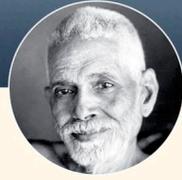


Saranagati



SARANAGATI
SRI RAMANASRAMAM

SEPTEMBER 2022
VOL. 16, NO.9



Dr. Carlos Lopez



Saranagati



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IN THIS
ISSUE

Dear Devotees,

September got underway with Bhagavan's Advent celebrations on Thursday the 1st, when some few hundred devotees joined for the festivities in an unseasonably mild and wet September.

In this issue we conclude the life story of T.R. Kanakammal and hear more about the boundless grace Bhagavan showered on her throughout the course of her life.

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

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Saranagati

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Calendar of Ashram Events

1st Sept (Thu) Sri Bhagavan's Advent Day
8th Sept (Thu) Pradhosham
9th Sept (Fri) Full Moon/Natarajar Abhishekam
13th Sept (Tue) Samvatsara Abhishekam
18th Sept (Sun) Purattasi month Srichakra Puja
20th Sept (Tue) Punarvasu
23rd Sept (Fri) Pradosham

26th Sept (Mon) Navaratri Commences
Sani Pradosham
DEEPAVALI, Naraka Chaturdasi Snanam
22nd Oct (Sun) Viswanathan Swami





resilience in his followers, and soon they saw that the legacy of his teaching transcended any impulsive responses born of their grief. They echoed his words prior to his departure and if they hadn't fully understood them at the time, now they knew that he had not really left them. They saw that he was calling them to a new way of working, to a deeper encounter with his teaching. They saw that they must follow in his footsteps rather than merely be devoted to him. They saw that circumstances would now force them to take the teaching to the level of lived experience, a part of who they were. The first step was paying closer attention to what he had written and said. Kanakammal writes:

When Bhagavan left the body, our grief was intolerable, and we were unable to carry on with our lives the way we had done before. In the hope of regaining some degree of mental composure, we requested Muruganar to explain Bhagavan's Collected Works, (Sri Ramana Nool-Thirattu), namely Bhagavan's poetry as well as his translations of other sacred works. Accordingly, Muruganar started his lectures on the Collected Works. These lectures went on for about six months. Muruganar was an exceptional teacher. His lectures were notable for their clarity and for the wealth of illustrations, quotations, and allusions to other philosophical works. Sometimes, the explanation of a single stanza could take two or three days. Muruganar was able to make us understand the most intricate poetry and to grasp the real meaning of Bhagavan's teachings ... His explanations, interspersed with reminiscences of the Master, delighted us, like showers of Ramana-ambrosia.²

The grief of her loss of Bhagavan began to heal in going to the source of Bhagavan's teaching under the guidance of one of his best students. Despite their ill-fortune, Kanakammal felt blessed to be able to gain intimacy with Bhagavan through his teaching. If Bhagavan's poetry was difficult for many, even for those well-versed in Tamil, it was because of its density, not least of all, the polyvalence of its language, where any word could have multiple flavours and meanings all at once. For his part, Muruganar had apprenticed himself to the Master not only through his boundless devotion but by cataloguing all that he had imbibed

² *Cherished Memories*, p. 83; 'Paramount Ramana', *The Mountain Path*, Jan 1986, p. 27.

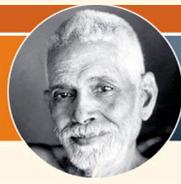
IN PROFILE

T.R. Kanakammal (Part VI)

Following Bhagavan's Mahanirvana in April 1950, Kanakammal and the devotees around her and indeed everywhere, were devastated. It felt like the light had gone out and that there would be no way to come back from the loss. Devotees 'scattered out' of Tiruvannamalai but after some time, discovered that 'they could not find peace anywhere else', so they slowly 'came back to the shrine of Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi'¹. Fortunately, Bhagavan had inspired

¹ 'Paramount Ramana', *The Mountain Path*, Jan 1986, p. 26.





in his presence and anthologising it in verse, a skill he possessed in the highest degree. Muruganar, during his time with Bhagavan, had composed more than 30,000 verses centred on him and his teaching, many of which had been perused, corrected and in some cases rewritten by Bhagavan himself:

Once the Collected Works had been discussed fully, Sri Muruganar started offering classes exclusively for me. One of the works he explained to me is the Ozhivil Odukkam. Sri Muruganar used to say that this was one of Bhagavan's favourite books. Muruganar told me that the existing commentary for this book was based on Siddhanta and that Bhagavan had asked him to write another commentary for the book based on Vedanta. Muruganar, however, was unable to carry out this assignment. During his lectures on the Collected Works, Muruganar often quoted from Ozhivil Odukkam. These verses were extremely sweet and moving. I was so charmed by the verses recited by Muruganar that I developed the desire to read the work in its entirety. But it is a very complex work, totally beyond my grasp. Tamil language allows for the combination of words to form complex word-chains. Unless one knows how to break up these word-chains, it is impossible to understand anything. One requires the guidance of an experienced teacher to comprehend this work. Muruganar graciously agreed to be my teacher.

Muruganar's method of teaching was as revolutionary as it was effective. He would insist upon my reading each verse aloud. Unfamiliar as I was with the intricacies of the language, my attempts at reading were quite clumsy and often totally confusing. But my teacher was very patient with me. After my faltering attempts at reading the verse, he would read the same verse, splitting the words properly and pausing at the appropriate places. When Muruganar read a verse, even I could get the broad outlines of its meaning. He would read each verse four or five times. I

would unconsciously memorise the verse, even as Muruganar read it. Next, he set about explaining it to me. He would quote extensively from great works such as Tirumandiram, Tiruvachakam, Tirukkural and Naaladiyar. At times, I felt quite bewildered by the profusion of information that seemed to be swirling around in my head.³

Kanakammal considered herself ill-equipped to take up such an exalted study under someone so great as Muruganar, but the poet urged her on:

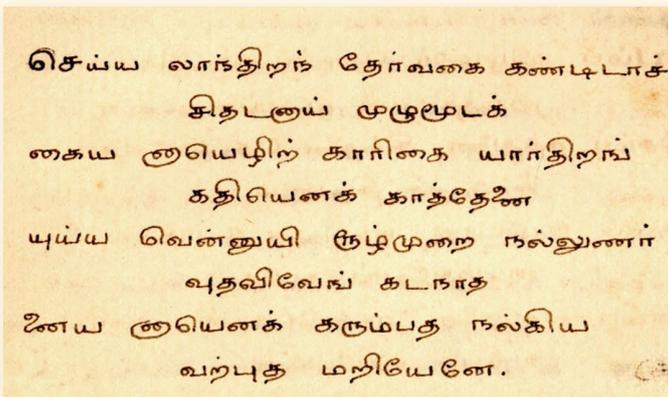
My difficulties could not have escaped his attention. This great scholar had the compassion to come down to my level and to teach me the rudiments of grammar, so that I could appreciate the poetry better. He would explain the rules which governed the combination of words, and train me to read the poetry the way it was meant to be read. At the end of one of our classes, I said, 'Swami, I very much regret the fact that I am not quite familiar with the Tamil language. If only I had known the language, I could have memorised all these verses without much difficulty. I feel that I am not a pupil worthy of a teacher of your calibre. I am really very sorry.' Muruganar replied, 'It does not matter if these lessons do not leave an impression upon your brain. It is enough if your heart is genuinely moved by the poetry.' Even as he said these words, my teacher's eyes filled with tears and his voice became hoarse with emotion. He himself had experienced that state of total emotional involvement with such spirited works and it is a measure of his infinite grace that he should have wished me to have an experience similar to his own.⁴

The intensity of the encounters with Bhagavan's verses were interspersed with stories from the hall in the early days as witnessed by Muruganar. The

³ Cherished Memories, p. 85.

⁴ Ibid., p. 85.

Bhagavan's Handwriting: 'Decad of Miracle' (v.4) of Muruganar's Sannidhi Murai



Seiyya laan-thiran ther vagai kandi-daach/Sida-danaai muzhu-moodak
Kaiya-naai ezhil kaari-gai yaar-tirang/Gadhi-enak kaat-thenai
Uyya ven-nuyir oozh-murai nall-unar/Udavi Venkata naadhen
Iyya naai-enakku arum-padha nalgiya/Arpudham ari-yene.

Not knowing the nuances of deeds that bring forth goodness, I, an ignorant imbecile, sought the attention of pretty women as my sole refuge. Lord Venkata saved my life, annihilated the law of karma and illumined my consciousness. Being my Master, you bestowed on me, your peerless holy feet. How did this miracle happen? —





poet also revealed moments about his own process and what it was like for him to write on Bhagavan. In one of the classes, Muruganar told how he had written a verse complaining to Arunachala about Arunachala's treatment of Bhagavan upon his arrival at Tiruvannamalai:

If you gave him nothing to eat for two days and then only two grains of rice, hard as nails, soaked in water, if you gave him no place to sleep except under a tree, if this is how you treat your devotees, who will come to you?

The next verse contains Arunachala's reply:

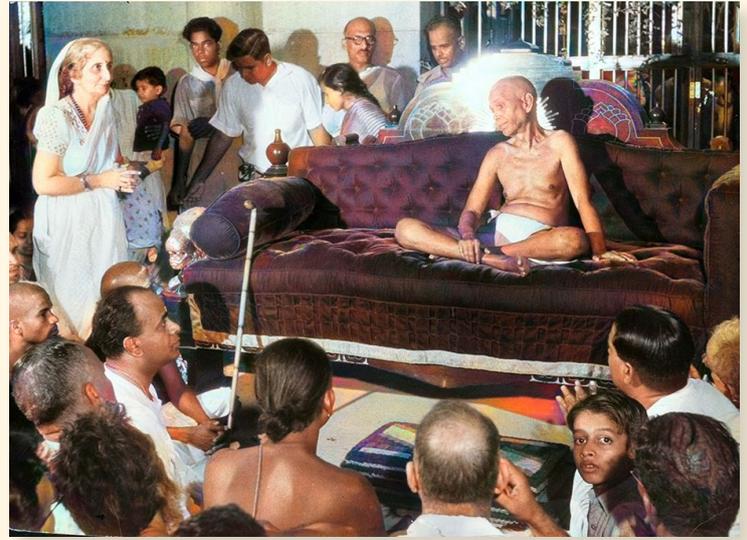
For the one who is surrendered, those two grains were like nectar and the tree under which he slept was like the palace of a king.

These verses were never published. As it would happen, when one of Muruganar's friends travelled to Chennai with manuscripts of these and other verses, in the night at Villupuram when the friend got up to change trains, he discovered the trunk containing the manuscripts as well as his belongings had gone missing. For someone like Muruganar, it would have been easy to reproduce those verses from memory. But in the same spirit of surrender contained in the verses, Muruganar took the incident to mean that Bhagavan did not want them published, otherwise Bhagavan would not have ordained that the originals go missing during the train journey to Chennai.⁵

Kanakammal's friend and mentor, Anandammal attended classes with her which eased Kanakammal's concerns about being sufficiently worthy as a student. Though older and more experienced in religious life, Anandammal was illiterate. And yet, because of the intensity of Anandammal's devotion and faith, this handicap had not prevented her from taking in all that the teacher had imparted.

Anandammal had been one of Bhagavan's earliest devotees having come to Bhagavan while he was still at Virupaksha Cave. Like Kanakammal, right from her childhood, she had a clearly discernible spiritual call. Even at a very early age, she regularly climbed up to Virupaksha Cave and sat in meditation before Bhagavan for hours at a time. In later life, when her

⁵ This account is taken from a conversation with Aparna Krishnamurthy in April 2022.

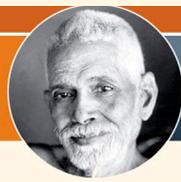


husband passed away, Anandammal came to live in a thatched hut in Ramana Nagar. Her brother took up the responsibility of caring for her son. Anandammal did not attach any importance to material possessions or physical needs. A close friend and admirer took upon herself the responsibility of cooking for her and looking after her as Anandammal devoted every ounce of her strength to realising Bhagavan's teaching. Anandammal remained faithful to the calling she had had since early childhood right up to her last breath. Kanakammal writes of their last class together:

After completing the Collected Works of Bhagavan, Muruganar expounded other spiritual treatises like Atma Purana. One day, Anandammal wanted Muruganar to explain a passage about Saint Vamadeva in Atma Purana. She commented that perhaps, Vamadeva had some residual prarabdha and had to experience garbha vasa (stay in womb). Immediately after coming out of the womb, he realised the Self, didn't he? After uttering these words, Anandammal suddenly fell forward and collapsed. It looked as if she was prostrating. But after a few minutes when she did not get up from her 'prostration,' I lifted her and made her sit up. She was not conscious. We sprinkled water on her face, yet there was no improvement. Then she was taken to the town to her relative's house. She never opened her eyes again. This happened at 6pm and by 9pm she was pronounced dead. Her last thought had been on the release of Vamadeva. Her body was laid to rest near the Ashram by her son and her brother.⁶

⁶ 'Paramount Ramana', *The Mountain Path*, Jan 1986, p. 27.





Vision of the Tongue

Over time Kanakammal internalised what Muruganar had taught her and made it her own. When the poet passed away in 1973, devotees deemed that Kanakammal was the only one in their midst who could pass on this legacy and thereby assist them in discerning the nuances of Bhagavan's written works. They impressed upon her the need to write up all she had learned at the feet of the scholar-poet and simultaneously asked her to continue the classes Muruganar had started in 1950. Kanakammal did this with a great deal of reluctance. But devotees urged her on. Invariably, stories from the golden years in the Hall would come up during class and before long, her students, among them, V. Ganesan, asked her to write up her reminiscences in order that they be published in *The Mountain Path*. What was astounding was how much detail she was able to recall regarding events that had taken place forty years earlier. To her own amazement, telling one story would call to mind another just as precious, and each she could narrate in perfect detail. Noting them down as requested, she began to narrate them more freely in her classes, stimulating further interest. Eventually, it was impressed upon her that, for the sake of posterity, she should compile all the stories and anecdotes and allow them to be made public. Her reminiscences were thus released first in Tamil, then in English, published under the title *Cherished Memories*.

All this work had gone smoothly, but then Kanakammal was requested to take up a far more challenging project, namely, an annotated version of Bhagavan's works, phrase by phrase, with commentary. This task required great exertion on her part, and she described how she had to stay up late into the night for months on end, getting very little sleep. The voluminous set of manuscripts that resulted from her efforts came in three volumes published in 1989 which included commentaries on *Arunachala Stuti Panchakam*, *Upadesa Noon Malai* as well as commentaries on Bhagavan's translated works: *Sri Devikalottara*, *Anma Sakshatkaram*, *Sri Bhagavad Gita Saram*, *Sri Dakshinamurthi Stotram*, *Sri Anma Bodham*, *Sri Guru Stuti* and *Sri Hastamalakam*. They were later translated into English and released by the Ashram⁷. Devotees marvelled at how Kanakammal was able to do all this, especially considering that she had never been formally schooled in written Tamil nor had ever been privileged to undertake higher studies:

*One wonders how one with no access to academic excellence through higher education could deal with ease on such abstruse subjects with such clarity. The clue perhaps is provided by what she confided, shortly before she got merged in Bhagavan. She vividly described an incident which she could neither call a dream nor a vision in which Bhagavan asked her to open her mouth, put out her tongue on which he thereafter wrote something. She, however, was so thrilled by this gesture of great grace that she did not register then nor could recall now what he wrote and in what script.*⁸

⁷ In 2009-2010.

⁸ *Anuvada Nunmalai*, vol II, Publisher's Note, p. v.

Sri Bhagavan's Ayurvedic Recipes: Vayu Samani

Vāyu Samani

aricit-tip pili-veḷḷai miḷagumē larisi
karuñjira kañcukku vāmiḷagu vellam
parañgiccak kaivagaikkup palamoṇḍru cūṇam
araiyeṭṭup palantēṇviṭ ṭalavucuṇḍai yuṭkoḷ

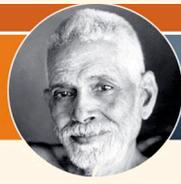
arici tippili veḷḷai miḷagum ēlarici
karuñjirakam cukku vāmiḷagu vellam
parañgic-cakkai vagaikkup palamoṇḍru cūṇam
arai-eṭṭup palantēṇviṭṭu aḷavu-cuṇḍai uṭkoḷ

Ingredients (35gms of each): rice, pippali, white pepper, seeds of matured cardamom, black cumin, dry ginger, cubeb pepper, jaggery, flying chuck and honey.

Preparation: Take the above equal weight of herbs, clean well and grind to a powder. Mix 1 part of powder with 4 parts of honey.

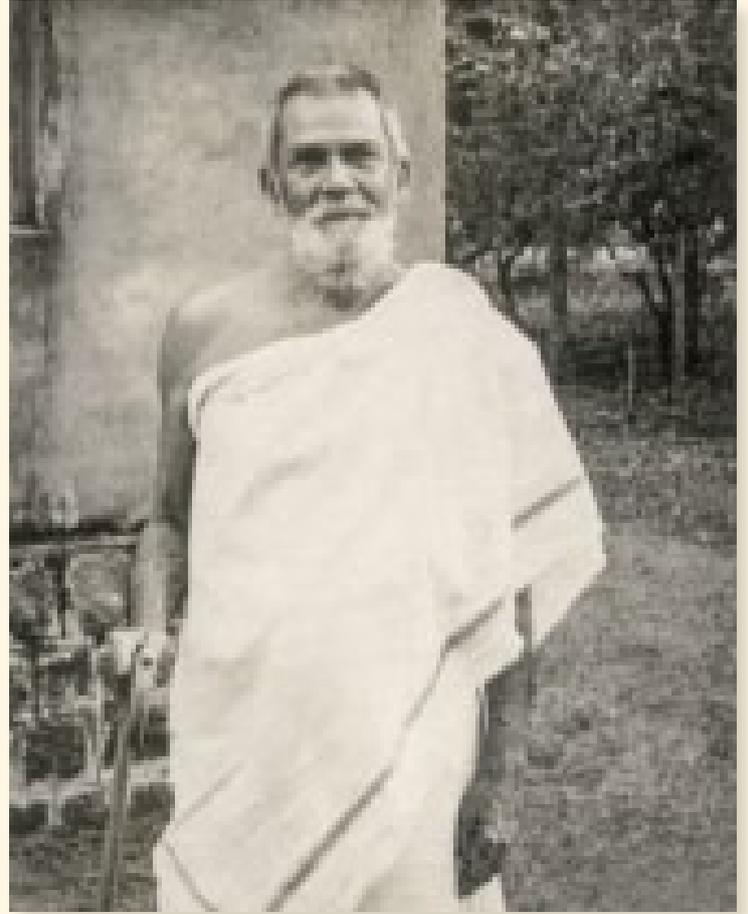
Benefits: Helps to maintain and regulate *vata* (the wind principle) as well as intestinal gas. —





Kanakammal's classes on Bhagavan's works continued right up through the final years of her life. By the late 1990s, students not versed in Tamil had joined her classes and thus it was necessary to do simultaneous translations. Kanakammal would go through the Tamil commentary that she had written according to Muruganar's instructions. Very often she would hear from devotees who had come to Bhagavan after 1950 complain of their misfortune at not having had his darshan. She consoled them saying:

Our attraction to Bhagavan was greatly enhanced by being able to observe him in daily life. But even if one goes to Sri Ramanasramam today, one can see devotees enter the hall with tears in their eyes, prostrate before Bhagavan and meditate, for how long even they do not know. Whenever they learn about some old devotee of Bhagavan who is still alive, they immediately seek them out and tell them, 'You have been so fortunate to live and meditate in Bhagavan's physical presence. We get such peace of mind even in our short and infrequent stays here.' For people like us who have lived with and enjoyed the physical presence of Bhagavan, being devoted to him is no great deal. What happened to me would have happened to you also, had you been there in my place. Today, I find people who have never seen Bhagavan physically, never heard his voice or listened to his upadesa, sit in the Old Hall or the Samadhi Hall, oblivious of themselves, often shedding tears, and going round the hall as if impelled by some unseen force. What gives these people their experiences? As Bhagavan always said, 'Is this body Bhagavan?' When somebody expressed sadness at having to go back home from the Ashram, Bhagavan said, 'What am I to do? You say that this body is Bhagavan. I say that it is not. Now, if you insist, what am I to do?' To others, he would say, 'Look, he says he is going to a place where I am not.'



These new devotees of Bhagavan are proof of all he told us.
 When Kanakammal's students expressed their gratitude over how 'through her eyes, which were always fixed on the Master, she [had given them] a precious glimpse of

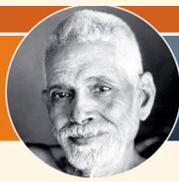
 9 'Srimati Kanakamma', *The Maharshi*, Mar-Apr 2000, p. 5.

Events in Sri Ramanasramam: Muruganar Day



On 25th August, Odhavars came from Chennai to recite Muruganar's *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai* in the Ashram's New Hall and at Muruganar's Samadhi. The following day, the chanting continued followed by abhishekam and puja with the Ashram President, Dr. Venkat S. Ramanan and devotees in attendance. —





those golden days.¹⁰ Nevertheless, they lamented never having gotten to experience them directly. She eased their concerns, insisting that nothing has changed, and that Bhagavan's grace is still here in full measure:

Bhagavan's power and influence have grown stronger since his Mahasamadhi. Muruganar once said, 'Bhagavan's real power will be seen not now, but only a few hundred years after his physical body is no more.' Just as Bhagavan used to guide devotees when in his body, he continues to guide people who come to him in the same way in accordance with each person's temperament.

Kanakammal goes on:

Immediately after Bhagavan's Mahasamadhi, even I used to wonder how I could continue to stay at the Ashram. While most devotees left, they all came back, just like the birds to the palm tree. Today, the number of devotees has multiplied a hundred times over. Everywhere we have Ramana Kendras and Ramana Bhakta Sabbas. Isn't this also Bhagavan's doing? ¹¹

Another lament heard from devotees was the steep climb to liberation, an undertaking for which many felt they were not qualified. Even if this were somehow true, Kanakammal would say, 'What does it matter whether we attain *jnana* or not? The singular blessing of beholding Bhagavan Ramana, moving in his presence and sitting at his feet, [even long after his Mahanirvana] is *mukthi* enough for us.'¹²

The Final Preparation

In her mid-seventies, Kanakammal began to have health problems owing to age and one night in the mid-1990s she found she could not move her limbs:

She tried to alert her relatives but to her utter dismay no sounds escaped from her. She had lost her power of speech. She was admitted in the ICU, her mental faculties intact. Greatly upset by the stifling atmosphere of the ICU and agitated that her relatives

10 'Remembering Kanakammal', Marye Tonnaire, *The Maharshi* May-June 2010, p. 5.

11 'Srimati Kanakamma', *The Maharshi*, Mar-Apr 2000, p. 5.

12 'Publisher's Note', *Commentary on Anuvada Nummalai*, vol II, p. vi.

were kept out, unable to provide support or succour of any kind, she made repeated vehement gestures, to be taken out of the ICU, but these helped in no way to make her intelligible to others. The nurse bestowed stern looks on her, making signs asking her to be still. Resigning herself to the situation she remained quiet. Suddenly there flashed in her mind what Bhagavan had once said: 'Total surrender does not come easily. When there is nothing that you can rely on, when your own kith and kin cannot help you, when your own body fails to obey your commands then, if one turns to the Lord with all one's heart, that is total surrender.'

Kanakammal woke up the next day calm and peaceful, as if having been administered a tranquillizer. When she spoke to the doctor who came on his rounds, she was surprised beyond measure to find that the power of speech had returned to her and that she could move her limbs freely, without any therapy or treatment. Later the specialist who examined her called her recovery miraculous. This direct and personal experience taught her most convincingly the truth of total surrender and prepared her for her imminent and graceful exit. ¹³

Later when asked what she had learnt from Bhagavan, she replied that Bhagavan had taught her 'not to place too much importance on the body'. When her body became aged, she was asked why she still came to the Ashram each day to sit quietly for an hour or two in the hall where Bhagavan had sat for so long. She replied that she did this 'simply out of gratitude'.

Kanakammal's biographer narrates her last pilgrimage to Tiruvannamalai:

In November 2009 Kanakammal came to the Ashram for Deepam but extended her stay and said that she would stay on in Tiruvannamalai until Jayanti. Yes indeed, she did stay until Jayanti — and not a day more! ¹⁴

The night of 31st December 2009 was remarkable for numerous reasons. First, it was Arudra Darshan, a night important for devotees of Lord Nataraja at Chidambaram. It was also the full moon night with

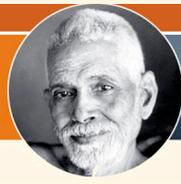
13 'T.R. Kanakammal: A Tribute', by Aparna Krishnamurthy, *The Mountain Path*, April 2010, pp. 71-78

14 *Ibid.*, pp. 71-78.

Announcement: Online Advent Celebrations

On Sunday, 11th September 2022 from 6am-8pm EST, devotees from satsang groups in the USA, Canada, Australia, France and United Kingdom will celebrate the 126th anniversary of Bhagavan's Advent to Arunachala. Join at <<https://youtu.be/rwCcArIuqIE>> or <<https://www.youtube.com/c/ArunachalaAshrama>>.





hundreds of thousands of pilgrims making their circumambulation of the Hill. It was New Year's Eve according to the Gregorian calendar and the following day, the 1st day of January 2010, was New Year's Day, but more importantly, it was Bhagavan's 131st Jayanti Day. Devotees from around India had come for the celebrations. Kanakammal's biographer narrates:

That day the Samadhi Hall was full to capacity, the Mahayasa Rudra Japam having just been completed. The Vedic pundits and the vidyarthi of the Patasala were sitting in their places at the raised shrine mantapa and the abhisheka was about to commence. Sri Bhagavan's shrine was shining resplendently in all its glory with all his devotees in attendance. The parayana of the Mahanarayana Upanishad was about to commence. The teacher of the Veda Patasala had taken his seat and was about to give the signal to start. One of the devotees who had come from Delhi nudged another saying, 'Look at this old lady immaculately draped in a beautiful sari.' Kanakammal was just then entering the hall through the entrance near the well, using her walking stick and escorted by a friend on one side and her attendant, Ramani, on the other. She moved towards the stone railing to rest her hand and tried to hold on to it with her eyes directed at the lingam. Her gait was a little unsteady and her hand, as it tried to hold onto the pillar shook violently. Her knees buckled and she fell on folded legs with both her arms outstretched. Devotees nearby rushed to arrest her fall. Her walking stick and spectacles were collected by a devotee, who also gave her a little water to drink. Another devotee fanned her. [But] the eyes closed forever and her mouth fell open. When efforts were made to straighten out her folded leg, it was observed that her extremities had become ice-cold. Dr Murthy arrived, and it was decided to carry Kanakammal to the area behind the old meditation hall on the west

side, to get fresh air and to avoid any commotion. This move was accompanied by the chanting of Arunachala Siva. Kanakammal was laid on the ground with her head on the lap of a devotee. Dr Murthy softly informed the devotees that she had passed away.

Amma's body was carried to her house. The mendicant swamis lounging in front of her gate got up, shocked, and bewildered to see the lifeless body of Amma as they had seen her going to the ashram in a car just a short while before. In this way Amma entered the compound, her residence for many years, where Sri Muruganar had taught her Sri Bhagavan's works, a legacy which she herself had carried on and thereby inspired the hearts of so many. Her younger brother performed the rites after all the devotees had paid their final respects. Relatives and some of the devotees acting as pallbearers, her last journey began. 'Arunachala Siva' was chanted all the way. The mortal frame was consigned to the elements after the completion of the cremation rites, witnessed by towering Arunachala to the north and the setting crimson sun to the west. It was the most graceful exit one could witness. There had been no sign of struggle, no sign of pain on her face. On the contrary, she looked calm, composed, and serene. Instead, there was a glow on her face.

Kanakammal's own words, which she never grew tired of repeating, echoed in our hearts: 'Bhagavan never allows anyone who has come to him to go away empty-handed;' and 'We all belong to Him.' Encouraged and immensely inspired by the glory of Kanakammal's departure, we bow our heads to Him in praise and prayer. The fervent desire of every earnest devotee who witnessed her exit from this world, is to earn the grace of Bhagavan and to emulate Kanakammal by living right till the end with a heart that remembers and holds to nothing but Him.¹⁵ —

(series concluded)

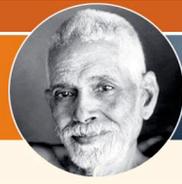
15 Ibid., pp. 71-78.

Events in Sri Ramanasramam: Sannidhi Murai Concert and Book Release



On the evening of 25th August, Muruganar's great devotional work, *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai* with word split was released along with a recording of the entire work sung by professional Odhavar singers. The release function was followed by a concert performance of these revered verses of devotion to Bhagavan. —





Events in Sri Ramanasramam: Veda Pariksha

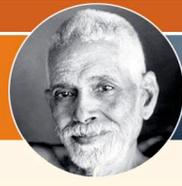
In 2015, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai joined Sringeri, Kanchipuram and Mysore as one of only a handful of Vedic Pariksha centres in South India. In 2022, sixty students from all over South India came to undergo three days of examinations (4th-6th August) in Krishna Yajur Veda, Rig Veda and Sama Veda. Mulam, Samhita, Padam, Kramam in Krishna Yajur Veda. Purvabhagam and Uttarabhagam in Sama Veda; and Padam and Kramam in Rig Veda were among the examinations given. The Rishis of ancient times sought ways to ensure preservation of the purity and sanctity of the sastras and thus devised various modes of recitation to guarantee accurate transmission down through the generations. Examination is yet another measure to ensure that the various *pathas* are transmitted faithfully. Certificates affirm and authenticate a Vedic student's training and ability. In all, nearly sixty certificates were awarded at Sri Ramanasramam by Ashram President, Dr. Venkat S. Ramanan, in this seventh pariksha at Sri Ramanasramam. —



Announcement: Sri Ramanasramam's Centenary Year (1st September 2022- 28th December 2023)

Sri Ramanasramam's Centenary celebrations called, *Ramanasramam: The Next One Hundred Years*, are set to begin on 1st Sept 2022 and will continue over a 16-month period until Jayanti, 28th Dec 2023. It is recorded in one place that Bhagavan came down the Hill to stay permanently 'about one week' before Jayanti which fell that year on 3rd January 1923. If so, this means the Ashram would have been established with Bhagavan's arrival around the 28th of Dec 1922. Ashram President Dr. Venkat S. Ramanan invites devotees to send their suggestions for this Centenary Year to him directly at <posrm@gururamana.org>. —





Events in Tiruvannamalai: Pandava Kovil Renovation



Pandava Kovil



Pandava Tirtham



Renovation in progress



Pandava Kovil in 1930

The Pandavas, the five sons of Pandu, had a scheming uncle, Shakuni, who was a master at gambling and owned a pair of loaded dice. He lured the eldest brother, Yudhishtira into a game and slyly won the Pandavas' entire kingdom. Now dispossessed, the five brothers went into exile and wandered the extent of Bharat from north to south with their wife, Draupadi. During their pilgrimage, they came to Tirukoilur and Tiruvannamalai and stayed on the Hill in the grove next to the temple that bears their name. The two tirthams on either side of Pandava Kovil (just behind Sri Ramanasramam a short distance up the Hill) are called Pandava Tirtham and Bhima Tirtham. The Arunachala Mahatmyam says that by bathing in Pandava Tirtham, the Pandavas became 'Lords of the World'. It also says that Bhu Devi (Goddess Mother Earth) was blessed with herbs, fruits and abundance as 'a result of bathing in Pandava Tirtham along with all the devas.'

In 2017, Ramanasramam repaired and renovated Pandava Tirtham. This year, with support from local people, the Ashram is renovating the temple itself. Work could be completed as early as the end of the year when the ancient temple will be rededicated with Mahakumbhabhishekam. —

Matrubhutesvara 100: Jagadisha Sastri's Matrubhutesvara Ashtakam (verses 5-6)

दिगूपं वसनं विहाय रुचिरं
क्षौमं वसानं शशुभं
हित्वा वासरुचिं श्मशानगहने
पुण्याश्रमैकाश्रयः ।
चित्यं भस्म विहाय चन्दनरसै
मील्यैः कृतालंक्रियः
योगांबा गृहमेधिको विजयते
श्रीमातृभूतेश्वरः ॥५॥

यच्छस्त्रारमणाश्रमस्थलमिदं
भूवासिनां नन्दनं ।
जातं स्वस्व विचित्रशिल्पिरचना
वैचित्र्यचैत्यं महत् ।
शोणाद्रीश्वरसानुगस्सजगता
मीशो निरीशस्त्रयं
सर्वेश्वर्यनिधिर्धुनोतुदुरितं
श्रीमातृभूतेश्वरः ॥६॥

5. Dik roopam vasanam vihaaya ruchiram kshoumam
vasaana subham

Hitvaa vaasaruchim smashaanagahane punyaashramai
kaashraya:

Chityam bhasma vihaaya chandana rasair maalyaih: kritaalankriya:
Yogaambaa grhamedhiko vijayate Sri Matrubhutesvara:

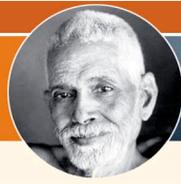
5. Setting aside the clothing of the eight directions to
be adorned in auspicious white silk, leaving aside the
pleasures of dwelling in a burial ground to take up
residence in this pious Ashram, leaving aside ashes in

order to be besmeared and bedecked with fragrant sandalwood paste and flower garlands, Sri Matrubhuteswar shines in the family way of life with His consort Yogambika.

6. Yas Sakhthya ramanasrama sthalamidam bhu vaasinaam nandanam/Jaatam swasya vichitra shilpi rachanaa vaichitryashityam mahath
Sonadree swarasaanugassa jagataameeso nireeshaswayam/Sarvaiswarya nidhir dhunotu duritam Sri Matrubhutesvarah

6. By the Lord's supreme power, this Ramanasramam is made a divine grove for the whole world; by His divinely powerful presence, a great temple of rarity to Himself, fashioned by great sculptors who sprung up at the foot of Arunachala Hill, may Sri Matrubhutesvara, Lord of the World, solitary and orphaned, treasure of the eight-fold wealth, do away with our sins! —





Events at Ramanasramam: 126th Anniversary of Bhagavan's Advent to Arunachala



On 1st September 2022 the Madurai Ramana Mandiram arrived and sang parayana in Bhagavan's Shrine and later that morning, devotees gathered for Mahanasya puja and singing. The gathering was to commemorate Bhagavan's coming to Arunachala 126 years earlier. Devotees recall how at the end of August 1896, young Bhagavan encountered kind-hearted hospitality at every step of his journey. At Villupuram when a hotel owner learned that the devout youngster had only two and half annas, he would not accept payment for the boy's meal. The following night after his jyoti darshan at Araiyananallur Temple in Tirukoilur, the pious temple drummer of Kilur Temple offered him his share of prasada. The next day, at the house of Muthukrishna Bhagavathar where Venkataraman pawned his gold earrings for the train ticket fare, he was tenderly cared for by one of the ladies of the house who prepared parcel of sweetmeats and naivedya offerings for Lord Krishna. Once having arrived at the Feet of Arunachala, however, concern for his bodily welfare departed and he surrendered himself completely to the Holy Hill. At Ayyankulam Tank, he dispensed with his remaining possessions, tearing from his clothes the material needed to fashion a codpiece. He offered his remaining three and half rupees to the waters of the holy tank, determined never to touch money again. Likewise, recalling the kind affection of the lady at Tirukoillur the day before, he gave away the remaining sweetmeats, now committed to a simple diet. —

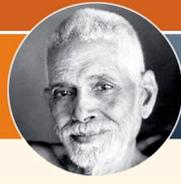
Events in Sri Ramanasramam: Ganesh Chaturthi



In some parts of the country, Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated for ten days. In Tiruvannamalai, these ten days are reserved for venerating Lord Arunachala at Kartigai Deepam. Nevertheless, Lord Ganesh is honoured on the fourth tithi of the bright half in the Bhadrpada month (mid August to mid-September), the day of his birth.

Following puja in Bhagavan's Shrine on 31st August, devotees gathered at the two main shrines to Lord Ganesa in the Mother's Shrine to celebrate with puja and singing —





Events in Sri Ramanasramam: Independence Day



Independence Day is celebrated each 15th August commemorating the nation's independence from colonial rule in 1947, when legislative sovereignty was transferred to the Indian Constituent Assembly. The Constitution came into effect on 26th January 1950 and is celebrated as Republic Day. At Sri Ramanasramam, this year's Independence Day was marked with the raising of the flag and singing the national anthem following the morning milk offering at 7am in Bhagavan's Shrine —

Ashram Gardens: Summer Rains



Unusual weather patterns observed around the world are also being experienced in Tiruvannamalai where July and August brought rains out of season. Pali Tirtham is almost full, the Ashram's gardens are thriving, and the climate pleasant with cool sunny days in between brief periods of precipitation. —

Announcement: Sri Ramana Maharshi Heritage



Sri Ramana Maharshi Heritage (SRMH) is a newly created 501 (c) (3), registered non-profit in the United States. The organization's purpose is to preserve Sri Ramana Maharshi's heritage and to serve devotees who are drawn to the life and teachings of Bhagavan. The new entity's objectives are aligned with those of Sri Ramanasramam in India. Devotees in the United States who wish to donate towards and participate in Sri Ramanasramam's charitable initiatives in India can learn more by visiting the website: <https://www.srmh.org/> or by sending an email to: sriramanamaharshiheritage@gmail.com. —

