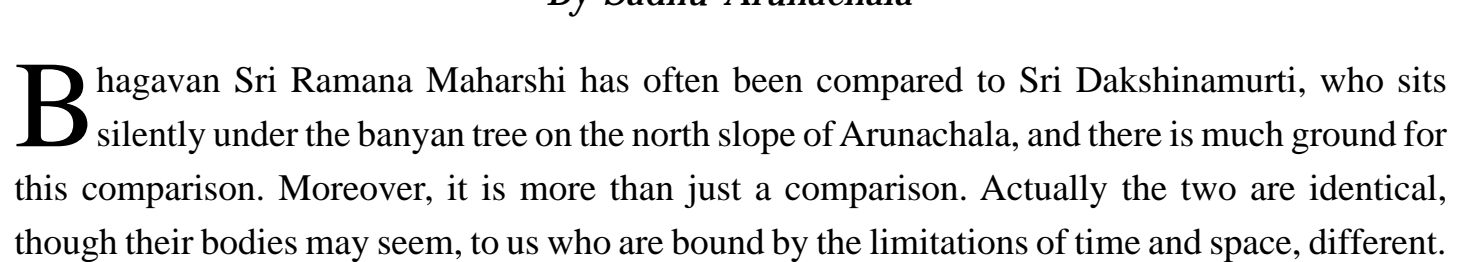


# THE MAHARSHI



MAR/APR 2005

VOL. 15, NO. 2

## Sri Dakshinamurti and Sri Ramana

*By Sadhu Arunachala*

**B**hagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi has often been compared to Sri Dakshinamurti, who sits silently under the banyan tree on the north slope of Arunachala, and there is much ground for this comparison. Moreover, it is more than just a comparison. Actually the two are identical, though their bodies may seem, to us who are bound by the limitations of time and space, different.

Sri Dakshinamurti has retreated to an inaccessible vastness, no longer to be reached by humans, and we can only surmise that this was done because he found the world unworthy and unable to understand his silent instruction, whereas in the form of Sri Ramana he was always most accessible and explained to one and all the meaning of this silence; if they did not listen now, well, the seed would bear fruit on some future occasion. Nothing was ever wasted, for him there was no time and so there could be no disappointment.

Strangely, Bhagavan (as we all used to call Sri Ramana) once found himself in the proximity of the Silent Guru. He had gone off on a ramble about the slopes of the hill when he saw a very large banyan-tree leaf lying in his path. So struck was he by this that he set off in search of its source. At length he came within sight of an abnormally large tree, which he thought must be the one he was looking for. But he could not reach it, his way was blocked by a wall of sheer rock, and at the same time he was attacked by a swarm of wasps whose nest he had unwittingly disturbed. So, realizing he was not destined to proceed, he returned. After this event, he discouraged his disciples who proposed to explore the Hill in quest of the same spot. "You will not succeed in any

way" he would tell them. And though occasionally someone would ignore his advice, nobody ever did succeed in getting a glimpse of the enormous tree.

Both Sri Dakshinamurti and Sri Ramana taught exactly the same, a teaching that can be fully expounded in silence. As soon as words are used we are in the realm of the relative, and for Bhagavan there was no relative. It was only a fictitious appearance of Reality which is One (Advaita). "Make an effort to be without effort," he would say. In fact don't do anything, because actually there is nothing to do. The whole trouble with us all is this constant doing, associating ourselves with all sorts of actions and circumstances and so putting apparent limitations on the Illimitable. How can speech do more than point out to us our mistakes? It can tell us only to 'be', not to be this or to be that, because being this or that is back again in the realm of limitation, and it is just exactly this that he is trying to make us understand.

And is there really any method of reaching that which is eternally and forever here and now? Yes, I know Sri Ramana taught Self-enquiry. Find out who is this eternal and ever conscious being you really are through the method of 'Who am I?' in fact. But that was all. 'Just be yourself,' in other words,

and to be yourself you must get behind phenomena to the Eternal Witness and this can only be done by Self-enquiry.

However, sometimes he would expound philosophy by the hour to clear the doubts of his many visitors, but in the end he would always explain that this was actually quite unnecessary. There was only one thing to know and one thing to do. Silence was best. Once when he saw me puzzling over the intricate division and recombination of the elements in an Advaitic treatise he had told me to read, he turned to someone sitting before him and said, "Tell him not to worry over all that, that is for those people who demand that sort of thing, who want analytical explanation of everything. Let him read the rest which he can understand."

He has stated explicitly that he himself never at any time did any *sadhana*. "Sometimes I would sit with my eyes closed and sometimes with them open. I still do. But I know no mantra or yogic exercises and would not have any use for them if I did." And it is certain that he never taught any of these things. He told us how to set about Self-enquiry and advised certain rules of life that would facilitate this, but that was all. He says in the little book *Who am I?*: "Regulation of diet, restricting it to *sattvic* food taken in moderate quantities, is of all rules of conduct the best, and is most conducive to the development of *sattvic* qualities of the mind. These, in their turn, assist us in the practice of *Atma Vichara* or enquiry in quest of the Self." For the mind is the product of the food we eat, he explained. Purify the food and the mind automatically becomes pure. Again: "Likes and dislikes, love and hatred are equally to be eschewed. Nor is it proper to let the mind rest often on the affairs of worldly life. As far as possible one should not interfere in the affairs of others. Everything offered to others is really an offering to oneself; and if only this is realized, who is there that could refuse anything to others?" Let me quote once again: "If the ego rises all else will rise, if it subsides all else will also subside. The deeper the humility with which we conduct ourselves the better it is for us. If only the mind is kept under control, what matters it where one may happen to be?"

It all sounds so simple put like this, and yet how many of us succeed? No question hereof going off and taking *sannyasa*, for as he says: "renunciation is not discarding external things, but the cancellation of the uprising ego." And this can quite possibly be done more effectively in the world and amidst family life. For, to the determined

seeker some opposition is really good, it gives him something to work on and keeps him alert, just as the airplane needs the opposition of the air to hold it aloft.

He was always very definite in pointing out that Liberation is not some far-off, after-death experience. It is here and now for all of us always. Just drop the false associ-

ation with limitation. Nothing new will happen, we shall then see that we have been all the time what we thought was something alien, something we were searching for. But he was no missionary trying to drive people along a definite track. Did he not know far better than we that everything had its proper time, there was no forcing it. A certain number of people were bound to come to him, and a few were able to remain permanently. It was just their karma. Once when a visitor was taking leave and, with tears, complained that he could not remain any longer, Bhagavan remarked in a very matter of fact way that if everybody who came remained, there would not be any room for anybody.

For people who believed in reforms and all sorts of charitable activity, his advice was: "First help yourself and then you may be able to help others. How can you possibly do any good to others when you yourself are still only seeking for the Good?" It is starting about it at the wrong end.

People who never came to him have often said that his was a negative philosophy. But this is only ignorance of the truth. He was a dynamic force himself and never



Sadhu Arunachala (Major A. W. Chadwick) meditating in the Old Hall\*

\* [Circa 1940] "I had then, and still have, considerable difficulty in sitting on the floor for any length of time in spite of years of practice. Afterwards I devised a meditation belt of cotton cloth which I brought round from the back across my raised knees and with this support could sit comfortably for long periods. Such belts are regularly used by yogis, though strange as it may seem, I had no idea of this when I devised my own. Bhagavan told me that his father had had one but had not used it in public. Once some boys came into the Hall and saw me meditating in the belt, they asked Bhagavan, "Why has he been tied up?" Bhagavan, who had a great sense of humour, was much amused. However, in spite of the fact that the belt made me conspicuous, I was so keen on meditating in Bhagavan's presence that I continued to use it for many years." —A Sadhu's Reminiscences

advised the inaction of inertia. “Do, but do not associate yourself with the doer. Be the witness always,” was his message. Things will undoubtedly go on, and as long as we imagine ourselves to be the body we will naturally believe that we perform the various activities ourselves. It is absolutely useless to sit back and say: “I am not the body, so there is no need to do anything,” when this is only a catch phrase of intellectualism. We do not really believe it is true, so it is only hypocrisy. When we do actually know it, we shall never talk like that. For the real *sannyasin*, he has said, there is no difference between solitude and active life, as he does not regard himself as the doer in either case.

His message was for one and all, and nobody, whatever his occupation, need say that he has no time, for it is to be practiced now and always, whatever we may be doing, be it working, resting, eating or sleeping.

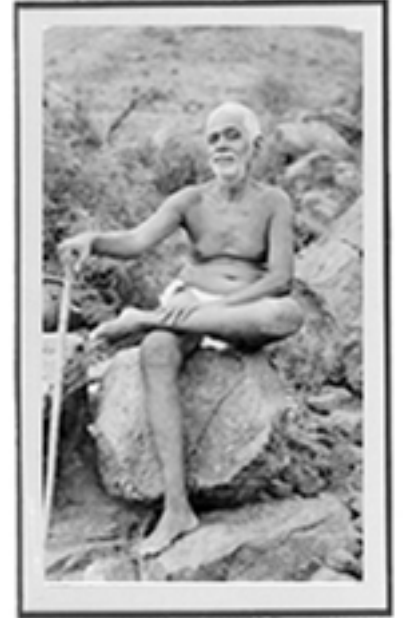
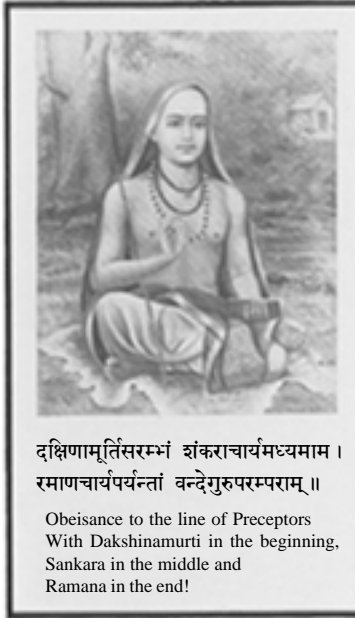
At the end of *Catechism of Enquiry*, [now titled *Spiritual Instruction*] it is said: “It is within our power to adopt a simple and nutritious diet, and with earnest and incessant endeavor, eradicate the ego, the cause of all misery, by canceling all mental activities born of the ego (i.e., the idea “I am the doer”). Can obsessing thought arise without the ego, and can there be illusion apart from such thought?”

And in these few words are summed up the whole of the teaching of the great Sage of Arunachala who was in fact none other than Sri Dakshinamurti in mortal form. And even now though Sri Ramana has left his body, where is the difference? Does he not exactly come up to the definition of Sri Dakshinamurti as given by Sri Sundararaja Sarma in his commentary on the slokas of Sri Sankaracharya? *Sri* - Sakti, *Dakshin* - Perfect, *Amurti* - formless, or “The Ever-Perfect, Invisible Power,” as one might term it.

The first verse of the Sri Dakshinamurti Stotra by Sri Sankaracharya declares the same: “I bow to Sri Dakshinamurti in the form of my Guru; I bow to him by whose Grace the whole world is found to exist entirely in the mind, like a city’s image mirrored in a glass, though like a dream, through Maya’s power it appears outside; and by whose Grace, again, on the dawn of Knowledge it is perceived as the everlasting and non-dual Self.”

But of a truth the Self is one. When we have reached that state of knowledge, when we live in the Self alone and see the world for what it is, we too shall find that both Sri Dakshinamurti and Sri Ramana are and ever have been enthroned in our hearts. Let us pray earnestly that the dawn of that day may be near at hand.

— *The Call Divine*, January 1953



The pictures above illustrate this Sanskrit verse of Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni

# How Maharshi Came To Me

By Robert Hanlon

I First became aware of the Name and Grace of Bhagavan in December 1958. Since my father's death in 1956, I had been in a grave spiritual and psychological crisis. Play-writing efforts of many years stopped abruptly. I then worked as an advertising copywriter until the unconscious weight of the identity search made any job impossible. I started taking a variety of drugs rather heavily, and began an intensive reading of Freudian and mystical literature, with the emphasis on Zen and Yoga. As if miraculously, financial help from a new wealthy friend began at this time and made the total search for Self economically feasible.

Gradually, I started to meditate in the Zen tradition, not knowing that already the Real Presence of the Divine Lover was dictating my most stumbling efforts. I was using the *koan*, "What was my original face before my father and mother were born?" I would meditate for a half hour, read a page here of one book, two pages of another, until the need to meditate overpowered me once more. But I was conscious of no inward change that would relieve my cosmic anxiety. I was overwhelmed by doubts that I could ever break through to the certitudes of immortality and the spirit.

Then, in December 1958, I went to Taos, New Mexico to visit a friend who was also engaged in the search for Self. One day we went to see a rather advanced Yogi and painter, Herman Rednick, who lived in the beautiful sagebrush desert along the Rio Grande Canyon. In his cabin he had five or six framed pictures of Indian sages. One of these pictures was the most famous one of Bhagavan, reproduced on the cover of Arthur Osborne's biography. Looking at it, I felt as if I had been waiting to see it for 10,000 years. The absolute serenity, sweetness and love in His eyes overwhelmed me; for the first time I knew there was really something to be discovered, and that here was my guide to the promised land. Tears came unbidden to my eyes. I was also conscious of powerful vibrations in the cabin which filled me with exultation. (I am now aware that these vibrations were the initial transmission of the Spirit, and that Herman was the Guru transmitting the Grace of Bhagavan, Sad-Guru, the One without a second.)

Returning to New York, I obtained Bhagavan's books and started to meditate according to His teachings. I also began praying to Him, using the *mantra* "OM Ramana", as given in Mudaliar's *Day by Day with Bhagavan*. I stopped taking drugs completely, thanks to the ever-pouring Grace of the Divine Saviour.

Several times during the succeeding months, the idea came to me to lie down on my bed and see if I could return to the womb in a psychic sense, "to go back the way you came," as Bhagavan told one devotee. These attempts had no results until the 22nd of December, 1959. This time, at noon, I was immediately conscious that something extraordinary had happened, that in some inexplicable way I had returned to the womb, although I was still completely conscious of my surroundings and adult identity. Then the question came, 'Where did I come from before I was in the womb?'

No sooner was this question out than a white light opened above and between the eyes; in it I saw what seemed to be black objects moving about. The word "spermatozoa" flashed through my mind, with no conscious volition on my part (I was not familiar with St. Augustine's statement of the *Logos Spermatikos* until several years later). This word, in its turn, triggered a complete rigidity of the body, so that I was aware of being completely in the grip of a higher power. A golden light appeared at the loins and three spiralling lines of light came up the body. The great golden light stopped momentarily at the navel, then rose to the forehead, where it took on the shape of a cone. My whole consciousness went through the horn - and I was immersed in the Ocean of Bliss. Immediately I said, "Of course! I remember. This is my original face." After a very short time, the consciousness came back into the body, which was now all white. The golden horn lingered for a few seconds, then came down again into the navel and so back to the loins. I now understood the significance of the myth of the Unicorn.

Still, (such is the obstinacy of the ever-clinging ego) despite this overpoweringly blissful rebirth of the Spirit which transformed faith into knowledge, I had no certitude that the Spirit which had led me to this beatitude of Light was truly Bhagavan. Thus was I questioning several nights later, 'How do I know it is Bhagavan who has rescued me from my ignorance and not simply any 'familiar' spirit?' when once again my body was gripped by a superior force. Slowly my head was turned in the chair to

the left, where the picture of Bhagavan which had first enthralled me in New Mexico was hanging. My gaze was held rigidly on the picture for some time while the thought came to my mind from an inner voice, 'Now do you see? Now, at last, do you see?'

Now at last I saw. The power of the Holy Name of Bhagavan Sri Ramana, the beatitude and salvation in His holy gaze, have been my surety and bliss since that day. To me, now, all life is a countless succession of Bhagavan's favors; many extraordinary things have happened daily. Pain and suffering have not disappeared from my life, but I accept them now as the will of Bhagavan, to whom I have surrendered as best I can. I am conscious at all times of the Real Presence of my Saviour. May I one day be worthy of the overpowering Love which He has showered upon me.

—*The Mountain Path, January 1966*

*Robert Hanlon would sometimes visit Arunachala Ashrama in New York during the late 1960s and early 1970s.*

## The 55th Maha Nirvana Day

You, your family and friends are cordially  
invited to join us in observing  
the 55th Maha Nirvana Day of Sri Ramana  
Maharshi in  
New York City  
**Saturday 7 May 2005**  
**11:00 A.M.**

at the  
COMMUNITY CENTER, HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF  
NORTH AMERICA (GANESHA TEMPLE)  
143-09 HOLLY AVENUE, FLUSHING, QUEENS, NY  
11355

The program will include recitations, bhajans, puja,  
followed by prasad (lunch).

For more information call:

(718) 575-3215

## How The Mantra Came To Me

By T. K. Sundaresa Iyer

The mantra *Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya* fascinated me greatly in my early days. It so delighted me that I was constantly thinking of Lord Vasudeva. I had a premonition that this body would pass away in its fortieth year, and I wanted to have *darsan* of the Lord before that time. I fasted and practised devotion to Lord Vasudeva incessantly; I read the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Srimad Bhagavatam* with great delight. Then when I read in the *Gita* that "*Jnani tu atmaiva me matam*" (In My view, the *Jnani* is My own Self) it went straight to my heart and the thought came to me, 'While I have at hand Bhagavan Sri Ramana, who is Himself Vasudeva, why should I worship Vasudeva separately?' Be it noted that all this was in my early days before settling down with Sri Bhagavan at His Ashram. So I wanted one single *mantra*, a single deity (*devata*), and a single scripture, so that there might be no conflict of loyalties.

Sri Ramana Paramatman became easily the God to worship, His *Collected Works* the gospel; as for the *mantra*, it struck me intuitively that *Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya* (Obeisance to Bhagavan Sri Ramana) might be an exact parallel to *Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya*. I counted the letters in this new *mantra*, and was very happy to find it also contained twelve letters (in Sanskrit); I told all this to Sri Bhagavan, and He gave the *mantra* His approval.

Advanced practicers (*sadhakas*) may laugh at this and say: "Why do you need a *mantra* while the Ocean of Bliss is there for one to be immersed in directly?" I confess that in this I was trying to conform to the traditional method of practice (*upasana*), which forms one of the main elements in *bhakti* (devotion). Sri Bhagavan has revealed His true nature as the All-Witness; yet there is the explicit injunction that *Advaita* must be only in the attitude and never be interpreted in outer action.

"Retain at heart always the sense of non-duality but never express it in action. My son, the sense of non-duality may apply to the three worlds but it is not to be used towards the Guru."

—*Forty Verses on Reality, Supplement*

This is how the *mantra Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya* came to me!

—*Mountain Path, July 1973*

## Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

This mantra was revealed to Sri T. K Sundaresa Iyer, an ardent devotee, and subsequently approved by Bhagavan to invoke his presence. It is known as the Dwadashakshara Mantra of Bhagavan, which means that it has twelve letters.

In Hinduism it is common to keep the actual mantra hidden, referring to it as a five-or six-lettered mantra without actually telling the mantra. This is done to protect the integrity and purity of the mantra so that the uninitiated may not misuse it. When we read in Suri Nagamma's *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam* that the Dwadashakshara mantra was being chanted before the Cow Lakshmi during her final days, this is the mantra she was referring to.

The actual meaning. It is, in brief, as follows:

### Om

This is the *bija* mantra of Lord Shiva, deriving its origin from *Soham*, which indicates the unity of *jiva* and Shiva. It also refers to the immanent form of Lord Shiva. It is sometimes called *Pranava*. It is believed this is the fundamental sound behind all creation.

### Namō

*Mana* in Sanskrit means mind. The mind of *jiva* goes out towards the world. If the word is reversed, *mana* becomes *nama*, which means turning to God or Self within. *Namah* is a common ending of most divine names meaning I turn to you. Thus *Namō* is grammatically necessitated.

### Bhagavate

One who possess *bhaga*. There are six *bhagas* indicative of Divinity. Only God or His true incarnations can possess them. The attributes are all-around power, dharma, fame, prosperity, knowledge and dispassion.

### Sri

Has several meanings, but in this context it means Gracious.

### Ramanaya

One who revels in the Self.

So the meaning of the mantra is "I take refuge in the Gracious Divine Lord Ramana."

## Chris Kelly

Friends from the New York Arunachala Ashrama were very saddened to hear of the sudden passing of Chris Kelly. Though we had only known him for the past four years, his intense sincerity and devotion to Bhagavan bound him firmly to the hearts of all.

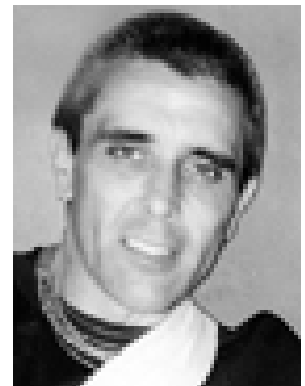
In 2002 and 2004 he made two-week visits to Sri Ramanasramam, and at the Aradhana 2003 function in New York he spoke with deep emotion, clarity and inspiration about his first visit to Sri Arunachala.

Reflecting on this visit he wrote in an email to Dick Satenberg: "Your letter was unusually moving for me this morning. Mental distress and occasional discomfort seem to be cyclical to me, yet I find myself in these moments of mental agitation and discomfort returning again and again to Arunachala within my heart — surely in the bigger picture I know I never really went anywhere nor did I ever leave.

"I have somehow come to know this much: I am not my thinking mind nor its thoughts or even the feelings associated with them, yet they surely exist within this mortal frame and can be a bother at times. One can only stand back and witness the comings and goings, the rise and fall of this feeling or that and be still and know that we are that which never comes, never leaves, never changes at all. As my guru Ramana has said: 'Happiness is your true nature. You identify with the body and my mind, feel their limitations and suffer.'"

Eight devotees from the Ashrama attended his funeral on Long Island where they recited the works of Bhagavan and spoke briefly about Chris' noble aspirations and sincerity.

His wife Karen and young son Jake, who often delighted us with his quiet, fun-loving romping through the Ashrama, survive Chris. We offer them our deepest sympathy, friendship and support.



## Letters and Comments

### Father Figure

I was just reading the first article in the Jan/Feb 2005 “Maharshi” and I found some resemblance in my own life to what the author (Anonymous) has written about seeing Bhagavan as his “father-figure.” It may be just a coincidence that before reading this issue, when I saw the Maharshi’s photo (the one seen in this issue of “The Maharshi”) it reminded me of my own grandfather. He was very similar to Bhagavan as far as physical appearance is concerned, and I remember him asking me on several occasions (humorously, as I was a kid at that time) “Do you know Ramana Maharshi?” At that period and for so many years that followed, I had no idea at all that Sri Bhagavan would be such a vital force for me in the future!

*Ketan, USA*

### Life Saved

I have had an experience in which I have felt the love and care — I really do not know how to express it — of Sri Bhagavan, and I feel like sharing it with you, since you appear to me to represent the extension of His work.

On December 25th I had a car accident on the highway. It was violent.. The car was completely destroyed. Miraculously my life and physical integrity were saved, though I am still recovering from the shock — I have pain in the back and neck and I am unable to go to work. I am profoundly grateful to Life, to all the Saints, Angels,

## Sri Devikalottara

अशरीरं यदात्मानं पश्यति ज्ञानचक्षुषा ।  
तदा भवति शान्तात्मा सर्वतो विगतस्पृहः । ५१ ।

aśarīraṁ yadātmānaṁ paśyati jñānacakṣuṣā ।  
tadā bhavati śāntātmā sarvato vigataspr̥haḥ । 51 ।

51. The day one is able to see oneself with his inner eye as not the body, all his desires vanish and he experiences perfect peace.

Ancestors, whomever or whatever were those responsible for this great gift.

Some weeks before that — by that time I had made contact with you — I printed a copy of Sri Bhagavan’s wonderful face which you have in your website. I had it in my wallet. So, during all the time after the crash, when I even did not know I was alive, I could see His face smiling on me, with pure serenity. I felt and still feel embraced by Him. I was very surprised at this because being the victim (this girl hit me) my words were all the time of peace and love. As you can imagine I did not expect that from me, as I am just a regular middle-aged woman. I profoundly feel I have had a Gift from Heaven. Thank you for listening.

I send my best wishes to all of you in Sri Bhagavan.

*Idoia, Spain*

## 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 (860-446-9320 / vprashanth@msn.com)

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

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

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

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

**Washington, D.C. Area** — Prakash & Mamtha Adishesan (703-502-4892 / adishesan@worldnet.att.net)