

Saranagathi

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ISSUE

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Dear Devotees,

In this issue of Saranagathi we continue our series on inspiring women devotees of Sri Bhagavan with the final part of the life story of Echammal followed by the life story of Mudaliar Paati. As the Ashram celebrated the Samadhi Day of Major Chadwick this month, we have included his story in *How I Came to Bhagavan* taken from *The Mountain Path* archives. *Reports from Sri Ramanasramam* include Chadwick's Day, Rama Navami and the April 14th Aradhana celebration. Bhagavan's 61st Aradhana was celebrated on Saturday, April 30th, with a smaller celebration on April 14th commemorating the event according to the Gregorian calendar. To view pictures and video coverage of these events please visit <http://www.sriramanamaharshi.org/aradhana2011.html>

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In Sri Bhagavan

The Editorial Team

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Reality in Forty Verses

3. 'The World is true'; 'No, it is a false appearance'; 'The World is Mind'; 'No, it is not'; 'The World is pleasant'; 'No, it is not' — What avails such talk? To leave the world alone and know the Self, to go beyond all thought of 'One' and 'Two', this egoless condition is the common goal of all.

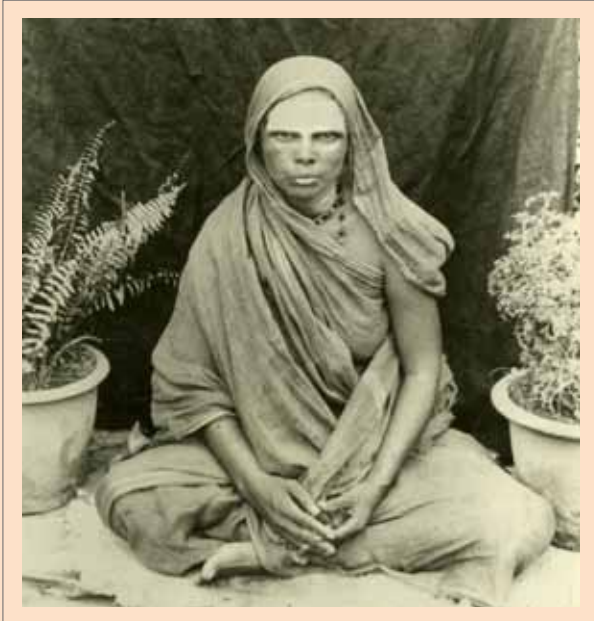
UlladuNarpadu by Sri Bhagavan (Verse 1)





Echammal

(concluding part)



Another day, Echammal was unable to go herself, and sent food for Bhagavan through someone else. It was kept in the kitchen, and they forgot to serve it to Bhagavan. In the dining hall, it was the custom to serve everyone first and Bhagavan last. Then Bhagavan would nod his head, and the others would begin eating. As usual, everyone was served, including Bhagavan. Bhagavan was seated quietly. He did not give the customary nod, so again this intelligent attendant enquired, "Have you served Echammal's food?" They said, "No, we forgot!" Only after Echammal's food was served, Bhagavan began to eat.

Toward the end of her life, Echammal was unconscious for two days. The first day, when she was struggling to breathe, Bhagavan sat for five hours like a rock on the sofa, deep in samadhi. Many remarked that they had never seen Bhagavan sit like that. Later on, they came to know that that was the time when Echammal was struggling. According to the doctors she went into coma after that. No doubt

she was already absorbed in the inner bliss by the grace of Bhagavan.

The next day when she was to relinquish the body, the ladies of the house wanted to test Echammal. In a loud voice, one of them said, "It appears that food has not reached Bhagavan." Suddenly Echammal opened her eyes wide. She could not speak, but her eyes questioned, "What happened?" They replied, "No, no! We were joking. The food has already gone to Bhagavan." Hearing this, she smiled, closed her eyes and left her body.

When Bhagavan was informed, he said, "Echammal has shuffled her whole load, but my load still remains."

Mudaliar Paatti

Mudaliar Paatti lived in a village with her son and daughter-in-law. She had been serving a sadhu. When he was about to die, she asked him what they should do now, and he said, "Go to Arunachala, there is a young saint there. Serve him. Your life's purpose will be fulfilled."

Mudaliar Paatti was past her prime when she came to Bhagavan. She saw Bhagavan at Virupaksha cave in 1910. Her very first glimpse of Bhagavan gave her an exhilarating spiritual experience. On the spot, she took a vow, "I will bring him food until my last day."

Occasionally she would collect money or provisions from the village. However, she gradually sold all her property to enable herself to serve Bhagavan. When she had nothing left, she would buy sesame seeds from the market, crush oil, sell it in the market and with the little profit she made, she would buy provisions to make food for Bhagavan.

This is why Bhagavan once said, "I'm afraid of two people — Ramanatha Brahmachari and Mudaliar





Paatti.” They were so completely selfless and so total was their surrender that Bhagavan was made totally responsible for them.

There are so many instances in Mudaliar Paatti’s life that display her deep devotion. Even after Sri Ramanashram came into being, she insisted on serving food to Bhagavan with her own hand. She had become half blind due to old age. One day, when serving Bhagavan’s food she stepped on the leaf on which his food was served. An attendant standing close by scolded her, “Hey! You have poor eyesight, why do you come? When you cannot see Bhagavan, why do you come and disturb everyone?” Mudaliar Paatti replied, “What does it matter if I can’t see him? Bhagavan sees me; that is enough.”

Another time, when she heard that Bhagavan’s health was deteriorating after the first surgery, she wanted to see him. She had gone totally blind, but still insisted on being with Bhagavan. She was brought to the hall, and strained her eyes to see. Bhagavan consoled her, “Paatti, I’m all right, my body is all right.” She was not fully satisfied. She stepped outside and stood at the entrance of the hall. When Bhagavan came out, she said, “Bhagavan, stop!” With her hands she then touched Bhagavan from his head to foot – she is the only woman whom Bhagavan allowed to do so. He asked her, “Are you satisfied now?”

This remarkable lady spent the last days of her life in Ramana Nagar -- a little away from Ramanashram. Kunju Swami, Viswanatha Swami and Suri Nagamma were sent by Bhagavan to look after her. They built a hut for her in Ramana Nagar. Bhagavan enquired about her daily.

By 1949, Mudaliar Paatti had grown very old, had gone blind, had lost her daughter-in-law, had lost everything—yet she continued cooking for Bhagavan. Even on her last day, she cooked food and made sure

that it was taken to Bhagavan. She insisted on being informed when Bhagavan had finished eating her food. When that was reported to her, she closed her eyes and dropped her body. Bhagavan gave instructions to Kunju Swami and others that she should be buried like a realized being (just as he had done earlier in the case of Seshadri Swami). On a previous occasion--the day when Echammal passed away--Bhagavan had remarked, “Still, Mudaliar Paatti is alive.” When Mudaliar Paatti passed away,



Bhagavan declared, “A big responsibility has been taken off my shoulders.”

The Universal Mother took the form of mother Alagammal and gave Bhagavan his body. In the forms of Ratnammal, Akhilandammal, Echammal and Mudaliar Paatti, the Universal Mother nourished Bhagavan’s body. Bhagavan graced these noble women with realization.

Soon after Mudaliar Paatti dropped her body, Bhagavan’s health deteriorated rapidly. Within a few months, he too dropped his body.





Maharshi's Gospel

Guru and His Grace

D: How can I obtain Grace?

M: Grace is the Self. That also is not to be acquired; you only need to know that it exists. The sun is brightness only. It does not see darkness. Yet you speak of darkness fleeing on the sun's approach. So also the devotee's ignorance, like the phantom of darkness, vanishes at the look of the Guru. You are surrounded by sunlight; yet if you want to see the sun, you must turn in its direction and look at it. So also Grace is found by the proper approach you make, though it is here and now.

D: Cannot Grace hasten ripeness in the seeker?

M: Leave it all to the Master. Surrender to Him without reserve.

One of two things must be done: either surrender yourself, because you realise your inability and need a higher power to help you; or investigate into the cause of misery, go into the Source and so merge in the Self. Either way, you will be free from misery. God or Guru never forsakes the devotee who has surrendered himself.

Report's from Sri Ramanasramam (part one)

Major Chadwick's Samadhi Day

Major Chadwick was a ripe soul when at 7 a.m. on November 1, 1935 he came to Bhagavan in whom he recognized his Guru. Bhagavan welcomed him with a smile and talked to him till it was time for lunch, something very unusual. Bhagavan later said of him: "Chadwick was with us before, he was one of us. He had some desire to be born in the West and that he has now fulfilled."

Major A. W. Chadwick was Absorbed in his Master Bhagavan Ramana on 17th April 1962. Chadwick Day was observed this year on the same day when at 10 a.m. devotees assembled near his Samadhi, decorated with colourful garlands, and chanted Arunachala Aksharamanamaalai. Prasad was then distributed.

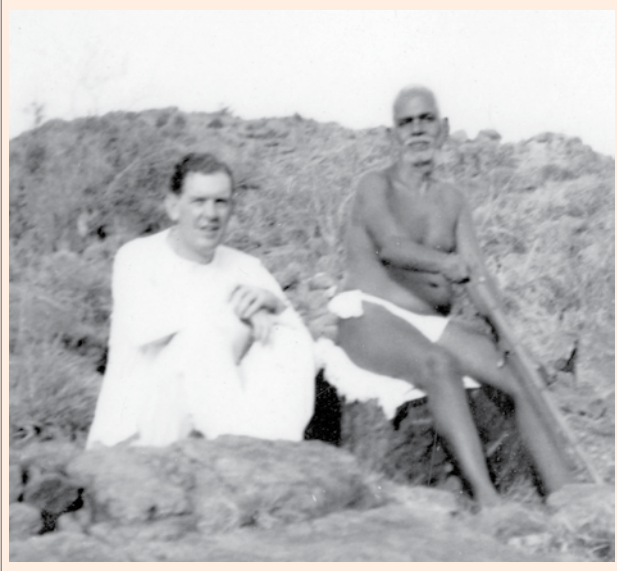




How I Came to Bhagavan

by Major Chadwick

—*The Mountain Path*, Jayanthi 1981

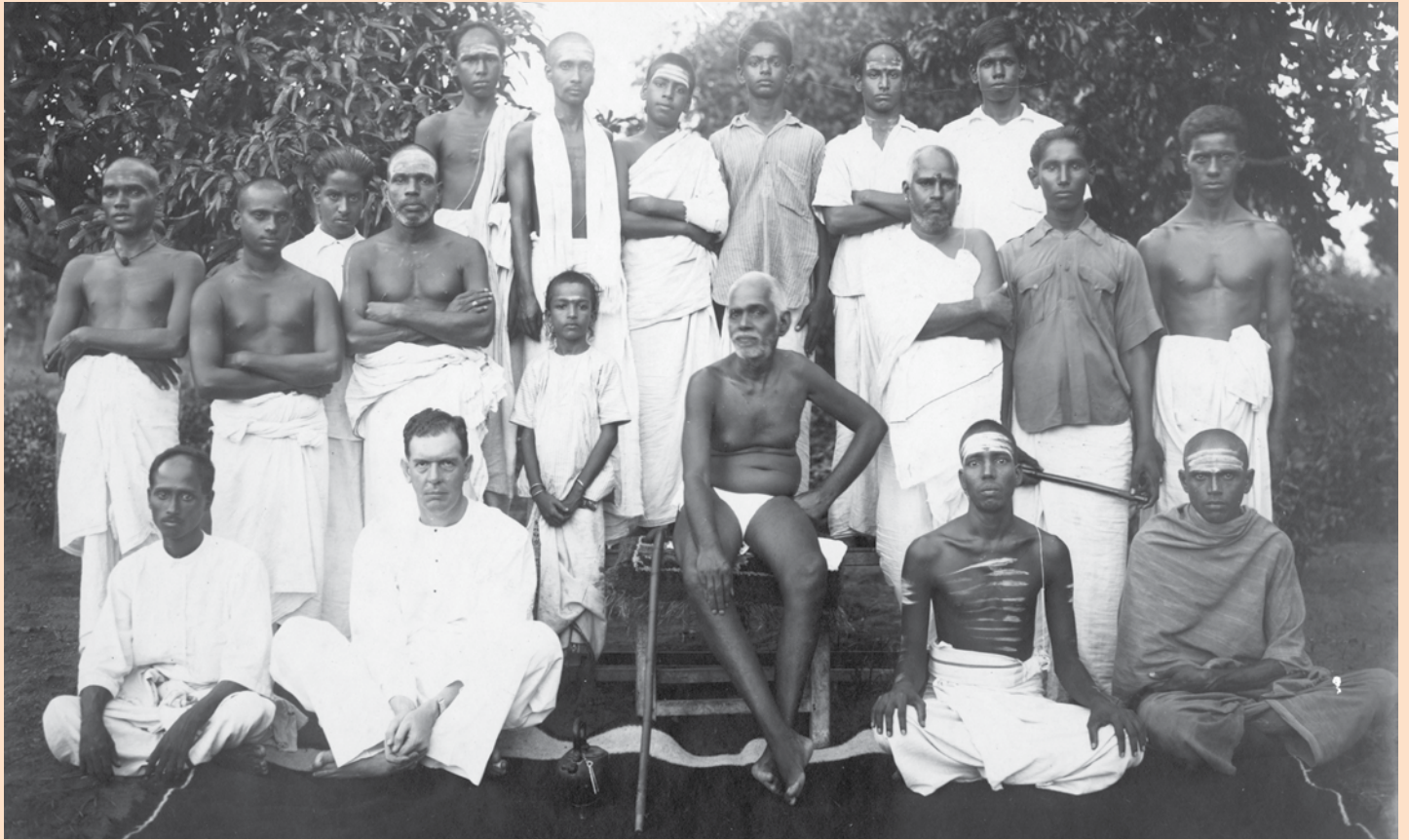


For many years I had been interested in mysticism, and in 1919 a friend of mine gave me a copy of Bhagavad Gita, which has been my constant companion ever since. For a long time too, I had prayed for a master, as I felt I had reached such a point in my meditation that only the personal contact of the Guru could carry me further on the road. This I was unable to find in the West; my prayers were in vain. There is a saying that when a pupil is ready the master will appear. I suppose that I was not ready. One day while I was at a reception in Budapest, the strong conviction suddenly came to me that I must go to India. At the same time, I was unable to understand why this obvious decision had not come to me long ago. This happened in April 1934 and I planned that I would put my house in order and leave in the October of the following year. Though I had not the least idea where I should go except that I vaguely thought that the Theosophists were the right people to contact, and that perhaps I ought to start in Madras. They, however, refused

to help me. They knew of no teacher and could not see their way to facilitate my search by allowing me to make Adyar my headquarters while I pursued my quest, even though I had become a member of their Society for the purpose of asking their help.

Ten months after I had made the momentous decision to go to India, I was still just as ignorant as to my destination as originally. In fact, I had not sufficient money to make an extensive tour of India, staying at her most expensive hotels, and even should I do so, I saw no possible way to achieve my end. So I reluctantly came to the conclusion that my voyage must be postponed. It was too much groping in the dark. Perhaps my faith had been tried enough, for shortly after I reached this decision, I came across the information I required in the strangest manner. One day I was attending a lunch party in Spain given by a friend of mine, an English lady. While alive, her husband had been a famous politician who had been noted for his evangelical outlook and strict orthodoxy, the very last person to have approved of the book, *A Search in Secret India*, with its esoteric carvings. He would have considered such a book almost sacrilegious. However, when lunch was



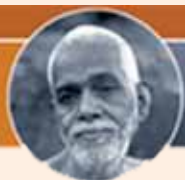


finished, my hostess picked up Paul Brunton's book and handed it to me, telling me to take it away and read it, as she was sure that it would interest me. We had never before discussed such subjects and it still remains a mystery to me why she should have chosen me from among her many guests as a fit person to read this particular book, a work I formerly believed would be an anathema to her. Once I had read the book I knew that my prayers had been answered. I had no doubt that the Maharshi was the teacher for whom I had been searching for so long. My postponed plan to go to India was revived, and I sailed as originally intended, at the beginning of October, my destination being Tiruvannamalai near Madras.

[Since coming here] I have learnt that Self-realisation is a question of discarding beliefs entirely, as a snake throws off its old skin. And I am in the constant hope

that being in the presence of the Holy One will help me to do that more quickly than any other method. That at least is what I understand Him to teach. That love and peace permeate his very presence is true, though perhaps for some that peace is more provocative of a divine discontent than the generally accepted tranquillity. And so with constant hope in my breast I remain here, far from my home and friends. No doubt as I pursue my search my hope will increase and so I shall be forced to remain in exile. For although I know that His grace would follow me wherever I went, I should find it impossible to run away from the Wonder of the World. Anyway, if I did so, I should only be forced to come back. Of himself, I hardly dare speak. He is so far greater than I could hope to express or explain, and the only way that he can be understood is through the spirit. Here the intellect will fail us entirely.





Report's from Sri Ramanasramam (part two)



Rama Navami

Lord Krishna declared in Srimad Bhagavad Gita that whenever there is decay of *dharma* and ascendancy of *adharma*, he re-incarnates himself in the world for the protection of the good and the establishment of *dharma* from age to age. Sri Rama is one such Avatar. Lord Rama was the prince of the Ikshwaku race, brave and valiant, yet gentle and modest.

Rama Navami celebrations were conducted in the Mother's Shrine this year on Tuesday, 12th April.

Nirvana Room Celebration

The anniversary of Sri Bhagavan's Brahma Nirvana is usually celebrated on Chaitra Krishna Paksha Trayodasi (April-May) reckoning the day according to the Souramana (solar) system of the Hindu calendar. In recent times it is also observed according to the Gregorian calendar, that is, on 14th April, 8.47 pm, the moment Bhagavan left His body.



Ramana Granthalaya Update

The new Ashram library complex under construction behind the Ashram dining hall is proceeding according to schedule and is slotted for completion 15th December this year. The foundation is in place and the ground floor supporting structures are nearing completion. Complete with courtyard, the complex is designed to house the Ashram library collection of some 30,000 volumes as well as serve as a space for cultural events.

