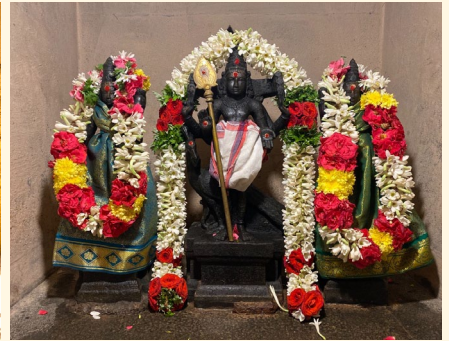


Saranagati



SARANAGATI
SRI RAMANASRAMAM

APRIL 2022 EXTENDED EDITION
VOL. 16, NO.4



D. Thiyagarajan



Saranagati



APRIL 2022 EXTENDED EDITION
VOL. 16, NO.4

IN THIS
ISSUE

Dear Devotees,

As we hopefully make our way towards the post-covid era, the month of March began with the extension of the Ashram's opening hours and ended with the annual three-day Maharudram recitation with sixty purohiths in the Grantalaya auditorium. April 1st marked a full return to normal Ashram life after two years. The new darshan hours are 5am-11 and 2pm- 9.

In this April 2022 issue of *Saranagati* we look at the first part of the life of T.R. Kanakammal in her centenary year. Born 13th February 1922, she merged at the feet of Arunachala on Punarvasu Day, on Bhagavan's Jayanti day no less, in his shrine on 1st January 2010 before a crowd of six hundred devotees who had come for the auspicious celebration.

For videos, photos and further news of events, go to <http://www.sriramanamaharshi.org> or write to us at saranagathi@sriramanamaharshi.org.

In Sri Bhagavan,
Saranagati

<i>In Profile: T.R. Kanakammal</i>	3
<i>Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Kanakammal Centenary</i>	6
<i>Announcement: Sri Ramana Maharshi Heritage</i>	7
<i>From the Archives: Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai</i>	9
<i>Ramana Maharshi Academy for the Blind</i>	10
<i>Ashram Centenary Year: In the Beginning</i>	11
<i>Ashram Centenary Year: One Hundred Years in Brief</i>	12
<i>Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Maharudram</i>	14
<i>Sri Bhagavan's Ayurvedic Recipes</i>	14

Calendar of Ashram Events

2nd April (Sat) Jagadish Swami Day/Telugu New Year
7th April (Thu) Sri Ramana Navami
8th April (Fri) Sri Vidya Homa
9th April (Sat) Punarvasu Day
14th April (Thu) Tamil New Year/Nirvana Room Chanting
16th April (Sat) Full Moon

17th April (Sun) Major Chadwick Day
28th April (Thu) Bhagavan's Aradhana Day
7th May (Sat) Punarvasu Day
15th May (Sun) Full Moon
20th May (Fri) First Day of the Ashram's Centenary
24th May (Tue) Mahapuja





IN PROFILE

T.R. Kanakammal

Devotees blessed to have known T.R. Kanakammal will testify to her many gifts—the intensity of her devotion, the depth of her understanding and the way she embodied Bhagavan’s teaching—but they may not be content to leave it there. Those who spent time in her presence will feel compelled to express what they met firsthand in her company, the magnitude of the spiritual energy field she manifested and carried with her. Devotees who had the privilege to travel with her, for instance, on a temple tour in South

India commented on the experience of being in the car with her for extended periods. They came to know that the remarkable thing about her was not so much anything she said or wrote but, more substantially, the vast expanse of silence within her. To them, it felt as though there were a great void at her centre, some immense interior space linked with the Divine.

Of course, Kanakammal was very ordinary in her outward behaviour. When she spoke, she might speak of common concerns like anyone else. She saw herself as a simple devotee of Bhagavan, ever giving him the glory, and she never brooked others praising her. However, if people were prone to extol her virtues, this would not have come as a surprise to her parents for they had seen early on the potential in their daughter.

Precocious from early childhood, their child evinced religious zeal and a singular spiritual resolve that precluded any interest in the children’s games of her peers.

A Tamil proverb says that the ninth child in the family is destined for greatness. Kanakammal was indeed number nine of the thirteen children born to Sri T. Ranganatha Iyer and Smt. Radhambal. The piety of her Tamil Brahmin family would have been a great support, especially for one exhibiting such an inclination toward religious life:

I grew up in a family which was known for its devotion to the Sankaracharya Swami of Kanchi. When I came away at a young age to Sri Ramanasramam, leaving the family atmosphere and the ways of the world, and began to tread the Bhagavan Ramana way, my family was unable to reconcile themselves to it. Though displeased, they [were unable to] dissuade me because I had the sympathy and support of my father who understood my aspirations.¹

In 1918, Kanaka’s father started a partnership in Andhra Pradesh where he had moved the family sometime earlier. Though Tamil was their mother tongue, the children learned Telugu in school. Kanaka’s uncle, Ramakrishna Iyer, remained in Tiruvannalamalai where he served as District Munsif and continued his frequent darshans with Bhagavan which had already begun in the days up on the hill:

My uncle Ramakrishna Iyer was one of the earlier devotees to come to Bhagavan. He had surrendered himself to Bhagavan while the Master was staying at Virupaksha Cave. Ramakrishna Iyer’s younger

¹ ‘This and That’, *The Mountain Path*, Jayanti, 1989, p. 143.





brother, Ranganatha Iyer, [was] my father. My uncle and father were born in Padi Agraharam village, in Chengam Taluk, about 20 miles west of Tiruvannamalai. In their adult years, however, both settled down in Tiruvannamalai. My father often visited his brother, and the two would go to Ramanasramam. It is only because of my elders' devotion to Bhagavan that I came into Bhagavan's fold. ²

As district Munsif in charge of settling minor legal affairs in Tiruvannamalai, Ramakrishna Iyer was well-placed and proved to be of service to the extended family which included Sri Ramanasramam:

In any situation, the Ashram authorities could depend upon my uncle for prompt and generous assistance. Once, Chinna-swami sent word that the priest who usually performed the puja at the Ashram temple had not come that day. Immediately, my uncle sent his cook to the Ashram, so that the puja could be performed on time. In the early days, the Ashram had to deal with several problems. Every time trouble arose, my uncle used to take charge of the situation and try to find a suitable solution. When thieves broke into the Ashram [in June 1924], it was my uncle whom Kunjuswami fetched from the town. My uncle could always be depended upon to assist the Ashram authorities in every possible manner. Whenever the need arose, Chinna-swami would send word to him, and my uncle never let him down. ³

Kanaka's aunt Ponnammal, Ramakrishna Iyer's wife, was a great inspiration to her and modelled for the young girl alternatives to common modes of living. Kanaka saw in her aunt someone who, like herself, was inexorably drawn to God, even to the point of having to respectfully forego societal expectations which otherwise exerted a strong influence on women in early 20th-century South India. Her aunt's steadfast devotion would later give Kanakammal courage to remain firm in her determination to follow the spiritual path full-time:

My uncle's wife, Ponnammal was an extraordinary lady. She had no worldly attachments. She had received initiation from Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni and was constantly engaged in prayers and puja. She paid little attention to household affairs. Nevertheless, the household functioned quite smoothly, and there was no dearth of visitors. She was a beautiful lady with a radiant face. She worshipped Goddess Shaketi and used to say that because of her intense devotion to the Goddess, she experienced something like an electric shock, if ever her bare feet touched the ground. So,

² *Cherished Memories*, T.R. Kanakammal, 2002, p. 46.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

she always wore a pair of wooden sandals on her feet. If relatives or guests arrived unexpectedly, she would immediately pick up her slippers and go into her room. She neither welcomed visitors nor objected to their visits. She simply did not get involved in taking care of guests. But my uncle never complained about this. Instead, he took care of the details himself. There was a young Brahmin boy to take care of the cooking and my uncle managed all the other household affairs. ⁴

Throughout her early childhood, Kanaka had heard her father and uncle discussing at length experiences they had had in the presence of Bhagavan, she had never seen the master face to face but waited her turn patiently. In 1930, the opportunity came at last:

Every time my parents took me to my uncle's house, Ramakrishna Iyer would arrange for us all to visit Ramanasramam to see Bhagavan. On one occasion, my uncle had some work to do, and could not take me to the Ashram himself. So he sent me with one of our relatives. I was around eight years old at the time. When we reached the Ashram, we found Bhagavan sitting on a small platform at the entrance to a thatched shed. I prostrated before Bhagavan and then stood watching him silently. Bhagavan made an inquiry to my companion, and he replied to him. I do not remember the conversation now. But I remember the beatific smile Bhagavan gave me. The memory of that smile has stayed with me ever afterwards. ⁵

Even if this first darshan caused her to be drawn to Bhagavan, owing to her tender age, she was not free to come to Bhagavan when she pleased. It would thus be three years before she could come again. In the meantime, she read the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda and stayed indoors to spend her days in meditation:⁶

While I was in the fifth standard, I had a lesson on Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa which made a profound impression on me. I felt inspired by Sri Ramakrishna's story, and it awakened in me a desire for a life free from worldly attachments. I wanted to dedicate myself to spiritual pursuits and this desire grew stronger with the passage of time. ⁷

On the Question of Marriage

Long aware of the intensity of their daughter's fascination with religious life, when Kanaka turned

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁶ *Introducing, The Mountain Path*, April 1983, pp. 118-119.

⁷ *Cherished Memories*, p. 53.





eleven, her father and mother worried about her reluctance to get married. Fearful that she might run away from home to seek God, her father slept near her during this period to keep an eye on her. One night, after she fell asleep following a day of meditation and prayer, she found herself in a state somewhere between dream and vision and suddenly awoke to find Swami Vivekananda standing before her scattering vibhūti all over her. The entire room was filled with the scent of vibhūti and her father woke up, exclaiming in wonder: ‘Where and how has this smell of vibhūti emanated so suddenly?’⁸

Not long after this, she witnessed the grief of a neighbour whose husband had just died. Observing the attachment that came with the householder’s life, she resolved never to get married. Her parents, however, were all the while quietly laying other plans:

When I was twelve years old, my parents started planning my marriage. I tried my best to convince my father that marriage was not for me. I begged and pleaded, but my efforts were all in vain. The elders in the family forced my father to finalise my marriage immediately, in spite of my vehement protests. I went to my father and expressed my feelings to him in clear terms: ‘In spite of my repeated protests you have finalised my marriage. I might be young, but my determination is very strong. I am absolutely certain that I cannot lead the life of a married woman. By ignoring my protests, and going ahead with your plans for my marriage, you are making a mistake which you will come to regret. If later on, you happen to find yourself in an embarrassing situation, please do not blame me.’

Kanakammal goes on:

Now when I think about it, I am amazed at my own boldness. I had never spoken to my father like that before. I think some power beyond my comprehension must have activated me and given me the courage to talk to my father so boldly at the age of twelve.

But rather than being annoyed, her father responded very compassionately:

Kanaka, all the arrangements for your marriage have been finalised. So, please co-operate with us. Later, if you continue to feel as you do now, I will try to comply with your wishes. I will not force you into anything against your wish. But please do not stop the marriage now, at this stage.⁹

⁸ *The Commentary on Anuvāda Nūṁmalai*, p. vi.

⁹ *Cherished Memories*, p. 54.



Kanakammal’s father and mother, Sri T. Ranganatha Iyer and Smt. Radhambal in 1952

The marriage ceremony proceeded as planned but years later when the time came for her to join her husband and his family, Kanaka would not go. She only persisted in her usual schedule of sadhana, prayer and recitation, just as she had promised her father she would do:

The entire household was plunged into gloom. My mother was heartbroken. My father was bound by his promise to me and did not try to force me to do anything against my wish. I remained oblivious to all the conflicting emotions of my family. I calmly continued with my normal routine. I would get up at 3 am every morning. After having my bath, I would sit in meditation under a tree in our garden. After a few hours of meditation, I would perform puja, recite prayers, and read from the scriptures.¹⁰

Some in the family thought the girl must be possessed of a demon or devil and efforts were made to bring in healers to rid her of this evil spirit. But her father knew the real reason for her tenacity. In time, her parents had no choice but to accede to her wishes and her marriage was never consummated.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 55.





Even though tensions over the broken marriage abated in the following months, her marital status remained a source of ongoing concern. What and how would Kanaka's life play out, the family worried? For her part, she only ever wanted to come and stay near Sri Bhagavan to continue her life of prayer and meditation. But her parents were pained at the thought of their young daughter living on her own in Tiruvannamalai. Meanwhile Kanaka's desire grew ever more intense:

Each time I went to Ramanasramam and saw Bhagavan, my heart would melt, and tears would pour down my face. There was a great longing in my heart—a longing to settle down at Ramanasramam.

In 1944 I visited the Ashram. When I entered the hall and saw devotees sitting in meditation in his presence, my heart cried silently, 'Bhagavan! I long to stay in your presence, just like all these fortunate people. Will my prayers never be answered? How much longer should I waste my time in journeying to and fro?'

*The thought brought tears to my eyes. With brimming eyes, I prostrated and stood up. Bhagavan gave me a long look of compassion which moved me. But I was unable to express my anguish in words. I usually remained silent in his presence. Somehow, I could never talk to him openly, even to tell him about the great longing in my heart.*¹¹

Still living at home, Kanaka made regular trips to the Ashram, determined to speak to Bhagavan for the first time, not least of all, to tell him of her dilemma:

¹¹ Ibid., p. 56.

*Many times, I had seen devotees approaching Bhagavan with some query or the other, and I had heard Bhagavan clearing their doubts. At times I would think, 'I must also ask him something.' But immediately a voice within me would say, 'Do you really need to tell Bhagavan what is in your heart? Is he not capable of reading your thoughts?' With this thought the desire to ask questions would disappear from my mind. As soon as the desire died out, my mind would become light and free. I could feel a great peace settling on me. All desires for speech and action would disappear and my mind would lay itself down at Bhagavan's feet completely calm and content. I cannot explain this strange phenomenon. It was not that I feared that Bhagavan might not reply if I asked him something. He was ever gracious to all devotees, regardless of their individual merits. I am not capable of describing my own state of mind. Anyway, this feeling did not really bother me much. It did not seem particularly important to me. I just accepted this state of affairs, and never wasted my time trying to find an explanation for it. Meanwhile, my restlessness affected my parents deeply, but their concern for me made it difficult for them to agree to my settling down at Ramanasramam. It took me quite some time to persuade them.*¹²

The casual observer may appreciate the uniqueness of the circumstance. Her parents were in a bind and feared for their daughter's future. Suppose when it was too late for marriage, the fervency of her faith and devotion were to ebb in favour of sudden longings for a family? Suppose she were later to have a drastic change of heart regarding her life's path?

¹² Ibid., p. 56.

Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Smt. T.R. Kanakammal Birth Centenary



Kanakammal. Since Kanakammal served Sri Muruganar for about two decades and studied with him his commentaries on *Ramana Sannidhi Murai* and Bhagavan's *Collected Works*, Muruganar's role in Kanakammal's life was highlighted with chanting of verses from *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai*. The function closed with chanting from Choolaimedu Ramanan and an offering of flowers to Kanakammal's photo image. —





These fears proved unfounded and Kanakammal's resolve never diminished. In fact she underwent a series of spiritual breakthroughs that made her trajectory all the more unambiguous. This series of spiritual openings led to an event that served as an inflection point regarding her parents' apprehensions about God's call on her life. Now they knew they had to surrender to the Divine:

A few days before I finally came to Arunachala, I had a strange and wonderful experience. It was very early in the morning, and I was still asleep. It was my normal practice to get up at 4am and to spend the quiet early morning hours in meditation. On this particular morning, I had not risen from my bed when I felt Bhagavan's presence. I felt that he was sitting beside me, caressing me from the neck to the heart. He smiled at me and said, 'What is it that you gave me? Why is it that I love you so much?' As he spoke, he continued to stroke my neck and throat with an infinitely tender touch. I cannot say how long this experience lasted. I am sure it was not just a dream. All my senses were aware of Bhagavan's presence by my side. With his words and his touch, Bhagavan brought a sense of peace and contentment to my restless heart. I have no idea how long I lay like that. When my sister-in-law noticed that I had not risen at my usual time, she came and woke me up. Even after getting up, I continued to be aware of some unusual feeling deep in my heart. A deep peace had taken possession of my senses. Though I carried on with my routine activities, I was in a dazed state. My parents noticed the change in me. They were finally convinced that family life was not for me. They had no choice but to let me have my way. So, in 1946, I came to Tiruvannamalai, with my parents' permission to stay there permanently. My spiritual journey had begun at last!¹³

13 Ibid., p. 57.

One of the chapters in the life of every saint is opposition from the family over their son or daughter taking up renunciate life. This applied to Bhagavan whose intense spiritual call met with resistance from his mother, uncle, and elder brother. Bhagavan and Kanakammal had unavoidably ignored the societal script by not taking up married life, but rather than bring shame to their families, they would in the end bring them honour. If early on some in Kanakammal's family had viewed her as an outsider, her devotion won them over—and even among the most prominent of their associates:

After I moved to Tiruvannamalai, I had visited the Kanchi Acharya several times and had his darshan but he never directly or obliquely made any critical reference to my chosen way of life. On the other hand, every time I went to the Acharya for darshan he would make the kindest enquiries and make a benedictory gesture with his hand with a most benign smile on his face. I took it as his unspoken approval. I once visited the Sage of Kanchi along with my aged grandmother. It was her deep wish that I should spend some time at Kanchi having frequent darshans of the Acharya and she asked me to stay back with her. However, I did not agree. My grandma talked about this to the Acharya in a plaintive mood and requested him to bid me stay there. I was overjoyed to hear the Mahatma's reply; looking at me with compassion, he told my grandma: 'What difference does it make if she is here or is there?'

What more did I want in life? Deeply moved by his words which clearly conveyed his blessings to me for my way of life, I gazed at the Acharya in gratitude with tears in my eyes.¹⁴

14 'This and That', *The Mountain Path*, Jayanti, 1989, p. 143.

Announcement: Sri Ramana Maharshi Heritage



Sri Ramana Maharshi Heritage (SRMH) is a newly created 501 (c) (3), registered non-profit in the United States. The organization's purpose is to preserve Sri Ramana Maharshi's heritage and to serve devotees who are drawn to the life and teachings of Bhagavan. The new entity's objectives are aligned with those of Sri Ramanasramam in India. Devotees in the United States who wish to donate towards and participate in Sri Ramanasramam's charitable initiatives in India can learn more by visiting the SRMH website: <https://www.srmh.org/> or by sending an email to: sriramanamaharshiheritage@gmail.com.





Settling into a New Life

With her parents' blessings, Kanakammal came to live permanently in Tiruvannamalai at the age of 24. As there were not many houses in Ramana Nagar in those days, she could not immediately find accommodation near the Ashram, but she was welcomed by her uncle Ramakrishna and aunt Ponnammal. However, since they lived on the opposite side of town, there was the problem of getting to the Ashram in the pre-dawn hours as it was not considered safe for a single young lady to walk the distance through the streets of the town alone, and she was loathe to trouble her relations to provide her an escort.

Among the established residences at the time of her arrival were the Bose Compound, the McIver Bungalow, the residences of Dr. T.N.K., Ceylon Ramachandra, Shanthammal, Kalyanaraman, Subrahmanyam, Anandammal, Sunita Chatterjee, Sub-Registrar Narayana Iyer, Alamelu Ammal, Pollachi Gounder, Dr. Syed, Dr. Anantha Narayana Rao, Ramanatha Iyer, Rajagopala Iyer, Gowri Ammal, Lokammal, Raju Chettiar, Cohen and Taleyarkhan. Kanakammal writes:

Most of these houses were occupied by the owners themselves and except for one or two, none of them had any rooms for rent. At last, we were able to secure a room in Komutti Lakshmi Ammal's house. My room was at the extreme end of the building. Along the fence at the back, there were several anthills which made it abundantly clear that I would have snakes for company. The room itself was very small, nothing more than four mud walls and a thatched roof. There was a large gap between the top of the door and the roof. This made it easy for cats and rats to visit me regularly. There was no electricity and no running water. There was a well in the compound, but the water in it was very muddy. The first person to use the well in the morning would be lucky enough to get clear water, but everyone who came later would have to make do with muddy water. Even this was limited in quantity. One could somehow manage to have a quick bath, but washing clothes was out of the question. Despite these disadvantages, I considered myself lucky to have found a room so close to the Ashram. I bought some pots and pans from a shop near the temple and arranged my things in my new home. Gradually, I settled into a routine.¹⁵

Kanakammal moved to Tiruvannamalai in 1946 not long after the conclusion of war when rationing was

¹⁵ *Cherished Memories*, p. 60.



Bhagavan in the Jubilee Hall, 1946

still in force. Rice, sugar, and kerosene were in short supply and there was not enough kerosene for the buses, so charcoal had to be used to run them. She comments:

The reader might feel that my life was full of problems, and that I must have been quite miserable. But it was not like that at all. I never felt the burden of my problems because the sight of Bhagavan's face early in the morning was enough to drive out all worries from my mind and fill it with joy and peace. A single smile could set my heart soaring. I would feel proud of myself for having been singled out for such a rare privilege.

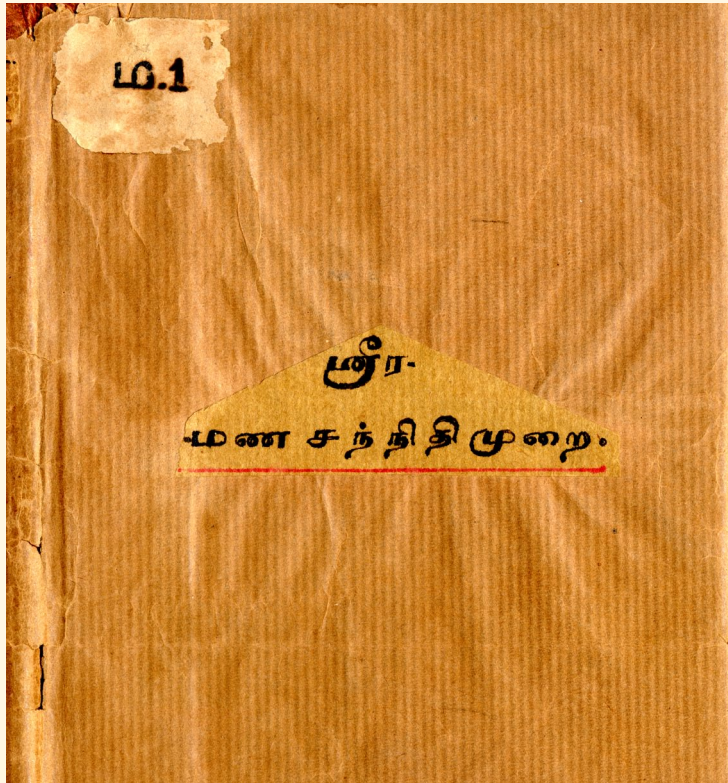
It is impossible to describe the charm of Bhagavan's smile. It must be experienced personally. It is hard to believe that so much power was packed into that frail frame. Bhagavan was very simple in his appearance, and he engaged himself in the most ordinary activities. Yet, one had but to look at that charming figure reclining upon the sofa to become totally captivated.

Despite all the difficulties and the frustrations of my domestic life, every morning my heart sang at the very thought of spending one more day in his presence, gazing at that enchanting form, and listening to his electrifying words. Even as I entered the Ashram, I could feel a transformation within myself. All my petty worries disappeared as if by magic. I felt as if each one of my faculties was slowly calming down. At the first glimpse of Bhagavan's form, my ego would start disintegrating. As I drew nearer to him, I became more like an empty shell, a body without a mind. It is difficult to describe this feeling.¹⁶ —

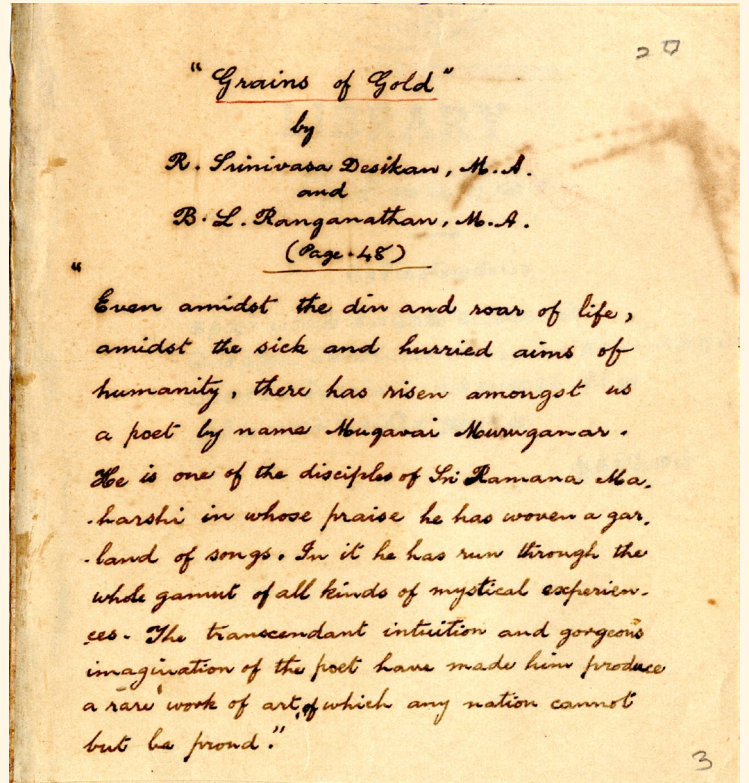
(to be continued)

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 62.





Bhagavan's notebook in his own hand with 'Sri Ra' at the top 'Mana Sannidhi Murai' below



Bhagavan copied out the 'review' of Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai called "Grains of Gold"

From the Archives: Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai

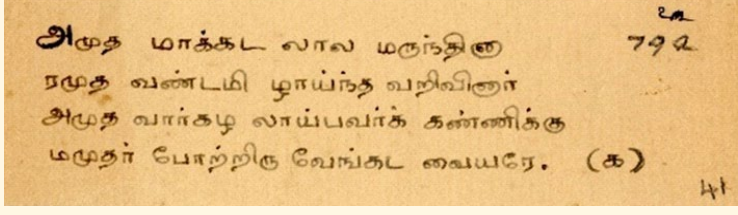
Kanakammal told how Muruganar was in the habit of writing poems and laying them at Bhagavan's feet. Upon reading one of these poems, Bhagavan once remarked, "These lines are just like the verses in Manickavachakar's *Tiruvachakam*. If you continue to compose verses in the same way, you can write another *Tiruvachakam*!"

Hearing this, Muruganar was overcome by emotion. He was so moved by Bhagavan's confidence in him that he broke down. He stammered, 'Bhagavan, in your compassion, you have compared me to the great poet-saint. It is true that you are Lord Siva Himself. But I am a worthless creature. I am not worthy of being compared to Manickavachakar. Where is the Sun and where is the firefly? I am not capable of emulating Manickavachakar on whom divine grace descended in abundance.'

Bhagavan listened to Muruganar but did not answer in words. His only response was a long deep look into Muruganar's eyes. This one glance was powerful enough to inspire in him the confidence to start writing. He started composing verses regularly. Coming to know of this, a devotee, N. R. Krishnamoorthy Iyer said to him, "These poems are quite good and it would be a good idea to systematically compile them into a Sannidhi Murai." Thus the *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai* started to take shape. Muruganar firmly believed that Bhagavan made use of him as an instrument for its creation.

The very first chapter in *Tiruvachakam* is called *Siva Puranam*, but the first edition of *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai* did not have an equivalent poem. Muruganar wanted to correct this and began writing. When he had written a few lines, he was suddenly assailed by doubts regarding the appropriateness of the chapter's title, *Ramana Puranam* (instead of *Siva Puranam*), which he had chosen to signify that its verses were in praise of the living God, Sri Ramana. Unable to settle





Amuda maak-kadal aalam arun-dinaar
Amuda van-tamizh aay-inda arivi-naar
Amuda vaar-kazhal aaiba-varkku annikkum
Amudar pol-tiru Venkata Iyere.

Translation: The one who drank the poison 'alahala' from the milky ocean, the Immaculate one, who analysed the nectarine ancient Tamil, those who abide at the holy feet, relish the nectarine bliss, Ramana, the Ambrosial one, who ruled me.

From the Archives: Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai (cont.)

his doubt, Muruganar laid the unfinished chapter at Bhagavan's feet. He did not say anything to Bhagavan about his inner turmoil and left the hall. When Muruganar returned to the hall that evening, Bhagavan returned the papers and said, 'Have a look.'

As Muruganar perused his lines, he became speechless seeing that, though Bhagavan had not known of his apprehensions, he had answered the disciple's unspoken question. At the top of each page Bhagavan had written the title *Ramana Puranam*. Moreover, he had composed additional lines and added them to the composition.

When the second edition of *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai* was prepared for publication, Muruganar added the *Ramana Puranam*. While checking the proofs, Muruganar added a footnote to the text

saying that only a portion of this chapter had been his own work and that the rest of the lines had been composed by Bhagavan. After correcting the proofs, Muruganar handed over the copy to Bhagavan and requested him to check it. Bhagavan noticed the footnote. At once, he turned to Muruganar and said, 'So! Only this portion is Bhagavan's, is it?'

These words had a shattering effect on Muruganar. He fell at Bhagavan's feet and sobbed, 'Bhagavan! What a grave mistake I have made! Please forgive me. I have not done anything at all. It is all your work. Every single line owes its existence to your infinite grace.'

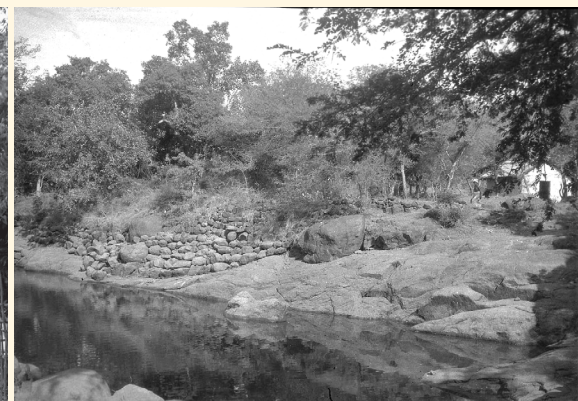
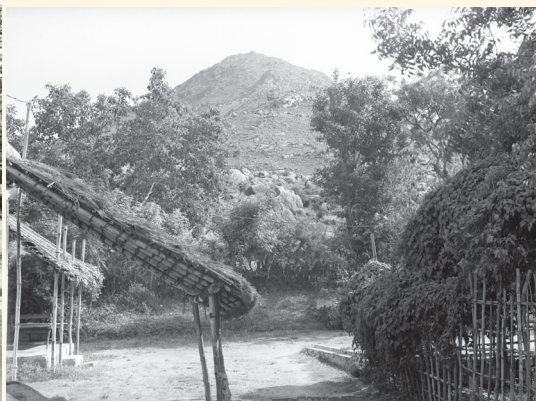
The first edition of *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai* came out in 1933. Bhagavan later copied out a number of verses in his own hand. The first edition copy of Bhagavan contains about sixty pages of Bhagavan's handwriting. —

The Ramana Maharshi Academy for the Blind



Sri T. V. Shrinivasan and Sri Thirumurthy came in September 1967 and while sitting in meditation at Skandasramam, felt prompted to do something for the world. While asleep that night, Bhagavan appeared in Srinivasan's dream and told him to start a school for the blind. Although he had no experience in working with the blind, he had teaching skills, having been a lecturer in biochemistry. After attending a training course for instructing the blind at the Belur Matt, Calcutta, he opened his school for the blind in his house with a single visually impaired student. Within a month he had 25 students. Today the school is thriving. Sri Shrinivasan visited the Ashram recently and told his story. —





The Ashram Centenary Year: In the Beginning

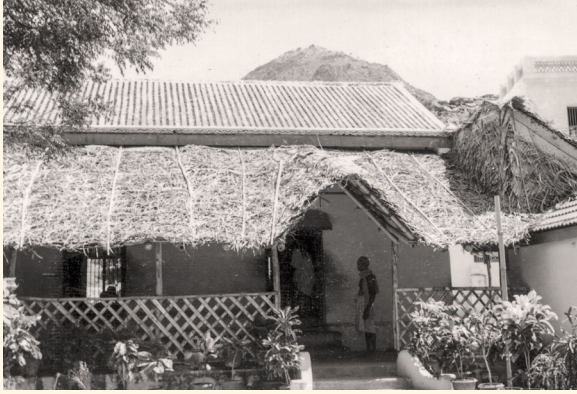
At 8 pm on 19th May, 1922, Mother left the body. Her remains were carried down to the foot of the hill and a samadhi site was established. The samadhi site initially chosen was next to the road but Kanakammal's uncle, Ramakrishna Iyer presciently interjected that it should lay some distance from the road in the event it were ever decided to construct a temple. A large pit was dug and the rites of a saint were performed. For ten days, ChinnaSwami and Ramanatha Brahmachari did puja each day.

At the tenth day puja, attended by a thousand people, it was decided to continue the pujas for a period of one *mandala* or forty-eight days. When earth was scooped out from a place just north of the burial site to provide for the raising of a platform around the Samadhi, a spring was discovered. Christened 'Alagamma Tirtha' (and later 'Ramana Thirtha'), water required for daily abhishekam was now readily available.

Soon, Dandapani Swami and ChinnaSwami decided to set up residence at Mother's Shrine to avoid the incessant climbs up to Skandasramam. They built a palm leaf hut over the Samadhi and another nearby it to use as a kitchen. Bhagavan regularly came down to visit them before returning to Skandasramam. However, one day in December when he came down, a devotee begged him to stay and accept his bhiksha. Residents at Skandasramam came down to join the feast. The day after the feast, a similar situation emerged with devotees from town pleading with Bhagavan to accept their bhiksha. Only Kunjuswami and Gopal Rao remained at Skandasramam but, despairing of being away from Bhagavan, they too came down. Skandasramam was now left exposed and soon it was reported that the clock and a wooden plank used by Bhagavan had been stolen. Bhagavan said, 'It is good. Nobody need go there to look after the place anymore.'

Bhagavan stayed on at Mother's Samadhi, never to live at Skandasramam again. Thus, it could be said, Sri Ramanasramam was established over a period of six months, from 20th May to 28th December 1922. —





The Ashram Centenary Year: One Hundred Years in Brief

1922 May 19th Friday 8 pm: Mother's Maha Samadhi. Somewhere after the third week of December around the 27th, Bhagavan came to stay in Sri Ramanasramam six months after the first stones were laid on 20th May.

1923 Jan 3rd: Sri Bhagavan's Jayanti celebrated at Mother's shrine first time.

1924 June 26th: Robbery at the ashram. Bhagavan receives blow on his left thigh. Kanakammal's uncle, Ramakrishna Iyer is called on for support.

1926: Bhagavan discontinues going for pradakshina; construction on the Old Hall commences.

1927 April 24th: Bhagavan composes *Atma Vidya*.

1927: Composes *Upadesa Saram* in Tamil, Telugu, Sanskrit and Malayalam.

1928: Composes *Ulladu Narpadu* in Tamil and Malayalam (*Sat Darshanam*).

1930: Ganapati Muni translates *Ulladu Narpadu* into Sanskrit under the title *Sat Darshanam*.

1933: Bhagavan translates *Atma Sakshatkara* into Tamil.

1933 May: Chinnaaswami appointed Secretary and Sarvadhikari by Power of Attorney executed by Bhagavan.

1936: A hearing to resolve official leadership challenge by Perumal Swami; Bhagavan translates *Sri Ramana Gita* into Malayalam.

1938 March: Bhagavan's Last Will and Testament is drawn up for the future functioning of the Ashram.

1939 September 1st: Foundation stone laid by Bhagavan for the Mathrubhuteswara Temple.

1940: Translates 42 verses of *Bhagavad Gita* into Tamil and Malayalam.

1941 May: Bhagavan stops going to the Ashram kitchen to help.

1945 June 5th: Foundation stone of the New Hall laid in presence of Bhagavan.

1946 September 1st: Golden Jubilee Celebration of Bhagavan's arrival at Arunachala; thatched pandal constructed for the purpose.

1948 June 18th: Cow Lakshmi attains nirvana.

1948: Translates *Atma Bodha* of Adi Sankara into Tamil

1949 March 14-17th: Mahakumbhabhishekam of Mathrubhuteswara Temple.

1949 June 1st: New hall is opened

1950 April 14, Friday: Mahanirvana of Bhagavan at 8:47 p.m. At that moment a shooting star, vividly luminous, coming from the South and moving slowly northward across the sky and disappearing behind the peak of Arunachala was observed by thousands.

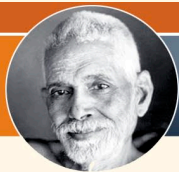
1950 September: Court case challenging the issue of a succession certificate.

1950: Devotees leave Tiruvannamalai. Ashram suffers financial burdens. T.N. Venkataraman forms the 14-member Executive Committee as a support.

1952 November: Ma Anandamayee lays the foundation stone for Bhagavan's Samadhi mantapam.

1953 January 3rd: Bhagavan's sister, Alamelu, passes away. On 29th January, Chinnaaswami passes away. T.N. Venkataraman succeeds as Ashram President; Chadwick raises funds to re-establish the Ashram's Vedapatasala (May) and the Sri Chakra Puja. In the years following,





T.N. Venkataraman, as Ashram President, fights a series of court cases on behalf of the Ashram.

1954 Aug: On the strength of Bhagavan's Will, courts declare TNV's right to manage the Ashram.

1956 Aug 30th: A case petitioning the court to bring the Ashram under the *Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act* was filed and initially, decided against the Ashram.

1959: An Ashram appeal in the Madras High Court was successful and the Ashram declared itself a Public Religious Trust, its sovereignty restored; Jan 1st: Mantapam over Bhagavan's Samadhi inaugurated.

1964: V. Ganesan assists Arthur Osborne in establishing *The Mountain Path*.

1967 June 18th: Mantapam with vimanam over Bhagavan's Samadhi is inaugurated with Mahakumbhabhishekam; expansion of the Morvi compound.

1970 May 3rd: Bhagavan's Samadhi Hall inaugurated.

1971 April 14th Bhagavan's commemoration stamp.

1979 Nov 22nd: Mahakumbhabhishekam

1980: Bhagavan's Birth Centenary celebrated Jan 1st-3rd; RMCL world tour of Ramana music programmes

1985: V. S. Mani returns to serve in the Ashram; reconstruction of Madurai Ramana Mandiram.

1986 May: Old Hall dismantled, reconstructed and reopened on 5th December; Vedapatasala renovated.

1992 V.S. Ramanan takes retirement to live at the Ashram.

1994: V.S. Ramanan is inaugurated as President; August: T.N. Venkataraman takes sannyas in Rishikesh and adopts the monastic name, Swami Ramanananda.

1995 July 7th: Mahakumbhabhishekam (coincides

with Madurai Meenakshi temple Kumbhabhishekam).

1996: New Ashram Dining Hall annex is inaugurated.

2003 Feb: Arakandanallur Temple renovation and Kumbhabhishekam (Nippon Ramana Kendra supporting). Ashram Archives is established, housing 1000 negatives of Bhagavan plus an additional 1000 printed photos, original manuscripts, and other articles connected with Bhagavan including handwriting.

2004 Nov 3rd: Mahakumbhabhishekam; 125th Jayanti, Ratha Yatra to spread *Aksaramanamalai* around Tamil Nadu, Andhra, and Kerala.

2006: Sundara Mandiram, Tiruchuli reconstruction.

2007 Dec. 26th: Sw Ramanananda (TNV) passes away.

2010: Achalam and new Dispensary inaugurated;

May: Sundara Mandiram Tiruchuli reconstructed

2012: Morvi Guest House reconstructed; new library complex with Grantalaya Auditorium is established in the Ashram proper; Old Dispensary is renovated

2013 August 25th: Mahakumbhabhishekam

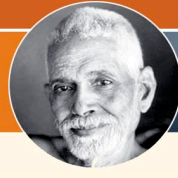
2014 Followup repairs to Vimanam over Bhagavan's Shrine.

2016: Complete renovation and Mahakumbhabhishekam of Tiruchuli Bhuminatha temple with financial support of a Japanese devotee.

2018: Citing health issues, V.S. Ramanan retires and nominates his eldest son, Dr. Venkat S. Ramanan to succeed him as President.

2020 June 17th: Dr Venkat S. Ramanan is sworn in as Ashram President. July 21st: V.S. Ramanan merges peacefully at the Feet of Arunachala. —





Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Maharudram



Sixty young purohiths and pundits convened in the New Grantalaya Auditorium on the morning of 29th March to lead a three-day recitation of the Rudram. The event culminated on the morning of the 31st with yagnam in the New Hall and a procession with the sacred kalasas followed by abhishekam of Ramaneswara Mahalingam and Matrubbhuteswara. Sri Rudram consists of eleven chapters in praise of Lord Siva and is the centre portion of the fourth kanda of the *Krishna Yajur Veda*. —

Sri Bhagavan's Ayurvedic Recipes

Vaishvanara Churnam

Indup pōmañ cīragamu / miṇuntip pilicuk kum'murāiyāc
candit tadaṇēr kaḍukkāyuñ / cārac cēruñ cūṃantāñ
mandam poruma lerivuḍaṇē / maṭṭrum vayittru valiyeḷḷāñ
cindit tīyā mundudalār / ciṛakkum vaishvā naramēṇḍrē.

Induppu ōmam cīragamum / iṇum tippili cukkum muṛāiyāc
candittu adaṇēr kaḍukkāyūm / cārac cērum cūṃamtāñ
mandam porumal erivuḍaṇē / maṭṭrum vayittru valiyeḷḷām
cindit tīyā mundudalāl / ciṛakkum vaishvānaram eṇḍrē.

Ingredients: rock salt (1 pt); bishop's weed (2 pts);
cumin seed (3 pts); long pippali (4 pts); dry ginger (5
pts); outer rind of myrobalan fruit (15 pts).

Preparation: Convert these into a fine powder and
mix them well. Mix 1 to 3 grams with warm water or
buttermilk and consume 2-3 times daily.

Benefits: Cures stomach conditions such as gastritis and
burning sensations in the stomach. —

