

# Saranagati



COVER  
INSERT

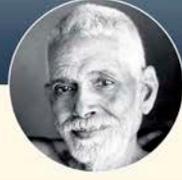
SRI RAMANASRAMAM  
JULY 2016



Photos this page from V. Karthik and Suresh Menon



## Saranagati



JULY 2016  
VOL. 10, NO. 7

IN THIS  
ISSUE

Dear Devotees,

The current issue includes this life story of Rajkumari Prabhavati Raje, the princess of Devas who came to Bhagavan in the early 1940s and Ramaswami Pillai who came in 1917 as a young student.

Cow Lakshmi Day fell on the 17th June this year and was celebrated with elaborate puja at her Shrine.

For videos, photos and further news of events, go to <http://www.sriramanamaharshi.org> or write to us at [saranagathi@sriramanamaharshi.org](mailto:saranagathi@sriramanamaharshi.org)

In Sri Bhagavan,  
The Editorial Team

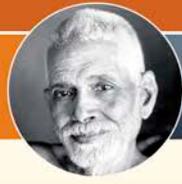
<i>In Focus: Rajkumari Prabhavati Raje</i>	3
<i>From The Periapuranam: Gananatha Naayanaar</i>	4
<i>Coming to Bhagavan: Ramaswami Pillai</i>	5
<i>Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi (§283): Satsang</i>	5
<i>Wordwise: Satsanga</i>	6
<i>Announcements: Ashram YouTube Channel</i>	7
<i>Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Cow Lakshmi Samadhi Day</i>	8

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

5th July (Tues) Purnarvasu Day  
19th July (Tues) Full Moon  
23rd July (Sat) H.C. Khanna Day  
25th July (Mon) Kavya Kanta Ganapati Muni Day  
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





In Focus:

## Rajkumari Prabhavati Raje

Rajkumari Prabhavati Raje, Princess of Devas, came to Bhagavan in the early 1940s as a young woman and eventually left her family to be in Bhagavan's presence. She had refused to get married in order to pursue spiritual goals and studied Bhagavan's teaching in depth. Bhagavan bestowed affectionate attention on her. In the mid-1940s her family prevailed upon her to form an alliance with a royal family in Kerala. When the time came to go to Kerala, Bhagavan insisted that since Kunjuswami was a Keralite, he should accompany her. Once in the midst of numerous family members in a visit that would last for several weeks, Kunjuswami made the decision to pass the time by going on pilgrimage. But when Bhagavan got word of it, he was not pleased. Munagala Venkataramiah wrote and requested him to stay with Prabhavati and bring her back to the Ashram at the conclusion of her visit. Later she came

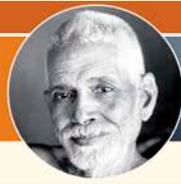
with her new husband and presented Bhagavan with two garlands, not knowing that it was forbidden to do so. When Bhagavan suggested that she offer them in the Mother's Shrine, she wept tears of sorrow, having failed to get Bhagavan to accept the garlands. After prostrating to Bhagavan, she took the garlands and began to make her way towards the Mother's Shrine. As she was leaving the hall, Kunjuswami stopped her and pointed to Bhagavan in the distance who could be seen carefully collecting the rose petals that had fallen from the garlands and placing them in his mouth. "See, how dear your offering is to Bhagavan."

Before her marriage, Prabhavati Raje had presented Sri Bhagavan with a set of bookends, requesting that they not be given for others' use but made use of by Bhagavan himself. Years later when she came to the Nirvana room in the last days of Bhagavan's earthly journey, upon entering Bhagavan motioned to the bookshelf. When she looked atop the bookshelf, she could see her book ends, still being used by Bhagavan and she wept in considering his infinite solicitude



Bhagavan next to the bookends presented by Prabhavati Raje

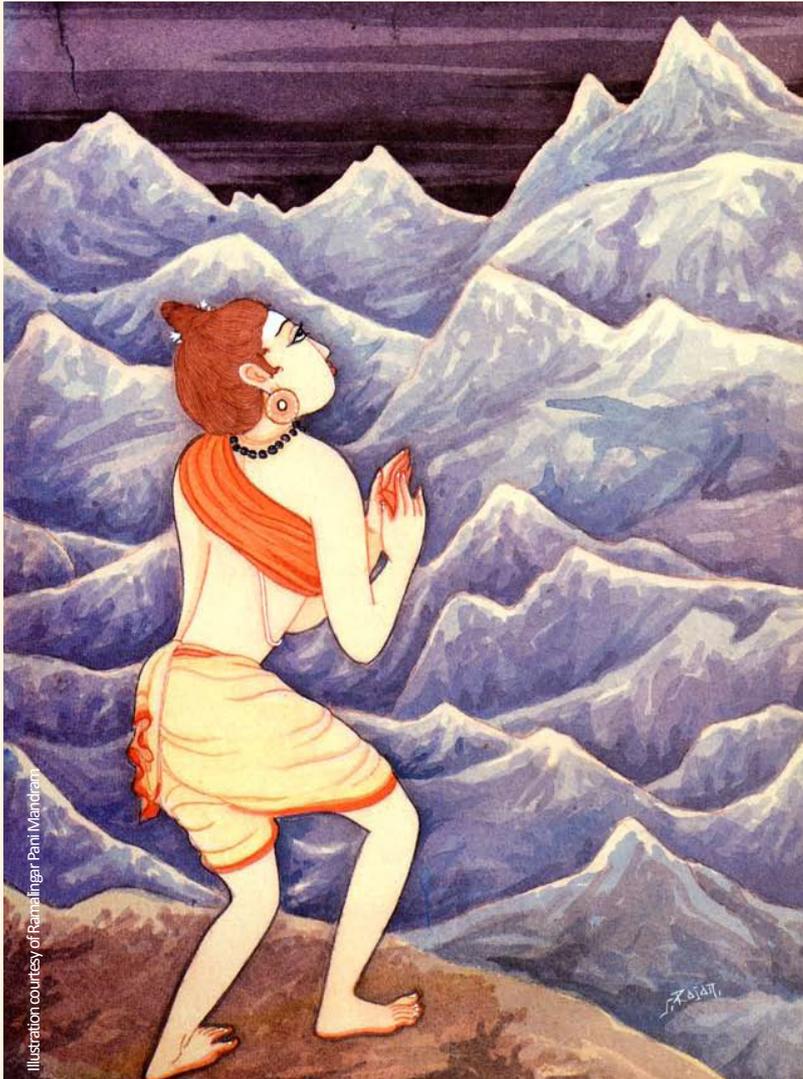




for his devotees. After Bhagavan's Mahanirvana, Prabhavati Raje continued to visit the Ashram and in later years was called on to speak about her experiences of Bhagavan. As she had an extensive repertoire of philosophical knowledge as well as being versed in numerous languages, she eventually was invited to speak on Bhagavan's teaching and became known for her oratorical gifts, having the capacity to move large crowds to tears when speaking on Bhagavan. Rajkumari Prabhavati Raje attained the Feet of Sri Bhagavan, on April, 25, 1991, in Madras. —



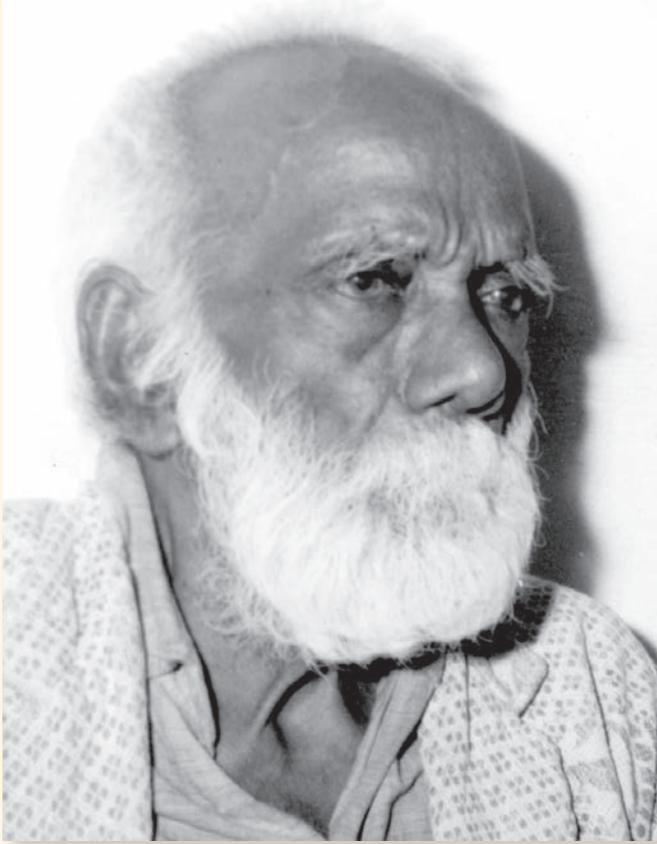
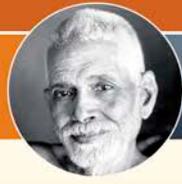
## From Periapuranam: Gananatha Naayanaar



Gananatha was a devout Brahmin from Dronipuram, the home of the great Jnana Sambandhar, the child-saint who had been fed by Parvati. Having submitted to the young master, Gananatha once asked him about the means of attaining the Lord's grace. Jnana Sambandhar initiated him into the secrets of Siva worship, giving him the *panchaksari* mantra to repeat day and night. He taught him to adorn his body with sacred ash and enjoined him to take up service in the Lord's temple. Gananatha took this advice to heart and took up service in the temple, lighting lamps in its shrines, maintaining its gardens, plucking flowers for worship, weaving garlands for the deities, fetching water for abhishekam, sweeping and washing the floors, keeping lamp wicks trimmed, copying out the sacred *Thirumurai*, giving training in music and dance, preparing musical instruments, aiding students of the Agamas, reconstructing temple chariots, helping to organise and plan festival days and painting and polishing the ornaments of deities. Thus, he spent his life happily and fruitfully and in the end, by the grace of Sarvesvara, his mind fixed on his guru's feet, he attained liberation and went to Kailas to serve the Lord there as the chief of His ganas, befitting his name 'Gananatha'. (*Gananatha Naayanaar's aradhana day fell on the 17th March, 2016*)

Illustration courtesy of Ramalingar Pami Mandram





## Coming to Bhagavan: Ramaswami Pillai

*[Once having come to the Ashram after his school exams, Ramaswami Pillai was untiring in the work he did for the Ashram. He shopped, collected post at the post office and parcels from the railway station and when Bhagavan slipped on the Hill and injured his leg, Pillai initiated leveling work on the path up to Skandasramam, efforts for which devotees have been grateful ever since. His gift as a singer made him a special presence at Tamil parayana. The following was written in January, 1930.]*

I first came to the Maharshi in March 1917, immediately after my final school examinations were completed, and I saw Bhagavan at Skandasramam. At this time, I used to think a lot of my mother, my father, and Bhagavan, and I was doing japa by chanting the name of God. The first time I saw Bhagavan, I fancied I saw a royal hunter in the forest; his personality was striking and I thought of him as a hunter hunting down the senses. On my first visit I stayed for one or two days, but no conversation passed between us; our eyes alone met. Directly I saw him, I gave up my previous 'Narayana' japa. On this visit I met Narayana Reddiar, and he gave me a copy of *The Marital Garland*. After leaving the Maharshi, I used to recite it loudly, or occasionally within the mind, identifying Arunachala with the Maharshi. I kept in touch with the Maharshi by writing occasional letters to Narayana Reddiar, and he would reply giving me details of the Maharshi and the Ashram. After my initial visit, I did not return for one or two years. When I eventually returned, I went around the mountain several times with the Maharshi. Each time we went, all of us would sing *The Marital Garland*. We also used to sing the *Song of the Poppadum*, and on our slow walk around the hill, or when he halted at Gautama ashram, we would ask him for explanations about the words in the song.

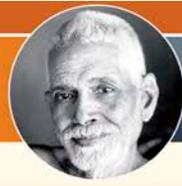
About this time, my mother committed suicide owing to a disagreement with my father, and I felt the loss very deeply. I went to Pachiappa's College from 1917-1921, losing one year because of a failure in my intermediate year. In February 1921, I joined the non-cooperation movement against the British. I was still feeling very depressed about the death of my mother, and I remember writing to Narayana Reddiar to try and find out her condition as a spirit. I never received a reply to that particular letter, but in the course of

## Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi: Satsang

M.: Satsanga means sanga (association) with sat. Sat is only the Self. Since the Self is not now understood to be Sat, the company of the sage who has thus understood it is sought. That is Satsanga. Introversion results. Then Sat is revealed. For whom is association? For whom is dosha? The Self is pure and unaffected. The impurities affect only the ego.

— Talks § 283



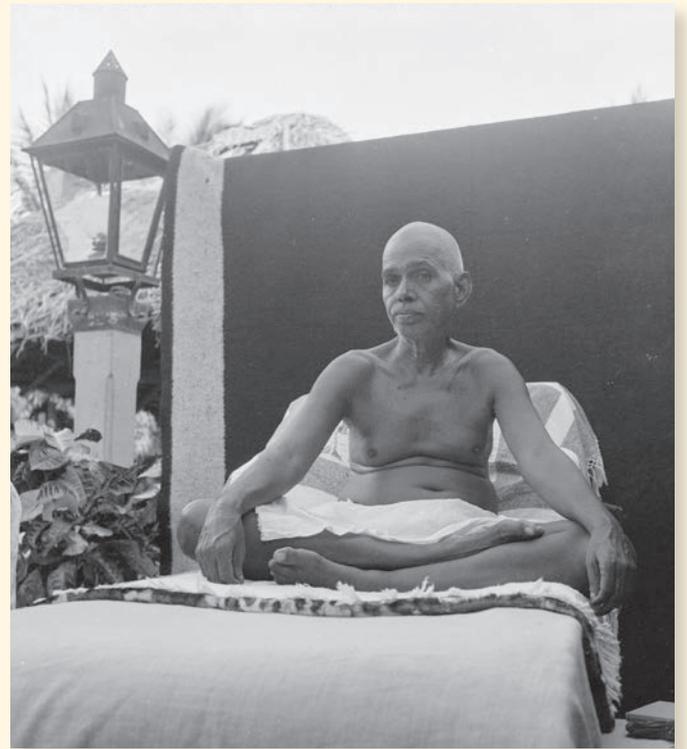


time, my grief lessened and disappeared.

During this time, I was feeling very guilty about my sexual defects, although they did not amount to anything like a crime or a serious sin. Narayana Reddiar gave me some advice in his letters but the problem did not disappear until I visited Bhagavan in 1919 and confessed my failings to him. From this point on, I was never troubled by such desires again.

I was still very much attracted to *The Marital Garland*, and in addition to memorising it, I used to write it out again and again. I was still involved with the non-cooperation movement, and while I was still at the Ashram, I cast lots, thinking of Bhagavan, trying to decide whether I should continue to “non-cooperate” and stay at the Ashram with the Maharshi, or whether I should “cooperate” and return to college. The decision was non-cooperation and I stayed at the Ashram for fifteen days. I did not consult my father, but informed him of my decision about quitting college again.

During this visit I met Sivaprakasam Pillai and Ganapati Muni for the first time. After some time, my father came to see what was detaining me, and after taking advice in the Ashram, I went back to my village where I got married in 1921. I found married life very disagreeable and in June 1922, I returned to the Ashram. I arrived at 6 am and found Bhagavan, Dandapani Swami and Chinna Swami. On this occasion, I stayed for one or two months doing all kinds of odd jobs. Dandapani Swami wanted me to go on a trip with him to raise funds for the Ashram, but I declined because I preferred doing service in the Ashram. I remained in the Ashram during Dandapani’s absence for one year, looking after the management with Chinna Swami, and keeping the accounts. During this period, over Rs 2,000 were spent



on clearing and levelling the ground in and around the Ashram. That year was the best so far in my spiritual life; ten months at a stretch in Bhagavan’s company with frequent opportunities to walk around the mountain with him. It was a period of intense activity, for we were working night and day to clear the stones, and Bhagavan often used to join us and give us a hand.

After ten months I left for my village, but I have been visiting him frequently ever since. Sometimes, during my visits, I used to concentrate on Bhagavan’s face in the middle of the night, and usually I would see a halo of flowing glorious light in all the seven colours of the rainbow. On these occasions, he reminded me of a royal figure from the time of the Moguls. This happened to

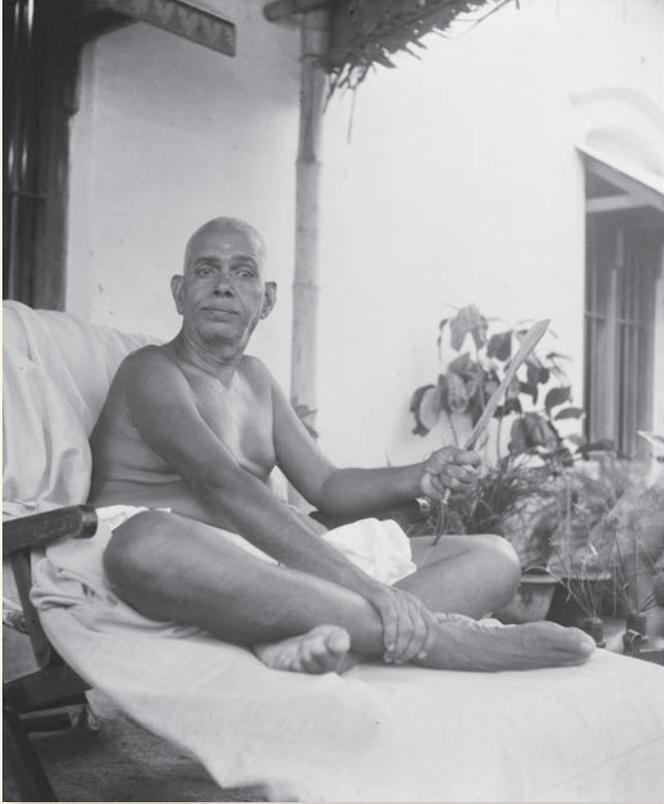
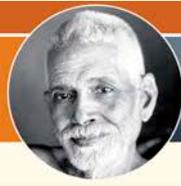
## Wordwise: Satsanga

सत्सङ्ग

*Satsanga* (from *sat*: true, noble, wise; + *sanga*: company, association): association with the wise; gathering for truth; in company of the truthful.

When Bhagavan was asked how to steady the mind, he said by strengthening it. When asked how to strengthen it, he said, “It grows strong by *satsanga* (the company of the wise).” (*Talks* §377).





me several times, but mostly, they were during my early visits, in 1921 or before. Bhagavan's personality used to manifest on important occasions like Kartika Deepam, Jayanti, Mahasivaratri and his mother's Mahapuja and when old and staunch devotees used to come and see him. It was on such occasions that we saw his light especially shining on us. On these occasions he would be all love, mercy and grace. He would be our model and exemplar, a shining light for us to be guided by.

On the first Sivaratri that I was with him in 1923, Bhagavan did not start out to walk around the mountain, as was his usual custom. Everyone else went around the hill, and only four of us stayed with him. Dandapani, Viswanathan, myself and one other devotee sat with Bhagavan all through the night. We were all awake throughout the night in a blissful state which is impossible to express in words.

From my experience, the best way to communicate with Bhagavan is to gaze into his eyes when he is in the silent samadhi state. Then peace of mind comes spontaneously, and the inward search is made much easier. When he is in such a state, merely to be near him is to experience pure happiness. Even in his absence, or even when I was away from the Ashram, I used to think of his person and of his name, and I would experience the sinking of all thoughts into the Self.

During my stay of ten months at the Ashram, we often used to read the *Ribhu Gita*. There would usually be six or seven of us, including Bhagavan, and we would each read a few verses in turn, going all the way through the book until we had finished it. Bhagavan used to tell us, and on occasions we used to feel and experience it, that to read the *Ribhu Gita* is to be in samadhi. Viswanathan, Muruganar, Chinna Swami, and anyone else who was present would all squat together in a ring with Bhagavan and take it in turns to read. No other book was read so often, but sometimes we would vary our reading by going through the *Tiruvachakam* and *Thayamanavar*. Sometimes Bhagavan himself would read out three or four stanzas from a book, and then explain the meaning to us. In addition to the readings, we would often chant certain works in his presence. Apart from the hymns to Arunachala, we frequently recited the *Dakshinamurti Ashtakam* in his presence. As soon as he composed his new works, *Upadesa Saram* and *Reality in Forty Verses*, we all learned them by heart. In the case of *Upadesa Saram*, we memorised it in all the four languages he had composed it in. On other occasions we would recite stanzas written in praise of him, usually by Muruganar, Sivaprakasam Pillai and the Tamil pandit, T.R. Ramachandra Iyer. To me he is more than father, mother, king, country, guru and God! <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Published in *The Mountain Path*, 1981. p. 145.

### Announcements: Ashram YouTube Channel

Sri Ramanasramam has its own YouTube channel and is regularly posting videos of events for free download. Please visit the channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/c/sriramanasramam>





## Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Cow Lakshmi Samadhi Day 17 June 2016



On the 18th June, 1948, Cow Lakshmi attained liberation in Bhagavan's hands. For 68 years since, the Ashram has remembered her on her samadhi day each year with special puja. This year's observance fell on the 17th June, 2016 before a large gathering of devotees who sang the praises of this great devotee. After the first arati, the ladies sang Manavasi Ramaswami Iyer's Life of Lakshmi, followed by KVS's Gomata Lakshamma.

## Obituary: Graham Boyd



Born in Leeds on 13th July 1949, Graham came to the Ashram in the mid-1990s and began work on archival photo negatives. Self-trained in sound and electrical engineering, Graham was instrumental in introducing computers to Ashram and he designed the Ashram's first two websites way back when website-designing was still quite new. In his youth while working odd jobs, Graham struggled to find inner peace amidst the entanglements of modern life. But in the early 1980s when he came across Mouni Sadhu's *In Days of Great Peace*, his life 'changed overnight' and he began to call himself a devotee of Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

Graham was untiring in his service to the Ashram and among his many projects were recording the Ashram Tamil Parayanam, digitising English publications, filming and editing the biography on Bhagavan's life in the documentary entitled *Eternal Light* and other video project on Arunachala Giripradakshina. His contribution in establishing the Archives was invaluable. It was Graham who initiated the restoration of archival photographs of Sri Bhagavan that devotees the world over enjoy today. Ever a friend of the poor, he quietly helped the needy.

Diagnosed with bone cancer in November 2015 and having undergone treatment in Chennai, Graham was blessed to be able to live out his final days in Tiruvannamalai where he merged at the feet of Arunachala on 16th June 2016 in the presence of friends and his daughter, Candice Faqir of Scarborough.

