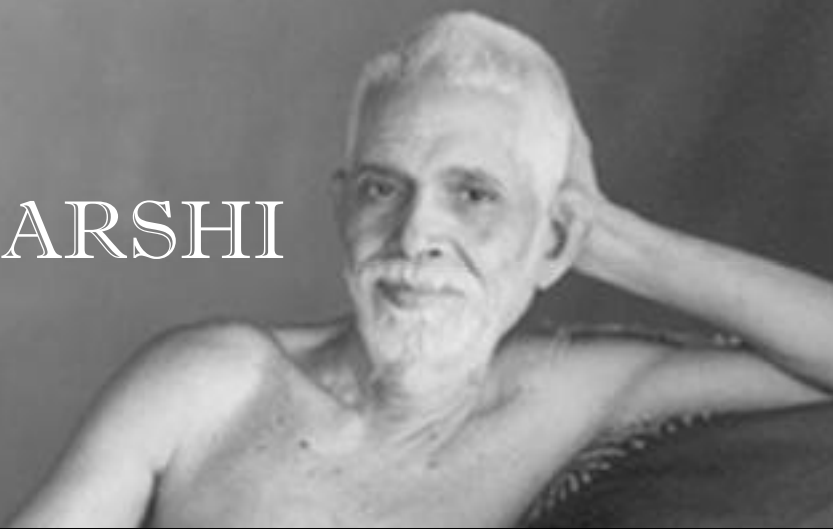


THE MAHARSHI



JUL/AUG 2005

VOL. 15, NO. 4

My Pilgrimage to Sri Ramanasramam

By Eleanor Pauline Noye

In the 1930s, Eleanor Pauline Noye began her spiral descent into despair, ill health and hopelessness. Throughout these difficult years she clung to an inexplicable faith that in India she would be restored to her former self. In spite of ill health and depression she embarked on a journey that brought her face to face with her 'Lord of Love'. Upon arriving in the Ashrama in 1939 she was caught in the web of the Master's love, regained her health, peace of mind and soared into the eternal expanse of freedom and joy. On her first visit to India she stayed at the Ashrama for ten months; subsequently, she made a second trip, arriving several months before the Master's Mahanirvana in 1950. Her joy of being with the Master, walking amidst a crowd of devotees directly behind him, is captured in the Archival Films. She kept in touch with the Ashrama from her California residence till her last days, in the mid 1970s.

Crisis in Life

A few years ago I reached a crisis in my life. After years of anguish and sleepless nights, I was in a critical condition. When things seemed darkest I had an unusual feeling that I should go away. I discussed it with my twin, Betty, and decided to take a trip around the world. After making the reservation I became very ill and had to cancel it. One obstacle after another presented itself until it seemed as though I were not to go, and being so ill I did not care if I went or not. Still there always seemed to be something urging me to go and my sister also felt that I should.

After a few weeks of rest I felt better and made reservations on another ship that was to sail a month later, but when the time arrived for sailing I was still not able to leave my bed. The boat sailed from San Francisco through the Panama Canal reaching New Orleans a month later. The steamship agent suggested my going there by train, which takes three days instead of one month, hoping I would feel better in the meantime.

I had a very trying trip to New Orleans, and upon arriving I collapsed and was taken to a Christian Science practitioner's home, where they put me to bed and took care of me. They thought I was in no condition to take a long trip, but I felt as though I must. I could not turn back. Fortunately the boat was two weeks late; otherwise I would not have been able to sail. The steamship agent said, "You do not look very well. If the Captain sees you I am afraid he will not take you, as we do not carry a physician." However, finally he agreed to my going but said, "Do not let the Captain see you until we are out at sea." Though outward conditions were very dark, I went, knowing that God would take care of me. I felt as though I were led and if I had not followed that inner voice which prompted me I would never have had the blessed experience of finding the happiest part of my life in the presence of Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

I Want To Find Myself

The doctor who vaccinated me before I left, knew that I was not well. He said, "Why are you taking the trip?" I

replied, “I want to find myself.” I was seeking something I had not found — Peace. Somehow my mind would always turn to India, especially during those days when I was in bed.

We sailed from New Orleans to Cape Town, South Africa, a three weeks’ trip without a stop. Providence was with me again, for had the boat stopped, I believe, I would have returned home. But God had other plans for me. I was torn between conflicting emotions and became worse again. My prayers seemed of no avail. I would have the most dreadful nightmares and wake up crying. I could not bear it any longer; so I sent a radiogram to the doctor: “Need help in every way, especially at night. Cold much worse; filled with fear. Will write from Cape Town.” I don’t know what I was afraid of, but my mind was never at peace. I felt better for a while but found it necessary to send a second cable. Therefore, had the boat stopped on its way to Cape Town, I should have disembarked and returned home. But Providence has always the upper hand. When we reached Cape Town, I felt much better; but as I did not like that ship I disembarked at Durban, South Africa, where I spent one month waiting for another boat.

Arriving in India

As we approached India I decided to get off at Madras, instead of going on to Calcutta, where the ship would be in dry-dock for two weeks. The people on board gave all sorts of reasons why I should not get off at Madras. It was very difficult to leave them; nevertheless I did, so they took me to the Connemara Hotel, saying it was not safe to stop at a second-rate hotel because of the food, etc. After my friends had gone I felt lost and went to my room and, with tears in my eyes, prayed for guidance. All night the heat was intense, so the next morning I asked the proprietor if he could suggest a cooler place. He said the hill station Kodaikanal was lovely and cool. So I made my plans to leave Madras immediately. Motoring there, I found it to be a charming place. The very first day I met two Hindu brothers and I asked them if they knew any Seers? I have no explanation to offer as to why I put that question. I anticipated nothing. They said they knew of one at Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramana Maharshi. “People come from far and near to see Him. He left home,” they said, “when he was twelve-years old and never went to school. He is the greatest Seer in India. It is difficult to find one that is genuine.” This is what they told me about Bhagavan; of course, these facts are not accurate.

I decided to leave for Tiruvannamalai the next day.

My friends helped me in every way, told me to buy some bedding, etc., but did not tell me that it was the custom to take a gift to the Holy Man; in fact I knew nothing about life at an Ashram. When I left Madras I had no idea I would have this experience, but was eager to go, and felt as though something momentous was about to happen.

When I told the guests in the hotel my plans, they said it was not safe to go alone, as the place (the Ashram) was in a jungle, and I would not endure the hardships and humidity, as I had been in India only a few days and was not acclimatized. An English official and his wife insisted upon getting all the details in order to keep track of me. I bought a ticket for Madura as my friends told me to see the temples there, but I decided not to go to Madura, as I was anxious to reach my destination. So I left the car at Kodaikanal Road and took the train for Tiruvannamalai.

At the Ashram

After arriving there I engaged a bullock cart to take me to the Ashram, where I was greeted by some of the inmates, including Niranjanananda Swami, brother of Sri Bhagavan. They told me that Sri Bhagavan was on the hill, but would be in the hall shortly, and graciously invited me to have my breakfast.

My heart throbbed with expectation as I was taken to the hall. As I entered it I felt the atmosphere was filled with Sri Bhagavan’s purity and blessedness. One feels a breath of the Divine in the Sage’s presence. He was sitting on a couch, clad only in a loincloth, surrounded by His devotees. When He smiled it was as though the gates of Heaven were thrown open. I have never seen eyes more alight with Divine Illumination — they shine like stars. He greeted me very tenderly and made some enquiries about me, which put me at ease. His look of Love and Compassion was a benediction that went straight to my heart. I was immediately drawn to Him. His greatness and kindness is all embracing. One feels such an uplifting influence in His Saintly Presence and cannot help but sense His extraordinary spirituality. It is not necessary for Him to talk. His silent influence of Love and Light is more potent than words could ever be. I did not know what manner of man I expected to find. But once I saw Him, I said to myself, ‘Surely, there is no one like Sri Bhagavan!’ I do not think there is another like Him on earth today. To see Him is to love Him. After spending the morning with Him, I had lunch at eleven o’clock and rested until 2 P.M.. Then I returned to the hall. As I looked upon Sri Bhagavan’s serene face and into His eyes, which beamed with mercy, my soul was

stirred. He knew how much I needed Him, while He looked straight into my heart. Every one who comes to Him is blessed; the inner Peace, which is His, is radiated to all. A beautiful sight are the little children, kneeling before the Master as He blesses them and smiles so tenderly, sometimes taking one in His arms, reminding me of the painting, "Christ Blessing the Children." Later I walked around the grounds, talked to the devotees. At seven o'clock I had a light meal; then I had the opportunity to say just a few words to Sri Bhagavan about my journey. Some time later I went to the Traveller's Bungalow, as ladies are not allowed to stay in the Ashram at night.

I would like to say here, that the one reason why I had been in such a rundown condition was that I had not slept well for years, although I had been taking medicine, which never gave me any relief. Although I said nothing to Sri Bhagavan about this, the amazing thing was that I slept soundly the first night and thereafter without taking any medicine, though I lacked the many comforts I had been accustomed to. I received "the Medicine of all medicines, the unfailing grace of the Lord, whose name is Heart." I arose next morning, feeling refreshed, as though I were born anew.

Soon after, one afternoon, as I was standing by the gate, Sri Bhagavan stopped, while on His way to the Hill-side, and asked me if I had more peace. His loving solicitude made me feel quite at home; and when He smiled, my joy knew no bounds.

During those sacred hours with the Master I unconsciously absorbed the Truth, which He embodies; it filled all my being. My love blossomed into deep devotion and I was filled with ineffable peace. The things which seemed so vital before were no longer of any importance. I could see things in their correct perspective; the heartaches of

yesterday and thoughts of tomorrow faded into oblivion.

Here, in the Ashram, far away from the noise and confusion of the busy highways, silence reigns. It is broken only by the bleating of the sheep and goats and the songs of the birds and the shepherd's song as he takes his flocks home to rest. Time seems to stand still in this peaceful, sacred retreat, amidst the beauties of nature, with its lovely flower gardens and beautiful pools, which are surrounded by knarred oak-like trees, that greet you like old friends. It is so primitive, but therein lies its charm. It is truly the Holy Land. The air is permeated with His peace and love.

Looking upon eternal Arunachala, 'The Hill of Light,' one is filled with awe and is overwhelmed by a great Spiritual Power. Everything is vibrant and speaks to us in Silence. On full-moon night it is especially inspiring to go around the hill. In this deep silence and quietude one readily hears the voice of God. In the inspiring words of the Master from the Five Hymns to Arunachala: "Only to convey by Silence Thy Transcendent State Thou standest as a Hill, shining from heaven to earth." One may also say with the Psalmist, "Be Still And Know That I Am God." These were among the first words spoken to me by Sri Bhagavan and the last ones before I left for America. I had always loved to meditate upon them, but now they seemed to take on a new meaning and filled my heart with bliss. I had been at the Ashram for two months, then made arrangements to sail one month later. I wanted to know more about India before going home. So I reluctantly made plans to leave the place. I had grown to love it and was very sad during those last days. Bhagavan said, "I will always be with you, wherever you go."

When the last day arrived I could not stop crying. Therefore, I did not go to the hall but sat by the pool. In the afternoon when I sat before Bhagavan, He smiled and said, "She has been crying all day; she does not want to

Heart is Thy Name, Oh Lord

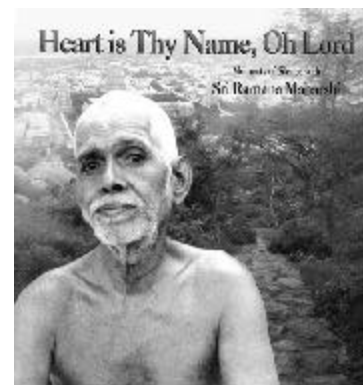
Definitely the most attractive book ever published by Sri Ramanasramam. In *Heart is Thy Name, Oh Lord*, Bharati Mirchandani has exquisitely harmonized two incomparable aspects of Sri Ramana Maharshi — his simple, direct teachings and His Divine Presence.

This subtle art of weaving together photos and quotations in a complimentary manner delightfully brings home the Master's unique personality and message.

size 9 X 9.5 inches, 108 pages (art stock)

price \$12.00

shipping \$2.50



leave Me.” He was so sweet and tender. Later I went to Him for His blessing; the pain of parting was almost more than I could bear; with tears in my eyes I knelt in deepest reverence and devotion before my Beloved Master. May He always be my Father, Mother and God; and may I always be His child, and whatever I do, may it be in His Name!



I then said goodbye to the devotees who had been so kind to me. As I drove to the station in the little cart, my heart grew heavy because I was leaving my Bhagavan, but I had so very much to be thankful for, having had the privilege of spending two months in His presence and been blessed beyond measure. Indeed, I was not the same person who had come to Him two months earlier.

When I reached Madras I wanted to return to Bhaga-

van, I really did not want to tour India; nevertheless I went from Madras to Srinagar in Kashmir, then to Calcutta (wherefrom I expected to sail for America). I had a pleasant trip, stopped at many interesting places along the way and was led to many people who were helpful and kind. What I would like to bring out is the way in which I was guided and protected. I had some blessed experiences, also two breathtaking ones on the train, and on one occasion I narrowly escaped death. It was the hottest season of the year, yet I felt no ill effects. A physician who was stopping at the same hotel in Agra said it was miraculous the way I traveled in the heat; he had seen strong Hindus drop like flies owing to the heat, which did not seem to bother me. I could hear Bhagavan's words: "I will always be with you, wherever you go." His dear face was always before me, no matter what I was doing. His presence filled all my heart.

My eyes were filled with tears many times as I thought of returning to America without seeing Him again. One day I seemed to hear Him say, 'Come back to Me again'. During the time I was separated from the Master my love and faith had deepened, and I decided to return to Him as soon as possible.

(To be continued)

Sleep and Ignorance

Mr. C. sat near the Master's couch and read aloud the following verse from *Vivekachudamani*:

"The blissful sheath (*Anandamayakosha*) has its fullest play in deep sleep, whilst in the dream and waking states it has only a partial manifestation, occasioned by the experience of agreeable objects.

"In *sushupti* (deep sleep) one enjoys a whole ocean of bliss like a king; whereas in the other two states the range of bliss is as wide as are the classes of men, from the king down to the penniless."

Mr. C.: *Sushupti* is often characterised as the state of ignorance.

Bhagavan: No, it is the pure State. There is full awareness in it and total ignorance in the waking state. It is said to be *ajnana* (ignorance) only in relation to the false *jnana* (knowledge) prevalent in *jagrat* (waking). Really speaking, *jagrat* is *ajnana* and *sushupti*, *prajnana* (wisdom). If *sushupti* is not the real state where does the intense peace come from to the sleeper? It is everybody's experience that nothing in *jagrat* can compare with the bliss and well-being derived from deep sleep, when the mind and the senses are absent. What does it all mean? It means that bliss comes only from inside ourselves and that it is most intense when we are free from thoughts and perceptions, which create the world and the body, that is, when we are in our pure Be-ing, which is Brahman, the Self. In other words, the Be-ing alone is bliss and the mental superimpositions are ignorance and, therefore, the cause of misery. That is why *samadhi* is also described as *sushupti* in *jagrat* (sleep in waking), the blissful pure being which prevails in deep sleep is experienced in *jagrat*, when the mind and the senses are fully alert but inactive.

—Guru Ramana

The 55th Aradhana In New York

Throughout North America groups of devotees and disciples of Sri Ramana Maharshi observed the 55th anniversary of his Mahanirvana Day.

In New York, a large group of friends and members of Arunachala Ashrama gathered at the rented hall in the Ganesha Temple in Flushing, NY. The program began with the singing of "Ramana Satguru," with alternating stanzas sung by men and women, just as is done in Sri Ramanasramam. Other works of the Master were recited, along with songs of praise.

Most notable that day were the talks given by Sri V. S. Mani, Manager of Sri Ramanasramam, and Dr. Shanta Ramachandran.

Sri V. S. Mani laid out before the audience a chronology of improvements and interesting developments since he has settled back into serving the Ashrama in 1985. He also recalled his childhood experience of seeing Bhagavan during his last days, and conversations he later had with doctors who treated Bhagavan.

Dr. Shanta Ramachandran in her talk graciously walked the devotees to the bedside of Bhagavan. As a medical student, and also the daughter of the prominent devotee, Prof. K. Swaminathan, she was invited to witness the changing of the bandages covering the large, oozing tumor on Bhagavan's left arm. With deep devotion and awe she graphically recreated this stirring scene.

New Ashrama in New York

After a sumptuous dinner, prepared this time in Gujarati style, many of the devotees drove over to see the new residence of the Ashrama, purchased only two weeks earlier. Tea was served to the devotees, as they toured the spacious grounds. Children ran wildly up and down the four flights, through the many hallways, doors and hidden chambers. Everyone settled into the shrine room for the Evening Veda Parayana, led by Sri Chalapati Sharma.

Future programs will now be conducted in this new, more spacious, Ashrama premises.

All are always welcome to attend any of the daily programs of the Ashrama, or to visit anytime of the day for meditation, prayer, or to meet with devotees.



Daily Program

Morning

4:30 to 5:15	Morning Veda Parayana
5:30 to 6:00	Reading
6:00 to 6:30	Sri Lalita Sahasranam Stotram
6:30 to 7:30	Silence, followed by a reading

Evening

5:15 to 6:00	Evening Veda Parayana
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Night

7:30 to 9:00	Bhajans, chanting and silence followed by a reading
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Sri Chakra Puja

Performed every Friday and Full-Moon Day from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., followed by prasad



MAY/JUNE 2005 issue of the MAHARSHI newsletter was canceled due to the exigencies of settling into the new Ashrama residence.

The 55th Aradhana in California

The 55th Aradhana of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated with great enthusiasm by the devotees of California on May 21, 2005. The program, which was conducted in the Jain Temple in Milpitas, attracted over eighty devotees, including a few from Sacramento, Chico and Los Angeles. Also special was the presence of Sri V. S. Mani, brother of the President of Ramanasramam and grand-nephew of Bhagavan. The highlights of the program included Dennis Hartel's reading of Swami Viswanathan's moving words from the book *The Last Days and Mahanirvana of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*, which reiterated the promise of Bhagavan's continued presence, highlighting that Bhagavan was never the body to begin with and hence seekers will continue to experience the same spiritual guidance as when Bhagavan tenanted the body.

Just as in the Aradhana program in New York on May 7th, Sri Mani spoke about the major initiatives that have been undertaken at Sri Ramanasramam during the last two decades: the restoration of the Old Hall, the re-institution of the daily Tamil Parayana, the construction of the Ashrama compound wall, efforts undertaken to protect and increase the population of peacocks in the Ashrama and the recent construction of the Sri Ramana Maharshi Archival Building to preserve artifacts and images of Bhagavan for posterity, to mention a few.

Sri Mani also recalled some incidents from his younger years, especially when he was able to enter the Ashrama dispensary just after the second operation had been performed on Bhagavan's arm.

Notable among the many bhajans that followed Sri



Devotees gathered at the May 21st program in California

Mani's talk was Smt. Usha Sangam's rendition of Sri Sankaracharya's "Nirvana Shatkam", which held the audience spellbound. Gopi Sankarasubramani and Sreedhar Jayaraman related a few incidents, highlighting Bhagavan's equal vision and respect for all life, exemplifying the goal of the present-day worldwide environmental movement.

The program concluded with a short Veda Parayana and arati. It was a delightful occasion for all devotees who also enjoyed the opportunity to converse with Sri Mani from Sri Ramanasramam.

Letters and Comments

I am Maithreyi, the elder daughter of N.S.Raja who recently returned to India from New York. You may recollect that I used to sing during the Ashrama's functions. I feel like sharing with you the details of a miracle performed recently by Sri Bhagavan in my case.

For the past five months, I have been having abdomen colic frequently and I took treatment at some reputed hospitals from experienced surgeons and physicians. Even after many tests, they were unable to diagnose the ailment correctly and their prescriptions failed to give me any substantial relief. Finally, a few days back, one of my relatives suggested that one Dr. Ganesan, a gastro-physician, may be able to treat me successfully, and he offered to schedule an appointment with Dr. Ganesan. He then called the doctor on his cell phone and described my medical problem and history, whereupon the doctor asked us to wait for him at a particular hospital the next morning.

I went to the hospital in the morning, but was told at the reception counter that no one named Dr. Ganesan was coming to the hospital. But when I reiterated that we had spoken to the doctor himself and had been specifically asked by him to meet him there, they reluctantly suggested that we might make further enquiries elsewhere in the same hospital. We did so, and everyone else confirmed that only a surgeon named Alagusundaram visits the hospital.

After a futile two hours there, we ultimately dialed the same number that we called the previous day and started the following talk:

Me: "Dr. Ganesan?"

The reply was: "Sorry, you are calling a wrong number."

We checked the number, convinced that it was correct, dialed again. The voice from the other end said, "This is Dr. Alagusundaram speaking. What can I do for you?"

We were perplexed and confused. He ascertained the

matter from us and confirmed that we had actually spoken to him only (and not to Dr. Ganesan) the previous day. (Actually, my relative had wrongly stored the number of Dr. Alagusundaram against the name of Dr. Ganesan.) He said he was a gastro-surgeon and would be in the hospital in a few minutes on his usual visits and offered to meet us if we were still interested.

The name "Alagusundaram" had special significance for us. Alagu (or Alagammal) is the name of Sri Bhagavan's mother and Sundaram is that of his father. Every one of us knows that Sri Bhagavan has used these names (i.e., "Alagusundaram") in the second stanza of "Aksharamanamalai." This name being uncommon, it struck us that Sri Bhagavan was indicating to us that this unexpected doctor, bearing the name of his parents, was the one through whom Sri Bhagavan wanted to cure my disease.

So I met the doctor, underwent the surgery suggested by him and am now all right. The course of events constitutes nothing short of a miracle for us. We felt the Presence of His helping hand.

Please convey my regards to all of the devotees at the Ashram.

—Yours affectionately, Maithreyi

We were very happy to read how Bhagavan made His presence known to you, in a way unique to your present need. That is how He shows us that we are not alone in our journey through life, that He is there watching, protecting and guiding us. He is ready to hand over to us perfect peace and joy if we but throw ourselves unreservedly to His care. He sometimes teaches us this

truth by steps, as He has shown you the truth of His presence in this instance. I am sure you will have many more such assurances. As you practice His teachings, He will make you realize and experience the true meaning and purpose of this human birth. You are fortunate and we thank you for sincerely sharing your experience with us.

—Editor

Sri Ramana's Children's Ashrama

August 22 -26, 2005

Our joyous inter-generational event known as "Sri Ramana's Children's Ashrama" in Nova Scotia will include, as usual, the scheduled activities of meditation for children, crafts, drama, song and dance, hatha yoga and service. Themes such as Bhagavan's love for animals, Bhagavan and Arunachala, Bhagavan's lessons in the kitchen, Bhagavan's devotees, have been an integral part of the summer camp curriculum in previous summers.

Afternoons will include outdoor activities such as treasure hunts, horseback riding, swimming, canoeing/swimming at Keji National Park, climbing the North Mountain and chanting in the cave, bonfire & corn roast, (voluntary) sleep-out on the last night, and plenty of open-ended time for kids to play together in the open air and wide fields surrounding the Ashrama.

Children of all ages are invited to share in this joyous time of fellowship and remembrance of Sri Bhagavan and Sri Arunachala. Please call the Ashrama or Darlene in Nova Scotia at (902) 665-2263 if you and your child(ren) would like to attend.

Ramana Satsangs

Satsangs with recitations, songs, readings and meditation have been going on in a few places near or in large cities. Some of them are weekly. If you would like to attend any of these, please contact the individuals below for more information.

Ann Arbor, MI — Gayatri & Mohan (734-623-7199 cedararbor@yahoo.com)

Atlanta Area — Mangalam Kalyanam (678-423-7324 / smoothcutter@hotmail.com)

Boston Area — David & Anna Klegon (617-928-1487 / dklegon@rcn.com)

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

Miami, Ft. Lauderdale Area — David & Janet Robinson (954-755-4758 / arunahill@earthlink.net)

San Francisco Area — Swaminathan & Sangeeta (510-979-1679 / nachiketas@hotmail.com)

Washington, D.C. Area — Prakash & Mamtha Adishesan (703-257-5589 / adishesan@worldnet.att.net)

Ottawa, Canada — Anantha Padmanabhan (613-733-8250 / padmanabhan_ananth@hotmail.com)

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

Vancouver, Canada — Zoya Malek (604-921-9692 / zoyaonline@yahoo.ca)