

Saranagathi



eNewsletter from www.sriramanamaharshi.org

In this Issue

Dear Devotees,

From this issue, we intend to start a series on Sri Bhagavan's 'attendants'. These were sincere devotees who spent virtually the entire day with Sri Bhagavan attending to His simple needs. The earliest amongst these were Sri Pazhaniswami and Ayyaswami. In this issue we present the first part of Sri Pazhaniswami's life story.

Following this is a moving story of 3 young 'devotees' of Sri Bhagavan from California, who visited the Ashram recently.

The concluding article is 'A report from Sri Ramanasramam', where we cover the Athirudra yagnam performed at the Ashram.

We would again like to draw your attention to recent additions to the website. We welcome your

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feedback on how to improve and enhance the website.

We hope to hear from you, about your [satsangs](http://www.saranagathi.org) and experience of Him. Please email them to saranagathi@sriramanamaharshi.org

Ever Truly In Sri Bhagavan,

The Editorial Team.

The Essence of Instruction

*Absorption in the heart of being,
Whence we sprang,
Is the path of action, of devotion,
Of union and of knowledge.*

– Upadesa Saram by Sri Bhagavan (Verse 10)

Sri Pazhaniswami

Sri Pazhaniswami was the first attendant, who was indeed the first devotee to attach himself permanently to Sri Bhagavan after He came to Tiruvannamalai. He remained with Sri Bhagavan till his death.



Pazhaniswami was a Malayali living in the house of one Nagalingaswami, carrying on the worship of Lord Vinayaka in Ayyankulam Street, and living upon the naivedya (food offered to the God) as his solitary meal for the day, not even using salt for seasoning his food. One Srinivasa Iyer, seeing his devotion to the stone idol, said, "What use is there in spending your lifetime with this stone Swami? There is a young Swami of flesh and blood at Gurumurtham. He is steeped in austerities (tapas) like the youthful Dhruva mentioned in the Puranas. If you go and serve him, and adhere to him, your life would serve its purpose." Others also pointed out to him that Brahmana Swami had no attendant, and that it was a blessing to serve such a high soul. Spurred on by their urging, Pazhaniswami went to Gurumurtham, saw the Swami and at once believed that he had discovered his saviour. At first, Pazhaniswami continued his worship at the Vinayakar temple, but in a short while, his faith in the living Guru increased and became all-absorbing and he

discontinued his worship at the temple. Thus the old order changed, yielding place to new and God (Vinayaka) fulfilled himself by sending the devotee on to Brahmana Swami, who thenceforward was his all in all, his only raft to cross this ocean of troubles and his anchor for the remaining term (nearly twenty-one years), of his life. Pazhaniswami attended constantly on the Swami. In fact he followed him like a shadow, he received the bits of food-offerings supplied at noon, mixed them up and offered them, to the Swami as his mid-day meal, and returned the rest of the offerings to those who brought them, as bhuktasesha or prasada, that is, the blessing of the Swami.

Pazhaniswami's Services

After a few months they moved to a nearby mango grove. Here they raised two crude platforms which were occupied by Sri Bhagavan and Pazhaniswami. Pazhaniswami used to pass through the footpath between rows of prickly pear to bring begged food every night from Kizhnathoor. Though the Swami protested Pazhaniswami persisted in doing so. He was free from greed or attachment of any kind. He had earned some money by service in the Straits Settlements and deposited his small savings with someone in the town from which he used to draw for emergencies. He was offered a comfortable living in his native village which he refused and continued to live with his Master till the end.

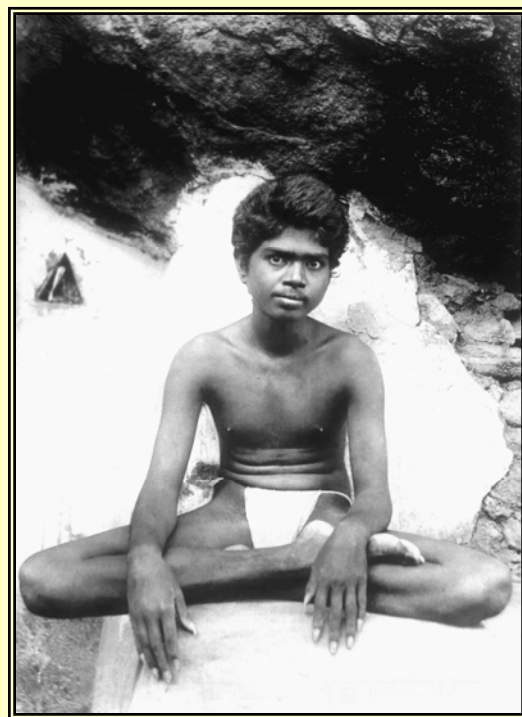
Later Sri Bhagavan spoke about his life at the mango grove. "I was in the mango grove next to Gurumurtham, for some time. At that time, I had a small shed under a mango tree. They erected

something overhead like a nest to prevent rain falling on me. There was however not enough space even to stretch my legs fully while sleeping. I used to be sitting almost all the time like a bird in its nest. Opposite my shed, Pazhaniswami also had a small shed. In that huge garden, only the two of us used to stay.”

In the Arunagirinathar Temple

For some reasons, the mango-grove proving no longer convenient, the Swami moved to a small temple of Arunagirinathar (i.e. Arunachaleswara, not the Tamil saint of that name) which is situated near the Ayyan Kulam (the tank in which young Venkataraman threw the money he had on arrival at Arunachala). When he started from the grove Sri Bhagavan wished to see if he could remain absolutely alone without any human contact, even the contact of an ardent disciple like Pazhaniswami. Sri Bhagavan urged him to go his own way by saying, “You go one way, beg your food and get on. Let me go another way, beg for my food and so on. Let us not live together.” But Pazhaniswami, after the day’s begging was over, came back to Sri Bhagavan at the Arunagirinathar temple and declared, “Where can I go?” It was no more possible for him to break away from the Swami than for a tender calf to break away from its mother.

During the month that he spent in the Arunagirinathar Temple the young Swami lived the life of a mendicant, begging alms in the streets of Tiruvannamalai himself though Pazhaniswami continued to stay with him.



Virupaksha Cave

When Pazhaniswami and Sri Bhagavan were in Virupaksha Cave, Pazhaniswami requested Sri Bhagavan to copy out and give him some stanzas written by Sri Adi Sankara but they had no note books or paper at that time. Sri Bhagavan therefore collected every scrap of paper he could, stitched them together into a notebook, and then wrote out the stanzas for Pazhaniswami. This small notebook contains a collection from about ten books of Sri Adi Sankara. This notebook was the only article they took with them when they left Virupaksha. As Pazhaniswami wore only a towel he used to fold the note book and tuck it in his waist. It is a small notebook written in Malayalam characters and copied from the Nagri script.

In the early days at Virupaksha Cave they had nothing but an earthen pot. They did not even have a towel then. Pazhaniswami alone had a towel to

wrap around his waist. The cave had no iron doors; there was only a wooden door with a wooden latch. They used to bolt it from outside with a small stick, go around the Hill, wander hither and thither and return after a week or ten days, opening the cave door with the help of another stick. That was their key at that time, no need to keep it safely! The only article they took with them was that first notebook. That was enough for them. At that time and even afterwards, Bhagavan did not write anything of his own accord.

Pazhaniswami would read one chapter from the Adhyatma Ramayana before he served food to Sri Bhagavan. Then only would he eat. His reading was very slow and halting. Sometimes people who had come from outside had to wait for a long time to have their meal, as Pazhaniswami read a chapter. Bhagavan began to feel bad about keeping hungry people waiting. One day he said to Pazhaniswami,

“Pazhaniswami, do you want to read it yourself or is it enough if you hear it read by somebody?” He said, “It is enough if I hear it read.” Next day Bhagavan took the book and found that the Malayalam script was a combination of Tamil and Grantha scripts, both of which he knew. Then he started reading the Adhyatma Ramayana in Malayalam. This is how he came to read and write Malayalam.

Pazhaniswami used to bring books like Kaivalyam, Vedanta Chudamani, and Jnana Vasishtam from Nagalingaswami in town. As there was no crowd during the time when Sri Bhagavan was at Virupaksha Cave, he was able to read the books undisturbed. He was surprised that those books were only describing the various experiences He had had. When he read them, it was like being reminded of a thing forgotten.

(To be continued in the next issue)

Caught in the tiger’s jaws of the Master’s Grace

Jane Molnar of California writes about how her family became ardent devotees of Sri Bhagavan.

“I would like to describe to you the remarkable story of how Bhagavan caught us in His net of Grace. Almost three years ago my middle son James (who was six at the time) chanced to see a picture of Bhagavan on my computer screen. James looked at Bhagavan very intently for a long time, and the next night asked to see His photograph again. Day after day he would look at Him for hours at a time, unable to lift his eyes from Bhagavan. As James gazed at Bhagavan I would look back and forth between Bhagavan’s face and James and it slowly became clear to me that my little son was looking directly at God. There was no other way to account for what happened to my child. Bhagavan’s

presence was so strong and the force of His love so powerful that He quickly captured my other two little boys (who were three and seven then) as well and I could not resist Him either. In no time at all He became everything to us. I called Arunachala Ashram in New York, telling them what had happened and asking them to send some photos. In that way we came to know devotees of Arunachala Ashrama, as they kindly supplied us with many more photos, books and DVDs.

When the first photos of Bhagavan and Arunachala arrived I placed them on an altar we

made. James looked back and forth between them and told me that even though people might think Bhagavan and Arunachala looked different, they were really identical. He then began begging me to take him to Arunachala. He would plead till very late at night, whispering, "Just sell the house. Leave a note! Let's leave NOW!" This longing to go to Arunachala spread to the other boys as well and they would take turns begging and pleading. The three would even team up and plead together with a great urgency that bordered at times on desperation. Though they had not been raised up until that point in a devotional house or culture, they felt an overwhelming urge to reach Bhagavan's shrine so they could prostrate to Him there. In our house they began doing aratis and and chanting and asking to learn Sanskrit. Even their play became centred on Bhagavan

and they would endlessly act out scenes from long ago involving Bhagavan and Muruganar and Annamalai Swami and other devotees. They firmly insist that their true home is Arunachala even though they have not yet set foot there. Over time their devotion spread to an intense desire to understand and practice self-enquiry and they began questioning me day and night on Bhagavan's teachings and even waking me up in the middle of the night to read aloud Bhagavan's promises from Padamalai.

Jane and her three boys, Thomas, James and William, finally did arrive at Sri Ramanasramam on February 9th and spent three glorious weeks at the feet of their Master, in total awe and devotion.

Sri Ramana Reminiscences

The following is an extract from Sri G.V. Subbaramayya's book Sri Ramana Reminiscences. In it he recounts his visit to the Ashram in February 1937 along with his five year old daughter, Lalitha. It is a moving account of how Sri Bhagavan showers this fortunate child with tender love and Grace.

".....Lalita was over active in the Hall, pulling Sri Bhagavan's punkah, meddling with His books and things, unmindful of the Ashram rules. Thrice Sri Bhagavan asked her, "What are you doing there?" and thrice she replied, "I am keeping quiet." At this Sri Bhagavan remarked, "This child is so busily active, but at the same time she affirms that she is keeping quiet. A little child says this but the elders are unable to understand." From now, she became a favorite of Sri Bhagavan who cajoled her to dance and sing Tamil songs that she learned from a Tamilian teacher. Sri Bhagavan evidently enjoyed the entertainment and His Grace seemed to overflow on the occasion.

Lalita's leave taking was a most moving scene. As she knelt down, Sri Bhagavan who was then squatting after his breakfast, tapped her on the back with his stick saying, "This is to keep you in mind lest you should forget." Then He lifted her and hugged her to His breast. He told the people then present, "The specialty of this child is this. She has no sense of newness or strangeness. All beings and all things she takes as her own....."

Athirudra Maha Yagnam

An Athirudra Maha Yagnam was performed at Sri Ramanasramam from 15th to 22nd March 2009, for world peace and prosperity.

Sri Rudram contains eleven chapters in praise of Siva. Repeating Sri Rudram 14,641 times is called Athirudram. More than 150 students and their teachers from various patasalas in Tamilnadu and Karnataka took part in the japam.

The Yagnam was held at the Yaga Sala constructed specially for this purpose north of the Old Hall and west of the old Dining Hall. On the concluding day after deeparadhana and mahaabhishekam at Sri Bhagavan's Shrine, the kalasams from the yagasala were ceremoniously taken round the Shrines of Matrubhuteswara and Sri Bhagavan. Sri Ramaneswara Mahalingam was bathed with the sacred water in the kalasam. On the same evening the participants were honoured.

The Yagnam was organized by Nallicheri Jambunaatha Ganapaatigal, Senthil Ganapaatigal and Trustees.



New



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