

Gaura Krishna



AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER
II – 1996-2001

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

FOREWORD

As with the first volume, this is not a book about Yogi Ramsuratkumar as such, but a notebook.

These notes were taken, day by day and immediately after the events they describe. Events, facts and words. As with the first volume, they have been purged of accounts of events not directly related to Yogiji, the ashram or the devotees. However, as Yogiji gave fewer darshans than before, some secondary facts have been left in, such as discussions between devotees.

As with the first volume, we also hope that this will help to rectify certain errors, or even lies or legends, which appeared in the books published by Hohm Press in the USA after Yogiji's Mahasamadhi, since it will be sufficient to compare what was noted immediately with an account constructed years later by people who were not present.

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Back in France around December 18, Krishna would have to deal with the problems that had arisen before his departure. In Tiruvannamalai, he had received a flood of blessings from Yogiji. Of course, he didn't know what was going to happen, but he was full of faith in Yogiji. He saw problems in a different light, as if he were above them.

And, as soon as he returned, the problems would pile up.

To sum up, in the early 1980s, Krishna created a natural method for "curing" nocturnal enuresis and, in the course of his experiments, achieved a success rate of 99%, without any medication and by ensuring that the child lived a completely normal life, with no restrictions on drinking, getting up during the night, etc. This result was achieved between 3 weeks and a month and a half, proving that enuresis was not an illness. Little did he know that he was about to come up against the pharmaceutical and medical lobbies, who would do everything they could to prevent him from practising, right up to the point of forbidding him to advertise, which was the only way for him to make the method known. There's no need to go into the details of this struggle. He was first subjected to controls and, following one of these, the French authorities asked him to pay a sum that was very important to him. Krishna considered this to be, objectively, an organized robbery, and refused to pay what for him, from a dharmic point of view, was absolutely not due. On the other hand, those who had previously stolen his system seemed to be very successful and were even competing with him. They had hired an excellent lawyer, whereas Krishna's lawyer, on the advice of a friend,

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seemed to be asleep at the switch, and so were the courts, since the case was going nowhere. The more time passed, the more successful the crooks became and the deeper Krishna sank.

Outwardly, everything was going from bad to worse. France seemed to him a country where people walked on their heads and thought with their feet, where all values were reversed. Everything appeared to him at once, including the danger for his children of being educated and living in such a society, where children are taught not to become real men, but to become tools of production. Another life had to be born. In mid-June 1995, the death of his dog, after 15 years together, also heralded the end of something.

Everything was going from bad to worse. But Krishna never expected everything to change so quickly and suddenly. One day, early in the morning and still in bed in the mezzanine, Yogiji's voice rang out loud and clear:

- Krishna, go to Mauritius!

On the same day, exactly the same day, but in the afternoon and while Krishna was on the road for his work, his mother-in-law called from Mauritius and said, in tears, to her daughter on the phone: "It's not going well in France, I can feel it. Come quickly, come and live in Mauritius".

At the end of January, he wrote to a friend to whom he had advised to go to Reunion Island and whom he had helped greatly when this friend had experienced comparable problems... The same day he wrote to his Master, sending him the latest issue of RAMA NAMA, without telling him at all about His voice which he had heard - for for Krishna things had since been resolute: what he had to do was obey His Master, who knew - but by simply explaining the problem to him, and thus ending with his remaining doubts about the difficulties:

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« ...You know your son feels Indian. He enjoys being with Indians. But in India it will be very difficult to give something to my brothers and sisters and nobody in the family speaks Indian language. Only Ishvari speaks Hindi. But in Mauritius people are Indian in majority and French language is spoken. So it may be possible first to find a place as a teacher or something like that. Ishvari will find back her family and will be very happy and enjoying life. As for children, they are still young, therefore there will be no problem. Father does all the things perfectly. He made Krishna buy a little piece of land in Mauritius seven years ago. He made him put some money there. And that in the case the things go badly in France... And Krishna recently came to know that with that money it is possible to build a little house... And recently the Mauritian law changed and it seems it is possible for husbands of Mauritian women to live in Mauritius if their wife is living there. God makes all the things perfect... And Krishna can sell the house in France and in this way establish in Mauritius without many problems in the beginning.

Now the little piece of land in Mauritius is in a village named Calebasses. Very near that piece of land there is an ashram where lived Swami Krishnananda who was very well known for his knowledge in Ayurveda. Hindus are there, ashrams are there. God is there, as He is everywhere but it is easier to feel His presence than in France. Krishna will certainly feel well there. And, as Father knows, Krishna, for some time, had in the heart to do more and more the work for his Father and less and less to be involved in a professional way. The reading of Swami Ramdas in the hut struck Krishna very much. Very much. Krishna was feeling Swami Ramdas was speaking to him. It was so. All his words. When he says: «for thirty-eight years Ramdas was living a worldly life », and

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that, at that time, God was appealing him. In my mind, I remembered Father took my life when I was thirty-eight and brought me to His Feet after. When Swami Ramdas said that it was less and less possible for him to take care of his little company because he was more and more involved in the path of God, Krishna feels the same.

And Father was so kind with his unworthy son! Oh, how much Divine Love Krishna received from his Father! His Father knows all. Some days ago, when she knew nothing about the things here, the mother of Ishvari called her - it is very expansive and she has no money - during half an hour, saying she was in tears, feeling things in France were not going well, and she said: « Come to Mauritius, build your house there, and live there ». Krishna was not there at that time and when Ishvari told him, he felt that this thing seemed to be really 'in the akash', and that what he was thinking and feeling to do was... what he had to do.

Father, what your son wants to do is not to follow his desires. He wants to do what he has to do, what God wants him to do. Now the decision is growing in his mind but he doesn't want to make any mistake, he has not the right to do any mistake at that important moment. So, Father, your unworthy son Krishna is praying for Your Blessings. If Krishna gets Your divine Blessings, then he will know he can go freely, he will know that is the Will of God, that it is the Will of His Father. He did not want to speak to His Father about that before, because he knew he had to find in himself what he had to do. And His Father blessed him. But now things become clearer and he is at Your Holy Feet, and if, as You did, You put Your Divine Hand on his head, on his shoulders, taking his hands in Yours, his heart will be full of your Divine Love and all the problems will vanish.

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Father, I don't know about surrender. I just know I want to follow the Will of God- to feel I am in the hands of my Father, and Krishna feels he is. I don't know if it is 'surrender'. I don't think. Surrender is far more than that. In writing that letter, Krishna suddenly remembers what His Father told him twice on the same day: « My Father's blessings wherever you be ». Father knows all, but his son knows nothing. The mind says now: if Father said that, it is because he knew Krishna will go elsewhere. But it is the mind, and Krishna has to know not in his mind but in his heart.

Yes, Father, your unworthy son is in Your Hands! You made him feel that strongly when You held his hand. Father, You are leading! Father, lead your son! You make his mind not going here and there, his mind is almost quiet. Because he knows he is in Your hands. Krishna would wish to be like a witness of what You do with him, sending him here or there and making him do this or that. In anyway, he needs Your blessings.

Your totally stupid son. »

The response was immediate, although Krishna received it later, due to long mail delays, around March 5. Here it is, in Ma Devaki's handwriting:

« YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR KI JAI !

15-2-96
Sudama

Dear Krishna,

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*Your long letter to Bhagavan reached Him 3 days back. Ever since, He has been carrying the 'Rama Nama' issue in hand all thro the day and night (even while sleeping, it'll be by the side of the pillow!) He often looks at it and says with a break in His voice, "Krishna says this is the last issue"!*¹

Today when we were returning from the Ashram, in the car, i reminded Him that we should send a reply. All of a sudden, when He saw some foreigner saluting Him on the way, He turned to me and said with tears in His voice, "Devki, Krishna said 'from one of Your gardens in France!', when i reminded Him, "Yes, but he is going to leave all that behind in France!", to which He said, "Krishna will see many more gardens of this beggar in future." Then i said « For settling down in Mauritius, he may need a lot of money – yet he has sent so much money as Ashram donation! »

Bhagavan replied: « Eh, eh, Krishna has a large heart. My Father blesses him. My Father will see that everything is alright wherever he is!"

So, dear Krishna, your Father thinks of you often and your Ram(a) Nam(a) is constantly with Him. Everything is going to be alright soon.

My love to Iswari, Parvathy and Lakshmi.

With prayers and pranams.

Your Ma. »

¹ In Krishna's letter, Krishna said to Yogiji that he was sending Him the lasy issue of RAMA NAMA. He meant: the last published issue, but not the last issue to be published.

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And below, in Yogiji's handwriting:

« *My Father blesses J.B. Carcelle!!!* », followed by, in devanagari characters, with: « *Yogi Ramsuratkumar, Tiruvannamalai,* » and His signature: « *Om* ».

*my father blesses
J. B. Carcelle !!!*
योगी रामसुरतकुमार
लिल वडुवा मन्नी
Om

Almost immediately, on the 7th March, Krishna answered:

« *Divine Father,
Holy Ma,*

When such an envelope reaches home, this unworthy Krishna asks himself whether he is clean enough to touch it. Because he knows there is light inside. O Father, what is this? Yes, God looks on and loves the unworthy in the same manner. There is no worthy or unworthy for Him. There is only He.

Father, oh my Father, it was not the last issue of Rama Nama. It was the last in order, in time, but not the last, because I

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want to « do as ordered by my Father » and 'Rama Nama' will continue and your son hopes it will be better in Mauritius where, maybe, there will be more time to look at stars outside and inside. Father, your son cannot stop to sing Your glory, never, never, never. Tears are coming, Father, because Ma wrote that there was a break in Your voice. Rama Nama will continue to be sent in France, and in Africa, if it is Your Will. It is only a little thing, there are only few persons, but if through a so bad man like Krishna Father can bring light to only one of my brothers or sisters, so I will not be of no use... (There follow a few lines that don't need to be repeated here)...

When your son read: “Krishna will see many more gardens of this beggar in future », all the body was shivering, because in those words my Father sent the greatest divine blessings. Father, am I worthy enough to see all those gardens of yours that you will show inside? Father, you guide me. I know, I feel, you are always guiding me.

So, holy Ma, is there any problem of money to move to Mauritius? No. Father will provide. He is providing. He began to provide so many years ago! Ma. Look, Father is sending me money. It is His money, in anyway. And it is coming now! He is closing some doors and opening some other ones. Krishna has just to follow! Money for the moving of all the furniture is now O.K. Money for plane tickets is now O.K. Krishna is going next week in Mauritius to see for the building of that little house and for all the problems which will come with the moving. Krishna was a little bit attached to his house here in France, because he built it himself in big part. But now, it is no more. Everywhere is the house of my Father Yogi Ramsuratkumar. So everywhere Krishna can seat. Krishna does not mind. He is just following, trying to do what he must do and what is his duty.

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I remembered one dream. Maybe the most beautiful dream I lived. It was last year, maybe in March, it doesn't matter. In this dream, this stupid Krishna was in India, in Kanhangad, singing AUM SRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM with.... SWAMI RAMDAS!!! And in December last year- in Tiruvannamalai, it was in the main mandir, Father has asked Krishna to sing the divine mantra of Ram. Eyes were closed. After some time, Krishna felt that somebody was touching him. He was then thinking Muttu was there asking him to stop. He opened his eyes, and who was there: Father! Oh God! And Father put His holy hand on my shoulder and let it slowly come to my hand. He did not take my hand, but my wrist. He did not go to bless his devotees (in anyway there are always blessed, at every moment), but went directly to the picture of Shri Aurobindo and Mother, then to the picture of Ramana Maharshi and Ma. Then He led me to the picture of Swami Ramdas and Ma Krishnabai. Before arriving at the holy feet of Swami Ramdas, this dream went back to my mind and the body was suddenly shivering, and many things beyond words came in this stupid guy. After, Father went back to His seat. At night, I was just saying to myself: "No. stupid one, it is not possible, it is just not possible. It must be some mistake somewhere in your mind, something you do not understand. What you were feeling cannot be true, cannot come into existence, you are too small." But, holy Ma, now Father says that He will make his bad son see many more gardens of Him. And Ma, it is the same that what I felt at that time!

(Some other lines follow...).

Yes, Ma, everything is going to be alright soon. Even now, I feel things are alright, because my Father is there. Oh Father, it is so good, while writing to You, to get tears in the eyes! It is

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Your Love! Your Divine Love! It is you, because you are Love Itself!

Even my mother knew his son was waiting for the Blessings of His Father for this moving. And she called me to ask. And she was joyful...

..."

Krishna soon took a plane ticket to Mauritius. And that's where we see the divine *lila* again. When he got married in 1988, Krishna had bought a tiny piece of land in Calebasses, at what was then a derisory price, in order to "have a little piece of land in Mauritius". And now, 8 years later, at the end of March and beginning of April, he was on a plane to have a house built on this plot of land! Needless to say, it would have been difficult for him to buy the same plot of land because prices had soared!

He was only there for 12 days. He had to find a bricklayer, explain the plans, etc, etc, etc... Whereas it takes several weeks, if not months, to obtain a 'development permit', Krishna met the right people and obtained the permit in a matter of days. He found a bricklayer who was so difficult to trust, he gave him the plans and explained them to him, warning him that he would receive other plans made by computer, and he even had time to find an excavator and have the hole dug for the house, then he was back on the plane. Everything was now looking very urgent and it had been specified in the contract that the house had to be finished by the end of June, since Krishna had decided to leave for Mauritius around that time, given that the children's school year would be over by then.

In France, it seemed that all the government departments were raging against Krishna. Now another one, another ministry, was asking him to 'scientifically' justify the terms of his advertisement! This of course following denunciation! He had already cured some 2,500

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children and had in his possession a very large number of certificates from parents, but now he had to justify this in writing. The administration! France! Someone was doing something good and it seemed that he had to be stopped at all costs. The pharmaceutical lobby was certainly behind it. Krishna drew up a full dossier and sent it off by bailiff. He would find out later, once in Mauritius, that it seems they took no notice of it... He was even summoned to the Ministry of Health in Paris but refused to go, explaining that the file he had sent them was absolutely complete and proved the validity of the method he had developed... Their response was to ban Krishna from advertising. As a result, he could no longer work at all.

Each time RAMA NAMA was sent, Krishna wrote a short letter to Yogiji. On 12 April, on his return to France, he sent Him the latest issue with this note:

« Late, this stupid one is always late for his Father when his Father does so much for him!

This is the last issue of RAMA NAMA. Your son has come back from Mauritius where he went for twelve days in order to make some preparations and take advices for the coming there, and for the building of the house. It was easy to see, to realize that Father was doing all. Father gave the development permit in three days!

Now, the struggle with the French administration is going on, but i know all will be well, because of Father! There is nothing to worry about. Father is there and everywhere... »

Yes, the struggle continued, both against the administration and at the level of justice, for the dharma. But the dharma was in a bad way. Everything seemed to be conspiring against Krishna, who even telephoned the administration to say that they would get

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nothing, even if it meant burning everything. Krishna was waiting for Mauritius' house to be almost finished before he and his family left. The move for the furniture had been organized and they were due to arrive in Mauritius towards the end of July. On 3rd June, while sending RAMA NAMA, Krishna informed Yogiji of the visit of Lee Lozowick (at His request) accompanied by Michael, who had arrived from India the same day, and some of Lee's other students. He also wrote:

« ... Father, is it possible to have a dream, to see Bharat taking back the color of the Sun and making the entire world turning towards it, going back to Your divine Sanatana Dharma? Is it only a dream, Father? Is there some beginning?

Father, this world is mad but it says it is clever. Father, You say You are mad but you are the Truth. The mad man says always he is in a very good condition, but the sage says he is mad comparatively to the magnificent cleverness of the world.

Father, Your son knows he is mad. It is a step. But when he went to Your feet, Father, he fell in love with your Madness.

Father, please, drive your stupid son to Your Asylum. »

It was just after this that something of a bombshell was to set things in motion. He received a registered letter from a tax fraud department in Paris and was being prosecuted for tax fraud, for an absolutely enormous amount of money - almost two million francs! He had never stolen a penny! So what was going on? Here's how it happened: some 15 years earlier, when Krishna had found unsalaried work, the man he was working with and under whose thumb he was had kindly asked him if he could, as a favor to a friend who wanted

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to set up a new company but wasn't allowed to because of bankruptcy, become the manager of the said company. Krishna had no choice anyway. So that's what he did. He kept an eye on the business. Everything was running smoothly. The first tax audit took place after 3 years and Krishna also went to defend the case. But he had every confidence in this man, who was soon to take over the factory of one of his suppliers. After that, his work and constant travel prevented him from continuing to watch, but everything was still going well, or so he was told. It turned out that this man hadn't paid VAT for years and hadn't even filed his end-of-year tax returns (balance sheets, etc.). Krishna was even going to be seen as a thief, a bandit! When all he had done was helping people. His run-ins with the authorities, on the other hand, were also largely based on the fact that he had wanted to help people. Of course, when problems arose, Krishna couldn't find anyone... This was cause for great concern, as Krishna could have been totally ruined.

He simply went next door to the house and told his wife: "Yogi wants us to leave France immediately."

Krishna, who was waiting for who knows what sign to put his house up for sale, did so immediately. And while other houses had been for sale for a long time in the same village, his was sold in 15 days at a very reasonable price. Now all that had to be done was to make sure that the authorities didn't get their hands on the proceeds...

Sending the July issue of RAMA NAMA on the 8th to his Master, Krishna wrote:

« So, Father, we are on the point of leaving France for the small island of Mauritius. The departure of the little family is planned for the 21st of July. More and more, by the things Father creates around, this stupid Krishna is pushed towards the departure. It seems there is no more place for this Krishna on this land of France. Attacks come from several

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administrations and this guy is completely surprised when his consciousness is very clear about those things. He just does not understand. But he knows Father is doing all, and his son sees all that as things to make him understand what he has to do. He will wear the grey shawl of Father during the trip from France to Mauritius, as the hands of Father are on our shoulders for this change...

... At each time this stupid one writes some news to You, Father, he gets the possibility to see how much he can be stupid, just in reading this letter again. He says to himself, « You are just making Father lose His time in writing things without any use. You know, there is one thing you have to say, and even sing: « Yogi Ramsuratkumar, Yogi Ramsuratkumar, Yogi Ramsuratkumar, Jaya Guru Raya! »

And on 21 July, when the house was empty and sold, the whole family got on a plane and left France for good, without any regrets on Krishna's part. He had stopped the construction of the house in Maurice when, on receiving photos, he realized that the mason had not built at all according to the plans, but according to his head! The work resumed as soon as he arrived, and he had everything that wasn't right knocked down and supervised the rest of the work from then on.

On 30th July, the day of Gurupurnima, he wrote to Yogiji:

This little one bows to You, Father, Guru, Light of the World, Light of my heart and of all the hearts, You, One without a Second who are All, « anywhere, everywhere, past, present, future », about Whom we have to understand and in Whom we have to commune. Oh, Father, my so deep Father, who, as said by Tirumular, brings light, and more light, what can this little one tell You, Father, when You know all?

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One day, as planned by You, You took my life in Your hands (You had always it in Your hands but this stupid one was so blind!) The first time this little Krishna got the blessing to get Your Blessings, You asked to John: « John, tell me, how is it possible for Krishna to marry Ishvari? ». Those were your first words, and I was so blind that I did not understand on the spot that it meant that it was only possible because of You, Father. Your very first words, and this stupid and blind one understood nothing.

Your ways, Father, are marvelous. Thus, when Devaki Ma was speaking to You about the trials I was living in, You stood without a word for some time and suddenly Your Divine hands were blessing. And now, by the grace of Father we left France, by the grace of Father we are in Mauritius, by the grace of Father the house in France was sold in less than one month, by the grace of Father, his stupid son learnt that he paid for the moving half of the normal price, by the grace of Father the house in Mauritius is coming out of the soil, by the grace of Father its name will be YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN if Father gives His permission, by the grace of Father, this issue of RAMA NAMA appears in due time, by the grace of Father, Ishvari, Lakshmi and Parvati are in a good boat (it is the boat of my Father, and it is impossible for it to go down the water of the world), by the grace of Father You appeared in a dream just some days after our arrival, by the grace of Father all appears and disappears in this world. So, this blind one does not know what he will really do in the future in Mauritius, but by the grace of Father all will come in due time and Father will show how beautiful His gardens are, and the way to keep them up and to get fruits for everybody.

Father, o my Father, your son is without words. You are doing all, we are Your instruments. Father, Divine Father,

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may this stupid one, by Your grace, be a good one for the sake of everybody. »

Around 15 August, all the furniture arrived from France, even though there were no doors or windows... Towards the end of August, Krishna received a letter from Tiruvannamalai dated 17 August:

योगी रासुरत्कुमार

My dear Krishna,

How happy Bhagavan and we, the devotees, are to hear from you from Mauritius, and to receive the latest 'Rama Nama'!

Your letter brought many SWEET SMILES to Bhagavan's face. He is touched by the fervour of your devotion and the spirit of surrender. Indeed, how earnest and humble you are!

Bhagavan was very happy that you could manage to bring out the new issue of Rama Nama without break, despite all the difficulties you must have undergone in moving. We hope You, Iswari, Lakshmi and Parvathy are all happily and comfortably settled by now. Bhagavan often talks about you, happy with your devotion and humility.

Ashram construction is going on fast. Bhagavan sits thro the work, both 10-12 and 4-6 sessions, attending to the 'work' and the 'atmosphere'. Swami Satchidananda of Anandashram is likely to visit us, this month end.

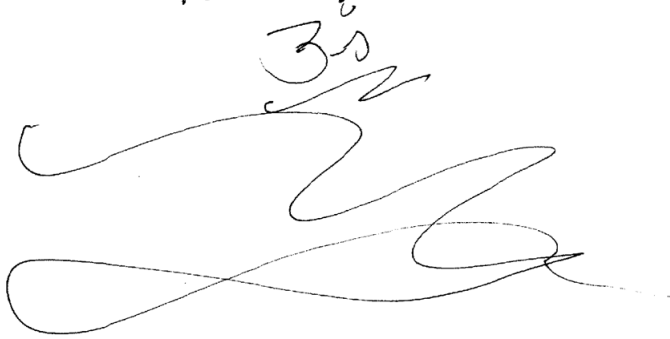
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OUR LOVE and BEST WISHES to Iswari, Lakshmi, Parvathy and to your Holy Self, for a happy and problem free LIFE in Mauritius.

Affectionately,
Your Ma. »

And underneath, Yogiji has written in His own handwriting:

my father blesses dear श्रीमती कर्माक्षरी
श्रीश्री, पार्वती and श्रीश्री with
a very happy life in mauritius!!!
yogi RamswatKumar
Tiruvannamalai

ॐ


On 6 September, sending the new RAMA NAMA, Krishna replied.

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“Your son bows to you, Father, Ma, for your sacred blessings for life in Mauritius. His heart of heart is in delight!

Holy Ma, your son doesn't know if he is humble. He does not think so. Ma, it is so easy to speak, but it is another way to be! What Krishna knows now, it is that even the « surrender » is given by Father. All is given by Father. With this issue of Rama Nama comes the passage of « Swami Ramdas on Himself » which constitutes the chapter VII of the book. Last year, Father made read this passage, in parts or totally, twelve times during the early morning darshans. And he insisted on the fact that we have to accept « intellectually » to begin, the fact that He controls everything. What Krishna can say is that it is for him more than intellectual. It is difficult to say, but maybe the best way to do it is to say: « It is a fact, and he would want to say: « I know ». God is doing all, that is more and more obvious, but what this Krishna and everybody has to reach, Father knows, is to live constantly in a state where he can feel that God is doing all through this being which is only a reflection. And that is something which is far beyond.

That God is all, it is even obvious, intellectually, from a scientific viewpoint. But, as a matter of fact, the scientists more than everybody else are negating the fact that is under their very nose. Intellectually, the end of reasoning is Advaita Vedanta. But we would want to put all the reasonings away, and to become, to live, to feel, to Be. And « on the point », and not to feel, after some time, or some years: « oh, Father did that! I was in a strange state at that time... ». And when Krishna is considering that, he just feels he is a tiny and stupid son. As we have to understand that the light of the moon is just the reflecting light of the Sun and leave the light of the moon for the light of the Sun, in the same way we have to leave the light of the mind when we understand that it is a reflexion of

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the light of God. But how difficult it is to leave the mind. Father knows that it happened when Krishna was younger, and at that time he often felt himself as an instrument. Krishna is just stupid. In a nutshell, he wants to be with Father. He is blind, because he knows Father is with him, always. Look at His ways: Father says He is happy that Rama Nama has come in time despite the moving. But it is He who made Krishna take the computer apart in the plane, it is He who made pass the custom free, and Ma says that it is Krishna who is humble! Another example: Ma sends her best wishes for a life in Mauritius without problems. But Krishna knows that the problems in France were sent by Father. Father is leading the life of his « budhu » son. Take my life, ô Father, take all. No, Father, you have not to take anything, because everything is Yours, and my life is yours. The prayer of your son, Father, is to serve You. More and more You are my All; you are taking my heart within which You dwell.

To-day is Krishna Jayanti, the Jayanti of Father, and all of us are His cows. This very day a puja was made for the installation of the door in Calebasses. As in the Ashram, Father is looking on and directing the building of that house.

Your son is departing for France on the 16th of September and will be on returning at the end of October as he thinks. If the French administration has not taken the money from the selling of the French house, Krishna asks for the permission from his Father to come to His divine feet in November.

...”

Then Krishna went back to France, the deed of sale was signed, and he made sure that the money was quickly transferred to Mauritius. Then he went back to Paris, where he stayed for two days before taking a flight. Back in Mauritius, he continued to supervise

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the work for three weeks before flying to Bharat Mata to join the divine feet of his Father.

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12th November

After taking the Point-to-point bus from Chennai at 10.15am, I arrive at the ashram at 2.50pm. Venkatraman and Selvaraj welcome me with great joy, followed soon after by Kannan. From the security post, they try in vain to get Mani on the phone to tell him of my arrival. They then took me to cottage 7, where Senthil also greets me with joy: "I've made special preparations for you. A bed." I tell Senthil, who has received my best wishes for his wedding, that the fact that he is now married can be seen because he has put on weight. Suresh is here too.

The day before yesterday, in Chennai, I heard from Mukilan that Muttu was no longer at the ashram, which took me by surprise. There was an argument with Mani, who even hit him. So he left. Yogiji Himself went to ask him to come back but the reply was: "Not while Mani is here." I also learnt shortly after my arrival that Srinivasan, Mani's eldest son, was getting married.

I take a shower, which is really welcome after the bus journey. Then I hear Mani's voice:

- *Krishna?*
- *Is that Mani?*
- *Yes.*

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- *I'm taking a shower.*
- *Take all the time you need.*

Once out of the shower, I put on the dhoti and kurta that Yogiji had offered me last year. That's when Shivakala comes in and tells me that "Mani Sir" is asking for me. So I meet Mani at his cottage salute him, as well as Raji and Rajeshvari. Naturally, they ask me about my little family and why they haven't turned up. Mani then makes me go out onto the doorstep and a coffee arrives. We both have a chat and go to see the ashram.

The aluminum roof has been installed. It's imposing and immense. In the centre, slightly offset, is the little hut where Yogiji, Ma Devaki and Sudama's sisters are sitting. Just before, I see Ravi and we both greet each other happily. I also show him how overweight he is, now that he's married too. Everyone laughs. Mani and I continue to speak and almost as soon as we started, he was back on (Sadhu) Rangarajan "who claims to be the international representative of the Ramnam, etc." To this I reply that we just have to do our job and, in order to do it as well as possible, we have to forget about ourselves.

Mani then invites me to go to the entrance, as Yogiji is about to arrive. There, on the left under the courtyard, people are waiting. I'm heading towards the entrance when I hear:

- Krishna !

Then I see Chettiar standing up. We greet each other warmly. Then it's Anastasia, the Swiss lady, to whom I explain that I've left France. She tells me that she's going to settle in

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Pondicherry. "Things are changing over there". Then everyone stands up for Yogiji's arrival. It's 4pm. There are some white people there, who look at me because they realize that I'm very well known. Chettiar invites me to go first, but I refuse and go after him.

Yogiji's car arrives and my body begins to accelerate its particles. Yogiji blesses me and gives me a big smile when he sees me. But I'm so moved that I bow as he passes me by, so I don't see him. Then the car goes to the main mandapam and enters it. With Chettiar and the others, I go into the refectory to sing the *gurunama*. I notice there's a white. After half an hour, Chettiar leaves. I stay a while but, as I've had nothing in my stomach since this morning, I leave after seeing Senthil at the entrance. I make my way to the cottage, where I gobble down some *elachi* cakes that I'd bought when I arrived at the bus station.

Senthil and Suresh join me for a few moments and then leave. They brought me a *chai*. At 5.35pm i join the darshan hall and sit in the back row to sing the *Gurunama*. I hadn't been there five minutes when somebody comes looking for me:

- Swamiji is calling you.

Needless to say, I get up in a hurry. I tell Selvaraj to wait for me while he beckons me over, because I have some things to give Yogiji and I have to go and get them. So I rush off to the cottage, pick up the 3 mangoes from Maurice's field, the November *Rama Nama* printed specially in color for Yogiji, Jocelyne C.'s *likhita japa* notebook and the packet of Charminar i bought when i arrived at the bus station.

I set off again, but on the way ask Raji if she has a tray, as I don't want to offer the mangoes with my hand, and what's more, in a plastic bag of *Pakistan Basmati rice*! A large silver tray arrives, into which I place everything, and I walk towards my Father, following Selvaraj. Yogiji is sitting with Mani on his right outside the 'auditorium' just at the door. He points to the chair on His left and beckons me to sit down. But I put the tray down and bow to the ground. Yogiji beckons me to sit down again as I offer him the tray:

- Ukhar.

I sit down. He blesses the mangoes. I say:

- These are new fruits from another of Your gardens.
- My garden, says Yogiji.
- They're like Krishna, they're not ripe.

Mani repeats. Then Yogiji asks me what the notebook is. I left the other *likhita japa* notebooks in Chennai with Sadhuji and only brought this one with me.

- Likhita Gurunam and ...
- "Ramnam," he adds, flipping quickly through the pages.

Yogiji leaves *Rama Nama* outright and told a boy from the ashram to carry the tray, probably to the darshan hall. It seems that Yogiji wants to get straight to the point of what he has called me for.

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He takes my right hand and places it on Him, holding it in His. Mani will repeat most of my answers to Him.

- For how much time are you here?
- About 2 months, Father.
- But for how long in the ashram?
- If Father tells me to stay, I stay, if He tells me to go, I go.

- What is your program?
- (silence).
- There must be a program?
- I wanted to go to Orissa.
- For how long?
- A few days.
- How many days?
- A week.
- What would you like to do in Orissa?
- Two *swayamsevaks* have written to me and invited me to come and see them. I would like to see their work, it would be a lesson.

- Is Rangarajan planning to go to Orissa?
- *Mani*: No, Bhagavan. It has nothing to do with Rangarajan.

- *Mani*: Bhubaneshvar?
- *Krishna*: Cuttak.
- *Mani*: Cuttak.
- *Yogiji*: This beggar wants you to stay here for the duration of your stay in India.
- *Krishna*: I will.

- *Yogiji*: If you have the addresses of friends in Orissa, it would be a good idea to write to them and tell them that this beggar wants you to stay here.

- *Krishna*: Will do, father.
- *Yogiji*: Ranganaraja must be told that this beggar wants Krishna to stay here for the duration of his stay in India.
- Another Frenchman is coming on the 24th.

And Yogiji asks me exactly the question I was waiting for Ma Devaki to ask me:

- What are you planning to do in Mauritius?
- Father has provided for everything. So I don't feel the need to take up a new profession. I feel ready to do Your work.
- *Mani*: He is building a house.
- How long will it take for the work to be completed?
- It's almost done, Father.
- Oh!
- The name of the house is '*Yogi Ramsuratkumar Bhavan*'.
- This beggar is very happy with this name: "*Yogi Ramsuratkumar Bhavan*", with the emphasis on Bhavan, which is a response to the fact that in Mauritius they wanted something other than Bhavan, which means public access.
- What does your wife think she's doing in Mauritius?
- At the moment she's sorting out the house and looking after the children.
- Are there any schools nearby?
- Yes, Father. I've put Lakshmi in a French school so that she doesn't lose anything, the time for her to learn the language. Next year, she'll go to school like everyone else. The youngest is at the community school.
- What language is spoken in Mauritius?

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- The common language is Creole. The basis of Creole is Old French. So any Mauritian can easily understand French. But at home, the Indians speak Bhojpuri.

- *Yogiji, for Mani*: a dialect of Hindi. Are there many Indians in Mauritius?

- Around 60%. Half of this 60% comes from Bihar, the other half from Tamil Nadu.

- Do the Tamils speak Tamil?

- So far I haven't heard any Tamil... The population is concentrated.

- On the islands, there's always a concentration.

- Mauritius has a population of 1,100,000. The island is 60 km long and 40 km wide.

- *Mani*: That's 2,400 km².

Meanwhile, Yogiji took both my hands and put His left hand on my back, like last year. After a while He says to Mani:

- Mani, you can go.

I'm still with Yogiji, while Mani has left. He continues to caress my hand and my back. There's silence. Then, after a while, when all the devotees seem to have left the darshan hall to gather at the ashram entrance, Yogiji pats me on the back:

- My Father blesses you. Go and stay.

I'm going to get up and do the *anjali*. Yogiji blesses me:

- My Father blesses you.

I join Mani, who soon tells me to go to the entrance for Yogiji's exit. Everyone lined up stares at me, because of course they saw me with Yogiji when they came out.

Yogiji's car moves slowly forward as He blesses. Ma Devaki smiles at me, and it is she I greet particularly with a smile.

After Yogiji left the ashram, Mani comes up to me, takes my hand and leads me towards the circular mandir. At the far end, there's a magnificent double wooden door for the entrance.

- This is the door that this beggar's beggar designed, what do you think?

- You had showed me the model on paper.

- Yes.

- It's magnificent (it's made of wood with bronze).

- Bhagavan didn't want any characteristic signs, like the fan, etc....

- No symbols.

- No symbols.

We leave the mandir. I ask:

- Ah, do you know where Anand is?

- He lives in the Osborne House estate. Why?

- To see him, and because I have two letters for him.

- You'll see him tomorrow. He'll be there at the 7 o'clock darshan. He's my guru," he adds with a laugh.

I come back to the cottage. I am soon told that Mani is calling me to go and see the statue of Yogiji. So I go out to the

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old darshan mandir. The statue is finished, cast, very big. Then I go out. Mani gives me an apple:

- For Krishna, Bhagavan's prasad.

So, while He was in Sudama, Yogiji gave a prasad for Krishna....

We go to the auditorium in the evening. It's all lit up. It's huge. Then I go back to the cottage to write when the electricity goes off.

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13th November

I was woken up at 6.20 am with *chai*. After showering and getting dressed, I went to the ashram entrance with the letters for Anand, but Anand wasn't there. He didn't arrive until shortly before Yogiji's arrival.

- Krishna! What a surprise!

We hug and I hand him the letters.

Yogiji arrives. Of course I hope to be called into the hut for breakfast, even though I had been warned that no one was called any more, not even Justice Arunachalam. Indeed, no call comes and my heart is sad. In fact, my ego takes a beating. Yogiji goes out after 8 am and it's breakfast time.

We both go to Anand's place after picking up the packet of '*Good Day*' cakes I had bought for him when we arrived at the bus station. He lives at the Osborne estate, a disciple of Ramana Maharshi, not far from Sudama, in the small room at the entrance. "Free of charge," he tells me, adding that there's even a swimming pool! Anand laughs. He says: "Prema invited me. I asked her if she had a swimming pool. - No, she didn't. - So no!" What a pleasure to hear his wonderful laugh again!

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At 10 am we join the ashram for Yogiji's darshan. Anand leaves straight away. As for me, I go to the cottage to finish the

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letter I'd started and write to my two friends in Orissa to tell them that i can't come and why. Then soon somebody brings me a fax from Jean L... received by Mukilan. Then Selvaraj arrives and tells me that Yogiji is calling me. I rush. Yogiji is sitting like yesterday, with Mani. He beckons me to sit down and asks Mani to give me the news. Mani complies: Alain, from Belgium, will be arriving on such and such a date. He asked Mukilan to book him a room in a 5-star hotel in Madras. Lee's group arrives on the 28th; two other Frenchmen from Lee's group on such and such a date.

- And I've just received a fax from my French friend, etc...

- *Mani*: Krishna has received a fax from his French friend that Mukilan has just sent and that I gave to Krishna. He arrives at Madras airport at 10.30am on the 24th.

- He asked me to pick him up. I told him that if that wasn't possible, Mukilan would do it.

- *Mani*: Mukilan can look after him and take him.

- *Yogiji*: So Krishna can stay here. Good.

- And I've also written to the two friends in Orissa. It is done.

- *Yogiji*: Should we tell Rangaraja?

- *Mani*: No, Bhagavan. It has nothing to do with Rangarajan. It is a direct connection between these people in Orissa and Krishna.

The devotees are on their way out. Yogiji beckons Krishnamurti to bring the fruits, takes 2 apples and hands them to me:

- Wherever you are, my Father blesses you. You may go.

So Yogiji, right from the start, gives me the same blessing as last year. Wherever I am in this life, His Father is with me. What greater blessing could there be?

After going to the ashram gate for Yogiji's exit, I go to eat. I'm next to Mahali (Mahalingam). Then I go back to the cottage and write to S. I then meet Anand at his house where we had planned to have *chai* around 3 pm. When I arrive, as I pass through the gate, I hear the Vedas being chanted at his house. There's a priest teaching him. They beckon me to sit down and Anand introduces me, saying that I am completely Indian except for my outward appearance. We talk about the Vedas and the *homas*. Anand tells me that this priest, who comes from Karnataka, has been at Ramanashram for 4 months as a teacher. His wife was having nervous problems. So he went to see Yogiji. Yogiji told him to go to Anandashram for 3 days, to take the *mantra* and to enter totally into the Name. When he returned, his wife was cured. Soon this humble priest leaves.

Anand prepares the *chai* and cakes.

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We talk...

I return for the 4pm darshan. Yogi goes to the old darshan hall. Then I sing the *Gurunama* for half an hour...

14th November

Nothing special. Very strong tiredness. The vertebrae have not fully reset in place. Anand is not there at 7 but he is present at 10. Darshan by Yogiji but I'm not going to sing. I go to the post office to send the letters and cards I've written and then go to the S.T.D. to telephone...

I try to sleep after filming the ashram after lunch, but to no avail. I'm tired. Immediately after Yogiji's darshan at 4 pm, the rain starts to fall when we both have to go to Anand's place after picking up my thermos flask. I arrive drenched at the Security where he is waiting for me. We both set off under an umbrella, but it's of little use and we both arrive soaked. He hands me a *dhoti* and a *kurta*, then prepares some *chai*. Anand really is a magnificent person.

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We have to hurry back to the ashram for Yogiji's outing. It stopped raining. Just after we leave, Mani asks me if I've got my video, as there's going to be a ceremony 'straight away'. I suspect it has something to do with Srinivasan's fiancée, who was introduced to me by Raji this afternoon. As I've forgotten the keys to the cottage at Anand's, we go back there quickly...

I return to Mani's and take the whole ceremony on film. Then outside where they launch fireworks. Around 8 p.m. we eat and then I go 'home'.

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15th November

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

I couldn't fall asleep last night, despite going to bed earlier than usual. I didn't fall asleep until 2 am. So much so that when they came to bring me the *chai* and woke me up at the same time at 7 am, not only do I miss Yogiji's darshan, which has already taken place, but I have a double-bagged suitcase under my right eye. At 7.45 am I go to the entrance for Yogiji's exit and meet Anand. Then we both go to the refectory for breakfast, then I go and pick up the video camera and we go to his place for *chai*.

I return to the ashram at 9.50 am for Yogiji's arrival, then go with Saravanand to the computer room to improve things. I set up the Windows system for them, arrange things so that they could click with the mouse and put up an input screen with the *Gurunama*. Around a quarter to twelve I return to the cottage to store the video camera. I then see that Yogiji is 'receiving' some people, sitting at the entrance to the main *mandapam*. After putting the camera down, I go to the darshan hall to sing the *Gurunama*, but I'm barely seated when they start the *Mangalam* and stand up. Then Saravanand enters and tells everyone to sit down again. Yogiji is coming!

Yogiji does indeed arrive, holding Selvaraj's hand and accompanied by Mani!

He goes round and considers the women first, then goes round again and sits on the platform while the *Gurunama* is sung. He stays for five minutes, then leaves.

Since 7 months according to Saravanand, 9 months according to Kanan (in fact since almost 8 months), Yogiji has

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not given darshan, except, Kanan tells me, when Swami Sadchidananda came for 2 days Yogiji gave darshan as well as another time for 15 minutes.

I say to myself, "I'm back just in time! Yogiji got me into the darshan hall for this." Blessing. I MUST chant the *Gurunama*. Body and mind must calm down. The heart must regain that vibration that it hasn't found yet, far from it.

I've also realized that I was right about one other thing: the cover is now blue and no more grey. The grey cover has gone over Mataji's back.

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16th November

Sleep was pretty good, but today I'm awake at 6 am! After Yogiji's darshan at the entrance at 7 am I come back and rest again. At 7.55 am I go to the entrance again but as I'm in the alley I see Yogiji leaving. I try to get there anyway but can't get to the gate in time. So I come back to have breakfast, then go back to the cottage and have a nap. I'm very tired.

10am: darshan at the entrance where I meet up with Anand, Srinivasan and Chelvadorai.

After darshan, Anand, who has just returned from *pradakshina*, goes home to "have a good samadhi". I borrow his bike from Venkatraman and go to fill the four Limca's flask. Back at the cottage, I read a bit of "*The Vision*" and write these lines. Mani told me that Mukilan was arriving today and that he would be putting him up in the same cottage as me. I'm delighted! Two days ago Yogiji asked Mani if I'd have any problem with other people staying in the cottage. Mani replied that I wouldn't have any. I can't believe it! Yogiji is incredibly caring, even to these details!

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17th November

Wake-up at 6 am. Finally, I feel less tired...

Having washed first, Mukilan goes before me to the ashram entrance. Today is going to be a memorable day. Srinivasan's wedding is at 8 o'clock in front of Yogiji. At the entrance, at the security post, I meet Parthiban. Today is Sunday, and there are a lot of people.

Yogiji arrives, and the car heads for the main mandapam. By 7.30 am, everything is ready in the darshan hall for the wedding and people enter. Anand and Mukilan are there but they are soon asked to leave, as only the family is allowed in. Everyone is there and I'm standing there, video camera in hand, waiting like everyone else for Yogiji to arrive at 8 o'clock. Waiting. Armstrong is there with his assistant. Suddenly, through the window of the darshan hall, I see Yogiji's car drive off. I imagine (wrongly, as He was in the hut) that Ravi is going to fetch Him and take the opportunity to go and get a blank tape from the cottage, as the one in the camera is almost finished. I come back quickly. I wait.

I soon learn that Yogiji won't be coming until 9.45. I go out to meet Anand and Mukilan. My Devaki is said to have said to Yogiji:

- But, Bhagavan, there's Srinivasan's wedding!

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To which He would have replied:

- This beggar knows that!

And the car left the ashram. "That's all Yogiji," says Anand. In the discussion that followed, I say, "Yogiji doesn't have to obey what men desire."

What happens then is that, as they have to rearrange the refectory for breakfast, everyone has to go out and they have to remove everything that had been prepared for the ceremony!

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Soon noticing people going to the darshan hall, I gently wake Anand, who washes his face with fresh water before we both make our way to the ashram entrance. It's very busy. Mukilan and I decide to stand at the end of the line so that he can take photos and I can film Yogiji's arrival. Mukilan took his newly bought video camera!

Yogiji arrives and I film the car. I soon put the camera down when the car is about to reach us. It passes, continues and stops at the main entrance to the auditorium. As the devotees take the covered walkway, I go towards the car and film. Yogiji gets out of the car, walks slowly towards the darshan hall, beckons Armstrong, who is taking photographs, to give Him a hand and He walks quickly to the refectory (darshan hall). I film the entrance as the devotees wait. I enter and film Yogiji until Mukilan tells me to stop and I hear Yogiji say "*No pictures*" and gesture with that meaning. Everyone puts down their cameras and I sit down, as does Mukilan further on. There

is silence. Everything is ready for the wedding, Yogiji is seated but Ma Devaki and Sudama's sisters are not there.

Almost non-stop, Yogiji looks at the photo of the Paramacharya above the window to His left. The engaged couple come to salute Him and take their places. Silence. Rajeshvari starts the *Gurunama*, but Yogiji immediately signals for her to stop.

It is then that everything changes. Yogiji keeps turning his head left and right. When the musicians start playing, he seems completely 'out of it'. It's true that it makes quite a noise. When the fiancé places the *mangalsutra*, two men in the audience give a sign and the music becomes a true cacophony with an impressive number of decibels. Yogiji seems hyper-nervous, angry. The engaged couple comes up to Him, He gives them the *anjali*, then quickly blesses them and with His hands makes a blessing as if to send them away. Then He gets up, as if in a fury, and like a madman, as I've already seen Him, He rushes out, blessing all-out with sudden gestures.

Everyone looks stunned, bewildered! I look at Srinivasan, who looks knocked out. I say to myself, as I say to Anand who came in after Yogiji left and asked me what had happened:

- Yogiji doesn't have to obey the plans of men and women. He follows his Father's plan. But what great blessings! I read that when a saint was angry, blessings rained down even more, and that Ramana Maharshi's disciples tried to make him angry in order to receive more blessings.

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I tell Anand to ask Mukilan for confirmation because I've only given him my point of view. But Mukilan tells him exactly the same thing about Yogiji's behavior. Then Sandhya says the same thing. She adds that the fiancée's mother is 'upset' because of all this; she thought there were going to be all the traditional things, exchanges, etc... Sandhya tells me: "With us, it lasts *a long time*", to which I reply: "*I know, I was married like that*". Sandhya said to this Mum:

- What? God himself has come and you're not satisfied?

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We both (Anand) head for the entrance as Yogiji is in the "auditorium". The queue is even longer. We wait. When Yogiji comes towards us, I open my eyes. As He smiles and blesses with His hand, He smiles even more when He arrives at my level and gives me the anjali! I bend over, and i say to Anand:

- Only one gesture and everything changes!

At last I feel close to my Father, through His grace, His grace alone.

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4 pm: darshan. I go and chant the Name for half an hour, leading the chant. *Arunachala Shiva* is then sung by Chettiar's wife...

At around 6 pm, Yogiji leaves.

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18th November

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10 am – Yogiji's Darshan. There are sadhus in the queue. Yogiji, from the car, blesses the line with His two hands. Then, reaching the sadhus, the blessing of the two hands is transformed into "puppets". In fact, the sadhus have come because they think there will be a distribution of clothes today, like last year for the Jayanti. Yogiji knows this very well. Both Anand and I laugh.

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Rest. Getting up around 3.15 pm.

I give Mani a note; it's a request addressed in English to Yogiji for His permission to go and see a doctor because my back hurts. I point out that it's a 'mechanical' problem with the vertebrae that have suffered from the move. I have to admit that the friend on my father in law in Mauritius didn't manage to put them all back correctly. My left arm is also still suffering.

4 pm: Yogiji's arrival. I lead the chanting for half an hour after Rajeshvari, who then intones *Arunachala Shiva*, to which, along with the other people in the audience, I give the 'answer'. She soon beckons me to continue, which I do until Shankara Rajulu takes over the *Gurunama*. At that time, i go

back to the cottage. Two young girls from the ashram are outside and make it clear that they have come to clean. I let them in, but in fact they want to be filmed. Of course, I can't refuse them this pleasure and I film each of them in turn. They manage to make me understand not to say anything to Mani. One of them keeps trying to tell me something, but I can't make any sense of it. They quickly clean up the room and leave.

At 4.45 pm I head back to the darshan hall, which I leave with everyone else to go to the entrance to see Yogiji going out. He's sitting near the auditorium door with Mani. A few minutes later, the car pulls out of the ashram. Just after the gate, Mani comes back to me and says:

- Krishna! Not to-day!

So I won't be going to the doctor today. I meet Anand at his place a quarter of an hour later, as he's sweeping up. ...

We also talk about Papaji in Lucknow. I tell Anand that I didn't feel anything from him and that I was even a bit shocked by his behavior towards the westerners there. While we were at table, Papaji was offering us tea and cakes, while the white people went almost under the table to touch his feet without him giving them the slightest glance, like dogs! Anand tells me that when there's a cricket match on TV, he watches it during darshan.

- I didn't feel anything. He talked about Gandhiji and the story he told you too, about this man who did *likhita japa* all his life and, when he met him at the end of his life, complained because his back hurt!

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- Mahatmas, when they see that a sadhak is a true seeker of truth and has his path, never turn him away, says Anand.

- I understand. I also met Bhaktivedanta a long time ago. I felt nothing. I just saw white people dancing the jerk in front of him.

And so we talk a bit about the I.S.K.C.O.N., and I mention the 'American Temple' in Vrindavan. I tell him that when we left, Papaji gave me the anjali, that there are only white people there.

- 99% white and one Indian," says Anand. Most of these people are former devotees of Rajneesh. Many are former drug addicts, etc... .

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19th November

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7 am: Bhagavan's darshan. I keep my eyes closed as He passes by. Around 7.50am, I leave the cottage for Yogiji's exit but He has left the auditorium before and is sitting at the entrance to the ashram. Shankara Rajulu tells me that He is waiting for a *muni*. Some time later we see some Jains arriving. The staff comes and gets some chairs and the Jains sit down opposite Yogiji, who is sitting in front of the security post. I'm thinking of taking the camera and filming up close. After much hesitation, I make up my mind when Ravi places the car in such a way that it completely hides Yogiji. The Jains start chanting (Mani tells me that Yogiji asked them to). I end up getting the camera and filming as best I can, then I go for lunch. When I get back, the Jains are still there.



Then, led by Mani, they visit the ashram before greeting Yogiji and setting off again. Yogiji in turn leaves.

I walk slowly towards the cottage, waiting for Mani to reach me. We've hardly spoken to each other this year. We sit outside his cottage and he begins. I'm learning a lot of totally

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unexpected things, and I'm thinking that they might be part of the explanation for how things have changed, but I'm also thinking that they might be questionable. You have to be careful with everything and, as early as last year, I noticed how Mani could constantly put himself forward and talk about himself without realizing it. This is what he tells me then:

- Bhagavan reserves Sudama's people for His service, no longer for the public. He no longer wants anyone to bow down to them, and so on. There are struggles among themselves. Vijayalakshmi left, then came back.

We sent for the doctor. He said Bhagavan had to be fed. He wasn't well fed. Krishna, last February (or January), Bhagavan suddenly arrived, the car stopped in front of the old darshan mandir. Yogiji sent for me: "Tell Mani to run here." I ran. He didn't get out and told me I had to prepare a lot of things. We went to the circular mandir and he told me: "Sudama's sisters are killing this beggar. This beggar will never return to Sudama." It cost me x rupees to buy blankets to keep him warm. We gave him medicine to restore his blood pressure. We gave him proper food."

Of course, I'm flabbergasted by Mani's account. Having witnessed nothing, I don't 'believe' anything. I can only tell Mani what I've seen for myself: Yogiji is in much better health than last year.

- It seems that Yogiji wants to bring Mani and Raji to the front," he continues. For sure this makes them react. People come here expecting something. We just need to know what we have to do.

- That's all we want to know," I say.

- Bhagavan said that He will leave His body when the construction of the ashram will be completed. He has appointed Justice Arunachalam to succeed Him spiritually, Mani for administration and He wants there to be no link between the spiritual and the administrative.

When I lost my mother, I stayed here. When Ma Devaki lost her mother, she came to ask me to make sure that her elder brother did all the rituals properly. Bhagavan asked her to repeat what she had asked and then said, "Devaki does not trust this beggar."

Everything surprises me. Yogiji doesn't want there to be any more garlands and so on, that's not surprising, but how can beings who have the infinite blessing of being at Rama's feet be jealous and want to keep Him to themselves?

- Bhagavan, Mani adds, said that Mani was the best friend He had ever had. That if Mani left the ashram, this beggar would leave His body. So I said I would stay. »

...

Is this why there is no longer any darshan, why NOBODY, with very rare exceptions, is called to the hut in the morning? No, it can't be, Yogiji is above all that. It can only be for his Divine Work! How could Bhagavan depend on Mani, what kind of story is this!

After the 10 am darshan, I go to the darshan hall where, after the Rajeshvari's five minutes, I lead the *Gurunama* for half an hour. ... At 11:50 am ... the *Gurunama* is still being

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sung. I walk towards the entrance and see that Bhagavan is sitting at the entrance to the mandapam with Mani on his right and Shankara Rajulu (who gave a speech after the singing of *Arunachala Shiva*) on his left. I'm alone at the entrance. Anand arrives ten minutes later. He went to sing a little. Then came midday and Yogiji's exit.

After inviting him to dinner at 7pm, Anand leaves for home and I head for the refectory for dinner. While I'm eating, Mani tells me that he's spoken to Bhagavan and that He wants to see me before I go to the doctor. After the meal, I go to sleep. I wrote to D. last night and continued this morning. At about 3 p.m., I woke up and at 3.30 p.m. a *chai* is brought to me as I had requested. Last year this was always the case and this year I had nothing (I say this in jest). It feels so good to have a little *chai* after a nap!

4 pm: darshan. I lead the chanting. ... At 5.15 pm I signal to Shankara Rajulu to lead the *Gurunama*. There's a swami there who I think is a westerner. During the chant, he suddenly raises his arms to the sky and Chettiar beckons me to look at him. During the chant he is called by Yogiji. Soon I go near Senthil at the entrance. After a while, Selvaraj enters and tells me that Father is calling me. It starts to rain a little, so we run. I stand in front of Father.

- You feel some pain...

I point Him the spot on my back. Yogiji puts His hand there for two seconds and asks me if i still feel pain. At this point I have to say that I don't feel anything and that I can touch my feet with ease, indicating that I couldn't before. I

point to my arm. I show my arm. Mani tells Yogiji that I've been carrying some heavy weights with the move. Yogiji puts His hand on my elbow and shoulder and asks if I'm still feeling pain. I move my arm back and forth. I don't feel any more pain.

- Do you still want to go to the doctor?

- No, Father.

Yogiji stands up. The rain is pouring down. He tells me I can go. I run through the rain to the darshan hall, where I sit down again next to Senthil. The swami comes up to me and starts asking me questions about Yogiji: I reply. Senthil tells him that my name is Krishna and that I am a devotee very close to Bhagavan. Then the swami asks if there are any books on Yogiji in English and someone goes to get him Lee Lozowick's poems. Thinking that it is a bit short, even really short, I ask Senthil if it isn't possible to get the biography written by Sadhu Rangarajan, which would be a better way of getting to know Yogiji. Senthil laughs and says no. I'm laughing too, of course, because I know we can't find it because of Mani's rivalry towards Sadhu Rangarajan. The swami continues to ask me questions:

- Who was his real guru?

- Papa Ramdas. Here, it's just like Papa Ramdas's. In 1952 he obtained Enlightenment in the very week he received initiation.

- Does it have miraculous powers?

- Yes, He does. I saw some last year and just now He healed me. But very often the miracle happens without anyone seeing it, not at the time. A devotee comes, asks for something,

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and it's only when he's gone that it happens. No one witnesses it.

- What is his main teaching?

- My Father alone exists. Ramnam, surrender and absolute faith. This is exactly the same teaching as Papa Ramdas.

The swami thanks me and leaves.

Mani arrives at the darshan hall:

- So?

- I don't feel anything, just a bit of pain here.

- The tip! he says, laughing and holding out his hand.

It's almost the time of *ârti* and Yogiji leaves at 6 o'clock. I find out who the swami is: he's the grandson of Mataji Krishnabai's elder brother.

Venkatraman doesn't feel well. He tells me he's going to do a blood test because he's afraid of malaria fever. Mani arrives and explains loud and clear that Yogiji has cured me. But... I still feel a bit of pain, but time is needed for the pain to go... I return to the darshan hall. Selvaraj tells me that Mani is going to the statue, so I go there after picking up the video camera and I film. But there is some shadow; the best would be to film in daylight, but the shutters in the darshan hall are constantly closed.



e of Bhagavan. But I ask you
press.

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- Mani, remember! Last year Yogiji asked me to come in and film the statue that was being made, even though no-one was allowed in. Has anything appeared?

- Forgive me, my brain's too oppressed.

I return to the cottage, accompanied by Shankara Rajulu. I tell him that I have never made anything public.

- Bhagavan has a plan that we don't know about," he says.

- Yes, he had me filmed. I don't know why. I'll find out in due course.

- That's for sure. I had written poems about Him in 1976. I asked Bhagavan to publish them. "It's not time yet," He told me at the time. Every year I asked him. And then one day He asked me if I could publish them in a fortnight's time!

...



It's 7.10pm when I go to Anand's house... Anand has just come back from *pradakshina*. He's preparing the meal and I film him a little as we both eat. We talk, of course, and I start as soon as I enter his house:

- Look at this!

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And I'm going to touch the tips of my feet with my legs straight.

- Oh, what happened?
- Yogiji called me.
- Really?

I explain. Then I tell Anand what Mani told me about Sudama's sisters. To this, Anand says that being with Yogiji 24 hours a day, it's normal for there to be tensions and discussions like this. It must be extremely difficult to live with Yogiji, with the mind always on the alert. He tells me that one day in the past Yogiji went to Ganeshan's house. There he said to Ganeshan:

- Ganeshan, this beggar would like food from the Ramanashram, but he would like you to sing His Name. Don't tell them there!

Ganeshan couldn't fall asleep. Even when he was falling asleep, he couldn't tell Yogiji that he was sleepy. He ended up asking Him inwardly to let him sleep. Yogiji always asked: "*Ganeshan, sing...*". Anand tells me that there were Ganeshan, Anuradha and Ilayaraja.

Anand tells me another episode. One day Ganeshan, because of a debt problem or who knows what else concerning *The Mountain Path*, was prosecuted and could go to prison even though he had done absolutely nothing wrong. Now he's in a state of feverish anxiety. He feels lost and doesn't know what to do. He goes to see Yogiji. When he arrived, Yogiji was pacing up and down at Sannadhi Street, as if nervous.

- Ganeshan, that beggar has been waiting for you for three quarters of an hour.

By the time he left Sannadhi Street, Ganeshan's mind had calmed down considerably. As he recounted the episode to Anand, he said:

- We don't want to hear about other people's problems, and when we have some, we're on our own. Tell me, who's going to listen to all your problems for hours on end?

Feeling that Anand is tired, I leave after telling him about the parallel problems I had in France with the tax authorities, even though I hadn't done anything wrong either. It is around 9.40 pm.

It's hard to get to sleep. The thought occurs to me: you must put Yogiji's blanket over you and sleep will come. But I don't dare do it, because I don't feel worthy.

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20th November

Yogiji's darshan at 7 am. After a while I join Ravi near the well not far from the hut. I see that there's a new calf. So there are two of them: Lava and Kusha...

10am, darshan. I go to the darshan hall and lead the singing, then return after the beginning of *Arunachala Shiva ...* when someone comes to tell me that Yogiji is calling me. I go ahead and walk behind Selvaraj. Yogiji asks me for the point of pain, which I show. Just like yesterday, He passes His hand over for a few seconds and twice asks me to walk back and forth in front of Him. I point out that the pain comes after sitting for a long time. Then it is my arm's turn. Like yesterday, the pain disappears. Yogiji then asks Selvaraj to take a banana from the tray, peels it at the end and tells me:

- Krishna, eat it.

Having done so, He says:

- You can go and stay there.

Noon. On my way out of the *Gurunama*, when I arrive at the cottage, I find Anand. Mani laughingly asks for his 'tip' again, so I explain to Anand that Yogiji has called me again. Better still, and Anand knows this, Venkatraman with his fever went to see Yogiji yesterday, who told him:

- You will be well.

The blood test showed malaria, apparently. This morning he goes to see Yogiji again, who asks him where it hurts. He points to a spot on his head, which Yogiji touches: the pain disappears. He points to other places: "*Here, and here, and here*". Yogiji touches these points and the pain disappears. You should see Venkatraman smile!

...

4.00 pm. I arrive at the entrance to the ashram when I see Suresh² arrive with Anand! It's a complete surprise. I go over to him and we hug. He'll be here until tomorrow evening. He tells me that his post in the police (superintendent) will be in Kerala, with some 3,000 men under his command. Kerala's not far away! He'll be back in Tiruvannamalai for the *Dîpam*, then he'll be leaving again, and just as he's due to reach Trivandrum on the 29th, he's let it be known that he has an important job and will only be back on the 2nd, so that he can be there for the *Jayanti* of Yogiji.

He gives me some *prasad* (rice) from the Bhubaneshvar Puri temple. I tell him that I wanted to go to Orissa but that Yogiji wanted me to stay in Tiruvannamalai for the whole of my stay in India. How it's perfect!

Yogiji arrives and I find myself, in line, between Anand and Suresh! How good it feels to be with my two brothers!

...

² Suresh Rajpurohit.

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Darshan: When He reaches the level of Suresh, Yogiji has a big smile on His face. Suresh is filled with inner joy. Anand asks me if I'm coming for dinner tonight and I say yes.

- But if you want," he adds, "you can come straight away.

So I fetch my *chappals* from the cottage and the three of us head for his place. We do the anjali as we pass Sudama and one of us imitates the movement of knocking on the door.

- We're ill and would like to see the doctor.

And Suresh says:

- If it's our karma to be ill, it's the doctor's dharma to treat us.

...

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21st November

I haven't suffered at all since Yogiji touched the pain points.

Ten to 6: am - I wake up, the *chai* is brought to me by Gopal. This morning, as I bend down, my back suddenly hurts. But I have no doubts. I say, "Father, what is this?"

7:00 am : darshan.

...

At 10am for darshan, Anand and Suresh are of course present. We then go and sing, Rajeshvari for five minutes as usual, and then I take over from the *Gurunama*. Suresh is called by Yogiji during the singing of *Arunachala Shiva*. Shortly after his return, it's my turn to be called. Yogiji is still looking after my back, just like yesterday. I tell him that it's much better and that I haven't suffered at all over the last two nights, just once this morning when I bent down. He puts His hand and then, again, asks me to walk back and forth in front of Him twice. As I walk back towards Him the second time, I see Him looking intently at me. Then He takes my elbow, and I show Him exactly the location. He puts His two hands on it: they are intensely warm. Like yesterday and the day before, I no longer feel any pain. He gives me a banana, peels it completely and tells me to eat it, after which he tells me I can go and blesses me with a smile.

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...

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22nd November

7 am: darshan. I'm almost alone, apart from a sadhu and the workers.

...

At 1.45 pm I leave for Anand's place, as we have an appointment with Swami Satyananda at 2.30 pm. At Anand's, I met a Bengali from Calcutta, 25 years old, whose Guru had told him to go to Tiruvannamalai, a very holy town. Few words: we share exactly everything internally. He starts singing. Soon the three of us are going to see Swami Satyananda, the Spanish-born swami who belongs to the VHP. We talk about Muslims and I explain the problem of France. We have the same vision, particularly that Europe is finished. We look at the titles published by *The Voice of India*. Like me, Swami Satyananda did not like Sita Ram Goel's book on Christianity. I tell him about the book on the Koran, a study done by a French priest, pointing out the thesis, and it is agreed that I will send him a copy. At 3.45 pm we leave the swami as we have to be at the ashram for darshan. Anand accompanies me and the Bengali goes to a newly-built *dharamsala* close to the ashram.

Rajagopal, the sculptor, is here. We greet each other and he asks me to see him. He's emaciated, it's incredible. He explains to me that he fell ill and was pumped full of antibiotics. Fortunately he's started taking ayurveda again. He seems to have aged 10 years!

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Darshan, Yogiji tells Rajagopal to come with Him..

I sing the *Gurunama* and then Anand, for a while, *Arunachala Shiva*. Then the *Gurunama* is taken up by a lady. I then go to the cottage to read Ramakrishna. When I come back, it's too late, Yogiji is already going out.

...

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23rd November

7am: darshan. God, how far I am from Yogiji!

Sri Ramakrishna: *"Life in the world is full of fear, and, more than that, there are so many ways in which the mind can be polluted. But if you can somehow keep your mind in God, all obstacles will go away. There is enormous power in the Name of God. Sing His name and His glory."*

"If, when you hear the name of God once, you shed tears and your hair stands on end, you can be sure that you no longer have to fulfil any karma."

...

24th November

Dīpam Day

... Darshan at 7 a.m. in light rain. It rained all night. ... Then Yogiji leaves at 8 o'clock. When I get to the entrance, I see Yogiji getting into the car. I see Shaktivel and it's a great joy. When he sees me he does the anjali and says very loudly: "Krishna!" We hug and he lifts me off the ground. Yogiji comes out; there are a lot of people.....

10h. It's really busy today. Mani asks me to go outside the ashram and close the queue that continues along the path. When Yogiji arrives, he seems surprised to find me there. I'm going to sing. After the *Gurunama*, *Arunachala Shiva* is led by Rajeshvari. Someone comes for me: Mukilan has called. I run to security and Mukilan tells me that he is at the airport (Chennai) and that Jean has arrived. He puts him on the phone. Jean seems lost! He can't communicate with Mukilan. His English is weak and, what's more, with the Indian accent he can't understand a thing! But already India seems to take him. As he hadn't changed any money, I tell Mukilan to get him to change 3,000 French francs at the airport. I tell Jean:

- We'll put you in a car. You'll be there for 4 or 5 hours, you can sleep or watch. It is *Dīpam*, and the crowds are thick. So you have a V.I.P. pass on your car, 'very important person!'

...

At around 3.15 pm I am told that "my friend" has arrived. I come out of the room and see Jean, his eyes like car headlights, on the doorstep. I greet him in *anjali* and we hug.

- I'm glad to see you here, he says.

I put him in the other room near the kitchen. While he recovers, I work out how much he owes to the driver of the car that brought him in and ask Jean for the money to pay for it. Then I invite him to take a cold shower, which he happily accepts. I immediately give him the Indian clothes and explain how to put them on. Meanwhile, I go to Mani's cottage and we call Mukilan to send a short fax to Jean's wife, who was very upset that he had left for India. Barely dressed, it's darshan and we both go to the ashram entrance. There is a long queue. For the first time, Jean has Yogiji's darshan. He is very concentrated, his eyes closed. We then go to the darshan hall and the chants begin. After about an hour and fifteen minutes, Jean looks for the cottage keys in my bag. I put the bag in front of him. He must be 'knackered' and it's very difficult for him to even take *sukhasana* because of the fall he had last year.

On the way out for the *Dîpam*, Jean is there, outside the darshan hall. Everyone goes out for the *Dîpam*, following the paths made with logs etc... Yogiji and Sudama sisters and Raji are seated in the aisle opposite the auditorium exit, facing the hill. The devotees go round and sit facing Him, the barriers preventing them from getting any closer. Mats are laid out in front of Yogiji. We sit down, I'm about third row, I see Anand and C.V.R., back from *pradakshina*. Anand is very close to us, in the front row in the corner, with C.V.R. slightly behind him.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

As it has been raining hard, I'm forced to sit in the mud. I point out to Jean that Yogiji writes *Aum* or *Rama* on his thigh almost all the time. Then there's the *Dîpam*, hidden by the clouds. It is also lit at the top of the dome. Yogiji then leaves and there is a rush to get near him.

With Anand, C.V.R. and Ramesh and a few others, we go to the cottage for a *chai*. Raji gives me a large enough pot and Anand prepares the *chai*. What a change this must be for Jean! Ah, the arrival is a success. A real bath in India and Hinduism. While Anand prepares the *chai*, I introduce Jean to C.V.R. and vice versa. C.V.R. tells him that his real home is here. That he is going on a little trip first, and then... I ask him to explain the meaning of *Arunachala*. *Aruna* is the first red glow of dawn, opening up more and more. *Chala* is the mountain, fixed and unchanging. Thus *Prakrti* and *Purusha*, Shiva and Shakti. *Aruna* is also *a-runna*. We then have *chai*, all seated in the main room.

We are thinking of leaving for the *pradakshina* when it is time for lunch. So we go to the darshan hall to eat and I show Jean how to eat with his hand. In the middle of the meal, he says:

- It's the first time I see servants walking on the table!

I burst out laughing and translate for Anand, who in turn bursts out laughing.

We leave for the *pradakshina* after lunch and washing our hands. As usual, it's densely crowded and buses are leaving the city. Jean must be completely flabbergasted! We finally reach

the junction where it's quieter. But it's crazy busy. We hardly stop at all, except at four *lingas*. Jean follows me. I'm amazed to see that every time there are cassette sellers making a huge fuss with their music! In the space of a few years, this has become a commercial fair, whereas we should be walking around the hill in silence, repeating "*Om Nama Shivaya!*" How can we meditate? And so this road is now tarmac, and buses and cars now also pass along it, honking their horns! Are pilgrims getting in their way? It's unthinkable, but that's the way it is. In so few years, everything has been spoilt, put on the ground. *Chai* stop on the other side where Yogiji used to come. I take a few video images. Then, Jean being 'knackered', I tell Anand and C.V.R. that we're going to carry on without stopping each time to wait for Ramesh.

Arrived in the city, I buy a bottle of mineral water for Jean, especially as he has some medicine to take. We arrive at midnight, but the ashram doors are locked! We try to open the door, but to no avail, but the caretaker hear us and comes out of his sleep to open it for us. I wash my feet. Jean takes another cold shower and we go to bed.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

25th November

I'm woken up with *chai* at about ten to six. I drink the *chai*, let Jean sleep and go back to bed. At 7.15 I take a shower, but with hot water today because yesterday my bones hurt all over my body. I go to the 8 am darshan and Yogiji sees that I'm there. I return to the cottage. Jean is still asleep and I let him rest. I go and have breakfast. Mani questions me because he can't see Jean and I tell him that he's asleep and that we came back late because we'd done the *pradakshina*.

- You know you're supposed to be back by 9.30 pm. But *Dîpam* is the only day you can go back afterwards. My boys are very good; they phoned me that you were coming back.

I return to the cottage after breakfast. Jean is still asleep. I leave him and write these lines. I am tired. I'm going to have a rest.

Everything goes inward. Thus the *Dîpam*. Again, Yogiji told Srinivasan, as He had other disciples tell, that there was no point in coming for the *Jayanti*, that there would be no ceremonies, no homa, etc... So it seems that the *Jayanti* will be a day like any other. Yogiji said that everyone could celebrate it at home as they wished. The dances have of course also been cancelled.

...

I go to the kitchen and reheat Jean's *chai*, which had arrived with mine. He wakes up and I hand him his hot *chai*. Then he showers and gets dressed. We go to the entrance for Yogiji's darshan at 10 am. There are still a lot of people there. We then go and sing. Jean can't quite keep his posture. He sings and is very concentrated. Then Yogiji's darshan again at around midday.

...

Ringling: *chai* coming. New darshan at 4pm. I've just given Mani a quick introduction to Jean, telling him that he had a Catholic upbringing when he was young, that he had discovered 'Hinduism' a year ago and that he owned a garment factory and had started repeating Yogiji's name in his factory. After the darshan, comes the chant. I'm singing when Raji comes up, touches me on the shoulder and tells me to stop. A man moves to the front row. At Raji's invitation, I start singing again, marking the rhythm with my hands. The man starts blowing a flute. He doesn't find the right tone straight away, but then slowly it becomes very beautiful and I regret not having taken the tape recorder that Jean brought at my request because I really would have liked to be recorded with the flute singing the *Gurunama*. Then it's Rajeshvari's turn to sing *Arunachala Shiva*. Here again, the flautist has some trouble finding the melody, but then everything becomes normal. Then a friend who is currently staying in another cottage and whom I met last year starts singing the *Gurunama* while doing the anjali. He hasn't started five minutes before someone taps me on the shoulder. It's Krishnamurti:

- Swamiji is asking for two people.

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I motion to Jean to get up and follow me, and even to follow me more quickly as he doesn't seem to be in a hurry. Perhaps he doesn't understand? We follow Selvaraj. I tell Jean to approach Yogiji in *anjali*.

Mani is seated to the right of Yogiji, both as usual for the 'interviews' at the entrance to the main mandapam. There's a chair to Yogiji's left and another on the left-hand side.

- *Ukhar, Krishna*, He says, indicating the chair next to Him. "*Ukhar*", he says to John, to whom I translate: "*Sit down*".

Mani introduces Jean. Yogiji asks his name: "Jean". It's very difficult for Mani to pronounce. I rectify it; Yogiji pronounces it much better than Mani. Yogiji asks how it's spelt and I spell it out. Mani tries to pronounce it but every time he says "djeon". I explain that in French it's not "dj" but "j": Jean. Anyway, Yogiji asks for his full name. Yogiji asks for the full name. I reply:

- Legrand, which means « The great ».
- What was Krishna's name?
- Jean Baptiste. John the baptist.
- John the baptist. There are four evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
- John the Baptist was at the beginning of Jesus' life in Palestine. He baptized Jesus. Then disciples came to Jesus and one of them was John who later wrote a Gospel.

Jean is married with two children. He was married and his wife has died. He had two children with her. He remarried and again has two children.

- Father's grace (raising His hand).

Mani explains that he arrived yesterday and he must leave India:

- On 6 December, I say. He came via London.

I explain that it's cheaper, and Mani re-translates it for Yogiji, who had perfectly understood.

- British Airways, Mani asks?

- Yes.

- 9-10 hours?

- That's it.

It's a direct flight from London to Madras. Sometimes we stop in Bombay, but we stay on the same plane.

Yogiji has been holding my hand for some time now, and he won't leave it for the whole interview. He asks Mani when Lee Lozowick is due to arrive.

- On the 29th.

- And when is Krishna leaving?

- Around the 24th-25th.

- Krishna: I haven't booked my place yet.

- Krishna has not yet reserved his place. If Bhagavan tells him when he can leave, he can do so through Mukilan.

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Yogiji doesn't answer. He will also ask:

- Are you still feeling pain?
- It's over in the back, Father. There's still a point of pain in the arm, but the real illness is in the head, there are too many things while the heart is empty.
- Where exactly does it hurt?
- Here, Father.

Yogiji puts his hands for a few moments.

- Can you still feel the pain?
- No, Father... Every time I come close to You, the pain goes away.

Yogiji bursts out laughing and pats me on the back.

- Is this his first time in India?
- Yes, Father. He discovered Hinduism a year ago and is reading *Rama Nama*. For some time now he has been repeating your Name in his factory.

At that moment, Yogiji took off his glasses, gave them to Selvaraj and began to look intensely at Jean, who had his eyes closed and his hands on his knees.

- How many times has Krishna come to India?
- This must be the eighth time, Father.
- Mani: 1990, 91, 93, 94, 95, 96. Only in 92 (he didn't come).
- I went to the Himalayas.

- Mani: In 92 he went to the Himalayas and didn't come.
- How did he come into contact with Rangaraja?
- It was in Mauritius. There was a very small newspaper with an insert: anyone who wanted information about Indian culture could write in. I wrote in.

- Mani: and he met Rangarajan.
- In France, I felt strongly that I had to come to India. It made me cry. We didn't know where to go in India. So we went to see Satya Sai Baba. But before we left, I received an invitation to Father's *Jayanti*. I wrote that we would be there.

Yogiji, His hand on my back, has a wonderful smile.

- It was in 1990.
- When did you write this article?
- In 1991, Father.
- Krishna wrote this article in a magazine in France and it was sent to Rangaraja and translated here. Did you send it with the English translation?

- No, Father, it was translated here.

(It's only when I copy this passage with the computer in Mauritius, on 11 January at 10.38 pm, that I realize how incredible it is that Yogiji remembered this fact, which is really just a detail!)

- When did you two meet?
- *Krishna, turning to Jean*: 5, 6 years?
- *Jean*: Yes, 5 years.
- 5 years ago, Father.
- And how did you meet?
- Through the Freemasons.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

First I mispronounce 'masons' in English, then Yogiji:

- Ah, Free maisons! I would like Krishna to talk about Freemasonry.

- They seek the path to Truth through symbolism. There are many Hindu symbols.

- When was Freemasonry founded?

- In England, around 1770 (error, it was a little earlier, but that doesn't make much difference).

- Are there any 'leaders'?

- No, Father. The leaders are administrative, not spiritual. They consider that the Master is the Lodge. There is a leader in each lodge who represents the spiritual, but he changes every year or three. There are groups, and now there are many, where all they talk about is politics.

- Is Freemasonry everywhere in the world?

- Yes, Father.

- *Mani*: Yes, yes, in Madras.

- How many Freemasons are there in the world?

- *Krishna (to Jean)*: Approximately how many Masons are there in France?

- *Jean*: 200,000.

- Krishna: 200,000 in France, Father (I'll tell Jean later that he was wrong, I think there are a lot fewer).

- But it is said it's very secret, that we mustn't reveal it to others...

- Yes, Father.

- *Mani*: It's very secret. It's very difficult to get into.

- How do you get in?

- When a member feels that someone is a true seeker of Truth, he proposes him. Then three Freemasons go and visit him to see if they feel he can enter. Then there is a vote.

Etc... Then Yogiji tells Selvaraj to put Jean's chair opposite His. I tell Jean to stand up. Selvaraj places the chair and Yogiji tells Jean to sit down. He first takes his right hand, then both hands, then caresses his forearms.

- What does he do for a living?
- He makes clothes, jackets and trousers.
- *Mani*: Shirts.
- *Krishna*: No, jackets and trousers, for men.
- *Yogiji*: for men.
- Is he on the machines?
- No, he's the manager.
- Where does he sell?

I ask Jean who answers:

- *Jean*: In France, Europe, and a little in Japan.

Mani repeats. Then there's silence. Then:

- The name is Jean (impossible to pronounce). We'll call him John. It's a name we've known for a long time.

Yogiji asks Selvaraj for the fruit platter. He takes an apple, "charges" it and puts it in my hand. He does the same with Jean. Then, blessing with both His hands:

- My Father blesses Krishna. My Father blesses John.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

We get up and slowly move backwards. Yogi continues to bless us with both His hands.

The devotees are out and we join the small alley to go to the entrance of the ashram with everyone else for Yogiji's exit.

We return to the cottage. Jean is on cloud nine, wondering what's happening to him.

- I didn't expect anything," he says. I thought that if even on the last day I had a blessing, it would be fantastic, and then...!

He is overwhelmed with inner joy. We talk a lot and the evening meal is brought in. We eat and then go to sleep anyway.

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26th November

...

6 am: wake-up and *chai*. Yogiji darshan at 7 am. There are very few people. Between 7.15 and 7.40 Jean and I confront our story of the interview we had with Yogiji yesterday. I then tell Jean that we need to go back to the entrance as Yogiji might be leaving before 8 am, which is exactly what happens.

...

9.55 am: we go to the ashram entrance. Darshan followed by chanting. We forgot to take the tape recorder again, which is a pity, because a *sâdhu* (a real one, it seems) sings loudly in a harmonic line and with faith. I find it very beautiful and here again I would have liked to be recorded leading the singing and responding to it with the others. Then it's *Arunachala Shiva*.

...

Jean and I go to the entrance... Then it's Yogiji's exit darshan.

...

4 pm. At the entrance, Anand is there and he's cold. Darshan then darshan hall....

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At the end we don't have time to attend the *ârti* because Yogiji is about to leave. Rajeshvari asks me to come back afterwards, but I'll forget. In the covered walkway, Jean tells me that he can't feel his legs, which are completely ankylosed. Then he adds: "*Thank you very much*". I tell him: "*Thank Him, not me.*" Yogiji leaves, after which I tell Anand about the interview with Yogiji and the fact that Yogiji had Jean's chair put in front of His etc...

...

27th November

... After Yogiji's darshan at 7 am we return to the cottage where I wash my clothes before leaving at ten to eight for Yogiji's outing. After breakfast ... I suggest to Jean that we take a photo of Yogiji's place in the main mandapam under the little shelter. Rajeshvari is in the mandapam and calls me....

- Have you seen the photo of Bhagavan with the lamp?
Bhagavan asked me to put it.

- No, he didn't. I did see a flame from the outside but I didn't know what it was.

I approach. Against the wall, surrounded on the sides and above by wood, is a chair with a flame on it, protected from the wind by glass. Higher up, in the same shelter formed by the wood, a photo of Yogiji and, behind the chair, an open umbrella. Rajeshvari tells me that Bhagavan asked her to place the photo and the lamp there with instructions not to touch them, not to change anything, and that the flame should never go out. As at that time the roof had not yet been completely laid and it sometimes rained inside, Selvaraj put up an umbrella for protection.

Now that the wood is all around it, it's no more possible to take the umbrella off. I film and call Jean to do the same with his camera. To make sure the camera doesn't move, I film a second time, placing the camera on a precarious table nearby, which we set down opposite. Selvaraj is not far away and he confirms all this for me.

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- When was this put on?
- 5 or 6 months ago.

Rajeshvari calls me again and shows me the square of soil surrounded by bricks in the centre of the mandapam, explaining that Yogiji has had a hole dug there and that *Ram Nam likhita japa* notebooks have been placed there. Once this was done, the whole thing was covered and no one is allowed to touch even the soil covering the notebooks. Asked about the date, Rajeshvari tells me that it took place in 1995. I'm surprised because it wasn't there last year. She then tells me to ask Mani. Rajeshvari asks me to have Jean sing first today and to follow with *Arunachala Shiva*. I leave the mandapam and go to Mani who is sitting outside the refectory. I sit on his right and Jean on his left a little in front and I ask him the question.

- It was at the beginning of 1995.
- But you never told me!
- I was instructed not to tell anyone.

That's when I notice that it is 9.50 am on Mani's watch. I signal to Jean to get up and we set the cameras down in the cottage. Darshan is followed by chanting, as requested by Rajeshvari, who then resumes the *Gurunama*, during which I have to leave the room for a few moments.

At midday darshan, Anand is there...

...

Just after lunch, as agreed, we change cottages, moving from No. 8 to No. 5, the first row at the back. This cottage even

has a telephone and isn't cluttered with boxes and stuff like No. 8. So it's for the best. No. 8 will be for the Americans. Speaking of Michael, the American who spent two years in India, Senthil says to me:

- He was always bothering us. We had to shake him. One day he hit a cobra that was there!

- But that's a very auspicious sign!

- Yes, it is!

- Ah, don't worry, they're Americans, they think they're masters of everything.

They're laughing.

...

At 3.55pm, we race to the entrance for the darshan. Anand arrives just before Yogiji's entrance. On our way to the darshan hall, I say to Anand, referring to Jean:

- He's reading Ramakrishna, he's in total ecstasy.

...

It's around 5.20 pm and we've barely started drinking our *chai* when we hear that Yogiji is leaving. We see people leaving and run to the entrance. Yogiji leaves....

Then I say to Anand:

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

- Ah, come on! I've got something to show you about the Americans. You like to laugh and we're going to laugh together.

I show him the brochure about Lee Lozowick and his rock band *Liars, gods and beggars*. He chuckles! I say:

- He will come with 15 ...

And Anand goes on with me:

- ... disciples!

We're going to show the brochure to Mani, who also laughs 'without comment'.

- L.G.B. he says. Liars go to God, who sends them out to beg.

.

Anand leaves soon. Jean can see that I'm not the only one who doesn't like the presence of the Americans. He's seen Anand's reaction and that of Mani. I spoke to him about all this the day before yesterday.

...

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28th November

I wake up at 6.15am. I open the door that Jean had closed last night because the wind was blowing it. So the *chai* and its porter can get in.

I've just had a dream and when I wake up I can see a clear meaning in it. I rarely remember my dreams. It's true that everyone dreams, but I have the impression that I never dream. It's a strange dream, one that I remember clearly. The last dream I had was on 5 November, in which I was in Kanhangad and received the blessing of Swami Ramdas who, with infinite gentleness, held me close to him. He wrapped his arms around my head and pulled me close. I was small and my head was level with his navel!

The dream I've just had is the following. One day I receive a letter saying that I have been appointed Director of Television (for the Indian Ocean). I don't pay too much attention to it. Then I meet Jean (and another person on another day) and say: "*Do you know? I've been (or am going to be) appointed Director of Television (for the Indian Ocean). It's going to go fast to spread (Ram Nam)*". Then comes a conference at HQ, probably in Paris. We're in a room that looks like a cinema, except that among the armchairs there's an enclosed area reserved for management, with a large table and chairs along the table so that people face the screen. There are a number of bigwigs in this room. I'm outside this space, on a

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

cinema seat, just in front, the first row in front. A screen with, it seems, a map of the world. First we chat, and then a question is asked: "*How can television be developed in these regions?*" To my right, a young man stands up. He's wearing glasses: "*First of all, it depends on the size of the customer file (prospects)*", he says with a smile. Then he sits down again. The conference ends almost immediately. I get up and, behind me, still seated in the Management area, the big boss is sitting in front of the big table where everyone used to sit, with a bundle of (open) letters in front of him. He has mine in his hands that are resting on the desk (it's a letter of application). I had written a job application a long time before, pointing out that my wife was Mauritian and that we had something there. I should also point out that my wife currently lives in a house that belongs to us there. And that's the end of it.

I tell Jean about this dream immediately after waking up. I say that I have to increase the 'customer database' in order to develop *Ramnam*. Have I been appointed Director of *Ramnam* for the Indian Ocean? I don't really know, but it doesn't matter. I have to forget about myself and 'get on with the job'.

After the 7 o'clock darshan, we return to the cottage, then go back for the 8 o'clock darshan and have breakfast. After returning to the cottage, we go to Anand's as planned for *chai*. ... Anand suddenly comes up with the idea of going to the temple. So we take a rickshaw...

We come back to the ashram in rickshaw, set down our cameras and return for Yogiji's darshan. Then we go to sing. ...

Darshan... At 1.40 pm we leave the ashram to fill up on liquids and Jean phones France. I then stop a rickshaw and we go to Armstrong's where I buy some color photos of Yogiji, which I didn't know. I see Raghu in one of the photos and ask Armstrong some news about him.

- Bhagavan asked him not to come anymore.
- Why?
- Nobody knows.

...

Mani also speaks of Raghu, certainly because of Pondicherry where Dilip Kumar's book was published.

- He has been banished.

...

After *chai*, we head to the entrance for the 4pm darshan. When I then start chanting the name in the darshan hall, I have no concentration and have to force myself to find the right melody and rhythm at the same time... ... Then Rajeshvari finds Jean and beckons him to sing the *Gurunama*. He hasn't started for five minutes (so it is about 5.20 p.m.) when Krishnamurti arrives and tells me that Yogiji wants to see me. I ask him if He wants to see us both. I then signal to Rajeshvari to have someone else sing and to Jean to get up and follow me.

Ravi, who is there, takes the tray of offerings and we follow him, arriving in anjali in front of Yogiji.

- *Krishna, sit here.*

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I sit down. Yogiji then beckons Jean to sit down, takes my right hand and asks me if my back is still hurting. I reply that it's fine. He seems to insist.

- Everything's fine, Father.

He passes His hand over lightly, then takes my left arm and asks if I'm in pain. I tell him that it's only when I wake up that I feel the pain. Yogiji puts His hand on my elbow, where I indicate the point of pain, and then both His hands. One moment His index finger is right on the spot and I say "yes". He then asks me if I'm still in pain. I say 'no' and He tells me that I need to find the exact point, but now I can't find it because I can't feel anything anymore. Just before, Yogiji asked me if I thought it was necessary for me to go and see a doctor anyway, and of course I replied that it wasn't. As on other occasions, He then makes me walk back and forth in front of Him and observes me attentively, apparently at the level of the sore spot on my back. As on the other times, He then makes me walk twice back and forth in front of Him twice and observes me attentively, apparently at the level of the sore spot on my back. What exactly is He looking at? The cakras? Nadis?

Then I sit down again and He takes my hand.

- Do you have any news from Mauritius?
- Yes, Father. Ishvari called on yesterday.
- It is cold?) (Yogiji understood 'cold' instead of 'called' because of my accent)
- No, Father. It's 30 degrees.

- *Mani*: Ishvari called yesterday and it's 30° over there
(*turning to me*): about the same as here?

- Yes.

- *Yogiji*: Is everything alright?

- Yes, Father.

- *Father's grace*.

Then Father raises his left arm to heaven, as if to bless:

- Ishvari is well by Father's grace.

...

- Krishna said yesterday that they met in a Masonic lodge.

- Yes, father.

- They have been in the same lodge for two years.

- Five years, Father.

- Five years! (*Yogiji smiles*). How many people are there?

- Between 15 and 20.

- *Mani*: In Madras, 20 is the maximum.

- In France, some lodges go up to 70.

- *Yogiji*: Is there a leader, a guru?

- No, Father. They consider that the Master is the spirit of the lodge.

- *Mani*: Just administrative.

- That's it.

- *Mani*: In Madras there are six lodges, one (at such and such a place), one (at such and such a place)...

Yogiji seems to know the location of one of them, because Mani starts to talk about its location and Yogiji specifies. I'll mention this to Jean later. Yogiji acts as if He

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

doesn't know anything, and yet He even knows the location of a Masonic lodge in Madras ...³

- *Mani*: Many of them are also members of Rotary and the Lions Club. It's very secretive. They mustn't reveal anything to anyone. I looked in Webster and, under "*mason*", I found "*house builder*".

That's Mani's sense of humor and I have to say it's excellent.

- *Krishna*: Most of the symbols are symbols of construction tools.

- *Yogiji*: Do you live far apart?

- About 60 kilometers, Father.

- And the lodge is between your two homes?

- No, in Lille. It's a different place, 40 kilometers from my home and 50 kilometers from Jean's home.

- Mani, when is Lee Lozowick arriving? Is it tomorrow?

- Tomorrow evening at the airport.

Mani explains the arrangements.

- They're all going to meet at the airport. Alain has booked a room at (such and such) hotel, the "princely suite" (or something like that). He's a very rich man. He's from Belgium.

- What does he do?

- I don't know.

³ Not much later, Krishna and Jean will leave masonry.

- *Krishna*: Father, he's from Belgium but he's often in France where he seems to have a property in Brittany, a region in the west of France.

- Does he have a business?

- I think so, Father.

- *Mani*: It makes investments. He is from a rich family

- *Krishna*: Noble.

- *Mani*: Yes, royal.

- *Krishna*: No, not royal.

- *Mani*: Something like the 'barons'.

- *Krishna*: Yes.

- *Yogiji*: How much did he send?

- *Mani*: 20,000 dollars, which is 10 lakhs, more than a million rupees.

- *Yogiji*: Does John know that there is an ashram in France?

- *Krishna*: I told him that Lee Lozowick was building an ashram.

- Have you been there?

- No, Father, it's a long way from where we live....

- Does John speak English?

- Yes, Father.

Soon Yogiji asks Ravi to put Jean's chair in front of Him.
After a while:

- Does John want to say anything?

- *Jean*: I can speak a little (in English).

- *Krishna*: Do you want to say something?

- *John, very moved, after a silence*: Yes. (*Silence. Then*) :
I would want help to get to You.

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Tears come to my eyes. Mani repeats to Yogiji, who soon takes Jean's arms in His hands. After a few moments, He asks Ravi to bring the tray forward, takes an apple and puts it in Jean's hand.

- My Father blesses you.

He does the same with me.

- You can go.

We stand up and step back. Father blesses us with both His hands as we walk away.

We return to singing in the darshan hall. Soon it's *Mangalam*, then Yogiji's exit darshan.

...

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29th November

Last day before the 'Americans' arrive. As I leave at 7 am for darshan, I see Nivedita with her baby and Bharati coming out of a nearby cottage. They arrived last night and are leaving today at 10 am because of the Jayanti festivities in Madras. Sadhuji is at Kanya Kumari as he told me he would be for the celebrations there.

Chettiar is at the entrance, like yesterday. He didn't come in for 3 days, caught with a fever, apparently a serious cold. His face yesterday was still very tired.

Sri Ramakrishna: *"He who receives divine blessings in a dream is sure to attain liberation"*. (v. dream in which blesses me???).

Anand arrives at 8 a.m. for darshan and we have to go to his lace for *chai*.

...

We come back for the 10 am darshan and go and sing... At midday, it's darshan followed by lunch.

We return to the cottage and Jean falls asleep. I wake him up at 1.45 pm and we go to the STD ... As I am going to Anand's place ... I hear a voice calling me. It's Swami Satyananda on his balcony, telling me I can come and see the

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Voice of India books. I put the packet of biscuits down at Anand's and we go up to the swami, who let us in.

I introduce Jean to him and then look at the books. I pick up one on the myth of St Thomas in India and St Thome's Cathedral in Mylapore, which I hope I'll have time to read. Swami Satyananda asks me when Lee Lozowick is arriving and, in answer to his question, I tell him the story of his ashram at Tiruvannamalai. He also saw the "cameras stunt" and seems to have the same opinion as the rest of us. One day, he tells us, Lee Lozowick came to his house. Swami said to him, "Come and have tea", to which Lee replied, "Ten of us are coming". The swami then suggested that they take cups... He saw the camera trick and then Lee went to make a speech on which the swami tells us:

- It was more psychotherapy than spirituality.

I then tell him about Jean, how we met, and how I got him into Hinduism. Jean soon says:

- I was only given the middle of Christianity, Krishna gave me the chapters that were missing at the beginning and the end.

As it is difficult for Jean to speak in English, Swami Satyananda tells him in pure French:

- Tu peux parler en français ! (You can speak French.)

And now he's expressing himself in impeccable French! And Krishna was trying so hard to speak English! The swami

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really had me fooled! Swami asks me if Yogiji is known in France. The answer is no, but I tell him that the biography has been published. *"Even in India, you can't find anything about Yogiji,"* I tell him, and I speak about the French biography written by Michel. He tells me that twelve years ago, Yogiji told him: *"There are evil forces fighting against me"*. The swami asked him to explain: *"Read the biography that was made about me"* (written by the American). The swami read it and still didn't understand. Yogiji then told him: *"Read it 10 times, 12 times"*. Swami tells me that this was impossible for him.

It's 3.45 pm and we're on our way back to the ashram. ...

It's around 4.50 pm when Jean and I reach the ashram. I sing, taking up *Arunachala Shiva* and take over for the *Gurunama*. After a few minutes, the musicians arrive and begin to play. Then it's the *ârti* and Yogiji's exit.

Swami Satyananda arrives accompanied by a white friend whose Indian name is 'Bharat' and tells me that he has just had Yogiji's darshan on the way. ...

...

Then Mani tells him about the 1,000 days he spent with Yogiji and says some very nice things. I then escort the swami to the ashram gate. ...

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

30th November

We are at the entrance at around 7 am and I see the line of "palefaces". We walk behind the *Yagashala* and then I look for Lee, who stands up and waves to me. We greet each other very cordially. He beckons me to sit down but I decline, pointing out that Yogiji is about to arrive. We talk for a few moments and I join Jean. Lee approaches the entrance and I'm surprised to see Parthiban's father kneel down in front of Lee, who seems to think it's perfectly normal! Yogiji arrives, then the car goes to the hut, then Lee is called and goes to the hut. Yogiji comes out at about 8 o'clock and we go for breakfast. Lee, who already had it, puts himself next to me.

Afterwards, Jean and I go to Anand's place for *chai*, film a bit and take a few photos, then come back for darshan at 10 am. Prema, her daughter, Balakrishnan and two children I don't know are there! Yogiji's car stops in the middle, a little past the level of the old darshan mandir. Yogiji gets out and asks Lee to come along. Lee gives him his hand and Yogiji walks... to the darshan hall! When we enter, Yogiji is sitting on the right of the stage (on the left for people) and Lee is on his right. I'm in the fourth row and Jean is on my left. After a while, Yogiji asks for some tapes to be brought in and Mani goes to get his hi-fi system. The cassette is played. It's a recording, a good one, made by Lee's band. Someone comes to tell me that there's a phone call for me.

I tell him to take the number and that I'll call back. After the tape is played for about half an hour, Yogiji asks Selvaraj to call me. I go over to Yogiji and kneel down.

- Go and sit next to Lee and you two talk.

I go to do this but we don't know where to sit in relation to each other and I end up sitting on his right and we talk, about his ashram, etc. Then Yogiji soon asks Rajalakshmi, Sudama's sister, to sing *slokas* in Sanskrit and, as she sings them, *sloka* after *sloka*, she gives the English translation. Twice, Yogiji asks her to repeat the text and finally asks her to explain: it is the message of the Paramacharya of Kanchi to the United Nations, which was sung by Vijaya Shubalakshmi. Following this explanation, Yogiji asks Lee to come and talk to the devotees about this text. Lee speaks on an individual level. Then Yogiji asks me to do the same.

- Say what you want.
- Can I speak in French?
- Speak in French.

I then explain that this text is for the United Nations and also applies not only to the individual, but to countries and that each nation must follow its *dharma* and respect the *dharma* of others and then "*Everyone will be happy and prosperous*" as the text says at the end. Then I kneel down in front of Yogiji, who laughs and slaps me twice on the back.

- Go back to sit down again and talk.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

I think I remember people singing afterwards. Twice Yogiji stands up and walks through the assembly. We both speak. As He sits, Yogiji turns to us from time to time as if to check whether we are actually speaking. Then Yogiji comes out and asks Lee to speak to the devotees. Then we all go out and it's darshan. ...

...

At midday I eat with the Indians and not with the Americans, after which Anand and I agreed that they all come with Prema etc. to have *chai* at the cottage around 1 pm. But when we get to the ashram gate, as it is already half past noon, we agree on 1.30pm. (Armstrong comes at 1 pm?). Returning to the cottage, I listen to the *Gayatri Mantra* cassette that Sri Jagtiani⁴ gave me. It is superb.

At around 1.30 pm I get on bike to phone Shobha. I meet John⁵ at the crossroads with the Street of Sudama and we go to the STD together, talking about my plane seat that I have to book via Mukilan for the return journey. Venkatraman told me that Mukilan would be arriving this evening, but John tells me that this is not the case. Just before I get into the cabin, I see Lee's troop shopping and walk past the STD. She called simply because she reread my first letter, but also because Lakshmi wants to talk to me. My little darling wasn't there when I called Mauritius and she asks me whether I am with Yogiji. I leave the STD and go to the shop next door where they sell statues and Aurobindo ashram *agharbati*. Lee arrives at that moment.

⁴ From Mumbai.

⁵ An Indian devotee of Yogiji living in Madras whom I had invited to come with us in November 1990 on a tour of southern India. (see Vol. 1)

The Americans choose statues. But I return to the ashram (after buying sugar etc.).

Everyone arrives around 2pm and Anand prepares the chai. We share it and I film a bit of the family. We all talk until darshan at 4pm. Everyone wonders if Yogiji is still going to the darshan hall, but the car goes to the main mandapam. The devotees then go to the darshan hall and Rajeshvari beckons me to the front row where seats have been left free. Jean takes a seat further back but I beckon him to come and sit next to me. As Lee arrives and takes his place behind me, I give him the first seat by pushing myself to the left and he thanks me. According to Rajeshvari, the plan is for her to sing the *Gurunama* for 5 minutes, for Jean to continue for half an hour and for me to continue with *Arunachala Shiva*. Lee will finish with the *Gurunama*.

We chant again the *Gurunama* after Rajeshvari when Yogiji enters and settles in with Sudama's sisters. He soon has Lee and I sitting where we were this morning, with instructions to speak.

- About anything, but speak!

Then Rajalakshmi sings the same thing as this morning, and Yogiji says that Lee Lozowick and Krishna 'Carcélé' are going to come over and talk about this text. Lee starts off with, it has to be said, a lot of spiel. When it's my turn, I speak in French, expressing the fact that science has arrived at the proof that everything is one, that everything is particles or waves and that we are all connected like drops in the ocean. I express the fact that the majority of people here began with Christianity

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

and I quote: "*Love thy neighbor as thyself*", explaining that this means: "*Love thy neighbor as being thyself*", and I quote an *Upanishad* where the sage says to his wife: "*What I love in you, it's the Atman*" and the fact that this Atman is One. I end by saying that "*Let every people be happy*" is a Vedic phrase, and I apply it to nations. I return to my seat after Yogiji blesses me with both His hands and says again:

- Speak of anything, but speak!

Yogiji asks Lee for some American women to sing, which they do while we talk. Then Yogiji asks Lee to read one of the poems from his collection "Poems of a broken heart", which has to do with Yogi Ramsuratkumar's name: "*What is my name? - "Ram ram". - "No, my name is Yogi Ramsuratkumar"*" and He asks him to comment on the name.

Then comes the end of the darshan. The chanting continues until Lee signals to stop. But, because of that, no one is there to see Yogiji going out, who has already left the ashram.

Anand and the others initially thought they'd stay for 15 minutes, but Yogiji came along, so of course they are still there at the end. They leave and Prema's daughter says to me:

- We meet at Anand's house at 7.30pm, after which Mum and I will have a rest.

When Mani comes back from Yogiji's, I go to the statue the Americans are going to see. I go first. Mani doesn't allow

the Americans to film. I then show Jean the smile on Yogiji's face as we make the *pradakshina* of the statue.

At 7.30pm, after telling young Suresh that we would not be eating at the ashram, we go to Anand's place as Anand is waiting for us near the junction with Sudama Street. We go to his place where Balakrishnan is resting. Prema is due to arrive but we don't see her, so we decide to go to the Ramanashram. The priest who is supposed to be chanting isn't there yet, so I take the opportunity to give Jean a quick "tour" of the temple. On our way back, we see the priest but we still have to wait for the organizer. When he arrives, drapery is spread out on the floor and I film almost the entire singing session. It ends at 9.20 pm and the priest asks, through Anand who was holding the harmonium, if it would be possible to have a copy of the tape, which I promise, saying that he will have to wait until March.

I give Rs 500 and Jean Rs 100, and I say that it's not possible to pay for what your heart has received. Anand gives me the list of what has been sung. The priest's name is Mutthiah Desikar and here is the program:

THEVARAM THIRUVAC

- 1.- Annamalai Ammaialoduam oruvan (sambandar)
- 2.- Vilavarkani Padaruria (sambandar)
- 3.- (sambandar)
- 4.- Odima Malargal Thuvi (appar)
- 5.- Paimponè Pavala Kunrè (appar)
- 6.- Irakkam Onrum Arta Kalani (appar)
- 7.- Muril (appar)

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- 8.- Potri Thiruthandagam (appar)
- 9.- Gnâthal Thozhuvâr Gnâmigal (appar)
- 10.- Mandiramavathu Niru (appar)
- 11.- Kulangal Indhum (sambandar)
- 12.- Niru Sèr or Maniar (sambandar)
- 13.- Murugan Kshetrapillaitamil (très beau)
- 14.- Thiruponnusal (Thiruvachagam)
- 15.- èru Mail èri (thirupugazh)
- 16.- Nadavindu Kalâdi Namô (thirupugazh)
- 17.- (thirupugazh)
- 18.- Âdhinadamadum malai - Gurunamasivayar - T.V.

Venba

He will ask me to send the tape to the attention of the
Cappt. Narayanan of Ramanashram.

...

1996

1st December Yogiji's Jayanti

We go to the entrance at 7 am. Yogiji arrives and Lee is called to the hut. Anand is there, shivering. There are a lot of people. I introduce Jean to Sri Rajagopall, the sculptor. Then Anand goes to sit in front of the old darshan mandir. He looks 'knackered'. Later I go and sit next to John at the bicycle storage area. Yogiji doesn't come out of the hut until 8:45.

...

10h. Yogiji arrives. The car stops near the entrance to the main *mandapa* and continues towards the darshan hall...

Darshan.-

Yogiji sits Lee and me down like yesterday, with instructions to talk. Ma Devaki and Sudama's sisters are not there. Lee tells me something about them and I tell him that there have been big changes and that they no longer appear in public. The American cassette is played. Then Ma Devaki and the Sudama sisters arrive. Yogi beats time with both His hands. He looks at both Lee for a moment and smiles at us.... A man arrives, whom I had already seen last year. As I've seen him go and sit in the third row from the start, I assume he is going to speak, and indeed he is called and, exuberant as ever, puts a

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shawl on Yogiji's shoulders and off he goes in a long speech, lasting over an hour. At one point he is brought a glass of water, but Yogiji asks for it and takes a drink himself a little before handing it over to him.

The speech is as exuberant as the character and it is impossible for this man to have thought carefully before pronouncing the words he says. Now the Paramacharya is Vashishta, who had told him that Yogiji was Ramachandra etc... Lee Lozowick is Yogiji's main disciple, a very great guru! I'm really flabbergasted! Blown away! Then he goes on with his personal horoscope, which says that he will live to be 70 at the latest. When he came to see Yogiji, he says that He went into samadhi and, returning from that state, told him that he will live to be 100. Yogiji would have called Mani: "x is going to live to be a hundred". He then talks about his *seva* and the *seva* he is going to do. God, what has become of Hinduism, blind! Yogiji will bless him at the end of the speech and he will be applauded!

At one point someone comes to talk to Ma Devaki who repeats to Yogiji. Yogiji then turns to Lee and me and ushers us out. This is to distribute *dhotis* to the sadhus who have gathered to eat in the *Yagashala*. There are 75 of them. Each time I give a *dhoti*, I say "Yogi Ramsuratkumar". We then go back to the darshan hall.

Yogi asks Rajeshvari to sing the same text from Kanchi's Paramacharya. He then asks Vijayalakshmi to go and explain by whom this text had been written and by whom it had been sung (Subbhalakshmi) at the United Nations. He then says:

- Lee Lozowick and Krishna Carcéle are going to say something.

Lee gets up but I stay where I am. Here he goes into explanations. I think of just saying this, since I've been praying to Yogiji to leave me in my corner: « I once heard Father say: *'This beggar died at the lotus feet of Swami Ramdas in 1952. Since then, only my Father has exists. This beggar does not exist. Only my Father, eternal, past, present and future. Yogi Ramsuratkumar is not the name of this beggar, but the name of my Father, so this beggar wants to hear it sung.'* The Jayanti does not exist for God, but it exists for the temple in which He resides and, as the Paramacharya's text says, "we have our Father, full of compassion" who allows us to experience the Jayanti of His temple in which He resides."

But it's midday and Yogiji is about to get up. So Lee comes to the end of his speech and beckons me to come. I say, "No, Yogiji's leaving". So Yogiji answered my prayer. And He goes out after Sudama sisters.

While Anand was sleeping, Prema's daughter and Prema herself woke him up. He's feverish. I tell them to let him sleep, but it's hard. At the ashram, there's a big crowd for the meal. Prema says they're going to eat outside, so I decide to go with her. The Swiss lady gives me the photo of Yogiji (95) that she had promised me as a present. I'm called first to eat but I say I'm not coming. I'm asked why and I simply reply that Anand isn't well. Prema went ahead to prepare her packages for the return to Chennai. We join her, her daughter and Jean at Anand's house, near one of the Ramanashram's lodgings. There

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we see Swami Satyananda, who asks me for some news. I tell him about a big "gurup"...

...

4:00 pm Darshan.-

Yogiji enters the ashram and the car heads for the darshan hall. I queue like everyone else with Anand, but after a while I'm called in, along with Jean. So I go in and Yogiji sit me and Lee on the mat. Jean is in the second row. Like this morning, the room is full and the darshan begins with the 'American' tape.

While we were still in the covered alley, I spotted the man who last year and two years ago had given an interminable speech on the *Ramayana* in a hoarse voice. There he is in the second or third row and I deduce that he wants to talk. Ma Devaki seems to tell Yogiji, who signals that he can do so. And here we go with his voice still as gravelly as ever for over an hour. 'Never two without three'. I say to Lee: "And that's just the introduction!

In the meantime Yogiji called Shankaraju who then sat down next to the speaker. After an hour of speech, Shankaraju gets up and remains standing. He tells us that Bhagavan has asked him to briefly explain in English what the speaker has just said in English. It's about Tirumular, his history and the *Tirumantiram*. Shankaraju's speech is very clear and later Anand will tell me that he had edited out what was a bit 'trivial' in the other man's mouth. Shankaraju is such a true devotee, full of humility.

Yogiji then asks Lee to get some Americans to sing. We are then treated to a mixture of "Yogi, Aum Sri Ram, guru, etc...» There are no full mantras! My Devaki gets up and I greet her, then Yogiji follows her and goes out.

As we are about to perform the *ârti*, Rajeshvari asks me to go and get Lee Lozowick (so that he can officiate), but I simply reply: "He's over there" and go out accompanied by Jean and Anand. I'm nobody's stooge, especially Lee's.

I've a "blow". Is this a lesson? All these talkers and gurus! Except Shankaraju of course. Jean feels the same way and makes me laugh by saying:

- Yogiogururama , we, we have 'panorama' !

...

Ah Father, who are we to think we are vested with anything? Thank you, Father, for leaving me in my corner, without making me speak. Who are we? Now I don't know what I'm supposed to do! Take away my ego, so powerful, Father, that's all I ask and yet it's titanic. To forget ourselves in order to know what we have to do! Father, Father! You are in my heart, every moment. Make me preferably like Arunachalam. Far from the crowd, from the talkers, from the "I". God, I am nothing. At the entrance, Parthiban said: "Krishna is truly a great soul" and I replied: "He (the One) who is blue!" I am nothing, Father! How I realize that! God, you give what we want, money or fame! I don't want that, I want your feet, Lord.

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Thank you for having made them talk and not me. It's so much better to say nothing and be at Your feet. Let me be unknown to everyone so that the ego doesn't come! To do this, to do that! But You do everything. We are nothing. NOTHING! Give me true humility, the humility that makes me always think of You and not of myself, remove this ego that comes through the pores of my skin, that is always present. Give me the solitude where I can be with You.

2 décembre

Wake up just before coffee at 6.15am. On my way out, I notice that the workmen are about to lay concrete on the roof of the last cottage.

Yogiji arrives. Once at the hut, Ravi, like yesterday, runs to fetch Lee Lozowick. Jean and I go to the cottage, each of us reading Ramakrishna. We leave the cottage around 7.45am. The car leaves but heads for the darshan hall. I tell Jean that Yogiji is going to bless the works and shortly afterwards Lee come to me and tells me that Yogiji is going to the works. I simply reply that I knew. We talk for a while and then he joins his troop. I don't know why, but when Yogiji leaves the ashram, Lee comes and stands next to me.

It's around 9 o'clock when we return to the cottage after breakfast. We go to film the works and climb onto the reservoir. Ravi is there and we stay with him for a while. Before 10 o'clock, Anand arrives in my room and we leave together for Yogiji's arrival.



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Darshan 10:00 am.-

The car goes to the darshan hall. I queue up and am called, as is Jean. Yogiji tells me to sit on the mat and to speak, Lee and I.

I see Alain removing a shawl from a plastic bag. The "American" tape is on. A man is called and sings two tunes. He is accompanied by another who taps a large metal jug, the opening of which he places against his stomach. In this way he gets high and low tones. The shawl is offered and Yogiji calls Lee and me. He asks us who went to see Chandra Swami. Lee explains that Alain went to his ashram for three days. Yogiji asks how Chandra Swami could have bought this as his ashram is further away than Rishikesh. Lee says he's certainly sent someone. Yogiji then asks that we both go and talk to Alain so that Alain explains. On the way back Yogiji asks us to go and explain to everyone, asking us to make it clear that it's not the Chandra Swami involved in political scandals. Lee dies so in English and then reads the passage dedicated to the swami in his book "*Facets of a diamond*", which Yogiji has handed him. I then do so in French and read the same passage from the same book in French. Yogiji then asks us to go and talk with Alain. And he asks Shankararaju to talk about the Alwars. There's a Frenchman there and his (girl)friend on the other side. He comes up to me in the middle of the darshan and I wave, "after".

Then the darshan ends. Yogiji leaves. The Frenchman wanted the address of Chandra swami's ashram. So I direct him to Everett, who had gone there with Alain. Everett goes to get

the address and gives it to him. I wait outside for the meal and end up eating near Lee. Another American arrives, Everett, who sits on my left and seems very nice. He's been here before, in 1991, and asks me how long I'll be here.

...

4:00 pm Darshan-

Anand is there, under cover. While everyone is getting into position for Yogiji's arrival, Venkatraman tells us about *Point to Point* (buses) for Madras on Thursday. It's agreed that Anand will leave for Madras with Jean.

Yogi again heads for the darshan hall and we are called. Tape for a long time, then Yogiji goes to bless the audience. He stops in front of the American who doesn't stop filming. He then sits on his ankles in front of Helmut, a German who lives in the south of France and belongs to Lee's group, and asks him: "Your name?" Yogiji comes over to Lee and me and sits on his ankles again. He asks Lee what he sent him. Chocolates? No, books. "There are books in English in France?" - "No, the books were printed in the US and we brought them to France." Yogiji laughs, then asks for the two of us to talk.... He again asked Shankaraju to come and talk about the Alwars, in English and Tamil, saying that someone would then translate into French. Shankaraju speaks first in English but I don't understand everything, far from it.

Not wishing to speak, especially as I didn't understand, I ask Lee to ask the German Helmut, who speaks French, to translate. Lee beckons him and explains. Helmut also says that

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he hasn't understood a word. Lee replies that he will be able to explain it to him quickly.

When Shankararaju had finished, Ma Devaki seems to remind Yogiji that He has said someone would translate into French. Yogi says that perhaps it was difficult to understand and asks me. I reply that I have not understood and tell Lee to explain to Yogiji that Helmut could translate. It is agreed that Lee will tell the story and Helmut translate. This is what is done, story by story (there are three of them). Helmut's voice is gentle, but his translation is almost impossible to understand. It doesn't matter, the heart is in it.

Then Yogiji comes out. It's very nice, Rajeshvari asks Jean to perform the *ârti*. He is lost, but as we go along I explain what needs to be done and everything goes perfectly. Anand, who had left just after Yogiji's arrival, is there at the end of the darshan. He explains that he has heard that there was a darshan and has come back quickly.

...

1996

3rd December

Before Yogiji arrives for the 7am darshan, I see Dr Ramanathan get out of a car, along with his wife (whom I don't know) and a young son. We hug and talk for a while before he goes to Lee. Anand arrives just before Yogiji's car. No one is called to the hut today. We then go to the cottage with Anand but only have a *chai*, and even then, perhaps we don't have anything, and soon return to the entrance, at around 7.30 am. Yogiji arrives, the car stops and Dr Ramanathan's family is called. After Yogiji leaves, the three of us go for breakfast and then, at the cottage, a *chai* with jam on bread. At 9.30 we head to Mani's for Jean's ticket.

10:00 am Darshan.-

The car heads towards the darshan hall. Lee always takes the head of the queue. As for me, I stay as usual with Anand and Jean, but we're both called and I go and sit on the mat with Lee. The American tape plays for a long time. Yogiji then calls Dr Ramanathan's wife, who sings Tamil songs, some of which appear on a cassette, including the melody of '*Jai Jagadish Hare*'. Yogiji then calls an American woman and asks her name, "E.E.". Yogiji asks her several times and each time He gets the same answer: "E.E.". He laughs and says: "A, B, C, D, E! E .E.! Everyone laughs. Several times he laughs at E.E... . Then he asks her where she lives and it seems to me that he says: "This beggar would like to go to your place." Then He makes her read a poem and, very moved, she stops and tears

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well up in her eyes. She turns to Yogiji, who stars at her. Another American woman comes to help her read. Yogiji blesses her.

Then he asks Ma Devaki to read Lee's poem about the first time Lee met Yogiji. Lee thought his name was 'Ram-Ram'. Ma Devaki read the text five times and Yogiji then asks Lee to read it and comment on it.

And then, oh God, what a surprise! Lee comes up with exactly what I've written about the Name in Michel Coquet's biography of Yogiji, *'Le Divin Mendiant'* ('The Divine Beggar'), from beginning to end. He copied everything, stole everything from me, even the example of the chair! It's as if he'd learnt it by heart! And he has the phenomenal nerve to plagiarize from me in front of Yogiji! And in front of me!!! I'm stunned! Dumbfounded! He starts with "In the beginning was the Word" and even makes a mistake by saying that there are two translations, one saying "And the Word was with God" and the other "And the Word was God", as if he hadn't quite understood everything. He will never understand well... And then Yogiji asks me to comment! The guy stole everything from me! He's plagiarized me outright, without the slightest hint of a problem of conscience, and he's done it in front of his Master!

So what can I say? First of all, I rectify the quotation by saying that it's from the Prologue to the Gospel of John, and I'm forced to say 'Lee said this', whereas it's from my writings. I add a few things and then Yogiji blesses me as he blessed Lee and says: "*Do you know E.E.?*" Laughs. He then asks Lee to make the Americans sing and leaves.

Noon: lunch with Anand. At 1 pm, the three of us go to Chettiar's house where we listen to Yogiji's voice. I get all the audio cassettes with Yogiji's voice so I can duplicate them and Chettiar prepares a pack of video cassettes that I will have copied later at Armstrong's house. After that we go to Anand's for *chai*.

4:00 pm Darshan.-

Anand joins us on his bike while we meet the Swiss woman on the way who is going to Madras to have Amma's darshan.

Yogi heads again to the darshan hall. Same call as this morning. Lee is in the front row and I'm in the second row, hiding myself a bit. The tape is played, then Yogiji calls Lee to read a poem and the music is stopped. He then asks him to comment on the poem and finally to go and sit on the mat. My eyes are closed when I hear Ma Devaki telling me to go to the mat too.

The Sudama sisters sing in Tamil several times. Then the Paramacharya text again. Then Yogi asks Lee to talk about what he wants. He talks about a text that appeared in '*Tattvaloka*' on "Living simply and thinking high", then quotes the story of Kubera who invites Shiva to his meal. The latter tells him to go with Ganapati, who eats everything and also wants to eat Kubera. Then Yogiji ask me to translate the story into French. I translate and add something about Sanatana Dharma, the Eternal Law which consists of living in harmony with nature and therefore with others. If there's a lack

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somewhere, we have to fill it. Then I explain the story of Kubera and Ganapati in French and go to bow down next to Yogiji, who blesses me and pats me on the back.

He then asks Vijayalakshmi to translate into Tamil and, afterwards, Lee to tell the Americans to sing. The song includes "Maranachala Shiva", which doesn't really mean anything...! Yogi leaves on this chant after asking Lee to give him his hand.

Yes, this year Lee Lozowick is much honored and Krishna is a little on the sidelines. So much the better. It teaches me to feel Yogiji in my heart. But my mind, my ego, is still there! It can't be for nothing that Yogi asked me to stay for the whole of my stay in India. The Americans leave on the 15th.

We both Anand and I go to see Ganeshan, but he isn't there at the moment, nor is he at the Ramanashram. So Jean and I set off to get some cassettes for the future recording of the tapes. I hoped to start this evening but we no longer have time.

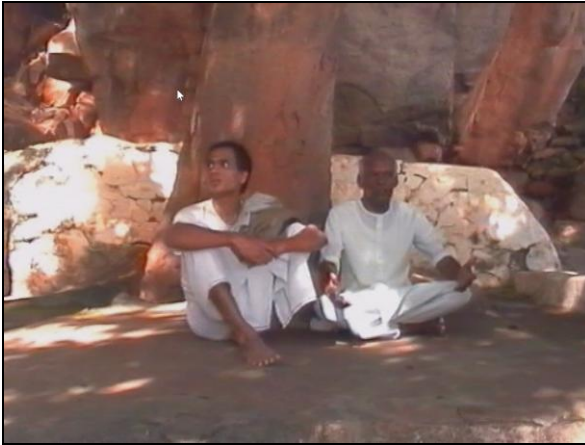
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1996

4th December

7 am Darshan: We stay out. Chettiar is there and asks about Anand, as it's planned to go to Skandashram together. I remind him that it's scheduled for 8 am. Chettiar leaves after darshan. I pet the little dog and play with him, then Jean and I do the *pradakshina* at the ashram. The little dog follows us.

...



Anand and Chettiar at Skandashram

10:00 am Darshan.-

Lee and I are soon invited to go to the mat and Yogiji asks Lee to get the Americans to sing the song which is on the cassette. About half an hour later, the electricity, which had been cut off, comes back on and Mani comes to tell Yogiji and

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puts on the said tape. As the tape is played, Yogiji call us both Lee and asks us to go and talk to Alain who is, as usual, sitting on a chair against the wall, so that he writes a letter to Chandra Swami, then Yogiji gets up and comes over to the three of us. Alain will write, and the two of us will each write something and "this beggar will put his name." Lee and I agree to meet at 6.30 pm.

End of the tape. The darshan has been going on for about an hour. Yogiji makes a white Buddhist monk come to Him. He is a German who lives in Thailand. He talks for a while with Father and Ma Devaki. His smile is wonderful. Yogiji then calls us and we go near Him. He asks us to talk to the monk and the three of us to go and talk to Alain. There isn't much room for everyone to hear. In fact, it's mainly Lee who's doing most of the talking. The monk returns to his seat.

Yogiji gives Ma Devaki Lee's book of poems and asks her to read everything about the Sister Nivedita Academy, as this book was published by the Academy. He then asks Lee to read it again. Then the Americans sing and Yogiji comes out after calling Lee to hold His hand.

Noon and lunch.

...

4:00 pm Darshan.-

Jean and I arrive at the entrance just as Yogiji's car is arriving. I stay at the end of the queue and am called, as is Jean

of course. The Americans have moved to the front and so I sit in the third row. Yogiji asks Lee to read the latest poems he has sent Him since September, then asks Ma Devaki to read them again, and then asks Lee to have them read by an American. Lee is then invited to read more of his poems. This goes on for a very long time.

Unexpectedly, Yogiji calls me up and asks me to explain how I've managed to spread *Rama Nama* so far. I speak in French, without mentioning the monthly RAMA NAMA. This being done, Ma Devaki tells me that Father wants me to sing AUM SRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM. I do so. After a few repetitions, I stop and say:

- We must clap our hands. Sri Ramakrishna says that just as when we stand under a tree and clap our hands all the birds fly away, so we must clap our hands while chanting the Divine Name and all other thoughts will fly away.

I start singing again and I feel great. Everyone claps their hands, the singing is indeed louder, people are paying attention! At one point, I see Anand come in. Then I speed up singing. I'm feeling good at last! Thank you, Father! I finish singing one last time, slowing down, and go and kneel down in front of Yogiji, who asks me:

- Is your friend leaving tomorrow?
- Yes, Father, on the Point to Point bus tomorrow morning.
- Tell him to come.

I call Jean, who is standing in *anjali* near the platform.

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- He will leave with Anand, I say.

Father and Ma are wondering which Anand.

- Anand Rao

- Ah! says Ma Devaki who passes on to Yogiji.

- Excellent! He says, and calls for Anand.

- Your name?" he asks Jean.

- Jean.

- What are you doing in France?

- (*Jean has misunderstood*) I'll try to think of You.

- What do you do for a living? I correct. He makes men's jackets and trousers. He employs 130 people.

- Tailoring ?

- Yes, Father.

- Where does he live?

- In Bruay, in the north of France.

- Are there any towns we know of nearby?

- No, Father, there are only small towns. It's 200 kilometers north of Paris.

- What's the name of the town?

- Bruay.

- Bruay.

- Yes, Father.

- My Father blesses you, John.

Yogiji invites us back to our seats. As we set off towards them:

- John !

John returns to Father.

- As soon as you arrive in France, send a note to Krishna who will be here to let him know that you've arrived safely. Do you understand?

- Yes.

Jean returns to his seat. In fact he misunderstood. He understood that he had to do something after the meal! So I explain the request to him. Then Yogiji calls Lee to give him his hand and leaves. Rajeshvari intones the *Mangalam* and repeats it.

Like yesterday, Anand and I fold the mats together and I fold the last one with Jean after the *aarti*. The three of us return to the cottage and I check the quality of the copy of the last cassettes. Lee arrives and, on the letter to Chandra Swami, I write the following:

« Swamiji, to see how my Father Yogi Ramsuratkumar was moved by your gift was a gift for everyone. Krishna. »

...

We go out. Anand is invited to Ganeshan's. I ask him to present my *pranams*. Jean and I go into town to fill the gourds, buy dates, a packet of *Good Day* and a packet of 20 cigarettes for Chettiar, to whose house we have been invited.

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Sri Rajagopall is there too. We talk and I film. The meal is, of course, delicious with *dosas*. It's wonderful! Jean also takes photos.

Then we go next door to Rajagopall's where I film the small statue he is making of Yogiji, as well as several of his works on the shelves. Finally, we take some photos and a video of the whole thing, and leave Chettiar's at 9.20 to go to the ashram nearby. Jean can't get over such simplicity! Chettiar's wife kneels before me. I immediately bend down:



- No, Ma, no, Ma ! I'm like a son!

And it's me who kneels. She has tears in her eyes.

Jean will have had a splendid stay. He told me today:

- I understood in four days what I hadn't understood after 40 years.

1996

5th December

As soon as the 7 o'clock darshan is over, while Anand goes to the Ramanashram, we both come back to the cottage and Jean packs his suitcase. ...

Exit Darshan at 8:00 am

...

Afterwards, Jean goes to salute Ravi and then we go to the entrance of the ashram, where Anand has arranged for an autorickshaw. Jean comes forward to tell me good bye, but I signal to him that we'll say goodbye outside, outside the ashram. Before getting into the rickshaw, we embrace, without saying a word, but our eyes speak our hearts. When he is seated, I simply tell him: "Yogi Ramsuratkumar". I salute Anand with the *anjali*. The rickshaw pulls away, with goodbyes on either sides. At the bend of the road, Jean waves goodbye with his arm outside the rickshaw, which I see again a moment later between two houses. Then I return to the cottage and write these lines.

...

Yes, Jean will have had a fantastic stay that will mark him for life. Every day, I don't know how many times a day, while he was reading Sri Ramakrishna, he came and saw me, a

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smile of happiness on his lips, and read me such and such a teaching: "*Ah, how brilliant*". *Ramakrishna's teachings* being finished, he rereads it from the beginning...

...

Yogiji is a book. He doesn't need to speak. A book where all the pages are blank. Written with invisible ink. You need a "special product" to be able to read them.

...

10:00 am Darshan.-

Thank you, Father! For an hour, you made me sing the Name!

I sit in the third row on the left. There are two mats in the middle, added by Selvaraj, who has just had a baby girl and has been away for a few days. Yogiji has the Sudama sisters sing the Paramacharya's chant several times, then makes it sing in Tamil, then again Rajeshvari sings it in Sanskrit with an English translation. Some people come to sit on the mat and one of them goes up to Yogiji to offer him copies of a book. Yogiji asks Rajeshvari to read the introductions before the poems. It's in Tamil but I recognize, at the beginning of the second text, the four verses of Tirumular's *Turumantiram* on the Guru. Then Yogiji asks Vijayalakshmi to read in turn, perhaps the texts at the end.

He then brings the man who has written the book, Balaraman, and blesses him. He then asks Selvaraj to fetch the

fruit platter and hands an apple to Balaraman, who then returns to his seat. Each of the others then comes to bow down and returns to the central mat. Yogiji now calls Lee and hands him the tray, asking him to give an apple to each of them, then calls Balarama back and hands him some bananas still in bunch for the people at the back who couldn't sit on the mat.

Lee then gives Yogiji the letter for Chandra Swami. Yogiji asks Ma for a pen and writes something down. He then asks Lee to read everything to Him (in particular). I can see that Ma is touched by the words I've written. Lee returns to his seat.

I don't remember what happens next. Maybe that's when Father asks "Krishna" twice, because he doesn't see me. I half stand up and go towards Him.

- You will lead the song of the Name as you did yesterday and they will take it up again. My Father blesses you.

And He pats me on the back.

For one hour! What a joy to forget the ramblings of the mind! Sudama sisters often clap their hands at times other than when I clap mine. My Devaki often does too. Someone accompanies me with little cymbals. It's great! I'm sweating.

At ten to twelve, Yogiji calls me and I go to him. He smiles marvelously at me. I bow down. He pats me incredibly hard on the back four or five times.

- My Father blesses you.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

Then He blesses me by raising both hands. I bow to Ma and go back to my seat. Then it's the *mangalam* and the exit.

Then someone comes up to me:

- You sang for an hour. It's very difficult to hold out.
- He gives me strength!

As I sang, I thought: "God does everything, you do nothing, He's the one who makes all your muscles move". Oh Father, thank you for this blessing!

While I was singing, Yogiji sometimes called Lee, in particular so that Tom could be introduced to Him. At that time I could hear the sound level dropping.

...

4:00 pm Darshan.-

Tom the American comes to tell me that Lee had reserved a seat for me in the front row. I tell him: "If you want, go there". But as it's a Lee's order, he obeys.

Yogiji asks Lee to "give some instruction". Lee speaks for about fifteen minutes. Then Yogiji asks for some girls to sing as recorded on the tape, and then asks Lee to join them, then he calls Tom to join too. At one point, they make a mistake and stop. Then Lee asks if they should continue, and Yogiji nods 'yes' and asks them to sing *Arunachala Shiva*. They then sing "*Arunachala Shiva Arunachala Shiva Arunajeiva or*

jiva" ? ? ? ? Rajeshvari and Ma Devaki laugh. I laugh too. Correction. I'm fine because I don't want to think about myself, I want to "merge". Then, surprise or not, Yogiji tells Lee to make Americans to sing American songs. Maybe it's because of the American rhythm of the singing! So we hear a few songs in English, unrelated to the spiritual life, then "*Silent Night*", etc... When they've finished, Anastasia from Switzerland applauds bluntly. It seems that we are swimming in the profane! During these songs, Yogiji calls Selvaraj and speaks to him. Selvaraj goes back near the window, laughing. I'm sure Yogiji has asked him to sing a song about Jesus (because of the American Christian songs). And that's exactly what happens. Tears come to my eyes because I like Selvaraj so much, he's so simple, gentle and humble. He sings several songs.

Yogiji then calls Selvaraj and I hear:

- We're going to Sudama, tell Ravi to bring the car around.

Yogiji leaves at 5.20 pm.

...

7.30pm: Mani treats us to a wonderful meal in the refectory. He has set up a table and chairs and the Americans are already seated when I enter. Mani puts me, Raji and himself at the 'head table', as it were. The food is delicious. Lee and his group leave as soon as they've finished eating. We continue talking with Ramamurthy, in particular about how Mani was 'taken' by Yogiji. In the end, Mani explains: two days in a row, Yogi called Lee into the hut. I remember on the second day, I said to Jean: "*Look, Yogiji will come out, Mani's*

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

outside". In fact, Mani then told Yogi that he didn't agree with the fact that He is refusing to allow Indians into the hut and that He is admitting Westerners. As Yogiji called Lee again that morning, Mani went out. Yogiji would have then said, "*My Father said you are right, that beggar is wrong.*" And Lee was called no more. Mani also tells me that last year, when I had left the beginning of a Gospel Commentary with Yogiji, Yogiji had given it to him to study.

I understand this morning's 'English songs' a little better and wonder if the darshans will continue.

...

Sri Ramakrishna: « *There is a great power in the seed of God's name. It destroys ignorance. A seed is tender, and the sprout soft; still it pierces the hard ground. The ground breaks and makes a way for the sprout.* »

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6th December

7:00 am: darshan. ...

10:00 am Darshan.-

Rajagopall, the sculptor, is there and we both go in the aisle to queue. I told Lee to leave the space for his students, but he replied that it was mine. When I come in, Lee is sitting on the mat and beckons me to come. As I have no instructions from Yogiji, I sit in the queue. I've hardly finished sitting down when I hear Yogiji say:

- Hasn't Krishna come?

So I stand up and He waves me over to the mat. Lee says, "Yogiji has decided for us."

Songs by the Sudama sisters, all new and in Tamil. They sing better than last year. However, I recognize a song at the end: "*Ram Ram Ramsurat Kumar*". While they are singing, Yogiji asked to put a chair next to Alain. He gets up and goes to sit next to him, taking his arm or his hand. He's very concentrated. After a while He comes over to us and sits down next to me, takes Lee's hand, then mine, and puts them both in His. Then He takes Lee's hand, then mine, and says:

- Talk together, about anything, but don't stop talking.
Then he gets up and sits back down on the platform.

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We understand the message perfectly. We have to work together, as I've always asked Lee to do⁶. Yogiji leaves at around 11.30-11.35am.

...

4:00 pm Darshan.-

I go on the mat. Songs by Sudama sisters. Yogi asks about an American woman who has a fever. He makes her drink water and tells Lee to put a shawl over her head and body (a doctor will come at 5.30 pm). Sudama sisters are still singing. At one point, Yogiji calls Christie and asks her to go and talk with Lee Lozowick. So she comes and sits with us, but I don't take part in the conversation. Yogiji calls me and asks me to lead the singing of OM SRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM, this for about fifteen minutes. Then he tells me to talk with Lee and Christie.

Yogi leaves at around 5.30 pm.

...

⁶ Alas, he never did... even though Yogiji had asked him once to come and see me in France and another year to come and see me in Mauritius, where everything was done to give him a warm welcome. A video was even made that day and sent to Yogiji.

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7th December

7 am: darshan. I stay until the 8 am darshan with Shaktivel at security. Then breakfast and we both Shaktivel and I stay at the cottage. ...

10:00 am Darshan.-

Yogiji is extremely concentrated. Sudama sisters sing in Tamil. At one point Yogiji asks for a man from the audience to come and, as the man comes towards Him, He says: "*She is well. My Father blesses*" and something else, and then He calls the man's wife to whom he also speaks (so certainly about someone who is ill). At another point He takes his fan and "fans" the audience, smiling.

Yogiji calls me at the end of the darshan to chant OM SRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM and, after five minutes, asks Lee to join me, then another five minutes and He asks the American women to join us and leaves.

4:00 pm Darshan.-

Before the darshan, I get to know a young and very friendly man from Delhi. Shaktivel and I decided to take the tape recorder and the video camera for the darshan.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

I'm again with Lee on the mat where Yogiji tells me to go. Very concentrated. Songs in Tamil for an hour and a quarter, then Yogiji asks Lee to get the Americans women to sing and He beats time. Shaktivel films. While they are singing,



He calls this young man from Delhi whose name I will soon learn: Makarand Paranjape, and tells him to go and talk with us, which we do. ... Yogiji often turns to us and laughs like a child, while Shaktivel films. At one point, Yogiji blesses the three of us with a wonderful laugh. Shaktivel will tell me that there was no more film. My Devaki told him to film the three of us. So he pulled the tape back and filmed a few passages! So much the better. What he took out was less important.



Yogiji looking at Krishna, Lee and Makarand

Something rather sad happens between 10am and midday. Kannan comes to eat. The *sambar* is yesterday's (I'm told that's normal), so today it has a particular taste. Kannan asks why and says he's going to tell the trustee (Mani). This seems normal, so that the devotees have a fresh *sambar*. At this, young Suresh hurries to see Mani and tells him that Kannan is going to tell Bhagavan that the *sambar* was rancid. Mani then gets angry, phones Kannan and makes him leave the security post. When Kannan arrives, Mani treats him worse than dirt!

And as we set off with Shaktivel at around 12.30pm, we see Raji and Mani coming back by car from Sudama. No doubt this is due to this morning's event. And since their return, no one has seen Mani!

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

On leaving the darshan, Makarand asks me if he should go and say hello to Mani. I tell him yes, because "you're not supposed to know what happened this morning". Makarand will tell us that he found Mani prostrate and full of sadness.

...

... We then go to the *Akash* hotel and talk to the owner, a great devotee of Yogiji who provides the ashram's food. We talk quite a lot. Shaktivel telephones Mukilan and learns that my ticket would be for 27 December. The owner of the *Akash* offers me a book about Yogiji in Tamil. Another very well bound book in green is there, with photos from 1976, 77. It's by Janardhanan and was released on Jayanti day in Bangalore (Janardhanan came but couldn't give the copy to Bhagavan). ...

After 6 p.m., the three of us have a loosely blound conversation. Makarand gives me his address, phone number and e-mail. He is a professor of English at the *Indian Institute of Technology* in Delhi. Makarand and Shaktivel (and Krishna) agree: Lee Lozowick thinks of himself as a *guru*. ...

We then head back to the cottage where we meet up with Makarand. Naturally, the conversation resumes and S... tells us a lot of things about Mani that is contrary to what Mani has told us. He would have received a commission on the purchase of the land for Lee Lozowick's ashram.

Being a 'political broker', he would be into trouble and some people would even want to do him in. Yogiji would protect him, says S... His political friends are now back in government (hence the asphalt road that now leads to the ashram from Chengam road). Seeing my surprise, S... asks me

if I want to see the CBI (*Central Bureau of Investigation*) report (Justice Arunachalam has a copy of this report). He would even take money from the ashram! It's hard for me to believe this would have told him that if he wanted to go back to Madras, he could! Quite the opposite of what Mani says. Mani's discourse, as I've already said, always bothers me because he adds to it, which I've been able to see for myself, especially at the meal he gave us where he was telling us about his 'meeting' with Yogiji when I was there to witness it, and he's telling everyone that Yogiji can't do without him. It seems that Mani is having problems with his relationship with Yogiji. That's for sure. It's safe to say that he's not as close as before now: it's Selvaraj who is called to take Yogiji's hand to go out. Yesterday Yogiji didn't even bless Raji when He came out of darshan!

(But does any of this matter when we have to concentrate solely on Yogiji?)

Makarand expresses so well the fact that when you feel far from Yogiji, you feel small, you wonder where you made a mistake. It's so well expressed. We really do feel exactly the same way, as with Anand, or Suresh, or...

8th December

7:00 am. Yogiji smiles at Makarand as he enters the ashram in the car and we both go back to the cottage. At 8 o'clock, on our way out, Yogiji smiles at both of us as we stand side by side. Makarand is truly wonderful and, here again, we both agree on everything, even the vision of what is going to happen in the world.

I'm writing this while Shaktivel has gone to buy something for Parthiban's sister, who has just had a baby, and Makarand has gone to see a friend at Ramanashram.

...

Concerning Mani, I was surprised when he gave me a small packet and said: "This is for Ishvari, you have to give Rs 200 for it. In fact it's a small oil lamp which must not cost much. Even though it's in a little cardboard box! But he should have asked me if I wanted to buy, instead of forcing it on me like that! In fact, I'm sure it was one of 79 oil lamps he'd bought for Yogiji's *Jayanti*. As it wasn't celebrated, he wanted to get rid of it at a good price and at a profit for himself. Because of course I didn't get any receipt...

After the 8:00 am darshan, we have breakfast and return to the cottage.

10:00 am Darshan.-

Lee and I are on the mat and Yogiji calls Makarand to join us. Sudama's sisters sing. Then Yogiji asks Lee to get some American women to sing and Selvaraj to put some chairs next to Alain so that the four of us can talk. He looks at us from time to time.

...

Shaktivel wrote down for me a phrase sung by Yogiji on the cassette, which I'd already had on another cassette:

*« Ramadas Guru Maji Ayi Pathitha pavana Sri
KrishnaBhai Bhai »*

4:00 pm Darshan.-

We are both Lee on the mat, as usual, and Sudama's sisters sing in Tamil. After a while, Yogiji arranges for chairs to be set up next to Alain and asks Makarand and I to go over there. We chat during darshan. Yogiji leaves at 5.30 pm while the American women are singing. Makarand, who was planning to leave for Chennai at 4pm at the same time as Shaktivel, found out that he had a private 'deluxe' bus at 10pm. So he asked Shaktivel to ask Yogiji if he should go. So Shaktivel came and went in. On leaving the darshan hall, where everyone was waiting, he said to Makarand:

- Yogiji is waiting for you with prasad.

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In the evening, Makarand will show me three apples, including a small one: one for him, one for his wife, and the small one for his 5-year-old daughter (Sophie).

I'm going to spend the rest of the evening with Makarand and I'll take him to the statue that he'll see it for the first time.

...

... Makarand understands everything, feels everything. He tells me that I'm someone very, very close to Yogiji, certainly one of his disciples in a previous life ... What he tells me is wonderful, too wonderful. I don't think it's possible because I'm far too small. In one day I discovered a very close brother.

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9th December

Makarand has left, maybe around 4.30 this morning. I heard him when he was going to the bathroom. When I wake up there is a photo of Arunachala with a note. He explained to me yesterday that 'Bhavan' means a place where a job is going to be done.

7am and 8am: darshans: I stay at security post.

10:00 am Darshan.-

Waiting with everyone else. Yogiji arrives at 10.35am. He's certainly received someone in Sudama.

Songs by Sudama sisters, at the end of which, while He blesses people after they have given their names, the American women sing the Name in 'rock'n roll'.

During the blessings, Mahali's father comes close to Yogiji. He's suffering from back pain, probably in the same place as me. Yogiji makes him bend down several times while the man is on his knees in order to touch the spot with His hand.

... Before leaving, Yogiji blesses Lee, behind whom I'm hidden, and everyone else. ... Then he gets up, does the *anjali*

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

to Alain and His piercing gaze comes to rest on me for a quarter of a second...

...

4:00 pm Darshan.-

Yogiji calls Anastasia, who seems also be suffering somewhere, and asks her to walk up and down the central aisle, then He asks her to go faster and even, at the end, to run. As with me, He seems to look 'through' her body and asks Ma Devaki to confirm where Anastasia is suffering. Then He sends her back to her place after saying:

- With my Father's blessings there will be no more pain.

Lee and I on the mat, the Sudama sisters singing. Today there's a young Italian whom Yogi makes come near Him. After talking to him a bit, He tells him to come and talk with us, then He has some chairs set up near Alain and, after a while, He calls an American (James) and has him come and talk with us too. This American isn't from Lee's group, he lives in Hawaii. Yogiji looks at us from time to time. Just before leaving, from His seat, He blesses us with both hands and then leaves happily, blessing us with His quick gesture of the back of his hand.

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10th December

7 o'clock, darshan. It's raining. Chettiar tells me that Mani will be packing soon... "He answers badly to Bhagavan! I return to the cottage and go back to the entrance for Yogiji's exit at 8am, then go and have breakfast, after which I go to the cottage to make a *chai* for Rik, an American from Lee's group who lives in Los Angeles and works for a charity....

10:00 am Darshan.-

Yogiji makes us settle in with Alain. He asks Lee if James is here, but James isn't in this morning. Alain tells us about his meeting with Swami Yogananda and the three times in three days that he saw Padre Pio, and then tells us about other episodes in his life.

At one point Yogiji calls Lee - who made it clear yesterday, in response to a question from James, that he never had any spiritual experiences (visions, etc.) - and asks him if he could come to Mauritius to see me and to France to see Alain. After our 'reply', He calls him again and asks if we'll give him a good 'welcome'. Yogiji is very happy when he answers 'for sure'. Talking to Lee, I tell him that it would be nice if he could come in March, and Rangarajan too, for the inauguration of the *Yogi Ramsuratkumar Bhavan*. And I add: "He" will bring things. Yogiji makes the American women sing and leaves shortly afterwards, blessing us.

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Lunch, after which I sleep until 3 p.m. and then coffee is brought by young Ravi.

... There's something in Lee that bothers me and a lot of other people close to Yogiji and servants of the ashram. It's this 'guru' side but, soon after I woke up from my nap, I realized that I had to forget about it. All that matters is Father's work...

I become aware that my "gland" on the right side of my neck is getting much bigger. I'll have to see a doctor as soon as I get back to Mauritius.

Perhaps the website should be created in Mauritius, at the crossroads of civilizations. I need to find the right people to create it.⁷

I had prayed to Yogi to lower my ego. He does.

4:00 pm Darshan.-

No sooner were we seated than Yogiji asked us to go with Alain. More than a quarter of an hour later, he asks Selvaraj to go and tell Mario, the young Italian, and James to join us, and then John, another American from outside Lee's group who I've seen at every darshan since I arrived. So we laugh, and so does Yogiji. Then He sends James's wife to join us. We can't all talk together, so two groups form, and I'm with

⁷ At that time, the Internet was very rare in Mauritius, so I had to create the site myself.

Mario and John, who I'm delighted to discover. Yogiji is right to 'sulk at me'. Americans are fine! John has been living in Thailand for 10 years. He has a house on an island and does nothing. He tells us about Hilda Charlton who, after her death, appeared at a friend's house. It seems that she is his guru. He seems to speak fluently to her. According to her, Satya Sai Baba is an avatar, but people place him too high. Sri Aurobindo would be immense, as would Yogiji.

I'd like to talk to John again, to find out how he talks to Hilda (automatic writing, intuitive, etc.). His guru on earth is Mother Mira, who lives in Germany. After the end of darshan, Yogiji gives blesses our group particularly.

Then I talk to Anastasia and John, who are still together, and I let them listen to Yogiji singing. John has to ask Yogiji if he can sell his house in Thailand because he'd like to come and live in Tiruvannamalai.

...

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

11th December

After the 7 o'clock darshan, I go and make myself a little *chai* at the cottage and head to the entrance for Yogiji's exit at 8 o'clock. After breakfast, I read *'They lived with God'*.

10:00 am Darshan.-

I enter with Lee and we're barely seated when Yogiji asks us to go with Alain and He soon makes Mario and John come with us. Conversations. I'm picked up during darshan because there's a registered letter. ... Like yesterday, Yogiji blesses the five of us before leaving at 11:35.

...

4:00 pm Darshan.-

Same with Lee, Alain, Mario and John. I only talk to John. One moment Yogiji calls a young white girl. She speaks out loud:

- My mother came and saw you feeding a mouse. As I love very much animals, so I came.

Ma Devaki passes Yogiji a note, which must surely contain the same message. Yogiji laughs. Then He sends her to join us. She's from Mexico. She seems to know what she

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wants. It's a truly international conference: U.S.A., France, Italy, Mauritius, Mexico. Yogiji will leave smiling and blessing us, then blessing with the back of His hand.

My neck worries me. Is it a gland, a ganglion? I think the hearing in my right ear is starting to take a knock. I had asked a doctor in France, who told me there was nothing unusual. But I know it's not normal.

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12th December

7am: darshan, then a *chai* at the cottage.

8am: darshan then breakfast then cottage.

10:00 am Darshan.-

For one hour I'm on the mat with Lee and the Sudama sisters sing in Tamil. Then Yogiji makes us both go near Alain. After half an hour He asks for Mario and John to join us, and later Christie.

Blessings and smiles.

...

4:00 pm Darshan.-

Yogiji beckons Lee, who went in first. The Americans walk past me, as usual, like last year, like Americans. Anyway, I move to the front row and sit next to Tom, who is in the 'place of honor', but Ma Devaki, after Lee intervened, I think, signals to Yogiji that I'm not on the mat and Yogiji says "*Krishna!*" and motions for me to go there.

After a while, Yogiji asks Selvaraj to put some chairs but only Lee and I are going to be near Alain today. I answer some

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of Alain's questions, and particularly what the 'Shankaracharyas' are.

At the end Yogiji blesses the three of us, 'seriously', and does the *anjali*, before leaving.

Yogiji wears a light orangey-yellow 'shawl' on which is written, as far as I can make out, in Sanskrit:

ॐ ×*ॐ***● +*● *+*

Sri Bhagavat Pâtha Seva?

Around 6.30 p.m. I cycle into town to buy bread and jam.

At 9pm and a few, Mukilan arrives. He has bought a video camera and films me recounting my first and second meetings with Yogiji. He tells Mani that he didn't want to stay with anyone other than Krishna.

13th December

We're awake at 5.45am! Suresh and another boy bring coffee, but Mukilan asks for *chai*. Around 6 o'clock the *chai* arrives. I ask Mukilan to explain Mani's life to me so that I can understand.

.....
.....
8

7 o'clock: before Yogiji arrives, Venkatraman tells Mukilan (Chettiar is there too) that the other day Mani went to Sudama, put mud on his clothes before entering and said:

- Look at how I work for you. People talk badly about me.

Yogiji would have not answered. I ask who witnessed this. It seems that Selvaraj was there. Chettiar had tried to tell me this story yesterday.

After Yogiji's darshan, we return to the cottage and I make a *chai*. Tom arrives to see Mukilan about confirming the plane tickets for the Americans. At 8 o'clock we go to the entrance for Yogiji's departure and then go and have breakfast. I then return to the cottage. Alain comes too and the three of us

⁸ Of course, this story has no place here.

talk on the stoop. But I'm not interested in the conversation. They talk about diamond dealers and so on... So I go back inside the cottage and the little Indian girl, Shivakala, kindly comes to do the washing-up...

10:00 am Darshan.-

Yogiji arrives. I stay with Mukilan; we've set up the video cameras in the darshan hall. Lee enters first as usual and I see him sitting at the back. I sit in the third row but Yogiji calls me to sit on the mat. Mukilan is in the second row and Selvaraj brings him the two video cameras.



Songs by the Sudama sisters. I manage to concentrate and sometimes feel the rays of spirituality emanating from Yogiji. During these darshans, Yogiji is very concentrated. He seems to be in 'constant contact'. One moment he calls

Mukilan who stays close to him for about a minute. Mukilan filmed almost non-stop and I saw him filming with my camera too.

At around 11:15, Yogiji gets up with Selvaraj's help, beckoning Ma Devaki to stay where she is. He goes over to the

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American girls, because a short time before he had asked Tom to come over to ask him to make them sing. Then he comes over to us, sits down on the mat and takes Lee's hand. He sends Selvaraj away. I close my eyes because I can strongly feel Yogiji's spiritual rays. I feel good. Then, with my eyes closed, I feel Yogiji's hand take mine. He smiles at me magnificently. Oh Father, what joy, what relief! I close my eyes and we stay like this for a while. Then Yogiji asks if we have any news of this swami... I said "Chandra Swami". Lee replies in the negative. Yogiji has two chairs put next to Alain, gets up and goes to him. He takes Alain's hand and talks with him for a while. Then he beckons Lee to come and sit next to Alain. Then He beckons me to come. I go to the chair where He was sitting. He gives me the *anjali* and smiles at me for a long time. God, what a blessing! Then He makes Ma Devaki and Sudama sisters leave and goes out in His turn.



Oh Father! Thank you, Father! Your smile, Father! Yes, when you took my hand, I asked you: "Take me, take my life!"

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We both Mukilan and I go and fold the blanket on which Yogiji sits. Mukilan takes some dust and swallows it. I take some dust and put it on the 'sick' part of my neck. Yogiji will heal me.

...

4:00 pm Darshan.-

Yogiji asks Sudama sisters to sing "*any song*". Songs in Tamil. And after that: "*any song*".

The fiancée who came the other day (she seems to be the daughter of a woman worker at the ashram) and received Yogi's blessings is coming today with her husband and members of her family. Yogiji blesses from afar and says:

- Be happy together.

That's all. Then he calls three women who had left a slip of paper, and blesses them very quickly, without hands, just by giving them a fruit.

At 5.15pm, Yogiji asks for the car to come and goes out, after an *anjali* for Lee and me, then Alain, blessing with the back of His hand.

...!

14th December

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We both Shaktivel and I go to the entrance for the 7 o'clock darshan. At the level of the darshan hall, I ask Mani to ask Yogiji's permission to go and see a doctor about this swollen lump on my neck. After darshan, Shaktivel and I return.

8 o'clock, darshan then breakfast. Shaktivel asks Mani about the doctor, but instead of saying he's forgotten, Mani says he'll bring it up 'at the appropriate time'. We return to the cottage after breakfast. Ponraj, Rajeshvari's son-in-law from Madras, is tired and wants to rest, which he does for just five minutes before darshan.

10:00 am Darshan.-

Lee and I on the mat. Songs in Tamil by the Sudama sisters. John and Mario are in the audience. After a while, Yogiji, who has a paper in His hand, gets up with Selvaraj's help and comes to sit on the mat where we are. He asks me where it hurts. I point to the lump and He puts His hand on it. I tell Him that I don't feel any pain and that I've never had any pain, but that it's swelling. Yogiji asks me:



- Do you want to go and see a doctor?
- If Father tells me to see a doctor, I will.
- Have you ever seen one?
- Yes, in France. He told me it wasn't serious and gave me antibiotics, but it didn't do anything.
- When?
- About four months ago

Yogiji is concentrating hard.

- It won't swell any more, by the grace of my Father.

Then he looks at his paper and says to Lee:

- Did you send anything to that beggar?

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- Yes, a book from France and drawings by my children.

Then Yogiji has chairs set up and tells us both to go with Alain. We get up and I see that Shaktivel is filming. I haven't noticed. Yogiji comes and sits down with us. He asks Shaktivel what the use of filming. Shaktivel replies that it's for Krishna and so Yogiji allows it. He asks Lee Lozowick to come to Mauritius and to Alain's if he doesn't mind and He will bless us for a long time. Then He returns to his seat and once again looks at us from there with a serious gaze. Shaktivel is called and Yogiji tells him the following (which Shaktivel will repeat to me):



- My Father wanted this beggar to be in the auditorium, but suddenly my Father commanded this beggar to give darshan for Lee and Krishna.

...

A little later He asks John to come and sit with us. After a while He calls him and tells him not to sell his house in Thailand:

- This is not necessary. For the time being, you have to be there.

So John got his answer. After some time, Yogiji calls Lee and talks about Hilda Charlton's 'sevas' in New York and asks Lee to ask John if he has met 'Will and Joan'. So Lee comes to ask and John tells him that these names mean something to him but that he can't remember anymore. Yogiji says to Lee, "*Hilda Charlton helped this beggar*" and it looks like He's crying (see video).

He then calls a family and gives them prasad, as well as Sudama sisters. Ponraj is also called but receives no prasad. Then the darshan ends. It is about 11.30am.

...

4:00 pm Darshan.-

Lee and I on the mat. Almost from the start Yogiji has made chairs set up and we go near Alain. A little later He asks John and Mario to come. Alain talks mainly about things that don't interest me much. At one point Yogiji moves and goes alone to the mat. Then He calls Lee who goes next to Him and they both talk. Lee then returns. Towards the end of the darshan, Yogiji calls Shaktivel via Selvaraj and talks to him for

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

a while. He then calls Lee and gives a "photo" (which appears at the beginning of the book "*Souvenir*") to each American, one by one. This leaves three photos. He asks Lee to whom he would like the photos to be given. Lee gestures towards me. I think, not having heard Yogiji's question, that it's John, so I tell John to go to the platform, but Lee signals that it's me. So I go over to Yogiji and kneel before Him. He gives me the photo and asks me about the lump, a question repeated by Ma Devaki. Yogi puts His hand again and tells me there's no need to go and see a doctor. He blesses me for a long time. I, who have never dared to touch His feet, bow down and the top of my head touches His foot. Then John is called. Then Shaktivel. While Yogiji was distributing to the Americans, Shaktivel had gone outside where he was in the company of Mani to whom he said:

- Why don't you give me one?
- Even for Krishna, there isn't one!

At that moment, Shaktivel hears from one of the ashram boys that Krishna is receiving a photo. He rushes inside and films. Then, as said earlier, it is John's turn, and then he too (Shaktivel) is called and also receives a photo! After the darshan, Shaktivel tells Mani that he has received a photo, and Mani will get angry.

Yogiji blesses the group, then the audience, and leaves the darshan hall.

6 pm. I make a *chai* for everyone: in the cottage are Shaktivel, John, Mario, Ponraj, and soon Selvaraj, whom I'll ask to film so that I can appear with everyone else. We have a

chat. I ask John to write down his afternoon dialogue with Yogiji.

...

Shaktivel and I are, of course, talking about Yogiji. And now I see the price A. is asking for large-format black and white photos: 800 rupees, or 400 rupees per photo. Shaktivel is horrified and tells me that it can't be more than 100 rupees per photo. He's horrified, and so am I, that so many people are using Yogiji for commercial purposes and adds that he's sure A... is going to make copies of the Chettiar cassette I gave him and sell them!

God, we're going to have to defend that sacred name! Can it be that Yogiji is surrounded by such people! Only he can understand his divine *lila*!

In the evening, on our way back to the ashram, we pass an elderly woman walking slowly. Shaktivel comes back to her and we bow down before her. He explains that she is 70 years old and that she walks around the hill every day. He tells me that on the day the ashram was inaugurated, she was at home baking cakes. Yogiji sent Rajeshvari at her home to get news! It was very auspicious!

Shaktivel tells me that one day he walked from Madras to Tiruvannamalai and arrived on the fourth day. He was at Sudama's gate. That evening Yogiji made him stay there and Sudama sisters fed him. Shaktivel has tears in his eyes as he tells me about this episode.

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While I was taking my notes to narrate the darshan, Shaktivel washed my *dhoti* without me noticing. When my notes are finished, I say:

- Right, I'm going to do my laundry.
- What laundry?
- My dhoti.

I go to the bathroom: nothing. In the main room, I see my dhoti drying!

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YOGI ASKED: "ARE YOU SURE THAT YOU DON'T KNOW WILL AND JUAN?"

I TOLD YOGAGI, "NOW I REMEMBER WHO THEY ARE I MET THEM IN NEW YORK CITY AT A MEETING IN MEMORY OF HILDA. I SPOKE THAT NIGHT ABOUT COMING TO INDIA AND MEETING YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR.

AND TELLING YOGAGI, THAT I WAS A STUDENT OF HIDA (HARLTON).

YOGAGI BECAME VERY HAPPY WHEN I MENTIONED HILDAS NAME AND TOLD ME "MY FATHER BLESSES HILDA AND

MY FATHER BLESSE YOU." AFTER I TOLD THIS STORY TO HILDAS GROUP

WILL THANKED ME FOR SUCH A BEAUTIFUL INTRODUCTION AND THEN

SAID ~~THAT~~ THAT HE AND HIS WIFE HAD JUST RECEIVED A LETTER FROM GOD.

THIS LETTER WAS DICTATED BY YOGAGI AND WRITTEN BY DEVAKI MA,

WHEN I TOLD YOGAGI THIS STORY AND WHEN HE HEARD THAT HE WAS

CALLED GOD, BY WILL AND JUAN HE CLOSED HIS EYES AND WAS

OVERCOME WITH HUMILITY.

IT WILL TAKE ME MANY LIFETIMES TO DIGEST THE BLESSINGS I

RECEIVED TODAY.

JOHN D'ANDREA

The dialogue between Yogiji and John narrated by John

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

15th December

7am: darshan in the rain. I shelter Chettiar and myself under an umbrella. Shaktivel and I then go to the circular hall where he tells me that the model of the ashram was made by young people from the ashram and that Mani has billed for it!!! We both go up to the meditation room. He tells me that normally we should have been able to see the hill from every point in the room, that Mani had been told to correct that in front of Bhagavan, but that nothing has been done. Like the slab at Calebasses, the dome leaks on all sides, but here it must be covered with tiles. We go back down to the new building that will house the generator. The generator was donated by the brother of the Minister of Finance, the director of *Karpagambal Mills*. We then return to Yogiji's future flats.

As we leave the auditorium, Selvaraj comes up to us. He explains that there's been some "discussions", and we learn that Mani has come out of the hut. We look for him but don't know where he is. Shaktivel then says that he may have dived into the well (he once would have told Yogiji that if one day he separated from him he would dive in). There are some important things going on, as Yogiji doesn't get out until 8.30!

We go to have breakfast. Mani is sitting in the refectory. I salute him but he answers me quickly. I can clearly see that things are not going well. He doesn't stay and leaves the refectory. We return to the cottage where I prepare a *chai* but,

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as Shaktivel doesn't drink it, we put it in a thermos for the afternoon.

Shaktivel is sitting on a chair, me in the armchair. He starts singing *Ram Ram Ram Ram*. This goes on for fifteen minutes. It is wonderful. My eyes are closed, but sometimes I open them and see Shaktivel waving his arms, like a medium, as I sometimes do.

Parthiban was supposed to come today but there's no-one here. Perhaps because the roads have been damaged by the intermittent rain (it's raining since more than 10 days!).

At around 9.20am we head into town to get some batteries for the tape recorder. The little dog follows me there! Shaktivel goes to the Ramanashram to get a photo of Yogi taken some time ago. I come back to the ashram, the little dog comes with me and I make sure nothing happens to him. When I arrive, Kannan tells me:

- It looks like he'll be following you to Mauritius. You have to take two plane tickets.

It's 10 o'clock. Yogiji arrives.

10:00 am Darshan.-

Lee and I go to the mat. Shortly afterwards, some shawls are brought and put next to Ma Devaki. I suspect that Yogiji is going to distribute them to the Americans who are leaving very

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

early tomorrow morning. And so it is done. Then I'm surprised because, after a while:

- Krishna!

I rush, walk around the platform and kneel before Yogiji, who offers me a shawl and, patting me on the back:

- My Father blesses you.

Then it's John's turn.

Yogi then has Selvaraj set up chairs near Alain and asked Lee and me to go over there. Shortly after we sat down, Alain has a sort of emotional meltdown and starts crying. I put my hand on his knee. For a moment Yogiji looks at us. Then He asks Selvaraj to separate the bananas that are in bunch on the tray. And now Yogiji is throwing bananas at the Americans! Afterwards i'll get the thought that we're like monkeys in a zoo and man throws bananas at us, the same the god at man. He then asks Selvaraj to go and get some more bananas. He calls



Lee and tells him to come forward with Selvaraj and hand them out by throwing them. Everyone laughs again. Then He gives Selvaraj another order and I film Yogiji and Ma for a few seconds. Selvaraj comes back with some round fruits. Then Yogiji calls

me and asks me to do the same. I step forward and throw in my turn.

Here a woman comes out of the audience and walks up to Ma Devaki, crying. She just stands there, talking to her, pointing at Yogiji. Yogiji says something loud in Tamil to her and Raji comes over to make her go back to her seat, where she continues to cry.

The American girls sing. At one point Yogiji makes them stop and calls me to sing *Ram Nam*. I can't concentrate because the people don't follow. They're limp and you'd never know they are singing Ram's glory, Ram who is right in front of their eyes. Calves, real calves. I feel like stopping the song to say to them: "But Ram is here, so sing Him, wake up!" It's incredible! He then calls me while I'm singing and asks me to read what is



written in a French book about current spiritual instructors. I saw this book at the FNAC in France in October and was quite outraged to see that Lee Lozowick was praised to some extent while Yogiji was quoted in a very little way and, at

the end of the article about Him, it was said that He Himself said that He was not a guru! Certainly it's Lee Lozowick who gave this text! He offered this book to Yogiji. So I read and Yogiji then asks Lee to translate, which he does by summarizing. The time is 11.30 am and it's the end of darshan.

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We learn from Selvaraj (but I'm wary of this kind of 'they say') that Yogiji is said to have told Ma Devaki that he would give darshans until the 15th. The last darshan should therefore take place, if we believe this, this afternoon.

On the way back from the refectory, Mani comes out of his cottage with a plate of Indian sweets and offers me one, as well as Lee who follows me. I go back to my cottage and write these notes.

At around 2.15pm Alain arrives at the cottage to say goodbye. He tells me that he would like to make a little present for my work in Mauritius. ...

As I leave the cottage with Shaktivel to go to the darshan, I spot Sadhu Rangarajan near the toilets. We greet each other with joy. He has come with devotees from South Africa and introduces me to Kumar. Then I make my way to the entrance.

4:00 pm Darshan.-

Ashram entrance: Yogiji's arrival. Alain is still there. After Yogiji enters, I go to wish him a safe journey and I can see that he is moved. John is there too, as is Mario.

We enter the darshan hall. Lee and I sit on the mat. Sadhuji is sitting with everyone else. There is no singing. Yogiji soon asks Selvaraj to put the chairs. He asks where Alain is and we tell him he's gone. Lee says he was in the queue when Yogiji arrived. He tells us both to go and sit on the chairs. After a while I hear Him ask where Rangarajan is and

He calls him over. I signal to Shaktivel to film Rangarajan a little. Yogiji asks how many people are with him: "8". Yogiji asks Selvaraj to spread out a mat in front of him at the bottom of the platform and gets the South Africans to sit on it. He then asks Rangarajan to sing the *Ram Nam* and Sadhuji performs in the Anandashram style, only faster, as he is wont to do. He sings for about fifteen minutes and the audience responds. Then Rangarajan is asked to sit on a chair with Lee and me and he sits on my left. Lee is on my right. ... As we don't speak, Yogiji sends Selvaraj to tell us to talk to Rangarajan. So I ask him when he's going back to South Africa and when he's coming to Mauritius because Yogiji, he says, has asked him to go there. I ask if he will come on the outward or return journey from South Africa and explain to him about the consecration of Yogi Ramsuratkumar Bhavan. Meanwhile, Yogiji asked the American Tom to make the American women sing and called Kumar close to him. They talked together for a long time and I filmed a bit. Yogiji looks at me and I quickly stop. Rangarajan talks to Lee about the Internet with Asnani and points out that I am also on the Internet and about the defense and problems of Hinduism in the world. He points out that Kumar is also in charge of a Satya Sai Baba group and that the South Africa person in charge told him to work for Satya Sai Baba and on no one else. To this, Kumar replied that he saw God in Baba as well as in Yogiji and that if this leader refused this, he would leave the Satya Sai Baba group.

Yogiji has Selvaraj call me and He calls Tom. He asks Tom to ask the American women to stop:

- Krishna will lead the chant. Sing the Ramnam!

He laughs, looking at me, and blesses me:

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

- *My Father blesses you.*

I sing the Ramnam with my eyes closed. God, when the hall is full, how lacking in enthusiasm! For God's sake, Ram is here! Sing! Sing! Sing! Sing!

I open my eyes when I hear the car engine. Yogiji is at the door, followed by Rangarajan. Then the car drives off. I stop singing and signal to Rajeshvari to sing the *Mangalam*.

Shaktivel left at 4.20pm, waving goodbye.

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16th December

Wake up at 4.45am when someone brings me coffee. Did they think I was leaving with the Americans? I can't get back to sleep, so I get up at 5.50am and make myself breakfast.

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Between 7am and 8am a minibus arrives from Madurai with a banner on the windscreen: "YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR". At 8am the darshan takes place in the rain. I ask Kannan again for Tulsi seeds. He tells me to wait until the rain stops. Then, after a day, the seeds will be dry.

At 9.20am, Parthiban made a surprise arrival at the cottage. He did leave on Saturday, but due to the blocked roads and trains he was only able to arrive this morning. For the same reason, he'll be leaving again this evening. Yogi asks him to come once a fortnight and, he tells me, today is the fifteenth day...

10:00 am Darshan.-

In front of the ashram entrance gate, a man is there, seated on a chair. He cannot move. One of the people accompanying him even has to hold his head up.

As soon as we see the car heading towards the darshan hall, Chettiar and I look at each other happily. Mario is there. I

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

am called first and Yogiji beckons me after *anjali* to sit on the mat. Then the women enter and then the men.

When everyone is inside, Yogiji calls Selvaraj and asks questions. Selvaraj then brings in the person in the wheelchair and he is placed next to a column. His head can rest against it. From time to time, the person accompanying him straightens it up. Yogiji calls this person and asks him the patient's name, what he was doing (engineer in such and such a place), etc.... Another person, better informed about his health, is called. Yogiji tells him that he must reply to the first person who will reply to Him in turn (indirect language, as is often the case). He asks when the illness occurred, how it happened and so on. This man first lost the use of his speech, then his limbs. Of course I think of my father... After a while, Yogiji says:

- *This beggar cannot do anything for him.*

Silence. Then, after another pause:

- *This beggar will pray his Father for his return to health and... by my Father's grace, he will be well.*

At that moment, the hands of family members in the audience rise above their heads. Tears come to my eyes. Such compassion! Then these men return to their seats and soon, with Selvaraj's help, Yogiji gets up and goes over to the patient, who is still sitting in his wheelchair against the column. Then I see a radiant smile blossom on his face as Yogiji comes towards him. Yogiji touches his head, shoulders, knees and arms. He then asks him his name, but the man can't answer out

loud. Nothing is heard. Yogiji returns and sits back down. Then He asks if John is there. Ma Devaki replies that he has left.

- There was an Italian, He says.
- Mario, says Ma. He's here.

Yogiji has some chairs put out and tells me to go and sit down and talk to Mario. And Mario tells me his story. Another beautiful story.

As we speak, Yogiji gets up and goes to sit next to the sick man, touching him here and there. Another time he sits at the back of the room with Parthiban and Mani.

Yogiji will call me from His seat to give me back Jocelyne C.'s mantra book and tell me to send it to Rangarajan with the account so that it can be sent to Anandashram. I reply to Yogiji that I've already given Rangarajan the other notebooks and that I've only brought this one. Yogiji laughs loudly and pats me on the back (perhaps He thought it was the only one!).

Again, as we both speak Mario and i, Yogiji, from in His seat calls me through Selvaraj, while Sudama sisters continue to sing in Tamil. He blesses me, smiles and asks me to sing the *Ramnam*. I wait for the end of the Sudama sisters' song and sing. As I'm singing, Yogiji gets up, walks over to Mario and sits down on the chair where I was standing before. I see Mario take Yogiji's hand outright and they both talk. At some point Yogiji calls me. So I stop singing and go and sit next to Him. He calls Rajeshvari who gets up and continues the *Ramnam* chant.

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- This friend is leaving tomorrow for Puttaparthi.

Yogiji takes my hand and he holds Mario's. Suddenly Mario removes a bracelet from his right wrist, puts it on Yogiji's wrist and says:

- I want to offer you this.

- Is it silver?

- Yes.

- How much does it cost?

- ?

- Approximately? (*I repeat the question to Mario*)

- Around 20 dollars.

- Around 20 dollars, Father. *I calculate quickly: $20 \times 5 = 100$, $100 \times 6 = 600$. 600 rupees.*

Yogiji takes off the bracelet and says, talking about Mario's wrist:

- This beggar wants it here.

- Why?

- Hm?

- Why?

- Because I'm here, says Yogiji, tapping Mario on the shoulder.... Krishna, what's your program?

- To stay here, Father, You asked me to stay here.

- Because you wanted to go to Orissa. Do you want to go somewhere?

- No, I'm better here near You.

- Did you get any news from your family?

- Yes, Father, a cyclone passed through Mauritius but everyone is fine. Just a little problem for Lakshmi at school. (Yogiji smiles)

- When are you going back?

- Mukilan is checking with Air India and Air Mauritius to see when a seat is available.

- Until you hear from Mukilan, stay here.

- Yes, Father.

- You can go back to singing. (*To Mario*): My Father blesses you wherever you are.

Selvaraj tells Rajeshvari to go back to his seat and I resume chanting the mantra while Yogiji goes out. I stop when the car has gone and Rajeshvari starts the *Mangalam*. I remain standing.

I eat with Mario and then tell him: "*You see, God is with you.*" That's what we said yesterday.

We then return to the cottage. Parthiban soon joins us. I make a *chai*. Parthiban says I'm a pure soul. I deny it and return that word to him. He denies it back. I then say:

- We're the same.

- No, Yogiji takes pure souls close to Him.

I deny and come to say:

- The only thing I have in common with Yogiji is that I'm a smoker. And even, not in the same way!

What do you want us to talk about if not Yogiji?

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

- Without Yogiji, we're nothing," I say.

Parthiban agrees.

...

I then go with Mario to the Bus Stand for his place tomorrow, but as I'm leaving the ashram I have to go back to bring in the little dog that's following me. Mario will catch the bus at 6.10am. There are no reservations, so he's scheduled to leave the Sheshadri Ashram at 5am.

As I'm back at the ashram, I hear from Venkatraman, who asks me not to repeat it, that Parthiban cuts Yogiji's nails. I understand why he comes every 15 days. What a blessing!

Once back at the cottage, Senthil arrives ... to play a game of chess. I didn't know that he'd brought his chess set with him yesterday; I thought it was just to put it somewhere safe. So I tell him we haven't got time as it's 2.30pm. Parthiban leaves for *Sudama* where he has to be at 3pm.

It's wonderful, I'm never alone! With Anand gone, Shaktivel arrives. Then it's Mukilan, then Shaktivel, then Parthiban! And tomorrow Anand returns, while Parthiban will leave after the 4pm darshan.

...

Will there be a darshan this afternoon? Nobody knows. From what Yogiji told me, I understood that I had to go back to

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Mauritius to join my family and not think about another program...

Since the creation of the ashram, the price of the surrounding land has risen sharply. So white people are buying ... and renting rooms ... to Indians! That's the height of it!



The ashram in the rain. The Yagashala blown down by the wind

15h50. It's pouring with rain and Parthiban has forgotten about the umbrella. I take the little *dhoti* that Anand offered me, put it over my head and shoulders and run to the entrance gate. That's when Parthiban brings me the umbrella, apologizing. Yogiji arrives and some men settle the sick man on a chair in the rain. Mario is there.

4:00 pm Darshan.-

I'm called first and go and sit on the mat as Yogiji signals me. I give Ma a piece of paper on which I've written that Mario will be leaving tomorrow for Bangalore on the 6.10am bus and from there to Puttaparthi, specifying that there is no reservation.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

A man I saw last year is there and hands Yogiji a laminated piece of paper:

- That's what Swami Ramdas said about the Rama Nama.
- How many copies are there? asks Yogiji.
- Three, but if you need more we can give you some.
- I need less.

... Yogiji asks if the "Italian" is there and makes us both (Mario and i) go and sit on the chairs. We both talk while Sudama sisters sing.

Towards the beginning of the darshan, Raji comes with a periodical, the one for which I wrote an article last year. Yogiji has one and she gives other copies to other people in the audience. Yogiji makes them read the article about Him. Then he asks the person who has brought the text of Swami Ramdas to say something. He speaks in Tamil, but I think he is talking about Swami Ramdas. It seems to me that Yogiji is also asking him to talk about the name "*Yogi Ramsuratkumar*".

At one point Yogiji calls Selvaraj and gives him something to give to me. It's what Swami Ramdas has written on the Ramnam!

I constantly feel effluvia of spirituality, as if Yogiji was "working on me". From time to time He looks at me. And here He calls me:

- Tell the Italian that when he arrives in Italy he should write a letter to this beggar. And tell him to write if he has arrived safely. Give him this beggar's address.

I return to my place next to Mario and repeat what Yogiji, who soon calls me again, told me.

- When are you leaving?

- Father, I'm on the waiting list for the 28th and my ticket is confirmed for 3rd January. Mukilan won't know until the 20th.

- You have to go back to Mauritius. Your wife and children need you. So this beggar would like you to contact Mukilan (again) to find out and give this beggar the answer.

- Yes, Father.

So Yogiji says there's nothing more for me to do here and I can go home. One moment he moves over and goes to see the sick person. Coming back with Selvaraj, he blesses us both with one hand and laughs. Yogiji calls the man who is looking after the sick one and who came in first this morning. He asks for the man to be looked after. A woman, is she his wife (?), is called. Yogiji asks if they will take him in. From the looks of it, the answer is not very enthusiastic! Yogiji says:

- By my Father's grace, he will regain his health!

He tells the first man that he can go and sit down again, adding:

- Try to convince them!

Yogiji wants them to take him. So these people must have faith in Yogiji.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

He will call me again and ask me to lead the Ramnam during which He will come out.

On leaving the darshan, the person who gave Yogiji Swami Ramdas' text on Ramnam this morning asks me if I remember him.

- Of course!
- That's very kind of you.
- As soon as I saw you, I recognized you. Where are you from?
- Salem.
- I remember Salem well. I went there in 1990 and received Mayî Ma's blessings.
- Oh, really?!
- That was just before I met Yogiji.

...

At the STD I try twice to phone, but to no avail. No-one is there. The third time is the good one and I tell Ishvari the news. She tells me:

- Everything's fine, but the children miss you terribly. Lakshmi has gone to the basement to get the baubles for the Christmas tree.

I'm about to hang up when I hear Lakshmi's voice:

- Pitaji, will you be back soon?
- Yes, my chick, Yogi said I have to go home.

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AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

17th December

Today is my sister Sabine's birthday ... and Beethoven's.

Resplendent sunshine this morning.

7 am : darshan. ...

8am: darshan followed by breakfast. Mani has contacted Mukilan. He will go and see Air India himself. ...

10:00 am Darshan.-

I see two white people at the entrance. I'm called first and Yogiji beckons me to sit on the mat. The Sudama sisters sing in Tamil for about an hour. In the meantime, Yogiji makes the two white men come close to Him. They're Italians. Then He tells me to go and sit down on a chair. He calls Selvaraj who then comes to me and tells me that Bhagavan asks if I have no objection to talking to the two Italians, and sends them to sit next to me with instructions to talk to them. So I ask them: when they arrived, why India (spirituality, etc.) and if they'd ever heard of Yogiji.

One of them, who is coming to India for the fourth time, tells me that it was a 'yogi' from Coimbatore who told him to go to Tiruvannamalai, that there was a powerful blessing there. They went to Puttaparthi for Baba's Jayanti. In fact, they don't seem very interested in what I'm telling them and I rather get

the impression that they're 'spiritual tourists'. I've barely explained him the sadhana of the Name when Yogiji calls me and asks me to lead the chanting of the Name. The two Italians certainly keep talking together. Once again I have the impression, when singing the Name, that people don't understand anything! They're asleep while they're singing! Instead of singing Ram with all their heart when Ram is right in front of them, they repeat like sleeping parrots!

At one point I feel that it's Yogiji taking my right arm with His left hand. He tells me:

- Continue.

And He goes out with Selvaraj, has an armchair set up to be placed in the middle of the aisle in front of the darshan hall and sits down in it. The two Italians follow, ask if they can take a photo, which they are granted, and stand on either side of Yogiji. Once the photo is taken, they leave. That was it, spiritual tourists. I'm sure we won't see them again.

I continue singing in front of the sleepers, then I see that Yogiji is asking for the car. Selvaraj comes in and tells Ma to leave. I stop singing as the car drives away.

Rajeshvari gets on my nerves a bit. She deliberately slows down the chanting of the Name, and it's the same with the *Gurunama*! It's been the same from the start.

The sun only lasted for the morning, and even then! It's starting to rain again. That makes 13 days in a row.

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4:00 am Darshan.-

As I'm talking with Chettiar under the courtyard waiting for Yogiji to arrive, a lady who was present at this morning's darshan comes up to me.

- What country are you from?
- France, but I now live in Mauritius.
- What is your name?
- Krishna.

- C.C. Krishna? Your wife's name is Ishvari and your children are Lakshmi and Parvati and your dog Raja benefited from Bhagavan's grace a few months ago?

- That's it! What a memory you have!
- Your life has suddenly changed.

She knows everything! Maybe she's just read the book '*Souvenir*' this morning? In any case, what a memory and what attention to what she reads!

Once Yogiji has entered the darshan hall, I am called first. Yogiji beckons me to sit on the mat. For a while, nothing happens. There is complete silence. Then Yogiji seems to be talking about people from Kerala and asks if they are there. Two still young men come up to Him and I soon hear Yogiji say that Swami Ramdas had first set up an ashram in Kasaragod, but I can't make out the rest. He is talking to Ma Devaki. I hear him say that they have just changed the name of Cannanore to Kannur... Then he says:

- My Father blesses you. Go back to your seats.

After a while, the Sudama sisters sing almost an entire book. In fact, I'd like to record the last track, which is 'super' with a 'super' rhythm. Their songs last about an hour and ten minutes.

I spotted two new white people in the room, a young man and a young woman. Then Yogiji calls me and asks me to sing the *Ramnam*. Like this morning, they all seem to be asleep. Sometimes I feel like turning to Yogiji and saying, "Father, they're asleep". I sing like this for about 25 minutes to half an hour, then Sudama's sisters leave. I continue to sing, turning to Ram (Yogiji) who beckons me to continue.

After the *ârti*, I'm approached by the white people. They're French. They tell me they need to find somewhere to stay. So I tell them two places. The woman is coming to India for the second time, he for the first. They went to Puttapparthi. They also ask me if I know Lee Lozowick. So I tell them that he left that very morning. They 'saw' him once at a 'meeting' in Gourdes, France. They live in Ardèche. The woman tells me that she saw a 'Guruji' in the north of India. Naturally, I ask her for more details and explain that there are plenty of 'Gurujis'.

- It's a certain 'Gaël' that Baba has realized, she tells me. He gave him visions.

- Just because you have visions doesn't mean you're come realized, I say.

- It's very quick! said the man, referring to my answer.

- Is it known?

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- In France, yes.
- But in India?
- It's coming.
- I don't know, I say. And where is he?
- North of Delhi.
- Where exactly?
- In Sonipat.
- I know Sonipat.
- Do you live in the ashram, she asks?

I tell her I come for two months of the year. They finally have to leave because they have to find somewhere to stay. The first question the woman asked me was about darshans and whether they could talk to Yogiji.

- If you come tomorrow morning and there's a darshan, you may be called.

I get on Saravanand's scooter after collecting some money from the cottage because I have to go with Venkatraman to buy him an umbrella. On the scooter:

- How old are you?
- I'm thirty.
- That's the right age to get married," I say.
- Yes, I'm waiting to find a girl who can share my feelings, because I want to go down a spiritual path.

...

Venkatraman goes as fast as we do on bike. First shop: *Pompuphar*: not the right size. Second shop: near the temple. It starts raining and ... I don't have an umbrella. Again, not the

right size. We find an umbrella at a shop a little further on and Venkatraman leaves us and I get back on Saravanand's scooter to go back to the ashram. We stop along the way and Saravanand offers me two teas and we chat. He doesn't like Americans. He tells me that Mani asked him to pick them up at the airport. There, Lee said hello to him, then didn't say a word, from any of them, as if he didn't exist! Of course, I'm not at all surprised. We talk a bit about this. He tells me that nobody likes them at the ashram, but that Krishna is loved by everyone. He also says that the Americans stay in groups and never talk to the Indians. Not even to me!

- I don't like it, I say.

- I noticed, when Lee and his group were under the courtyard, you left.

- Oh, you noticed?

...

18th December

Wake-up at 6.25am. Darshan at 7 o'clock. I return the last two original cassettes to Chettiar. Anand hasn't arrived yet. There's a man there whose face tells me something. After darshan, I go for the *pradakshina* of the ashram when this gentleman meets me at the hut and asks me if I recognize him. I reply that I remember his face. He tells me that he owns a guest house in Kanya Kumari.

- Yes," I say, "you gave me a diary last year when I was leaving the library.

He tells me that he comes from Madras and that, with the rain, it takes eight hours to come from there. We continue the *pradakshina* and at 7.30 am, while he continues on his way, I return to the cottage.

After the 8 o'clock darshan, breakfast. Mani tells me that he asked Yogiji for a few days off (?), but that Yogiji replied that the ashram couldn't function without him...

I was told the other day that Yogiji didn't want Srinivasan's wedding to take place at the ashram, but that Mani had insisted. Yogiji finally agreed ... by force ... I was also told that Mani and Raghu used to get drunk together...

At seven to ten, I go to the entrance. I see Yogiji's car coming back empty. The French couple arrives. Kannan soon

comes to announce that Yogiji won't be coming at 10 and that we don't know if he'll come at 4.00. I invite the two French to come and have a *chai* at the cottage. In fact, they too are spiritual tourists. They come to "be in contact with the masters" and at the same time go to the beaches. The man in particular is interested in the beaches. This is his first visit to India, although the girl has already come to the darshan two years ago. He is bothered by the noise and dirt of India. He's 'exhausted' and can't sleep. He's obviously very unwell in India. The girl asks me if I know "so-and-so" and "so-and-so", "realized". I tell her that there are many gurus but very few *sadgurus*, that anyone who claims to be enlightened creates an ashram and everybody bleats before him. It's not on the outside that you need to know, it's on the inside. I'll take Lee as an example and explain the myth of his realization. She tells me:

- But he says so himself in his books. He makes a distinction between before and after awakening.
- The second birth must not be confused with realization.

It reminds me of the Americans doing japa in front of Yogiji in the middle of darshan, and singing something else at the same time!

At lunchtime, only two of us are eating. I return to the cottage, read and sleep until 3pm.

Darshan de 16h.-

The French are there. Yogiji is coming. I look to see where the car is going and Chettiar laughs.

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- No doubt, darshan! he says.

But as we are in the covered alleyway, I show him the car that is entering the auditorium, the door having been opened. We move into the darshan hall. I am in the third row with Chettiar and Rajeshvari begins to sing the *Gurunama*.

We are singing for about five minutes when Chettiar tells me:

- Bhagavan is coming.
- No, it's the empty car.
- No, he's coming.

Indeed, Yogiji enters, followed by Sudama sisters. Barely settled in, He calls:

- Krishna!

He beckons me to the mat. Rajeshvari continues. Her singing is, as always, rather sad. Soon again:

- Krishna!

I stand up.

- Sing the Name.

I go to sing. How they need to be stirred! Once again I feel like saying to Yogiji: *"Father, they're sleeping! Rama's right in front of them and that doesn't touché them! But they*

should clap their hands and sing their hearts out!" I sing for about fifteen to twenty minutes. Then:

- Krishna!

I go and kneel down.

- *Thanks.*

And Father pats me on the back and points to my seat. Then he says to Ma:

- Devaki, I would like you and Vijayalakshmi to go and chant the mantra given by the Paramacharya: "*Arunachala Shiva, Arunachala Shiva, Arunachala Shiva, Aruna jata.*"

So Ma and Vijayalakshmi get up and go to the place where I was chanting and they intone the mantra that everyone is repeating. After a while Yogiji tells Rajalakshmi (Sudama sister) to tell Ma Devaki and Vijayalakshmi to continue chanting but to sit down. During the darshan, a swami with a face in the style of a young Sri Aurobindo arrived, accompanied by a lady wearing a white sari with edging⁹.

While Ma and Vijayalakshmi are singing, Yogiji calls Chettiar and speaks to him for a few moments. Chettiar then comes out of the darshan hall. It is around 5pm.

⁹ I'll learn from Venkatraman that the swami with Aurobindo's face is called Swami Hamsananda and that he 'runs' the grey ashram nearby, on the road after the bend. The woman accompanying him first came to the Yogiji ashram and then went to this ashram and it seems that the two people have joined.

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After some time, He asks Ma and Vijayalakshmi to come back and makes them sit on the platform again and asks Rajeshvari and Chettiar's wife to chant "*Arunachala Shiva, Arunachala Shiva, Arunachala Shiva, Aruna jata.*" seated. They do so.

All of a sudden, at around 5.10pm, Yogiji gets up alone, blesses with the back of His hand and goes out. I soon see the car arrive with Chettiar and Rajagopal inside. Chettiar gets out and Yogiji gets in the back on the left next to Rajagopal. He makes Mani get in front.

The singing will continue for a long time, until Sudama's sisters are called to go out. Rajeshvari then intones the *Mangalam* and everyone goes out.

Everyone is aligned for Yogiji's exit and Chettiar, who was at the front of the line, reports the events to me:

Yogiji had the statue brought into the auditorium to be installed. He hadn't seen the statue since it was cast. I suspect it will be installed above the *likhita japa* and I'll be right.

Evening falls, it's dark. The lady who has read my article in the book '*Souvenir*' approaches me and I give her my address and the address of Sadhu Rangarajan as she had asked me before. I point out to her the mistranslation in the article where it should read "*beggar*" and not "*sâdhu*". We have a little chat. She is always accompanied by a girl who seems to be her daughter.

Chettiar is then called to the auditorium from where he returns after some time. Ravi arrives by car and Rajagopal gets out at the entrance. He is moved. He holds out his hand to me.

- This is a great day for you!, I say.

He leaves.

- See you soon, Krishna.

Then Yogiji comes out of the auditorium. I tell the lady I'll be right back and rush to see the statue. I'm on my own. There's no electricity in the auditorium, but a projector is plugged in. Mani, Raji and Rajeshvari are there. Mani tells me that for the last ten months he was forbidden to enter the auditorium when Yogiji was there, but that today He told him to come. I will learn, I think from Venkatraman (to whom Yogiji offered two shawls this evening), that Yogiji arrived at the statue and asked Rajagopal:

- When can it be installed?

- At any time, Bhagavan.

Yogiji then asked for it to be transported immediately, but not by lorry. Fifteen workers then carried it on their shoulders and it was installed on the *likhita japa*, with nothing to fix it.

I soon leave the auditorium, go to the entrance and get some *prasad*. I then go over to the lady and the young girl and we talk.

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- I met Swamiji 8 years ago in Sannadhi Street. He blessed me", she tells me. I came back but he didn't recognize me. So I went to him crying. I was told I was hindering, etc.... (*I feel that she needs me to talk to her*). Swamiji told me: "I'll always be with you." What should I do as a sadhana?

- But you have heard! Yogiji will always be with you! Don't worry about other people's judgments. Follow your heart! Yogiji will always be present in your heart. So repeat His Name, sing Him while feeling His presence within you. It's enough!

- My Devaki told me: "You've received a very great blessing. So go and sit down again.

- But she's absolutely right. It is a very great blessing. "I will always be with you." What more could you want?

- Why didn't He recognize me?

I have to explain to her that Bhagavan loves everyone equally and that, furthermore, times have changed since Sannadhi Street. I explain to her that Yogiji is not the body we see, but the soul united with God, and that I don't understand why people don't sing their hearts out but sleep when Ram is right in front of them!

- Oh, you sing so beautifully. You sound like a great Indian musician. Oh! I wanted to clap my hands but someone told me to stop.

- Who told you to stop? A lady?

- A lady in white.

- Yes (*of course, it's Rajeshvari who's meddling in everything*). Don't worry about it. Follow your heart! Don't worry about what others say or their judgments.

- Eight years ago, I knew that this beggar would one day have a big ashram and I said so. But my husband was asking

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me: "What attracts you to this beggar?" I've always felt attracted. I wanted to come.

I also tell her, in the course of the conversation, that I feel Indian.

- Sure, your past life was in India.

- Several past lives. I was born in France for a purpose. But it was to learn about them. Now I've got my diploma and Yogiji has put me in Mauritius where there are lots of Indians, at home, and at the crossroads of the two civilizations.

- You have something important to do.

- When I was younger, I was told that from up there, but with life, we forget.

Her mum is standing next to us as I speak. The young girl asks me for my autograph and the lady asks me to talk, to explain how, by saying "*Ram*", things came about, my marriage, etc... I tell her. This lady is so real. She wants a photo of me!

I have to go with Venkatraman, who has asked me for a pair of trousers. We both go to the cottage and he stays there



while I go and film the statue, so that I have a picture on the day of the installation.

The auditorium is closed, but I pass by Yogiji's future apartment. The little dog follows me everywhere. I return and the meal is

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brought in, then I go to the shop to fill the gourd and give Venkatraman 300 rupees to buy a pair of trousers. This evening he takes the bus to Bangalore at 10pm to fetch vegetables offered by a devotee, as he does every week.

I go back to the ashram, give Natarajan 2 bananas he asked me to bring, read the newspaper and write these lines.

Yes, the time has come to return to Mauritius.

19th December

There's no one to wake me up today by bringing me chai. It's 6.25am when I get up. I wash up and make a *chai*. At five to seven I go to the entrance and Gopal, on the way, offers me a *chai*.

7am: Yogiji's arrival. I hear this from Kannan:

Yesterday night Yogiji asked for someone to sleep next to the statue. Kannan came to Mani's (indeed, I "bumped into" them at Mani's on the way back to the cottage after filming the statue). Mani said that the lorry driver would sleep there and that Kannan could go and sleep at *Sudama*. So Kannan returned to *Sudama*. Yogiji asked someone to call to send His blessings. He wants two people to sleep near the statue every night.

From Chettiar: After sending for Rajagopal, Yogiji went with him into the old darshan hall where the statue was. He placed His hands on the feet of the statue and brought them to His eyes (Chettiar learnt this directly from Rajagopal).

I do the *pradakshina* of the ashram; the two dogs follow me, the little one and 'Albert'. I've called him Albert, and he's the one who makes the law! With the two dogs following me, I head back to the cottage. The dogs 'stand guard'. I'd like to ask

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permission to sleep near the statue (later, Shaktivel and I will want to sleep there but won't be able to).

8am: darshan, then breakfast, where I'm alone with a lady.

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The idiot who says, because I read that Lozowick said it, that it's stupid to be moved! The language is stupid. It preaches indifference! It confuses the mind with the heart! When you see a dog being hit for nothing, should you just let it go? Is it natural to feel nothing? Ramakrishna had marks coming all over his body!

Father, I want to be moved, I don't want to be dry, I want to feel Your Presence, Your fragrance! I don't care if ... That's for afterwards, when we become all. Then we can talk. Not before. Bhakti! Bhakti! Who says that it is worthless, saying that he who has emotions is not evolved? Look at my Father if He is not moved!

...

Father, to go back to Mauritius like this without Your fragrance, which is your Blessing! Father, once, once...

Yesterday, in the middle of the afternoon darshan, the Frenchman left the hall. The girl stayed. He's really not well in India. He must be in love with the girl and followed her, but he'd like to get back to France as soon as possible or go to the beaches of Kerala.

...

Father, I don't want to succumb to what they tell me: C.V.R.: that I have such and such a mission in Mauritius, M...: that I was already close to You in the past life, P...: that I am a pure soul. No, I know very well that I am not a pure soul. I don't want to deceive myself, Father, the ego whose ravages I can see here and there frightens me.

Under the courtyard, waiting for Yogiji to arrive at 10am, Rajagopal explains to both us, Chettiar and i, that the statue is going to be fixed with bars going deep into the ground and that a square with chains would be set around it so that no one could touch it.

The French girl is there, but not her friend.

10am: Yogiji's car stops before entering and Ravi turns off the engine. We beckon Mani to come while he's at the other end. Mani runs, which is just a figure of speech as he has a lot of trouble running, and Yogiji talks to him. The car then enters the ashram and Mani tells us that those who want to see the statue will be able to do so once Yogiji has entered the auditorium.

So, the few people present go there and I am before Chettiar and Rajagopal. I kneel 3 or 4 meters from the statue ... then I do the *pradakshina* and leave. Then it's Chettiar's and Rajagopall's turn.

I then go to the darshan hall where Rajeshvari has started singing. A few moments later Rajagopall comes and sits down next to me. The French girl leaves the darshan hall after a few

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minutes. Armstrong's mother soon arrives and tells Rajeshvari to stop singing the *Gurunama*. I had just started to respond to it, whereas before I had remained silent. She starts singing *Arunachala Shiva*. I respond and feel a mental calm that lasts for a good fifteen minutes. Then Rajagopall comes out.

...

As I leave the darshan (hall), Mani tells me that Mukilan has phoned and that Air India has to get confirmation from Air Mauritius, so we should know something definitive today about my return.

We go to the ashram entrance. Yogiji won't be out until around 12.05 - 12.10. After lunch, I return to the cottage where I read today's '*The Hindu*', write these notes and then rest.

That's clear, the time for darshans is over.

No *chai* this afternoon.

4pm. The French girl is there, along with a German and an Englishwoman and another white man and woman. Yogiji heads for the auditorium. Like this morning, once He is seated under the shelter, everyone goes to do the *pradakshina* of the statue. Even more so than this morning, when I kneel with my eyes closed, repeated circles of light flash into my eyes. It's as if there are several circles coming towards me at high speed, over and over again.

Arunachala Shiva by Rajeshvari. From 4.40pm to 5.25pm I sing *Aum Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*. Then I signal

to Rajeshvari that I'm stopping. She then takes over *Arunachala Shiva* while I leave and go to the cottage to take these notes.

When at around 5 p.m I am heading back to the darshan hall, Mani and Raji signal that Yogiji is leaving. So I go to the ashram entrance for His exit and then take the *prasad*. Chettiar invites me to take a few steps and come for a coffee. So I go and get my *chappals*. The little bitch follows me and I give her half a biscuit. Back at the entrance, Chettiar is talking to a white man accompanied by a Hindu couple. Chettiar is talking about me. The white man, who is very nice, tells me that they are from Australia but that the couple is native of Tamil Nadu. He speaks French and is truly a wonderful man. We talk about Mauritius. We then go on the path together, leaving each other at the junction. Chettiar and I go to 'Pink House' His wife makes me three *dosas* and we both drink coffee together. He shows me Janardhanan's book and the two photos of Yogiji when Swami Sadchidananda came to Ramanashram this year. Chettiar explains to me that the statue was cast with the five metals (*panca?*): gold (7 sovereigns), silver, bronze, pewter (?) and ? His wife has given a golden pot of gold that was a hundred years old, suddenly.. His daughter has given a gold bracelet, etc....

Rajagopall's wife arrives and asks me about my family, how I ended up in Mauritius and so on. Then Rajagopall makes a quick appearance. He's tired and cold. At 7pm I leave for town. On my way back to the ashram, like the other evening, young Saravanand takes me on his luggage rack to the ashram. Dinner is served around 7.50pm. I reread the newspaper and take these notes.

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The little bitch sleeps at my door. I go to bed early.

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20th December

Ten to 7: C..., me and 4 men from Madras... Venkatraman is here. C... tells me that the head of Mani's spies is Rajeshvari, then there's Selvaraj (which I'm very surprised about), Krishnamurti, Suresh and the lorry driver. He tells me that it won't be long before Mani and the others leave the ashram. About two months ago, Yogiji would have said: "*This beggar will beg until 31 December. After that, this beggar (something like) will project himself*". I say, jokingly of course, "*Then I'll stay!*"

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8.10am: breakfast. Mani tells me that my seat is confirmed for Bombay on the 27th or 29th, but that Air India cannot influence Air Mauritius, so Mukilan has to contact them himself.

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10am: darshan: *pradakshina* of the statue. Then chanting in the darshan hall. I sing *Arunachala Shiva* for about 20 minutes.

4pm: darshan: *pradakshina* of the statue. I don't go to the darshan hall but to the cottage. At some point, Selvaraj arrives with a fax from the Americans telling Yogiji that they have

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arrived safely. Yogiji asked Selvaraj to come and read it to me. I go to the darshan hall only at 5.05pm and sing *Aum Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*, which I record. Very few people.

As Yogiji's car arrives to leave the ashram, it stops near the *Yagashala*. Ravi stops the engine and comes to help Yogiji out, then they go to the newly rebuilt *Yagashala* (everything had fallen down with the cyclone tail winds). Going out, at the top of the steps, Yogiji puts back on correctly his *dhoti* and his blanket. He looks at each of the people lined up and goes out of the ashram on foot. Ravi quickly goes to get the car, Yogiji get in and the car sets off towards *Sudama*.



The rebuilt Yagashala

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21st December

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Darshans at 7am and 8am. At 9am I send a fax to Jean in France because I haven't received anything, even though Yogiji had asked him to write to me as soon as he arrived.

10 o'clock. After the *pradakshina*, I'm not going to sing except for the last half-hour. Mani takes care of my Air Mauritius ticket. At 11.40 I learn that if all goes well I'll have a plane to Mauritius on the 28th. We'll have confirmation on Monday.

After the 4pm darshan, I'm only going to sing a little. Shaktivel has arrived and we're staying together. I show him the statue and tell him about its installation.

At 6 p.m., as Yogiji is going out, Shaktivel gives Him the first volume of Ra. Ganapati on Satya Sai Baba through the car window. Then, with Ravi's moped, we go to Sannadhi Street, guarded by Shaktivel's brother, Shashi (it's only a short time ago that Shaktivel told me they were brothers). I go inside for the first time since December 1990, 6 years ago! Shashi is reading the Tamil biography of Yogiji by Janardhanan. Shaktivel asks him to give it to me. Shashi replied, "But it's in Tamil! » Shaktivel says something to him and, without hesitation, Shashi hands me the book, covered with newspaper. No hesitation!!!

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22nd December

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Darshan at 7 o'clock. Chettiar returns the cassettes to me. With Shaktivel, we do the *pradakshina* of the ashram. I see the Rama Tulsi, the Krishna Tulsi, the *kusha* grass, the punnai, the Neem, etc... Shaktivel tells me that Yogiji sometimes drinks 'infusions' of *kusha*.

After the *pradakshina* of the statue, we go into town on Ravi's moped. ... Shaktivel takes advantage of being there to telephone Justice Arunachalam in Madras. He has arrived in Madras! Arunachalam is not in good health so I don't think I will see him in Tiruvannamalai, but I will meet him in Madras itself. Because of the noise outside, the horns, etc., I can hardly understand anything Justice is telling me. We come back... Shaktivel arrives at that time and tells me that Yogiji has just asked him to go back to Madras straight away. So he changes clothes quickly and leaves, when it's 11.30am and I'm about to sing ... then I go with everyone else to the entrance for Yogiji's exit. The little bitch sits in front of me under the courtyard.

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4pm. After the darshan and *pradakshina* of the statue..., Anand goes to the darshan hall to sing, while Anastasia waits for me to speak...

...

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6pm: Yogiji leaves. I go over to Anastasia's and copy down what Yogiji had said. As for the rest, they are texts of the kind I had obtained in 1971. Anastasia really believes that the earth is going to swing on its axis and that the lands will be submerged, etc... They believe it's all happens so fast!!!!...

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23rd December

7am: darshan.

8am: darshan.

10am: darshan with Anand and *pradakshina* of the statue.

Noon: at the end of darshan, Yogiji calls me from the car and asks me when I'm leaving. I tell Him that I have a plane to Mumbai on the 27th and maybe one to Mauritius on the 28th, and so I'll be leaving on either the 24th or 25th.

4pm: darshan. I'm with John for the *pradakshina* of the statue. I go with him to sing in the front row. Twice Mani calls me about the plane. The second time he and Raji ask me my departure date from the ashram.

Knowing that the plane leaves at 12.10pm, I explain that I'd like to be there on Christmas night, which is, moreover, a full moon night. After some thought, I decide to leave on the 25th by the 7am *Point to Point* bus. So Mani can tell Yogiji.

Exit Darshan.

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As I am near the Ramanashram, Senthil calls me and offers me a *chai*. The two of us talk for a long time about faith in Yogiji and so on. He tells me that salaries are low at the

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

ashram and that he doesn't know if he'll still be here next year. Yogiji had told them that *"this beggar pays you small wages, but my Father will see to it that you find a good job."* Senthil would like to write a song about Yogiji in Tamil, but is waiting for His permission. He has already written one for another temple.

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24th December

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10 o'clock: darshan. Lots of people. *Pradakshina* around the statue with John and Anand. Anand doesn't stay long at the chanting and I'll soon be leaving the darshan hall myself to take these notes.

11:30 am: I go to the darshan hall. At the end and as I leave, "Hare Rama Hare Krishna" takes my hand and chants the mantra, and we both go to the entrance. He asks me for my address and I give it to him. After Yogiji leaves, he gives me his, in Tamil, as he doesn't speak English. I ask Venkatraman to write it in 'European' characters and Venkatraman gives me a 'laminated' photo of Yogiji, then I go and eat with 'Hare Rama'. Then I walk him to the exit and Venkatraman gives me the address written in European characters. "Hare Rama" goes out. Kannan comes up to me:

- Why did he give you his address?
- He asked me to send him a letter when I arrive
- Don't do it. He'll use it to get money. That's what he does. He'll show your letter to make himself look important and get more. He does nothing and his wife is a coolie. It is all very well to chant Hare Rama Hare Krishna without doing anything, but that is not *bhakti*. We have to work, etc.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

I will of course take into account what Kannan tells me. My letter must not be used to use Yogi Ramsuratkumar's name to make money.

I go back to the cottage and try to pack. First I wash the *kurta* offered by Yogiji last year to wear with the *dhoti* for the last darshan and chanting session. Around 2.45pm, Senthil comes and tells me to ask Mani for someone to accompany me because of the luggage.

Then Selvaraj arrives and tells me that I'd better send the books by post, because I'll have the excess luggage at the airport anyway. So we agree that he will come at 6pm and send the books by registered airmail tomorrow.

4pm: lots of people. Anand is not there. John arrives. *Pradakshina* of the statue. I go and sing in the front row. After about 20 minutes of *Gurunama* by Rajeshvari, she beckons me to sing *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram* and then *Arunachala Shiva*. It's while I am singing that I am told that Yogiji is calling me. I hurry.

- *Krishna, ukhar...*

Yogiji takes my right hand in His and, with His other hand, takes my wrist like a pulse. Silence. My mind is not stable. Will he give me some indication of what I should do? He asks for the details of my return. When Mani tells him that the ticket is 'prepaid', Father says:

- *Ah, Father's grace!*

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Then He asks me, as usual:

- As soon as you get to Mauritius, send a letter to this beggar saying you've arrived safely.

Then, twice, He will say :

- *Wherever Krishna will be, my Father will be with him* (and perhaps it was the second time: *whenever* »).

Then He asks Selvaraj to go and get some dried fruit from Raji's. Yogiji puts a packet of cakes ??? (brand) in a plastic bag, and lots of bananas, and says:

- *My Father blesses Krishna, his wife and his children.*

Then He tells me to go back and tells Mani to inform that I must lead the Ramnam.

I settle back in the front row and sing enthusiastically, even though people sing in their sleep. At one point, it's wonderful. I'm 'fine'... I'm fine, fine, fine! (John would later tell me that the way I was singing at the time was fantastic and that he was feeling a lot of things).

But I've never smelt Yogiji's perfume!

Exit: Anand is here. In passing, Yogiji looks at me for longer than usual.

Anand and I return to the cottage and soon Selvaraj arrives. It's agreed, he'll send everything tomorrow. Then I go

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to Chettiar's but he's not there. I greet Rajagopal's family for about five minutes and go from there to Anand's, via *Sudama*. Anand is preparing bread, butter, jam and *chai*. We talk.

I'll leave Jean's tape recorder to him. He'll come with me tomorrow to the bus station. Anand is going to do the hill *pradakshina*. As I leave his house, I see quite a few people, then the crowd. It's a full moon and Christmas Eve. But I'm tired and I have to get up early tomorrow.

I come back, film *Sudama* in the evening and eat in the refectory. Then I go to Mani's to get the text of the Paramacharya sung by Subbhalakshmi. They don't have it in Sanskrit. Raji gives me two ice creams, and then I go back to the cottage.

This is where my notes end.

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On my return from Tiruvannamalai in December 1996, Mukilan found me a plane ticket to Mauritius from Mumbai and I was even able to sleep on the plane. On the first of January I wished Yogiji and Ma a Happy New Year. On 2 February, in a new letter to Yogiji, I told him that I had worked on a cassette and CD of Ramnam chanting using material I had, and that on the same cassette you could hear Swami Ramdas, Mataji Krishnabai and 'Father' Himself chanting the mantra AUM SRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM.

I specified to Yogiji that different ways of chanting the mantra appeared on this cassette and that I would now like to work on a second cassette (and CD) on which would be grouped the *mantras* and *shlokas* chanted by Yogiji Himself, using bits of recordings that I had been able to find here and there in Tiruvannamalai and Chennai. As the background noise was terrible, I asked in this letter if there wasn't an original in the ashram where everything was clearer, in order to make a very good cassette.

In the same letter, Yogiji was informed that the Bhavan now had an email address and that I was already in contact with Makarand Paranjape.

On 9 March, in a new letter, I informed Yogiji that the first 'public manifestation' of the Bhavan had taken place on the occasion of the Mahashivaratri and that we had arranged a covered area at the front of the house where water, *chai* etc... were distributed to pilgrims going to or returning from Grand

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Bassin, that pilgrims could even rest in the room below. I attached color photos taken from the video camera...

On 26 April, it was another letter informing Yogiji that the *Ramnam Pujas* had started at the Bhavan and would be held every Sunday from 4pm to 6pm. I also told Yogiji that, following his request to Lee Lozowick to come and see me in Mauritius, I was going to email Lee to let him know that everything was now ready for him to come. I also talked briefly about what happened to Vishal, who people thought was crazy because he talked about God. That's another story that could be narrated here. Finally, I told Yogiji about a magnificent piece of land I'd seen in the mountain in a place called Chitrakut!

...

The history of the land for a possible future ashram:

In a new letter dated 27 June, I narrated to Yogiji about the following events. Here they are, as they have since been posted on the Internet: March arrived and the Mahashivaratri. Paul, a French friend - a brother - came with his wife to Mauritius especially to see Krishna. So we made him visit the island. In the process, Krishna looked at possible locations other than Calebasses, because of the incessant noise caused by the traffic on the Royal Road. But wasn't everything beautiful? And so they circumnavigated the island. When they had done so, a brother-in-law said: "Let's go that way, it's nice up there." Krishna didn't know this way and so they ended up in Vallée des Prêtres (The Valley of the Priests), surrounded by small mountains. He noticed that, as in another village called Triolet, Hindu flags could be seen on either side of the small road,

indicating a population with a large Hindu majority. Stopping at the home of some relative of the brother-in-law, they continued along the road, 'to take a tour'. From then on, it was uphill. And they soon arrived in lush vegetation, with hairpin bends, a typical mountain road, amidst mango trees. There Krishna fell into ecstasy and said: "Oh, you'd think you were in India! The landscape reminded him of a small village north of Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh. Then soon: "Oh, it's here, it's here, it's here that we have to find something! It's wonderful, splendid, paradise. There, a little above the village!" It was absolutely there! There was no doubt about it. That's where it HAD to be, it was obvious. Krishna knew it was there.

The car now skirted the mountain, still in the village, and soon a faded sign appeared that still read in Hindi and English transliteration. Once again Krishna was ecstatic: "And what's more, it's called Chitrakut!

...

On one of the following days, the building permit officer came to the Bhavan to see if a special permit was needed for the basement and found that a hall had been specially set up for the performance of pujas and the chanting of bhajans.... He then asked Krishna to come to a *Bhagavat Mahapurān ki katha* which was to last 9 days and was organized by his family in Chitrakut. And, at the end of the discussion, he even asked Krishna to give a speech there.

It's like this that, without his stupid son doing anything but following, Yogiji had him make his first speech in the village of Chitrakut (1), the very place where He had reserved a

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plot of land for a possible future YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR ASHRAM...

...

It's a wonderful village and, as mentioned above, 100% Hindu. And now let me tell you about the TULSI KRIT HANUMAN MANDIR association.

This association is mainly made up of young people from the village. They themselves financed the construction of a temple, the TULSI KRIT HANUMAN MANDIR. These young people, including some very good musicians, travel from time to time around the island to sing the *Ramayana* and bhajans. They have recorded a cassette (1), *SRI RAM RAS*, and the profits will be used to finance extensions to the temple and other projects.

When Lee Lozowick came at Yogiji's request, Krishna asked them if they could come and sing, telling them for the first time about YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR. There was not the slightest hesitation, and so the *Ramayana* was sung at the Bhavan and, for the first time in Mauritius, the *Gurumantra* YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR JAYA GURU RAYA rang out.

...

But let's go back a little further. On 21 June, I had written to Ma Devaki asking her if she could send me some original cassettes and I gave her the list of *mantras* and *shlokas* chanted by Yogiji. I also sent Yogiji the CD and some chocolates.

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Shortly afterwards, I receive a phone call from Tiruvannamalai: Yogiji has asked that all the ashram's recordings of Him be immediately copied in front of Him and sent to Krishna.

In July, I received from Tiruvannamalai the following handwritten letter from Ma Devaki, accompanied by two cassettes (several pages followed this letter on the contents of the said cassettes):

Yogi Ramsuratkumar ki jai !

Sudama 13-7-97

Dear Holy Krishna,

Loving pranams to you and family,

Bhagavan received the chocolates and the letter carrying the exciting news of your divine project of 'Chitrakut' - there was a happy smile on His face throughout the reading of your letter. All our earnest prayers and best wishes for 'Yogi Ramsuratkumar Ashram' at Chitrakut – one of His many gardens to be all over the world!

Today, under Bhagavan's instruction and permission, we recorded two cassettes (second not full) with whatever Sudama possessed – right in the presence of Bhagavan in the Pradhan Mandir. Very little by way of record is available since Bhagavan emphatically objected to any machine-recording, so far. Any way, i will try hereafter, as much as 'possible' – His

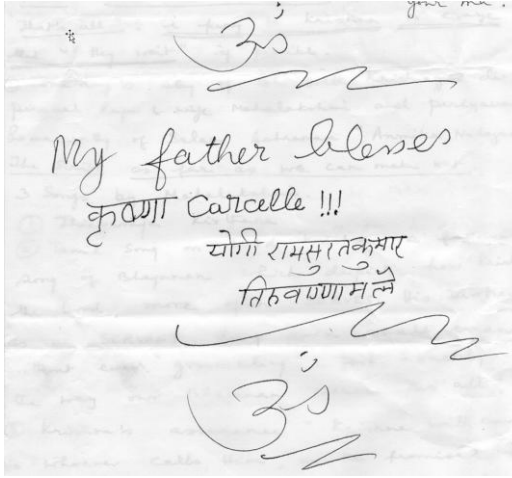
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slave cannot have any will independently for less act!¹⁰ It is all our fortune. He agreed this time!

My love to Eswari, Parvathy and Lakshmi and to all our family there.

*Affectionately,
Your ma.*

And underneath, Yogiji wrote His blessings!



At the beginning of this tape, there's a divine passage where Yogiji talks to Ma Devaki. Ma had asked me to blow up a kind of scream that she had shouted. I did so immediately and on 31 July sent her this part, copied onto a cassette of the 'definitive' version of the *mantras* and *shlokas* sung by Yogiji. For I set to work straight away, but the result wasn't very satisfactory, given the poor quality of the recording. In particular, it was the case of a recording of a conversation between Yogiji and Dr Ramamurthy and his family...

Lee arrived in Mauritius on the morning of 24 August with one of his German students and left on the 25th. I immediately informed Yogiji of this visit in a letter dated 3 September:

« ... After having welcomed Lee, we went to the Botanical Garden in Pamplémousses which is a marvel and which is very close to Calebasses. In the afternoon, a Ramnam Puja began at 3 PM in the small Bhavan. The musicians of the Tulsi Krit Hanuman Mandir of Chitrakut came as asked and accompanied the Ramnam on their instruments.

After the chant of Ramnam, Krishna spoke about our Divine Father and to introduce Lee. Then Lee spoke about his meeting with Father. Then the group chanted the Ramayana. Oh Father, they sang so well, not only with their mouth, their lips and their tongue, but with their true hearts, with their entire being. What a blessing did you send! An aged Hindu neighbor said he never heard the Ramayana so well chanted.

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Then, for the first time in Mauritius, the Gurunama was sung. As soon as Krishna began to sing, the instruments went on! It was marvelous! The divine Play of Father! The name of YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR resonated. It was so marvelous, what a joy!...

... At 7 PM, Krishna brought Lee and a student with whom he came, to Chitrakut for the function. Because Father made Lee to come the very day of Krishna Jayanti! After entering the mandir, Krishna was asked to sing AUM SRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM, then to speak. So he spoke about the ten avatars of Vishnu. Then Lee spoke (in English) and tried himself to translate in French what he had said.

The day after, we went back together to Chitrakut to make him visit the ground. Then, we went down to the main town to have some food and after that took the bus and a car to go to Ganga Talav, the little lake on the hills which is equivalent to Ganga in Mauritius. After that, they took the bus for some kilometers for the airport, back to France...

The Chitrakut ground continued to be cleaned every weekend, Saturday and Sunday, with Dhaneshvar.

Here is a part of the letter I sent to Yogiji on the 30th September:

Two messages arrived through the Internet from John (who came to have Your darshan last year). How wonderful are his words. He says you are doing all. He writes: "He is here, everywhere. The trip to Tiruvannamalai seems to be the drop which made the vase overflow. Father, I am not worthy ...

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Father, my mind understands nothing... Father, i will ask you for nothing more... But don't let me too long in the waiting room... »

He says: "I am in a hurry to find you back, at home, over there ... I would want to join the House of Yogiji, not as an enlightened tourist like on the first time, but as a disciple flooded with the bliss he gave me as is he!

...

On 4 November I wrote, in a long letter to Yogiji, that my ticket had been taken for Bharat but that I was still on the waiting list, and I told Him how sorry I was to see the state of Hinduism among the Hindus of Mauritius ... And also that the second plot of land was going to be bought ... And that at the *Durga Puja*, 5 to 600 people had sung the *Guru Nama* after the last speech I had given at Chitrakut, which was on the theme: "The Gurus, the Guru and Sri Yogi Ramsuratkumar. "

So that was a summary of the events of 1997...

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18th November

Arrival in Madras. Mukilan is here! With a little beard! Hug. We drive to his house. It's raining - the end of the monsoon is a bit late this year, it seems. From the plane we could see water everywhere! Reunion with Lakshmi and Bhawani...

How well Yogiji does things! This is further demonstrated by the fact that Mukilan phoned me 8 days before my departure to find out when I would be arriving, and then again the day before to tell me that we would be driving together to Tiruvannamalai.

19th November

I wake up before 5 a.m. but I'm 'knackered', but I have to get up with Mukilan gently scratching at the door. Kumar has already arrived. I wash with hot water and off we go. My left eye starts to titillate me and the open windows of the car don't help. A chai-stop, then another stop later for lunch, but they have to wake me up. Once again, I can't stand up because I'm so tired. But I'm back on my feet by the time we reach Tiruvannamalai, where we are twenty minutes before Yogiji arrives at 10am. I'm wearing the Bhavan T-shirt, with the well-known photo of Yogiji blessing because I didn't put *longi* this morning. Everyone welcomes me warmly, Venkatraman, Kannan. I also greet Chettiar's wife, who informs me that Chettiar is on his way. There's Mani of course, Anastasia from Switzerland and now I see John from Thailand arriving too. He arrived the day before!

Yogiji arrives. I am moved. The car goes into the *mandapam* and then we go for the *pradakshina* of the statue. Beforehand, I bow down, then go around the statue and then, like the others, go to the darshan hall where the *Gurunama* begins, still led by Rajeshvari from the outset. Mukilan and Kumar are called by Yogiji. After a while, Rajeshvari asks me to sing *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*, at the end of which someone takes up the *Gurunama*.

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And I'm soon called by Yogiji. Selvaraj leads me. Coming out of the darshan hall, Mukilan and Kumar are there. They tell me: "Krishna, we are leaving now" (for Chennai).

We enter the *mandapam*. Yogiji is sitting in the first recess to the left of the entrance. He is alone; Ma Devaki and the Sudama sisters are in their usual place under the wood and straw shelter. I bow down at Yogiji's feet, and He immediately beckons me to sit next to Him.

He holds out His hand. I put my right hand in His and close my eyes. Yogiji will stay concentrated like this for a long time without saying a word. For sure He sees everything. After these long minutes:

- *Krishna, are you well in Mauritius?*
- *Yes, Father.*

New silence. Then:

- *Did you come alone from Madras?*
- *No, Father, with Mukilan and Kumar.*
- *With Mukilan and Kumar...*

New silence. Yogiji is very concentrated. I'm very moved. I know He sees everything. After another long silence:

- *Krishna, what did you do since your arrival in Mauritius?*

- Father, it's very difficult to put into words. First, we finished building the house. Then one day a friend from France came...

I then narrate the discovery of Chitrakut and the fact that a Yogi Ramsuratkumar Ashram might be built there. But Yogiji doesn't show the slightest reaction, as if none of this mattered at all.

And now, all of a sudden, even though I've only ever answered a few words to Yogiji's questions, I'm off to explain the situation in Mauritius, particularly as regards the Hindus. The English comes all by itself, I speak loudly, and the tears come as I explain the situation.

- Father, it's a shame. They've forgotten everything. They want a TV, a fridge, of course they can have them, but they don't understand anything any more. They drink and eat meat. The children no longer speak Hindi and have forgotten their entire culture. There are Hindu organizations and each one claims to be representative of Hinduism, but they founded all this for them. There are ashrams in Mauritius, many swamis. But they do nothing. One day I went to the Ramakrishna Mission. There is a magnificent mandir and a large garden: no one in the garden, no one in the mandir. Only the swami was there. I talked to him for an hour. They don't do anything. There are pandits, priests; they come, do their ritual, take their money and leave. But, Father, you've made me meet some wonderful people too. And I have come with them in my heart to put ourselves at Your feet, Father. Father, you do everything. I try to see, to feel, what you show me. I've made a few speeches, but speeches are words. They go in here and

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come out there. There are festivals. There was the Durga Puja. My brother-in-law says that after the Durga puja comes the murga puja¹¹. A few days ago it was Ganga Asnan. I went to the seaside to have a look. The Hindus were there. The family arrives, and the mother with the children goes through a little ritual she doesn't understand. Meanwhile, the father looks after the meal with the meat and the bottle of alcohol. Afterwards, they eat, drink and possibly take a bath!

But there are the young people! After some speeches, some young people came to see me. They want to rediscover true values. The state of dharma is terrible, Father! But what am I? As you know, I haven't found God. You are God. Father, guide me. You have made me understand that God is and does everything. Everything is Hindu. I see, I feel that it is You who do everything, but I am only a little human being, blind too. I see and try to feel through what You do what I must do. But maybe I'm wrong! I need you to guide me, Father! I don't want to miss! I know you placed me in Mauritius. I've got something to do. Maybe I'll have to take up a profession again because my income from France is dwindling and will come to an end. I don't want to take up a profession again, Father, I want - oh human will - yes, my desire is to do Your work all day long. But if Your will is that I take up some profession again, Father, I will. But I'd just like to do Your work. Someone came to offer me a property deal. I didn't ask for anything. Perhaps it was You who sent him. I don't know what I will do. Father, some young people have come to see me. People in their 20s and 40s have their minds set, old people believe in their superstitions, but we have to be with the young, they're asking for it, Father.

¹¹ Chicken puja.

They want to rediscover true values. ... Father, forgive me for speaking so much".

These are just the words I remember.

Yogiji doesn't say anything. He takes my hand again, and my arm trembles a little from the emotion that has just gripped me as I spoke. Then, after a long silence:

- Krishna, what time is it?

As I don't have a watch, I turn to Selvaraj who announces that it's midday.

Another silence, at the end of which Yogiji lets go of my hand and says:

- Everything is my Father's Will. Krishna, there is no need to bother, all will be alright by the grace of my Father.

So, in one sentence, my Father removed all my doubts. Then, Yogiji having told me I can go, I go outside. Everyone is already outside and I'm going to join them after Father gave me an orange. I'm a bit worried that they might have heard me, as I was talking quite loudly. I meet John again and tell him:

- Yogiji made me say everything; He drew everything out of me.

- And then, what did He tell you?

- Krishna, what time is it?

John bursts out laughing.

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...

Yogiji's car goes out and then it's time for lunch.

...

I tell Mani that I haven't been able to give Yogiji what I brought from Mauritius, so I ask him to give it to Him himself. To which he replies: "I'll let Yogiji know."

After the *pradakshina* of the statue, I join the darshan hall and the chanting begins. Someone soon comes to tell me that Raji, who is at the entrance as she was last year, is calling me.

- Krishna, go and get your offerings. I'll write it down for Bhagavan.

So I go to my allocated cottage no. 5 and Mani calls me as I pass the 'telephone exchange' where he is staying. I go in, sit down and we talk.

...

I ask him a question about a black man who lives in France (and whose letter I received made me fear that he wanted to use the name Yogiji to promote himself).

- *Ah! Ram Edimo!*

- *That's it!*

As a matter of fact, John told me that last April, according to Anastasia, something extraordinary happened. A Frenchman from Tahiti, reading Yogiji's biography, opened the book, saw Yogiji's photo, and exclaimed: "But that's my guru!"

and immediately came to Tiruvannamalai. Then, again according to Anastasia, Yogiji did everything for him. He would have arranged a room in town at the Akash, had him taken on the tour of Arunachala, had him guided to its summit and there, the sadhu who normally throws stones at everyone would have welcomed him, the Tahitian woman and the child who accompanied him, with kindness, making them sit down, etc.... What's more, one day the Tahitian woman's son would have come alone to see Yogiji and told him: *"my mother has been suffering from stomach pains for a long time and no one has been able to cure her. She must be cured."* Yogiji, moved by the child, would have got the mother to come, blessed her and told her: *"All will be all right"*.

I was somewhat in wonder by this story, but deep down I feel, having always Edimo's letter taste, that something doesn't add up. It cannot be. It's beautiful, wonderful, certainly there's some truth in it, but something just doesn't add up. There's something wrong there, I can feel it. Edimo wrote to me and talked about this Tahitian woman. But he's not her husband. He's Cameroonian and lives in Lyon. What's more, he had written to me as if I was his inferior and wanted to create international things, etc... I had replied that all this already existed and that if he had come into contact with Yogiji, it was thanks to the work that had been done over the years and that it was not good for a son to kill his father, etc... I told him that everything had to be done, to respect Yogiji's wishes, within the Bhavan, which was previously the International Yogi Ramsuratkumar Association based in France. I didn't get any reply, but I knew we had to meet in Tiruvannamalai, as he was coming with Lee.

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Mani tells me straight away that Ram (I tell him his name is Jean-Corneille) Edimo believes he is 'vested', and so on...

Mani tells me that when they left for France last year, they had done a lot of shopping and were taken back to the airport by ashram people, and that they had excess baggage. Mani had to pay Rs 1,000! He tells me that Edimo seems to have no resources, because for nothing, a drink, he would ask the Tahitian woman, who was very hard on him. He tells me that Edimo wears a *rudraksha mala*, a large *tilaka*, etc. etc.

We've reached this point when Yogiji sends for me. I take the offerings and follow Selvaraj at a brisk pace. This time Yogiji is sitting outside near the front door of the *mandapam*. He makes me sit next to Him. I offer Him the lychees along with the 5 packets of Charminar we bought on the way from Madras this morning.

- *Father, these are lychees from Mauritius.*
- *From Mauritius!" he said, smiling.*

And He asks me to take them out of the black plastic packet Selvaraj made me put them in. As some of the lychees have remained at the bottom and are no longer attached to the little branches, Yogiji took them out one by one. He tells Selvaraj to take the lychees left on the branches to Ma Devaki. He gives me a lychee as prasad, one to Selvaraj and one to Ravi, who is standing on the other side of the *mandapam* door. Then He takes a packet of Charminar and asks for a light. Selvaraj goes to fetch some and brings the ashtray in which there are 3 cigarettes, barely opened and extinguished in the

water. Yogiji takes out a cigarette and lights it. Before that, I offer Him the drawings of Lakshmi and Parvati.

- *What are the names of your 2 daughters, Krishna?*

- *Lakshmi and Parvati, Father.*

- *How old are they?*

- *Lakshmi is 8 and Parvati 6. Here are two drawings of Lakshmi.*

- *What is your wife's name?*

- *Ishvari, Father.*

- *Ishvari. How is she?*

- *She's fine, Father.*

- *Father's grace!*

Yogiji looks at the drawings attentively. I read him what Lakshmi has written, telling him that she is 8 years old. Then He looks just as closely at the two drawings of Parvati. He looks at what is written, the little hearts drawn by Lakshmi etc... Then Yogiji puts them to His forehead and gives them back to me.

I then offer Him the pictures photos of the land of the potential future ashram. He takes them in His hand, but as He's also holding the black plastic bag containing four packets of Charminar, He asks me to take the photos one by one after He looks at them with a "hummm". In fact, He can only hold them with one hand. Then He raises them to His forehead and hands them back to me. I then show him the map of Mauritius, where we live and where the land is.

- *Are there any fishermen?*

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- Yes, Father, small boats with one or 2 fishermen, but there are also tourists who come to catch big fishes. It's an attraction.

He asks me to give Him the names of a number of villages and I explain to Him that there was a high concentration of people in the west, whereas the east was mainly made up of villages in the countryside, that Mauritius is volcanic land with heights in the middle not exceeding 820 m, and that the site of the possible future ashram is between two peaks. Then another map. He asks me what the capital is called. I then show Him the map I've enlarged on the computer, where it possible to see from Port-Louis to Le Pouce, and therefore Chittrakut. The capital, Port-Louis, takes up most of the map. I show Him the exact route from Port-Louis to the plot.

Then I show him the plan with the five plots. Pointing to plot 2, I say:

- You made us buy this land, Father. We are in the process of...

Yogiji cuts off immediately and asks:

*- What about this portion? (He points to plot no. 1)
- It's an inheritance, Father, and there are several heirs...*

So Yogiji shows that He knows.

- ... *We're in the process of acquiring this section and I've been told that this one (showing No. 3) will be up for sale shortly.*

Yogiji raises everything to His forehead and gives it back. He smokes only a few puffs of the cigarette he has lit, it seems.

- Have you found a room here?
- Yes, Father.
- You can go back to your room now.

(Yogiji must have offered me some fruit) I get up.

- *Take this.*

He gives me the black plastic bag in which there are still 4 packets of Charminar.

- *Can I give it to Selvaraj?*
- *Take it with you.*
- *And the cigarettes?*
- *Give them to someone.*

I go to my room, not the singing, as Yogiji has told me to go to my room. I won't leave it until Yogiji goes out at 6pm.

...

20th November

... Yogiji arrives at the ashram at 7 o'clock. Kannan:

- Krishna, new songs for you on Yogiji.

He translates for me and sings. How wonderful. How wonderful and great Kannan is! How small he makes himself!

I'll learn from him that Yogiji gave *kurta* and *longi* to Edimo. From what I can judge at this time, Edimo is a true bhakta of Yogiji but totally under the control of the Tahitian woman and he believes himself vested by Yogiji in an international way! During the day, Mani receives a letter from him, which he shows me. It takes my breath away: not a hello, but "*Please send a van on such and such a date to Madras airport as we are 6 people plus luggage*"...

Totally unbelievable! He's giving orders as if he were the king! Never seen anything like this! And, in His compassion, Yogiji agreed. What compassion! He'll be staying at the Akash and not the ashram, according to what Mani tells me.

At 10am, I sing *Aum Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram* and *Arunachala Shiva*. Then it's a reunion with John and a *chai* together at the cottage.

In the evening I go to see the Spanish swami, Swami Satyananda, but he is about to start his meditation. We talk a bit about Mauritius, and the tape he knows I sent to Suresh (*Yogiji chanting mantras and shlokas*).

...

That day, while waiting in line for the darshan, Chettiar gives me another photo.

What's new at the ashram? All the major works have stopped. There's not much new. Inside the main *mandapam*, concrete has been poured around the statue of Yogiji without touching it and there is a rope. Outside, plants have been put all along the length of the *mandapam*. All the cottages have been completed, the tenth being Justice Arunachalam's cottage. There is no more mud because everything has been concreted over and concrete has been planted in front of each cottage. There is a wall between the last cottage and the toilets. On this wall, on either side of *Om*, the beggar's bowl on one side and the fan on the other. Outside the ashram, up, a swarm of bees has taken up residence, almost above the entrance. The power station is also completed, making the ashram electrically self-sufficient.

Telephones have been installed in all the cottages and you can call outside from each cottage, each with its own number. The phone rings in each cottage at 10am and 4pm to say that it's time to go to the entrance for Yogiji's arrival. All the telephone wires run underground or in the walls.

As a result, the number of workers has shrunk considerably. Senthil is no longer there, nor the "artist", nor some others. There is still Venkatraman, Gopal, Kannan of

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course, the two Saravanands including the gardener, a newcomer, Selvaraj, Ravi. Among the girls, the two who came to be filmed last year are still here, as is Shivakala.

What's also new is that Sashi, Shaktivel's younger brother, is now at the ashram during the day, at the entrance and doesn't depend on Mani, but directly on Yogiji, and in the evening he goes back to sleep at Sannadhi street.



1997

21st November

...

It rained from morning to midday. Just when Yogiji left Yogiji, the rain stopped.

...

I'm invited to Chettiar's this evening and, of course, it's delicious: idlis and dosas. ...

Chettiar shows me some new photos.

I forgot to mention that yesterday or the day before I met Rajagopal and his wife on the way to town. They recognized me straight away and asked me to come over. Sri Rajagopal seems to have aged suddenly.

Kannan tells me that the statue of Yogiji was his 21st ... and last.

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22nd November

At the 10 a.m. session, the singing goes on when, at around 11.30 a.m., Selvaraj comes in:

- *Swamiji is asking for you...*

Surprised, I ask him if he's sure it's really me. No doubt. So I follow him. Yogiji is sitting outside the *mandapam*, a row of chairs to his left, oriented towards the aisle.

- *Krishna, ukhar..*

I sit next to Him, on His left. He holds out His hand and I put my hand in His. After a while He asks me:

- *Are you well?*

- *Yes, Father, but the mind goes here and there...*

He laughs. Then asks:

- *Is the food good?*

- *Very good, Father.*

He keeps my hand in His and soon the young American seen yesterday arrives. Yogiji beckons him to sit on my left.

- *Do you know him?*

- *I saw him yesterday, Father.*
- *This beggar would like the two of you to talk together.*

I then turn to the young American, whose braided hair is in a crown around his head. I ask him if he knows Lee Lozowick.

- *Who is he?*
- *A disciple of Yogiji.*
- *Who is Yogiji?*

I make a sign with both hands towards Yogiji.

- *Yogi Ramsuratkumar!*

Yogiji laughs. The American is 21 and has come to India alone. I relay everything to Yogiji who, through me, asks questions.

- *He is 21 years old; he arrived in Delhi, and then went to Kashmir, Srinagar, Dharamsala and Pondicherry. Tomorrow he goes to Satya Sai Baba's Jayanti in ...*
- *Puttaparthi, on the 23rd.*
- *What does he do for a living?*
- *What do you do?*
- *I don't do anything. I was a fisherman... Nothing.*
- *He does nothing, Father.*

Yogiji laughs. The young American speaks directly, but Selvaraj tells him he has to go through me. Then Yogiji says:

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- We have to do some work. Ensure food. Then, when we have a bit of money, we can travel. You're a fisherman and fishing suits you very well. You should continue fishing.

On the paper given to Yogiji about the visitors, it's written:
Scott.

- Is there any meaning in his name?*
- Is there any meaning in your name?*
- ? ? ?*
- Indian names have meaning...*
- He doesn't know.*
- Perhaps it comes from 'scottish'*
- Perhaps it comes from 'scottish', Father. Perhaps his ancestors came from Scotland...*

At one point, Yogiji takes my hand. He strokes my forearm, arm and shoulder and, several times, his finger touches each of the nails on my hand.

Then He asks Selvaraj to move the fruit tray forward and gives us each a banana. As I stand up, Yogiji says:

- How's your mind?*
- It'll be fine, by Your grace.*
- Here is the place for tapas. Do tapas.*

I retreat backwards, the young American follows me. Then it's time for Yogiji to leave and, through the alley, we head towards the entrance to the ashram for Yogiji's darshan. Magnificent, my mind is CALM!...

The two of us have lunch together. ... After lunch, we go into the cottage to have a little chat.

...

In the middle of the afternoon session, I am called by Mani who has just received a phone call from Mukilan's wife. Ishvari has phoned and wants me to call her back 'immediately'. Mani tells me the story of Ra Ganapati and Shaktivel, saying that Ra Ganapati is an opportunist, that he has known him for 20 years, that he admires his writings but that the man is no less an opportunist. He tells me that Shaktivel had started dressing like him, that he'd had problems, and so on... Mukilan waited until we were no longer in the presence of his wife to tell me that Shaktivel had had words, had told Yogiji in writing what was wrong, and that from that day on Yogiji no longer spoke to him. When I arrived in Madras I had already asked Mukilan about him and he had waited until we were no longer in the presence of his wife to tell me that Shaktivel had had words, had told Yogiji in writing what was wrong and that since that day Yogiji had not spoken to him.

While Mani is in the middle of the Shaktivel-Ra Ganapati story, Shaktivel turns up! Hug in the little telephone office...

...

We return to the ashram and both eat in the darshan hall before returning to the cottage. He must sleep near the statue, but we have time to chat beforehand.

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I tell him about Mauritius and show him the photos, give him some news, then ask him to tell me his story with Ra Ganapati.

- *Why?*
- *Because I want to hear it from you.*
- *Who told about it?*

Shaktivel tells me that Mukilan runs errands for Mani, that he says bad things about him but that he helps him from behind! Anyway, I can see there's a bit of a row between Mukilan and Shaktivel. I cut. Shaktivel tells me his story and it becomes much clearer and more logical!

Actually, Ra Ganapati was asking more and more from him. At first, Shaktivel asked Yogiji if he could serve Ra Ganapati, but Yogiji replied that his Father didn't say anything about it. Ra Ganapati had come to ask himself and Yogiji had agreed. He would have told Shaktivel: *"Whatever you can do, do it."* It involved taking him to the temple and the beach every day, then taking care of his food.

As time went by, Ra Ganapati asked more and more of Shaktivel and Shaktivel didn't have the time to respond to all this; he had to spend four hours a day just to get to his courses. It ended up creating clashes. Ra Ganapati then said, *"Yogiji has asked you to serve me, so you must serve me."* In the end, Shaktivel would have finally replied, *"Yes, Bhagavan has asked me and that is why I am doing it. But I cannot do more than it is possible for me to do."*

Add to this the story of a man courting a girl in the house and having to marry her when he was already married... which further complicates matters. Indeed, Shaktivel, because of the woman's presence, could no longer go to the kitchen and had to buy food outside to take to Ra Ganapati. In any case, relations eventually soured and Ra Ganapati said: *"If you want to complain to Bhagavan, say everything!"* Shaktivel ended up doing just that, and the other became tense. Yogiji called Shaktivel and told him:

- *You must serve Ra Ganapati. To serve him is to serve this beggar.*

- *Yes, Bhagavan.*

Shaktivel returned to Ra Ganapati but the latter refused. Shaktivel then begged to be reinstated.

- *How far will you go to serve me?*

- *Whatever I can do, I'll do.*

...

23rd November

...

Darshan at 7 o'clock and, following Shaktivel and Swaminathan, I do the *pradakshina* of the ashram, three times. Shaktivel then introduces me to Swaminathan, who says: "I know him." I didn't know he knew me!

...

Darshan from 10 a.m. There are more people.

I forgot to mention that a problem occurred yesterday. Yogiji stopped outside and made reproaches to Mani, thinking that Mani had forgotten to answer a letter (Mani will explain this to me).

...

Even as I'm drifting off to sleep, the phone rings to announce Yogiji's arrival in ten minutes or so. ...

So I make my way to the exit, arrive at the *Yaga Shala* by the alley and see Mukilan who says, "Anand's here! I carry on, very happy! Anand comes forward from the entrance post, doing the *anjali*, and we both have smiles on our lips and in our hearts as we walk towards each other. Needless to say, we give

each other a big hug. What a joy! He's looking good and smiling as ever. There was a bit to fear with Ra Ganapati's regime, but I have to admit that he's very well. I see Ra Ganapati sitting in the entrance post, skinnier than ever, with a scarf over his head. After a while, Anand beckons me in. I bow down myself Ra Ganapati, who blesses me with his eyes closed. I get up, his eyes are still closed. Rajeshvari arrives and does the same. I go out and we both Anand and I talk. He tells me that Suresh will be arriving in a couple of days and he too tells me about the tape I sent to Suresh. I explain.

In the meantime, a group of white people arrives, including, I suppose, this Polish girl who gives satsangs. The group waits under the courtyard.

Then Yogiji arrives. Everyone lines up. The car is heading for the darshan hall (refectory)! Soon Ra Ganapati is called and is driven by Mukilan, who holds his hand, along with Anand.

I go into the entrance post and, a little later, it's the turn of the white group to be called. Venkatraman tells me to go too, but I answer that I must not. Kannan says not to go. *"This is a special darshan for Ra Ganapati and these people,"* I say, *"I must not go."*

Some time later, we are signaled, along with the people waiting in the courtyard, that we can go to the darshan hall. As we get there, I can hear the Sudama sisters singing.

I enter and find myself in the fourth row. Opposite Yogiji, seated on the platform, is a young woman dressed in

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white. Opposite the steps, at the bottom of the platform: Ra Ganapati with Mukilan and Anand to his right. To his left are the white men in a line, to his right the white women.

Sudama's sisters are singing and I'm joining my voice. These are songs in Sanskrit. "*An other song*" says Yogiji 2 or 3 times after each song.

At one point, Yogiji takes the young woman's hand, something I've never seen Him do with a woman. He smiles, even laughs sometimes; once He seems to look at her very toughly as He sometimes does, that look that plunges deep into you, He takes her right hand, does as He did with me with her nails, He looks at the nails, then caresses the forearm two or three times as well as the arm. The bhajans go on.

At one point, Yogiji calls Selvaraj and tells him something. Soon Selvaraj returns with glasses and water or chai, I don't know, is offered to all the white people. Some prasad (the young woman's offering, I think) will be offered to everyone... except to me, perhaps because I was closing my eyes at that very moment.

Then Yogiji calls Ra Ganapati and speaks to him. It seems that he is asking him to address the devotees because soon I can see, hidden by the woman, Ra Ganapati addressing them, sitting on the floor at Yogiji's left. He speaks with a so weak voice! With the fans on, it's absolutely impossible for me to hear anything. After his speech, I see and hear Yogiji talking about God: "*One without a second...*" He then tells Ra Ganapati that he can return to his seat but that, if he prefers, he can remain seated next to Him. Ra Ganapati of course remains

seated next to Him. It is Anand who is now called to sing. He stands at the usual place and sings "*Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare Hare Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Hare Hare*", the *mahamantra*, which is taken up by everyone. This goes on for quite a long time.

...

Next, Rajeshvari is asked to sing *Arunachala Shiva*. Anand sits down, Rajeshvari stands up and sings.

And what a surprise! Some time later Yogiji turns to me ... as well as Ma Devaki! Yes, it's really me! I ask, pointing my finger at my chest. And yes... So I get up quickly and go and kneel at Yogiji's feet, in front of Ra Ganapati.

- *Krishna, this beggar would like you both to talk,*" he says, pointing to the young woman. *You can sit wherever you like.*

- *Yes, Father.*

The young woman seems quite surprised when I ask her to come down from the platform and say: "*We can sit over there...*" » It seems to me that her status is taking a big hit! Yes, for a while she was the object of everyone's gaze, sitting on the same level as Yogiji, but all of a sudden an unknown 'greenhorn' (white boy) comes along and says: "O.K., now get off your pedestal..."

We sit down on the mat behind Ma Devaki, to Yogiji's right (left for the others). I turn my back to Yogiji,

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unintentionally of course, but this way she can see Him. I start, since Yogiji asked me to.

- I've heard that you come from Poland?

- I am of Polish origin, yes.

- So perhaps you speak French?

- No, I don't.

- Please forgive my poor English.

- You speak very well.

- I heard about you yesterday, that you are giving satsangs, from a wonderful young American. So I'd like to hear more about you....

- I was awakened 6 months ago in the very presence of Papaji (Punjaji). Since then, we're giving satsangs here and we will go to America, etc

- You are a disciple of Punjaji ...

- Yes. I was there in 1994-1995.

- I met Punjaji in Lucknow, it must have been in 1994.

Maybe ...

- When I saw you at the entrance," she says, "I thought I'd seen you before...

...

As at a certain point I feel there's nothing more to say, I give her the anjali, which she hands back to me. My Devaki then seems to signal to Yogiji that the interview is over.

- Is your name Krishna?

- Yes.

- He told me we could leave whenever we wanted. We are going to leave.

...

She gets up and goes to salute Yogiji and all the white people leave. I take advantage of the movement to get back to my seat as I think I don't have to stay there any longer. Ra Ganapati also leaves, accompanied by Anand and Mukilan. And soon the darshan is over. Rajeshvari continues to sing *Arunachala Shiva...*

...

At a quarter to 6pm, it's the *ârti* and Yogiji's departure...

...

It was 'funny' to see this young Western woman who claims to be 'awakened' put on the same 'plane' as Yogiji, while Ra Ganapati, skeletal and performing 'tapas' for moons, was seated on the floor! I've always found the so-called 'realization' of these Westerners to be inenarrable... they often confuse the sudden 'intellectual understanding' that we must of course go through, but which is only one stage, with what they call 'awakening'...

Humility for Ra Ganapati.

Yogiji laughed.

Why ask Krishna to speak to the 'realized'? To give her a little humility? This year Lee Lozowick has some competition! Here are 2 awakened white people giving *satsangs*!

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24th November

Darshan at 7am. I do the ashram pradakshina three times and Yogiji comes out of the hut as I finish the third time.

It's 10 to 10. I'm still at the cottage. Edimo must have arrived. I sense something. I go out and walk to the entrance. From the alley I can see black men and women at the library exit. Mani, who is walking parallel to me but in the ashram courtyard, calls out to me. I reach the end of the path and go towards him:

- Krishna, try to find out from the women if they are the ones who financed Edimo's trip...

I make my way to the entrance. They introduce me to Edimo. Maybe it's Venkatraman making the introductions, to tell the truth I can't remember. He is dressed in Indian style, *kurta, longi*, I suppose the ones Yogiji would have given him, with a *rudraksha* necklace, etc.... a green shawl that he wears like Yogiji wears his shawl... He wears glasses... I do the *anjali* without any demonstration. I simply tell him that we'll have time to talk, even if I leave on 2 or 3 December. That's all, and then I walk away. This behavior seems to be dictated to me.

Darshan, and then, as always, we do the *pradakshina* of the statue. As Edimo steps forward, he makes grand gestures with his arms, saluting the statue. Ravi and others laugh surreptitiously. Then everyone goes into the hall to sing as usual. I place myself at the back. Edimo is further forward. First it's the *Gurunama*, then *Arunachala Shiva*, then Rajeshvari beckons me and I intone *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*. Everyone follows, but soon Selvaraj comes up to me, telling me that Yogiji is asking for me. So I signal to continue without me...

Yogiji is sitting outside, near the entrance to the *mandapam*, as He does most of the time. There is 1 chair to His right and 6 chairs to His left going towards the alley. Yogiji beckons me to sit on His right.

- *Krishna, do you know those Negro people?*

- *No, Father, but a Frenchman called Robert Cousty, very nice, came to the ashram in April and was given my address. He wrote to me, saying that he wanted to start a Ramnam chanting group in Paris and that another, called Edimo, wanted to start one in Lyon, which is the second largest city in France, in the south-east. I wrote to Edimo, he wrote back, I wrote back and told him we'd meet at the ashram...*

That's when I see them come forward. Yogiji makes them sit on the 6 chairs to His left. They bow down in turn, Edimo first. Yogiji asks me again if I know any of them. Edimo then starts to speak, but Bhagavan turns to me and makes everything go through me, so I translate. Edimo finally understands that he has to go through me. Yogiji asks me to talk to them. So I ask everyone their name, where they live and

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what they do for a living. I tell Yogiji that they're all from Cameroon but that they all live in France since some time.

- They are all from Paris except Edimo who lives in Lyon, Father.

I introduce each of them to my Father, repeating their name and what they do for a living, as well as their age. Edimo says that everyone would like to talk about their problems. So Yogiji asks me to ask them to speak one by one and has a chair placed in front of mine. Julienne starts. She has problems with her feet and her kidneys get blocked from time to time.

- Has she consulted a doctor?

- Have you consulted a doctor?

- Yes, he gave me some medicine

(Let's continue without the repetition that occurs each time)

- Is there any improvement?

- No, Father.

- She should see the same doctor again and continue her treatment. By my Father's grace, everything will be all right.

I translate. But Julienne has a notebook with a whole list of problems. Yogiji blesses her, but she would want to continue. I tell her we'll see another day. Then it's her son. His name is 'Progrès' (Progress). I translate. His problem is this: he sometimes has bodily reactions that he can't control. His body starts have reactions.

- Did he see a doctor?

- *Yes, Father. At first he took some medicine but the doctor told him it was a metaphysical problem, let's say psychological, etc....*

Father also blesses him.

Then it's another young woman who had been taking medication for 22 years for a stomach ache, with no results.

- *She should continue to see the same doctor and continue the treatment. She should tell the doctor that there has been no improvement and, if he changes the medication, she should take it. All will be well, by my Father's grace.*

Then her son, who doesn't know why, but when he starts a job, in a restaurant for example, there comes a time when he can't continue, and so on...

Then another woman, then it's Edimo's turn. He mentions for a moment that he has already been initiated, as well as one of the women who is here, in Bangalore or elsewhere, it seems. Yogiji asks the name of the guru. Then Edimo starts to say that he would like to create an association...

- *Do they know "Rama Nama"?*

- *No, Father.*

Edimo: *We would like to set up an association to do the work ...*

He adds that they all wish to become Yogiji's disciples but, unintentionally, this is omitted in my translation. I

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translate. Father asks me about the organization, and I tell him that I'm still following the devotees from France.

- *So talk to them. You can start straight away.*

I'll talk to them a bit.

- *Edimo: Now that you're no longer in France, Krishna, and you're in Mauritius, I'd like to set up an association under the 1901 law...*

- *Father, he says he would like to create a legal association...*

- *Is that possible, Krishna?*

- *Yes, Father, it's possible. They may encounter problems because France is fighting against sects, but it is possible.*

- *Edimo: We would like to create an association that replicates exactly what is done here, with nothing more and nothing less.*

I'll translate. Yogiji says:

- *I'm going to ask my Father to see this and help you in your endeavor (His words, more or less).*

- *Edimo: There are also letters. There are other brothers and sisters who couldn't come and who have written.*

Edimo hands the letters to Yogiji.

- *Yogiji: Father will eventually give the opportunity to come when he ???*

- Edimo: *Some in French, others in English*
- *Krishna will translate the letters (that are) in French.*

He calls Selvaraj, gives him the letters and tells him to bring them to Ma Devaki.

- Edimo: *Each one has other problems to talk about...*
- *They're here for 20 days. We have time. Krishna, talk to each of them and see what the problems of each of them are.*
- *Yes, Father.*

Edimo also asked permission to walk around the hill, to go to the top of the hill and visit the temple. I translate:

- *Father, they are asking for your permission to do the giripradakshina, to go to the summit and visit the temple of Arunachalesh...*
- *Arunachaleshvar temple.*

Yogiji gives his permission and arranges for someone from the Akash hotel to be called.

- *You have to lead them around the hill, to the summit and to the temple.*

This is followed by a short exchange in Tamil, and the man from the Akash leaves.

- *You can go now.*

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He gives everyone a fruit. They ask if they can touch Yogiji's feet and I translate their request. Father allows them to. So they kneel down in turn and touch Yogiji's feet.

After they left, Yogiji makes me stay with Him.

- *Krishna, are you well?*

- *Very well, Father.*

Father speaks. I can understand this:

- *If you have any problems, apply (directly) to my Father (He raises His eyes to heaven), He will help you. ... He soon adds: There may be some problems with the food...*

Other people are called. First two men. After the *prasad*, others. I'm still with Yogiji, alone. As I write these notes, I realize that Yogiji must have 'done it on purpose' so that Edimo could see that.

Then Yogiji tells me I can go, blesses me and asks Selvaraj to take me to the refectory. But everyone has already gone to the entrance for Yogiji's exit. Only now do I realize that Yogiji must have done it effectively on purpose so that Edimo as well as the other Africans would see me alone with Him, so that these other Africans would know who to talk to and not fall into a trap.

So I wait inside the refectory. Raji is there and Mani arrives. I sit down with him and he talks about Edimo, whose game he too had seen straight away. Then everyone arrives for the meal and I let them settle in. John arrives first and doesn't

see me. Edimo and the Africans arrive last. I don't eat with them. They see me sitting with Mani. It's all Yogiji's game! Divine game! Even I'm only realizing it now as I write these notes! An instrument in His hands, for His game.

Then I go to talk to John for a bit. The Africans see that and realize that I know everyone. I also go to Edimo to tell him that we'll talk together after lunch as they have to go to the hill at around 5pm. When they've all finished, they come out. One of the two men who had been received by Yogiji approaches me. He wants to do business, import-export, and is interested, knowing that I live in Mauritius. He must have made some enquiries. I tell him we can talk about it, but that I have to eat first. All he has to do is to wait for me outside. I sit down and am given something to eat. The person from the Akash soon comes to sit next to me and soon Saravanand comes to my right. He tells me that the usual cook isn't there, that the one who has done the cooking is there (he shows me) and that his name is also Krishna (I salute him), so there is some change today. So I understand why Yogiji told me about the food. Mani soon tells me that he told the person who wanted to trade to buzz off, adding that this is not the place. He's absolutely right. After lunch, I go out and take the black group to the *Yagashala*. Raja is on the side. He tells me he's leaving and won't be back until around two. I ask him if we can sit inside the *Yagashala* and we climb the steps. Once inside, I notice that the two boys aren't there.

- *Where are the two sons?*
- *They're right next," says Edimo, "but they will come.*

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I go down the other side and, not seeing them, I ask Kannan, explaining him that Yogiji has asked me to talk to the Africans.

- *If you see them, tell them to come.*
- *They're there outside smoking a cigarette.*

Kannan moves to the barrier near the *Yagashala* and calls out to them, summoning them to come.

Here we all are. They're lined up facing the ashram and I'm opposite them. The women are on my left, then come the two boys and, on the right, Edimo. I know there's going to be some reaction from him, but I know that it is necessary to burst the abscess. I attack. Not everything is in these notes, taken afterwards of course, and perhaps these notes are not in the right order.

- *Bhagavan has asked me, on the one hand, to talk to you about the organization in France and, on the other, to receive each of you so that you can explain your problems. This will be translated and passed on to Bhagavan. OK.*

You came into contact with Yogi Ramsuratkumar through a book, his biography. This biography was written by Michel Coquet who, before publishing it, submitted it to me. I submitted it to Yogiji who told me to take it up with Sadhu Rangarajan. I wrote the conclusion of this book, about the Ramnam. My address appeared at the end of the book but, Yogiji having moved me to Mauritius, it was too late when we phoned the publisher to change my address, as the book had just been printed. Some people, who were really looking,

phoned either the publisher or Michel Coquet and obtained my address. Others didn't...

As far as the organization is concerned, there is an association. This association was called the International Yogi Ramsuratkumar Association and was created in 1993. It publishes a small newsletter, RAMA NAMA, and Yogiji asked me if you knew it. With my move to Mauritius, it's now called Yogi Ramsuratkumar Bhavan, with Bhagavan's blessings, but nothing has changed and I'm in constant contact with the French devotees. There is a Yogi Ramsuratkumar Association for Gabon, one for Congo and there is a devotee in Cameroon, wonderful and some in Ivory Coast, Benin, etc... I'm in contact with everybody, Anandashram, Sister Nivedita Academy...

And so on. Here two women get under blankets as if to sleep, but I carry on.

- Why do you want to set up a legal association?

The clash with Edimo is about to begin, this is Yogiji's game. He explains that he is very law-abiding and wants to do things legally.

- Do we need the law to sing the name of God?

The women got out of their blankets and stand up straight. Edimo then explains to me that France is fighting against sects, and that the law gives people the freedom to assemble.

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- You'll be considered even more of a sect if you set up an association, and there's no need to set up an association to have the freedom to assemble, which is a constitutional right.

Edimo goes on to give various reasons, but each time these reasons are put to rest.

- There is freedom; even in prison you can sing the name of God.

- A woman: How did you do in your village?

- It's very simple: one day we meet at someone's home, another day at someone else's...

- Oh yes, that's right.

- Swami Ram Tirth was against associations. When you create an association, you need several people. And soon after, the struggle to be the leader begins.

Setting up an association is not compulsory. You create an association with a president, a secretary, etc... Who will be the chairman? You create an association for yourself. No one is the representative of Yogi Ramsuratkumar. We are His servants.

Edimo is a little flat.

- Anyway," he says, "Bhagavan has given me His blessing to set up the association!

- That's not what He said! He said: "I'm going to ask my Father to see and help you with this achievement...» He said neither 'yes' nor 'no'. If you say to Yogiji: "I would like to

kill myself", maybe Yogiji will tell you: "My Father blesses you"

Thus, Edimo wanted people to believe falsehoods. Yogiji never told him what he says. Luckily I correct him, and twice, in front of the others and in French, because as they don't speak English, Edimo can make them swallow anything!

- No one proclaims oneself to be the representative Yogi Ramsuratkumar.

Having run out of arguments, Edimo finally says:

- I refuse to fit into a ready-made mould.

In fact, he has to admit that he wants to "create his own thing".

- For the devotees of Yogi Ramsuratkumar, there is no 'I' want or 'I' don't want. We must forget ourselves.

Edimo is flat. And those are just the notes.

- And there's no question of fitting into a mould. At Yogi Ramsuratkumar Bhavan, there are no membership fees. People pay something if they want to subscribe to Rama Nama. They are not obliged to do anything. On the contrary, they can get anything they want, information, films, cassettes, everything. Here, go on, take it. It's quite the opposite, total freedom and the possibility of having everything that exists on Yogiji, Ramnam, etc...

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It's not easy in France. I know that country very well. Not only are they anti-sects, they're racist!

- Ah yes!!!

- Despite your religion, do you have any links with your ancestral culture?

- Yes, Yes!!

- It's wonderful. They need to be developed. Do you know that there is an Indo-African Institute, created last year?

- Where?

- I don't know.

- I don't remember exactly, but I receive their papers. So you can benefit from that. There's no question of fitting into a mould. The Association doesn't ask for anything, it doesn't force you to do anything, it doesn't say: "You have to do this, you have to do that". No! It simply has tools to help you. We've made cassettes, so you can hear how Ramnam is sung, listen to Yogiji and get news. Do you need anything? Just write! Everyone is free!

Edimo is really flat. At one point he says:

- For me, everything is seen by my Father" or something like that.

- That's fine, you can say it, but you have to speak to each one at his own level, so that he understands.

Everybody agrees. Julienne's son intervenes. He says he doesn't see the need to create a legal framework; that he has come to look and see, that he doesn't know what he is going to do, that it all depends on what he will feel.

- I like the way you talk! I say. You say things directly.

Edimo is at zero.

- *Now Bhagavan has asked me to see you one by one to find out your problems. When do you want to start?*

- *Why not right away?"* says Edimo.

- *Agreed.*

Julienne comes first. I'll take her to the cottage. She's really surprised...

- *Whose place is this?*

- *It's my home, for the time being...*

She takes out her notebook and I write down all her requests. Then I say to her, so much I'm amazed:

- *It's an extraordinary sacrifice that you have made. Tell me, how did you finance your trip?*

- *I took out a loan.*

- *A loan?*

- *Yes, and to pay for my son's place, and we're in a hotel.*

I am dumbfounded and have tears in my eyes. This woman is extraordinary. She's a ward girl in a clinic, earns 5,000 francs a month gross, has 6 children without a job to support, no longer receives child benefit, sends medicines for her brother in Africa, and she doesn't complain. How does she do it? She has a magnificent faith. "*God loves me*", she says. "*I see my sons driving around in Mercedes... The neighbors can't believe it because I can still standing, I've still a job...*" She's

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understood everything, she's great. I tell her she is blessed. She can't believe how much I understand and asks me if she can call me 'brother'. Yes. She cries at times. Her whole life flashes by. She's wonderful and I tell her so.

Then she talks about Edimo. I tell her:

- Don't worry, sister, I can see into his heart. He wants to use Yogiji's name for himself.

- That's exactly it! But how do you know?

She tells me that she has her return ticket for the 6th, that she has to go back to work but that Edimo, having heard about the festival (*Dīpam*) wants to stay until the 15th. And leave her alone... How will she manage alone in India, when she doesn't speak a word of English? Ravi enters and goes into the bedroom adjoining the kitchen to get some sleep.

- He has no right to do that and he won't do it. He brought you here, he must look after you and go back. I'm going to tell him. Yogiji won't allow it.

God, there are so many problems! I have to give Yogiji an account of everything, without letting my thoughts intervene. I mustn't leave anything out, or think 'personally' that something shouldn't be said or something else should be supported.

Here are my notes, which I've included so that you can get a better feel for the person and the situation:

1997

Julienne B...

(Very long and detailed report)

...

Throughout the conversation, she refers to Yogiji as "*Papa Yogi*". It's 3pm now! We say goodbye. I take her back to the beginning of the alley.

- *Tell your son to come*
- *Come and get him or he won't come.*

She asked me to persuade him to go round the hill because, she says, he doesn't want to come and he will not come. So she goes there, even runs. Her son arrives and we go to the cottage.

...

*(Discussion with the son, very intelligent
who is really looking for himself)*

Soon the phone rings. We have to get to the entrance, it's 3.50pm. But Progrès continues to speak... In the evening, he'll tell me he wants to see me again, to keep talking...

Darshan, then I go and sing with everyone. As I walk in, the African women turn to me and smile as I salute them. I'm in the second row. Edimo comes to sit in the same row some time later. Selvaraj arrives. Yogiji calls me...

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He makes me sit down and has me translate the letters of those people who could not come, sons and daughters of those present. One is in English (or two) the others in French. Then, when the reading is finished, Yogiji says:

- *Is there a message that can be given to them?*
- *Father, they are asking for Your help!*
- *My Father will help them all, this can be said...*
- *Father, I have begun, as You asked, to receive them one by one and I am taking notes. I will translate as best I can.*

Yogiji smiles. While I'm with him, Mani is called, probably at his request. Mani tells Yogiji that Lee Lozowick wants permission to film on video. Mani leaves. At the end, Yogiji gives me an orange and:

- *I wish you well. My Father blesses you, Krishna!*

Smiling, He pats me on the back.

I go back but Raji tells me that Mani is calling me because he wants Lee Lozowick's fax number. So I go out but Mani is called by Yogiji. When he comes back, I'm with the fax number I'd got in the cottage. I give it to him.

He tells me about Edimo and I tell him about the woman's sacrifice and the fact that Edimo wants to stay for the *Dîpam* and doesn't mind leaving her alone. Mani tells me that Yogiji has used me as an instrument and that, like him, Mani, I'm going to receive stones from Edimo. Then I join the darshan for the last quarter of an hour, the orange that Yogiji gave me in my hand and half eaten.

Now Edimo is totally flat. He thinks Yogiji has called me all this time.

...

It wasn't Edimo who did the *arti*. On the way out, I tell the African women that Yogiji has said that His Father will help all the authors of the letters. When we get to the entrance, I say: "In Hermine's letter there was a page 2, a page 3, but no page 1". Julienne tells me that she must not have noticed because she had just had a baby.

- *Was there a photo in Jacques' letter?* she asks me.
- *No. It was noted that there was one, but there wasn't.*

Julienne chides Edimo.

- *Why did you take it out? etc...*
- *I didn't take it out. Mum, you must believe me.*

Edimo is at zero!

Yogiji's exit.

To Julienne about her son Progrès, I say:

- *He's very intelligent!*
- *Yes, he must have been gifted, but he has been bewitched.*

...

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The women ask me if I'm going to see everyone.

- *Yes, it's better to listen carefully to everyone. I have to convey as best I can.*

They all turn to me now. Edimo no longer exists.

- *What are you doing? Are you going round the hill? I ask.*

- Edimo: *Yes. Are you coming too?*

- *No, I have to meet someone.*

Thinking of Julienne, whose legs are aching (it's the ache she mentioned to Yogiji), I add:

- *Watch her legs, she's suffering..."*

- *That's karma!"* Edimo replies.

I'm stunned at such stupidity.

- *She's suffered enough in her life,"* I say.

A few moments later, I ask the person from the Akash who is to take them to take care of this lady because of her legs. I add that she has a beautiful heart.

They leave. John and I go to the second entrance of the Ramanashram to get the address of the "realized Polish woman". I am given a card and I ask to add the email address if there is one.

http://www.WEBPAGE-etc.com
|satsang|
Satsang with Neelam
Satsang information and messages for Neelan
(510) 869-2533
Fax (415) 323-5474
P.O. Box 3997, Berkeley, CA 94703, USA.

John starts chatting with the girl who gave me the card. I end up going out and waiting for him by the roadside. When he comes out, we both go for a *chai* and then everyone goes home. Back at the ashram, Mani talks with me. What he says is very beautiful, very right, humble and direct.

I'm writing these notes because tomorrow there will be a lot more to write and I'm sure I've forgotten to write things down. I note in particular, about Edimo: if he was initiated by a guru, why doesn't he follow his guru???? No, he needs a real saint to make himself known!

O Father, Your *Lila* is marvelous! How true, we are but instruments in Your hands!

Thank you, Father, once again I smell Your flowery fragrance. Often, close to You! And tonight as I write these notes! Father, crush the ego!

25th November

7 o'clock in the morning. After Yogiji's darshan on entering the ashram, even though it's raining a bit, I do the *pradakshina* of the ashram three times. The Cameroonians aren't there. They must be very tired from walking around the hill.

Breakfast, then back to the cottage, where I translate and structure the interview with Julienne so that it can be given to Yogiji. I also attach the photos she entrusted to me.

10 h. As we go into the mandapam for the *pradakshina* of the statue, it is possible to hear Yogiji repeating aloud:

*RAMA LAKSHMANA JANAKI
JAI BOLO HANUMAN KI*

When John will arrive later, Yogiji was still repeating it.

...

Yogiji leaves and we have lunch. I tell the Cameroonians that at 1pm I will be receiving Jeanne and then her son, and I go to the cottage to prepare a *chai*. When Jeanne arrives, I offer her a cup and invite her to sit down. We begin. I'm white, don't forget that. But she relaxes little by little and

eventually she'll be fine and she'll be able to confide. I write everything down. She trusts me. Short phrases come out of my mouth, seemingly to instill this confidence in her.

Then Ravi and Saravanand arrive and I tell Jeanne to send her son to me at 3.05pm. In the room adjoining the kitchen, Ravi is asleep, along with Saravanand and Raja. It's the first time Raja has come...

Here are my notes on Jeanne, which are relatively long.

ETJE Jeanne. 46

(Very very long and very detailed report)¹²

These notes are copied to show the work that had been entrusted to Krishna concerning the Cameroonians...

Steeve arrives at around 3.10pm, just as I had left to meet him. This young man has had a strange life.

... He's wonderful, this boy, but how he must be suffering! He's arrived completely closed up. *"I've got so much to say,"* he says.

Here are the notes taken about him:

STEEVE, 23.

(report)

¹² Obviously, all these reports are not included in this summary.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

The phone rings and we head for the entrance. Darshan, Yogiji blesses from the car, singing:

*Ram Lakshman Janaki
Jai bolo Hanuman ki*

...

During the *Gurunama*, Saravanand picks me up to improve the computer. I return around 5.15pm.

After Yogiji leaves, I ask Rajeshvari to look after Steeve's swollen finger (pus inside). I'm on my way to Chettiar's when a young Indian on a bike asks me for some money for a *chai*. I only have 75 paises in my pocket and give them to him. Then Kannan arrives and I ask him to translate and explain the situation. Kannan says, "*Don't bother, he's poor but he'll drink or smoke gandia*". Kannan made me go and enter his home, but I tell him that I can only stay for 10 minutes as I have an appointment with Chettiar.

I learn that Selvaraj, his wife and two children (girls) live in the same house as Kannan and his wife. They each have an absolutely tiny room. Selvaraj's wife is also there, with the two little ones. I salute her. The eldest child is sitting on the floor, slate and chalk in hand. She's doing her homework, she's only 3 and a half, she's so cute like that, calm. As for her harelip, and Selvaraj told me this during one of his short visits to the cottage, Yogiji said not to do anything, that His Father would take care of it.

As for Kannan and his wife, they live in exactly 10 m²! They offer me cake and water boiled with *jira* (anise). I tell him about the wonderful magnificent Africans, about Yogiji, and how happy I am to talk about them.

Then I go to Chettiar's house. Rajagopal is sitting on the steps in front of the house and introduces me to an Australian with whom he is chatting. He says I'm his friend and I reply that it's a great honor for me!

...

26th November

7h. Rajagopal is at the entrance. He wishes me to come and film the drawings he is currently making. He can no longer make sculptures. I explain to him that my camera isn't working properly. ... He tells me that Indian television, at the request of the government, has to come for two days to see him and film. It's going to be very tiring for him. He has just asked them to postpone it until after the *Dîpam*.

- *Krishna, did you film me making Bhagavan's statue?*

- *Yes, at Bhagavan's request.*

- *Do you have the film here with you?*

- *No.*

- *Would it be possible to put it in their report?*

- *Yes, it would. I'll make a copy as soon as I get to Mauritius and send it straight away, but I don't know if it will arrive in time.*

There are only four of us (Rajagopal, Chettiar, Swaminathan and Krishna) when Yogiji arrives. After He leaves at around 5.30pm, Kannan comes over, gives me his hand and invite me to eat at his place this evening.

- *Selvaraj and I will welcome Krishna, John and Swami Hamsananda.*

...

10:15: All is a great divine game.

10 o'clock. Every day there are more and more people in the queue....

About half an hour later, I'm told that Mani is calling me. So I join him in the small building for the telephone and Mani tells me the following problem:

Edimo told the Akash hotel that they don't have enough money to pay. Mani phones the hotel to find out who said this. In fact," I tell him, "maybe the others gave Edimo their money and... It was Edimo who said that. Soon the person from the Akash hotel arrives. Mani asks me to investigate, to ask the question, to find out if it's true. I tell him I'll give him the answer.

Then I read the newspaper. Mani talks to me a lot: his daughter-in-law, the wife of Chelvadorai who is now in Indonesia, is going to give birth in Chennai. Mani also tells me that Yogiji asked him for the accounts, not of the ashram as Mukilan had told me by email, but how much he had spent out of his own pocket. Mani tells me it's 4.5 lakhs, as Yogiji made him pay for the statue (2 lakhs), etc... I've also learnt that there have been anonymous letters against Mani... How much pettiness!...

People say that Mani is rejected by Yogiji, but Mani doesn't go away. He's always there. He could have left with his political friends back in power...

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Perhaps it was on this occasion that he told me the following episode:

Last year, Yogiji had told Suresh, "You can do the *homa*." Because of the 'late' day (for us) when Yogiji had given this permission, we had to go very quickly. Ramesh was in Tirupati. Suresh calls him: we must act quickly. Ramesh goes to take the bus, but the bus is full! But who is the driver of the bus? - Tikkaraman!!! The bus made no stop until Tiruvannamalai and Ramesh arrived on time!!! Ah, Yogiji, omniscient, LILA.

- Everything He says is true, but it's never free. He requires efforts on our part, says Mani.

He will also explain to me that one day Yogiji had requested such and such a book for the same day. Mani was therefore sure to find it, but still had to look for it. They found it at the Ramanashram library. By taking another book, the one sought has fallen!

It is now noon, Yogiji leaves the ashram. I eat with John and the American who is 'exhausted' and who will try to find a room in the city to sleep.

Then I go out and tell the African women that I will have a question to ask them. Then I receive the last African woman. Similarly, it takes a certain time before the situation becomes clearer.

- I told you that I had a question to ask you.

- Yes.

- *Here it is: is it true that you don't have enough money to pay for the hotel?*

She seems surprised that I am aware. She does not respond at first. So I insist and she ends up acknowledging that it is true.

- *Do you have enough money to pay until today?*

She thinks and ends up answering in the affirmative.

- *And how are you going to pay for the coming days?*
- *God will provide ...*

Here are the notes taken about her:

Hélène M...

(very detailed report).

I ask Hélène to send Edimo to me, and of course I expect him to refuse.

When I arrive, I ask Edimo to sit. He sits down but really makes a strange 'face'. He is completely closed-off, pouting, looking totally negative and 'refusing'. I receive him as kindly as possible. I no longer have the notes concerning him, but first he tells me:

- *Krishna, I have nothing to tell you. I want to talk directly to Bhagavan since I also speak English.*

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- Bhagavan asked me to receive you one by one to hear about your problems. Now everyone is free. If you don't want, I write (and I do it): Ram Edimo refuses to speak to Krishna; he wants to talk directly to Bhagavan since he himself speaks English.

Then, after a while, Edimo says:

Now that this has been clarified, I would like to talk about my project... (or something like that).

Then follow on my part some bittersweet reactions to what Edimo says, until the moment when I tell myself that I must calm down and listen without reacting, listen to him all the way. But before, his words are so 'young searcher believing to have arrived and believing to know everything' that I couldn't help myself.

I note as it goes. In these notes, one of the first things he told me afterwards was written:

- I know how to interpret the words of the great masters; Yogi is not the first one I meet.

Also:

- Where you are wrong, it's that you think I learned about the existence of Yogi Ramsuratkumar in the biography. However, that is not that at all. In fact I was in my sanctum and there, suddenly, I had his revelation.

I'll make a note of that, of course. Like this:

- I am a Brahmin.

I can't help but giggle a little.

- Excuse me?

- I am a Brahmin.

- Do you know what this word means?

- Very well. I was initiated. I received the brahmic initiation in ... In Lyon, we are an association of brahmins...

- How many are you?

- 50 Brahmins...

- Do you know varnas? Do you know what that means?

- Yes.

- Do you know the ashramas?

- Yes.

- Do you know the Puranas a little?

- Yes. And I can also interpret the Vedas...

- You are very lucky, because nowadays practically no one can understand them ... That's why the Puranas appeared. And since no one understands the Puranas anymore, there were the rituals. And since people no longer understand the rituals, we sing the Name of God.

I end up asking him what his profession is.

- I am a buyer for companies. And, in addition, I had a small business of my own, where I sold fabrics, tires, etc... But, as you know, taxes in France are very heavy and recently I saw

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my legal advisors who advised me to stop. So I filed for bankruptcy and went to the ANPE¹³.

- But you still have that job as a buyer for large companies?

- No, I was laid off. So I went to the unemployment office to find something to finance this project I have for an association...

At that moment, having stopped my bittersweet reflections, I am sitting on the ground, near Edimo who is standing on a chair. That's when I see Suresh climbing the steps of the cottage! I ask Edimo to excuse me for a few moments Suresh comes in and we hug warmly, in front of Edimo who has to see again that everyone knows Krishna here... Then I ask Suresh to kindly excuse me, that I will join him as soon as the interview I have will be finished.

So I suddenly sympathized with Edimo who is now asking me to help him after telling me that he had been seeing Lee Lozowick who would have told him that this association was a good idea.

- For the Name of Yogi Ramsuratkumar, I will always help you.

Then Edimo leaves and I join Suresh in the alley. I tell him about Mauritius, the interview with Yogiji, the state of Hinduism there, that Yogiji does everything. He tells me about his last interview with Yogiji, who asked him:

¹³ Agence Nationale Pour l'Emploi (National Employment Agency).

- *What about the work of Christians in the north-east?*

Suresh tells me it's terrible: Mizoram: 90% Christian, Nagaland, d°. They are converting the tribes. In some states there are pockets of resistance due to the presence of the Ramakrishna Mission, which is very active. Then we talk about the cassette. Suresh tells me that some passages are missing. I also explain to him that the noise that remains cannot be removed.

Yogiji is on the way. Yogiji arrives. I'm in the queue next to Suresh. The car goes to the *mandapam*. Edimo comes towards me. He says he went to Venkatraman and Saravanand to explain the problem but they told him he had to go to Krishna and Krishna would talk of it to Bhagavan. Progrès has just had a crisis and his body had uncontrollable violent reactions. They want Bhagavan to touch him so that the evil spirit can leave him (sic).

So I explain to Suresh that I can't go and sing and go to the cottage to pick up the sheet of paper I'd written on Progress, which reads as follows:

Progrès B...

(Long report)

...

I therefore add the following to this report:

25/11 – darshan time – 4:00 pm

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Edimo has just come to meet Krishna. He first went to Saravanand and Venkatraman who told him to tell Krishna about the problem and that Krishna would give the message to Bhagavan. So, Father, here's the prayer:

Today Progrès had a crisis. His body had violent reactions that he could not control. They ask Bhagavan to touch Progrès to make the spirit that possesses him go away.

Yesterday, as he spoke, his eyes sometimes squinted as if they were looking at the end of his nose.

I ask Selvaraj to give this paper to Yogiji. Mani intervenes and I explain the situation to him. He says he's going to write a paper for Bhagavan. I staple the photo of Progress onto the paper. Just then, Suresh comes out to go towards Yogiji, and I see him take a book out of his bag. I wait, pacing back and forth, concentrated. Suresh stays with Yogiji for a long time. Then Selvaraj arrives to tell me I have to go there. He thinks I want to go with all the blacks, but I tell him: "Only one!" and I go to get Progrès. Selvaraj had already put 6 chairs.

Yogiji makes me sit on His right. Progrès follows, prostrating himself and touching Yogiji's feet with his head. Yogiji tells him to sit down and I explain, then read the last paragraph, the one I've just written, adding, as I've just been told, that he wants to sing the name but a force prevents him from doing so. I tell Yogiji that I had a meeting with him yesterday and that I've written everything down. So Yogiji asks me to read. He takes Progress's right hand. Soon his body jerks a little. Yogiji turns to me and asks a question like:

- *His body reacts?*

- *Yes, Father, his body moves.*

Yogiji lets go of his hand.

- *Is he feeling better now?*
- *Are you feeling better now?*
- *Yes, a little better.*
- *Yes, Father, a little better.*

Yogiji takes his hand again and again some jolts follow. After a while, Yogiji blesses him:

- *There is no longer any witchcraft in you, if there ever was (smiling a little). But whatever the cause, my Father will heal you and He blesses you!*

Yogiji asks his name again. Then he tells Progress to leave.

- *Krishna, this beggar would like to keep this (the report) and the photo with him for some time.*

I'm getting ready to leave, I'm standing up. Then I add:

- *Father, there's something else. Mani asked me to tell you about it. Edimo told the Akash hotel that they don't have enough money to pay the bill. Mani called the Akash and the man came. Mani asked me to find out what was going on. I received a woman today and asked her the question. It's true; they don't have enough money to pay. I asked her if they could pay until today, and she said 'yes'. I asked her, "What are you going to do about the other days?"*

- *And what did they say?*

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

- God will provide!

Yogiji bursts out laughing, then:

- We'll see what to do after the 1st, they will leave.

- Father, their ticket is for the 6th. Mani asked me to ask the question because he doesn't know what to do.

- So we'll see what my Father will decide... Krishna, you'll take this letter back when this beggar comes out later.

- Yes, Father

Father blesses me. I leave to sing, putting my arm on Progress' shoulder. I sit three-quarters in the back. Then, seeing Suresh in the front row as well as Progrès who has just prostrated himself before sitting down, I go and stand between them and sing. Suresh and I start clapping our hands as we sing. Then Mani calls me. I go and tell him:

- « Let us see what my Father will decide. »

Raji enters the small room. The maternity ward had said that his daughter-in-law might need a Caesarean section. Mani will go to see Yogi, who will tell him not to worry, that his Father will take care of it. I see Suresh come out, and soon everyone else. I move towards Progrès' mother and tell her there's nothing more to worry about, explaining the interview quickly. Then we go and line up for Yogiji's exit.

Passing in front of us, Yogiji waves me out of the ashram. I run to the other side of the gate, at the end of the queue. There he gives me back the letter and speaks a little to Suresh, whom

he had also waved out of the ashram. Then He says to both of us:

- This beggar wants you both to talk, so that you can understand each other.

Then the car starts. Suresh takes my hand, he's happy, and so am I! A real communion! We already understood each other completely. This means that Yogiji is officially 'binding' us! We sit down on the steps of the Yagashala. Hélène comes to tell me what she has forgotten to tell me in her requests. I make a note with Suresh's pen, and he tells me that Yogiji has also used it.

...

Suresh tells me that, last time, Yogiji had advised him to read *Jnaneshvari*. So he bought it and Yogiji has just dedicated it to him. He asked Suresh to start reading and then said:

- Now that you've begun to read it in my presence, you must continue to read it.

Suresh says:

- When I see all that is going on, Krishna, people prostrating themselves at the feet of so-called gurus, to get any little thing, all this vileness, Krishna, we have nothing more to ask for in this life. We have everything. We are in His hands, instruments.

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Of course I am in complete communion. I take advantage of what he's just said to tell him about the Polish woman who gives satsangs, with her visiting card and all that, how the darshan went, etc...

As usual, we're 100% in tune. Yogiji!

...

Just then a white couple approaches me. I'm just outside the small door, but outside the ashram. The woman is in shorts and a floral shirt or something like that, very casual. She asks:

- *Does he give speeches?*
- *No, He rarely speaks.*
- *So He keeps everything to himself!*
- *It's quite the opposite, He gives everything away, He's constantly giving Himself.*
- *If we come here, what do we do?*

And a few more questions like that. Thanks to Heaven, it was only for a short time!

Yogiji asked him (Suresh):

- *Have you found accommodation?*
- *I went to the Ramanashram, but there was no room. At such and such an ashram, no room available, the only room available was for one night only. I found a place at the Atithi Ashram.*
- *There's no better place in the whole of Tiruvannamalai.*

- *Precisely*", I say, "*this evening I have to eat with the Swami.*

- *His name is Tyagarajan. "We call him Tyagarath swami,"* Yogiji told him.

At 7.05pm, I leave. I fetch my *chappals* and arrive at Kannan and Selvaraj's house at around 7.15pm. Kannan is on the roof trying to shed some light. Success. We go upstairs with John, who has just arrived; mats are laid.

- *Is Swamiji coming?"* I ask Kannan.

- *He's downstairs making masala dosas.*

Swamiji arrives. It's the first time I've really the opportunity to meet him, apart from the other day at Chettiar, when he has eaten with the Mother of the Atithi Ashram. I put my *dhoti* back on properly and go to touch his feet, because I've learnt that Yogiji respects him a lot. He invites us to sit down and begins to recount a few episodes.

He arrived here around twenty years ago. One day he wanted to leave. But it was the rainy season and during this season a sadhu has to stay in the same place. He found a hard-to-reach place in the fields outside the town, but no sooner had he settled there than people and children came to see him. How did this happen? He doesn't know.

He met Yogi Ramsuratkumar 10 years ago at Sannadhi Street. He was passing near the temple at the time. A big car was parked there and he heard people saying: "*He hasn't*

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received us yet, since yesterday..." The swami went and knocked on the door and was immediately received. Yogiji told him:

- You asked to get in; you'll have to ask to get out.

Since then he has lived in Tiruvannamalai. That evening, he stayed late into the night with Yogiji. Yogiji said he was *"very happy to be with the swami!"*

Now it's starting to rain, so we go downstairs. Selvaraj's children are there, as well as his wife and the Mother from the Atithi Ashram who does the *dosas*. For us, Selvaraj removes the mattress and turns the bed into a precarious sofa. John and I are invited to sit on it and we are served *masala dosas* and *vadai*. The swami is sitting on the floor. Kannan and Selvaraj serve us. No chilli, perfect.

Then Kannan goes to fetch the swami, as it's raining in torrents, and I get off the 'sofa' to sit on the floor. Swamiji makes some room for me to sit next to him. So John gets off too. Swamiji tells us another episode:

- The mother here is very reserved, she feels too small to approach Yogiji. One day she had a back problem, a pain that affected her spine. One day this pain became terrible. At night, she had a darshan (vision) of Yogiji. Yogiji had a dish and, in the dish, the remains of a meal, which he offered to the devotees. But the devotees, disgusted, hesitated to take it. Ramana Maharshi was on the Mother's right and explained to her that this was prasad, divine leftovers. So she took some and ate. The next day, she was alive again, feeling much better.

Yet, that same day, Yogiji went to Kannan's house and took some leftovers, while Ma Devaki was saying: 'It's full of ants

It's true. You can refer to my notes from last year. I remember very well. INCREDIBLE!

- It was on that same day that Kannan came to the Atithi Ashram for the first time, and he told us about it! Neither of them knew what had happened at the other's! The Mother got the Prasad.

Swamiji leaves, telling me to come to his ashram at any time. I will, of course.

Then I go back to the ashram and write these notes.

I have to add that during an interview with Mani, which must have taken place today (my reminder note on this subject dates from today 26 November), he explained to me, along with someone else who was present in the telephone shelter, that one day Yogiji asked for concrete to be put around and under the statue, without touching the statue at all. Mani tells us that he found a way: he has it dug on each side and then put rails underneath, pushed with a hammer. All that remained to do was to pour... A few days later, when I was at Rajagopal's, the latter told us the same thing. In fact, the idea was his and Mani made it his own by telling us about the episode...

27th November

Slept badly! Just before waking up, I dreamt: *"Are you ready with your video camera for the 1st?"*

Ten to 7. Chettiar and Swaminathan. Suresh arrives. Kannan gives me the *anjali* and calls me in a corner.

- *Is this true? Mani told me yesterday that you told him I spoke ill of him last year?*

- *Never! He said something bad, I don't have to repeat it. If I had done that, I'd be a hypocrite! Mani told me: "You see a difference this year. A lot of people have said bad things about me". And I said: "It's true that last year some people said bad things about you!"*

Suresh intervenes:

- *That's detergent Yogiji is sending.*

Yogiji arrives. Because of this conversation with Kannan, I'm right next to him at the gate, and Chettiar says:

- *Krishna is in the place of the gods!*

We both Suresh and I (and Swaminathan does the same) do three times the *pradakshina* of the ashram. I say to Suresh:

- *We were already united, but now He has officially united us.*

Suresh explains some of the trees to me, and tells me to make a *panchavati* at the Mauritius' ashram and put all Yogiji's trees in it (*bilva, punnai, gooseberry, etc.*). On the last lap, we see that the car is already a long way off, so we run, run, and arrive just in time! In passing, Yogiji waves us to come out, the same at Swaminathan. So we get out. He talks to Swaminathan for a while, then Suresh comes forward. Yogiji takes his hand:

- *Are you well ?*
- *Yes, Bhagavan.*

I step forward in turn. Yogiji takes my hand and, smiling, says simply:

- *Ram Ram.*

My Devaki smiles too.

Suresh leaves. I go back to the cottage and finish writing what concerns H el ene M.... I got up last night to write about Edimo. I slept very badly again.

10am. Rajagopal is here. The weather is heavy and damp. He is talking to Suresh in the entrance pavilion. He beckons me to sit down.

- *Krishna, we can postpone. The weather is not good.*
- *No, no, we're going to do it, at 1pm, even if the camera only works for a minute, we'll continue tomorrow.*

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- *I told them (the TV people) to come after the Dîpam, so they have to come around the 17th.*

- *So when I get to Mauritius, I'll make a copy straight away and send it off. Perhaps it will arrive in time?*

- *Did you film me while I was working?*

- *No, you were explaining.*

We go outside, I'm on my knees next to Rajagopal, who is sitting outside on a chair.

Yogiji arrives. We're going for the *darshan* and the *pradakshina* of the statue... Yogiji sings in the car:

*RAMA LAKSMAN JANAKI
JAI BOLO HANUMAN KI*

We queue up. We hear Yogiji singing. Suresh tells me:

- *It's a pity we don't have a tape recorder!*

- *I've one. I'll buy a cassette.*

We both come forward. Yogiji and the sisters sing 'RAMA LAKSHMAN JANAKI JAI BOLO HANUMAN KI'. Then we go out and go to the hall to sing, but I go and get the report on the Africans. Last, I stapled the photos (Jeanne in particular gave a lot of them!) and am about to give them to Raji when Julienne says she has something else to add and I am told that the second boy isn't doing well either. I reply that there's nothing more I can add, that if I hang around Yogiji might not get it and that, in any case, Yogiji knows what she wants.

Entering the hall, I explain to Raji and ask her to give all this to Yogiji, then I go and stand next to Suresh. The chanting stops for a moment and Rajeshvari reads out an article in Tamil about Yogiji, written by a retired policeman in a newspaper (Yogiji said that to come to the ashram, to chant even once the name of this beggar...). Then I intone *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*, clapping my hands a little, and soon I'm doing it faster and faster. At times it's raining in torrents. The Africans aren't here. They've gone shopping (even though they say they have no money to pay for the hotel). Then it's time for the exit. But noon passes without Yogiji going out. He doesn't come out until 12.30! I'm sure Devaki Ma has read him all about the Africans. As He passes by, Yogiji waves to me and Suresh to come out.

I approach the car window:

- *Are those friends all right?*
- *Yes, Father. However, one boy isn't very well.*
- *They'll all be fine.*

Then He says to Suresh:

- You can do the Homa.

Yogiji has kept everything I've written about the Africans, and I'll tell them before the 4pm darshan.

Lunch, then I go and pick up the video camera and head for Rajagopal's.

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...

Then we begin. I film the drawings one by one until we get to a Krishna with the gopis, drawings and collages. The camera malfunctions. So I say we have to stop and start again tomorrow. Rajagopal explains that the drawing represents Krishna and the gopis.

- *It's for you. I'm offering it to you.*
- *I'm not worthy of it.*
- *It's for you.*

So I touch his foot and do the anjali, so happy am I for this gift.

- *Put it in a frame.*
- *Yes, when I get to Mauritius. But there's a problem. I've got a rucksack. I'll have to find two thin boards to put it between.*

...

A white man arrives and asks:

- *Is this Rajagopal's place?*
- *Yes.*

We tell him to come in. Ma makes coffee for Rajagopal and me after a while and the three of us talk to the white man. Rajagopal tells us that he met Swami Ramdas in 194? He was with the young Ramcharandas in Madras. He asked Rajagopal what he was doing.

- *I'm a student at the Beaux-Arts.*
- *Did you know that I am one of their former students?*

He talked about art on fabric and said:

- *Now, this is what I am now.*

He then returned into India.

The American, for he is an American, who is now with us hopes that his new life will begin. He has already met Amma in America. We're talking about the Polish woman's satsang because he's gone there.

- *She looks great.*
- *That's what everyone says, I say.*

And I quickly explain the darshan where Yogiji asked me to speak with her.

Rajagopal talks about sculpture and his meeting with Krishnamurti. He says that Bourdelle had come and wanted to make a statue of him.

- *You sculptors, you hypnotize, J.K. would have said.*

Rajagopal wanted to make his statue also.

- *Why do you want to make a statue of me?*
- *For the lines, the lines of your face.*
- *Really?*

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He was scared.

- *So, while I'm giving a lecture, you can do it.*

- *While I'm making your statue, could you give a lecture?*

Krishnamurti then embraced him.

Rajagopal then shows a few statues to the American and explains "the lines". He also tells us about his meeting with Ramana Maharshi about the statue. Nobody had to be there. Rajagopal had already told me about it.

- *We'll stand there, we will close the door and no one will be allowed to get in,"* said the Maharshi.

Following a story about darkness that happened to the American, I recount the episode of Bavishya Badri when I got in and it was dark on the way down, and the tiger just after I got back in the car.

Then I apologize, go out and join Suresh at the Atithi Ashram. I ask him if he can come with me to fill my gourde. On the way I explain everything about Edimo to him, and this continues until we get back, waiting for Yogiji to arrive. Suresh thinks exactly the same thing as me and thinks that Edimo is taking advantage of these people to play guru. I explain his 'brahmanism' and the fact that he wears the cord.

- *Yes, I've seen it,"* says Suresh.

- *Do you know the wacky people who give this kind of initiation? ...*

Seeing the Africans, I go and tell them that Yogiji has kept the reports and the photos.

Yogiji arrives. He's singing again. Both Suresh and I concur to go and get the tape recorder and he says he'll carry it in plain sight. I rush off. I come back but Suresh has gone to the Atithi ashram. Here he is coming back. He puts the recorder in his bag and I tell him where to press. When we both enter, he presses the button and leaves the recorder in his bag. As I finish my prostration and Suresh is about to come out of the *mandapam*, I distinctly hear him running the tape recorder to see what his recording has come up with. In fact, there will be practically nothing. Because it was left in the bag with other things. Suresh tells me to keep the recorder with me and we enter the hall.

....

During the darshan, Raji, beaming, comes up to me in the front row and announces the birth:

- *It's a baby girl!*
- *Did everything go well?*
- *Yes.*

I then raise both arms to the sky as if everything was normal, since Yogiji had said that His Father would take care of it.

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On exit, as I'm telling Mani how touched I was that Raji has come to tell me about the birth in the middle of the session, he replies:

- It's normal, you're family.

And he starts telling Saravanand how we met, how I was staying with him, how we were all in tears the day of my departure, and so on...

Yogiji's exit. Suresh goes to the temple. I stay.... Selvaraj tells me:

- Come home!

- OK, I'll come.

... Selvaraj who is here with his wife and little girls. Kannan is here too, but doesn't have the time. She's so cute, and so good, this little girl who, unfortunately, has a harelip. How adorable! Selvaraj tells me that she sees Yogiji every day because of her harelip. Passing by in the car, Yogiji stops to see her.... Here she goes to fetch some little bracelets and, gesturing, showing her little sister, lets me know that the bracelets are hers, and she goes to put one on her, just like a mom would do.

I return to the ashram and talk to Mani for a few moments,

As Yogiji hasn't allowed Raji to go to Chennai for the birth, she's there on the phone. Mani tells me that Yogiji needs him for the Jayanti.

1997

Even if it's not me, someone has to be here. But even after the Jayanti, I'll wait because I want to be here when you leave.

- We could part together...

I go back to the cottage, read the papers and draft these notes.

It's around 7pm. I hear voices. Women singing. Yet all is quiet outside!

28th November

7am darshan: Suresh, Chettiar, Swaminathan. We do the *pradakshina* three times. I see Sri ??? and of course go over to him. We exchange a few words. Yogiji's exit.

...

After breakfast, Suresh tells me:

- *We could go and see someone...*

And he tells me the story of this person. So we go there, it's very close: after the ashram, we turn right, pass in front of the Atithi ashram, turn left, and arrive at this house called "Mangalam". This gentleman is in the tiny house at the entrance on the left. Suresh introduces me and we are invited to sit down. The gentleman, who I think is over 65 but very much alive, asks us if we'd like a cup of tea. Suresh seems very used to it. He soon asks the gentleman to tell his story himself.

He was 21 at the time and thirsty for spirituality. Suddenly he began to have doubts, and practically no longer believed in anything. One day someone tells him about a saint in Tiruvannamalai. So he comes to see Ramana. But he wishes to talk to him personally, even if only for a single word. He then watches the sage's comings and goings and, one day, he sees the Maharshi go behind the building with his assistant, most likely to urinate. It seems to be where the path to

Skandashram begins. Ramana Maharshi then returns. As he approaches the young man, the latter moves aside a little to let Him pass. Ramana stops, and whereas he usually stares into space, He looks at him, asks him a few questions and says:

- *The forest has caught fire. It will burn itself down. There's nothing to worry about.*

The young man then prostrated himself all over at His feet.

...

I reach the entrance at 10am when the phone rings. Before Yogiji arrives, the young American arrives but soon leaves. I'm with Suresh and Sri (Ramamurthy). He speaks in Tamil. Laughs. I ask what it means.

One day, there was a heavy downpour and it was practically impossible to go outside. But then Yogiji arrives and, despite the rain, the devotees line up in a row. Yogiji then, from the car, looks at everyone and laughs out loud!

The line moves to the *mandapam* for *darshan* and *pradakshina*. Kannan soon tells me that Yogiji has asked me to stand with Edimo, to enter the *mandapam* together and then that I go and sit outside on the chair to the right of His armchair. I have seen that the chairs have been set up and, before we enter, after the women have left the *mandapam*, that the African men and women were seated. What's going to happen? Perhaps I made a mistake and I'll be reprimanded, always kindly? It seems to me that I have been as objective as

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possible. So we go with Edimo when the time comes, I let him pass, I prostrate at the feet of the statue, then, as usual, from a distance to Yogiji when coming back. We sit down.

After a few minutes, while we're all sitting down, Yogiji arrives. I stand up, in *anjali*.

- *Krishna, ukhar...*

I sit down again. Yogiji sits down. He has a parcel with him, an envelope. These are the letters written by the Africans who couldn't make it.

- *Krishna, are you well here?*

- *Well, Father, very well.*

- *They all live in France?*

- *Yes, Father.*

- *Ask each of them how long they have lived in France.*

So I ask each of them, translate one by one, giving their names and saying that so-and-so is the son of so-and-so. Then Yogiji speaks in Tamil to Selvaraj.

- *Krishna, this beggar would like to know exactly where Cameroon is. Can you tell it?*

- *Father, Africa, in the west, has a rounded coastline (I draw in the air with my hand). Then it goes south. Cameroon is situated at the angle.*

I ask if anyone has a pencil so that I can draw.

- *Maybe it's possible, Father, to draw a picture.*

Yogiji, with a sign, points that Selvaraj arrives. He has a small A4 Atlas in his hand and gives it to Yogiji.

- *Krishna, search and show where Cameroon is.*

As if on purpose, I come directly across the map of Africa.

- *There, the rounded shape, Father, and there, it goes south. Cameroon is there.*

- *And there?*

- *There the Congo, there the Central African Republic, further on there Chad. There's also Gabon, Father.*

- *Do these countries have the same population?*

Not quite understanding, I ask Edimo who answers in the affirmative, so I answer Yogiji in the affirmative.¹⁴

- *Father," I say, "there are devotees who sing the Ramnam in Gabon and Congo.-*

- *Father's grace!*

...

- *Do they all live in Paris?*

- *Yes, Father, except for Ram Edimo who lives in Lyon, which is the second largest city in France.*

- *Krishna, this beggar didn't understand.*

¹⁴ It's possible that Edimo didn't understand correctly either. Did Yogiji ask about the population in number or if all these African countries have a black population, and it's why I asked Edimo.

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- *Father, Ram Edimo lives in Lyon. Lyon is the second most populous city in France.*

- *Like Paris.*

- *Yes Father.*

- *Krishna, find the map to show.*

I search and find Europe.

- There you have it, Father, France.

Yogiji passes His finger at the northeast of France:

- *Here, France too?*

- *No, Father. This is a geographical map. Father', if you allow it, I'll try to find a political map.*

I leaf through but don't find any, so I come back to this map. I follow the border with my finger.

- *This is France, Father. This is Belgium, where Alain is, the Frenchman who lives in Belgium. This is Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and this is Spain. Paris is here. Lyon is here.*

After a while:

- *Krishna, find a map to show me which route they're going to take to go back.*

I find a map of the world.

- *Father, from Tiruvannamalai, they'll go to Madras, then Mumbai, then Delhi, and from Delhi, Paris.*

- *Directly?*

- *Yes, Father, directly.*

- *My Father blesses you. You will have a safe journey.*

When are they leaving, Krishna? Will they stay for the Dîpam?

I ask Edimo, completing:

- *Would you still like to stay for Dîpam?*

- *Yes...*

- *Ram Edimo would like to stay for the Dîpam, Father, but their places are reserved for the 6th. And Mani has told them that there are no rooms.*

- *Are they definitely leaving on the 6th?*

- *Yes, Father.*

After a while:

- *These are their letters (in fact the reports). This beggar asked Ma Devaki to read them all out to him. Krishna, you have taken great pains for this and this beggar (or my Father) thanks you and blesses you. Take them one by one and read some problems, not all of them because there are many.*

- *Yes, Father.*

I pick up the first sheet and see that it's the one about Edimo. Instinctively I put it under the packet to read it last. Now it's Steeve's turn, and I point him out to Yogiji.

- *His name? Steeve?*

- *Yes, Father, Steeve.*

- *The problem?*

- *He wishes to find a job.*

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Father has Selvaraj bring a chair forward.

- *My Father blesses Steeve. You will find a job.*

Then, I think, it's Hélène. For everyone, the main problem is finding a job. Yogiji asks the women where they work. Then it's Progrès's turn to be blessed. As for the two boys, I tell Yogiji that they are the sons of So-and-so and So-and-so (so-and-so). Everyone prostrates themselves at His feet, except Edimo who will not do.

Now comes Edimo's sheet.

- *Read, Krishna.*

Thus, if what I've written is wrong, Edimo will have plenty of time to say so.

- *Father, Ram Edimo said that he had nothing to say to Krishna, that he wanted to speak directly to Bhagavan since he himself speaks English.*

Yogi affectionately puts His hand on my shoulder, looks up to Heaven, and says:

- *Talking to Krishna is talking to this beggar.*

Silence, then:

- *He added that he wanted to create a legal association that would be the same in France as it is here. He said that he*

was a Brahmin, that he had received a Brahmin initiation and that he belongs to an association of 50 Brahmins in Lyon. He said that he knew the 4 varnas, the 4 ashramas, the Puranas, that he knew how to interpret the Vedas, that he had not known Bhagavan through the French biography but that he had had a revelation of You in his puja-room and that he had already spoken to You about it, Father (I must also have said that he had said that he knew how to interpret the words of the great masters...).

He said that he had met Lee Lozowick and that Lee had told him that the creation of this association would be a very good thing. He asked Krishna to help him and Krishna replied that for the name of Yogi Ramsuratkumar he would do whatever he was able to do.

Professionally, he was a buyer for large companies and he had his own business where he sold fabrics, tyres, etc... but he had met his legal advisers who had told him it was better to close down. He also lost his job as a buyer. As far as Krishna can understand, he would like to find another job so that he can carry out his association project.

- What did he study?*
- What did you study?*
- I have a degree from the Lyon Business School.*
- He studied trading*
- He will find a job, by my Father's grace.*

So, at no point did Yogiji tell him about the association he wanted to set up in France. He just blessed him by saying that he would find work. No one knows whether Edimo understood what he had to do.

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Yogiji asks me to return the 'letters' to each of them, that is to say the reports I wrote on each of them. Only that of Progrès is not returned, as it has been used previously when he has had these bodily reactions. Yogiji asks me to write down all the names and give them to him. So I'll do that.

Then Yogiji asks Selvaraj to bring the fruit platter. He takes a banana, peels it and leads each of them forward. He puts it in the mouth of each person, who then takes it and finishes it as they take back their place. Then He says:

- *No one has been forgotten?*

- *Krishna! some say.*

- *Ah!* says Yogiji bursting out laughing and patting my back. Then He does the same with me.

During the conversation, Yogiji also asked:

- *Do you sometimes go back to Cameroon?*

- *Yes.*

- *When?*

- *When we have money.*

- *Yes, Father, when they have money.*

Yogiji bursts out laughing and taps me on the shoulder:

- *When they have money they go back there!*

And almost immediately His face becomes extremely serious and He looks at them.

Yogiji then stands up. He goes to bless each one. Then He returns to His seat, and it seems to me that He is still saying that their problems will be solved. Then He tells them they can go, asking Selvaraj to accompany them.

Once they are gone, Yogiji tells me:

- This beggar has rarely met natives from Africa. Only a few.

- Father, some years ago, an African from Gabon came to see You. He first came to France to see Krishna and wanted Krishna to do some 'tantrics' (Yogiji laughs). But Krishna said he couldn't do anything. So he said, "I'll go and see your guru" (Yogiji laughs). I quickly wrote to say that he could create problems, but my letter arrived long after him ... and I heard that he had created problems. He had come wearing a T-shirt with Your face on it, Father. Back home he got what he had asked for from You and, it seems, he forgot all about the rest.

I get into the anjali. Silence. Yogiji sometimes takes my hand. He sends Selvaraj to fetch Mani (I think, I can't remember the exact order).

At one point, Yogiji tells me:

- This is the land of Tapasya.

Also:

- My Father will give you the help and strength you need to overcome any problem, if there are any.

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Two people have been called and Yogiji has a conversation with them. Mani arrives and reads a letter from a man who would like to set up a stall to sell his books (he'd already told me about it) or a donation to build one outside. Mani doesn't have time to finish the letter:

- *Mani, answer that we can't...*

Then he says: "*We can't give anything to build ...*".

Mani tells Yogiji that there's something else.

- *Venkatasubramaniam has written an article on Bhagavan in 'The Hindu' today. There is a copy for Bhagavan and he asks that Bhagavan bless the other which is to be returned to him.*

He hands it to Yogiji. After a while, Yogiji gives it to me and says:

- *Read it, Krishna.*

I read it, as best I could. Here is the article:

The Yogi of Thiruvannamalai

Yogi Sri Ram Surathkumar of Thiruvannamalai celebrates his 80th birthday on December 1. K. Venkatasubramanian pays tribute.

It was the great Paramacharya of Kanchi who once said that every nation is a genius in some special way, and India is a genius

for religion and faith. The great Tamil saint Thiruvalluvar speaks of God Almighty as one without favour or disfavour.

The Gita spells the doctrine of unity of the Lord. "Whosoever comes to me through whatsoever form, I reach him, all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me."

Swami Vivekananda thundered at Chicago: « Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced that it is now." "I fervently hope", "that the bell that tolled in honour of this convention (Chicago) may be the death knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen and of all uncharitable feelings between people wending this way to the same goal."

This goal set by the Swamiji a 100-old years ago has not yet been reached. On the other end, we find the modern world aggressively pursuing paths of self and pleasure without even, for a moment, thinking there is a God above.

Of the quite a few sages, who are working at helping humanity, Yogi Sri Ram Surathkumar "the god-child of Thiruvannamalai" is very unique in many respects. What makes the Yogi as different is his utter simplicity, piety and absence of any paraphernalia and pomp. His devotees celebrate his 80th birthday on December 1, 97.

He is not attached to the material world at all and the « tharaka manthra » of the Yogi is "My Father alone exists, nothing else, nobody else." The Yogi shines as a beacon light to men and women from all walks of life. People from all over the globe throng to follow the Yogi who gives peace, solace and sobriety.

Swami Ram Surathkumar has influenced myriads of his devotees by his simple living and high thinking and his unmistakable emphasis of the Supremacy of the Divine.

Thiruvannamalai, the sacred place, held in reverential awe from time immemorial, has been a great center of devotion attracting savants from far and near. The great Festival of Lights known as "Annamalai Deepam" draws devotees from all over the world. Saint

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

Thirugnanasambandar said: "those who pray to Annamalai will get relieved from the pains of fate and their ills will get demolished."

Arunachala Puranam states that if you go to Chidambaram, you get mukthi, if you die at Varanasi, you get mukthi, if you are born at Thiruvavur, you get mukthi, if you walk in Kanchi, you get mukthi. But, if you just think of Thiruvannamalai, you get mukthi. Such is the greatness of this temple town.

The first time I saw the Yogi, he was sitting, clad in old clothes with bundles of old newspapers around him and with a fan in the hand. (He was known as the Visiri Swami). When I saw him for the first time, I stood there transfixed. It was Swamiji who spoke first. He said, "My dear son, I was expecting you, sit down." I realized that I was in the glorious presence of a holy god child, but never realized that is he going to have great impact on my life. My association with the Yogi continued with vigor for years till date. I have visited him a number of times. While I was asked to become the founder Vice-Chancellor of the Central University, Pondicherry, I went to Thiruvannamalai to seek the Swami's blessings. There have been several incidents in my life which have helped me strengthen my faith and belief in the Swami.

Thiruvannamalai has the "Karthika Deepam" once a year, but at Agrahara Collai, (N^o 1833/1, Chengam Road, Thiruvannamalai, sits for ever, the "Ball of Fire", so cool and fine, showering His grace on all, irrespective of caste, color or religion.

He performs miracles silently and cleanses your soul completely. His touch is magic, it revives you. Whoever is privileged to meet him, returns home a better person. His devotees are hundreds in number including eminent men and women from all walks of life. The Yogi's formula for happiness is simple - "Think of the Master and He will protect you."

This Yogi is constantly asking His Master above to help his devotees. Thus, the Yogi of Thiruvannamalai is a rare phenomenon and his very presence in our midst is a benediction to us.

As a tail piece, I have a true incident to narrate. I am a great admirer of Rajiv Gandhi. I wrote the biography of Indira Gandhi,

with a foreword from R. Venkataraman, former President. Yogi Sri Ram Surathkumar was also very fond of Rajiv Gandhi. We were thinking of taking him to Thiruvannamalai to have darshan of the Yogi during his tour of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry in May, 1991.

In early May, 1991, I met the Yogi and told him that I was going to Delhi to meet Rajiv Gandhi and I wanted the Yogi's permission to take Rajiv Gandhi to Thiruvannamalai to have His darshan. As soon as I uttered these words, the Yogi became tense and uttered the words "No. No. Don't attend to bring him here. He cannot come, he cannot come," and the Yogi disappeared in the inner rooms of the Sannidhi Street house. I was taken aback, but I kept mum. My friend the late A.R.P.N. Rajamanickam Nadar and I were not able to decipher these prophetic words of the Yogi till May 21st when Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated.

Was it divine intuition, prophecy, second sight, clairvoyance or mere casual words after looking into the future? I do not know. But, this episode haunts me even today.

But, the fact was that this saint, who is the Master of the past, the present and the future at Thiruvannamalai, said these words and Rajiv really could not come. As Mr. Justice T.S. Arunachalam, a former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court and a devotee of the Yogi used to say: "Sri Ramji know all and everything."

The Yogi of Thiruvannamalai

Yogi Sri Ram Surathkumar of Thiruvannamalai celebrates his 80th birthday on December 1. K. Venkatasubramanian pays tribute.

It was the great Paramacharya of Kanchi who once said that every nation is a genius in some special way, and India is a genius for religion and faith. The great Tamil saint Thiruvalluvar speaks of God Almighty as one without favour or disfavour.

The Gita spells the doctrine of unity of the Lord. "Whosoever comes to me through whatsoever form, I reach him, all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me."

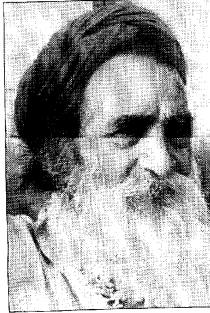
Swami Vivekananda thundered at Chicago: "Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now." "I fervently hope," the mount added, "that the bell that tolled in honour of this convention (Chicago) may be the death knell of all fanaticism of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen and of all unchangeable feelings between people warring this way to the same goal."

This goal set by the Swamiji a 100-odd years ago has not yet been reached. On the other hand, we find the modern world aggressively pursuing paths of self and pleasure without even, for a moment, thinking there is a God above.

Of the quite a few sages, who are working at helping humanity, Yogi Sri Ram Surathkumar "the god-child of Thiruvannamalai" is very unique in many respects. What makes the Yogi as different is his utter simplicity, piety and absence of any paraphernalia and pomp. His devotees celebrate his 80th birthday on December 1, 97.

He is not attached to the material world at all and the "tharaka mantras" of the Yogi is "My Father alone exists, nothing else, nobody else." The Yogi shines as a beacon light to men and women from all walks of life. People from all over the globe throng to follow the Yogi who gives peace, solace and sobriety.

Swami Ram Surathkumar has influenced hundreds of his devotees by his simple living and high thinking and his unmistakable emphasis of the Supremacy of the Divine. Thiruvannamalai, the sacred place, held in



reverential awe from time immemorial, has been a great centre of devotion attracting devotees from far and near. The great Festival of Lights known as "Annammalai Deepam" draws devotees from all over the world. Saint Thiruvannamambardar said: "those who pray to Annammalai will get relieved from the pangs of fate and their ills will get denuded."

Arannamalai Paranam "Males" viba' r' g' b' o' go to Chidambaram. you get mukthi, if you die at Varanasi, you get mukthi, if you are born at Thiruvavur, you get mukthi, if you walk in Kanchi, you get mukthi. But, if you just think of Thiruvannamalai, you get mukthi. Such is the greatness of this temple town.

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I give back the article to Yogiji. Mani:

- Venkatasubramaniam wishes Bhagavan to keep one and bless another one for him.

Yogiji asks Mani to repeat so that He understands correctly, then he runs His right hand over the article for a few seconds, raises it to His forehead and gives it back to Mani.

3 people are called, including a 90-year-old man who is still in full health. Yogiji talks to the first man and asks him questions. Then, after the conversation, he gives some fruits and recommends to the first man (who has brought the others) that he himself gives the fruit to the man's wife. This woman must be 86 years old. Is it to this man or to another one that He asks to present His pranams to Satyananda Swami, and above all not to forget?

Then, with these people gone, Yogiji seems to concentrate on me. I'm in anjali the whole time, not saying a word. Now the Arunachaleshvar Temple Committee has come to invite Yogiji for the Dîpam. They come with a huge garland that has been sanctified at the Temple and put it around Yogiji's neck. This garland smells wonderful.

Yogiji speaks with the members of the Committee and I hear that He says that the Dîpam will be very successful by His Father's grace. Then the Committee leaves. Yogiji takes my hand again. I say to myself that maybe Yogiji will make me stay with him until the end to show Edimo what He, Yogiji, wants. Then a couple arrives who were staying in cottage no. 5 next to me. There's the wife, but also the daughter and another child. After the interview, they leave.

Suddenly, Yogiji, starting to remove the huge garland, says:

- *Krishna, this beggar wants to garland you.*

I was immensely moved and tears come to my eyes. Putting the garland on me, He says:

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

- *Arunachaleshvar garlands you!*

I have tears in my eyes, at the height of emotion, and, while seated, I bend towards Him, my head almost on the armrest. Yogiji keeps my clasped hands in His, and I stay that way. I'll stay like this until the end. After a while, He calls other people. Hearing the voices, I think it's Sri Ramamurthy introducing his daughter and another member of his family.

Sometimes I smell Yogiji's fragrance, sometimes I feel that He is enveloping me in His own spirituality. I feel it physically, like an envelope!

Then he asks Selvaraj if the singing is over (I'll learn later that the article was read in the hall, I also heard the *Mangalam*). Selvaraj returns a few moments later. I believe that more people will be received.

Yogiji takes my hands again, and soon straighten me up. He says:

- *Krishna, it would be good to wear this garland when you're in the cottage. Is there somewhere you can hang it?*

- *Yes, Father.*

- *So wear it for a few days. It's too big for you to take to Mauritius.*

- *Father, there's room in my bag. I could put it in.*

- *Then take it to Mauritius. Go. My Father blesses you.*

And Yogiji hits me on the back. He asks Selvaraj to help me carry the garland to the cottage. I take it off, give it to

Selvaraj, and bow down at the feet of Yogiji, my Father, who pats me on the back.

- My Father blesses Krishna.

I dare not, as I have never dared, touch His feet. Then I join Selvaraj. He takes the garland to the cottage and I walk on the alley. Mani, Ravi and Rajeshvari are there between the alley and the darshan hall. Suresh is there, standing in the small alley, looking at Yogiji. I come up to him, press him against me, full of emotion!

- Arunachaleshvar garlands you!

I repeat to him. Suresh takes my hand and squeezes it very hard and we stay like that as we walk. I arrive behind the *Yagashala* and go towards the exit when I am told that Bhagavan is calling me. Someone arrives, hands me a photo of Jeanne and says that Yogi has asked that I return the photo with my own hands. So I go to Jeanne and give it back to her while explaining what had happened. At the exit, under the courtyard, Ramamurthy calls me. Chettiar is next to him and I sit down next to them. Ramamurthy takes my hands and says:

- Yogiji has touched these hands.

And he raises them to his forehead. Yogiji will go out. Progrès comes next to me. Yogiji goes out. There are more and more people.

We go to eat. I narrate a bit to Suresh...

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

...

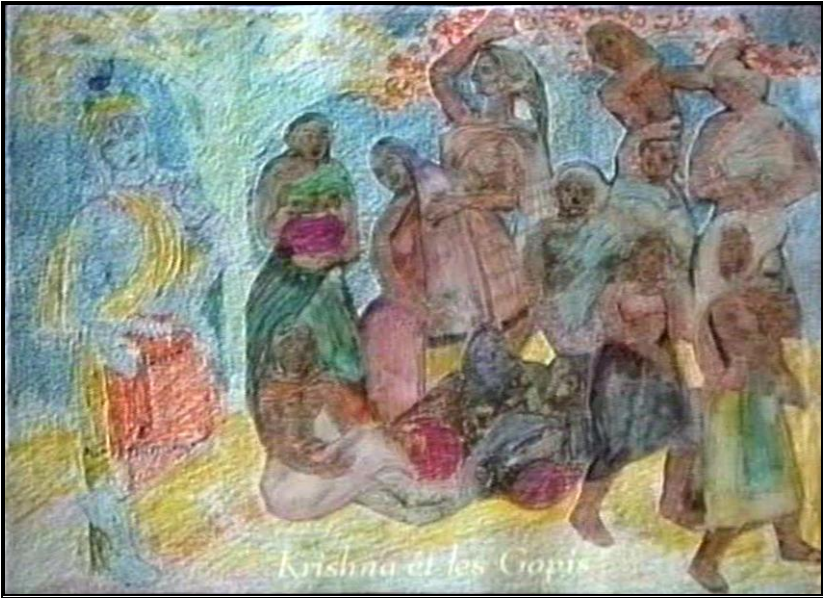
Suresh decides to come with me to Rajagopal's. I take the video camera and we go there.

We talk a little, even a lot. Rajagopal talks about how he met Yogiji and everything he told me last year. Coffee. Then I start filming. After a while, the camera begins to dysfunction and I stop. Rajagopal then takes the drawing of Krishna and the gopis and puts it on a blue background and tries other backgrounds, but it's the blue, the background color of the drawing, that works the best. He signs it. He takes it out again later and puts a dedication on it.

I put the camera under the fan, saying that we could try again, that maybe it would work again in a quarter of an hour.

Rajagopal narrates how he met Yogiji.... and I ask him to tell the episode when Yogiji asked him to see the statue of Ramana Maharshi before Indira Gandhi. Suresh then visits Chettiar.

After a while, I check: the camera is working. So we both carry on, but soon the battery is empty.



Krishna and the Gopis

Drawing by Shri Rajagopal that he will offer to Krishna

...

It's very hot at that time, but I stay that way until the phone rings for the 4 p.m. darshan...

I go out. On my way to the entrance, Edimo, who is with the Africans in the Yagashala, calls me. I go up.

- *Krishna, Bhagavan asked for the written list, here it is. I told them: "Following Bhagavan is taking out all-risk insurance.*

- *You're absolutely right.*

...

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

We get up for Yogiji's arrival.

...

7pm. I go to Chettiar's and arrive at the level of Kannan's house. He's outside with his wife.

- *Go," he says, "I know you have an appointment at Chettiar's and Suresh too, and that you need to learn how to make sambar.*

- *Good night!*

...

Learning. I look again for the chutney. Rajagopal arrives.

- *Krishna, they're coming tomorrow. There's nothing we can do tomorrow.*

Suresh arrives; I take note of all the recipes. Then Chettiar puts on the cassette and we try to listen to Yogiji who suddenly speaks while the singing stops. I learn that the cassette is from me and that Chettiar copied it last year.

Delicious meal, followed by a chat that Suresh translates for me at first, but not afterwards. Acchi talks, tears streaming down her face. 3 episodes:

- One day, Yogiji arrives at her home in the city. She's so stunned she doesn't know what to do. So Yogiji asks if there's any water. She brings some water. Yogiji starts washing

His own feet. She is so stunned that she doesn't understand that she has to do the *pada puja*. Then Yogiji asks if there is any coffee, and then asks for something to eat.

- Another day, there is a meeting at the temple for the birthday of a very old member of the family. Yogiji arrives and asks what they're doing. They explain. The next day they arrive late at the temple and see, where they are supposed to be, Yogiji waiting.

- Acchi sometimes went to Tapovanam, but it was her sister-in-law who did the cooking. As usual, she always stood back and watched from a distance. One day, her sister-in-law comes to Tiruvannamalai. Yogiji arrives. The sister-in-law goes to prepare the meal, but Yogiji tells Acchi that she will be doing the cooking.

...

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

29th November

...

The Americans have arrived around 5am and made a lot of noise. Up at 6.05 and soon Gopal arrives with the *chai* and pours me 2 cups!

7am-10am: Hello to Lee Lozowick, we exchange a few words, to Alain who tells me:

- I was sure I'd find you here!

Darshan, I stand next to Lee in the queue, then I go and do the *pradakshina* 3 times, I'm behind Swaminathan and before Suresh. After the third round, I see Parthiban and greet him. Then I go towards him.

At breakfast, Mani tells me:

- *Krishna, do you mind if I put up Parthiban with you?*

I smile, it's so obvious that it's not! He then says to Suresh:

- *He must have been involved in politics in France!*

10 am. We are three of us with Suresh and we talk for a while, then everyone heads for the *mandapam*. The young American is there. As we head for the *mandapam*, I ask him if he'd like me to introduce him to Lee Lozowick. He doesn't really seem to want it, but I introduce him and leave. It then starts to rain. Everyone huddles against the walls of the *mandapam*, but Suresh, Partibhan, Chettiar, the Akash man and I take shelter under the trees by the alley.

Then it's darshan and afterwards we join the hall where we sing. Suresh and I are towards the back. The *Gurunama* is being sung when, after ten minutes or so, someone comes and waves us to move forward, compacting together. Turning around, I see Yogiji arriving, alone with Selvaraj. He sits down and asks to arrange some mats in front of the platform, then asks Lee's group to sit on them. Then He calls Lee and for a while takes his hand and concentrates. Then he asks Lee if he can see Krishna. Lee finally sees me and beckons me to come. I kneel before Yogiji. Yogiji says:

- This beggar would like Lee to say a few words about why he comes here... and Krishna to translate for those who speak French.

So it's what is done: whatever He does for us, we come to pay Him homage, to surrender ourselves to Him, etc... Then Lee stays on his knees next to Yogiji and I end up sitting on the mat next to him. Yogiji calls Selvaraj and tells him to fetch Devaki Ma and the sisters. The car soon arrives and, as they are about to come in, Yogiji tells us to sit on the mat to His right (like last year) and talk, which we do immediately.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

This time, everything's fine between Lee and me, it's completely relaxed. Alain is seated on a chair since the beginning, just like last year. Yogiji calls Selvaraj who comes to tell us that Swamiji wants us to go and sit next to Alain and the three of us to talk. Once seated, Lee says:

- *The International Committee begins.*

We chat. Alain in particular, and Yogiji calls Lee to get some American girls to sing. At about 11:40 Yogiji calls Lee, tells him a few words, Lee comes back to me and says:

- *Yogiji wants the three of us to go on the platform in His place as soon as He leaves. I asked a second time to know if I understood correctly.*

- *Are you sure?*

- *Yes.*

Yogiji comes out and we set up on the platform. Finding myself in the middle, I take Devaki Ma's place first, looking towards the audience, while Lee is in Yogiji's place, on the left of the platform. Alain puts himself before me, so I'm a bit hidden, which I'm glad about. I watch Yogiji's exit and do the anjali until the car starts. As Yogiji gets into the car, I see Devaki Ma looking towards us, smiling. Lee says something like:

- There is a quarter of an hour to hold out.

Mani arrives and motions for us to huddle together, for Alain to move to the back of the platform, so that I find myself right in the middle. At first I don't know how to contain myself.

Then I close my eyes and all of a sudden flashbulbs are going off. An American's video camera doesn't stop rolling. So I think and concentrate on Yogiji, closing my eyes and forgetting about people. I open my eyes around five to twelve. Bala (who's here, I forgot to mention) and Suresh look at me and smile. So I put my hands on the blanket on which Yogiji sits and on which we are sitting, rub my hands over it several times and then run them over my face, then I hold out my hands to them as if to say, "*Take!*" They make affirmative gestures.

It's finally the *Mangalam*, and I quickly get down and bow, resting my head on the blanket where Yogiji normally stands. When I come out, Suresh, Bala and Swaminathan are there. Bala and Suresh run their hands over my body to, as it were, take Yogiji. So I put both my hands on the shoulders and arms of all three of them (even Swaminathan, whom I don't actually know) and say:

- It was an excellent exercise against ego!

Then we go to Yogiji's exit from the ashram.

Lunch with Suresh and Bala.

...

Cottage. Maybe that's when Ravi comes... He explains to me, which I didn't know before, that the garland Yogiji put around my neck was the subject of a special puja at the Temple of Arunachaleshvar before Yogiji was decorated with it. I now fully understand the meaning of "*Arunachaleshvar garlands you!*".

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

...

(At Swami Satyananda's) We enter, prostrate ourselves and start talking. Suresh asks me to narrate the two hours spent with Yogiji.

Then Suresh speaks about the *Homa* that Yogiji has asked him to perform on the morning of the Jayanti. The Swami asks him if he has heard about the *homa* that took place in the United States. He picks up an issue of *Hinduism Today* and we look at the photos. We agree that this newspaper is very 'American Hinduism' and moreover, that Sivasubramaniam is an American who lives in Hawaii and has a lot of computers... I read 3 lines from the article:

- He speaks about dollars yielded and the next sentence is: 'The devotees have become spiritually richer!'

I laugh and show the others. I explain that, in *Hinduism Today*, the publication of an article on Chitrakut depends on the quality of a photo!

Noticing a new issue of *Tattvaloka*, I say:

- That's much better.

- Yes," says Swamiji, "but it's been going down for some time now too.

- Yes, since one year, when they started changing everything, even the color of the cover. They're turning everything down.

- *They're turning everything down," says Suresh, "when it's up to the people to raise themselves to the level!*

We come to talk about Neelam and her satsangs and I explain, in particular the two 'traps' she may have been thinking of catching me in.

I say:

- *I was looking at this young woman, sitting in front of Yogiji, relaxed, and next to her, Ra Ganapati. It's all there!*

I recount this darshan and the fact that I had to get the young woman off the stage, sensing that she was surprised to have to come down and talk to this quidam. We talk about the false gurus with whom the world is filled.

- *Nowadays, everyone wants to be a gurus, but no one wants to be a shishya!"* says Suresh.

Then we set off and buy some postcards. We pass through *Sudama* to reach *Mangalam*. The gentleman is there. He sits us down and Suresh asks him to tell us some episodes about Ramana Maharshi.

- *What they're writing now isn't right. I went to the ashram library. There's nothing there any more!*

- *It's in Western hands now, isn't it?"* I ask Suresh.

- *Yes.*

- *They don't know, they don't understand,"* continues the man. *It's a question of experience. Even we wouldn't say we've had the experience.*

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

Episodes:

One day, at around 2 p.m., when it was scorching hot, Bhagavan was pacing back and forth up and down the hill in the sun. A harijan woman arrives and says:

- What are you doing out here in the sun? What's wrong with you? You'd better get into the shade and pray!

Anyone else would have beaten a non-caste. Bhagavan slapped his own cheeks and said:

- Yes, I'm wrong. You're right." And he went into the shade.

The gentleman goes to tell me about another episode, but Suresh tells him he's already told me (he did it at around 1 p.m.).

One day, a Western woman arrives and says to Bhagavan:

- Give me realization.*
- When? asks the Maharshi.*
- Now!*
- Would you be able to bear it?*

The woman closed her eyes for a while and then ran off.

Another: One day a lady arrives, creates a sugar cane from nothing and explains to Ramana Maharshi that she had a vision of Shiva. But she can't have it again. What to do?

- *Ask yourself who saw," said the Maharshi.*

Moral: it's impossible.

Suresh told me another episode that this gentleman told him this morning.

- *People say that the Maharshi was dry, without feeling. Nothing could be further from the truth. He was full of compassion. One day, while he was talking to a group of people, a woman arrives crying and announces that someone in her family has died. The Maharshi, who knew the person who has died, has tears welling up in his eyes and he comes to cry, almost sobbing...*

We are offered *chai*. We talk about Nisargadatta and Suresh tells us about Swami Nityananda and asks me if I've been there. He tells us that he told Yogiji that he'd been there, etc...

...

Yogiji's car moves very slowly. Soon, together with Bala, Suresh and Anand, we run to the alley and even to the entrance of the darshan hall and wait. Yogiji's car has headed there. We dry off with our *dhotis* and Mani brings me a towel-shawl to dry my head. I give it back to him and put it over his shoulders.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

The others soon arrive, except Lee's group, who must be taking shelter. He finally arrives and is called, then Mani calls Krishna and, I don't know why, he then calls Edimo! When I come in, Rajagopal's wife has a word with me. The Americans are lined up as they were this morning. I'm in first place. What the Sudama sisters sing when we come in is "*Ram Lakshman Janaki, Jai Bolo Hanuman ki.*"

Lee is soon called to Yogiji and an American woman starts singing. I close my eyes and concentrate hard. Soon I hear "Krishna" softly. It's Lee who beckons me to come and sit with Alain. I listen to the conversation and try to join in. There are more and more people. More mats are added to the left of the columns. There is a judge. Selvaraj comes with a note. He arranges another mat in addition to the one that was already at the bottom of the platform and leads these people forward. Yogiji steps down from the dais.

All the time an American is filming, it seems non-stop. Yogiji settles down on the mat, facing the devotees. People come to sit down. Yogiji talks to them. Then His turban comes off and gradually falls away. He leaves it like that, then pats people on the back. Parthiban arrives, I wave, he takes photos. Chettiar, Suresh and Anand are ecstatic. Then Yogiji slowly goes back to His place, without his turban, which is still on His shoulders. He won't put it back on until later.

Alain does most of the talking, and as it's not at all interesting, because it's all about Formula 1 and other things, I end up just looking at Yogiji and don't take part in the conversation at all.

Soon Yogiji calls Lee and asks for another woman to sing. She then intones "*Yogi-Rama-Surata*" etc... with some sort of syncopation, and it ends with "*Ramaaaaom!*" Yogiji bursts out laughing into his beard. And it's the same thing every time the same passage comes up: he bursts out laughing. And of course everyone laughs. Everyone becomes a child again when seeing Yogiji! At one point I say to myself: "*What is this rhythm?*" And I can't help but recognize ... a Charleston rhythm! I watch Anand and Suresh's reactions...

Alain asks Lee why Yogiji is laughing. Lee replies:

- *Simply because He enjoys!*

I only know this because Lee is repeating Alain's question and answer to me, because my mind is elsewhere. At one point during the 'Charleston', Ma Devaki beckons Parthiban, who is at the back of the room, to come and take a photo of Yogiji. So Parthiban comes to our left, near the corner. He takes one or two, then waits for Yogiji to laugh, but Yogiji remains serious and ends up calling Selvaraj to tell Parthiban not to take any more photos and to go back to his seat... Yogiji lets this tune sing for a very long time, until 4.30pm, then he calls Lee, who comes back and tells me that we have to do like this morning.

As he stands up, Yogiji beckons us to come over, but I want to interpret this sign as being addressed only to Lee. I can't go up on the platform while Yogiji is still in the room. So Lee is sitting up there on his own. I wait for the car to leave,

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then stand up because I have to obey Yogiji, while Lee beckons me over at the same time.

- *This time, it's for half an hour,*" he says.

But quickly I close my eyes and think of Yogiji. A quarter of an hour later I open them and close them again, then sing along with everyone else, following the women who are singing: "*Yogi Ramsuratkumar Om*" in the American style. When I open my eyes after fifteen minutes, my three brothers Suresh, Anand and Bala have disappeared from the room. Rajagopal's wife will stay until the end.

I pick up some wisps of dust and earth that are before Lee, where Yogiji was standing, and say:

- *Dust from Yogiji's feet!*

Adding, because I can feel that he thinks it's silly:

- *Many people are looking for that!*

...

We go upstairs to Swamiji's (Swami Hamsananda) for coffee. We go upstairs and arrive in a room. Swamiji is sitting on the bed along the wall to the left of the door.

- *Krishna has come!* he says.

We settle down on mats around the room, with Swamiji sitting on the bed. On one wall, a large photo of Yogiji decorated with a garland. On the opposite wall, a photo of Ramana Maharshi.

On the windowsill on the wall opposite the bed, 2 photos of Yogiji, one with Chettiar behind Yogiji. They talk and translate for me, especially Anand. Swamiji tells about his first meeting with Yogiji, when, without speaking, he stayed up late into the night. Then he recounts another episode:

One day he goes to Yogiji's and there is a swami with strange manners, not very polite, who also comes in. Yogiji sits in such a way that Swamiji can see Him completely and the other swami cannot see Him at all... Yogiji says:

- *What is this swami?* etc...

Swamiji tells us that this swami couldn't understand anything, that his mind was blocked. Then he recounts another episode:

One day, someone, Balakumaran it seems, comes to see Yogiji, and to do so he dresses up, shirt super ironed, etc.... Yogiji lets him in, takes some dust and rubs it all over his shirt. So the next time, the other guy didn't know whether to come with clean clothes or dirty ones!

Suresh also narrates:

One day, someone who hadn't eaten comes to see Yogiji. Yogiji takes him in. And, only at around 2pm, he tells him: "You can go"! No food! Same story for another person,

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but better: the day before, he had come having eaten and Yogiji invited him to eat. He couldn't refuse!

For is part, Selvaraj tells the story of how he was taken into the ashram:

At the very beginning, a team was working to make the path for the *pradakshina*, before the walls went up. One day Yogiji arrives. Selvaraj cleans up where He is going to pass. Yogiji stops ... and voilà!

Another day, they make a path so that Yogiji can pass in a clean place ... and Yogiji takes another one. The next day they sweep the path ... and Yogiji takes again another.

Selvaraj also tells us that Yogiji said that no intervention was needed for his little daughter's harelip, that His Father would take care of it.

...

30th November

Shaktivel arrived last night and joined Parthiban at the statue.

...

7am: darshan. Then ashram pradakshina 3 times as usual: Suresh, Swaminathan, Krishna. Yogiji leaves around 7:30 am, then breakfast.

...

We head to the entrance for Yogiji's arrival at 10am.

There are a lot of people. There comes Justice Arunachalam and his brother! He sees me and says:

- *Krishna!*

We hug very, very tightly.

- *Yogi has linked us,"* he says.

What joy! His brother the doctor hugs me too. And now the professor (from Salem) has arrived too! It's wonderful!

After Yogiji's arrival, Justice and I walk arm in arm towards the queue. We are almost the last in line and join everyone waiting at the entrance to the hall. Justice is called,

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then the Americans, then Krishna. Justice is in the centre, slightly to the left to be separated from the American women. Lee is to his left, and to his left are his students. I forgot to mention that there were 7 Americans, 3 French, 4 Germans and one Englishman, or thereabouts. The doctor is behind, at the 'first' place, and I'm next to him.

Some time after the beginning of the darshan, Yogiji calls Lee to get a woman to sing and, a little later, he sits us down next to Alain. The singing begins. Yogiji smiles at the first musical phrase. Lee and I don't talk. I put my chair against the wall so that I can see Yogiji who, after a while, climbs down from the platform, walks around it with a paper in His hand and beckons Justice Arunachalam to follow Him. They sit down on the mat. Yogiji takes Justice's hand and concentrates. Then He 'does' Justice's nails, then repeatedly takes the paper on which little seems to be written and concentrates hard on it. At times he asks Lee to change the singer. Then He asks Justice to go back to his place and stands up on his own. Once Yogiji is on His feet, Selvaraj gives Him his hand but, having reached the other side of the platform, Yogiji beckons Selvaraj to go and sit down and He continues alone to His place on the platform. ...

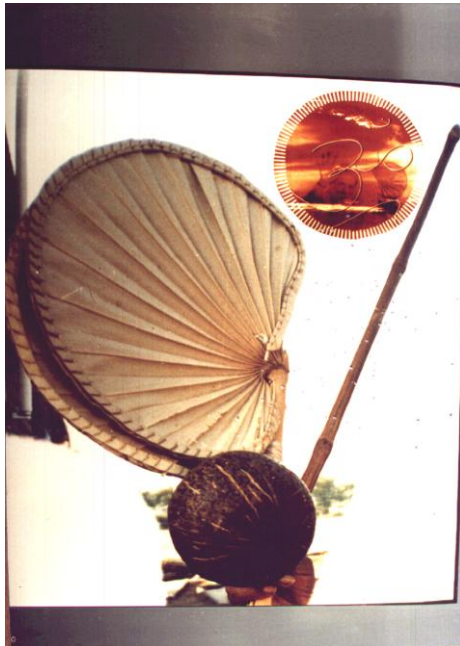
Yogiji calls Suresh and asks him to sing something. Suresh sings, standing next to Yogiji. His voice is weak, but the love it expresses is immense. These are Hindi songs he has composed about Yogiji, about the Guru. Tears come to my eyes. Yogiji will also ask Shankarajulu to sing.

Songs continue and Yogiji calls Lee to instruct him to do like yesterday concerning us. I was hoping that with

Arunachalam present this wouldn't happen. But Yogiji comes out and, as He passes by Justice, as Justice tells me later, tells him: *"This beggar is sending there members of Lee's group, but you stay here!"* Justice must have forgotten a word or two, because everyone knows that Krishna has nothing to do with Lee's group...

Yogiji out, we join the platform and I find myself still in the middle again. Yogiji has asked to distribute a photo of the beggar's fan, stick and bowl, taken by Dr Ramanathan.

...



I concentrate on the photo in front of me, then close my eyes and concentrate on Yogiji. Then, after a quarter of an

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hour, when Yogiji's name is sung, I look directly into the eyes of Justice, who is in front of me and watching me. Tears well up in our eyes. I keep my gaze immersed in his and an exchange beyond words, a real communion in Yogiji takes place between us. An American woman looks at us both and seems to sense this communion.

Then comes the *Mangalam* and the end of the darshan. I have the meal with Justice and his brother, I'm between the two of them. Justice tells me that Makarand will not come, that he'd received a message from Yogiji telling him about Lee's presence but not Krishna's. He tells me that Makarand and he say they haven't reached my level. He tells me that he and Makarand say they haven't reached my level of devotion. I laugh frankly and tell him that I feel exactly the same way about him. I tell him:

- *I'm a smoker, I often shout...*

- *Ah, you've never seen me shout!* he replies....

After lunch, I go off to some place I can't remember, then go and get my gourde after asking Shaktivel if he was coming with me. We make a 'diversion' past the last cottage and Arunachalam offers me the *prasad* in 'his' cottage... Fun fact, Arunachalam says that talking to Krishna is talking to Yogi Ramsuratkumar, or something like that.

...

Ropes have been put up along the ashram so that people stay behind when Yogiji arrives. I'm with Anand. Arunachalam moves and comes between us saying:

1997

- I want to be between two good people.

Yogiji's arrival, the car heads for the darshan hall. I'm among the last and find myself with Suresh... The Americans are in line in front, with Arunachalam in the centre and Alain is sitting on the chair. Yogiji seems to looking for someone, over and over again... He asks Shankarajulu to sing, then the Salem's teacher to give a speech, then he calls Suresh to sing something from his notebook. At the end of darshan He calls me to go and sit on the chair with Lee. And at the very end of darshan, we have to go to His place again and we go there. Like this morning, a photo has been distributed.



...

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At 7pm, we're called to the dance show that Srinivasan's wife is going to give... It's SUPERB! I didn't know she could dance so well. She's a real professional! The show consisted of several parts: 1) Ganesh, 2) Shiva Nataraj, 3) Krishna, 4) Yogi Ramsuratkumar. Arunachalam presented the first numbers, then Shankaraju. Then it's time for the meal.

In the evening, M... tells me about "Mani's life".¹⁵

...

¹⁵ Which has not to be written here.

1st December Jayanti

Shaktivel comes early again and wakes me up, even though he didn't mean to. I learnt the day before from Suresh, who was preparing for the Homa, that the Homa, which was supposed to take place at 6am, has been postponed by Yogiji. It will start after He has had breakfast in the hut, i.e. at 7.30am.

While I'm doing the *pradakshina*, I see Yogiji coming out of the hut and Arunachalam wearing a garland. Justice, at 1.30 p.m., will tell me that Yogiji blessed him twice and then a third time at the car.

This time no one is inside the *Yagashala*, but everyone is behind the ropes. The only ones in the *Yagashala* are Yogiji, Ma Devaki, Sudama's sisters and the officiants who are my brothers Suresh, his father, Anand, Ramesh, C.V.R. and Balakrishnan. Mukilan is filming. Suddenly I see a big monkey, high above the corner of the main *mandapam*, looking at the Homa. I quickly report it to Mukilan:

- *Hanuman is here!*

So Mukilan films him for a few moments. Yogiji is very concentrated. Arunachalam will tell me that he said on TV (see below) bless the gods... This is the 'vision' he had of

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things. At one point Arunachalam joins me and for a long time, arm in arm, we look at Yogiji.

After the homa and Yogiji's departure, it's breakfast.

...

10am: darshan. Yogiji arrives and then, as people follow the queue behind the ropes, I'm told to go to the darshan hall. So I take the central aisle.... Some TV people are there, setting up their equipment and filming from time to time.

The astrologer made a very long speech, re-tells what he has already said last year about his longevity, then he stops, picks up his bag and a bottle of water, habs his fill and continues, then more water, and so on... He'll do the same thing to us about Lee Lozowick. God, human ignorance! O God, Kali yuga! Why did this gentleman always give me the impression of an empty 'did you see me'¹⁶?

Finally, after three quarters of an hour, Yogiji sends Selvaraj to fetch Shankarajulu so that he sings, and then he sends for Suresh. I then feel what Suresh feels. Then it is the professor from Salem who, during his speech, pronounces the name '*Bhagavan Yogi Ramsuratkumar*' and is moved to tears. So I'm moved to tears too. Then, before we leave, Yogiji sends Selvaraj to fetch me so that I sit with Lee and Alain, as seems to have been decided by now, and then it's the exit.

...

¹⁶ Showboater, glory hound, show-off.

Mukilan tells the TV people who are there that they have to interview me. Further on, Raji tells us that the meal takes place in the *Yagashala*. In fact it takes place in the circular *mandapam*.

...

I had seen Swaminathan, whose name I didn't know until now, under the courtyard. He is now near me and I invite him to come and eat with me. After a bit of a wait we go in and I tell him I'm happy to be with him. Indeed, this gentleman, who is very close to Yogiji, is exemplary in his discretion and humility. We settle in and talk about my departure. He will book my bus ticket on the 2nd, and I'll leave on the 3rd after lunch. Mani comes to tell me that the TV is waiting for me. So I say to my neighbor:

- *What can we say, but 'Yogi Ramsuratkumar'?*

...

Justice, who is there, tells me:

- *They're going to interview you, I've said something, Lee's said something, Yogi's with you and I'll be near you.*

...

We head for the cottages and the interview takes place at the bottom of the steps of Mani's cottage. They make me do it a second time because the sun is getting in the way here and there. I don't know what to say. I don't want to talk about myself, as Arunachalam tells me to do and as I'm sure everyone expects me to do. So I say something like:

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- *Yogi Ramsuratkumar is the name of the Soul that pervades everything. He constantly blesses all beings everywhere, but we are not aware of this. 'Only my Father exists', He says, and He says that to become conscious of it, we have to chant the Name, whether it is 'Aum Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram', Victory to Consciousness, or 'Yogi Ramsuratkumar Yogi Ramsuratkumar Yogi Ramsuratkumar jaya Guru Raya', etc....*

Then Justice Arunachalam takes the role of interviewer and asks this question:

- *When you wrote the article 'India my Mother, Yogi my Father', was the Omkara there?*

- *The Omkara was there, but I didn't see it with this! I say, pointing to my eyes....*

4 :00 pm Darshan.-

...

I follow everyone and don't go with the Americans. I will do the *pradakshina* around the statue and enter the darshan hall, going behind everyone on the left where extra mats have been laid out, soon joined by Suresh and, behind, by C.V.R. I'm behind Swaminathan. Yogiji asks the person with the gravelly voice who spoke last year and the year before to make his speech. He does it sitting down. He talks and talks and talks. It lasts about three quarters of an hour. At one point during his speech, I say to Suresh: *"That's just the introduction..."* Then Shankarajulu is called. Then Yogiji calls

Lee to tell him to go and sit with me next to Alain. Lee looks for me and I move over to the chair, doing the anjali which Yogiji returns to me in a very serious manner ... Then Yogiji asks for some American women to sing. He then makes them stop and calls Arunachalam. Justice calls a young man and Yogiji sits him down in front of Sudama's sisters. After a while, Justice introduces this young man to the assembly and he sings a song about Yogiji in Tamil. What a wonderful voice! He had heard this song, but had never met Yogiji before. He has expressed his desire to sing the song in front of Him. Then Yogiji asks Arunachalam to say a few words. What he says is, of course, magnificent.

After a while, Yogiji calls Lee, who comes back to tell me that, once again, we will have to go to His place. Ma and the sisters leave, then Yogiji gets up and immediately beckons us to come. Once seated, I sing and close my eyes, concentrating on my Father...

...

The *ârti* is done by Mani and then I go out and it's prasad. Everyone's leaving! Arunachalam tells me that he will leave.... It's Parthiban's turn to leave. He decorates Yogiji's car with two garlands. As for Shaktivel, he has to take the bus. Arunachalam comes out of the ashram to his car, which is surrounded by a few people. He comes towards me and we hug, as did his brother and I immediately afterwards. The TV people are there and he asks them if they could send me a copy of the tape of what they have filmed, but free of charge. That's agreed. Then Justice takes me aside and tells me that he'd like to make a donation to the Mauritius ashram and asks me if it's possible.

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- Before, as a judge, I was poor, but now Bhagavan has given me the opportunity as a lawyer in Delhi to earn money.

I tell him that I'll find out whether it's possible to send money from India for this purpose and that I'll email him the answer via Makarand. He gets in the car and asks me to write to him at least once or twice a year. I tell him I will. His daughter is there and I have exchanged a few words with her. They all get in and drive off.

...

2nd December

There are very few people at the darshan. It's strange after the crowds for the Jayanti the day before. The Americans, Suresh, Bala, Ramamurthy and I are there. We walk the *pradakshina* of the ashram three times. Yogiji leaves.

After breakfast, I go to Rajagopal's with the video camera and first spend a few moments at Chettiar's... I then go to Rajagopal's and film, but the camera quickly malfunctions. Another attempt a little later but it's the same.

Aachi and Chettiar are due to leave by car for the family's place in the south, but at 3.40pm Aachi leads me to believe that Yogiji's car is on its way, and off she goes. I quickly take the road that passes behind and find her just before the entrance for the 10am darshan.

Suresh and Bala are there. I go with everyone to the statue, while the Americans go straight to the darshan hall.

Yogiji makes the Americans sing. After a while, he calls Lee who then beckons me to come and sit down, as is now a habit.

...

Then, before leaving, Yogiji calls Lee to get the American girls to sing and for us to go to His place once He's

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out. As usual, I'm in the middle of the platform, so I look behind the cushion to see if I can find a hair. Bala and Suresh understand immediately, smiling and imploring. I see some of Yogiji's cigarette ashes on the platform.

...

I join Rajagopal. I had left everything at his place: the tape recorder in the choridhar's bag, and the camera. We talk a bit about Mauritius, the population, etc... The Americans who are always in groups, Lee's visit to Mauritius, the haggling he did at the Port-Louis market for T-shirts, etc... Then, noticing that Rajagopal is tired, I leave them so that he can rest. I tell them I'll be back tomorrow morning: we need more footage. He gives me an empty cassette to copy what I've filmed of him.

...

Soon the phone rings. Mani tells me that the TV people are there and that another man, the manager, is there too and that they want to see me. He asks if he can bring them over. So I quickly get dressed and comb my hair. These gentlemen arrive. There are two chairs and an armchair and I invite them to sit down. They say to me:

- *And you?*

- *I'll sit here,*" I say, pointing to the floor.

Hence, we all agree to sit on the floor.

What do I want? A copy of the tape. That will be done. Before going any further, the 'director' explains a wish to me.

He introduces himself, he is an advocate of the High Court of Chennai, and so he knows Justice Arunachalam well. This pronounced name indicates to me that I can listen further and be open. He says that apart from that, his 'job' is to help people discover true Hinduism. He is a Hindu but respects everyone. He wishes to broadcast reports on Tamil culture in Mauritius and asks for my help (I skip all the details). I reply that he could do this in collaboration with the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, that I also had friends, etc... I'm thinking in particular of Ajay. This gentleman's work (as a lawyer) is in fact the same as Ajay's, so I can see an opening. Then he says that if we can get closer to the tourism body, he can promote Mauritius in Tamil Nadu and create mutual exchanges. I'm very open. It was agreed that he would send me a synopsis which I could then present to the Mahatma Gandhi Institute.¹⁷

At the end, I tell them that I wish the cassette to be broadcast in Mauritius and that everything, including the titles, should be identical to the original. I also add that they have to add to my interview that I am now in Mauritius.

The telephone rings for darshan. We agree to meet again at 6pm.

4 :00 pm Darshan.-

Like this morning, I go to the statue and, as I enter the darshan hall, I find myself at the back, a little in front of Edimo. The TV man is just in front of me on the left. Yogiji has some American girls singing and soon calls Selvaraj so that

¹⁷ I never received anything.

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Lee and I go and sit down. The singing goes on for a long time, then Yogiji picks up a Hindu-colored envelope and looks at it for a long time. He asks Ma Devaki a question.

After a while, the American singers change, and then He calls a woman who has been at all the darshans for a few days (Jayanti). He makes the Americans stop and she sings in turn. I know the second song (... *urmille*) She sings magnificently, it's superb. At the prasad at the exit, she explains to me that she had mentally said to Yogiji in her mind: "Why don't you call me to sing" and that Yogiji had immediately called her. She also tells me that she wrote the lyrics and music for the first song. BEAU-TI-FUL.

During this darshan, Yogiji gives 2 dried gooseberries to Ma Devaki, who comes to give them to Lee and me.

- He said that His Father gives you this.

Yogiji calls Selvaraj to bring in a man who is standing at the back. As the man arrives, Yogiji blesses him and smiles. The man prostrates himself and Yogiji speaks to him, and then sits him down on the mat to His right. A priest (probably from the temple) arrives with some people who must be members of the Committee. They put a beautiful garland on Yogiji; the priest says the prayer while the Americans start talking. Yogiji reaches into His right pocket and hands something to each of them. They leave. Yogiji becomes very concentrated, as if in samadhi. He's up there, no doubt about it. Then He comes back to our plan. I say to Lee:

- He will put the garland on you.

- *I had the same idea, but for you.*
- *No, for me, it's already done.*

Yogiji takes down His garland and calls Selvaraj to tell him to put it at the Paramacharya's photo... Then He signals to the gentleman sitting on the mat to return to his seat, calls Lee who comes back and says that we have to go to the stage again ("The 'Trimurti' told me Chettiar this morning...") and leaves. Lee doesn't even wait for Yogiji to get into the car, he rushes. Does he want to be in Yogiji's place? I let him anyway. I follow and, as usual, put my hands on the spot where Yogiji was sitting and bring them to my eyes and over my head before sitting down. The garland is still there, but some of the flowers have gone. I take a small white one and put it in my mouth, chewing it. The American is filming, always, constantly. Lee tells me something like: "*Is it good?*", laughing, perhaps with a touch of mockery. Then I say, "The best are rose petals." There is one, I pick it up, chew it and swallow. So he picks up two and hands them to me. I do the same. Soon, twice, some people come and touch his feet. I let it happen, of course; what to do anyway, preferring to close my eyes the first time and the second time concentrate on Selvaraj hanging the garland.

Photos. Mani arrives and goes next to Lee, handing his camera to an American to take a photo. He talks loudly. I think it's stupid, everyone's laughing! Where is Yogiji, His presence?

Thanks be to Heaven, at 5.30 a.m., Mani asks to intone the *Mangalam*. Ârti by Ramamurthy. Mani calls me and John. He invites us to come tonight at 7:30 because there will be a meal in my honor and he tells him that our story goes back to the beginning... and the crying at the airport... Exit? After that,

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on the threshold of the darshan hall, Mani asks the African girls to do an African dance tomorrow! He asks me when I'm leaving so that he can tell Yogiji:

- Tomorrow, on the 2-hour Point to Point. Departure from Chennai on the 5th at 7.40pm, departure from Mumbai during the night, very early on the 6th.

Prasad. The lady who has sung comes up to me and says what I have quoted above. The man from the TV asks me to come not at 6pm but at 7pm.

...

On the way back from Sudama, Mani sees me (with the American?) and tells me that he gave Yogiji the information about my departure but that Yogiji didn't react.

It's 7.15pm and the TV person still hasn't arrived. I'm called to go and eat at Mani's with John who's due to arrive. Mani does nothing but talk, making fun of people who meditate but who can only do so if others prepare food for them, etc.... He's the only one talking. However, he says:

- Every meeting with Him is a new experience. Maybe he'll say to me: 'Good-bye next time...''.

It must be during the meal that I am told that the TV people are waiting for me. Mani says they can wait a little longer. Then I join them. We sit down again on the floor and everything changes. First he asks me to negotiate the rights on the report on Yogiji, which he would do in two half-hour

segments, with Mauritian TV. Either he gives me the rights and I negotiate them with Mauritian TV, or I negotiate directly with Mauritian TV on his behalf. He's asking for quite a lot of rupees, I think 150,000 rupees per half-hour... The rate would be higher, I think, for other reports... I tell him I'd rather have someone else do it for me because I don't like discussing money when it comes to Yogiji... Now he would only send me the tape with the Betacam tape once I've negotiated the rights! It just goes to show that people change as soon as they can get money out of it!!! As for the rest, it all comes back to sending the synopsis... I join Mani and John (at least that's how things must have worked out). We have a little chat on the steps.

As we part, he says, "Prepare to be called to the hut in the morning."

...

3rd December

7 o'clock. As I walk down the aisle to the entrance, Lee is there waiting for me. So we carry on together.

- *I was really happy to see you this time, Krishna.*
- *The same for me. We are united now.*
- *Yes, He planted the seed and now it's blooming.*¹⁸

Mani is there at the entrance with his camera and wants to take a picture of the two of us Lee in front of Arunachala. So we pose arm in arm before the other Americans arrive.

Yogiji left for the temple early this morning for the opening of the Dipam. Swaminathan arrives on his bike, comes up to me and gives me the token for the bus. I ask him how much I owe him but he doesn't want anything. Chettiar isn't here because they've left. He adds that he'll come to the station for my departure.

¹⁸ Actually, that will not be the case. Quite the contrary in fact! After Yogiji's Mahasamadhi, books were published by Hohm Press, in other words by Lee, who did everything in his power to make Krishna appear to be a passing stranger and Lee to be Yogiji's main disciple, without even mentioning the name of his real main disciple: Justice Arunachalam. Books with a few misleading or 'Alice in Wonderland'-style episodes, all to the glory of Lee. Mani will also write his own book, which will be published by Hohm Press on condition that he adds a chapter - totally untrue - praising Lee.

Here comes Yogiji's car, quickly. I immediately deduce that Yogiji is not inside. Ravi is alone and announces that Yogiji won't be coming until around 7.30. So Swaminathan beckons me to do the pradakshina. At 7:30 the car arrives again quickly. Ravi's message: Yogiji won't be coming until 10.

Swaminathan tells me he's very happy to have met me. I tell him that it's me that I am, to see people like him, so humble and so on. We salute each other. I go to see Kannan, unless I've done so before the *pradakshina*, to remind him of the *tulsi* seeds and the hibiscus, because Saravanand had told me yesterday: "*tomorrow before your departure, I'll do it*", But Kannan tells me that Saravanand won't be coming today... I fetch the video camera and my *chappals* and put them at the entrance of the refectory so that I can go straight to Rajagopal's, then I come back to have breakfast.

During breakfast Selvaraj arrives. Yesterday was his little daughter's birthday and I went to see the adorable little Priya. I ask him about the plants. OK, he'll come. After breakfast I see him talking to Mani about it. Mani calls me:

- *Do you want flowers from here?*
- *Yes.*
- *Granted!*

Selvaraj and I take a tour of the ashram and he shows me various plants. I collect a few seeds, including seeds of a plant he says is good for jaundice (red seeds). Then he tells me he's going to cut the hibiscus (there was a conversation between Selvaraj and Kannan about how to cut certain branches), prepare them and put them at the entrance to the

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cottage. Selvaraj explains to me how to plant the branches: never straight, but at an angle.

I have to go to Rajagopal's. I pack my bag. Selvaraj cuts a plastic bottle of Bisleri water to put the soil and the hibiscus and so on in. I leave for Rajagopal's while Selvaraj starts to get busy.

As usual, the camera breaks down after a while. However, I took advantage of its brief moment of good form to film Rajagopal too. We talk a bit. His wife asks me my date of birth. One of her sons was born in April 1950. She wishes Ishvari, Lakshmi and Parvati a Happy New Year. I say that the first thing I will do when I arrive in Mauritius will be to make the copy. Then Rajagopal goes to get some kind of shawl. Seeing its color, I say:

- That's it, we should have put that in the background.

I feel like he's going to put it on my shoulders. And bang!

- For you, Krishna.

I kneel before him.

- It's silk from Benares.

He also gives me a big pomegranate. I try again with the video camera, which works for a while. Now I have to go back, so I salute them both and Rajagopal accompanies me on

the threshold and follows me with his eyes to the bend in the road.

When I arrive at the cottage, I saw see Selvaraj has put the plants in the bottle of Bisleri in the corner of the door. It's all done very carefully. I finish packing my bag and copy these notes.

10:00 am Darshan.-

Last darshan before I leave. As usual, Yogiji calls Lee after a while to tell us to go and sit down. American women sing. At one point, Yogiji calls me:

- *Krishna, you're leaving today?*
- *Yes, father.*
- *At what time?*
- *By the 2 o'clock bus, Father.*

He then takes 6 fresh gooseberries from his pocket and gives them to me.

- *My Father blesses you, wherever you are!*

I come back to sit down on the chair. Later, Yogiji calls me again. I go over to him and prostrate myself, my head against His knee. Then He looks me straight in the eye, with his piercing gaze that goes to the very depths of the being. I do the same, thinking very hard about my two Mums, mentally asking Him to relieve them, then I lower my eyes and close them. After a while, Yogiji asks me to go and get my bag from the cottage. I come back and, on the threshold, wait a little

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

while, Ma beckons me to come. So I go next to Yogiji and open the bag. Yogiji takes 2 apples:

- *My Father blesses Ishvari, my Father blesses the children.*

And He gives me the two apples, which I place in the bag after raising them to my forehead. Yogiji takes two more apples:

- *Father's blessings.*

Likewise He takes again 2 apples:

- *Father's blessings.*

In the end, there are 7 apples in the bag, which I close. I put it aside and prostrate. Yogiji makes me raise my head and gives me a rupee.

- *Father's blessings.*

I put my head against His knee. He strokes it twice and then gives me two huge pats on the back. I raise my head and Yogiji looks at me, then immediately looks up at the heavens and blesses me. Then he gives me a little nod to let me know that I should put my bag back. So off I go to the cottage. When I come back, Mani calls me, but I can't remember what it's about. When I re-enter the darshan hall, I go straight to my seat by passing to the left. Maybe I'm wrong, certainly even, but that was the impulse I had and I followed it. I should have gone towards Yogiji, or at least wait for a sign.

At 11.15, Yogiji calls Lee: we have to go back to the platform. Yogiji leaves. I'm overcome with emotion. Just as He's leaving the stage, Lee rushes; Yogiji has, I think, signaled to go there. He goes out, the car drives off. I ask Lee if Yogiji has given a time until which we should stay.

- *Yes, until midday.*

Around 11.30 Mani comes but we tell him that Yogiji said we had to stay until midday. It's now the end of darshan. The blacks have not come.

I eat. My bag is almost ready.

...

I go to Mani's and give him 1,000 rupees - it's all I can do this year. Then I thank everyone who is there.

...

Then we get into Yogiji's car: Ravi is driving and Saravanand and Raja are in the back.

- *This is the first time Raja accompanies me," I say.*

Arrived at the station, we wait. Swaminathan arrives about 10 minutes after us. I tell him that Shaktivel must be waiting for me in Tambaram, apparently to meet some holy person (when I told Anastasia about this stop in Tambaram earlier, she told me about a holy person...). Swaminathan tells me that when Yogiji moved from Sannadhi Street to Sudama,

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He wanted to take some precious things and asked Swaminathan, among other things, to find the article "*India my Mother, Yogi my Father.*" He tells me that next year his family will be coming to Tiruvannamalai and that he'll introduce them to me. He stays there until the bus leaves, while Ravi, Saravanand and Raja have already been gone for a few minutes. He even helps me put my things on the bus. When the bus leaves, we greet each other in Anjali. I filled up with fresh Limca. He stays there until the bus leaves, while Ravi, Saravanand and Raja have already gone since a few minutes. He even helps me put my things on the bus. When the bus leaves, we greet each other in *anjali*. I filled up with fresh Limca.

Tambaram. It's still daylight. No matter how hard I look outside, I can't see Shaktivel! Finally, there he is and he spots me. My neighbor has got out of the bus. I quickly say to Shaktivel:

- *I don't get off. Mukilan phoned and Mani told me not to get off. Get in, you!*
- *No, I've informed.*

Anyway, the bus has nothing to do with our dialogue and begins to start. Shaktivel runs up close to the bus and explains to the driver that I have to get off, which I eventually do, the driver having stopped.

But then Shaktivel came from Chennai on a scooter! He's really optimistic, because how can I put my backpack in when it's so full? He didn't know that my rucksack would be so full and so heavy... And I didn't know he'd be on a scooter...

We find a solution. I put the bag on my back, get on the scooter and put the bag on the spare wheel behind me, and off we go. But soon, having to adopt a posture where my back has to move backwards a bit, the vertebrae healed by Yogiji last year starts to titillate me. We stop further on and loosen my pack straps a little. We set off again, feeling much better. After a few kilometers, we reach a town and Shaktivel takes to the streets. We finally reach a house near a crossroads, where I can see that we are expected. It appears that they were asking, "*When will we see Krishna?*" and he said, "*I'll bring him to you.*" What house is this? Swaminathan's house.

I'm ushered in and seated, and soon asked if I'd like anything. Then I'm invited into the next room, which is longer. At the far end of this room, on the left, is a sort of concrete bookcase, with all the shelves occupied by photos of Yogiji. Most, if not all, of these photos, Shaktivel tells me, have a story behind them, having been donated by Yogiji. We sit there and I learn that Swaminathan has been transferred to Tiruvannamalai.

They once lived in Tiruvannamalai. Swaminathan's wife, as Shaktivel had already told me, used to feed Yogiji. In 1981, instead of the house we're standing in now, there was nothing, no house, it was the countryside. Before building, they did a *bhumipuja*. During this *puja*, a cow and her calf appeared out of nowhere, went round three times and vanished. No one knows where they came from or where they went.

The following year, in 1982, once the house was finished, the specific *puja* took place. Yogiji had told them He would be there. Once again, a single cow came, went round

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three times and left. So, says the girl (who is Shaktivel's chemistry teacher), Yogiji came. They didn't move into this house until 1989. From Tiruvannamalai they had moved to a town north-west of Chennai on the way to Tirupati, whose name is something like Pooni.

I'm asked to sing. I sing a little the Gurunama and Shaktivel and Swaminathan's daughter respond. Then this young girl (the eldest daughter, the other is in the next room studying. Her name is Lakshmi and she received her name from Yogiji). She sings a song about Yogiji. Then she and the Mum sing another song. At the end, we are served a meal of *idlis* and *dosas*.

It's a blessing from Yogiji: on the very day I'm leaving, the dad, upon whom I looked with great respect for his humble and retiring manner, comes to the station to say goodbye to me. At that time I told him that it looks like we are going to see a holy person in Tambaram with Shaktivel, and when I get off the bus, I find myself in his family!

After that, we get back on the scooter, are greeted and we greet and, for many kilometers, drive to Chennai and to Mukilan's house, who is absent, having taken the train to Madurai and not due back until the next morning.

...

Mukilan has arrived. Just before taking me to the airport, he receives a phone call:

Yogiji has just someone phone Arunachalam in Delhi to tell him to stop what he is doing and to move to Tiruvannamalai for the rest of his life!

This is where the notes end.

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1998 was to be an eventful year. Shortly after returning from Tiruvannamalai, the second plot of land for a possible ashram was purchased in December 1997, doubling the size of the first. The price obtained was really interesting, being about half that of the first, for the same surface area. Some time later, this acquisition might have been impossible because the owner, who was already ill, left this Earth.

Then came the Mahashivaratri, where Krishna did nothing special this time. The following 15 days he took part in the Holi festival at Chitrakut, with the young people. The consecration of the land as an ashram had been planned for the Mahashivaratri, but the rains were so heavy that everything was just mud. This meant that Yogiji had not chosen that day and the consecration was postponed until Ram Navami.

On that day, 5 April, from the Tulsi Krit Hanuman Mandir in Chitrakut, devotees made their way up to the ground chanting bhajans. On the ground, a kund had been prepared by Krishna and Vishal. People settled around the kund and the *Taraka mantra* was chanted: "AUM SRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM", followed by the *homa*. At the end of the 'ceremony', the people chanted the name of YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR. The land had just been consecrated...

Then came the month of April when, with the Vishva Hindu Parishad, he took an active part in the setting up of the Hindu Sangam and the arrival of Swami Chinmayananda Sarasvati from Haridvar. Not only is Swamiji a renowned swami in India, he is also a B.J.P. deputy in the Lok Sabha of India.

Yogiji wanted Krishna to accompany Swamiji wherever he went, being present at all the *sangams* and acting as a sort of reporter for the photo and video coverage. Swamiji affectionately called Krishna 'Gaura Krishna', which translates as 'Black White'. Before, sometimes Krishna used to call himself the 'White Krishna'. He liked this name: both white and black and neither white nor black. On the eve of his departure, Swamiji went to the plot to plant a *Nimba* (neem).

...

Then, on 1 August, Ashok Singhal, President of the Vishva Hindu Parishad, came to Mauritius for a 3-day visit before attending the International Hindu Conference in Nairobi. Once again, Yogiji ensured that Krishna accompanied Ashokji everywhere. In particular, he accompanied him to see the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister. One episode is worth recounting here. The Prime Minister of Mauritius is a man who was born a Hindu, but who was educated in England, who seems to be very attached to England, and who lives a completely Western lifestyle, seeming to have nothing to do with Hindu values. He doesn't speak a single Indian language and it seems he has never worked in any profession. When he entered the Prime Minister's office, Krishna was introduced as "Krishna of the Vishva Hindu Parishad", and the swarthy Hindu saw a white Hindu enter, greeting him in Anjali and saying "Namaste". The other did not know how to behave or how to respond. It was really two opposites meeting: a Hindu becoming a typical Westerner and a Westerner becoming a Hindu.

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Ashokji gave a lecture at the *Human Service Trust* in Calebasses. Krishna had been asked not only to provide photo and video coverage, but to design a fold-out page to present Ashokji with text and photo ... (to be completed)

(I never finished these notes)

1998

17th November

Arrived at the airport fairly early, we¹⁹ learn that the flight has been delayed from 8.30pm to 11.30pm. Once everyone is settled on board, it is easy to see that the plane is completely full. As for the three of us, we are placed in the centre as there are no free seats left near the windows. I had hoped for a seat like this because, for Ajay and Vikash, not only is this their first trip to India, it's also their first flight.

...

18th November

We arrive in Mumbai at around 7.30 am and are greeted by Ramesh's²⁰ friend Venu Prabhu.

...

¹⁹ Krishna, Ajay and Vikash.

²⁰ A very close friend of Krishna, a true brother, from India and working for the Mauritius Swayamsevak Sangh.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

19th November

...

It's not until around 8pm that the train pulls into Chennai station. I go to a STD outside and phone Mukilan's parents-in-law's. Lakshmi tells me that Mukilan has gone to pick me up and asks where I am so that she can inform Mukilan. Mukilan arrives some 5 or 10 minutes later and of course we hug.

...

20th November

So this morning we go to Chennai with Mukilan to do some shopping, ... and we stop at Kumar's where I see some wonderful new photos of Yogiji. Naturally, he is in a hurry to offer me one in a small size.

...

Then we go to see Sadhu Rangarajan, as I have to check with him when he would be coming to Mauritius...

...

21st November

4am-4.30am: get up! I'm very tired. When I'm ready, the driver hasn't arrived yet. After a while, at last, we set off for Tiruvannamalai. Mukilan brings along a pillow so that I can rest in the car. We stop along the way, as we did last year with Kumar, in the same place, and I have some idlis and coffee (with milk, of course). The road has been resurfaced and is spotless.

...

We arrive at the ashram at 9.15am. A happy reunion. I'm staying in cottage no. 4. Mani is not at the ashram, and I have learnt from Mukilan that Yogiji is running the ashram Himself. I also learnt that Justice Arunachalam was due to come to the ashram definitively around 15 December...

10:00 am Darshan: While I am waiting for Yogiji to arrive, or is it afterwards, I am introduced to Bret, the American that Janki had told me about. I realize I know him; he's the American who's building a house that never ends being finished opposite the ashram, not far from the Atithi ashram. After doing the *pradakshina* of the statue, we go to the darshan hall and the chanting begins. I'm called in with Mukilan. Like last year, Yogiji welcomes people near the mandapam's front door. Yogiji makes me sit on His left, Mukilan on mine. Yogiji will not say a word to me. I will find out later that He's not well.

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Yogiji receives a few people. He asks to bring in Swaminathan. Swaminathan ... the person who has known Yogiji for so long, who is so humble and wonderful! Yogiji is told that there are two people. Yogiji smiles: "Ah, they are two." In fact there's only one, and it's not the Swaminathan I was thinking of. This one is from Chennai and he's praying to Yogiji for his mother who, if I remember correctly, is 71 and losing her sight through diabetes. Soon Yogiji will bless him, saying: "Your mother will regain her sight, by the grace of my Father". I can't help but feel a sense of gratitude for this incarnation and of communion with this man and his mother. Then it's the turn of a man from Singapore whose family lives in Madras. A few members of his family are with him. He too has brought some fruit from the country where he lives to give to Yogiji. Yogiji will ask to accommodate him in a cottage with the members of his family who are accompanying him.

I'm here with my offerings but Yogiji doesn't speak to me. I don't know what to do. I stay by His side until midday, a great blessing. When He tells us to go, I stand up and give Him the bag containing lychees from Mauritius: "Some lychees from Mauritius, Father". He takes it with a smile: "from Mauritius"...

After munch, I sleep.

4:00 pm Darshan: Shaktivel is here! This morning his brother announced to me about his arrival. I'll not go to sing. I've met Bret and we're both going into the cottage to have a chat with him and Shaktivel... We're going out for Yogiji's departure. ...



Venkatraman, Sashi et Kannan

22nd November

Gopal wakes me up at 6 and brings me coffee.

At 7 o'clock, during the breakfast darshan, Swaminathan is there! Shaktivel has told me that his family now lived in Tiruvannamalai. We do the ashram *pradakshina*. Then Yogiji's exit.

That's the day I'll be distributing the T-shirts I've brought from Mauritius. This will cause problems, as some people don't have one... I won't be attending a full singing session. A lady who sang last year (inwardly, she asked Yogiji to make her sing and was immediately called) is currently leading the singing. So it's much livelier than last year.

I have told Shaktivel and Swaminathan the 'story' of the cassette of the 'conversation' between Yogiji and Sri Ramamurthy's group. I explain that what needs to be done now is to try to understand everything, to put all the text in Tamil and in transliteration, to get the translation and also to find all the words in English. We agree to go to Swaminathan's house that very evening. So we go there with Shaktivel, it's a little outside the centre of Tiruvannamalai on the road we took to do the *pradakshina* on the hill. Swaminathan's daughter is there and we begin. But it is agreed that his daughter will work on it and take care of it, along with Shaktivel. It's truly magnificent!

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23rd November

Yogiji seems to be doing better. I'm getting to know Bret more and more, who is an 'extra' American. We are very often together. On the first day he tells me about John (from Thailand) who, he says, will not arrive until the 3rd. As we wait in the queue to do the *pradakshina* at the statue, he tells me: "*Krishna is known everywhere!*"

Acchi Chettiar has been unwell for over a week. But she seems to be recovering day by day. Because, of course, I very soon saw Chettiar again!

I've learned a lot about Mani... At least I've heard... But the various oral reports say the same thing.... (We must refrain from talking about it here).

...

24th November

It's on the 23rd or 24th that I tell Ravi, after the darshan in the *mandapam*, that I have some things to give to Yogiji but that I don't want to disturb Him. So I tell him that I'm going to give them to him so that he can give them to Yogiji. But Ravi tells me he's going to talk to Yogiji about it.

The chanting session begins and I open it by chanting the name of Yogi Ramsuratkumar. But I am soon called. So I run to the cottage to get everything and go next to Yogiji, who makes me sit on His left.

Yogiji soon gets Ravi to give Him one of the two letters that are on the right-hand chair and the origin of which I can see: Anandashram. Ravi gives it to Yogiji, who hands it to me and says:

- *Go through that.*

Swami Sadchidananda, because Yogiji was his *gurubhai* at the ashram. So I read the letter. It is signed by Sriram and asks Yogiji to kindly write an article or message to be included in a 'Souvenir' that the ashram is going to publish to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the taking of Sannyasa by (Swami Sdtchidananda) in Swami Ramdas's time, on 26 January.

Yogiji asks me if I've ever been to Anandashram.

- *Yes, Father, in 1990.*
- *Did you meet Swamiji?*
- *Yes, Father, just for ten minutes or so.*

Yogiji asks how long He has to answer. I look, that's 2 months. After a while, Yogiji tells me:

- *Krishna, this beggar is a poor writer. Think of writing an article or a message for this and see about going to Anandashram to talk to Sriram and Swamiji....*

Tears immediately come to my eyes and, not seeing that this is perhaps an order since it is a request from the Guru, perhaps reacting selfishly, I say to my Master:

- *Father, forgive me, but I'm too small to give a message. Only you can deliver a message. Who am I to do this, what message can I give? Only if You yourself write through me...*²¹

Yogiji says nothing. He will not talk about it any more.

Then Yogiji gives me the second letter from Anandashram to read. It's earlier than the first one and makes the same request. It says, however, that they want the article or message by 6 December or something like that. I explain this to Yogiji. Then I remain the letter in my hand.

²¹ Reliving the scene much later, I will regret it all my life and it still haunts me. Even if it was a question of modesty and I was only expressing what I thought and felt, the only thing to do was to obey the Master, without looking for excuses or making phrases.

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I specify to Yogiji that on a previous trip I had thought of going back to Anandashram but that He had wanted me to stay at the ashram. I also tell Him that I went to Anandashram just before having His first darshan.

Perhaps that day, or the day Yogiji received me for the first time, I told Him that 2 friends from Mauritius, from Chittrakut, would be arriving and that they were in Mumbai for the time being, one of them a trustee of the Yogi Ramsuratkumar Ashram (in Mauritius in project). Yogiji immediately blesses:

- All will be all right.

It must be at this point that, by signs, I make Ravi understand that I don't know if I should offer what I've brought now. Ravi says yes. So I offer Yogiji the tape of the conversation with Sri Ramamurthy 'cleaned up'. Yogiji wears it on her forehead and gives it back to me, as do the drawings of Lakshmi and Parvati. I also give Him the 'Souvenir' of the International Conference on the Ramayana, for which I designed the cover. He read a few passages and does the same. So I end up with everything I've brought to give Him, and I don't know what to do with it, whether to leave it there or take it back with me...

Yogiji soon has in his hands the full list of Americans due to arrive and the allocation of cottages: 3 cottages. Another group of Americans will also arrive later but will be staying outside (in fact where Bret is currently living, as he told me himself).

Yogiji is about to call the people who have asked to meet Him. The first to arrive is a lady in her forties. Her name is Deborah Ress. Yogiji has a note from her in His hand and I can see her name. He makes her sit on His right, but not on the chair next to Him, on the one after it.

- *Your name?*
- *Deborah.*

Yogiji asks for clarification and then turns to me to do so. I specify:

- *Deborah is the name, Ress the surname.*
- *Does Deborah mean anything?*

I'll repeat the question.

- *Honey bee.*
- *Honey bee, Father.*

Yogiji laughs.

- *It's very sweet," I say, feeling like adding: "It can also be dangerous.*

Then Yogiji reads the note the lady has written. This little letter, as I can see, begins with the words 'Kriya Yoga'. Yogiji reads everything and then, after a silence, says:

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

- *This beggar knows nothing about Kriya Yoga. So he cannot help you. Krishna, do you know anything about Kriya Yoga?*

- *No, Father, I don't.* (How could I say I know when Yogiji himself gave this answer?!)

- *It was Yogananda who created...*

- *Yes, Father.*

Silence. Then Yogiji turns to her:

- *You must pray to God. You must ask Him to make you less talkative. You must pray to God.*

Another long silence. Then, turning to her again:

- *I will pray to my Father to make you less talkative so that your friends don't move away from you anymore.*

Then Yogiji takes a fruit and gives it to her as *prasad*.

The clock is ticking and there are still people on the list! Next up is a group of three people from Madras: 2 men and a woman. The first has known Yogiji for over 20 years. Every time he talks to Him, he calls Him 'Master'.

First he announces to Yogiji that his mother's health has returned to normal. Then the two of them talk, and it's difficult for me to understand what he's saying because of his accent. Yogiji asks the name of his wife, who is with him. The man says that one day when she was in the kitchen, her sari caught

fire and she started repeating Yogiji's name. That saved her. And other things too.

Yogiji asks him if he wouldn't mind if He "touches" his wife. The response from both is immediate and the husband said, "This is such an occasion!" So Yogiji brings the wife closer and takes her arm. Then he does the same to the husband. Then, after asking each person's name, he says to them:

- My Father blesses X.

Then Mani arrives and tells Yogiji about some things. Yogiji tells him what to do. Mani returns later with a typed letter for Yogiji to sign. Someone told me when I arrived at the ashram that it was now Yogiji who had taken over the running of the ashram.

He also informs Yogiji that Raghu (from Pondicherry) has been admitted to hospital and that his health is at its worst.

It's well after midday. Yogiji tells me and the others to go and blesses me.

...

This evening, as I am going to town on a motorbike, probably with Bret, I see Sri Rajagopal and his wife walking home. Naturally, I stop to salute them.

...

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

It must be today that Mani arrived. He tells me that he had a burn to his esophagus or intestine and that he had to have an operation. He has indeed lost weight. He tells me that people speak ill of him. That Justice Arunachalam came one day and made a scene, shouting that he was a demon and that he wanted him and R to leave...

25th November

The Americans are arriving tonight. I'm thinking of Ajay and Vikash who are also due to arrive in Chennai this evening. They should normally be welcomed by Mukilan. Everything has been arranged. But I've no news from them.

A brother of Shaktivel, whom I didn't know before, arrived at the ashram....

Today I'll be visiting Rajagopal with Bret. A white guy will also come to make a little visit and we'll have a few laughs. He must live in Australia, I can't remember exactly.



When I go into town, I often go with Bret on his motorbike. The two of us often talk and I make fun of Americans, which makes him laugh.

...

Swaminathan's wife and daughter are often there at the darshans. They are leaving this afternoon because Lalitha's grandfather has just died.

...

26th November

The Americans arrived at 4am-4.40am. And, as last year, without knowing why, Gopal brings me coffee at this time. So I think it's 6 o'clock and time to get up. When I look at the clock, I realize that it's only 4.30am. Needless to say, I go back to bed!

...

7am, waiting for Yogiji to arrive: I meet Lee. His group remains distant and don't even greet me. Even the one who was here two years ago. Their behavior is really strange, but hey...

Mukilan phones this morning and tells me that he has received Ajay and Vikash and that they will arrive on the 10.30am point-to-point bus, just before the afternoon darshan.

10:00 am Darshan: The car heads for the mandapam, as it does every day. The queue forms for the pradakshina at the statue, with the Americans in addition. Bret has joined their group... Then we all head for the darshan hall... where Yogiji comes at around 10.30am. The darshan will last until 12.30, almost 12.45!

Soon Yogiji makes Lee, me and Bret go and sit against the wall where Alain is already sitting. He calls Lee over, who shows him his new book, a large green volume (entitled '*Death of a Dishonest Man*'), which Yogiji now has in His hands and asks him how much it costs:

- 100 dollars...
- But in rupees?
- 4,000 rupees.

Yogiji startles, laughs out loud and hides His face with His hand, meaning: ouch ouch ouch, all the while laughing! Then he asks Ma Devaki to write a cheque for 4,000 rupees and buys the book. Lee takes the cheque. Yogiji doesn't seem to want to accept the book as a gift. Is He doing this because of Lee's business acumen, only He knows...

On leaving the darshan I learn of Raghu's death at around 12 o'clock. Chettiar tells me. Mani comes up to me during the meal and tells me in turn.

New phone call from Mukilan: Ajay and Vikash will arrive around 4.30pm as they took the 12.30pm bus. So I send Venkatraman to pick them up at the station as I have to stay for the afternoon darshan. But just before the darshan, in the darshan hall, as I'm talking to Mani about their arrival, he gets a phone call from reception saying they've arrived. So Venkatraman misses them at the station.

Here they come. Hurry up," I tell them, "Yogiji's on his way.

4:00 pm Darshan: We rush to the cottage. They get changed in no great hurry. They ask me what they must do. "Don't worry, you'll see," I tell them. I get them to hurry up and we head for the darshan hall. The car is already there! We enter the darshan hall just as Yogiji has just asked Lee to go and sit on the chairs. I pass to the left of the columns, seat Ajay and

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

Vikash and continue to the chair intended for me. Yogiji watches me come without a smile, His face completely impassive. The audience sings "*Arunachala Shiva*".

Yogiji soon has two people called, a man and a woman, while the mantra is chanted. The woman soon stands up at Yogiji's request and speaks in English, but too softly to understand properly. She explains that they have been in contact with Yogiji for a very long time. Then she announces that she will play some bhajans and her husband set up a tape recorder on the platform and turns on the music, at full volume, resulting in incredible distortion. You can't understand anything. Then he switches to the second side of the cassette and, after a while, I recognize Yogiji singing "*Aum Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*" and the devotees singing in turn. Then it's "*Sita Ram*" for a very long time. ...

Then Yogiji hands the lady Lee's book. And here we are witnessing Yogiji playing a real game. He explains to her that the book costs 4,000 rupees. I hear the lady exclaim "Ah Ma!" and I see Yogiji immediately smile, covering His eyes. But the lady has to buy the book! And Yogiji starts playing salesman. He says to the audience:

- If any of you wants a book, let him say so, but it's 4,000 rupees and you have to pay cash !

And thus Yogiji sells Lee 3 or 4 books. But each time, He asks Lee to check that the account of banknotes is correct. At the end of the sale, after the last book, as there are none left, Yogiji, instead of blessing Lee, holds out his hand and shakes

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it, as if to say: "That was a good deal! Of course, the audience laughs.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

27th November

10:00 Darshan: 10:00 Darshan: After *pradakshina* in the *mandapam*, we join the darshan hall. I lead the singing of "*Arunachala Shiva*" when Yogiji arrives. Someone takes over from me and I have to go to my chair. Yogiji soon has the Americans singing. He calls a gentleman and a lady.

He also calls the couple from yesterday who played the tape and asks this lady to sing a *bhajan*. She also addresses the audience, this time in Tamil. Then He asks Lee to talk about what he wants. Lee talks about his book, about surrender, about "all is one". When he has finished, Yogiji blesses him.

Then Yogiji calls me and asks me to talk about Mauritius. In the end, Yogiji blesses me. Then Yogiji asks Bret to say a few words. Bret is greatly surprised. His speech is brief, and he is also blessed.

...

4:00 pm Darshan: Afternoon: Chettiar arrives, so we take some photos with him. He tells Ajay and Vikash: "*Krishna is the true son of Yogiji, etc.*" Since this morning I have been going to prostrate myself in front of Yogiji during darshan, whereas before I used to kneel from a distance. I wanted the three of us to prostrate together before Him in dedication.

Yogiji comes into the darshan hall. He brings back the same man and the same lady and has them sit next to Him at

the bottom of the platform. The man will sing in Tamil for a very long time. He brings in another gentleman and another lady. He asks this man to sing. This man is perhaps in his sixties, very thin, with a thin voice. His singing is marvelous, an immense lesson in humility, inner beauty and dedication. How many lessons we have to learn!

Then Yogiji leaves the darshan hall after asking Lee to make the American girls sing and to go, as last year, Lee, Krishna, Alain and Bret, in His place.

It's Friday and the musicians are here. Mani comes up to us and asks Lee's "permission" to stop the Americans singing at quarter to 6 so that the musicians can play.

It seems that the musicians haven't warmed up their instruments. What's more, the woman who played last year isn't here - she's apparently got married. As a result, it's full of burn notes and I make Bret laugh, drawing a parallel with classical music where there is exposition, development, reexposition, cadence and coda. It seems to be the same thing. At the reexposition, as there are once again some burn notes, I tell Bret that this is normal: the reexposition is the return of the theme, the return of the ducks returning from their migration (since the ducks are coming again). As the musicians play a theme, I chant Yogi Ramsuratkumar's name on this theme, as I did at a Jayanti a few years ago, and Ajay soon does the same. Then it's the *aarti* and the *cow aarti*. The Americans stay together and watch. I say to Ajay: "Let's go". The three of us then do the *cow pradakshina*.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

In the evening we go to visit Swami Hamsananda, who will speak to us about Ramana Maharshi among other things. Back at the ashram, the three of us chant Yogi Ramsuratkumar's name on the theme of the afternoon *darshan* and Vikash uses the chair as a *dollock*.

This is where my notes taken on the spot end.

On the 28th, it was Dîpam.

Yogiji will give darshans until the day before the three of us are due to leave. He will usually leave half an hour before 12 or 6pm and will always ask us to go and take His place as soon as He leaves. The gentleman and lady mentioned above will often be called and the lady will give a few more speeches. Yogiji will often ask Lee to say "something useful" and



Lee will make some very nice speeches.

While the three of us were singing Yogiji's name on the aforementioned theme, a new 'version' of the theme came along. During a darshan, while we're on the stage, I'll ask Lee to let Ajay and Vikash sing for a few moments, but they won't dare to sing the new theme. It is only when I almost 'force' them to do so that they finally do, using passages from the *Ramcharitmanas* as verses. The whole audience sings along with joy and happiness. Ajay and Vikash are a great success and many people come to congratulate them or to give me their congratulations. A few bhajans will even be recorded in the cottage in the presence of Shaktivel to satisfy Rajeshvari's wish.

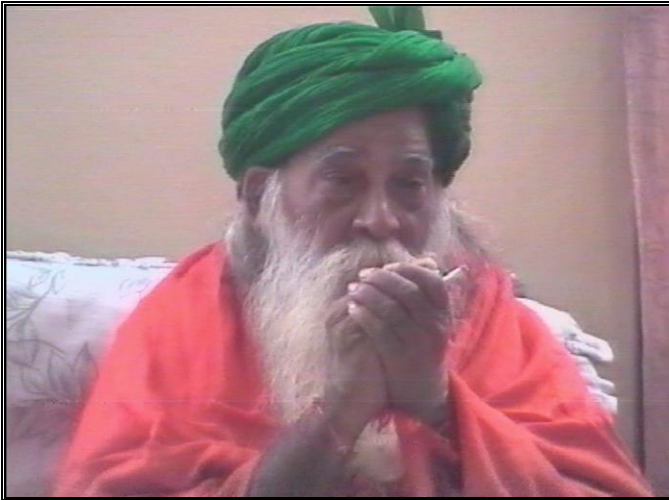
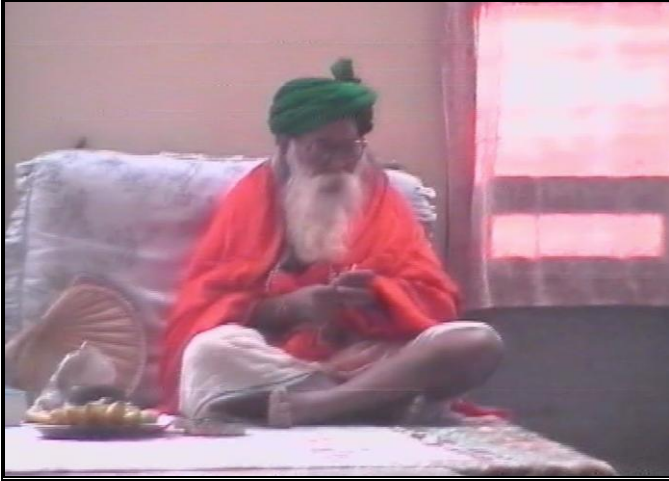
AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

Before Ajay and Vikash arrived, I had also sung in my own way, as I do in Mauritius, the Name of Yogiji. When Rajeshvari is called by Yogiji to sit next to Him and sing during a darshan, she will sing in this way and that will gladden my heart.

...

1998

29th November



Yogiji during darshan

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

30th November



1998

1st December: Jayanti

Like last year, there is no special program for the Jayanti. A homa is planned and Suresh, his sister whom I didn't know, and Radhakrishnan arrived yesterday. They're staying at the Atithi ashram and unfortunately we won't be seeing much of each other. Suresh will finally give me his corrections for the CD of Yogiji chanting mantras and shlokas, almost a year after I sent him the text.

We get up very early to be in the *mandapam* by 3am.



Here Suresh performs the aarti and then begins the chanting of various mantras (and the Americans their 'mixtures') around the statue of Yogiji, men and women taking turns while the others go and sit on mats. Soon chai

is served.

Dr Ramanathan will inform me that Justice will come (to settle in the Ashram), but that not even his own family knows...

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER



Yogiji and Ma Devaki during the homa on Jayanti day



When we shared breakfast with Yogiji on the last day and He offered me the book, He made it clear that no book was to be taken without first paying for it. And Yogiji remains that x years ago, when Krishna had received a request for a donation from Lee, he had replied that everything had gone for the *Ramnam!*

Yogiji offers me Lee's book, and before that offered me a brown shawl, saying that it was Sudama's sisters who were offering it to me:

- *Krishna, you must have some of these things, but the sisters want to offer you this.*

Because yes, Yogiji had already offered me shawl and clothes...

A

1999

1998

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AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

Unfortunately, I have lost my notes from that year when I came with my daughter Lakshmi, who was 10 years old at the time, so that she could come into contact with Yogiji and receive His blessings for her future life. I have only been able to find what had already been typed on the computer, as well as a part published in RAMA NAMA. If I can find those notes, they will of course appear here.

22nd November

Arrival in Mumbai. As I suspected, there is nobody at the airport!

...

We get out and look for a rickshaw after walking a long way with our bags. Eventually, we arrive at the guest house: the Vishva Niketan. Someone is waiting for us outside. He asks us if it's Krishna from Mauritius.

...

23rd November

Mumbai...

We board the train and settle in. Departure at 2pm. I'll get first class tickets later and we'll be fine. Lakshmi is happy,

1999

whereas yesterday she was crying and missing her mum and sister...

24th November

Evening: arrival in Madras. Mukilan sent 2 people who recognize me on the quay and took our luggage.

At Mukilan's, Bhavani gets on well with Lakshmi, who unfortunately doesn't like idlis or dosas!

Mukilan arrives late.

He tells me that as Lee will arrive on the 26th, it would be better if we leave for Tiruvannamalai as soon as possible, so as to have a chance of Yogiji calling us and having an interview with Him.

25th November

...

We catch the bus at Tamaris. It speeds along. No stops.

We arrive at the ashram at around 2pm.

4:00 pm Darshan.-

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

After half an hour's singing, Yogiji calls me inside the mandapam. This year Yogiji won't have any physical contact with me, not even a pat on the back, but I think it's the same for everyone.

I give Yogiji the December issue of RAMA NAMA and the drawing of Parvati. Yogiji looks at the drawing, what is written. He puts it to His forehead and gives it back to me. Then Rama Nama. He asks:

- *Are there people who write, so that you always have enough matter?*

- *Father, it's mainly translations of the words of great sages like Swami Rama Tirtha, Swami Vivekananda, etc...*

Yogiji, as if on purpose, opens on the page of 'To Be or not to be', the article that appeared in Mauritius' *Sunday Vani* on the very day of our departure, which talks about Vedanta and makes a very harsh assessment of the state of Hinduism in Mauritius and the crass ignorance that reigns on the subject.

- And this? He asks me.

- This is an article on the state of Hinduism in Mauritius.

This seems to be where my notes end, alas, because I didn't take many notes that year.

That day, however, I remember that Ma Devaki came and asked Yogiji if she could take Lakshmi with her. So she

took Lakshmi with her under the thatched roof, and Rajeshvari was there too.

Mukilan told me to ask Yogiji for this or that. I'll tell Yogiji that I'm not a shopkeeper, that I don't know how to make things known. "Father, you didn't give me these abilities."

- My Father will give you all the abilities you will need.

...

I found some of my notes in Rama Nama:

All the RAMA NAMAs had been sent out, so the job was done. On the morning of our departure for Bharat and Tiruvannamalai, I bought SUNDAY VANI, which was published that very Sunday morning. As if on cue, it was the same friend who drove us to the airport, where he gave me his photo for Yogiji to bless and lead him ... The ball was in the court, stupid Krishna wouldn't be there for the reactions as he was already on the plane. And, as Pilate would say, "he had nothing to do with that story". The article appeared with, on the page next to it, a magnificent article on the GANGA ASNAN by a Swami Paramananda who also regretted the loss of its true meaning.

On the 25th, after a day's stop in Mumbai for the final touches concerning the printing of HAMSA, a 26-hour train journey to Chennai and a bus journey to Tiruvannamalai, I arrived with my eldest daughter Lakshmi at the Tiruvannamalai

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

ashram. It was 2pm. It was magnificent, and we had time to wash and change before Yogiji's darshan at 4pm.

At 4pm, Yogiji's car entered the ashram and Yogiji blessed the devotees who were lined up. He smiled when he saw me and Ma Devaki smiled when she saw Lakshmi. Yogiji went as usual to the large mandapam and some time later the devotees took turns going round the statue. When it was my turn, I prostrated myself completely at Yogiji's feet and joined everyone else in the prayer hall. The chanting of the Gurunama began. We'd been there about twenty minutes before Ravi came to fetch me. Yogiji asked to see me. I took the brand new RAMA NAMA to offer Him.

While Yogiji normally received disciples and devotees outside near the door of the mandapam, he received us inside where two chairs had just been placed. Lakshmi and I prostrated ourselves and, after I had been asked to sit and Ma Devaki had come to ask Yogiji if she could take Lakshmi with her, Yogiji asked me this question:

- Krishna, do you prefer being in Mauritius or in France?

I replied that, all things considered, Maurice was better in the sense that it was still possible to feel like a human being and not just a number or a simple production tool. I offered Him a drawing of my second daughter Parvati, which He looked at attentively and then raised to His forehead before giving it back to me, followed by RAMA NAMA. I told him that this issue was celebrating RAMA NAMA's 6th anniversary.

*- Do you still have enough material for RAMA NAMA?
Do enough people write?*

- Father, most of the texts that appear in it are translations of sages such as Swami Vivekananda, Swami Rama Tirtha, Sri Ramakrishna, etc... or of scriptures...

Yogiji leafed through RAMA NAMA. Yogiji speaks Hindi, Bhojpuri, Tamil and English, but not French. Yet, as he leafed through, he stopped just short of the title page of the article 'TO BE OR NOT TO BE'. Funny, I could feel it coming! Wasn't it the same when, having announced in RAMA NAMA that it was to cease publication, he had had this very passage translated in Tiruvannamalai and had immediately sent me a message?

- And this article, Krishna?

- Oh, that, Father, is not from a sage! I wrote this before coming. It's sort of the state of Hinduism in Mauritius and it's in the form of an answer to a question... I hesitated for a long time before putting it in the issue, but I felt I had to let it be there.

He handed me RAMA NAMA:

- Read, Krishna.

I simply read the question, feeling there was no point in going any further. Then Yogiji asked me about Maurice, as he

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

did every year when I arrived. Questions, as always, that seemed innocuous...

But, as usual, in a seemingly innocuous, indirect way, Yogiji had just given me the answer. Yes, the article in question did indeed say. *"This Krishna does absolutely nothing. We are merely instruments in the hands of the sages."*

Yogiji also told me:

- *Krishna, are there any friends still in touch with you and writing to you?*

- *Yes, Father, it's wonderful, and sometimes I even get a phone call. Some of them tell me to come back to France.*

- *And what do you answer them?*

- *That you sent me to Mauritius and that's where I should be. That I am doing what You are asking me to do, Father.*

Afterwards, I reread this article many times in the copy of SUNDAY VANI that I'd brought with me. It was really as if I was not directly the author of it. And I could see that, whatever the reactions to this piece of writing, which was a real kick in the anthill, the response to these reactions was already written in the article itself.

When I was talking on Jayanti day about the situation of Hindus in Mauritius to S... with whom I have a special connection and who has just been appointed Superintendent of Police in Mallapuram and I was telling him about the article

and the interview with Yogiji, he said, addressing me and three close friends in the room:

"See how sages work. Their way is utterly inscrutable ..."

As if that wasn't enough, whereas the previous two years this had been stopped by Yogiji, I had the immense blessing of being called every morning to share her breakfast under the hut, with Lakshmi!

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

(Notes from the videos)

Is it on the 25th or a little later, Lakshmi goes with Chettiar and Shaktivel in Chettiar's car to invite the sadhus. Later, Swami Hamsananda from the Atithi Ashram takes her to the Ramanashram where she sees the calves. Later still, incredibly pampered by the Ashram and in particular by Swaminathan's wife, the Ashram has her measurements taken for clothes, in the presence of Justice Arunachalam and Swaminathan.

30th November

During the breakfast darshan, Yogiji sits down and, like Dakshinamurti, turns towards the south.



1999

In the evening, at night, in the Pradhan mandir, lamps are lit around the statue.

1st December - Jayanti

There's a queue for Yogiji's arrival. Musicians play in front of the car, walking backwards. Then, further on and alone, it stops. Then it's the Homa in the *Yagashala* led by Suresh (Rajpurohit), with the devotees standing outside.



Then Yogiji gets back into the car and leaves the ashram.

The darshan is then held in the Pradhman Mandir, with Yogiji seated on a chair on a platform. The Gurunama is sung.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

Yogiji is dressed in green. These are the last images I will take of Yogiji.



That day, hearing a reflection by Lee Lozowick with a Vedantic character, we were very surprised and one in our small group said: "Well, it looks like Lee is beginning to understand...»

Later, I don't remember the date, we went to Skandashram and Swami Ramdas' cave.

On 5 December, we were back in Chennai.

1999

At the Athithi ashram, I had spoken to S... about the article 'To be or not to be' at He said: "All the priests must be killed". He also told me that in India it's terrible, nobody understands anything any more, that the level of ignorance is absolutely terrifying, etc.

If one day I can find all my notes for 1999, I'll update this book.

2000

1999

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AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

On 14 January, I received this message from Rajmohan:

Yogi Ramsuratkumar Bhavan

De : RAJMOHAN <yrskt@md4.vsnl.net.in>
À : C.C. Krishna <ckrishna@intnet.mu>
Envoyé : vendredi 14 janvier 2000 20:22
Objet : Happy Pongal and Happy Birthday to Krishna

Beloved Krishnaji,

Namaskar! Happy Pongal and Happy Birthday to you. Bhagavan, Mataji, Justice, Mani, Prof. Sankararajulu and everyone in the ashram send their greetings to you on your birthday. Bhagavan also says "My Father's Blessings to Krishna Carcelle." Our warm regards to everyone in your family.

Please do keep in touch.

Love,
Rajmohan.

On 26 January, I received another message:

Yogi Ramsuratkumar Bhavan

De : YOGIRAMSURATKUMAR <yrskt@md4.vsnl.net.in>
À : C.C. Krishna <ckrishna@intnet.mu>
Envoyé : mercredi 26 janvier 2000 21:30
Objet : mail from frederic

Beloved Krishnaji,

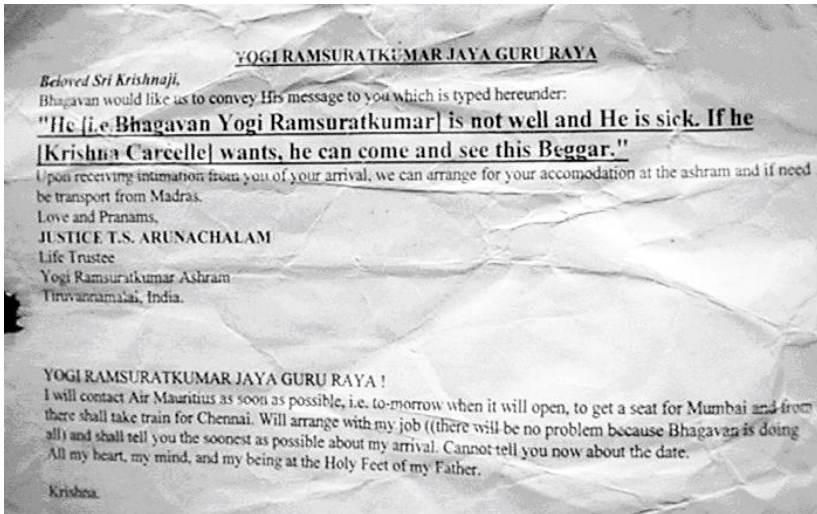
Namaskar! Bhagavan went through your mail and told me that "By Father's Grace and Blessings Krishna Carcelle will be very happy and peaceful." Regarding mail from Frederic, Bhagavan wanted to know whether he is your friend. I replied I do not know. *Anyway, Bhagavan asked You to reply to Frederic. So, please send a mail to Sri Frederic with the following message from Bhagavan: "My Father Blesses Frederic and he will have good employment situation."*

Convey my regards to your wife and children.

Love and with a prayer to Bhagavan that soon you should get a nice job soon,
Rajmohan.

2000

But the tragedy came on 16 July. At the time, I was working since a few months on Reunion Island. That day I received this message from Justice Arunachalam and I replied immediately (sorry for the state of the scan of the printed paper, which had suffered a few vicissitudes):



I immediately went to see my friend who ran the company he'd asked me to help him with and said:

"Suppose your father was still here yesterday and you get a message saying that he's very ill and that he's going to die soon. Would you go and see him straight away? That's what's happening to me and the person I'm talking about is more than just my biological father. So I'm asking you to have the possibility to leave for India right away.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

It was very difficult for him not to agree.

The following day, 17 July, I received another message from Justice Arunachalam:

De : YOGIRAMSURATKUMAR <yrskt@md4.vsnl.net.in>
A : Krishna reunion <brial@ravnal.fr>
Cc : C.C. Krishna <ckrishna@intnet.mu>
Envoyé : lundi 17 juillet 2000 14:43
Objet : BHAGAVAN'S HEALTH

Yogi Ramsuratkumar Jaga Juru Raya

Beloved Krishnaji,

Namaskar! Bhagavan's ailment has been diagnosed as VERRUCOUS CARCINOMA [CANCER]. The surgeon who examined Bhagavan four days ago suggested quick surgery as the only solution. However, Bhagavan has impressed upon us that HIS Body is being protected by Father and that surgery was not necessary. It is in this context that the earlier message was sent to you. Bhagavan is very weak and exhausted and is struggling even to speak a little. He has almost stopped solid intake and for the past week He is taking only little liquid food. Since we cannot take initiative and Bhagavan gave permission to inform you, only yesterday, that is July 16th, we could not inform you earlier. Even now Bhagavan is telling that His body is being protected by Supreme Father. Hoping with great faith that Father will make Bhagavan healthy to bounce back to His normal routine.

Love and Pranams,

Justice T.S. Arunachalam
Life Trustee
Yogi Ramsuratkumar Ashram, Tiruvannamalai.

Beloved Krishnaji,

Namaskar! Bhagavan's ailment has been diagnosed as VERRUCOUS CARCINOMA (CANCER). The surgeon who examined Bhagavan four days ago suggested quick surgery as the only solution. However, Bhagavan has impressed upon us that HIS Body is being protected by Father and that surgery was not necessary. It is in this context that the earlier message was sent to you. Bhagavan is very weak and exhausted and is struggling even to speak a little. He has almost stopped solid intake and for the past week He is taking only liquid food. Since we cannot take initiative and Bhagavan gave permission to inform you, only yesterday, that is July 16th, we could not inform you earlier. Even now Bhagavan is telling that His body is being protected by Supreme Father. Hoping with great faith

2000

that Father will make Bhagavan healthy to bounce back to His normal routine.

Love and pranams.

I immediately flew to Mauritius and arranged for Parvati, then aged 9, to get a passport so that she could accompany me and have the blessing of being with Yogiji. And this was very fast since, on the 28th July, we landed in Mumbai.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

28th July

As we leave Mumbai airport, Bharatji is there. He takes us to the Vishva Niketan. Sunil soon tells me that Kamlesh (from Chitrakut) is there. He soon arrives with a friend (who works for Bharatji). This friend gives me the train tickets taken by Bharatji and I pay. He will take us to the train for Chennai in the early afternoon.

29th July

Arrival at the station. No one there. I phone the ashram and was soon put through to Shaktivel. He says: "Tell me where you are, don't move, in half an hour someone will be there." We wait and Kumaranji will come to fetch us. We are taken to his office, where we stay for a while, and then taken to Mukilan's house, where we'll sleep for the night.

2000

30th July

We leave later than planned on the Point to Point bus, where Mukilan take us himself.

I make a note of the villages on the road before Tiruvannamalai: Thampondi, Sathyamangalam, Dallapadi, Semmedu, Melpampasi, Kilpannathur.

Arrived in Tiruvannamalai, rickshaw. Arrival at the ashram around 2:30 p.m. if memory serves.

Discussion with Justice Arunachalam:

- Yogiji would have said: « The cosmic work will be done only from this ashram ». That's also why the ashram is so big.
- A message was sent to Satya Sai Baba, who did not reply.
- Someone contacted one of his friends at Ma Amritanandamayi's ashram, who in turn contacted Ma Amritanandamayi, who said: "There's nothing to fear, the Mother will pray".
- Rangarajan didn't come.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

- Lee Lozowick arrives in 2 days. He says it's expensive. They're asking for A/C, etc. Justice feels the same way about Lee as I do.
- No operation. You people, have faith my Father takes care of this body.
- Shri Krishnapremi has come. "This body is not yours. You have no body. This body belongs to your devotees. It is for them to decide." Yogiji didn't reply.
- Enormous work done at the ashram: finishing touches, gate, Veda Patashala.
- Lee Lozowick would have said that Yogiji said that if He was Rama, Lee would be Hanuman! (no comment).
- Yogiji told Arunachalam that He had not initiated anyone, not even Rangarajan, who had not told Him that he had already been initiated by Swami Chinmayananda.
- Rajmohan has said: when he took my second email to Yogiji, Yogiji was lying down and sleeping. Then he read him the message saying: "Krishna says that if Bhagavan says 'no operation', he won't have an operation". Yogiji was categorical: "No operation for Krishna".
- Yogiji has said that before the initiation, he didn't smoke. It was Swami Ramdas "who gave this disease to this beggar".

It seems that He was also always impeccably groomed. It was only after the initiation that He stopped bathing.

- Yogiji never met Sri Aurobindo. One day he was in the queue for *darshan* but someone said to The Mother, "There is a mad man in the queue". The Mother stopped the darshan before Yogiji arrived.

- Yogiji says that Sri Aurobindo's power was immense. He has an immense regard for the Mother.

- Brett would have made a transfer of ownership to Lee Lozowick without telling anyone, not even Yogiji. I remind Arunachalam that Yogiji had said he didn't want a Lee Lozowick ashram here.

31st July

After coffee, Chettiar takes us in his new car and buy me some cigarettes and the newspaper. Then we return to the ashram. As we pass the ashram gate, I see Brett on his way to the *mandapam*. He doesn't look back.

8am: I say hello to Shankara Rajulu, whom I had glimpsed the day before. Coming out of the *mandapam*. Someone touches me from behind and I recognize his voice: it's Brett. We have breakfast together and he explains that he has transferred his property to Lee Lozowick's Hohm community. Then he tells me that we can go to his house at any time. I reply that we're going to do some shopping and we'll drop by on the way back.

We then go to the cottage, where I take the gourde Parvati, who already has a friend next door, comes with me. We go to the gentleman's shop, gentleman whom I know well and whom has moved, now being located before Kumarji's STD in the street leading to the ashram. I fill the gourd with 3 Limca. We go back to Brett's house. While the maid shows Parvati around the house, we talk, in particular about the Indians: lies, self-interest, etc. He criticizes Justice Arunachalam for always sitting down, not being active enough, and criticizes the 'politics' inside the ashram. He criticizes Justice Arunachalam for always sitting down, not being active enough, and he criticizes the 'politics' inside the ashram. I reply

that we have nothing to do with all that. This while drinking a coffee. Then I tell him I have to leave because it's 10 to 10 and you never know: if Yogiji calls me, I have to be there.

On arriving at the ashram, I am told at the entrance that Justice Arunachalam is telling me to go to *Sudama*. I quickly take the gourd to the cottage and we hurry off to *Sudama*.

Someone on guard outside wants us to go away, but I knock gently on the gate and Ravi comes to open it for us. We go in. Yogiji is there in an armchair-bed, like a bedridden one. I prostrate myself before Him for a few moments. Around Him are Ma Devaki, Rajalakshmi and Rajmohan. Ma Devaki tells Yogiji that Krishna and Parvati are there but Yogiji doesn't seem to react. I sit on the floor at the foot of the bed but Ma Devaki invites me to sit in a chair so that Yogiji can see me. Yogiji sees me, for sure.

My Devaki explains to me what Yogiji has (urethral cancer). She tells me that Yogiji doesn't want to have an operation, that He said His Father would cure him. She tells me that Ma Amritanandamayi said, "The children have nothing to fear, Mother will pray." Two messengers were also sent to Satya Sai Baba, but he 'avoided' them twice.

Ma Devaki says that Yogiji made the promise that His Father would cure Him. She also says that they sent for mahatmas to come and to convince Yogiji to have the operation, but each time he remained as silent as a stone. Krishnapremi's visit didn't help either. Another mahatma (Swami Muktananda?) also came. He spoke to Bhagavan.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

When he came out, they asked him, "*What did Bhagavan say?*" - "*He said, "Rama."*"

After a while, Yogiji having seen me says: « *Oh, those friends have come!* ».

Yogiji very often calls "Devaki!" to urinate. So Ravi, Rajmohan and Ma Devaki have to lift Him onto a special chair where He can urinate. We are then invited to go into the next room. This happens at least every five minutes. We go into the next room with our armchairs, but after that we leave them there to join them later.

At one point, I give Ma the email message from Rajendra Amarnath's of the USA, then Lakshmi's letter which she reads out loud, then Laksharaj Janki's oral message and the envelope given to me by Mr Appadoo. I also give the postcards from La Réunion²² and the latest issue of RAMA NAMA, which I had just finished and sent off before leaving for India.

When Yogiji opens His eyes, I do the anjali. Yogiji immediately makes the gesture of joining His hands!

Ma Devaki has Rajeshvari serve us coffee.

Rajmohan asks me for a CD for the ashram. I reply that I'll send one as soon as I get back. My Devaki tells me that not long ago they got the video and were finally able to watch what had been recorded at the Yogi Ramsuratkumar Bhavan with the Chitrakut group singing the Ramayana and Yogiji's name.

²² Reunion island.

At one point, Yogiji, who hardly speaks, asks me: "*How is life in Mauritius?*" I answer: "*Fine, Father. I now work in Reunion Island.*" My Devaki explains that I go back every three weeks for a weekend.

I have the blessing of refreshing Yogiji with the fan, as Ma asks me to do. He can sleep from time to time. Ma Devaki sleeps standing up. She sometimes lies down, but before five minutes have passed she has to get up to put Yogiji on the toilet. Always with a smile. "*He's like a baby*", she tells me, same behavior. I don't know how Ma Devaki can hold out. The medicines given to Yogiji are "pediatric" medicines.

- How's your lump (at the neck)?

I show Him.

- Bhagavan was categorical: "No operation." He said, "My Father will cure Krishna. Does it hurt?"

- Not at all, but it's ugly. But I'd rather keep this and see Bhagavan heal.

At one point, Ma tells me: "*He's smiling at you.*" I hadn't seen, looking away at the time. Perhaps it was my response that prompted the smile. I can't say because these notes were taken afterwards.

Since this morning, we've lifted Yogiji more than 10 times, but no urine has passed. Ma is worried. I ask if there is anything I could do. She asks me to go to the ashram and ask

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

Justice Arunachalam to come and bring a car. Ma wants to have a car at hand in case of an emergency, to go to the hospital or anywhere else it would be necessary to go. So I go to the ashram but Justiceji doesn't seem to understand and asks Saravanand (the tall one) to go and ask Ma Devaki exactly what she wants. I tell him it's no use: there's no urine coming through, Ma's worried and, as she knows the doctor won't be in until 2pm, she wants a car in case there's an emergency, for example to take Yogiji to hospital. Justice finally understands, calls Saravanand back and we drive to *Sudama* in Yogiji's car.

Justice is here now, but he doesn't seem to be able to do anything, so full of grief I feel he is, always on the verge of tears.

After a while, Ma asks Yogiji if Krishna and Parvati can eat at *Sudama*. Yogiji agrees. After some time, we go into the next room to eat. It is then that I remember that this is the very room where I fell in tears at Yogiji's feet and that it was there that He said: *"This beggar has been waiting for Krishna for a long time. Now that Krishna is here, this beggar will never leave him."* Simply the great door that was closed then is open now. I remember a few moments from that year...

I am told, though I can't remember the time, that yesterday Bhagavan asked to go to the river. Faced with objections about his health, Yogiji said: *« If you have faith that My Father will cure this body, we will come out of this ashram right now.* So Yogiji was taken to the river, but it was dry at that time.

So we eat with Justice Arunachalam, followed by Ma Devaki and Rajeshvari, who serves us.

After the meal, we learn that a little urine has finally passed.

- Bhagavan," asks Ma, "do you feel some relief?"

- Yah," replies Yogiji.

Everyone is reassured.

I tell Justice Arunachalam that I don't want to be an inconvenience in any way and that I am going to join the ashram with him. He repeats this to Ma Devaki some time later.

"Yes," she says, "and they can rest and come back afterwards." Ma says to Yogiji, "Krishna is going to the ashram." I kneel by Yogiji's bed and He looks at me. I go out and say to Rajmohan, "I don't want to be a disturbance. Everyone is helping and I'm not doing anything. Please, for anything, if you need help, tell me" Then we leave and go back to the ashram.

On the way I meet a woman, devotee of Yogiji and then, further on, the Mother of the Athithi Ashram who had seen me the day before when we arrived by rickshaw and also this morning. I tell her we will come back. She replies: "I told Swamiji that I've seen you."

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

Thus, we stayed with Yogiji from 10am to 2pm. A blessing.

Part of the afternoon is spent with a Frenchwoman who took the name of Shanti and was a devotee of Papaji. She's been living in India for some time but, as her purse is empty, she'll have to go back to France and find some work. I tell her about Yogiji, of course, and the fact that I met Papaji in Lucknow, etc...

In the evening, just Parvati and I eat in the refectory, served by Gopal and Rajalakshmi.

1st August

Gopal, like yesterday, brings the coffee at 6.15am! I drink it but go right back to bed, so tired I am, without waking Parvati. She's very happy, she has friends, she's like a little queen, and there are puppies! I wake her up at 7.30am anyway, as we have to go to breakfast at 8am. After waking up and washing up, we go for a tour of the ashram and then go to breakfast. I hear that Yogiji is going to be taken to the ashram.

We then go to the shop to get a drink. On the way, we meet Swaminathan at the crossroads, coming out of *Sudama*. He tells me that Yogiji was in a lot of pain last night, that the urine has passed a little and that he's going to the post office to phone the hospital to tell them that the doctor won't be coming but that he's staying with Yogiji at *Sudama*.

Around 10am, I'm with Justiceji in his cottage. He asks me to sort out the fax machine, which is a French one because the one that's installed isn't working any more. A fat woman arrives with her daughter. Justiceji says that, in addition to Satya Sai Baba and Ma Amritanandamayi, a message has also been sent to Sringeri Shankaracharya and that they are going to perform a *Rudra Homa* there with four priests. The ash from the Homa will have to be applied on Yogiji's forehead.

He then recounts his first visits to Yogiji and, instead of recounting them here, it's best to wait for Justiceji to write them himself one of these days.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

At 11.30am, I leave his cottage. Parvati is walking around the ashram, of which she is the 'star', as Shankara Rajulu puts it.

Noon: lunch. Then after a while I join the group formed by Shankara Rajulu, Brett, Chettiar and a man in a wheelchair whom I had met yesterday and whose wife I had met at Justiceji's house. They are near the entrance to the *mandapam*. I heard from Rajalakshmi that Yogiji was going to be taken to the ashram. The three of us, Ashish (that's the name of the person in the wheelchair I saw last December), Brett and I, start by talking about R.S.S., V.H.P., Koran (where I explain the thesis I put on the Internet and the threat I received), Ayodhya and then we talk about American food (McDonald's, Coca Cola, etc...), then French and Indian. We're now on the other side, in the shade of the trees.

Then again we head to the *mandapam* entrance because we learn that that Yogiji is due to arrive. Shortly afterwards, a Maruti car arrives. Yogiji is lying in the back seat, but we can't see Him, and then another car with, certainly, all the medicines.

After that, I go to the Arunachalam's cottage and sort out the fax.

After 4pm, Parvati and I go to the Athithi Ashram where the Mother welcomes us. There's an Italian couple there. Ma explains that Swamiji had to go to Vellore this morning to get some wood for the construction. Around 5.30pm. Ashish's wife arrives and gives me their business card... She leaves shortly after. Ma asks me to distribute the food to the sadhus. So I go

downstairs and give 3 idlis to each sadhu. It is also agreed that tomorrow morning, after breakfast, I will bring Parvati so that Ma shows her the city, the monkeys, the peacocks, etc..

Then we return to the ashram for the evening meal, which Gopal and Saravanand (the gardener) bring us around 8pm. They wait for us to eat. There are dosas. I say that, as there are no spices, at least I'll sleep well, which hasn't been the case so far. I film a bit.

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AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

2nd August

...

I go immediately to Justice Arunachalam...

I take permission to leave Justiceji at 9 am and go to the Athithi Ashram.

Swami Hamsananda is there, as are the 2 Italians. I prostrate myself at Swamiji's feet. Discussions. Mataji is a little late getting ready to leave. The discussion continues, even after Ma and Parvati leave. Eventually, I take my leave and arrive at the ashram just as Rajmohan is leaving. He tells me he's been waiting for me but will be back in five minutes. I go to wait at Justice's, who tells me that Yogiji is feeling better. Rajmohan arrives about 15 minutes later.

...

Justice has to go and give the 'green light' for lunch. When I arrive, Ashish is in his chair, coming out of the mandapam, and we start a long conversation.

...

Meanwhile, Parvati has returned... with gifts from Ma! I join her and sleep for about an hour. Justice told me that at 4 o'clock I will go and see Yogiji.

4pm: I join Justice. ...

"We'll go when the electricity comes back", Justice tells me, which happens 5 or 10 minutes later. We go to Yogiji's while the others join the *mandapam*.

We wait in the adjoining room for Yogiji's treatment to finish. We go in. Yogiji is lying in the middle of the room in the foldaway bed. There are 2 chairs on either side of Him. My Devaki motions for us to sit in the 2 chairs to the right of the bed so that Yogiji could see me.

Thanks to Heaven, Yogiji rests and manages to sleep from time to time. Ma gives Him something to eat from time to time, only liquid food. She will also give us some prasada. She offers us coffee. Soon she asks, "Would you like something to eat with your coffee?" and we hear Yogiji answer loud and clear, "No, thank you!" She tells Yogiji that Krishna is here. Then she tells him about my lump, saying that although I don't want her to bother Him with it, she talks about it anyway. She then explains that my sister-in-law had been healed by a Yogi, as I had explained to her before, saying that I could only attest to what I had witnessed with my sister-in-law.

Parvati is falling asleep. At one point Ma gives me the fan so that I can fan my Master. By 6.30 p.m. I will soon be standing with the fan. Yogiji sometimes, but rarely, opens His eyes and once looks at me distinctly.

As I stand fanning Yogiji, Ma will say: "He's healed so many people!" And she tells me the story of a lady who came to see Yogiji with 2 other people. "He saved my life!" She was

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

in the final stages of cancer and had come to see Yogiji without believing in anything. Yogiji said to her: "But my Father has healed you!" She left without really believing and went back to the hospital for the usual tests. There: nothing! Nobody understands.

I then explain to Ma how Yogiji had healed my back.

Parvati has been put in the next room so that she could sleep, but she doesn't sleep and comes back after a few moments. "*This is my baby*", Mataji tells her, pointing to Yogiji.

I soon ask Mataji's permission for Parvati to go to the cottage. "Will you go with her?" No, she can go on her own. Parvati prostrates herself before Yogiji and then before Ma, which touches Mataji.

At 6.30pm I ask permission to join her, as it's going to get dark. I ask Mataji when I could come back, adding that I'd like to help, even if it's only for small things. Ma tells me that everything will depend on Yogiji's condition, but that I can come back to fan Him.

What a wonderful moment: sometimes alone in the room, standing next to my Master's bed and fanning Him, or fanning Yogiji and Ma who, with her eyes closed, is reciting her mala!

I meet up with Parvati and then we go to the Athithi Ashram where we are invited to eat. After the bend in the road, I see Selvaraj's eldest daughter, whom I greet with a "Namaste". Then, at the entrance to the ashram, Mataji is on

the steps with another little girl. Cute, with big nails made of flower petals by Ma. I film. A sadhu arrives and leads me upstairs to Swamiji. I tell him what I know about Yogiji's condition.

Swamiji tells me the story of Yogiji and a Perumal (different from the one who wrote the book): Yogiji is apparently sleeping. Perumal is sitting in a chair behind Yogiji, but at some distance. He doesn't know what to do. Then, with his toe, he draws "Ram" on the floor in Devanagari characters. Yogiji said to him: "Perumal, you are disturbing this beggar. Swamiji says: "This is how one should be: no thought."

We discuss his talk on meditation. I tell him it's very clear. Then he tells me about the two Italians who are here and who already came last year. The woman was very depressed. Swamiji told her a few very simple words which enlightened her. They came back. Then we all eat, but first Swamiji asks Parvati if she knows a prayer. After a few moments of shyness, Parvati sings a prayer to Lakshmi. Then we start eating. A good meal and a good time. I'll be filming a bit. It is planned that I bring Parvati the day after tomorrow at quarter to 7 so that she can go with the Italians to the Skanda Ashram.

We return to the ashram at around 9:00 pm, and I write these lines.

...

3rd August

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

I woke up very early. I caught a chill from the air-conditioning and got a good indigestion. I'll be "paf"²³ all day and turn with a pain in the back of my head for a while. As on other days, I have the coffee that Gopal brings...

At 8 o'clock I go to see Justice again to send a message to Mauritius.

...

Whereas I'm lying in the cottage, at around 9.45, the phone rings. It's Kannan. He tells me that Ma Devaki has a job for me and asks me to come over. I tell him I'll be there in about fifteen minutes.

As I see the devotees making their way towards the mandapam, I go to Yogiji's flat and, with Kannan and Selvaraj, we cut a roll of cotton into small squares, certainly to put on Yogiji's body at the critical spot where the cancer is and to absorb the urine.

Then Ma Devaki tells me that anyone can do this job and asks me if I know how to sew with a machine. I reply that I certainly already did, so I could give it a try. It's all about cutting and sewing little 'pillowcases' into which we will put cotton and which we will place on either side of the armchair where we put Yogiji so that He can urinate.

So, after a while I go to the small building that used to house the fax machine and keys, on the right just before the cottages, and where the sewing machine is. Nagaraja is there

²³ 'Out of order'

and seems to know all about it as he's already cut out a few pieces. He shows me. My head is spinning. In fact, it is Nagaraja who does most of the work, because I really am not feeling well. At midday I tell him, "I'll be back at 2 o'clock".

I go to lie down in the cottage. I don't go to eat. At 2pm I stay in the cottage because I really feel bad. Around 2.45pm I make an effort to go and sew but as there's no electricity it's too hot and I can't hold out without a fan. At 4pm I finally go there again and there I do all the seams. Rajalakshmi, whom I told that I was spinning because I had indigestion and hadn't eaten, will come back to give me some lemon with glucose. My Devaki will ask her: "*Is Krishna sewing?*" - "*Yes, but he's dizzy,*" she'll reply.

...

Justice soon receives a phone call: the car his daughter was in has just crashed. The car would be broken, but no one is injured. Justiceji has to leave for Madras.

...

Following Justice Arunachalam's request that the same thing be done with Parvati as with Lakshmi last December, Rajalakshmi asks me if Parvati can go with Swaminathan's daughter into town at 6 o'clock. I of course reply in the affirmative and then ask Swaminathan's daughter if she could tell the Athithi Ashram that I will not be able to lead Parvati tomorrow morning as I am not feeling well.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

At 6pm, Raja asks me to proceed with the *ârti*, but I tell him I'm spinning, that I'm not feeling well and can't proceed.

Parvati and Swaminathan's daughter won't be back until 9pm and at some point I'll be worried, aggravated by my head spinning. In fact Swaminathan's wife was with them. So here they are in the cottage, looking at what they've bought and discussing what needs to be done to cut the fabric, measures, etc... I see Swaminathan's wife counting the money and I don't know why, for small gifts and jewellery again? I film a bit (oops, this will not be in the film). Then soon we go to sleep.

2000

4th August

Nothing special this morning, apart from the fact that for the first time I'm going to the *mandapam* at around 11-11.15am and will be chanting *AUM SRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM*. Venkatraman will come and stop me. It seems that the chant is changed more often than before. I'll be leaving shortly afterwards.

Likewise in the afternoon, I will go to sing at 4pm. While I am singing *ARUNACHALA SHIVA*, Ma Devaki sends for me. I immediately go to Yogiji's flat and I am soon admitted to the room where He is lying. The bed has been moved to the back of the room.

Ma tells me that Yogiji told her some time ago: "*This beggar will have to suffer.*"

Mataji tells me that Bhagavan says that "*Father takes care of this body*". There is, she says, a kind of regulation. The urine wasn't getting through and Yogiji caught a cold. By coughing, the urine passes.

"It would be nice if this Yogi Anand comes and cures Bhagavan²⁴. If you had time, you could fetch him from Delhi."

²⁴ The yogi who cured my sister in law.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

I tell Mataji that the first thing I'll do when I arrive in Mauritius will be to email this swami's contact details.

I'll help to straighten Yogiji up a few times so that the phlegm can pass his throat and he can get rid of it and feel relieved. Taking His hand to straighten Him up, putting my arm behind His back...

I'll leave when Mataji will say, "Krishna has to go now," because then they'll sit Yogiji in the armchair.

Then we both Parvati and I go telephone Ishvari and I let Parvati say the first words so that the surprise is better at the other end of the line. We stop off at the Athithi Ashram where I see the Mother sitting on the steps. She invites us to eat and makes me idlis with 'curd' for my weakened stomach and intestines.

Back to the ashram, Saravanand gives me my repaired trousers. I give him 50 rupees as I have no change to pay the 20 rupee price. I tell him not to prepare any food for us as we've just eaten at the Athithi Ashram. He tells me: "Hot milk? - OK!" Half an hour later, however, Gopal arrives not only with the hot milk, but also with a meal that he has to bring back immediately after I explained to him that I had asked Saravanand (the gardener) not to prepare anything for us.

2000

5th August

Some things before, we don't get out until 8 o'clock. As we make our way to the refectory for breakfast and pass by Justice Arunachalam's cottage, which is still in Madras, we hear a voice coming from the cottage: "Parvatinou!" Naturally, I immediately recognize Shaktivel's voice. I immediately ask for news of the accident. No injuries, but 60,000 rupees in repairs.

We have breakfast and then I try to repair the *choridhar* given to Parvati by the Mother of the Athithi Ashram, which got unstitched since she fell. Not quite succeeding, Shaktivel took over. The sewing machine is at that time in Rajalakshmi's cottage. I film.

Then I go and film the young peacock and Parvati with the puppies and head back to the cottage.

Shaktivel tells me to stay until the 7th because a *Maha Rudra Homa* will be performed for Yogiji's health inside the ashram, but I tell him that this is not possible. He shows me photos of the *homa* that took place in the ashram after *Guru Purnima*. Later we will agree that no one, apart from close ones, can see the photos of Yogiji in bed during this *homa*.

At 10am, I head to the mandapam for the singing. It's Saturday and there are a few more people. I sing AUM SRI

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM. I stay for about an hour, and then go to the library. Parvati will of course be there with Sashi and I'll be filming a bit. Then it's time for the meal served to the sadhus, where I also film a bit. By then it was 11.30am. Then comes midday and the meal. As I'm sitting against the wall near the entrance and Shankara Rajulu is sitting next to me, Ravi comes up, grabs my shoulders and says to me in a tone full of sincerity and, it seems, emotion: "*Krishna, you mustn't leave, you must stay here.*"

As I take off a *kurta*, a present from Yogiji, it sticks to the skin on my back from perspiration and rips almost the entire width. It saddens me.

Parvati and I go to phone Rogers to book a flight to Mauritius-La Réunion after my return, if possible on the evening of the 15th. Saravanand (the fat one) takes us on his motorbike. As he drops us off, I ask him to tell Natarajan to come and pick us up here with his rickshaw and take us round the hill. I find out from Rogers Travels that all the Mauritius-Reunion flights are full for August. They put me on the waiting list and I ask the girl on the phone who knows me to do everything she can to find me a seat. She promises.

We get out and Natarajan arrives with his auto-rickshaw. I buy some Limca, etc... and off we go around the hill. We don't stop and the tour is quickly completed, without any concentration, it has to be said, and without much interest on the part of Parvati. The road is now paved. When we're 3 quarters of the way there, after the right-hand bend, Natarajan shows me a photo of another wise man with a white beard like Yogiji, who lives about 30 km from Tiruvannamalai. He tells

me, but I don't know if I've understood him correctly because of his accent and the fact that he has to talk while he is driving and that I'm in the back seat, that John used to go and see this swami and that one day Yogiji got angry and ordered to be taken there. Went with Him Mataji, Justice, Selva, etc.... He would have told John to leave the place. John never went back there.

...

At the ashram, Parvati receives and puts on her new garment. I film her, but it soon have to be taken off, as Rajalakshmi have to give everything to Ma Devaki, who herself will offer it on behalf of the ashram.

At 4pm we go to the mandapam for the singing. I only leave the mandapam for 15 minutes because of an intestinal problem...

At 6pm I proceed with the *ârti* at the refectory. At 7.30pm we have to go to Acchi and Chettiar, who have invited us. Acchi reminded me of this during the day, but of course I hadn't forgotten. In the meantime, I head back to the cottage. I don't know where Parvati is, but I know she's all right.

At 6pm, the phone rings. It's Ravi. He tells me that Mataji is calling me. Parvati has just returned. We go immediately to Yogiji's flats. The lights are out and Ma Devaki sits us down. Yogiji is turned on his left side. Behind Him, Kannan fans Him. Yogiji seems to be resting, sleeping.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

After a while, Ma Devaki asks Parvati if she could sing. Parvati, again after a moment's shyness, sings *AUM SRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM*. Ma asks me to fan Yogiji. The moment is blessed. Parvati continues to sing. I had stopped her so as not to disturb Yogiji, but Ma says, "*Keep going, he'll like it.*" Then she asks her if she can sing Yogiji's name. Parvati then sings *YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR YOGI RAMSURAT-KUMAR YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR JAYA GURU RAYA*, but instead of Raya, she sings something like "Yara". She tries but fails to pronounce Raya at the right moment.

Swaminathan has also arrived in the meantime. Rajmohan is here. We try to get Parvati to pronounce Raya, but she doesn't succeed. Selvaraj brings me 2 coffees. "Why 2?" "Because the cups are small." Parvati asks if she can sing *ARUNACHALA SHIVA*, which she does. Then Ma asks her if she knows any Hindi songs. Parvati then sings "*Asato sat gamaya, tamaso ma jyotir gamaya mrityor ma amrtam gamaya shanti shanti shanti*", etc... It's truly wonderful, divine! Near Yogiji, as I fan Him, as Ma is sitting there, as a few close disciples are there, rises this child's voice celebrating God!

At 7 p.m. Ma asks us to withdraw and we go to Chettiar and Acchi.

There I will ask them to just eat a little because of my intestinal problems. Chettiar shows me the photos of the dedication of the temple to Yogi Ramsuratkumar in Hosur. He had sent me an invitation but I have not received anything. There I discover many photos with a person dressed like Yogiji, with a white beard, a green turban, etc... I ask: "Who is he?" - Pon Komaraj! "What, Pon Komaraj?"

2000

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AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

6th August

Last day. The plan is for us to leave by car after all, although I have asked Venkatraman to reserve 2 places on the 2 p.m. Point to Point and I warned Mataji of this the day before. The truth is, Justiceji quickly comes back to Madras before we leave and we'll be able to leave with his car. Mukilan telephones and tells me that it's Bhavani's birthday and that we should leave as soon as the car arrives, i.e. around 10 o'clock. I tell him that this is strictly impossible as Mataji has to call me to come and see Yogiji before we leave and I don't know what time she will. Later Rajmohan makes it clear that I won't be able to leave before then. After hanging up, Rajmohan tells me that his behavior (Mukilan's) is selfish.

I'll go to prayers. Then lunch. Ma hasn't called me. The bags are almost ready. Justiceji returns. No casualties, except for the wrist from what I understand, but that's not serious.

It's around 1pm 1:15pm, if memory serves, that Mataji calls us. Shaktivel and we head immediately for Yogiji's apartments. Mataji ushers us in after a few moments and we prostrate ourselves completely. Shaktivel is on the right, Parvati in the center who also prostrates herself fully, and I am on the right, then we sit down next to Yogiji who is still on the left side. Kannan fans Him from behind and falls asleep.

Yogiji's eyes are closed. We'll be staying for about 3 quarters of an hour, and I think we'll be leaving around 2 pm. Just as Mataji tells Yogiji that Krishna and Parvati are leaving, Yogiji opens his eyes and looks at me for a long time. I look at him, my hands in anjali, begging Him to heal.

Then we leave. Goodbye to the ashram, goodbye to Justiceji. We embrace. Then it's the departure at around 3 a.m. with Shaktivel heading back to Madras. A stop in Gingi to film the castle and get out for a while, a pee stop for Parvati, then out of Gingi to film the monkeys. We'll also have a coffee somewhere and arrive in Madras in the evening. Shaktivel, instead of taking me straight to Mukilan's so that we can wash up and be driven to the place where Bhavani's birthday party is being held, takes us to a store where he buys *choridhars* for Lakshmi and Parvati. Then we go to his place. From there he calls Mukilan's mobile, as Mukilan had asked me to do, and it seems that Mukilan is not happy.

We get back into the cab and Shaktivel's elder brother takes us to Mukilan's. We wash and change, Parvati puts on the clothes offered by the ashram and we are driven very far into Madras. We arrive when the festivities are over. I can't eat much because of my intestines. I film a little. Then we go home. Bedtime.

AT THE FEET OF MY MASTER

The notes that follow, from August 7 to 10, have nothing more to do with Yogiji: Madras, Mumbai and return to Mauritius.

What happened afterwards at the Ashram until September has been reported here and there, and there's no need for repetition.

It's only on November 27th that I received a new message, written by Rajmohan who, it seems, had already sent it to me a little earlier without my receiving it. In fact, the postscript was added on the 27th, but Yogiji had already returned to the ashram on the 23rd and Rajmohan had written in the original without PS that He would be back in 7 to 10 days. The original message must therefore have been sent around November 15.

De : YOGIRAMSURATKUMAR <yrskt@md4.vsnl.net.in>
À : krishna reunion <brial@ravnal.fr>
Cc : C.C. Krishna <ckrishna@intnet.mu>
Envoyé : lundi 27 novembre 2000 22:05
Objet : message resent at your request

Beloved friends,

Sorry. I could not keep all of you informed about Bhagavan's health for the last two months as I was with Bhagavan at the hospital in Madras. Bhagavan was operated for cancer on September 11, 2000. After the successful surgery, He underwent raditation therapy and other usual procedures. Now He is almost back to His old, normal health. Only thing that remains is that He has to get up and walk. Doctor feels that His power is excellent and only because of the disease He carried for ten years or so without revealing it to anyone He needed support of another person for the last year or so. Now doctor feels that Bhagavan will be able to walk on His own without anyone's support. However, it may take little more time, may be a month or two. Bhagavan is returning to Tiruvannamalai in another seven to ten days time. Due to shortage of time, I am not able to send each one of you separate mail. I hope to do that very soon.

Love,
Rajmohan

P.S.: We are all very very happy to inform you, dear brother, that Yogiji has returned to the ashram from the hospital in Madras on 23rd November at 1630 hrs. After overcoming a slight physical discomfort, He is in good health and has been giving darshan to devotees.

2000

« Beloved friends,

Sorry. I could not keep all of you informed about Bhagavan's health for the last two months as I was with Bhagavan at the hospital in Madras. Bhagavan was operated for cancer on September, 2000. After the successful surgery, He underwent radiation therapy and other usual procedures. Now He is almost back to His old, normal health. Only thing that remains is that He has to get up and walk. Doctor feels that His power is excellent and only because of the disease He carried for ten years or so without revealing it to anyone He needed support of another person for the last year or so. Now doctor feels that Bhagavan will be able to walk on His own without anyone's support. However, it may take little more time, maybe a month or two. Bhagavan is returning Tiruvannamalai in another seven to ten days time. Due to shortage of time, I was not able to send each one of you separate mail. I hope to do that very soon...

PS: We are all very happy to inform you, dear brother, that Yogiji has returned to the ashram from the hospital in Madras on 23rd November at 1630 hrs. After overcoming a slight physical discomfort, He is in good health and has been giving darshan to devotees.”

2001

On February 20, while in France and staying at my brother's in Lambersart near Lille, I got up and went to wash up. That's when, in the mirror, I saw that there was a vertical red mark on my forehead between the two eyebrows. Of course, I wondered what was going on and where this brand could have come from... It didn't take long to understand when I received this e-mail from Rajmohan the next day, sent to my brother's e-mail address that I had given.

De : YOGIRAMSURATKUMAR <yrskt@vsnl.com>
À : Krishna CARCELLE <fcarcelle@wanadoo.fr>
Envoyé : mercredi 21 février 2001 18:55
Objet : BHAGAVAN HAS ATTAINED MAHA SAMADHI

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR JAYA GURU RAYA

Beloved Brother Krishnaji,

It is really very sad that you did not receive the mail of Bhagavan's Mahasamadhi. Bhagavan liberated Himself from the physical body at 0319 hrs on 20/Feb/2001.

Love,
Rajmohan

« YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR JAYA GURU RAYA

Dear brother Krishnaji,

2001

It is really very sad that you did not receive the email of Bhagavan's Mahasamadhi. Bhagavan liberated Himself from the physical body at 0319 hrs on 20/Feb/2001."