

Saranagati



SARANAGATI
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Courtesy of Dev Gogoi



Saranagati



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ISSUE

Dear Devotees,

March was a month of colour, sound and light with Mahasivaratri celebrations preceded by the three-day Maha Rudram function with homa, and followed ten days later by the Sri Vidya Havan on the 18th.

Sundaram Iyer Day was observed on the 27th. The Mahakumbhabhishekam of Pavala Kunru is not yet fixed but the Big Temple Mahakumbhabhishekam will not take place before June.

For videos, photos and further news of events, go to <http://www.sriramanamaharshi.org> or write to us at saranagathi@sriramanamaharshi.org. See our YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/c/sriramanasramam>.

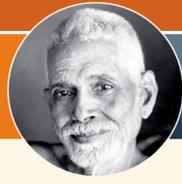
In Sri Bhagavan,
The Editorial Team

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

8th April (Fri) Telugu New Year	4th May (Weds) Sri Bhagavan's 66th Aradhana
14th April (Thurs) Tamil New Year/Punarvasu	11th May (Weds) Punarvasu
15th April (Fri) Rama Navami	21st May (Sat) Full Moon
17th April (Sun) Major Chadwick Day	30th May (Mon) Mahapuja
21st April (Thurs) Full Moon	8th June (Weds) Punarvasu
26th April (Tues) Muruganar Mandiram (Ramanathapuram) Anniversary	17th June (Fri) Cow Lakshmi Day





Coming to Bhagavan: K. V. Balakrishna Menon

“Everything is afraid of Time but Time itself is afraid of the pyramids”, so goes an old saying about the pyramids of Egypt.

Thus defying Time there stands in the remote sun-baked town of Tiruvannamalai, the Hill which for ages has attracted saints and seers, the latest of whom is Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, It is said that those who meditate on Arunachala in their hearts will lose the ego, the besetting ‘original sin’ of mankind.

Way back in 1937, I was doing my B.A. in the American College, Madurai. One day I happened to go to the house of my professor, Sri N. R. Krishnamurti Iyer in Adimoolam Pillai Agraharam, Madurai, and I had the first introduction to the saint

of Arunachala whose portrait adorned the front room. In 1939, due to a traumatic experience, I came to Sri Ramanasramam without informing my parents. My father got scent of it. Before he reached the Ashram, I went to Anandashram of Swami Ramdas where he picked me up. Later on I learnt that my father had sent a telegram from Sri Ramanasramam to Swami Ramdas, reading, “Detain my son Balakrishnan, Confidential.” The telegram was sent with the knowledge of Sri Bhagavan. My only satisfaction is that thus I was instrumental in my father getting the darshan of Bhagavan.

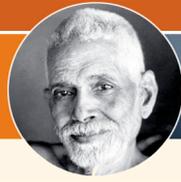
I belong to a Hindu family of North Malabar, following the old, now obsolete matrilineal custom. All the heads of my family (Karnavans) were hereditary village Menons (revenue collectors), which are a subcaste of the Nair community formerly engaged in administrative duties, such as being scribes and accountants in service of the kings of Kerala. Pious and religious by the tradition of my ancestors and by nature since my earliest youth, I took to spirituality. Being a student of Sanskrit, I started reading the scriptures. But nothing gave me solace. So in 1949, I came to Arunachala once again. Till the passing away of Bhagavan I used to sit for hours on end before Him. I lost my abundant vanity and pride. I became humble and unassuming. After the Mahanirvana of Bhagavan I became a teacher.

Thinking of Bhagavan had become spontaneous with me. I retired as headmaster of a Government High School in North Arcot District. By His Grace I got a State award also. At present I am back in Arunachala, a religious recluse. By Bhagavan’s Grace my peace of mind was throughout unaffected by the trials and anxieties that fell to my lot. While once sitting in meditation before Sri Bhagavan, I had the most enduring satisfaction when he asked me: “Have you had your food?”

Have I not? * —

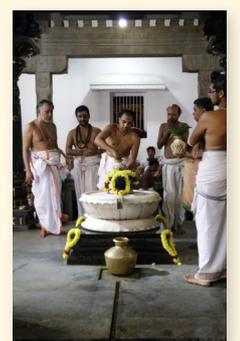
* See the *Mountain Path*, April 1977





Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Mahasivratri

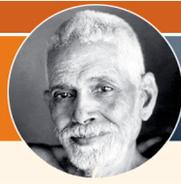
The 'Great Night of Siva' is the day when the Lord saved the world from the darkness of ignorance by revealing His true form as pure light. Mahasivaratri was celebrated at the Ashram on Krishna Paksha Chaturdasi, the night of 7th March with *jagaran*, an all-night vigil of puja, recitation, meditation and pradakshina. Vedapatasala students chanted the Holy Rudram through much of the night, rousing and invigorating devotees' sadhana and prayer.



Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Maha Rudram

Rudram consists of *namakam* (the repetition of *namah* indicating surrender to the Lord) and *chamakam* (repeating *cha-me,*'and for me'). *Maha Rudram* at the Ashram from the 5th through 7th March had four main parts: Two days of *japa mantra* in the library auditorium followed by *homa* and *archana* in the New Hall, and *kalasa abhishekam* at Bhagavan's Shrine. During the three days, 45 students and 15 purohits recited *namakam* 1,331 times and *chamakam* 121 times.





Favourite Stories of Bhagavan: Punya and Pavana

[In response to the questions posed by a lady devotee from Uttar Pradesh, Sri Bhagavan cited the following story from Yoga Vasishtha, Book V, Chapters 19-21. (see Talks §16 & §276)]

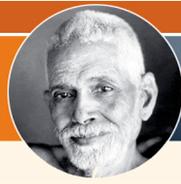
On the banks of the holy Ganges lived a sage named Dirghatapa who was, as his name implies, the very embodiment of ceaseless austerity. His two sons, Punya (Virtue) and Pavana (Purity) were well-versed in the four Vedas and the whole family took refuge in the holy hill Mahendragiri. In the course of time, Punya, by virtue of his detachment and concentrated sadhana, had attained full enlightenment while Pavana, though

having overcome ignorance, had not yet reached full enlightenment but suffered from a vacillating mind. With the inexorable passage of time, their father, having fully conquered the senses and completed his earthly mission, one day shed his body frail with age as naturally as a bird flying away from its cage. His wife, by similar yogic powers, followed her husband and likewise attained salvation.

At this sudden departure of his parents, Pavana was overwhelmed by grief and wailed inconsolably. Still not fully ripened in pursuit of the Absolute, he ran away to the forest to grieve. Punya recognizing the inviolability of time, performed his parents' last rites with a calm and heroic mind. Upon completing the rites, Punya found his brother and embraced him saying, "My dear brother! The blindness of ignorance alone is the cause of your tears. Our parents have repaired to the safe haven of their true home. There is no cause for tears. Why do you grieve so when they have reached the final destination? Please realize that they have not been your only parents. In past lives, you have had innumerable parents. If you reflect on this fact, the illusion of samsara will evaporate like dew and you will be free from all grief. You have taken uncountable births at different times and places, in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, in animate and inanimate forms. Your parents are legion. What you see as the world is only an illusory appearance. In truth there are neither friends nor relatives. Neither is there death or separation. When you realize the fleeting nature of all these manifestations, only temporary cages of flesh and bone, you will recognise how the body creates the illusion of permanency. When you enquire sincerely, you will realize that what is true is the awareness of the 'I' that inhabits these various forms, not the forms themselves. When you contemplate it, you will understand that all-pervading Consciousness, the Self, is the only imperishable truth. Such a vision is the true *Brahmidrishti* and will lead you to freedom. Know this and attain your life's goal."

On hearing these instructions of wisdom from his brother, Pavana's turbulent mind became steady and immersed in the Self. Both the brothers lived long and eventually merged in Brahman. —

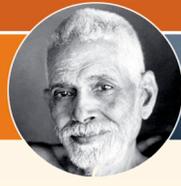




Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Sri Vidya Havan

In the Sri Vidya tradition, Goddess Lalita Tripurasundari is supreme, the physical universe being but her manifestation. She is worshipped through the two-dimensional *Sri Chakra yantra* and through the three-dimensional *Meru Chakra*. Each year at the Ashram, the Sri Chakra and the Meru Chakra are rededicated in *yagna* called Sri Vidya Havan. This year's havan took place on Friday, 18 March commencing at 7 am with Navavarana Puja from 8am-11 and followed by homa. At 2.30 pm purnahuti took place followed by *deeparadhana*. Procession into the Mother's Shrine ensued and abhishekam and final *deeparadhana* took place at 2.45pm.





Obituary: Sri La Su Rengarajan



Sri La Su Rengarajan (born December 1930) was a well-known writer, journalist and Gandhian scholar devoted to Bhagavan. He started his career as assistant editor at *The Indian Express* (1952-56) and then moved to New Delhi to work as officer on special duty at the *Mahatma Gandhi Collected Works* at the I & B Ministry, of which his mentor, Prof. K. Swaminathan, was chief editor. He retired as joint director and returned to Chennai and wrote on Mahatma Gandhi while translating several books on Bhagavan into Tamil. In 1994, he helped former Ashram President Sri T.N. Venkataraman in writing his autobiography. La Su Ra translated into Tamil Professor Swaminathan's *Ramana Maharshi*; T.M.P. Mahadevan's *Bhagavan Ramana* and two of Arthur Osborne's books on Bhagavan. In Chennai he edited the Gandhian monthly *Bharata Mani* and the literary monthly *Kanaiyazhi* and was the general editor of the five-volume Tamil edition, *Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. He wrote the script for a prestigious 4.5 hour video entitled, *Gandhi—Apostle of Peace and Non-violence* produced by Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan. In recent years, Sri La Su was awarded a senior fellowship by the Ministry of Culture for the project document *The Spiritual Journey of Mahatma Gandhi amidst Socio-political Vortices*.

Sri Rengarajan passed away peacefully in Chennai on January 18, 2016 at the age of 85 after a battle with bone cancer. He is survived by his wife Smt. Lalitha Rengarajan who attended on him with immense care. He will be remembered for his amiability, simplicity, hard work and, of course, his lifelong devotion to Mahatma Gandhi and Bhagavan Sri Ramana. —

Obituary: Sri Chinnaraj



We regret to report the passing away of one of our longtime, sincere Ashram workers, Sri. Chinnaraj. He served us for more than 40 years and passed away suddenly on 22 March, 2016. He will always be remembered for his loyal, devoted service in the Ashram and also at President's household. Both his surviving sons Anand and Arun are carrying on the tradition of serving in the Ashram.

Saranagati's Suggestion Box

Please send your comments and suggestions for *Saranagati Magazine*, Sri Ramanasramam's official e-monthly, to the following address:

<saranagati.suggestionbox@gmail.com>

