

NEWSLETTER

Ramana Maharshi Foundation U.K.
Spring-Summer 2025





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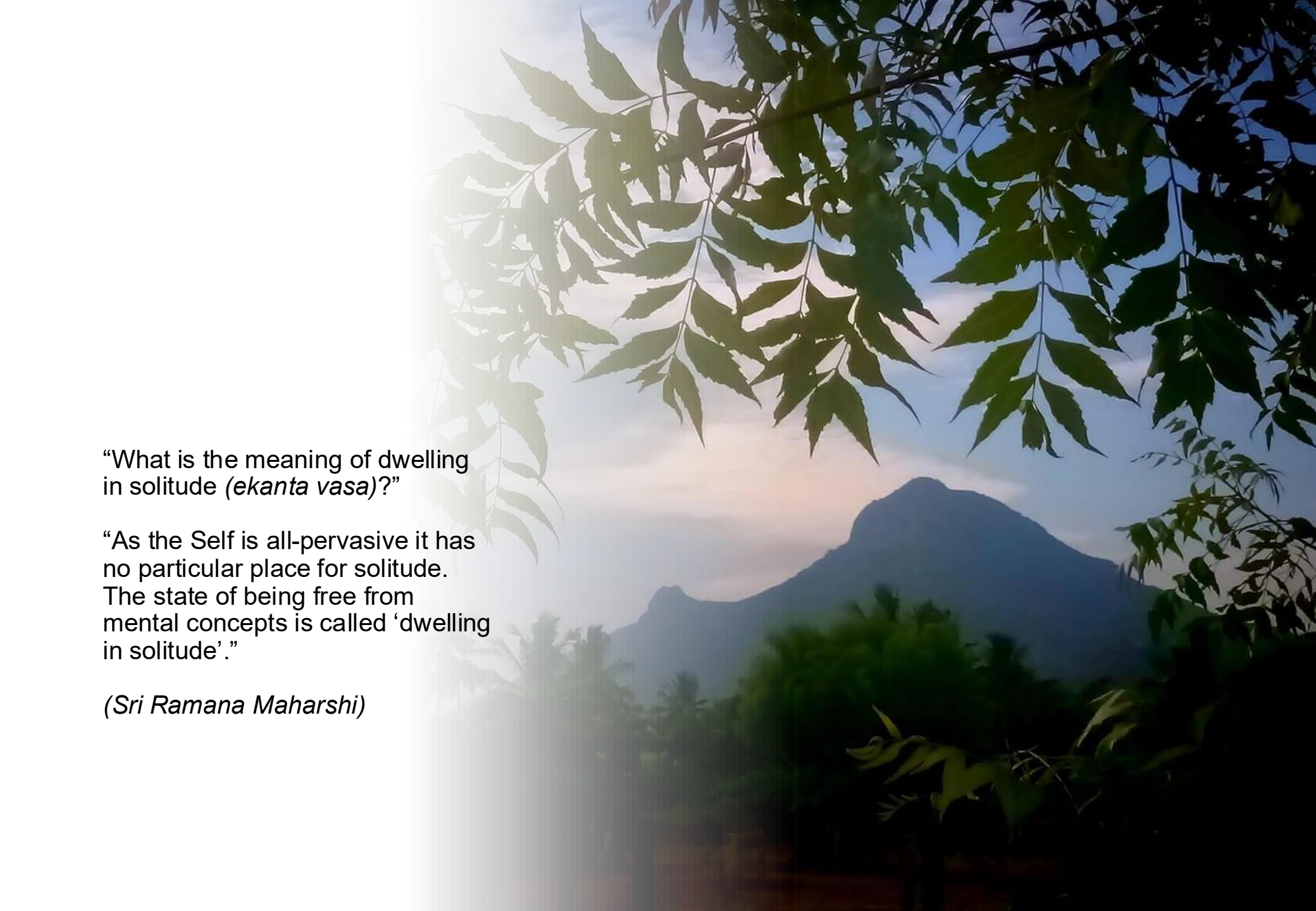
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Newsletter
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Content:



“What is the meaning of dwelling
in solitude (*ekanta vasa*)?”

“As the Self is all-pervasive it has
no particular place for solitude.
The state of being free from
mental concepts is called ‘dwelling
in solitude’.”

(*Sri Ramana Maharshi*)



Welcome to this Spring-Summer 2025 edition of the RMF UK Newsletter

We continue with three verses from Aksharamanamalai, The Marital Garland of Letters which is Bhagavan's outpouring of His love for Arunachala. All three verses are concerned about grace. In verse 25 Bhagavan is acknowledging that he has in some way earned this grace.

It is through this grace that we receive initiation. As the article on Initiation (taken from the editorial in the Mountain Path) says we are all open to transformation and initiation. It is described as "the communication of a transformative spiritual influence". And there are numerous instances of devotees experiencing this in the physical presence of Bhagavan. The accounts of the experience are sometimes quite dramatic such as that of Susri Dhiruben Patel and Louis Hartz.

Louis Hartz was so uncertain that he managed to get Bhagavan to confirm that he had received initiation, as did Major Chadwick. He felt that nothing was happening, but happening it was. The editorial also says that even now with patience, sincerity and perseverance we will earn that initiation.

Mudaliar Patti was associated with Sri Ramana Maharshi for more than forty years. After arriving in Tiruvannamalai in 1908, she took a vow that she would serve Bhagavan food every day and not eat herself until she had fed him. Despite many obstacles, she managed to keep her vow for more than forty years until she passed away in 1949.

Arunachala Aksharamanamalai

Verse 23

kaiyiniṛ kaṇiyuṇ meyrasaṇ koṇḍuva
haiveṛi koḷavaru ḷaruṇācalā

Paraphrase:

[Arunachala!] Grant me your grace, that I may drink in the intoxicating liquor of the juices of your Self, which is like a sweet grape in the palm of my hand and lie inebriated with bliss.

Commentary:

Arunachala himself is that fruit, the bliss of true knowledge, manifesting as his [Bhagavan's] own Self. Arunachala shines luminously within the Heart, which is the source of the mind, so that he never for a moment becomes deluded through a lapse in awareness and becomes separated from Him. This is the working of the grace of Arunachala in which [Bhagavan] experiences the joy of eating and relishing the ripe fruit he holds in his hand.

Arunachala Aksharamanamalai

Verse 24

kodiyiṭ ṭaḍiyaraik kolluṇaik kaṭṭik
koṇḍeṇaṇ vārvē ṇaruṇācalā

Paraphrase:

[Arunachala!] To stand opposed to your devotees, as if you raised the flag of battle, to kill them without killing, is your firm resolve.

Commentary:

‘Killing his devotees’ means destroying their imagined individuality, their *jivahood* is itself the gaining of *Sivahood*. (In truth there is no killing, because the true reality of the soul in the absolute sense is the supreme, non-dual, reality of Arunachala, the supreme Self, *Atma Swarupa* which cannot kill or be killed.)

The sense is that the devotees who have been brought under Arunachala’s dominion are entirely consumed and destroyed by Him who is the non-dual Self, becoming entirely of the same nature as Him, like the sugarcane in the mouth of the elephant or the deer in the jaws of the tiger. After that they can never in the slightest degree exist separately from Him as they did before, in the *jiva* state, with the awareness of an individual self, the ‘I’. (*Destroying* [means here] *digesting*).

Arunachala Aksharamanamalai

Verse 25

kōpamil guṇattōy kuṛiyā yeṇaikkōḷak
kuṛaiyeṇ seydē ṇaruṇācalā

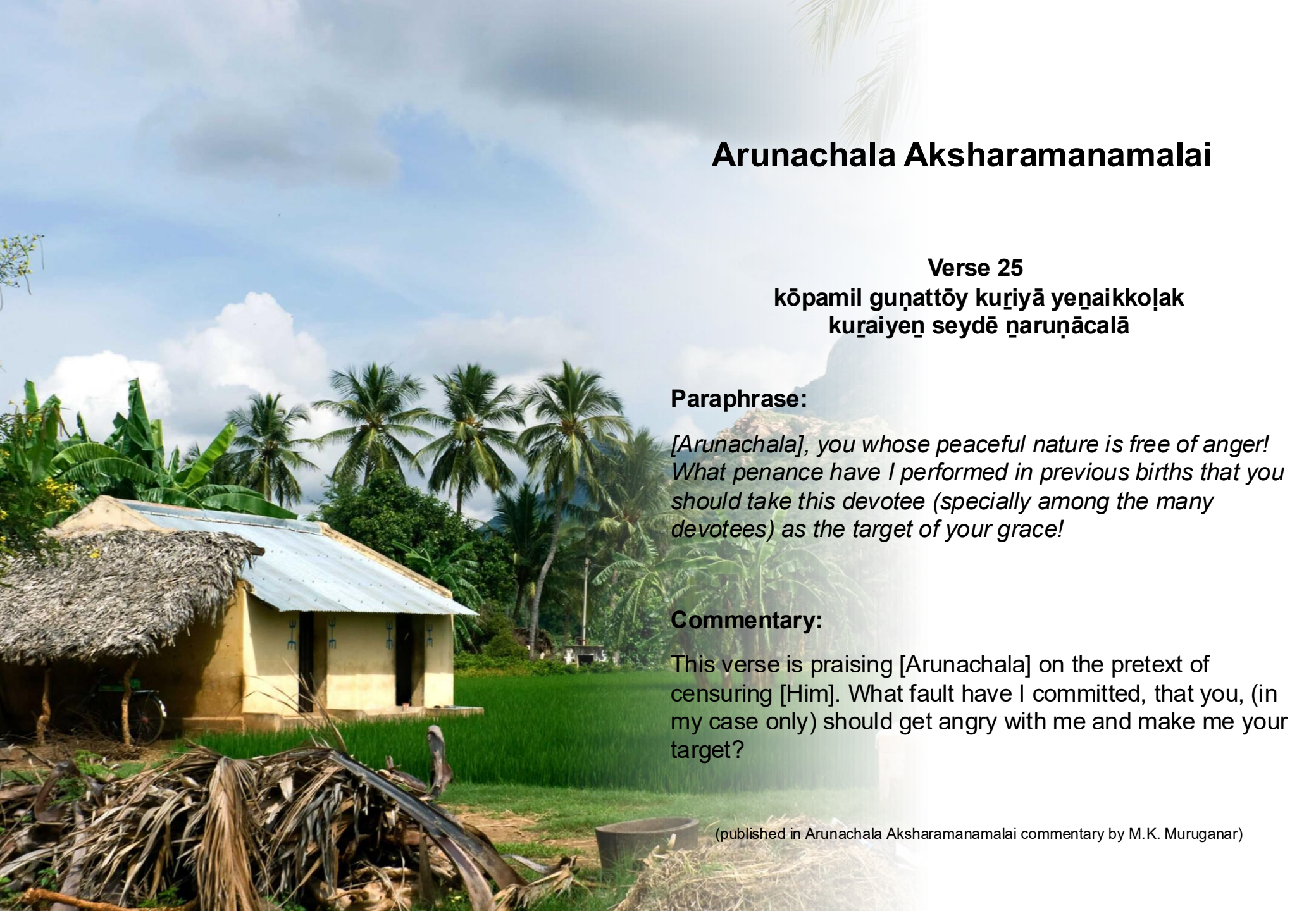
Paraphrase:

*[Arunachala], you whose peaceful nature is free of anger!
What penance have I performed in previous births that you
should take this devotee (specially among the many
devotees) as the target of your grace!*

Commentary:

This verse is praising [Arunachala] on the pretext of censuring [Him]. What fault have I committed, that you, (in my case only) should get angry with me and make me your target?

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



INITIATION

What is initiation? It is essentially a ‘transmission’. It is the communication of a transformative spiritual influence. Each genuine spiritual lineage has a specific form in which to realise the essence.

A devotee who had heard about the meetings of the Head of the Sivaganga Mutt and the discussions about Narasimha Bharathi, asked Bhagavan, “It seems a long time ago someone from the Sringeri Mutt requested Bhagavan to accept *diksha* (formal initiation).”

Bhagavan: “Yes. That is so. That was during the early days of my stay at the Virupaksha Cave. A Sastri residing in the Sringeri Mutt came to see me one morning. He saw me, spoke to me for a long time, and before going to the town for meals, drew near me and with folded arms and great respect said, ‘Swami! I have a request to make. Please hear me.’ When I asked him what it was, he said, ‘Swami, as you are born a brahmin, should you not take sannyasa in the regular way? It is an ancient practice. You know all that. What is there for me to tell you? I am anxious to include you in the line of our Gurus. Hence, if you give me the permission, I will come here with all the requisite articles from my mutt and give you the initiation. If you do not care to wear the full ochre-coloured robes (*akhaṇḍa kāṣāyaṁ*), I respectfully submit that it is enough if your loin cloth at least is of ochre colour. You may think over this well and give me a reply. I am going down the hill to take my meals and will come back by 3p.m. All the members of our mutt have heard of your greatness, and I have come here to see you at their request. Please do this favour.’

“A little while after he left, an old brahmin came there with a bundle. His face appeared familiar. It would be seen from the outside of the bundle that there were some books in it. As soon as he came, he placed the bundle opposite to me and like an old acquaintance said, ‘Swami, I have just come. I have not had a bath. There is no one to look after this bundle. I am therefore leaving it with you.’ So, saying he left the place. As soon as he went, why, I do not know, but I felt like opening that bundle and seeing the books. As soon as I opened it, I saw a Sanskrit book in Nagari characters with the title *Arunachala Mahatmyam*. I did not know before that the *Arunachala Mahatmyam* was in Sanskrit also. I was therefore surprised and as I opened the book, I found the *sloka* describing the greatness of this place in the words of *Ishwara*:

*Yojanatrāyamātre'smin kṣetre nivasatām nṛṇām
dīkṣādikaṁ vināpyastu matsāyujyaṁ mamājñayā*

Those who live within twenty-four miles of this place (three *yojanas*) i.e. this Arunachala Hill, will get My *Sayujyam*, i.e. absorption in Me, freed from all bonds, even if they do not take any *dīksha*. This is my order.

“As soon as I saw that *sloka*, I felt I could give a fitting reply to that Sastri by quoting that *sloka* and so hastily copied it out, for the brahmin might come back at any moment, and then tied up the bundle as before after replacing the book.

I showed this *sloka* to the Sastri as soon as he came in the evening. As he was a learned man, he did not say anything further but with great reverence and trepidity saluted me, went away and, it seems, reported everything to Narasimha Bharathi. Narasimha Bharathi felt very sorry for what his disciples had done and told them to stop all further efforts in that direction.”¹

Unlike in traditional mutts which have a codified way of granting public initiation, Sri Ramanasramam has never granted official initiation to anyone both in Bhagavan's day as well as today. Initiation in the ashram has always operated in secret. Bhagavan never gave public initiation for all to see but rather transferred his spiritual power under the cloak of anonymity. It was in this way that Bhagavan protected his devotees from the temptation to misuse their acceptance as if they were now someone special.

There was direct eye to eye contact initiation (*nayana* or *kaṭākṣa dīkṣā*) or say a simple word in the midst of a crowded Old Hall that was directed specially to just one person. Bhagavan could also say a *mantra* such as Śiva Śiva in the course of a normal conversation, but such was its power that anyone who had the ears to listen would resonate to it and leave a lasting impact. Rarely could one see Bhagavan casually touching or patting someone on the head as *hasta dīkṣā* (touching with the hand by way of blessing). It could also occur through a vision or a dream.

The principle way in which Bhagavan gave *dīkṣā* was through silence. Not the empty silence in which no words are heard but as it has been described as 'the thunder of silence'. A silence that many today still hear or rather enter into as they sit quietly in the Old Hall. Anyone who makes the attempt to sit quietly is open to initiation. It does require patience and perseverance in the face of 'nothing is happening' but happen it does, given time and effort. It is earned, not freely given to any who enter. The prerequisite is sincerity and an earnestness to pay whatever price is required.

There is a pertinent conversation between Bhagavan and Major Alan Chadwick:

[Chadwick wrote:] Many people said that Bhagavan did not give initiation or have any disciples, although those who lived with him had no doubts as to the relationship existing between themselves and Bhagavan. I was interested to find out what Bhagavan himself had to say on the subject, so one night after the evening meal the following conversation took place:

D: Bhagavan says that he has no disciples.

B: (Looking at me suspiciously): Yes.

D: But then Bhagavan also says that for the majority of aspirants a Guru is necessary?

B: Yes.

D: Then what am I to do? I have come all this distance and sat at Bhagavan's feet all these years, has it all been a waste of time? Must I now go off and wander about India in search of a Guru?.....

[Bhagavan replied]: For the *Jnani* (Realised Soul) all are one. He sees no distinction between the Guru and disciple. He knows, only one Self, not a myriad selves as we do, so for him how can there be any distinction between persons? [This is for us almost impossible to understand. How can he both see distinctions and not see distinctions? He obviously does. He can answer questions, discuss and apparently do all things in the way we do, yet for him, I repeat, there is only one Self and this life is nothing but a dream.]

However, for the seeker the difference between persons is very real. For him there is undoubtedly the relationship of Guru and disciple. If such does not exist "why has he come all these thousands of miles to this place and remained here?" For the seeker God and his Grace takes a form in order to lead him to the formless state.

[Bhagavan then said]: “Has he any doubt about it? Ask him, does he want me to give him a written document? Go and call Narayana Iyer, the Sub-Registrar, and tell him to make one out for him.”

Then later he added humorously, “Go and get the office stamp and put it on him. Will that convince him?”²

It is evident that Bhagavan in his compassion is a guru for us who seek guidance.

Susri Dhiruben Patel describes her first encounter with Bhagavan as a young woman: “There I saw the Old Hall where Bhagavan was sitting along with one or two attendants standing nearby. Next to Bhagavan I saw a small vessel in which charcoals were burning. I took that one step up to go into the hall to give my *namaskar*. I did it by impatiently joining my hands and bowing. I just wanted to get it over with as soon as possible. I was not interested in Bhagavan or having his *darshan*. As I couldn’t defy my mother, I had to do it. So, with closed eyes, I just did it.

“When I raised my head, I can’t find words to describe what happened to me. As soon as Bhagavan’s gaze met mine, he looked at me and in that very second it seemed that I was annihilated. I didn’t exist any longer and there was a great sense of release and peace, and there was a light, but not strong light. It was like a soft moonlight all around me, with no boundaries and no barriers anywhere. It was as if I was lost in a sky of light and peace.”

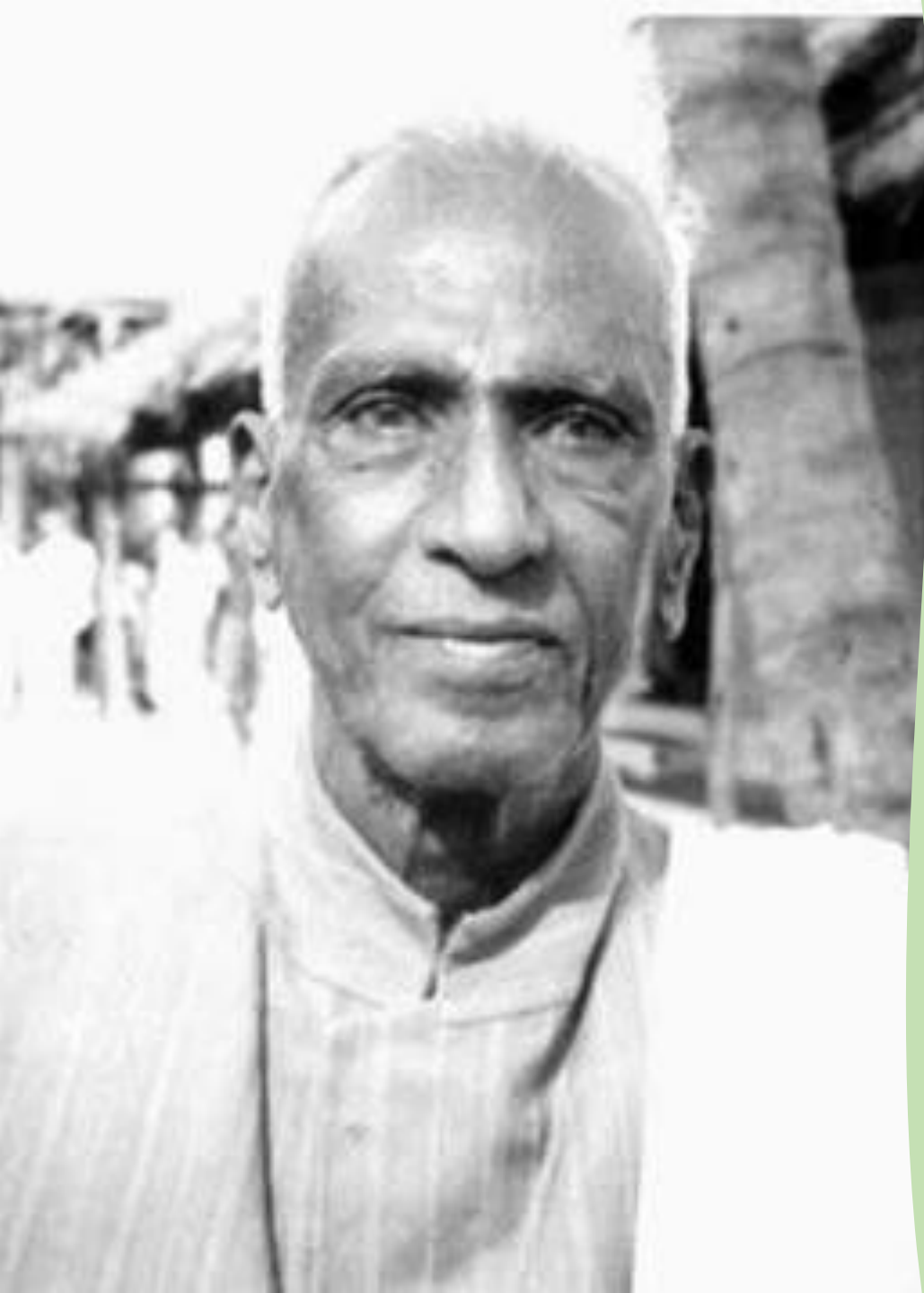
Though she did not know it at the time, this was an initiation that would affect her for the rest of her life and colour all her activities. For most of us such an initiation is not so dramatic.

By entering the radius of Arunachala’s influence, we spontaneously become open to transformation. Initiation will naturally follow if we are sincere and wish to change. And with initiation comes the conviction there is a meaning to our life.

Extract from Editorial on Initiation, The Mountain Path, July-September 2023

¹*Suri Nagamma, Letters from Sri Ramanasramam, 13 January, 1949, (214) ‘Acceptance of Diksha’.*

²*Krishna Bhikshu, Ramana Leela, “In fact everyone knew within himself whether he was accepted or not but no one could claim to be Bhagavan’s sishya or that what they said was Bhagavan’s view also.”*



Easiest Way to Control the Mind

Bhagavan was frequently asked by visitors "What is the best or easiest way to control the mind". This question used to be put alike by those who had read Bhagavan's books and those who were strangers to his teaching.

His usual reply, based on the method of self-enquiry that he prescribed, was: "Who wants to control the mind? Who is the 'I' that wants to control, that puts this question? If you find that out, all will be solved."

But alike for those who followed his method and those who followed other methods, he used to say: "There is no short cut. There is only one thing to do. As explained in the *Gita*, as often as the restless mind goes outwards after various things draw it inwards and fix it on the Self. This is not easy. But do it constantly. By constant practice you will gradually gain the strength to control the mind, till you finally become its master."

(My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana, A Devaraja Mudaliar)

HOW I MET THE MAHARSHI

By LOUIS HARTZ

I met Arthur Osborne in an internment camp in Bangkok during the second world war. At first, I had little contact with him because he was very reserved. After some time, however, I approached him. I had a craving to understand and asked him point blank what is Truth. What sticks in my memory is how, sitting beside his bed in the common dormitory, he said: "I will tell you one truth—Infinity minus X is a contradiction in terms because by the exclusion of X the first term ceases to be infinite. You grant that?" Yes, I granted that.

"Well, then," he said, "think of God as Infinity and yourself as X and try to work it out." When I asked for more explanation, he just said "Think this over and come tomorrow at this time and tell me what you make of it."

I returned to my place in the dormitory, which was only some eight or ten steps distant, and suddenly it flashed upon me that he was right, that you cannot take anything away from the Infinite, and that I was not apart from it, only I had not known. The thought made me so happy that I could hardly wait to speak to him next day, but I did not like to disturb him earlier.

From that time onward he started to instruct me and after a few weeks He showed me a photograph of the Maharshi. There was an urgency in his voice as he spoke of him and he handled the photograph with reverence. I began to understand that there was only one 'I' and that it was in me and was everywhere.

The Maharshi grew so much in my heart that I felt him nearer to me than my parents or my wife. He lived more vividly in me than any person I had known. After some time, we received permission to write a Red Cross letter to our families, and I used mine to write to the Maharshi and ask him for guidance.

Then the war ended, and I left camp. The desire to enjoy life sprang up in me again. I was strongly drawn to the spiritual path but even more strongly for the time being to a worldly life. I wanted to make money, to have power and fine clothes, to be important. In camp I had eliminated daydreaming as far as possible. When I went to bed at night I slept straight away. But now my nights were often filled with planning and scheming.

A few years later, when I was in Europe and due to return to Siam on business, I wrote to Osborne, who was living at Tiruvannamalai, to suggest that I should break my journey in India and stay there for a few days. He at once wrote back arranging to meet me and conduct me there and inviting me to stay at his house.

In Madras we hired a car and drove to Tiruvannamalai. It was an old car and I felt that I was being slowly roasted in the midday heat. When I let my eyes rest on the sun-baked scenery or the country folk sheltering under the wayside trees, I saw only the face of the Maharshi looming up before me. Nothing else registered.

I was terribly scared that the Maharshi would look in my eyes and see into me. I cursed myself for a fool for coming to this desolate place, with its heat and discomfort. I don't know what prevented me turning back; perhaps I was afraid to show Osborne what a coward I was. The nearer we approached the Ashram the more I shrank from meeting the Maharshi.

It was nearly dusk when we arrived and he had already retired, but Osborne went in to see him and asked whether he would see me for a few moments. I entered the hall and saw an elderly man reclining on a couch, who gave the impression of great reserve and a certain shyness. It was not the severe Master or the Guru with the burning eyes that I had expected - Osborne explained who I was, and his replies were, monosyllabic and sometimes in Tamil. With a slow movement of the head, he turned to me and held my eyes for a moment. His eyes were like empty, bottomless pools and at the same time they worked like magic mirrors, because suddenly I felt at peace as though I had come home after a long journey.

I can't recall where I slept that night, but I do remember that before going to bed I sat and talked with a number of people, Indians and foreigners, at Osborne's place. One of them was a diplomat from some European country, stationed in China. He talked about seeing spirits and even conversing with them, and it struck me as funny that anyone should be interested in such things at a place like this.

Sitting in the hall next day I saw that the Maharshi's smile was tender and gracious. I not only lost my fears but felt at ease. I had no questions to ask. Before coming I had prepared a number of questions that had been worrying me to ask the Maharshi, but now I couldn't remember them. My doubts had simply evaporated. Questions seemed unimportant.

I felt that there was nothing strange about the Maharshi. He was just a man who was himself, whereas all of us were growing away from ourselves. He was natural; it was we who were not. We call him a saint or sage, but I felt that to be like him is the inheritance of everybody; only we throw it away.

There were a lot of people in the hall— Indians and foreigners, learned professors and simple country people. I reminded the Maharshi about the Red Cross letter I had sent him and he replied that he wanted me to come and I had come. There was something childlike about him : he was free and natural and could laugh with the spontaneity that only a child shows.

A discussion started in the hall and they appealed to the Maharshi to say who was right. Some one spoke about unity and I objected that the word implied two to be united and that a better word was Oneness; and the Maharshi confirmed this. He said that there is only One, and that One is indivisible. I felt that he meant that the divisions are all unreal, just as we say rain, ice, water, coffee-water, washing water, but it is all water.

A group of devotees started singing and I asked the Maharshi what he felt about it. He laughed and replied that it pleased them to sing and made them feel peaceful.

Next morning again I sat in the hall. There was a yogi with matted hair. The diplomat was there, sitting in concentrated thought. I wondered whether I should imitate him, but I did not feel like meditating. Suddenly the Maharshi looked at me with great intensity. His eyes took possession of me - I don't know how long it lasted, but I felt at ease and happy.

Afterwards a disciple who had been with him for twenty years told me that this was the silent initiation. I felt that it probably was, but I wanted to make sure, so in the hall that afternoon I said : " Bhagavan, I want your initiation.."

And he replied : " You have it already."¹

Knowing myself and feeling anxious about what would happen when I left his presence, I asked for some sort of reassurance from him, and he replied very firmly and decisively : "Even if you let go of Bhagavan, Bhagavan will never let go of you."

There was some whispering and exchange of glances when people heard that. The diplomat whispered to a Muslim professor who was sitting beside him and then the latter asked the Maharshi whether this guarantee applied only to me or to him also. The Maharshi did not look very pleased but replied briefly: "To all."

Nevertheless, I felt that there was something intensely personal in it, that it had been a confirmation of the initiation and a direct, personal guarantee of protection.

Certain it is that whatever else may have happened, there has been no day since then when his face or his words have not influenced me.

¹ This is the only occasion on which I have ever known the Maharshi give an express verbal confirmation of having given initiation to anyone. It will be noted that the request was phrased in such a way that the confirmation could be given without any statement implying duality. (Editor)
(Mountain Path April 1964)



Sparks of Wit from the Maharshi

Bhagavan, the One with Cosmic Consciousness, loved to create comic situations around him, even during his early days on the Hill.

During his stay at Pacaiyammam Koil, the only Malayalam towel he had was threadbare and torn with several gaping holes. After use, Bhagavan would dry it himself and guarded it carefully away from the sight of anyone else. One day, a mischievous boy saw Bhagavan drying it, and wittily said, “Swami! Swami! This towel is demanded by the Governor, he has asked me to purchase it from you. Please give it to me!” So saying the boy stretched out his hand for it, at which Bhagavan jokingly replied, “Oh dear! This towel? No, no, I cannot part with it, go away!”

(Letters from Sri Ramanasramam, Suri Nagamma, ‘Fortunate are Those with a Mere Loincloth’ 5.2.1946)

Spiritual Instructions

Remaining Still Inwardly is Intense Activity

Is the state of 'being still' a state involving effort or effortless?

It is not an effortless state of indolence. All mundane activities which are ordinarily called effort are performed with the aid of a portion of the mind and with frequent breaks. But the act of communion with the Self (*atma vyavahara*) or remaining still inwardly is intense activity which is performed with the entire mind and without a break. Maya (delusion or ignorance) which cannot be destroyed by any other act is completely destroyed by this intense activity which is called 'silence' (*mouna*).

(Saranagati February 2024)

MUDALIAR PATTI

Mudaliar Patti was one of the earliest devotees of Bhagavan, and she is affectionately remembered among devotees for the many years of service which she gave to Bhagavan. She considered it her duty to bring food daily to Bhagavan, and despite her own relative poverty and lack of resources she considered that feeding Bhagavan was a holy obligation and no one could persuade her to give it up.

Her family came from Karaikal near Pondicherry and they were all deeply devoted to Siva and His devotees. They manifested their devotion by utilising a large portion of their income to feed devotees of Siva and itinerant sadhus. They were particularly fond of one sadhu, and when his death was approaching, they felt that his passing away would be a great blow to them.

Shortly before his death, they approached him and asked : *"Revered sir, where can we find another like you after your passing away?"* The sadhu told them not to worry and he consoled them by saying that they would soon be fortunate to serve a great *jnani*. When they asked for further details, the sadhu advised them to go to Tiruvannamalai and serve a Swami called Brahmana Swami, which was the name by which Bhagavan was known during the first years of his stay at Arunachala. A few days later the sadhu passed away.



Two months later in 1909, Mudaliar Patti came to Tiruvannamalai with her son Subbaya Mudaliar and her daughter-in-law Kamakshi and they settled down together in Tiruvannamalai. The whole family was filled with joy when they finally had the *darshan* of Brahmana Swami and they had no hesitation in deciding to serve him food.

Everyday Mudaliar Patti and her daughter-in-law took food to Bhagavan, first at Virupaksha Cave, and then later at Skandashram. In addition to their commitment to Bhagavan, they were also feeding a number of sadhus in their own house. Mudaliar Patti wished to extend her service by worshipping Bhagavan with flowers also, but when she found that Bhagavan disapproved of this practice, she installed a picture of Bhagavan in her own house and garlanded him there instead.

After few years the revenue which Mudaliar Patti received from her lands in Karaikal diminished and she soon found herself unable to live on it. However, her lack of income from this source in no way diminished her commitment to feed Bhagavan. She procured gingili seed (sesame seed) from the local market and laboured by hand to extract the oil from it. She supplemented the money she earned from selling the oil by preparing and selling *poppadam* and all the profits she earned from these enterprises were channelled into feeding Bhagavan. She occasionally had to work, day and night to ensure that the supply of food to the Ashram was maintained, but no matter how little she earned, she always managed to bring an offering to the Ashram. On special occasions she would redouble her efforts, and on these days, she would prepare special sweets, *vadai* and *poppadam* and when she brought them to the ashram, she would personally serve them to Bhagavan and his devotees.

Around 1938, Mudaliar Patti's daughter-in-law passed away and her son lost interest in worldly life and joined a Mutt as a sadhu. Although she was now alone she bore the difficulties of life with equanimity. Because she had no money and no one to help her with the domestic work in her house, the Ashram Manager and several devotees approached her and offered her a place in the Ashram. They even offered to send food to her house if she did not wish to reside in the Ashram. Mudaliar Patti was not interested in the offer and she replied : *"Whatever the difficulties, I shall not give up this holy task. If I do not have money, I shall go to ten houses, feeling my way with my stick, beg food, offer it to Bhagavan, and only then will I eat. I cannot keep quiet."* She finally accepted an offer by one of the devotees to live in a vacant house which he owned, and several devotees, impressed by her devotion, gave her small donations so that she was able to continue her daily offerings.

Bhagavan himself would always wait for her food to arrive, and he could never be persuaded to eat before her offering had arrived. If Bhagavan went round the hill, or even to the top of it, Mudaliar Patti would follow to ensure that her offering was accepted. Bhagavan had his regular stopping places around the hill, and Mudaliar Patti soon learned them; frequently Bhagavan would find her waiting for him with a basket full of food in some remote place on the far side of the hill. Once when she was approaching old age, she climbed the mountain alone with two large carriers and a basket full of food because she had heard that Bhagavan was climbing the mountain with several devotees. She eventually tracked him down at Seven Springs which was at least two thirds of the way to the summit. It seemed that nothing would persuade her to stop her daily offering, and even when the whole town was evacuated because of a plague epidemic, Mudaliar Patti took shelter on the hill and still managed to find food to take to Bhagavan.

In the last years of her life Mudaliar Patti's eyesight became very poor, and on one of her visits to the dining hall to feed Bhagavan she accidentally stepped on a leaf plate. The ashram Manager took her aside and said : *"Patti, what is the use of taking all the trouble to come when you cannot even see Bhagavan?"* Mudaliar Patti immediately replied : *"What does it matter whether I see Bhagavan or not? Is it not enough that Bhagavan's gracious look falls on me?"* Bhagavan smiled at this reply and said to the manager: *"What answer could you give her now?"*

Because of her long familiarity, she often took great liberties with Bhagavan. On one occasion when she was serving him she put a handful of rice and curry on his plate and Bhagavan reprimanded her by saying : "*If you serve so much, how can I eat it ?*" Everyone knew how touchy Bhagavan was about receiving large servings, and had the remark been made to one of the regular servers, the portion would have been hastily removed. However, Mudaliar Patti was unperturbed and she insisted that Bhagavan eat it all. "*There are several other things to eat,*" replied Bhagavan, "*How can my stomach contain them all?* " Mudaliar Patti just smiled at him and said : "*It is all a matter of the mind, Swami,*" and after saying this she served Bhagavan the full portion and left. Bhagavan laughed at the incident and commented to the people who were near him : "*Do you see? She is paying me back with my own teachings.*"

Finally, her health gave way, and for the last two or three years of her life, she had to be content to send the food through somebody else, and as a consequence she had to give up her hard-earned privilege of personally serving Bhagavan his food. During this period, someone told her that Bhagavan's body had become very emaciated, and she thought that this was all due to the fact that she was no longer able to serve him personally. She immediately came to the Ashram and voiced her fears to Bhagavan. Bhagavan laughed at her fears and told her that they were groundless. Taking advantage of her lack of sight, he stood near her when he was leaving the hall and said with a laugh: "*Granny, have I become reduced? See how well I am. It is a pity that your sight is so poor that you are not able to see for yourself.*"

By the time she finally died in September 1949 she was completely blind, but neither old age, blindness nor lack of money prevented her serving Bhagavan till the end. She breathed her last only after hearing that her last daily offering had been served to Bhagavan in the Ashram. It had been over forty years since she had served her first meal to Bhagavan, and in all that period not a day had passed without Bhagavan eating her food offering. When Bhagavan heard about her death, he enquired about the place of her burial, and when he was told that it was planned to bury her in the Hindu general burial ground, he intervened and insisted that she be buried in the compound where she had died. So, in obedience to Bhagavan's will, her body was made to sit cross-legged, garlanded with flowers, sprinkled with sacred ash and camphor (the standard procedure for burying a sannyasi), and she was finally laid to rest in the compound where she had spent the last years of her life.

(Mountain Path, January 1982)

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.

Two **Newsletters** are distributed - one in Spring-Summer and another in Autumn-Winter.

To join or subscribe to any of the above, email: ramanamaharshifoundationuk@ramana-maharshi.co.uk

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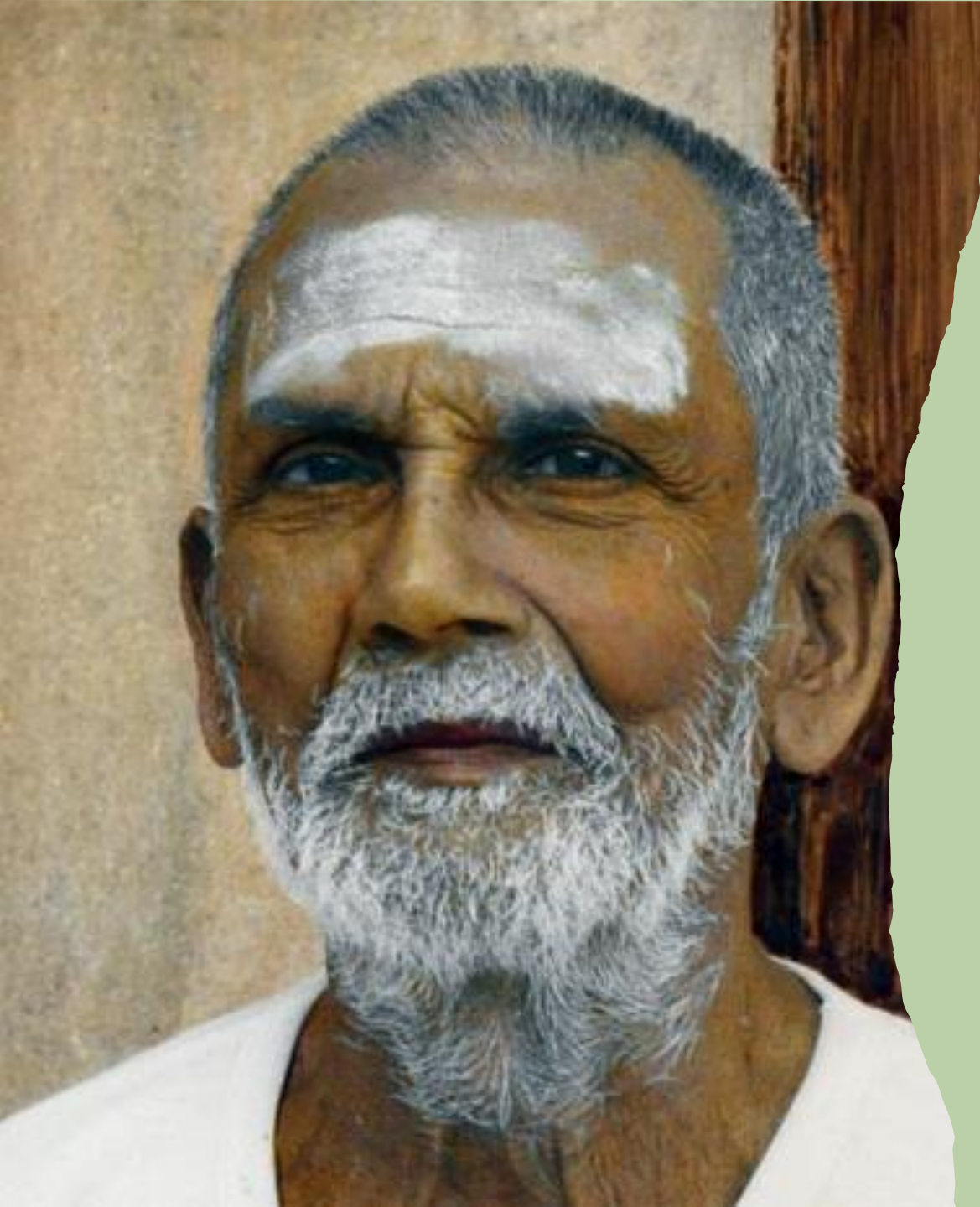
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Don't meditate at intervals.
Abide without a break in steady
self-awareness. Instead of plucking
hair after itching hair of thought,
better shave the whole scalp clean.

(Sri Murugunar)