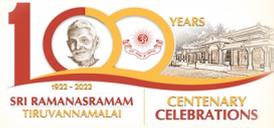


Saranagati



SARANAGATI
SRI RAMANASRAMAM



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Photos from D. Thiyyagarajan



Saranagati



FEBRUARY 2023
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IN THIS
ISSUE



Dear devotees,

On 7th January 2023 we celebrated Bhagavan's 143rd Jayanti. Just a week later was Bhogi followed by Sankranti Pongal and then Maattu Pongal. The day before Jayanti was full moon and the Centenary celebration of Sadhu Om at his Ashram in Ramana Nagar.

In this issue we read the life story of Sadhu Om who came to Bhagavan in 1946 and sang songs of devotion in his presence (p.3). Also this issue is a reflection on Bhagavan's surrender as it relates to what Bhagavan calls *chidakasa*.

For videos, photos and further news of events, go to <<https://sriramanamaharshi.org>> or write to us at <saranagathi@sriramanamaharshi.org>.

In Sri Bhagavan,
Saranagati

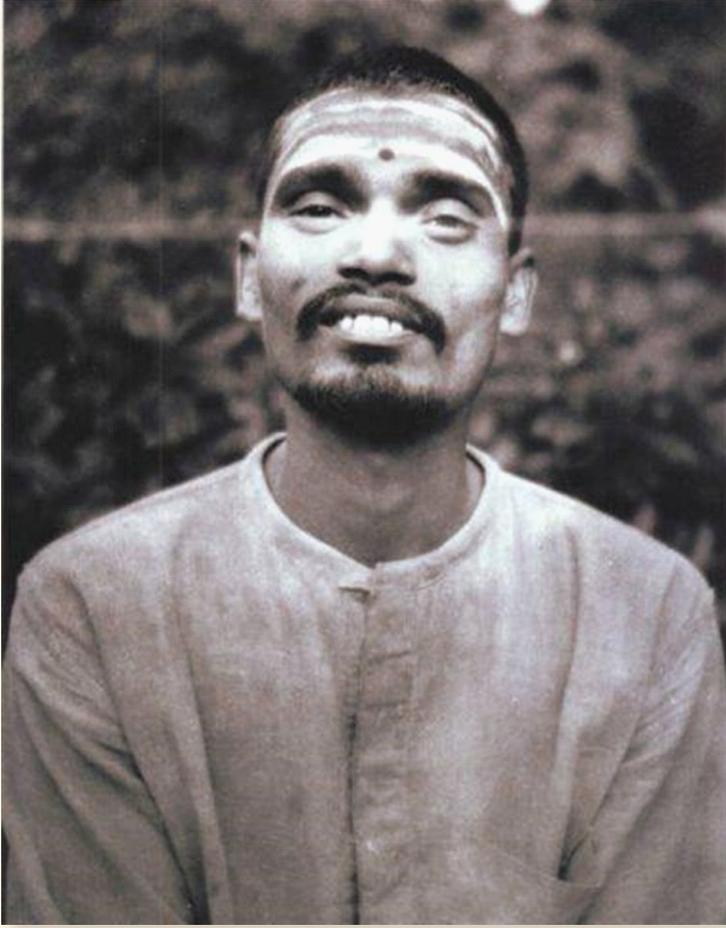
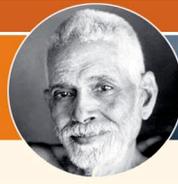
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Calendar of Ashram Events

3rd Feb (Fri) Pradosham
4th Feb (Sat) Punarvasu/Full Moon
5th Feb (Sun) Full Moon/Chinnaswami Day
7th Feb (Tue) Swami Rajeswarananda Day
18th Feb (Sat) Mahasivaratri/Pradosham
3rd Mar (Fri) Punarvasu
4th Mar (Sat) Pradosham

6th Mar (Mon) Full Moon
12th Mar (Sun) Sundaram Iyer Day
17th Mar (Fri) Sri Vidya Havan
19th Mar (Sun) Pradosham
22nd Mar (Wed) Telugu New Year
30th Mar (Thu) Punarvasu
18th April (Tues) Bhagavan's 73rd Aradhana





IN PROFILE

Sri Sadhu Om

It is rare to encounter a devotee who excels simultaneously in devotion and scholarly erudition. But Sadhu Om's poems of devotion were known for their depth of feeling, while his scholarly work, mastery of the Tamil language, and understanding of advaitic teaching revealed a keen philosophical mind. From an early age, Sadhu Om demonstrated an ardent spiritual inclination. In his teen years he immersed himself in the books of Ramakrishna and had a 'vision of Sri Ramakrishna, beaming with a divine smile and radiance'¹.

¹ *Sri Sadhu Om Birth Centenary Souvenir*, 'Sadhu Om: A Brief Life History', p. 1.

Born the second of four sons in January 1922 on Arudra Darshan Day², the auspicious day of Lord Nataraja, the child was fittingly named Natarajan. His family hailed from a village just 3 kms from the *mahakshetra* of Tanjore. Janaki Matha lived nearby in Ganapathi Nagar, and Natarajan would later spend time at her house/ashram.

From the age of fourteen Natarajan composed and sang verses in praise of Lord Muruga. Later, he wrote hundreds of songs in praise of Janaki Matha. His outpourings were so prolific and his devotion so robust that he earned the moniker, *Mathadasan*. Janaki Matha became his guide and inspiration, and he followed her wherever she went. In time he became editor of the Ashram's journal *Arulpatrikai*, centred on Janaki Matha's life. All this took place in the years before he met Bhagavan.³

Janaki Matha's story has relevance here. She had profound spiritual experiences living as a housewife *cum* sadhika in Tanjore and as she pursued her sadhana amid household routines, she noticed the changes going on within her born of an intensive prayer schedule. One day she had a vision of a giant serpent who vowed to 'touch her' in her thirtieth year. When the appointed time arrived, however, the event unfolded in an unexpected way. The 'touch' left her unable to walk and physically debilitated. She was so ill-affected that her husband, Dr. Ganapathi, feared for her life. Every medical intervention proved fruitless. At last, the doctor took his wife to Bhagavan Ramana. It was only Bhagavan who could cure her of this serious spiritual condition.⁴ This all took place in the mid-1930s, and Janaki Matha became an ardent devotee of Ramana Maharshi.

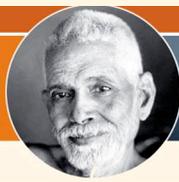
By the time young Natarajan arrived on the scene in 1944, all Mathaji's concerns had been resolved. In his search for a guru, he had gone to Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai where he met the Math's President. Detecting the youngster's spiritual fervour, the President suggested he visit Sri Ramana Maharshi. When Natarajan inquired about Ramana in Tanjore, he learned that Janaki Matha

² 12th January 1922, to Pakkiri Swamy and Kalimuthambal in Punnai Nal, near Tanjore.

³ G. Swaminathan, son of Dr. C. S. Ganapathi Iyer and Janaki Matha (see *Saranagati*, March 2019, pp. 5-6).

⁴ Perhaps a kundalini disorder.





was regularly visiting Sri Ramansramam. At the feet of Janaki Matha, Natarajan came to see that devotion to her invariably included devotion to Bhagavan Ramana. She was thus the go-between, a stepping-stone to his true sadguru whom he had yet to meet face to face. If over time Natarajan wrote dozens of devotional songs in praise of Janaki Matha, some of these songs would eventually be laid at the feet of the Maharshi, dedicated in his name. did Janaki Matha see any contradiction in this? None whatsoever. She knew where things stood, and she knew the greatness of Bhagavan. She merely assisted Natarajan in coming to Bhagavan. As for Natarajan, he was looking for his way and Janaki Matha helped him to find it.

Natarajan first heard the recitations of Bhagavan's works at Janaki Matha's house/ashram. His natural gift for Tamil prosody permitted him to savour the subtleties and depth of Bhagavan's verses, which have evaded so many Tamil speaking devotees over the years. Once when Natarajan heard *Aksharamanamalai* being recited, he was so taken by the elegance and cogency of these lines from Bhagavan that he promptly went home and memorised all 108 verses. The next day he returned to Janaki Ma and recited them from memory before her. She informed him that she would be going to Ramanasramam the following week and invited him to join. The moment he had been waiting for had at last come and the departure from Tanjore took place as planned on 6th July 1946. Natarajan, full of expectation and excitement, arrived at the Darshan Hall of Ramanasramam. He later described the experience this way:

When I entered the hall, I wanted to see Bhagavan, but I only saw a sofa and no one sitting on it. I was surprised to see, however, that everyone else was doing namaskarams towards that sofa. When I was hesitating whether to do namaskarams, I began to notice the vague outline of a human figure sitting on the sofa. At once I prostrated. When I got up, I saw that vague figure slowly solidifying and becoming clear. Only then was I able to recognise it as Bhagavan.⁵

The Koel Song

The following morning, Natarajan sang Bhagavan a song entitled *Kuyil Vidu Thoothu* ('A Message Sent by Koel', later titled, *Kuyilodu Kooral*). The Koel (*Eudynamis*) is a bird of the cuckoo family which makes its unique calls heard in the early morning at first light. Natarajan started singing the song with great feeling before the Master, but the recitation was soon interrupted by tears of emotion. The scene was reminiscent of Muruganar's first meeting with Bhagavan in September 1923 when the newly arrived devotee was unable to recite for Bhagavan his first poetic offering, the *Desika Padikam* which he had just composed that morning in the Big Temple. As before, Bhagavan took the paper from the poet, this time the young Natarajan, and read it himself. Though he corrected a few grammatical errors, the extent of the boy's gift was immediately apparent to him. Bhagavan then asked the young man to take his verses to Muruganar who was living in 'Palakkotthu', as if to say to Muruganar, "See, here is the boy you were looking for!" With this 'letter of introduction' from the Master, this youngster from Tanjore was immediately in

⁵ From an interview in *Arunachala Ramana* magazine, reproduced on David Godman's blog.

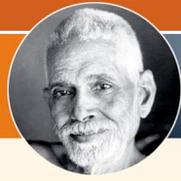
Bhagavan's Handwriting: Muruganar's 'Decad of Miracle' (v. 7)

வம்ப விழ்மலர் கொண்டருச் சித்திலென்
வழுத்திலென் வணங்கில்லென்
செம்ப தத்துணை சிந்தனை செய்கிலென்
சீர்பெறச் சிவஞம
நம்பி நாடொறு நமவென் லோதிலெ
னயந்துவேங் கடதேவ
னம்ப லத்தெனை யாண்டுகொண் டருளிய
வற்புத மறியேனே. (எ)

Vam-bavizh malar kondu aru-chichi-kilen/Vazhit-tilen vana-ngilen
Chem-padat tunai chin-tanai sei-gilen/Seer-pera siva naama
Nambi naal-toru nama-vena odilen/Nayandu Venkata devan
Anba lattu-enai aandu-kondu aruliya/Arpudam ari-yene.

I have not showered you with ever-lasting fragrant flowers, neither worshipped nor prostrated before you. I have neither meditated on your golden feet nor had the faith to perpetually chant "Om Namah Shivaya" to attain goodness. Despite my conduct, the compassionate Venkata Deva, ruled me graciously in the "space of consciousness". How did this miracle happen? —





good standing with Muruganar, and the two formed a close bond that would last thirty years.

Those who were present in the hall the day before knew why Bhagavan wanted Muruganar to see these lines. The previous day Bhagavan and Muruganar had discussed current Tamil poets. Muruganar lamented that there were none of merit and attributed this deficit to lack of good education. Bhagavan insisted that poetic ability was not cultivated by conventional education but spontaneously “sprang up from within by Divine Grace”. Bhagavan said that sages like “Sambandhar, Arunagirinaathar and Ramalinga had their poetic faculties opened up with the Grace of the Divine alone, and shone as Divine Poets”, even though they had no formal education.

Sri Bhagavan had gone on to say that even in present times, there would be young poets with little education, and yet, with the inner muse opened by Divine Grace. Relying on the mere fundamentals of ‘grammar and syntax’, they would begin to shine as great poets. According to Bhagavan’s words the day

before, a poet prodigy without any prior training or formal education sat in their midst.⁶

For his part, Natarajan said of this encounter in the Hall, “After coming to Bhagavan [this first day], there was a vast change and improvement in my poetic flow and style.”⁷

Breakfast

Two weeks later, Natarajan returned to Sri Ramanasramam. Upon his arrival, he sat on a rock a little way up Arunachala composing verses on Bhagavan under the title, *Vetkai* (‘Divine Longing’). Suddenly he realised it was time for breakfast and hastened to the dining hall. The encounter was described this way:

He entered the dining hall and seeing Bhagavan eating there, he sat in front of Bhagavan, and started to eat. When Sri Bhagavan finished, he got up from his seat. Seeing this, Natarajan also got up, although he had not finished eating. Sri Bhagavan looked at him and said, Vandha Velaiyaip Paar (‘Look after the business for which you have come’). Natarajan then sat back

⁶ Birth Centenary Souvenir, p. 2.

⁷ Sadhu Om Interview.

Events in Tiruvannamalai: Sadhu Om Birth Centenary and Kumbhabhishekam



On 5th and 6th January 2023 devotees of the Sadhu Om Kudil of Tiruvannamalai celebrated Mahakumbhabhishekam at the shrines of Sadhu Om and Thinnai Swami. Sadhu Om devotees worldwide pitched in to carry out renovations of the Sadhu Om Ashram. Sri Ramanasramam President Dr. Venkat S. Ramanan and other

Ramana devotees were invited to attend the event and commemorate the centenary of Sadhu Om’s birth. Purnahurthi took place between 9-10 am on the morning of the 6th of January, followed by Mangala Deeparadhana. Afterwards, prasadam was served for all. RMCL Ramananjali singers performed in the afternoon. —





down, but since he had gotten up while eating, he was reluctant to continue eating. Bhagavan washed his hands and was walking alongside the dining hall. Seeing that Natarajan was reluctant to eat, he repeated the words, Vandha Velaiyaip Paar. Hearing these words, Natarajan started eating again. As Sri Bhagavan went near the entrance and was about to pass over the threshold, Natarajan turned back and looked at Sri Bhagavan. Sri Bhagavan also looked at Natarajan and uttered the same words, Vandha Velaiyaip Paar, for the third time. It was then that the youngster realised that the words were Sri Bhagavan's upadesa, to look after the business for which he was born into this world.⁸

Mudaliar refers to this story on Natarajan's next visit:

This morning, the young man Natarajan of Tanjore arrived. He brought gifts from Janaki Ammal, a walking stick with a silver knob and a pair of wooden slippers with silver gilt. Bhagavan said, "I shall touch them and give them back. Let her have them for her puja." So saying, Bhagavan inspected them and gave them back to the attendant. Later, I asked Natarajan and found out that the allusion in the seventh stanza of his Vetkai [refers to Bhagavan telling him] to 'attend to the business for which you have come'.⁹

Perhaps Bhagavan had intended this phrase casually to refer to the meal. And yet, nothing is casual for Bhagavan. When Bhagavan had uttered the phrase three times, needless to say, Natarajan took it to heart.

Natarajan began to visit the Ashram regularly. Each time he came he brought freshly written verses in praise of Bhagavan. While singing or reciting his

⁸ Birth Centenary Souvenir, p. 3; see also <http://arunachalasamudra.org>
⁹ Day By Day, 11-8-1946.

compositions, he would often fall into a swoon:

Today Natarajan read out his Vetkai, consisting of ten verses. I had asked him to read it yesterday but when he [sang] his Kuyilodu Kooral, he so lost himself that he forgot all about my request. So he read out Vetkai today. He also read out another song composed by him today in which he has embodied Janaki Ammal's request sent through him to Bhagavan. He told Bhagavan, "I have already shown it to Muruganar." Bhagavan perused it and made one small correction.¹⁰

Leaving His Job

As the frequency of Natarajan's visits to Bhagavan increased, his job at the Collector's Office in Tanjore became less interesting for him. He wanted to resign but when he went to Bhagavan along with Janaki Matha and sought his permission to resign, Bhagavan remarked, "What, is all this required?" This was taken to mean, "Not now." So, Natarajan waited.¹¹

One year passed and, on another visit, Natarajan drafted a letter of resignation and handed it over to Bhagavan. Bhagavan read it and gave it back to Natarajan without making any comment. Natarajan took this as Bhagavan's assent. Once having left his job, he was free to come and visit the Master anytime and stay for longer periods to take up what he believed was his true calling, namely, to sit at the feet of Bhagavan. —

(to be continued)

¹⁰ Day by Day, 12-8-1946; also see Birth Centenary Souvenir, p. 4.

¹¹ Birth Centenary Souvenir, p. 4.

Sri Bhagavan's Ayurvedic Recipes: Inji Rasayanam

Inji Rasāyanam

iñjirasā yaṇaṅsōmbu jādik kāyu
mēlañcī rakampoḍiyov vorupa lantāṇ
añjeṇuñchī ṅākkāṇḍoṇ ḍraraippalañ cērt
tañcelumic campazhaccāṭ trālrāittē
pañcadā raiyuntēṇum palamum mūṇḍru
palanāṅgiñ jiyumbillai yākkik kūṭṭik
koñjamāyc cuṇḍaiyuruk koḷḷa vaṅgi
kollumajīr ṇamvāyu manda mellām
iñji rasāyaṇam sōmbu jātikkāyum
ēlam siragampoḍi ovvoru palamtāṇ

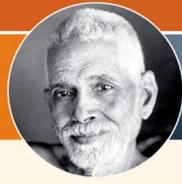
añjeṇum chīṅākkāṇḍu'ōṇḍru araip-palam cērttu
añju elumiccam pazhac-cāṭṭrāl arāittē
pañcadārai-yum tēṇum palamum mūṇḍru
pala-nāṅgu iñjiyum billai-yākkik kūṭṭik
koñjamāyc cuṇḍai uruk-koḷḷa vaṅgi
kollum ajiṅṅam-vāyu mandam ellām

Ingredients: anise (fennel seed: 35 gms); nutmeg (35 gms); cardamom (35 gms); cumin seeds (35 gms); china candy (17.5 gms); sugar (105 gms); honey (105 gms); ginger (140 gms); juice from 5 lemons

Preparation: Mix well and grind.

Benefits: 1/4 teaspoon for indigestion or flatulence.





Events in Sri Ramanasramam: Bhagavan's 143rd Jayanti

Sri Bhagavan's 143rd Jayanti celebrations started early on the morning of 7th January with Nadaswaram. Dhanurmasa Puja and Vishnu Sahasranama parayana took place in the early morning, followed by a special Tamil parayana and Mahanyasam Rudrajapam. Puja and abhishekam to Sri Ramaneswara Mahalingam culminated in Deeparadhana at 10.30 am. The afternoon programme on the 7th included a special abhishekam and puja in Bhagavan's Shrine. The Ashram kitchen served bhiksha to some 10,000 during the celebration. —





RAMANA REFLECTIONS

Wisdom of the Ether Resonance and the Harmonics of Being

When devotees talk about the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana, they look to self-inquiry almost exclusively and rarely take up the theme of Bhagavan's surrender. Perhaps for them surrender is thought to be more difficult to practice than enquiry. Or maybe surrender is not seen by them as a practice at all, but rather as the fruit of practice. The difficulty in understanding how we develop a mind and heart that are surrendered is knowing what surrender is and how we go in search of it. But suppose we came to see that surrender is really the natural state of the heart? What if we came to see that all the created order, the entirety of the natural world is governed by a single principle, a common essence that permeates

the whole? What if surrender were not different from the Self? And what if the wisdom of the Self were nothing more than the perfect resonance and harmonization of all things, animate and inanimate, divine and mundane, born of non-resistance? What would this look like?

An image from the *Atharva Veda* made its way into the 3rd-century *Avatamsaka Sutra* describing the mysterious interpenetration of the external world and the internal realm of the mind:

Far away in the heavenly abode of the great god Indra, there is a wonderful net which has been hung by some cunning artificer in such a manner that it stretches out infinitely in all directions. In accordance with the extravagant tastes of deities, the artificer has hung a single glittering jewel in each intersection of the net, and since the net itself is infinite in dimension, the jewels are infinite in number. There hang the jewels, glittering like stars in the first magnitude, a wonderful sight to behold. If we now arbitrarily select one of these jewels for inspection, we will discover that in its polished surface there are reflected all the other jewels in the net, infinite in number.

Now consider for a moment what is being offered here. The jewels in the net are the disparate entities in the world, including individual human hearts, each reflecting the life of the hearts of others, each containing a perfect reflection of the other. Each jewel is infused by the light of the Self which is the whole. But this 'infusion' is not separate from the whole, for each reflection *IS* the whole.

Bhagavan tells us that all the material world is merely Consciousness. But since form and consciousness are just words, terms relative to one another pointing to the same ultimate reality, what we call It doesn't really matter as much as knowing it first-hand. In earlier generations, this vision of the cosmos as a *field of knowing* was called *chidakasa*. Bhagavan most often called It *the Self*. Here we are reminded of lines from *Talks* where Bhagavan says:

A mirror, as we know it, is an insentient object which reflects light. What corresponds to a mirror in an individual? The light of the Self-luminous Self is reflected on the Mahatattva. The reflected light is the mind ether or the pure mind... Chidakasa (chit ether) is Pure Knowledge. It is the source of the mind. At the moment of rising, the mind is only light; afterwards the thought "I am this" arises; this 'I'-thought forms the jiva and the world. The first light is the pure mind, the mind ether or Isvara. Its





*modes manifest as objects. Because it contains all these objects within itself, it is called mind ether.*¹

Indra's Net is simultaneously a cosmological vision and an empirical description of the world. Strange as it may seem, modern scientific descriptions of the cosmos, what Bhagavan calls *bhootakasa*, begin to resemble the image from the *Atharva Veda*. Consider the recent discovery by NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory of a vacuum-pressure wave originating in a super-massive black hole in the Perseus cluster of galaxies 250 million light-years from Earth. The wave has been traveling through outer space for 2.5 billion years i.e., more than half the age of the earth. At a frequency fifty-seven octaves below middle C, it is well below the threshold of human hearing but nonetheless carries a lot of information about its place of origin.²

While the illustration from Indra's Net is just a symbol, it shows that the ancients were on to something. Chandra's pressure wave is one tiny example of the vast flow of information circulating in the frictionless medium of our cosmos, revealing a multi-directional information field. The medium is so frictionless that even the pressure waves of our very first cries as new-born infants and, for that matter, every audible sound that has passed our lips since, are still being transmitted, however faintly, throughout the cosmos. Therefore, the entire universe is brimming with *wave memory*,³ i.e. what Bhagavan calls the reflected light of the 'mirror'. Every event in the present universe

1 *Talks*, §569 and §589.

2 See *Science and the Akashic Field*, Ervin Laszlo, p. 50. See also the Frankfurt School sociologist Hartmut Rosa in his 2016 'Resonance: A Sociology of the Relationship to the World' (*Resonanz: Eine Soziologie der Weltbeziehung*)

3 To better understand *wave memory*, consider how the waves of a ship transfer information. By measuring waves from a ship that passed hours earlier (even at a great distance), we can know the ship's size, weight, speed, direction, and time of travel. A submarine conveys information in every direction. In wave memory, there is no pure place of the observer who does not simultaneously affect the field. The ocean is a relatively frictionless medium and preserves its information for long periods. If it were not for coastlines, wind and ocean currents, scientists tell us, the information would be preserved indefinitely. The cosmos by contrast is perfectly frictionless and thus its *wave memory* is virtually perfect (see Laszlo, p. 53).

has been faithfully recorded, not least of all, its first moment, namely, the primordial eruption of the Big Bang.⁴

If the ancient vision of Indra's Net is relevant to modern science, what would the 'reflected light' look like in contemporary scientific language?

It was the Nobel prize-winning Danish physicist Niels Bohr in the early 20th century who laid the ground for quantum theory and non-locality, that is, quantum objects communicating with each other at a distance. How did the idea of non-locality emerge? Observational physicists found that every measurement of a particle yielded a complementary outcome in the measurement on its companion particle. Every action on a particle seemed to have an instantaneous effect on its companion.⁵

Non-locality exemplifies the metaphor of Indra's Net as linking the various 'jewels' that make up the (physical) universe. The non-local connection between particles, irrespective of the distance between them, is predictable and instantaneous. One physicist describes it this way:

*The essence of non-locality is unmediated action-at-a-distance. A non-local interaction links up one location with another without crossing space, without decay, and without delay.*⁶

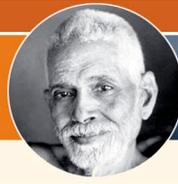
To adequately apply the metaphor of Indra's Net to the natural order, the non-locality of a quantum field should have some correlation, at least metaphorically, at the macro-scale of biological life. Hence, we might ask if there is such a thing as biological 'non-locality' in information fields of knowing among organisms

4 The signature of the Big Bang is preserved 14.7 billion years later in various ways, not least of all by the ongoing expansion of the universe as well as cosmic microwave background radiation which registers a temperature of 4 degrees Kelvin throughout space (UT Austin, Astronomy Dept).

5 Thus, causing its wave-function to collapse into a complementary state. It has been speculated that quantum nature's non-locality is born of a strange kind of topography in the universe (UT Austin, Astronomy Dept).

6 This comment from Nick Herbert. It should be added that non-locality is the basis for 'quantum teleportation', or what in computer science is called quantum computing, namely, an instant transfer of information among remote particles without requiring they be proximate with one another (see Laszlo, p. 82).





and the inanimate world?⁷ Bhagavan's remarks would suggest a resounding, 'yes'. The German theoretician Marco Bischof comments:

*Quantum mechanics has established the primacy of the inseparable whole. For this reason, the basis of the new biophysics must be the insight into the fundamental interconnectedness within the organism as well as between organisms, and that of the organism with the environment.*⁸

Holograms and Entrainment

The British physicist David Bohm made use of the hologram as a metaphor for what he calls the "implicate order". In a hologram, each region of a photograph contains within it "the whole three-dimensional image, which can be viewed from various perspectives. Each region contains a whole and undivided image."⁹ This is precisely what Indra's Net describes, namely, that the light reflected in any jewel of the net reflects all the others. Bhagavan takes up this discussion and asks rhetorically:

*What is [this] world? It is objects distributed through space. Who [or what] comprehends [them]? The mind. Is not the mind which comprehends space itself space (akasa)? Space is physical ether (bhootakasa). The mind is mental ether (manakasa) which is contained in transcendental ether (chidakasa). The mind is thus the ether principle (akasa tattva). Being the principle of knowledge, it is identified with ether metaphysically. Considering it to be ether, there's no difficulty in reconciling the apparent contradiction. Pure mind is ether. The dynamic and dull aspects (rajas and tamas) operate as gross objects. [Thus,] the whole universe is only mental.*¹⁰

From an empirical point of view, resonance and communication at a distance between organisms and inanimate objects can be thought of in various ways. One is entrainment, for example, the way that singing a *Sa*, a *Re* or a *Ga* at a distance causes the string of an instrument tuned to that key to vibrate on its own.

In 1665 the Dutch physicist Christian Huygens studied entrainment and 'phase syncopation', experimenting

⁷ The biologist Rupert Sheldrake suggests that memory is inherent in the natural order and that "natural systems ... inherit a collective memory from all previous things of their kind." Sheldrake proposes that such memory is also responsible for telesomatic interconnections between organisms much like non-local communication between particles. (*Morphic Resonance: The Nature of Formative Causation*).

⁸ Laszlo, p. 53.

⁹ David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*.

¹⁰ *Talks*, §451.



with pendulum clocks. He set them in motion and found upon returning to his lab the following morning that their pendulums had synchronized. This is accounted for in conventional scientific terms by the *small amounts of energy that are transferred between the two systems when they are out of phase such as to produce negative feedback*.¹¹

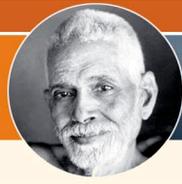
Neuropsychologists studying brainwave entrainment point to the acoustical resonance of participants at a music event. Group entrainment as a form of social resonance means brain patterns of large groups of people synchronise. Take evening Tamil *parayana* at Ramanasramam as an example. Participants synchronise their recitation by rhythm and harmony.¹² Reciting in unison bonds those gathered and strengthens the cohesiveness of the community¹³. But entrainment

¹¹ Stated in more detail: *As the two machines assume a more stable phase relationship, the amount of energy gradually reduces to zero, with systems of greater frequency slowing down, and the other speeding up. A modern example comes from the laundromat where the tumbling clothes-drying machines synchronize their rotations (see Wikipedia for 'Entrainment')*.

¹² As well as by deeply held feelings regarding the content of the texts recited, namely, Bhagavan's verses, what social psychologists call 'narrative empathy'.

¹³ And perhaps we can talk of entrainment without any salient external cues such as that which meditators in the Old Hall expe-





is measurable. Studies show that couples married for three decades or more exhibit pronounced brainwave entrainment as do identical twins. The entrainment in identical twins is so pronounced that they can often sense the pain or trauma of the other at a distance. When pairs of identical twins were rigorously monitored for brain waves, blood pressure, and galvanic skin response, and one of the unsuspecting twins was subjected to a loud alarm fitted to the back of his or her chair, the other registered the resulting shock even though he or she was closeted some distance away in a soundproof room.¹⁴ How do we account for such occurrences? Bhagavan comments:

*[Whereas] physical ether which contains objects, mind ether contains thoughts. Just as physical ether accommodating the gross objects of the universe is itself the content of the mind ether, so the latter is the content of Chit ether. Chit remains as Pure Knowledge ... Ether denotes not only the insentient physical ether but also Pure Knowledge. Knowledge does not [merely] consist in knowing objects, which is just relative knowledge, but knowledge in its purity, remaining alone, one, unique [is] transcendent Light.*¹⁵

The human heart is vast and mysterious and there may be more to our world than meets the eye. Studies show—and we know from our own experience—that unassisted communication at a distance takes place

rience, i.e., a shared sense of ‘stillness in the hall’, possibly linked ‘to collective cuing’ to subtle ambient sounds.

14 Guy Playfair, from his book *Twin Telepathy*.

15 *Talks*, §589.

on a daily basis. Consider something as quotidian as the communication between humans and their pets. In one hundred filmed tests of pets and their owners, the former spent far more time at the window when its owner was on their way home than when they were not. Additional tests had the owner travel home in a taxi or some other unfamiliar vehicle at randomly selected times to rule out the possibility that the pet was reacting to familiar car sounds or routines.¹⁶ While these findings are not surprising, still, they challenge conventional assumptions we have about the world.

Bhagavan’s Surrender

Now, if humans and other living creatures are (unconsciously) participating in vast fields of knowing—*manakasa* and *chidakasa*—replete with multidirectional transfers of information of every imaginable sort, still, what does this have to do with our starting point, namely, Bhagavan’s surrender, and how can it help us in our walk on the path?

Surrender is wisdom and freedom. Non-surrender is groping after something one wants but does not have, on the one hand, and resisting something one does not like, on the other. Mostly, any obstacle born of the small self is rooted in non-acceptance of the conditions one is facing at any given moment. If there are no wants and no complaints whatsoever, then we are in

16 Rupert Sheldrake, *Dogs That Know When Their Owners Are Coming Home*.

Events in Sri Ramanasramam: Sankranti Pongal



On Sunday 15th January devotees gathered in the Mother’s Shrine to celebrate Sankranti Pongal or Uttarayana, coinciding with the transition of the Sun into Makara rasi which marks the end of winter of decreasing daylight to the lengthening of the days as the sun moves toward spring and summer. —





Bhagavan's surrender and for the moment our fierce clinging to the small self diminishes. Here is where the language of *chidakasa* and resonant fields enters the picture. In non-resistance, the vast trove of universal 'memory'—what tradition calls intuitive wisdom—is made available to us. Non-resistance opens a whole new field of knowing, namely, the inner world of Bhagavan's self-inquiry.¹⁷ Practicing non-resistance means greeting each moment of resistance with patience and empathy, carefully making a mental note of episodes of the least form of non-surrender and reactivity as and when they arise without trying to make them be other than what they are. By patiently inquiring

¹⁷ Sadhu Om once said, "Bhagavan taught two paths, self-enquiry and self-surrender. Just as it is natural for a man to walk on two legs, so it is natural [...] to follow these two paths." (Interview from *Arunachala Ramana*.)

into them, we come to understand something of their nature and their causes and begin to become more friendly toward them, slowly assimilating them into the heart. By this process we discover what we are and what we are not, learn to differentiate wisdom and delusion, come to know ourselves, and gradually free ourselves from long-standing afflictions born of confusion. What is the confusion? It is the *samsaric* assumption we carry with us day in and day out which posits an ego in a body, Bhagavan tells us. Upon experiencing the cosmos as a vast harmonised resonant field which includes all the manifest forms of *bhootakasa*¹⁸, we come to see that we are bound up with one another and with the greater inanimate whole, and that this thing I call 'myself' is not separate from any other 'self'. The assumption that we are a *jiva* in a body situated in a world is upside-down, says Bhagavan. Rather, the world and the body are contained *within Us*, and the jewels of the net and the light which passes through them are a seamless whole.

Bhagavan never spoke of resonant fields, but he did speak of *chidakasa*, as we saw above. And even if Bhagavan never gave lengthy explanations in how to cultivate surrender, when we apprentice ourselves to Mother Nature, as did Dattatreya with his '24 gurus'¹⁹, we discover first-hand the *dharma* of flawless non-resistance. Thus what had been alien and intangible becomes familiar and intimate. In time, we discover that Mother Nature is here to help us. In Her boundless mercy, she bears us up, holds us in a perfect embrace and makes us one with Herself.

¹⁸ Including the immense neuronal network of the human brain.
¹⁹ *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Canto 11.

Ashram Gardens: The Ashoka Tree



The Ashoka Tree (*Saraca asoca*), named after King Ashoka, is an evergreen loved for its bright foliage and fragrant flowers. Traditionally planted in royal gardens, its blooms can be very dense and lush and have medicinal properties. In the *Ramayana*, Hanuman first meets Sita in a garden of Ashoka trees. It was the Ashoka that shaded and protected the Buddha's mother at the time of giving birth to the Buddha. The Ashram Ashoka Tree behind the Ashram Archives flowered recently—





Thus the *field of knowing* is the *field of being*, and fractal patterns common throughout the natural and Divine orders abide within us, allowing us to sketch a map of the territory ahead. What is the territory ahead? It is just surrendering to things as they are, Bhagavan tells us. Surrender alone can unite us with the disparate fragments of the heart and too, with the fragments of the hearts of others. If it engenders our healing, it likewise assists theirs by virtue of the budding fulfilment within us, the source of blessing and benediction rippling out into the collective. Bhagavan tells us it all begins with seeing clearly and letting go:

*Do not delude yourself by imagining the source to be some God outside you. Your source is within you. Give yourself up to that. That means that you should seek the source and merge in it. Because you imagine yourself to be [apart from] it, you raise the question "Where is the source?" ... [But] can one surrender oneself and yet retain one's individuality? ... Would God—Pure Consciousness—not ask: "Who are you apart from Me that you would presume to serve Me?... It is enough that one surrenders oneself. Surrender is to give oneself up to the original cause of one's being."*²⁰ —

(to be continued)

20 *Talks*, §208.

Obituary: Smt. Nirmalaben Mehta



On 14th April 1950, a yet to be married 18-year-old girl in a small village near Navsari in south Gujarat saw a very bright shiny object crossing the night sky. Two weeks later she got married and as she entered the house of her new family, her mother-in-law pointed to a framed picture, and told her, "This is your husband's Guru. Please seek His Blessings." It was the famous Mani portrait of our Bhagavan. Only then did she realise that the shooting star that she had seen that night coincided with Bhagavan's Mahasamadhi. The picture in the frame had been cut out from a newspaper and was the only picture of Bhagavan in the family for many decades.

After retirement she and her husband built a house near the Ashram where they lived for many years. Due to age, they returned to Baroda a few years back, but her devotion never wavered. Though she never discussed Bhagavan, occasionally pearls would escape her mouth. Once she casually mentioned that practically every night, she dreamed of Bhagavan. Due to her devotion, poetry started flowing out from her and she wrote and sang many songs on Bhagavan. A book was published in recent years and devotees in the USA made a high-quality CD of her songs. Though she never felt the need to read books by or on Bhagavan, the Master had claimed her even before she knew Bhagavan, like so many devotees.

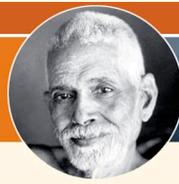
Smt. Nirmalaben Mehta passed away amid the sound of the family's recitation of *Arunachala Siva* and *Ramana Sat Guru*, merging at the feet of Arunachala on 13th December 2022. Like a true devotee, she lived a humble self-effacing life, loving and gentle. She will be missed by devotees and family members alike. —

Events in Sri Ramanasramam: Samudram Gosala Maattu Pongal



On Maattu Pongal following the main celebrations at the Ashram, devotees gathered at the Samudram Gosala (the Ashram's Old Age Home for elderly cows near the Samudram sluice) to offer puja and feed the resident cows pongal and bananas. —





Bhagavan's 143rd Global Online Jayanti Celebrations



On Sunday 29th January devotees from around the world gathered on Zoom to celebrate Bhagavan's 143rd Jayanti. Organised by Arunachala Ashrama NY, satsang groups around the globe participated, including the Ramana Maharshi Foundation UK, as well as groups from Melbourne, Georgia, North Carolina, Paris, Los Angeles, Seattle, Hawaii, Hyderabad, San Francisco, Ohio, Tampa Bay, and the worldwide Spanish-speaking satsang.

The 12-hour programme consisted of songs and sharings by devotees from each satsang group and concluded with a talk by Sri Ramanasramam President Dr. Venkat S. Ramanan. The Ashram President spoke of Jayanti in Bhagavan's time, quoting Sri Ramana and recalled the words of Dr Melkote who in an ecstatic moment in the aftermath of treating Bhagavan for eczema in 1939, said: *I have lived to see this great marvel. Who would say he is like any of us? He condescends to be one of us and that is our great fortune. My patient is my darling and my God.*

Dr Anand concluded his talk by enumerating the many valuable undertakings of the Ashram in this centenary year, thanking devotees for their support and inviting them to remember they have a 'home away from home'. For recorded footage of the various programmes, go to: <https://youtube.com/c/ArunachalaAshrama/videos>. —

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Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Ramana Puranam Chanting for Thai Krittika

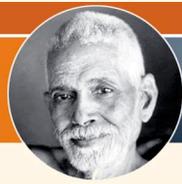


When the first edition of *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai* was published in 1933, Bhagavan likened it to *Tiruvachakam*. Muruganar realised that *Sannidhi Murai's* first chapter should have an equivalent to *Tiruvachakam's Siva Puranam*. When Muruganar had written a few lines, he was suddenly assailed by doubts regarding the appropriateness of the chapter's title, calling it *Ramana Puranam* (instead of *Siva Puranam*). Unable to settle this doubt, Muruganar laid the unfinished chapter at Bhagavan's feet. Returning to the hall that evening, Bhagavan handed over the manuscript and said, 'Have a look.' Muruganar was surprised to see that though Bhagavan had not known of his apprehensions about the title, at the top of each page Bhagavan had written the title, *Ramana Puranam*. Moreover, Bhagavan had composed additional lines and added them. When the new edition was being prepared for publication, Muruganar added his newly composed *Ramana Puranam* with a footnote saying that only a portion of this chapter had been his own work and that the rest of the lines had been composed by Bhagavan. When Bhagavan saw the footnote, he turned to Muruganar and said, 'So! Only this portion is Bhagavan's, is it?' Muruganar fell at Bhagavan's feet and sobbed, 'Bhagavan! What a grave mistake I have made! Please forgive me. It is all your work. Every single line owes its existence to your infinite grace.'

On Thai Krittika (30th January), devotees gathered in the New Hall to recite Muruganar's *Ramana Puranam* which was first recited on this day in 1938. Devotees came from Chennai to chant *Ramana Puranam* eleven times, most of which took place at Muruganar's Shrine near the Ashram's back gate. —

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Events in Sri Ramanasramam: Ramaswami Pillai and Rajeswarananda Celebrations



On Saturday 14th and on Tuesday 31st January devotees gathered at the samadhis near the back gate. On the 14th, puja was offered at the shrine of Ramaswami Pillai and on the 31st, at the shrine of Sw. Rajeswarananda. At both events, following the recitation of *Aksharamanamalai*, arathi was performed and afterward, prasad was distributed. —

Announcement: Ashram Calendar 2023



SRI RAMANASRAMAM SPECIAL DAYS 2023

Festival/Function	English Date
Bhagavan's 143rd Jayanti	07-01-2023 Saturday
Pongal	15-01-2023 Sunday
Chinnaswamigal Aradhana	05-02-2023 Sunday
Maha Sivaratri	18-02-2023 Saturday

Sundaram Iyer Day	12-03-2023	Sunday
Sri Vidya Havan	17-03-2023	Friday
Telugu New Year	22-03-2023	Wednesday
Sri Rama Navami	30-03-2023	Thursday
Tamil New Year	14-04-2023	Friday
Bhagavan's 73rd Aradhana	18-04-2023	Tuesday
Maha Puja	12-06-2023	Monday
Cow Lakshmi Day	30-06-2023	Friday
Guru Poornima	03-07-2023	Monday
Bhagavan's Advent Day	01-09-2023	Friday
Navaratri Festival commences	15-10-2023	Sunday
Saraswati Puja	23-10-2023	Monday
Vijayadasami	24-10-2023	Tuesday
Deepavali	12-11-2023	Sunday
Karthigai Festival commences	17-11-2023	Friday
Deepam	26-11-2023	Sunday
Bhagavan's 144th Jayanti	28-12-2023	Thursday

Events in Sri Ramanasramam: Sivaprakasam Pillai Day



On Thursday 12th January devotees gathered in the New Hall to sing a repertoire of verses written by Sivaprakasam Pillai. The recitation was followed by arathi and the distribution of prasad. —

