

## Saranagathi

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ISSUE

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Dear Devotees,

This issue of *Saranagathi* continues with our series on women devotees by sharing the life story of Saroja Krishnan. Sarojamma attained the feet of Bhagavan on the 30th June this year at the age of 90. Her story here draws from an interview made ten years ago combined with an earlier written testimonial.

*How I came to Bhagavan* this month is the story of Dr. Narayana Reddy, now 103 yrs. old, the veterinarian called in to treat Cow Lakshmi during the time of her fatal illness in 1948. In the course of his visits to treat Lakshmi, Dr. Reddy had his first darshan of Sri Bhagavan and became his devotee. (See pp.5-6)

Events this month include Cow Lakshmi Samadhi Day on the 12th, Guru Purnima the 15th, Khanna Samadhi Day the 23rd and Ganapathi Muni Samadhi Day the 25th.

For further details and other news, click on the following link <http://www.sriramanamaharshi.org>

Please write us at [saranagathi@sriramanamaharshi.org](mailto:saranagathi@sriramanamaharshi.org)

In Sri Bhagavan  
The Editorial Team



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## Reality in Forty Verses

6. The world is made up of the five kinds of sense perceptions and nothing else. And those impressions are perceived as objects by the five senses. Since through the senses the mind alone perceives the world, is the world other than the mind?

UlladuNarpadu by Sri Bhagavan





## Women Devotees Series: Saroja Krishnan



My first visit to Bhagavan was when I was just 6 months old, so I cannot remember it. But I was brought here by my grandfather. My grandfather, Narayana Iyer, was a faithful devotee of Bhagavan. Just a few months older than Bhagavan, he knew Bhagavan in the early days at Virupaksha Cave. (He was the government doctor-in-charge here when Bhagavan was evacuated, and it was he who arranged for Bhagavan to move to Pachiamman Kovil because he didn't want anyone to disturb Bhagavan.) Anyway my grandfather brought all the family here when I was a baby. This was just after Bhagavan's mother had passed away and Bhagavan had just moved down to the foot of the hill. After this visit, my father was posted to Trivandrum and so there was not as much opportunity to come. So my next visit was only several years later. I can remember sitting in the thatched hut over Mother's shrine where we had our food. At that time there was no dining hall, and we simply sat under the thatch there near Mother's Samadhi, some 4 or 5 of us, and took our food. I was

very young at the time. That is the earliest memory I have of Bhagavan and the Ashram. After that I came again a few times but my devotion to Bhagavan started only later when I started asking him things.

Once when I was about 14 or 15 I was in a very bad patch in my life, sunk in misery. I was even thinking of taking my own life. My uncle hired a car and we all came. We had all come to see Bhagavan and stayed two or three days. When the time came to depart and my family had taken leave of Bhagavan, I approached Bhagavan in the hall. He had his feet up on the sofa when I knelt down to do namaskar. But when I lifted up my head he had both his feet on the small stool in front of the sofa. Automatically my hands shot up and caught hold of his feet. But just as quickly, shocked by my boldness, I became frightened. In those days we didn't touch anyone, it was unthinkable, and we didn't even talk to men-folk. So I became frightened and immediately removed my hands and left the hall. But from that moment, as soon as I stepped out of the hall, my God! — it is not possible to describe it but a wave of happiness overcame me. I walked out of the hall and wave after wave, a deluge of waves, billowed over me. As far as my parents or family were concerned, none knew anything about what was happening to me. Everyone got in to the car and everybody was talking and joking, singing songs of Bhagavan because they were all devoted to him — my aunt, my mother. They were talking about Bhagavan. But nothing registered. I was in my own world. I could see and hear what was going on around me — the starting of the car, driving, people giving me food to eat and water to drink as we drove along — but I was in my own world, in absolute bliss.

I never had that before. And I never had it after that. But it lasted for quite some time. In the end it wore off but my period of unhappiness also ended. That was the beginning of my devotion to Bhagavan.

After this period I was taken away to Delhi and life followed its normal course. In time I was married. Later, some six years after my marriage, there began to be all kinds of innuendos about my not having given birth to a child. People started advising me to visit this or





that temple, go on pilgrimage or take up some vow for the gift of a child. Even from my childhood I had been inordinately fond of babies. My mother had petitioned Bhagavan on my behalf. Bhagavan said, "There is a song in *Thiruppugazh*, 'Thandayani Vendayam', which is said to confer the boon of a baby on the singer." So I learnt this song and on three occasions sang it in Bhagavan's presence, accompanying myself on the veena. There was a celebration in the Ashram, a few days after I sang the "baby song" in the hall; it might have been Bhagavan's Jayanti, I cannot recall exactly. The big pandal put up for the occasion was full. People mostly with eyes closed in meditation were sitting in silent rows and there was a low bamboo fence around Bhagavan. Mr. Osborne's two year old baby son, Adam, somehow crept into the enclosure and toddled towards Bhagavan who gave him his usual smile of welcome. After a while, the child returned to the fence and, not knowing how to cross it, stood in bewilderment. Uncle Rajagopala had a vivid thought, as he told us later: "Saroja has sung the *Thiruppugazh* in Bhagavan's presence. If she comes and picks up Adam, a

son will be born to her within a year." I was sitting at the farthest end of the long hall. Seeing the child struggling to get out, I rose automatically, and crossing the length of the hall, reached the fence. Bending over, I picked up Adam and put him down near his mummy, after petting the chubby little one. On reaching home, Chittappa (uncle) told us about his thought in Bhagavan's presence and declared like an oracle, "I bet a son will be born to her within a year!" And so it came to pass.

When I was in the advanced stage of pregnancy, with Bhagavan's guidance, uncle Rajagopala took me and mother to Vellore. Initially we stayed at a place which was far from the town. Uncle Rajagopala went hunting for a place near the hospital. While he was walking along, he saw a cart being loaded with household articles in front of a house. Straightaway he entered and made enquiries. A portion of the house had just been vacated and the householder agreed to rent it. Uncle settled us there and returned to Tiruvannamalai to narrate the details to Bhagavan. Bhagavan listened to everything and said with an innocent air "Number one in Kasi Viswanathar

## The 63 Naayanar Saints

In the early years, not long after hearing about Arunachala, young Bhagavan chanced upon the first religious book he would ever read, the poet-saint Sekkizhar's *Periapuranam*, a collection of life stories of the 63 Tamil Saints. A copy had been given to his uncle by a swami. Discovering and perusing its pages, the young boy was transported, learning for the first time that the 63 saints were not merely images in the temple but were real life devotees who gave their entire lives to praising Mahadev. Young Venkataraman was filled with wonder and eventually found himself at Meenakshi Temple, shedding tears of devotion before the images of the 63 saints: "I would feel the waves of emotion overcome me..... I would stand before Isvara, the Controller of the universe and the destinies of all, the Omniscient and Omnipotent, and occasionally pray for the descent of his grace upon me so that my devotion would increase and become perpetual like that of the 63 saints..."

Monday, 25th July was the Aradhana Day for Murthi Naayanar of Madurai, the faithful devotee of Lord Siva who stood against the religious persecution of a corrupt king, eventually bringing about his downfall.

The 28th July was Aradhana Day for Kutruva Naayanar of Tirukkalandhai. Lord Siva came in his sleep and conferred on him his gracious feet. Kutruva was crowned king and ruled justly all his days. For more details, see the *Periapuranam*.



Illustration: Kutruva Naayanar; by courtesy of Ramalingar Pani Mandram





## Maharshi's Gospel

### Aham and Aham-Vritti

D: How can any enquiry initiated by the ego reveal its own unreality?

M: The ego's phenomenal existence is transcended when you dive into the Source wherefrom arises the aham-vritti.

D: But is not the aham-vritti only one of the three forms in which the ego manifests itself? Yoga Vasishtha and other ancient texts describe the ego as having a threefold form.

M: It is so. The ego is described as having three bodies, the gross, the subtle and the causal, but that is only for the purposes of analytical exposition. If the method of enquiry were to depend on the ego's form, you may take it that any enquiry would become altogether impossible, because the forms the ego may assume are legion. Therefore, for purposes of jnana vichara, you have to proceed on the basis that the ego has but one form, namely that of aham-vritti.

Koil street? Looking through the window of the front room, you can see straight ahead up to the *garbhagriha* of the Viswanathar Temple across the road. The verandah is rather high. But there would be a bad stink from the gutter nearby." The people in the hall looked at each other with a wild surprise. Bhagavan had never been to Vellore but he was describing the place. They were excited thinking that Bhagavan had inadvertently admitted his clairvoyance. After a pause, Bhagavan said with a smile, "Nayana stayed in that house for quite some time. Mahadevan was born there. In his letters to me he would always describe everything in detail." Everybody laughed. Would Bhagavan, who had always been strictly against any display of siddhis, ever admit to having performed them? He would always point out a rationale behind every miracle that took place and make it seem like an ordinary occurrence.

I was well into the third day of dry labour without making much progress despite repeated alternate administrations of pituitrin and morphia, which left me in a comatose condition. The third night the doctors decided to do a Caesarean section – often fatal in the

pre-penicillin days. They feared that the baby could not be taken out in one piece, and any further delay would endanger the mother's life also. My mother and others were in great distress on hearing this and sent a telegram of appeal to Bhagavan, our sole refuge. Bhagavan saw the telegram at one-thirty past midnight and exclaimed, "Is it our Saroja?" When I heard this later, I could hardly believe that Bhagavan had said that, though I felt very happy and proud. Bhagavan had referred to me as, "our Saroja"! He has accepted me! What tapas have I ever done to merit this? What sacrifice have I ever made or meritorious deed performed to earn this supreme accolade? Bhagavan read the telegram in Tiruvannamalai and instantly in Vellore my baby son, Ramana Kumar, was born by a normal easy delivery. The doctors were confounded (naturally!) that after three whole days of dry labour, after the instruments had been sterilized and the surgeon donned the gloves preparatory to doing a Caesarean, a normal delivery should occur without recourse to even the forceps! Could there be the least doubt as to who was behind the whole happening? —





## Coming to Bhagavan through the Cow Lakshmi

Dr. Narayana Reddy, Veterinarian

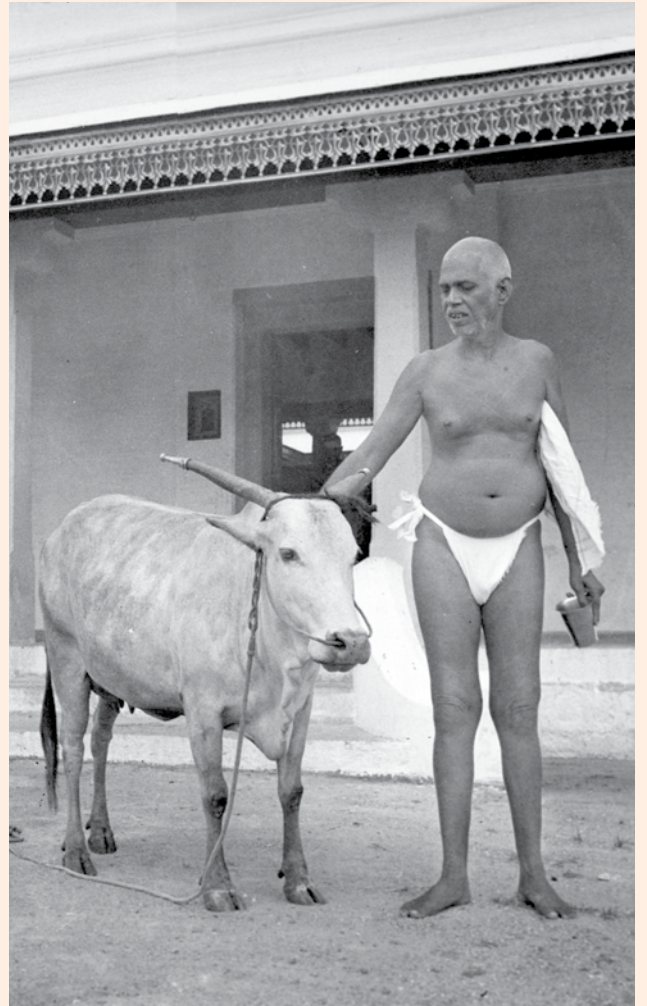
—June 2011



Reddivari Narayana Reddy's contact with the Ashram began when Cow Lakshmi fell sick in the year 1948 and his teacher, Prof. Anathanarayana Rao, advised Chinnaswami to invite his former student to treat her. At the time Dr. Reddy was the Government Touring Veterinary Assistant Surgeon working in the veterinary hospital at Tiruvannamalai. He came to see Lakshmi several times and determined that she was suffering from indigestion. Despite his treatment, however, she eventually succumbed, much to the dismay of devotees. Dr. Reddy says Lakshmi's digestive condition may have been caused in part, or at least complicated by, devotee's indiscriminate, though nevertheless well-intended, feeding of Lakshmi with all sorts of delicacies.

Bhagavan acknowledged Dr. Reddy's efforts and it seems, one day enquired of Chinnaswami whether the doctor had been paid for his visits. Though Chinnaswami had offered payment for his services, the veterinarian had refused to accept it. When Dr. Reddy met Bhagavan in the old hall, declining once again to accept any form of payment, Bhagavan graciously instructed the attendant to gift him copies of all the Ashram publications in English and Telugu.

Following his treatment of Cow Lakshmi, Dr. Reddy visited the Ashram whenever he was free in the mornings or evenings often coinciding with Vedaparayana. He also made a point to do *giri pradakshina* whenever possible. He says it was unnecessary to talk to Bhagavan; it was enough





simply to bask in Bhagavan's presence. The slips of papers containing devotees' questions, he says, were all sufficiently answered by Bhagavan's deep penetrating silence.

Born in 1908 Dr. Reddy ultimately came to Bhagavan through Cow Lakshmi after a long series of bends and turns. He had been attracted to the Theosophical Society and participated in the Salt *Satyagraha* as part of the Civil Disobedience movement of Gandhiji. He then came into contact with Sri Ramakrishna Math, Visakapatnam, and was initiated into the order by Swami Yatiswaranandaji. By virtue of his position as the Veterinary Assistant Surgeon at Tiruvannamalai he was blessed to come in contact with the Ashram and finally to meet Bhagavan Sri Ramana which altered the course of his life forever. When Dr. Reddy retired from active service in 1965, he continued to make regular visits to the Ashram.

With his spiritual leanings since childhood, and as a gifted orator, Dr. Reddy became and remained an active speaker. To his credit he wrote and published

a book (in Telugu) on Bhagavan's teachings entitled, *Atmavicharamu: Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

Dr. Reddy is now 103 years old. Healthy and managing on his own, he lives with his son in their native Tanapalli, near Tirupati. —



## Online Books: Update on Expanded Service

<http://www.sriramanamaharshi.org/bookstallsales>



Books in Tamil, Telegu, Malayalam, Kannada, Gujarati and Hindi may now be purchased online. (See above link for titles). Subscriptions for *The Mountain Path* can also now be made online. The website accepts payment through Indian credit card or net banking card. The payment is processed by *CCavenue gateway*. Delivery is done by courier.

For readers residing outside India, books (in English only), audio, video and photos of Bhagavan may be purchased from <http://www.arunachala.org/bookstore>. Payment is made through *Pay Pal* and delivered through the US Postal Service.

It is possible for those residing outside India to send books to their friends in India by using International credit cards and visiting [www.sriramanamaharshi.org/bookstallsales](http://www.sriramanamaharshi.org/bookstallsales). (The only restriction is that the shipping address must be in India while the billing address can be anywhere.)





## Report's from Sri Ramanasramam

### Ashram Peahens and their Chicks

From May to August peahens start laying their eggs discreetly behind infrequented bushes, haystacks etc. They sit over them for about three weeks. We start giving protection from that stage onwards, cordoning the area with thorn bushes and alerting inmates and workers to see that no harm comes to peahen or her eggs. Once the eggs are hatched, we gently coax the mother and her brood into specially built cages. After the first few days, the mother peahen and the chicks are taken out for regular 'grazing' while grams and water are kept in the cage for nourishment. Within 5 months time the chicks grow enough to look after themselves. It is gratifying to see the mother peacock warily leading her young chicks round the Ashram she is familiar with! We are happy that the peacocks are flourishing again. Bhagavan would not want it any other way!



### Cow Lakshmi Samadhi Day

On 18th June, 1948 at 10.30 am, the veterinarian came to give an injection but Lakshmi remained unaffected as though the body was no longer hers. There was no suffering and her sight was clear and calm. An hour later, she took her last breaths, attaining the holy feet of Sri Ramana forever. At Lakshmi's funerary rites, Bhagavan was visibly affected as he tossed a last handful of vibhuti over the body as it was being lowered into the burial pit near the Dining Hall.

On the 12th July 2011 devotees gathered to sing hymns in honour of Bhagavan's favourite devotee. For photos and coverage, go to [http://www.sriramanamaharshi.org/cow\\_lakshmi2011.html](http://www.sriramanamaharshi.org/cow_lakshmi2011.html)

### Khanna/'Nayana' Samadhi Day

On Saturday the 23rd of July, around 10 am devotees gathered at the decorated samadhi of Sri H.C. Khanna. *Aksharamanamalai* was chanted, followed by arati and prasadam.

Two days later on the 25th, the Anniversary Day of Sri Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni (Nayana) was observed in the New Hall. Devotees chanted Ganapati Muni's Sat Darshanam, Sri Ramana Gita and Soundaryamba Maha Nirvana Shatkam, which includes two verses celebrating the consecration of the Mother's Shrine by Bhagavan's own hands.

