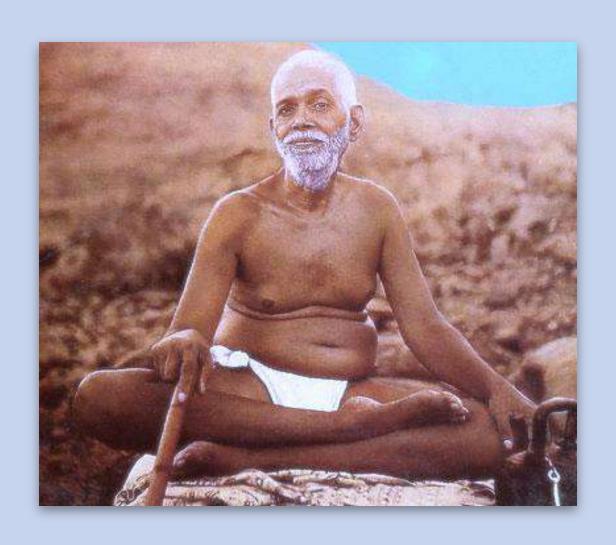
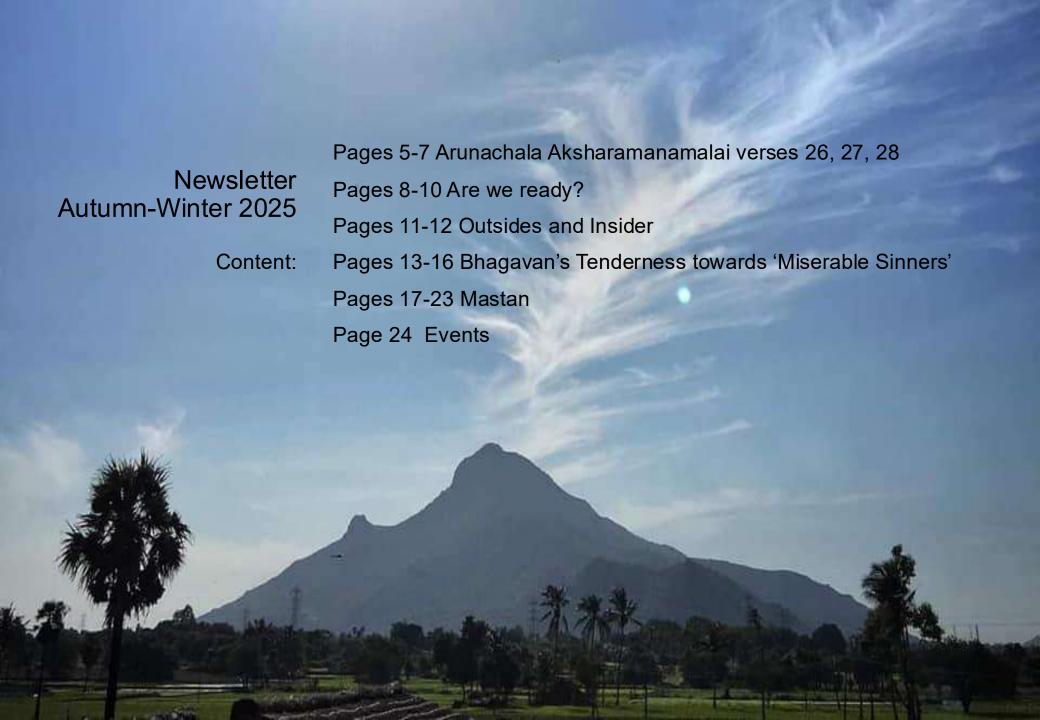
NEWSLETTER

Ramana Maharshi Foundation U.K. Autumn-Winter 2025

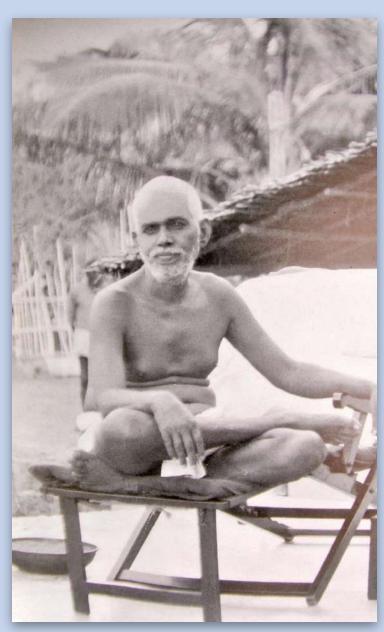




In the inmost core, the Heart
Shines as Brahman alone,
As 'I-I', the Self aware.
Enter deep into the Heart
By search for Self, or diving deep,
With breath under check.
Thus abide ever in Atman.

(Ramana Gita ch.II v.2)





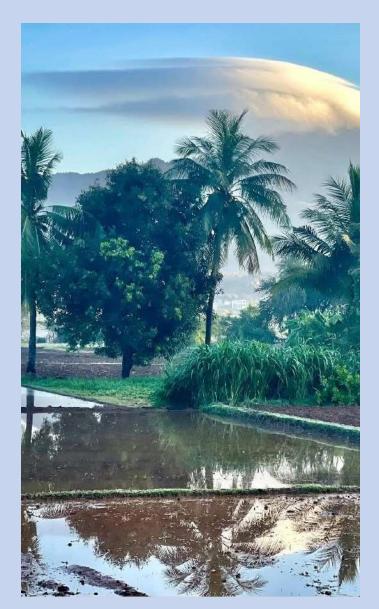
Welcome to this Autumn-Winter 2025 edition of the RMFUK newsletter.

The Newsletter begins with 3 verses from Aksharamanamalai in which Bhagavan is beseeching Arunachala to make him a worthy recipient of His ever-present grace, to dispel the darkness of ignorance and to totally annihilate the ego through his grace.

The two following articles also refer to the grace that is always present, and whether we are ready to accept it. This is reinforced in the excerpts about Bhagavan's tenderness towards so called "sinners".

The final article in this edition is the story of Mastan, a Muslim devotee, who was clearly such an advanced soul that Bhagavan ensured that his burial and the construction of his samadhi were conducted according to the rites reserved for Saivite saints.

Arunachala Aksharamanamalai



Verse 26 gautamar pōtruṅ karuṇaimā malaiyē kaḍaikkaṇit tāļvā yaruṇācalā

Paraphrase:

[Arunachala!] Compassion bestowing great mountain, praised by rishi Gautama! Just as you accepted his praise and bestowed your godly grace upon him, be pleased to accept my praise also and rule me in grace as a servant at your holy feet, adorning me with your compassionate glance.

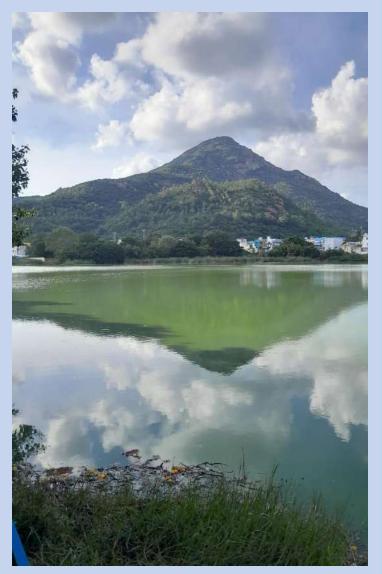
Commentary:

In saying 'Compassion-bestowing great mountain', he is highlighting his munificence in affording his grace to those who seek refuge in Him. Bhagavan pleads with Arunachala to heed his prayers and to make him a worthy recipient of His grace just as He readily responded to the prayers of Gautama.

Arunachala's reputation of raining grace on devotees who seek Him, dispelling the darkness of their ignorance and granting them His form is well known. Hence he says, 'may you rule me, bestowing your glance of grace.'

(published in Arunachala Aksharamanamalai commentary M.K.Muruganar translated by Robert Butler)

Arunachala Aksharamanamalai



Verse 27 sakalamum virungun kadiroļi yinamana jalaja malarttiyi darunācalā

Paraphrase:

Arunachala! The form of effulgent light of Knowledge! The Sun of Supreme Wisdom! Thou swalloweth up in all its entirety the unreal world, projected by the ego by its inherent sense of duality. Make my Heart-lotus, enveloped in darkness and folded up as a bud, unfold by Thy grace and bloom forth by the light of Thy Wisdom.

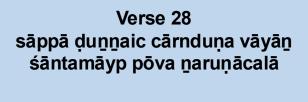
Commentary:

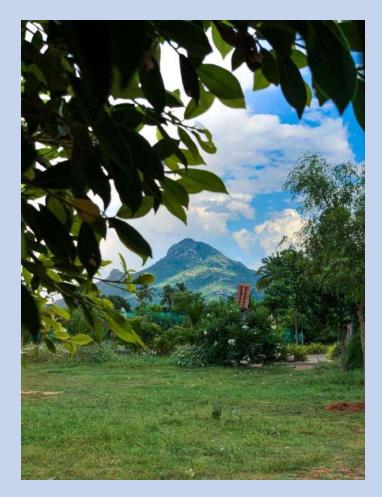
The darkness of ignorance (the ego) having as its cause the forgetfulness of its own supreme Truth that ever shines resplendently, effects the projection of this unreal universe – the phantom world of shadows – makes it appear real and deludes the *jiva*. When knowledge of the ever-existent Reality becomes the experience by the benign grace of the guru, the darkness gets dispelled, when all that is seen gets merged in the seer, and the Seer alone remains as All.

As the sun, immediately on rising, swallows up the darkness enveloping the world, Arunachala, the pervading light of Knowledge, is invoked to swallow the phantom creation of the world of *samsara* and to dispel its cause – the darkness of nescience enveloping the Heart-lotus – and thus make it unfold fully and bloom.

(published in Arunachala Aksharamanamalai commentary M.K.Muruganar translated by Robert Butler)

Arunachala Aksharamanamalai





Paraphrase:

Arunachala! Considering Thee as food for my insatiable hunger, I came to Thee. Instead, I have become Thy prey, being consumed by and absorbed in Thee. Now I am naught, but in supreme peace.

Commentary:

For the spiritual hunger of a *sādhak*, *jnāna* alone is the feast and the medicine as well for the malady of *samsara*. The ego that has an end, preyed on by Arunachala, gets totally annihilated, and what remains is the real form of Self, a state of infinite quietude. Bhagavan reveals that in the liberated state there will be no individuality. For the perception of the others, the form alone will continue to appear. What was within was swallowed up by the Lord.

(published in Arunachala Aksharamanamalai commentary M.K.Muruganar translated by Robert Butler)

ARE WE READY?

Are any of us ready? Though many of us think we are, in fact it may not even be what we truly want! Of course we want Self-realisation, but are we prepared to truly shed the accumulation of *vāsanā-s* reflected in our body and mind...the person we have identified with all our lives? Think about it. We truly want the final outcome, in theory, but possibly not the details, in fact. We all come to Arunachala with our own idiosyncratic bag of anticipations and it takes many a tough moment to realise how inadequate our preparations generally are. And even if we arrive with relatively few expectations, after the initial euphoria at having arrived 'home', it does not take long to see that the road ahead is long and arduous. Slowly but surely our preconceptions are stripped away and we face a future in which we do not really know what will happen next.

At this time, we may not know it, but we have taken the first significant step in making ourselves open to the possibility of true understanding, *jñāna*. In Vedanta, a person who is sufficiently mature to start the journey of inner realisation is called an *adhikārin*,¹ that is, a person who is eligible; one who is qualified to pursue the spiritual path.

For a person to be fit they should develop themselves to the point where they are capable and deserve to be taught, by reason of their cultivation of humility and truthfulness. Traditionally, the *adhikārin-s* on the Vedanta path should have purified their minds through the performance of duties commensurate with their position in life, particularly in regard to family, and adopted the *sādhana catustaya* or the four *sādhana-s* or means to illumination.

Every skill requires training to a greater or lesser degree. You cannot become a doctor by saying, "I am ready to be a doctor, show me the book." You cannot even become a competent electrician or stonemason by saying, "Show me the manual." You need training. Why should we imagine that receiving enlightenment is easier? In the same way, yes we have the book, namely The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi. Yes, we have read other books on the life and teaching of Bhagavan. Yes, we have met, discussed and shared experiences with others who have been to the ashram. Yes, we felt a communion with something greater than ourselves yet we have not attained our goal. It is as if we have tasted food that was exquisite and we want more but do not know how to get it, a second bite is maddeningly elusive.

Until we are prepared to assiduously work to understand how our minds function and meticulously follow the instructions given by Bhagavan, only then will we be liberated from the endless round of identification with transitory images which we mistake ourselves to be. This is when we must beware of the delusion of having achieved our goal. This is when some fall by the wayside and become 'gurus'. Many such would-be gurus can cause great harm, both to others and possibly more seriously, to themselves.

There is no reliable substitute for truth. And while we come to acknowledge the truth of how hard it is to arrive at a true understanding of our undertaking, we are in the presence, and begging the help of one who broke all the rules and did in fact attain true self-realisation in one momentous flash. That was something so rare as to be virtually unique, and thus far only the seriously deluded have claimed a similar experience.

Aside from the written works by Bhagavan there is Ramanasramam which is a subtle pulsating centre that can enliven and cultivate our inward quest. We have seen often enough newcomers who spend time in the Old Hall and come out strangely moved by the sacred silence they experienced which is not a vacuum but a dynamic power that shifts our consciousness to a higher realm of understanding. It sweeps away useless thoughts and negative emotions. Quite often, we come out of the Old Hall slightly dazed and wonder what happened. For those with eyes to see, they feel a divine majestic presence that transmits a potent sense of peace and well-being. Once they have tasted that *bhāva* or feeling, nothing else seems to satisfy them. They are not only convinced of the rightness of their coming to the ashram but also start to feel perplexed because they discover there is a choice between the existence they had prior to coming to the ashram and a second alternative. A new horizon has opened up and with it the dilemma: how to recapture in their mind and memory the experience of this newly found shaft of illumination that has suddenly, unexpectedly, given them a renewed sense of purpose.

This, then is what they were searching for, and it was not a fantasy, but on the contrary it is the only true reality! The pertinent question then is: what is the most important activity in their lives? It is for each to answer according to the intensity of their wish for liberation. If we say yes to the realignment of our lives, we are faced with a conundrum. If we wish to make that experience permanent, it means changing our priorities, although we may come to see that it is not really in our hands. Call it *prārabdha*, call it destiny. Grace is not a material that can be possessed or controlled. Rather the reverse, it is the Grace that possesses us. Once we trigger the switch by a wholehearted commitment a new strata of possibility opens up, something we had never anticipated. If we approach with humility and a true desire to understand, then Bhagavan is on our side and there to help us. He has said that if the disciple takes but one step towards the guru, then the guru will take the other nine steps towards you.

Are we ready to be absorbed into this Light?

¹ Grimes, John, A Concise Dictionary of Indian Philosophy, Indica Books, 2009. p.27. (Extract from the Editorial by Christopher Quilkey, Mountain Path April 2021)

OUTSIDERS AND INSIDERS

(Christopher Quilkey)

There is a story about an incident during Bhagavan's lifetime when there was some disturbance at the delay of the feeding or Narayana Seva for sadhus and poor people, that is, outsiders¹. On that day in connection with the building of the temple a special puja was being performed, so the Narayana Seva was delayed, and hence the sadhus were becoming impatient and began making a commotion. Chinna Swami became annoyed and said they would get fed on that particular day after the ashram inmates, insiders², who would eat at the usual time of 11.30am. Bhagavan who happened to be passing by heard this and by the time of the lunchtime bell he was not to be seen as the insiders filed into the dining a hall for lunch. A search party was sent out and he was discovered at Palakothu quietly sitting on a rock. The searchers asked him to please come to the dining room as everyone was waiting for him before they could start eating. He told them that since he was an outsider he was waiting until the insiders had lunch. This was reported back to Chinna Swami who immediately rescinded the order. Bhagavan was informed and he came to the dining hall. Thereafter, the ashram has continued without interruption the tradition of feeding sadhus and the poor before the ashram inmates.

What do we learn from this incident? First, Bhagavan identified himself with the sadhus and the poor and by implication he did not see himself as having the rights of an insider. He did not 'own' Sri Ramana Ashram and did not take for granted his apparent position as the titular head of the establishment. If Bhagavan owned anything, it was his walking stick, water pot and *kaupina*. Nothing more. In all else he was a sadhu who possessed nothing.

If we feel it is undignified to acknowledge that we are like the sadhus and beggars, it should not be forgotten that Bhagavan knew what it was like to be a beggar and at the mercy of others to sustain his body. During those first years at Arunachala, he would humbly roam the streets begging for food. He reminisced about those times and did not feel embarrassed but said he felt like a king who was free without a care in the world.

Secondly, as an outsider who came to Arunachala from Madurai in 1896 he never forgot his self-effacing quest seeking his father, Lord Arunachala. We know this from another incident when after a Karthikai Deepam festival, the chariot carrying Lord Arunachaleswara and his consort, Apitakuchambaal, were traditionally carried in procession around Arunachala. The chariot stopped in front of Sri Ramana Ashram for devotees to pay their respects. After the puja, the *vibhuti* and *kumkum prasad* were brought to Bhagavan who had remained in the Old Hall. As he accepted the *prasad* and placed the *vibhuti* and *kumkum* on his forehead, he said in all reverence that the son is beholden to the father.

All of us who come to Arunachala are outsiders seeking the grace of the master, whether in the form of Arunachala or his human emissary, Sri Ramana Maharshi and as such we do not have the security of any type of permanence. We are all beggars in our own way. It may not be physical as in terms of food or substance but our hearts are aching for the food of his divine love. As outsiders we should keep in mind that in our quest we too are beholden to our father, Lord Arunachaleswara. And just as Bhagavan identified himself with the outsiders, we too should remember that our well-being is first and foremost Bhagavan's concern. For we too will be amply fed with his grace even though we have no rights as an insider.

¹ In Tamil, paradeśi, someone from a para [distant or other] deśa [place].

² That is, deśi (a local, someone belonging to the place). (I thank Michael James for his clarifications).

Article contributed by Christopher Quilkey (editor of the Mountain Path for 21 years from 2003 to 2023)

Bhagavan's Tenderness towards 'Miserable Sinners'

Bhagavan was most tender with people who thought themselves for some reason or other to be miserable sinners, and went to him torn by repentance.

During the summer evenings we used to sit in the open space near the well. We would collect in the dining hall for dinner and come back to the well. Suddenly one of the visitors started weeping bitterly. "I am a horrible sinner. For a long time I have been coming to your feet, but there is no change in me. Can I become pure at last? How long am I to wait? When I am here near you I am good for a time. But when I leave this place I become a beast again. You cannot imagine how bad I can be – hardly a human being. Am I to remain a sinner forever?"

Bhagavan answered: "Why do you come to me? What have I to do with you? What is there between us that you should come here and weep and cry in front of me?"

The man started moaning and crying even more as if his heart was breaking. "All my hopes of salvation are gone. You were my last refuge and you say you have nothing to do with me! To whom shall I turn now? What am I to do? To whom am I to go?"

Bhagavan watched him for some time and said: "Am I your guru that I should be responsible for your salvation? Have I ever said that I am your master?"

"If you are not my master, then who is? And who are you, if not my master? You are my guru, you are my guardian angel, you will pity me and release me from my sins!" He started sobbing and crying again. We all sat silent and overcome with pity. Only Bhagavan looked alert and matter-of-fact.

- "If I am your guru, what are my fees? Surely you should pay me for my services."
- "But you won't take anything," cried the visitor. "What can I give you?"
- "Did I ever say that I don't take anything? And did you ever ask me what you can give me?"
- "If you would take, then ask me; there is nothing I would not give you."
- "All right, now I am asking. Give me. What will you give me?"
- "Take anything, all is yours."
- "Then give me all the good you have done in this world."
- "What good could I have done? I have not a single virtue to my credit."
- "You have promised to give. Now give. Don't talk of your credit. Just give away all the good you have done in your past."
- "Yes, I shall give. But how does one give? Tell me how the giving is done and I shall give."
- "Say like this: 'All the good I have done in the past I am giving away entirely to my guru. Henceforth I have no merit from it nor have I any concern with it.' Say it with your whole heart."
- "All right, Swami, I am giving away to you all the good I have done so far if I have done any and all its good effects. I am giving it to you gladly, for you are my master and you are asking me to give it all away to you."
- "But this is not enough," said Bhagavan sternly.
- "I give you all I have and all you asked me to give. I have nothing more to give."
- "No, you have. Give me all your sins."

The man looked wildly at Bhagavan, terror stricken. "You do not know, Swami, what you are asking for, if you knew, you would not ask me. If you take over my sins, your body will rot and burn. You do not know me, You do not know my sins." And he wept bitterly.

"I shall look after myself, don't you worry about me," said Bhagavan. "All I want from you is your sins."

For a long time the bargain would not go through. The man refused to part with his sins. But Bhagavan was adamant.

"Either give me your sins along with your merits, or keep both and don't think of me as your master."

In the end the visitor's scruples broke down and he declared: "Whatever sins I have done, they are no longer mine. All of them and their results too, belong to Ramana."

Bhagavan seemed to be satisfied, "From now on there is no good nor bad in you. You are just pure. Go and do nothing, neither good nor bad. Remain yourself, remain what you are."

A great peace fell over the man and over us all. No one knows what happened to the fortunate visitor: he was never seen in the Ashram again. He might have been in no further need of coming.

At some other time another visitor started wailing before Bhagavan that he was being quite crushed under the enormity of his sins. Bhagavan asked: "When you sleep, are you a sinner?" "No, I am just asleep." "If you are not a sinner, then you must be good." "No, I am neither good nor bad when I am asleep. I know nothing about myself." "And what do you know about yourself now? You say you are a sinner. You say so because you think so. Were you pleased with yourself, you would call yourself a good man and stop telling me about your being a sinner. What do you know about good and evil except what is in your mind? When you see that the mind invents everything, all will vanish. The good will vanish, the evil will vanish, and you will remain as you are."

Once a visitor said: "I have been coming to you, Swami, many times, hoping that something will happen and I shall be changed. So far I do not see any change in me. I am as I was, a weakling of a man, an inveterate sinner." And he started weeping piteously.

"On this road there are no milestones," replied Bhagavan. "How can you know which direction you are going? Why don't you do what the first-class railway passenger does? He tells the guard his destination, locks the doors and goes to sleep. The rest is done by the guard. If you could trust your guru as much as you trust the railway guard, it would be quite enough to make you reach your destination. Your business is to shut the door and windows and sleep. The guard will wake you up at your destination."

(Ramana Smriti Souvenir, Sri Ramana Maharshi Birth Centenary Offering 1980 The Bhagavan I Knew, Krishna Bhikshu)

Addressing Mrs. Noye, a new American visitor from California, who seemed to be suffering from some mental distress, Sri Bhagavan said, "Get rid of the notion 'I am impure'. The Self is ever pure. All this is the work of the mind. If you get at the basis of the mind, all these wrong notions disappear."

(Sri Ramana Reminiscences by G.V.Subbaramayya Page 52-53)

Mastan

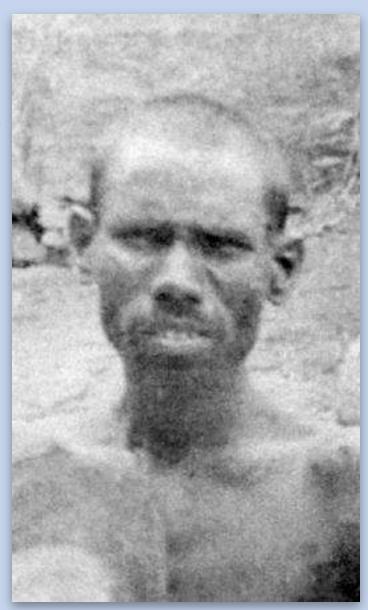
(David Godman)

Mastan, one of Bhagavan's early devotees, was born in 1878 in Desur, a small village about forty miles from Tiruvannamalai. He came from a Muslim weaving family but was drawn to Bhagavan by Akhilandamma, a widow of the village who made regular trips to Tiruvannamalai to see Bhagavan and cook for him.

When he was young he would spontaneously fall into a samadhi like state while he was working on the family loom. His hands and feet, which were plying the machinery of his trade, would stop and he would become absolutely still. His parents, Hussain and Salubi, thought that he was falling asleep on the job. Whenever they saw him in this condition, they would hit him, bring him back to his waking state, and tell him to get on with his work. These episodes seem to have been a recurring feature of his childhood.

Not much more is known about Mastan's life until the day he accompanied Akhilandamma on his first visit to Tiruvannamalai in 1914. This is how Mastan described the meeting when he spoke to Kunju Swami:

When I came to Bhagavan, he was seated like a rock.... [His unwavering gaze] was filled with grace, compassion and steady wisdom. I stood by his side. After giving me a look, he opened the gate of my Heart and I was also established in his state. I stood like that for eight hours, absolutely without fatigue, but filled with total absorption and peace. Bhagavan in those days used to open our Heart with a simple gracious look, and it transformed us. There was no need for any questions since he made us, by his look, like himself.¹



These samadhi experiences happened more than once. Bhagavan himself once mentioned them to Viswanatha Swami:

'Among those who show up in a normal human body, and who subsequently stay on and become devotees, there is a huge range of spiritual attainment: complete beginners mix with highly advanced souls. The most advanced are ripe fruits, just waiting to fall. They only have to come into the presence of a *jnani* in order to plunge into a deep experience of the Self. One such devotee was Mastan.

'He was such a ripe soul, when he came to Virupaksha Cave to see me he would sometimes go into a deep samadhi before he had even entered the cave. As soon as he touched the railings of the gate, he would have a paralysing experience of the Self. He would stand, rooted to the spot, unable to move, for six or seven hours. This happened several times. Usually, these experiences would happen before he had even seen me since I would be inside the cave, unaware of what was going on at the gate.

'Mastan was in an entirely different category to most of the people who came. He was highly spiritual, although outwardly he looked like an ordinary man. He was a kind generous man who was always looking for an opportunity to help other people. He never showed any self-importance. On the contrary he liked to stay in the background, unnoticed and unappreciated by ordinary people.'

These samadhi states did not give him a full and permanent experience of the Self. When his mind reasserted itself, he went to Bhagavan for advice:

Once, while I was on my way to see Bhagavan, I prayed for his grace. On my arrival at Virupaksha Cave he asked, 'Do you like *saguna upasana* [meditation or worship of form], or do you like *nirguna upasana* [meditation or worship of the formless]?'

I replied, 'I only want nirguna upasana'.

Bhagavan then told me, 'Fix the mind in the Heart. If you keep your attention at the source from where all thoughts arise, the mind will subside at the source and reality will shine forth.'

'I had already come across similar teachings in Maharaja Turavu and Sukar Kaivalyam. I had also seen these instructions in several other books. I took a firm decision that this was the way for me. After this meeting with Bhagavan I had no further doubts about this. No doubts at all.'

In 1914, shortly after Mastan had become a devotee, he and Akhilandamma decided to open a math in the village of Desur that would function as a *choultry*, a place where visiting sadhus and pilgrims could be accommodated and fed. Many of the sadhus from Ramanasramam came to stay there, particularly when they were sick and needed someone to look after them.

When the building was completed, Mastan regularly did *parayana* of Bhagavan's works there. By this time Mastan had more or less abandoned his career as a weaver, although he did go back to work occasionally to weave the cloth that was used to make Bhagavan's *kaupinas*.

Bhagavan once remarked, with great joy, 'Mastan's craft, though it did not give food either to him or his parents, gives me clothes.'

Mastan has recorded one other meeting he had with Bhagavan:

"For some time, while I was meditating at night for about an hour, I used to hear the sound of a big bell ringing. Sometimes a limitless effulgence would appear. In 1922 when I visited Bhagavan at his new ashram at the foot of the hill, I asked him about this. He advised me, 'There is no need to concern ourselves about sounds such as these. If you see from where it rises, it will be known that it arises on account of a desire [sankalpa] of the mind. Everything appears in oneself and subsides within oneself. The light, too, only appears from the same place. If you see to whom it appears, mind will subside at the source and only reality will remain.' "

Mastan continued to visit Bhagavan throughout the 1920s, although his visits were less frequent than in earlier years. During this period devotees from Ramanasramam would often visit nearby towns where Bhagavan's devotees stayed. If Mastan came to hear about this, he would try to get there first. Viswanatha Swami has described what would happen on these occasions:

On some of these trips Mastan would somehow find out in advance where we were going. We would arrive at a town, Polur for example, and find him waiting for us. Once he had discovered our whereabouts, he would make us sit while he went out begging for us. We didn't want to be served in this way, but Mastan was very insistent. He told us on these occasions that he was the 'devotee of devotees', a role and a title that he took on himself. He would say, 'I want to serve the devotees of Bhagavan. You must stay here while I find food for you.' Mastan would generally return with a huge amount of food, far more than we could possibly eat. After we had eaten as much as we could, we would share the leftovers with any local people who lived nearby. If we were living in caves or other out-of-the-way places, we would give the leftovers to monkeys.

As he fed us Mastan would make one persistent request: 'Please tell me some stories about the glory of our Master. Tell me everything he has said during the time I was not with him. To me, every word Bhagavan speaks is holy. The words that come out of his holy mouth are so powerful, merely listening to them can give liberation to ripe souls.'

Mastan continued to be based near Desur until 1931, the year he passed away. Akhilandamma was present when Mastan died. This is her description of his final moments:

He was sick and bedridden for about a week. During those days he spoke of many things not of this world, as if he were actually seeing them.

He said, 'There, Nandiswara [Nandi the bull, the vehicle of Siva] is descending. He is very affectionately licking all over my body! Look! The Siva ganas [celestial followers of Siva] are dancing here! See! They are beckoning me to come to their world. Look at those lotus ponds where celestial swans are swimming!'

We thought that this was nothing but delirium, but on the last day a very strange thing happened, and we cannot lightly dismiss it as delirium. On this day he suddenly got up from his bed and stood up, looking as if someone, face to face, had been calling him.

Then, in great excitement, he exclaimed, 'Mother Apeetakuchamba,² have you come yourself to escort me?'

The next moment he fell down dead. I immediately sent a message to Bhagavan.

When Bhagavan learned of Mastan's passing away, he sent Kunju Swami to our village with full instructions on how to make a samadhi for Mastan. There is a Tamil book that faithfully gives the details of how saints who have followed Lord Siva have to be buried.³ In accordance with these details Bhagavan drew up a plan of the dimensions of the samadhi and sent it along with Kunju Swami. It seemed very strange to us that a Muslim should be given a Saiva saint's burial and stranger still that Bhagavan, who did not generally encourage ceremonial rites, actually laid down in the minutest detail the rites to be followed in the samadhi of Mastan.

Whatever the reason, just as Bhagavan stipulated, we made a tomb for Mastan in our village. It is a village whose population is predominantly Jain. These inhabitants of the village felt that having a Hindu samadhi in their midst would be very inauspicious. When they first heard of it, there was even talk of their abandoning the village completely. However, in the time that has passed since Mastan's samadhi was constructed, the village has thrived and grown rich. Nowadays the samadhi is a visible deity to all the people from the village, whatever their caste or religion. What a wonder!

Bhagavan only ordered this type of samadhi for three of his devotees: his mother, Lakshmi the cow, and Mastan. Since Bhagavan publicly declared that the first two realised the Self, one can make a strong case for saying that Bhagavan felt that Mastan was also in this state at the time of his death. If this is true, the final realisation must have occurred sometime between 1922, when Mastan was still asking questions about his sadhana, and 1931, the year he passed away.

Chockalingam, a local resident, has spoken about the tradition that the samadhi has wish-fulfilling powers, something that Akhilandamma referred to in the final paragraph of her account:

'In the years that followed his samadhi everyone noticed that the family affairs and businesses of people who had helped Mastan prospered, whereas those who were opposed to him found that their fortunes declined. Everyone could see what was happening, so people started coming to the samadhi to ask for blessings. Even today, many people still come here to pray for their desires to be fulfilled.'

A few days after Mastan passed away, Akhilandamma went to Tiruvannamalai to tell Bhagavan about Mastan's final days and the vision he had had on his death bed.

After hearing the story, Bhagavan commented, 'Maybe the universal mother, Apeetakuchamba, personally came to take him. All his descriptions tally with the world of Siva. Mastan was an unassuming devotee. He had a wealth of hidden spiritual experiences. It is a matter for gratification that he passed away in your care and under your supervision.'

¹ All the information in this account has come from The Power of the Presence, Part Three, pp. 22-42. A fuller account of Mastan's life and details of all the sources used in this article can be found there.

² Apeetakuchamba is the Sanskrit name of the consort of Siva in the Arunachaleswara Temple. ³The book is Tirumantiram by Tirumular. Bhagavan kept a copy of it in his personal library.

EVENTS

Satsangs on Bhagavan's Compositions and Questions put by Devotees - second and last Saturday of every month with Michael James via Zoom.

Satsangs on Bhagavan's Devotees - the third Saturday of every month with David Godman via Zoom.

In-Person Meetings in London - usually the first Saturday of every month (check our website) at The Study Society, Colet House, London W14 9DA.

Study Group - Every Tuesday and Thursday from 7 pm to 8.30 pm via Zoom.

Meditation Group - Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7pm to 8.15pm via Zoom.

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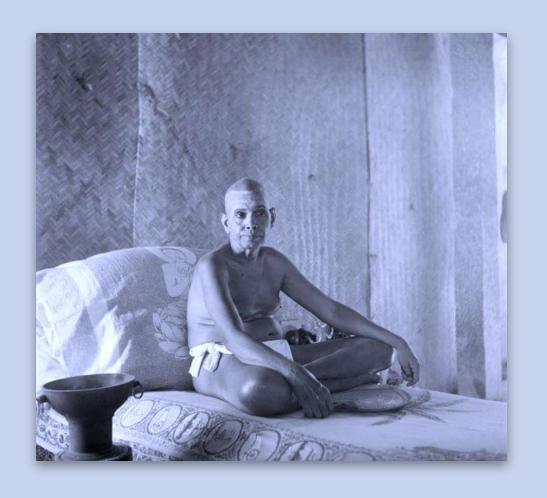
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All religions postulate the three fundamentals, the world, the soul and God; but it is the One Reality that manifests itself as these three. One can say: 'The three are really three' only so long as the ego lasts. Therefore to inhere in one's own Being, when the ego is dead is the perfect state.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi