

JAGADGURU SRI CHANDRASEKHARA BHARATI MAHASWAMI – MYSTIC AND SEER

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Sacred Sringeri – I

Sringeri is a breathtakingly beautiful place with river Tunga flowing amidst a rich background of forests and mountains. Valmiki *Ramayana* portrays the character of sage Vibhandaka who lived here. He was the very essence of austerity and renunciation. His son Rishyasringa, after whom the place is named, was equally outstanding in knowledge and penance.

When Adi Sankara came to the south of the Vindhyas in search of a centre for the propagation of the Sanatana Dharma, he was struck by the spiritual enchantment of the place. He chose it as one of the four centres of scriptural and dharmic wisdom established by him. He also stayed in Sringeri itself for 12 years writing his commentaries on the scriptural texts.

The principal deity, Sharadambal, the Goddess of Learning, is a focus of a mighty spiritual force. Sharadambal, by all legendary accounts, is a deity of Kashmir who was brought down to the south of India by Adi Sankara. He installed an idol made of sandalwood on a Sri Chakra drawn by himself. Traditionally, it is regarded that the deity embodies Cit, or the consciousness aspect of the Self.

Adi Sankara also built four guardian temples on the surrounding hillocks—Kalabhairava in the east, Anjaneya in the west, Durga in the south and Kali in the north—to protect the place from dangers, diseases and forces of evil. The other landmark is the Vidya Sankara temple built by Sri Vidyananya.

Guru Lineage

Of the long lineage of Jagadgurus of Sringeri Sharada Peetha, dating back to the eighth

century, only three of them were born in Sringeri, Karnataka. They are the 31st, 32nd and 34th Pontiffs, the last being Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahaswami.

Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahaswami belongs to the rare category of those who are born to teach, born to be exemplars of mankind. He spent most of his 62 years in Sringeri. Except for his two tours—in 1924-1927 and 1938-1940—he was at Sringeri. The Kala Bhairava temple had a special fascination for him. One finds the peace of the place in the Jagadguru's countenance, in his unhurried steps and, in fact, in everything he did.

Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahaswami was born in a family noted for its godliness, strict observance of scriptures and vast erudition. His grandfather, Eswari Subba Sastri had performed *kotilinga archana* along with *mahanyasa*. He was a *medhavi* — a man of profound intellect and great detachment. Though his only son, Gopala Sastri, could not match his father in his erudition, he outshone him in his detachment. Gopala Sastry's wife Lakshamma was a true *pativrata*.

Though 11 children were born to them, each of them died in their infancy. Gopala Sastry bore this series of misfortunes with great fortitude and courage. But even he, for all his deep sense of true religious spirit, could not help feeling the pangs of sorrow in his heart. Some suggested that a pilgrimage to Gokarna would solve their problem.

The couple sought the blessings of Sri Narasimha Bharathi Mahaswami, whom they looked up to for everything. When they met the Acharya, due to his spiritual insight, he could see the happy events in store not only to their family but also for the Peetha. It is said that the

Acharya, while assuring them of the success of their pilgrimage, added that it would be in the best interest of their to-be-born son to be dedicated to Goddess Sharadambal.

When the couple reached Gokarna they were in the best possible spiritual mood. On being told that their horoscope indicated *putra dosha*, they performed the necessary propitiatory rites. Then, on the Sivaratri day, which they spent in prayer and fasting, their minds dwelt on the parents of Adi Sankara. Had not Sivaguru and Aryamba similarly worshipped Lord Siva with great devotional fervour, also on a Sivaratri day centuries earlier, for a son? Had not the great Lord Vrishabesvara granted their boon? Would they not be similarly blessed by Mahabalesvara?

One night Mahabalesvara appeared in the dreams of Gopala Sastri and Lakshamma, and assured them that they would be blessed with an illustrious son. Their hearts were filled with ecstasy.

Birth of a Mystic Seer

Soon the happy tidings came. Lakshamma had conceived her twelfth child. There was a special lustre in her face. Was not a *jnani*, a *mahapurusha*, the upholder of dharma in her womb? The highly detached Gopala Sastri too exuded evident happiness.

On Sunday, October 16 1892, a son was born to this pious couple. His birth, *upanayanam*, *sannyasa*, and *videha mukti* were all on Sundays. It was the auspicious day of *ashwayuja bahula ekadasi* (the eleventh day of the dark fortnight) in the lunar year Nandana. His birth star was Makha, second *pada*, and the *rasi* was simha. It was in the fitness of things that this child, who has to become a *vairagya chakravarti*, the foremost amongst the dispassionate, should be born on an *ekadasi*, a day marked for fasting and prayer. The parents' joy knew no bounds.

When this auspicious event was reported to Sri Narasimha Bharathi Mahaswamigal, the

Acharya conveyed his blessings, knowing as he did what role the boy was to play as an exceptional *tapasvi*, whose life would be totally surrendered to Sharadamba.

On the eleventh day the rituals of *jatakarma* and *namakarana*, writing of horoscope and naming, were done. The son was named 'Sri Narasimha.'

Boyhood Days

Narasimha was a gift of God with the blessings of the guru Sri Narasimha Bharathi Mahaswami. There is little doubt that Narasimha was an exceptional luminary who was born to teach, born to redeem. Little wonder that even from his boyhood days he was introverted, had no attraction for the objects of the world.

He had his boarding and lodging in the house of Srikanta Sastri, the Administrator, but he would never fail to discharge his filial duties. But moods of God-intoxication would be there on him, often making him forget his surroundings.

He was very fond of chanting the hymn *Mookapanchasati*. Once while on way to the market, he was so immersed in the composition that he proceeded far beyond the limits of the Sringeri township. It was only when the recitation ended that Narasimha realized he had come far out.

This was not a stray incident. His God-mindedness manifested itself in several ways. Each evening, till about seven or seven-thirty, Narasimha would sit in the Vidya Sankara temple with no awareness of the external world.

This devotional mood would be particularly intense on *pradosha* days (*pradosha* occurs twice in a lunar month and is considered sacred for Siva worship). "How did he offer his worship? With *abhisheka* performed with the waters of the pure mind drawn from the river of faith and with flowers of constant *samadhi*."

To him worship was a sure means of communion with God. There was an air of reality in whatever he did. It was not a matter of make-believe or imagination. The way he did the *parayanam*, reading from the *Ramayana*, was a lesson in this direction.

Narasimha would visit the Sharadambal temple everyday and also offer his respects to his Acharya. The guru noticed the regularity and deep devotion of Narasimha and was happy about it. If he was absent some day the Acharya would miss him and enquire, "Why has Narasimha not come today?"

Narasimha's, memory was prodigious, his intelligence was sparkling and his conduct was humble and simple. His parents performed the sastrically prescribed rite of *choodakarma* (it is one of the 16 *samskaras* prescribed in *sastras*) which enables a boy to enter a school for formal studies. He was then admitted to the local Anglo-venacular school run by the Government.

Narasimha was not at all made for the secular education. But the parents did not consider his inclinations and predispositions. They had had enough of penury and wished that their long cherished only surviving child should have a successful career and have all the good things in life. Thus, Narasimha used to study Sanskrit at home and English at school.

The *Brahmopadesha* of Narasimha was performed when he was eight. He was regular in the performance of *sandhyavandana* three times each day and *agnikarya*, worship of fire god, twice daily.

Narasimha excelled in his class. In his twelfth year, Narasimha took the lower secondary examination and topped the list in the first division. This excellent performance confirmed the dreams which his parents had set in their minds. They visualized a bright career for him. However, Narasimha was just not made for a wordly career. He was the child of God born to adorn the Sharada Peetha.

According to its plans, the divine soon took the matter of his future education into its own hands. Narasimha changed over to Sadvidya Sanjeevini Pathasala of the Peetha, according to the express wishes of Sri Narasimha Bharathi Mahaswami.

Heir to Sharada Peetha - II

The Mahaswami kept a close watch over the progress of his ward. He not only visited the *pathasala* regularly but would also evaluate the answer papers of the students. The answer papers of Narasimha gave him the confidence that Sharadamba had answered his prayers and that Narasimha was well on the road to *sarvajnatva*, fullness of knowledge, for which he had prayed so ardently.

During his tours, the Acharya established in 1910 an institution of higher Vedantic training, 'Bharatiya Girvana Proudha Vidya Vardhini Sala'. His automatic choice for the course was his special student, Narasimha. The others could seldom understand the mystery of the Mahaswami's relationship with and the fondness for this "impecunious, retiring type of boy." One is reminded of Sankara Bhagavatpada's assessment of the true worth of his disciple Giri whom others had regarded, in their ignorance, as dull witted.

Before sending Narasimha to Bangalore, the Mahaswami briefed him on why he was sending him for further studies there.

Even more important is the fact that the Mahaswami initiated Narasimha with *Neelakantha Traiakshari mantra*. After initiating him the Mahaswami told him, "Both for you and for those who acquire knowledge under you, this will constitute the means of earning God's grace." This special blessings underscores the awareness of the Mahaswami of the future role of Narasimha as a Sadguru.

Higher Studies in Bangalore

For Sri Narasimha Bharati Mahaswami it must have been quite a wrench to send Naransimha away from his immediate presence. He had already selected him as his successor and grown fond of him because of his intellectual brilliance, humility and many endearing spiritual virtues. Though the great ones have no attachment, still the relationship between the guru and a disciple is something special and cannot be explained.

Narasimha moved to Bangalore with his parents in 1911, and plunged into his studies. Mahamahopadhyaya Vellore Subramanya Sastri, who had studied *Mimamsa* under the Mahaswami, was a teacher for this subject. He had also a brilliant teacher in *Mimasaka*, Shiromani Vaidyanatha Sastri. Narasimha spent long hours studying *Mimamsa* books like *Bhatta Dipika*.

Narasimha had a wise head on his young shoulders. So he sought out Virupaksha Sastri, an exceptionally erudite scholar in Vedanta, to learn from him. He was not on staff of the Peetha Pathasala, so Narasimha took private tuition under him. The great advantage was also that he was a chosen disciple of Mahaswami. It was as if the divine had planned that Narasimha should receive his coaching in Vedanta from Virupaksha Sastri who had studied under Sri Narasimha Bharati Mahaswami himself. The divine hand is clear because Virupaksha Sastri was specially chosen later for continuing Narasimha's lesson in Vedanta, after he had acceded to the Peetha, the very next year in 1912. it was to be a long and close relationship born of mutual love and respect.

Even in Bangalore there was no change whatsoever in Narasimha's inwardness. There in Sringeri it was the Vidya Sankara temple which drew him. He wanted a place not too far away from his house which would yet be unpolluted by the vast crowds. He found a suitable place in the Gangadhareswara temple

in Gavipuram. It was like an oasis in the city and almost as if it was situated in a village. Narasimha would go there regularly and lose himself in the mental worship of Siva.

For his parents this was perhaps the best period of their lives. Narasimha stayed under the same roof and pleased their hearts no end by willingly attending to all their daily needs. Their son was performing exceptionally well in his studies and was ever obedient, gentle and affectionate. Little could they foresee how quickly fate would take a hand, how soon they would lose their son to a higher call, a call from his guru to succeed him to the Sharada Peetha.

Prelude to Sanyasa

When Narasimha Bharati Mahaswami felt that his body had served its purpose and that there was a need to appoint his successor, he sent for Narasimha who was then studying in Bangalore. Every day the Mahaswami would visit Sri Kala Bhairava temple in the evening. On the way he would chant *Antakshari* verses (verses in which the last syllable of a verse would be the first syllable of the succeeding verse) and also discuss some spiritual topics.

One evening he asked Narasimha and two other students Markandeya and Shivananda to accompany him. Seated at the temple he composed 11 verses pregnant with meaning. It would appear that he had resolved to give *sannyasa* to Narasimha. Hence, after composing eight verses, he specially turned his gracious eyes on Narasimha and uttered the last three verses looking straight at his face. The English translation on these verses read:

- 1) O Child, if you have the desire to cross the ocean of transmigratory existence, listen to what I am saying. It is in consonance with the Upanishads and would be helpful to you later.
- 2) Have your head shaven. Throw away your sacred thread donned for performing

sacrifices. Become a *sannyasi*. Be a steadfast adherent of *sadhana chatustaya*.

- 3) Enquire long into the truth with faith and devotion listening to the nectar-like utterances of the Upanishads flowing from the lips of the Sadguru.

What is the real significance of this event? Sri Abinava Vidya Tirtha is positive that Sri Narasimha Bharati Mahaswami had actually given *sannyasa diksha* -initiated Narasimha into *sannyasa*. He stresses that the initiation need not necessarily be by touch only, since the scriptures recognize other modes like look and with the mind. The parallel being the case of Giri, on whom Sankara Bhagavatpada transmitted knowledge of all the 14 sciences. What happened at the Kala Bhairava temple was exactly the same.

Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha says, "While my paramaguru did not tell my guru about his wanting to give him *sannyasa* or his wanting to choose him as his successor, he composed the verses while looking at my guru's mind."

By pouring his grace on Narasimha thus, he provided him with that which is considered to be of paramount importance-a single minded decision to become a *sannyasi* by renouncing home. Since Narasimha Bharati Mahaswami attained Mahasamadhi on March 20, 1912 before Narasimha reached Sringeri, to take over as his successor, he had the necessary divine foresight to fulfill this sacred requirement.

Afterwards Narasimha returned to Bangalore to continue his studies.

Mantle of Succession – III

During the first quarter of 1911 many momentous events took place in the history of the Sharada Peetha. Sri Narasimha Bharati Mahaswami visited Kaladi, which he had identified as the birthplace of Adi Sankara through divine insight, and consecrated a temple of Sharadamba and another for Adi Sankara.

When he returned to Sringeri in March 1911, his health was none too good. His period of stewardship of the Sringeri Math had been fulfilled, and people had come to recognize the importance and significance of Sringeri as the fountainhead of scriptural learning and Vedic thought.

The Mahaswami, therefore, felt that his life's task was done. As he expressed it to Sharadamba, "*Ata Param Kim Karyam Asti?*" (After this what is it that remains to be done ?) Hence, he gradually withdrew from his activities of the Peetha and prepared to spend most of the time in the solitude of Narasimha Vana.

Having felt that his body's purpose had been served, he was ready to cast off the same. However, one duty remained, the duty to nominate, formally, his successor. 'Formal' because he had decided that Narasimha was to succeed him.

A beloved devotee Rama Sastri was entrusted with the sacred trust, that of personally carrying the Mahaswami's letter seeking the official consent of Krishnaraja Wodeyar, Maharaja of Mysore, for the nomination of Shrungagiri Narasimha Sastri to succeed the Mahaswami to the Sharada Peetham. He was also to meet Narasimha and his parents to communicate the decision and obtain their consent.

The Mahaswami had the satisfaction of visualizing in his Yoga Nishta the coronation of Narasimha Sastri as the *peethaadhipathi* (head of the Peetha). The Mahaswami also chose the *sannyasi* name of his successor as "Chandrasekara Bharati" putting the final seal on what his heart had always wanted.

A few days later, on March 20, 1912, Sri Narasimha Bharati Mahaswami attained Mahasamadhi. Narasimha Sastry was to reach Sringeri only a day later. But his guru had already transmitted his power to him and the firm assurance in his heart of the availability of his unfailing guidance.

Formal Sannyasa

The shock of having lost the physical presence of the guru, and the tearful farewell of his loving parents must have weighed heavily on Narasimha's mind. The physical vacuum was hard to bear, even though the strong mental bonds made it somewhat bearable.

On the day before coronation, he was in constant prayer of his guru who responded to his prayers. His guru appeared in his dream and imparted the *Mahavakya* of the Peetha, *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman). Though he was blessed by his guru himself, he felt duty bound to go through the formalities and demonstrate the importance of keeping up the time honoured traditions of receiving the *Mahavakya* initiation formally.

Worship of Sri Chakra is a must for the swamis of the Peetha. Normally, the Sri Vidya *mantropadesa* would be done by the guru. Since Sri Narasimha Bharati had passed away, the *mantropadesa* was done by Srikanta Sastri who had been initiated into it by the Mahaswami.

On the ninth day of Chaitra Bahula of Sri Paridhavi Samvatsara, April 7, 1912, a new chapter dawned in the history of Sharada Peetha. Narasimha performed the required rites to become a *sannyasi*. After having another bath in the Tunga, Narasimha stood navel deep in the water and took the vow of non-injury. He was ready to receive his formal initiation into *sannyasa* from Sri Satyananda Saraswati Mahaswami with the *mahavakya*, *Aham Brahmasmi*.

He received the saffron robes, the sacred staff and the *kamandalu* (water-pot) from Sri Satyananda Mahaswami. As desired by the previous Acharya, he was given the *sannyasi* name Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati.

The brilliance of inner life showed itself in the extraordinary beauty of the face, and a magnetic power to draw everyone towards him.

As for the title Bharati, it was indeed most appropriate. He had mastered the *Tarka Sastra* and most of *Mimamsa* and Vedanta. His mind was sharp as a *kusa* grass, and could grasp the true import of Sastraic statements. Had not the prayers of his predecessor to Sharadamba that Narasimha should become a '*sarvajna*' borne fruit?

The new Mahaswami then proceeded to the *adhistanam*, the *samadhi* shrine of his guru. There he beheld the divine form of his guru as if he were physically present there. Bubbling with joy he composed a poem extolling the glory of his guru, extracts from which read:

"You are the incarnation of Lord Siva. As if to confirm this you have been named Sivaswami. Will not your compassionate glance fall on me and make me also worthy of this glorious Peetham? You have immensely graced me by your sagacious guidance and blessings at the Kala Bhairava temple... Please accept me as a bee seeking your lotus feet."

When Mahaswami was engrossed in the worship of Sharada, the doors of the *sanctum sanctorum* closed. The Mahaswami could feel the hand of Sharada over his head and her sweet voice blessed him. There could not have been a more auspicious augury for his spiritual stewardship.

Life's Fulfilment of Kumbhabhishekams – IV

This affirmation of faith in the presiding deity of the Peetha, Sharadambal, was most auspicious. The Kumbhabhishekam, of the Sharada temple, in 1916, was a great fulfillment for Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahaswami, following the rebuilding of the temple which had been partly destroyed by fire in 1911.

Throughout his life, his overflowing love for his guru and Sharadambal were the streams which influenced his every action. And it was given to him to perform the Kumbhabhishekam

of both the temples of his guru and Sharadambal. It was quite a stupendous achievement made possible by the growing power of his penance. For this happened within the first few years of his pontiffship when he still had to establish firm contact in the minds and hearts of devotees.

In a voice charged with devotion Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati spoke in mellifluous Sanskrit about the unique combination of the place Sringeri, bursting with spiritual currents, and worship of Sharada, the epitome of wisdom. "Fortunate indeed is one who has Sharada as his *Upasana devata* for she is the supreme giver of boons. One is reminded of the Mahaswami's poetic outpourings on the supreme Sharada. In one of his compositions, he ecstatically says, "Let those who come for wealth worship Lakshmi but for me, Sharada, you alone, are the refuge."

The Poet

Who can access the stature of the Jagadguru's poetic genius? His was a multi-sided excellence. He was young, full of devotional fervour for his guru, for Sharadambal, and full of unsaid concern for his mother's plight when he wrote his compositions. The Jagadguru's compositions number 36 and have been printed in Sanskrit and Tamil in a beautiful work, titled *Gururaja Sukthi Malika*, in two volumes, coming to about 400 pages.

The whole world is indebted to the Jagadguru for his monumental prose work, the commentary on *Viveka Choodamani*. This was a work dear to his heart. He began this work early in 1940 during his second trip to Kaladi, as the inspiration came in the birthplace of Adi Sankara whose timeless work was being commented upon.

No one was better suited to this task for, in his reverence for Adi Sankara, he was second to none. Each verse was directly applicable to his own *Sadhana* and *siddhi* of the state of *jivanmukti*. Only a few verses remained to be commented upon after some years, the verses from 516 to 581. When requested to complete them, he said,

"Whatever has to be said has already been conveyed."

The Swami's Spell-binding Worship - V

Being keen on setting an example, the new Mahaswami would, without fail, do the Chandramouleeswara pooja and Sri Chakra Pooja, whenever he was not indrawn.

To the Mahaswami, worship was a means of direct communion with God. It was not a formality to be gone through mechanically. He would emphasize that it should be done with total absorption.

On the day when Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha was nominated as his successor, on May 22, 1931, the disciple and Guru were about to enter the *sanctum sanctorum*. Noticing the understandable eagerness of the disciple, the Mahaswami counseled patience and the following conversation took place.

M: Where are we going?

D: To Sharadamabal's temple.

M: It is not just Sharadamabal's temple we are going to but to mother's inner chamber... She is transcendent and grants all wishes. Whatever you wish for, she will confer. Hence enter with full faith and tranquility.

There is a convention that on their birthdays the heads of the Peetha should worship Siva in the *Malahanikaresvara* temple, on a hillock in Sringeri.

On an occasion when the Mahaswami was performing worship at Malahanikaresvara temple, even though the place had been thoroughly cleaned, red ants started attacking the Mahaswami. They kept coming out of the crevices in swarms. The attendant could not help coming out. But the Mahaswami was unperturbed and the red ants did not make the slightest impression on him. He completed the elaborate pooja after which he emerged.

To the Mahaswami, worship was something sacrosanct and nothing should be allowed to interfere with it. Once while the Mahaswami was performing Chandramouleeswara pooja, a king cobra came in, causing consternation among the devotees. But the Mahaswami signaled to them to be calm and proceeded with the worship. The cobra went near the place of worship. The Mahaswami took a small cup, filled it with milk and extended his hand with the cup of milk to the cobra. The cobra licked up the milk, took a good look at the Mahaswami and slithered away. When there is no fear the response of reptiles and animals would be normal and fearless. But who except a jnani can be fearless?

The way the Mahaswami would offer worship was a sight for Gods to see. He would meticulously observe every little detail and yet be wholly absorbed in the deity. The atmosphere would be charged with spirituality and those witnessing the worship would be uplifted and elevated to a new dimension.

The First Tour

The Mahaswami was fully aware of the need to meet the devotees who looked up to the guidance of the Jagadguru. He was also aware of the tradition coming down from the time of Adi Sankara for the heads of the Peetha to go on tour spanning several years. The Mahaswami's Paramaguru, Sri Narasimha Bharati VII, was almost always on tour. Even his guru had covered vast areas during his tours.

There was constant pressure from the administration and various appeals from organizations and devotees that the guru should perform some auspicious function or the other connected with the Kumbhabhishekam of a temple, opening of a Veda *pathasala* and so on. There was also the standing invitation from Krishnaraja Wodeyar that the Mahaswami should come to Mysore and honour him. Besides, a beautiful temple in honour of his guru was being constructed in his birth place Mysore. This

temple in his guru's honour had to be declared open and ancillary facilities for Vedic studies had to be provided.

The Mahaswami was therefore well aware that he should go out on tour and the only question was one of timing. He wanted to be rooted in the Self, to be fully ripe before starting. Unlike his guru and his successor Swamis, he had the great handicap of having to do his spiritual practices on his own without having the constant physical proximity and guidance of the guru. True, Virupaksha Sastri filled this vacuum to some extent. But still the Herculean labour had to be his.

Towards the middle of 1923, the Mahaswami felt he was ready but he waited for Sharada's *Prerana*, the divine sanction. A couple of months later, he got the green signal from Sharada and authorized the administration to make the necessary arrangements.

The administration was only too happy. In their heart of hearts they had misgivings as to whether the Mahaswami, used as he was to inner communion and withdrawal, would ever agree to such a tour which they had felt would be in the best interests of the Peetha, from all angles. It took a few months to finalize the plans. In January 1924, Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati left Sringeri on his first tour which was to be momentous in many ways.

Abinava Shakaralaya

Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati attached great importance to his first camp at Mysore. Was it not the birth place of his guru? The temple in his honour had been completed. The Mahaswami's first assignment, on his first tour, was to consecrate this temple. What could be more pleasing to him? The temple had been named 'Abhinava Shankaralaya'.

A marble statue of Sri Narasimha Bharati Mahaswami was installed in the temple which was declared open by the Mahaswami. This was

the second occasion for the Mahaswami to pay a concrete tribute to his guru. Eight years earlier he had done so at Sringeri.

Gift of Sharada

From Mysore, the Mahaswami proceeded to Satyamangalam via Nanjangud and Chamarajanagar. At Satyamangalam, the first halt of the Mahaswami in Tamil Nadu, a tumultuous welcome awaited him.

After completing the evening worship the Mahaswami who had scant knowledge of Tamil began his speech in chaste Tamil. The choicest words fell into their proper place in mellifluous Tamil as if coming out of a natural spring. It was like pouring nectar into the ears of the large gathering. Never once did the Mahaswami falter.

One might say that this address, fully in

Tamil, was the first public evidence of the fact that the Mahaswami had become a great *pavana purusha*-a saint to whom the various siddhis (powers) had come naturally, unsought.

Otherwise it is impossible to explain how the Mahaswami could speak Tamil as fluently as in his own mother-tongue when he hardly knew the language. To the Mahaswami everything was the gift of the Goddess Sharada.

In later years his successor Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha Mahaswami used to be amazed at the manner in which the Mahaswami would know even the unexpressed problems of the devotees, and solve them. Whenever he asked the Mahaswami in wonder, the Mahaswami would never admit his powers but would only submit the credit to Sharadambal.

Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahaswami – Mystic and Seer

About the Book and the Author

Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahaswami, who incarnated in Sringeri adorned the Dakshinamnaya Sringeri Sharada Peetha for 42 years (1912-1954), was one of those rare human beings who was born to teach and bring light to the lives of all those with whom he came in touch.

The book selected for this issue, Jagadguru Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahaswami-Mystic and Seer, brings alive to the reader the Jagadguru with all the fragrance and aroma of the fascination of his inner life.

"My Paramaguru's unparalleled erudition in Sastras," said the present Holiness Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswami, "was matched only by his own ability to make even those of ordinary intellect comprehend the most profound import of the scriptures. The touchstone of his erudition and scholarship is his commentary on Adi Sankara's Vivekachoodamani."

"Gifted with divine virtues, Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahaswami was also resplendent as a jivanmukta", His Holiness added.

A.R. Natarajan, author of the book, has been associated with the Sringeri Sharada Peetham for over three decades. From the time he saw the photograph of the sage at the old guest house at Sringeri, in 1956, the pull was magnetic. The fascination continued. The author thinks that perhaps this link gave him the opportunity of being the biographer of the Mahaswami.

The author says that at every stage, while gathering the material for it, sifting it, absorbing it and presenting it, he felt an intimate contact with Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahaswami-one born for welfare of the world, rooted in the Self.

The book, conceived on the occasion of the birth centenary of the Mahaswami (October 16, 1992), was published in 1994 by A.R. Natarajan, President of the Ramana Maharshi Center for Learning, 40/41, 2nd Cross, Lower Palace Orchards, Bangalore 560 003. Priced at Rs. 95, the 202-page book contains a few color and some rare black and white photographs.