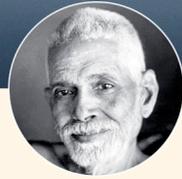


Saranagati



SARANAGATI
SRI RAMANASRAMAM

DECEMBER 2021
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D. Thiagarajan



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IN THIS
ISSUE

Dear Devotees,

December began with intermittent monsoon rains following seven weeks of torrential downpours that left the Tiruvannamalai landscape soaked through.

The Central Government is making every effort to resume international flights to and from India starting on 15th December. But it is not yet clear if and how the Omicron variant might make its presence felt in India and what impact it may have for upcoming air travel.

In this issue we conclude a short series on the life of Frank H. Humphreys who came to Bhagavan while serving as Asst. Superintendent of Police in Vellore (p. 3). Also, as we approach 2022, the Ashram's centenary year, we recall our most recent losses by remembering those devotees who have gone on before us (see In Memoriam, p. 13).

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

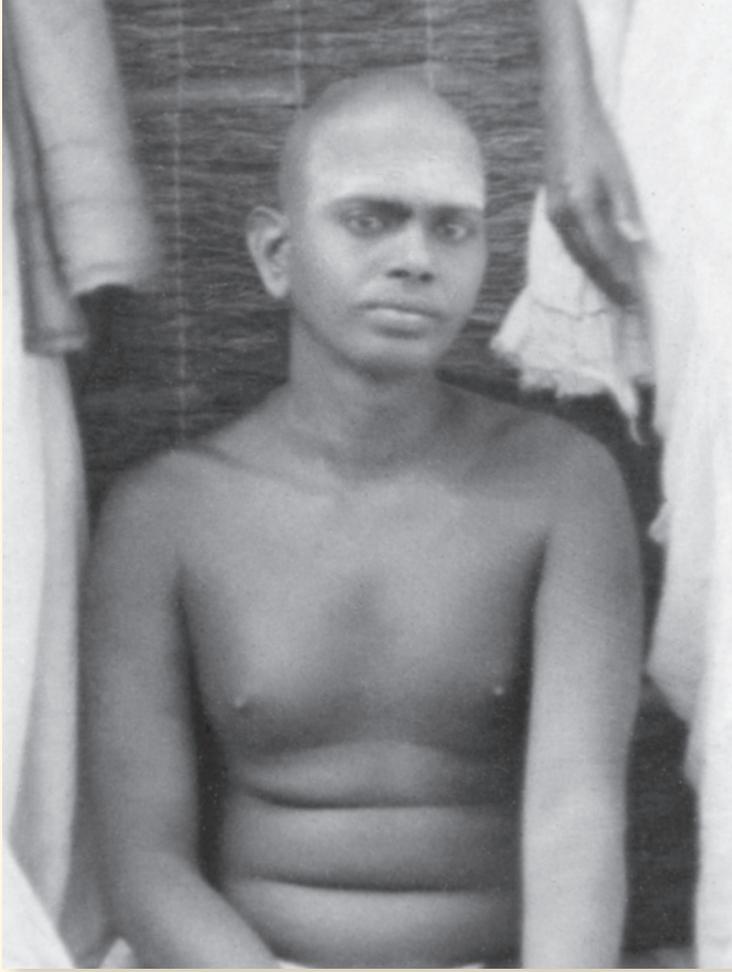
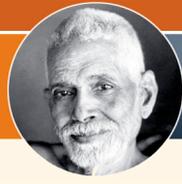
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Calendar of Ashram Events

16th December (Sat) Dhanur Masam
18th December (Sat) Full Moon
21st December (Tues) Bhagavan's Jayanti
22nd December (Weds) Sw Ramananda Day
31st December (Fri) Lucy-ma Day
12th January (Weds) Sivaprakasam Pillai

14th January (Fri) Pongal/Ramaswami Pillai
17th Jan (Mon) Punarvasu/Full Moon/Chinnaswami Day
12th February (Sat) Munagala Venkataramaiah Day
14th February (Mon) Punarvasu
15-16th February (Tues-Weds) Full Moon
1st March (Tues) Mahasivaratri





IN PROFILE

Frank H. Humphreys (pt II)

In the last segment we saw how the 21-year-old Frank Humphreys came to India by steamer in January 1911 to serve as Assistant Superintendent of Police in Vellore. Upon arrival in Bombay, however, he fell sick and was hospitalised where he contracted malaria and almost died. In his fevered state, he had a glimpse of the man who would become his Telugu teacher in Vellore. After meeting the Munshi, S. Narasimhayya in person in mid-March, Humphreys had another premonition related to the Munshi, that his teacher had a guru even though his teacher had

endeavoured to conceal the fact. In Humphreys' dream, the guru spoke to him.. This turned out to be Kavya Kantha Ganapathi Muni. Humphreys fell ill again and was advised by a doctor to go to Ootacamund for recovery which he did on 1st April, 1911. Before meeting the Munshi following his recovery later that year, he had another dream, this time about a 'Mahatma' living in a cave. When he made a pencil drawing of the place that had appeared in his dream, the Munshi recognised it as Virupaksha Cave and the Mahatma appearing in the dream was none other than Sri Bhagavan. The Munshi was impressed with Humphreys' sincerity and finally acceded to the latter's request that the young policeman be introduced to Ganapathi Muni. Both the Muni and the Munshi detected a genuine call in Humphreys and the Munshi took him to Tiruvannamalai in November of 1911 where Ganapathi Muni awaited their arrival:

Yesterday I got a day's leave and went with the Munshi to meet Ganapathi Sastriar. We heard Sastriar lecture for an hour and a half in Tamil to a huge crowd, and he appeared refreshed by his efforts. At 2 pm, he pointed up to the cave where the Maharshi lived, and we set off up the mountain to see him. When we reached the cave, we sat before the Maharshi at his feet and said nothing. We sat thus a long while, and I felt lifted out of myself.¹

The Muni had instructed young Humphreys to keep his eyes trained on Bhagavan, so for nearly 30 minutes, Humphreys gazed into eternity, eyes which 'never changed their expression of deep contemplation'. He describes it like this:

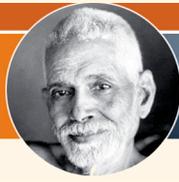
I could only feel his body was not the man, it was the instrument of God, merely a sitting motionless corpse from which God was radiating terrifically. My own sensations were indescribable. Sastriar then said I might speak. I asked for teaching and the master spoke and we listened. In a few sentences of broken English, and in Telugu, he conveyed worlds of meaning and taught me directly, which he seldom does, and made me his chela — not of course such a one as the Sastriar, his own very special chela, but as one of the many.²

When the opportunity to ask a question came, Humphreys gave voice to his youthful idealism and he asked, 'Master! Can I help the world?' 'Help

¹ *Glimpses of the Life and Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*, p. 15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.





yourself and you will help the world' came the reply. The young Englishman then said, 'I wish to help the world. Shall I not be helpful?' Bhagavan said, 'Yes! By helping yourself, you help the world. You are in the world; you are the world. You are not different from the world, nor is the world different from you.'

This would have been an altogether new way of seeing for this young Westerner whose perception of world had always been 'that which lies outside oneself'. But the Sage before him seemed to be suggesting that the world lies within as well and is not separable from oneself. He was slow in taking to heart the idea that by helping himself, he would be helping the world. Humphreys later commented on a new way of seeing world as per Bhagavan's remarks:

We must take away the world, which causes our doubts, which clouds our mind, and the light of God will shine clearly through. How is the world taken away? When, for example, instead of seeing a man you say, 'This is God animating a body,' which body answers, more or less perfectly, to the direction of God, as a ship answers more or less perfectly to her helm.³

Humphreys next asked, 'Master, can I perform miracles as Sri Krishna and Jesus did?'

It is not surprising to hear this question, given Humphreys' mother's occultism, that Humphreys would have been taken by such abilities and imagined them to be the aimed-for in the religious life. Bhagavan intuited the motivation behind the question and countered with, 'Did any of them at the time of acting feel that he was acting and doing something inconsistent with the laws of nature?' 'No, Master', Humphreys responded.

Humphreys got the same reply to related inquiries but Bhagavan succeeded in disabusing him of the notion that siddhis are something to strive for. Humphreys wrote up his conclusion according to Bhagavan's words:

A master is one who has meditated solely on God, has flung his whole personality into the sea of God, drowned and forgotten it there till he becomes simply the instrument of God, and when his mouth opens, it speaks God's words without effort or forethought, and when he raises a hand, God flows through that to work a miracle.⁴

³ Ibid., p. 16.

⁴ Ibid., p. 18.



Bhagavan with devotees at Virupaksha around the same time period of Humphreys visit

Outweighing psychic gifts were the much richer rewards gained by one's efforts toward the inner search. Humphreys paraphrased Bhagavan:

Clairvoyance, clairaudience, and such things are not worth having when such far greater illumination and peace are possible without them than with them. No Master ever cared a rap for occult powers for he has no need of them for his daily life.⁵

Humphreys became cognizant of the children gathered around at Bhagavan's Cave on the Hillside that first visit:

The most touching sight was the number of tiny children, up to about seven years of age, who climb the mountain, all on their own, to come and sit near the Maharshi, even though he may not speak a word or hardly look at them for days together. They do not play, but just sit quietly there in perfect contentment. He is a man beyond description in his expression of dignity, gentleness, self-control, and calm strength of conviction.⁶

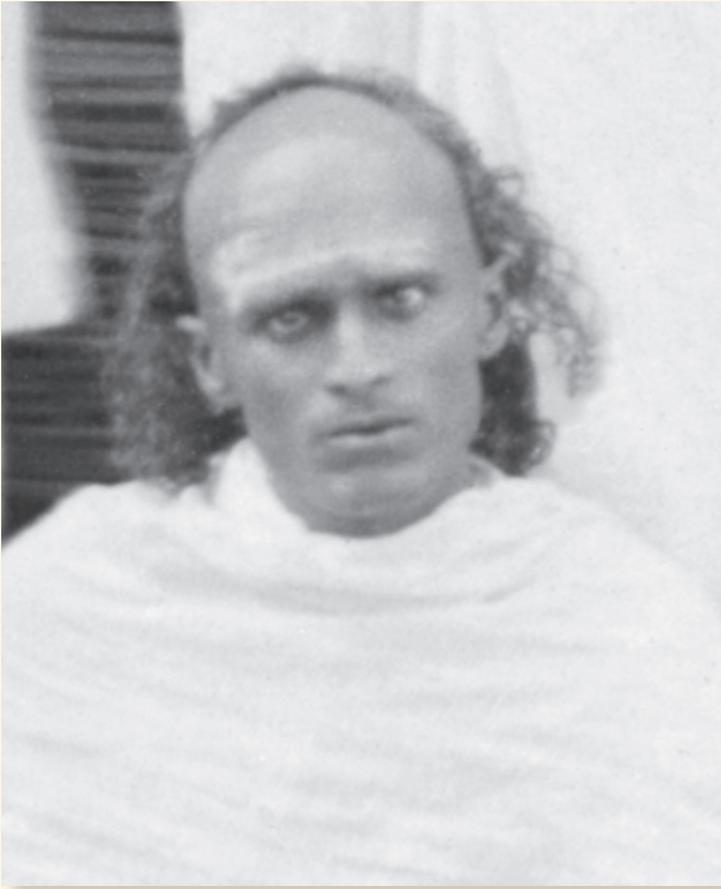
Second Visit

After this initial visit, Bhagavan's first Western devotee passed his examination in Telegu and was sent to the Anantapur District where he underwent further training. He was then sent to Kalyandurg to train as Acting Inspector, where he had six police stations and one hundred men under his direction. Once, when he got some time off, he returned to see the Maharshi a second time. On this visit, he travelled on

⁵ Ibid., p. 19.

⁶ Ibid., p. 16.





Kavya Kantha Ganapathi Muni at Virupaksha Cave, 1913

his motorcycle the fifty miles from Vellore under a hot summer sun. Raghavachariar, the T.R.S. Supervisor at Tiruvannamalai, took him up to see the Maharshi. A. S. Krishnaswami Iyer, then a District Munsif, happened to be present and served as interpreter. Humphreys writes:

[Bhagavan] smiled when he saw me but was not the least surprised. Before he had sat down, he had asked me a question private to myself, of which he knew, showing that he recognised me. Everyone who comes to him is open as a book, and a single glance suffices to reveal its contents. 'You have not yet had any food and are hungry.' I admitted that it was so. He immediately called to a chela to bring me food — rice, ghee, fruit, etc., eaten with the fingers. Though I have practised eating this way I lack dexterity. So he gave me a coconut spoon to eat with, smiling and talking between whiles. You can imagine nothing more beautiful than his smile. I had coconut milk to drink, white like cow's milk and delicious, to which he had himself added sugar. When I finished, I was still hungry, and he knew it and ordered more. He knew

everything, and when others pressed me to eat fruit when I had had enough, he stopped them at once. Whilst I was eating, he related my past history to the others, and accurately too. Yet he had seen me but once before, and [had seen] many hundreds in between.⁷

This encounter with Bhagavan was not just about the needs of the stomach. Humphreys was blessed to be able to listen to Bhagavan who gave him detailed instructions in enquiry:

I sat for about three hours listening to his teaching, [which can be summed up this way:] Do not fix your attention on all these changing things of life, death, and phenomena. Do not think of even the actual act of seeing them or perceiving them but only of that which sees all these things. That which is responsible for it all. This will seem nearly impossible at first, but by degrees the result will be felt. It takes years of steady, daily practice, but that is how a Master is made. [In the beginning] give yourself a quarter of an hour a day. Keep your eyes open, and try to keep the mind unshakingly fixed on That Which Sees. It is inside yourself. Do not expect to find that 'That' is something definite on which the mind can be fixed easily; it will not be so. Though it takes years to find that 'That', the results of this concentration will soon show themselves—in four- or five-months' time—in all sorts of unconscious divining, in peace of mind, in power to deal with troubles, in power all round — always unconscious power. From now onwards let your whole thought in meditation be not on the act of seeing nor on what you see, but immovably on That Which Sees.⁸

Humphreys' understanding began to resonate with Bhagavan and the communication between the two became deep and insightful. Indeed, the young man would not leave empty-handed. Humphreys summarised the instruction from Bhagavan this way:

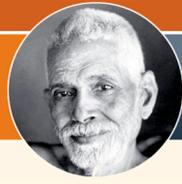
If you sit down and realise that you only think by virtue of the One Life, and that the mind, animated by the One Life into the act of thinking is a part of the whole which is God, then you argue your mind out of existence as a separate entity, and the result is that mind and body physically, so to speak, disappear and the only thing that remains is Being, which is at once existence and non-existence, and not explainable in words or ideas. A Master cannot help being perpetually in this state, with only this difference: he can use mind and body and intellect too, without falling back into the delusion of having a separate consciousness.⁹

⁷ Ibid., p. 16.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

⁹ Ibid., p. 21.





As Humphreys only had one day free from his professional obligations, the time came for Humphreys to take leave and he stood up:

At last, I had to go, so bowed as we do, and went outside the cave to put on my boots. He came outside too and said I might come to see Him again.

Departure from India

Humphrey's life was transformed by these encounters and he took Bhagavan's guidance to heart. However, his health continued to be a problem and the climate seemed to aggravate the recurring bouts of malaria. He found himself overworked and stressed in the face of crimes that he could not solve and he also lamented not being able to follow his true vocation. His time in India was coming to an end. His biographers write:

In due course Humphrey was promoted to the sub-division of a District, a black spot on the crime map of India, where he had nine murders, a threat of riot and the discovery of a large gang of bandits, [all] in one week ... About this time his cough grew worse and tuberculosis was diagnosed. After two and a half years [in India,] Humphreys returned to England.¹⁰

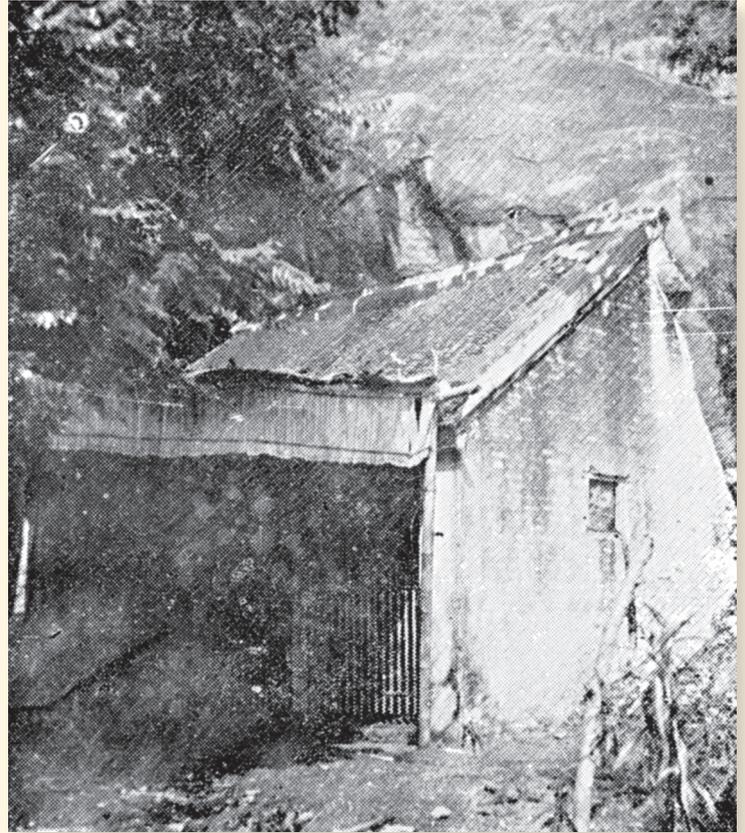
In England he developed a large swelling in his back and was soon in hospital in London for an operation for an abscess in the sacrum. Following a long recovery Humphreys wrote as a journalist, learned Russian, took up flying and was commissioned as a pilot at the end of 1915. After six months in hospital to recover from TB, he resumed flying. But disaster would strike yet again:

While he was posted as Flying Instructor in October 1918, a pupil took off under him as he was coming into land and he crashed his plane. Humphreys' top jaw was broken into four pieces, the antra were pushed into his eyes, his nose was crushed. This was the end of his flying.¹¹

Humphreys spent the next ten months in hospital to recover from the accident. While there, he met a fellow patient who was making plans to go to South Africa to grow oranges once released from the hospital. Humphreys decided to join him in this venture. In South Africa, he met his fiancée and plans were fixed for their marriage. All the while, he intensified

¹⁰ *Not So Trivial A Tale*, p. 18.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 21.



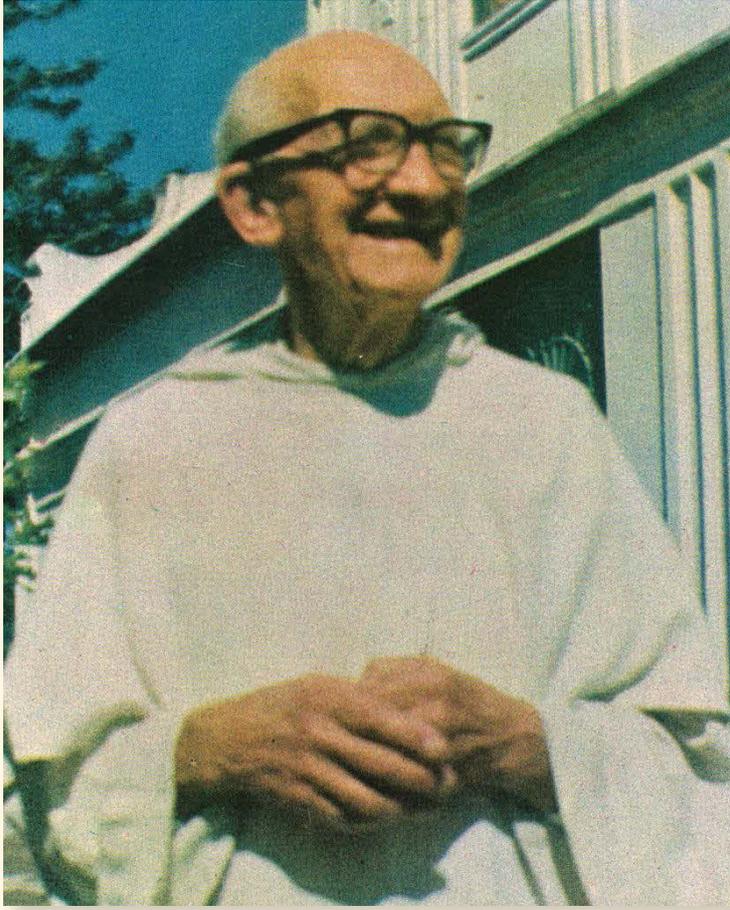
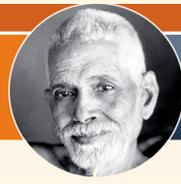
An uninhabited Virupaksha Cave many years later

his spiritual search, converted to Catholicism, and published an article in the *International Psychic Gazette* about his impressions of the Maharshi. These were compiled into a booklet in 1925. Humphreys spoke glowingly of the Master's instruction:

God works perfectly in our unconscious virtuous actions. A Master when instructing is far from any thought of instructing; but to feel a doubt or a difficulty in his presence is to call forth, at once, before you can express the doubt, the wonderful words which will clear away that doubt. The words never fail and the Master with his heart fixed on God, realising perfectly that no action is a personal one, making no claims to have either originated the thought or to have been the means of destroying a doubt, saying never 'I' or 'Mine', seeing only God in every thought and action, whether they be yours or his, feels no surprise, no especial pleasure to himself in having allayed your doubt. He never desires to feel pleasure. He says: Who is it that feels pleasure? Why, God. Who is the so-called 'I'? I is God. God is pleasure. If I desire perpetual pleasure, I must forget myself, and be that which is pleasure itself, viz., God.¹²

¹² *Glimpses*, pp. 25-26.





Fr. Nicolas (Frank H.) Humphreys, ca. 1974

The grace of the guru had revealed itself in myriad ways, not least of all, revealing one who is the embodiment of virtue. Humphreys continued:

A Master sacrifices his whole self, lets it drown as an artificial idea into the Ocean of God Who Is... He flings every personal desire aside, even the desire for virtue. He denies it being his own action and attributes it to God, till he becomes the embodiment of that personal virtue he once desired, and no one can come near him without being blessed. He is the embodiment of all virtues. Such is true worship and its results.¹³

When Humphreys' engagement broke off in 1926, he took it as a conclusive sign that he was not meant to pursue the family life but to take up celibacy and the solitary life of a monk. Thus in 1927 he joined the Dominicans and in January of 1928 took first profession of vows at Hawksyard, ordained with the name Nicolas. Life as a Dominican friar brought

¹³ Ibid. p. 26.

him regularity and stability and he was able to devote himself to prayer, contemplation, and service to God in a way he had only ever dreamed of.

In January 1931 at the age of 40, he took Solemn Profession (what would be considered full sannyasin vows in the Eastern tradition). As a friar, he did a wide variety of jobs which included carpentry, study, teaching, parish work, giving retreats, and pastoring an outlying parish with a small school of 100 children. In 1932 he was ordained as a Catholic priest. In July 1954, he was awarded one of the highest distinctions in the Dominican Order—the title of Preacher General.

In the early 1960's at the request of his Dominican religious Superior, Humphreys wrote an autobiography, called "A Trivial Tale". He had not been eager to do it but fulfilled the request of his superiors:

It is true my life has been full of events, but they have been relatively small ones, of interest only to myself, in that, in reflecting on this I can wonder at the love of God and his care even for the smallest. Dominus sollicitus est mei, 'The Lord is full of care for me' (Ps. 40:18). ... He is for every one of us, and so, in telling my trivial tale, I shall have the happiness of acknowledging to Him His goodness. His solicitude, and my own wonder and gratitude over His unfailing and detailed care. I shall be continuously singing of His goodness. I can only marvel at His kindness and the perfection of His Providence. It is all His Gift.¹⁴

Humphreys' life as a friar became one of worship and he devoted himself completely to the path that he had discovered in his early youth which included days spent at the feet of Bhagavan. From that time onward it became a question of how to best fulfil this calling and how to seek God truly:

How can you best worship God? Why, by not trying to worship Him but by giving up your whole self to Him, and showing that every thought, every action, is only a working of that One Life (God).¹⁵

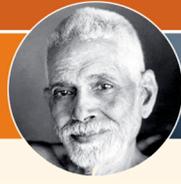
Friar Nicholas Humphreys lived out his life as a friar in South Africa, dedicated to prayer and service. He died in Cape Town on September 20, 1975 at the ripe old age of 85. He was buried at Stellenbosch. —

(series concluded)

¹⁴ *Not So Trivial A Tale*, p. 8.

¹⁵ *Glimpses*, p. 25.



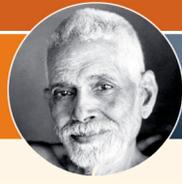


Dev Gogoi

November 2021 Kartigai Deepam Celebrations

The festival of lights linked to Lord Muruga is ancient and appears in the classical Tamil Sangam literature known as *Abanaanuru*. This would mean the festival has continued for well more than 2000 years. This year, *Dwajaroohanam*, the flag-hoisting ceremony which officially starts the Deepam Festival, took place on the morning of the 10th November at the Big Temple. Homas commenced in the Yagasala opposite Mother's mantapam and the four Vedas were recited in the main shrine. Meanwhile, at Sri Ramanasramam, special Vedic chanting commenced with Krishna Yajur Veda Ghanaparayana at 7 am, and an afternoon group of Vedacharyas performing Sama Veda at 3 pm each of the ten days. On Tuesday the 17th, the Big Temple closed for the remaining days of the festival up through to Monday the 22nd. This was a state government decision to prevent the risk of large gatherings in the midst of the Covid crisis. Sri Ramanasramam followed suit and closed its gates on the same day. Nevertheless, the festival continued behind closed doors with Yagasala homas and procession within the temple though the Maha Ratham remained stationary. The culminating moment took place at 6 pm on Friday the 19th, when the beacon lamp at the top of the Hill was lit. Ashram devotees were delighted that despite intermittent rains, the sky cleared up to let them have a darshan of the beacon light on almost all of the eleven days. —





RAMANA REFLECTIONS

The Beauty of Falling Leaves

Coming to the end of the Ashram's first century, we find ourselves concluding a year that has been rife with change, challenge, and costs, especially for those who have had to suffer the departure of loved ones during the pandemic crisis. In light of the many losses, we call to mind the oft-referenced scene from the New Hall at the end of May 1949 when devotees first learned of the seriousness of Bhagavan's medical condition. This was when they came to know that the growth on Bhagavan's arm was carcinoma.

For Dr. Padmanabhan who was a practising physician, it was clear that the cancerous growth on Bhagavan's arm was a very aggressive form of sarcoma and he immediately intuited the danger that he and Bhagavan's devotees faced. Together with T. P. Ramachandran, he sat behind the stone sofa where Sri Bhagavan was seated and the two began to weep. Sri Bhagavan could hear the sobs of these two devotees sitting on the floor behind him and called out to them in a jocular manner, 'Hey, why are you weeping?' They responded openly about their horror at the thought of losing Bhagavan. To this Bhagavan simply said, 'Where can I go? Where is it possible for me to go?'¹

What makes this scene so striking is the light-heartedness with which Bhagavan speaks. It is the same light-heartedness he demonstrated in the dispensary during a major surgical procedure without general anaesthesia. How uncanny all of this appeared to the devotees. Indeed, how could anyone be so at ease and detached from their own body?

Bhagavan revealed that he was at peace with whatever went on around him, at peace with whatever might be happening to his physical form, but devotees couldn't bear it.

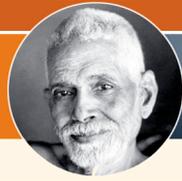
Late in his life, the poet David Ignatow observed falling leaves one late autumn in his native northeast America and penned lines that began with the following words: *I wish I understood the beauty in leaves falling. To whom are we beautiful as we go?*²

One wonders about the beauty the poet is referring to and, for that matter, why falling leaves should be beautiful at all? Do they not augur the certainty of passing from this world and the uncertainty of knowing when? If all compound things are transient, falling leaves are threatening by virtue of pointing up the way we invest in transient things and invariably suffer the pain of loss because of them. If our apprehension is born of mistaken seeing, one wonders what it would take to see the world through Bhagavan's eyes. As it is, we innocently cling to the transient, as if that was all there is, not realising the peril.

¹ *The Mountain Path*, April 1973, p. 80.

² David Ignatow, 'Three in Transition'.





Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, goes a verse³, in other words, whosoever seeks the eternal in this limited form of the body and the personality will ever be unsatisfied, unfulfilled, and will be pervaded by fear and trembling. If we find ourselves perpetually looking for a safe place, somewhere or something that is solid and unaffected by the law of change, we should also compel ourselves to ask how such a safe place could ever hope to be found by an illusory self in a perishable body. In this vein, we recall Bhagavan's words from the Friday evening Tamil parayana: *The whole objective world such as the body, is born of ignorance and is transient like a bubble on water.*⁴

Ethnographers have observed that small-scale societies such as the palaeolithic tribes of the Andaman Islands, Amer-Amazonia, Papua New Guinea and Borneo believe that naming demons grants power over them. If we could look squarely at our own demons, which would include the demon of mortality, their hold on us would diminish. This is what the Carmelite nun does when each morning on her way to prayer, she stops at the designated plot in the convent graveyard where her mortal remains are to one day be interred and there turns a small spadeful of soil, a kinaesthetic reminder of how things will be down the stretch. *What is mentionable is manageable*⁵, and what is enacted in simple gestures, becomes familiar,

³ Matthew 16.25.

⁴ *Anma Bhodam*, v. 31.

⁵ A saying of Fred Rodgers from the children's television series, *Mr. Rodgers' Neighborhood*.

accepted. More than that the biology of the human body is expert in knowing how to make its exit from this world when the time comes.

If only I could understand the beauty in leaves falling, if only I could turn toward the passing-away nature of conditions, the changing nature of circumstances day by day; if only I could embrace the flux and flow of the phenomenal realm and see it as it is.

Seeing the beauty in leaves falling means being able to receive the whole package of life which includes its impermanence—loss, death, separation from our nearest and dearest—and being able to appreciate the beauty of a flower as contained in its transitoriness, being able to understand that the eternal lies not in *perpetuity in time*, but in that which is *outside of time*. In this understanding, we would be free, and would know God as He or She is, would know the Self as It is.

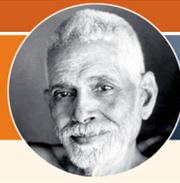
When we look at a factory-made flower, we find it beautiful only until we discover that it is an imitation flower. At that moment, we no longer find it beautiful, for suddenly it lacks the quality of fragility and the vulnerability of perishing. The transitoriness of life is part of what makes our relationships meaningful. The subtle knowing that our communion with others is bound by time and cannot endure except in the Heart is a poignant reminder that brings depth to human life. If we pause to appreciate what lies outside of time, if we frame the ordinary things of daily life in their frailty, all the above mentioned becomes extraordinary. Bhagavan stated it this way:

Events in Sri Ramanasramam: Ashram Gardens



The Ashram's Bishop's Candle tree has been in full bloom recently behind Swami Ramanananda's Samadhi. The Bishop's Candle or *Senna alata* is an ornamental flowering plant 3–4 metres in height in the subfamily *Caesalpinioideae*. It has medicinal properties and is used as a laxative, a purgative and as an anti-fungal. —





If you consider yourself the body, the world appears to be external. [But when] you [understand that you] are the Self, the world [even in its transitoriness] appears as Brahman.⁶

There is a renowned story in the Mahayana tradition from Tang dynasty China where a monk gripped by these same concerns comes before the great meditation master Tairyū and asks in all sincerity: ‘Man’s body will ultimately decompose; what is the indestructible Dharma body?’ In other words, what is there that does not die? Tairyū quotes two lines from a familiar Chinese poem: *Flowers cover the hillside like brocade; the vale lies deep in cool shade.⁷*

Tairyū’s response is perplexing in that one would have expected the master to pontificate on the eternal dharma—the unborn, uncreated, undying Buddha nature, the Tao that undergirds all things. This is what the monk was pining for. But, instead, the master points to what is most fleeting in the world—flowers on a hillside, a cool valley in morning time before the sun rises, that is, the embodiment of transience. So what is Tairyū trying to communicate here?

Out of fear, we grope for comfort in the face of life’s poignancy and want to have things always stay the same. Such an impulse is like plastic flowers, like the wealthy New Ager arranging his Last Will and Testament so that upon death his corpse will be cryonically preserved at low temperatures in the hope of some future resuscitation when medical science has made advances. Even if such a thing were ever to become scientifically possible, would it be desirable? There seems to be a misunderstanding at work here. But, of course, we are all afflicted with some version of this misunderstanding.

The beauty in leaves falling is contained in the recognition that the perishable world, just as it is, carries a reflection of the divine in each and every moment. It is this reflection that makes the tenderness of the rose so lovely. It is this reflection that illumines the flowers on the hillside and gives autumn leaves their exquisiteness. But what is this reflection of the divine?

If we look at the scene in the New Hall, we might wonder what Bhagavan meant by ‘I’ when he said *Where*

⁶ *Talks* §272.

⁷ ‘Tairyū’s Indestructible Dharma Body’ is case 82 in the 12th-century classic, the koan collection known as the *Heikiganroku*.

can I go? Did he mean his body? Did he mean some immaterial entity within the body that would live on after the body dies; or did he mean, *Where can reality go? Where can Being go? Where can THIS go?* When the leaf falls, the tree remains; when the tree falls, the earth remains; when the earth is swallowed up in the universal conflagration at the end of the world cycle, space remains. Bhagavan’s *Song Celestial* verse 7 reads:

Invulnerable He is, not to be burnt, not to be drenched or dried. He is eternal, all pervading, changeless, motionless, enduring.⁸

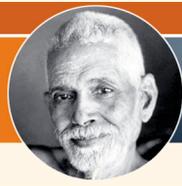
The fact is, we perpetually project our falling-leaf vision onto the world, identifying ourselves with a perishable body, separate from everyone and everything around us and it is the sense of our separateness that engenders our unease. Might our dread of dying be related to the sense of separation which simultaneously means clinging to the sense-realm and to the hollowness of worldly consolations? Undoubtedly, when egoic attachment falls away, the fear of dying—which is nothing more than a mental state—will no longer have such a hold on us.

We recall a verse from the Monday evening parayana, Bhagavan beseeching Lord Arunachala: *Vouchsafe the knowledge of eternal life that I may learn the glorious primal wisdom, and shun the delusion of this world, Oh Arunachala!⁹*

⁸ ‘The Song Celestial’, v. 7 (ii:24), *Collected Works*, p.154.

⁹ *Aksharamanamalai*, v. 33.





In the New Hall in late May 1949, Bhagavan could freely ask, *Where can I go?* because he was not identified with form. The fear of physical death had left him already by the age of 16 and he saw the universe as it is, a single thing without the slightest degree of separation.

Tairyū was skilful in freeing his monk from erroneous thinking. He sought to guide the monk out from a passing mental state and nudge him toward a clearer vision. The world, even in its transience—whether expressed by flowers on a hillside or falling leaves on an autumn morning—is not other than ourselves. We are not separate from *That*.

I wish I understood the beauty in leaves falling. To whom are we beautiful as we go?

The second of these two lines seems to say, ‘for whom will our passing from this earth be seen in its true light as the natural and perfect unfolding of things?’

The line that follows reads:

I lie in the field, still, absorbing the stars, and silently throwing off their presence.

In other words, the true I and all that the I-AM encompasses, which includes Silence, rests in its essence, just as it is—Unconditional and Unchanging.

Bhagavan concludes:

*Abide in stillness, without any stir of tongue, mind, or body and behold within the effulgence of the Self, the ocean of Bliss, the experience of Eternity, absent of all fear.*¹⁰ —

¹⁰ *Atma Vidya*, v.5.

Events in Sri Ramanasramam: Deepavali



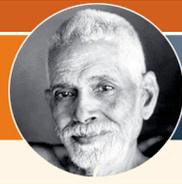
Deepavali was celebrated at the Ashram on the early morning of the 4th November with special parayana and early morning puja followed by a fireworks display at the foot of Bhagavan’s Samadhi. —



Aksharamanamalai Discourses

Nochur Sri Venkataraman will be prerecording the Aksharamanamalai discourses prior to Bhagavan’s Jayanti so that they will be available for viewing on the Ashram YouTube channel starting on 22nd December, the day after Jayanti. —

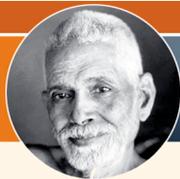




In Memoriam

As we come to the end of 2021 and ready ourselves to celebrate Sri Ramanasramam's Centenary Year, we pause to call to mind the many beloved devotees who have left us since January 2016. Above are pictured some of the kind faces that will sadly not be seen in the Ashram again, though they live ever in our memory. From top, left to right: *1st row:* Sri V. S. Ramanan, Sri Ranganathan, Sri Nanna Garu, Sri T. S. Nagarajan, Sri T.K. Natarajan, Smt. Ramani Subramanian, Sri Subramanyan (Manalurpettai Sastrigal), Sri Margabandhu Sastrigal, Dr. Serge Emile Demetrian (Narayana), Sri G. Kannan; *2nd row:* Sri V. S. Srinivasan, Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, Sri Gowri Shankar, Smt. Lakshmi Venkataraman, Brahmasri Senthilnatha





In Memoriam (cont.)

Ghanapatigal, Sri Ramani, Smt. Savitri Sabhahit, Sri Sethu Ramanan, Sri S. Krishnaswamy, Sri Pingali Surya Sundaram; *3rd row:* Sri Manikantan, Sri R. Anjaneyalu, Swami Ramananada Saraswati, Smt. Soona Dara Nicholson, Smt. Hamsa Ramaiah, Sri A.S. Natarajan, Sri S. V. Venkatesan, Smt. Malathi Venkatesan, Sri V. Venkataraman Sri V. Srinivasan; *4th row:* Sri Sitapati Ganesh, Sri M. Venkataraman, Kum. Dolly Kolah, Sri Appathurai Seevaratnam, Sri La Su Rengarajan, Smt. Nagu (Padma), Sri Graham Boyd, Smt. V. Lalitha Rajeswaramma, Dr Manjunath Devappa Naik, Sri Subramanyam P. N.; *5th row:* Smt. Rajalakshmi, Sri A. Viswanathan, Smt. Hilda Kapur, Sri V. V. Ramana Rao, Sri B. K. Subiah, Smt V. Rakshaben, Dr. R. Ravichandran, Sri Murugesan, Smt. Suvarna R. Nathani, Smt. Vanajakshi; *6th row:* Dr. A. S. Venugopal Rao, Sri Martin Wolff, Dr A. Kondal Raj, Smt. Seeta Krishnaswamy, Sri Lakshmana Swamy, Sri S. Krishnamurthy, Kumari Veeralakshmi, Sri Venkatesa Sastri, Smt. Dharmambal, Sri Khurshed Birdy; *7th row:* Sri Alan Jacobs, Dr. Narayana Reddy, Sri T. V. Manian, Sri M.G. Balu, Sri Jiri Vacek, Kumari Marleen Boers, Sri Ida Pedanda Gede Gunung, Smt. Nadhia Sutara, Smt. Sreeja Jayan, Sri Chinnaraj. —

Events: Mastan's Samadhi Day



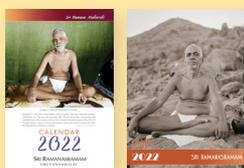
On 8th November, Mastan's Samadhi Day was celebrated at his Samadhi near the Akhilanda Ashram with devotees in attendance. At that evening's arati in Sri Ramanasramam, KVS sang his own composition on Mastan Swami, strung as a Garland of five ragas. —

Events in Ramanasramam: Tree Planting with Seed Balls



A Madurai devotee has provided the Ashram with seed balls for sowing on the mountain. The company label is replete with Bhagavan's photo and the Ashram insignia. Seed balls, or earth balls, very often contain a variety of seeds within a ball of red clay that is supplied with fertilizers. They can simply be dropped, or even thrown, into the preferred area of planting as the ball itself contains all the necessary nutrients for the young seeds to get a good start. The technique for creating seed balls that would seed at the right time (not while still in the package) was developed by the renowned Japanese farmer, Masanobu Fukuoka who advocated natural non-chemical farming. Seed balls have also been used for the aerial seeding of forested areas. —

Announcement: 2022 Ashram Calendars



The Ashram's 2022 calendars are now available in the Ashram book depot. Calendars' link: <https://bookstore.sriramanamaharshi.org/product-category/calendar-2022/> Diary link: <https://bookstore.sriramanamaharshi.org/product-category/diary/>

