

Saranagati



SARANAGATI
SRI RAMANASRAMAM

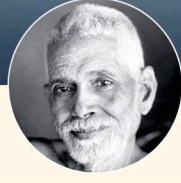
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D. Thiyagarajan



Saranagati



AUGUST 2023
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IN THIS
ISSUE



Dear Devotees,

In this issue, we take up the life story of Daivarata, the gifted Vedic scholar who spontaneously uttered eight Sanskrit stanzas upon his first meeting with Bhagavan at Skandasramam in 1917.

We also look at the origins of the Tamil parayana in this first segment of a three-part series on its history.

Continuing with Sadhu Natanananda's *Upadesa Ratnavali* comprising 108 instructions in all, which Bhagavan corrected after its completion in 1931, in this issue we see the 11th stanza with Bhagavan's correction.

For videos, photos and other news of events, go to <<https://sriramanamaharshi.org>> or write to us at <saranagati@gururamana.org>.

In Sri Bhagavan,
Saranagati

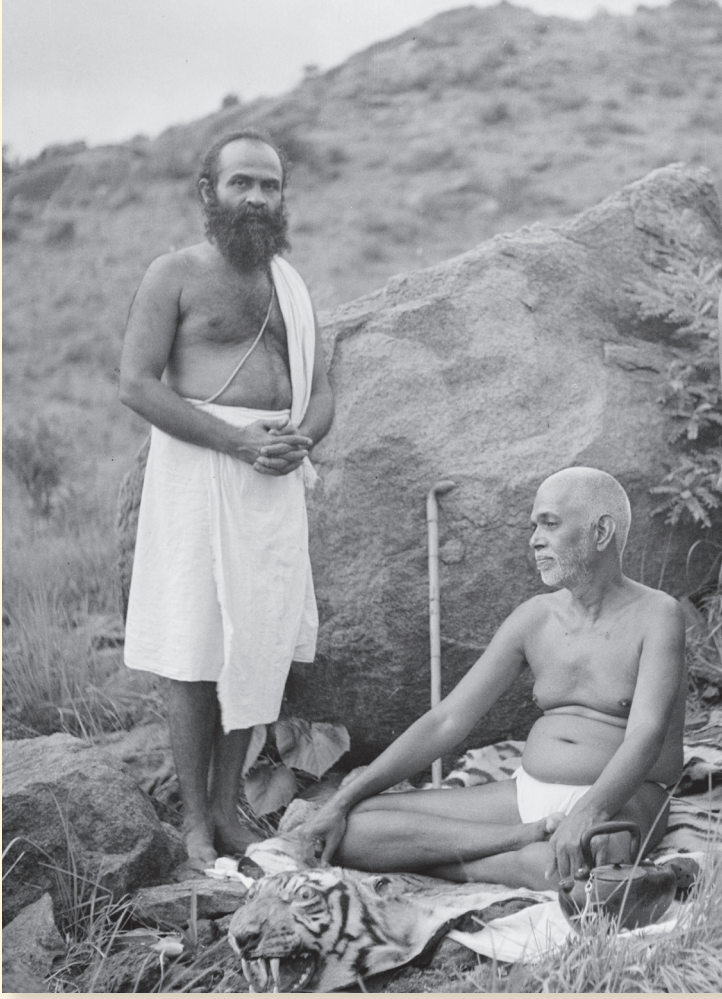
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Calendar of Ashram Events

1st Aug (Tue) Full Moon
7th Aug (Mon) Kunjuswami Day
14th Aug (Mon) Punarvasu
30th Aug (Wed) Full Moon
1st Sep (Fri) Bhagavan's Advent Day
3rd Sep (Sun) Samvatsara Abhishekam

14th Sep (Thu) Muruganar Day
28th Sep (Thu) Full Moon
15th Oct (Sun) Navaratri Commences
22nd Oct (Sun) Viswanathaswami Day
23rd Oct (Mon) Saraswati Puja
24th Oct (Tue) Vijayadasami





IN PROFILE

Daivarata

Each one of Bhagavan's devotees is unique and this also applies to Daivarata who first came to Bhagavan at Skandasramam in 1917 at the age of 25.

Born in 1892 to a family of Vedic pundits from Gokarna, North Kanara District of the Bombay Presidency, presently in Karnataka state, he grew up in an environment soaked in scripture and recitation. As a boy, he studied the *Rigveda* and *Taittiriya* under the guidance of his father, Vighneswara Bhat Bhadti, a Vedic scholar living the simple life of a farmer. His mother, Smt. Nagaveni, was the daughter of a learned scholar Sri Ganesa Sastry

Hosamane and the family followed the tradition their ancestors had carried with them from North India some 800 years earlier when they were brought to South India by the renowned King Mayura Varma.¹

Named Ganesh after his maternal grandfather, the boy attended classes run by the local Vedic pundits but decided not to follow the priestly profession and instead, aim for higher spiritual ideals. At the age of fifteen he was initiated into bhakti yoga by Ramdas Maharaja of Ujjain who inspired him with devotion and taught him to relish the transformative power born of singing and dancing to classical devotional songs. Ganesh accompanied his teacher along with other disciples on a two-year pilgrimage that took them across the whole of North India and up into Nepal. When their *yatra* led them to the teacher's native Ujjain, his beloved guru attained samadhi on the banks of the River Chambal.²

On Ganesh's return journey, he met Tembe Maharaj, the highly revered peripatetic saint monk who perpetually wandered all over India in the traditional way, granting blessing simply by his presence. Expert in Sanskrit, *ijotisha* and yoga, Tembe Maharaj was highly regarded for his saintliness and extraordinary spiritual attainments. He taught Ganesh pranayama and other traditional yogic practices. Later Ganesh met Kavya Kantha Ganapathi Muni when the Muni came to Gokarna to observe austerities. Ganesh was naturally attracted by the Muni's charisma, ardent faith, and knowledge of the Vedas. In a short time, Ganesh became the teacher's most coveted student and received the name 'Daivarata' after the ancient Rishi Devarata to whose *pravara*³ he belonged. The Muni initiated Daivarata into Upanishadic disciplines such as *mukhyapranopasana* and the *vaidica vidya*⁴. Over many months attending the Muni's lectures, Daivarata picked up spoken Sanskrit.⁵ He renewed his study of the Gita and the Upanishad and in the

1 Private conversations with members of the Gokarna community.

2 Called Charmanvati in *Mahabharata*.

3 The same family line (gotra).

4 Central life worship and deep knowledge of the Vedas.

5 *The Insight of Chhando-Darshana: Biography of Sri Brahmarshi Daivarata*, translated from the Kannada and published in 2019.

See also <<https://brahmarishidaivaratha.com>>.





Muni's absence, studied the *yoga-kriyas* with Tembe Maharaj. Later he took to a life of penance, living on alms in a little hut on the banks of the Ganges. He lost interest in acquiring endless amounts of book knowledge. He went to Bombay where he stayed for some time and proceeded to Orissa to join the Muni. Once reunited, master and pupil set off for the Mahendra mountains where they observed penance for a month at the Parasuram Tapovana. Next, the master led him to Arunachala to meet and pay respects to his guru, Bhagavan Sri Ramana, where they would spend the next two months. At the first sight of the sage, Daivarata was so moved that verse began to spontaneously pour forth from his lips. He uttered eight Sanskrit stanzas which would later receive the title 'Ramana Vibhaktystaka'.⁶ The impact of the sage's presence was so great that Daivarata felt he could grasp the Sage's teaching without the least confusion just by listening with rapt attention. In speaking of Bhagavan after this first encounter, Daivarata reflected:

On getting Maharshi's darshan, all the doubts in one's mind are cleared and one's desire to know is also fulfilled all at once. This is a sign of his spiritual greatness. His eyes always glitter with spotless light, full of peace and pure love. To sit and gaze at his motionless, peaceful countenance is itself an act of worship. By having his divine darshan, people forget the world. They do not feel the pangs of hunger and thirst. Negative feelings or attitudes such as anger and hatred subside altogether. And people become so much engrossed in his darshan that they do not like to leave his divine presence.⁷

In visits to the Ashram on the Hill, Daivarata could not help but be very impressed by the Maharshi's continuous and 'natural communion with God'. He set about to figure out how he might reach such a state.⁸ He writes:

Bhagavan has reached the state which is beyond the four varnas and Asramas, and therefore, he is called atbivarnashrami. He is firmly established in his Divine state keeping himself free of all thoughts desirable and undesirable, happy and unhappy. Great pundits, yogis, yatis, ascetics, mahatmas, rajas and maharajas are fascinated by his divine self-knowledge.⁹

6 For the complete Sanskrit text, see: <<https://archive.arunachala.org/docs/ramana-vibhakti-ashtakam>>.

7 *Arunachala Ramana, Boundless Ocean of Grace*, vol I, p. 459-461.

8 <<https://brahmarishidaivaratha.com>>.

9 Ibid.



Ramana Gita

During an encounter with Bhagavan on 7th July 1917 at Skandasramam, Daivarata posed numerous questions. Ganapathi Muni had encouraged his disciples to clear their doubts with the Sage as he wanted to note down Bhagavan's responses and include them in the volume of Sanskrit verse he was working on titled *Ramana Gita*. Daivarata, who Bhagavan knew as 'Gajanana,' asked about correct conduct in this world of births and deaths and the means of attaining True Knowledge. As Bhagavan responded to each question, Kavya Kantha noted down the Master's answers in 'sutra form' i.e. in brief aphoristic phrases, and then very soon rendered them into Sanskrit verse. Answers to Gajanana's (i.e. Daivarata's) questions were eventually incorporated into Sri Ramana Gita, Ch.III. The completed work was ready by the end of the year and was translated into Telugu and Tamil¹⁰ and published in 1923.

Daivarata's first question was: "In this samsara, what is the chief thing a *sadhaka* must do?"

Maharshi: Well, your question is what you as a person should do in regard to your karma, action. It asks about the most important duty. You wish to arrange duties in the order of their importance, and this importance is based on the value—to you—of the fruits of each karma. In short, you are inquiring into your appropriate karma

¹⁰ Translated by S. Narasimhayya, later known as Pranavananda.





Daivarata with Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India

and the value of its fruits. Does not the karma and its importance depend plainly on the individual who is to perform it and reap the fruit? If so, then, as a preliminary to this investigation, first inquire who the person is that does the karma and tastes the fruit. In other words, take up the inquiry "Who am I?" and inquire into yourself, which almost immediately becomes the inquiry into the Self, with a view to gaining Self-knowledge.

Gajanana: Again, Revered Sir, what are the means to attain this Self-realization, and as for the means already suggested, namely, inwardly directed inquiry (pratyagdrishti), how are we to attain it?
Maharshi: The steps to attain Self-realization are these: First, the mind should be withdrawn from its objects, and the objective vision of the world must cease. Secondly, the mind's internal operations (such as ruminative thinking) must be put to an end. Thirdly, the mind must thereby be rendered characterless (nirupadhika or free of attributes) and must continue characterless; and lastly, it must rest in pure vichara, contemplation or realization of its nature. This is the means for pratyagdrishti or darsana, also termed antarmukham, the inward vision or inquiry.

Gajanana: How long does one have to go on with his niyama (disciplines such as the regulation of food, sleep and exertion)? Is he to adhere to them till he attains Yoga Siddhi? And do they prove useful right up to the end?

Maharshi: Yes, the spiritual aspirant in his ongoing pursuit of yoga is helped by such disciplines. Once he reaches his goal, disciplines drop away on their own.

Gajanana (adverting to the answer to his first question): Revered Sir, as for the goal that is attained by firm, characterless vichara mentioned just now, cannot the same goal be attained by the repetition of mantras?

Maharshi: Yes, if the mantra japa is unbroken and performed with an undeflected current of attention and with due faith, equal

success is achieved. Even the mere Pranava Japa would suffice. You see that by such a japa (of either the Pranava or other mantras) the mind is deflected from its operations regarding the objective world. By identifying oneself with the mantra, one attains the Atman.¹¹

Sri Arunchala Pancharatnam

S. Narasimhayya (see footnote 10) was present during Daivarata and Ganapathi Muni's visits up at Skandasramam in July and August 1917. He requested the Muni to compose a song on the guru which he did under the title *Guru Gitam*. Devotees then asked for benedictory verses at which point it was mentioned that Bhagavan had earlier composed a single Sanskrit verse, in *arya* metre, beginning with "karuna purna sudhabdhe". Hearing this, Ganapathi Muni asked Bhagavan if he would be willing to compose four more verses which would, along with the first, form the five benedictory verses to the *Guru Gitam*. Bhagavan wrote the additional verses and Daivarata penned a concluding verse. The five from Bhagavan and the final verse from Daivarata came to form the Sanskrit *Arunachala Pancharatnam* which was later translated into Tamil by Bhagavan. The Tamil version is still sung today as the concluding part to the Monday evening Tamil parayana.¹² Daivarata's verse reads:

This is Sri Ramana Maharshi's vision of Arunachala in the language of the Gods. It is a jewel of five verses in Arya meter, and indeed contains the essence of the Upanishads.¹³

Padaiveedu Outpourings

After two months with Bhagavan Ramana, the Muni and his disciple went to Padaiveedu (between Tiruvannamalai and Vellore) to continue their sadhana. One day, Ganapathi Muni heard Daivarata muttering while in a deep state of meditation. When the same thing happened the following day, the Muni realized that the utterances were Vedic in nature and were in Vedic meters. Ganapathi Muni began taking notes. These daily occurrences lasted three hours and went on for about sixteen consecutive days. The verses are in four

11 This prose version of Chapter 3 is from B.V. Narasimha Swami. For the complete text see <<https://archive.arunachala.org/newsletters/2009/sep-oct#ch.3>>.

12 The concluding verse beginning "srimad ramana maharsher" was written by Gajanana.

13 Rendered in *Parayana: The Poetic Works of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi* as: *This Arunachala Pancharatnam revealed by Sri Maharshi in Sanskrit is the very essence of the Upanishad.*





Vedic meters, namely, Gayatri, Anushtubh, Trishtubh and Jagati, and ‘invoked forty-two Vedic deities of which Saraswati, identified with Vak, the Goddess of Speech, was predominant.’¹⁴ The commentary adds that ‘none of these mantras were traceable to any known Vedic source.’

In his commentary, the Muni said that some of the mantras could not be noted down simply owing to the rapidity with which they were uttered. Others were not sufficiently distinct. Only those which were complete and clearly audible, and which could be taken down in full were compiled. Some fifty suktas (hymns) with 448 stanzas were noted.

K. Natesan later commented on the humility of Ganapathi Muni who took the trouble to note down the utterances of his young student. But the Muni recognised the greatness of these verses that came forth spontaneously from his pupil’s lips in a recurring darshana of chandas, a vision of Vedic mantras. Natesan writes:

*The Guru of the disciple, our Ganapathi Muni, acted as scribe and noted down the mantras as they issued forth from his inspired disciple. Later, the Muni even wrote a commentary on the mantras just as Adi Sankara had done for the verses of his disciple Hastamalaka.*¹⁵

The mantras were so remarkable that Ganapathi Muni used the word ‘supersight’¹⁶ to refer to his disciple’s enunciations which seemed to suggest inspired contact with the Goddess Vak. The commentary by

14 These are the details of the event as presented in *Chandodarsana* by Daivarata (1968), a publication given to Mani Rao as a pdf file by Kapre. The book includes Daivarata’s verses and an introduction and commentary by Ganapathi Muni.

15 See <<https://kavyakantha.arunachala.org>>.

16 *Chandodarshana* is mostly translated as a ‘vision of Vedic mantra’.

Ganapathi Muni includes Daivarata’s birth chart on which the Muni is well-qualified to comment given his formidable understanding of *jyotisha*. He comments that the *rasi* contains combinations and alignments (yogas) that would suggest ‘greatness’.¹⁷

Later, when India’s first President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, had serendipitously come across Daivarata’s notes in New Delhi, he was ‘so impressed by the scholarship evident in these fragments that he visited Gokarna and gradually became Daivarata’s supporter and follower.’ More interesting still is that there were subsequent initiatives in the Vedic world (though ultimately unsuccessful) to have the utterances included in the Atharva Veda.¹⁸

Bhagavan, the Mountaineer

After the experiences at Padaiveedu some years passed until Daivarata saw Bhagavan again in the mid-1920s. Later during the Jayanti celebrations of 1936, GVS submitted his Telugu verse translations of Ramana *Chatvarimsat* (‘Forty Verses in Praise of Ramana’) and notes that he had already sent the Ashram a rendering of *Ramana Vibhakti Ashtakam* (‘Eight Grammatical Cases in Praise of Ramana’) authored by Daivarata. While scrutinising the two works, Bhagavan said that Daivarata had originally described him in the first of his eight verses as a “Mountaineer” (*Parvathiyah*) whereas Nayana urged him to change it to “the son of Parvathi” (*Paarvatya*).¹⁹

17 *Living Mantra: Mantra, Deity, and Visionary Experience Today*, Mani Rao: <<https://vdoc.pub/documents>>.

18 Ibid.


19 It is interesting to note that the first line in the published version retains *parvathiyah* or ‘mountaineer’ and reads, *śrīmat paraśaroyam pramuditavadanah pāvanah pārvathiyah*. For the full text, see <<https://archive.arunachala.org/docs/ramana-vibhakti-ashtakam>>.

Announcements: Upcoming Events in Delhi

Sri Ramanasramam President, Dr. Venkat S. Ramanan will give a series of talks in Delhi during the first week of August. Two talks at an annual conference at Delhi IIT, one at the Delhi Ramana Kendra and on Friday the 4th August at 3pm, a talk at the *Nehru Memorial Museum and Library* entitled, ‘Contributions of Sri Ramana Maharshi to National Awakening and to India’s Spiritual Heritage.’ Lecture links at: <<https://www.youtube.com/user/nehrumemoriamlibrary>>.

Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
Teen Murti House, New Delhi
cordially invites you to a Public Lecture

Contribution of Sri Ramana Maharshi to National Awakening and to India's Spiritual Heritage

Speaker :

Dr. Venkat S. Ramanan
President, Sri Ramanasramam

Friday, 04 Aug 2023
3:00 pm

Venue:
Seminar Room
Library Building
Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

Occupational Partners
<http://archanamemorialmuseum.org>
Video Links of Lectures
<https://www.youtube.com/user/nehrumemoriamlibrary>

Those wishing to have their names added to the email list and receive e-mail in their e-mail address should contact: archanamemorial@vsnl.net

All are Welcome





Bhagavan also mentioned to those in the Hall that Daivarata was living in Nepal and was held in high esteem as “Maharshi Gajanan Sarma.” A visitor had recently asked Bhagavan where Daivarata was. Even as Bhagavan was replying that his whereabouts was not known, the day’s mail was handed to Bhagavan, and the very first letter was from Maharshi Gajanan Sarma of Mukthi Kshetram, Nepal. In it he had written that though he was so far away, he always felt that he was only at the feet of Bhagavan. As if to bring home that feeling, the letter enclosed a photograph of Daivarata with a flowing beard. Bhagavan added that it struck him at the time as if Daivarata himself appeared in person and answered the query, saying “Here I am!”²⁰

It was also in 1936 when Daivarata lost his two first gurus. Both Tembe Maharaj and Ganapathi Muni left the body that year. Daivarata had always been grateful to Ganapathi Muni for having brought him to Bhagavan.

In August 1938 Daivarata met Gandhiji along with Dr. Rajendra Prasadji and Jamnalal Bajaj in Bombay and on Gandhiji’s request, the three went to see Bhagavan to seek his blessings. Group photos were taken of the party and other devotees together with Bhagavan behind the darshan hall.

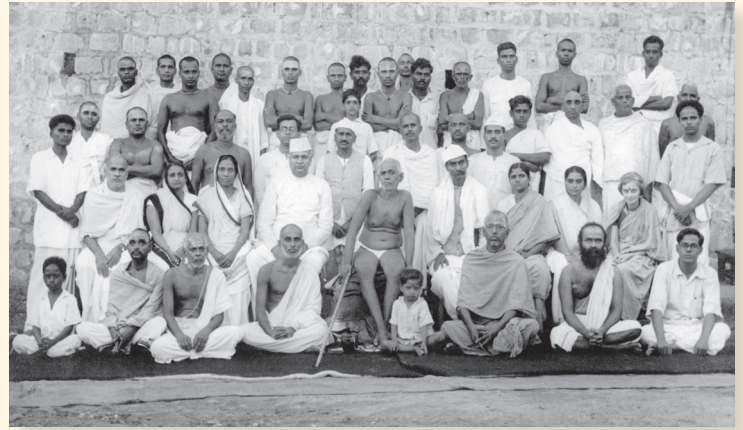
Daivarata’s Visit in 1946

Daivarata next visited the Ashram in February 1946, still ‘looking sturdy and strong’. After parayana, Bhagavan recounted the history of Daivarata’s visits to Tiruvannamalai starting with Skandasramam in 1917.

At breakfast, Bhagavan enquired where Gajanan, i.e. Daivarata, was staying and what he was going to take. It was reported Gajanan had gone for his bath. Bhagavan then said, “He can eat anything. If you give him a quantity of tender neem leaves and a chembu of cow’s urine, he will breakfast on that. He had lived on things like that [during his years of wandering].”

About 10.30 a.m. Gajanan was in the hall showing a picture of a Pasupati image in Nepal and explaining its esoteric significance. Later that day, Gajanan was telling Bhagavan about Nepal. He said, among other things, “There are three important shrines in Nepal, all very sacred. The King is a very religious man, and it

²⁰ G.V. Subbaramayya’s *Reminiscences*, p. 8.



Bhagavan with Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Jamnalal Bajaj, 18th August 1938; Daivarata is sitting in the front row

is the custom and tradition there for the King not to do anything or go anywhere without first going and taking permission from the gods in these temples.’

Balaram Reddy said to Bhagavan, “He does bhajan with great spirit and enthusiasm. We should have it one day here.” When asked, Gajanan expressed his willingness. “Can we get some tinkling beads for the ankles and some accompaniment?” Bhagavan also said, “He must have some sruti like harmonium, some accompaniment like mridangam or ganjira and some cymbals (jalra).” Balaram Reddy asked if Gajanan had performed bhajans while walking on pradakshina. Bhagavan replied, “Oh, he would do his bhajan while walking. He would jump from one side of the pradakshina road to another. He was so full of life and enthusiasm.” Gajanan said, “I was much younger then. But I can do it even now.” Discussing where and when such a bhajan should be arranged, it was decided that it would be better in the dining hall.²¹ When all was arranged, Bhagavan sat where he usually did at mealtime while devotees all sat in rows. Daivarata began singing and dancing up and down the rows with great enthusiasm. He also sang Ganapathi Muni’s *Chatvarimsat* in his own melody, dancing to the tune.

Conclusion

After Bhagavan’s Mahanirvana, Daivarata built his own ashram near the seashore outside of Gokarna and established a Veda patasala there with about 20

²¹ *Day by Day* 13-2-46 Morning.





Daivarata at his Ashram outside Gokarna in the early 1970s

students. One day a rogue wave came roaring in and took away every last building. Daivarata's response was looking placidly heavenward, saying, 'the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.' He rebuilt a little further inland on the large property and settled into a quiet rural life which he felt blended perfectly with the sacred

culture of the Vedas. This didn't keep dignitaries away such as Lal Bahadur Shastri, the second Prime Minister of India and Maharshi Mahesh Yogi among others.

Daivarata shied away from public life and said that agriculture and caring for the cow who so generously provides for our needs were the two fundamental vocations directly connected with a meaningful earthly life. He became versed in herbs and natural ways of eating for spiritual and health benefit. He promoted harmonization of the mundane and spiritual life as something that is not only possible but also the most 'fruitful, integral, and meaningful way of life propounded by the Vedas'.²²

Daivarata passed away in 1975 at the age of 83. His samadhi is established in the ashram his children and grandchildren still maintain today on the outskirts of their native Gokarna. —

²² <<https://brahmarishidaivaratha.com>>.



Sri Ramanasramam's *In Focus*

During the pandemic, devotees were stranded in their homes and had no access to Bhagavan's Ashram. There was an intense demand for video footage of the Ashram, especially considering that pujas and recitation in the Ashram continued unabated throughout the pandemic even if the Ashram was closed to the public and virtually no one was in attendance. It was only reasonable to video record as many Ashram functions as possible and make them available to devotees. During this period, *In Focus* was inaugurated (March 28, 2021) and weekly editions were uploaded for the next 18 months until August 2022. From September to December that year, *In Focus* began to be released once every two weeks. When *Tamil Parayana Live* started, it was thought that *In Focus* would no longer be needed. But the demand was great, and the Ashram reinstated the series in January 2023 as a once monthly release. Please see these tastefully edited monthly videos featuring daily life in Sri Ramanasramam. For the month of June, go to: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vH9LaLqGpw4>>. For the month of July: <<https://youtu.be/P3U5OI3adcM>>.





Events in Tamil Nadu: Ramanasramam Centenary Celebrations, Coimbatore



On 16th July 2023, Ashram President, Dr. Venkat S. Ramanan attended the Sri Ramanasramam Centenary Celebrations in Coimbatore. The theme of his talk was *satsang* wherein he said: ‘We are part of a bigger family and live in a world where the feeling of family prevails. An organisation is nothing more than a sum of its parts and we are the sum of such great devotees that I am proud to be the president of such an organisation. After all, nowhere do we find such spiritually minded people. When Ganapathi Muni asked Bhagavan what the goal of society was, Bhagavan said that it was “universal brotherhood based on equality”. We know that in the external world we can never reach perfect equality, but Ramana devotees know that within, we are all equal, all the divine Atman, all elements of the

eternal *satchidananda*. The advantage of *satsang* is that we meet like-minded people and get a compounding effect. As my grandfather, Venkatoor, used to say, “whenever I go anywhere, Bhagavan is there before me already waiting for me”. This applies to all of us.’ The President then quoted Prof. K. Swaminathan’s translation of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* where Sri Muruganar writes on the theme of *satsang*: *The best friendship is with those good men whose minds are dead and who abide in the pure silence of awareness and hereafter live in the company of sages steadfast in their state of moveless stillness.* —

[For complete coverage of the President’s speech, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9UJ_aIMifg>.]

Events in Sri Ramanasramam: Guru Purnima



Guru Purnima was celebrated on the morning of the 3rd of July in Bhagavan’s Samadhi Hall where the Ashram President, Dr. Venkat S. Ramanan gave *prasadam* of ochre robes just prior to the puja. Bhagavan said, *the Guru is both interior and exterior. From the exterior, he gives the mind a push to turn it inward. From the interior, he pulls the mind toward the Self and helps it to gain quietness. Hence there is no difference between God, Guru and Self.* —





ORIGINS

The History of the Ashram Tamil Parayana

Devotees often think that Bhagavan only taught *atma vichara* and surrender and that he only wanted us to practise these at the exclusion of all else. But Bhagavan also prized the recitation of sacred texts. This is made evident at Skandasramam when Bhagavan initiated chanting of the *Ribhu Gita* and other advaitic texts. He held the hymns of Sundarar, Appar, Jnanasambandar and Manikkavachagar in high esteem and encouraged the recitation of his own poetic compositions.

In 1917 at Skandasramam when answering a devotee's question, Bhagavan said that if our recitation is 'unbroken and performed with an uninterrupted current of attention and with due faith', and if in the process 'the mind is deflected from its operations regarding the objective world, one will attain the Atman.'¹

¹ *Ramana Gita*, Chapter III; see p. 5 above.

This complements what Bhagavan would later state in greater detail when extolling the efficacy of listening to the teaching, Bhagavan says:

*The effects of sravana may be immediate and the disciple will realise the truth all at once. This happens only for the well-advanced disciple.*²

In other words, hearing the sacred teachings of the master is an 'aid for eradicating thoughts and the predispositions remaining in seed form'³. Bhagavan explains:

*To remove ignorance completely, [the sadhaka] must hear the truth repeatedly until his knowledge of the subject-matter becomes perfect. To remove doubts, he must reflect on what he has heard. And finally, to remove the wrong identity of the Self with the non-self (such as the body, the senses, the mind or the intellect), his mind must become one-pointed.*⁴

Here we have Bhagavan's teaching in a nutshell which, to be sure, includes surrender and inquiry (*nididhyasana*) but does not neglect hearing (*sravana*) and reflection (*manana*). The starting point would seem to be with hearing and learning the teaching. Only then can the diligent devotee put it into practice.

For the sadhu-devotees gathered round Bhagavan up at Skandasramam in 1917, the benefits of the study and repetition of Bhagavan's poetic works was self-evident. If tradition says that Saraswati, the goddess of speech (Vak Devi), endows human beings with the power of wisdom, learning, and speech, then the place to begin is with recitation. Thus, they started regular *parayana*.⁵

Kunjuswami once said that when he first came to Bhagavan in 1920, Bhagavan's mother was in the habit of reciting devotional songs each morning between 4 am and 5 am. When she completed her recitation, other devotees would chant *Sri Arunachala Aksharamanamalai*, *Appalap Paattu* and Bhagavan's Tamil rendering of *Sri Dakshinamurti Stotram*, among others. In the course of time, Bhagavan composed new works, which were incorporated into the daily chanting repertoire. By the late 1940s, the *parayana* cycle had grown to fifteen days and consisted of more than thirty works. The recitation was as follows:

² *Talks*, §249.

³ *Ibid*.

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ *Parayana* refers to recitation of prayers, sacred hymns, poems or songs, often learned by heart. What follows is taken from *Parayana: The Poetic Works of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*.





Day 1: *Tiruvannamalai Devaram*, verses in praise of Arunachala by Jnanasambandar, Navukkarasu and Sundaramurti;

Day 2: *Sri Arunachala Tattuvam*, *Sri Arunachala Mahatmyam*, and *Akshara Mana Malai*;

Day 3: *Sri Arunachala Nava Mani Malai*, *Sri Arunachala Padikam*, *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam*, *Appalap Paattu*, and *Anma Viddai*;

Day 4: *Upadesa Undiyar* and *Upadesa Saram* in Malayalam, Telugu and Sanskrit;

Day 5: *Ulladu Narpadu* and *Supplement to Ulladu Narpadu*;

Day 6: *Sat Darshanam* (the Malayalam version of *Ulladu Narpadu* and its Supplement);

Day 7: *Devikalottaram*;

Day 8: *Anma Sakshatkaram*, *Sri Guru Stuti*, and *Sri Hastamalakam*;

Day 9: *Gita Saram* in Tamil, Malayalam and Sanskrit;

Day 10: *Anma Bhodam* and *Ekanma Panchakam*;

Day 11: *Dakshinamurti Stotram* in Sanskrit and Tamil and selected verses in Sanskrit and Tamil from *Vivekachudamani*, *Sivananda Labari* and works of Thayumanavar;

Day 12: *Sri Ramana Stuti Panchakam* by Satyamangalam Venkataramayyar;

Day 13: *Sri Ramana Deva Malai* and *Satguru Malai* by Sivaprakasam Pillai;

Day 14: *Sri Ramana Deva Malai* and *Vinnapam* by Sivaprakasam Pillai;

Day 15: *Ramana Pada Malai* by Sivaprakasam Pillai and verses on Tiruchuzhi by Manikkavachagar and Sundaramurti.



The above liturgical corpus began to take shape in the years at Skandasramam and can be divided into four main categories: the original works of Bhagavan in Tamil, Telugu, Sanskrit and Malayalam; works translated by Bhagavan from Sanskrit into Tamil and Malayalam; verses selected by Bhagavan from classical Tamil and Sanskrit texts; and works on Sri Bhagavan by devotees.⁶ Reciting these verses each evening became a regular practice and many of these continue to be recited in the present day.

⁶ Most of Bhagavan's verses and translations utilise *venba* metre, consisting of two couplets connected through a link word. A *venba* contains four lines, the first three of which contain four words each and the last, three words. Bhagavan wrote *kalivenba* versions for most of his verses wherein the ordinary *venba* verse is connected to the next verse with a link word to facilitate rote learning.

Bhagavan and Cinema: Harischandra (in Tamil with English Subtitles)



In the last issue, we received the link for the newly uploaded *Mirabai* (starring M.S. Subbalakshmi) a film which Bhagavan viewed on 5th Nov. 1946. This supplemented links for the previously uploaded *Nandanar* (part 1, part 2) and *Sant Tukaram* (part 1, part 2). Since then, devotees have edited and uploaded the Tamil film *Harischandra* (part 1, part 2) with English subtitles. This film was viewed by Bhagavan on 1st November 1946. Owing to some delay that night, the film could not be started until 9.30 pm which meant that Bhagavan had to stay awake till 12.30 am. Nevertheless, he sat through it all and Devaraj Mudaliar says, 'he seems to have enjoyed it' (*Day by Day*, p. 338). For devotees interested in viewing this film, see part 1 at: <<https://youtube.com/embed/XWmypBXj01l>> and part 2 at: <<https://youtu.be/SKrfVvjLwJ4>>.

[Editor's note: Ashram devotees are hoping to locate copies of the Hindi films *Karna* and *Bhartruhari* as well as the Tamil film *Bhakta Pundarika*, films seen by Bhagavan. If anyone has information regarding any of these, please write to the Ashram President at posrm@gururamana.org or to mhighburger@gmail.com.]





Earliest Beginnings to the Present

In the early days of the Tamil parayana, the works composed or selected by Bhagavan were compiled in a notebook and those wishing to chant them would copy them out by hand. On occasion devotees would request Bhagavan to copy them out himself for their use and he spared no pains in heeding their requests. One such notebook was obtained from one of Bhagavan's attendants, Swami Sivananda, and published by Kanvashrama Trust in 1987. Subsequently Kanvashrama Trust made selections from the text and a devotee, the late Smt. Shanta Gurumurti, helped in rendering them in Roman transliteration. This book was published in 1998 and has served as the principal chanting text for those unfamiliar with Tamil. In 2006 a parallel text of Tamil transliteration with English translation was published. The following year, a similar parallel text with modern Tamil was released.

In 1985 daily Tamil parayana in Ramanasramam was initiated by Anuradha Jambunathan under the supervision and guidance of Kunjuswami. The current programme of Tamil recitation at the Ashram follows the sequence established in the Tamil *Collected Works*.

Monday Parayana

The hymns in *Sri Arunachala Stuti Panchakam* are among the earliest of Bhagavan's compositions. They were written around 1914 when Bhagavan was living on the hill at Virupaksha Cave. The *Arunachala Mahatmyam*,⁷ a short

7 Verses 5 and 6 are translations of the Sanskrit slokas Bhagavan discovered one day at Virupaksha Cave in the *Arunachala Mahatmyam*. Bhagavan put the slokas to use as the principal means of declining a

hymn that introduces *Sri Arunachala Stuti Panchakam*, is taken from the *Skanda Purana* and was translated by Bhagavan into Tamil. Included in this prelude are verses on the significance of Arunachala written by Muruganar and a verse by Bhagavan on the significance of the beacon flame atop Arunachala on Deepam Day.

Among his devotees at the time of composing this hymn were several sadhus who used to go to town each day to beg for alms. It so happened that other sadhus in town would try and give their benefactors the impression that they too were connected with the Maharshi in order to improve their chances of receiving alms. Devotees requested Bhagavan to compose a song that they could sing while on their round for bhiksha, both as a way of benefiting their patrons with Bhagavan's wisdom and to distinguish themselves as his devotees. Initially Bhagavan declined, saying that there were already plenty of songs by the Saivite saints. But they continued to press him, and in the end, he relented, composing the *Akshara Mana Malai* or the 'Marital Garland of Letters'.⁸ The second, third and fourth hymns (*Sri Arunachala Nava Mani Malai*, *Padikam* and *Ashtakam*) were written about the same time. Whereas later poems of the Maharshi are teaching-oriented, these hymns are soaked in devotion. *Sri Arunachala Nava Mani Malai*, like *Akshara Mana Malai*, tells of the wonder of Arunachala.

request to adopt *sannyasa diksha* made by a visiting Mutt pundit.

8 With a few exceptions, the first letters of each of the 108 couplets are in alphabetical order (according to the Tamil alphabet). The first verse, called *payiram*, is written by Muruganar and is in *viruttam* metre.

Events in Sri Ramanasramam: Kavya Kantha Ganapathi Muni Day



On the 25th July, devotees gathered in the New Hall to celebrate Kavya Kantha Ganapathi Muni Day chanting from various of his works, e.g. *Ramana Gita*, *Guru Gita* and *Sat-Darshana*. —





Of *Sri Arunachala Padikam*⁹ and *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam* Bhagavan said:

*The only poems that came to me spontaneously and compelled me, as it were, to write them without anyone urging me to do so are Sri Arunachala Padikam and Sri Arunachala Ashtakam. The opening words of Sri Arunachala Padikam came to me one morning and even though I tried to suppress them, saying, "What have I to do with these words?" they would not be suppressed till I composed a song bringing them in; and all the words flowed easily, without any effort. In the same way the second stanza was made the next day and the succeeding ones the following days, one each day. Only the tenth and eleventh were composed the same day.*¹⁰

9 *Padikam* means 'ten stanzas' but in the end this hymn came to total eleven and is often referred to as the 'Eleven Verses to Sri Arunachala'. *Ezhu seer viruttam* (seven-word metre): These are eight-line verses with the first line of each couplet having four words and the second, three.

10 *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-knowledge*, Arthur Osborne, 2004, p. 205.

Arunachala Pancharatna

For a description of the genesis of the fifth hymn, *Arunachala Pancaratna*, see page five above which tells how the five verses came to be composed by Bhagavan in Sanskrit (with a concluding verse by Daivarata), all of which were translated by Bhagavan into Tamil for inclusion as the closing verses of the *Arunachala Stutbi Panchakam*.

Concluding and Benedictory Verses

The *ariyadi* verse was written by Bhagavan during the Virupaksha days in response to a question-verse written in Malayalam by Amrutanata yati concerning who Bhagavan Ramana is. The benedictory verse sung on Mondays — *vazhga van* — was composed by Muruganar. The alternate benedictory verse sung Tuesday-Friday is taken from Venkataramayyar's *Ponnolir Pattu* (v. 10). —

(to be continued)

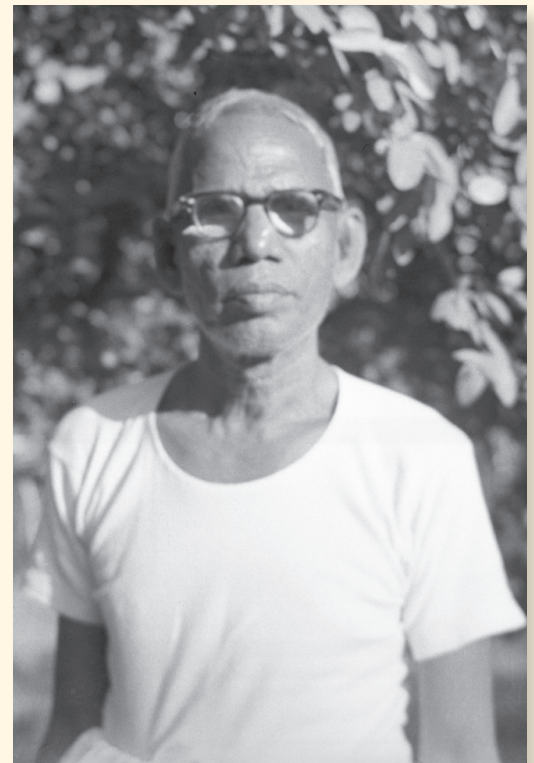
Sadhu Natanananda's Upadesa Ratnavali, the 11th stanza

Sadhu Natanananda's *Upadesa Ratnavali* was written in 1931 and revised by Bhagavan. In 2000, the work was published in Tamil in the periodical *Ramanodhayam* but was never translated. Sadhu Natanananda tells us that it was meant as a commentary on verses from Sri Muruganar's *Guru Vachaka Kovai*. As for the genesis of his 108 Tamil stanzas, Natanananda writes:

One of the permanent residents of Sri Ramanasramam, Sri Barathvaji Mubavai Kanna Muruganar, used to record the flood of grace in the form of the teachings of Bhagavan based on his sravana (listening/reading) in the form of venbas. Before these were published in book form, the author (Swami Natanananda) picked out some verses from Muruganar and rendered them in prose for the benefit of sincere seekers of truth. As the original composition of Muruganar was in chaste classical Tamil, it could not be easily understood by devotees with a limited working knowledge of the language.

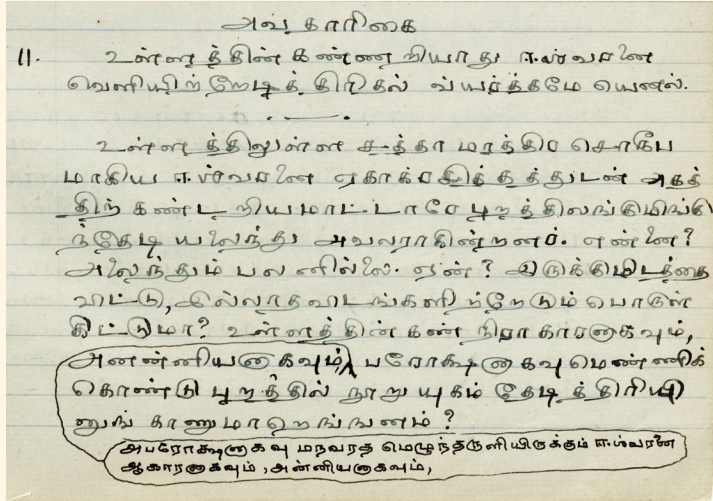
Below we see a sample of Bhagavan's revisions to the eleventh stanza (based on GVK 783 and 1026) which in English has been adapted as follows:

Roaming about in search of Ishwara instead of seeking to experience Him directly within the heart is futile. Instead of holding one's attention single pointedly to the direct intuitive experience of Ishwara who resides in each (human) heart, people roam about looking for Him in appearances. Can an object lost inside the house be found outside the house? Can the formless ever-present Ishwara beyond the senses ever be seen by looking outwardly through the senses, even if one attempts it for hundreds of eons?





Sadhu Natanananda's Upadesa Ratnavali (cont.)



Associated verses:

Ishvara is different from oneself, so thinks the lowest category of men. I should be ever at the command and service before the feet of Ishvara, so thinks the middling category. But merged in Ishvara beyond any differentiation or separation is the first category.

— Sivgnana Vallalar, Vallalar Saathiram
Gnana Vilakkam, Ishvara Bakthi, v. 35

Those who are wallowing in identification with the body will perform puja, wave lights, and bring their palms together with longing in salutation before the idol of a god, but will not inquire whether the true God is the worshipper of the idol.

— Sorupa Saram

Events in Sri Ramanasramam: H.C. Khanna Day



On 23rd July, Sri Ramanasramam President Dr. Venkat S. Ramanan and devotees gathered with Anil and Sabby Khanna of Bombay to remember H.C. Khanna at his tomb adjacent to Chadwick's cottage. The celebration began with the recitation of *Aksharamanamalai*, followed by arathi, distribution of prasada and circumambulation of the four samadhis. —

Sri Bhagavan's Ayurvedic Verses: Vataharam (Couplet)

Vātaharam (Couplet)

Tuḷasirasat tilmīlagut tūḷney kalanduṭ
koḷalvāta nōyaik kolum

Tuḷasirasattil miḷagut tūḷ-ney kalandu-ṭ
koḷḷal-vāta nōyaik kollum

Rheumatism can be treated by mixing pepper powder and ghee with the juice of freshly squeezed basil.

