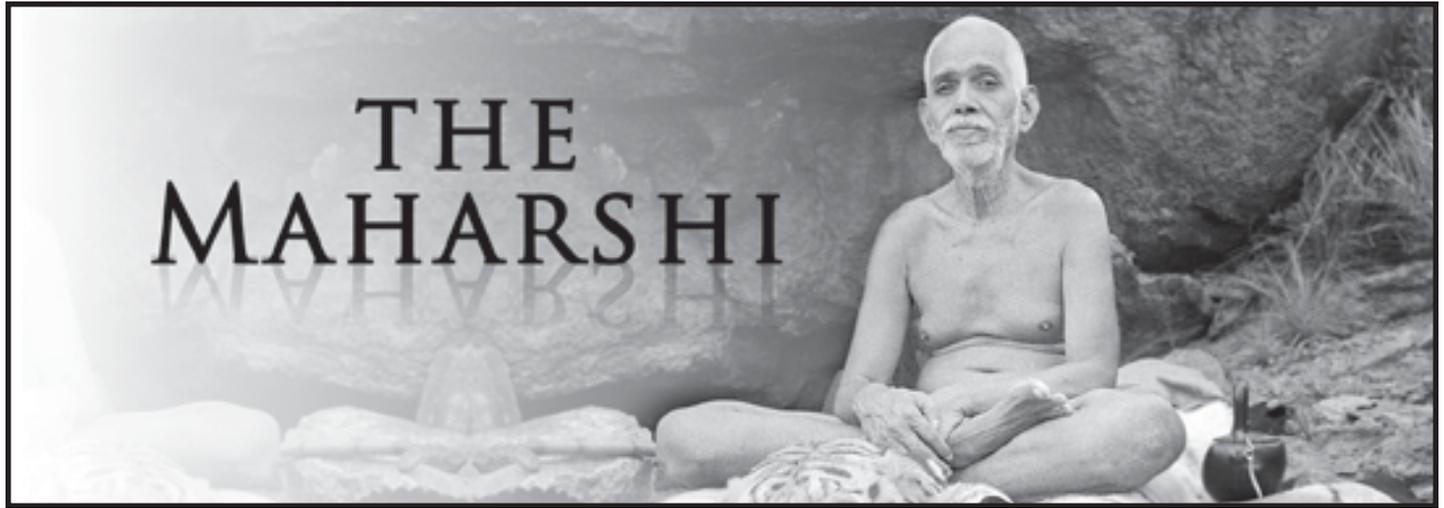


# THE MAHARSHI



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## The Sat-Guru By Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami

“From darkness lead me to light,” says the *Upanishad*. The Guru is one who is competent to do this; and such a one was Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. The Guru is the dispeller of ignorance and awakener of understanding. Throughout the ages India has produced such.

THE Sat-Guru, who is Divine Consciousness in human form, is the one guide to Enlightenment, the only bridge from the mental concepts in which the disciple is enclosed to spiritual consciousness. Said Sri Shankara: “Even though you possess learning and all gifts and endowments, it will not avail you unless your mind is protected by the Guru and absorbed in him.” And again, in *Vivekachudamani*, he says: “There are three things that are rare and acquired due to the Grace of God: a human birth, thirst for Liberation and the protective care of the Guru.”

Were it not for this manifestation of absolute Reality or pure Consciousness (which are the same) in human form, spiritual knowledge would be lost to the world. The Guru, who is a knower of Brahman, is equated in the *Upanishads* with Brahman Himself. Though living as a man in our midst, he is conscious of his Divine Identity. Were there none such as he, the doctrine of the Self would remain a mere theoretical concept for the discussion of philosophers. The mind of man has to be shown the way. For this, the pure Consciousness embodied in the Guru mingles with the same Consciousness awakened by him in the disciple. The Guru is ever ready to help and uplift those who appeal to him. To disregard such help would be folly. It is vanity and pride to suppose that one’s own unaided efforts will suffice. To accept a Guru does not mean accepting the guidance of

another man, but of pure Consciousness, shining through a human psychosomatic instrument.

Spiritual tradition has always accepted the need for initiation and guidance by a Master. “What is commonly called ‘self-reliance’ is only ego-reliance,” the Maharshi said. And again: “God, Guru and Self are the same.” Only he in whom this Divine Consciousness is awakened can lead us beyond the range of human perception. There are various ways in which the Guru can initiate and guide the disciple, but that he should do so has always been held necessary. Those who attack this tradition are really only attacking their own false conception of it.

The Guru has already trodden the path and can show it to the seeker. Even if he has arrived spontaneously at the goal, as did Bhagavan, he can still see and indicate the approaches to it. He may even transmit direct experience to the disciple as Sri Ramakrishna did for Vivekananda. However this can never be stabilised so long as the disciple’s *vasanas* or inherent tendencies remain, since they drag him away again to the illusory world of sense-perception. There is no wisdom that can be given to all alike, says the *Gita*: “This wisdom must not be given to one who has no *tapas*, is not a devotee and is not in earnest.” This does not mean that the Guru holds guidance or Realization back from anyone. The Maharshi once said that if the Guru could simply

give Realization there would not be even a cow left unrealized. Most people do not want spiritual knowledge, and it cannot be given to those who do not try to awaken it in themselves. It cannot be grasped by reason. Therefore the Guru will not respond to those who question him or try to argue with him out of mere academic curiosity: "This wisdom is not to be had by reasoning."

A Guru is only for those who seek contact with him for the sake of spiritual understanding, because this means seeking contact with the Truth in one's own heart through him. One who lives at a distance and approaches him in this way may receive guidance, while one who lives near him may not know how to ask. "The real Guru is in the heart," the Maharshi said. And "The task of the outer Guru is only to turn you inward to the Guru in your heart." We are told that the Divine dwells in the innermost recess of the heart, but how many of us are competent to look inward and realize it? The power of the Guru in helping one to do so is far more important than any mere verbal explanation he may give, for this latter touches only the mental understanding. The Maharshi said, "A silent Guru is very potent. His work goes on inwardly where it is not apparent to the disciple." And he gave assurance that "As the disciple dives inwards in search of the Self, the Guru will do his part."

But can this not be done without the intervention of an outer Guru? The Maharshi admitted that it can, but he added that there are very few who are so close to Enlightenment that they can dispense with the need for an outer Guru. This is because it is not a case of something new to be discovered but of the removal of obstructions to realization of the ever-existing Self. And since these obstructions are more emotional than theoretical, rooted in the desires rather than the intellect, outer aid is usually necessary to destroy them. "*Sadhana* is for the removal of ignorance, which is ingrained wrong ideas. It is not for acquiring the Self, because the Self is always there, but for becoming aware of it."<sup>1</sup>

Even though the disciple believes that Consciousness is One, he accepts the duality of Guru-disciple relationship in order to transcend it. He serves the outer Guru in order to realize the inner. "The disciple must work inwardly, but the Guru can work both inwardly and outwardly," the Maharshi explained.

One should approach the Awakened and listen to his teaching, then dwell on it as a guide to *sadhana*. When instruction comes from a Guru it carries power. Out of the relationship of Guru and disciple realization is born, as the fire of knowledge from the former is kindled in the heart of the latter.

The *Upanishad* says that the knower of Brahman is Brahman Himself. This is an indication that if we are unable to meditate on the formless Brahman we should meditate on a knower of Brahman. He teaches right doctrine but it is very different from the same doctrine learned from a book. He himself is the living teaching. His presence inspires and strengthens us. His teaching has the authority of experience. It does not matter if the disciplines prescribed by the Masters vary or even if their doctrines differ on the mental plane; the essence of their teaching is the same, just as the milk from cows of different colours is all white.

"The spirit of the disciple is moribund owing to forgetfulness of his true nature. The Guru revives him by removing his supposed identity with body and mind." The mind is apt to deny the existence of the Self because the Self is not an object of the senses. It can never be the object of knowledge but is itself the sole knower. Therefore a search for it by the mind can never succeed. "Logical explanations have no finality. Why look outward and explain phenomena? One should learn to attend to the knower of the phenomena." The knower of the phenomena is Reality. It just is; it is not affected by discussions or logical conclusions. It is the Grace of the Guru that enables us to realize our identity with this Reality. Since it is the Reality, it is not something to be acquired in the future; it just is, now, eternally.

So long as the disciple lives in duality and seeks to transcend it, he feels oppressed by burdens and hindered by obstacles. These are in fact mere manifestations of the tendencies in his own mind that hold him back from Enlightenment and make him cling to the duality he seeks to escape from. To such a one the Guru appears as the bearer of burdens and remover of obstructions: the destroyer of ignorance and giver of Liberation. But effort must be made by the disciple to remove the obstructions. And although it is true to say that the Guru is the giver of Liberation it is also true to say that the disciple must earn it by making himself fit to receive it.

1. While speaking thus of the need for an outer Guru, it is to be remembered that the Maharshi himself still acts as Guru even without a human body (EDITOR).

The Guru does not add to the ideas or theories with which the mind of the disciple is already cluttered up. Rather he induces cessation of thought. "The mind creates the world and life and obscures the Self. Becoming obscures Being." It often happened that someone came to the Maharshi with a whole list of questions that he had drawn up and, sitting before him, found not so much that the answers came as that the questions faded out and ceased to be important.

Life has plunged us into a state that can be called sleep — spiritual sleep. All our life activities are done in this sleep. The Guru is the Awakened; he does not become involved in this sleep but helps us to awaken from it.

You encounter life through a thing called 'yourself', that is through a fictitious apparatus for living. It is this which takes charge of body and senses, thinks through your mind, talks through your mouth, uses your name and mistakes itself for you. But just as it mistakes itself for you, so it mistakes the Guru for another separate self outside of you; and that is its fatal error and also your salvation, for the Guru, having freed himself from the clutches of this fiend, can free you from it and lead you to the experience of the One Self.

Thereby he gives a new meaning to the word 'I'. Before meeting him you attributed it to this pseudo-self, but 'I' or 'Aham' is the name of Being, of God. He alone can call Himself 'I'. You only can insofar as you are One with Him. Individual human life goes on like a dream. In a dream you mistake the dream-self for 'I'. Similarly in this life you mistake the fictitious pseudo-self for 'I'. The Guru helps you to awaken from this illusion. "To keep the I-thought alert is the only *upadesa* (teaching)." He teaches you to abide in and as the Self while apparently living in the world. "One should not lose consciousness of his 'I' under any circumstances. This is the remedy for all the ills of life." "The 'I' springs up from the centre of our being and our only concern should be with this 'I'."

The true Self is qualityless and therefore beyond description or even knowledge. It is thought that obscures it. "Give up thoughts. You need not give up anything else. The body and the comforts of life are no hindrance to realization. The loss of the body is not Enlightenment, it is death. The loss of the ego-sense, the I-concept, is what is required." The very presence of the Guru calms down the waves of the mind and brings it to that condition of stillness in which it is simply aware.

Those who saw the Maharshi sitting in samadhi were moved and awed by it. He radiated peace as the sun radiates light. His imperturbable composure impressed some, his lively explanations others, his grace and compassion yet others; some enjoyed his conversation and some his tremendous silence. Thousands flocked for a sight of Him. People felt that here was God incarnate walking on earth. He assured us when leaving the body that he was not going away. "People say that I am going away, but where can I go? I am here." Being universal, there was no going from here to there for him. Having realized that he was not this body, there was no return to any other body. He has assured us that "he who is ready for Divine Knowledge will be led to it."

—*The Mountain Path*, 1965, No. 3

## Saranagathi Program 2012

**B**HAGAVAN Sri Ramana Maharshi Satsang Group, Connecticut, organizes a program called Saranagathi every year during the Memorial Day weekend. This year the program was conducted at the home of Dr. Aruna Ramanan and Dr. Ramkumar Sankaran in Farmington, CT, on Sunday, May 27<sup>th</sup>. Out-of-state visitors included devotees from New York, Maryland, Texas, New Hampshire, Arizona and Tennessee.

This year's program centered on the theme of the "Ashram Kitchen". The morning began with the recitation of Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni's forty verses in praise of Bhagavan, "Sri Ramana Chatvaramsat," followed by a reading from G. V. Subbaramayya's *Reminiscences*. The words from this book transported the devotees into the presence of the ashram Dining Hall where "kanji" and "aviyal" were being served. To give greater reality to this Ashram experience, the host had thoughtfully prepared "kanji" and "aviyal" that morning for breakfast. No longer was Bhagavan's existence a subtle metaphysical experience. We could taste it, drink it, ask for more and smell the fragrance of His glorious presence in these food preparations. We were all transported to the Ashram Dining Hall. It was as if a magical time-space transcendence vehicle took us to the sacred presence of Bhagavan.

The day continued with worship, a multi-media presentation on the ashram kitchen in Bhagavan's days and a lively open discussion. "Appalam Pattu" (song of the Pappadum) was melodiously rendered by a budding singer.

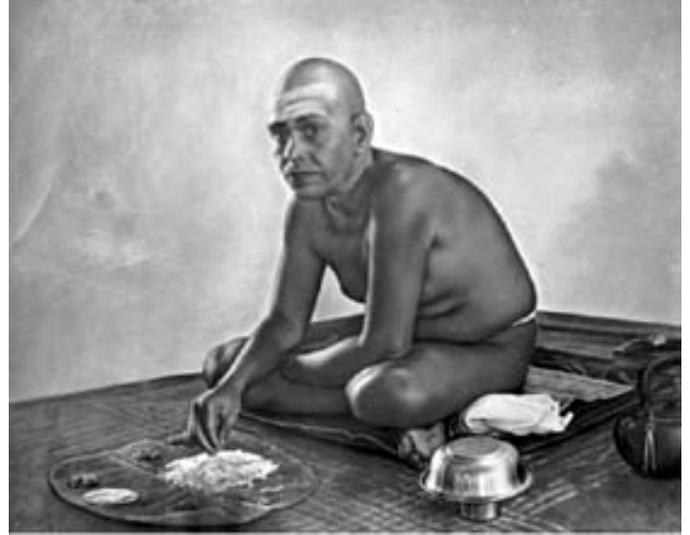
Devotees joined in singing a special composition that KVS of Sri Ramanasramam composed for this program. Its lyrics were saturated with Vedantic meanings based on ordinary South India dishes.

Then mellifluous compositions that revealed the glory of Arunachala were sung. The worship concluded with a grand Vedic recitation and solemn Aarti with several auspicious benedictions.

What followed can only be compared with “Anna Koot,” the festival in Vrindavan where numerous tasty dishes are served in limitless quantities.

Our hearts rejoiced at the manifestation of “Karuna Purna Sudhabde” (The Ocean of Mercy Full of Grace) on this day.

– T. S. Vaidyanathan



## If Only It Were Chadwick By Louis Buss

*The scrutiny of the hand-written inscriptions found in a 1935 edition of the book Self-Realisation bought on Ebay takes the author on a journey of inspiration and expectation.*

### Part VII The Once and Future King

A few weeks ago, after an absence of two years, I set off for my second visit to the Ashram, taking the book with me – although I wonder now whether it would be more accurate to say that, after an absence of seventy-five years, the book set off for India once more, and took me along as a sort of unwitting shepherd. In any case, I found myself returning to Arunachala, the rock against which my life has broken, which rises from the surrounding plains like the island of some tropical Prospero jutting from a south Indian sea. How many other ships have split against this magic isle? No mariner through human life is safe from it. You may be sailing in peaceful waters anywhere in the world when suddenly some enchanted tempest will rise up and drive you here. Once you have run aground against these fatal rocks, you will find yourself lost in a strange shadow-land of allegorical visions and waking dreams. Although you may seem to escape, and even resume your former life, you know that this itself is only one of the illusions of the isle, from which there can never be any return to the waking world.

It is sixty years and more since Prospero Himself was last seen here with His loincloth and His staff, but still the

place lies deep under His spell<sup>1</sup>. As soon as you step beneath the magic arch and enter His domain, some unearthly quiet comes upon you, a sort of inner hush. All around, you will see His spirits and creatures working diligently away, as if they hold their Master in such awe that they don't dare to relax, even after all these years. Perhaps they believe that He is not absent at all, but has merely used His powers to render Himself invisible for a while. Then again, they know that He can assume any shape at will, and thus they can never be quite sure that He hasn't returned to oversee their work in the shape of a dog, a monkey or a bird. Or perhaps they believe He has retreated to some giddy crag near the mountain peak, to sit beneath that mythical tree of which He Himself once told tales. From there, perhaps, He can see and direct all the doings of the isle. There He may sit for thousands of years before He chooses to return below and reveal Himself again, sunk for millennia under the deepest of all charms, which is His own.

The very trees here are reputed to be higher beings, saints and sages who have taken refuge on the island in vegetable form to avoid the tragedy of human birth. Like

1. Prospero, in Shakspear's *Tempest*, was the master of the small isle on which he was exiled to by his brother. There he learned the art of socery. [Editor]

Ariel trapped inside his pine, they are perhaps waiting for Prospero to come and free them, willing to serve Him for a while as spirits if He will only grant them ultimate release. Every beggar in every ditch may be an angel or a visiting deity, but all of them understand that this is Prospero's kingdom still. In the small cell where the magician used to sit each day on His sofa, working His enchantment by word or look, or by reciting from some book of spells, His victims still sit bewitched for hours at a time. Elsewhere, in a different sort of trance, they walk round and round His shrine like so many somnambulists, unconsciously drawn to the spiritual axis of their Master's castle. Further afield, in ones and twos, they circumambulate the entire island, demonstrating that this is the magic pole of the globe itself, the source of the universal charm that sustains our implausible world. Day after day and week after week, the routines of the magician's home continue exactly as they did when He was still alive, as if the whole place were nothing but some giant clock He wound up and left to run for centuries. Late each afternoon, His creatures and spirits gather together to chant His spells, and call down the tropical dusk. By the time silence falls, the charm has worked, and the island has vanished from view.

*Nothing of him that doth fade,  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.*

Whether He lets them know it or not, all who pass beneath that archway become His creatures. Nothing can happen there except at His bidding, for every action there is His. We are all His creatures there. So, whatever illusions He may have allowed me to retain, Bhagavan was the one who arranged for that book to be taken to the Ashram archive. I had heard of the building before, but had never known where it was. Now it materialised quite close to the main gate. Although it was in full view, I had never even noticed a building there before, so that it was as if the archive had been wearing an invisibility cloak, or had been conjured out of nothing purely to allow me the coming visions.

Bhagavan had delegated a party of three to escort the book to the archive, on the last leg of a very long and slow round trip: myself, my sister and a devotee who was friends with Sri Ramani, the Ashram archivist, who

seemed the manifestation in flesh and blood of the enormous devotion that raised this extraordinary building. Inside, the most elaborate precautions have been taken to preserve the assembled treasures in a strictly controlled environment, for here we find the objects most intimately associated with Ramana Maharshi – His walking sticks and umbrellas, His binoculars and pencils, the razors that were used to shave Him and the surgical instruments that were used to perform the operations on His arm. It is impossible not to feel that, through their prolonged contact with Him, these objects have been subjected to a sort of benign contamination. They have been irradiated at the spiritual equivalent of a nuclear core. Who knows what power they absorbed as they bathed in that light? Years afterwards, some inner Geiger counter still seems to go mad the moment you come near them, and if they are kept sealed away in that carefully controlled bunker, it is perhaps to stop that magic charge leaking out into the surrounding environment. Just as radioactive objects acquire the power to engender diseases, so those pens, umbrellas and walking-sticks may well, by exposure to Bhagavan, have acquired the power to cure them. Who can say what benefits might accrue to anyone brave enough to touch one of the exhibits in that little museum?

Of course, we didn't dare to touch, but just looked round in awe. At a certain point, I asked Sri Ramani if, of all the assembled treasures there, he had a personal favourite. He promptly replied that, with Bhagavan, everything was precious. I admired the devotion behind this answer, and can see that, from a purely professional point of view, it is the ideal attitude for an archivist to take. All the same, I have to say that for me, if there was one treasure that set my inner Geiger counter clicking more wildly than all the others, it was Bhagavan's famous walking-stick, the simple rounded one we see in so many pictures. If I was diagnosed with some tumour or incurable disease, and was given the chance to touch one object in the archive, I would immediately reach out for that stick. For what could be more deeply invested with Prospero's power than His staff? Bhagavan may have used any number of pens and other everyday objects, but only that stick was really a part of Him, even more so than his

The consciousness within, purged of the mind, is felt as God. – *Talks*

famous water-pot. As about the only object He could really have been said to possess, it stands as a symbol of His perfect renunciation. All His physical frailty and spiritual might are there. That stick was at once the support of a doddering old man and the rod of God Himself – as Muruganar so marvellously puts it, tottering around on a mountain, looking for souls to save. That stick appears in the archival films, not only to support Him as He staggers through the Ashram, but also as the means of greeting a baby, playfully conferring some blessing we will never know. Yet it is the same stick that appears beneath His hand in those pictures from which He radiates an almost terrifying power, making you feel that, if He had chosen then to strike the magic staff against the ground, the impact would have sent a fissure round the globe, swallowing skyscrapers, buses and trains like so many inconsequential toys.

I know I am not alone in feeling that I have not so much discovered Ramana Maharshi as remembered Him after many years of effort. That lean, unclad figure with His weight on one leg seems to be some sort of universal icon, buried deep in every human being, or perhaps in every living creature, only waiting for us to sink down and uncover Him. And if there is one object buried deep in the universal subconscious with Him, it is that walking-stick. Why this should be, I cannot say. Perhaps every living creature draws some deep reassurance from that grandfatherly symbol of humility and frailty, whilst at the same time instinctively recognising a stick as the most basic symbol of power. For whatever reason, that is how God has chosen to appear.

But, as Caliban knew, if you want to overthrow Prospero, breaking His magic staff across your knee is not enough – you have to burn His books, for without them He hath not one spirit to command. Bhagavan's books and papers are kept in separate rooms. Sri Ramani allowed us to go in and gape at the cabinets which contain every surviving scrap on which He wrote in His own hand, right back to and including that famous note He left when He set off as a schoolboy for Arunachala. It is all there, sealed up in packets and safe behind glass. Since everything has now been scanned onto special DVDs that will survive a hundred years, it is hard to see why any of those packets should ever be opened again. There could be no conceivable excuse for risking damage to the precious originals when it is so easy to view a perfect copy on a screen. Perhaps it was the idea of all the undisturbed years ahead that filled that tiny chamber with the hush of an enchanted sleep. A small device in the corner drew endless peaks and troughs on a roll of graph-paper, recording each tiny variation in temperature or humidity, like a life-support system monitoring the vital signs of a comatose patient. Here, more than anywhere else in the archive, I had the sense of intruding on some Arthurian slumber. If nobody would ever dare to open any of those packets again, what was really the point of keeping them at all? Standing there, one could almost imagine it was only because their true owner might at any moment come back for them, like the once and future king awakening in England's hour of need, calling for his armour and his sword.

*(To be Continued)*

## Homage to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Please join us at Arunachala Ashrama in Queens, New York City on

**Saturday, 14 July - 5:30 to 7:00 PM**

for A Free Carnatic Singing Concert

**By Smt. Mytrei Aravind**

Smt Mytrei Aravind hails from a family of Bhagavan's ardent devotees. Right from her great grandfather the association with Bhagavan and his teachings has been deep rooted, generation after generation.

Mytrei has been a professional Carnatic singer for the past 15 years and regularly performs in all major forums in India and abroad. At this concert she will offer selected compositions on Bhagavan and also include interesting anecdotes on Bhagavan's life in between each song.

## Guru Puja

ON Saturday, June 16th, in the New York Arunachala Ashrama's new shrine hall, Srimati Raksha and Sri T. S. Vaidyanathan had arranged a special Guru Puja, with homam, mantrams and prayers. This was offered by them as a parting prayer to Bhagavan Ramana, whom they have been serving in the New York Arunachala Ashrama all these years. Many friends of this devoted couple attended the inspired program. Raksha and Vaidyanathan have recently retired from gainful employment in the USA and will now leave to settle at the Feet of their Master in Tiruvannamalai.



The Ashram has benefited immensely from their unalloyed devotion and service. All of us wish them both an ever-deepening experience of the effulgent Presence of Bhagavan in their Heart.

## Ramana Satsangs

Regular satsangs with recitations, songs, readings and meditation are conducted in or near large cities. Some of them are weekly. If you would like to attend any of these, please contact the individuals below for more information.

**Atlanta Area** — Mangalam Kalyanam (678-546-0378 / smoothcutter@hotmail.com)

**Ann Arbor, MI** — Nirupama & Ramesh (574-514-4766 / <neeru\_2@hotmail.com)

**Birmingham, AL** — Sai Kand (205-441-6859 / kandsai@yahoo.com)

**Boston, MA** — David & Anna (617-928-1487 / annaklegon@gmail.com)

**Connecticut Area** — Prashanth & Shobana (860-691-1862 / vprashanth@msn.com)

**Dublin, Ohio** — Abilash & Madhavi (614-789-9058 / mungamuru@hotmail.com)

**Ft. Lauderdale Area** — David & Janet Rubinson (954-755-4758 / arunahill@gmail.com)

**Houston, TX** — Kumar Saran (832-435-3761 / saran01@earthlink.net)

**Los Angeles, CA** — Natarajan and Indira Venkatesan (310-473-9441 / nvenky30@yahoo.com)

**New Jersey, Pennington** — Nandini (609-730-8447 / nandinikapadia@yahoo.com)

**Ottawa, Canada** — Anantha Padmanabhan (613-733-8250 / padmanabhan\_ananth@hotmail.com)

**Puerto Rico** — Rosa & Scott Mathewson (787-531-5295 / rosilinm@hotmail.com)

**San Francisco Area** — Karthik & Sunita (510-656-2752 / sunita\_parasuraman@yahoo.com)

**San Francisco Area** — Vijay and Sree Sajja (925-417-0909 / vsajja@evergent.com)

**Tampa, Florida** — Rohit ((813) 632-7843 / rohitkvaidya@yahoo.com)

**Toronto, Canada** — Krishnan & Padma Sastri (905-849-6005 / psastri@hotmail.com)

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**Washington, D.C. Area** — Uma and Santosh (301-528 - 5526 / uma\_santosh@hotmail.com)

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