

Saranagathi



eNewsletter from www.sriramanamaharshi.org

In this Issue

Dear Sri Bhagavan Devotees,

Last month Mahapuja, [Mother Azhagammal's Aradhana](#), was celebrated at the Ashram. The Ashram website carries a video of the occasion.

In this issue, commemorating the event, we carry an article on Sri Bhagavan and His Mother and continue with the series on Attendants of Sri Bhagavan, to cover Arni Annamalaiswami. This issue ends with 'Reports from Sri Ramanasramam'.

We would again like to draw attention to some new additions to the website like the [Old Devotees Interviews](#). We welcome your feedback on how to improve the website further.

We hope to hear from you, about your [satsangs](#) and experiences of Him. Please email them to

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Yours in Sri Bhagavan,

The Editorial Team.

The Essence of Instruction

*Mind and breath (as thought and action)
Fork out like two branches.
But both spring
From a single root.*

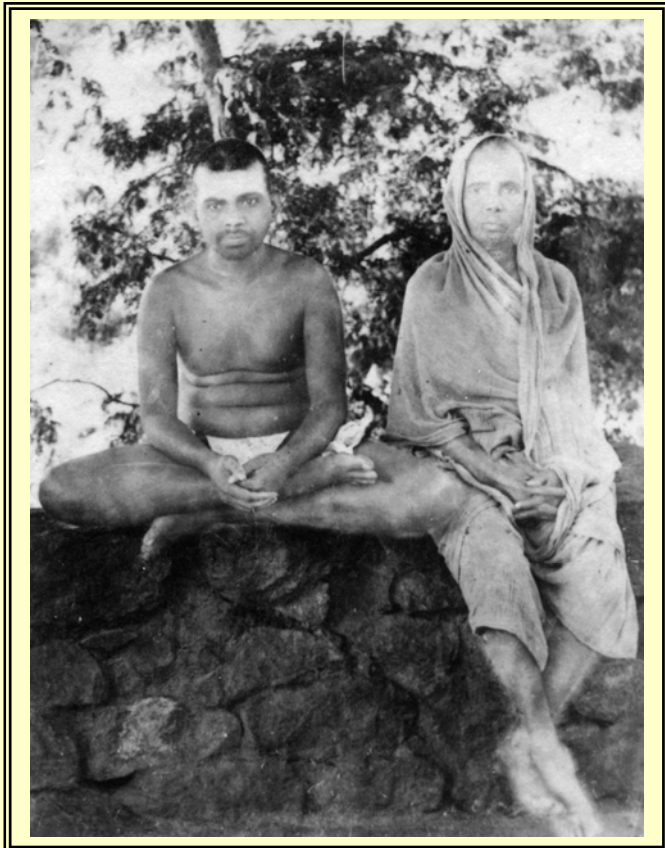
– Upadesa Saram by Sri Bhagavan (Verse 12)

The Maharshi and His Mother

Extracted from an article authored by Sri A R Natarajan in Ramana Smriti, a souvenir first published in 1980 to commemorate Sri Bhagavan's birth centenary.

Sri Ramana Maharshi shared an extraordinarily beautiful and tender relationship with His mother, Alagammal. For ostensible purposes, one finds three different stages in the relationship, but throughout, the undercurrent of love Sri Bhagavan had for his mother and the regard and love she had for him are evident.

In the biography of Sri Bhagavan we first find a detailed account of this relationship when his mother went to Tiruvannamalai in 1898 to persuade him to return home. Seeing Sri Bhagavan with his matted hair and dirty loin cloth, his mother's heart bled and she used all kinds of persuasion to take him back home.



Sri Ramana who was then observing *mouna* wrote in Tamil on a sheet of paper:

"The Lord, remaining everywhere, gives the fruits of all actions at the appropriate time. That which is destined not to happen will not happen despite any amount of effort. What is destined to happen cannot be prevented. The best course is, therefore to have an attitude of resignation".

Knowing that it was not possible for him to go back, Sri Ramana thought that the only recourse open to him was to give his mother the appropriate advice.

In 1914, while returning from a trip from the shrine of Venkataramana at Tirupati, she stayed for some time with Sri Ramana at Virupaksha cave on the Arunachala Hill where she fell ill with typhoid. On this occasion when her condition became serious Sri Bhagavan composed a touching poem in Tamil on Arunachala praying for the recovery of his mother. The verses are given below:

Hill of my refuge that cures the ills of recurring births! O Lord! It is for Thee to cure my mother's fever.

O God that smites Death itself! My sole refuge! Vouchsafe Thy grace unto my mother and shield her from Death. What is Death if scrutinized?

Arunachala! Thou blazing fire of Jnana! Deign to wrap my mother in Thy light and make her one with Thee. What need then for cremation?

Arunachala, that chasest away illusion (maya)! Why delayest Thou to dispel my mother's delirium! Besides Thee, is there anyone who with maternal solicitude can protect the suppliant soul and ward off the strokes of destiny?

This is the only known instance of prayer by Sri Bhagavan to change the course of events. Needless to say, Alagammal recovered.

From 1916 to 1922, the mother was in Tiruvannamalai and spent the last few years of her life with Sri Ramana. These years were used by Sri Bhagavan to hasten her spiritual growth and make her fit for liberation.

So deep was the mother's love for Sri Bhagavan that she even refused to go to her daughter's place for a brief spell when the daughter had built a house and had invited her just to set her foot in it. It is reported that she told Sri Ramana, "Even if you throw my dead body on these thorny bushes, I must end this life in your arms". Sri Ramana, on his part, used every opportunity to guide his mother in the spiritual path. The famous *Appala Pattu* (song of the pappad) came to be composed for her spiritual edification.

On 19 May, 1922, the mother took seriously ill, and the Maharshi, knowing that the time had come, sat by her side with his right hand on her chest, and the left hand on her head. At about eight in the night Alagammal attained *Mahasamadhi*. When somebody said that she had passed away, Sri Ramana corrected him with the curt remark, "Not passed away, absorbed". Further explaining what happened in the ten or twelve hours when his hands were on the head and heart of his mother, Maharshi said:

"Innate tendencies (*vasanas*) and the subtle memory of past experiences leading to future possibilities became very active. Scene after scene

rolled before her in the subtle consciousness, the outer senses having already gone. The soul was passing through a series of experiences, thus avoiding the need for rebirth and effecting union with the Supreme Spirit. The soul was at last disrobed of the subtle sheaths before it reached the final Destination, the Supreme Peace of liberation from which there is no return to ignorance."

Maharshi had already stated that in *jnana* there was no difference between man and woman and that the body of a woman liberated from life should not be cremated for it was a temple. Accordingly, she was buried in the southern slopes of Arunachala, and a *lingam*, *Matrubhuteswara* was installed on the *Samadhi*. Within a few months, Sri Bhagavan shifted from Skandasramam to the site of the *Samadhi* where Sri Ramanasramam has grown through the years.

In 1949, devotees of Sri Bhagavan completed the building of a beautiful shrine over the mother's *Samadhi* and now the shrine of Bhagavan Sri Ramana and that of the mother are adjacent, under scoring the beauty of their wonderful relationship.



Arni Annamalaiswami

There is little information about Arni Annamalaiswami who served Sri Bhagavan at Virupaksha for a while and later at Skandasramam. The following is a compilation of references made to this early attendant of the Maharishi in various Ashram publications.

Arni Annamalaiswami first visited the Maharshi at Virupaksha Cave. He later went to Kovilur where he studied some Tamil scriptures. He returned to Skandasramam and served Sri Bhagavan there for two years. Annamalaiswami died in January, 1922 in his 29th year. In the meantime he had composed 36 stanzas in Tamil full of religious fervor which Sri Bhagavan had read out, briefly explaining their meaning.

Sri Kunjuswami, who was to serve Sri Bhagavan for many years, arrived at Skandasramam in January 1922, on the very day Annamalaiswami died of plague. Sri Kunjuswami recollects the incident in his reminiscences as follows:

“When I reached Skandasramam and saw Bhagavan, I was thrilled. At that time my friend, Ramakrishnaswami, Perumalswami and Akhandananda prostrated before Bhagavan. I did likewise. Ramakrishnaswami was pleasantly surprised to see me. He said to Bhagavan, “He is from my village. He has been a sadhu from a very early age. It was he who sent me here.” Bhagavan nodded his head. Then Ramakrishnaswami said to me, “Please stay here. We shall be back soon.” I learned later that Annamalaiswami, an attendant of Bhagavan, had died of the plague and they were going for making arrangements for his burial. I heard someone weeping in the adjoining small room. An old woman cried, “A gem of a fellow has been snatched away. What a tragedy!” Someone was sitting beside her. Turning towards them Bhagavan said pointing to me, “Why are you all so upset? Another son has come here to fill his place.” I did not understand the significance of these words at that time. I came to know later that the old lady was Bhagavan’s mother and the gentleman who was

beside her was Niranananda Swami, Bhagavan’s brother.

Another reference to Annamalaiswami can be found in Sri Devaraja Mudaliar’s Reminiscences.

6–2–46 Night.

After parayana, a person came and told Bhagavan “we are going to our village tomorrow morning”. Bhagavan said ‘Yes’ and the person left. Turning to the attendant, Bhagavan said, “Have they been given?” The attendant went out, enquired, came back and reported, “They have not yet been given. But things have been reserved to be given to them.” I was wondering what all this was about. Bhagavan told me, “There was one Annamalaiswami when I was at the Asramam on the hill (i.e.; Skandasramam). He died in *Thai*¹ of 1922 and was buried near Eesanya math. This is his Guru puja or death anniversary. His relations come and celebrate it every year. They feed poor people there and leave some rice, etc., here. We give them our prasadam (vadai, pongal, etc.). It is usual to sing the songs composed by that Annamalaiswami on such Guru puja days, with our Tamil parayana. I don’t know what they propose to do today.” I said, “If that has been the custom, we shall certainly do the same today. Why should there be any doubt about it?” Meanwhile Balaram asked Bhagavan who that Annamalaiswami was. Bhagavan thereupon took out the life of Bhagavan brought out by Kamath with 111 illustrations and showed us a group photo in which that Annamalaiswami is standing at the right hand end of the picture. Bhagavan said, “Mother used to be very fond of him. He died in *Thai*. She passed away in *Vaikas*².”

Reports from Sri Ramanasramam

Maha Puja

On 18th May 2009, the Aradhana (Samadhi Day) of Mother Azhagammal or Maha Puja was performed on a grand scale at Sri Ramanasramam. The previous evening, i.e., on 17th May 2009, a musical concert entitled 'Azhagammain Arut Selvan' was performed by Dr. Sarada, Smt. V. Radha and students of RMCL in the New Hall. It was well received by devotees.

On Maha Puja day Mahanyasa commenced at 6 a.m. followed by Ekadasa Rudra japa. This was followed by an elaborate abhishekam and arati.

That evening 'Mother Azhagammal – A Saga of Enlightenment' – A Bharatanatyam feature was performed by Sri J. Ujwal and Sri R. Srinivas.



Aarati at Sri Mathrubhuteswara Shrine



Concert by Dr Sarada, Smt V Radha & team

New Meditation Hall

The first Sarvadhikari, Sri Niranjanananda Swami's old office room (adjacent to Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi Hall) has been converted into a Meditation Hall and is open to devotees to meditate and observe one's self.

