



Ma Devaki's Diary

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

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April 2009 – December 2015

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We are presenting excerpts from Ma Devaki's Diary, which appeared in the monthly magazine of the Ashram '*Saranagatam*'.

These excerpts were already present on the website of the Yogi Ramsuratkumar Bhavan; however it has seemed useful to put them together in the form of a book.

This book will be completed each time a new part of Ma's diary will be published.

Gaura Krishna
April 19th, 2009

We are very thankful to Smt. Nivedita Ramesh for having corrected typing errors.

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September 22nd, 1991

Satsang at Sannadhi street

By Bhagavan's grace, on January 15, 1991, we, the Sudama sisters, took a small room for rent in a lane opposite to Ramanashram in Ramana Nagar. Bhagavan named it as Sudama and blessed it, by setting His Holy Feet in it. Almost every weekend and also every possible holiday, I had been coming from Salem to Tiruvannamalai to have Darshan of Bhagavan. There was such a strong pull and I could never resist it! There were times, I had to go back with not so much as a glimpse of Him even at a distance! Because, as I understood later, when Bhagavan was busy with some people doing some important work on them, He would not permit the presence of certain others there. But every time, the very thought of Tiruvannamalai and His "possible" Darshan itself was enough to keep me at it, which of course eventually led to my looking for a permanent residence somewhere in Tiruvannamalai. That's how we found this title "Sudama". This itself was a miracle that we could find this room at all, opposite to "KRUPA" where Bhagavan was a frequent visitor in those days.

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As usual, the four of us landed at Sudama the previous night, on our weekend visit. The next day was Sunday, the 22nd September 1991, and we reached around 9.30a.m. Sri. B.N, a popular writer and his wife were there. A little later, a famous playback Music Director came to visit Bhagavan. All of us were seated in two rows opposite to each other in that small veranda. Bhagavan was doing some intense work on them, mostly smoking and looking at them penetratingly, but now and then switching His glances over swiftly from one to the other. We, for our part, kept on singing His Name, whenever He gestured to us. After some time, Bhagavan asked the Music Director to sing the song he had composed in Tamil a year back, “(tamil word)” the meaning of which is:

*“Oh, how blessed is this life!
How privileged am I to remember
Even if for a fleeting moment
Grandpa Koti Swami, Mayee Ma
That splendid Sun of Jnana — Ramana
And Yogi Ramsuratkumar
Life’s purpose gained,
What more do i need?”*

Bhagavan gestured to us to join him and we were all singing together the same song for an hour. By then, a huge crowd had collected outside to see the Music Director. There was such commotion there and people began to bang on the grill gate, jostling each other, just to have a glimpse of the Musician, their matinee idol. The music director was visibly embarrassed – “How could

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these people want to see poor me when the benevolent Divinity is seated here right before them for all the beneficence!” was the kind of countenance his face had. The boy at the gate was unable to manage the crowd. Then, Bhagavan commanded the writer B.N to go outside and see the crowd, promising Darshan of their matinee idol. As Mr. B.N started to appeal to the people with persuasive talks and gestures, Bhagavan began to smile. He also asked Music Director to go outside and give “Darshan” to his fans. When both Mr B.N. and Mr. I became busy, Bhagavan began to enjoy the whole show. He even danced with his hands sometimes, to our singing. Meanwhile, Mr. I had to autograph quite a few books, papers, notebooks etc. He finished everything as quickly as possible and returned to his seat with Mr. B.N. By now Bhagavan was dancing in tune with our singing more expressly, His face constantly beaming. Now and then, He would put a piece of sugar candy into His mouth and also distribute, but only to some people there, every time he took out piece, hope would stir our hearts, only to end in playful disappointment, minutes later! There was such joy all around! Suddenly, one child very spontaneously voiced out what some of us were feeling but dared to express!! “Swami, you did not give me even one piece!” Bhagavan burst into peals of laughter and all of us joined too in the complaint as well as the laughter. Even then, some of us had no chance at all as He continued His leela in the same fashion. The writer had brought a collection of songs with sketches appropriate to their themes, even the previous night and had been with Bhagavan from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. already! So they had

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been up the whole night yet He looked fresh and cheerful and the atmosphere seemed electrified!

Bhagavan had been showing special attention to one lady for some days. Whenever she came, she was made to sit opposite to Him and given the fan. Once He even took her inside with Mr. B. And gave them lunch, when we three were seated outside, hungry, thirsty and tired, staring at the closed wooden door even while singing. So that day, when we were all sitting together with Him in the veranda, I began to think and pray "Bhagavan, please make my next janma at least, better. Let me be close to you." Immediately, he commanded Mr. I to sing his song once again where he would state, "Those who think of Yogi Ramsuratkumar even for a moment, will not have to be born ever again." Bhagavan looked at me laughed. He also gave me some kind glances which sent me floating in the clouds!

After sometime, He gave leave to every group there and now only the four of us were left. Bhagavan was playing with the flower garland he was wearing. All of a sudden He would remove it and keep it down. After a few minutes, He would take it and put it on Himself. Soon again He would put it down, only to wear it again after a few minutes! This went on quite a few times. Suddenly it flashed across my mind! Only yesterday I was telling a friend, "Just as we string varieties of flowers into malas and decorate Him, Bhagavan strings varieties of people, events and Leelas into malas, adorns Himself with them and enjoys His own beauty!" Was it possible that He not only heard it but in appreciation of

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the Truth it symbolized pointedly, was also demonstrating His Eternal Leela of creation, protection and destruction? I looked up and found Him smiling with a hand raised in benediction. What a beautiful gift of assurance! My eyes filled with tears of gratitude.

We had taken some chappathies, sabji and milk, which he took and kept near Himself. Then I gathered some courage and asked hesitantly.

D: Bhagavan, what's the Mantra for Koti archanai at Ramji Ashram?

Bhagavan (*laughing*): what you people are singing now. (tamil title)(that's it).

D: What should be the date for Koti archanai?

Bhagavan: They usually hold it with Jayanti.

D (*Hesitantly*): we cannot take leave from the college at that time. So I asked M & Y rather if they could keep Koti archanai during summer holidays. But they said, "It's not done that way here. But whatever Bhagavan says, we will follow."

Bhagavan: (*quickly and emphatically*) Oh, this beggar says nothing. You can tell them that.

D: Bhagavan, The Divya Padukas there, are not in good condition. Can I arrange to take them to Madras and set them right?

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Bhagavan: No. They will themselves take care of it. You don't take up the responsibility.

Sometime passed in silence. Now, we were also mentally preparing for Bhagavan's gesture of dismissal. When it finally came, one sister in our group prayed loudly while prostrating "Please save from my own defects."

Bhagavan nodded, smiling and gave her an apple. When she crossed the gate with the fruit in hand, one monkey from the roof, came to the very edge of the sunshade, looked down with its head sticking out and began to pull her sari with its monkey-grip. Thoroughly frightened, she started to scream and tried to run inside, when Bhagavan came on the spot in one jump and struck the sari with a sweep of His hand, freeing it at once from the monkey. He asked all of us to wait inside, returned to His seat, took His stick in hand, went out and chased away the monkeys. Then I remembered the lines, "(words in Tamil)" (Don't you dare seize me. Oh Enmity! Beware, here comes charging, my Lord's Spear) and exclaimed spontaneously "how symbolic!" Immediately Bhagavan gave me a sharp penetrating glance and in benediction, He raised His hand with the stick and stood still for a few seconds, looking every bit like Thiruchendur Lord Muruga, we all stood overwhelmed with folded hands. I felt a thrill running through me. Seconds later, He left us very casually.

What a rich and rewarding weekend!

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December 2nd, 1991

A milestone for all the Sudama Sisters! It was on that day, by the abundant Grace of Bhagavan, that we four went to the local Land Registration office at 10 a.m. and did the registration of the plot which was to be our new 'Sudama'. The old single room residence in which we were staying during the weekends when we came from Salem, was named 'Sudama' by Bhagavan Himself. How every detail of registration of new Sudama got arranged so meticulously, so miraculously is a story by itself! After registration, we wanted to report to Bhagavan and so rushed straight to His Sannadhi street Residence. It was 12 noon. Fortunately for us, He was still seated in the Veranda as though waiting for us! There was no one else with Him. As always we were absolutely thrilled to have His Darshan. He gave a knowing smile and gestured to us to be seated. With a sharp, penetrating look at each one of us, He said cryptically,

- **Bhagavan** : So, Registration is over. Now construction must start.

and pulled out a cigarette. It struck me immediately that He meant more than the construction of a house in the plot. Was it my imagination? Was He merely talking about the plot alone? I looked around but I could not

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make out from the faces of other Sudama Sisters if they also read into His words more than the literal. However, Bhagavan spoke again, now completely in practical terms. He instructed us to go and see Sri A and Sri G regarding construction. It was well past 12.30 now. I became conscious, not without some compunction, that we were detaining Him perhaps unnecessarily when He could be resting inside by now.

I stole a glance at Him. There was no sign of His letting us go just then. He was still drawing deeply on His cigarette. However, there was still a small offering to be made to Bhagavan by me.

For the previous 3 days, and that mostly burning the midnight oil (???), I had been doing some decorative embroidery of His Nama in Hindi, English and Tamil on a handkerchief. Which got completed only the previous night. I had intended all along to submit it to Him on this Registration day. Now was the time My heart began to pound so loudly that I even feared that others could hear it! I gathered enough courage, went near His Feet, put the kerchief there with a silent prayer and returned quickly to my seat. Sometimes, He would return the offering saying, "This beggar would use it here" or simply "My Father blesses you. You can keep it", etc.

Sure, both are communication of blessings, no doubt. Yet, I did the cloth for His use--not for blessing because I had been watching for sometime now, how dirty the one he was currently using, looked. I prayed again earnestly asking for His forgiveness if it was presumptuous on my

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part to have done so. I stole a glance at Him again. He put out the cigarette and spoke the words,

- ***Bhagavan*** : This beggar would leave all the four of you, now.

To my great relief, as we went near one by one, He dropped some fruit alone into our hands. As I was about to reach for the grill-gate He called my name! My heart almost stopped! I moved rather reluctantly, afraid that He was going to pack off the handkerchief along with me. Lo and behold! To my utter delight, He put His hand deep into His pocket, pulled out His old, used, dirtied.... very very dirtied, handkerchief, folded it neatly, carefully and dropped it into my stretched hands! Absolutely thrilled I almost jumped at this overwhelming generosity on His part and burst into ecstatic tears. That had been my most prized possession ever since. It is now kept in the Siddhi Sthalam as one of His relics for Public viewing.

The Bhiksha
from the divine Bhikshu

beginning of 1992

It was an irresistible habit with me in late eighties and early nineties (When i was still teaching at the college) to rush to Tiruvannamalai for Bhagavan's *Darshan*, on every single holiday the Providence provided. Not that it worked fine every time. For, there were days when i had to return in abject misery with not so much as a far off glimpse of Him! Yet, always ALWAYS, by a strange compulsion, i would find myself standing before His residence at Sannidhi Street undaunted, with an ever reviving hope and eagerness for His *Darshan*, either on the following day, or at the next earliest opportunity such was His divine magnetism and magic that pulled the heartstrings of many grateful devotees like me and we succumbed only too happily.

It was the beginning of the year 1992 and the college had just announced the much awaited Pongal holidays amidst the cheering student community. As usual, at the stroke of the evening bell, i found myself rushing out along with the youngsters in an undignified

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hurry and deposited myself unceremoniously in a bus bound for home. - Yes, 'home' for me, over the years, had come to mean being with Bhagavan in Tiruvannamalai and not in Chennai where my parents lived. The next morning at about 10, as i waited with a fluttering heart along with the crowd near the Theradi Mandap, I could hardly see anything through the grill - gate, anything in the dim light of the divine porch of His cottage, except perhaps the faint outline of a plain mat on one side. As the wooden door opened to reveal the emerging divine form of our beloved Yogiji, there was a visible ripple of excitement in the crowd and i with the gathering, moved forward. With better visibility now, i could see that His loosely tied green turban sat well on His head like an emerald crown and His carelessly thrown shawls shone like silken fineries around His shoulders! He seated Himself on the plain mat after carefully placing His hand-fan, coconut shell and the stick on the nearby step. To my surprise, i found one young man already seated opposite to Him with eyes closed in deep absorption. Obviously he did not notice Swami's coming but that only seemed to delight Swami, for, He with a smile, immediately raised His hand in benediction towards that man. My whole attention was so riveted to what was happening inside that i did not hear the gate opening, nor the gate- boy announcing my name to come in. My friend nudged me hard and I jumped and ran in, somewhat perplexed by the sudden turn of events. After prostrating before Bhagavan, as was my wont in those days, i kept the bottle of gooseberry juice near Him (Which He would sometimes accept graciously) but held to myself the

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packet of chappathies i had taken for Him, fearing it might be too much of a presumption on my part. With one nod from Him, we went and seated ourselves, in the same line on the lower veranda. Now after a few more were in, He instructed the gate-boy to allow people inside one by one.

By now, he had lighted a cigarette and began His spiritual ministry of the session. Some received a pat on the back with a smile, some with an exchange of pleasantries, some with "*Ram, Ram,*" and some others with "*My Father blesses you.*" But all were enveloped in His warm radiance and love and all returned basking in His Divine Grace! All through, for nearly one and half hours, Bhagavan hardly spoke, but smoked a lot. The young man held His attention mostly and i began to wonder if he could be from Anandashram or perhaps Sri Aurobindo Ashram or perhaps from Kanchi Periyaval... Though ail devotees in general, covet His acts of attention, some privileged few, claim special indulgence from Him for reasons best known to Bhagavan. But whatever Bhagavan said or did, however small a gesture seemed, not one of them should be passed over lightly or dismissed as superfluous. Everything that He said or did was Father's work and had a perfect place in the scheme of His cosmic work.

Now it was nearing 11.30 when Bhagavan asked the gate-boy to close the gate and then SMILED that beatific smile of His, bringing in turn, smiles to everyone around. Then He laughed loudly His happy laughter, in that inimitable fashion of His and it seemed

to me that the whole world lighted up and laughed with Him! Indeed He was a Cosmic Being with a cosmic touch to everything that He said or did. Now even the man opposite, opened his eyes and smiled happily. Bhagavan looked around at everyone, his eyes still laughing and suddenly laughed once again, this time closing His eyes with his hands like a mischievous boy! Enthralled as we were, witnessing His divine leela, we even stopped our *Nama* chanting and began to gape at Him. Bhagavan now looked at the man opposite deeply and assumed a serious countenance.

- **Bhagavan** (*Lighting a cigarette and still looking at the man*) : What is Physics?

- **Man** : Swamiji, Physics deals with matter and energy.

- **Bhagavan** (*Smiling*) : What is Chemistry?

- **Man** : That deals with elements and their inter-reactions.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh! This beggar thought Chemistry also deals with matter and energy!

Bhagavan now turned on, an innocent and charming smile towards me unexpectedly -- me who had eyes and ears only for Him and not the least care for definitions of something so drab as physics or Chemistry! However that made me alert, for, i knew from experience, Bhagavan would not make idle

conversations but sometimes start from the fundamentals to drive home some "home truths".

- **Man** : No, sir. Actually, chemistry deals with electrons outside and physics goes deeper into the atom.

- **Bhagavan** (*Looking at the man squarely*) : What work are you doing?

- **Man** : I am in Agro meteorological research Sir. I do it for the sake of the office. What I really want to do is to know myself. Swamiji, I need your Blessings for that.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh ! But this beggar has not realised himself! How can he help you to realise yourself!

- **Man** (*humbly*) : Your blessings are sufficient.

Bhagavan's face became serious, and His eyes sharp. He raised his left hand up blessing once again and looked at the man as if in deep scrutiny.

- **Bhagavan** : (Still smoking) What is energy? Can it be created?

- **Man** : No. It can neither be created nor be destroyed. However, it can be changed from one form to another .That's all.

- **Bhagavan** : What is matter? Can it turn into energy?

- **Man** : Yes, Matter can be converted into energy. Energy can be converted into matter. They are interchangeable.

- **Bhagavan** : Can matter be created?

- **Man** : If matter is energy, it cannot be created also.

Momentarily dropping my attention on Bhagavan, I was, by force of habit, drawn into the conversation. On hearing the reply of the man, I blurted out,

- **Myself** : On science, we say, Bhagavan, that matter can be created and destroyed. Energy can not be. Energy, in that respect, is held above matter.

- **Man** : Yes, Swamiji. For destruction of matter, atom bomb is an example.

- **Myself** : The science is slowly advancing towards higher truths, Bhagavan. Recently they have come to find out from certain experiments that the elementary particles exhibit a certain knowledge which presupposes consciousness. That could mean, from consciousness to energy and from energy to matter is the order of things.

Bhagavan nodded as if in acknowledgement and then cupped His hand near the mouth and drew in deeply from the cigarette, in that North Indian fashion.

- **Bhagavan** : What is sun? S ... U... N ... ? What have you read about it?

- **Man** : The sun is a star that gives light. It gives energy by fusion. Actually, without sunlight, there can be no life on earth!

- **Bhagavan** : So, without sunlight, there can be no life on earth. What about air? Can there be life without air?

- **Man** (*Laughing*) : No Swamiji.

- **Bhagavan** : You say, without sunlight, there is no life. Can a star die? What will happen then?

- **Man** : Yes, actually there are black holes which are dead stars. But I think, there is no proof for that.

- **Myself** : No, Bhagavan. There is proof for the existence of black holes.

- **Bhagavan** : When will our sun die?

- **Myself** : Several hundred billion years to come, they say.

- **Bhagavan** : (*Grinning*) So, we people, in our life time, do not have to worry about it?

- **Man** : It is all a mystery, Swamiji. Science can explain the how of things. Not the why of it. It is all a mystery.

- **Bhagavan** : It is all Father, my friend. Father is a mystery. No one can understand Father. (*Now Bhagavan lighted another cigarette and smiled*) So you have said, without sunlight or air, there can be no life on earth. Now, what about water? Can there be life without it?

- **Man** : (*Again laughing*) No Sir. It is all a mystery. Oxygen is very important for life. But another form of Oxygen - Ozone is harmful to life. It is all a mystery, Sir!

- **Myself** : They say, the world is so delicately balanced in order that all life to be sustained and that it is a total perfection.

- **Bhagavan** : Eh... eh! It is all perfection. It is all Father and Father is EVER PERFECT. Father's creation is EVER PERFECT. Father is eternal and His creation is also eternal.

Now Bhagavan in a reassuring gesture of blessing, turned around to look at each one of us and His sharp, penetrating gaze lingered on each one around, embracing all in His radiant Divinity. Though it was still somewhat cold outside, we felt a cosy comfortable warmth in His presence.

- **Bhagavan** : (*Resuming the conversation*) So energy can neither be created nor be destroyed. It continues to exist all the time ... ?

- **Man** : Yes Swamiji. What exists, exists.

- **Bhagavan** : (*Bursting into peals of laughter*) So what exists, exists! Energy exists even when it is in the form of matter?

- **Man** : (*Joining in His laughter*) Yes Swamiji, one can say matter is basically energy...

- **Bhagavan** : Eh... eh! (*with a twinkle in the eyes*) You are aware you exist now?

- **Man** : (*Alert*) Yes Swamiji.

- **Bhagawan** : When you sleep, do you exist?

- **Man** : They say when we sleep, we are not aware that we exist like we do in the waking state. But we still exist.

- **Bhagavan** : They? What about you? You know, you existed while sleeping.

- **Man** : Yes Sir. But that I know only when I wake up. Not while sleeping.

- **Bhagavan** : (*Smiling*) Alright, now, tell me, are you aware of all parts of your body now?

- **Man** : (*Thinking*) No. (*looking at his hands and legs*)
But, when I think about them, I know they are there.

- **Bhagavan** : So, even when you are not thinking of them,
THEY ARE THERE. Like that, even while sleeping, we
exist though we are not aware of it.

Bhagavan now smiled indulgently and the man
nodded his head as understanding dawned on him. His
eyes widened and there was a strange expression on his
face as if he was going through some experience of the
very truth. Indeed, words of Mahatmas are not mere
words, they carry a higher power with them which could
make such experiences instantly possible for anyone.

- **Bhagavan** : What is your name?

- **Man** : Ramanathan.

- **Bhagavan** : How did you come to know about this
beggar?

- **Man** : I have come here once before. I read an article
on you in *Mountain Path*.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh! *Mountain Path*! Have you read
Ramana Maharishi's teachings?

- **Man** : Only one book, '*Talks with Bhagavan.*' I try to
enquire within, Swamiji. But all that leads me nowhere.

- **Bhagavan** : Ramana Maharshi says, "You are not the body." Ramana Maharishi has found Himself. This beggar has not realised himself, how can he help you?

- **Man** : (*Humbly*) You have already helped me Swamiji! Your blessings are sufficient.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh! Father's grace. Do you believe that you are not the body?

The man sat in silence and looked as if in deep thought.

- **Bhagavan** : Do you know, when people die, they do ceremonies for the soul to rest in peace? They believe people exist even after death.

- **Man** : (*Quickly*) That faith, I too have Swamiji.

- **Bhagavan** : So, you have that faith! If you think self-enquiry lands you nowhere, HAVE FAITH IN RAMANA. He says 'You are not the body.' Keep repeating it to yourself again and again. My Father will see to the rest.

- **Man** : (*Humbly*) Yes, Swamiji.

- **Bhagavan** : (*Smiling*) Repeat, "I am not the body." Go on repeating it to yourself like a Mantra. Father will give you the understanding. Ramana Maharishi blesses you.

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- **Man** : (*Smiling happily, yet in tears*) Thank you, Swamiji, you have helped me so much, Swamiji, Thank you for the blessings.

He left with some prasad.

Now once again people came in one by one. As before each one received His blessings with either '*Ram Ram*' or a pat on the back or a simple acknowledging nod. It was nearing one. When I hesitantly placed the chappatis before him, He nodded in acceptance. He also asked me to pour a little *Nellikai* juice into his coconut shell and drank.

- **Bhagavan** : Do you people take the *Nellikai* juice, this beggar leaves for you?

- **Myself** : Yes, Bhagawan.

- **Bhagavan** : Good. Now this beggar leaves you!

He gave us each an apple and closed the gate FIRMLY after us! As the sweetness of His Divine Presence and utterances lingered in my heart, i felt a sense of fulfilment and knew instantly, there could be no better celebration of a *Pongal* day, nor a sweeter prasad ever distributed!

An interview with the Lord

8th March, 1992

It was on the 8th day of March in the year 1992. That being a Sunday, there was already a sizable crowd outside Bhagavan's residence in Sannidhi street even at 10 a.m. We submitted the chappatthi packet and the gooseberry juice bottle at Bhagavan's Feet and at His nod, seated ourselves where he pointed, though it was a bit of a squeeze. One row was already full and the other was nearing it. All of us were singing His Nama, as the people came in one by one for His darshan. A writer known in literary circles as progressive, brought another new Malayalam writer and entered with Bhagavan's permission. Bhagavan seated the devotee-writer by His side and before He even looked up, the Malayalam writer sat straight away without Bhagavan's direction, right in front of Bhagavan Himself in that small space between the two rows! He went ahead to inform Bhagavan that two more friends had come with them. Bhagavan gestured with both hands as if to say "no space". But the Malayalam writer said:

- *Malayalam writer* : It is alright. We will adjust.

- **Bhagavan** : Oho! you will adjust. Alright. (*to the gate boy*) Now you close the door!

It looked to me that the writer meant that they would "adjust and sit" in the small space. But Bhagavan, pointedly did the opposite! The words, "It is alright. We will adjust" could mean if there is no space, we will adjust to the situation. It could also mean they can stand outside. It seemed to be a deliberate twist of the meaning but one that carried a teaching lesson from the Guru to all the overbearing visitors, who try to take over the situation and organise things in His place! The countenance on the Malayalam writer's face was a study in blank dismay! He opened his mouth to say something but apparently on second thoughts shut his mouth tight. Now by this very first nose-cut, so to say, he seemed to have gained in wisdom and obeyed Bhagavan without a word, when Bhagavan pointed a seat in the opposite row. The two friends understood instantly, and stood relaxed outside holding on to the grill gate.

- **Malayalam writer** : Can I ask you some questions, Sir?

- **Bhagavan** (*pulling out a cigarette*) : Yes. Ask them.

- **Malayalam writer** : You are very famous in Tamil Nadu. You are all over in Tamil Nadu, now. (*The writer smiled. But Bhagavan didn't*). VIPs like Balakumaran and Illayaraja are your disciples. They write about you, talk about you! I want to know if you encourage them to do so.

What a question to ask a son of God! and how (c)rudely he put it! Some of us felt disconcerted by his challenging tone and manner.

But Bhagavan quietly lighted a cigarette and put it to his lips in a familiar ritual, and looked at the writer piercingly.

- **Bhagavan** : Surely, my friend. This beggar encouraged them to write. Will they write otherwise?

The Malayalam writer was instantly disarmed and taken aback by Bhagavan's reply. His countenance changed into one of wonder and hesitation. He seemed to pull himself together and spoke rather slowly now.

- **Malayalam writer** : I heard these people singing your name. Are you encouraging that also ?

- **Bhagavan** : Yes. Surely. This beggar likes to hear these people singing his name. Will they sing otherwise?

- **Malayalam writer** (*better prepared now but speaking in English with great difficulty and pointing to the devotee writer who was sitting next to Bhagavan*) : This one is a good friend of mine. He has great respect for you. He is a progressive writer. That is why I was curious to see you.

- **Bhagavan** : Eh...! eh...! He is a good man. This beggar is bad and mad. He does things in madness. But this friend gives this beggar his good company. He is very kind. (*Malayalam writer laughed as if embarrassed.*)

- **Malayalam writer** : He respects you so much. He has told me about you. Sir, I like Tolstoy. You resemble Tolstoy. So I... (*laughed awkwardly*) I see you have no Ashram, no institution, no people staying with you. I like this.

- **Bhagavan** : I am a dirty beggar and a dirty sinner, my friend. Nothing more.

- **Malayalam writer** : I wanted to be a street beggar like you, a few years back. But I could not be. Instead I became a Government employee. (Laughter)

- **Bhagavan** : Is it! This beggar does nothing. He is lazy. He simply eats, sits, and sleeps. He is mad. But you are a good man.

- **Malayalam writer** : I didn't believe in God. But I believe in goodness. I believe in helping people.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh! Very good. So you believe in goodness. You are a good man. This friend is also a good man. This beggar is very bad.

- **Malayalam writer** (*alert and looking not so confident as he did when he entered*) : Am I irritating you by asking these questions? I have no intention of irritating. I just want to know. Please, forgive me.

- **Bhagavan** : No. You are not irritating me, please talk. This beggar wants you to talk. This beggar is happy that you are talking.

Often engaging the visitor in some inconsequential talk was a ploy of Bhagavan to do His Father's work on the visitors which perhaps enabled Him to help them more easily and efficiently as there would be no conscious resistance on the part of the visitor. At least I thought so.

- **Malayalam writer** : I am from Kanyakumari District. They are building a temple for you. Are you encouraging all these? Other VIPs also write about you, talk about you.

- **Bhagavan** (*looking at him in that sharp piercing way of His*) : My friend, this beggar doesn't exist. Father alone exists. Everything is Father only. There is nothing else, no one else, my friend.

Malayalam writer looked blank. What Bhagavan declared didn't seem to mean anything to him at least apparently. He was bent upon convincing...

- **Malayalam writer** : In arguments, this is one way of defeating. I don't mean to argue with you. I have no intention of irritating you.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh, you are not irritating this beggar, my friend. Please keep talking.

Throughout Bhagavan kept on blessing him.

- **Malayalam writer** : My writer friend said that you were worried about India on the day they were going to hoist the flag in Kashmir. I don't understand this. You are a holy man. All countries are equal to you. How can you be worried about India alone? How can India be special to you?

- **Bhagavan** (*turning to the writer sitting next to Him*) : Was this beggar worried? This beggar doesn't remember to have worried!

- **Malayalam writer** :Yes, that day, I thought you were worried.

- **Bhagavan** : If this beggar was worried, then it is wrong on the part of this beggar. This beggar has committed a sin! But this beggar doesn't remember to have worried.

The writer became quiet after that. What a conversation! How could we even begin to understand this cosmic man and His love for mankind, and India? Hasn't he said several times on that day, "India is our Lila bhumi, the bhumi of great masters, the custodians of divine plan." How wrong it is to question this Divine beggar - a person of such profound sensitivities?

- **Malayalam writer** : This writer friend also told me that you were roaming the streets freely. Now you are in this place. So much crowds coming to see you all the time. Is it not like a prison?

- **Bhagavan** : Yes, Yes. This beggar is in a prison. How did you find out! But one thing, this beggar likes it! This beggar enjoys staying in the prison!

My God, what to make of this conversation!

- **Malayalam writer** : I generally do not compromise with my principles. What do you think about compromising or not compromising?

(The Malayalam writer sort of stammered while talking, giving the impression that perhaps he was nervous.)

- **Bhagavan** : Are you asking if this beggar compromises his principle?

- **Malayalam writer** : No! (*Again stammering*) I mean what do you think about my not compromising my principle? Is it good or bad?

- **Bhagavan** : Do not compromise if you do not want, it is alright. Do you write in Malayalam?

- **Malayalam writer** : Both in Malayalam and in Tamil.

- **Devotee writer** : He wrote a novel by name "*Rubber*". It is famous. He has been awarded for that.

- **Malayalam writer** (*once again restless and too conscious of people outside*) : My friends are waiting outside. Also so many other people are standing in the sun, while I am seated here comfortably. ...

Pat came the reply from Bhagavan.

- **Bhagavan** : Let them stand. Let them do some tapas. You don't bother about it. They enjoy their standing there.

- **Malayalam writer** (*surprised and taking his righteous 'stand'*) : No, how can I not bother? Moreover, my wife is alone in my house. I have to go.

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling*) : Alright, my friend, this beggar leaves you now.

Without doing Namaskar, the writer left the place. Out of the two friends who stood outside, one came and sat before Bhagavan, just for one minute and left with prasad. The other one prostrated and touched Bhagavan's feet before leaving with prasad.

Someone shouted from the outside :

- **Someone outside** : Why can't you allow us also inside? It is getting late for us!

Bhagavan suddenly got up in great force, went and opened the gate Himself. When everybody expected the impertinent man to come in, Bhagavan did just the opposite. He began to touch everybody's feet and put His hands to His eyes in a gesture of worship and prostration. All the people ran away, absolutely disarmed and frightened beyond their own comprehension.

The strange visitor

(April 1992)

It was the month of April in 1992. The summer had been fiercely hot as always, in Tiruvannamalai. Even at 3:30 PM three and half hours after the noon, the sun was blazing down on us ruthlessly with all its oppressive brilliance. My original intention of walking upto Sannidhi street residence of Bhagavan Sri Yogi Ramsuratkumar from Ramana Nagar, evaporated instantly in the burning heat as soon as i set out from the house. As though in approval from Bhagavan, an autorickshaw made its sudden appearance around the corner in an irresistible invitation. As i rushed along, i picked up a tender coconut with a prayer, that it should not be a burden to Him. There were times when He would straightaway command me to pour the water into His coconut shell and drink it. But one could never take anything for granted with Him.

When i entered, He gestured to me to be seated, after pointing out a place near His seat for the coconut. With a few others already seated, we began singing His name at His nod. Hardly ten minutes passed, when all of a sudden, a strange figure appeared at the doorway with

somewhat bizarre attire and appearance! All our eyes were caught unawares and transfixed on this unexpected sight. i realised soon, we had all stopped singing, carried away by this rather startling and sudden entry into that space. i stole a glance at Bhagavan who too was observing the visitor silently. The visitor had the face of a negro - curly hair, flat nose, jet-black skin and thick lips. But his thick lower lip was hanging down with the weight of a heavy jewel at its centre. His tongue had been pierced too with a small jewel sitting snugly at the tip. My God, i had never seen an ornamented tongue ever before! His black skin with its sheen and his rather feminine gestures, strangely reminded me of Mother Kali! The bridge between the two nostrils of his rather flat nose was punctured too with a short narrow wooden stick, probably meant to be an ornament, which of course made one wonder how he could breathe naturally with all that! His ears had those big weighty jewels dingle-dangling like those of Indian village women. Many thick and large sized bangles of red, white (Conch) and black colours were adorning half the length of his forearms from the wrists upwards, not to mention the three shining silver rings on three fingers of each hand. Around his neck, there was a necklace of human skull-shaped beads albeit small in size, made of human bones, along with so many other varieties of *malas*. He wore a black coloured upper cloth neatly draped around his broad shoulders much in the fashion of the "Dhuppatta" of selvar *Kameez*. Below his waist was tied a red coloured dhoti with pleats like a *saree*. From his hips, hung a bunch of bushy fox-tails apart from two small bronze bells! His hands were graceful like a woman's, his fingers long and tapering

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with well-cut and painted nails! Indeed amidst all those strange, somewhat primitive and even repelling adornments, there was also a certain feminine beauty and grace bordering on the Divine! (or so it seemed to me!) Very interesting indeed! He walked in gracefully and sat before Bhagavan with his hands folded in *Namaskar*. And then he smiled. Bhagavan was also watching him intensely with an apparent seriousness though i thought i detected a slight curving around the corner of his lips in suggestion of a smile. When the negro smiled, Bhagavan grinned and told the gateboy to close the gate and not allow anyone for some time. Now, the negro's smile widened into a grin revealing my god, one tooth long and jutting out on each side of his otherwise neat rows of teeth, just like Ma Kali! How could someone be at once ugly and beautiful! i found myself gaping at him in wonder and confusion. i looked around to see how others were reacting. There was a couple seated opposite to me who had earlier submitted a wedding invitation with Bhagavan's picture and name on it. The lady looked a little disturbed though the man was looking out of the corner of his eyes now and then but mostly their gaze was on Bhagavan. Otherwise, there was a general curiosity mixed with a certain fear in everyone's countenance. Now, both Bhagavan and the stranger were grinning at each other, the man still with folded hands, Bhagavan reaching out for His ash-tray, but pushing it aside immediately.

- *Bhagavan* (*smiling*) : Where are you from?

- **Man** : From Africa - East Africa - Kenya - Maaza. But, Babaji, now I live in United States of America.

- **Bhagavan** : Your mother tongue?

- **Man** : My tribes live in Maaza, Kenya. They speak Swahili, Bantu, Maaza. But Babaji, I was born in USA. I do not know the tribal language. I speak English.

Indeed, he spoke excellent English making me wonder again how any one could talk at all without the help of the lower lip, and pronounce so well at that !

- **Bhagavan** : What is your name ?

He gave an Indian name.

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling again*) : Are you a Hindu?

- **Man** : Hindu, yes ... before a Hindu. To a Muslim, I am a Muslim. To a Christian I am a Christian (laughed).

- **Bhagavan** : What do you do in USA?

- **Man** : Teach - you see, our tribal worship of Mother Goddess and your Kali worship are the same - Kali - Mariyamma - Shakta - Shakti. Every thing is Mother Kali. The sun, moon, people, here, there - everything is Amma. Everywhere is Amma. Whatever Amma teaches me, I teach people.

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- **Bhagavan** : Oho! How did you come to know this beggar?

- **Man** (*laughing*) : I met one of your students this afternoon. He showed me a picture of you, Babaji. In you I saw Mother. (*Pointing to Bhagavan*) It is Mother Kali seated there. Babaji's Blessings are Ma Kali's blessings. I want them. So I came.

- **Bhagavan** (*leaning forward*) : Oho, when did you come to India?

- **Man** : I come to India every 5 years. I came to witness Kumbhamela. When I got down from the train, Mother said, Kumbhamela is not for you. Instead, go around South India.

He shrugged his shoulders in American fashion every now and then and laughed in a certain peculiar way.

- **Man** : Babaji, whatever Mother says, this child obeys.

Then he showed his malas saying:

- **Man** : This is human bone. This is earth - Nature - Mother - All one. Everything is Mother. Our tribe used to dress up this way. (*Pointing his black upper cloth*) you see Mother is black. - Akash - From this Rajas - red came. (*Pointing to his red dhoti*) This is rajas. Babaji, I met Amritanandamayi in U.S.A. So before I came here to Tiruvannamalai, I was with Mata Amritanandamayi - we are very close.

- **Bhagavan** : Oho... ho! So you were with Mata Amritanandamayi. This beggar had her darshan¹ in Tiruvannamalai when she came here. How long have you been in Tiruvannamalai?

- **Man** : Two days now. You see, Mother Kali said, "No Kumbhamela. Go to Tiruvannamalai. Go and see Babaji." So I am here before you. I am uneducated. Whatever Mother teaches me, I learn.

While the conversation was going on, the gate-boy announced the coming of a lady-devotee, with her girl child who was a frequent visitor. I was afraid, the child might get frightened by the odd appearance of that strange visitor. But as they came in, the child came and sat in my lap and began to watch him with interest!!

- **Man** : See, Mother is Love. Babaji is Love. I can see. All these people come to you because you are Love. Their eyes are shining with Your Love. You are the Sun. These people are like stars. I want to be a moon shining your light on people...

Now he folded his hands in *namaskar* with great reverence.

- **Bhagavan** (with His catchy penetrating look) : How long have you been in America?

¹ To have darshan : to see. (NdT)

- **Man** : I was born there, Babaji. Though I don't like living there, Mother said "Stay in America. Teach them. You are not great. But they have something to learn from you." Babji, I love India. (*Suddenly putting his hand on his mouth with genuine regret*) Oh! I talk too much.

- **Bhagavan** : It is alright. This beggar wants to hear you talk, please go on.

- **Man** (*relaxing visibly*) : You see, in America, there is money, power. People are obsessed with them. But India... India is the Teacher. The world has much to learn from India.

i noticed how graceful his gestures were, like Bharatnatya mudras !

- **Bhagavan** : How long you have been like this?

- **Man** : Since when I was 14. Then I was a Muslim boy. My teacher noticed me and said "*This is not your way of worship. There are other ways. There is one God, one book - follow that and be a Christian. There is the Jewish way. There you follow one book of rules, and do everything by those rules and be a Jew. But there is another way - where you must leave everything behind and go beyond books and God. You must be a Hindu. Think about it and choose.*" So, I thought about it for 2 years, and then Mother came. From then on everything is Mother - everything is peace and harmony. I know when Mother is happy with me.

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- **Bhagavan** (*seriously*) : How do you know mother is happy with you?

- **Man** (*laughing*) : Well. When Mother is happy with me, I stay healthy, no disease and everything goes well. (*He breathed in loudly*). Everything is good. I am here. I breathe well. I am able to see and hear Mother. But when Mother is not happy, even while simply walking I would stumble upon something - develop disease. Once in U.S.A., I fell very sick and I was dying, getting more and more sick everyday. The doctor gave up. I told Mother, "Well, Mother, If you want me, let me live. This is yours. But if you want me to die, you take me. You are everything to me. This is yours." Next morning I was OK! I got up and was jumping about!! The doctor was stunned. You see, if Mother wants she can do anything. (*Again realizing with regret*) Babaji, I talk too much. You are so quiet.

- **Bhagavan** (*reassuring with a smile*) : No, no. It's alright, my friend. Please talk.

- **Man** : You see, I have only two small packs. When people want to come with me, I insist I travel alone. On my way, whatever Mother gives vegetarian or non-vegetarian, I eat. When I go to a house, all they have is only a piece of meat, what can the child say! This is what Mother gives. So I take. But I usually advise people to keep to vegetarian diet.

Strangely, Bhagavan had not smoked even a single cigarette so far.

- **Man** : Mother is all Love (*with the gesture of Mother breast-feeding a child*). Mother knows what we need, not what we want. You see, once upon a time, 10,000 years ago, it was Love, it was nature, harmony, love. But now, the world is different. Before, 10,000 years back, South India, Australia, Africa were all one piece of land, one continent, no difference between Tamils and negros. It was called Lemuria. So Mother-worship is similar between Africa and South India. Tantric worship is misunderstood. They all think it is about male and female union. That is only 20%. The rest is harmony, peace, balance. In America, 45% women kill their own sons! 78% women can give birth only by caesarian - by cutting - no normal delivery! You see, something is very wrong. People have no peace of mind. Tantric is 80% harmony, peace, balance. Everything is Mother. Shiva is Shava without Mother. Mother stands on Him and dances. Mother is very powerful. We say "ego"... ee ... go ... This 'ee' is a Sanskrit syllabe (*He pronounced it as 'A'*). It means "Ahamkar". So A ... A ... go ... Go ... Go ...! We should drive it out like that. It should go (*laughter*). Likewise, the word 'Swami' is 'sva' ... 'mee'. Split like that, it means "I am That." In India, it is nice that everyone calls the other "Swa... mi" (*laughter*). I learnt this from Swami Satchidananda in U.S.A. (*laughter*). Babaji, this Tantric worship of Mother is misunderstood by people. You see, as I said before, 80% of it is balance, peace and harmony. What we need badly today!"

Strangely, throughout this session, Bhagavan had neither smoked nor talked. While I listened to the non-

stop talk of the visitor and made a mental note of it all, something that he said about Shiva being *Shava* without Mother kept nagging at me, at the back of my mind. "Doesn't he know Shiva is the static substratum of all that moves? But for Shiva, there would be no cosmic dance nor Ma Kali either?" i thought to myself. As though in reaffirmation of my thoughts, i found Bhagavan's hands rising up in benediction and with a sharp divine look, He kept blessing the visitor for what seemed like a long time. For his part, the negro's eyes widened awestruck, as if he was witnessing his own Ishta Devata seated before him. Then his head bent in utter humility, his eyes closed half-way and his hands fell into a spontaneous gesture of *Namaskar*.

The scene that stretched before me got indelibly etched in my memory. Bhagavan with His radiant golden hue and matted hair looked everybit the Lord Shiva while the black Mother-worshipper with his mouth now firmly shut, head bent, his body adorned with all those fantastic ornaments sitting gracefully in a meditative mood reminded one of the feminine aspects of the Divinity. When, in a sudden gesture, Bhagavan's hand reached out to the visitor's jet-black hand, it seemed to me like the Purusha sustaining *Prakriti* and her cosmic dance, creating a certain "*bhava*" in me. i found myself staring at Yogi Ramsuratkumar in a mindless awe and wonder. When the strange visitor left, there was a look of deep peace and contentment on his face while a beautiful smile adorned Bhagavan lips.

Yet, unpredictable as ever, all our Bhagavan said at last and that, in a voice of innocent wonder was,

- **Bhagavan** : So, today we have met a negro! A few years back i met one². This is the second time. D. did you see... he had something on his nose!... He said he is a Hindu!

² *The first time Yogiji met a negro, it was not at all the same kind of person, but the complete opposite. This negro was from Gabon. He was part of the Yogi Ramsuratkumar Association Krishna had created in France. Once he came to visit Krishna in France and wanted Krishna to grant him what he wanted in his life. He had come in the Association for selfish interests. Krishna said he could not. He told Krishna : "If you don't want to give me that, I will go and see your Master." So, this people took a flight to Chennai and rushed to Tiruvannamalai. By the time, Krishna had sent a letter to Yogiji to tell him that he had not sent this man, but his letter arrived too late... (NdT)*

This beggar likes
To hear His Name sung

April 13th, 1992

In the early morning of 13th April 1992, when i woke up, i remembered it was the Tamil New Year day and i had exactly one year more to resign from my job and become a permanent resident of Tiruvannamalai - the holy place where Bhagavan Sri Yogi Ramsuratkumar lived in flesh and blood and i could rush to Him everyday for Darshan! The very thought brought in its wake a sweet joy and cheer and in great enthusiasm i began to get ready to go to the Sannidhi street house of Bhagavan. As we three of *Sudama* sisters rushed in an autorickshaw to the *Theradi Mandap*, it was exactly 10 a.m. The familiar sight of the long queue greeted us as we alighted hurriedly and stood aside, not knowing whether to join the line or wait in a corner. The long line was getting longer by the minute as crowds of people kept joining it as soon as they came out of Sri Arunachaleswara Temple. Mrs. P who had come even at 9.30 a.m. joined us with her familiar bag carrying some milk for Bhagavan. Half an hour later, at 10.30 a.m., we were still there, she for one hour, and we for half an hour, hoping and hoping for

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a call from Him! Now the queue had gone upto the temple... but it was moving faster. So we decided to join the tail end and were almost there, when the gate-boy suddenly called out our names loudly! Gratefully we ran the entire length of the street, risking the jealous looks and frowns from other visitors, and landed rather breathlessly at His Lotus Feet. By a casual gesture, He stopped our clumsy attempts at prostration and pointed our seats. To my discomfort, i found my usual place occupied by Mr. J! Just as i began to wonder as to the property of any claim of ownership to any place, in the presence of the owner of the whole cosmos, Mr. J, as if by telepathy got up and went to a seat on the opposite side! Thanking Bhagavan from the depths of my heart, i settled comfortably in 'my' ringside seat from where i could observe closely all that Bhagavan said or did.

The singing of His Name "*Yogi Ramsuratkumar*" was already in full swing. Mrs. R. seated opposite to Bhagavan was fanning Him and was obviously enjoying it very much. One could see such contentment and joy on her face. Her son was seated next. People moved in and out, one by one, in a steady stream with some prasada or the other which was accompanied sometimes by some verbal benediction or a gracious gesture. Some special ones managed to draw a special smile or a pat on the back however brief the spell was. Everything seemed so perfect, so organised like the Yogiji Himself. He looked the very picture of the ancient culture and wisdom of India, bringing in, purpose, meaning and beauty to the everyday life of thousands - none left untouched by His Divine Compassion and Care. i felt that it was a priceless

privilege to have known such a One. Despite the largeness of crowd and the taxing nature of His Father's work, Swami's patience never flagged - His meticulous attention never waned ...

As the singing continued in full gusto, a local lady doctor (an ardent devotee of Bhagavan who had the fortune of attending on Him when He fell sick in 1990) her husband and her son entered. The boy was suffering from some illness and the doctors in Chennai had urged an operation in the next following week. Yet Bhagavan said 'no' to the operation and had been treating the boy for the last 2 days. He would sometimes clasp the boy's hand in His unyielding divine grip, sometimes look at him sharply with raised hand and other times, would simply smoke while making an "idle" conversation with the boy. That day also, the boy received a lot of His attention. Bhagavan kept asking the boy if there was still pain in certain parts of his body etc.

- **Bhagavan** (*to the parents*) : Ask S. (the boy) to come and see this beggar a few times. There may not be place here in this small veranda always. But coming and seeing this beggar is enough. S. is completely alright. My Father has cured him. There is nothing to worry.

Karunamurthy, the Doctor of Doctors, how kindly how tenderly He spoke! There was a special smile too for the benefit of the boy!

- **Boy's Father** : Swamiji, we are going with him to Madras on 17th for a medical check-up.

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- **Bhagavan** (*emphatically*) : There is no need to go. My Father says he is healthy.

The parents and the boy smiled happily as we too joined them in ready cheer.

- **Bhagavan** : (*with a smile, turning to Mrs. R.*) : T. what is it to be healthy?

- **Mrs. R** (*after a minute's pause*) : To remember Sundareshvara all the time is healthy.

What a beautiful reply! ... i thought to myself, i wished i too had the *pakwa* (mental preparedness) to reply like that!

Bhagavan's smile widened. He turned to me now and asked :

- **Bhagavan** : Did you hear what she said?

- **Ma Devaki** (*recovering fast from my wandering thoughts*) : ... to remember Lord Shiva ...?

- **Bhagavan** (*correcting me promptly*) : ... Sundareshvara ... she is from Madurai.

Bhagavan smiled again in that bewitching way so typically His and rewarded her well with another round of blessings! Mrs. R. seemed full of adoration for Bhagavan and she spoke in a steady and soft manner. She

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had a quiet dignity about herself and her words seemed to go straight to the heart of people. Her high cultured manners won my heart. i remembered one previous occasion, when she had come with her two sisters on a *Guru Purnima* Day. She was sitting right opposite to Bhagavan, in what i would jokingly call number one seat, in those days! and was fanning Him even as this day. Bhagavan ordered tea for all those present there. Then He pulled the purse in front of her nearer to Himself and took out the money in slow deliberation with a show of great liberty, much to the envy of some of us present then. What was more, after drinking a little from His coconut shell, He gave the rest to her to drink! And again, before she completed it, He took it from her and so casually finished the whole thing!!! I understood that this familiarity and closeness came as a reward for her unparalleled devotion to her Sundaresvara and at the same time, as a lesson for people like me who claimed much with little or no devotion at all! i also remembered how much longing it created in my heart.

We continued to sing His Name and there was much blend in the chorus that day unlike the staccato of other times. The crowds kept coming without respite, the queue kept extending. Bhagavan without a moment's rest, continued His spiritual ministry even as the melody of His Name filled the space with a rich sweetness.

- ***Bhagavan*** (*suddenly, as if in wonder*) : This beggar likes to hear his name sung!

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- **Ma Devaki** : God likes to hear his name sung - so our Puranas say repeatedly.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar is no God. He is a dirty sinner. He is very bad... very mad. My Master Swami Ramdas gave Ram Nam. If anyone sang another Nama, He would say "Sing Ram Nam" (*Laughter*). Then we would change into Ram Nam. But this beggar (*putting His right hand palm over His mouth*) this beggar gives his own name! He is no God, He is also lazy! This beggar doesn't do anything. He doesn't even remember Ram Nam!

Eh... eh...! For those who have become one with the Universal Being - what need is there to remember any Name! However, haven't i seen His left thumb always busy with an imaginary japa mala ? How many times i had wondered why He should continue this japa! They say that Shiva is eternally in *dhyān* of *Ram Nam*. Gnaneshvar said, "The Ganges keep flowing towards the ocean even after it has united with it to become Ganga Sagar, ever benefiting thousands on its way!" This brought me to my remembering our new year puja that morning.

- **Ma Devaki** (*hesitantly*) : Today, we did puja to Bhagavan at Sudama...

- **Bhagavan** (*with no expression, continuing His one by one*) : Is it? Then Father must be blessing you all!

- **Ma Devaki** (*happily*) : After puja, we chanted Bhagavad Gita 12th chapter as you had once hinted to us

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that it would help our devotion to God. Sandya came exactly at that moment and took the lead. We all tried to get the sloka "*Anapekshaha...*" by heart. It was not easy. After repeated attempts in vain, we decided to fill up the entire sloka with your name! It struck us then that when there was such an easier way to attain the same benefit, why should we resort to those hard sounding words ...

- **Bhagavan** : Is it! (*turning to Mrs. R.*) : Did you hear what she said?

Mrs. R. nodded in happy approval of what i spoke.

- **Ma Devaki** : Yes Bhagavan. i feel, to chant your name is to be healthy.

At that Bhagavan burst into uproarious laughter saying "*Andha Madhiri!*" (Like that!). And as suddenly, His laughter stopped too, and his countenance changed into one of serious scrutiny as if to see if my words came from the lips or from the depths, even while his hands raised in a blessing gesture.

- **Bhagavan** (*turning to Mrs. R.'s son*) : Your grandmother - ask her to come down to the orphanage and distribute these sweets herself. This beggar is giving you some work.

He handed over a sweet packet to the boy and left them both with lots of prasad.

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(All these conversations, He managed, even while people kept streaming in and out steadily one by one. They too were attended to with the same concern and compassion, even though, as i saw, some of them must have longed for more than a quick *darshan*. Indeed that could equal sitting in the intimacy of a visible God (*Pratyaksha Daivam*) and gazing at Him with a heart full of thrill and joy! Just then my train of thoughts was broken as He started to speak as if in reply to my thoughts).

- **Bhagavan** : Everyday this beggar comes out here with the plan he must be here only between 10 and 12 and evening between 4 and 6. But everyday it happens like this!... What is the time? ... 1.30! This beggar is not able to disperse people like that! Father has given some other works also which are heavy. Seeing people and talking to them is only a small fraction of this beggar's work. Most of this beggar's work is hidden. All Father's *Leela*! All Father's Grace! My Father alone exists. Nothing else, no one else. It is He who has become all and plays this game! Father in all and all in Father!

Even as He repeatedly declared this Mahavakya, the only ever Truth, in which He was so firmly established, His face glowed with a divine brilliance and i became aware of a strange power filling the whole space gripping everyone seated, in its overwhelming vibrancy. There was such loving tenderness when He suddenly looked around at all those who were still seated there! Mercurial as ever, He suddenly grinned with a mischievous twinkle in His eyes and spoke to us :

- **Bhagavan** : "This beggar is preparing to leave you people. He is not able to do that! He is ... caught up in this *Mayajalam* (the play of illusion)!"

He exploded with laughter, patting His own thighs loudly and an incomplete cigarette was still glowing in one of His hands. The thought came to me that He probably meant He would keep us there until the cigarette was completed... until the work on us was over. Even before the thought died, He put out the cigarette in a slow deliberation and smiled at the two sisters seated with me. They had planned to inform Him about their Bombay trip and seek His blessings. But before they said anything,

- **Bhagavan** : Whenever people say that they are going to Bombay, this beggar requests them to visit Ganeshpuri and Vajesvari - S. Nityananda's place. It is only 50 kms from Bombay. Please try and visit.

As fresh crowds collected outside, people began to demand to come in for closer *darshan*.

- **Bhagavan** : See this, people come anytime. Today is Tamil New Year. Every year, the number of people is increasing! Previously this beggar used to go to the temple. But now, this beggar has become lazy! He doesn't go anywhere. So they come here!

i remembered something i have been waiting to tell Him from morning. Still confused as to whether i

should convey it at all, i looked at Him with folded hands and there was just the slightest nod. i noticed His new cigarette still growing in His hand. Conscious that the time was turning out, that any moment he would pack us off now, i hastened.

- **Ma Devaki** : Bhagavan, last time when the writer had come, it seems you made a comment "so much writing - but not a word about God! What is the use?" It has kind of upset him ...

- **Bhagavan** (*cutting me*) : That was not about his writing. We were discussing Jean Paul Sartre. Someone said, in one book of his, there is no mention of God anywhere. That is when this beggar said it. It was a general comment (for all writers) not of one person alone.

- **Ma Devaki** : Thank you Bhagavan. Please forgive me for mentioning it.

He kept quiet. The cigarette was then put out. He gave each one of us some fruits and left us quickly after that. Just before turning round the corner of the street, i stole a look behind and found a still growing line of people. i wondered when He would retire from this session and have his lunch... if there was any lunch at all... waiting for Him! Tearfully i walked ahead.

Crumbs
from the Master's table

May 3rd, 1992

My heart was punding with excitement in that late evening of 2nd May 1992 when Bhagavan did finally utter those words i so longed to hear, "Yes, you people can join us tomorrow at the Nadar Lodge. That friend is coming with his family" which meant a great fortune for us, the fortune of an eventful day with Bhagavan in His service! In exuberance, we bounced back to *Sudama* and got busy immediately with the preparations for the day ahead. The next morning around 7.45, when we climbed the staircase of Nadar Lodge with all our bags and baggage (of cooked food, snacks, fruit juices, etc.) a loud and sweet chanting of His Name by the family greeted us with such warmth and love that tears welled up in my eyes in gratitude for this extremely kind gesture of His. Bhagavan was already smoking and the visitor was describing his first visit to Ramanashram two years ago. Bhagavan became pensive and then began to speak slowly, reminiscing His own visit ...

MA DEVAKI'S DIARY

- **Bhagavan** : In 1948, Mathrubhutesvar's temple construction was going on. The *stapati* and Ramana Bhagavan were there. Some puja was in progress. Lots of people were there. Dipradhanai was brought near Maharshi. He touched the kumkum and put it to his forehead. This beggar was standing very near Maharshi. When they brought the plate, this beggar touched the kumkum where Maharshi had touched... Oh God.. an electric shock passed through this beggar! (*He repeated it with great feeling*). This beggar saw once, Yogi Ramiah... Maharshi was on the cot. This beggar came from outside. Yogi Ramiah was applying oil or something on Maharshi's back. There was some wound or something. He put his hand like this (*Bhagavan imitated the gesture*) and applied! Another time, one American - he had written a book on "Destiny and Free Will" - came and put both his hands like this (*again Bhagavan imitated the gesture*) on the cot on which Ramana Maharshi was seated ... for 45 minutes! That was an exceptional thing this beggar saw. Only those two people, he has seen like that! How could they do it for so long! This beggar could not even touch the kumkum without an electric shock passing through him!! (*Turning to the visitor:*) Have you gone to Sri Aurobindo Ashram and sat near the Samadhi? Did you feel anything? You didn't feel that overwhelming peace when you sat near Mother's Samadhi?

The visitor shook his head and said that a man came and disturbed him twice, asking him to move away.

- **Bhagavan** : There is a wonderful type of peace very near the samadhi. In this connection, this beggar would like to say something. Long before coming to Maharshi, there was a Sannyasi near the Ganges. This beggar went to him and had his darshan for a day or two. After that, this beggar was coming away from that place. While coming, a voice spoke "Vivekananda is calling you." I heard it and this beggar was wondering where the voice came from. I was surprised!... thrilled! It happened once more. This beggar was doing some work. Suddenly he heard a voice, "This is not the work for you. Vivekananda is calling you."

- **V.** : Bhagavan, what work were you doing?

- **Bhagavan** : Those details, this beggar will not tell you. They are not necessary.

After a pause, Bhagavan became reminiscent again.

- **Bhagavan** : Once with Krishnaji, in Madras, something happened. One day before, this beggar had been there. He wanted to see Krishnaji. This beggar saw him coming from somewhere, through the window. Krishnaji came down. He came and touched this beggar on the back. (*With great emotion* :) Something happened to this beggar then ... I don't know ... Something happened! Madavachari said "Today is the talk-day. He doesn't see people. But in your case... well... you are lucky!"

Every one was listening with rapt attention. After a pause, Bhagavan continued again.

- **Bhagavan** : You see, there's a village Kilpennathur near Tiruvannamalai. Near that is another village called Mekalur. Some people used to feed this beggar many many years before. There is a tank. Some advocates from around were there. We were all talking and laughing! This beggar asked, "When is Paramacharya coming?" He was coming in palanquin already and was there within 5 or 10 minutes! Oh God! This beggar was talking and laughing! Paramacharya had a dip in the tank. He chanted a mantra and made people repeat it and did *Surya Namaskar*. He prostrated the Sun-God. Then suddenly he moved to... there is a Navagraha temple... He went round that and reached Srinivasa Iyer's place where he was staying. People began to prostrate. This beggar also did... Oh God! Something happened... This beggar slept!...³ (*smile*). Just as it happened with J. Krishnamurti! Then Paramacharya voice came loudly "Um ... Um."

Bhagavan now looked around and smiled in that sweet way of His, which drew smiles from all around. Again Bhagavan closed His eyes for a few minutes.

- **Bhagavan** : Sri Aurobindashram Mother, with her also, something strange happened to this beggar! Not like before Paramacharya or Krishnaji. But something totally different. Mother was giving flowers to everyone. This

³ *He went in samadhi. (NdT)*

beggar also received one. Then something strange happened...!

- **V.** : When I went to Mayamma, I felt something.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar did not feel anything in the presence of Mayamma and Pundi Swami. This beggar might have been there for one hour, but was not sensitive enough to feel anything.

- **Devotee** : Bhagavan, there's something they say about your meeting with Mayamma... that she came in a car and said, "Jaldi kâ Karo. (do the work fast)"⁴.

Bhagavan shook His head.

- **Bhagavan** : Coining stories ... They are all stories.

Then the talk turned to Puravipalayam Koti Swami.

- **Bhagavan** : Murugesnji from Tuticorin had been to Puravipalayam Swami. He said, he was sitting there for a long time. Murugesnji asked the Swami, "I want the Toupee on your head." Koti Swami said, "Go home. It will come after 10 days." Murugesnji searched for it after 10 days. He said he didn't see anything! (*laughter*).

- **Bhagavan** (*turning to J.*) : J., this beggar told so many nice things, but he didn't say anything about so many sins

⁴ This 'legend' appears in Sadhu Rangarajan's book "Glimpses of a Great Yogi". (NdT)

this beggar has! (*Grinning*) He hides the sins! Writers want to know everything! (*Seriously* :) There is no need to know all the details. Writers have to write something that will inspire people - that will keep up the faith of the people.

Then the family played a song "*Engirundho Vandaan*" which was very dear to the heart of Bhagavan and which was verily the description of Bhagavan Himself. My eyes ached with unshed tears as a huge emotion shook my body... and then I saw Bhagavan's tearful eyes too.

After a reminder for breakfast, Bhagavan and others took some breakfast. Bhagavan blessed me with the fortune of eating in His leaf!

...

- **Bhagavan** (*to the visitor*) : Have you read the commentary on Tirukkural by Parimelazhagar? They say it is the first commentary on Tirukkural... Somebody said, "It is not a good book. It was written by a Brahmin."

- **V.** : My mother, who taught Tamil literature used to say that Parimelashagar is the best one!

- **Mother** : He was a Dhikshadar, Swami. He was Kancheepuram Ulagalanda Perumal Kovil Battar (pujari). His commentary is widely read by people as the best.

- **Bhagavan** : What is the name - Munisamy? He had come to this beggar. When we were talking, this beggar said to him, "All the 1330 couplets are about DEVOTION TO GOD ONLY." He said, "No, no, the first part is about Dharma, the second part about politics and economics and the last part is about love." This beggar says, the second couplet - what is it?

The visitor quoted it.

- **Bhagavan** : Eh... eh... It means, "what is the use of learning if we don't worship the Holy Feet of God?" They say "Moksha" is not given in Tirrukural. So this beggar says, "Dharma, Artha, Kama, all these are for leading us to God only, so all 1330 couplets... (*with emphasis*) all those are for leading us to Moksha only (*Laughter*).

- **V.** : In Tamil, I have started to read one Masterpiece, by Vallalar...

- **Bhagavan** (*intervening*) : Arutpa?

- **V.** : (*surprised and delighted that Bhagavan seems to know everything*) Yes... Bhagavan, when will I understand fully your "Father is here, there, and everywhere"?

- **Bhagavan** : Oh, this beggar also doesn't understand (*laughter*). But he has faith in my master Swami Ramdas' words. He has faith in the scriptures, in the wise people... Tulasi Das said, "Akanda, Nirguna Nirakar came in the lap of Kausalya Devi for the sake of Devotees." How to

show our feelings to God, Shiva, Rama, Ventakeswara at Tirupati? Through prayers. Difficult to show our love to all pervading Nirguna. We have got ordinary minds which cannot think of the unlimited. Valmiki, Tulasi Das, Kamban described Rama in form and His great leelas. We can read their stories and get purified. (*Suddenly, with a smile*) Kamban must have described Rama like a South Indian King...

- **V.** : In Kamba Ramayana, Ravana has been treated as a hero.

After lunch, once again, the topic turned to the Mahatmas.

- **V.** : Bhagavan, have you seen Lahari Mahasay and Babaji?

- **Bhagavan** : No, Yukteswar - Yogananda - Dayamata - that Parampara have had Darshan of Babaji. Once a man came and asked this beggar, "Can you help me to see Babaji?" This beggar said that he could not do so, only Shyamachanran Lahiri Parampara have that great privilege.

- **V.** : Is it not necessary that we should know our Parampara?

- **Bhagavan** : Swami Ramdas is this beggar's Guru. He was initiated by his father Balakrishna Rao. Balakrishna Rao was initiated by a Sannyasi from Udipi whose name is not known, though Swami Ramdas had help from

Ramana Maharshi and Hubli Siddharuda Swami. (*To the woman devotee sitting opposite*) These three people, Sri Aurobindo, Ramana Maharshi and Swami Ramdas had great influence on this beggar's life. This beggar owes his very life to them. It was Sri Aurobindo who brought this beggar to the south. This beggar knew he was a revolutionary, took part in freedom fight earlier, and stayed in Pondicherry. When this beggar entered Sri Aurobindo Ashram, there was so much peace all around. Then, this beggar understood that peace was Sri Aurobindo! Swami Ramdas gave this madness to this beggar. There are other people who have influenced. But these three are totally different. There is no question of this beggar meeting Sri Aurobindo physically or not. It is how they influenced him, how they moulded his life that is important.

Bhagavan once again returned to the topic of faith.

- **Bhagavan** : They say, DK people say, "there is no God." This beggar says, "there is God only." But then, it is God who is speaking through these people also! Father works through all people. He alone exists! (*Pointing to a devotee who was teaching physics*) Those people say - what is it - unified field theory of Einstein - that there is one fundamental force and everything is related. Sun, Moon, Vast space, stars - the infinite cosmos - all related. Whatever exists is a PART OF YOUR LIFE. This beggar read in Indira Gandhi's book, "If you trample upon a blade of grass, the distant stars tremble." Nothing is isolated. It is all ONE LIFE. Whatever exists, that you are. This beggar says, "From the beginning, whatever

was, whatever exists now, whatever remains, THIS BEGGAR IS ALL THAT. Someone asked this beggar if he was Ayya Vaikuntar. This beggar said, he is Ayya Vaikuntar. J. Krishnamurti, Jesus, Buddha and all that ever lived, will ever live. I AM ALL THINGS - I AM ALL TOTAL. The oceans, animals, plants, trees, all one life! When we say, something is our own, we have love for that! When you love someone, you don't see any fault in them. You people love this beggar, so you all look upon this beggar CHARITABLY! (*Laughter*). ALL HAVE COME OUT OF GOD, SO ALL ARE GOD.

When this beggar went to Bombay to Victoria Terminus after Krishnaji's meeting, he was terribly afraid to cross the place! So many cars! Some friend came and took me across!

- *Devotee* : He who takes people easily across this terrible ocean of samsara was afraid to cross the road! (*laughter*).

Bhagavan, with a mischievous smile, lighted a cigarette Himself.

- *Bhagavan* : Oh God! That friend who took me across would halt at one place - walk a little - halt again. Oh God... several times! After that this beggar went to Ganeshpuri and Vajreshvari, passed some time near Nityananda Ashram. He took bath in the hot springs also! Very calm and quiet place! Miles and miles around, peace! When people went near Nityananda and halted for more time than necessary, he would say "Go to Vajreshvari."

MA DEVAKI'S DIARY

- **V.** : I too want to roam about like a beggar, all over India.

- **Devotee** : We feel safe and secure with you only Bhagavan. We don't want to go anywhere (*Bhagavan laughed loudly*).

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar doesn't know how long he will be here! This beggar thought he would go to Rishikesh, Haridvar where he could speak the language. But somebody put a brake! Now this beggar is in Tiruvannamalai. This body goes wherever Father takes. There is one sloka in Bhagavad Gita,

*Ishvara Sarva Bhutanam
Hrddeshe Arjuna tishthati/
Bramayan Sarva Bhutani
Yantrarudani Mayaya//*

God residing in the heart of every being, controls all the movements of every being. Just like the puppets in puppet show - pulling the strings. We think we are doing something. BUT EVERYBODY IS MOVED BY HIM ALONE. This is a lunatic life! This mad fool living this mad life last 40 years! Vivekananda said, "Saint or a sinner, a king or a beggar, all are tools in His hands." That is His leela.

The little boy in the group complained of stomach ache after lunch, when Bhagavan raised His hand and blessed him nicely.

- **Bhagavan** : There is a sloka of Chanakya,

*Ajirne' Dve'shatham Vaari
Girane' Vaari Balapradham
Bojane Amrutham Vaari
Bojanaanthe Vishapradham.*

The meaning is: for digestion, water is strength, for indigestion, water is enemy. When you take food, take a lot of water. It is like nectar then! After food, water is poisonous! Farmers working in the field take little food but plenty of water and they could work in the hot sun.

Then Bhagavan began to sing His own name first, then a few slokas from Bhagavad Gita and finally Sri Rama Jai Rama, all of which were promptly recorded. Then they played once again "Engirundo Vandan." The song began to flow in all its richness of music and meaning, holding everyone of us in the powerful grip of the embodied presence of the Divine before us.

"He came from somewhere and said, "I am from the caste of the sheperds."

To get him over here what tapas have I done?

He does promptly as told, takes care of the clothes, and sings beautifully songs to small children!

Just as the eye-lids protect the eyes, he protects my family perfectly!

I have never seen him grumble! My attachment to him keeps growing! I can never talk sufficiently about all the help that I receive from him!

MA DEVAKI'S DIARY

*As my friend,... as my minister... as my good teacher ... as
the Divine in virtues... but a servant in looks... Kannan
came from somewhere...!*

As we were all transported into another dimension,
Bhagavan seemed to grow and grow filling the whole
space in exalted revelation of HIS cosmic form. Time
seemed to stand still! i found myself at once crying and
laughing.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVANI

MA DEVAKI'S DIARY

June 10th, 1992

What a glorious evening it was! There was such an air of intimacy and joy when the visiting devotees sat together with Bhagavan watching the sky pouring its bounties... i shall begin from the beginning...

The day was 10th June 1992. We, the *Sudama* sisters reached Bhagavan's residence in Sannidhi street around 4:00 PM and were let in at once! We had carried two tender coconuts and placed them carefully on His right side. He gave each of us some flowers and gestured to us to be seated. It was after i sat that i noticed a pool of water under one of the coconuts. When i began to wonder how to wipe it, Bhagavan called the gate boy to give the coconut water in His coconut shell. After He drank, i ventured to ask,

- *Ma Devaki* : Bhagavan, can i wipe with my saree?

- *Bhagavan (smiling)* : No. Thank you.

The gate boy used his handkerchief and cleaned the place. Then he sat down opposite to Bhagavan and began to fan. The French author Michel Coquet was sitting opposite to me. Outside, there was dull light as the weather was cloudy. A small crowd had collected and

they began to come in, one by one. One old woman who looked like a vegetable vendor staggered her way to Bhagavan with a walking stick. She tried to prostrate but in the attempt, unfortunately, fell down near Bhagavan, in what seemed like total exhaustion. Bhagavan gestured to the boy to close the gate. After a while, the old woman spoke in her village Tamil,

- **Woman** : "Sami, for 3 days now, i have been coming here, would stand outside and go back from there. Not able to walk at all. I get dizzy. Even to go to temple, I feel a reluctance and disgust. The whole body is burning."

- **Bhagavan** (*tenderly*) : Ennamma? Mayakkam Varudha? (What is it Amma? Do you feel dizzy?)

- **Woman** (in Tamil) : Yes Sami, even last year, I was sick like this. You also came to me. You cured me last year. This year, the same illness has come over me. I am not able to sweep those litters and fruit peels as I used to do. The very thought of sweeping is disgusting in my present state.

Bhagavan gave some sugar-candy and asked her to eat it saying she would be alright soon.

- **Bhagavan** : Ungallukku Enda Vooru? (What is your native place?)

- **Woman** : Tiruvennainallur.

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- **Bhagavan** : Anga Yarum Erukkangala? Akka, Thangachi, Anna, Thambi, yarum...? (Anyone there? Your elder sister, younger sister, elder brother, younger brother...?)

- **Woman** : None, sami.

- **Bhagavan** : Oho! Sari, enime mayakkam varadhu, soukkiam eruppa, Arunachaleshvarar arul. (Alright, there will be no dizziness anymore. You will be well, Arunachaleshvara's grace!)

The old woman left in better frame of mind and health. Bhagavan then took the Indian Express and Hindu of 2nd June that carried the announcement of Kanchi Periyava's Birthday celebrations, looked at it for sometime and kept it down. He had been doing it everyday in both the sessions, for quite some days by then.

- **Bhagavan** : Today is 9th, 13th is birthday - the day of culmination of all these days.

It was becoming more and more cloudy outside.

- **Bhagavan** (*referring to the old woman sweeper*) : She has no one - no relations. If they are rich, they could live in homes for the aged. But people like her - where will they go?

Did i detect 'tears' in His voice?

- **Bhagavan** : In Arabindo Ashram, there is a room for the aged people and there are people to look after them. (*With a peculiar smile*) But for people like this beggar and her, only Arunachaleshvara should look after us. Some ashrams send the old people to their relations. People who have been working for a long time, when they become old, they are sent to their relations.

- **A devotee** : If they don't have any relations, what will they do?

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar doesn't know!

- **Devotee** : In Tiruvanmiyur, there is one old age home 'Vishranthi' and another 'Saicharan'. Even rich people come and stay there - their own daughters and sons leave them there because they could not look after them.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh! (*Turning to the French author*) What are you doing in France?

- **French author** : Writing books. I have written about 20 books. All on philosophy, India and Its spiritual message.

- **Bhagavan** : Do the publishers sell it? Do they give you money (smile).

- **French author (smiling)** : Yes, Bhagavan. But not much! It is alright. I write mainly for passing on spiritual message. (*A pause*). I want to ask one thing. There must be books on Bhagavan. Is there any book on Him which I can read? I want to write on you, Bhagavan.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh! you want to write on this beggar? (*Derisive smile*). This beggar has no material. This beggar has nothing to give. No material. (*Gesturing with hands as if to say 'Nothing'*).

- **French author** (*undaunted*) : I want to write on your message. I have seen only booklets so far...

- **Bhagavan** : But this beggar has no message to give you!

- **French author** : I think Your life is Your message!

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling*) : You have already written an article on this beggar.⁵

- **French author** : Some of it could be wrong or insufficient.

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling*) : It doesn't matter. It's alright. Lives of Rama and Krishna have so much material to write on. For ages, lives of Rama and Krishna have been inspiring and for ages to come, it will continue to inspire writers, painters, poets, sculptors...! Always fresh, new, everlasting, EVERLASTING!

Bhagavan now lighted a cigarette.

⁵ This article was published in "Le Monde Inconnu" ("The Unknown world"). (NdT)

MA DEVAKI'S DIARY

- **Bhagavan** : Sometimes, in madness, this beggar says, "Stories of Rama and Krishna are my stories. Life of Rama, Life of Krishna is my life!". In normal sense, this beggar cannot talk like that. Will anybody believe it? Perhaps... if there is something in this beggar's life like Rama's or like Krishna's, they may believe it! (*Now pointing to His dress and appearance*) But not like this... nobody would believe it!

What a rare, rare declaration had come my way! Suddenly I found my eyes aching with unshed tears and i felt that Bhagavan and I had known each other for ages and ages!! A strong hitherto unknown feeling gripped me sending waves of ecstasy through my body. My hands folded themselves and my heart leapt, aflame with joy and thrill. Before i came to Yogi Ramsuratkumar, Krishna was my Ishta Devata...

It began to rain outside. Amidst all these revelations, Bhagavan's one by one ministry was also going on as usual, simultaneously. People came in and went out, carrying with them, the richness of His love, care and gracious blessings. Bhagavan sent out the gate boy twice to look for the clouds, who came back and announced,

- **Gate boy** : Plenty of them, Swami!

- **Bhagavan** (*to Himself*) : It's going to rain ! (*To the gate boy*) Sashi, Mazhai venuma, vendama? (Do you want the rain or not?)

MA DEVAKI'S DIARY

The boy smiled not knowing what to say and kept quiet.

- **Bhagavan** : Enna Sashi, bhadhil venum venam solla mattingala? (What, Sashi, will you not reply whether you want it or not?)

- **The gate boy** : I want it to rain, Sami.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh, you want it!

Bhagavan kept smoking. He also blessed the French man, sometimes raising His hand high, sometimes merely looking at him deeply.

- **Bhagavan** (to me) : Can anybody believe it if this beggar (*pointing again to his dress and smoking*) looking like this, says, I am Rama and Krishna! Can anybody believe it?

- **Self** : Why, we all believe it, Bhagavan! That is why we address you as Bhagavan (Bhagavan laughed). Yes Bhagavan. We want to hear you say it again and again, for such revelations not only make us very happy, but also strengthen our conviction. It gives us a fresh impetus and propels us forward.

Just then, someone came in, and with that Bhagavan became quiet.

- **Bhagavan** (after a pause) : Krishna lifted a hill on his little finger like this (showing His little finger upwards). Can this beggar do it?

- **Self** : Perhaps not literally, yes. But you have relieved every one of us from different sufferings. Honestly, i feel that you are ALWAYS holding an invisible hill over our lives all the time. What protection, what guidance and help we receive! Krishna did it only once. But you... you are doing it all through our lives!... all the time!

- **Bhagavan** : Oh! (smiling) Father's Grace! It is all done by Father. This beggar is Nothing.

- **Self** : I often feel that this name '*Sudama*' you have given is significant. Like Kuchela went to Sri Krishna in utter poverty, we have all come to you in spiritual poverty. It is our faith that one day, you will make everyone of us a Spiritual Mansion, just as Krishna turned Kuchelakutir into a golden place!

There was a sudden intense expression on His face and His eyes became sharper. He blessed us with His raised cigarette hand, for a long time.

- **A devotee** : Once, a devotee told me that on one of his visits, when he stood outside waiting for you to open the door, he saw this place full of light and that one minute, Swamiji was walking up and down here - next minute it was Krishna walking up and down! This beautiful sight overwhelmed him and filled him with great bliss.

- **Bhagavan** : Is it ! All Father's Grace !

Suddenly Bhagavan packed off one couple seated opposite to us. Very soon after that it began to rain heavily outside and there was even rumbling.

- **Bhagavan** : It is a very good rain ! There's lightening and thunder. (*Turning to the French man*) He wants to write on this beggar. But this beggar has no material!

- **French author** (*with a happy smile*) : Only experience, Swami !

This conversation started a train of thoughts in me... Bhagavan keeps saying He has no material... Indeed He had taken to begging voluntarily and had no material possessions at all. His Divinity is His only possession. He could also be hinting that in truth, He was pure consciousness and hence had NOTHING MATERIAL... They say from the level of pure consciousness, even creation doesn't exist... Suddenly the stream of thoughts was broken when Bhagavan got up and went inside. The French man asked me if i had any book on Yogiji that i could lend to him. Before i answered, Bhagavan came out and sat.

- **Self** : Bhagavan, this French friend sayus there is an International Youth Centre in France.

- **Bhagavan** : What is that article – "India my mother..."

- **Sashi** : Yes Swamiji - by J.B. CARCELLE⁶.

- **French author** : Yes! J.B.Carcelle and I meet each other sometimes. We talk about Yogiji. Now he is in India, somewhere in the Himalayas. He is a nice man Swamiji⁷.

Outside, it was still pouring. Bhagavan lay down on His mat. We were chanting His *Nama*. Just then one lady came and stood outside. She had an umbrella but was completely drenched. The time was 5:50 PM. The gate boy announced her presence. Bhagavan got up immediately and asked him to open the gate. He seemed annoyed and rebuked her saying:

- **Bhagavan** : Eni indha madhiri mazhaila varakkudadhamma (Do not come like this in the rain hereafter).

- **Lady** : When I started from home, there was no rain, Swami...

- **Bhagavan** still angry : Oh, do not talk like this. It has been raining for quite sometime! This beggar doesn't like it if people come drenched like this in the rain.

⁶ This article, with the French name of Krishna, was first published in France. Afterwards, it was published several times in India. Yogiji liked it very much. (NDT)

⁷ This very day, Krishna was in Gangotri. Krishna had already got Yogiji's darshan in 1990, and Yogiji had become his guru.

He dropped some prasad into her hands and said softly in Tamil,

- **Bhagavan** : "Thuni mathikkanum, Juram wandhudum (Change the clothes. (otherwise) Fever would develop).

What care and compassion! Yet, how strict He was with people! All His words of admonition were born of His very love and concern for people. Who could understand this sensitive Divine child who seemed a bundle of contradictions at times!

Bhagavan lay down again.

- **Self** (*hesitantly*) : Bhagavan knows i note down mentally all that takes place here whenever i visit. i have collected them under the title "CRUMBS FROM A DIVINE BEGGAR'S BOWL."

Bhagavan simply nodded His head in acknowledgement and said "umm" with closed eyes. Around 6, there was some let up in the rain and He got up as if He knew! Then He gave mangoes as prasad and asked concernedly:

- **Bhagavan** : How will you people go?

When i replied "by autoriskchaw", He left us immediately. As i came out, i felt that the rain outside was symbolic of the "*Gnana Mazhai*", the rain of His

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words of wisdom inside and i was happy i came out
drenched in that!

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

Patience in spiritual Sadhana

16th June, 1992

When we started from home, on the 16th of June 1992, we had no idea what a beautiful morning session with the beautiful God Child awaited us! Indeed, a day of feast for both ears and eyes as well! On that memorable day, when we landed at Sannidhi street residence of Bhagavan Yogi Ramsuratkumar, the darshan had already started and Bhagavan (wonder of wonders!) was attired in a dazzling white finery-looking every bit Sri Narayana of Vaikunta! Even as i prostrated, He handed over that day's *Hindu* paper, pointing out the article "*A Bee in Boris' Bonnet.*" Already overwhelmed by His heavenly appearance and now with this added joy of sharing an article with Him, i seated myself in deep gratitude and began to read out. The article was on the then president of Russia, Boris Yeltsin and the ousted president Michael Gorbachev. Even as people were coming in, one by one, and leaving after darshan and prasad as happy recipients of His spiritual ministry, He was listening with great interest and attention, to every word of the article and punctuating it with His laughter throughout the reading.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar doesn't know what Bonnet is!

- **D.** : A bee in the bonnet means a certain idea buzzes in somebody's head, bugging him and stinging him. Bonnet is usually something like a hat people wear on the head.

(Laughter.)

The article spoke of how Yeltsin was irked at the world image and honour, Gorbachev's actions and achievements had created for him.

- **Bhagavan** : Gorbachev has an international image - wherever he goes, he is respected-honoured! A politician out of power - still he is respected!

- **D.** : Here Gorbachev says, "Yeltsin is not Jesus Christ. I am not answerable to him."

(Laughter)

- **Bhagavan** : Eh... eh! He is not a narrow minded Christian.

When there was still a paragraph left unread, a group of five people came from a certain place. They had come after 6 p.m. the previous day when Bhagavan opened the grill-gate, sat on the steps and made them go with a "come tomorrow at 10".

- **Bhagavan** (*in Tamil*) : Five people have come! mm... alright, sit down. Three here... two there.

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- **D.** (*with wonder*) : Gorbachev is described as the "man of the Era"!

- **Bhagavan** (*firmly*) : Nobody can doubt it. There was this fear of Nuclear war - especially in Europe and America! But after he came to power - he averted it. HE SAVED MANKIND.

Then, in a very low tone - so low that i could barely catch it ...

- **Bhagavan** (*mumbling*) : People won't believe it... But this beggar says he is like Mahatma Gandhi in that respect.

Surprised at this unexpected praise of Gorbachev, i began to wonder what a great man he should be to have earned this praise from Bhagavan.... i had no idea! Now, in between spiritual ministry, He once again pointed out another news item - where it was mentioned how Gorbachev and his wife were received by the foreign ministry of Tel Aviv, Israel, albeit being on a personal visit!

- **Bhagavan** (*laughing*) : So Gorbachev first went to Germany, then to Japan, U.S.A. and now Israel!

Then he indicated another news item on Boris Yeltsin's visit to U.S.A. and his reply-shots to questions by American National Network.

- **Bhagavan** : See, he had to bring medicine from Moscow for his mother! The mother of the President of a country!

When i read that particular news item, somehow "New York 15th" did not register in mind and i began to wonder in my mind when Yeltsin went to America. Bhagavan, even while attending to people with the same meticulous care and attention, turned suddenly towards me and said, "New York 15th!"

Then we began to sing His name as He gestured to us. There were a few people outside. One Malaysian guy came in and said he was leaving for Malaysia next day.

- **Bhagavan** (*mumbling to Himself*) : Malaysia - Indonesia - Eurasia ... Asia!

left the man with prasad. Next entered a girl who came with the Malaysian guy. She looked like an Indian of about 20 years with her bobbed hair hanging loose in western fashion and a hand-bag draped across her front. She seemed very bold and spontaneous.

- **Girl** : Swami, can I seat for a while?

- **Bhagavan** : There is no place here ... mm... alright. How many people have come with you ? Sit there.

- **Girl** : Only one.

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She gestured to the guy outside to come in but he was hesitant and afraid and soon he left!

- **Bhagavan** : Where are you from?

- **Girl** : Italy.

- **Bhagavan** : Italy! Your colour is not like Italian?

- **Girl** : Sure. I was born in India. I am an Indian (*she spoke her name*). I have been in Italy for 6 years now... studying.

- **Bhagavan** (*curiously*) : What are you doing now?

- **Girl** : I don't know! I am planning to study further. Yet I haven't decided.

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling*) : How can you plan something and say you have not decided? (*laughter*). How did you come to know about this beggar?

- **Girl** : You are not a beggar! Far... Far... from one! You are a Gnani. That friend from Malaysia told me he was coming here. Now he is standing outside. He doesn't have the courage to ask you if he could sit here! Can I ask you something?

- **Bhagavan** : Ask. We shall see.

- **Girl** : I keep on asking myself "Who am I". But nothing seems to happen. Am I doing it wrong?

Bhagavan looked at her sharply and lighted a cigarette.

- **Bhagavan** : Do you doubt the efficacy of Ramana Maharshi's method?

- **Girl** : No, I have faith in him. But I doubt if I am doing it all wrong.

(Laughter)

- **Bhagavan** : Go on doing it. Go on asking yourself, "Who am I?" Don't get tired of it.

- **Girl** : But how to ask? The mind begins to wander.

- **Bhagavan** : Put the question inside. Let the mind wander. You keep on asking the question inside until the answer comes.

- **Girl** : I am doing it all the 24 hours. At least I think so! But still nothing happens!

- **Bhagavan** : Ramana Maharshi had the fear of death. He lay down. Then he found out that only the body dies and that he is the spirit, the eternal spirit. There was no more fear of death. For Ramana Maharshi, it took only a few seconds. For people like us, it may take hundred of years!

The girl's eyes widened in disappointment. Bhagavan laughed.

- **Bhagavan** : Don't be impatient. Keep on doing, you will get the answer.

A man sitting opposite to me butted in and asked Bhagavan if he could say something regarding this topic. Bhagavan firmly said: "NO."

- **Bhagavan** : The mind always wanders here and there. But whenever you put the question, the mind goes inside for a fraction of a second. Let it wander again. But again you put the question. Don't get tired. When we go to the temple and watch the pooja or when we do prayer, japa, dhyana, the mind goes inside for that short time. One should keep on doing it. We are all attached to the body. Ramana Maharshi found out he was not the body, but the eternal spirit. But we... We are all attached to the body. We want food, clothes, shelter... We have to be in the world. We have to work and earn our livelihood. So the mind will go outside. But when we pray or go to the temple or put the question, "Who am I", the mind comes inside even if it is for a fraction of a second. It will be peaceful whenever it goes inside. Otherwise life will be continuously miserable. Bertrand Russel - this beggar doesn't read any book, just reads here and there a little - Russel says, "You have to go out to work and earn. So the mind goes outside. But if you do only that, life will be miserable. You have to bring the mind inside by some means. Then life will be worth living." Be patient.

At His gesture, one by one, people began to come in, took prasad from His hand and left.

- **Bhagavan** : Vedantins teach, "*Aham Brahmasmi*"; Ramana Maharshi taught, "*Koham Asmi?*" "Who am I?" This is another method. We are not the body but the immortal soul... Keep on saying, "I am not the body, but the soul", again and again. We have a divine spark inside which has all the attributes of the all-knowing, all-intelligent, all-powerful, all-pervasive infinite. Swami Nityananda of Ganeshpuri says, "The one who thinks he is not the body but the immortal spirit is always in Sahaja Samadhi..."

He repeated it.

(A pause.)

- **Bhagavan** : Swami Vivekananda says, "Religion is that which makes people strong. Anything that weakens you is not religion.." (*Swami repeated it twice.*) Ramana Maharshi's method is self-enquiry whereas all others said, from their experience, "You are not the body. You are the eternal, pure, immortal soul, Atma." Self-enquiry leads you to find out for yourself what it is. Vivekananda says, "Only India gave the concept of Atma. It was not in Europe or America." They have their burial ground and they believe that all souls will rise, resurrect with the body one day! That's all! But we say, we know, we are the divine sparks of the Infinite. That spark has all the attributes of the Infinite Divine. Oh! But this beggar doesn't know all that. He is a dirty sinner. He is simply talking all these - merely vomiting what he heard or read.

(Laughter).

- *Girl (humbly)* : I am also a beggar.

(Laughter).

- *Bhagavan* : Vivekananda says, "Go to every village in India and tell every man, You are not the body but the divine soul. Then India will become strong." Vivekananda awakened the whole India. Because of him, national movement started in Bengal first. Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru were inspired by Vivekananda. The freedom movement started, in the beginning inspired by Vivekananda.

(A pause).

The crowd outside was let in one by one and left with blessings and prasad.

- *Bhagavan* : Ramana Maharshi was suffering from cancer. There was much pain. He cried once. Someone said, "Bhagavan, you are crying. You are suffering like this!". They felt, "Bhagavan is dying." Then Ramana Maharshi sat upon the cot and said, "Have I been teaching only this all these years?" It is the body. All diseases, all sufferings come to the body only. Not to the soul. If you are firmly established that we are the eternal spirit, not the body, suffering will not touch us. That is the meaning. There will be no fear of death. (*Looking at the girl sharply*) You are the soul - all pervasive, all intelligent, all powerful soul. All sufferings, pain, disease, death come to the body only.

(A pause).

- **Bhagavan** (*pointing to a lady opposite*) : K. has the fear of insect-bite. If she thinks she is not the body but the all powerful Atman, she will not have the fear. Nothing will bite her!

(A pause).

- **Bhagavan** : In Bhagavad Gita, Krishna told Arjuna, "These Kauravas and Duryodhana, why are you afraid to kill them? You cannot kill "them". They will exist even after you kill their bodies. They existed even before. After you kill them also, they will exist. The death is only to the body." Krishna also said to Arjuna, "If you don't have faith in Atman, then, all those who are born in this world will die inevitably. Death cannot be avoided. According to the law, all those who are born, must die. So, even if you don't have faith in the Atma, the soul, death cannot be avoided. So why do you worry about killing them?"

(A pause, someone came in and went).

- **Bhagavan** : In all faiths, I think there is this idea of the soul. We do some ceremonies after death, to the forefathers and ancestors. So there is soul! Even the Christians believe in the soul. In the graveyard, they rise after death or something.

(*To the girl*) : How long will you be here?

- *Girl* : A month, I think.

- *Bhagavan* (*smiling*) : Then we shall meet sometime.

He left her with some prasad.

- *Bhagavan* (*turning to the man opposite who wanted to intervene and say something when Bhagavan said 'no' to him*) : You wanted to say something then. Now you say it, what is it?

- *Man* : I read somewhere, 2 or 3 days ago, about Ramana Maharshi's answer. The question disappears, that is the answer. I suppose there will be no one to question, no one to answer!

- *Bhagavan* : I don't know that the question contains the answer. But when we keep enquiring, 'I' that pertains to the body dies. Different people give different interpretations.

One by one spiritual ministry continued.

- *Bhagavan* (*to me*) : When the faith comes - the faith that you are not the body but the soul - you become one with everyone! You become one with all! Then you will love everybody! That's the real love. J. Krishnamurti says somebody asked him about kundalini shakti and all that! He said, "You leave all that. When all selfish activities stop, a great energy is released!" So, only when you serve without any selfish motive, it becomes real service.

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Those who do service to get name, fame and power, do no service. They are only serving themselves!

(To a lady devotee sitting there, smiling) : She will think she is not the body but immortal soul. She will become very strong. There will be no fear. This beggar cannot think like that! But she will be able to do that.

He repeated it several times and blessed that lady. We began to sing His nama.

- **Bhagavan** *(suddenly)* : Where is Yogi Ramsuratkumar?

- **Lady** : Bhagavan, you have taught me that Yogi Ramsuratkumar is everywhere. Please bless me so that it becomes the truth for me.

Bhagavan blessed her again and again. The group of 5 people seated in the veranda asked Swami about the telegram they had given. Bhagavan turned His face away to another devotee as if He did not want to talk about it. The telegram did not mention their time of arrival, neither the number of people. The previous day Bhagavan mentioned it twice. Those people had brought a two year old child. The child kept moving here and there freely and at times would stop before Bhagavan and ask for sugar candy. Bhagavan also played along, indulging her every time. Then the child took out the sugar candy from its mouth and offered it to Bhagavan saying, "You eat it". Bhagavan laughed uproariously but didn't take it. Another indulging gesture from Bhagavan was, whenever the child came near Him, He would stoke

its legs and feet and then put His hand to His eyes, in a gesture of worship. The child simply loved it, that it began to come often and stretched its legs before Him. With a countenance of tenderness Bhagavan indulged her. All of us were watching it with interest, some of us finding it great fun. Each one had their own interpretation of the scene before us according to our nature and understanding.

- *Lady (referring to the child)* : She was very happy in Ramana Ashram, Swami. She enjoyed the peacocks and the monkeys.

- *Bhagavan* : In all ashrams, all the old people and children will be happy.

Then Bhagavan called them one by one and left them with prasad. Bhagavan now looked at the lady sitting opposite once again and said :

- *Bhagavan* : She will be able to think she is the soul, not the body. She will become strong and fearless.

Then He repeated it two more times. Another lady blurted out, unable to contain herself anymore :

- *Other lady* : Swami, we also want to think so. We also want to become strong and fearless.

Bhagavan's whole frame shook with His thunderous and cascading laughter. Then, while giving prasad, Bhagavan grinned and said to that lady devotee :

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- **Bhagavan** : When Krishna taught Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna, it was not only for Arjuna. It was for everyone!

Again He went into peals of laughter.

We departed on that beautiful parting shot from Bhagavan, which kept echoing like thunder amidst that day's downpour of supreme knowledge from the Chidakasha Bhagavan.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAKTIPATI

Father is eternal,
His creation is eternal!

June 19th, 1992

With a heart possessed by a never satiated yearning for His *Darshan*, I was getting ready to go to the Sannadhi Street residence of Bhagavan Sri Yogi Ramsuratkumar, as always, in anticipation of the ineffable thrill of all that His Divine company meant to me. Much to my delightful surprise, that morning of 19th June 1992, i found a mango from *Sudama* garden that had just turned in a delectable yellow! Indeed, it seemed like a perfect offering to The perfect One! Yet, there was no way one could be sure, He would use it Himself! Once, some VIP came and placed an offering of Rs. 10,000/- at His feet. Bhagavan gave him a deep penetrating look and then dropped the bundle into the hands of a woman devotee seated opposite to Him. (Only minutes before, that lady was saying amidst bitter tears that, at long last, her daughter's marriage had been fixed, but there was absolutely no money to conduct it.) While the lady looked perplexed with so much money in hand, the VIP gentleman's expression had turned to one of disbelief. Bhagavan smiled indulgently at the man and said, "What you have offered to this beggar has become

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this beggar's. (Pointing to the woman) Now, this beggar will use it here." As i recalled this incident, i decided that it was not for me to contemplate the fate of the mango. Whatever Bhagavan did was necessary and perfect.

When i reached the Theradi Mandap, it was precisely 10 a.m. and as ever, there was a crowd outside. One young lady from far south approached one of the elderly devotees there and expressed her wish to go in with the elderly lady and join us all in singing His Name. The elderly lady explained to her that their being called in or even their singing together, would happen according to Swami's will alone, however, all of us had the freedom to pray to Him mentally for whatever we wished. Hardly did she finish her reply, when the young lady and her husband were called in! Ironically, it was nearly 25 minutes after than. The elderly lady was the last to be admitted inside! The young lady was seated with her husband opposite to our row, on the lower veranda. At Bhagavan's nod, we all began to sing His Name SOFTLY as He had been instructing us for some days then. The young lady sang rather loudly and off-note all the time! i stole a glance at Bhagavan who seemed rather absorbed in His Father's work, unmindful of how we sang that day! But i knew, no detail ever escaped His notice, however busy He was. So, ignoring the discordant pitch, we continued on. But more was to come. The young lady would now and then stop singing and start talking to her husband as loudly and seemed unaware of the discipline maintained there. Somewhat annoyed, a male devotee seated in our row, gestured to her to stop talking but she mistook the gesture and stopped her singing altogether!

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Embarrassed and perhaps afraid too, to communicate any further, the devotee became quiet. Bhagavan turned to him and pointed out that she had wanted to sing with all of us and that was why she was there. The man said meekly that he was sorry that he did what he did. Now Bhagavan nodded to us and we all started singing once again. It continued in full blast for nearly forty minutes, while Bhagavan attended to His one-by-one spiritual ministry. Then He called the beaming couple near and sent them with prasad.

Just then, the gate-boy announced that one gentleman had arrived with a brand new lorry bearing the sign-board "Yogi Ramsuratkumar Transport." At Bhagavan's nod of acknowledgement, he was allowed in. He seemed rather nervous and tensed up. With trembling hands, he submitted the registered documents of the lorry. The driver who followed him in, was also in jitters and dropped a huge mango down! This nervousness and fear form of extreme awe and wonder was all too familiar to me! Hadn't i myself gone through such moments before! In hardly a few minutes, Bhagavan blessed them nicely and left them with fruits. By eleven, almost everyone had been sent away except one Spanish lady and an American lady from Sri Aurobindo Ashram and my little self. i was beginning to wonder if my turn was next ! It was getting very cloudy outside. All of a sudden, Bhagavan put out the cigarette and announced ...

- **Bhagavan** (*to the attendant*) : Let us go outside. Father is calling this beggar to the temple.

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Bhagavan gestured to us to get up and folded the mat carefully Himself. In one jump, He came out and stood on the steps. The attendant brought the lock and key from inside. i had seen the lock on the gate a few times but that was the first time i had seen the key! With a curiosity i could not help, i began to watch it. As the attendant unfolded the handkerchief to which the key was tied in a corner, i found to my surprise, the cloth was old, dirty and had a big tear - a tear almost the size of the kerchief itself! A strong emotion seized me and even as my eyes welled up, we all began to run after Swami, because He was walking down the lane opposite to His house, in rather long strides. The lane was narrow and lined up on either side with vessel shops. It had been long since i had seen Bhagavan walk like that. It reminded me of the classical example of a king elephant in its royal procession! Even as the thought struck me, His gait changed. Now He was moving with the graceful swiftness of a gliding sea-gull! Indeed, without exaggeration, it was a sight for all the gods of the heavens! Even with His "Once upon a time white" dhoti now turned black and brown and His carelessly draped shawls torn and hanging here and there and the green turban tied so casually but sitting like a diadem of emeralds on His head, He had all the majestic beauty of a great Emperor! i had the fortune of my eyes, fill that day after a long long time. Both the sophistication of a perfect god and the innocence of a guileless child seemed to blend in Him in a gracious perfection. Indeed words would fall miserably if one should attempt to describe the unsurpassed beauty that walked the earth as Yogi Ramsuratkumar.

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As Bhagavan strode across in long steps, we trailed behind in a great flurry. He crossed the main doorway of the temple, turned right, proceeded straight to a spot under the Neem tree and sat relaxing. After a moment's hesitation, at His almost imperceptible nod, we too followed suit. For nearly twenty minutes, a comfortable peace prevailed, lulling us into a cosy exclusive privacy with the Divine, while He kept watching around, in a slow and curious deliberation. Few were the people piling past that 'invisible' group, into the temple, absorbed in their own interests. Fact lit up with a tender smile, He seemed to listen with interest, to the cries of mainas, parrots, pigeons that were busy crisscrossing the sky. Now and then, He even pointed them out to us in radiant joy. Minutes ticked on ... albeit to me, time seemed to stand still. Indeed, there was a timeless quality to the whole event that the Divine togetherness felt so achingly familiar and heavenly, transporting me into another dimension ... another world ... another time. There was a nostalgic stirring in the depths of my being ...

At long last, what looked like ages to me, He spoke breaking the magic spell.

- **Bhagavan** (*pointing to the stone wall of the temple*) : Did you people see this wall? How big, how strong, how majestic it is! (*pause*) See, how big the stones are! (*To the attendant*) What did they use along with the stones, do you know?

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- **Attendant** : I think it is lime, Swamiji.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh! (*To the foreign ladies*) Have any of you seen the China Wall?

- **Foreign Ladies** (*grinning*) : No, swami!

- **One Devotee** : I have seen a picture of it, swamiji. It doesn't appear tall at all! But it seems to run hundreds of miles.

- **Bhagavan** : Eh... eh! It is also very old and very strong and is made up of stones. Friends, how did they all do it, in those days!

Just then an old woman - a buttermilk vendor - came towards Bhagavan with her pot and addressed Him in the village slang with an air of familiarity.

- **Woman** (in tamil) : Dearie, will you drink at least a little buttermilk? Isn't it long since you did? Take just a little bit, dear.

Bhagavan folded both His hands in *Namaskar* and said with an apologetic smile (in tamil) :

- **Bhagavan** : No, please.

Well rewarded with a smile, she happily prostrated and left.

- **Bhagavan** : Do you know how old is the earth ?

- *Devotee* : They say about five billion years.

- *Bhagavan* : What is a billion?

- *Devotee* : There are two definitions. The American billion is one thousand million. The British billion is one million million.

- *Bhagavan* : What is a million? 10 Lakhs?

- *Devotee (surprised)* : Yes, Swami.

- *Foreign Lady* : Bhagavan, how do you perceive this granite?

- *Bhagavan (smiling)* : All this is God, my friend. Nothing else exists. There is nothing else. All that exists is God alone!

Everybody sat quietly as if contemplating on what He uttered. It began to drizzle.

- *Bhagavan (looking at the sky)* : This beggar has heard ... also read in the papers that in places where there are industries, when it rains, it carries acid because of the air pollution. (*To a devotee*) Do you know about that?

- *Devotee* : Yes, Swami. But generally, the water is pure, perhaps where there are no industries. It is so pure that in chemical laboratories, I have seen them keeping big

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vessels to collect the rain water, and use them even as distilled water.

- **Bhagavan** (*suddenly, to the attendant*) : P. would be waiting there near the house. Call her here. (*To the devotees*) P. brings some milk and juice for this beggar everyday. She always waits! She comes at 5 p.m. everyday. Sometimes, this beggar goes out and returns late at 8 o'clock, even then she waits patiently! Three hours! This beggar doesn't know how she does it, but she does it! Now by chance this beggar remembered her! (*The attendant left*).

i thought to myself "What a lie! Is there any detail that He is not aware of, however far it is!"

- **Bhagavan** : So, the age of the earth is five billion years! How old is the earth! How short is man's life! (*Looking around and pointing to the wall, the flooring, etc.*) All these are eternal, my friends. They all existed long before us, just as they would exist long after us! Even if they should break in course of time, they would continue to exist in another form. You see, only the form changes. (*Now pointing to His own hands and His entire body*) Whatever is all this, whatever it is all made up of, when this body drops, it will also continue to exist. Only the form changes. This was there in a different form before this body was formed. It will be there after this body drops also. (*Now pointing to the earth and then to the sky*) You see, this earth, that sky, the air this beggar is breathing now (*laughter*) ... Enna? All these are also eternal. All these are my Father. When this body drops,

the heat will leave the body, the air, the water, all will leave the body. But they will still continue to exist... eternally!... as the *Panchabhutas* of the Cosmos. Only the form changes.

A heavy silence followed. The attendant is yet to return with Mrs P. Thoughts began to race through my mind. "Is He pointing out that not only the atman is eternal but His physical body as well? ... Once before, in that same space of the veranda, an article was read out from the newspaper (at His request) wherein there was a vivid description of how Sri Aurobindo's attendant had collected the hair, nails, etc. of his great Master. Bhagavan pointed out then "You see, Is the physical body of Sri Aurobindo a mere body?" hinting that those relics were Sri Aurobindo Himself. Is Bhagavan saying that even after His body drops, He would continue to live in the form of the very Cosmos? ... in the very creation? ... that there would be no physical separation either, so to speak?

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling*) : Father is Eternal, His creation is eternal. As long as Father exists which is Eternal, His creation also continues. So His creation is also eternal. Only the form changes.

(*Looking up at the tower*) (*to the attendant*) : There used to be a beehive here... how many years back, do you remember?

- **Attendant** : 4 years, Swamiji.

i remembered too how once Bhagavan took me and a friend to that very spot and pointed it out to us rather pointedly! i had even noted down at that time, what i had felt to be the significance of that symbolic gesture under the tile, "The Beggar and the Beehive."

- **Foreign Lady** : In Auroville, we try to live in tune with nature as much as possible. We refuse to use even electricity which we get from a power plant. The Auroville is meant to be a model village. We use solar panels for getting energy. In United States also, there are people who do not want to use any modern gadgets like fridge etc. and lead a simple natural life.

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling*) : Is it? This beggar heard that in United States of America they have to buy water. They are so afraid to drink any other water, that they would buy and drink it from bottles!

Everybody laughs.

- **Bhagavan** (*throwing back both hands in a gesture of assertion*) : God is eternal. His creation is also eternal. All is Father alone. He alone exists. Nothing else. No one else. It is He who has become (*pointing to Himself and others*) all these. All His Leela only, He is eternal, His creation is eternal, His Leela is eternal.

The attendant returned with the lady who had waited at His residence. Now everybody became quiet. The declaration of higher truths had drawn a heavy blanket of silence over all of us and the atmosphere

became intense. Suddenly, out of the blue, something stirred in my stomach and to my shame i felt a pang of hunger, of all things! It so happened that i hadn't taken anything from morning. All the same, what a come down from the sublime to the ridiculous... !

- **Bhagavan** (*with a grin*) : You can go home now and have your lunch.

Embarrassed and ashamed, I prostrated and left, cursing myself for loosing such a fortune of an opportunity when Bhagavan might still be talking of sublime truths to those attentive few around ...

Moments later, when my auto crossed Bhagavan's lane-end, to my surprise, i saw Bhagavan and His attendant standing on the doorstep of His house, opening the lock!

Freedom in Hinduism

June 21st, 1992

That Sunday, the 21st of June 1992, dawned like any other Sunday with a sense of luxury of not having to slog like the weekdays. And there was this added element of excitement and anticipation, for, i happened to be in Tiruvannamalai that day and the day seemed full of promises with Bhagavan's *Darshan*, *sparshan* and *Sambhashan*.

At 10 a.m. I was already inside, sitting in the low veranda of Bhagavan's residence in Sannidhi street. There was a big crowd outside, getting bigger by the minute - as it had always been on Sundays for sometime then. The small veranda was full with those fortunate few who could sit with Him a little while, singing His name. People were allowed in, one by one till 11.00 a.m. Bhagavan's blessing hand kept dropping some prasad or the other into the hands of the visiting devotees. The prasad was accompanied by a verbal benediction of "*Ram, Ram*" or "*My Father's Blessings*" or a simple "*Hum*" and sometimes a rare pat on the back with that bewitching smile, all His own... raising an unknown longing in the hearts of other devotees. Seeing the swelling crowds,

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someone seated there whispered to his neighbour in so low a tone that no one could have possibly heard, "Looks like it is going to be like this every Sunday!" Pat came the reply, most unexpectedly from none other than Bhagavan Himself,

- **Bhagavan** : Eh, eh! All Father's grace! Father's will!

This utterance of Bhagavan was to continue almost every two to three visitors. Even as 'one by one' went on, Bhagavan repeated His comment six times in the next ten minutes!

One Professor was seated with his wife and daughter opposite to us. Both the parents were crying silently. The professor had brought a letter which he gave to Bhagavan saying, the problem concerning his daughter was there in all details. Bhagavan went through it for nearly 10 minutes. Then He blessed the daughter nicely for some time. Right from the beginning Bhagavan had been asking His attendant what the time was. Every time, the attendant found to my amusement, a devotee opposite to me was also looking at his watch. Just then, one man entered and said one Justice and the local Collector wanted to have His *Darshan* and were on their way. It was already 11:15. People were still coming. Bhagavan looked around significantly or so it seemed to me. I prepared myself mentally to leave if He should send me out for lack of space. It indeed takes some preparation of mind to leave Him!

- **Bhagavan** (looking at the professor and family) : This beggar will leave you now, my friends. Some people are coming. There is no place here. (*Bhagavan asked the attendant for time when he said "11:20"*)

- **The devotee opposite** : It is 11:15 only Swamiji. His watch is 5 minutes fast.

(*Laughter*)

- **Bhagavan** (addressing the attendant by name) : So, this friend has found an error in your watch.

(*Laughter*)

- **Devotee** : After noting all the watches here I said this Swamiji. All other watches agree. His is only 5 minutes fast.

Everybody laughed.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar wants a gap before these people come. But ...

Around 11:25 Bhagavan asked the gate boy to close the gate and in a rare gesture asked for the tender coconut water someone had brought. After drinking, He lay down. It looked as if He was going to either concentrate on something or just relax into a short nap. He looked so tired. But neither happened. With His eyes closed, one palm rubbing the other palm, He carried on a

conversation with one of the devotees there! People began to gather outside.

- **Bhagavan** (*calling the gate boy, in tamil*) : No one should stand there. Let us ask them to leave. They will come later.

- **Bhagavan** (*still eyes closed, to me*) : You had brought a ripe mango yesterday. This beggar ate it. He liked it very much.

- **Myself** (*taken by surprise, gratefully*) : Thank you so much Bhagavan. Even the green ones from that tree are tasty.

- **Bhagavan** : This Justice has not come here before?

- **Attendant** : No, Swamiji.

Bhagavan went on to discuss some details about the Justice but not a word about the Collector who was to accompany him! At 11:35, a car stopped in front of the house, and the Justice's family came in with the local *Thashildar*. The Collector did not come! The hefty figured Justice asked the gate boy even as he entered, if Swamiji knew Tamil to which the gate boy replied: "Tamil, Hindi, English ..." Bhagavan pulled out a cigarette and began to smoke while they seated themselves before Him, in the upper veranda.

Justice talked a lot on various things that day. For most part of his talk, Bhagavan sat quietly smoking, His

eyes looking deeply into the eyes of the visitor. Only that part of the conversation to which Bhagavan seemed to respond visibly is reproduced here.

- **Justice** : Swamiji, where is Dharma? Where is Justice? This country is in peril. (*in tamil* :) Our country is in a very bad state. Only you should save the country.

- **Bhagavan** (*raising the hand with the lighted cigarette with a penetrating look at the visitor and with a light smile*) What? Where is Justice? ... Oho.

He blessed the Justice without saying anything.

- **Bhagavan** : What are you doing?

- **Justice** : Nothing (*Laughter*). I am retired. I have got some judiciary work still, which involves companies. They employ retired south Indian Judges for North Indian Jurisdiction and vice versa. I am also a trustee of a college.

Bhagavan then made few enquiries about the college and clarified certain points.

- **Justice** : Swamiji, everyone is selfish. We go to Bhagavan to ask for this and that, "My children should come up well." "My son should get a job" etc., who prays for the people? for the country?

- **Bhagavan** (*with a light smile*) : Oh! How many children you have?

Justice replied. Then, he spoke again.

- **Justice** : My son has done law. All my daughters and sons are well settled. Swamiji, I have had a happy, contented life. No more duty to be done. Just waiting for the call! (*Laughter*). Any moment it comes, I will happily go!

(*Laughter*)

Bhagavan raised both His hands and blessed the visitor.

- **Bhagavan** : Is your son practising as an advocate?

- **Justice** (*surprised*) : No, Swamiji. He is running a business. You see, in this world, people want to make money fast. They don't want to become rich gradually. They become MLA today, they want a ministry tomorrow and then the money flows! Swamiji, our generation is over. We are not bothered about ourselves. What about these children? Their generation? Only great people like you must set things right. Only you people should save them.

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling*) : Father is there, Father will look after them. Father runs the whole cosmos!

- **Justice** (*apologetically*) : Swamiji, I am sorry I am talking too much.

- **Bhagavan** : No, no. Please keep talking. This beggar likes to hear you.

By then there was a large collection of people outside. People were leaning on the grill gate jostling each other and making noise with the latch.

- **Justice** : There are so many people waiting outside. I am holding you up.

- **Bhagavan** (*still smoking*) : It is alright. They come daily. You come rarely. Today you are here. We don't know when we shall meet again (*laughter*).

- **Justice** : I will surely come again to see Swamiji.

Bhagavan simply smiled and kept quiet.

- **Justice** : Hinduism is very confusing, Swamiji. Please, excuse me for talking so frankly. Some people say God is a male, worshipping Him in maleform. Some worship Him in female form. Does He has form at all? They say, "The temple in this place has more power. Sabarimalai Sastha has more power. This God is more powerful than that God.", etc. What is all this? In Shivananda Lahiri, Shankara says: "My Lord please forgive me. I am committing a sin by going to a temple and worshipping you in a limited form there, when you are in truth formless and everywhere." Swamiji, who is a Hindu? This question came up in the court. People tried to define it in various ways. "People on this side of Indus river are

Hindus" etc. etc. The final verdict was "Hinduism is a way of life"! Please excuse me, I am talking too much.

Bhagavan reassured him once again saying :

- **Bhagavan** : No, no, please keep talking.

All the while, Bhagavan kept blessing him. Also His glance would swiftly slide over all those around there one by one. As the Justice kept talking further on, Bhagavan sent the gate-boy in to bring "Guru Devar Arutpamalai" and then gave it to the Justice. The Justice opened and saw inside. Then he exclaimed :

- **Justice** : Oh, Avinashilingam Chettiar! Mahalingam!

- **Bhagavan** : Eh... eh! Do you know them?

- **Justice** : Yes, I know them very well. Avinashilingam Chettiar is a great man. He has done a lot for people.

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling*) : Eh! Can you call him selfish?

- **Justice** : No.

- **Bhagavan** : So, there are a few good people in this world!

- **Justice** : Very few people like him, Swamiji, very few.

- **Bhagavan** : Very few, yes. But there are.

- **Justice** : Swamiji, we have no One Guru, One God, One Book, One set of principles. So many gods! So many Gurus! So many idols! Swamiji, what about idol worship?

- **Bhagavan** : Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi used to go around the hill. He liked people to go round the hill. The hill is considered as Lord Shiva Himself. You can say this is idol worship if you like. This is Murti Puja. People need something, some form to worship. If you want to worship God in a male form, do so. If you want to worship Him as a female, you do that too... Freedom, my friend. It's freedom. Or if you want to worship God in the form of a Hill-Arunachala ... or a tree ... or water ... you do that ! Can't you see, it's freedom?

God is everywhere. There is no place where He is not. Father is omnipresent. He is everywhere in everything. There is no place where He is not ! So if you want to worship Him as a Male or a Female or a Hill or a River, do so, It is Freedom. Or if you want to worship Him as formless, do it. It's Freedom!

Bhagavan spoke the word, "Freedom", so beautifully, so effectively. Any other personage might have been tempted to give a lecture on Hinduism! In one simple word, one simple familiar example of Arunachala Hill, He had said all that could be said on Hinduism. Justice accepted the truth of Bhagavan's simple talk quietly, unable to say anything else. Thereafter he became quiet.

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While all these conversation were going on, another amusing but significant scene unfolded. A child of Justice's family sat with its legs stretched towards Bhagavan. Whenever someone noticed, they would make the child fold the legs - but soon, the child would stretch once again. Again some elder of the family would correct the posture of the child. But every time somebody pointed out the stretched legs of the child, Bhagavan would call the child near and with great love would stroke the child's legs and then put His hands to His eyes! Finally, Bhagavan gave the Justice and his family prasada and left them. A bank officer, well known to Bhagavan for a long time, was seated behind in a corner of lower veranda. Bhagavan called him to His side and spoke.

- **Bhagavan** : G. you have taken leave and come. These friends - Justice and family - were here, this beggar could not see G. nicely. Can you come in the afternoon?

- **G.** : Yes, Swamiji.

- **Bhagavan** : What is the time?

- **Attendant** : 12:20

Bhagavan looked at the devotee who corrected the time previously, with a mischievous smile.

- **Bhagavan (to me)** : Did you hear the talk ?

- **Myself** : Yes, Bhagavan. Every word! Thank you Bhagavan.

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- **Bhagavan** (*teasingly, to the attendant*) : We will send her first and everyone after that!

(*Laughter*)

With an irresistible charm and a twinkle in His eyes, He dropped an apple into my hands and burst into laughter, a laughter that stayed with me all through the day and after, indelibly etched in the heart forever.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHATTARAI

What is culture

June 21st, 1992 - Afternoon

His explosive laughter still ringing in my ears, enveloping me cosily in all its bewitching sweetness, there i was, in so short time, walking towards His residence in Sannidhi street helplessly, like a possessed one! It was only three hours since He left me with His mischievous comment. "We will send her first and everyone after that!" Did He already know, i would be turning up so soon like the proverbial bad penny for more of His Divine charm and laughter? The thought made me convulse in an unconscious mirth, much to the surprise of some curious passers-by. That, in turn, contained my jubilation and by a strange twist, an uncomfortable doubt began to nag me as to if He would permit me in, at all, for the immediate session again... Braving it up, i staggered on further and reached the Theradi Mandap. The time was exactly 4 p.m. and the day was the same Sunday 21st June 1992.

One Sastriji whom i had seen quite a few times before, was already seated inside. As i sat gratefully after prostration, one man entered with a boy of 10 years and was asked to sit near Sastriji. Looking at the boy in that unique sharp way of His, He lighted a cigarette.

- **Bhagavan** (to *Sastriji*) : Did you go to Kancheepuram?

- **Sastriji** (in tamil) : Could not go. Ramu Sastri has gone and come back.

- **Sastriji** (in tamil) : This boy ...

Then Sastriji gestured to the father of the boy to speak.

- **Man** (in tamil) : This boy of mine doesn't take any fruits, Swamiji. He doesn't like rice also. However much we compel him, he wouldn't give in.

Bhagavan looked at the boy sharply once again. A few minutes later, He took a plantain, peeled it Himself and asked the boy to take it from His hand. There was a strange expression on the boy's face. Staring at the fruit in Bhagavan's hand, his expression changed to one of fear and then something else, i could not exactly describe. Then he shook his head vigorously and said (tamil), "no". outright. He refused even to touch the fruit.

- **Bhagavan** (to the father) : Don't compel him.

Then Bhagavan called the gate boy and gave the fruit to him to eat.

- **Father** : Iddlies, Dosa ...

- **Bhagavan** (*in Tamil*) : Give that then. (*in English*)
Whatever he likes, give that to eat.

Bhagavan kept smoking thereafter and with a raised hand, blessed the boy for quite sometime. Just before leaving them, Bhagavan gave another plantain, this time without peeling it. The boy hesitated, then looked at his father as if for support to say "no!"

- **Father** (*in Tamil*) : Accept it. Take it from the Great one's hand.

Then the boy took it from Bhagavan's hand. But in the next instant, he dropped it into the hands of his father! Bhagavan smiled and left them with His blessings. Outside, there were two doctor devotees, a doctorate professor, well-known devotee of Bhagavan, and another doctorate professor with his family. At Bhagavan's nod, they all entered and for want of seats, some of us had to go and sit behind. Bhagavan took one "*Kalaimagal*" magazine in hand and opened on a page where there was an article (title in Tamil) by Dr. K. Venkata Subramanian. He gave the book to the devotee professor and gestured to him to read out.

- **Bhagavan** : What is the meaning of this title?

- **Devotee Professor** : "Showing the right path" or, more literally "giving the right code of conduct".

The Professor started reading out the article which all the others listened to with rapt attention. The word

(Tamil) had been translated into "discipline" in the article and it spoke about the general deterioration of discipline among the modern students. This discussion was followed by the author's narration of his visit to Bhagavan Yogi Ramsuratkumar and how, in the end, before leaving, Bhagavan patted him on the back, saying: "Love thy neighbour."

Bhagavan kept smoking quietly throughout the reading and then nodded to us. We began to sing His name.

- **Bhagavan** (to the devotee professor, pointing to the new visitor) : Who is this friend ?

- **Devotee professor** (after mentioning his name) : He is running a private college in a nearby place, Swamiji. He belongs to the department of Philosophy.

- **Bhagavan** (still smoking, with His sharp eyes focusing on the professor of Philosophy) : What was your thesis in Philosophy ?

- **Philosophy Professor** : No Swamiji. That was not in Philosophy, but in business management. I received it from the University of Australia.

- **Bhagavan** : Do you know Sanskrit?

- **Philosophy Professor** (hesitantly) : A little, Swamiji.

- **Bhagavan** : What are the subjects you teach in the College?

- **Philosophy Professor** : We offer courses in Economics, Commerce, etc., like any other College, but all, through correspondence course only. I taught philosophy previously, in another college, Swamiji. Now, here, we have Fine Arts, Indian culture, etc.

- **Bhagavan** : Do you think, Sanskrit is necessary to study Indian culture?

- **Philosophy Professor** : Yes, Swamiji. Very much so.

- **Bhagavan** (*smilingly sweetly with a nod of approval*) : What do you think "Culture" is?

- **Philosophy Professor** (*grinning*) : Swami knows. What can I say!

- **Bhagavan** (*to the devotee Professor*) : You see, this friend thinks, this beggar knows everything!

(*A burst of laughter*)

- **Philosophy Professor** : Yes, Swamiji. If I talk anything about Indian culture in front of you, it will be like carrying coal to Newcastle!

(Laughter)

- **Bhagavan** (*to the devotee Professor*) : S., this beggar does not have any material to talk. He doesn't know anything! That is why, when friends like you people come, this beggar wants them to talk. You see, this beggar likes to hear them talk. (*To the philosophy professor*) It will not be carrying coal to Newcastle. Please, tell me, what 'Culture' is.

There was an instant of silence. Bhagavan's penetrating eyes slid swiftly over everyone seated there before resting on the Philosophy Professor once again.

- **Philosophy Professor** : Like Swamiji said to Dr. Venkatasubramanian in that article, "*Love thy neighbour*", a man who does that certainly be a man of culture!

- **Bhagavan** (*seemingly unimpressed*) : Oho!

There was once again silence. Some of us were looking at Bhagavan eagerly for some revealing expression of approval or otherwise of this definition of Indian culture. But Bhagavan's countenance was inscrutable. He put out the cigarette and raised both hands in a gesture of benediction and blessed professor of Philosophy for a few minutes (though it seemed like a long time then. That, i lost all sense of time whenever i sat in His presence has always been a wonder to me!) Then Bhagavan turned towards the two doctor devotees of Madurai who had come with them.

- **One Doctor** : Swami, Government has offered 12 acres of land to build a hospital for heart patients. It needs crores of money. The project has come to my hands.

- **Bhagavan** (*lighting a cigarette*) : It should be very costly.

- **Doctor** : Yes, Swami. Huge machines have to come from other countries. There is no such Hospital in our place so far.

The devotee professor then said that the doctor wanted to name the hospital "Yogi Ramsuratkumar Hospital".

- **Bhagavan** (*quickly with folded hands*) : Not necessary! (*A pause*). You can give the local deity's name to the Hospital.

- **Doctor** (*humbly*) : Yes, Swamiji. We need your blessings.

- **Bhagavan** : Father's Grace.

Then Bhagavan opened the tiffin-box placed by His side by the wife of the Philosophy Professor and took out one sweet chappati. He put it in His coconut shell and began to eat very much like the Divine child of Brindavan which He really is! Just sitting and watching Him eat did something to my heart strings and i felt a lump in my throat and tears filled my eyes. When He

finished, He kept the shell down, wiped His hand on His upper cloth and blessed all of them nicely.

Just when He left all of them, Bhagavan turned to the Philosophy Professor and said:

- **Bhagavan** : My friend, the one who remembers God is a man of culture. The one who does not remember God, whatever else he is, is not a man of culture.

This unexpected reply of Bhagavan with the compelling intensity of His countenance and the brilliant blaze of His eyes had a dramatic effect on everyone there. As His charged words sank into the depths of our hearts straight, the atmosphere felt electrified. With that beautiful, well-timed benedictory words of Bhagavan, the professors (devotees or otherwise), left all overwhelmed. It was not just a reply to a question but a communication of divine grace. It held the power of the Truth in which He constantly lived.

The time was nearly 6 p.m. then. Bhagavan called out the bank officer who had been seated far behind in a corner of the lower veranda all along.

- **Bhagavan** (*to me*) : It's very difficult to get leave for this friend. (*Addressing the bank officer by name*) : You have taken leave only today?

- **Bank officer** : Yes, Swamiji.

- **Bhagavan** (*to me*) : He came in the morning itself. So this beggar asked him to come in the afternoon. But then, those people came!

- **Bank officer** : If Swamiji wants, I can take leave again next week and come here.

- **Bhagavan** (*with great love*) : No, no, my friend. Not necessary. You stay there and do your duty. Each one must do their duty first. (*To me*) This friend writes this beggar's name 12 times daily. He has been doing it for many years!

- **Bank officer** : From 1974, Swamiji. I first came to know Swamiji in 1968. I started writing His name in 1974.

- **Bhagavan** (*blessing him with both hands raised*) : This friend is very kind to this beggar.

(Laughter)

- **A devotee** (*humbly*) : Only you are being kind to all of us Swamiji. And by writing or chanting Your Divine Nama, we are only being kind to ourselves.

Bhagavan went into peals of laughter.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar will now leave this friend and all the others.

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As i came out with prasad, His words : "The one who remembers God is a man of culture" kept reverberating forcefully in my heart, flooding my entire being with an intense prayer for that rare blessing that would keep me forever in His culture.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

The ash-tray story

August 22nd, 1992

It was 22nd August 1992. I had taken an ash-tray which had the world map embedded on the surface. It seemed symbolic of Bhagavan's cosmic work and I felt a prompting to buy and submit at Bhagavan's feet. When I entered Bhagavan's residence at 10 a.m., I offered it with a sure hope that it would get His approval and even presumed to explain why I bought it.

- **Bhagavan**: Oh! (*To the attendant*:) See, JR, these people have got a new ash-tray. Is there world map on it?

I was puzzled because the world map was so conspicuous, no one could miss it! Anyway, more was to come.

- **Bhagavan** (*again to JR*): Is there Sri Lanka in it?

The attendant scrutinised the ash-tray and gave it back saying 'No Swamiji.'

- **J.R.**: But there is the sun shining on the world, Swamiji.

He showed it to Bhagavan.

- **Myself**: The sun is Bhagavan. It is all very symbolic. I hope it is also convenient...

- **Bhagavan** (*with a quick glance at me*) : We shall see.

There seemed a wealth of meaning in what He said. Just then, R.U. entered with some people and there were let in. We began to chant.

- **Bhagavan** (*lighting a cigarette, to R.U. and others*): See, this beggar has got a new ash-tray with world map on it!

- **Myself**: And the symbolic sun shining on it.

- **R.U.** (*promptly*): Swamiji belongs to the world. That is why.

Everyone laughed spontaneously; I thought it was a great reply and felt happy. An old man came and prostrated before Bhagavan. Then he went and stood near the grill door. The gate-boy asked him to leave but he said,

- **Old man** : Wait, Thambi, I have come from far off place. Just to see him. I want to see him for a little while.

- **Bhagavan** (*to the gate-boy*): Leave him. He has come to "see" this beggar. Let him see.

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When the old man left after sometime, there was a small commotion outside. One man from outside spoke so loudly,

- **Man** : I too have come from a far off place - Himachala Pradesh. I have only a little time to spend here. Let me in.

- **Bhagavan** (*with a derisive smile*): Oh, he has only little time to spend here. (*In Tamil:*) Alright, I shall see him 'a little'.

That Himachala Pradesh devotee came inside and prostrated apparently with great devotion and left immediately.

- **Bhagavan**: They all come to Ramanashram. Somebody tells them about this beggar. Somebody misguides them!... Then they find a little time to spare for this beggar!

Just then one husband, wife and child came in. The wife kept a folded paper at His Feet.

- **Bhagavan**: What is it JR?

JR found a ten rupee note inside...

- **Wife**: This child of mine was very sick, Swamiji. Then I prayed before your photo and kept this 10 Rs. as offering. She became alright.

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Bhagavan nodded His head in acceptance and left them immediately. Another family of husband and wife and child entered and Bhagavan smile familiarly and pointed out their seats.

- **Bhagavan** (*calling the husband by name*): R, what are you doing now?

- **R** : I am in Tata groups, Madras, Swamiji.

- **Bhagavan**: Where do you live?

- **R** : In my father-in-law's house.

- **Bhagavan**: Father in law's house! (*Now looking at his wife with a smile*) Then, she must be ruling you!

Everyone laughed. The wife nodded in the negative with a shy smile.

- **R** (*laughing*): No Swamiji. Actually, in reality...

- **Bhagavan** (*not allowing him to even complete the sentence*): What is Reality?

(*A pause*)

- **Myself** (*whispering softly so that no one could hear*): You must be the only reality to me Bhagavan. Pray, there should be no other reality.

- **R** : Swamiji, You are the Reality.

- **Bhagavan**: Oh! Are you reading J. Krishnamurti?

- **R** : Yes. I go to Vasantha Vihar, take books and read. Swamiji, in Indian Express, I saw a small write-up on a book about J.K. by Radha Sloss. There was one Rajagopal who stayed with J.K. and accompanied him everywhere. His daughter has written a book which gives such a damaging picture of J.K. and his involvement with women. That book is in Ramanashram Library.

- **Bhagavan**: This beggar read that book once and forgot it. Now you have reminded.

- **R** : I went to Vasantha Vihar and asked about this terrible book. They said, "J.K. was such a powerful personality, if he were alive today, people would not dare write such books." He also showed me a video on J.K. It was so wonderful, so powerful, that I did not bother to read this negative book.

- **Bhagavan**: If people should remember J.K. only this way, let them remember him at least this way. There are many versions of Ramayana. Some people like Ravana's version of Ramayana! Somehow they should remember the Lord. You know how Kamsa and Hiranyakashipu remembered Sri Krishna!

By then quite a crowd had collected outside. Bhagavan gave the glowing cigarette from His hand to Subhash Shinde from Dharwar who was seated close to Him and began to attend to them one by one. The mind

being what it is, began to meander. Even as the thought came that Shubash Shinde must be someone special, I started to wonder and worry that perhaps, there was no provision to keep the glowing cigarette in the new ashtray! Perhaps, I should have tried for a better one...! Before I knew I had voiced out my doubt even to my own dismay! Once we submit something at His feet, it becomes His completely. Moreover, whatever Bhagavan does has its own purpose. No gesture of His is ever casual. It is not for us to worry about it, far less, worry Him about it.

- **Bhagavan** (*cutting through my words*): Oh, I see, there's provision for the cigarette. This beggar could not see, could not understand it. (Turning to me) Thank you.

God, oh God, what impertinence on my part! Bhagavan's reply and tone shook me to the core and I felt shattered. Soon a well-known family from Tuticorin came in and sat opposite to Bhagavan. From then on, Bhagavan began to keep those half-smoked cigarettes in the groove in the ashtray so noticeably that I felt wretched and miserable. However, Bhagavan gestured to us to sing the *Nama*.

- **Bhagavan** (*to me*): This is Shinde. He always does Rama Japa. S.R. told me Shinde used to send Ram Nam count before but not now.

- **Shinde**: I am not able to use the japa mala while working etc. But I keep doing, Swamiji.

- **Bhagavan** (*smoking*): My Father alone exists. There is nothing else, no one else. Here, there, everywhere! Who is it who said - it is Vivekananda or Ram Tirth ? - They say, God is nowhere. But it is really NOW and HERE.

(*Now everybody laughed*).

- **Myself**: Bhagavan, we can understand Now and Here because you are there sitting right in front of us. But not anywhere and everywhere. I mean, we don't feel this way anywhere and everywhere.

- **Bhagavan**: What is there to understand? Great scriptures say that God is everywhere. Great people like Ramdas, Sri Ramakrishna have said so. It is faith. Have faith in their words.

I began to cry as secretly as possible.

- **Bhagavan**: When Sri Aurobindo was involved in a case and thrown into a jail in Alipur, he saw Sri Krishna everywhere. He called God Vasudeva Krishna. Whatever you call God, it is all One. Swami Ramdas called Him Ram. This beggar calls Him Father. When Uddava came to advise Gopis of Vrindavan, they said, "We don't know all that. We know only our Krishna of Vrindavan. We don't want anything else." But in Bhagavata, it is also said that the Gopis thought of Krishna so much that they began to see Krishna everywhere! When they went out to sell curds, they called out Krishna, Govinda, Gopala instead of curds!

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I understood what He meant. But still I could not contain my tears.

- **Bhagavan** : Mirabai also felt the separation so much, so much that she began to see Krishna everywhere. Once a disciple came and asked Sri Ramakrishna how to see God. Ramakrishna took him to the Ganges and when the disciple was taking a dip, Ramakrishna pressed his head down again and again under water and finally released him. Ramakrishna asked the disciple, "When i pressed you like that, what did you feel?" The disciple said, "Oh God, I was thirsting for breath and was dying for it." Ramakrishna said, "When you thirst and hunger for God like that, you will see Him."

(A pause).

Suddenly Bhagavan laughed so loudly as if He had just heard an outrageous joke!

- **Bhagavan**: There is only God everywhere! Only God! It is so simple a truth! There is nothing to understand. It is all Faith. Have Faith.

Oh God, He says it's so simple! To be able to see God in Rama is easy. But how to see Him in the evil Ravana...! I suddenly remembered the Vedic lines "Salutation to the robber chieftain! Salutation to the cruel and the violent. The robbers, the cruel, the swindlers all are Brahman. Salutation to them all."

One lady came from Cutch. She spoke Hindi, prostrated and left.

- **Bhagavan**: Cutch is so far away⁸. In Cutch, this beggar visited two places, Biju and Anjar⁹. (*Still attending to people, His eyes darted back and forth over all of us every now and then*).

- **Bhagavan** (*suddenly*): No one is separate. No one is isolated. God is indivisibly everywhere.

- **A devotee**: We understand God is everywhere. Still we are not able to relate to Him personally in this way.

- **Bhagavan**: Relate to Him! (*Laughing loudly*) All are related. We are all related to God and related to each other. We are all in God. God is in all. There is perfect unity. It is all One existence, whole, indivisible, Total, perfect unity.

Then He turned to me and gestured to me to come and take the prasad from Him. As I went near, He suddenly said,

- **Bhagavan** : Wait a minute.

⁸ *Kaachch or Kutch is situated in the North-Wet of India. It is the northern part of Gujarat and it touches to Pakistan now, since the Partition. Dwaraka, Krishna's capital, is not so far. (NdT)*

⁹ *Dwaraka is on one side of the gulf, Anjar on the other side. (NdT)*

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and then asked the attendant to wash the ash tray. Then He dropped it into my hands saying,

- ***Bhagavan*** : When this beggar needs this, he will ask you. You keep it with you now.

and smiled sweetly. Feeling terrible about having overdone the ash-tray bit, I staggered my way back to my house. The bag felt heavy with the returned offering and my heart too...

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAKTIN

Faith in the Master's words

(10th September, 1992)

On 10th September 1992, I started for Sannadhi street house of Bhagavan from Sudama, Ramana Nagar, and reached around 9:45 AM. I had taken two tender coconuts with me. Bhagavan, to everybody's delight, was in pure white, dazzling and beautiful. He looked every bit the God that He really is. His Divine Darshan put a song in every heart and a smile on every face! My heart began to sing too...

The gate boy left for his class at 10 o'clock. Jay took over. There was a steady stream of visitors. Jay had to go to the gate several times to check the crowd. We kept singing the Nama. One man entered. Bhagavan held out a banana as prasad. But the man held out a 10 rupee note. Immediately, Bhagavan dropped the banana on the floor. The man too kept his rupee note down! Bhagavan turned his face away and we could not observe the expression on His face. But soon, His voice rang out:

- **Bhagavan**: Jay, take these two (the banana and the Rs 10 note) and give it to anybody. Ask him to go.”

The man left without any expression!

One by one, people kept coming in. Bhagavan suddenly began to smile and said:

- **Bhagavan**: Jay, this beggar wanted to give him a banana. But when this beggar gave that, he gave the money! This beggar could not take it. He could not take the banana!

(He laughed. But it sounded regretful...)

- **Bhagavan**: This beggar did not know what to do, then this beggar thought, let Jay give it to anybody outside. Jay, it is not merely giving a banana to anybody. There is some communication. (*Turning to me*) Communication could not take place. It was not possible. It is a question of giving and taking. (*A pause*) He could not take the banana. This beggar could not take the money! What do do! This beggar thought, “it is all right if Jay gives it to someone also, it happened like this.

(It still sounded a little upset to me).

One character, an old man entered. He came and stood before Bhagavan without prostrating and left towards the gate immediately! Today I did not count the visitors. We kept singing. But AB, who was sitting next to me sang the first two lines differently – striking a discordant note

now and then. She also kept reacting sharply to everyone who entered. I tried to contain her.

One blind girl came. Jay looked at me pointedly, so I sprang up to my feet and helped her come in and prostrate before Bhagavan. Though I did not specifically ask Bhagavan if I should help the girl, I felt I had His permission to lead her in and out. A few minutes passed. All of a sudden Jay got up and went out quickly and kept his bicycle in the shade.

- *Bhagavan* (to me): Why is he going? What is he doing?

I mumbled to myself, 'why couldn't he tell Bhagavan and go? Probably, he did not want to trouble Bhagavan with petty things.' Sometimes, the mirror in the bikes reflects so much sunlight, it affects His vision. Perhaps that was why Jay left in a hurry to do that.

Yet, by an unspoken rule, everybody referred everything to Bhagavan, first however small it was.

People kept coming one after the other. T.R.S. came to say that eight people from Hong Kong were coming with Ramanashram Sri Ganeshan for His Darshan. Bhagavan gave him a banana and an apple for Sri G. He asked them to come by 4. Nearing 12 noon, He lay down and asked Jay to tell the story of "Asaikadal." (A serial story which centred around Bhagavan, written by a popular writer in a local magazine.) He did rather well. Bhagavan responded with, "um... umm... ummm." Then he made

me repeat the whole story once again and left me at 12:30 pm.

AFTERNOON, THURSDAY 10.09.1992

Jay's wife came home, so we went together to Sannidhi street and stood outside. Bhagavan was sleeping. Probably he 'fell' asleep... how hard He worked the way He had been seeing crowds those days!

Shri Ganesa came with eight people as they had taken permission in the morning. But I had no heart to disturb Bhagavan on any account, though the gate-boy was already attempting to... Bhagavan woke up and called me in, first.

- **Bhagavan**: Call Ganesha.

The group entered. Bhagavan sat on the step near the wooden door. Sri Ganesa began to fan Him. *Tattvaloka* editor sang the Nama so cheerfully. He kept urging others also to join in. People began to come in one by one. Some of them kept 2 Rupee notes, 1 Rupee notes etc as offering at the Feet of Bhagavan. Three more people got seated in that small verandah. It was now full. JP came and stood outside.

- **Bhagavan**: There is no space here. You can go.

Bhagavan eyed the rupee notes. Then (*turning to me*):

- *Bhagavan*: “You are singing very well (*laughter*).

He now dropped one 2 Rupee note into my hands! He carefully gathered the rest of the money and counted. All of us were watching with obvious curiosity. Then He collected all the notes and gave them to the Hong Kong lady. All of us laughed with Him. Now everyone was singing with gusto. One hour passed. One man from outside told the gate-boy (rather pointedly) in Tamil, “Ask all those people inside to come out. We people should go in.”

- *Bhagavan* (*looking at Shri G.*): You go and stand at the gate. Let S. (*gate-boy*) come here and fan.

Somehow, that shut the man’s mouth effectively. Then people were let in again one by one. One man had a packet of some thing in his hand. He kept it by the side of Bhagavan’s Feet and prostrated. But it happened that his hand was half over the packet during prostration.

- *Bhagavan* (*with a strange expression*): Please take it.

- *Man* : You give it to me, Swamji.

- *Bhagavan*: No, this beggar cannot take it.

(Bhagavan said it so forcefully that the man took it away without arguing further).

One and half hours passed while Bhagavan was blessing people quietly and we were singing in high spirits. When

the last of the crowd left, Bhagavan asked Sri Ganeshan to close the gate and return to his seat.

- **Bhagavan**: Ganesha, tell everyone here something on Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi.

Sri Ganeshan folded his hands and began with, “*Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya,*” three times.

- **Ganeshan**: When somebody came and asked Bhagavan Ramana, ‘Your teachings are like that of Adi Shankara. You are only teaching what Adi Shankara taught. They are similar.’ Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi replied, “I speak from my experience. You say that they are like Adi Shankara’s. It may be inferred that experience has got to be the same.

“When I came to our Swamiji here and asked about self-realisation, Swamiji replied, “This beggar does not know anything about self-realisation, God-realisation etc. This beggar has only faith! Faith in the Master’s word, faith in the Scriptures, faith in the Truth. Ganesha, Bhagavan has said that God is inside you. If you cannot see God in yourself, you can never find Him outside! Ganesha, this beggar has this faith that God, this Truth is within us. This beggar is established in this. When friends ask this beggar, ‘how can you be established in this?’ this beggar simply says he has this Faith.”

(All of us were listening with rapt attention. Yogi Ramsuratkumar always spoke from the point of view of the questioner. I had seen several times on different

occasions, Yogi Ji taking the view of the questioner upon Himself, and making a reply in the first person. The above reply is a typical example. It is Yogi Ji's way of pointing out that the questioner must have faith in his Master's words and believe that he is himself God. The questioner must become established in this faith, if he can't take up any arduous sadhana).

Shri Ganesha continued...

- **Ganeshan:** Once I came and told Swamiji, 'Fate is very strong, Swamiji. Things happen according to fate.' Swamiji immediately said, 'Where there is faith, there is no fate.' This faith is important. When we come to the Mahatmas – people should be blessed for that. Otherwise, they cannot come to the Mahatmas. They help us to establish ourselves in Truth. Their only activity is to help people. Swamiji has helped me to get established in that faith. It is by His encouragement, I have made those foreign trips and spoken on Bhagavan Ramana and His teaching. God is both inside and outside. Once, people asked Bhagavan Ramana, 'You are self-realised. Shri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, are they self-realised?' Bhagavan Ramana replied, 'There are no Jnanis. There is only Jnana.' Truth is ONE. Its expressions are varied. Only to you there are different Mahatmas... that this is Gandhi, this is Shri Aurobindo. Truth has infinite expressions. The same Truth is expressed in different words, in different languages, in different ways by different Mahatmas.' God is both inside and outside.

(Suddenly Sri Ganesha stopped and looked at Bhagavan. With folded hands, he humbly said:)

- **Ganeshan**: Swamiji, I feel ashamed to speak in your presence.

- **Bhagavan**: No, Ganesha, there is no need to feel ashamed. You are speaking very well. Please, continue.

Sri Ganesha began to say:

- **Ganeshan**: God is both inside and outside. God has already graced those people who come to Mahatmas. We must keep that faith and try to see the Truth both inside and outside. The Mahatmas will be able to give us this Truth in a form that we can take – we can receive and benefit. This is how they establish us in the Truth. Swami Ji, it is over.

(Bhagavan throughout the talk kept smiling and was blessing Sri Ganesha.)

- **Bhagavan**: Thank you, Ganesha. You have spoken well. Hereafter, your speech will differ.

- **Ganeshan**: Thank you Swamiji.

(Then Bhagavan peeled one banana and gave the fruit to Shri Ganesan. He then asked the gate-boy to bring some more and began to peel them one by one and give one to each there. One Japanese lady came out of turn and when she went near Bhagavan He kept quiet. Obviously she

felt bad and she came back to her seat. Then Bhagavan specifically called her, when her turn came and gave her a peeled banana! We began to sing. One mami had brought chocolates and cakes in a box and she reminded Bhagavan about it. Bhagavan acknowledged but kept quiet. After sometime, he asked her to distribute it to everyone around. When this was going on, I remembered suddenly that V and R. would be making chocolate cake at home, just at that time, for, I had asked them to bring some! How strange, even before they reached here Bhagavan was already distributing it to me! Was that an indication that he was aware of it? What was more, Bhagavan even asked that mami how the chocolate cake was made!!

Then Bhagavan said:

- **Bhagavan**: Ganesha, this beggar leaves you all now.

When the Editor prostrated, he said:

- **Editor**: Please, Swamiji, you must bless me that I get self-realisation.

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling sweetly*): This beggar does not know anything about self-realisation. There is no need to know – no need for self-realisation (*laughter*), but this beggar has faith in the Scriptures, in the words of the wise people that God is everywhere. He is indivisible – whole – omnipresent – God alone is. (*His eyes turned red and face flushed*). My Father is everywhere. There is no

place where He is not. (*Emphatically*) There is only One existence, that of Father, nothing else, no one else.

- **Editor**: Please, Swamiji, you must bless me that I should be able to see Father everywhere in this birth itself.

- **Bhagavan**: Oh! (*laughing and gesturing with one hand*) Have FAITH, remember God – have faith that Father is everywhere. MY FATHER'S BLESSINGS.

(Bhagavan smiled and gave him Prasad and left the whole group. Then he called all of us who had taken seat, to come and sit opposite. He sent the Japanese first, next myself and then Mrs B. Just before I left, He remembered the tender coconuts I had taken for Him and promptly drank from them! This kind gesture of His touched me so much, and I felt tears filling my eyes.)

Happiness, the goal of life

(12th September, 1992)

It was the 12th September 1992. When we reached Bhagavan's Sannidhi street House, it was well past 10 a.m. I was thinking all along that the small veranda of His house would be full already, and that I might have to sit behind, which meant that I would not be able to hear the conversations Bhagavan might get into, with the visitors.

To my utter surprise, that day, there was nobody except a Finnish lady. She was seated in my usual place! So I got even a better seat with a better view! I settled cosily in my seat with a smug smile and began to sing His Name. Suddenly Bhagavan left the Finnish lady with a fruit and gestured to me! Thus I was soon 'put' in (my usual) place! People started to gather and soon there was "one by one" darshan for sometime. When there was a respite, I spoke.

- *D.* : Bhagavan, I rang upto Viji. She is so busy. She will be able to come here only if Bhagavan blesses!

- **Bhagavan** : Oh! She will come tomorrow. My Father's blessings.

(The newly built Sudama House was nearing its completion. So the talk of Grahapravesam was already up. In the beginning, Bhagavan said, "*You people can do it on 2nd October.*" But the contractor retreated saying that he needed one full month more for completion and the local Shastris objected to the date since that fell in Purattasi Tamil month which would not be favourable for such occasions. So we, the Sudama sisters, decided to go ahead with 2nd October Grahapravesam and make it a simple, quiet and informal affair with Bhagavan's Nama chanting, of course, all the time hoping and hoping that Bhagavan would grace the function. As I was thus absorbed in my own thoughts, I suddenly heard Bhagavan's voice clear and loud.)

- **Bhagavan** : Devki, do like what people usually do. Consult Shastris. But they may not fix 2nd October as auspicious. Don't mind what this beggar says in his madness. This beggar said it in order to celebrate Gandhi Jayanti. You don't bother.

I was stuck dumb. I no more knew what to think and what to say! Bhagavan became quiet and we began to sing again. On by one, people started coming. Bhagavan kept smiling now and then all to Himself as He was enjoying a personal joke. I had not the courage to find out... Just then one Mrs RK. From far south came with her son Mr. S. and two of her usual friends. Bhagavan looked curiously at Mr. S. and smiled. The boy

did not prostrate at Bhagavan while all the others did! Bhagavan seated them in the opposite line.

- **Bhagavan** (*turning to me with a smile*) : Devki, you were there, when his brother came to see this beggar that day?

- **D.** : Yes, Bhagavan. He spoke about Ayn Rand (author of some novels).

- **Bhagavan** : Eh... eh!

Bhagavan looked at the boy again and smiled.

- **Mr. S.** : I have something to ask you. (*At Bhagavan's nod*) What is the goal of life?

- **Bhagavan** (*lighting a cigarette*) Happiness. Everybody wants happiness. People try to get it the way they want it. They work hard to get it.

Then Bhagavan leaned forward with the cigarette in hand and asked...

- **Bhagavan** : What do you think is the goal of life?

- **Mr. S.** : To understand things.

- **Bhagavan** : What? This beggar does not understand what you mean. Can you explain? Can you make it clear to this beggar?

- **Mr. S.** (*smiling somewhat awkwardly*) : Actually, I have two questions to ask you... Swamiji.

- **Bhagavan** (*smoking*) : We shall finish the first. Then other things.

- **Mr. S.** : To understand things means to understand what is life, what is God, etc.

Bhagavan, who had been smiling to Himself off and on all along, now became completely serious. He looked at Mr. S deeply and became to bless him quietly.

After some time.

- **Bhagavan** (*looking at Mrs. RK.*) You came here only recently! (*To me*) She has come so soon now because (*smiling*) she has succeeded in bringing her son here! (*Laughter*) (*To her in Tamil*) When did you come last?

- **Mrs. RK** : Two months back, Samy.

- **Bhagavan** : So, she succeeded at last in persuading her son to come and see this beggar!

Laughter.

- **Mr. S.** : P.S. Mama (uncle) told me that you are free from all bonds.

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling*) : What bonds? You see this beggar smoking. (*Showing the cigarette packet and then the*

devotees seated all around) You see these people singing this beggars' name. All these are bondage only!

I mumbled to myself "Thank you Bhagavan, for calling us your bondage! We may be bondage to you. But you are our much hoped for, much longed for FREEDOM." When I looked up, I caught Bhagavan's sharp eyes just for a fraction of second on me!

- **Mr. S** : I mean human bonds. I came here to see, to understand what you are. When I came with my father, I didn't understand. I used to ask this uncle why father was coming here. He told me two incidents.

Bhagavan did not ask for those incidents, though we were eager and hoping the boy would narrate them.

- **Bhagavan** (*turning to me*) : That day, when his brother came, he said, "My father was leading a happy life. Everything was ok. The only mistake he committed was coming to you." He also said, "After he passed away, it did not matter to me whether I came to you or not. Mother wanted me to come. So I came." Now RK. Has succeeded in bringing S also here, Father's Grace!

- **D.** : Is S also fond of Ayn Rand?

- **Bhagavan** : Eh... he follows his brother. He also likes all that his brother likes. (Smile)

- **Mr S.** : Ayn Rand says that selfishness is a virtue.

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- **Bhagavan** : Eh... eh... selfishness is a virtue (*explosive laughter*). RK told me, her sons likes inventions. He likes to create things, discover things. (*Laughter*) You see, out of curiosity, he has come to see this beggar! He wants to understand this beggar, this DIRTY SINNER! (*laughter*). (*Looking at Mr. S. mischeviously*) For S. there is no authority... (*laughter*).

- **Bhagavan** (*now in all seriousness*) : S is sitting here and watching this beggar. If he is here four days, five days... 7 days, he will understand for himself. If he is PATIENT and SERIOUS, he will understand what this beggar is. He will see himself and understand. Vivekananda asked Ramakrishna, "Have you seen God?" Ramakrishna said, "Yes" and then he touched Vivekananda. Then Vivekananda was able to see God.

- **D. to herself** : Does that mean, if this boy stays here a few days, Bhagavan would give him the highest experience... make him another Vivekananda?

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar is no Ramakrishna. He cannot show S God. This beggar is not free from bonds. Du(?) (*uproarious laughter*).

- **Mr. S.** : On what standards do you live?

- **Bhagavan** : What?

Bhagavan drew on His cigarette deeply.

- **Mr. S** : Standards, I mean, on what principles do you live? What do you do for your happiness?

- **Bhagavan** : Happiness... ?! (*a burst of laughter*) This beggar has no standards. This beggar has no principles. But PS said, this beggar is free from all bondage!! Parama Swathanthiram! (*Bhagavan drew His head backwards and broke into another riotous laughter*).

- **Bhagavan** : In Shri Aurobindo's yoga, he says, "To be free is not the goal of life. To be free and to serve God, is the goal of life." J. Krishnamurti said, "Those who say there is God are superstitious! Those who say there is No God are also superstitious!" Because these people say so because someone, some authority has said so. They have not found themselves. They believe in what others say! But for S here (*teasingly*) NO AUTHORITY. He wants to find out himself. (*Seriously*) If he is PATIENT AND SERIOUS, HE CAN UNDERSAND SOMETHING OF THIS BEGGAR. If he has PERSEVERANCE AND PATIENCE, he can find out something about this beggar. This beggar repeats Kabir's Doha. (Bhagavan quoted two lines in Hindi).

(*To me*) That day when we were in Sudama Garden, someone brought Ram Tirtha's book. There was something on Gnana and Vignana. They read about Gnana, when they began to read Vignana, this beggar stopped it... Do you remember... You have forgotten.

- **Mr. S** : Vignana... Aurobindo says...

- **Bhagavan** (*cutting him*) : You don't bother about all that. Different people speak different languages... different words. They convey it from their OWN EXPERIENCES. Sometimes, if you try to understand, it may even mean the opposite! S, you don't bother about all that.

Dr. Rajagopal of Bangalore entered on Bhagavan's permission.

- **Bhagavan** (*to Dr. Rajagopal*) : You go inside. You would not have eaten anything from morning. (*To me*) What is the time?

- **D.** : 11.38 a.m.

Just then, the lady with the umbrella came inside. She folded her hands in Namaskar.

- **Bhagavan** (*to her, teasingly*) : Namaste! Namaste! Namaste!

That drew smiles from everybody.

At 11.54 a.m. when He left me with prasada, I thought to myself, "What a great fortune of an invitation for that boy and that from SOMEONE NO LESS THAN THE FIRE OF ARUNACHALA! How many more janmas will it take for people like me to get such an invitation?! and staggered my way back to Sudama.

Biksha from the Divine Bhikshu

(24th-25th October, 1992)

It was October 24th in 1992. I had come down to Tiruvannamalai with two other Sudama sisters for the week-end to have darshan of Bhagavan Yogi Ramsuratkumar.

When we reached Bhagavan's place around 10 a.m. one family was already in. Their car was parked opposite the house. The head of the family was walking up and down in the veranda as per Bhagavan's instruction.

- **Bhagavan** : How do you feel now ?

- **Man** : Ishvara, much better my Lord! I am able to walk!

- **Bhagavan** : Where do you have pain ?

Bhagavan touched him there.

- **Man** : I am not able to inhale my Lord.

Bhagavan touched him again and said:

- **Bhagavan** : Now, see.

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- **Man** : Thank you my Lord, now I am able to inhale. Thank you my Lord.

- **Bhagavan** (*pointing to his wife*) : Why is she wearing a collar?

- **Man** : When the accident took place, she should have died on the spot. But only by your grace, she escaped. She got hurt on the neck. She is not able to move her head – not able to speak well.

- **Bhagavan** : How long have you been in the hospital ?

- **Man** : 3 months.

- **Bhagavan** : How did the accident take place ?

By now, Bhagavan was smoking continuously.

- **Man** : I was night 11 o'clock. One lorry was parked on the road. Our car was overtaking. Probably the driver was feeling a little sleepy. From the opposite side, another lorry came and collided with ours. My chest was full of blood. Only my daughter was unhurt. I had a dog a big Alsatian – very attached to me. It used to come and sit on my lap and then take food. I lost it! When it came near me and scented my blood, my daughter was afraid it would bite me. She pushed it away. It fell into a ditch. We were all unconscious. My daughter cringed in fear, yet asked every car to stop. But nobody bothered. The, one lorry driver – he was God Himself – took the trouble to take us to the local hospital. We received first aid. My

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Lord, I'm so bad tempered, when they lifted me it pained like hell. I shouted, "You dog, what are you all doing to me?" My Lord I'm such a bad fellow. I went to the very hell my Lord! I was very much attached to my parents but I always shouted so they didn't understand me. When I parted from them I cried so much. I have a good heart but a very bad temper. My Lord must set it right.

- **Bhagavan** (*smoking so much*) : How much did you spend?

- **Man** : nearly 2.50 lakhs. I didn't mind the money. By my Lord's grace, we all escaped and are alive today.

- **Bhagavan** : Where did she get hurt? Remove the collar.

Bhagavan now touched her nape for some time and then worked on all of them in turn.

- **Bhagavan** : That daughter Anuradha – what went wrong with her?

- **Man** : Her spinal cord got affected. Even now there is some pain there.

- **Bhagavan** : Alright. (*Addressing Anuradha's sister*) : You put your hand where she feels the pain.

(Worked on her).

We began to sing. The man was so happy and overwhelmed. He began to sing too.

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- **Bhagavan**: By my Father's blessings, everything will be alright. Now this beggar is going to leave you all.

(Later I heard that the man was a Sessions Judge in a nearby place. Bhagavan left me too with Prasad.)

AFTERNOON

We three went again for 4 o'clock darshan. He nodded to us to be seated.

One Reddiar from Mekalur came. He was very sad.

- **Reddiyar** (*in Tamil*): Something has happened in our family. My daughter's daughter has been "blackmailed."

- **Bhagavan** (*in Tamil*): Let's sit a little while.

There was a big crowd outside. Bhagavan began to see them one by one. After a while, Bhagavan asked him to describe what really happened. The man explained.

- **Bhagavan** (*turning to me*): What's he saying – black mail?

- **Devaki** : Must be "kidnapping."

- **Bhagavan** : Oh!

The man kept looking at his watch.

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- **Bhagavan**: Please sit for sometime. Where are you going from here?

- **Man**: My son-in-law has gone to Mekalur to search for his daughter. I have to go to my work place.

- **Bhagavan** (*patiently*): Please sit for some time.

A telegram carrying Divali Greetings from one family. Bhagavan said: "My Father blesses the family." Generally, it is very rare for the devotees to send such greetings. They won't dare disturb Bhagavan like this... Reddiar became restless and took leave.

- **Bhagavan** : What a grief to the family! The man was in agony. So this beggar wanted him to sit for sometime here. But he was in a hurry! He came only to inform this beggar. My Father's blessings – they would be able to trace her. She will come back to the family... (a pause)... Once one village officer – a Thashildhar came here. His daughter was lost. She left for some relatives' house, without telling anybody. He came and told this beggar. This beggar prayed to Father. She came back to him. What a grief to the family! They are sure it's kidnapping....! But only father knows what it is!

One Gurukhal came and sat after prostrating.

- **Gurukhal** (*in Tamil*): Two years in Singapore, 1 year in Malaysia. I have not been able to do anything. Wherever I go, there is problem.

- **Bhagavan** (raising His hand and blessing): Everything will be alright.

- **Gurukhal** (in Tamil) : When I go to the house, there too problem. When I go to the village, again there also problem comes. I used to do the pujas well before... Now...

- **Bhagavan** : Do you know this beggar's Name?

Bhagavan looked at me and smiled. I took the hint and pronounced His Name.

- **Devaki** : Yogi Ramsuratkumar.

- **Gurukhal** : Oh !

He took it casually and began to fan Bhagavan. What a pity! He did not realise, Bhagavan was giving him life saving medicine in that Mantra!

- **Bhagavan** : You don't do that. Venkatarama, you give the fan, to that boy.

Bhagavan sent him with Prasad. After he left, Bhagavan spoke.

- **Bhagavan** : He is confused. He will be alright. My Father will see to it.

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It was 12.30 now. Two brothers from Pondicherry came in, just then. When the talk turned to Kanchi Paramacharya, Bhagavan said:

- **Bhagavan**: People like Kanchi Paramacharya are models to the society. They inspire people, preserve Vedas, observe all the rules. But once in a while, sometimes, Father sends people like this beggar! You see that varaha (a pig was passing by) rather sends beggars like this varaha – to cleanse the society!

- **The brothers**: You are verily Father. You are our Father.

- **Devaki** : Our only Father.

They all smiled.

It was nearing 2.30. There was a sweet packet. Bhagavan gave (Tamil word) to V n P., (Tamil word) to me and Sashi, cakes to R and RG, Halva packet to the two brothers.

- **Bhagavan** (*pointing to the sweet pocket, with relief*): So much BURDEN! Now it's alright.

(Laughter)

Then one who got sweet box said, 'I'll make sweets and bring them in that box.'

- D. to herself: Oh God. Just now, he felt so released to part with packet. Now some one is already planning for

another one! What to say, "Father is perfect. Father's leela is perfect!

The next day when we went in at about 10 o'clock in the morning.

Two foreigners were already seated opposite to Bhagavan. One was an old man and the other somewhat young with white bow across the hair and pearls on the ears! Dr. R had come from Bangalore. Jay was fanning Him. Bhagavan kept on looking at the old man and smiled off and on. It looked to me that Bhagavan knew the thoughts that were passing through this old man which must have drawn the smile too. The old man for his part, kept his head at an angle and looked somewhat curiously at Bhagavan, almost staring at Him at times. He too smiled now and then.

At last Bhagavan opened His mouth and spoke:

- **Bhagavan**: You are from which country?

- **Old man**: Holland.

- **Bhagavan**: This beggar read somewhere that they have take land from the sea. How do they do it?

- **Old man**: They build a dam first, a little distance into the sea – not far off and then pump out the water. And again they build another dam, a little way from the first and again pump out the water.

- **Bhagavan**: Holland is the only country which has done it! What were you doing at Holland?

- **OM**: I have an oil company.

- **Bhagavan**: Where do they get oil from?

- **OM**: From the country itself. Also from the gulf. Some from America.

Bhagavan looked at him deeply and smiled again mischievously? By then a big crowd had collected outside.

- **Bhagavan** (mentioning the name of one Swami): Have you seen him?

- **Devaki**: No, Bhagavan. But I have heard about him. I think he lives near Tiruparai Tapovanam.

- **Bhagavan**: Oh! These people have come from there! The Swami once came here and blessed this beggar.

People began to come one by one by His order to the gate-boy.

- **Bhagavan**: Today is Dipavali Day. People come to the temple and then they come to see this beggar also.

- **One Lady**: We came here only to see you, Swamiji, and then we came to know it was Dipavali day. (*To me*): It is true, you know.

Two foreigners entered and wanted to sit for a while and were permitted.

- **Dr. Rj** (*to the foreigners*): Have you been to Anandashram?

- **One man**: Yes.

- **Bhagavan**: Did you see them there?

- **Rj**: Yes, Babaji. One interesting thing happened then. Swami Chidananda had come from Rishikesh. He was giving a lecture. There was one reptile, lizard.

- **Foreigner**: It was on a rock. None of us could see it. Only he saw. He said, "Leave it. If it went inside the pants, take off the pants." But the lizard leave¹⁰.

We all laughed.

- **Bhagavan** (*to the other to foreigners*): Where are you from?

- **Man**: Rishikesh. Shivanandashram. Swami Chidananda has been taking care for the past one year. It's only God's grace. He is great. He advised me to go into Ramakrishna order.

All the foreigners seemed like serious people. They were eager to take Bhagavan's blessings. People were once again allowed one by one. While Bhagavan was

¹⁰ The text is like this: "... take off the pants. But the lizzed leave."

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attending to them, we begin to chant. Those foreigners also joined. The two new ones were obviously awestruck. There was such a look of humility and wonder on their faces.

Bhagavan kept on looking at the old man's inspecting eye and smiled mischievously. Suddenly, He blessed them both with raised hands, dropped some fruit into their hands and left them.

Bhagavan turned to the other two foreigners.

- **Bhagavan**: How long will you be here?

- **Foreigners**: Another four days.

I kept remembering Bhagavan's golden words. "India will be the spiritual leader of the world." All those people were in spotless white and somewhat well dressed while Bhagavan was in dark dirty rags. Yet, they all sat before Him in utter humility, looking upto Him for guidance and blessings! What a contrasting picture they made! Bhagavan blessed those 2 foreigners nicely and left them with prasad. Now it was past 12 noon.

Around 12.35 p.m., He left me with Prasad and another beautiful laughter.

Visitors from Argentina

12th November, 1992

Today, the space of the verandah of Bhagavan's Sannidhi street house was full even before 4 o'clock as has been happening often these days ! When Argentina people came exactly at 4.00 p.m. there was once again no space. Bhagavan called the Spanish lady near, gave her prasada and left her saying, "people are coming." The Argentinians have been coming for five days both morning and afternoon, only to be turned away, since there was no space for 10 people. The leader of the group from Argentina was let in, first.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh! Alright, how many of you are there?

- **Leader** : Nine. One lady, Ursula, is sick. But there is one from Denmark. I have asked him to come with us.

Bhagavan nodded his head and they came in. Bhagavan asked us to move back a little.

- **Bhagavan** : You came for three days. There was no space. It was not possible to sit together. Now this beggar

had to ask these people to move and adjust - so it's possible.

To me, His remark meant more than mere physical spacing adjustment. Often, I have seen Bhagavan 'setting the atmosphere' before a group entered. Once, I heard Him say openly, that the atmosphere of the room had changed because certain people had come in without prior information and He was not prepared. Father's work was disturbed.

- **Bhagavan** (*again to the Argentinian leader*): You people have come from Argentina – near South Pole ?

The leader smiled.

- **Leader** : We want you to say something to us. Please speak to us.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar only wants to hear something from you all. This beggar has nothing to say.

They all kept smiling. I could see some of them were awestruck. They were looking at him in open admiration even though Bhagavan had hardly spoken!

- **Bhagavan** (*to the leader*): You want to say something ?

The leader shook his head as if to say 'no'.

Bhagavan smiled.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar does not talk much. He has nothing to say. You have nothing to say. So we shall keep silent!

This was translated into Spanish by one of their members. They all became very quiet. There was silence for quite some time. I did not know what experience each one had. Bhagavan kept smoking, switching His glances swiftly from one to another. By then, people began to gather outside, some of them demanding to be let in. We too began to chant His Nama since Bhagavan has assured me that chanting His Nama would never disturb Father's work; on the contrary, it would help His work. When I remembered this, I gestured to some of them to join in our singing. But others looked doubtful. I felt this urge strongly to tell them how important His Nama is. This became so strong that all hesitation and fear dropped and I ventured out to say,

- **Devaki** : Bhagavan, can I seek Your permission to say something to these friends? Please, will You permit me?"

I thought if it was a wrong urge and not out of inspiration, He would refuse and that was alright with me!

- **Bhagavan** : What is it ? Alright, say it.

- **Devaki** (to the leader) : It has been my experience and the experience of all His devotees, that, whenever we get any problems, difficult to solve, we call out Yogi

Ramsuratkumar, then help comes immediately and the problem gets solved beautifully. His Nama is a Mantra and we have realised how powerful it is. So, we keep chanting it throughout the day – while walking, talking, eating, resting, anytime, anywhere.

Bhagavan was listening quietly. One of the group translated it into Spanish.

- **Bhagavan** : What Swami Ramdas calls Ram, Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi calls « The Self », this beggar calls « My Father ». It is all the same. (*To me:*) My Father; it's my Father who sends help, it's my Father who takes care when someone remembers this beggar or chants the name "Yogi Ramsuratkumar," this beggar is nothing.

It made them so happy that when we began to chant, this time they all joined us, enthusiastically.

One man of the group asked:

- Can we take a picture of you? Photograph of you?

- **Bhagavan** (*folding His hands in Namaste and smiling*) :
No, thank you.

Another man said:

- Yesterday, when we came, I brought an offering of fruit. You did not accept it, you gave it back to me. Why?

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling*): When you bring something for this beggar, throw it this side. This beggar cannot take it if you hold it in hand and prostrate. (With the gesture of throwing something) Throw it this side and do it empty-handed.

(Again Bhagavan demonstrated with a smile).

- **Bhagavan** : But if you do like that – holding it in hand – this beggar cannot accept it.

The man said, “oh!” (he looked a little confused. Bhagavan began to smoke once again. He kept on smoking. Then He went inside. I used this opportunity to tell them more about Bhagavan’s Nama.

- **Devaki** : You see, not only any problem in mundane life – the potency of even when you sit for meditation or begin your sadhana or some big project in your work – just call out to Him. His full Name Yogi Ramsuratkumar, a few times and then do it. You’ll see what difference it makes...

They all smiled, nodding their heads. One of them pronounced it to know if that was okay. Bhagavan came out as suddenly as He had gone inside, carrying a photograph – a big picture of Himself with His Name underneath. What Sri Janardhan has printed for Bhagavan.

- **Bhagavan** : You people wanted to take a photograph of this beggar. You can take this.

He gave it to the leader who passed it around.

One of the men said :

- It is written Godchild ?

Bhagavan looked at me and smiled as though He wanted me to reply !

- **Devaki** : Yes, He refers to God as Father and considers Himself as His child. Actually we all call Him Bhagavan, as you can, see for yourself, which means God. But, He always refers to Himself only as 'beggar' while in conversation with people.

- **Leader** (*smiling humbly*) : So I noticed.

- **Devaki** : If you people ever choose to write to Bhagavan, you can write – whatever is given under the photograph, as address – Yogi Ramsurat Kumar, Godchild of Tiruvannalalai, 606603.

- **Bhagavan** (*intervening*) : But this beggar does not reply to any of them. This beggar will read them.

And then, with an intent expression on His face, He kept on smoking for the next ten minutes...

- **Bhagavan** : You wanted this beggar to say something; now she has said something...! (*smiled*).

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- **Devaki** (humbly folding her hands) : I spoke from experience – from mine and other devotees' experience.

- **Bhagavan** : It is all Faith – F. A. I. T. H!

He spelt each letter with emphasis.

- **Leader** : So I believe.

After a silence, we began to chant again. Bhagavan went inside. I told them further, some of our experiences and the significance of His Nama. Bhagavan came out with some more photographs. They looked like stickers? When I commented upon it, Bhagavan said :

- **Bhagavan** : Someone came and left them here. Since these people want photographs, they can use these.

Now Bhagavan called the leader, made him sit next to Himself and held his hand for sometime. Then He announced :

- **Bhagavan**: Now this beggar is going to leave all of you.

They came 'one by one' near and He patted everyone's back loudly that it amused some of them. Then He said to them unexpectedly, to our delightful surprise,

- **Bhagavan** : Remember God always. Don't forget Him. Then they will be no problem or suffering. Whatever you do, don't forget Him. Remember my Father always.

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With some fruit prasad, they all left happily.

- **Bhagavan** (*turning to me*) : What is the time ?

- **Devaki** : 5:45 pm

- **Bhagavan** : You people, now come and sit here.

I was now really scared. Unlike ever before, today I spoke so much on my own both in His presence and absence. Now, suddenly, it all seemed very impertinent on my part and I began to feel disturbed.

- **Bhagavan** (*as if to put me at ease, He casually said*) : These people have come from so far. For three days they came saying, 'we want to sit with you' – all Father's will. This beggar has seen them nicely today.

I felt so relieved! Indeed, how kind of Him to put me at ease! In fact, one of the following months, He told me in some context, "Scatter this Beggar's Nama from North Pole to South Pole", which astounded me beyond expression! He now lighted another cigarette and looked at the two people seated with us.

- **Bhagavan** (*to me*) : They conducted *koti archanai* for two years and incurred a loan of Rs 13,000. Your friend helped with Rs 10,000 or something.

-**Devaki** : By your Grace, the friend came forward of her own accord.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar is telling you people (to those two) 100 times. Don't take loan. Whatever you have collected, spend from that. Don't go beyond the means. Moreover, arrange everything within the means, not a paisa should be spent extra. This beggar is telling you 100 times, 200 times. This beggar doesn't want to hear about loan again in future. (To me) When this beggar asked them why they were doing it, they said, "The ashram has a good name. So, they have to live up to it! They don't mind the loan – earning a good name and worrying about loans! Two years conducting functions and worrying about loans. Do not go beyond the means.

- **Both** (*totally repentant*) : Never again papa.

- **Bhagavan** (*to me*) : These people are coming with you?

- **Devaki** : Yes, Bhagavan. We have invited them for supper.

- **Bhagavan** : Alright. You also tell them nicely. These people are not going today. So you are not alone.

- **Devaki** : I am never alone. You are there to protect me, Bhagavan.

- **Bhagavan** (*in self-derision*) : Oh, sadhus and Swamis are attacked on the hill. What can this beggar do sitting here?

- **Devaki** : No, Bhagavan. You, or rather true devotees will never be beaten up.

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- *Bhagavan* : So be it. Father's blessings.

He left us at 6:30 p.m.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

In the Satsang of Bhagavan

January 31st, 1993

It was 31st of January 1993 - a Sunday. Bhagavan Yogi Ramsuratkumar was coming to *Nadar lodge* from His Sannidhi Street residence to spend a few hours with a Doctor from Kerala. With Bhagavan's permission we, the *Sudama* sisters, were all set for joining them with our food preparations that could last for the entire day, if necessary. The car came promptly at 6.30 a.m. and when we reached Bhagavan's presence, we submitted at His Lotus Feet, the beautiful yellow hibiscus, the first ever to flower in our newly built *Sudama* House. He smelled it with a smile and presented it immediately to the Doctor. The room was small but sufficient for the few of us. Bhagavan was already busy with His Father's work -- smoking and enquiring about the Doctor's family and his Nursing Home.

We had early breakfast around 7.30 a.m. The Doctor described his Gangotri trip -- how he ran into a boy Swami who said he was from Tiruvannamalai, from Sannidhi Street and he knew Yogi Ramsuratkumar very well. As it turned out, we came to know recently that the

young Swami was none other than Swami Nityananda of Bangalore. The Doctor also talked about Swami Vishnu Devananda who described Yogi Ramsuratkumar as a 'Mahayogi.' Bhagavan smiled and said, "Oho!" The Doctor further described the various types of sadhus seen in different places in the Himalayas. How some of them live in deep forests with no food or comfort whatsoever. I also narrated how we came across one sadhu on Bimaleshwar peak among the Hills of Uttarkashi -- how he survived despite the wild animals around -- how, in mysterious ways, he found food in that place where no one could possibly visit! So thick was the forest! Then Bhagavan began to sing a song in Hindi melodiously in His sweet voice. The first line of the song was "*Bharath Bhoomi Bhavani*" At our request, Bhagavan explained the meaning very sweetly, very kindly.

- **Bhagavan** - Such sons are produced by you Oh Mother Bharat! These sons conquer the whole world, do 'viswajit yagna' -- they give up everything, take the mud-pot in hand, and wander like sannyasis. These are Maanis -- They keep their self-respect. They are Daanis -- they give away everything and walk with the mud-pot. They are the Gnanis of great wisdom! you have given birth to such people -- Oh, Mother India!

Then started a discussion of some sadhus Swami Ramdas came across during his wanderings.

- **Bhagavan**: Mataji Krishnabai used to narrate one story from Swami Ramdas. A Sadhu went to a house and asked for Bhiksha because he was very hungry. Seeing his

hefty figure, the people of the house said, 'Why, you look healthy. Why don't you do work and earn? Alright, here are some logs of wood. You can cut them into small pieces. Then we will give you food.' The sadhu quietly began to do the work. He slogged for nearly two hours and finished the work. The house people were pleased and offered food. The sadhu refused and said, 'Where I beg food, I will not work. Where I work, I will not beg food.' So saying he walked out!

- *A Devotee* : He must have walked out so majestically, so beautifully!

Then the topic of sadhana, especially *Nama* chanting was raised by someone.

- *Bhagavan* : (Once again began to sing)

"Ram Nam Krishna

Nam Shivaramakrishna Nam"

He kept singing repeatedly the above line for a few minutes. It rang through the room touching everybody's heart with all its sweetness.

- *Bhagavan* : Great masters have come to the earth -- Rama had lived, Krishna had lived. The great masters have propagated their Names -- Ram Nam and Krishna Nam. For centuries and centuries, their names will be remembered. There are temples all over India, for Krishna and Rama.

The ancient rishis, the wise people propagated only the names of Rama, Shiva, Krishna's Names. Is it

proper for this beggar to propagate his own name? How long will this beggar's name last out?

- *A devotee* : Eternally!

- *The Doctor* : For centuries and centuries!

Bhagavan smiled and continued.

- *Bhagavan* : THIS BEGGAR DOESN'T GIVE HIS NAME TO EVERYONE. ONLY TO A FEW CLOSE FRIENDS. This beggar generally gives "OM SRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM" only.

- *A devotee* : Bhagavan once said in my presence "Rama's story and Krishna's story are my stories. Ram Nam, Krishna Nam are my names.

- *Bhagavan* : Oh! This beggar says things like that in madness. Don't believe them. Beggars like this come and go. But Rama and Krishna will live forever.

- *A devotee* : (*undeterred*) Bhagavan has also said quite a few times 'AUM' is my First Name. "It is also my best name."

Bhagavan kept quiet.

Bhagawan : Krishna was the only one who gave his name -- of course, Ramakrishna mutt people chant Ramakrishna's name. But it is different.

- **Someone** : Swami Nityananda of Ganeshpuri gave his nama for chanting. Ramana Maharshi wrote "Om Namoh Bhagavathe Ramanaya" for one devotee to chant.

Then the talk turned once again to sadhana.

- **Bhagavan** : In *Bhagavad Gita* Krishna says to Arjuna "You remember me -- also, do your work, do the fighting." You must do both simultaneously. How can anyone think of God all the twenty four hours? For very rare few it is possible! But for ordinary people -- they have to work. Krishna says, "Earn your livelihood. No one can run away from Karma." Krishna also says, "I have nothing to gain by working. But even I work" Action! Ramakrishna asked Vivekananda to go to Kali and ask for help. But Vivekananda could not do it. Vivekananda said, "Renunciation and SERVICE are the twin ideals." But Swami Ramdas has no faith in action. He initiated this beggar into Ram Nam and said, "Chant this Mantra all the twenty four hours." This beggar was trying but he gave this beggar love-madness. (A pause) Lord Krishna says in the Gita, "Remember me all the 24 hours."

Then Swami quoted the *Gita* sloka "*Ananyacheta sathatham yo mam smarathi* "..... and gave its meaning also.

- **Bhagavan** : "Without any other thought, those who remember me all the time, to them I am easily accessible."

Then Bhagavan quoted another *Gita* Sloka, "*Ananyaschintayantho mam Ye Janaha.....*" and then explained so kindly!

- **Bhagavan** : Those who remember me all the time, to them I give, '*Yogakshemam*'. In this context 'Yoga' means the provision of the means for the devotee's maintenance and '*Kshema*' means the protection of what has been provided. He supplies what is necessary and protects it also. When King Dasaratha was worried about the safety of his beloved sons Rama and Lakshmana, Vasishta said, "Oh, King! Vishwamitra would take care of them AS WELL as you do."

When Chatrapati Shivaji saw his Gurudev Samarth Ramdas going in the streets begging for food, he wrote out his whole Kingdom to his Guru. Samartha Ramdas said, 'I don't want your Kingdom.' He took Shivaji to some rock. When that was broken under his order, a toad leapt out! Shivaji was surprised to see the toad alive. Samartha Ramdas made him understand how God had provided water even inside a rock for the toad. So Krishna says, "Remember me all the 24 hours I'll give you *Yogakshemam*".

Bhagavan now mentioned a devotee's name.

- **Bhagavan** : PG tried his best to do the chanting of Name as much as possible. He felt his work distracted him from his goal. He wanted to give it up. Often this beggar tells the example of Morarji Desai. When he became the Prime Minister, Someone asked him, 'You have become what you wanted. What more do you need?'

Morarji Desai replied, 'Prime Ministership is not the goal of my life. God is the Goal of my life.'

Bhagavan now recited one Doha of Kabir which gives all the Dos and Don'ts. Then He began to explain.

- **Bhagavan** : Kabir says, "Do remember God. This is the first rule. Do not forget God." This is the first of all rules! If you want to remember God all the time, then do it now. 'Abhi Bajo' Start now. You know the story of Dhruva. This beggar may be wrong about names. But the story is -- when Dhruva, the child wanted to sit in his father's lap, his step-mother said (*eyes tearful and voice choking.*) "Go and do Tapas to be born out of me. Then you will get this privilege. You will be permitted to sit-in his lap." And he did! Today, we say, pointing to the star, "That's Dhruva." All these great Mahatmas - Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Tulasi Das, Kabir Das, -- they propagated Rama's Name, Krishna's Name. In madness, this beggar asks people to chant his name!! Is it proper? Can this name last like that of Rama and Krishna? They have temples all over India and more and more are coming up!

Then Bhagavan began to sing the following lines repeatedly quite a few times and explained the meaning.

- **Bhagavan** :

Bade chalo, Bade Chalo, Bade Chalo, Jawan!

Rukna thera kam nahin, chalna theri shawn!

March forward, March forward, Marc forward, oh,
soldier!

Stopping is not your work - marching ahead is
your glory!

- **Bhagavan** : Forgetting God is DEATH. Remembering
God is LIFE. If you want to remember God all the time,
then do it now!

Abhi Bajo, Bhahut Bhajo! Start. Do it now. Do
much now. Do a lot.

- **Bhagavan** : (*Once again*) Forgetting God is death.
Remembering God is life. Start now. Remember the
Name.

Then Dr. R.K.¹¹ began to talk about a meeting he
attended. He said,

- **Dr R.K.** : One scientist spoke about *Vimana sastra* in
the meeting. He said, our ancient *rishis* knew everything
about *Vimana*. They had knowledge of all those parts of
vimana, today's principles of aeroplanes. They knew the
technology even then. All the latest knowledge of science,
their seed-ideas can be found in *vedas*. Vivekananda also
said so. Varahamihira, one of King Vikramaditya's Nava
Rathnas, was an astrologer as well as an astronomer.
Scientist has got a book on ancient *Vimana Sastra* which
gives all the technical knowledge of *Vimana*.¹² (1)

- **Bhagavan** : It shows what a great culture was prevalent
in India in those days!

¹¹ *Dr Radhakrishnan. (NdT)*

¹² *Krishna has a copy of this book. Those interested can ask the Yogi
Ramsuratkumar Bhavan.*

- **Bhagavan** : (*With voice choking over*) Will India ever return to that great culture again Dr. RK?

By now it was time for lunch. So with Bhagavan's permission we began to arrange for that. Two of the *Sudama* sisters served everyone. Bhagavan asked me to take food in His leaf. After lunch, Bhagavan lay down a little while. A little later, He got up and began to smoke.

Dr. RK began to talk about Satya Saibaba's speciality hospital and other miracles. If Baba can cure people just like that, why did he build a super special Hospital? etc.

- **Dr. RK** : I am critical in my appreciation.

- **Bhagavan** : (*Talking of the Super Speciality hospital*) Is that not a miracle in itself. They are all related to each other. This beggar thinks what Baba does is no magic. They are done to create faith in people.

- **Dr. RK** : Why the miracle? When the sun shines, a beautiful flower flowers. It will speak for itself.

- **Devotee** : The flower may be beautiful. But if you are blind? Only a select few can recognise a Mahatma for what he is. What about the masses? They need miracles. These miracles have a definite place in their spiritual ministry.

- **Bhagavan** : Surely. They are all part of their great works. Part of their service to humanity.

- **Devotee** : People come in lakhs to him.

- **Bhagavan** : Eh.... Eh ! Saibaba controls all these people. Once J. Krishnamurti's lecture was arranged. People were talking here and there. Some 2000 people were there. It was noisy. But when J. Krishnamurti came into the Hall, everyone became silent! He had that kind of power over people. (A pause) Once J. Krishnamurti spoke in a meeting about suffering with such familiarity and knowledge. One man got up and said, "you don't know anything about suffering. Why are you talking about that?" J. Krishnamurti kept on talking, ignoring him. But, the man went on insisting and insisting. J. Krishnamurti left the place quietly. He did not get provoked. He was very quiet. He simply left the place.

Around 3 P.M., we made some tea with the help of the electric percolator as we had not taken any stove with us. It was distributed all around with some snacks. Though i was busy with this and that, I could catch words like 'Chayavadhi', 'Ranikumar', 'Maha Devi Varma' etc. Bhagawan was talking about poetry. I heard him say, "It is a school of poetry."

The talk came to Nellikkai when Bhagawan said.

- **Bhagavan** : It is a panacea for all ills. Not only it is a panacea but also it is a TONIC. Are you, Sudama sisters taking it everyday?

- **D** : Yes, Bhagavan. (*Pointing to people around*) These people are asking us why you gave the name *Sudama* to our house.

- **Bhagavan** : Sudama is a great Bhakta.

- **D** : We tell ourselves that it is very symbolic. Just as our small room became a big Sudama, we too will one day turn into giant spiritual power houses.

Bhagavan looked at us sharply and blessed us with His hand raised. Then the talk came on miracle cures.

- **D** : Sri V. Ganesan of Ramanashram once described to me how Bhagavan had cured a certain nose-problem of his, during Bhagavan's visit to 'Ananda Ramana,' his house. When the devotees were sitting quietly with Bhagavan, Sri V. Ganesan had to get up suddenly, go inside the house and apply a few nasal drops. When Sri Ganesan came out Bhagavan asked him what the matter was. Sri Ganesan replied that two decades ago, he had a major operation on his nose to remove a certain bone growth inside the nose. Though, the surgery was successful, the surgeon told him that a thick black liquid would drop into his throat a few times every day which had to be spitted out or swallowed. This liquid would not harm him. The doctor regretted that he could not help this problem. As time passed, the frequency of it increased much to his distress. He consulted another Doctor who suggested these nasal drops which, anyway did not help

him much. Bhagavan then looked at him with great compassion and gestured to him to sit very close to Swami at His Feet. Patting Sri. V. Ganesan affectionately on his back, Swami said, "The next time it occurs, please inform this beggar." Strangely, within a few minutes it occurred, and as his throat held the drop of that black liquid, he could not speak but conveyed to Bhagavan through gestures. Bhagavan looked at him intensely and ordered in a firm tone 'Spit it here' showing a spot very near His Feet! Sri V. Ganesan had but to obey. Soon Bhagavan with such an intense expression looked at the spit and then at Sri V. Ganesan's nose and throat. Bhagavan's head shook a few times. Then he raised both His hands in benediction and with such compassion declared, "Ganesa! Father says, He has cured you. Nothing to bother anymore. Father's Blessings to Ganesa." True to that, he never again had to suffer from that problem, all thanks to Bhagavan's Grace.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar doesn't remember that. But he remembers, once Ganesha complained of low blood pressure. This beggar said "Take butter-milk." He told me he was taking it regularly and he has not suffered from low blood pressure after that, Dr. RK, is there something in butter-milk that prevents this?

- **Doctor** : It has minerals. We also add salt to it which increases blood pressure.

(Regarding fruits and milk for sadana.)

- **Bhagavan** : They say fruits and milk help people. They take people up - but they brought this beggar down!
(*Laughter!*)

Was he indicating that he developed Diabetes?

- **D** : Bhagavan, most difficult problems become easy by your grace.

- **Bhagavan** : By my Father's Grace.

- **Bhagavan** : Father has tied this beggar down to this routine. What could this beggar do? It is not important if this beggar is overloaded or tired. Father's work is important.

i reminded one of the *Sudama* sisters about the new watch she had bought. She took it out when Bhagavan saw it also.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar would like to give it to her in her hand.

And gave it to her wishing 'good luck' like the perfect gentleman that He really is!

- **D** : Please bless us that we use the time well. Time is precious.

- **Bhagavan** : eh... eh.... It is precious - every minute is precious. Do not live even a second or a fraction of a second without taking the Name. When my master

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Swami Ramdas initiated this beggar into Ram Nam, He said, "Chant the Name all the 24 hours." You also chant every second.

- *D* : (with folded hands) Yes. Bhagavan, by your Grace we will be able to do so.

By now Bhagavan looked very tired. He left the doctor by 5 o'clock and the few of us by 5:30 p.m.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

Satsang at the house of Krupa

(Unknown date, but could be on the 1st February 1993)

A day with God! That's how i felt, overwhelmed with ecstatic joy! Sitting in that small room (named 'Sudama' by Bhagavan) i could see the same excitement on the faces of the other two friends. It was getting to be 2 a.m. and in that late hour, i could still see no tiredness on our faces despite a day's hard work at the college and a journey of 4 and half hours from Salem to Tiruvannamalai. We had almost finished that beautiful *mala*. It was meant for garlanding Bhagavan next day as our welcome *Namaskar*, when he would visit 'Krupa' at 6.30 a.m. None of us felt the passing of time as we happily continued our discussion of His *leelas*.

True to His word, as always, He promptly presented Himself at 'Krupa' at 6.30 a.m. He had come in Dr. R's car. Dr. R treated Sri Bhagavan for a very serious ulcer problem in August 1990 for ten days, at 'Krupa' itself. Ever since, Dr. R had been visiting Bhagavan once a month regularly.

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Now, Bhagavan got seated comfortably under a tree in the sit-out. Then i gave the *mala* we had so lovingly made the whole night, to Dr. R to garland Bhagavan, which he did. i had seen, on some earlier occasions that whenever women garlanded Bhagavan, he would either fold His hands in *Namaskar* or touch their feet with His hands and put them to His eyes in a gesture of reverence. In order to avoid His touching my feet, i gave it to Dr. R. Soon an exchange of pleasantries followed all around. At 8 a.m. Sri. D, the owner of 'Krupa,' whom i call *Appa* asked me to bring the collection of photos, he had taken recently. Bhagavan gave but a cursory glance and put them down quickly. i also had the collection of Sri B's poems on Bhagavan with suitable sketches under each song. The small crowd around Bhagavan that day, had some Telugus, some Malayalis, few Tamilians and of course, Bhagavan who spoke Hindi. So when Bhagavan gave permission to read out those poems, it was with a little anxiety, i began. But soon i found they were all enjoying the sketches and the poems. Bhagavan was all smiles too! Appa and his daughter gave us all a nice breakfast.

Just then, one Madras High Court Justice came to 'Krupa' for Swami's Darshan. Bhagavan became pensive and then said, "We shall go to the place where you are staying." So Bhagavan went with the Justice to the circuit house taking Sri S. with him and returned after one hour and twenty minutes. We were all still seated just as He left us. With Bhagavan's presence the whole atmosphere became electrified once again and, He became the centre

of everybody's unwavering attention once again. He looked at Dr. R deeply and began to say-

- **Bhagavan** : Dr. R, God alone exists. There is nothing else and no one else. He is all-pervading. He alone exists... nothing else..... neither in the past nor in the present nor in the future. He is everywhere.... here.... there..... (*emphatically*) EVERYWHERE! He is indivisible indescribable, beyond ordinary intelligence He is Total beyond words..... complete Anirvachaniyam Avyaktham. No one is separate"

(His eyes darted back and forth on all around, even while speaking.)

"It is for people, for ordinary mortals who do not understand this, name and form are NECESSARY. All are in Father. Father is in all of us."

He repeated "All in Father" several times. I was thinking, how many times, I had heard it, read about it in books and still was not able to relate to it! I wondered how many others thought like me too! Bhagavan began to speak again.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar does not understand advaitic (non-dual) philosophy. But he remembers the lotus Feet of his Master Swami Ramdas. Ramdas gave this beggar Ram Nam. For this beggar, the lotus feet of his Master and Ram Nam will do.

This he repeated several times. This reminded me of another time when Swami declared, "For the most

intelligent, Guru's Holy Feet and the Guru Mantra will do. It is for the less intelligent, books are necessary!"

We all sat silently, absorbing His words and allowing them to do their work in the core of our being. Bhagavan asked one attendant to read out the English translation of an old article of Ki. Va. Ja's. Then an article by Dr. S.V. on Bhagavan which appeared in "Congress of Philosophy" Souvenir, Pondicherry was read out by Dr. R. Both the articles were beautiful in their own ways. Both displayed a deep insight into the nature and work of Mahatmas and also a richness of expressions.

It was now after lunch, when Bhagavan sent his attendant to call G, R and S. G was very devoted to all Mahatmas in general, but Sri Ramana and Yogi Ramsuratkumar in particular. Both G and R were good friends of mine. They would often narrate their experiences with Swami, so beautifully. They had once taken a very intricate problem to Bhagavan, by whose divine intervention the problem got solved smoothly relieving them from a great distress.

- **Bhagavan** : (*Suddenly*) This beggar hates R! She attacks this beggar violently!

Contrary to His words, His countenance showed softness and love to the relief of those who were shocked by His words. He kept repeating it, laughing all the while. Who could understand the mystery of His Leelas! R, for her part, played along and retorted in good humour.

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- **R** : Swami, you may hate me. But I love You. That's why I come to see you. (*Laughter all around*)

- **Bhagavan** : (*Turning to me*) Ask her not to come and sit here. This beggar does not want to see her. She used to attack this beggar. This beggar did not see her for one year. Then, G kept requesting. He was so serious, so finally, this beggar agreed to see her. R, don't come here.

Saying this Bhagavan laughed and laughed.

- **A** : Alright Swami. You don't see me. But I will sit here and see you. Because I love you.

Again Bhagavan roared with laughter. Who knows what Leela Bhagavan was playing! Who can even begin to guess at it! Just then, one 84 year old senior Sadak from Ramanashram by name B. R who was first with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and later with Ramana Bhagavan, came to Krupa to see Dr. R.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar knows BR from 1948.

Bhagavan received BR cheerfully and seated him opposite to Himself. Just then i remembered how BR told me once "Yogi Ramsuratkumar is a very charming person. He injects cheerfulness into everyone".

- **BR** : (*Showing his palm to Bhagavan*) One finger is not able to fold. See, it's straight and stiff. So I came to see the doctor from Kerala.

Bhagavan smiled, took BR's hand into His own and kept on looking at it for sometime. His countenance was typical - whenever he worked intensely on someone, his face would take on a strange expression.

- **Bhagavan** : Now, try and see if you can fold it.

- **BR** : Oh! now I can fold ! But..... there is some pain

Again Bhagavan held his hand in His for a few seconds and then declared,

- **Bhagavan** : My Father has cured your hand. You will be alright.

- **BR** : (*After examining his hand and exclaiming happily*) now the pain is much less ! (*Then BR looked at the doctor*)

"Doctor, you look after Swamiji's body. He will look after your mind and soul."

Again he spoke,

- **BR** : (*To the doctor*) Swamiji has brought you here for our sake also. We all need your help. Swamiji has done something to the finger. You must give it the finishing touch.

i thought to myself. "So he doesn't have faith in Bhagavan's curing his hand completely! How strange yet how typical of a mind to trust a doctor than a Godman!" But Bhagavan ignored B.R's comment, got up and sat

very close to him with one hand around B. R and the other stroking his back, his hands and legs. Who can possibly know what treatment Bhagavan was giving B.R! But i am sure it would not only remove his body pain and tiredness but take care of him at various levels. After some time, Bhagavan left BR with some prasad.

Bhagavan, then, gave Sri Chavan's Seminar address (that had come in the Newspaper) to the doctor and asked him to read out which the doctor did.

- **A Devotee** : (*very assertively*) They should have mentioned Buddha before Shankara! Before Buddha, there was no Ahimsa in Hinduism.

This comment drew frowns and displeasure from all around and the devotee stopped abruptly.

- **Appa** : (*by way of snubbing*) This friend has done a deed of Ahimsa by stopping his talk!

Immediately Bhagavan, compassion incarnate that He is, took the devotee's hand in His and began to speak like a loving Father.

- **Bhagavan** : My Friend, There is nothing that has not been included in Sanatana Dharma. The scriptures have EVERYTHING. Buddha took the concept from Hindu scriptures and emphasized this particular point. That's all. (*Now looking at one of his attendants.*)

Mahabharat, when was it written JR? Some 2000 years ago? In Bhagavad Gita in Mahabharat, Krishna

mentions Ahimsa. This beggar does not know Gita much. What is that sloka?

He recited the sloka from chapter 17, Sloka 14

- *Bhagavan* :

*Deva dvija guru prajna pujanam saucham arjavam /
Brahmacharyam ahimsa cha sariramTapa uchayate /*

The meaning of which is 'Worship of the Gods, of the twice-born, of teachers and of the wise men and also the purity, straight-forwardness, celibacy and Ahimsa--not hurting any being, these are said to be the Tapas of the body. You see Ahimsa? On Yoga shastra, Sri Patanjali says in an aphorism :

Ahimsa satyastheya brahmacharya aparigraha yama:

So Ahimsa is prescribed here as one of the sadhanas. You understand these?

Some of us were stunned to hear Bhagavan quote these slokas so aptly and with such ease and expertise! I have heard some people say that Bhagavan knew all the 700 *Gita* Slokas by heart. It would seem He knew other scriptures as well!

- *Dr* : Our *yagnas* recommend animal sacrifice. When I did yagna, I used PRUSHTA COW, after consultation

with Agnihotram Thattachariyar. How can we kill an innocent animal for our own benefit?

- **Bhagavan** (*quickly*) : There's nothing wrong in that. The *yagnas* are done for a great cause. Our ancient rishis knew everything... (Emphatically) They have made rules from their knowledge of EVERYTHING. Vedas are great books. To do a small sacrifice for a big cause is alright. If you don't do that, it is that much incomplete...

(A pause)

Bhagavan continued,

- **Bhagavan** : See, in your medical science, you kill animals for experiments. When you do an operation, you cut certain parts with a knife. It will bleed and pain. But you know it is for greater good of the patient.

- **Dr** : But we don't kill them! If the patient dies, we are taken to task! If a human being is to be sacrificed in yagna, should we allow it?

Pat came the reply from Bhagavan,

- **Bhagavan** : There is no reference to human sacrifice in the scriptures. This bit of animal sacrifice in *yagna* is different.

Then Bhagavan took out one cigarette and asked the Doctor to light it.

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- **Appa** : (*sarcastically or in good humour i couldn't make out*) Doctor, is it an act of Himsa or Ahimsa?

Bhagavan burst into peals of laughter.

- **Bhagavan** : The doctor asked this beggar not to smoke, when this beggar was sick. But this beggar could not do that. Instead, he asks Doctor himself to light it!

Bhagavan laughed and laughed patting the doctor on his back. That eased the whole atmosphere and people visibly relaxed. Then, I noticed how unusually white Bhagavan's clothes were! Others must have thought too! For, Bhagavan responded, immediately,

- **Bhagavan** : Today, Father gave permission and helped this beggar to wear new clothes. You see, (*looking at Appa*) this beggar was coming to see the Doctor and the Justice. He thought, "Why to go in dirty clothes... Dirty and bad-smelling! Two days back, R and S brought these clothes. This was there. In that ocean of dirt, it was difficult to find other clothes. So this beggar wore this.

Then again He looked at A and said with laughter:

- **Bhagavan** : A, this beggar hates you. This beggar doesn't want to see you.

Pretending as if she was hurt, she went and sat behind Sri G. Bhagavan continued in good humour:

- **Bhagavan** : What is it, Dr? They say, 'once bitten, twice shy!'

Bhagavan also quoted a saying in Hindi. Which meant 'The one who got his tongue burnt by drinking very hot milk, will drink even buttermilk only after cooling it with great effort'.

- **Bhagavan** (*again jokingly*) : D.R, is it beaten or bitten?

- **Appa** : (*in the same vein*) It's usually bitten Swamiji. But in her case, we can say beaten!

Bhagavan roared with laughter. Everybody joined happily.

For sometime now, the photos Appa had taken, were going round among the people present there.

- **Dr.** (*looking at D*) : Aniyathi (Younger sister), you must have spent a fortune on all these!

- **Bhagavan** (*in rebuking tone*) : Yes, in thousands! she does not save any money. She likes to spend everything like this.

- **D.** (*happily*) : Yes, Bhagavan. But what a beautiful thing it is

- **Bhagavan** (*cutting her short*) : Oh ... oh ... ! to spend all the money?

- **D.** (a little frightened at His severe tone and at a loss to know what to say) : no Bhagavan (I mumbled something inaudibly!)

- **Appa** : Swamiji, why should these people save money? They have come to you saying, "SAVE ME", so why SAVE MONEY?

- **D.** : (happily picking up) : Well said, Appa! Thank you.

Then shocked at my own impertinence and insensitivity, I looked at Bhagavan in fear. But Bhagavan, that Karuna Sagar, only smiled indulgently!

- **Dr** : Aniyathi, hereafter, I will share the cost with you. You must permit.

Then the topic turned to various other subjects, mostly among the devotees. When it came to beggary, suddenly, there was a change in the atmosphere, a seriousness which all of us felt. Everybody's attention turned to the Divine Beggar. Bhagavan began to speak in a tearful voice.

- **Bhagavan** : Begging is not a crime in India. Beggars are not criminals. Beggars should be permitted in India. This is a holy Land where Sadhus have always been protected. This is the land of GREAT MASTERS. This is our PLAYGROUND. Great Masters come in the form of beggars. If you arrest beggars in this country, they will leave this land (tears) ... That's all (tears) ... They will not come here ... (His voice broke) ... The great Masters will

not come here.... If they are protected, they will do their Leelas here. India is their Leela Bhumi. Beggars are permitted by VEDAS. Vedas were made by great Rishis who knew about everything. The ancient Rishis knew the best and they made the social structure of India with KNOWLEDGE. They knew how to run the society. Vedas and Vedic Brahmins must be protected. The Varnas, Brahmins, Kshathriyas... etc were all made by the great Rishis who knew everything. The discipline of division of labour is necessary for the society. They knew how to run the society. If you arrest beggars like me, where will we go! Of course, it is very difficult to distinguish the Masters from beggars. Grihasthas (house holders) cannot under-stand whether a beggar is a good man or a bad man. They may give food. But they will not allow beggars like me to sleep in their house (*tears*). For people like us, Temple is the only shelter. It is big and if we go and sit there, no one can question us. They say, "Why should temple have lands? Give them away" (*Sternly*). That should not be done. TEMPLE IS OUR REFUGE. If you say, "Why, this man can do some work and earn. Don't give him anything,"-- if you say, "India should be like Europe."-- If you want to make India like Europe, that is not good. If you throw one meal to a beggar, it is not going to make him a millionaire! Nor would you lose your fortune! (*tears*).

Bhagavan went on to say :

- **Bhagavan** : Vedas are everything. They must be protected at all costs. They say, "We don't understand Sanskrit. So why commit slokas to memory? Sanskrit

must go." NO, NO, That's WRONG. Even if you don't understand Vedic chanting, go to the place and merely listen to it. That will do good. Chanting without understanding is also good. Where Vedas are pronounced, go and listen. (*Emphatically.*) It will do you good. This beggar was wandering at one time. He could not enter Bombay. One constable told him "if you enter Bombay, I will arrest you." So this BEGGAR could not go into Bombay. In Tiruvannamalai also, this beggar had the same experience. In Madras, this beggar was sitting and smoking outside a house, when two constables came and put him in a horse-cart and took him to the police station. Then some friend came to know about it and brought me out. Beggars should not be arrested in THIS COUNTRY. INDIA SHOULD NOT BECOME LIKE EUROPE. THIS IS OUR PLAY--GROUND. The play-ground of Great Masters.

This He repeated several times and kept wiping His eyes. Some of us were filled with tears too. A heavy silence followed. A deep sense of loss and agony overwhelmed me.

All of a sudden, Bhagavan turned to Mrs. B and said,

- **Bhagavan** : B, you are not listening to me! Are you worried about your son? Why are you worried about him? He is alright. Others are all listening. But you are not listening.

Mrs. B folded her hands in humility and devotion and did not reply. Bhagavan asked her to sing some songs. She had memorised 3 songs of Ki. Va. Ja. from *Balajothidam* and she began to recite them. Bhagavan smiled and blessed her nicely.

- **Bhagavan** : Now B can go home and do *Agnihothram Homam*.

- **Mrs. B. (Hesitantly)** : My child Ch is asking me, ' Swami is coming so often to Krupa but not to our house even once, why?'

- **Bhagavan** : (*Smiling*) Eh... eh.. JR. may also think so! This beggar will come today.

- **D** : (*Quickly*) JR once told me Bhagavan that the entire Tiruvannamalai is your place only.

- **Bhagavan** : Eh ... ! eh ...! Out of kindness, JR. might have said that. But this beggar will go to his house today.

Bhagavan then gestured to us, Sudama sisters to sing the Name. He also turned to Appa, and asked,

- **Bhagavan** : D.R. will you permit them to chant the Name? This beggar likes to hear it.

- **D.R.** : Appa (DR) smiled and bowed in humility with folded hands as if to say 'yes.'

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- **Bhagavan** : This beggar told these Sudama sisters once, when they came to offer some money to this beggar.... this beggar said, "When you sing my Name, you are giving me crores and crores of Rupees. So this money is not necessary."

This reminder of Bhagavan sent a fresh wave of enthusiasm through everyone and we began to sing with gusto. I also remember Bhagavan telling me another time, "When people sing this beggar's Name, which is really Father's Name, they are not only helping themselves. They help the whole world. They are helping this beggar's work also."

It was nearing four and Appa's daughter S began to serve everyone coffee and '*Sundal*' (boiled and seasoned Bengal gram.) She and i crushed the grains and offered to Bhagavan who could not eat them otherwise. He had no teeth. So also plucked some tender gooseberry leaves as usual and ground them. She made it into a nice green ball and gave it in Bhagavan's palm.

Only now, Bhagavan gave leave to Mrs. B. He took her child's both hands in His and put them to His eyes in worshipful reverence.

A few minutes passed and we were singing His name, when Bhagavan's eyes fell upon a small wooden image of Sri Krishna with Rukmini and Satyabhama on either side. He took it in His hands and asked D.R's daughter S,

- **Bhagavan** : "Who gave this to you, S?"

- **S** : One Radha from next door Swamiji. Not to me but to Appa.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh! Radha gave away Rukmini and Satyabama to S, so she could stay with Krishna

(He began to laugh.)

- **S** : No Swamiji! Radha gave Rukmini and Satyabhama to Appa with Krishna. *(Bhagavan again laughed loudly.)*

- **Bhagavan** : Rama and Krishna will live for ages.... inspire people for ages It is easy to remember Name and Form of Rama and Krishna and their leelas. This beggar likes Ramayana and Mahabharatha. Rama Nama and Krishna Nama are dear to this beggar. If anybody insists that this beggar's Name alone is important, they are doing a great SIN. Rama and Krishna are dear to this beggar!

(A pause)

Once this beggar signed in somebody's book. They asked me 'Swamiji, please sign your own Name.' This beggar said, 'Om is my first Name and Best Name!'

Bhagavan laughed again.

Then Bhagavan took out the latest issue of *Balajothidam* from a bag. Eager to know what is on *Bhagavan* in that issue, i begged Bhagavan to give me the book for a few minutes. But Bhagavan deliberately

ignored me and gave it in the hand of S and asked her to read.

- **Bhagavan** : (*Looking at me from the corner of his eyes*)
D thinks, "I am asking him, but he is giving it to her!"

He laughed uproariously.

Suddenly it dawned on me that this gesture is deliberate on His part and carries some lesson for me. When I began to wonder, it flashed suddenly how the whole night we sisters had so lovingly prepared a *mala* to garland Him but in the morning, i gave it in the hands of the Doctor to garland Bhagavan for fear of Bhagavan touching my Feet! Could this be a gesture returned in kind to say that i should have gone ahead with garlanding him myself, no matter what? No more worshipping by PROXY!

As it happened, S could not read Tamil, so Sri G had to read it out finally.

- **Bhagavan** : (*Turning to D*) Do you know, this Balajothidam Lakshmanan? This is his 9th issue in which he has published something on this beggar. In the beginning he wrote articles on this beggar. After that, in every issue he publishes at least a few songs of Ki. Va. Ja.

- **D** : Bhagavan i saw a person giving a book to Bhagavan. Is there an article in that?

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar gave it to JR.- what is it JR?

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- **JR** : It is a story Swamiji. Written by someone who visited you. He came and knocked at Swami's door. Swamiji came out but scolded him saying they do not know how to knock at the door. But the man had taken it nicely in the story, Swamiji. He says, he felt blessed by you.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh ... ! Oh ... he saved me! (*Laughter*)

Around 6 P.M. Bhagavan left in Dr. R's car. True to His word, Bhagavan then visited JR's place, sat by his side for 10 minutes while he did *Agnihotram* and spent sometime with his children also.

Vedas should be preserved at any cost

21st February, 1993

It was the year 93, February 21st afternoon. I was on my way from Sudama to Bhagwan's Sannidhi Street residence for His 4 O'clock Dharshan. It became somewhat late because of a phone call I had to make to Mr.B for some information to be passed on to Bhagwan. The place was already full when I went in and reported to Bhagwan about B's mother. Bhagawan gave me a rose, listened to the details with great attention and kept quiet. Then I went and sat behind. People kept coming one by one. We were chanting Bhagawan's Name. Then He asked one girl to go behind and called me to come and sit in front Him. At that time one young sastri entered, lighted the camphor and began to recite slokas. "Satyam, Sarvam, Viswamurthy, Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu...." While this was going on, Bhagawan called me near and asked what B's mother's name was. I clean forgot ! but by His grace, I remembered in time and said it. Soon the sastri left. One Local Sub Inspector came with the envelope carrying some message from Mrs. KS. Sub Inspector said she wanted a reply immediately. (Later Mrs. KS told me that she was shocked to hear it, because she would never dare demand a reply from Bhagawan

like that – she merely asked him to hand over, that was all)

- **Bhagavan**: Oh ! A reply immediately ! Alright, please tell her she will be alright by My Father's grace.

Bhagavan made the Sub Inspector repeat it correctly. Asked him to ring upto one higher officer by name Shekar and pass on the message.

Sri Ramachandra Upadyaya came and prostrated.

- **Bhagavan**, *smiling*: Come on, Ramachandra.

Bhagavan held his hand.

- **Ramachandra Upadhyaya**: Can I bring the radio on 22nd, 23rd, 24th for Bhagawan to hear Sadhu Rangarajan's speech?

- **Bhagavan**, *smiling*: Alright, bring it.

- **Ramachandra Upadhyaya**: It would be my pleasure. These days, it is very difficult to see you Swamiji. I would be happy to do it – I can see you all the three days!

(Bhagavan sent him with Prasad)

- **Devaki**, *hesitantly*: When I asked Bhagavan, if I could bring the radio, Bhagavan replied 'no'.

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- **Bhagavan**, *laughed loudly*: This beggar has no consistency! When Ramachandra asks, this beggar says yes. When Devaki asks he says no! This beggar has no consistency. He is consistently inconsistent !

Burst of laughter.

- **Devaki**, *shyly*: You are consistency itself. It is Divine consistency !

- **Bhagavan**: This Beggar is mad. He is very bad.

- **Devaki**: This Divine madness is what we all want. Every word of Bhagavan has meaning and purpose, though sometimes we fail to understand.

- **Bhagavan**: This beggar has no meaning, no purpose!

- **Devaki**: Only after seeing you, our lives assumed purpose and meaning. Whatever you do, we may not understand immediately – but later we do. Bhagavan gives specific work to specific people.

- **Bhagavan**, *laughing*: You are coming every day. These people come once in a while. (*Correcting Himself*) No, you are not coming every day, but only on holidays—Saturday and Sunday.

- **Devaki**: This is why I want to make every day, holiday! I want to stay in Tiruvannamalai permanently.

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- **Bhagavan**: Dr. RK was not for it. He was against it. He does his duty perfectly. One should do one's duty. You are a Teacher. You must teach students.

- **Devaki**: But Bhagavan, later, he was convinced when Bhagavan supported my decision.

Bhagavan smiled in happy approval of my reply. At least it seemed so to me. Then His eyes turned towards little Godavari, child of Shri Jayaraman, with such soft and gracious love.

- **Bhagavan**, *bending forward Godavari, in Tamil*: Where is God? Do you know?

- **Godavari** :..... (*she gestured with her little hand cutely, pointing to Bhagavan*)

- **Bhagavan**, *in Tamil*: Where?

- **Godavari**, *in Tamil*: Here Swamiji. (*Again she pointed to Bhagavan with such sweetness*)

- **Bhagavan**: Oho! (*Laughed*), *in Tamil*: Godavari knows where God is. This beggar does not know. Chetas, where is God? Do you know?

- **Chetas**, *in Tamil*: I know.

- **Bhagavan**, *in Tamil*: Where?

- **Chetas**, *in Tamil*: Here. (*He too pointed to Bhagwan*)

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- **Bhagavan**, *in Tamil*: Oh! Chetas Even Chetas said like that !) (*Looking at the child's mother, Bhuvana*): Can they say like this, Amma?

- **Bhuvana**, *shyly, in Tamil*: Yes, Swamiji. It can be said so.

Bhagavan looked at her deeply and raised his hands in benediction.

- **Bhagavan**, *in Tamil*: Godavari knows. This beggar does not know where God is. Godavari knows.

- **Devaki**: When she talks to me, she refers to you as Bhagavan. (Because I always, refer to Him as Bhagavan) To her parents, she refers to you as 'Swamiji'.

Bhagavan smiled. Others also smiled. All through this wonderful conversation, there were smiles of adoration from devotees all around. Nearing six, Bhagavan gave a big box of sweets to Godavari and wished her "Happy Birth Day"

Then He left us all together.

22nd February, Forenoon

Starting early morning, we went round the hill and were there outside Sannidhi street house by 9.50 am. We joined the Q. Mr. J and Mr. A came and had private

audience with Bhagavan inside the house. One foreign lady entered. After that we three were asked to come in. Bhagavan asked the foreigner to move and made me sit in the first seat. He asked me about B's mother. The gate boy announced that one old lady (Mother of a familiar devotee) had come with three people. At Bhagavan's nod, she came in with not three people but 5 ! Also, she sat out of line with everybody and began to fan Swami without permission.

- **Bhagavan**: The gate boy said four, but five people have entered !

Dr. N's family entered followed by APK people. The Veranda was now fully packed – About 16 people were seated.

- **Bhagavan**, *looking at the old lady*: This beggar initially heard 3, she said 4, finally 5 people entered! This is a small space. She is sitting out of line. It is creating problems for this beggar. She does not understand – This beggar wants to see everyone in line – That way he could see everyone better. She is sitting out of it like this.

She moved into the line. But there was no space... So Bhagavan called the Doctor from Madurai near and said:

- **Bhagavan**: “Doctor, you have seen this beggar. You can go. Come in the evening...oh! but you leave tomorrow! Father's grace!”

He blessed the family nicely and left them.

Now only six of us remained and we sat nicely. A from Ramanashram came and sat. One Ramu Sastri Stepped in.

- **Bhagavan**, in Tamil: Are you keeping well?

Bhagavan blessed him with such love and left him with Prasad.

- **Devaki**: We met him during our Giri pradakshina this morning. He said Bhagawan knew him. He is from Tapovanam, he said.

- **Bhagavan**: He used to be in Veda Patasala here in Ramanashram. The no. of students decreased. Finally, only one or two remained. So they sent him away. Another man came. He must have said "I will bring more people " So he got the place.

- **A.**: That sastris used to have a nice relationship with the students. He used to give individual attention.

- **Bhagavan**: Oh, He used to be here in Tiruvannamalai, visit this beggar also. He used to go for purohit work. Now we don't know if he could do it in Tirukovilur.

- **A.**: In Ramanashram, we don't allow them to go for purohit work, Swami.

- **Bhagavan**: There are Veda Patasalas in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharastra – in North also this beggar has seen. But there they teach Sahitya, Jyothisham, Nyaya Sastra, Vyakarn etc. not Vedas. People are interested in those things – not in Vedas!

- **A.**: The Purohit work brings more money than Veda Patasala work.

- **Bhagavan**: But it has no status – no status is given to that. This beggar doesn't know if he has told you before – one Brahmin girl – when it was suggested she should marry someone from Veda Patasala, she said “I will not marry a ‘Kudumi’ man “ (A man with long hair like a Sastri !) – But the cause of Vedas is very dear to Paramacharya. He has done whatever possible for the propagation of Vedas. Vedas should remain intact. They should be preserved at any cost. (He repeated again) “Vedas should be preserved at any cost.”

A pause. Again:

- **Bhagavan**: VEDAS SHOULD BE PRESERVED AT ANY COST. Paramacharya has done as much as he can. We should be grateful to him for that. About centenary celebration arrangements, this beggar has asked Jayarama to write and find out. Let us see what the plans are. They are preparing to do in a big scale... this cause of Vedas is very dear to Paramacharya.

- **Devaki**: Ramakrishna Mutt Sanyasis trace their parampara (lineage) to Sringeri Pitam because of Totapuri, the Advaitic Guru of Sri Ramakrishna.

- **Bhagavan**: This beggar, has told you – Vivekananda said that the knowledge of all past, present and future – the seeds are in the Vedas. Vedas must be propagated at any cost. The no. of students learning Vedas goes on decreasing. At this rate, it will soon be extinct, Paramacharya does not want that. He is trying his best for the preservation of Vedas. This beggar's salutations to him!

After a pause:

- **Bhagavan**: They all want to celebrate his centenary year in a big way, let us see. This beggar asked Jayarama to get the addresses and write to them and ask what their plans are ... 100 scholars will be presented with a purse. Some students will get scholarships.

Bhagavan showed the addresses secured by Jayarama to everyone around! It was written neatly

- **Bhagavan**: He took it from some Tamil paper. President R. Venkataraman is the president of the Committee. Paramacharya has many rich devotees Tata, Birla, – P.V. Narasimha Rao etc. It should be possible! P.V.N.Rao is a very competent man. But ... we shall see ...

- *Devaki*, *hesitantly*: For Sadhu Rangarajan's talk, who will bring the radio tomorrow Bhagwan?

- *Bhagavan*: Ramachandra Upadhyaya has arranged to send it through somebody. So you don't worry.

Just then, a devotee who had the habit of fussing over "Omens" entered with his family. He was visibly upset about some thing. Bhagavan asked him what the reason was.) The man said anxiously:

The man: "Swami, when we started in the car for your Darshan, a cat ran in front of the car from left to right ! It is not a good omen. Swami I am very worried."

Some of us were really surprised at his interpretation. But then, I too had heard about such traditional beliefs before. So I was curious to see how Bhagavan would respond....Bhagavan's face assumed very serious expression, Head bent, He looked as if He had gone deeply inside –only his thumb was still moving in ceaseless japa. Seeing Bhagavan, every one became silent. I began to think, Oh, may be, there is really something in all these omens,– even if we take refuge at the feet of the Guru". We were afraid that probably something serious had really happened and Bhagavan was also worried.

Suddenly Bhagavan looked up at the man and said in all seriousness

- *Bhagavan*: A rat must have run that side.

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- *Devaki*: (!!!)

We all had difficulty containing our laughter which was threatening to burst out !

Around 12, He called me and dropped 2 empty cigarette boxes into my hands and left me.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVANI

May 17th, 1993

Yogi Ramsuratkumar, Yogi Ramsuratkumar, Yogi Ramsuratkumar ... even as my heart chanted in ceaseless rhythm, i walked as fast as my legs could carry me down the road from Ramana Nagar towards "Father's cottage" (so He called it once!) in Sannadhi street with the unspoken prayer that all the questions raised by the French author should be answered by Bhagavan today. It was exactly 9.30 am when i reached Theradi Mandap and the day was 17th May 1993. Just at that precise moment, the wooden door of His residence opened and out, walked Sri Bhagavan in His colourful rags with a mat in His hand! He spread it near the step Himself, came outside the grill gate and called out the gate-boy to come down from the Mandap, when i had my first quick fill of my eyes, of His exquisite *Darshan*, before He disappeared into the house again. The wooden door closed promptly after Him, only to open soon enough and this time, He came out with His begging bowl, handfan and the stick and kept them carefully on the step near the mat. Then the Divine Beggar sat down for His morning *darshan* ... How gracious, how majestic, how GODLY He looked ...! i was called in. As it was a little earlier than His usual 10 o'clock session, there were but few

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callers apart from me. As i prostrated, Bhagavan reached for the day's Hindu and showed me a news-item on Paramacharyal. As i found myself unusually alone i took my chance and ventured to say, "Bhagavan, I have written a reply to Michel Coquet as you have asked. But i am afraid, I need some clarifications. If Bhagavan could spare a few minutes ...?"

- *Bhagavan* : Alright, What clarifications?

I conveyed the doubts one after the other as the French author had asked, and promptly Bhagavan answered every one of them! Delighted and grateful, i thanked Him heartily and sat in a vacant place. A few others followed, which included the tailor's wife, a regular visitor. Bhagavan gave her the fan and seated her opposite to Himself. A few more came in one by one and Bhagavan left many of them immediately. But, each one was blessed with either a loud pat on the back, or a raised hand with "*My Father blesses you*" or a simple "*Ram Ram*". I saw every one of them leaving with a happy smile of fulfilment. By 10 o'clock, Mrs. R and G. turned up with the twins. i saw Bhagavan smiling His welcome and there was such tenderness on His face as He looked at the young twins. They were seated next to the tailor wife. Mrs. R's brother had gone to the Himalayas on a Char-Dham trip.

- *Bhagavan* : Any news from the Himalayas?

Mrs. R. gave a detailed report of their pilgrimage.

- **Bhagavan** : My Father would bless them to finish their trip successfully. Paramacharya, Jayendra Swami and Vijayendra Swami will bless them to return safely. This beggar read somewhere in the paper that helicopter facilities are there to reach upto Badri...

- **R.** : Yes, Swami. Upto Badri and Kedar from Delhi...

Then they offered a book titled "*Deivathin Kural*" (The Voice of God) by Sri Ra. Ganapathy. By then there was quite a crowd outside and Bhagavan began to allow them in one by one. One man entered with a bright smile and spoke with great emotion.

- **Man** : Swamiji, I got a promotion as Manager of a Shipping Company... all by your Grace (*with a garland*). Kindly accept this.

- **Bhagavan** : (*quicky*) It is all Father's Grace! This beggar doesn't exist!

He garlanded, prostrated and was sent by Bhagavan with prasada. A few others followed. Then one old lady, a villager, from a place near Kani Madam, came with a boy. The boy tried to garland Bhagavan with a sea-shell *mala*. Bhagavan ordered him to keep it aside. But the lady took it in her hand in right-royal fashion and put it around Bhagavan's neck! We were all stunned! Yet Bhagavan merely watched the whole thing, in a silence of consent to her to do whatever she wanted! Who can understand His ways! She spoke out her complaints, got His blessings and left. Another lady came in with loose,

unstrung *Mullai* flowers and poured them on His head in a gesture of worship. The flowers rolled down in a wide stream and were strewn everywhere on the upper veranda. Bhagavan smiled, gathered some and began to give to other people who came in one by one. By 10.30 the queue ended and the gate was closed temporarily.

- **Bhagavan** (*gesturing to the gate-boy*), *in tamil*) :
Remove these a little.

The gate boy began to remove the flowers from Bhagavan's body carefully.

- **Mrs. R.** : There is some on your crown, Swami.

- **Gate-boy** (*in tamil*) : It can be removed only if the turban is taken off. There is plenty there.

Everyone laughed. Bhagavan promptly submitted and the remaining ones were removed carefully.

- **Bhagavan** (*showing the news*) : You see this, a 71 years old Balak Brahmachari has attained Maha samadhi. But devotees are still waiting... Did you read that? You read this news-item also. So many kilograms of gold are coming from London for Kanakabhishekam of Paramacharya.

As Bhagavan passed on the paper, Mr. G. submitted a letter from Ra. Ganapathy.

- **Bhagavan** (*to me*) : Read this.

- "The word "Surathy" is sanskrit which means 'Sublimated one' in Madhura Bhava. Some people, especially in Tamil Nadu use a long vowel like "Soorat". Is it long or short? Mahaperiaval says it must be "SURAT" coming from the word 'SURAJ' - SURYA - SUN. Sri Rama is Surya Vamsa and it could be prefixed to a name. Generally "Chandra" comes as suffix to "Rama".

- **Bhagavan** : Read it again. This beggar did not follow nicely.

I did and at the end, I said : "like "Ramachandra"".

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling*) : Oh! So Paramacharya has said, it is SURAJ-SURYA. It is prefixed to the Name. So Paramacharya knows this beggar's Name! Generally it is Ramachandra... Oh!... This beggar understands... now. (Bhagavan gave a grin).

- **D** (*curiously*) : What is the real meaning of the word "Surat"?

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling*) : You look into a Sanskrit Dictionary and find out. He has given the Sanskrit meaning "Surathi" in Madhura Bhava...! (*He smile again*).

Then the people sitting opposite, thanked Bhagavan for some instructions of His, which they followed exactly and benefited much. They said:

- **People** : We will not do anything that you would not want us to do.

- **Bhagavan** (*quickly*) : Whatever we do, we should do it for Father! We will do everything for Father. Not for this beggar! (He raised both His hands in benediction. By now, He was smoking all the while, looking at times at someone or the other sharply).

- **Mrs. R** : When I was in the Kanchi Mutt, I sat and talked with His personal attendants, Swami. Paramacharya has 5 or 6 of them...

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling but still smoking*) : Is it? What did you learn? Tell us something.

- **Mrs. R** : They insisted that we call Him Maha periyaval only, not Paramacharya. As for His food, someone is bringing Him rice..., like Kanji. Paramacharya allowed one man to make idlies out of Nendram banana powder.

- **Bhagavan** (*mischievously*) : Is it very soft?

- **Mrs R** : Just the opposite, Swami! If he throws it at anyone, they will get severe injuries. He will get President's award for it. That hard!

Laughter. Bhagavan continued smoking as He glanced around swiftly from one to another. It looked to me that Bhagavan was doing some heavy work amidst all that laughter and conversations.

- **Bhagavan** (to Mrs R.) : Um... Um... (*urging her to continue*).

- **R.** : He is only 40 kg. now. Once he fell down. One of his attendants who is hefty ran to lift him. Paramacharyal sat and looked up at the attendant and said : "Oho! Alright, lift me." The attendant could not do it, however much he tried!: 3 other people also joined - still they could not! Then Paramacharyal said, "You see, let me get up myself. I can look after myself. Do only what I ask you to do."

Bhagavan laughed again as we all did, at the same time looked around sharply switching His glances over quickly from one to another all around.

- **Mrs R.** : Once He was very sick. He seemed even unconscious. Still, they said, he was very much conscious. In the mutt, everything is done with his permission only. They said: "You have to be very very careful. If you make a mistake, He will give you a sharp look and it can burn you down!"

At this, Bhagavan put a finger on His nose as though in wonder and repeated: "If we make a mistake, he will give a look and we will be burnt down!"

A pause.

- **Bhagavan** (*pensively*) : Paramacharya has been very kind to this dirty beggar!

Now Bhagawan looked at the 6th volume of "The Voice of God".

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar doesn't know if we can read anything from this. If there is anytime... (he looked at the gate and outside). Alright, G., just open on any page and read.

G. opened on 262. The title was *Thithiksha* - Forbearance. He read upto 264, where Paramacharyal says, "one should endure both good and bad in life. One should not be overly happy when one something very good happens. Nor should one wallow in self-pity and sorrow when something bad happens. One should learn to endure. This is called Forbearance. This is the 4th of 6 spiritual assets. This comes as the third stage in Advaita Sadana.

- **Bhagavan**: Thank you G. So it is about *Thithiksha* - forbearance.

(A pause)

- **Bhagavan** (*all of a sudden*) : What Paramacharyal speaks here doesn't apply to this beggar! This beggar! This beggar cannot practise *Thithiksha*. If someone praises this beggar, he will be happy!

I thought to myself, "Vishnu is described as *Stotra priya* - lover of Praises! Otherwise, how will the devotees be motivated to praise the God?"

- **Bhagavan** : If somebody abuses this beggar, he will feel sorry. Whatever happens is ALRIGHT! This beggar cannot keep himself in one state like that. IN WHATEVER STATE FATHER KEEPS THIS BEGGAR IT IS ALRIGHT. If Father keeps this beggar happy, it is alright. If Father keeps this beggar unhappy, weeping, it is alright. Whatever happens is Father's Grace! His WILL! THIS BEGGAR DOESN'T EXIST. This beggar died in 1952. Ever since, only Father exists. FATHER ALONE IS... past, present, future... everywhere Father alone. Father is ALL. No reasoning. No questioning. No question of individual efforts. Whatever condition Father keeps this beggar in, is alright. NO QUESTION OF RIGHT AND WRONG. This beggar doesn't know what is right and what is wrong. NO MIND. No reasoning. No right and wrong. If somebody praises this beggar, this beggar feels happy. If someone abuses also, it is alright. Whatever Father makes this beggar feel is alright.

(to some to us) : So don't expect this beggar to do only what you think is right!

As His words cascaded from His mouth and washed over us with its purity and Truthfulness, we could only fold our hands in humble *Namaskar* in awe and wonder.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar doesn't know what is right and what is wrong. He has no mind. No reasoning. No individual here! So, don't expect this beggar to do only what you think is right!

This revelation of the Divine Beggar reverberated back and forth (in that small verandah of Sannadhi street house) with a force that left us speechless and spell bound, creating an intense atmosphere all around. In the ensuing silence, i was afraid even to breathe loudly as the divine touch of His wisdom was slowly descending into our heart and soul. And then, suddenly Bhagavan smiled - a smile that was so pure, so innocent, so mysterious and beautiful and so typically His! Everyone relaxed into a smile too and the atmosphere changed visibly into one of our usual happy gathering in His holy company.

Soon, a large crowd gathered outside and Bhagavan was back to His brisk "one by one" spiritual ministry. Half-way through, one of the devotees seated opposite, voiced out a prayer, "Swami, I am limited in this body. You have only kept me in this condition of limitations. Only you make me limitless just as you are." At this, Bhagavan gave a sharp, penetrating look toward her, but continued to attend to the people from the queue. When there was a temporary respite, He took out a cigarette, lighted it and turned towards that particular devotee.

- **Bhagavan** : It is my Father who is limitless, all-pervasive. He is everywhere. It is by His will that everything happens. This beggar has no conscience, no decision of right and wrong. What Father wants this beggar to do, that alone this beggar does. This beggar has no existence. Only Father exists. This beggar has told G. before ... once a friend asked this beggar, "Do you feel

happy? What do you gain by all this? Don't you ever feel something lacking in your life?" This beggar said (*with great emotion*), "This beggar does not live for happiness. This beggar lives only for Father's work. Every minute, every thought, every word and every movement, ... every gesture of this beggar is controlled by Father - Father who runs the whole Cosmos." (*Smoking in between*) Father governs us all. He governs this beggar, you and everyone. This beggar is nothing. Do you hear? There is no existence. Only Father here! No conscience, no will of his own, no decision of right and wrong. All washed away! ... Gone, ... totally gone, nothing remains! Do you understand, G.? So, whatever each one thinks that this beggar is! (*He repeated it once again*). So, what Paramacharya says, this beggar cannot follow. Titiksha... forbearance... this beggar cannot be in one state all the time. Whatever state, Father keeps this beggar in, is Perfect. No questioning. For him everything is Father's will. This beggar ceased to exist in 1952. Only Father is everywhere ... limitless ... only Father is ... Father alone is. Do you understand, G., what this beggar means?

Overwhelmed, G. nodded "Yes" with folded hands. By now, quite a few had collected again outside and Bhagavan gestured to the gate-boy to send them in one by one. Even while blessing the devotees as appropriate to their needs and situations, Bhagavan continued with His talk.

- **Bhagavan** : In those days, when this beggar was in Ramana Nagar and coming to the Ashram, MI was very kind to this beggar. He sometimes took this dirty beggar

to his house and gave him some fruits ... fruits maybe all in bad conditions! ... but he would say (*At this point, Bhagavan put his finger on the nose as though in wonder*) ... MI would say, "You must keep all these fruits. Don't waste any of them. Don't throw them..." (*i felt tears rushing to my eyes*. As i wiped them hastily, i heard Bhagavan's voice continuing). You know KSI? He once said ... he was so kind to this beggar generally ... still he said in front of so many people around, pointing to this beggar "He sometimes takes opium" ... because Father had given this madness to this beggar! (*At this, there was a break in Swami's voice and tears in His eyes*) G. whatever people say about this beggar, it is alright. It is all Father's Lila, Father's will, Father's grace!

Mrs R. and i looked at each other in mutual sharing of our tears. There was now a ball in my throat chocking me and threatening to break into sobs. This sharing with her helped...

- **Bhagavan** : However, G., it is these two people, by their kindness, kept this beggar binding to Ramana Nagar. On account of them, this beggar was going to the Ashram. You know, Ramanananda Sarasvati had written "Talks with Ramana Maharshi". If they had not noted down all that we won't be able to read those talks today.

By this time, Bhagavan had throw two empty cigarettes boxes and one empty match box towards me!

- **Bhagavan** (*looking at Volume VI of "The Voice of God"*) : Ra. Ganapati says this is the most important of all the six volumes. This book is yours, G.?

- **G.** (*shaking his head*) : No, it is for you Swami. He has written so in the first page.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh! (*opening on 1st page and reading it out Himself*) :

"With highest regards and deepest love to Sri Sri Yogi Ramsuratkumar".

Ra Ganapati

12.5.93

So, this great devotee of Paramacharya Ra. Ganapati has highest regards and deepest love for this dirty beggar!

Bhagavan seemed delightfully surprised! Only the previous day, one Ramu Sastry came and submitted his Sanskrit composition on Paramacharya at Bhagavan's feet. Bhagavan asked him to recite it and kept the paper in His pocket carefully. Now He took it out and gave to the people sitting opposite. They were frequent visitors to the Kanchi Mutt. By now, a huge crowd had gathered outside and Bhagavan started His "One by one" blessing once again. In between attending to them, He continued to talk.

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling mischievously*) : So this beggar has no conscience, no thinking, no sense of right and wrong! How can you trust him? (*Laughter*) All washed away.

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One who died cannot live again! Only Father exists. So whatever each one thinks, that this beggar is! (Laughter)

Bhagavan's eyes now fell on a file of papers containing Lee's introduction and preface write-ups for a book that was yet to see the print.

- **Bhagavan** : SR wants to bring all the poems of Lee Lozowick in book form. Lee has taken this beggar as his master. So he speaks so highly of this beggar! (Laughter) You see, one can write anything about one's Master! (Laughter) R., will you read out this introduction so that all the friends here can hear?

Thus, Bhagavan granted me another unspoken prayer to Him! While Mrs. R. was reading Lee's introduction loudly with such involvement, Bhagavan kept looking at her every now and then with a smile in self-derision or so it seemed to me!

- **R.** (reading) : "Yogi Ramsuratkumar wears the rags with more nobility than a king ...

Just as she finished the word "King", a boy entered from the line outside.

- **Bhagavan** (with a mischievous grin) : What is your name ?

- **Boy** : Raja (meaning 'King')

(Laughter.)

- **Bhagavan** : Raja comes to this beggar? (*Laughter*)

The boy smiled shyly and left with prasad.

- **R.** (*reading further*) : Lee says here "no one can joke with Yogi Ramsuratkumar". Ha! He doesn't know about Murugesji Swami!

- **Bhagavan** (*laughing*) : Each one says what he thinks.

- **R.** : You are different to each one, Swami.

- **G.** : But among all these varieties (of devotees) there is an underlying unity, Swami.

- **Bhagavan** : What unity, G.?

- **G.** : Peace and Joy, Swami. Everyone who comes here gets them, Swami.

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling*) : Thank you, G. (*To me*) G. has paid tribute to this beggar (*laughter*).

- **R.** (*referring to Lee's words*) : But Swami, there is an air of sincerity in these words. Lee warns the devotees to be alert.

- **Bhagavan** : No, R., Lee warns this beggar, "People will speak any high things. Don't take them for truth but be alert ...! (*Laughter*).

"One by one" blessing was still going on. One "Maami" (a Brahmin housewife, well known to Bhagavan) came in and sat between Bhagavan and me, completely blocking the view, because of which my concentration began to suffer. The tailor's wife was still fanning.

- **Bhagavan** (to her, with concern) : Your hand must be paining. You are doing such hard work for this beggar. Thank you, Amma.

Just then i made a gesture to G. in order to know the page number that he read out from Volume VI. As Bhagavan seemed completely absorbed in His "one by one" work, G. passed on the book itself to me, which of course, did not escape Bhagavan's notice, as always. The book opened on a certain page by itself and i began to see what it was about, when i heard Bhagavan's voice.

- **Bhagavan** : What, G., did she find anything interesting?

- **G.** (taken aback) : No Bhagavan... just to make sure ..

i just babbled something when my friend seated next to me whispered in my ears " " (Terrific Swami) no detail ever escapes Him, however busy He is!" i laughed when my eyes caught on a line in the opened page which had reference to Sri Ramana Maharshi! - Probably the only place where Sri Ramana Bhagavan's Name is mentioned in the entire book of 1330 pages! i became excited by this coincidence that the instant Bhagavan mentioned the word "interesting", i should find a

reference to Sri Ramana Maharshi, in front of those Ramana Bhaktas! Just then by another coincidence, the crowd had cleared outside and Bhagavan ordered the gate-boy to close the gate).

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar would like G. to read that page she has opened on.

Bhagavan continued to smoke. G. read the whole paragraph. It was about the place of Bhakti in Jnana Marga. How Sukha Bhramam, Adi Shankara, Madhu Sudana Sarasvati, Sadhashiva Brahmendral had all composed devotional poetry despite their Advaitic State and most recently in the line, Sri Ramana Maharshi had done on Arunachaleshvara. Throughout the reading, Bhagavan kept blessing the Ramana bhaktas seated there. It was now 12.15 P.M. Bhagavan left everyone with some prasada or the other. As i was alone with Bhagavan, He took some gooseberry juice and accepted some chapatis from me. i asked Him if the French author could use both his French and Indian names for the book. Bhagavan said 'Yes'.

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling*) : D., you would like to read this Volume VI nicely?

Hoping that Bhagavan would lend me the book i said eagerly,

- **D.** : Yes Bhagavan.

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- **Bhagavan** : Then you can buy a book and read.
(*Laughter*)

Around 12.25, i came out with a heart full of joy
and hands full of fruits.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

May 19th, 1993

Feeling absolutely delighted and grateful for that wonderful summer vacation (from the college where I was teaching) rich with Bhagavan's *Darshan* and events, I walked fast cheerfully, unmindful of the burning sun overhead, from Ramana Nagar to Bhagavan's 'Kutil' in Sannidhi street. Little did I know what chastisement and lessons awaited an ignorant fool like me, in that small veranda space where the Divine Beggar conducted His Dharbar in those days. Previous to my coming to Yogi Ramsuratkumar, I had often thought that the fruits, flowers and the like, not to mention the verbal benediction, were the only kind of prasad one received from the Mahatmas. But, after my experiences with Bhagavan, I slowly began to understand that there were subtler varieties of prasad (however disconcerting) much more valuable and precious to one's own transformation. If we could not accept the corrective measures of a Mahatma, which are, in truth, veiled blessings, with the same cheer as we do the other prasads we would indeed be missing some finer features of our spiritual growth, far more, the wisdom that went with them.

MA DEVAKI'S DIARY

The day was 19th May 1993 and as was my wont, I reached His residence around 9.45 A.M. From the length of the queue, I understood I had no hope of sitting anywhere with Bhagavan in view! Now that I had the self-appointed task of noting down my observations mentally, I should at least be in the hearing range - was my anxious prayer as I moved on (with the crowd steadily) from the tail end of the line. When the call did come eventually, I found, to my delightful surprise, my usual seat alone empty, in an otherwise closely packed veranda! I offered some freshly plucked *Manoranjithams* from *Sudama* before that very personification of grace and seated myself gratefully. As the line continued on, one man prostrated before Him with his offering still in hand. That seemed to annoy Bhagavan.

- *Bhagavan* (*somewhat irritated (in Tamil)*) : Should not do that, brother, take it back.

The man was obviously upset but he had the grace to obey Swami instantly and that seemed to please Bhagavan. Bhagavan's face became soft and He dropped some sugar candies into that man's hand. Indeed, how many times He had pointed out that we should go to Him empty handed (both literally and figuratively) at least while receiving prasad! Ignorant as we are to the ways of Mahatmas and their well meaning gestures, we often found ourselves in the sorry position of denying the very help that we come to seek from Him! He often said it was not merely a plaintain or sugar-candy but a communication, a transmission from Father. Just then, a lady professor known to me well and her brother, a local

auditor, were there outside. The lady gestured to me from outside to come out for a minute. Afraid that it was not the decorum in front of Bhagavan, I tried to ignore her. But then, no detail ever escaped Bhagavan however busy He was! He asked me straight :

- **Bhagavan** : What is it?

- **Myself** : Professor S. is there outside... she wants me to come out for a second...

- **Bhagavan** : Oh! Alright, go out for a SECOND, then.

Conscious of His emphasis on the last word, I ran back quickly with the message that Auditor 'R' had come with the Trust papers and that he wanted to keep them at His feet, and take His blessings.

- **Bhagavan** : Alright. Let him come in.

The Auditor put the papers at His Feet, took them back in a second and went out promptly! Not a word was exchanged - Nor did Bhagavan so much as touch the papers! That kept troubling my mind (which had yet to learn so much). The one who bestowed endless grace on the common crowd that sought all worldly things, should be so 'casual' with something so important as Trust papers! The inner grumbling continued in "righteous indignation...! God, how strange and funny the human mind is! Many and varied are its vagaries and follies. I even thought I should find out later from the Auditor how he felt! Bhagavan suddenly got up and went in. When He

came out, His face had such glow and freshness as if He has just had a bath! It reminded me of a comment a foreigner once made in my hearing, in a similar situation, "Wow, the guy looks like he had just had a million dollar bath!" As an unconscious smile broke out on my face, Bhagavan came and stood right in front of me to bless the people seated behind right upto the end of veranda, in that most captivating majesty that was all His own. Then He came back to His seat and continued His routine "One by one" ministry. When there was a respite from the crowd and the gate closed, He called the professor gentleman seated in the front and introduced him to me, which in itself was a strange gesture, coming from Bhagavan.

- **Bhagavan** : He once came here, sat for four hours, then went back to his place. He wrote a letter and said that he was sorry he could not talk to this beggar even a word!

Some warning belles began to sound in the corner of my mind.

- **Professor** (*remorsefully*) : Mannicchudeunga Sami. (Please forgive me, Swami).

- **Bhagavan** : It is alright. He wrote "Though I sat for four hours with you, I am sorry I could not talk a word." Um... Um... That is the attitude of people! They want this beggar to talk! Um... Um... sari (alright). That's how they understand this beggar! Um... Um... Sari...

- **Professor** (*again apologetically*) : Whatever mistake i have committed knowingly, or unknowingly, please Swamiji, you must forgive me - please forgive me.

- **Bhagavan** : It is alright.

Thoughts began to race through my mind, chaotically - How many of us commit this mistake and so often at that! Instead of being grateful for whatever we get from Him, without the faith that what He gives is only what we need! This applied to me too - That I happened to be a professor also and that I had sat in His Divine presence for quite some days by then, was a matter of pride and precious value to me. Yet there I was, sitting before that embodiment of divine wisdom thinking He had not even touched the papers! Whatever He did or said or not said was ABSOLUTELY RIGHT. It was not common intelligence that was working in Him. He was VERILY THE CHIT, the Divine Cosmic intelligence that runs the whole cosmos. I felt very uneasy and ashamed, yet not completely regretful, for, the curiosity still clouded my keener understanding. Later when I rang upto the Auditor, he said "I did not feel that Bhagavan had either touched the papers nor talked for I had mental contact with Him. I had a strong wish to submit the papers at His feet before leaving, yet could not go to Him. He somehow made me come to Him and my wish was fulfilled. What's more, some other problem also got solved after His *Darshan*." I felt like a complete fool - thoroughly ashamed and chastened, I could only beg His forgiveness again and again.

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Just then one lady came with 2 small girls. She used to come from Bombay with one girl and one boy. Bhagavan recognised her instantly.)

- **Bhagavan** (*to her*) : Where is the other child?

- **The Lady** (not hearing Him properly) : She is Soumya. We have brought milk for you.

- **Bhagavan** (*patiently*) : Where is the other child?

- **The Lady** (*surprised and happy that He remembered her other child*) : The boy is in Bombay. He could not come Swamiji.

- **Bhagavan** said kindly : My Father blesses you and your whole family in Bombay

and permitted her to sit for a while. One professor (it seemed to be a day for professors!) came from Madurai with a daughter and son and a big 'mala'. He asked Bhagavan if he could sit. The whole place was already crowded.)

- **Bhagavan** : You see it is a small place. Where is the seat?

Then the professor described his family problems and said that other members were waiting outside.

- **Bhagavan** : They can come and see. You can go.

They left a little disappointed.

Next came a man whom I recognised - his father was a famous literary man.

- **Man** : I am the son of so and so. My son is coming from America. I am going to receive him.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh... um... um...

- **Man** : Do you want me to go?

- **Bhagavan** (*without any expression*) : If you want to go, you go.

His tone suggested to me that one should not ask such questions to Bhagavan. Once Bhagavan told me how sometimes people even asked him whether they could go to one room from another and wasted His Father's precious time. The man left, but clearly disappointed. The "one by one" *darshan* continued for some more time. When there was a gap, Bhagavan asked me to read the 13th chapter of "*Meendum Shankara Vijayam*" (The visit of Shankara again), a serial on Sri Kanchi Maha Perivaya Chandrashekarendra Sarasvati, very dear to the heart of Bhagavan. It never failed to draw a deep response from Bhagavan and that day He kept smiling all through even as He continued smoking.

- **Myself** : Bhagavan, today I met Mr. G who narrated some interesting episodes from the lives of Mahatmas.

- **Bhagavan** (*lighting a cigarette*) : Is it! (*cheerfully*)
What did he say? Let us hear about it.

- **Myself** : He said, whatever Swami arranges we must accept. We mustn't look for a logical understanding of everything the Mahatmas do. Then He gave examples. One from Nisargadatta Maharaj, one from Sheshadri Swami and a third from J. Krishnamurti.

- **Bhagavan** : Tell us about Nisargadatta Maharaj.

- **Myself** : Nisargadatta Maharaj used to give talks between 10 and 11 A.M. One day a girl of 23 years wearing a pendant of Rajnesh was begging to be allowed in for his talk. It was his usual habit that he would look around as soon as he entered. That day his eyes fell on this girl, who was seated in the front row. He pointed to her and asked,

"- *Who is your Guru?*

"- *Bhagavan Rajnesh.*"

"- *You can go to him.*"

"- *I came all the way only to see you, only to listen to your talk. I started early morning just for this.*"

"- *No, no. You should leave immediately.*"

The girl began to beg again and again. Maharaj's face became red with anger. He walked to his seat, sat with one leg over the other and turned his face away. He would not start the talk either. Finally the girl left. Still, his anger continued for another 7 minutes! That is the time one takes to reach the main road! After 7 minutes, his countenance changed dramatically. He whispered to Mr. G cheerfully, who was seated near, "she NEEDED

that", and smiled. Then everyone in the room also relaxed visibly and smiled.

- **Bhagavan** (*grinning*) : You continue with J.K.'s episode.

- **Myself** : Before J.K. passed away, he made one last visit to Madras. Hearing about it, Mr. G. persuaded his friends to attend it saying, "These Mahatmas would drop their body all of a sudden. Let's make the best while they exist in the body." It seems two of his friends started to cry at the mere hearing of it.

- **Bhagavan** (*nodding His head*) : 6 months before he passed away, he gave a hint.

- **Myself** (*understanding dawning*) : Oh..., I see! When these people attended his last Madras meeting, there were nearly 3000 people.

When J.K. came and sat for his lecture he saw one foreigner in the front row sitting and staring at him. J.K. pointed to that man and said, "You are staring at me. It is disturbing, please go out." The foreigner began to plead, "I was only staring at you in admiration. Please permit me to stay." J.K. said, "No, until you leave the place, I will not start the talk." Seeing all these, one of Mr. G.'s friends complained to Mr. G. in a whisper, "What is this! Why should J.K. insist on his leaving, especially after his apologising. It is common courtesy... 3000 people here. Why couldn't this foreigner be permitted?" Mr. G. hushed her saying he would explain later on, which he did with the example of Nisargadatta Maharaj's lecture episode.

(Bhagavan kept smiling throughout even while he continued smoking. The local attendant of Bhagavan came and went straight inside. Minutes later, he brought lemon juice to Bhagavan in His coconut shell.)

- **Bhagavan** (*drinking the juice*) : You are going to the office, J. ?

- **The attendant** : Yes Swami.

Bhagavan left him with some prasad. Then Bhagavan looked at me as if to say 'Yes'.

- **Myself** : Mr. G. said, "Whatever these Mahatmas do, there is a definite purpose. Better not to try to understand. We should learn to trust their wisdom and love and surrender unquestioningly."

- **Bhagavan** (*with a merry glint*) : Is it! But J.K. Nisargadatta Maharaj, my Master Swami Ramdas are all Mahatmas. Don't think whatever this beggar does is right... (*Laughter*).

- **Myself** : We don't even think of you as Mahatma. To us, you are really Bhagavan. That is why we call you Bhagavan.

- **Bhagavan** (*grinning*) : Oh... You mean PARAMATMA! Not Mahatma! Then you should know Paramatma is EVERYWHERE. He is all pervasive. He is not confined to the body.

What a hit! What an irrefutable logic! Why do I rush to Him everyday for *Darshan* and get agitated when there isn't any? How beautifully He has pointed out the basic flaw in my attitude towards Him!... I was arrested in my thinking as I heard Bhagavan speak again.

- **Bhagavan** : Paramatma is all pervasive. Beggars like this come and go. But Paramatma is eternal.

I hung my head in shame, at the thought how I had reduced Him to a mere body at times, despite calling Him Bhagavan all the time. The word 'Bhagavan' should also bring to mind that it stands for, whenever I use it... Again Bhagavan spoke breaking the train of my thoughts.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar is no Bhagavan. He does things in madness, not so agreeable to people all the time. He is so mad, he may do bad things also.

- **Myself** : When you are mad, you do mad things, not bad things, Bhagavan.

This spontaneous remark drew such gales of laughter and He roared again and again, slapping His thighs loudly, repeating what i said. All who sat around there also began to laugh. It seemed to me the whole world blossomed forth and laughed with him! As there was a crowd once again, Bhagavan started his 'One by one' blessing. When the gate closed for a gap, Bhagavan said,

- **Bhagavan** : What about Seshadri Swami?

and smiled.

- **Myself** : Seshadri Swami had the habit of picking up pieces of broken mud pots and throwing them at people sometimes. One day, one shepherd boy approached him. Seshadri Swami, for no apparent reason, began to beat him up with those pot pieces! Even blood began to ooze out of the wounds. A crowd collected around. Some of them were upset and some disconcerted. Yet the shepherded boy himself kept smiling all through! Two months later, one foreign couple came to Tiruvannamalai, saw the boy and adopted him. They taught him their family trade. He became a millionaire later! Mr. G said that even the anger of Mahatmas is a great blessing, if only we know how to receive.

- **Bhagavan** : There used to be so many complaints about Seshadri Swami.

Bhagavan began to reminisce about His Ramanashram days. He said Ramanananda Sarasvati and T.K. Sundaresa Iyer were kind to Him. They kept Him going to the Ashram.

- **Myself** : Bhagavan, they say, you were staying in that house - what is now called "*Mithra Nilayam*."

- **Bhagavan** : Yes. At that time one Subhulakshmi Amma was the owner of the house. But she lived in Bombay. One Kokila Amma used to collect the rent.

- *Myself* : Once that Malayalamma next to Mithra Nilayam said that she had seen you prepare chapatis.

- *Bhagavan* : No. (*Emphatically*) THIS BEGGAR NEVER PREPARED ANY FOOD EVEN BEFORE HE CAME DOWN TO THE SOUTH. THIS BEGGAR LIVED ONLY BY BEGGING ALL ALONG. They used to say, "This one is no Ramana Bhakta. He is a "SADHYA" SAMI". (Sadhya means untamed). Ayo! This "Sadhya Sami" was treated like a mad fellow.

There were tears in Bhagavan's eyes and a break in His voice. I felt terrible. I had heard about that period once before. But that they had nicknamed Him and teased Him badly was news to me and it was difficult to swallow.

- *Myself* : Was it all in 1959 or earlier?

- *Bhagavan* : Everything was only after 1959. In 1948, when this beggar came here, he hardly stayed for 2 months. At that time - this beggar might have told you before - Swami A. and B.R. used to sit under the Asvatha tree near the 'Pali' tank sometimes. They have cut it now. Ramaswami Pillai cut it. This beggar tried to stop him. But he said, "What do you know about this?" B.R. and Swami A. used to sit under it and talk. They would sometime kindly permit this beggar to listen to them.

How terrible it all sounds - what He must have gone through at that time, I had better not think now.

MA DEVAKI'S DIARY

- **Bhagavan** (*suddenly with a smile*) : Has this beggar told you about the peacock coming to the Ashram?

- **Myself** (*eagerly*) : No Bhagavan.

- **Bhagavan** : Once a peacock came to the Ashram. He was singing a song, a sound of "music"! He went near Bhagavan Ramana. Then the Sarvadhikkari came and drove him out saying "Po, Po, Po" (go, go, go). Then Bhagavan Ramana said, "Why are you asking him to go out of here? He came here as a humble devotee." Then Ramana Maharshi turned to the peacock and said, "You tell him to go out of here." They said later on that after that incident, the Sarvadhikkari went to the office and kept saying "Ramana Bhagavan has asked me to go out." (*Smiling*) The peacock was making musical sound.

- **Myself** (*gaining a little courage*) : Someone said that at *Mithra Nilayam* where you were living, the lock was broken several times.

- **Bhagavan** : The lock was there. The key was also there. But this beggar could not open it! They did it in such a way that this beggar could not open it! They did something to it - impossible for this beggar to go there anymore. (Suddenly) What is the time?

- **Myself** : 11:45 A.M.

Bhagavan began to send people one by one. Knowing that I was pushing my luck too far, I asked hesitantly,

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- *Myself* : What year did it happen?

- *Bhagavan* : Oh God! It was so many years ago!

His "Oh God" sent a warning bell that I became alarmed. I shut my mouth promptly but my heart felt heavy from the information He had given. Just then I heard Bhagavan call my name and He promptly packed me off immediately with some prasad.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAKTAN

24th May, 1993

On the 24th May 1993, i arrived at Bhagavan's place around 9.30 a.m., with three foreign ladies. They had come to Sudama earlier and begged me to take them to see Bhagavan. Normally i would not have obliged because Bhagavan had expressed in more ways than one His displeasure if i went in new company. But as they happened to be friends of an American lady whom Bhagavan knew and who had helped me initially so much in Ramana Nagar, i felt bound to take them. So, there we were, even half an hour before time! The wooden door seemed locked from within and the grillgate too well-latched. Though the veranda looked empty from outside for all appearances, to me it seemed full and vibrant with His Subtle Presence!

While standing out side, the ladies began to ask me about Bhagavan's ways. They said that only the previous day, they had climbed up the hill to see one swami but only to be chased away with a stick, by the swami himself! They said that they were so frightened to see any other Swami and that was one of the reasons why they sought my help! They wanted to know if Bhagavan had ever done such bizarre things. i reassured them that Bhagavan had always exhibited highest culture where Father's work was concerned, however unpredictable He might be seen in His divine madness.

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Bhagavan came out at 9.45 and opened the grill-gate. He looked up at the Mantap, probably to call the gate boy. Guessing so and gathering courage, i called out the boy by name and he came running down the steps. Bhagavan sat down on the plain mat, after carefully arranging His fan, stick and the coconut shell. Immediately after i was called in.

Bhagavan : What did the Sastri say? (That was as regards the *upanayanam* of the son of a Chennai devotee, to be held at Tiruvannamalai in the first week of June.)

Myself : The local Sastri said, he would himself arrange all the other Sastries.

Bhagavan smiled happily.

Myself : (*Hesitantly*) Bhagavan, three friends of that American lady whom Bhagavan knows, have come for your Darshan. One is from Canada, one from Denmark one from United State of America. They are Ambal, Joy and Gopali. They are very anxious to sit for a little while in your gracious presence.

Bhagavan : (*looking in their direction through the closed grill-gate*) We shall see.

Bhagavan became silent for a few minutes as if He was considering my request. Then He said:

Bhagavan : Alright, you call them now.

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They came and sat opposite, after prostrating before Him. The painter-teacher from a Fine Arts College near Tanjore had also come with a local friend. One of the foreign ladies looked at me as if to remind me that she wanted to ask some questions to Bhagavan.

Myself : Bhagavan, Ambal has some questions to ask if Bhagavan would kindly permit.....

Bhagavan : Oh! Alright, (*Pointing a seat opposite to Him*) Let her come here. Where are you from?

Ambal : Denmark

Bhagavan : We have a Danish Mission here. They have no orphanage for ladies. They teach something.

Now Bhagavan suddenly smiled and the lady smiled too, relaxing.

Bhagavan : What do you want to ask?

Ambal : How to go beyond mind?

Bhagavan : Oh, God! Oh, God! How to go beyond mind?..... that.....that!

He put His hand to His eyes and laughed just as an elder would laugh when a child asked something far beyond its understanding.

Bhagavan (*Kindly*) : This beggar has not gone beyond mind. How to tell you how to go beyond mind? This beggar cannot tell you.

(Did He mean that ignorant as we were and still far from the right perspective of the Divine, it would be difficult for us to understand? That we needed much more preparation for that?)

Ambal : Will you help me to break my ego?

Bhagavan : It is very difficult to break one's ego (*laughter*).

Ambal : How to improve?

Bhagavan kept quiet.

Bhagavan : Perhaps, if you help others as much as possible-if you try to be less selfish and help others as much as possible, then you may improve.

Ambal : Can I do Japa? Of Lord's Name?

Bhagavan : Do it.

Ambal : What name can I chant?

Bhagavan : Any name of the Lord you like. Try to help others and keep chanting the Name. Who gave you this name, Ambal?

Ambal : Mother in Kerala

Bhagavan (*laughing*) : Amirthanandamayi. She gives all these foreigners Indian names. Has she come to Denmark?

Ambal : No, only to Sweden - the neighbouring country.

Bhagavan : What do you do?

Ambal : I am thinking of starting an agency so that I could take people on spiritual tours to India.

Bhagavan : Do it. Father's Grace.

(A Pause)

Bhagavan : For ordinary people like this beggar, it is not possible to go beyond mind. But we can keep chanting the Name as often as possible.

As always Mahatmas do, Bhagavan spoke from the point of view of the questioner. Also perhaps because they are the embodiment of first culture.

Ambal : Will you help me in Meditation?

Bhagavan looked at her in that deep, penetrating way of His and then raised His hand in blessings.

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Joy : Please give me health - otherwise my mind goes down and down.

She began to cry.

Bhagavan (*Softly*) : My Father blesses you with good health.

Gopali : Please Swamiji, bless me also!.... that I should not have jealousy. Also I should be healthy. I eat too much even when I am not hungry!

Bhagavan burst into laughter and thereafter kept on laughing again and again until the three of them left.

Bhagavan : My Father blesses you, both.

He raised both His hands in benediction.

All the three : Can we come tomorrow also?

Bhagavan : Yes. You may do so.

He left them with many fruits, smiling all through. The time was 11.55. He gave me a bagful of mangoes, oranges, apples, lemons, bananas.....! and left me also.

May 29th, 1993

A weekend darshan

It was 29th May, 1993, a Saturday. As usual, we three Sudama Sisters were promptly back in Tiruvannamalai for the weekend Darshan of Bhagavan Yogi Ramsuratkumar. It was already 10 a.m. when we rushed to His place and were permitted in immediately. V. was given the fan. Then we began to chant, after Bhagavan signaled to us. When I turned casually to the side of the gate, I saw the fourth Sudama sister (from Madras), V.'s face in the crowd outside and announced to Bhagavan. Bhagavan nodded to the gate-boy and she entered with two of her relatives. V. sat next to Vk and next to her was a lady from Madras who was there even the previous day. V.'s brother sat on the lower verandah, opposite to us.

Bhagavan: So V. has been to Vaishnav Devi! Tell us about it, V.

She describes her trip in all detail.

V.: By your Grace, though I preponed the trip and was worried about it also, every thing worked out well. Two persons were with me all the time. I had wonderful

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Darshan. They have closed the usual way. We don't have to crawl and go now. The other side is open and we can walk straight in. The first day, as soon as I went in, the pujari dropped some coins as Prasad and then pushed me out! I stayed the night. The next day I had wonderful Darshan in the morning at 4.

Bhagavan : You stayed the night there!

V.: Yes, Bhagavan.

Bhagavan : You have got the coins here? – Kubera coins?

V.: Yes Bhagavan – here in the bag.

Bhagavan: Alright, let us see them.

She took out three 10 paisa coins. Bhagavan took them in hand.

Bhagavan: So, this beggar has become Kubera now! (laughed and all joined in).

Then He gestured to me to come and get it and pass it around.

Bhagavan: Let everybody see it.

So, very religiously, all of us held them in hand, had a good look at them and passed them on. Then it came back to V.'s hand.

Bhagavan: Give it back to this beggar, V... this beggar wants to hold “Kubera Kāsu” – he wants to become Kubera! (*bursts of laughter*).

Bhagavan (to me): Did you know she was coming?

D: No, Bhagavan. I spotted her in the crowd.

V. (Apologetically): There was no time. So I could not write and inform you.

Bhagavan : It’s alright. Whatever happens is alright. What ever happens is perfect.

From morning, my mind was grumbling over something – this could very well be my much required lesson to learn!

V. : I went on a pony.

Bhagavan: (laughing): You did not fall down?

V. : No, Bhagavan, by your Grace! The people there, the pilgrims were full of devotion. They kept sating loudly throughout, ‘Jor Se Bholo Jai Mata Di’ (victory to Mother!) with such fervour. I could see all kinds of people from all parts of India.

Bhagavan : Eh...eh...! Such pilgrim centres of India bring all the people of India together. People are united at

these centres. They bring unity – this spiritual fervour is the basis for unity of India.

V. : Yes, such fervour and devotion I saw there.

D: Generally, the devotion that we come across in North India, seems so much more than in South India.

Bhagavan (*smoking*): No, in India everybody is devoted in some way or the other. What huge temples we have here! What architecture!... cannot be compared with anything else! In India, for everyone, the centre of life is God – that is the Indian character! (*Thoughtfully*)...in villages, what fervour we see in South India... Mariamma, Pacchamma... Muthu Mariamma, Draupathamma... some deity... may not be Vaishnavi but everyone is devoted in some way or the other.

Bhagavan now looked at the “ kāsū” (the coins) saying:

Bhagavan: So this beggar has become Kubera! (*laughter*).

He then handed the coins to V.. Then people were allowed in one by one. Today many had been keeping Rs. 1 & Rs 2 notes as offering at the feet of Bhagavan and Bhagavan kept throwing them to me! One man from Singapore came inside and kept three \$10 notes.

Bhagavan: What are these?

Singapore man: \$10 singapore notes.

Bhagavan: They are Singapore currencies. How can we use it here? We have to change it in the bank. If we go to the bank, will they not question how we got it? Will they give it?

Singapore man: No, they won't question. We are tourists. They will give the money, no matter whoever takes it.

Bhagavan: Alright, thank you!

The man became so happy that Bhagavan was accepting it. But he gave the dollar notes also to me, right in front of him. By now, I had quite a collection of notes! The Singapore man left.

D: Why are the devotees given coins? There must be some significant story behind it.

Bhagavan: What does it matter, whether it is a coin or something else? It is PRASAD. You don't bother. This beggar also sometimes gives coins to people! Then they say, "we don't want all these things, (with a frown) we don't want all these things. We want your blessings!" even people with great devotion and knowledge say like this! They don't understand. Whatever it is, it is Prasadam.

I thought to myself, "how He uses an opportunity to make a point!" and said quite meekly, "yes, Bhagavan."

V. : Bhagavan, next issue of “ Gnana Vazhi” has come; it is in the car.

Bhagavan (*still smoking*): Just wait.

After a few minutes, He permitted her to go and bring it. She read out her article on Bhagavan.

Bhagavan : We can worship God in any form, in any time. Some people do without form also. Muslims worship the formless Allah. Everyone is devoted to some Form, some name – even Formless.

Bhagavan (*looking at V.'s relatives*): These people are also going to your place with you?

V. : Yes Bhagavan.

One man came and fixed 4th of June for Justice Venkatasami to have Darshan of Bhagavan.

D : The meeting is on the third evening (it was a meeting of devotee to be held in Madras for the collection of funds for the Tiruvannamalai ashram)

Bhagavan: He cannot attend.

V. : They asked me to write on behalf of the ashram.

Bhagavan: Do it.

V. : Mrs. I, wife of the music Director, rang me up a few times. I was not available. Then I contacted her. She said she would attend the meeting on the third. Her husband is abroad for a month.

Mrs P. came with juice and milk. Bhagavan looked at the two ladies seated opposite Him. Both had the same name.

Bhagavan (*mischievously*): Do you both know each other? (*laughter*)

Bhagavan: do you know about Balaji?

(People began to come in one by one)

V. : The actor? His sister was my classmate. I know them well.

V.'s **brother**: According to astrology, the planet Saturn is passing from sixth to the 7th house – it is very bad for India.

Bhagavan (raising his hands and pronouncing a great benediction): IT WILL BE ALRIGHT. NOTHING TO WORRY. MY FATHER'S BLESSING!

My God! He could put things in order in the cosmic level was not new to me. Yet this blessing overwhelmed me and reminded me of Papa Ramdas saying “Mahatmas can play football with the planets”. Another time, Bhagavan himself, perhaps in an unguarded moment, had

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proclaimed that He was the cosmic controller! All I could do now was gape at Him when voice rang out again:

Bhagavan : Now this beggar will leave you people.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

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May 30th, 1993

The day was 30th May 1993. As it was a Sunday, there was a long queue even at 09.40 A.M., waiting before Bhagavan's residence near Theradi Mandap. The sun was already shining in all its hot brilliance - indeed, it had been an oppressive summer. As i walked fast, all my way from Ramana Nagar, i was sweating profusely and the sight of that long line which had already reached two-thirds of the street, did little to ease up my discomfort. But the view of Bhagavan from where i was and the thought of the awaited closer *Darshan* further on, was great comfort and i began to relax. However, i could not help wondering how long it would take to go in, when i suddenly heard my name announced by the gate-keeper. Overwhelmed by His '*avyaga karuna*' (causeless grace), i rushed in and prostrated before His beautiful divine form. Almost immediately, He gestured to me to start the chanting of His Name which i did. Bhagavan began to attend to people one by one as the queue moved on steadily. That day, He was mostly silent, except perhaps for an occasional pat on the back of someone or His familiar greeting "*Ram Ram*". One hand busy with a burning cigarette, with the other hand He kept dropping some prasad or the other into the hands of the Bhaktas who came. However, His bewitching smile, His care and concern, and His radiant face, never failed to fascinate

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people and gratified and grateful, everyone returned with a beaming smile.

There were a few though, who came with more expectations than a quick *darshan* and they walked out with a certain look of disappointment. But they too were hovering around outside, unable to leave the place. As ever, i sat watching Him at work and the atmosphere became soothing and peaceful.

With the chanting going on steadily, i was soon lulled into a semi-snooze! The previous day had been somewhat heavy and i had stayed up late into the night over some work. Coupled with that, the hurried walk in the hot sun had taken its toll on my body and spirit. The chanting became a drone as i helplessly began to doze off. However i stole a glance or two at Him now and then, whenever i 'surfaced'! He seemed absolutely indifferent to our droning on. i thought to myself cosily "Oh, it is O.K. It is the routine 'one by one' today. Nothing particularly interesting that would demand an alert listening" and once again fell into a comfortable nap! Around 11.10, i was startled into a wide wakefulness, as one Mr R. entered with a Swami and a van-load of people. They crowded pell-mell into that small veranda in great bustle and the discipline Bhagavan so loved and insisted on, was all forgotten. The ladies particularly, began to sit in any available space and soon others followed too. Bhagavan had to say nearly 3 times to Mr. R. that they could all leave and not crowd that small place. At long last, Mr. R. overcame his hesitation and carried out Bhagavan's order.

Now the Swami and Mr. R. alone remained of the group. Suddenly Bhagavan smiled curiously at the Swami (or so it seemed to me!) and i thought i even detected a charming twinkle in His eyes.

- **Bhagavan** (to Mr. R.) : Was Swami wearing these sannyas robes even last time?

- **Mr. R.** : Yes Swamiji.

(The visiting Swami had a diamond ring and a gold watch on one hand. The other hand seemed polio-attacked).

- **Bhagavan** : Where are you coming from?

- **Swami** : From Madras, Baba.

Now the Swami got up and prostrated saying "Shivarpanam" (Surrender to Shiva). Bhagavan smiled and turned to me saying "Ramarpanam, Krishnarpanam!"

- **Bhagavan** : What has brought Swami to this dirty beggar?

- **Swami** (in adoration) : I had instruction from God yesterday, "You go and meet the Baba in Tiruvannamalai", so I came here today, to get your blessings, Baba.

- **Bhagavan** (pointing His index finger over His head) : All blessings come from Father. All instructions come from Father. This beggar is nothing. He can only beg and receive.

- **Swami** : Father is not somewhere. He is sitting before me. All instructions come through you, Baba.

Bhagavan kept quiet. Then He suddenly got up and went in, closing the wooden door firmly after Him. In a few minutes, the door opened again and all our eyes were fixed on the doorway. He appeared on the threshold and draped Himself so gracefully, so majestically, so divinely. It was a magnificent sight and one that took my breath away! I suddenly felt the door, the veranda and all who sat around fading off into non existence and saw only a powerful divine effulgence that engulfed me in a unique bliss of peace. In hardly a few seconds, He moved down the doorstep breaking the spell and the magic moment passed on. He looked at the Swami curiously once again and laughed His captivating laughter. Then He showed a picture of Nayana to the Swami.

- **Swami** (after a close look at the picture) : I know Shyama Charan. He is a Shirdi Baba devotee.

- **Bhagavan** : He came to Ramanashram with his devotee.

- **Swami** : Did he come and see you, Baba?

- **Bhagavan** : No. He stayed at Ramanashram. But he sent his devotees to bless this beggar. Swami also has come to bless this beggar. (*Laughter*).

- **Swami** : I came to take blessings from you Baba. I am your servant. You are FATHER.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar has not seen Father. This beggar is nothing. Father alone is! He is everywhere - omnipresent, all pervasive, total. Bodies like this come and go. But my Father is Eternal. Beggars like this come and go. But my Father is Eternal. Father alone exists. This beggar knows ONLY ONE EXISTENCE - THAT OF FATHER!

- **Swami** : You are a relative of Lord Shiva. I am only a servant of Lord Shiva!

Bhagavan smiled and continued smoking. One local lady sitting opposite to Bhagavan, had been fanning Him from the time the session started, much to the envy of some of us! The Swami turned to her once or twice as if to say something but contained. There was by now, a big crowd outside once again and Bhagavan began His 'one by one' spiritual ministry. Every one of them was attended to with the same care and concern, though some had the extra fortune of a radiant smile from Him. But never anyone went empty handed as He Himself often used to assure so, verbally.

The steady flow of visitors was suddenly interrupted as a man tried to force himself in saying,

"Tell Sami that Ganesh has come. Avar ennathan mudalla koopiduvār (He will call only me first)." But Bhagavan remained totally unimpressed and indifferent. However, the man proceeded straight to Bhagavan and stood right in front of Him. With an air of familiarity, he began to say in Hindi "I am Ganesh, the policeman... when you were living near the Railway Station...". He further went on to say that he was going through some suffering from which he wanted some relief. Then he sat down without His permission.

Another man came from Uttar Pradesh and said that he had been sent by one Guruji known to Bhagavan. All through, Bhagavan listened without any impression whatsoever. The man from Uttar Pradesh, probably a Tamilian, spoke in visible agitation, "so much suffering in the family in Tambaram. I am not going to see any other Mahatmas here afterwards. I have come to you with the faith that my suffering will come to an end." Bhagavan looked at him deeply and continued smoking. In the meantime, that Ganesh turned to the lady with the fan and began to pester her saying, "Give me the fan. I shall fan a little." The lady was obviously in confusion and did not know how to respond. She knew she couldn't do anything unless Bhagavan ordered so. Somewhat embarrassed, she looked at Bhagavan expectantly.

- **Bhagavan** (*folding His hands in Namaskar*) : Ganesh (*in tamil*) not do that.

It was now Swami's turn to ask the lady!

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- **Swami** : Please give the fan to me. Let me do it. (He repeated it 2 or 3 times).

- **Lady** (*hesitantly*) : Avarai Kelungo (Ask Him).

- **Bhagavan** (*to Swami*) : That is her work. Let her do her work. It is not your work. You do your work.

- **Swami** (*alert*) : Tell me, Baba, what work should I do? What is the mission of my life?

Bhagavan became silent. He was now busy smoking. Then He left Ganesh and the other man with prasad. Now again, Bhagavan looked at Swami with a twinkle that was fast becoming familiar to me and smile.

- **Swami** : I have to go to America, Baba. I want your blessings.

- **Bhagavan** : Oh!... Swami is very... DYNAMIC!... (*smile*). He is doing hard work. Swami does Homam?

- **Swami** : Yes. Koti Rudra Homam. I want to finish it in one year. That is my ambition.

- **Bhagavan** (*with a teasing smile*) : Oh! Swami is very dynamic! This beggar is lazy, idle! He cannot do any work. Swami works hard.

- **Swami** : You don't have to do any work Baba. You are the son of the Lord. You are a relative of Shiva. I am only a servant. Only servants have to do the work, Baba.

The reply drew smiles from all around in happy agreement. Then, Swami showed a Tamil magazine to Bhagavan. There were many pictures of the Swami in that.

- **Swami** : Baba, what is the mission of my life? Please, tell me. You MUST tell me.

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar doesn't know anything. (*Gesturing with both hands as if to say "no use"*). This beggar is lazy. Swami works hard.

- **Swami** : Baba, you must tell me this time. What is the mission of my life? If you don't say, I will not leave this place! I will stay with you. I will serve you all my life. I will not leave the place. Only if you say, I will leave.

Bhagavan kept on looking at him all through and the smoking continued.

- **Bhagavan** : My Master Swami Ramdas initiated this beggar into Ramnam and said, "Don't forget this Name. Go on chanting it." Ever since, this beggar has been doing that. This beggar has not seen Father. This beggar is doing what his Master Swami Ramdas instructed. This beggar is not worried about seeing Father or the mission of his life. This beggar is doing what his Guru instructed. So this beggar thinks that the mission of everybody's life is not to forget God, but to remember Him always, to chant His Name always. This beggar has no mission. This beggar does no work. The mission of everyone's life

is only to remember God always, not to forget Him. That's all.

Bhagavan was smoking all through.

- *Bhagavan* (to Mr. R.) : How is the Governor?

- *Mr. R.* : He is well Swamiji. (A relative of Mr. R., the Governor used to visit Bhagavan whenever he could).

- *Bhagavan* (to Swami) : Come and sit here.

Bhagavan pointed a place next to Himself. When Swami came and sat, Bhagavan held Swami's handicapped hand so tenderly and began to stroke it up and down, with the back of His right hand. With His left hand, He continued to smoke. Bhagavan also put His hand on Swami's *Sahasrara* (the scalp). Again and again Bhagavan repeated the same gestures, sometimes with half closed eyes. Swami's countenance changed dramatically. He had closed his eyes now. There was no more curiosity to know the mission of his life nor any anxiety. His face was peaceful now and no words came out of his mouth. The whole atmosphere became charged in the gripping presence of Bhagavan and we too had stopped our chanting without realising!

- *Bhagavan* (breaking the silence, but still holding the hand of the Swami) : J., do you know the Swami?

J., a local attendant of Bhagavan, shook his head as if to say "no".

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- **Bhagavan** : Last time you had given your name as Guru Sripada Sri Vallaba... something. This time you merely said your name! (*smile*)

(The Swami smiled humbly. Now the Swami had become very quiet. Bhagavan let him go and sit opposite to Him. He kept on blessing the Swami, raising the hand (that held the glowing cigarette) in benediction. Now Swami was looking down.)

- **Bhagavan** : R., ask Swami to look at this beggar's eyes, not sit like this.

Even while focusing on Swami mostly, Bhagavan would, in between shift his gaze to Mrs. P. and bless her. She, for her part, would bend her head with a shy smile. Bhagavan also smiled back at her indulgently now and then. i became curious and began to wonder what nice thoughts were passing through her head to invite His private attention. It should be interesting to know! Bhagavan allowed her to bring food for Him everyday. He also permitted another local lady to fan Him, every time she visited. Suddenly, it struck me that He would not allow any personal service from me anytime ever! A black despair stirred up from the depths, rearing its ugly head above, throwing me, all of a sudden, into a mood of self resentment and depression. As i sat there keening over my own inadequacy, i felt the pressure of unshed tears in my rather tired eyes. There was a clump of misery, choking my throat and i realised, i had stopped singing. Bhagavan's lila of looking around at everyone

with a smile, leaving me completely ignored, continued for some time. Then suddenly Bhagavan spoke:)

- **Bhagavan** : This beggar would like to leave the Swami now.

The Swami got up and prostrated. Bhagavan was all cheer and laughter. He gave the Swami eight loud pats on his back! After Swami left, He once again smiled at everybody, skipping me deliberately (or so it seemed to me!) He gestured to Mrs. P. to come near, in order to leave her also. When she prostrated, Bhagavan gave her one loud pat on her back, with a burst of laughter. When my turn came, He dropped a packet of some left-over sugar candies, saying,

- **Bhagavan** : it is for *Sudama*.

Again He smiled His enchanting smile at everyone else. I could barely control my tears now. He dropped a biscuit packet into J.'s hand saying,

- **Bhagavan** : This is for your dog.

It was 1:15 P.M. exactly, when we all came out. I wiped my tears hastily before anyone noticed them. All that tiredness that had left me while i was in there, came back with a vengeance and i recalled His usual utterances "All Father's Lila", All Father's Grace...! Eh... eh... Indeed!

The best Sadhana

August 13th, 1993

It was the afternoon session of 13th August 1993. Two Ramakrishna Mutt Swamis and two Brahmacharis were standing outside Bhagavan's residence at Sannidhi street. I was already seated inside singing His Name along with others present there. Bhagavan called them inside and then told the gate-boy to close the gate. Just then the local District Superintendent of Police came with a message from the then DIG, Madras, for taking permission to visit Bhagavan. There were already two old devotees of Tapovanam seated opposite to us. After the Swamis were seated comfortably, the elder swami spoke in Bengali and asked one Brahmachari to translate it to Bhagavan, probably thinking that Bhagavan did not speak English.

- **Bhagavan** (*with a smile and leaning forward*) : This beggar would like to know from which place you Swamis have come.

- **Swami** (*surprised*) : Oh, you speak English. Well, we are all from Delhi.

- **Bhagavan**: How long you have been in Delhi Mutt?

- **Swami** : Seven years. I joined in 1959.

The Swami looked at Bhagavan in great admiration, obviously very impressed by whatever he saw in Bhagavan.

- **Swami** : Can I ask you something? We have so many activities in our Mutts. Amidst all those activities, how to concentrate on God?

- **Bhagavan** (*folding His hands*) : You are asking this question to this dirty beggar!! This beggar doesn't know anything. He is only a beggar - no sannyasi!

- **Elder swami** (*grinning*) : No, no, you are no beggar, I can see.

- **Younger swami** : Maharaj, all of us are beggars. All sadhus are beggars.

(*Laughter*).

- **Elder swami** : It is not a question asked for the sake of asking. It is a genuine one and we want to know from you. Amidst so many activities, it is difficult to concentrate. How to achieve it?

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling*) : Whatever we do, we must think that we are doing it for God - for His sake - whatever activity we are engaged in, we must believe that it is for

His sake, we are doing it. First of all, the goal must be clear, that we want to live for God, we want to dedicate our life to God. If the goal is clear, if we are established in that goal, then we can offer all that we do to Him.

- *Younger swami* : How to do that offering?

- *Bhagavan* (smiling at the younger swami and raising His hand in blessing) : Simply, think, tell yourself: "I am doing this work for God, for His sake only." Then our thoughts, actions and feelings will become offerings to Him. But one thing: the goal must be clear. God must be our goal.

Elder swami, absolutely charmed by the personality of Bhagavan, and the authority with which He spoke, now smiled with a certain devotion in his eyes and folded his hands.

- *One brahmachari* : But we know our life is for God. That is why we have come to this life. Yet we forget, we get absorbed in the activities. Maharaj, why do we forget Him like that? What to do, when we forget?

- *Bhagavan* (lighting a cigarette for the first time, to the astonishment of the younger swami and brahmachari) : By bringing it again and again to the mind that God is our goal and that we are living for His sake. If we forget, it is alright. We will try to remember as much as possible. Help will come from Father. You will see how your practice gathers strength increasingly.

The way Bhagavan said was so powerful that all of us felt instantly the truth of His advice and felt blessed by the power of His words.

- **Elder swami** : Is anybody recording all that Maharaj speaks?

- **Foreign lady** (*pointing to me*) : She writes later on whatever she remembers.

Elder swami nodded his approval and smiled.

- **Elder swami** (*with folded hands*) : I know, we are taking your time and company so much. But you look like my own Guru. (*Showing a photo of Swami Virajânanda*) : You see, the beard, the face. He used to wander in the Himalayas. He also smoked sometimes. I like your company.

Bhagavan laughed loudly and raised both His hands in benediction, looking at the Swami penetratingly.

- **Bhagavan**: You have all honoured this dirty beggar by your visit, by your presence here.

- **Elder swami** : No, no. You are no dirty beggar. You are simply hiding yourself for your own reasons. We all feel blessed and honoured by your kind attention.

Elder swami looked around the space of the veranda, the closed wooden door and the palm mat on which Bhagavan was seated.

- **Elder swami** : Do you live here? Who takes care of you? Someone brings food? Is this your house?

- **Bhagavan** (*laughing*) : This is Father's cottage. Father feeds this beggar. Father takes care of this beggar. Father alone exists. There is nothing else. No one else.

- **Elder swami** : Father's cottage! (*laughed*). Actually S.S. told me to go and see you.

- **Bhagavan**: Excuse me, this beggar doesn't remember him! But you are all being very kind to this dirty beggar.

- **Elder swami** : You are no beggar.

- **Bhagavan**: A born beggar remains as beggar, will die as beggar.

- **Elder swami** : Who is your Guru, Maharaj?

- **Bhagavan**: Swami Ramdas of Kanhangad, Anandashram. He initiated this beggar into Ram Nam - Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram. He said: "Repeat it all the 24 hours." This beggar could not do all that. But he was trying and trying. Not even a week passed. Then Swami Ramdas gave this madness to this beggar! I don't know why he gave this but he killed this beggar in 1952. Even since, this beggar has been living in this madness!

- **Elder swami** : When did you come here? Where did you go after that? What did you do?

- **Bhagavan** (*smiling broadly*) : After that Father alone exists. This beggar doesn't exist. It is all pervading. Father alone.

Swami understood, and did not press further.

- **Bhagavan**: Father drives this beggar here and there. Father controls all his movements.

Bhagavan became quiet. In the silence that ensued, i felt a prompting to volunteer some information to the senior Swami on Bhagavan.

- **Myself** (*braving up*) : Bhagavan lived under a Punnai tree near the Railway station for seventeen years. He spent the nights outside those vessel shops mostly. In 1977, He moved here, after repeated entreaties from devotees.

- **Elder swami** : Please come and visit our Madras Mutt.

- **Bhagavan**: This beggar does not leave Tiruvannamalai. Father governs this beggar. All Father's will.

(By then, a huge crowd had collected outside and Bhagavan gestured to the gate boy to let them in one by one. This went on till 5.45. Then Bhagavan had the door closed again).

- **Bhagavan** (with a bewitching smile and blessing the swamis profusely) : You people have honoured this beggar. Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda had inspired and influenced this beggar. Have any of you read *Gitanjali* by Rabindranath Tagore?

Then Bhagavan quoted three or four lines in Bengali to the great astonishment of those sadhus.

- **Bhagavan** (turning to us) : The meaning of these lines is : "Let your wish be fulfilled through me, Let my life be according to your wish."

- **Elder Swami** : How's that you speak Bengali so well?

- **Bhagavan**: This beggar read the book because it was important to this beggar.

(Turning to younger swami and the Brahmacharis :)
When we do everything for God, offer all our actions, our every breath, then surrender comes. When God accepts this surrender, He takes possession of the body, mind and intellect. Then we become His instruments. Then Father begins to work through us. We cease to exist then.

- **Swami** : How to get this surrender?

- **Bhagavan**: The best sadhana is to be near one's Guru, to obey and to serve Him. All other sadhanas are only after that; otherwise, do whatever your Guru has asked you to do. But remember, whatever happens, happens only by Father's will.

- Brahmachari : How to know the difference between our own will and Father's will?

- **Bhagavan**: Whatever you desire, what finally happens is Father's will. And remember, whatever happens is Grace. It is necessary for you. The best sadhana is to obey one's Guru and serve him. Vivekananda says spirituality is communicated to a disciple from the Master. It is not achieved by sadhana. By Guru's grace alone, it is achieved.

- **Elder swami** : I am so happy I met you. Now we have to leave for Chengalpattu and then for Madras and release the car.

- **Bhagavan**: Oh! Then you have to go. This beggar should not detain you.

Ramakrishna ki Jai!

Vivekananda ki Jai!

Sharadamani Devi ki Jai!

Bhagavan gave them lots of fruits and left them.

January 1997

One day in January 1997, after we returned from the Ashram to Sudama, Bhagavan made a move towards the right side corner of the veranda, instead of going to his seat on the left side - an unusual gesture! I rushed after him and arranged the seat quickly. When he settled down comfortably, he saw the unasked "Why?" in my eyes. He smiled very sweetly and said,

"All the movements of this beggar are unpredictable. Father directs his thoughts and gestures according to the situation of the whole cosmos, Devki. It will be difficult to tell the meaning. Every move is unplanned and spontaneous, and in tune with the entire cosmos. Devki, know that Father keeps this beggar in such a way that it would suit His work best".

As he said that he looked so radiant, SO GODLY, SO SO BEYOND, that I could not take my eyes off him. Nor could I help exclaiming wondrously, "Just where have you come from?". With a bewitching smile, pat came the reply "VAIKUNTAM" followed by his inimitable cascading laughter. I burst into uncontrollable tears.

Sudama Darshan

10th, January 1997

A Mercedes Benz car drove up the lane and stopped under the Tamarind tree opposite to Sudama. A man in clean white Dhoti and white shirt got down and began to wait in the shade. Someone who saw the whole thing from the veranda of Sudama came inside and reported to Bhagavan, who had just then wound up his morning darshan and was getting ready for his next "work" - Lunch. Now Bhagavan boomed, "Go and tell who ever that is, this beggar is busy. They can come back latter". The attendant came back and reported that the visitor was the Chairman of a very most popular company called Butterfly. But the Chairman replied, "please tell swami, his dog would wait for him in the street, however long it takes." The reply drew a smile from Bhagavan Smiling at the reply Bhagavan ordered "Tell him to come in now". The quiet, humble and undemanding Chairman was allowed straight into the inner Sanctum of Bhagavan. He took his seat quietly against the wall at the spot pointed out by Bhagavan. Swami kept him for the next two hours, missing his lunch! Finally at swami's nod the gentleman left with tears of gratitude and contentment.

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This was so much in contrast to what happened in the morning darshan. A group noisy, critical and complaining, demanded Bhagavan's immediate attention, despite the crowd outside Bhagavan stood up in a jump, rushed to the gate and touched the ground in salutation to them. The group simply ran away.

Night, same day

After the night meal at 7pm, Bhagavan came to the veranda and asked me to start reading the book "Ramakrishna Sangha" which went on till 9pm. Right from the evening of that day, my eyes had been sore, painful and watering. But by his own Grace I was able to read until he asked me to stop. Then he said,

- Wash your eyes with Nellikkai water.

When I completed it, He ordered,

- Lie down on your mat now. My Father has already cured your eyes.

The eyes were still very painful when I began to sleep. But when I woke up at 2.40am it was completely alright. Added to it there was such a wonderful sense of well being in the whole body and mind!

Pradhan Mandir Darshan

31st, January 1997

Bhagawan was seated in the chair near his Murthy in the Pradhan Mandir. An American (known to us) and a lady friend of his entered Pradhan Mandir. As was the practice then, they came straight to the Murthy, and went round it. The American moved back straightaway as probably instructed outside, stood at a distance with folded hands, while the lady pushed ahead adamantly towards Bhagawan. The attendant tried to stop her but in vain. Watching the whole show silently, Bhagawan put down the cigarette and began to wave his hands rather jerkily several times with a displeased countenance as if to indicate that she should leave. Seeing his gestures, the lady, unsure and discouraged, backed out with a look of consternation. But the American continued to stand quietly, at a far off distance with folded hands in utter humility and reverence. After the lady left Pradhan Mandir, Bhagawan turned towards him with folded hands in a reply of *namaskar*, which of course, in truth is a gesture of Blessing. The American repeated his *namaskar* at three different places on his way out of Pradhan Mandir, all the time walking backwards reverentially. Bhagawan too repeated his Blessing *Namaskar* quietly all the three times!

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Bhagawan's behaviour seemed like an exact reflection of the devotee's gesture, though it was not always so obvious or demonstrative.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN