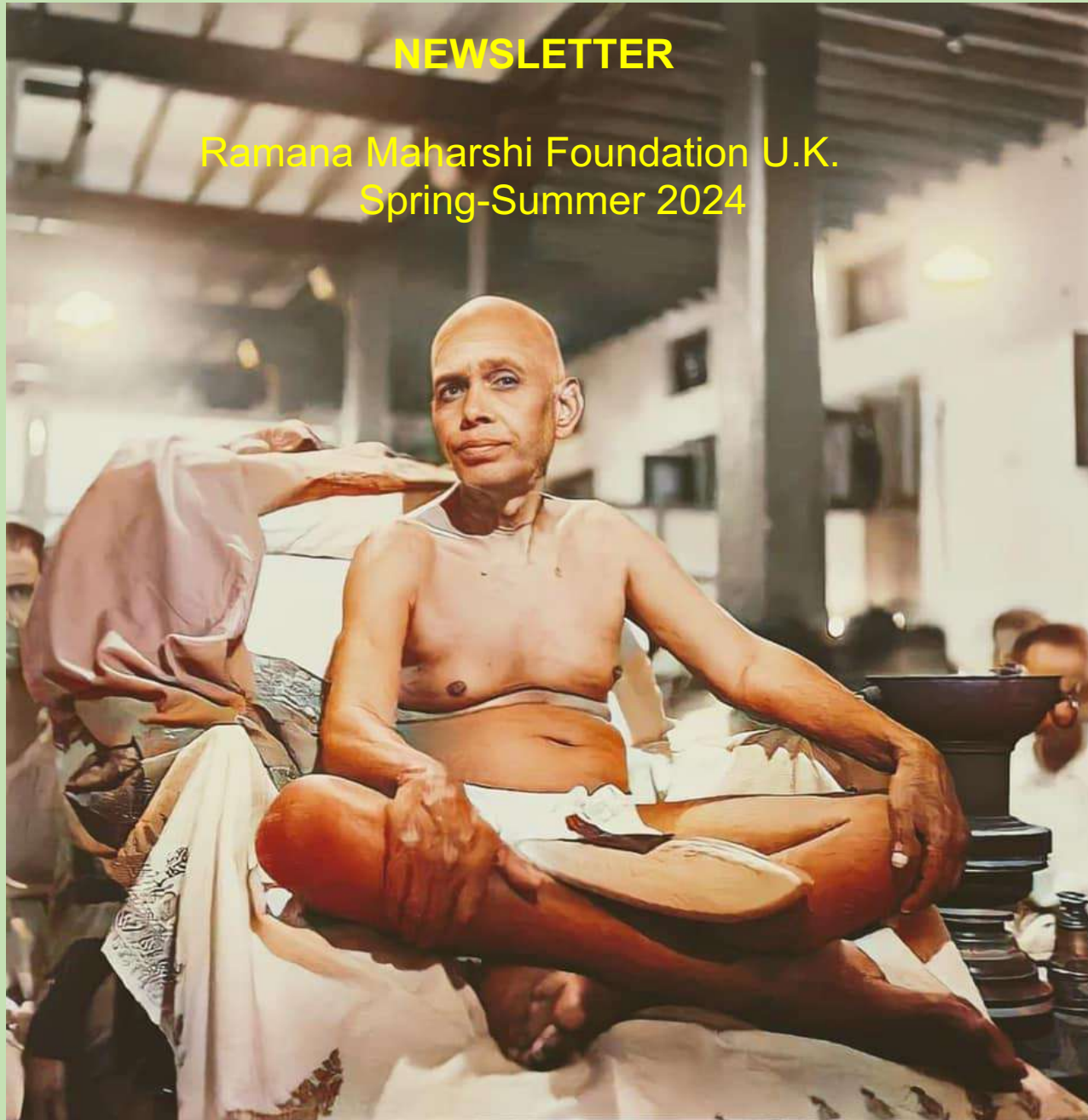


NEWSLETTER

Ramana Maharshi Foundation U.K.
Spring-Summer 2024





Newsletter Spring-Summer 2024

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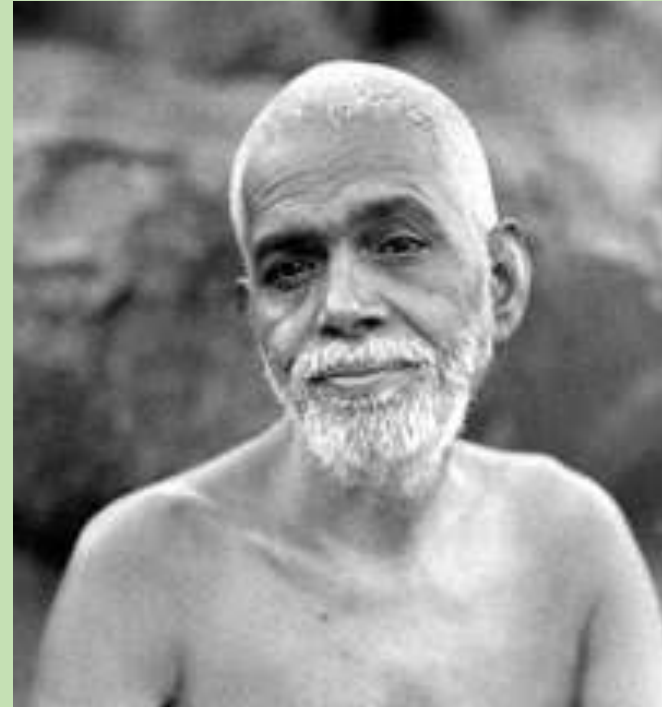
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The compassionate heart that flows from me to you will never fail except when you cease to have remembrance of 'me', who command and conduct everything.

(From Padamalai by Muruganar)



Welcome to this Spring-Summer 2024 edition of the RMF UK Newsletter.

In this edition there is a theme of compassion. Bhagavan showed profound compassion to all - nothing and no one escaped his compassionate gaze. After all he saw God in all.

In the three verses of Aksharamanamalai Bhagavan is beseeching the Guru Arunachala to show compassion and through the light of His Grace to destroy the ignorance that is the ego. The three excerpts from Eternal Ocean of Grace are beautiful examples both of how Bhagavan saw God in all and how he showed such great compassion to all around. The extract from Krishna Bikshu's memoirs similarly describes Bhagavan's compassion for trees. Thus demonstrating again his compassion not just for human beings, but for all.

V. Subbalaxshmi describes at some length how she came to Bhagavan and speaks with such fervour of that special privilege of working with him and learning from him all the time. Through his wisdom, kindness and compassion the simple uneducated women of the kitchen learnt Vedanta in theory and practice. In her account she also describes a visitor asking Bhagavan for nothing else, just salvation. Bhagavan was very amused that she seemed to think it could so easily be given and his response was "If the want is really sincere, that itself is salvation".

We conclude this newsletter with a piece by Muruganar on True Immortality.



Arunachala Aksharamanamalai

Verse 17

**kiriyuru vākiya kirupaik kaṭalē
kirupaikūrn taruḷuvā yaruṇācalā**

Paraphrase:

[Arunachala]! Though you are perceived by the fleshly eye in the form of a mountain of solid rock, to the eye of knowledge you are an ocean of compassion, most mild and gentle in its nature. May you in grace bestow your abounding compassion.

Commentary:

Arunachala who is invested with supreme grace, through which, in his compassion, He has the ability to grant unstintingly to his devotees all that they desire in the manner that they desire it. However, it is only He who, by virtue of his infallible understanding, truly knows what really ought to be desired by his devotees for their true good. Those who are aware of this truth desire only whatever He, who is the ocean of compassion and the possessor of true knowledge, deigns to bestow upon them through his grace. If they were to make any specific request of Him, it would simply be for devotion to Him, nothing more. Therefore, it seems likely that Bhagavan was thinking along these lines when he contented himself with simply saying, 'May you in grace bestow your abounding compassion.'

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



Arunachala Aksharamamalai

Verse 18

kīlmē leṅkuṅ kiḷaroḷi maṅiyen
kīlmaiyaip pāḷcey yaruṅācalā

Paraphrase:

Precious jewel that is Arunachala Siva, the self-luminous, pure being-consciousness, which, as the indwelling Godhead, abides and shines (without distinction) within the hearts of all equally, be they base or virtuous! Shining in the Heart may you destroy the darkness of my ignorance (through the light of your grace).

Commentary:

The lowliest of all that is low is the deluded *jīva*, who considers himself as the body, though in reality, he is the Atman. The cause of this delusion is nescience (void). 'May Thou render this void naught.' The nescience or ego is the root of all ills. If this 'void' of an ego is made null and void, what remains is the perpetually resplendent Atman.

(published in Arunachala Stuti Panchakam, commentary by T.R.Kanakammal)



Arunachala Aksharamanamalai

Verse 19

**kurramur raruttenaik kuṇamāyp paṇittā!
kuruvuru vāyoḷi raruṇācalā**

Paraphrase:

Arunachala, you who shine as the form of the guru! May you entirely destroy all my defects, along with their source, the ego, and bestow your grace, keeping me as a servant at your holy feet as one who is virtuous.

Commentary:

The ego-mind, known as the 'I', is the original defect that arises in mankind, containing in some manner within itself all other defects in the form of subtle seeds. Until that ego is entirely eliminated, all the other defects, which evolve and develop, emerging from it later, each in its due season, to manifest in gross form, cannot be totally destroyed. Although defects are many, they fall mainly into the three classes of desire, aversion and delusion. When these three perish, suffering will be no more. Therefore only he who is free of the ego can truthfully be termed a virtuous one. Furthermore, for Bhagavan, Arunachala is his guru. For this reason he calls out to Arunachala, his voice and heart filled with love, saying, in the fullest possible sense of these words, 'Arunachala, you who shine in the form of a guru.'

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



Excerpts from Eternal Ocean of Grace

In Ramana Smriti Lokammal recalled: “Very often we found ourselves caught in the trap of outmoded customs and conventions that discriminated against the less fortunate, especially women and the lower castes. Bhagavan was strict in treating all equally. He often said, “The Ashram does not see any differences. There are no untouchables here. Those who do not like it may eat elsewhere.

“At Skandasramam there used to be the same trouble with Mother. She would not give food to the man who brought us firewood. She would insist that I eat first, then she would eat and then the woodcutter could have the remnants left outside the Ashram. I would refuse to eat until the man was decently fed.

“At first, she would not yield and would suffer and weep and fast, but I was adamant too. She then saw that she could not have her way in these matters. What is the difference between man and man? Am I a Brahmin and he a pariah? Is it not correct to see only God in all?” We were all astounded. The rebuke went deep into our hearts. We asked Bhagavan to make our minds clear and our hearts pure so that we would sin no more against God in man.

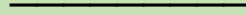


Bhagavan once said, “When I was in Virupaksha Cave, we used to change over to the Mango Tree cave during summer as there was no water in the former. At the Mango Tree cave, at midday, some untouchable women used to come for water with heavy loads of grass on their heads and were often very tired. These poor women started from their homes early in the morning after taking a little gruel (kanji), went up the Hill and secured a head load of grass.

“As soon as they came to the cave they threw down their bundles, bent down and said, ‘Swami, Swami, first throw a vessel-full of water down our spines.’ I used to stand on the verandah there and when I poured water on them as desired, they used to recover from their exhaustion, saying, ‘Oh, how good this is!’ Then, making a cup of both the hands, they used to drink water until their stomachs were full, wash their faces, take some rest in the shade of the trees and depart. They alone could experience the happiness of it all. It is only when oppressed by heat that one knows the refreshing relief of cool water.”

Bhagavan further added, “I would pour the water on them myself. I knew they would be coming at that hour and so would wait there with the water ready. What could they do? They were not allowed to touch the water in Mulaippal Tirtham (holy tank) and there was no water anywhere else. The heat was unbearable. They could not get any food unless they sold the grass and got some money. They had children at home. They had to reach home quickly to look after them. What could they do? Poor women! They used to come to the cave with the hope that the Swami would supply water.

“We were not cooking at that time. If on any day we did cook, we poured a lot of water into the rice, took out the gruel, poured it into a pot, mixed water with it liberally and added salt. If dry ginger was available, I would mix that also. When the women came, the gruel water would be quite cool. When a tumbler of it was poured into their hands, they used to drink it like nectar and go away. The taste of that gruel and the happiness of drinking that water they alone could know.”



There was a large stone slab east of Skandasramam. However cold it was, Sri Bhagavan would come and sit on the slab and clean his teeth. In the early morning sun's rays, Sri Bhagavan's body would shine beautifully. When it was very cold, devotees used to request him not to sit there, but Sri Bhagavan would not listen to them. The reason for this only became known later.

In Big Street, which is to the north of Arunachaleswara temple, there was an elderly woman called Sowbhagyathammal. She and a few others had taken a vow that daily they would eat only after they had seen Sri Bhagavan and Seshadri Swami. Every day they used to climb the hill to have the darshan of Sri Bhagavan. One day Sowbhagyathammal did not come. Among his devotees, if he found even one missing, Sri Bhagavan would ask whether he was all right. In the same way, he asked Sowbhagyathammal the next day why she had not come the previous day. She said, "All the same I had your darshan Bhagavan." Sri Bhagavan said, "But you didn't come yesterday." She replied, "I could not climb the hill because of my weakness. But I was fortunate to have your darshan from my house." She explained how she saw Sri Bhagavan when he was brushing his teeth sitting on the stone slab. She said if he brushed his teeth at the same place every day, she would be able to see him every day from her house itself as she found it difficult to climb the hill. From then on, Sri Bhagavan brushed his teeth sitting on the stone, irrespective of weather conditions. It was a boon for other elderly people also.

Some extracts from Krishna Bikshu's Memoirs

One summer evening when Bhagavan was reclining on a couch near the well, a devotee offered plantains. Madhava Swami was warding off the monkeys. Suddenly Bhagavan got up, clapped his hands and said with childish excitement, "It has taken it away, it has taken it away". He seemed always on the side of the monkeys. He would not allow them to be beaten. He would sign to them to take away the fruits stealthily. The monkeys knew only too well who cared for them. They would take refuge near Bhagavan's sofa. He would say that a practitioner on the path should be as single-minded as a monkey whose attention is fixed on an object on which it has set its mind.

There was an almond tree opposite the hall. A servant had been instructed by the management to chop off the dry branches but he was hacking the green ones also. Bhagavan pulled him up, "Why are you hurting the tree? Does it not have life? Get away. Must you keep hurting something or the other?"

One night Bhagavan caught someone plucking some fruit from a tree and chided the culprit, "Won't you let the tree sleep in peace? Can you not pluck the fruit during the day time? Have a heart. Merely because the tree cannot express its woe should you be so cruel?" To our eyes there are differences in attitudes towards fellow human beings, animals, insects and trees. For him there is only one yardstick, that no harm should befall even a blade of grass.

(Krishna Bikshu, Unforgettable Years, Memoirs of 29 old devotees of Bhagavan)

My Life, My Light

Varanasi Subbalaxshmi



Varanasi Subbalaxshmi rendered useful service in the Ashrama kitchen during the lifetime of Sri Bhagavan. Her chosen God was Lord Viswanath of Benares. However, when she was going to Benares for good she had a dream in which Lord Viswanath told her to return to Arunachala, saying that Bhagavan Ramana was the embodiment of Rama, Krishna, Siva and all other Gods.

I lost my husband when I was sixteen. I went back to my mother's house and lived there as a widow should, trying to pray to and meditate on God. My mother's mind too was devoted to the spiritual quest and religion was the main thing in her life.

Once we went on a pilgrimage to Kaveri Pushkaram and on our way back we stopped at Arunachala. There we were told that a young Brahmin saint had been living on the hill for the past ten years. The next morning we went up the hill along with others with whom we were travelling. At Mulaipal Tirtha we cooked our food, ate and had some rest. Then we went further and found the young Swami near Virupaksha Cave. There was a brick platform at the entrance of the cave and he was sitting on it. As soon as I saw him, I was at once convinced that God Arunachala Himself had come in human form to give salvation to all who approached Him.

He was about thirty at the time, and wonderful to look at; he was bright and shining like burnished gold, his eyes were blooming and clear, like the petals of a lotus. He looked at us for a long time. The peak of Arunachala was towering over our heads, the huge towers of the temple were below and an immense silence surrounded the Swami. Then the ladies started whispering. One wanted to pray for a child for her daughter-in-law who was barren, but another was saying that the Swami was too exalted for such worldly matters. Finally the Swami was told of the young wife's sorrow. He smiled and lifted his folded hands to the sky as if saying : "All happens by the will of the Almighty."

We returned to Nellore and the impression of that visit faded away. I did not even dream at that time that my life would be spent at the feet of the Swami.

When I was thirty-one I went to Rameshwaram on a pilgrimage and on my return journey I stopped at Tiruvannamalai. I learned that the Swami was then living at the foot of the hill. That afternoon we went to see him at his Ashrama. There was a thatched shed over his mother's samadhi and a tiled hall for meeting the Swami. He was seated on a couch and about a dozen devotees were on the bare floor. We sat in silence for ten minutes and returned to the town.

Bhagavan's presence gave me the experience of inner silence and mental stillness, but away from him I could not regain it and I spent a year vainly trying to free myself from all thought. Some friends were going to see Sri Aurobindo's Ashrama at Pondicherry and they took me along. They were to stay there for a week. I was not much impressed and went for a short visit to Ramanasramam. A learned Shastri whom I knew appeared in my dream and asked me: "Where was the need for you to go to Pondicherry? Entrust yourself to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. He is God Himself. He will surely lead you to salvation."

But even such a clear dream was not enough. I cherished a plan of going to Benares and spending my life there in holy austerities. I decided to go to Bhagavan, learn from him how to meditate, and then leave for Benares for good. My friend Parvatamma decided to join me in the spiritual adventure. Accordingly we went to Tiruvannamalai and rented a house. In the afternoon we took cashew nuts and sugar candy as an offering to Bhagavan and went to the Ashrama. We placed our offerings on a stool before him and sat down. The cow Lakshmi happened to be lying near Bhagavan's sofa. She got up and began to chew our precious offerings. Bhagavan looked on and said nothing. His attendant, Madhava Swami, did not even look. We thought it might be impious to disturb the cow, but soon I got exasperated and exclaimed, "Please remove the cow !" Madhava Swami replied: "Why? I thought you offered those sweets to Lakshmi !"

What is Atma?

The next day at noon I was again at Ramanasramam. His midday meal over, Bhagavan was reclining on the sofa and explaining a verse from the *Bhagavad Gita* to Sri Ramiah Yogi. As no one else was in the hall, I gathered courage and asked: "What is *Atma*? Is it the limitless ether of space or the awareness that cognizes everything?" Bhagavan replied: "To remain without thinking 'this is *Atma*' and 'that is *Atma*', is itself *Atma*." He looked at me and I felt my mind melt away into nothing. No thought would come, only the feeling of immense, unutterable peace. My doubts were cleared.

Every day I would visit Bhagavan and listen to his talks with the devotees. Deep in my mind there was the same rock-like stillness, immensely solid and yet strangely vibrant.

Several times I was invited to work in the Ashrama, but the Ashrama ways were not orthodox enough for me. One day Bhagavan's own sister asked me to take her place in the Ashrama, for she had to leave for some time. I could not refuse. At that time Shantammal was the chief cook and my duty was to help her. To my great joy Bhagavan was in the kitchen with us most of the time. He taught me to cook tastily and neatly. I would spend all day in the Ashrama and in the evening I would go to the town to sleep, for there was no sleeping accommodation for women in the Ashrama.

Once Bhagavan said: "You widows do not eat vegetables like drumsticks and radish. Diet restrictions are good to strengthen the will. Besides, the quality of food and the manner of eating have an influence on the mind." I was very happy to work in the kitchen directly under Bhagavan's supervision; yet I wanted to go home. The Ashrama ways were too unorthodox for me. And there was too much work. I did not want to work all day long. I wanted to sit quietly and meditate in solitude.

I Leave the Ashram

So I left again for my village and I went away for about a year. I divided my time between idleness and meditation. Yet my heart was at the Ashrama. I would tell myself: "Where is the need of running about. Is not Bhagavan here and everywhere?" But my heart was calling me to Bhagavan. Even when I was pleading with myself, that in the Ashrama there would be no time for meditation, my heart would say: "Working in the kitchen by his side is far better than meditation." At home I had all the leisure I wanted, but it seemed to me that I was wasting my time. Later I learned that that was the time Bhagavan used to remember me very often. Once they were preparing *pongal* (pulse with rice and black pepper) to celebrate Bhagavan's monthly birth-star (*Punarvasu*) and Bhagavan told Shantammal: "Subbalakshmi is far away yet she worries whether *pongal* is cooked here today or not." On some other festival day Bhagavan announced: "Subbalakshmi will turn up; keep some *pongal* for her." That very day I arrived at the Ashrama.

His great love for me, a worthless devotee, bound me firmly to his feet. Again and again I wanted to leave the Ashrama, but he held me for my own good, more powerfully than I held on to him.

Whenever I was collecting courage to tell Bhagavan about my desire to leave, he would seem to read my thoughts and forestall me by giving me something special to do. I felt I had too much to do and that my life was being wasted.

One day Bhagavan was looking at me intently and said: "It looks as if you are still hankering after meditation." I replied: "What have I got except endless work in the kitchen?" Bhagavan said with deep feeling: "Your hands may do the work but your mind can remain still. You are that which never moves. Realize that and you will find that work is not a strain. But as long as you think that you are the body and that the work is done by you, you will feel your life to be an endless toil. In fact, it is the mind that toils, not the body. Even if your body keeps quiet, will your mind keep quiet too? Even in sleep the mind is busy with its dreams."

I replied: "Yes, Swami, it is as natural for you to know that you are not your body as it is for us to think that we are the body. I had a dream recently in which you were explaining this very point. I was dreaming that I was working in the kitchen and you were having your bath in your usual place behind the bamboo mat partition. You asked: 'Who is it?'

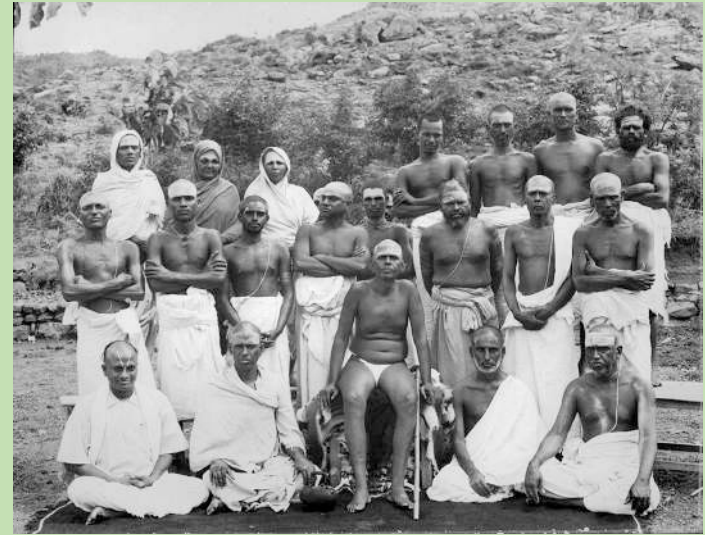
I replied: 'Who shall I say I am?' You said: 'Exactly so, you are nothing of which something can be said.' Now, just remember that was my dream and it was quite clear. Why can't I remember always that I am not the body?" "Because you haven't had enough of it," he smiled.

Do Not Torture The Body

I used to fast quite often, as advised in some scriptural texts. In one of the books, I read: "He who wants to know himself and yet pays attention to his body is like a man who trusts a crocodile to take him across a river." I showed the text to Bhagavan and he explained: "It does not mean that you should starve. You need not torture the body. It only means not giving the body more than it needs. With your mind, hold on to enquiry and just keep the body going so that it does not become a hindrance. For this, pure and fresh food, simply prepared and taken in moderation, is a great help."

Another day I asked Bhagavan's permission to put on the *sannyasin's* orange robes and beg for my food. He said: "Will coloured clothes give you renunciation? First learn what *sannyasa* means."

Once five or six devotees sat down before Bhagavan and sang a hymn in praise of the Guru. He got up in the middle of the recitation and went away, saying: "Prayers and praises will not take one far. It is the merciful look of the teacher that bestows true knowledge." I felt elated. Had I not received his merciful glances? But the next day he was saying: "Unless one becomes a six month old baby there is no hope for him in the realm of self-knowledge." My heart sank. Although I lived in the presence of Lord Arunachala Himself, I was far from becoming an infant.



Subbalaxshmi is far left, back row.

Why Should You Doubt?

Another time Bhagavan was telling us stories from the lives of devotees of bygone ages. I questioned him: "It is written that God appeared before the devotee and shed His grace on him while he was still in his mother's womb. Can it be true?" To that Bhagavan replied: "Why should you doubt? Will doubt profit you? Only your devotion will suffer. Those stories are as real as your telling me that you are present here and now."

Bhagavan was one day reading and explaining *Tiruppugazh* in Tamil to Alamelammal of Madura. I did not know Tamil and I could only look on. I saw a change in Bhagavan. A light was shining from within him. His face was radiant, his smile was beaming, his eyes were full of compassion. His words reverberated in the mind and were instantly and deeply understood. All my being was carried upwards on a current of strange vibrations. The memory of this experience is ever present in my heart. A great joy has remained with me that I was privileged to sit at the feet of the Divine Being.

It was ever like this with him. Whoever went to him, he would go down to his level; his words and gestures, even the intonation of his voice, would adapt themselves to the make-up of the people around him. With children he was their playmate, to family people - a wise counsellor, to pundits - a well of knowledge, to yogis - the God of will, the God of victory. He saw himself in them and they saw themselves in him and their hearts would be bound to his feet in everlasting love. All who came to see him would be charmed by his love and kindness, beauty and wisdom, and the overwhelming sense of unity he radiated like fire radiating heat. To some he would grant a special vision, invisible to others; with some he would openly discourse. Crowds would gather round him and each one would see him differently. Even his pictures differ. A stranger would not guess that they are all of the same person.

Grant Me Salvation, Swami

One afternoon a lady from Kumbhakonam sat near Bhagavan and exclaimed: "How glad I am that I have met you, Swami. I have craved to see you for a long time, Swami. Not that I want anything, Swami. Only please be kind and grant me salvation, Swami." With that she got up and went away. Bhagavan had a hearty laugh. "Look at her - all she wants is salvation. Give her salvation, she wants nothing else." I said: "Is it not what we all want?"

He replied: "Is salvation something to be handed over on request? Do I keep bundles of salvation concealed about me, that people should ask me for salvation? She said 'I do not want anything.' If it is sincere, that itself is salvation. What is there I can give and what is there they can take?"

Somebody brought a bell to be rung at the *arati* ceremony and it was put into Bhagavan's hands. He tried its sound in various ways and laughed: "God wants us to make a fire of our past evil deeds and burn our karma in it. But these people burn a copper worth of camphor and hope to please the Almighty. Do they really believe that they can get something for nothing? They do not want to bend to God, they want God to bend to them. In their greed they would swallow God, but they would not let him swallow them. Some boast of their offerings. What have they got to offer? The idol of Vinayaka (Ganesha) is made of jaggery. They break off a piece of it and offer it to Him. The only offering worthy of the Lord is to clear the mind of thoughts and remain steady in the peace of Self."

In the early days, when I joined the Ashrama, Bhagavan used to help in grinding lentils, peeling vegetables and even lending a hand in cooking. He would get up long before daybreak to join the kitchen staff at their work. We ladies would arrive by sunrise, and Bhagavan would see that all was ready for our arrival and we would often find a part of our work already done. To forestall him we would come by five; he would come at four; we would come then at three. When he saw that we were left without sleep, he stopped entering the kitchen before sunrise and gave us time to sleep.

He was the very embodiment of wisdom and kindness, though he did not mind our faults and mistakes, he made us follow his instructions to the letter. We had to do the same task again and again until it was done to his complete satisfaction. Did he do it for himself? Of what use was it to him? He wanted to prove to us that we could do things right, that only lack of patience and attention causes all the mess. He sometimes seemed too severe, even harsh, to make us do something correctly, for he knew what we did not know - that we can act correctly if we only try. With experience came confidence, and with confidence the great peace of righteousness.

In daily life he avoided all distinction. At work and at food he was one of us. But in the hall, seated on the sofa, he was the great Lord of Kailas, the Holy Mountain. Whenever Bhagavan would enter or leave the hall, we would all get up respectfully. One could see that he did not like so many people being disturbed because of him.

He wanted us to learn well the lesson that God is present in every being in all his glory and fullness and must be given equal reverence. He was tireless in hammering this lesson into our minds and hearts, and he would ruthlessly sacrifice the little comforts we so loved to provide for him, as soon as he noticed a trace of preference.

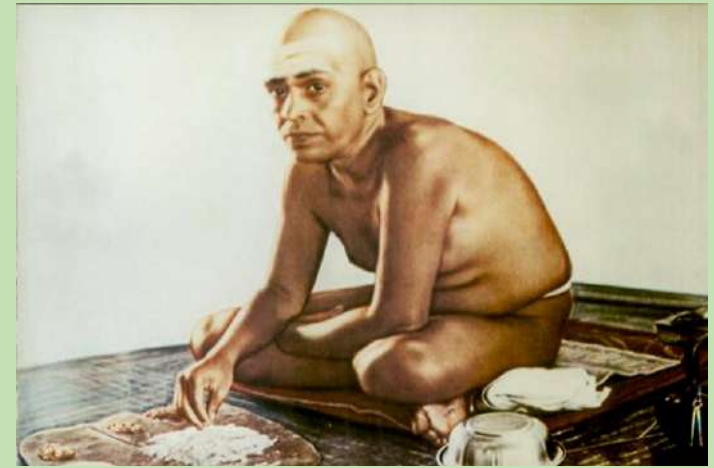
The law that what cannot be shared must not be touched was supreme in his way of dealing with us. Separative and exclusive feelings are the cause of the "I" and therefore the greatest obstacles in the realization of the One. No wonder he was exterminating them so relentlessly.

Once Bhagavan had jaundice. He had to be put on a fruit diet, but he would not eat fruit unless all ate, and in equal quantities too! Where could we get such a lot of fruit? Yet he was adamant and would leave his share untouched unless he saw an equal share on everybody's leaf-plate. Those who say that a sick man needs special food and must not give trouble, miss the point. Bhagavan was not sick. His body had jaundice, that was all. He wanted to impress on our minds that under no condition must a man have a greater share. Our learning this lesson was more important to him than the cure of his jaundice.

To serve him at mealtimes was by itself a dangerous adventure. Our womanly desire was to fill him to the brim. His rule was to clear the plate no matter what or how much was served. Not a speck of food would be left uneaten. So we had to be watchful and serve much less than what we would like to. It was not easy and we would often fail. He would scold us bitterly, or, what was infinitely worse, would fall ill and suffer. I cannot understand how he managed to produce an illness when a lesson was needed, but our life with him was crisis after crisis.

He would take any amount of trouble to teach us the virtues necessary for self-discovery. Our life in the Ashrama was a school of yoga, and a hard school too. For book-knowledge was as nothing to him; only character and genuine spiritual experience counted.

With time he ceased working in the kitchen, but we could still find him in the dining hall. When all would leave after food, he would linger on his seat and we would collect around him and chat and listen to his precious words. He would teach us and guide us and we would forget the years that passed and be again the happy crowd of yore.



Changed to the Very Root of Our Being

One had to live and work with him to know what a great teacher he was. Through the trifles of daily life he taught us Vedanta in theory and practice. He led us with absolute wisdom and infinite kindness and we were changed to the very root of our being, not even knowing the depth and scope of his influence. It is only now, after so many years, that we can see the meaning of the orders, prohibitions, scoldings and storms that we had to endure. At that time we understood so little and just obeyed, because we felt that he was God. Even that feeling we owed to his grace, for from time to time he would let us see him as he really was, the Lord Almighty, and not the human frame to which we were accustomed.

We were women, simple and uneducated. It was our love for him, a reflection of his love, that chained us to his feet and made us stay. For him we gave up hearth and home and all our earthly ties. We only knew that we were safe with him, that in some miraculous way he would take us to our goal. He himself was our goal, our real home. More than that we did not know or care. We were even slow to learn the lesson of equality to man and beast which he was so anxious to teach us first. To us he alone existed. The radiant form of Ramana was enough for us. We did not know that it was not enough, that a human soul must learn to embrace the universe and realize its own presence in every living being. We would concentrate too much on him and resent his compelling us to enlarge our little circle. His sometimes harsh treatment would bewilder us and make us cry. Now we see that it was love that suffered as it laboured.

Yogis control themselves severely for long to reach the state to which Bhagavan would take us by making us work near him in the kitchen. The small tasks of daily life he would make into avenues to light and bliss. Whoever has not experienced the ecstasy of grinding, the rapture of cooking, the joy of serving *iddlies* to devotees, his devotees, the state when the mind is in the heart and the heart is in him and he is in the work, does not know how much bliss a human heart contains.

Although physically he is no more with us, he still directs us, as in the past. He will not let go his hold on us until we reach the Other Shore. This is our unshaken faith. We may not always be conscious of his guidance, but we are safe in his hands. Sri Krishna, in His mercy became a cowherd to teach simple milkmaids the way to salvation. Similarly Bhagavan, the same supreme Being in another form, took to cooking in order to save a few ignorant women. With his eyes he served his devotees the food of the spirit, with his hands – the bread of life.

(The Maharshi, Nov/Dec 1991, Vol1 No.5)

True Immortality

Sri Muruganar

Unfailing immortality
Accrues only to those who have
Destroyed the ego whose demon-dance is oneself, one thinks
Obstructs the vision of the precious
Truth that we are ever-perfect
Being-Awareness-Bliss

Imagining that this new-comer,
The body, is oneself, one thinks
That one is born and that one dies.
The moment this delusion goes
One's own true immortality
Is gained.

Death is nothing but the fond
Delusion that this new-comer,
The body, is oneself. When the ego,
The clinging to delusion, ends,
The ensuing bliss of true Awareness,
Being one without a second, this,
This only is immortality.

Believing that the body is
Oneself, one dreads the body's death.
Enquiring "What dies?", "Who am I?"
One dies into the Self. How else
But through the ego's death can one
Gain immortality?

True clearness, freedom from the mind's
Ripples and shadows, this alone
Is ever-fresh immortality. By this awareness pure, by this
Alone and by no other means,
Can Death, a mere delusion, end.

EVENTS

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

In-Person Meetings in London - 1st or 3rd Saturday of every month at The Study Society, Colet House, London W14 9DA.

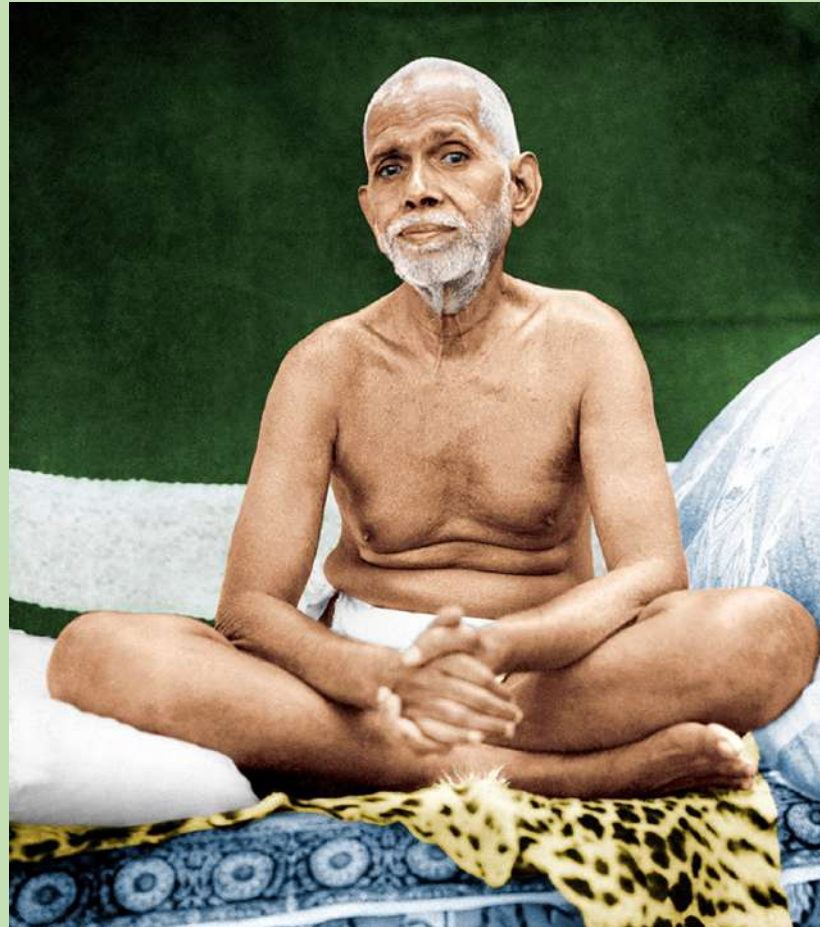
Study Group - Every Tuesday and Wednesday from 7pm to 8.30pm (British time) via Zoom

Meditation Group - Every Monday, Thursday and Friday from 7pm to 8.15pm (British time) via Zoom

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

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“The consciousness within, purged of the mind, is felt as God.”