

“The Old Hall Rises in the New World,” [declared](#) the Jan/Feb 2017 edition of the Maharshi Newsletter. Approximately eight years ago, the ‘Old Hall’ in the West was inaugurated for the use of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi’s devotees at the home of Dr. Palani Rathinasamy and Smt. Mathy Rathinasamy. Many who stepped into the Old Hall at Tiruvannamalai would attest to the divine peace they felt in that place, where Bhagavan spent nearly 23 years sitting on the sofa. Devotees who enter the new ‘Old Hall’ feel that same peace and quietude.

In December 2013, the first retreat was organized in Tampa with roughly 60 participants actively participating under the single roof. The wonderful write-up, which appeared in the [Maharshi](#), began attracting more and wider participants in the subsequent years.

Now, it has been a tradition for nearly 11 years (with the exception of ‘COVID years’) for many devotees across North and South Americas to assemble for 2 to 3 days in and around Tampa for a retreat. The annual retreat has become a staple for many devotees, where sincere seekers and devotees of Bhagavan assemble once a year under the same location. In addition to the proximity to the ‘Old Hall’ in Tampa, many prior participants felt divine peace being in the company of Bhagavan’s children of the west with Bhajans, children’s programs, walks, listening to invited talks or guest lectures, or simply sitting in meditation while basking in the glory of Bhagavan’s name in their hearts. Some of the past talks at the Tampa retreat are still available on YouTube.

In 2023, the Tampa retreat resumed under the auspices of Sri Ramana Maharshi Heritage after a three-year hiatus primarily due to COVID-related travel restrictions. With nearly 60 participants, the 2023 retreat was a testament to Maharshi’s living presence among his devotees. The event was organized at the Marriott Center due to policy changes at the previous retreat venue. As Bhagavan once told a devotee that happiness could also be found in busy centers and not just in forests because the real happiness is in the Self, the devotees at the 2023 retreat felt the same peace even in the commercial hall. With Dr. Anand Ramanan, the president of Sri Ramanasramam, in attendance, the event also marked the conclusion of the year-long centenary celebration.

The 2024 retreat is scheduled to take place from December 27-30, with an expected attendance of 60 sincere devotees of Sri Bhagavan traveling from various parts of the US, Canada, and South America.

*The Heart is the Self. It is not within or without. The mind is Its sakti. – Talk 293 in Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi.*