

Saranagathi



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In this Issue

Dear Sri Bhagavan Devotees,

Sivaratri was observed at Sri Ramanasramam on 12th February 2010.

The Glory of Sri Arunachala (Sri Arunachala Mahatmyam)

Nandi said: Know that the day on which (Siva) assumed for the first time the form of a great and wonderful linga by the name Arunachala, is athirai in the (Tamil month of) Margazhi. And the day on which the Devas led by Vishnu praised and worshipped Siva, who appeared in the midst of that splendour (or: appeared as that splendour), is Sivaratri in the month of Masi.

In this issue of Saranagathi, Swami Satyananda who served Sri Bhagavan in His final years recollects some memories of serving the Master. This is followed by Dilip Kumar Roy's account of 'How I came to the

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Maharshi' and finally a few reports about recent happenings at Sri Ramanasramam.

Yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Editorial Team.

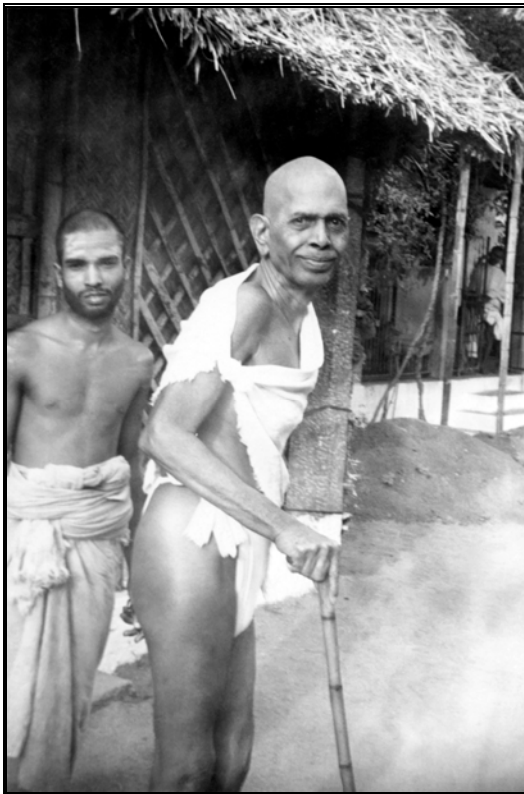
The Essence of Instruction

*Of the term, 'I' the permanent import
Is That. For even in deep sleep
Where we have no sense of 'I'
We do not cease to be.*

— Upadesa Saram by Sri Bhagavan (Verse 21)

Swami Satyananda

Swami Satyananda was one of the attendants of Sri Bhagavan during the last few years of His physical existence. He was with Sri Bhagavan at the time of His Mahanirvana. The following article has been extracted from the January 1973 issue of The Mountain Path. It is a first person account of how the Swami was drawn to the Maharshi and his recollections of serving Sri Bhagavan.



I was born in 1916 in a village named Mavelikara in South Kerala. My mother who was of a pious disposition used to serve sadhus and was happy to help them in various ways. Her piety made me turn to the spiritual path when I was only eighteen but home I left later. Meanwhile I ran a small school for children on the verandah of our house.

After four years I went on a pilgrimage to Rameswaram in the company of some sadhus. In the course of my pilgrimage I halted at an abode of sadhus called Pandikkan Mazhi Matham situated between Madurai and Manamadurai. This matham was managed by one Narayanaswami who had stayed at Sri Ramanasramam for some time. He was the first person who spoke to me about Sri

Bhagavan and His greatness. He wrote out the full address of Sri Ramanasramam on a piece of paper and gave it to me.

From Rameswaram I came directly to Tiruvannamalai. This was in 1938. I was overcome with joy when I saw Arunachala. After spending a few days at the Virupaksha Cave I came down one day to Sri Ramanasramam in the company of a sadhu. When we arrived Sri Bhagavan had just returned from His afternoon walk and was sitting in the hall alone. He looked at us and smiled. I can never forget that smile. After sitting in His presence for some time I returned to the cave. Thereafter I used to visit the Ashram daily and have darshan of Sri Bhagavan. I changed my abode from the Virupaksha Cave to the Mango tree Cave, Skandaramam, etc., from time to time and spent seven years in this manner, begging my food in the town.

I then obtained, by Sri Bhagavan's Grace, the good fortune of serving Him as His personal attendant from 1946 till His final Nirvana on 14th April 1950. One day Sri Bhagavan described to me how one Sadguru Swami from Kerala, under the influence of some intoxicating drug, kept on embracing Him tightly saying, "You are a good boy. It is a pleasure to see you." Sri Bhagavan acted the part of the sadhu in His inimitable way while narrating the incident. I was alone with Him at the time and still remember the scene with joy!

I was present when the tumour on Sri Bhagavan's arm was operated upon in 1949. Although I cannot

stand the sight of blood I managed somehow to control myself. On the evening of the 14th of April 1950 we were massaging Sri Bhagavan's body. At about 5 o'clock He asked us to help Him sit up. Precisely at that moment devotees started singing Arunachala Siva—Arunachala Siva. When Sri Bhagavan heard this His face lit up with radiant joy. Tears began to flow from His eyes and continued to flow for a long time. I was wiping them from time to time. I was also giving Him spoonfuls of water boiled with ginger. The doctor wanted to administer artificial respiration but Sri Bhagavan waved it away. He also wanted to give some fruit juice so I begged Sri Bhagavan to agree to this and when He graciously consented the doctor gave it to Him. Sri Bhagavan's breathing became gradually

slower and slower and exactly at 8.47 p.m. subsided quietly. At that very moment, as is well known, devotees who were outside saw a big, bright meteor in the sky.

I observed silence from 1950 to 1963. I have all these years been feeding the peacocks, monkeys and squirrels, a job that was always pleasing to Sri Bhagavan. I also look after the room in which Sri Bhagavan attained Nirvana. I wish to end my life doing this service.

*Sri Swami Satyananda
was absorbed in Arunachala on the evening of Monday,
27th November 1989.*

Maharshi's Gospel: The Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi

Mind Control

Devotee: How can I control the mind?

Maharshi: There is no mind to control if the Self is realized. The Self shines forth when the mind vanishes. In the realized man the mind may be active or inactive, the Self alone exists. For, the mind, body and world are not separate from the Self; and they cannot remain apart from the Self. Can they be other than the Self? When aware of the Self why should one worry about these shadows? How do they affect the Self?

Devotee: If the mind is merely a shadow how then is one to know the Self?

Maharshi: The Self is the heart, self-luminous. Illumination arises from the heart and reaches the brain, which is the seat of the mind. The world is seen with the mind; so you see the world by the reflected light of the Self. The world is perceived by an act of the mind. When the mind is illumined it is aware of the world; when it is not so illumined, it is not aware of the world.

If the mind is turned in, towards the source of illumination, objective knowledge ceases, and the Self alone shines as the heart.

How I came to the Maharshi

By Dilip Kumar Roy (*Published in The Mountain Path, October 1964*)

Dilip Kumar Roy was known throughout India as a famous singer, apart from which he himself composed songs and wrote poems, especially devotional songs and poems to Sri Krishna. For many years he was an inmate of Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry. Later he was the head of the Hari Krishna Mandir at Poona where, aided by his foremost disciple, Indira Devi, he acted as guru to the many Krishna bhaktas who came. This account of his visit to the Maharshi was taken on his own invitation, from his book 'The Flute Calls Still'.

It happened in 1945, I think. I was still living as an inmate of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, even though I had come to feel a growing sense of isolation and begun to surmise that I was a misfit there. My sadness and sense of dereliction only deepened with time till what little peace I had left me completely and I felt all but stranded. But I need not go into the why and wherefore of it all; I would plunge straight into what keeps me company as one of the most unforgettable experiences I have ever had. It does, as it was a landmark in my life.

After having been for weeks in the grip of a deep gloom, I.....wrote straight to Sri Aurobindo. He wrote back at once giving me the needed permission, which I deeply appreciated.

I took the train to Tiruvannamalai where Ramana Maharshi lived. But as the train rolled on I felt a deep and growing malaise.....How could I win the needed peace at the feet of one who was not my Guru when I could not attain it at the feet of my revered Guru, Sri Aurobindo, whose wisdom and greatness my heart had never once questioned.

Well, I alighted at the station in a mixed frame of mind...But it was too late then, for I was already at the gates of Ramanashram. How could I return now, after having crossed the Rubicon? Besides, I was driven by an irresistible urge to meet in the flesh the great Yogi who—unlike my own preceptor. Sri Aurobindo—was available to all at all hours. And, to crown all, I wanted to test the Maharshi for myself and see whether he, with his magic compassion,

could lift me out of the deep slough I had landed in.

But he did, and against my worst prognostications at that, so that I could not possibly explain it away as a figment of autosuggestion. I mean—if there were any autosuggestion here it could only be against and not in favour of my receiving the goods. But, as the Lord's ways are not ours, I won an experience I could never even have dreamed of. So listen with bated breath.

I can still recapture the thrill of the apocalyptic experience that came to me to charm away as it were the obstinate gloom which had settled on my chest like an incubus. But, alas, words seem so utterly pale and banal the moment you want to describe an authentic spiritual experience which is vivid, throbbing and intense. Still I must try.

I entered a trifle diffidently a big, bare hall where the Maharshi reclined morning and evening among his devotees and the visitors who happened to call. Accessible to all, the great saint sat on a divan looking straight in front at nothing at all. I was told he lived thus all the time, in sahaja samadhi, that is a constant super conscious state. I was indeed fascinated by what I saw, but I will not even attempt to portray with words how overwhelmed I was (and why) by what met my eyes. For what is it after all that I saw? Just a thin, half-naked man sitting silently, gazing with glazed eyes at the window. Yet there was something in him that spoke to me—an indefinable beauty of poise and a plenitude that cannot be limmed with words.

I wrote afterwards a poem on him that may give a better idea, but I must not get ahead of my story.

I touched his feet and then, without a word, sat down near him on the floor and meditated, my heart aheave with a strange exaltation which deepened by and by into an ineffable peace which beggars description. My month-old gloom and misgivings, doubts and questionings, melted away like mist before sunrise, till I felt I was being cradled on the crest of a flawless peace in a vast ocean of felicity and light. I have to use superlatives here as I am trying to describe as best I can my experience of an ineffable bliss and peace, which lasted for hours and

hours. I can well remember how deep was the gratefulness I felt towards the Maharshi on that sleepless and restful night as I reclined, bathed in peace, in an easy chair under the stars at which I gazed and gazed in an ecstasy of tears. And I recalled a pregnant saying of his: "Just be. All is in you. Only a veil stands between. You have only to rend the veil and then, well, just be."

I had found this favourite remark of his rather cryptic heretofore. But in that moment I understood for the first time and wrote a poem in homage to the Maharshi.

Reports from Sri Ramanasramam



Sri Ramana Puranam Chanting

Sri Ramana Puranam (the first portion of Sannidhi Murai) was jointly composed by Sri Muruganar and Sri Bhagavan. It was dedicated in the 1930s on Thai Krithigai Day. Devotees chant it at the Ashram every year on the Thai Krithigai day. This year too, devotees chanted Sri Ramana Puranam in the New Hall on Monday the 25th January 2010 from 8.am. to 11 a.m. and again from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Sri Niranjanananda Swami Aradhana

Sri Niranjanananda Swami's Aradhana was observed on 29th January 2010 at his Samadhi shrine. The Sivalinga on his samadhi was bathed with milk, curd etc., and decorated with garlands. During the Abhishekam devotees present sang songs composed on Chinnaswamy by old devotees and sung every year. After archana, elaborate arati was performed. A recently composed song was sung highlighting his personal qualities and devotion to Sri Bhagavan.



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