

Saranagati

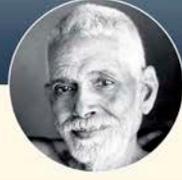


SARANAGATI
SRI RAMANASRAMAM

AUGUST 2016
VOL. 10, NO.8



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ISSUE

Dear Devotees,

On 23rd July H.C. Khanna's day was observed and on the 25th that of Kavya Kantha Ganapathi Muni. The current issue hears the testimony of an anonymous devotee. *Favourite Stories of Bhagavan* looks at the story of the great Dakshinamurthi, the teacher of the four sons of Brahman through silence.

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

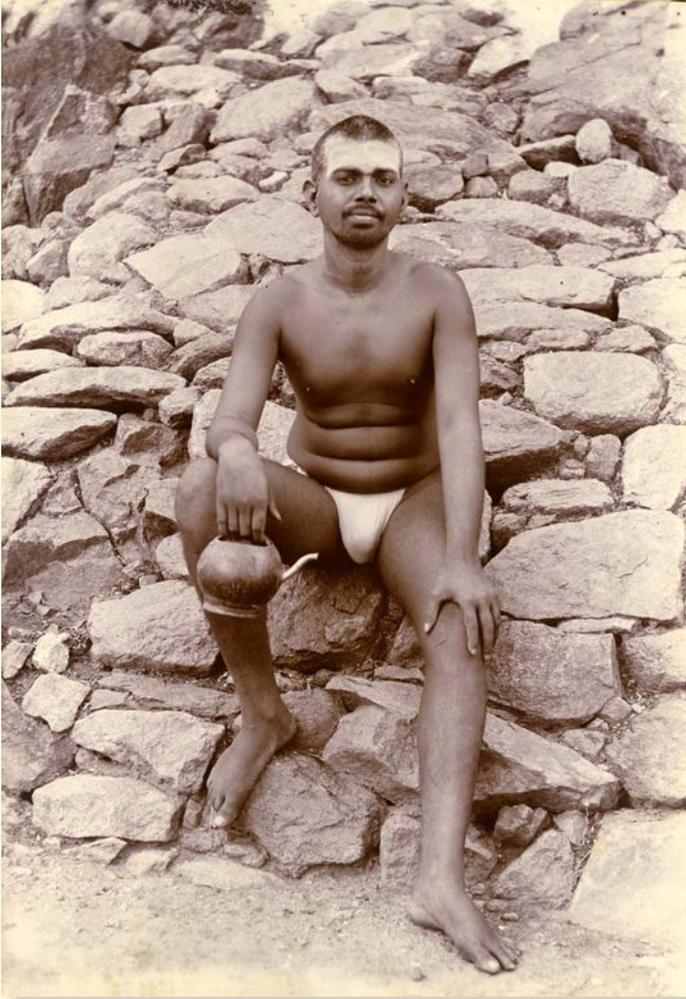
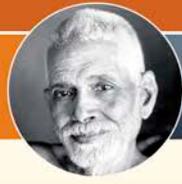
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Calendar of Upcoming Events

1st August (Mon) Purnarvasu Day
7th August (Sun) Kunju Swami Day
17th August (Weds) Full Moon
29th August (Mon) Purnarvasu Day
1st September (Thurs) Advent and Muruganar Day
16th September (Fri) Full Moon
25th September (Sun) Purnarvasu Day

1st October (Sat) Navaratri Festival Commences
10th October (Mon) Saraswati Puja
11th October (Tues) Vijayadasami Day
15th October (Sat) Full Moon
22nd October (Sat) Purnarvasu Day
29th October (Sat) Deepavali
14th November (Mon) Full Moon





Coming to Bhagavan: Anonymous

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi personifies, to many devotees, the Universal Father. Instances are many when devotees felt that they were looking at their own father when they saw Bhagavan. I vividly remember a friend of our family who had accompanied us to Ramanasramam in 1947, exclaim in delight, as soon as he saw Bhagavan, “Here is my father, just as he looked in his later life!”

Far back in 1933 when my own father was drawn to Bhagavan Ramana for the first time, he actually saw ‘his father’, with the same physical traits. And as recently as 1966, after the passing of my father, I cannot but be

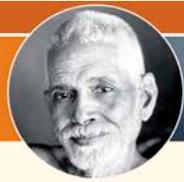
touched by the striking resemblance between his and Bhagavan’s appearance, although such an impression was not altogether new to me. Indeed, Bhagavan Ramana is the embodiment of “Fatherhood”, at once universal and transcendental.

Experiences with Bhagavan and his grace used to be recounted very often by my father together with other incidents in his life, rich with spiritual lessons. A boy of about twelve then, I used to listen avidly and as a result, these narrations took a deep root in me, ripening into an incessant desire to have Bhagavan’s darshan, to touch him and to be always near him.

During my daily prayers, my mind used to fix itself on the frontispiece photograph of Bhagavan Ramana, appearing in his books and fervently ask for his darshan. As time rolled by, the yearning intensified but no call came. Once or twice I ventured to ask my father about it, but he used to simply brush it aside with the remark, “If and when Bhagavan calls you, you will go.”

Then one day the first experience came. I think it was in 1945. One night, during deep sleep, I dreamt that I was sitting in the corner of a room, waiting for somebody. I then saw Bhagavan Ramana slowly enter the room and rushed to him and held him around the waist with both my hands, crying and supplicating, but Bhagavan simply passed on with apparent unconcern. I woke up and thought of it for a long time. It seemed so disappointing that there was no response from him. However, I felt confident since at last I had seen him and touched him, which proved that he had not forsaken me. Now I began to think of him more and more. Yet again, for a long time nothing happened. Once more I was becoming desperate and losing hope. Then one dark night, he appeared and initiated me out of his boundless love. This time it was more of a vision than a dream. I was half awake and felt myself rising from bed and walking into the courtyard of our house. Total silence enveloped the entire surroundings. The blanket of darkness was accentuated by the twinkling stars above. I found myself standing still on a mound of sand, facing westward, looking, looking and looking. Slowly out of the darkness emerged the outline of a Hill, shaped exactly like Holy Arunachala. Emerging, it steadied itself into a discernible silhouette by remaining darker than the dark background. After a





few minutes, a small flame leapt out of the apex of the Hill. In the beginning, it was just like an eye in vertical position but very swiftly it grew and grew until it became a pillar of light, with extraordinary brightness, having the hilltop as its base and origin. Its height touched the very heavens. Its splendour was beyond description. It was just the shape of the flame of a lamp when it burns steadily golden-coloured, shining as if a thousand suns had arisen together. Its golden rays fell on my body. I was riveted to the spot and found that I could move neither hand nor foot. I stood there as one totally hypnotised, oblivious of anything else but the burning golden flame. My mind was in raptures, throbbing with an ecstatic joy, which seemed to burst out of my body. How long I stood like this I cannot say, for time seemed to stop altogether. Then I became conscious of the scene, and felt that I was not alone in that spot. With an effort, I turned my face to the right and found Bhagavan Ramana was standing there, looking at me. On his lips played the most bewitching smile, while his eyes poured out boundless compassion and love. When I saw him, I forgot the jyothi and everything else and tried to fall at his feet. But he gently stopped me by placing his divine hand, upon my head. Joy of joys! My whole being, inner and outer, thrilled to that divine touch from the hand of one who is no other than God. Waves of bliss and tranquillity took possession of my whole being. He raised his forefinger and pointed at the Golden Flame and asked me in a voice resembling the sound of silver bells, “Child, do you understand what the jyothi is? This is the real Karthigai Deepam.” Suddenly I was wide awake, ushered by consciousness into the care and worry ridden world. Subsequent visions have followed, all of them showing Bhagavan as the personification of supreme love, but none could ever

match the splendour of this first vision and initiation. I no longer felt dissatisfied at not being able to go to the Ashram in a physical sense, though I must confess, occasionally the desire did arise.

In 1947, I was proceeding to Madras from Coimbatore. The train was speeding along some hills in the night when a prayer to be allowed to visit the Ashram took shape in me. As I was accompanying my father, who did not entertain ideas from children, I did not talk of the prayer to anyone. A few days later, when we were to return to Coimbatore, my father suddenly asked me how I would like to go to Ramanasramam and have darshan of Bhagavan. I am not ashamed to record here that I broke into tears on hearing this, as this was a prayer so graciously granted by Bhagavan. The next day, we were in our home—Sri Ramanasramam. It was a Friday and a New Moon day. As I entered the divine presence of Bhagavan Ramana, I felt that I was submerging in a sea, only this was a sea of bliss and tranquillity. We were there the whole of the forenoon and except for a swift, piercing look that Bhagavan blessed me with, nothing happened. Nothing mattered any more. When I heard later that Bhagavan had shed his mortal frame, a few tear drops rolled down my cheeks, but my father sternly said, “You are a fool. Where can Bhagavan go?”

Years have rolled by; still the torch burns on, gathering more and more brightness. It is the torch that he, out of His boundless grace, lit in my heart. Now my children, in their turn, ask me: “Father, when will Bhagavan Thatha come to us?” I feel too full to reply to them, yet sometimes say, “All in good time, children. Learn to labour and to wait.”

When the messenger comes, carrying the authority of inexorable time may my heart surrender to him and may my lips whisper, “Om Namō Bhagavate Ramanaya. —

Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi: Self-Realisation

D.: What is the object of Self-Realisation?

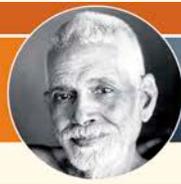
M.: Self-Realisation is the final goal and it is the end in itself.

D.: I mean, what is the use of Self-Realisation?

M.: Why should you seek Self-Realisation? Why do you not rest content with your present state? It is evident that you are discontented with the present state. The discontent is at an end if you realise the Self.

— Talks §487





Favourite Stories of Bhagavan: Teaching through Silence

[While translating into Tamil the invocation to Sri Dakshinamurthi Stotra, Sri Bhagavan also covered the origin and purpose for which the Lord manifested Himself in that form. I wrote a Telugu translation of the preface recently. Sri Bhagavan looked at it and said with a smile, "Look, I wrote the story just to cover the invocation. But the actual story is more intriguing". With that he started narrating the background. (Suri Nagamma, Letters from Sri Ramanasramam, 7th February, 1947)]

Brahma, the first of the Trimurtis, is the Creator. Concentrating on creating the universe and filling it with life, He materialised His own representatives, Vasishtha, Narada, Ribhuvu and Daksha. Brahma wanted them to be house-holders and procreate. Daksha and Vasishtha respected their father's wish and occupied

unique places by His grace. Narada, Ribhuvu and a few others roamed about as ascetics not interested in the act of creation. Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujata also belonged to the same category. They too were the progeny of Brahma born out of His will. From their early childhood, they were without desire and their only concern was to be free from samsara, the cycle of birth and death. How to be rid of all doubts and anxiety and attain peace? Contemplating this problem they reached Nandana vana in their wanderings.

Several *Siddhas*, *Sadhya*s, *Kinneras*, *Kimpurushas*, *Gandhrvas*, *Vidyadharas* and sages fortified with their penance have all gathered in the assembly of the Gods and were discussing issues of a confidential nature. Looking at the four boys shining with dazzling light, innocence personified, all the assembled went towards them and extended a hearty welcome. The sons of Brahma sought the path for escaping samsara from the knowledgeable ones of the assembly. During the interaction, the youngsters perceived that the people there have been indulging in only discussions pertaining to the world and they have no knowledge of Brahman.

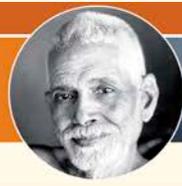
When they were thus thirsting for a guide, the Sage Narada, possessor of faith, patience, worldly wisdom, humour and the ability to succeed in all worldly problems, approached them. The four offered their respects and posed their problem.

Narada was already the cause of Daksha's curse for having induced the progeny of Brahma towards salvation. But he was least affected by it. People engaged in tasks of virtue, endured difficulties and pitfalls. They will pursue their goals undeterred. He took the youngsters to Satyaloka saying, "Come we will go to Brahma Himself. Who else can impart Brahma Jnana better than He?"

The scene there was a feast to their eyes. The four-headed grand sire sat cross-legged in the lotus posture. The Goddess of Learning, Mother Saraswati, seated on the white lotus in shining attire, was singing in praise of Parameswara. Opposite Her, Virinchi was keeping time, both chanting the name of the Divine: *Nama sanḱirtanam yasya sarva papa pranasanam. Pranamo dukḱha samanah.*

Seeing the Creator, the repository of all spiritual knowledge, and Saraswati together thus, the youngsters





were disappointed, feeling that a person in the company of a woman was in no position to teach them. They thus took leave of the place. Though they were qualified to acquire the knowledge of Brahman, they were not yet mature enough to make the choice of a preceptor.

They proceeded directly to *vaikuntha*, the abode of Lord Vishnu. As the poet sings, *ala vaikunthapurammulo, aa moola soudhammu lo*, the Lord will be in the inner courts within bejewelled compounds and will not be easily accessible. To gain His access, one must cross several gates and doorkeepers. Narada, with his dash and initiative, went inside and returned in no time. “Well! At least Brahma and Saraswati were seated at a distance from each other. Here the Lord is lying on a luxurious bedstead and the Goddess is pressing His feet in all delicacy. He appears as one in search of bodily comforts. Moreover, the grandeur of these inner apartments does not betoken an aspirant of spiritual truth. What knowledge can the one craving an indolent life and ensnared in samsara ever truly have? Let us take the help of the three-eyed one!” said Narada and made them leave the place in a hurry.

The arduous journey led them over ice-clad mountains and finally to the great Kailasa. They were stunned by what they saw. Brahma was keeping time, Vishnu was playing the drums and the Gods were playing musical instruments. In the midst of them, the first couple of the universe, Siva and Sivani, appeared to be integral with each other. The followers of the Kailasavasa were merrily jumping around Sanaka. The rest were disappointed and left the place in anguish, “How ridiculous. He seems incapable of distancing himself from the company of women.”

The Lord, engaged in His celestial dance, observed their coming and going. He took pity on them for their erroneous belief that mere company of women would destroy jnana. He set about the task of uplifting their minds. Leaving Parvati, He put on an attire that that would appeal to mental make-up of the young sages. He took on a form that was bewitching even to the most austere ascetics. He sat in the shadow of a large banyan tree in the form of a sixteen year-old youth, with His right foot resting on His left knee, dazzling with the

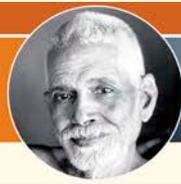


Dakshinamurthi Yantra

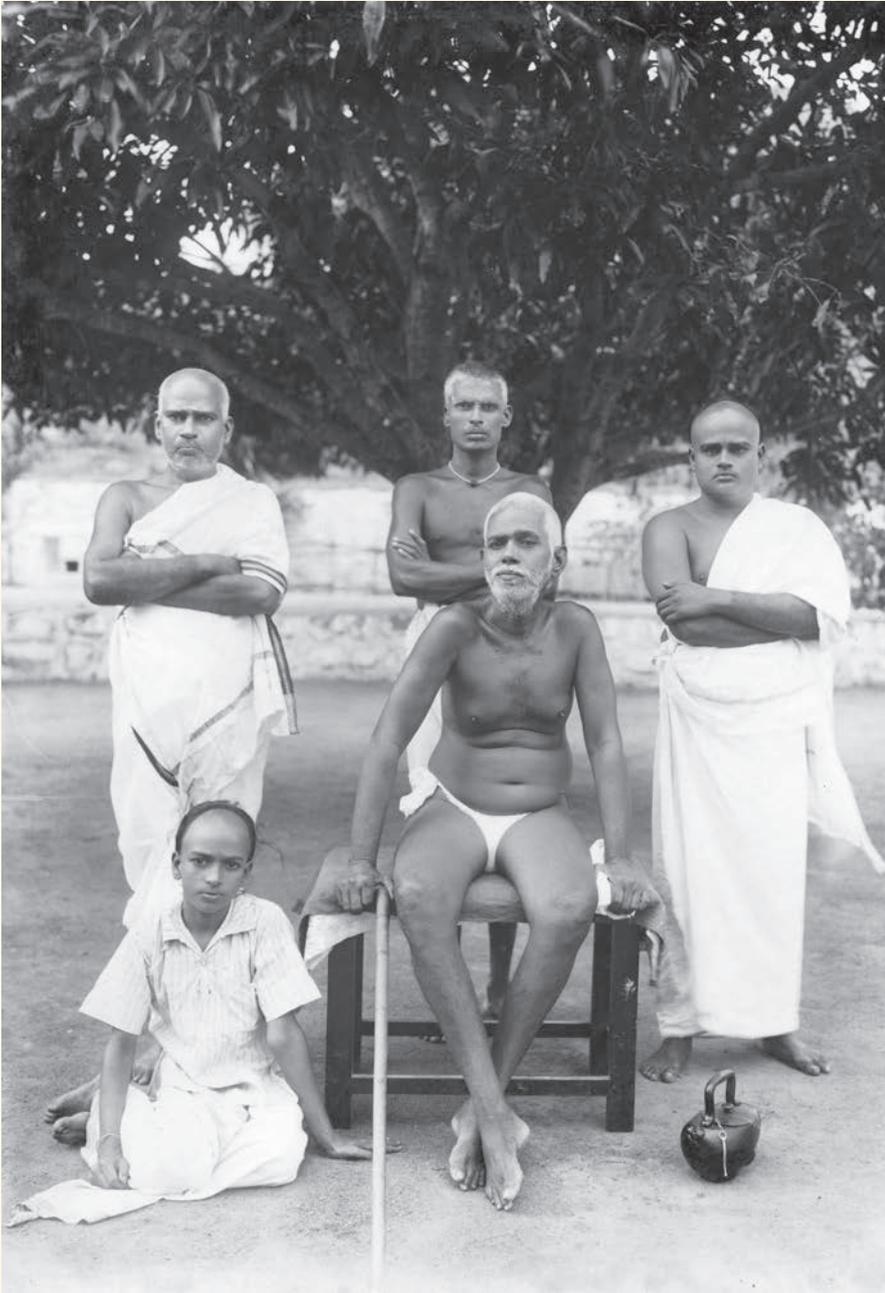
radiance of all the sixteen hues. He sat facing south in deep meditation, like a supreme ascetic, adopting the posture of benediction. The ambiance was filled with peace and bliss owing to His supreme greatness.

Sanaka and his associates were riveted to the spot where Dakshinamurthi sat as if drawn by a magnet. As they continued to gaze at Him their minds were filled with peace and feelings of well-being. They sat at His feet. Effortlessly they fell into a state of samadhi and before long, achieved Self-Realisation. They sought nothing, he taught nothing, but the result was astounding: The disciples acquired the knowledge of the Self. This was *nayana deeksha*, knowledge imparted by a glance. For the perfected ones, the very proximity would suffice. In that total silence, the mind was absorbed in the heart and they realised the truth. How strange that the teacher sitting under the banyan tree was a youth while His disciples were aged. But people who are born into true knowledge are young and those bereft of it, even if young, are akin to those subject to old age and death: *The youth, bliss in a solidified form, is seated in the posture of benediction explaining the Parabrahman through silence, surrounded by sages mature in years, who are established in the Self and are serving Him. I offer my salutations to Him, the Lord of the great teachers, dazzling in His own splendour and is content sporting within Himself.* —



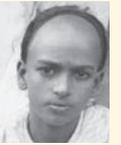


In the Frame: GRO 136



Archival Listing GRO 136 (ca. 1939): Bhagavan with Balasubramanian (sitting) and (standing, left to right) Tippirajapuram Krishnaswamy Iyer (Balasubramanian's father), Madhava Swami (attendant), and Koneriraiapuram Ramiah (son-in-law of Krishnaswamy Iyer).

K. Balasubramanian, later speaking of the circumstances in which this photo was taken, said, "It may have been the year 1939 or thereabouts. I was ten years old then and had a keen desire to be photographed with Sri Bhagavan. I approached Chinnaswamigal for the purpose. The Sarvadhikari said he would readily permit it and also arrange for a photographer to do the job. However, it was up to me to obtain permission from Sri Bhagavan. Accordingly, I waited near the steps at the rear of the ashram so as to meet Bhagavan on his return from his morning walk. When I made the request, Sri Bhagavan's response was warm in the extreme. He said, "By all means, you can take the photograph. You may do it on my return from my evening walk on the Hill." He also suggested the name of a particular photographer.



Tippirajapuram Krishnaswamy Iyer (Balasubramanian's father): was an old devotee who had been coming to Sri Bhagavan from the Virupaksha days. He had arranged at his own cost, for extensive renovations of Pali Tirtham, the tank beside the ashram.

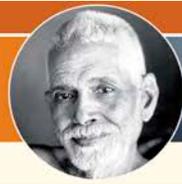


Later, he was also in-charge of the rituals during the Kumbhabhishekam ceremony for the Mother's Shrine in 1949.



Madhava Swami: Widely considered telepathic to Bhagavan's wishes, the attendant served from the late 1920's to early 1940's. It was suspected, and never denied by Bhagavan, that the white peacock was an incarnation of Madhavaswami, one factor being due to this peacock picking out all the books from Bhagavan's library which had been repaired by Madhavaswami, and other habits common to both. He was one of the few people who were allowed to massage Bhagavan's body. He eventually left the Ashram and died in Kumbakonam. His funeral arrangements were taken care of by Kunju Swami, under personal instructions from Bhagavan.





Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Guru Purnima 19 July 2016



Guru Purnima comes with excitement and anticipation, for it is the day when devotees rededicate their lives to Bhagavan's teaching, to remember that we are being called to follow Bhagavan, not merely to adore him. But of course, Guru Purnima is also the day to regard and reverence teachers and guides everywhere. This day, sannyasins begin *chaturmasya*, the annual four-month respite from itinerant life during the rainy months in which they practice solitude. Guru Purnima at Sri Ramanasramam was celebrated the 19th July with mahanyasa puja at Mother's Shrine and guru pada puja at Bhagavan's shrine. Sannyasins were presented with ochre robes. Devotees joined the thousands in circumambulating the Hill on this auspicious occasion. Food was served during dinner time to pilgrims doing parikrama.

Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Khanna Day 23 July 2016



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.

Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Ganapati Muni Day 25 July 2016

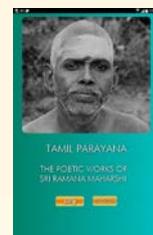


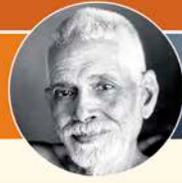
Two days later on the 25th, the Anniversary Day of Sri Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni (Nayana) was observed in the New Hall. Devotees chanted Ganapati Muni's Sat Darshanam and some chapters from Sri Ramana Gita.

"Ramana Tamil Parayana" - Android App



Get connected with Ramanasramam with this Free App (Ramana Tamil Parayana). This App combines Tamil parayana from Monday through Saturday with English and Tamil text, audio, downloadable Mp3 files, notifications and more. <https://goo.gl/PCfkQj>





Obituary: T.V. Venkataraman



Born on 13th July 1929 in Ananthapur District, Andhra Pradesh, Sri T. V. Venkataraman, or TW as he was affectionately called, was blessed to be associated with Bhagavan from his youth. When the family moved to T. Nagar, Chennai, the boy studied at the Hindu Theological High School, Sowcarpet, at Ramakrishna Mission Schools and at Loyola College, Chennai where, in 1949 he graduated first class in B.Sc. Physics. His father, Sri Venkatesan, owned and operated Liberty Press which did printing for the Ashram from 1942. Venkatesan sent his son to study printing and subsequently TWV joined his father's press which by then took the name 'Jupiter Press Pvt Ltd'. Over the years he assisted in printing Ashram books and souvenirs, one of which won second prize in an all-India competition sponsored by the Govt. of India. Following its inception in 1964, TWV assisted in the publication of the Mountain Path. A true friend of the Ashram, this devotee was known and loved for his graciousness, humility and faithful

service to the Ashram which he rendered right up until the end.

Having fractured his leg in a fall in early June, on the 12th June, 2016, TWV underwent surgery which by all accounts had been successful. But on Friday the 15th, a complication arose and he slipped into a coma where he lay peacefully for three hours until, at 6.30 pm, in Utharayana Punyakalam on Ekadhasi, just two days after his 87th birthday, he merged at the feet of Bhagavan. TWV is survived by his daughter Nirmala of Chennai and his son Gurumoorthy of Adelaide, Australia.

Obituary: Gomathi Ammal



Gomathi Ammal was the grand-daughter of Kizhapasalai Ramachandra Iyer who was the brother of Bhagavan's Mother, Azhagammal. Born in 1929, Gomathi Ammal was the only child of Erukkur Lakshmi Ammal (daughter of Ramachandra Iyer and sister of Nagalakshmi Ammal, mother of Ashram President, V.S. Ramanan). In 1935, when just six years old, Gomathi had the good fortune to have Bhagavan's darshan and has been a devotee ever since. Gomathi was blessed to spend her final years in Tiruvannamalai where she rendered service to the Ashram during Navaratri, Sri Vidya Homam and other functions. Gomathi was absorbed in Ramana on 29 June 2016. Devotees recall with affection her kind gentle disposition.

Tree Planting on Arunachala



More than 20 students from Mookambika Polytechnic, Dharmapuri came to the Ashram at the end of July to assist in planting more trees on the Hill. Heading up the project is Swami Brahmananda, caretaker of Skandasramam, who took advantage of recent light rains which made for ideal planting conditions. It is heartening that around 200 well-grown saplings of Banyan planted same time last year, are doing well.

