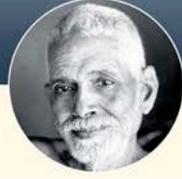


Saranagati



SEPTEMBER 2012
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IN THIS
ISSUE

Dear Devotees,

Rains this month helped to relieve the long, dry months of summer and if they continue, Pali Thirtam will soon reach the halfway mark.

This issue carries the life story of Dr. K. Subrahmanian, the founder of and enduring inspiration for the Hyderabad Ramana Kendram. *Wordwise* this month looks at Adhyaaropa or superimposition. *Events at Sri Ramanasramam* includes the Advent celebrations, Varuna Japa Homa, the Independence Day celebrations and the inauguration of the New Library. *Introducing the Kendras* features Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad.

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

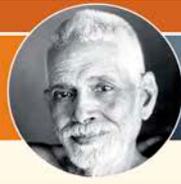
In Sri Bhagavan,
The Editorial Team

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Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi: Superimposition

M.: Of what degree of unreality is [the world]? ...The answer is that it is a superimposition on the one Reality, like the appearance of a snake on a coiled rope seen in dim light. But the wrong identity ceases as soon as a friend points out that it is a rope, whereas in the matter of the world, it persists even after it is known to be unreal. How is that? The appearance of water in a mirage persists even after the knowledge of the mirage is recognised. So it is with the world. Though knowing it to be unreal, it continues to manifest.... It is like a man satisfying his dream wants by dream creations. The realised sage finally declares that in the regenerate state the [waking] world is found to be as unreal as the dream world is found to be in the waking state. In fact, wakefulness and dream are equally unreal from the standpoint of the Absolute. —Talks §399





Tracing the Footsteps of Bhagavan: The Life of Dr. K. Subrahmanian (part one)

Dr. K. Subrahmanian was a teacher, columnist, author and orator. He was professor of the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad and founded the Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad in 1979. He was the Kendram's inspiration and guiding light for two decades until his death in January, 1998.

Because both his parents were staunch devotees, K. Subrahmanian had the good fortune to come to Bhagavan at the early age of two. His mother met Bhagavan in 1921 at Skandasramam as a girl of ten and later visited Bhagavan every year. His father, Prof. V. S. Krishnaswami Iyer of Melvayalamoor (30 kms from Tiruvannamalai) worked as a maths teacher in the Municipal High School and met Bhagavan in 1927. During this first encounter he asked Bhagavan:

“There are so many sadhus; how can one know who is a genuine *siddha*?” Bhagavan replied in clear terms: “In whose mere presence, without any effort, one gets spontaneous peace of mind—that one is the real *siddha*.”

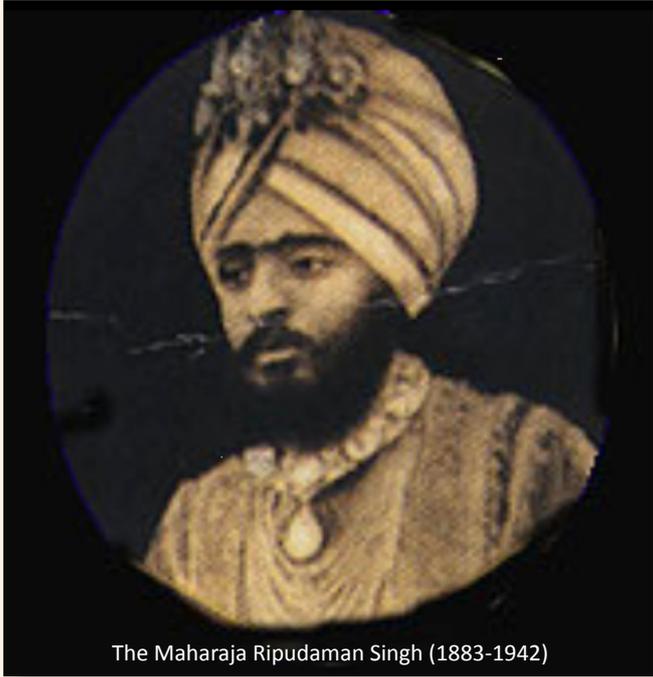
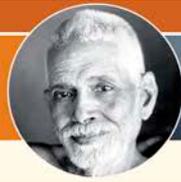
Already from this first meeting, Krishnaswami knew that he had found what he was looking for and began making regular visits to the Ashram. But shortly after the birth of his son, in April 1928, he was posted to Kodaikanal to teach at the Presentation Convent High School, a prestigious academy designed to prepare students for the Cambridge University exams. Now quite some distance from Tiruvannamalai, the family would have to take advantage of the annual winter breaks to come to the Ashram.

In Kodaikanal, among other teaching duties, Krishnaswami tutored the princess of Nabha. The girl's father, the Maharaja Ripudaman Singh, had been banished to Kodaikanal in 1927 by the British¹ and was confined to the municipal limits for the rest of his life. While his exile was severely constraining, it did afford him one reward—the good fortune of learning about the life and teachings of Sri Bhagavan and of close association with one of Bhagavan's ardent devotees. The Maharaja and his wife were thrilled to be able to discuss Bhagavan with the kindly professor. Having no curtailment on her travel privileges, the Maharani asked Prof. Krishnaswami to take her with him to see Bhagavan on her husband's behalf. The Maharaja sent a typewriter along with them to present to the Ashram. Once in Bhagavan's presence, the Maharani experienced a peace such as she had never before had.

In 1942, the Maharaja fell ill and requested Krishnaswami to go to Tiruvannamalai to seek Bhagavan's blessings. Bhagavan listened with great attention to Krishnaswami's plea but made no reply. The Ashram authorities presented Prof. Krishnaswami with prasad but upon opening the envelope, the

¹ With the death of his father in 1911, Ripudaman Singh assumed the throne of the small Punjabi kingdom. As Maharaja, he reformed the judiciary and invoked progressive legislation, establishing a legislature and an executive council. Incensed by the events of the Amritsar Massacre where more than 1,000 demonstrators died in April, 1919, he publicly opposed the British. Ripudaman was deposed and succeeded by his eldest son, Pratap Singh, and then exiled to Kodaikanal where he lived out his life and died on 12 December, 1942 at the age of 59.)





The Maharaja Ripudaman Singh (1883-1942)

Maharaja Ripudaman Singh fell silent and at last, with choking voice, said: “Krishnaswami, the Maharshi is most gracious to me. He has intimated to me that I am not going to live long. You see this envelope, there is no kumkum here within, but only vibhuti. Sri Bhagavan has graciously told me that my end is near.” The professor was visibly upset but the Maharaja added, “There is nothing to be upset about. What is to happen will happen.” The Maharaja passed away four months later in December, 1942.

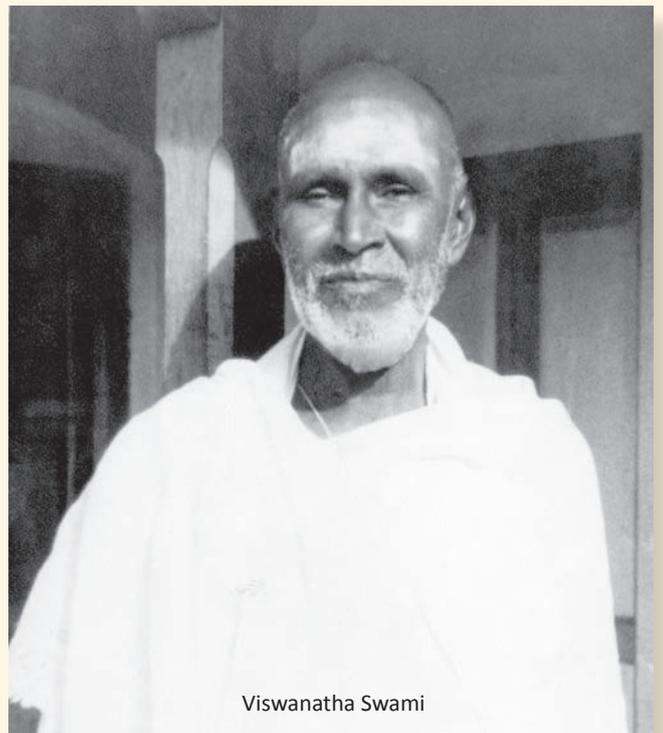
Meanwhile, K. Subrahmanian’s childhood home was enlivened with conversations about Bhagavan and with visits from devotees, not least among them, Viswanatha Swami. The youngster grew up in an atmosphere ‘soaked in Bhagavan’ and learned a lot about Bhagavan from those who moved closely with him.

Viswanatha Swami met K. Subrahmanian’s father in the days when the latter was teaching school in Tiruvannamalai. In those days the young Viswanatha Swami would go on his begging rounds and in the traditional way a bhikshu announces his arrival, clap his hands in front of Krishnaswami’s house. K. Subrahmanian’s mother always had something for the young sadhu and his father was ever grateful to have devotees of Bhagavan in the family home. Viswanatha Swami would come and stay for days

at a stretch during which time conversations would invariably centre on Bhagavan. Viswanatha Swami had plenty of stories to share and the family was all ears. He once related the story of a short exchange between Bhagavan and a devotee who enquired as to what Bhagavan would do if Lord Siva were to appear before him on His bull-mount and offer a boon. Bhagavan said, “I won’t be tempted by such a question—Lord Siva is the formless Self in all!”

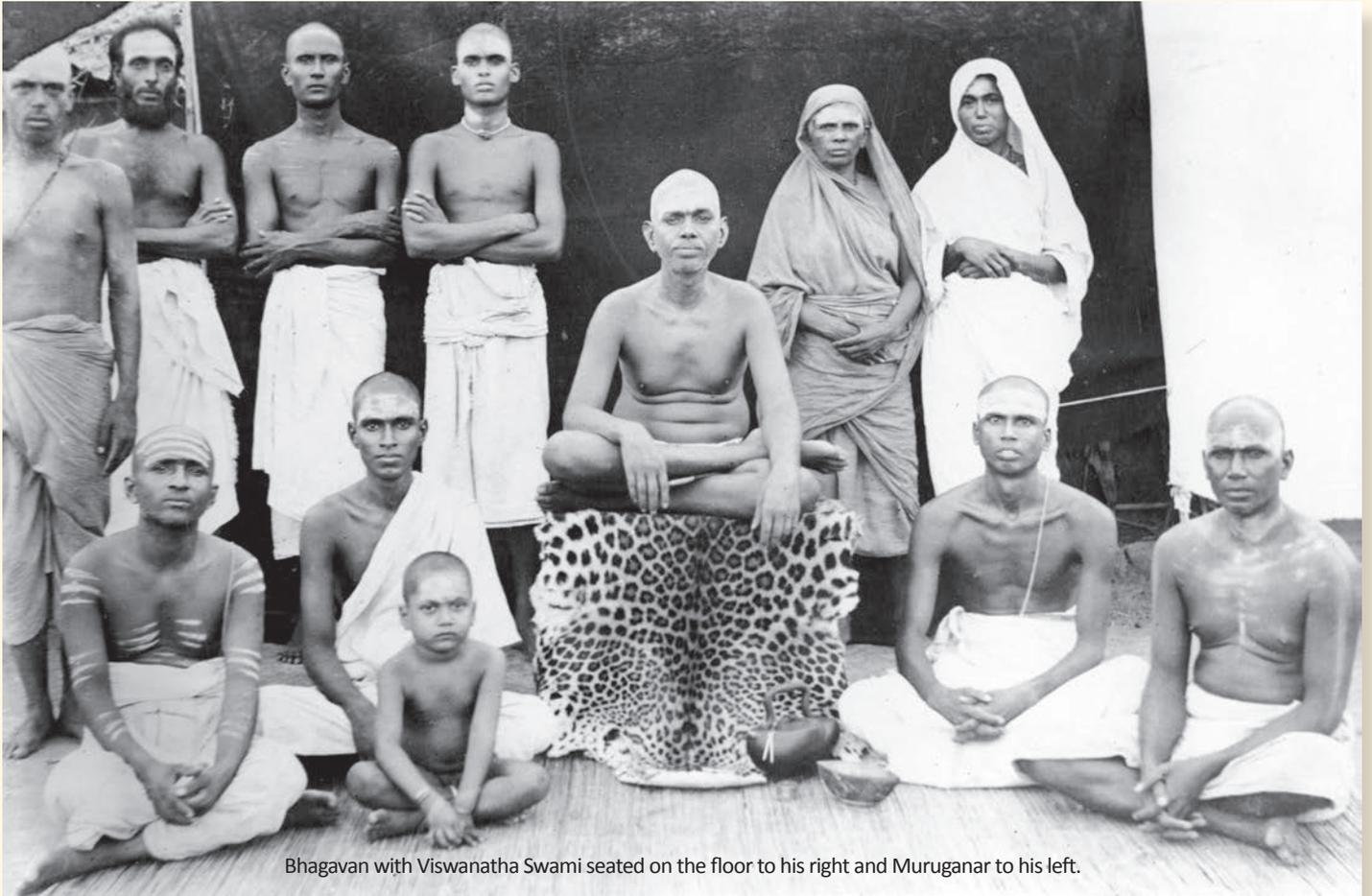
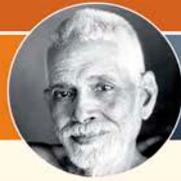
Another time, Viswanatha Swami, unable to bear seeing Bhagavan grinding chutney with blistered hands, carried out the task in his absence. Upon discovering it, Bhagavan told Viswanatha Swami, “In the early days I used to go for bhiksha. Now I am getting free food in the Ashram. That’s why I do some work in the kitchen. But today you have done my work for me, so please give me your dhoti, I will wash it for you.” Hearing these words, Viswanatha Swami was moved to tears.

K. Subrahmanian’s uncle, V.S. Srinivas Iyer, also had stories to tell. Already since his student days at Voorhese College, Vellore, when there were only thatched huts in the Ashram, he made regular visits to Bhagavan. In time, he became the munsiff (tax assessor) of Vaylamoore, and from there would travel to Tiruvannamalai every second month, often taking his nephew with him.



Viswanatha Swami





Bhagavan with Viswanatha Swami seated on the floor to his right and Muruganar to his left.

On one occasion during his stay, a large number of people came to the Ashram unexpectedly. As Bhagavan was keen that all guests be fed, one of the cooks protested, saying that there was not enough food to feed all those who had come. Bhagavan said, “Don’t worry, there’ll be enough.”

At meal, Bhagavan set his gaze upon everyone present in the dining hall before beginning to take his meal. In Bhagavan’s presence, most of the people felt full even before starting and thus required very little. So the small quantity of food that had been prepared turned out to be—just as Bhagavan had promised—more than enough for all.

By 1941 K. Subrahmanian reached the eighth standard and his father sent him to P. S. Sivaswami Iyer High School, a boarding school in Tirukattupally, where he remained for the next four years. His father sent money each month to pay for tuition, room and board. It was during this time that the young student started writing letters to Sri Bhagavan, for which Chinnaswami sent

regular replies along with prasad from Bhagavan. On a subsequent visit to the Ashram, Bhagavan pointed to the youngster and asked Srinivasa Iyer about him. “Oh, this is my brother’s son who lives in Kodaikanal”. Bhagavan graciously turned to Subrahmanian: “So you’re the one writing me letters!” Then Bhagavan added in jest, “Does your father send you money so that you can write me letters?” The boy was thrilled with joy at having Bhagavan address him but also felt embarrassed and ‘perspired profusely due to the feeling of awe’.

After completing the SSLC² in 1945, Subrahmanian applied for admission to the American College, Madurai. As he was taking leave of Bhagavan, Bhagavan enquired of his destination. When he told him that he was going to Madurai for admission to college, Bhagavan asked, “Which college?” The student had meant to say “American College, Madurai” but instead said “Madura College”. Bhagavan smiled and said,

²A *Secondary School Leaving Certificate* is obtained on passing the examination for the secondary schooling level in India.





“Sari, sari”. When the time came, Subrahmanian did not get the expected admission to the American College, Madurai, but instead got admission to Madura College. And that is where he enrolled.

At the Ashram a year later, Subrahmanian was walking towards the darshan hall with his head bent down. When he looked up, he saw Bhagavan standing and talking to a devotee near the Ashram well. Just at that moment Sri Bhagavan cast his glance toward him. In an instant, the boy came to a complete stop. While standing perfectly still, a powerful light penetrated and engulfed him. The blissful state that ensued remained with him for the next three weeks.

A similar experience occurred in 1949. By this time the Mother’s Shrine had been completed and Bhagavan had moved to the New Hall. As Subrahmanian sat at the entrance of the hall, looking at Bhagavan, he thought to himself, “I’ve been coming to the Ashram for so long, but Bhagavan has never granted me the experience of real meditation.” Thinking thus, he closed his eyes. When he opened them again after what had seemed like only a few minutes, he found the hall completely empty; Bhagavan and devotees had filed out past him and exited the hall while he sat unawares, absorbed in meditation.

In March the following year, the final examinations for his bachelor degree were to take place. A devotee

—his sister’s father-in-law, T.V. Krishnaswami Iyer—gave Subrahmanian a copy of Muruganar’s commentary on *Aksharamanamalai*. It was not clear whether or not the book would ever be published, so in order to have the text to study in an ongoing way, Subrahmanian eagerly hand-copied the manuscript in its entirety—a task of three days—all the while heedless of the approaching examination. On the night before his first paper, he at last opened his textbooks to study for the following day’s test. As it dealt with the subject of translating Old English into modern English, he randomly selected a passage from the book and translated it in what would turn out to be a very hasty preparation for the first of his final exams. With this done, he went to bed. The next morning when he appeared for the exam, he was startled to discover that the first and principal question of the examination was the very passage he had selected the night before. Such was life growing up in the midst of Bhagavan!

(to be continued)

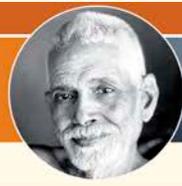
Freely adapted from the following sources: *Dr. K. Subrahmanian (1928-1998), A Tribute*. Hyderabad Ramana Kendram, 1999; *Face to Face with Bhagavan*, 2009, pp. 65-68; *Moments Remembered*, 1989, pp. 79-81; *Mountain Path*, Advent 2004, pp. 79-92; *Advent Souvenir*, 1996, pp. 39-40; and *The Maharshi*, Nov/Dec 1999, Vol. 9 No.6. pp.1-2.

Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Varuna Japa Homa

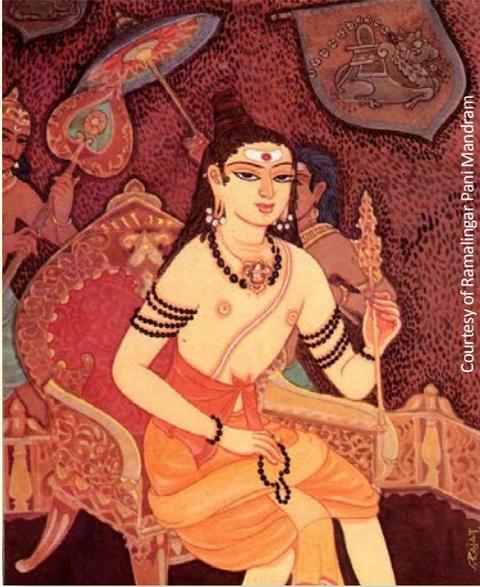


Varuna is God of the Sky and Rain (*vorsanos*, “to moisten, to drip”) and bears resemblance to the Greek god Poseidon, God of the Seas. Varuna Japa Homa is a rite designed to appease Lord Varuna and bring rain. In view of the scanty monsoons in India this season, Sri Ramanasramam priests and pundits, in accord with mutts and temples in South India, performed Varuna Japa Homa. The event started at 5.30am in the New Hall on Monday, August 20th with Vighneswara Puja, Mahanyasam and Varuna Japa Homa and culminated with purnahuti and deeparadhana around 10am. Immediately afterward there was a special abhishekam at Pali Thirtam before the final deeparadhana at Bhagavan’s shrine. The month of August did bring some rain, both before and after the homa, and Pali Thirtam, having been completely dry for six months, is now filled to about 35% of its capacity. Likewise the Hill, after months of drought and several brush fires, is beginning to show signs of greening.





From the *Periapuranam*: Moorthi Nayanar



Courtesy of Ramalingar Pani Mandram

Born a Vaisya in the Pandya kingdom at Madurai, the great Moorthiyaar made it his daily mission to offer fresh sandal-paste to the Lord. But one day the city was conquered by a Karnataka king. The new king sought to crush the Saivite religion and saw to it that implements of worship of Lord Siva such as sandalwood were not available. In despair, Moorthiyaar searched everywhere to procure sandalwood for his daily offerings. Finally he had the idea to grind his own arm on the millstone where he made sandalpaste and offer it to the Lord. When the Lord saw this, he took pity on the saint who had by now ground away the flesh of his arm all the way to the bone. He spoke to Moorthiyaar and told him that he alone was destined to be king, and with these words, restored the saint's injured arm. That night the foreign king died in his sleep and the next day, ministers sent the palace elephant blind-folded through the streets of the city with a garland in its trunk. In accordance with ancient custom, the man the elephant garlanded would be anointed king. The blind-folded elephant marched through the crowds but only when he found Moorthiyaar did he raise the garland and place it around the devotee's neck. Moorthi ruled long and justly and restored worship of the Lord to Madurai.

Wordwise: *Adhyaaropa* अध्यारोप

Adhyaaropa (*adhi*: 'above', 'over' + *aropa*: 'attribute'): superimposition, wrong attribution, erroneously transferring a statement of one thing to another (*Monier Will.*); *adhyaasa*: to sit over or above, to impute wrongly, such as with a snake on a rope, water on a mirage; taking appearances for reality; seeing as existing what is not there; (*negative superimposition*:) taking as *not* there what *is* there, such as in the missing necklace (see below).

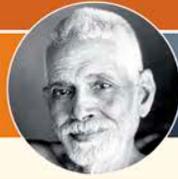
Superimposition, Bhagavan tells us, is projection, the transformation of Brahman into the objects of the world or the remoulding of the light of the Self into the ego and I-am-the-body consciousness. Correct seeing (through *atma-vichara* and finally, *jnana*) removes false attribution and allows the real to be seen as it really is. Once appearances are exposed, no special effort is required. Bhagavan blames superimposition for the prevalent mistaken notion that the Self is bound, and thus in need of being liberated, like the woman he describes in *Talks*, who needs to find her 'lost' necklace. When a friend points to the necklace round her neck, the woman shouts with joy at having 'found it at last'. But, Bhagavan says emphatically, "In fact she never lost the necklace nor recovered it, [for it was there all along]. And yet she was once miserable and is now happy. So also with the realisation of the Self. The Self is always realised. Realisation is now obscured but when the veil is removed, the person feels happy at rediscovering the ever-realised Self." (*Talks* §490)

Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Chanting Tiruvachakam



Sri Damodharan of Tirukazhukundram, the town where Jnana Sambandar, Appar, Sundara, and Manikavachakar came and sang their hymns, began sponsoring biksha for 50 pilgrims each day at the holy *kshetra*. Discovering the power of Manikavachakar's great work, the Tiruvachakam, Sri Damodharan began sponsoring all-day chanting programmes, first in Avudaiyar Kovil (for 1,000) in April, then Chidambaram (4,000) in June, and finally, a full-day programme in Tiruvannamalai (very close to the Ashram) on the 29th July which hosted more than 10,000 participants. The next programme is to take place in Kanchipuram in September.



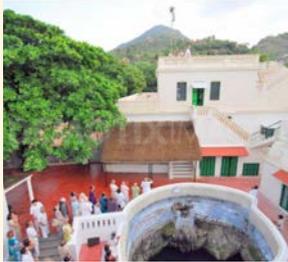


Events at Sri Ramanasramam: 116th Advent Celebrations



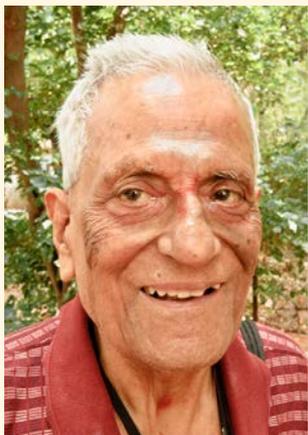
On the 1st of September, 1896, a boy of 16 arrived at Arunachala, never to leave His presence again. The encounter would prove fateful not just in the lives of those who gathered round him then but for all posterity. On August 31st, 2012, sixty devotees from Madurai Ramana Mandiram stopped in at the Arayaninallur Temple, Tirukoillur, and chanted *Aksharamanamalai* in remembrance of Bhagavan's stay there 116 years earlier. Proceeding to Ramanasramam, they kicked off the 116th Advent celebrations with Tamil parayanam in Sri Bhagavan's Shrine at 5.30am, 1st September. Mahanyasa puja was then performed before a large gathering of devotees.

Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Independence Day and Library Opening Day



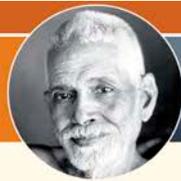
August 15th this year was a uniquely auspicious day, not only because it was *pradosham*, the propitious 13th tihti so important for Siva bhaktas but also because it was Bhagavan's Punarvasu Day which brought with it mahanyasa chanting and a special puja in the morning. The same evening was Masasivaratri, the monthly 14th tihti in Krishnapaksha. Arunagirinathar's birthday is also celebrated on the 15th. But every year, the 15th of August is a national holiday and like previous years right from the 15th August, 1947, the Ashram observes National Independence Day by raising the nation's flag atop the Ashram dining hall. Later that morning, the New Library had its official opening with Ashram President, V.S.Ramanan, and other devotees in attendance.

Obituary: P. R. Suryanandan



Sri Suryanandan was born on the 18th Dec, 1922 to P. S. Ramaswami and Janaki Ammal. A devotee of Bhagavan from a young age, he joined the British Royal Air Force at seventeen and saw service in the far-flung outposts of the British Empire. In October, 1947, he was airlifted to Kashmir along with 30 soldiers of the Sikh light infantry division to secure Srinagar Airport where he served as radio operator. In 1965 he married S. Mahalakshmi, daughter of Prof. K. Swaminathan. As career demanded, the couple shifted to Belgaum and then Kolkata, and in both places, conducted Ramana Satsanghs. After retirement as deputy director of Civil Aviation in 1986, the two made their home at Arunachala. PRS volunteered his services at Arunachala Reforestation Society, eventually serving as Vice-President and de facto Secretary. Known for his self-effacing, compassionate disposition and unfailing devotion to Bhagavan, P. R. Suryanandan was loved and respected by all. In recent years, though suffering poor health, he nevertheless maintained his cheerful good spirits right up till the end when, at the age of 89, in the early morning hours of the 29th of August, he merged into the Feet of Arunachala.





Introducing the Kendras: Hyderabad Ramana Kendra



Bhumi puja for an extension to the main building, performed 28th April, 2012, and attended by Sri Ramanasramam President, V. S. Ramanan, and devotees of the Kendram.

In 1979, when authorities of Sri Ramanasramam asked Dr. K. Subrahmanian to celebrate the birth centenary of Sri Bhagavan in Hyderabad, he published a news item in the *Deccan Chronicle*. When 20 devotees gathered in the Hindi Arts College on 19th July that year to discuss how best to organize the centenary at Hyderabad, someone suggested that a Ramana Kendram be established in Hyderabad. In the early days, satsang took place on Sundays 4.30-6pm. In April 1981, as membership grew, the venue moved to the Gandhi Centenary Hall of the Andhra Mahila Sabha College for Women abutting the Osmania University campus. Dr. K. S. paid the rent for the premises anonymously for several years. In time, meetings were conducted daily, rotating among members' homes. Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad continues to conduct its programmes in the tradition established by Dr. K.S. and attendance continues to grow, including many youngsters.



Ramanasramam in the Internet World: Online Bookstore

The online bookstore at www.sriramanamaharshi.org/bookstallsales offers photos, audio, video and books in English and regional languages such as Tamil, Telegu, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi and Gujarati. Indian shoppers can use credit cards or net-banking to pay in local currency. The diary, wall calendar and desk calendar for year 2013 are now available. International visitors to the online store want to know why they are not able to buy these items. One reason is that we have an online store www.arunachala.org/bookstore based in New York that offers photo, audio, video and English titles for international shipment. However some visitors want to buy books in regional languages for their parents living abroad. We encourage them to email us at bookstall@sriramanamaharshi.org. The ashram will email a specially prepared invoice to them upon payment and the order will be shipped via the Indian postal service. (We decided against automating this procedure because of the elevated cost of international shipping.)

