

Saranagathi



eNewsletter from www.sriramanamaharshi.org

Note from the Editor

Dear Sri Bhagavan Devotees,

The month of September holds a special interest for all of us, as it was on the 1st of September in 1896 that Sri Bhagavan arrived at Tiruvannamalai. Upon His arrival at Arunachala as a 16 year old boy, he retains only a small piece of cloth as 'kaupinam' while throwing away the rest of his dhoti and the little money He had, in an act of total 'surrender' to Arunachala.

In this issue of Saranagathi we continue with the focus on the life story of Sri Muruganar, a remarkable devotee of Sri Bhagavan, which we started serializing from the last issue.

At the Ashram, we celebrated Sri Kunjuswami and Sri Muruganar's Aradhana. Sri Nochur

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Venkataraman's 'Bhagavatha Saptaham' was a joyous 'satsang', for all devotees. Details of these are on pages 4 & 5.

We continue to modify our website ([Timeline](http://www.saranagathi.org)) and there are many more ideas in the offing. We look forward to hearing from you, about your satsangs, experiences and feedback. Please send your emails to us at saranagathi@sriramanamaharshi.org.

Ever Truly In Sri Bhagavan,

Editorial Team.

The Essence of Instruction

*Disinterested action
Surrendered to the Lord
Purifies the mind and points
The way to moksha.*

– Upadesa Saram by Sri Bhagavan (Verse 3)

Sri Muruganar

*Extract from Arunachala's Ramana – Boundless Ocean of Grace. Volume-2
(Continued from last issue)*

In 1926, on the Mahasivarathri day, Muruganar came with his mother for Bhagavan's darshan. They were kindly welcomed by the inmates. Muruganar engaged himself in deep meditation. Whenever he could he came for Bhagavan's darshan. Once he brought his students too for Bhagavan's darshan.

Muruganar was a staunch Gandhian and wore only khadi garments. As he believed in the principle of ahimsa (non-violence) he would not travel in vehicles drawn by horses or bulls. He therefore walked to the Asramam, all the way from the railway station in Tiruvannamalai Town.

Being a spiritually oriented nationalist, he was active for a few years as teacher, scholar and inspired bard and then was drawn to the august presence of Bhagavan Ramana, which at once became his exaltation and spiritual captivity. From that moment onwards, Muruganar realized that in his heart and mind, there was no room for anyone or anything other than Ramana, who was his God, Guru and his All. The muses started coming to him at a greatly superior level; and he dedicated them, all his life, to the Lord who was his Saviour. Thus the sole theme of the poems which have welled forth in profusion from Muruganar's heart is Ramana: the glory of the great Master and his matchless teachings.

Since then he was made a non-entity, losing his separate individuality. He then became the 'shadow of Bhagavan', as a devotee put it so aptly.

Muruganar was totally captivated by Bhagavan, and could not stay away from Bhagavan and Ramanasramam for long. Every time he felt the

urge to see Bhagavan, he would immediately catch the train and come to the Asramam. When it was time to return to Madras, he just could not bear to leave Bhagavan. He would somehow force himself to leave the Asramam and would set off for the railway station. With his characteristic perception, Bhagavan understood Muruganar's difficulty, and arranged for someone to go with Muruganar, just to make sure he reached the station! Someone would accompany Muruganar to the station. Once his companion had left him, however, Muruganar would completely forget the reason for his being in the railway station. He would wander up and down the platform, oblivious to all the activity around him. The train would arrive and then leave, amidst the ringing of bells and the blowing of whistles. Muruganar would not notice all the noise and the bustle, but would continue walking up and down, lost in thoughts of Bhagavan. Long after the train had left, Muruganar would suddenly emerge from his reverie. He would look around in obvious confusion and, after a few minutes, would make his way back to the Asramam.

Upon his return to the Asramam, Bhagavan would ask Muruganar, "Didn't the train come on time?" When he heard that the train had arrived on time, Bhagavan would ask, "Then why did you not board the train?" In a dazed tone of voice Muruganar would reply, "I just didn't feel like getting into the train, Bhagavan!" The next time Muruganar made preparations for going to Madras, Bhagavan would make it a point to send someone with him, to see that Muruganar actually boarded the train! They would come and report to Bhagavan jokingly, "We have deported Muruganar!"

In this fashion, Muruganar carried on with his life, travelling between Madras and Tiruvannamalai frequently. He wanted to wind up the household in

Madras and settle down in Tiruvannamalai, but circumstances were not favourable. His mother was old and infirm, and Muruganar had to stay in Madras for her sake.

Within three years Muruganar's mother passed away. He performed the last rites as prescribed. He took his mother's ashes to Dhanushkoti and dissolved a major portion of it in the sea there. Then, with the balance of his mother's ashes in an urn, Muruganar came to Tiruvannamalai. He placed the urn at the foot of a tree, had his bath, and went into the hall. When Bhagavan saw Muruganar, he enquired with touching concern, "Were you able to complete the last rites for your mother, without any trouble?" Bhagavan's gentle tone and compassionate words shattered Muruganar's composure, and he broke down completely. Kunju Swami, who was nearby, said to Bhagavan, "Muruganar has brought his mother's ashes in an urn." Bhagavan said, "That is good. The Agni Thirtham is a suitable spot for dissolving the ashes." Muruganar took Bhagavan's advice and dissolved the ashes in the Agni Thirtham. Muruganar expressed his deep gratitude to his master in two of his verses (Keerthi Thiruagaval, Peytru Padhikam) in Ramana Sannadhi Murai.

After his mother's passing away, Muruganar resigned his job in Madras, wound up the household there, and came to Tiruvannamalai for good in 1926. Before he left Madras for good it appears that he made arrangements for his wife's maintenance through one Nagarathar, viz, Melaichivapuri Subramania Chettiar. This same Chettiar got Bhagavan's darshan once when meditating on him at his home. This incident is mentioned by Muruganar in Keerthi Thiruagaval (Ramana Sannadhi Murai).

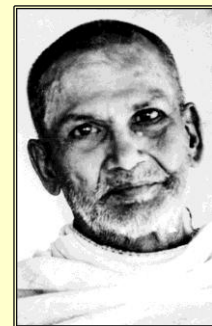
First, he stayed at Palakothu. He lived on alms, going into the town to beg every morning. On several occasions, he went without food for the entire day, because he had missed the trip into town. Bhagavan used to say that by begging for one's food one can easily conquer the ego. Muruganar's faith in this

principle was very strong. Every morning, he would set off on his rounds, with a white towel in which he collected the food he received as alms. Then he would come to Palakothu, lay the bundle of food on the bank of the pond, and wade into the water to clean his hands and feet.

Muruganar was very fastidious, when it came to personal hygiene. He could scrub his hands and legs with mud several times, till he was satisfied that they were quite clean. Naturally, this took a lot of time. The monkeys in the area would come and devour all the food that Muruganar had collected. Finally when he came out of the water, he would find that all his food was gone. He had no choice but to go without food that day.

Sabhapathi Pillai, who was in charge of the Vinayaka Temple in Palakothu, once saw the monkeys plundering Muruganar's food. Out of concern for the hapless Muruganar, Sabhapathi Pillai offered to stay within the temple premises, and asked Muruganar to stay in his room.

During the time of Muruganar's stay in Palakothu, Kunju Swami, Munagala Venkatrama Iyer, Viswanatha Swami, Ramanatha Brahmachari and Ramasubba Iyer were also staying there. All of them being Bhagavan's staunch devotees, they enjoyed each other's company greatly. Kunju Swami often spoke of those days with a lot of nostalgic feeling.



Sri Muruganar

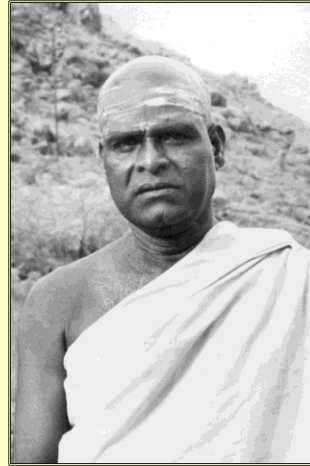
Sri Kunjuswami's Aradhana : August 7th 2008.

A report from Sri Ramanasramam.

Sri Kunjuswami came to Sri Bhagavan in 1920, while still in his teens, and served Him till His nirvana in 1950. Kunjuswami lived a simple and austere life at Sri Ramanasramam, rendering invaluable service by sharing his experiences with seekers until the ripe age of 95 when he was absorbed at his Master's Feet in 1992.

His Samadhi day was observed with puja and chanting of Malayalam works of Sri Bhagavan. It was only at the request of Sri Kunjuswami that Sri Bhagavan composed his Malayalam works.

Devotees in large numbers participated in the Puja and Parayana.



Sri Kunjuswami



Arathi being performed at Sri Kunjuswami's Samadhi.

Sri Muruganar's Aradhana : August 30th 2008.

A report from Sri Ramanasramam.

Sri Muruganar first came to Sri Bhagavan after reading Sri Arunachala Akshara Mana Malai and 'Naan Yaar?' rendered by Sri Bhagavan. On seeing Bhagavan's exalted state, he was attracted to Him and finally he settled at Tiruvannamalai and the rest of his life was one of complete surrender to Sri Bhagavan.

Special puja and chanting were held at his Samadhi. Homage to Sri Muruganar was also paid at Sri Muruganar's birth place 'Sri Muruganar Mandiram' in Ramanathapuram on his Samadhi day with special puja and talk on Sri Muruganar by Sri Ramana Kumar of Pollachi.



Devotees at Sri Muruganar's Samadhi.



After Puja, Arati was offered.

Bhagavata Saptaham at Sri Ramanasramam

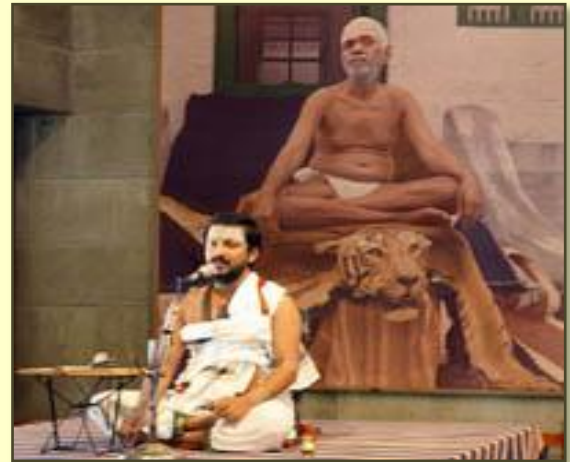
A report from Sri Ramanasramam.

Sri Nochur Venkataraman held a Bhagavata Saptaham (a week of discourses on Bhagavatam) at Sri Ramanasramam from the 20th to the 27th of July 2008. It was a masterly exposition of Bhagavatam which is a devotional masterpiece of all times, during which the young spiritual sadhaka and scholar won the hearts of the listeners by lacing his recounting of the story and analysis of the philosophy of this great work with copious apt quotations from Bhagavan Ramana's works and references to anecdotes from his life.

They were struck by the raconteur's stupendous scholarship and memory, his firm grasp of the essence of Bhagavatam and the teachings of Bhagavan, to whom he is deeply devoted, and the effortlessly adroit way in which he frequently held a mirror before them to the strong Advaitic undertones of a supreme work of devotion. It was a week of immense joy as much to lovers of jnana as to those of bhakti.



Sri Nochur Venkataraman



At the New Hall



Devotees listening to the discourse