

Saranagati



SARANAGATI
SRI RAMANASRAMAM

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D. Thiyagarajan



Saranagati



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IN THIS
ISSUE

Dear Devotees,

The month of August ended in anticipation of Bhagavan's Advent Day celebrations on the 1st September.

On 27th August the Ashram dispensary hosted an all-day Ayurvedic medical camp with free treatment for devotees.

In this issue, we hear further encounters between Ella Maillart and Sri Bhagavan in the Hall. We also glimpse the life of Sri V. Venkataraman, one of Bhagavan's relatives who passed away peacefully last month as well as Sri T. K. Natarajan, son of Dr. TNK, who passed away on the 24th at the age of 88.

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

In Sri Bhagavan,
The Editorial Team

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

1st September (Sat) Bhagavan's Advent Day
6th September (Thurs) Purnavasu
13th September (Thurs) Ganesh Chaturthi
24th September (Mon) Full Moon Day
3rd October (Weds) Purnavasu
9th October (Tues) Navaratri Commences

18th October (Thurs) Saraswati Puja
19th October (Fri) Vijaya Dasami
24th October (Weds) Full Moon Day
30th October (Tues) Purnavasu
6th November (Tues) Deepavali
14th November (Weds) Kartigai Festival Flag-raising





The Long Road to Bhagavan

Tracing the Pilgrim Life of Ella Maillart (Part VI)

On the Nature of Ramana

Devotees coming to Arunachala marvelled at the mystery that is Bhagavan and asked who in fact this Ramana was? Kunjuswami, during his long years at the feet of Sri Ramana, sought to reveal this enigma in the moving stories he shared of daily life in the Master's presence—the tender gestures, the subtle caretaking, the simple ways in which Bhagavan sought the well-being of others.

Sri Ramana was an orderer of things, a restorer of the natural way, not only in human hearts but also of things in the ordinary external world. Whilst

out walking, for example, seeing something on the footpath he would pick it up and put it in its proper place while everyone else would have stepped over it. In the kitchen, when he found a mustard seed on the floor, he would retrieve it and walk over to place it in the storage bin. If someone came with bad intentions, such as the bandits who attacked the Ashram in the mid-1920s, they got no censure from him, nor did he feel any compulsion to take revenge on personal detractors. He was simply not invested in what the world had to offer, nor was he unduly disturbed by its distortions because he did not depend on it for his happiness, but drew from resources within himself.

Miraculous events in his company led devotees to ponder his nature with superlatives. In 1908, after Ganapati Muni experienced great bliss in the young sage's presence at Virupaksha Cave, he gave him an appellation reserved for the highest of beings. Calling him *Maharshi* ('Great Seer')¹ i.e. "one who transcends the mundane world through spiritual knowledge", he prefixed the name with the title *Bhagavan*, meaning the 'Blessed One'. Sri Ramana was thus linked to the luminaries of antiquity, those who had gone beyond worldly understanding to become liberated souls working on creation's behalf.

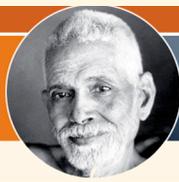
Carl Jung, who Ella met in 1939 just before leaving for India², later came to India himself. Though he missed the opportunity to see Bhagavan Ramana, he characterised the Sage's nature in most eloquent, if not cryptic phrasings: "Sri Ramana is a true son of the Indian earth ... the whitest spot in a white space. What we find in the life and teachings of Sri Ramana is the purest of India; with its breath of world-liberated and liberating humanity, it is a chant of millenniums."³

¹ *Rshi* also means 'to flow'.

² I called on C. G. Jung [and] offered him one of my books. He looked at it and asked: "Why do you travel?" "To meet those who know how to live peacefully" was the first answer that came to my lips. But the great man had looked at me with suspicion; did I look like a restless lunatic who wants to be cured? I felt giddy at the science he displayed in analysing the recesses of what he called "the Old Man's mind" or in describing the supra-conscious heights he was going to study systematically. I asked if such research were not dangerous. Years later, when I met spiritual masters in India, I was to remember his answer, and the glance of those small piercing eyes: "Yes, it is dangerous. But he who wants to know must take into account the possibility of going mad." [The Cruel Way, p. 34.]

³ Carl Jung in his forward to *Sri Ramana and His Message to Modern Man*.





Later devotees would speculate about Sri Ramana's nature. Some believed he was an incarnation of Lord Subramanya, the six-faced yogi and reconciler of all opposites; others said he was Lord Dakshinamurti, Siva as the 'south-facing' adi-guru, who gave spiritual instruction through a silent gaze. Since *dakshinya* also means 'compassion', others likened Bhagavan to the Divine Mother who comes in many forms and has compassion as her chief attribute.

Devotees saw the Sage as the divine in human form, one who came to walk as man on earth yet all the while somehow existing outside of time. Once a young medical student sat by while surgery was performed on the Master by doctors from Madras, and witnessed a large excision of tissue from his arm in a major procedure which took place, according to Bhagavan's wishes, without the use of a general anaesthesia as is prescribed for such major procedures. She watched with great attention for the inevitable pain accompanying such an operation, but after an initial 'ouch', was amazed to see Bhagavan make casual jokes to lighten the tension of those who looked on in disbelief. The young student came out from the surgery remarking that in this dispensary sat none other than God Himself.

Ella and the other foreign visitors who came to sit at Bhagavan's feet were likewise bewildered by the many unusual events they witnessed in his presence, and even more compellingly, the things they experienced in the silent chambers of their hearts. They sometimes chatted discreetly about the nature of this elderly, loin-cloth-clad South Indian saint, conversations which Ella frequently recorded:

*Hague says Bhagavan is not human, not like us. Like a mirror, he reflects who talks to him, cries with the weeping widow, laughs with children. He has no individuality.*⁴

The subject was picked up again on another occasion at Major Chadwick's. Ella writes:

The sub-registrar [said] we cannot conceive the state Bhagavan is in. When he dies, he will not change from what he is now.

The fact that we need him and ask him questions produces

⁴ Ella Maillart fonds, Ms. fr. 7107/2-8, Carnets I à VII, feuillet 120. Bhagavan was also the only one who knew how to deal with the sorrows of Mrs Noye, the American whose husband had abandoned her.



Woman and baby, Tiruvannamalai, 1940 (photo by Ella)

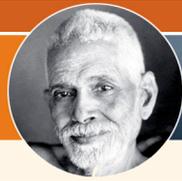
*reflexes in him so that he deals with us. He talks when somebody has come who wants to hear him intensely ... He is like the exposed photographic plate — it has seen the light, [which has been imprinted on it] forever, and will not move, whereas [we who are still lost] in obscurity keep on getting impressed by this and that. Until the final stage there will always be [the] danger of [falling away] again. Only when a pearl is polished can nothing more make a scratch on it.*⁵

In the same encounter, Munagala Venkataramayya makes an objection to the line of thinking pursued by the others, with he and Ella agreeing on a different tack: *Munagala: It [should] be stated differently. We and our universes are in him. We are the passing shadows on the screen whether we mean our thoughts, bodies or universes. He cannot change.*

Ella: Therefore, it is only our mind which tells us that throughout millions of years ever since the first amoeba we long for him, want to reach him?

⁵ *Ibid.*, feuillet 36.





Munagala: Yes, [but] this is all distorted and is thought through mind, which ignores [the fact] that all the time we are in Him. He cannot change a whit. He is always everywhere. Anyhow, where is the world in your deep sleep? It does not exist when you sleep in the Self.

*Ella: Yes, but I have to quieten most of what my reason objects [to].
Munagala: If you listen to your reason, you will never stop thinking. It can lead you nowhere. Bhagavan's trick — "Who Am I?" — is not meant to be answered; it is only to stop recurring thoughts.⁶*

On another occasion, Cohen weighed-in on the subject and made a convincing appeal for ontological humility:

There are things we cannot know. Theories belong to the world of thought. Let us stick to what we can grasp; it might be the path to deeper and deeper understanding.⁷

Ella's questions continued, however, and she wondered what it was that made Bhagavan 'work at [cutting] the vegetables or make leaf-plates?' She answers her own question:

It cannot be understood but by a sage why a sage acts. To the sage, his body doesn't exist; he is [not] the doer, but still obeys reflexes.⁸

On Following Rules

Having noticed how the Brahmins did not eat with non-Brahmins in the dining hall, Ella asked a devotee one day why Bhagavan, the highest of the Brahmin clan, did not abide by this rule. P. K. Rajagopalam, a devotee from Chennai, shed light on the issue telling her a story about Adi Sankara who once ate meat offered by a Muslim⁹, and even drank toddy. The story goes that when one of Sankara's disciples took the guru's action to mean that all of them were above the rules, the Sankaracharya gave an exceptional teaching:

*Sankara passed near a blacksmith and ate a piece of molten iron. Turning to his disciple, he said: "When you are able to eat this, then meat and alcohol will do you no harm."
[Rajagopalam concluded:] "Only for those rare beings above all can there be no rules".*

⁶ *Ibid.*, feuillet 38.

⁷ Ella Maillart fonds, Ms. fr. 7111 B/3 feuillet 33.

⁸ The Sage's Activity in Inactivity", Ella Maillart, *Golden Jubilee*, Sri Ramanasramam, 3rd edition, 1995.

⁹ This story is curious given the fact that the Muslim invasion of India took place only after Adi Sankara. It is, however, not unreasonable to assume that some Muslims lived in India prior to that.

Ella concludes:

Only Bhagavan is able to abandon rules. The spirit has to be altered, not the rules.¹⁰

Making a comparison with the Western tradition, Ella continues with her probe into Bhagavan's nature:

Christ exhausts all the Mediterranean myths addressed to the West (Dionysius, etc.) which deal with symbols working through our vital-emotional plane. He stands incomprehensible, a paradox fulfilling the predictions; the description of him and his doings creates a void, a darkness; nothing can be explained. Whereas here, one doesn't deal with such physical and vital planes. One jumps straight to the plane of the [beyond]. Bhagavan never deals with the individual on the relative plane. His silences cut right through to the Absolute.¹¹

This did not mean that Ella thought Bhagavan's nature was beyond causes and conditions or the laws of physics:

Even Bhagavan suffers from rheumatism; bodies obey their own laws of decay.¹² [...] Lately, [Bhagavan] has not been well. Eats little. Gives up buttermilk — not good for his cold. Will he let his body die? It is only our need [for him] which [keeps] him here. Our devotion is perhaps too weak? Or is he still waiting for someone to come, whether peasant or pundit, [after which] he will go?¹³

But even at the conventional level, she mused on how Bhagavan exhibited unusual qualities and never seemed to have much attachment to his physical form:

The sage had a toothache for months. A Madras doctor wanted to extract it. "All right," said Bhagavan. Then someone said it [would be] too dangerous. "All right, don't," said Bhagavan, who was chewing [the tobacco-like substance called pan] week after week with a distorted face. At last, two decayed teeth fell out. One day when they forgot to bring him his daily ration of [pan], he gave up chewing for ever, saying: "All right. I wanted to stop; now the occasion has come. I don't [need] it any more".¹⁴

Bhagavan was an expert in taking things in stride, the very embodiment of an ancient saying—*what could be more apt for our needs than that which comes to us woven in the pattern of our destiny?*¹⁵ Ella continues:

¹⁰ Ella Maillart fonds, Ms. fr. 7111 B/2 feuillet 10.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, B/3 feuillet 36.

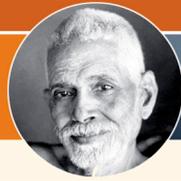
¹² *Ibid.*, B/4 feuillet 72.

¹³ *Ibid.*, B/3 feuillet 34.

¹⁴ Ella Maillart fonds, Ms. fr. 7107/2-8, Carn. I à VII, feu 57.

¹⁵ Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*.





The sage walks with difficulty, his spine is not straight and I feel he has a lumbago back like mine, but he does not feel the pain. He does no miracle for others — he is above that because he thinks that things will change by themselves when time and the soul are ready for it. But he gives us understanding, which can do a lot.¹⁶

Ella realises that mortality is not to be struggled with:

Today I read in the Bhagavad Gita: “For certain death is for the born, and certain is birth for the dead; therefore what is inevitable ought not to be a cause for thy sorrow.”

The to-do made by the physical mind and the senses about death and the horror of death whether on the sick-bed or the battlefield, is the most ignorant of nervous clamours. Our sorrow for the death of men is an ignorant grieving for those [for whom] there is no cause to grieve since they have neither gone out of existence nor suffered [a] change of condition, but are beyond death no less in being and no more unhappy in circumstances than in life. Constant subjection to birth and death is an inevitable circumstance of the soul’s self-manifestation. Its birth is an appearing out of some state in which it is not non-existent but unmanifest to our mortal senses; its death is a return to that unmanifest world or condition and out of it, it will again appear in the physical manifestation.¹⁷

Pilgrims in the Hall

Ella recalls her arrival to Arunachala, first seeing the Ashram and first meeting Bhagavan:

Moved to see the pyramid of the mountain. Buildings. Old trees. [The scent] of incense. The hall. First I see his white head from behind. Deep glance. Dark but radiant. About twenty devotees. The Sage does not want disciples, does not take in hand the life of many creatures. Each has to find the way that suits him. He is here to be seen, attainable for all. The tiger’s head hides him from me at moments. Have I reached the harbour? I could easily cry! Shall I be sincere enough?¹⁸ [...] They all tell me: “Be patient, you cannot know at once. You will see what a marvellous place this is.” It is true my headache stopped in his presence.¹⁹

She observes the stream of pilgrims who come:

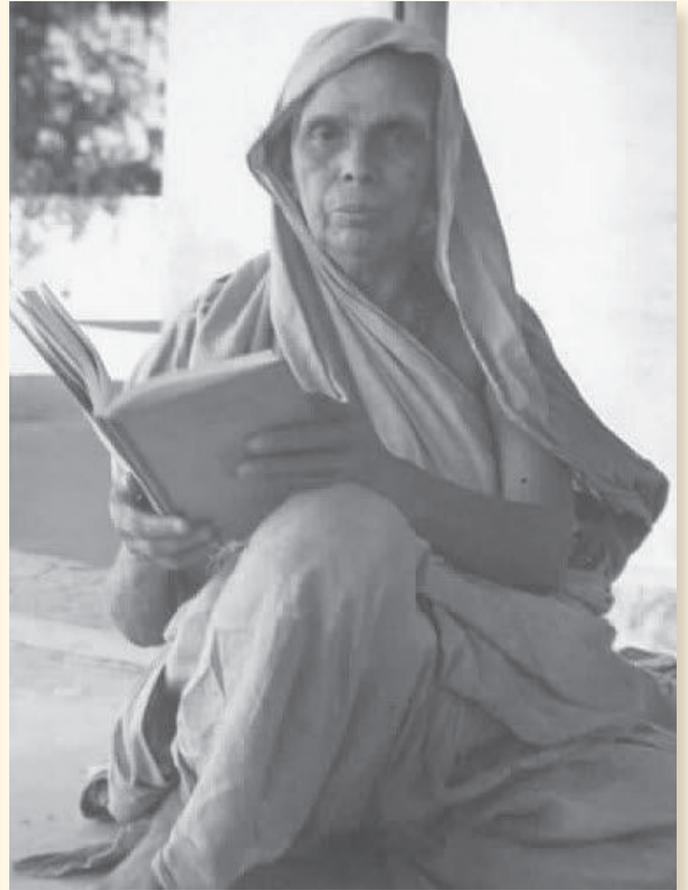
Whole families come [and] prostrate before him, stretching three times, first with their arms extended [outward], then

16 Letter to her mother, 5 November, 1940.

17 Letter to her mother, February 28 - Mar 2, 1941.

18 Ella Maillart fonds, Ms. fr. 7111 B/2 feuillet 4.

19 *Ibid.*, B/2 feuillet 8.



Echammal, ca. 1942 (photo by Ella)

back along the body, while one cheek then the other touch the ground. The young children who try to do this are charming and receive the same bright smile [...] He is not asked a lot of questions because there are not a lot of questions: as soon as you are near him, you realize that most of the questions are just words and not really [needed]. His presence acts in a positive sense that makes us feel [that] the answer is in [us] and for it to be of some profit, [we] have to find it [ourselves].²⁰

Other visitors from far away, arrive in the Hall:

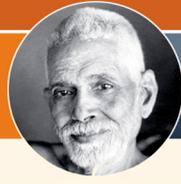
“Please Great Rishi, show pity on us who travelled so much.” [Bhagavan says:] “You are in water up to your neck and ask for a drink.” Another one, very learned, wants to know if he has to follow the path shown by Sankara or by Ramanuja. Bhagavan says: “Follow the way you took to come here.”²¹

One evening, Ella despairs of the constant influx of visitors and the intrusion on the silence in the Hall:

20 ‘Cette Realite’ pp.190-193.

21 *Ibid.*, B/2 feuillet 16.





I have been angry at people standing between me and Bhagavan. They interfered. I thought I had an appointment with Bhagavan since he was smiling at me ... Climax: the ego at work, claims preferential treatment, speaks of an appointment when Self or God is always within patiently waiting till I come to an appointment fixed aeons ago. I am late ... as usual. And God being everywhere and everything, how foolish to complain that something stands between us. Tears. Ashamed of my foolish ways.²²

Later she recovers her clarity and says:

Bhagavan is completely real, though beyond us in a fourth dimension, which is everywhere as well as nowhere.”²³ [But Bhagavan’s] body shows no sign of his quality of being more Real than anything else, because the body means nothing to him. Therefore, I shall only see his Reality when able to meet him on his ground, through the third eye!²⁴

For Ella, Bhagavan was as mysterious as the Self. But if this be true, she reasoned, the best way to respond to searching questions as to Bhagavan’s nature was to look within:

If there is a hole in the rock it can retain the falling rain. You have to be prepared to catch the flow of Bhagavan’s grace, otherwise he can’t do you any good.²⁵

But how to be that ‘hole in the rock’, she pondered:

[Bhagavan] doesn’t believe [it] necessary to shut oneself in silence to learn concentration as we have to live and learn to be with God in the middle of everyday life. The Absolute we long for unconsciously is not in a silent cave; for a specially trained mind it is part of everything around us, and more easily, it is found in our innermost middle [...] The main teaching of the Veda is that the development of our consciousness cannot be explained; it has to be felt and lived, [independent of] reason.²⁶

Ella is invariably searching for the thing-in-itself, that which depends on nothing else. The primacy of experience, she discovers, supersedes all we know since experience is prior to all knowing, independent of all theories and abstractions. What is it we grasp at, she wonders, when seeking to know, and how do

²² *Ibid.*, B/5 feuillet 92.

²³ Ella Maillart fonds, Ms. fr. 7107/2-8, Carnets I à VII, feuillet 59.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, feuillet 21.

²⁵ Ella Maillart fonds, Ms. fr. 7111 B/3 feuillet 34.

²⁶ Letter to her mother, 12 December, 1940.

we come to possess it, or shall we let go of all efforts at possessing? She writes:

God is everywhere, they say. Yes, he is; in such a simple way — and subtle — that one does not know it. I had read such a sentence before. It was dry, meaningless. Now, for the first time, it moves me deeply. The wave goes to stir my centre; I start to live it. It is like the sun: we can see it or [hide] behind our shutters. It is our loss. The sun won’t alter its ways and burn [away] the shutters. But if I stop fidgeting, learn to be calm, patient, silent, I shall realise its beauty, love its power. I can let it shine in me. Kindle my inner Sun! Grace of total embrace. The [devotee] with hollow cheeks said: “When I think of Bhagavan, my heart melts within me like snow in the sun.” Shall I ever feel the same one day? We Westerners melt over a run-over dog, but not when we meet [the] Witness of God: we then discuss whether it is in accordance with such and such dogma to prove to ourselves that our reason still holds the tiller of our being. We are then pleased with ourselves. Unable to see our loss, we [have] nipped love in the bud, love that teaches all. Whereas, reason only kills.²⁷

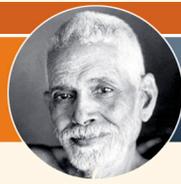
She determines to stand firm and observe, both inwardly and outwardly, and let her surroundings with Bhagavan at the centre be the teacher, not only in what he says, but in the silences, in the synchronous occurrences, the congruous actions of those in her midst and the promptings of her heart:

Nothing will lure me away. And it might take a long time before I have annihilated my feeling of separateness from the only fullness I want. Bhagavan reads his mail. I am near enough to see [an image of a] blue Everest [which] arouses my curiosity. [But] then I notice that Everest has lost its magic, and its charm no longer operates [on me, the charm], which [was] woven all through my youth around that epic of mountaineering. I wonder what enterprise, [what] invitation to which land or island, would arouse me today? What would be worthwhile, which external worldly conquest? [Now] I have in me the feeling that I am meant to do something here where matter and spirit meet.²⁸ [...] For the first time, instead of self-pity, it is joy that flows from the word Solitude. The old [phrase], ‘gate of tears’, means freedom. I am free from hopes, from regrets. I can devote myself to that without ties and loose ends trailing around me [over which] to trip. So, I was perhaps training myself unconsciously for that dedication, so that it could be pure, total. I float detached,

²⁷ *Ibid.*, B/3 feuillet 52.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, B/3 feuillet 30.





empty, light as never before, naked. That deep peace I never felt before, that richness which I would like to render lasting ... is [an indication] that my movement is [the right one]. I cry once more, though an old habit usual on the earth when one takes leave of good friends ... I shall learn to love them 'in God'. Am grateful to be alive! What a new feeling. Grateful to Bhagavan. To be here, spared. ²⁹

Inner Resources

Ella begins to see that we are called to put our hopes in inner resources. All that comes from outside is fleeting and unsubstantial and will not carry us through the storms of life. This is why winning approval, gaining recognition, trying to build a reputation, become popular, rich or famous serves no purpose in respect of inner peace because inner peace neither depends on the changing conditions of the external world nor on the whims and opinions of others. Worldly consolations are provisional; it is only God that ultimately consoles:

[In my youth, I felt] I was meant to do something in life, but not knowing what, I kept on rushing over hills and seas, into the first action offering itself. Now, I feel the 'movement' that

29 *Ibid.*, B/3 feuillet 46-47.

*created me, knows to what end [is its purpose]. My job is to be calm, pushing aside my blind desires, and [to be reformed according to] its will.*³⁰ ...

[We] travel to get away from everything, but it is a big illusion [because] we carry our potential along with us. It was always myself who I would find at the end of a voyage, and I regret that I had to waste so many years before having the courage to face myself. ... In fact, it is our own perspective that we project outwardly [in order to] decipher it when afterward we meet up with the so-called objective world.

Instinctively we wish to be everything—why cut the rose or marry the man, otherwise? [...] We want to feel that this earth is all ours, like our parents' house when we were children. ³¹ [...] Now, I know where my North stands: this tension towards God. Only that can satisfy me. And here is that 'shortcut' enabling me to understand Europe, war, suffering, to be with all. God cannot be denied when one is here. [The] corollary of this new unity in me: my main problem has vanished. If ship, if compass, move, who cares? The needle is motionless. ³²

(to be continued)

30 *Ibid.*, B/3 feuillet 37.

31 <https://www.inspirationalstories.com/>

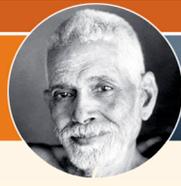
32 Ella Maillart fonds, Ms. fr. 7111 B/5 feuillet 102.



Events at Sri Ramanasramam: Indian Independence Day

Independence Day is celebrated each year on 15th August commemorating India's independence from Great Britain on the same day when the UK Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act of 1947. On that day, the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru raised the Indian national flag above the Lahori Gate of the Red Fort in Delhi. At the Ashram following morning milk offering this year, devotees celebrated the day with a flag-hoisting and singing the national anthem. —





Sri V. Venkataraman
1935 - 2018

Sri V. Venkataraman was the grandson of Subbaiyar¹, the younger brother of Sundaram Iyer, Bhagavan's father. Pichai Chithappa, as Venkataraman was affectionately called by peers and those at Sri Ramanasramam, was an ardent devotee of Sri Bhagavan. Born 25th December, 1935 in Devakottai, he did his bachelors in Economics and joined Indian Bank, serving in various branches retiring in 1995 as chief manager and settling in Nanganallur, Chennai.

A simple man who believed in leading an honest life, Venkataraman said that he had once been enveloped by a whirlpool of emotions and anxieties until he surrendered to Bhagavan.

Venkataraman first met Bhagavan at the age of twelve during a visit to the Ashram with his father, during which

¹ It was in the Madurai house of V. Venkataraman's grandfather, Subbaiyar, that Bhagavan had his death experience in 1896.

time Bhagavan blessed him. The boy had wanted to pose a question to Bhagavan regarding the inequalities in society but his father would not allow it. During the course of his life, Sri Venkataraman always took it upon himself to help the needy in whatever way he could, and no beggar ever walked away from his house dissatisfied. Deeply inspired by Bhagavan, who would sit and dine with everyone irrespective of caste or creed, it had been Bhagavan's simplicity, sense of equality and compassion for fellow beings that drew Sri Venkataraman closer to Bhagavan and inculcated in him compassion for the dispossessed.

Though Venkataraman visited the Ashram at a young age, it was only following an experience he had while meditating at the Ashram in 1981 that he became an ardent devotee.

Even though there is a saying that those born in the family of a liberated one for seven generations before and after are granted liberation, Sri V. Venkataraman believed that one would have to work hard with deep desire and great faith in the words of the Guru to attain his holy feet. He thus visited the Ashram every month between 1990 and 1995 and regularly went for *giri valam*. He continued to visit at least once a year until 2012, even when not in good health.

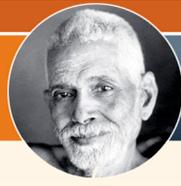
Venkataraman 'Pichai Chithappa' desired that the life and teachings of Bhagavan be known to as many people as possible. A voracious reader of books related to Bhagavan, the bookshelves in his house were almost an exact replica of the Ashram Book Depot. He often gifted books of Bhagavan's life and teachings to devotees, loved ones and those desiring to know more about Bhagavan.

When Venkataraman brought the former president of the Ashram, Sri Ramanananda ('Venkatoo'), to the local secondary school in Nanganallur to make a presentation of a photo of Sri Bhagavan along with copies of *Aksharamanamalai*, it became an annual tradition at the school to celebrate Bhagavan's Advent Day on 1st September.

Venkataraman was a founding member of *Nanganallur Ramana Satsang* where eminent speakers are invited to address the regular gatherings to celebrate Bhagavan's life and teachings.

Venkataraman was also instrumental in bringing out the Tamil translation of B.V. Narasimhaswami's *Self-*





Realisation through Nanganallur Ramana Satsang with the blessing of Sri Ramanasramam.

Sri Venkataraman's greatest trait was his ability to touch the lives of people close to him. The stories visitors to the hospital narrated about his humility, honesty and

compassion were recollected with lumps in their throats.

Sri Venkataraman attained the lotus feet of Bhagavan on 30th July, 2018 at the age of 83. While his body has turned to ashes, the impact he has had on those around him endures. He is survived by his wife and two daughters. —

Obituary: Sri T. K. Natarajan



Sri T.K. Natarajan with his father Dr. TNK

Even as a young boy of seven, Natarajan accompanied his father Dr. T.N.K. on weekend trips to the Ashram. While his father set up his tripod and camera and began to take photos, Natarajan would be assigned the task of storing rolls of film in the pockets of his trousers. Along with his father, the two regularly accompanied Bhagavan on his walk.

Natarajan grew up in Mylapore, Madras, surrounded by photos of Bhagavan which his father had taken and later painted. As a young boy, his mother Janaki Ammal once complained to Bhagavan that he never ate properly, a complaint common with many mothers. Bhagavan laughed and replied in Tamil, "Don't worry, everything will be alright." Natarajan recalls Muruganar staying at their home for many months, and other Ashram visitors such as Kitty Osborne, Vaikunta Vasar, J.J. Reede and Eknath Rao.

Natarajan attended Annamalai University where he studied engineering. In the 1950s he made the voyage to New York on the steam ship "Chidambaram" in order to study and completed his MS in Civil Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. He returned to India in 1956 and lived in New Delhi with his wife Vasantha and their three children, Sumati, Raghu and Badri. He was very fond of the Ramana Kendra in New Delhi and was a close associate of A. R. Natarajan. When he retired as Director of CRRI in New Delhi in 1990, he returned to Mylapore. His house served as the temporary location of the Ramana Kendra in Madras for some time. He enjoyed listening to the President Sri T.N. Venkataraman tell stories about his father. Sri T. K. Natarajan was absorbed in Arunachala Ramana on Aug 24, 2018 at the age of 88. —

Obituary: Sri Krishna P. Bhat



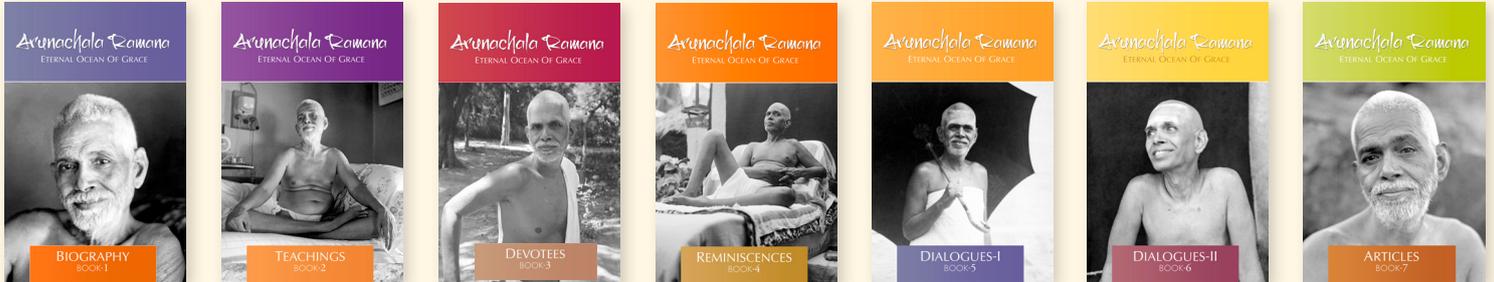
Sri Krishna P. Bhat was born 19th September 1934 to a poor rural family near Kumta (Uttara Kannada, Karnataka). He lost his father at the age of nine and started working at the age of fifteen. He worked as a composer in a *taluka* printing press for which he had to walk almost five miles a day. Sri Bhat started his own printing press in Kumta sometime later and earned a high reputation in the field. He was initiated into Sri Ramana's teachings due to his affiliation with M.D. Naik and other senior devotees in the town. Even though he had only studied up to fourth standard, he was successful in various fields as well as becoming President of *Devagiri Mandal Panchayat*. An ardent devotee of Sri Ramana and President of *Sri Ramana Seva Sangha*, he specialized in Bhagavan's teaching and published eight volumes of poetry in Kannada, among them, "Jnana

Surya", a collection of poems on the Maharshi. A gifted speaker, Sri Bhat gave discourses with confidence on Sri Ramana and during his regular visits to Tiruvannamalai, was always accompanied by an entourage of well-wishers. Sri Bhat passed away on 30th July 2018 at his residence, "Sri Ramana Nilaya" in his native village Handigon, Kumta, Karnataka. —





Announcements: New Ashram Publications



The eight-volume book *Arunachala's Ramana: Boundless Ocean of Grace* has been thoroughly revised and updated. It will be offered as a series of seven books entitled *Arunachala Ramana: Eternal Ocean of Grace*. The edition has been restructured under the subtitles: *Biography (Book 1)*; *Teachings (Book 2)*; *Devotees (Book 3)*; *Reminiscences (Book 4)*; *Dialogue I (Book 5)*; *Dialogue II (Book 6)* and *The Guiding Presence (Book 7)*. The compendium is expected to be released on Advent Day, 1 September, 2018. —

