

# Saranagathi



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## Note from the Editor

Dear Sri Bhagavan Devotees,

In this issue of Saranagathi we have begun serializing the life story of Sri Muruganar, a remarkable devotee of Sri Bhagavan.

Sri Muruganar was a great Tamil scholar and a poet whose poems can be compared only with those of ancient Sangam literature. After he came to Sri Bhagavan he surrendered completely and composed poems only about Sri Bhagavan and his sayings.

We would like to bring to your notice some recent additions made to the Ashram website. [Past issues of 'The Mountain Path'](#), (a quarterly journal published by Sri Ramanasramam) can now be viewed through the [eLibrary link](#) on the Home page of our website. Through the same

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link [photographs and videos](#) of recent Ashram activities can be accessed. The [2008 Ashram calendar](#) marking important events and some new additions to the list of [centers](#), are things to look out for in the website.

We look forward to hearing from you, about your satsangs, experiences and feedback. Please send your emails to us at [saranagathi@sriramanamaharshi.org](mailto:saranagathi@sriramanamaharshi.org).

Ever Truly In Sri Bhagavan,

Editorial Team.

## The Essence of Instruction

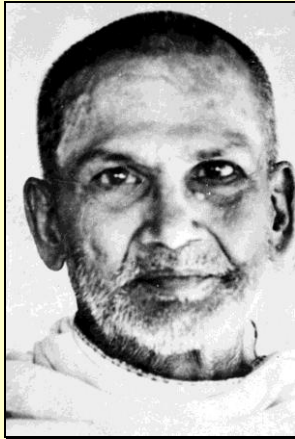
*The fruit of action passes.  
But action leaves behind  
Seed of further action  
Leading to an endless ocean of action;  
Not at all to moksha.*

– Upadesa Saram by Sri Bhagavan (Verse 2)

## Sri Muruganar

*Extract from Arunachala's Ramana – Boundless Ocean of Grace. Volume-2*

Sri Muruganar was born in the district of Ramnad in August 1890, His father was Krishna Iyer and his mother was Subbulakshmi Ammal. He had a sister named Kamakshi. Krishna Iyer passed away when his son was just a young boy. Thus he lost his father early in life, and had his education at Coimbatore. Though known as C. K. Subramania Iyer, originally his parents named him Sambamurthi.



For the first five years of his life, the child did not utter a single word. Maybe he was saving all his speech to be poured forth in a torrent of exquisite poetry in his later life!

Sri Muruganar attended the Christian Mission School in Ramanathapuram. After passing the sixth form, he went to Madurai and stayed with a relative for two years, completed his Matriculation and returned home. Upon his return to Ramanathapuram, he was approached by one Veluchami Thevar, a member of the royal family, with a request to teach him the Thirukkural. The entire family had a deep love for the Tamil language. When they came to know about Sri Muruganar's ability as a teacher, many members of the family approached him for clarification of their doubts. As a result of his association with them, he gained the respect and the good wishes

of the royal family. At that time, the renowned Tamil scholar, Raosahib Mu. Raghava Iyengar was the court poet of the Royal Court of Ramanathapuram. There was another great poet in the same court and, by a strange coincidence; he was also called Raghava Iyengar! With the patronage of the royal family, these two poets made a significant contribution to Tamil literature. Thanks to his association with the royal family Muruganar had the opportunity to work with these great scholars.

Sri Muruganar joined some other scholars in making a critical study of the five great Tamil classics, namely, Silappadhikaram, Manimekalai, Seevakachintamani, Valaiyapathi and Kundalakesi. This was followed by research into other Tamil literary works like Thirukkural, Nannool and Naidadham. He had an especially remarkable understanding of Tiruvalluvar's immortal work, Thirukkural.

Muruganar specialized in Tamil and was a scholar-member of the Tamil Lexicon Committee presided over by Dr. Chandler. He became a great Tamil pundit and served some years in the Norwich Girls' High School, Madras. There he was reputed for proficiency and spotless character. He was not merely a noted scholar in his chosen language but also an ardent nationalist and reformer. Great was his interest in Mahatma Gandhi's national liberation movement. His many songs in praise of Gandhiji and his constructive activities appeared in various Tamil periodicals of the time and were later on collected into a volume entitled Swatantra Geetam.

Several of the Tamil scholars of the day had joined to compile a Tamil Dictionary. Muruganar was one of the members of the Committee. As a result of his

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involvement in this project he got the opportunity to work closely with great scholars like Raosahib Mu. Raghava Iyengar, Mahamahopadhyaya, Dr. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer, Rao Bahadur V.S. Chengalvaraya Pillai and Sachidanandam Pillai, etc. All these scholars had great regard for Muruganar. It was this group of scholars that wrote the Special Preface for his book, *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai*. Raosahib Raghava Iyengar had a special affection and regard for Muruganar. It was he who persuaded Sri Muruganar to take up the job of Tamil teacher in the Norwich High School for Girls, in Madras. While he was working in Madras, his wife, Meenakshi, and mother were staying with him.

Muruganar's father-in-law, Dhandapani Swami, was a devotee of Sri Bhagavan. On one of his visits to Madras, Dhandapani Swami gave Sri Bhagavan's *Arunachala Stuti Panchakam* and *Who Am I?* to his son-in-law and asked him to read the books.

Muruganar was captivated by these two books, which are treasure-houses of devotion and philosophy. Upon reading the books, Muruganar developed the desire to go to Tiruvannamalai and have darshan of Sri Ramana Maharshi; but the pressures of work made it impossible for him to go at once.

During the mid-term holidays (in September), Muruganar was determined to make a visit to Sri Ramanasramam. With God's Grace, he was able to put his plans into action immediately, and he reached Tiruvannamalai on the 21st of September, 1923. Upon reaching Tiruvannamalai, he saw the tall towers of the Arunachala Temple. Devout Siva bhakta that he was, he went in, where, bowing down to the Lord, he wanted to proceed to the Asramam. He stood in front of the shrine of Lord Arunachaleswara and His Divine Consort, lost in adoration. It was an extremely thrilling experience for him. His excitement reached an even higher pitch when he thought of the visit to Sri Ramanasramam. He suddenly realised that he had not brought any offerings to lay at the Maharshi's feet. While about to start, he felt he should not go empty-

handed when going to meet a Sage. Immediately, he sat down and wrote a decad of verses in praise of Sri Bhagavan. This poem, titled *Desika Pathikam*, was to be Muruganar's first offering to his Master. They were inspired verses in the pattern of Saint Manickavachakar's Thiruvachakam. Even before he saw Sri Bhagavan he was totally entranced by Bhagavan. With this hymn he reached the Asramam, and Sri Bhagavan. He did not know how to meet the Sage, not knowing the regulations, observed in mutts and asramams. In those days there was only a thatched shed in which Sri Bhagavan and others lived.

Discerning the predicament of this potential devotee, as it were, Sri Bhagavan Himself came out of the cottage when Muruganar reached its entrance. Sri Bhagavan looked straight at him. A miracle took place! The look of the Master on that day kindled the fire of poesy in him which glowed in him ever after. "What?" Sri Bhagavan asked. Muruganar was totally absorbed in him and the vichara brought him back to life. He started singing (in the particular specified tune) the verses composed by him at the Temple. Tears welled up in his eyes and he could not proceed. The tune of his singing was obstructed. "Can't you read? Give it to me. I shall myself read it," said Sri Bhagavan. (Muruganar narrated this with tears and added that though he had specified tunes to each of his thousands of verses, that was the only occasion and the last one too, when he read out to him his poem attuned to its raga: never afterwards could he sing!)

During his stay one evening, Muruganar joined the others for dinner. After dinner, all the devotees were sitting in Sri Bhagavan's presence. Muruganar was seen to be very much perturbed. "Within two or three days after coming to Tiruvannamalai I noticed that some change was taking place within me. I could not pinpoint what exactly was happening to me. Dramatically I was immersed in a sort of bliss. I sat before the Maharshi and focused my mind entirely on him. After a few minutes I saw an effulgence surrounding the Maharshi's person. I do not know how

long this lasted. I was completely absorbed in that vision. I totally lost my individual personality. At that time, Kunju Swami, Dhandapani Swami and Arunachala Swami were there with me. An Adhyatmic Sakti rose like an ocean and devoured me. Although I was fully conscious of what was happening yet it seemed as if it was a dream. It appeared as if I was losing my individual personality, world consciousness, etc. I suddenly got frightened.”

“I was frightened that I would be made to reside permanently at Tiruvannamalai and that my mother who is solely dependent on me would lose my support. I gave vent to my feelings at that time as follows:

“There is a large crowd of thieves here led by the Maharshi. The sole intention of this crowd is to ensnare the unwary visitor and make him one of their own. It is impossible either for my mother or anyone to release me from this manacle. Hence I should immediately leave this place.’

“I addressed the Maharshi thus: ‘Even for a short while, I could not bear your effulgent being. I wonder how a lady, your mother, was able to bear this effulgence for ten months. How wonderful!’ After this I suddenly got up, prostrated to Sri Bhagavan and rushed out.”

Seeing that Muruganar appeared greatly agitated, Sri Bhagavan signaled to Kunju Swami and Arunachala Swami to follow Muruganar. Soon, Muruganar and the two others were on the bank of the Agni Thirtham. Muruganar did not seem to have any intention of slackening his speed. Kunju Swami approached the hurrying form in front of him and gently suggested, “Sir, the moon is shining brightly and the night is cool and beautiful. Why don’t we sit on these steps and relax for a while?” Muruganar responded to this suggestion and sat down on the steps with his two new friends. At first, he was

silent, but soon he started talking about the strange experience that made him rush out of the Asramam. He said that he had suddenly felt an overpowering excitement that was frightening in its intensity and that this sudden rush of emotion was too much for him to handle, and so he had decided to return home immediately.

To calm him and to reassure him, they started talking about Sri Bhagavan’s infinite compassion, the concern and kindness he showered on his devotees, as also the all-encompassing love that Sri Bhagavan gave to every creature, animal and human alike. However Muruganar could not get over his fear and so he roamed around on the Chengam road till three in the morning. All his efforts to leave the Asramam were futile. It appeared as if his whole being was tied to Tiruvannamalai. For him Maharshi and Tiruvannamalai were one.

Gradually, Muruganar calmed down, went back to the Asramam and stayed for two more days. After that, he often came to Tiruvannamalai and stayed in the Asramam for two or three days each time. Ever since his first darshan of Sri Bhagavan, Muruganar was totally won over by him and he lost interest in everything else.

*(To be continued in the next issue)*

## Enlightenment Day celebrations at Sri Ramana Manthiram

*A report from Madurai Ramana Kendram.*



*Sri Bhagavan's Decorated Picture.*

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's enlightenment day was celebrated on 17th July with usual fervor at Sri Ramana Manthiram, the place where Sri Bhagavan became enlightened through his death experience at the age of 16 during his stay at Madurai.

A 2 day 'Spiritual workshop' between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. is conducted on this occasion since 1996 jointly by Madurai Ramana Kendram situated at Sri Ramana Manthiram and Sri Ramana Maharishi Centre for Learning, Bangalore. This year, the 13th workshop was conducted on 17th & 18th of July.

Professors Dr. Niranjana, Dr. T.N.P. Haran and Dr. Kalarani Rangasamy and Dr. Sarada

Natarajan delivered spiritual lectures. Smt. Sulochana Natarajan and Ms. Radha performed bhajans. RMCL, Bangalore presented audio cassettes to the participants and devotees gathered for the occasion, as Sri Bhagavan's "arut prasadam".

In the workshop, Sri Bhagavan's unique teaching of 'Atma Vichara' was elaborated. The significance of His teaching and how to practice it, was elaborated by discussions around 'Why to - ', 'How to - ' and 'Benefits to - ' individuals & society in day-to-day life.

The participants expressed that they were very much inspired by the workshop and that they have realized the importance of following the path of Sri Bhagavan and their individual commitments towards it.

Late Sri A.R. Natarajan, Founder President of RMCL, Bangalore was gratefully remembered, for this workshop was his brainchild.



*Devotees at the Workshop.*