

Saranagati



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IN THIS
ISSUE

Dear Devotees,

On Punarvasu Day, 26th Oct, Ashram President V.S. Ramanan released *Sri Ramana Maharshi Pillai Tamil*, a new Tamil book of verses on the life and teaching of Sri Bhagavan by Tamil Kuzhavi. Meanwhile satsang with 30 devotees from Coimbatore took place in the Library Auditorium with discourses by Sri R. Sukavanam and Sri Pranatharthiharan.

This issue presents part two of the story of Tiruchuli (p.2) while *Ashram Heritage Sites* features the history of the recently restored Morvi Guest House funded by Maharaja Lakhdhiraji Waghji Sahib Bahadur of Morvi in 1942.

Among the 4,000 photos taken at Mahakumbhabhishekam (Aug 2013) by the six-man photographic team led by V. Karthik and Suresh Menon, a small sampling appears at the beginning of this issue (see cover insert).

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

In Sri Bhagavan,
The Editorial Team

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Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi: The World and the Self

A visitor: “[Brahman] is Real; the world (*jagat*) is illusion” is the stock phrase of Sri Sankaracharya. Yet others say, “The world is reality”. Which is true?

M.: Both statements are true. They refer to different stages of development and are spoken from different points of view. The aspirant starts with the definition: *that which is real exists always*. He then eliminates the world because it is changing [‘not this, not this!’. The seeker ultimately reaches the Self and finds unity. That which was originally rejected as being unreal is found to be a part of the unity. Being absorbed in Reality, the world is also Real. There is only Being in Self-Realisation, and nothing but Being.

— Talks §33





Bhuminathesvar Kovil ca. 1940

The Springs of Tiruchuli (part two)

The Third Deluge

As stated previously, the Tamil word *chuli* refers to the 'holes' or 'eddies' made when Lord Siva made perforations in the earth with his trident to serve as outlets for the *pralaya* floodwaters. On a second occasion, he raised the city up on his trident to protect it from the torrent. A third deluge account in the Purana tells how Mother Earth was carried away by the demon Hiranyaksha and held captive beneath the waters. Rescued by Lord Vishnu, Mother Earth saw that she had suffered pollution by the touch of the asura and, as purification, bathed in Trisula Tirtham and worshipped the Lord at Tiruchuzhi. Thus the Sivalingam of Tiruchuli got the name *Bhuminathesvara* ('the Lord of

Mother Earth')¹, while Parvati is called *Sahayavalli* or *Sahayamba* ('the Helping Mother')².

When Sundaramurti came to have darshan of Lord Bhuminatha, he and Cheraman entered 'the city of liberation' (*muktinagar*)³ to the amazement of local townspeople who beheld their forms bright as the sun and moon. Sundaramurti stayed that night along the bank of the river, which was then in spate. This place came to be known as *Kalaiyarkoil*, situated at Pallimadam on the opposite side of the river from Bhuminathesvar Temple at Tiruchuli. Later that night in a dream, Lord Siva appeared

1 Also called *Bhuminathar*, *Bhumesar*, *Tirumeninathar*, *Bhuvanesar* and *Chuzhikesar*. Bhuminathesvara is surrounded by nine sacred bodies of water: Sulatirtham, Papaharini, Kanvatirtham, Kalavatirtham, Koditirtham, Bhumitirtham, Amrithavavi, Brahmatirtham and Trilochanathirtham, (though many have disappeared with the city's expansion in modern times). The *sthala vriksa* (sacred tree) is *punjnai* (*callophyllum inophyllum*). The inner portion of the temple is thought to be 2500 years old while its lingam dates to prehistory.

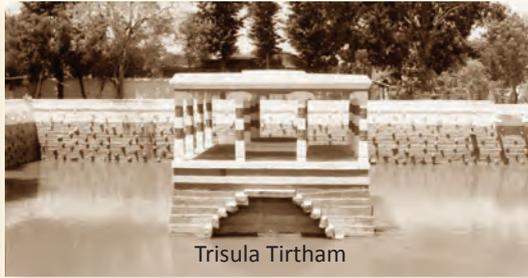
2 Or *Tunaimalai Amman* or *Muthumalai Umayal*.

3 Like Kasi, all who end their life in Tiruchuli are said to gain liberation.





Koundinya River



Trisula Tirtham



Bhagavan's Birthhouse ca. 1940



Shrine of Goddess Sahayavalli

to him and the saint woke with excitement and began to sing the *Thevara Padikam* (*Thondar Adithodalalum*)⁴.

The Meaning of 'Tiruchuli'

In addition to 'eddy', Tamil scholars tell us that the word *chuli* evokes significations such as 'fate' or 'destiny' as well as 'nil' or the number 'zero'⁵. Let us consider the possibilities: Tiruchuli as 'holy fate', the final destiny of the earthly journey; as 'holy zero' —*shunyata*— the Void from which the fullness of all creation emerges; as 'holy eddy', the portal that lies between the Unmanifest and the manifest, between the realm of gods and that of men, between essence and form, spirit and matter. Tiruchuli, the 'holy aperture' through which the *pralaya* floodwaters escaped, was not only the means by which mankind was spared a watery extinction, but served as the conduit by which human defilements were carried away. This 'holy eddy' — the navel of the world, as it were — is the fertile womb that brought forth the water of life and flowers of hope, giving birth to sages and kings in a darkened age.

Young Venkataraman was born in the wee hours of the morning on 30th December, 1879, as family in Bhuminathesvar Temple celebrated Ardra Darshan,

⁴ Later Sundara was led to the temple Kaanapper, now known as Kaalayaar Koil, near Sivagangai, about 60km away.

⁵ See 'Pilgrimage to Tiruchuli', *Mountain Path*, June 1994, pp. 45-6.

a night when, tradition says, Siva manifested as Lord Nataraja. The blind woman in attendance at the family home in Karthigai Street 'saw' a wondrous light and wondered what such a sign could mean. But 135 years later, devotees of Bhagavan know first-hand what such things mean: truth has been born in the hearts of countless seekers the world over and what had been formerly hidden is now an open secret⁶.

Who would have thought that the most magnificent moment in Tiruchuli's long, illustrious and ancient (puranic) history would occur in the modern era, in Kali Yuga? * —

⁶ During his *bhoodan padayatra* in the 1950s, Vinoba Bhave came to Tiruchuli solely to thank its citizens for their 'gift of the Maharshi' to the world.

*Tiruchuli has suffered persistent drought in modern times as the demands for water have increased with changes in agricultural practices and growing populations. Locals report that the rhythmic cycle of oscillating water levels in Trisula Tirtham during the month of Masi have been disturbed since the mid-1980s. However, it should be mentioned that with recent rainfall, Koundinya River, Trisula Tirtham and the town lake (at the time of writing), are filled to capacity. Also, coinciding with the recent Mahakumbhabhishekam of Bhuminathesvar Temple (1st September, 2013), have been various local infrastructural improvements such as a new train station, new railway lines and a large railway bridge spanning the Koundinya River.

[Material for this article draws freely from the Ashram literature.]





Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Navaratri

On Amavasya, 4th October, 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) Sesa 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). Customary blessing rites and pujas took place in the bookstall, library and dispensary on the afternoon of the ninth day, Sunday 13th Oct. On the evenings of the first three days, devotees were blessed to hear Carnatic music in the Library Auditorium.





Ashram Heritage Sites: Morvi Guest House

Speaking with one of Bhagavan's devotees in 1940, the Maharajah Sri Lakhdiraji Waghji Sahib Bahadur of Morvi and his wife, the Maharani, inquired about Bhagavan. Hearing their interest, the devotee insisted that they come to Tiruvannamalai and have Bhagavan's darshan. Some days later, one Mr. Oza, the Royal Secretary of Morvi, came to see what arrangements could be made for their stay. Finding no adequate accommodation, he was doubtful of their coming but when it was suggested that the royal couple travel and be accommodated in a rail saloon, plans were finalised. Once at the Ashram, the Maharaja, known for extensive philanthropic building projects in Gujarat, insisted on endowing the construction of a guest house opposite the Ashram to lodge visiting dignitaries. Funds were forthcoming, however, instead of a guest house, the Rs. 7,500 donation was used to construct a stone wall to enclose the newly acquired four-acre plot. The devotee who had brokered the arrangement approached the royal couple a second time to plead for further support. Building commenced immediately and a stately guest house with a sturdy granite stone foundation, granite pillars, beams of Burmese teak, stone tiles and a perennial well alongside it, was completed and inaugurated in 1942. Dubbed *Morvi Guest House* in honour of its benefactor, the facility would host rajahs, ranis, VIPs and eventually ordinary devotees who came for Bhagavan's darshan.

On 5th August, 1949, the facility was home to a team of 30 medical practitioners from Chennai who came to perform the surgery on Bhagavan's arm in the Ashram dispensary. In the 1960s H.C. Khanna of Kanpur built a cottage within the compound, as did others in years to come: Ila Bhat, Kotak, Ramachandran, Gridalur Family, Er. Padmanabhan, Nargish Parikh, Ramaswami (Bang), Nath Family (Kasi), Anjaneyalu and others. In 1977, Delhi Ramana Kendra built rooms and by then the compound contained dozens of rooms for guests. In 1981, the *Sri Ramana Centenary Library* was inaugurated. Finally in 2011-12, the aging cottages were replaced with 50 single- and double-occupancy rooms, as well as 12 family accommodations, while the heritage building, with its vintage fixtures and furnishings (see above), was restored to its original condition by architectural conservationists headed by Shakti Murugan of Tanjavur. —



At Morvi, team of surgeons from Chennai (August 1949)

Fields south of Arunachala prior to Morvi Compound construction

Maharajah of Morvi with heir apparent





From *Periapuranam*: Idangazhi Nayanaar

In Kodumbaloor, the capital of Koannadu, dwelt King Idangazhiyaar of the Velir clan. Loyal to the renowned Aadithan of the Solar dynasty who plated with gold the roof of the Chidambaram shrine of Lord Nataraja, Idangazhiyaar was devoted to Lord Siva. He offered hospitality to the Lord's devotees and ensured that the required rituals were performed.

Among the subjects of his kingdom was one devotee who made it his daily duty to feed Siva bhaktas. He spent his weekly earnings procuring rice to make hot meals for pilgrims. Once, when he found himself with neither rice nor funds to purchase rice, he panicked and without weighing the consequences, broke into the royal granary to help himself to its paddy. In his careless haste, he was caught by the palace guards and promptly jailed. The following morning he was taken before the king. When asked to explain his deeds, he simply told the truth. Hearing it, King Idangazhiyaar addressed the assembly:

"This man, a devotee of the Lord, is not a thief but rather my true granary. Can there be punishment in such a case? Is it a crime to feed rice to pilgrims of the Lord's temple?" Saying this, the king began to understand the true purpose of accumulated wealth—that it should be shared with those in need. The King added, "Let it be known that from now on, devotees of the Lord may freely help themselves to my grain stores." From then on King Idangazhiyaar shared his possessions with devotees and in due course attained the lotus feet of Mahadeva. (*Idangazhi Nayanaar's aradhana day fell on the 21st October.*)

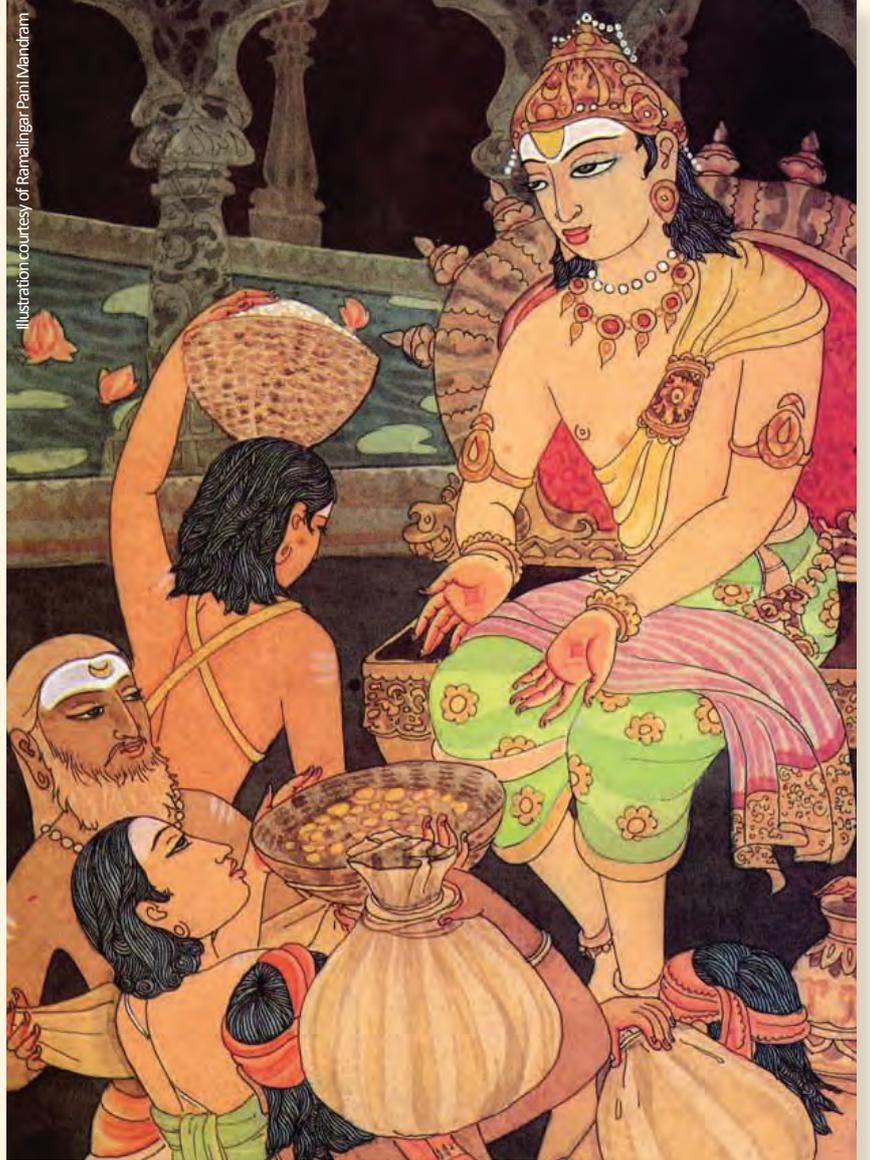


Illustration courtesy of Ramalingar Pani Mandam

Reality in Forty Verses

28. Controlling speech and breath and diving deep within oneself — like diving deep down to find a thing that has fallen into water — one must seek out the source whence the aspiring ego springs.

— Sri Bhagavan





Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Mandalabhishekam, 12th October



After Mahakumbhabhishekam to Bhagavan's Shrine and Matrubhuteswara on August 25th, 2013, daily mahanyasa pujas were performed each day for 48 days until the final day when an elaborate homa and abhishekam (*mandalabhishekam*) were performed. On the 12th October the programme started at 5am in the New Hall with Rudra Japam around the kalasam, followed by an elaborate homa with Vasordara Deeparadhana at 9.15am and kalasa abhishekam in Bhagavan's and Mother's Shrines.

Wordwise: Jagat जगत्

Jagat: the world; the cosmos or cosmic manifestation; universe; earth; (lit.) 'that which moves'.

Jagat can also be said to be 'all the worlds, both material and spiritual', 'everything, animate and inanimate'. But Bhagavan simply points to the Self: "Take the instance of the cinema. There are pictures moving on the screen. Go and touch them. What do you touch? Only the screen. Let the pictures disappear. What remains? Only the screen. So also here. Touch the substratum of the 'I'. After the substratum is touched what does it matter if the world (*jagat*) appears or disappears? The ajnani takes the world to be real; whereas the jnani sees it only as the manifestation of the Self." (Talks §65)

Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Navaratri Bharatanatyam



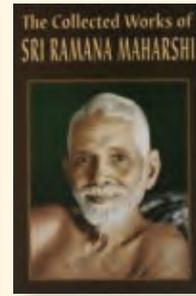
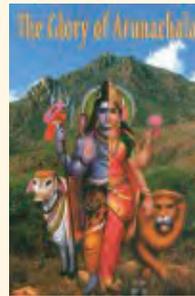
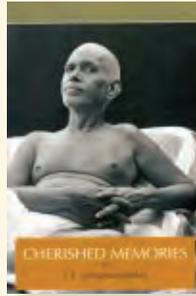
On 12th Oct, Ms. Aparna S. and Ms. Mala R., Alumni of Kalakshetra gave a presentation of Bharatanatyam at the New Auditorium in the Grantalaya (Library).





Announcements: Online Store

The Ashram has undertaken a project to convert Sri Ramana Maharshi's books into ebook formats suitable for reading in Kindle or iPad. Currently over thirty books can be purchased online. We offer Kindle compatible ebooks, published by Sri Ramanarsamam, through Amazon and Apple App "Sri Ramana Maharshi".



Calendar of Upcoming Events

2nd November (Sat) Deepavali
 8th November (Fri) Karthigai Festival Begins
 15th November (Fri) Big Chariot
 16th November (Sat) Full Moon

17th November (Sun) Karthigai Deepam
 22nd November (Fri) Punarvasu
 16th December (Mon) Full Moon
 19th December (Thurs) Jayanthi

Obituary: Dr. R. Ravindran



Born in Jaffna, Ceylon in 1932, Dr. Ravindran was in the company of sages from an early age. In his third year, the family home was host to regular visits by Yogaswami. At the age of six, he met Bhagavan Ramana when the family came to the Ashram in the late 1930s. At breakfast one morning, Bhagavan spied the youngster tugging his father's shirt sleeve — he had only received two iddlies while others were getting four. Bhagavan, intuiting his wish, indicated that two more iddlies be put on the boy's leaf. From that time on, Ravindran said he had 'been fed by Bhagavan'.

While in medical college, Ravi came to Ramanasramam before migrating to the UK to study surgery. He settled in Adelaide, Australia, in 1977 to specialise in orthopaedic surgery. Despite the distance, Dr. Ravi made the annual pilgrimage to the Ashram where he passed his mornings in the Old Hall and helped raise funds for local orphanages. After spending the whole of last month here (September), he stopped in Chennai to do consultation work for Sri Lankan refugees before returning home. Back in Australia, in the middle of October, Dr. Ravi got a severe infection (sepsis) and was unable to recover. He merged peacefully at the feet of Bhagavan on the 16th October. Dr. Ravi is survived by his wife, Beatrice, and their three sons, Janakan, Niranjan and Sanjayan. Universally known for his gentle, compassionate nature, he will be missed by all.

