



Be Still: A Simple Path Any Seeker Can Practice

Silence, Surrender, and the Six Stages of Inner Awakening

A Foundational Spiritual Guide · Sri Murugan Research Centre (SMRC)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

You do not need a Himalayan cave or decades of Sanskrit scholarship to find God. You only need a mind willing to stop running. Across traditions—from the Tamil Saiva masters to Himalayan sages—the supreme teaching has always been identical: Be still. Let the thought of God alone remain. When mental agitation ceases, the Divine presence that was always there becomes self-evident. This monograph unifies this universal transmission across Lord Dakshinamurthy, Murugan’s “Summa Iru”, Thayumanavar, Saint Meikandar, Ramana Maharshi, and Shivapuri Baba, outlining the six stages of grace and practical methods for living in stillness today.

1. One Teaching, Many Voices: The Universal Lineage of Stillness

Across every authentic spiritual tradition, from the temples of ancient Tamil Nadu to the high peaks of Nepal, the greatest masters have articulated the identical truth in different vocabularies: Be still. Let the thought of God alone remain. When we cease generating continuous mental noise, what was always present—peace, pure awareness, God—becomes immediately obvious.

- Lord Dakshinamurthy (The Primal Guru): Taught the supreme wisdom without uttering a single syllable. Seated silently beneath the sacred banyan tree, He initiated venerable aged sages into non-dual realization through silence alone—His right hand held in the gentle Chinmudra (the index finger touching the thumb). Without discourse or debate, restless thoughts dissolved in His presence, and the sages understood.
- Lord Murugan (“Summa Iru, Sol Ara”): When the poet-saint Arunagirinathar was about to cast himself from the temple tower in absolute despair, Lord Murugan caught him in His arms and imparted a two-word instruction that transformed his entire life: “Summa iru, sol ara” (சும்மா இரு, சொல் அற — “Be still; let all words cease”). Arunagirinathar spent the remainder of his days singing sublime verses celebrating the God who liberated him with two words.
- Mauna Guru & Thayumanavar: When the scholar-minister Thayumanavar implored his master Mauna Guru for the ultimate secret of existence, he was given that identical phrase: summa iru. Thayumanavar documented in ecstatic poetry that divine bliss is neither something to chase nor construct—it is simply what remains when internal noise stops.
- Saint Meikandar (Saiva Siddhanta): Explained why stillness dissolves karmic bondage. As long as one thinks “I am meditating” or “I am performing this pious action,” the individual ego remains the driver. When the seeker abandons personal agency and rests entirely in the divine will, the grip of past karma (prarabdha) loosens naturally.
- Ramalinga Swamigal & Mayandi Swamigal (Stillness in Action): Demonstrated that stillness is never lethargy or escapism. They erected temples, fed tens of thousands of hungry souls daily, and laboured tirelessly—proving that selfless, compassionate service (seva) exhausts the ego until it collapses spontaneously into silence. Stillness is not inactivity; it is intense activity with no false “I” claiming credit.

- Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi (Self-Inquiry): Formulated a direct method accessible to every modern seeker. Whenever an agitating thought arises, ask gently: “To whom does this thought come?” The response is inevitably: “To me.” Then inquire: “Who am I?” Tracing that question inward past the mental noise causes the mind to quiet of its own accord. As Bhagavan summarized: “Your duty is simply to be.”
- Shivapuri Baba (The Three Disciplines): Taught that the outer life must first be ordered through Physical and Moral discipline (fulfilling worldly duties and cultivating ethical clarity) so that the mind can focus exclusively on God during Spiritual discipline—whereupon the supreme realization arrives as a spontaneous flash.
- Patanjali (The Science of Yoga): Systematized this inward movement: holding attention on one point (dharana), allowing that focus to flow unbroken (dhyana), and culminating in the state where the observer and the observed merge (samadhi). Different words; the identical stillness.

“Stillness is not the absence of energy. It is the presence of absolute fullness, untouched by the agitation of ego.”

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2. Six Stages, Given in Grace

How does this stillness actually unfold in the life of an ordinary person? The unfolding of spiritual awakening is not an academic accomplishment, but an organic progression of divine grace:

STAGE 1: GRACE OPENS THE DOOR

Something inside softens first. It is not an engineered achievement, but an unearned impulse of divine compassion that awakens the heart.

STAGE 2: YOU START SHOWING UP

You begin establishing contact with the sacred—visiting temples, contemplating sacred verses, and weaving moments of reverence into daily life.

STAGE 3: ASKING FOR THE REAL THING

Mundane petitions give way to a sincere, desperate prayer for the ultimate experience—the realization that leaves nothing further to seek.

STAGE 4: THE LONGING INTENSIFIES

The hunger for Truth and the Guru eclipses trivial worldly ambitions. The pursuit of the divine becomes the singular axis of existence.

STAGE 5: RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME

Divine timing arranges the meeting. The Guru appears at the precise moment of readiness to impart direct wisdom and spiritual transmission.

STAGE 6: MERGING AT GOD’S FEET

Not an egoic trophy, but a complete dissolving. The illusion of separateness vanishes; the seeker and the sought were always one.

3. How to Practice This Today: Five Practical Disciplines

You do not need to wait for all six stages to unfold before you begin. You only need to start where you are:

- 1. Stop Doing, for a Few Minutes Daily: Sit quietly without trying to fix, regulate, or suppress your thoughts. Allow them to rise and dissipate naturally without engaging them.
- 2. Inquire Who is Thinking: When a surge of anxiety, pride, or ambition pulls at you, pause and softly ask: “To whom is this happening?” Step back into the silent witness observing the commotion.
- 3. Hold One Thought, Not Many: Anchor the mind to a single divine name, sacred mantra (Aum Saravanabhava), or heartfelt prayer. Return to it gently every time attention drifts.
- 4. Let the Noise Exhaust Itself: Whether through silent meditation or dedicated, selfless work, let the “I” that claims credit tire itself out until only quiet service remains.

- 5. Trust Divine Timing: The right teacher and the decisive insight arrive exactly when the vessel is prepared—never prematurely, and never by force.

4. The Guide and the Giver

No guru enlightens anyone through personal power—not Dakshinamurthy, not Murugan, not Ramana, nor Shivapuri Baba. What the masters provide is a doorway, a sacred word, and a mirror in which to examine the self.

The realization on the other side of that threshold is God's prerogative alone to grant. This is why every authentic sage speaks with profound humility and makes no personal claim of ownership over the fruit: they point the way; they do not own the destination.

5. Signs of a Life That Has Gone Still

When inner stillness takes root, it reveals itself not through lofty speech or esoteric claims, but through unmistakable changes in daily living:

- Complete Surrender: No hidden personal agendas; life is offered unreservedly to the Divine.
- Freedom from Anxiety: No inner turmoil, because nothing is being demanded from outer circumstances.
- Spontaneous Right Action: Conduct arises naturally from the needs of the moment, free from calculated self-interest.
- Dispassion toward Acclaim: Complete indifference to the allure of fame, wealth, or personal prestige.
- Fearlessness: Total freedom from intimidation by power, authority, or the fear of death.
- Absence of Spiritual Pride: No desire to be recognized or revered as an enlightened being.
- Dissolution of the False Self: The demanding, insecure ego is no longer running the show.

6. Conclusion: Be Still

This teaching is not an exhausting checklist to perform; it is what remains, pure and luminous, once the noise has finally stopped. It is the identical stillness that Dakshinamurthy transmitted in silence, Murugan bestowed in two words (Summa Iru), and Ramana Maharshi unlocked with a single question.

Be still. That is the whole of it.
