

Saranagati



SARANAGATI
SRI RAMANASRAMAM

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D. Thiyagarajan



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IN THIS
ISSUE

Dear Devotees,

We end the month of September with Navaratri 2019 in progress with nightly pujas dedicated to the Goddess and with daily Laksharchana and parayana including Devi Mahatmyam performed each day

In this issue, we launch two new series, In Profile, featuring the lives of devotees close to Bhagavan, and Putting Bhagavan into Practice, a series exploring ways of putting Bhagavan's teaching to work in daily life. This issue's In Profile (starting on p. 3) looks at the life of Dr. M. R. Krishnamurthi Iyer, the first dispensary doctor who remained in the Ashram up till the end. Putting Bhagavan into Practice this issue (starting on p. 7) looks at affliction and defilements.

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

In Sri Bhagavan,
The Editorial Team

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

7th October (Mon) Saraswati Puja
8th October (Tues) Vijayadasami
13th October (Sun) Full Moon
21st October (Mon) Punarvasu
27th October (Sun) Deepavali
12th November (Tues) Full Moon
17th November (Sun) Punarvasu

1st December (Sun) Karthigai Festival commences
10th December (Tues) Karthigai Deepam Day
11th December (Wed) Full Moon
14th December (Sat) Punarvasu
11th January (Sat) Bhagavan's 140th Jayanti
14th January (Tues) Pongal
20 - 26th January Nochur Venkataraman Discourses





IN PROFILE

Dr. M. R. Krishnamurthi Iyer

Dr. M. R. Krishnamurthi Iyer first came to Bhagavan in 1924. From of a good family of Mondri in Thanjavore District, in 1933 he settled down in Tiruvannamalai, took a house in town, worked in the local hospital and came regularly to the Ashram to see Bhagavan.

Known in the Ashram as the ‘town doctor’, Dr. Krishnamurthi became the first doctor of the Ashram Dispensary. Until 1942, he treated patients in a simple thatched shed before the new Ashram Dispensary was inaugurated. Though working much of the time, Dr. Krishnamurthi came to have Bhagavan’s darshan each

Sunday at 2 pm, leading devotees to call him “Sunday Doctor”. Whenever he would arrive, Bhagavan would say, “Oh, today is Sunday.”

Healing Bhagavan

In the late 1930s, Bhagavan got an intractable case of the hiccups and it fell to Dr. Krishnamurthi to treat him. Having tried every imaginable medicine without result, he became nervous when he discovered Bhagavan’s weak pulse. Returning home, he went to bed full of worry about Bhagavan’s condition.

During the night, Bhagavan appeared to him in a dream: “Why are you weeping? Don’t cry. In the courtyard of your house there is a *seendhikodi* plant. Pluck some leaves from it, fry them in ghee and then pound them along with dried ginger and jaggery, make a ball of it and bring it to me.”

When the doctor awoke, he and his wife Subbalakshmi went out with a hurricane lamp and searched for the herb in the courtyard. Among a strip of bushes, they found the desired plant. Having made the preparation according to the dream’s instructions, he and his wife entered the darshan hall early in the morning and found Bhagavan sitting on his couch. Bhagavan swallowed the medicine. When they told Bhagavan of the dream, Bhagavan acted as if he knew nothing about it. The hiccups stopped within a few days.

Another Dream

Another incident in respect of Dr. Krishnamurthi’s medical treatments being influenced by dream under Bhagavan’s guidance was the case of a close Ramana family member who suffered a serious burn on the back close to the vertebra. The wound became septic and Dr. Krishnamurthi was deeply concerned that it was not responding to conventional treatment under the care of physicians in Chennai. Bhagavan appeared in Dr. Krishnamurthi’s dream and advised him to apply a mixture consisting of penicillin ointment, cod liver oil and civet musk (the fragrant glandular secretion of the South Indian civet — called *punugu* in Tamil). With this treatment, the infection cleared up immediately.

Subbalakshmi’s Dream

Mrs. Krishnamurthi first met Bhagavan with her husband during the Deepam festival in the early days



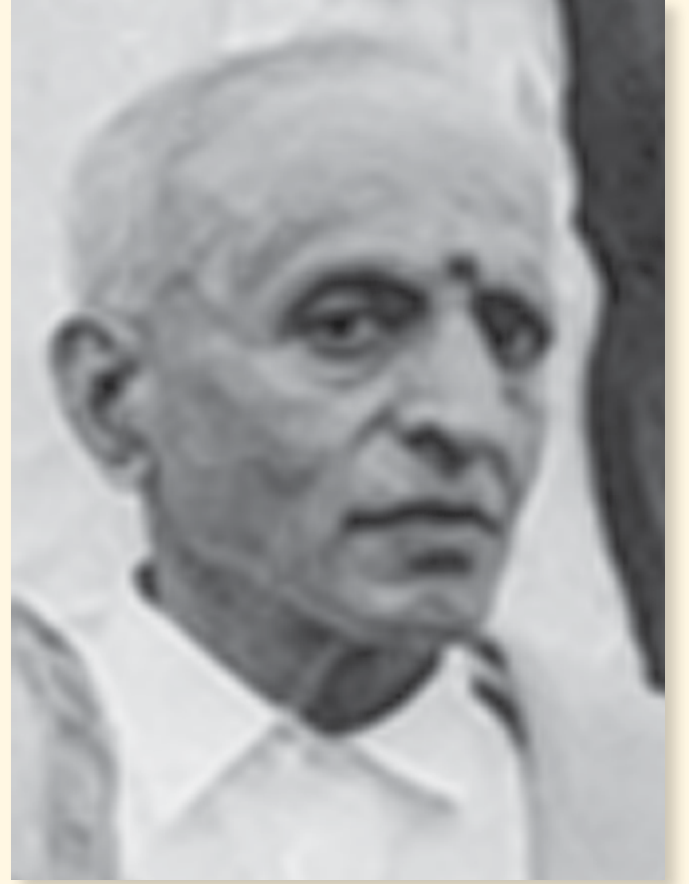


of their marriage. Her husband would often run away to Bhagavan, leaving his young bride alone. At one point she became gripped by the terrifying thought that her husband might become a sadhu and leave her altogether. The following night Bhagavan appeared in a dream, "Have no fear; your husband knows where his duties lie. Give up all worries." She told her husband of the dream who narrated it to Bhagavan.

Another time, Subbalakshmi fell sick. Neighbours and friends thought she would not pull through. At that time the doctor was at the Ashram. When the message was sent to the Ashram about her condition, Bhagavan, who was reading the newspaper at the time, went into a trance. Simultaneously, Mrs. Krishnamurthi's health was fully restored.

The Photo of Bhagavan

Another time there was a procession in town and Subbulakshmiammal saw the large picture of Seshadri Swami they were carrying to the accompaniment of drums. She thought, "If only I had at home a similar picture of Bhagavan, I could offer pooja and garlands to him." Not long afterward, there was a knock on the door. Someone with a large picture of Bhagavan was standing at the doorstep. The man said, "I come from the village of Polur. I am supposed to leave this photograph at your house. I am on my way to the Ashram but will return after having Bhagavan's darshan."



In amazement, Subbulakshmiammal took the picture inside, and immediately placed a garland around it and performed puja. When Dr. Krishnamurthi returned home, the children rushed out to greet him, "Father, Bhagavan has come to our house!" Krishnamurthi was likewise astonished and his wife said, "I thought you had sent the man."

Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai: Desika Padigam §8

தஞ்சமென்று அடைந்த தமிழனேன் வாழத்
தயைமிகத் தழைத்திட நோக்கி
அஞ்சலென்று உன்றன் அணிமலர் வாயால்
ஆதரம் பெருகிட அழைத்து
கஞ்சமென்று உவமை கண்ட நின் கழலாம்
கனகமா முடியெனைக் கவித்துச்
செஞ்சொல் ஒன்று அருளித் திருவருள் புரிவாய்
தேசிக ரமண மா தேவே.

Guru Ramana, Siva, deign to look
With grace on me who has surrendered to
you, an ordinary one lying here, revive me,
Sustain me, with all the 3 dikshas (nayana, vachaka
and tiruvadi), with one whispered 'Fear not',
Crown my head with the golden lotuses
Of your twin Feet. Say one kind word
and save me. —





When the man from Polur arrived, he said, “I am an electrician. One day, I was called by Major Chadwick to do some electrical repairs in his room. I saw this photograph. When the work was done, he gave me money. I told Chadwick to give me this photograph instead. I was delighted when he did so and took the photograph to Polur.

Every day, I performed puja to the photograph with great reverence. However, one day something possessed me to give this picture to Dr. Krishnamurthi Iyer. That is why I am now leaving it behind.”

The family narrated the incident to Bhagavan who listened with great interest.

Final Days

Dr. Krishnamurthi was with Bhagavan during the multiple surgeries for osteogenic sarcoma. He was a traditionalist and was not in favour of the numerous surgeries, feeling that the body of a jnani should not be touched with surgical instruments. However, he did not interfere and cared for Bhagavan as best he could. At the time of the fourth surgery in December 1949 up till Bhagavan’s Mahanirvana, Krishnamurthi

was with Bhagavan: “Every night, I would go through heaven and hell. To be with Bhagavan, my guru, was heaven; to see his body suffer, was hell.”

Mrs. Krishnamurthi had wanted to come for darshan on Bhagavan’s Mahanirvana day but was prevented owing to the long queue. Bhagavan appeared to her in a dream and said, “Amma, how long should I bear the body? Death is natural to it. It is like a leaf on which the food has been eaten. It has to be thrown away.”

In the years that followed Bhagavan’s Mahanirvana, Dr. Krishnamurthi’s devotion to Bhagavan only grew stronger and he found that he could do nothing more than devote himself to Bhagavan, leaving off with the demands of work life and career.

The family’s financial condition diminished, but none suffered for want of food or shelter and the ever-increasing devotion to Bhagavan that filled the family home offset any burden in respect of creature comforts.

Dr. Krishnamurthi spent his final years regularly sitting in the upper room of his house in town, in continual worship of Sri Bhagavan and the Holy Hill. —

Events at Sri Ramanasramam: The Ashram Screwpine Garden



Devotees know the *thaaazhampoo* (Screwpine flower) from the story of Arunachala where Brahma, unlike his rival, remained ambitious in his search and, continuing his flight upward into the heavens in the form of a swan, found a *thaaazham* flower falling from the fiery column’s uppermost heights. He persuaded the flower to join him in testifying before the Lord that he had taken her from the lingam’s apex.

When Mahadeva heard their story, he chided them both for their deceit and deemed that Brahma would no longer have temples built in his name and that the *thaaazham* flower would no longer be offered at Siva pujas. However, acknowledging that the flower had no motive of her own, the Lord allowed that she might be offered once per year on the linga of the Lord at Mahasivaratri. Thus, in the spirit of nothing in creation being left aside, *thaaazhampoo* has this small role she plays in S. Indian liturgical life. *Thaaazham* tree (*L. pandanus*) in the Ashram gardens just above Pali Tirtham are thriving with recent copious rainfall bloomed two large blossoms (40cm long) and were placed on Bhagavan’s image in the New Hall on 23rd September. —

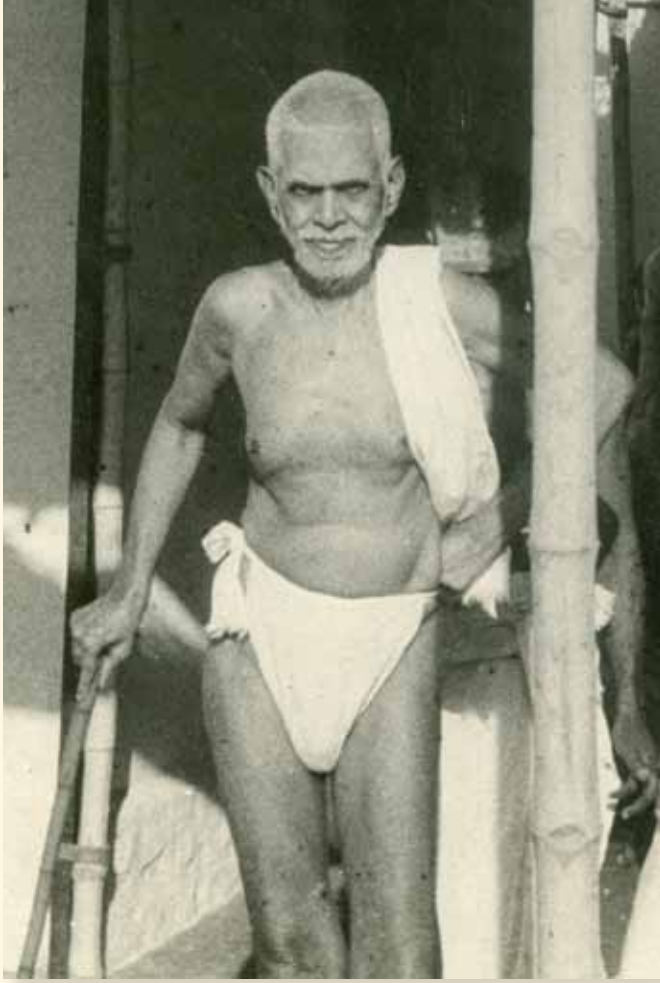




Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Navaratri 2019

On Saturday the 28th September, Goddess Yogambika went in procession and was installed at the head of the New Hall. The night of the following day began the first of nine successive nightly *alankarams*: 1) Goddess Meenakshi, 2) Gaja Lakshmi, 3) Tapas, 4) Linga Puja, 5) Rishabha Vahanam, 6) Sesha Sayanam, 7) Venuganam, 8) Saraswati; and lastly, 9) Mahishasura Mardini, celebrating the “slayer of the buffalo-demon”, Durga’s victory on *dasami shukla paksha* (the tenth day of the waxing moon). As we go to print, nightly pujas are underway with daily Laksharchana and parayana including *Devi Mahatmyam* performed each day. Customary blessing rites and pujas in the bookstall, library and dispensary will take place on the afternoon of the ninth day, Monday 7th Oct. On the evenings of the first four days, devotees will hear Carnatic music in the Library Auditorium. —





PUTTING BHAGAVAN INTO PRACTICE

Unmasking Affliction through Ramana Vichara

[In this new series, we attempt to address a common tendency to read Bhagavan merely theoretically, instead of putting his teaching to work in our lives day to day. If Bhagavan emphasized practice and were here now to give us down-to-earth steps which lead out from confusion, what might those steps look like in the 21st century?

In the following series, we take up themes from Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi and explore them in a practical way to make them relevant for daily living.]

Often, we find ourselves overwhelmed by circumstances in our lives with no adequate

means for addressing them. We feel threatened by what our spouse, friends or colleagues say to us, overpowered by the demands made by the world, as though we were trapped in a perpetual opposition to inner afflictive states. Anxiety, fear, anger, desire, aversion, jealousy and depression can assert themselves and so beleaguer us that moving through our daily lives feels like wading through molasses, each step draining every ounce of power. The occasions when we find ourselves besieged by such mental states are the times to remind ourselves of the tools Bhagavan gave us for navigating samsaric confusion. His vichara could be summed up this way: *awareness and wakeful attention is the path to freedom.*

Compassionately working with afflictive emotional states is most often not a question of *trying harder* but *trying different*. Afflictions are not something to be destroyed or eliminated through coercion or by a force of will but are healed through sympathetic attention in the context of steady enquiry. If afflictions thrive in non-awareness, bringing them into the light of alert attention through regular meditation helps us discover that we can heal them quite readily if we are able to name them for what they are.

We do not need to get rid of afflictions, impurities or defilements. We need only recognise them as and when they emerge. The old paradigm is fraught because it makes the same mistake every time: in reifying our defilements, that is, in making them into something that appears real and substantial, we fall into the trap of imagining that there is a little man or little woman in there that is tainted utterly, calling him or her 'ego', whereas Bhagavan tells us there is no such entity. He points to this as the root delusion in respect of bondage, namely, imagining that there is someone in bondage:

Identity of the Self with the body is the real bondage. Leave off the false notion and perceive intuitively the Real. That alone matters. If you melt a gold ornament, what does it matter how it is melted, whole or in parts, or what shape [it has]?There is no bondage, no material to bind with and no one to be bound. (Talks §32, §264)

In other words, see the defiled one as they really are, namely, unreal; and all bondage disappears.





But how do we do that? Here is where Bhagavan's enquiry comes in handy. When we break it up into smaller parts, we see how reification is the source of our trouble. When we make a thing out of the 'deluded self,' we give it a reality it doesn't deserve. Hence opting for the language of defilements, *kleshas* or afflictive emotions rather than the language of ego identity and deluded self helps us avoid a problem that is not there. How do we gain this insight?

By means of vichara, we can unmask the deception. Instead of quarrelling with our conceit or with behaviours we later judge as egoistic, we simply identify the behaviours as conceited or egoistic, naming them and nothing more. We do not personify the behaviours, make them into a person. By naming them without judgement and avoiding the temptation of trying to be rid of them, their hold on us is diminished. If we try to get rid of them, on the other hand, we strengthen them by creating samskaras of opposition. The great trap is imagining that our freedom hinges on being free of such impulses. The art is identifying them when they arise without evaluation or loathing. If aversion for them arises simultaneously, we identify the aversion as aversion. Micro-vichara helps us break up the objects of enquiry into smaller bite-sized parts and diminish their mayavic hold over us. *Everything that deceives can be said to enchant*, wrote Plato, and we are in part enamoured by our defilements, shy to confess our attraction to the old paradigm. Vichara does not necessarily usher in a wholesale understanding of our true nature all at once, but helps us see through identification with negative impulses, calling them self.

This is the old spiritual paradigm from which Bhagavan is trying to shake us. The old paradigm

is a demon's trick. The 'demon', as it were, gets us to imagine that we need to be cleansed of negative impulses once for all, causes us to imagine that we are the ego that must be destroyed at all costs. But as Bhagavan says repeatedly, the 'destroying' is nothing more than seeing through the delusion that there is such an entity. Bhagavan tells us, *the Jnani sees no one as an ajnani. All are only Jnanis in his sight... The Self is all shining and only pure Jnana. So there is no ajnana in his sight... There is only the Self* (Talks §499, §157).

The old paradigm is stubborn and keeps us ever trapped. We identify with our defilements and imagine that if we purify them, all will be well. By such a method, however, we forever grant them renewed strength. The attempt to root out defilements is like a street dog scratching at fleas: even if there is momentary relief, they just keep coming back. By our focusing on impurities, the defilements ever remain one step ahead. No matter how much we try, we can never overcome them. Why? Because we are pitted against them in an adversarial relationship. As has been said, *what we resist, persists*. Opposition to afflictions gives them the power of continuance. Reactivity can never be a vehicle for freedom, for in reacting, we create further defilements born of the antagonism. The tradition calls this *samskara dubkha* or reactivity toward deluded conditioning and habits of mind. This reactivity in turn generates second order entanglements. Arguably, the very origin of defilement, affliction and impurity is reactivity. As our defilements colour our vision of the world and the people in it, further reactivity accumulates in layers. Whether we call it externalisation, superimposition or psychological projection, such reactivity amounts to

Wordwise: Klesha

Klesha or *klesha* means "poison" and has been translated as mental afflictions, mental disturbances, afflictive emotions, disturbing emotions, defilements, passions, mental poisons, worldly desires. —





colouring the world by and through the filter of our afflictions. When seeing the world thus coloured, we reject it, imagining thereby that we are free of the

original affliction, whereas in fact it remains concealed in newly generated layers of samskaras. —

(to be continued)

Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Dispensary Physiotherapy Department



On Saturday 28th September, Sri Ramanasramam Dispensary inaugurated its newly installed physiotherapy department. Dr. Gandhi M., from Adhiparasakthi College of Physiotherapy, has been called on to head treatment for patients suffering paralysis, lower back pain, neck pain, shoulder and knee pain and cerebral palsy (in children). The lab is equipped with a cervical and lumbar traction machine, interferential therapy machine, a shortwave diathermy machine, ultrasound and a muscle stimulator. —

Obituary: Dr. R. Ravichandran



The kind-hearted and eminent surgeon, Dr. R. Ravichandran was born in Karaikudi on 9th March, 1957 and did his undergraduate work at Stanley Medical College, followed by postgraduate study in Aravind Eye Hospital where he worked for 10 years under Dr. G. Venkatasamy. He worked with Dr. Bill Stewart at Stanford University, USA in 1992. Under Dr. G. Venkataswamy's guidance and inspiration, he developed devotion towards Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and founded the Sri Ramana Maharshi Eye Hospital in 1996. He performed 4,76,496 free surgeries all over India and trained 126 ophthalmologists around the world. The Government of India honoured him with the "Best Citizen of India 2001" award for conducting free eye camps and free eye surgeries. On 17th September 2019, at the age of 62, Dr. Ravichandran surrendered his soul at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Sri Ramana. —

Announcement:

Nochur Sri Venkataraman's January 2020 Discourses

In consideration of Bhagavan's 140th Jayanthi falling late this year (11th January) and being followed very closely by the Pongal celebrations, Sri Nochur's English *Aksharamanamalai* discourses have been moved up to 20th-26th January.





Obituary: Sri B.K. Subiah



Sri Biddanda K. Subiah, the long-time Ramana devotee and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavana Kodagu Vidyalaya Managing Board Chairman passed away at the age of 82 on 25th August 2019 following cardiac arrest. The prime disciple of the great Nath Panth Master B. G. Vellal Maharaj, lovingly known as Jack, was on the way to deliver a Satsang discourse in Bengaluru when he developed health complications and passed away in the car before arrival. His followers write that he had already “died” when he merged with the Divine years back, and only now “has his body left us”.

As a planter with an estate in Meduru, he and other planters who were being spiritually guided by him provided Ramanasramam’s annual requirement of coffee beans, pepper and cardamom each year for decades. He had numerous followers in India and from abroad.

Among them, one wrote recently of their teacher:

What greater presence on this gravity-laden earth? It is the stars that speak to us, and no matter what the words are, the inner space is nourished, not from knowledge, but from experience; an experience so vast, so unfathomable, yet so humble, so unobtrusive, offering just a gentle nudge, an assurance, an outstretched hand with love greater than a mother’s. In his memory, with Sobam in our hearts, let us walk the path he laid for us, for his hands are always outstretched and welcoming. Thank you, Maharaj, for showing us the way.

Sri Biddanda K. Subiah is survived by his wife, son and two daughters. —

Obituary: Sri V. Srinivasan



Sri V. Srinivasan, son of the late Justice K. S. Venkataraman was absorbed in Bhagavan on 2nd September 2019. (Devotees would know his elder sister, the late Sulochana Natarajan and her husband, late Sri AR Natarajan, Founding President of Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bengaluru).

Sri V. Srinivasan was blessed to have the darshan of Bhagavan in 1948 and later became an ardent devotee of Kanchi Paramacharya, His Holiness Jagadguru Shankaracharya Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati. He was also deeply devoted to the cause of old freedom fighters of India in general, and to Sri C. Rajagopalachari, in particular. In accordance with the Gandhian spirit, he always wore *khadi*. A person of childlike innocence and natural purity, Srinivasan was ever ready to help one and all with no expectations. His favourite God was Ganesha, and he was

absorbed on Ganesha Chaturthi. He is survived by his wife Hema Srinivasan, his nieces, Dr Sarada Natarajan and Dr Ambika Kameshwar, heads of the Ramana Centres for Learning and Education in Bangalore and Chennai, respectively. —



Announcement: Ramani Maami: A Remembrance

A recent video from the Bay Area Ramana Kendra called *Ramani Maami: A Remembrance* commemorates the life of Smt. Ramani Subramanian. Please see the following link:

<https://youtu.be/EVzDAFa9JAM>

