



RAMANA GYAN DIRECT PATH

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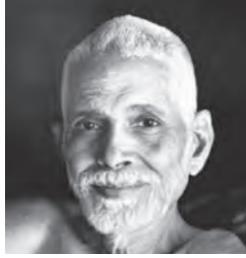
“ *Realization is our true nature. It is nothing new to be gained. What is new cannot be eternal. Therefore there is no need to be doubting whether we would gain or lose the self* ”



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VOLUME XVII ISSUE 4

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Uniqueness of Creation

Dr. Vijay Vancheswar

[Editor-Direct Path]

Vedanta says that the cosmos springs into view simultaneously with the seer. This is said to be *yugapat srshti* (instantaneous creation). Bhagavan Ramana says that this is similar to the creations in dream where the experiencer springs up simultaneously with the objects of experience. He also clarifies that when this is told, some people are not satisfied as they are very rooted in objective knowledge. Such people desire an explanation for the existence of the world which they see around them. To satisfy their curiosity the *Srutis* provide the concept of *karma srshti* (gradual creation) with a cause and effect explanation. Sri Ramana clarifies that the true seeker is content with the explanation provided through *yugapat srshti* or instantaneous creation as in the Absolute, there is no creation or destruction. Only when the mind appears does the world appear. Bhagavan mentions that both creation

and destruction are movements, not in the Absolute substratum but as aspects of the manifested *shakti*.

Thus out of the *sankalpa* (volition or idea) of the Supreme Brahman who is the essence of sat-chit- ananda is born this universe, with infinite variety in name and form. Each and every object of creation owes its creation to Him alone. *Chit* and *achit* are both attached inseparably to the Brahman, as the waves are to the ocean. The relationship is similar to that of the soul and the body. However, Brahman remains distinct, aloof and eternal, even as He bears with ease the created world which is mutable and subject to change. Sri Ramana collaborates what the Vedas say about the nature of Brahman- its ways are inscrutable and unfathomable to human thought and word. From Brahman's *sankalpa* His *Moola Prakriti* manifests as the five elements of space or ether, air, fire, water and earth. The Arunachala Hill represents the manifestation of

the source of Shiva represented as fire, the limitless aspect of Brahman. The five elements combine in various proportions to create the animate and inanimate beings and objects of gross and subtle nature.

The simile of the potter who uses his skills through the potter's wheel to make pots of different sizes and shapes or the goldsmith who fashions intricate

pieces of jewellery is often used to underscore the essential oneness of creation. However, Brahman as the Source of creation transcends all aspects of cause and effect; remaining timeless, causeless and boundary less.

The inner quest helps us retrace our path to our origin, the original state of our presence in the form of 'I' as the ever present consciousness. ■

Grace of Bhagavan towards Sri Sankarananda

Sri Sankarananda, a devotee of Sri Bhagavan, was employed in Madras in the Postal Department. As a result of practicing mantra japa for a long time, he attained mano-laya, i.e. stillness of mind. He lost interest in all mundane things and he could no more attend to his duties either in the office or at home. He was all the time in laya-samadhi. It was at this juncture that he came to Bhagavan, having taken six months leave. He sat in the old hall with Bhagavan and soon lost all outer consciousness. Even after the lunch bell was given he sat unmoved. Bhagavan brought him back to consciousness by giving a mild push with His foot and took him to the dining hall.

Since mano laya Samadhi would not lead one to the ultimate Truth, Bhagavan asked Sri Kunju swami, Sri Viswanatha Swami and others to take Sankarananda to the temple in the morning, to Samudram lake in the evening and engage him in one way or another throughout the daytime, thus preventing him from relapsing into laya. For many days this process of keeping him awake in the day time continued till he was overpowered by sleep. After some time, by the Grace of Sri Bhagavan, Sankarananda became normal. At the end of his leave he returned home to continue life in the normal way and also earned a promotion! It was this Sankarananda who later took Sri Niranjananda Swami to Burma to procure teakwood for the construction of the Matrubhuteswara temple. ■

Extracts from "The Mountain Path July, 1982



Glimpses of Self from Adhyatma Ramayana – Part 59

By G Kameshwar

INTRODUCTION

Agastya Muni continues to narrate the story of Ravana to Rama...

*

Ravana was instigated by his mother to get the better of his step-brother Kubera. Ravana along with his brothers went to Gokarana and performed severe austerities. Ravana, in particular, performed the most gory of austerities and started offering his heads, one by one, as sacrifice. When he was about to offer his tenth head, Brahma intervened, asked him to desist, and offered him a boon. Ravana asked for the boon of immortality. Brahma explained to him that 'what was born has to face death', and therefore he should ask for some other boon. Ravana then asked that he should be immune from death from the hands of any being in Creation, with the exception of human beings. He asked this because he felt humans

were no more dangerous than blades of grass. That boon was granted.

Ravana's brothers Kumbhakarna and Vibheeshana too performed austerities. When Brahma offered Kumbhakarna a boon, Goddess Saraswati manipulated Kumbhakarna's senses, and he ended up asking for the boon of sleeping six months at a time, and eating for one day thereafter. That boon was granted. Vibheeshana, to the offer of a boon by Brahma, asked that his mind should never swerve from the path of Dharma. Brahma, pleased with this unusual request, not only granted him this boon, but also granted him immortality.

Now, Sumali, the maternal grandfather of Ravana, finding that his grandsons had become invincible, came and asked Ravana to go and wrest Lanka from Kubera. Ravana tried telling Sumali that it would not be right to demand that from an elder brother. But Sumali explained

realpolitik to him and convinced him to confront Kubera. Ravana went and evicted Kubera from Lanka and established his own Kingdom there. Kubera, went to Kailasa and took refuge with Lord Siva.

Ravana continued his onslaught over all worlds and wreaked havoc on all Rshi-s. Deva-s etc. Kubera sent word to Ravana to desist from such evil acts. Ravana, in anger, attacked Kubera, defeated him and took away his Pushpaka vimana.

Thereafter, Ravana attacked and defeated Varuna, Yama etc. When he attacked Indra, he met with stiff resistance. Then Ravana's son Meghnada came and defeated Indra. Thereby, he got the name Indrajit.

Ravana then went and tried to uproot Kailasa. Nandi, the vehicle of Siva, cursed Ravana that he would meet his end in the hands of monkeys and men.

Thereafter, Ravana had an encounter with Kartaveerya Arjuna and later with Vali. He was worsted in both encounters, but managed to get away.

In this manner, Ravana overcame all three worlds, and he had Indrajit

and Kumbhakarna by his side too.

After narrating all this in detail, Agastya said to Rama....

Agastya to Rama:

Rama!

You are, verily,

Narayana,

The origin and creator

Of all the universes,

The Lord Almighty!

All this creation

Moving and still,

Are (all)

But your form.

From your navel-lotus

Manifested Brahma

The grandsire of the all;

Agni¹

Along with *Vagdevi Saraswati*²

Came from your mouth,

O best among Raghu-s!

From your arms came

The *Lokapala*³-s

And from your eyes

The Sun and the moon.

All directions

And all intermediate points in the

compass

Came from your ears!

¹ Agni: Fire deity, the principle of fire in all creation

² Vagdevi saraswati: the Goddess of speech

³ lokapAla: guardian of the world

From your nose Came Prana ⁴ ! As also the <i>Ashwini</i> twins ⁵ !	Came <i>Khara</i> ¹¹ and the like. You are <i>Vishwaroopa</i> ¹² The <i>Purusha</i> ¹³
From your shank, knee and thighs Came the worlds <i>Bhuvā</i> ⁶ and the like!	Endowed with the power of <i>Maya</i> ¹⁴ . You shine as multifarious forms When associated with <i>guNA-s</i> ¹⁵ .
From your abdomen Came the four seas, And from your breasts Came <i>Indra</i> and <i>Varuna</i> ⁷ ; From your seeds Came the <i>Valakhilya-s</i> ⁸ ; From your phallus Came <i>Yama</i> ⁹ , And from your rectum Death.	It is by you That all this universe Moving and still Been created. It is dependent on your alone That all creation, moving and still, Survive. Raghava Even in (worldly) conduct All objects behave But as your devotees!
From your anger Came <i>Rudra</i> ¹⁰ , the three eyed.	Just as clarified butter exists In the core of milk; Likewise, devotion to you, Pervades all creation!
From your bones Were born the mountains And from your hair The cloud clusters!	By your luminance Shines the Sun; Not you
The medicinal-herbs Came from your pores ; From your nails	

⁴ prANa: Life-breath principle that animates all creation

⁵ ashvini: celestial twins, physicians of the Gods

⁶ bhuvā: one of the seven worlds (loka-s) – bhu, bhuvā, suvā, mahā, jana, tapa, satyam

⁷ indra and varuNa: supreme deities of Veda

⁸ vAlakhilya: Rshi-s, produced from Brahma's body, who surround the chariot of the Sun

⁹ yama: the restrainer, the God who rules over the departed, the God who dispenses justice to the departed

¹⁰ rudra: the destroyer, Siva

¹¹ khara: demon, donkey

¹² visvarUpa: the form of the all-pervading cosmos

¹³ purusa: primeval person, the Supreme Being, the inner persona in all Creation

¹⁴ mAya: that which projects this illusory cosmos

¹⁵ guNa: Quality, attribute, characteristic of a person or object

By Sun's luminance!

Omnipresent

Eternal

One

You can be seen

Only with Divine-Eyes!

Not by eyes of ignorance

Can you be seen;

Like a blind person

Seeing the Sun.

Yogi-s

Contemplate you

O Supreme Lord,

In their own person!

In this manner

Does the crest of Veda (Upanishad)

Speak of you, night and day,

As "not this, not this"...

Carried by but a bit of devotion

To your feet, O Lord,

No sooner do the Yogi-s

Contemplate (you in their heart)

They see you

As their own Consciousness

Not as otherwise!

This little-bit prattle

That I have done in front of you,

O Supreme among Gods,

Please deign to forgive,

For I

Am entitled to your compassion!

Sans Directions,

Space, Time;

One,

Sans any other apart;

Pure Consciousness¹⁶;

Un-decaying, unborn,

Bereft of movement and the like;

Omniscient, Almighty,

Of infinite virtues,

Beyond the clutches of Maya;

One who is non-apart from his

devotees;

(He who is such)

The Lord of Raghu-s

I revere! ■

**** To be continued ****

¹⁶ cinMatra



Beloved Ramana

By V. Ganesan

Sri Sadhu Natanananda, the author of *Spiritual Instructions*, is little known to the outside world, even though he had for decades been living in the vicinity of the Ashram, till his passing away in 1981. He was content to practise and live Bhagavan's teachings totally withdrawn from active life and free from all desire for recognition or reputation. He was gracious enough to enlighten seekers and help them on in the path of *Atma Vichara*.

When I asked him what was the last talk he had with the Master, he gave the following as the most important, though not the last, instruction that he had received from Bhagavan before His *Mahasamadhi*.

“When I approached Bhagavan to clarify in what state of being we lived, He quoted these two verses from *Kaivalya Navanita*:

‘By the Lord under sacred banyan tree,

I speak the truth: You are the unchanging

Witness of the gross, subtle and (casual)

Ignorance, the waking, dream and sleep states,

and the passage of time – past, present and future

Which endlessly rise and fall, like waves in the ocean of bliss.

I had in my countless past incarnations

mistaken the body for the Self.

High or low, seeing all as a mirage, I

have by the grace of My Master

realized the Self as ‘I’ and been liberated’.

“These verses clear the deep-rooted

doubt even of advanced *sadhaks*, whether we live as the *Atma* or as *ahankara*.”

On another day, Sadhu Natanananda gave me the gist of Sri Bhagavan’s teachings as follows”

“The Truth is only One and this Truth was passed on by Saint Uddhalakha to Swetaketu; by Yamadharmā to Nachiketas, by Yagnavalkya to Gargi, to Maitreyi, to Janaka; by Vyas to Sukha by Vasishtha to Rama, by Rama to Anjaneya, by Krishna to Arjuna, by Sankara to Mandanamisra and by Sri Ramakrishna to Vivekananda. This same Truth, the essence of all the Upanishads, and the direct perception of our Master, He has passed on to us in His abundant compassion and Grace! It is: ‘Man’s original state is Awareness alone. He is not either the body or senses or the mind. The Awareness is as subtle as the *akash*, ether. Even though the Awareness seems to be within the body, yet like the lotus-leaf on the water and the insect in the mire, it is not bound by it. Also, just as ether is the basic element which pervades earth, water, fire and air, this Awareness pervades the body and the mind and yet is not in any way affected by them. For this Awareness there is no birth nor death, no bondage nor release. That Awareness is your real nature’. This is what Bhagavan

tells us emphatically”.

He continued, “On one occasion, I asked Sri Bhagavan, the right method for *Atma Vichara* and He replied: ‘At any time and under all circumstances one should unfailingly remember one’s real nature (I AM). (ii) While remembering this one fulfils one’s obligations in the world, one will do it without the least attachment to actions done, or to their results. When this attitude is strengthened the aspirant feels assured that he is making progress in his *sadhana*. (iii) This attitude should be practiced by all.

For instance Bhagavan Himself was very active and did all sorts of work. He stitched leaves, He made *kamandalams*, He perfected staffs, He assisted in the kitchen, grinding, preparing pasters, cutting vegetables and actual cooking. He acted as a mid-wife to dogs and monkeys. And He did all this without the least attachment and did it all perfectly. The proof of one’s doing the actions without attachment is that one feels that it is the Lord who uses one to get things done and done so well. His whole being says: ‘The Supreme has done these things through me’. Such humility is the mark of spiritual maturity”.

Sampoornammal who had for many

years served as kitchen-assistant to Bhagavan, came running to me one day after singing the following song of Avadayakka at the *Samadhi* shrine of Sri Bhagavan.

The song runs :

‘My Lord I do not find anything to offer in return for your word of Grace to me.

‘This entire Universe appears to me filled with Consciousness. Hence I feel guilty for my not offering you anything’.

‘Nothing, not even my body, heart and soul nor any matter in this Universe, if offered

Could match your own word of Grace, As this Universe is nothing other than you, what is there in this world that I can offer you?

‘Of what use would an Upadesa imparted to a worm inside its abode be to a bee humming outside? Please guide me, as I stand confused’.

She said : “While singing this song, it strongly reminded me of the day when I took some sugar-candy and bananas and placed them before Bhagavan. He said smilingly : ‘What is the use of offering these to me? You

should surrender your mind!’”.

Sri N. Balarama Reddiar, an old scholarly devotee narrated the following to me :

“A Vaishnava-devotee went and stood by the couch of Sri Bhagavan most reverentially and asked : “Bhagavan! Why have you not chosen the verse “*Sarvadharmā parityajā*” (Ch. 18 v. 66) which has been cited by great sages as the most important *sloka* of *Sri Bhagavad Gita* and which is the *charama sloka* of Vaishnavites”? Bhagavan replied: You will see that I have chosen instead an earlier verse of the same chapter (Ch.18 v.62)”.

Sri Balarama Reddiar clarified this cryptic statement as follows: In v.66 a negative aspect, ‘abandoning all righteous deeds seek Me as thy sole refuge’, is stressed; but in v.62, ‘Unto Him alone surrender, O Bharata, with all thy being’, the positive method is given.

Here are the two verses from Ch.18.

“Abandoning all righteous deeds, seek Me as thy sole refuge; I will liberate thee from all sins; do thou not grieve”. (v.66, not included in the *Gita-Sara*).

“Unto Him alone surrender, O Bharata, with all thy being; by His

Grace shalt thou obtain peace Supreme, the abode eternal.” (verse 66, which appears as verse 42, the concluding verse of *Bhagavat Gita Sara*).

Dr. M.R. Krishnamurthi Iyer, the first Doctor of the Ashram Dispensary which was started in 1929, was a great seeker and in course of time had attained high spiritual maturity and even a simple contact with him proved it. He stayed in Tiruvannamalai town and his house had been very familiar to me from my childhood. After Bhagavan attained *Brahma Nirvana*, Dr Krishnamurthi Iyer used to come to Bhagavan’s *Samadhi* sing a devotional song and go round the Hill. Such was my admiration for him that when I fell seriously ill I was adamant that he alone should treat me and he did so with intense care and affection. During that period I came to know of his intense spiritual fervor and I asked him to tell me more about Bhagavan. Don’t worry!’ I woke up, delighted, and my wife and I went out with a hurricane lamp and searched for the herb in the courtyard. Except for a small strip, the courtyard was plastered in cement. In the small strip many bushes had grown. There among these, we did find the herb – only one of it. And we made the preparation accordingly and almost ran to the Ashram. When we entered the Hall very early in the

morning, Sri Bhagavan was seated on His couch. With a smiling face, He greeted us and extended His hand with these words: “Give me what you have brought!” He swallowed the medicine. When I spoke to Him about the dream He looked innocent as if He knew nothing about it! Needless to say, the hiccup stopped within a few days. He was restored to normal health.

Smt Lakshmi Ranganadhan was a fortunate devotee whom Bhagavan referred to as “our Lakshmi” and who was fondly known as “Oor Athai” (Aunt coming from town).

Oor Athai was kind enough to tell me the following: “Through my brother Naravana Rao I came to Bhagavan. With my mother I stayed in town and visited the Ashram. Chinnaswami was then doing the Ashram cooking all alone. I was asked to assist in the kitchen. One day I was grinding for the next day’s *iddlis*. Suddenly Bhagavan came there and asked me ‘Why are you doing it all alone?’ Then He also sat with me and completed the grinding before He left. Even now my hairs stand on end when I think of it!”

Oor Athai continued: “Bhagavan could be stern when we made mistakes. Once I made some *puris* for being served in the afternoon.

I fried them in oil, but also made a few in ghee. I placed the specially made ones on top, so that I could quietly serve these to Bhagavan. Everything was distributed. When all was over, Bhagavan called me and said: ‘Lakshmi’. Don’t do this again. If you try to differentiate, I will never touch any of your preparations”. How did He know what I had done? I never repeated this mistake. Bhagavan’s words are so powerful that the entire being gets changed with a single word of His. He is not only the Foundation of Compassion, but the Lord of Power as well”.

It was well known that Bhagavan’s head would shake continuously and that without the staff he could not walk or even stand aright. These were not symptoms of old age. Sri Kunju Swami says that both the shaking of the head and His holding on to a staff were with Him from very early days. These were the marks left on Him by the stupendous experience of *Atmanubhuthi* in Madurai! When asked about this condition, Sri Bhagavan remarked: “What do you think would happen to a small thatched hut inside which a big elephant is kept tied up? Wouldn’t it be shattered? It is the same case here!”.

Vilacheri Ranga Iyer was a classmate of Sri Bhagavan was known

to have interfered and changed the course of one’s life. He made him stay along with Him for months and did not allow him to go away though he repeatedly asked permission to go. (The story is given in A. Devaraja Mudaliar’s *My Recollections*, pp. 103-4) When Bhagavan did permit him to go home, most of Ranga Iyer’s problems had been solved.

His daughter, Smt Alagammal, came to the Ashram in June this year. She is deeply devoted to Bhagavan. She got her name Alagammal from Bhagavan Himself. She narrated a few interesting incidents that took place in the presence of Bhagavan as told by her father.

“When first Ranga Iyer met Bhagavan, up the Hill, he asked Him: “What Bhagavan Even the previous evening before you left for Arunachala, we were together playing football. You were so normal, then. How is it you did not inform me, who was so close a friend of yours?” Bhagavan smiled and replied: “Ranga! Did I undertake the journey in the normal course, packing up things and so on? It was some great force that pushed me and brought me to Arunachala. Where is room then for anything else?” The immensity of the ‘Great Force’ was proved by the fact that Bhagavan had been quite normal 24 hours before!”

“Ranga Iyer’s wife, Chellamma, was also deeply devoted to Bhagavan. During one of their visits, Ranga Iyer and family took permission from Bhagavan and went round the Hill (*giripradakshina*). Chellamma was having a swollen leg and hence could not go along with others. She, however, went round the Ashram premises once and a few times around the Old Hall in which Bhagavan was seated. When she entered the Hall Bhagavan was surprised and asked her how she had made the *giripradakshina* so quickly. She replied: “I could not go with them; but I went round the

Ashram and the Hill, which for me is Arunachala *pradakshina*. Did not Lord Ganesa once go round His parents, Siva and Parvati, and win the prize for going round the universe? For me Bhagavan is my father and mother and going round Him is more than *pradakshina* of the Hill”. Bhagavan laughed and said: “I hope Chellamma will not ask me for a reward like the golden mango which Ganesa got?” Chellamma replied: “I do want a reward, Bhagavan. I want your “grace”. Bhagavan benignly looked at her!. [Extracts from “The Mountain Path” October, 1982]. ■

“*Jnana* is given neither from outside nor from another person. It can be realized by each and everyone in their own heart. The *Jnana* guru of everyone is only the Supreme Self that is always revealing its own truth in every Heart through the being-consciousness as ‘I AM, I AM’. This granting of true knowledge by him is initiation into *Jnana*. The grace of guru is only that Self awareness that is one’s own true nature. It is the inner consciousness by which he is unceasingly revealing his existence. This divine *upadesa* is always going on naturally in everyone.” ■

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Light heartedness of Sri Ramana

By A. Devaraja Mudaliar

Whenever Bhagavan told a story, he was a complete actor and made it incredibly vivid. I cannot at all give the following story in the picturesque style in which we had it from him. I can only give the mere bones of it, but even from that one can see how funny it must have been. The story: A man, who could not afford a servant was very vain and thought that people would not respect him unless he was accompanied by a servant. He happened to go to a neighbouring village and stay at night there. He took with him a small bundle of clothes etc. On seeing a house with a nice pial outside, he watched for a moment and when the occupants of the house were inside, threw his bundle on the pial and went away. After a little while he returned and asked, "Did my servant come and leave my bundle here?" They said, "Yes, there is a bundle. See, if this is yours?" The man said, "Yes. It is mine. The foolish servant has gone somewhere without telling. I don't know when he will turn up." The people of the house gave him what hospitality they could and he was allowed to sleep on the pial outside. When he had gone to bed and his hosts had closed the door, he began speaking in tones loud enough to be heard inside, as if the servant had returned and was massaging his limbs. He said: "You fool! Where have you been all this time? You always behave like this. Now massage my legs properly." He kept on making such remarks as: "Now like this." Sometimes he would slap his body so that the

people inside could have the impression that some servant was really massaging their visitor.

When this had gone for some time, one of the family members felt curious to have a look at this wonderful servant. He peeped through the windows and discovered the hoax. But the family did not indicate to the poor fool that they had discovered his bluff. Next morning, after having something for breakfast, he took leave telling his hosts: "My servant will come in a few minutes and take my bundle." He left his bundle on the pial and after a few minutes, when all the family was inside, he returned hoping to take it away unnoticed, and leave on his hosts the impression that his servant had come and taken it. But the family, guessing his intention, hid the bundle. Not being able to find it, he had to ask them for it, and they told him: "Yes, your servant came for it soon after you left and took it away, as you said he would." We could not contain our laughter when Bhagavan described how the man carried on the imaginary conversation with his non-existing servant and also kept massaging and slapping his body hard enough to be heard inside.

I remember a joke Bhagavan cracked at his own expense. In the last years he was suffering badly from rheumatism and could walk only with the aid of a stick. Whenever it was time for him to leave the hall, the attendant would get up and give him his stick. On one such occasion, while taking the stick and rising from the couch, he quoted the well-known Tamil saying: "The monkey will only perform when the master waves his stick." ■

Source: My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana

Bhagavan's Solicitude

By Kunju Swami

Once thinking that Bhagavan was angry with me, I decided to leave for Tirupati and got Bhagavan's permission also to leave. That afternoon, Bhagavan unexpectedly started for *pradakshina* and Ramakrishna Swami asked me to accompany them. I started with a towel and a dhoti in order to be ready for my departure. That day Bhagavan walked unusually slowly. As it was not proper to go ahead of Him, I could not walk faster either. After some time, we could see, at a distance, my train leaving the station. Bhagavan said: "There goes your train; fly, fly to it!" So saying He laughed. I missed my train and we reached the Ashram late that night. Bhagavan told Dandapani Swami: "He thinks that I was annoyed with him and decided to go to Tirupati. What a wonderful fellow! Even here at the Ashram he eats without relish. What will he get outside? How will he eat?"

Yet another occasion evidencing Bhagavan's great consideration is imprinted in my mind. I had to go to my village to look after Ramakrishna Swami's brother but had only just enough money to buy a ticket. There was no extra money to meet the expenses on the way. That afternoon at three, a devotee came and served *pooris* in Bhagavan's plate, He did not say anything. We were all surprised! Bhagavan took only one of them and packed the remaining five and gave them to me, saying: "He has no money for food on the way". All were deeply touched by Bhagavan's compassion. ■

Source: From Ramana Bhoomi

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Sri Bhagavan's Cart - Ride

By S.S. Cohen

During an after-dinner chat in 1942, the conversation drifted to modern scientific discoveries – talkies, radio, television, etc. – whereupon Bhagavan remarked: "Speaking of radio, etc., reminds me that in my young days there were no buses even; I, for instance, have never in my life ridden in a bus or car.". Someone asked, "What about a cart? How many times has Bhagavan used a cart since he came to Tiruvannamalai?" Bhagavan answered, "Only once – it was I think in 1906. There was a feast in Ishania Mutt, in the north end of the town. The Head of the Mutt came with some of his followers and invited me to it. He insisted so much that I had to accept the invitation. On reaching the road I saw a cart waiting, which they asked me to mount, but I said they could use it themselves if they so chose and I would follow on foot. Without saying a word three of them lifted me up and bundled me into the cart".

From Guru Ramana, first edition, page-8

“When the mind turns away from the objects, it beholds its source, consciousness. This is Self-abidance.”

Ramana Maharshi (Upadesa Saram-16)

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Who is a real Sannyasi

By A.S. Rajaram

When Sri Ramana Maharshi was staying in his jungle hermitage, a female monkey came with her baby on her breast to snatch some fruits from the Ashram but was driven away by the people there. Ramana was full of concern for the plight of the monkey and said “Is this fair? We call ourselves sannyasins, but when a real sannyasi comes we drive him away without giving him anything. How unfair! We want to eat for years and live. We store things in a room, lock it and keep the keys with us. Has the monkey got a house? Can it put anything by for the morrow? It eats whatever it can get and sleeps on whatever tree available. It carries the child under the belly wherever it goes until the child is able to walk about when it leaves the child to itself. Who is real Sannyasi, the monkey or ourselves?” (Timless in Time p.229). At the same time Ramana was very clear that a person who takes to sannyas when he is not yet ripe for it would only

create new bonds for himself. He said that true renunciation is in the mind and is neither achieved by physical renunciation or impeded by the lack of it. When Sadhu Natanananda wanted Maharshi’s permission to renounce his family ties, Maharshi advised him against it. “There is no difference between domestic life and that of hermits. Just as you avoid the cares of home when you are there, go home and try to be equally unconcerned and unaffected by the circumstances amidst home life.” Explaining his views fully to an Andhra Pandit in 1935, Ramana said “Why do you think that you are a *grihasta* (house holder)? If you go out as a sannyasi, a similar thought (that you are a sannyasi) will haunt you. Whether you continue in the household, or renounce it and go to the forest, your mind haunts you. The ego is the source of thoughts. It creates the body and the world and makes you think you are a *grihasta*. If you renounce the world, it will only substitute the thought sannyasi

for *grihasta* and the environment of the forest for those of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there. They even increase in new surroundings. There is no help in the change of environment. The obstacle is the mind. It must be got over whether at home or in the forest. If you can do it in the forest, why not in the home? Therefore why change the environment? Your efforts can be made even now whatever environment you may be in” (Talks p.59). He declared “so long as one thinks that he is a sannyasi; he is not one, so long as one does not think of samsara, he is not a samsari. On the other hand he is a sanyasi” (Talks p.242). Ramana also said “In sleep you are not aware of ‘your family’. And you are the same thing now. But now you are aware of the family and feel that it binds you, and think of renouncing it. Do the members of ‘your’ family bind you to themselves or do you bind yourself to them? It is enough if you give up the thought ‘This is my family’. Thoughts change, but not you. Keep hold of the unchanging you. To do so, you do not need to stop the minds’ thinking. Just remember the source of thoughts and be in earnest to find it”. That is one should understand sannyasa aright. It is a purification of mind, a harmonious and concentrated direction of the mind to the goal – not simply the observance

of external forms of self-denial. One should know that the Self is neither an ascetic nor a householder.

Osho in his book ‘Pointing the Way’ says that “Saintliness is definitely not an external attribute, it is an internal truth”. Saintliness is being one’s self. Man is generally outside himself. He is not in his self for a moment. He is with anyone and everyone but himself. Holding oneself aloof from one’s self is non-saintliness. Returning to the self, becoming stabilized in one’s own being, becoming spiritually healthy is saintliness. Spiritual health is saintliness”. Elaborating this point Osho went on to say “Worldliness and renunciation cannot coexist in the same mind. A worldly mind can never be a renouncing mind. The change over from worldliness to renunciation cannot take place unless a basic revolution happens in the mind. And that basic revolution is itself renunciation.

Sannyas is neither a change of dress nor a change of name nor a change of one’s abode. It is a change of one’s outlook. It is a total change in one’s mind. And for that revolution the same types of approach that work in the world are useless. The mathematics of the world are not only

futile, they are obstructions standing in the way of that revolution. As the rules of dreams do not apply when one is awake, the truths of the world bear no relation to renunciation. After all, sannyas is awakening from the dream we call the world”.

Ramana’s views are similar. “Sannyas is to renounce one’s individuality. This is not the same as tonsure or ochre robes. A man may be a house holder but if he does not think that he is a grihi, he is a Sannyasi. On the contrary, a man may wear ochre robe and wander about; yet if he thinks that he is a sannyasi, he is not that. To think of sannyas defeats its own purpose.” (Talks p.394). Again he says “Renunciation does not mean outward divestment of clothes and so on or abandonment of home. True renunciation is the renunciation of desires, passions and attachments”. (Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge p.79).

While talking to Annamalai Swami, Ramana stressed the point that “That man who is active in the world yet remains desire-less, without losing sight of one’s own essential nature, is alone a true man.” Even better than the man who thinks “I have renounced everything” is the one who does his duty but does not

think “I do this” or “I am the doer”. Even a sannyasi who thinks ‘I am a sannyasi’ cannot be a true sannyasi, whereas a house holder who does not think “I am a house holder” is truly a sannyasi (Talks p.512).

Ramana did not decry taking of sannyas per se. He only said that when the time comes one will drop off from secular life as a ripe fruit does from the branch of a tree”. When Maharshi’s friend Rangan then countered “Then why did you become a sannyasin”? Ramana replied “That was my prarabdha” (destiny). At the same time, He took special interest in young sadhus who had taken a vow of sannyas. He expected such devotees to remain aloof from the attractions of the world. Whenever he found them deviating from their dharma of their asramas, he would immediately correct them. Once a maharaja came for Maharshi’s darshan and when he was going back, a Sadhu from the Ashram followed the Maharaja for some distance and then returned. Looking at him with a smile, Maharshi said “Swami seems to have gone on some urgent business! There may be some special reason for that Maharaja, who possesses the eight forms of wealth to come seeking you. But why did you, who

should be exemplifying contentment of mind, go after him? If ever you have any wants, is he the one who can remove them. Without knowing this simple truth, for what purpose have you embraced renunciation? (Narrated by Sadhu Natanananda to David Godman – Refer to Power of the Presence p.122).

Thus Maharshi declares that

Sannyasa is not going to forest or giving up of one's duties but to turn inwards and renounce activities there. Sadhus must totally surrender themselves to the Lord, they should be without likes and dislikes, free from thoughts and anxieties and depend on the Lord alone for their needs. Sannyas thus is the renunciation of the one who is the renouncer. ■

Bhagavan's Composition of Aksharamanamalai

In the evenings, Bhagavan's attendants would beg in the streets to collect food. The traditional song they sang to collect alms was by Adi Shankara: "Samba Sadasiva, Samba Sadasiva, Shamba Sadasiva, Samba Sivom." When the people of the town heard this refrain, they would be ready with food knowing that Bhagavan's attendants were coming. Knowing this, some miscreants began to go ahead of them, sing the same song and collect the food instead. So Bhagavan's attendants requested him, "Please compose a song we can sing exclusively to collect alms." Bhagavan, in his usual manner, kept silent. The next day when they were going around the hill, Palani Swami called Ayya Swami, the most literate among them aside, "Bhagavan is murmuring something, perhaps he is composing some verses. Take this paper and pencil." During that one circumambulation, Bhagavan composed one hundred and eight verses. Ayya Swami faithfully took these down. Titled *Aksharamanamalai* or *The Marital Garland of Letters*, it is one of the most spiritually moving, devotional hymns ever written. (Arthur Osborne told me once that he had read three thousand books of poetical verses in English, many of them devotional in nature. He said none excelled these verses in devotion and wisdom.) ■

Source : Ramana Periya Puranam

One day, someone put a statue of Ganesa in a niche inside Virupaksha cave. Overwhelmed, Palani Swami requested Bhagavan, “Why don’t you make some offering to Lord Ganesa?” Bhagavan’s way of making an offering was not through food, garlands or flowers, but through verse. This was the first verse composed by Bhagavan: “Lord with a big and fat belly residing in the niche, you who allowed your Father to go around begging, at least now shower your glance of grace on me, who too is the son of that Father.” ■

Source: Ramana Periya Puranam

Advent of Ashram *iddlis*

Ashram *iddlis* are so famous that when on some rare occasion *iddlis* were served in Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat, Gandhiji would remark: “*Ramanasramam iddlis!*” (Sarojini Naidu, the ‘nightingale of India’ stayed with Bhagavan for some time and liked Ashram *iddlis* so much that she had described them to Gandhiji!). It may be interesting to recall how *iddlis* came to be made in the Ashram. In those days, Bhagavan used to get up very early in the morning and cut vegetables and occasionally help in the preparation of *uppuma*. Once Lokammal sent from her village, Pattakurichi, near Tenkasi, some large quantities of par – boiled- rice, the best quality. Santhamma, another kitchen –assistant, not knowing how to utilize the half – boiled rice (only raw rice is cooked at the Ashram), in consultation with Bhgavan, prepared *iddlis* that day for break-fast. It was very much liked by everyone. Thenceforth, *iddlis* became the staple break-fast. Even today, Ashram *iddlis* are acclaimed for size, softness and taste, the full credit should go to Lokamma Pati! ■

Extracts from “The Mountain Path July, 1982”

Devotion of Yazhpani with Bhagavan

When Bhagavan went to Skandashram, Perumal Swami also went along. Among Bhagavan's attendants, there was one Yazhpani from Sri Lanka. (Sri Lanka was also known as Yazhpanam and so he was called Yazhpani.) He was a scrupulously clean person. He would sweep Skandashram daily and keep everything spic and span. His reputation was equally spotless; whenever Bhagavan returned to the Skandashram and leaves were scattered about, he would ask, "Is Yazhpani not here?" Once, Yazhpani spread a paste of cow dung on the rough, soft earth of Skandashram to make the ground smoother and harder. When Perumal Swami who was like the manager of Skandashram came and saw it still wet and slippery, he became livid and shouted, "Yazhpani, get out of Skandashram!" Yazhpani was a very sincere devotee of Bhagavan. He could not leave Bhagavan but also wanted to obey the orders of the manager. Being a clever man, he tried to find a way out. Inside Skandashram was a tall coconut tree that protruded outside its grounds. He quickly climbed to the top of the tree and stayed there. Now, he was technically out of Skandashram without leaving it! Everyone pleaded with him to come down but he refused. At lunch, Bhagavan noticed that Yazhpani was missing. The other devotees then related what had happened. Bhagavan got up, went to the coconut tree and gently said, "Yazhpani, why not come down and share the food." He spoke so softly that this man came down like a child and started eating his food. Another day, Bhagavan was heard saying, "I had a notebook in which I had written some verses. A person from Uttarkashi has taken it but has not returned it. It is several months now. I needed that notebook." Yazhpani disappeared for many days. He went to Uttarkashi, got the notebook back from that person and presented it to Bhagavan. Bhagavan was very happy. Yazhpani told the other devotees that it had taken him several days without a minute's rest to fulfill his guru's wish. That was the one pointed devotion he had for Bhagavan. ■

Source : Ramana Periya Puranam



Recollections - III

Akhilandamma

I used to worship Bhagavan by breaking a coconut, lighting camphor and performing arathi before him. In the old days on the hill Bhagavan had graciously allowed me to worship like this.

Once Bhagavan and the devotees started to do *giripradakshina*. I was one of the crowd which followed him. I, and two of the ladies who accompanied me, Echammal and Kamakshi Ammal, had planned to worship Bhagavan while he was walking around the hill. Breaking coconut and lighting camphor before Bhagavan inside the Ashram was not liked by Chinnaswami. He preferred that such ceremonies be performed only in front of the Mother's shrine. So the three of us, without his knowledge, brought all the necessary things to do *puja* to Bhagavan on the *pradakshina* road.

Bhagavan always walked very slowly when he performed *giripradakshina*. He also used to

stop at regular intervals. At one of the resting places Echammal broke a coconut and lighted camphor in Bhagavan's benign presence. At the next halting place Kanakshi did the same thing. My turn came when Bhagavan halted again outside Gautama ashram. I broke the coconut, lighted the camphor and bowed to him. Bhagavan looked at me and asked in a kindly manner, "Did the three of you bring coconuts and fruit after consulting together?" Our conspiracy was thus exposed.

During one of the Deepam festivals I went to Skandashram with a coconut and camphor to have darshan of Bhagavan. On this visit I met Dandapani Swami, who had recently settled in the Ashram, for the first time. Bhagavan was not there when I arrived. When Dandapani Swami saw the coconut and camphor he knew that I had come for. He tried to prevent me from carrying out my plan by ordering me not to worship

Bhagavan with the coconut and the camphor. I had no intention of following his orders, but to placate him I kept quiet while he lectured me on how it was against the Ashram rules to perform ritual worship to Bhagavan.

Finally Bhagavan came. While he was still walking towards us he looked kindly at me and enquired, "When did you come?" Dandapani Swami was quite surprised. He had been ordering and threatening me on the assumption that I was a new devotee who had never met Bhagavan before. When he saw how well I knew Bhagavan he calmed down and went away, leaving us alone. In his absence I performed my usual puja to Bhagavan, thinking all the while of Bhagavan's grace. I should mention that whenever I brought food from my village for Bhagavan, Bhagavan would invariably enquire "When did you come?".

Bhagavan's manner of protecting his devotees is unique. Unlike most spiritual figures he wants nothing from his devotees. Devotees must offer food and namaskarams to the heads of maths in order to get any grace from them. But Bhagavan is different. When he does not even like the salutations from his devotees, how can there be any desire for the food offerings which the devotees bring?

Bhagavan never accepts the worship of devotees when they break coconuts and wave camphor before him. Some of us, who had been devotees for many years, still worshiped him in this way, but Bhagavan did not approve of our activities. He did not prevent us because he knew that it gave us some mental satisfaction, but at the completion of each puja he would usually request us not to do again.

Once I went into the presence of Bhagavan with two coconuts, determined in my mind to offer one to Bhagavan and the other at the Mother's samadhi. Bhagavan, of course, knew what my intentions were. He said, "I am an idol which eats. In the temple there is an idol which doesn't eat. Break the coconuts before the God who doesn't eat"

On another occasion, just before I started *giri pradakshina*, I lighted camphor in Bhagavan's presence, prostrated and left. I learned later that after I had gone, a few boys also burnt camphor in Bhagavan's presence and prostrated to him. Bhagavan complained, "All this has happened on account of Akhilandamma".

Bhagavan is the one who bestows grace without being asked. Does he shower his grace merely in exchange for our *puja* offerings? No! Is not

grace his natural state?

It is well-known that many of the devotees who had *darshan* of Bhagavan Ramana during his early days at Arunachala adored him as Jnanasambandhar himself. That sage also attained Self-realization in his youth. Those who ponder over the two lives will discover many other similarities between the two. Bhagavan himself frequently praised the *jnana* of Jnanasambandhar. The birth day of both of them is *Arudra Darsanam*, both were strongly drawn to Arunachala, and both reached it by the same route. On the way to Arunachala both halted at the Aryaninallur temple. The sceptre of *jnana* which Jnanasambandhar wielded till his 16th year was taken over by Bhagavan, also in his 16th year. The similarities between the two are very striking. Because of this, when the Gurupuja of Jnanasambandhar I always used to go there, have Bhagavan's *darshan* and offer *bhiksha*.

After cooking started at Sri Ramanasramam I still wanted to offer *bhiksha* to all Bhagavan's devotees, but how could I offer it to the Brahmins? I resolved the problem by purchasing vegetables etc. and giving them to the Ashram with instructions that they should be prepared for the Brahmins. I myself used to cook the food for

Bhagavan and for the non-Brahmin devotees and bring it to the Ashram. In the early days of Sri Ramanasramam, when the cooking facilities were not very well developed, Bhagavan never made any critical comments about my habit of preparing and bringing food in this way. However, when the Ashram began to expand, a big dining room was constructed in which it was possible to cook and serve food for hundreds every day. Even then, I stuck to my old practice of cooking food at home and bringing it to the Ashram.

Once, after the dining room had been built, I brought *bhiksha* to the Ashram on the *Gurupuja* day of Jnanasambandhar. Bhagavan looked at me and said, "What all this trouble for you? If you donate some food the ashramites can cook it and serve it." From that time on, unable to disobey the gracious order of Bhagavan, I gave the Ashram whatever food I could in order to continue my service. I still managed to do some cooking for Bhagavan and the devotees because thereafter I was permitted to assist with the preparation of the Ashram break-fast. Since Bhagavan did not say anything about this, whenever I go to the Ashram I still have the good fortune of preparing the morning break-fast.

In Bhagavan's last days, while I was staying in Desur, I was frequently

thinking and worrying about Bhagavan's health. I decided that I had to come and see him because my desire for *darshan* and the grief I was feeling on account of his suffering were both very great. When I reached the gates of the Ashram a Brahmin, who was not known to me, prevented me from entering. He ordered me to stay outside. I was immediately struck with an unbearable grief because at that time my yearning to see Bhagavan was very great. Fortunately, by Bhagavan's grace, an inmate of the Ashram who knew me came to that place. The barriers and rules and regulations which had been formed to maintain the tranquility of the Ashram in those final days could not withstand the surging tides of my ocean of grief. When this devotee informed Bhagavan that I had arrived I was given permission to enter the Ashram and have *darshan*. I tried to suppress my emotions as I went into Bhagavan's room, but the feeling that I would soon be losing my one and only God completely destroyed my self-restraint. I cried out to him, "Bhagavan! Bhagavan has decided to give up his body. What can I do?"

There were thousands of good souls outside who, like me, had been wanting to have Bhagavan's *darshan*. Is it not the boundless grace of Bhagavan that I alone was

admitted inside?. Musing on this graciousness I bowed to my Lord and came out in a perplexed state of mind. It goes without saying that I was very unwilling to leave. After I had left the room Bhagavan sent me the following message via the devotee who had opened the door for me: "Why do you feel sorry for this mortal body?" It occurred to me that Bhagavan was consoling me by saying, "Don't feel sorry for this body, I am always your saviour!" When the import of his message registered with me I experienced a little calmness and clarity.

When Bhagavan finally attained *mahasamadhi* my mind sank into an unfathomable ocean of grief. Later, when I discovered that Bhagavan's grace and benign presence were still permeating my heart, the grief I felt on account of his physical disappearance abated. Now, on my visits to Tiruvannamalai I worship at the *lingam* which has been installed on Bhagavan's *samadhi*, I have *darshan* of Sri Ramana's devotees and I offer them *bhiksha* according to my means and ability. I hope to spend the small remaining portion of my life continuing such services. ■

Extracts from "The Mountain Path" July, 1988

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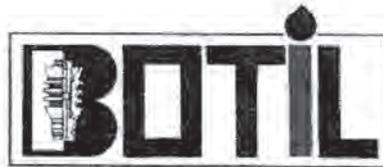
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Ramana Maharshi {Upadesa Saram (2)}

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Devotion of poor Sepoy Swami

There was another sadhu living at Skandashram called Sepoy Swami. (Sepoy means soldier and he was called so because he was a retired army man.) He was therefore habituated to military etiquette. Very devoted to Bhagavan, he expressed his devotion by guarding Bhagavan as he felt it was his duty to be Bhagavan's bodyguard. Whenever Bhagavan was in Skandashram, Sepoy Swami would come with a long stick that was supposed to be his rifle and stand in attention next to Bhagavan. Every minute that Bhagavan was there, he would stand guard silently, not looking at anybody else and completely immersed in meditation! One day, Perumal Swami was vexed with him and shouted, "What are you doing? Are you enacting some drama here? Get out of Skandashram!" This man wanted to obey but could not go away from Bhagavan. Therefore, he stood outside Skandashram, guarding Bhagavan from there just as he had been doing from within its walls. Some days later, he felt that Bhagavan was not being properly honoured. To Sepoy Swami, his master was the sovereign monarch of the whole universe who people were not honouring appropriately. His feeling of veneration led him to decide that Bhagavan must have horses. He went home, sold all his property, bought some horses and brought them to Skandashram. As he did not know how to maintain them, the horses died one after the other in the course of time. If you do not go into the logic of it, you will admire the devotion of poor Sepoy Swami.

Source Ramana Periya Puranam

Bhagavan's grace towards Perumal Swami

Though Perumal Swami disliked Bhagavan's mother, when she passed away in 1922, he helped carry her body to the present day Ramanasramam. After placing the body down, he went into town and got all the things necessary for building her samadhi. However, when Bhagavan began staying there in a simple, thatched shed built over the tomb of the Mother, Perumal Swami did not like it. He also intensely loathed Bhagavan's younger brother Niranjanananda Swami (Chinna Swami). When the management of Ramanasramam was handed over to Chinna Swami, he stoutly opposed it. He went to court, filed a suit against Bhagavan and tried to drag him to court. He even created a statue of Bhagavan, started another Ramanasramam in town and proclaimed it the real one. Further, he declared himself the secretary of this institution. However, Chinna Swami was the secretary of the original Ramanasramam. Whenever the mail arrived, there was always a tug of the war in the town post office. Then Bhagavan solved it very simply. He said, "Let all the letters go to Perumal Swami. Whatever he wants to take let him take and whatever he does not want let us take. Where is the need to quarrel?" When Perumal Swami was thus frustrated and agitated by Bhagavan's response, Bhagavan sent word through Kunju Swami, "Tell Perumal Swami that he should not swerve away from spiritual sadhana." Perumal Swami did not listen, but Bhagavan never gave up on him. When he lost the court case, he felt humbled and soon fell ill. He sent word to Bhagavan, "Bhagavan, I want to come and apologize. I have committed a sin." The rest of the people in the ashram said, "No! He is the person who went against you, Bhagavan. He should not be allowed to come inside." When Bhagavan heard this, he said, "Why do you say so? He is our Perumal Swami. Let him come." When Perumal Swami came, everyone looked at him with "acid eyes. He broke down before Bhagavan and said, "Bhagavan, I have committed a terrible sin. I will surely go to hell." Bhagavan smiled at him and said, "Will I not be there with you even there?" That was a turning point for Perumal Swami. He chose a small cave near Seshadri Swami Ashram and started living there in meditation and contemplation. Even after Bhagavan dropped the body, he felt he must have prasada from Ramanasramam. So, Kunju Swami used to bring rice and rasam from Ramanasramam for Perumal Swami twice a day. That is how Bhagavan took care of him. He may have been a rough edged rock, but Bhagavan took care of him. We can be sure that he too was absorbed back into Arunachala, the divine stillness. ■

Source: *Ramana Periya Puranam*

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I, Mr. Justice K. Ramamoorthy (Retd.), hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

1st March 2015

(Signature of the publisher)



How I came to Bhagavan

Sadhu Mahalingam

On becoming aware in childhood that my father had been baptized by a bishop and my mother had initiated a baptismal tank; that my birth had been on the eve of a feast of The Holy Virgin; and that I had been given two Biblical names and circumcised, I had received the impression that God required of me to be exceptionally religious. These factors cannot of course be a source of pride, but it shows that, if we have a spiritual awareness as children, our dough in later years will be activated by a most potent yeast.

The spiritual setting for my growth was that of the Catholic church and the most vital moments as a teenager were those as an altar boy. Sunday was definitely the pivot of the week, the Mass being an incomparable experience. During the week, the informal company of the priests and nuns was simply

joyous, and although I usually fell short of my own aspiring in prayer, there was a compelling urge to be on the knees. Catholicism was both a second mother and a second father during the teenage period and the pilgrimage to Palestine-Rome-Lourdes a marvelous climax.

As with inquiring young man, the search started for 'the wisdom of the East' – not as a substitute for Christianity, but in the expectation that it would reveal new facets of 'God in the world', strengthen the prayer-life and assist me to understand what God required of me. As a result of the search, Vedanta emerged as the indicated path and in particular, I was attracted to Bhagavan, when the Sankarite Swami who initiated me into the Eastern spiritual path, and the tantric yogi who invested the Gayatri Thread, and the Mahatma who conferred Brahmachari *diksha*, all

spoke very highly of Sri Ramana Maharshi, His teachings and Sri Ramanasramam.

I have not known Bhagavan in the body, but His presence is definitely still at His Ashram and still on Arunachala. It is still possible to 'sit at the feet of the Rishi and have His *darshan*'. May I give one illustration of this. It was the afternoon of the Arunagiri festival and before taking leave of the Ashram I meditated on Bahagavan, and arose refreshed and strengthened. On reaching the satsang, much fuss was made over the 'western sadhu' and he found himself a 'prisoner in lotus posture exposed to view'. Seven hours later when the Satsang came to a close, the 'western sadhu' was still in lotus posture, although he had never previously managed it for such a long period of time!

It is not, of course, being suggested that every westerner who reads this testimonial should become a Christian in the Hindu setting. Every one of us is unique and it is conceivable that God deals uniquely with each one of us. But one can remain a loyal member of the Mother-church whilst following Bhagavan's technique if meditation; as Thomas

Merton, the celebrated spokesman for Catholic Monasticism, has shown, one does not compromise one's Christianity either by enriching one's understanding through a study of Eastern philosophy or by developing one's prayer-life through Eastern meditative techniques.

Thus have I come to Bhagavan. Thus have I been given the Sadhu name of Mahalingam as Arunachala-Bhagavan-Ramanasramam has deepened my awareness of my Christian understanding. As a bhakta I would also like to stress that Sri Ramanasramam is not only for detached intellectuals; Bhagavan's teachings are definitely suited to the path of devotion – despite those theorists who say that one cannot be both an Advaitin and a devotee. Nor does one need to have mastered the teachings before one is welcomed at the Ashram.

Come, therefore, to Sri Ramanasramam and know yourself at a deeper level; come and get your spiritual batteries charged. Come, for not only are the inmates waiting for you, but Bhagavan Himself is waiting for you. ■

Extracts from "The Mountain Path" October, 1977



The following is from the edited Hindi version of the book
"Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi". Both the Hindi and English versions of the book are
available at the Delhi Kendra book store.

श्री रमण महर्षि के संस्मरण

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के. के. नम्बियार मद्रास प्रेसिडेंसी में चीफ इंजीनियर थे। उन्होंने अपने
संस्मरणों को **The Guiding Presence of Sri Ramana** में लिपिबद्ध
किया है।

वर्ष 1932 में जब मैं सेलम (तमिलनाडु) में इंजीनियर पद पर था, मेरे एक
मित्र ने मलयालम में लिखी 'मैं कौन हूँ?' पुस्तक मुझे दी। उसे पढ़कर मैं
प्रभावित हुआ। सलेम डिस्ट्रिक्ट बोर्ड के अध्यक्ष चेट्टीआर को मैंने उस पुस्तक
के विषय में बताया और हमारी तिरुवण्णामलै यात्रा की योजना बन गई। आश्रम
पहुँचकर, महर्षि के कक्ष में प्रवेश कर मैंने उन्हें प्रणाम किया। यद्यपि हमारी कोई
बातचीत नहीं हुई, किंतु उनके सानिध्य का एक अवर्णनीय प्रभाव पड़ा—मुझ
पर गहन प्रशान्ति का भाव छा गया। मैं अपने स्थान पर स्तंभित सा बैठा रहा।
एकाध घंटे बाद चेट्टीआर उठे और मुझे साथ आने का इशारा किया। महर्षि से
आज्ञा लेकर जब हम बाहर आए तो मुझे लगा कि मेरा हृदय सोफे पर बैठे हुए
देहधारी ईश्वर (चित्र 7) के प्रति किसी शक्तिशाली आध्यात्मिक चुंबक की
ओर खींच रहा है। मेरी स्थिति कवि कालीदास के शब्दों में, 'शरीर आगे बढ़
रहा है किंतु हृदय सामने से आती हवा में लहराते ध्वज की तरह पीछे फड़फड़ा
रहा है।' मैंने बड़ी आतुरता के साथ प्रार्थना की कि मुझे महर्षि के साथ रहने का
और अधिक अवसर मिलना चाहिए। शीघ्र ही मेरी प्रार्थना स्वीकृत हो गई और
मेरी नियुक्ति डिस्ट्रिक्ट बोर्ड इंजीनियर के रूप में तिरुवण्णामलै में हो गई।

वर्ष 1936 तक मुझमें महर्षि से बात करने का साहस आ गया। सबसे
पहले मैं उन्हें सच्चे हृदय से अपना संपूर्ण रक्षक मानकर उनकी शरण में चला

गया। यह बात मैंने एक श्लोक के रूप में कागज़ पर लिखकर उनके चरणों में रख दी: अन्यथा शरणं नास्ति, त्वमेव शरणं मम। तस्मात् कारुण्य भावेन, रक्ष माम रमणेश्वरा—अर्थात्, हे रमणेश्वर, मेरा कोई और आश्रय नहीं है; आप ही की शरण में हूँ, अतः मुझ पर दया करके मेरा रक्षण कीजिए। महर्षि ने उसे पढ़कर वापस देते हुए कहा कि यह एक पुराने श्लोक का रूपांतर है। जब मैं अपने स्थान पर बैठ गया तब उन्होंने एकटक मेरी ओर देखकर जो कृपा दृष्टि मुझ पर डाली उसने मेरे मन को पूर्णतः शांत कर दिया।

नित्य प्रति होनेवाली घटनाओं से पता चलता रहता था कि महर्षि रहस्यमय ढंग से भक्तों को सांत्वना देते, सुख पहुँचाते, उनकी शंकाओं का समाधान करके ज्ञान दान देते और उन्हें आत्म साक्षात्कार के लक्ष्य की ओर प्रेरित करते रहते। महर्षि में मेरी श्रद्धा दिनों-दिन बढ़ती गई, गहरी होती गई। मैंने उन्हें मानव शरीरधारी परमात्मा मान कर अपनी सारी चिंता उन पर छोड़ दी। धीरे-धीरे मंदिरों में जाने तथा धार्मिक अनुष्ठानों से मेरी रुचि घटने लगी। घर रहकर, जब घरेलू अथवा कार्यालय के काम का बोझ नहीं होता, मैं अपना समय ध्यान में ही बिताता।

एक दिन महर्षि के कक्ष में जब मैं ध्यान में बैठा था, मेरा शरीर सुन्न होने लगा और एक्सरे के चित्र के समान मैंने अपने शरीर का अस्थि-पंजर देखा। मैंने यह बात महर्षि से कही। वे बोले, इन बातों पर ध्यान दिए बिना मुझे गहराई से अपना ध्यान व अभ्यास बनाए रखना है।

महर्षि रहस्यमय शक्तियों के उपयोग और प्रदर्शन के विरोधी थे। उन्होंने अपने भक्तों को कई बार चेतावनी दी कि उनके मोह में पड़ने पर वे सही मार्ग (आत्म साक्षात्कार) से हट जाएँगे। आश्रम में समय-समय पर चमत्कार होते रहते थे। जब ऐसी किसी घटना की बात महर्षि को बताई जाती, तब सामान्यतः उनका उत्तर होता कि वह तो 'स्वचालित दिव्य-क्रिया-कलाप' (Automatic Divine Action) है।

महर्षि से शब्दों द्वारा प्रार्थना करना अनिवार्य नहीं था। वे भक्तों की सच्चे हृदय से की गई अनुनय-विनय का उत्तर अवश्य देते थे। उनकी शारीरिक

अनुपस्थिति से मुझे कुछ बाधा नहीं पहुँची है। वे आज भी स्वप्न में तथा अन्य अनेक प्रकार से मुझे मार्गदर्शन देते रहते हैं।

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सूरी नागम्मा (1902-80), तेलुगु में अपने बड़े भाई को लिखे 273 पत्रों, जो 'लेखलु' (तेलुगु) नामक पुस्तक के रूप में प्रकाशित हैं, के लिए प्रसिद्ध हैं। इन पत्रों में जिज्ञासुओं द्वारा महर्षि से (1945-50 के बीच) हुई बातचीत व रमणाश्रम की घटनाओं का यथार्थ वर्णन है। 'श्रीरमणाश्रम से पत्र', इसका हिंदी अनुवाद भी उपलब्ध है।

जब मैं केवल चार वर्ष की थी, मेरे पिता का, और दस वर्ष की अवस्था में माता का देहांत हो गया। ग्यारह वर्ष की अवस्था में मेरे विवाह के एक वर्ष बाद ही मेरे पति का देहांत हो गया। मेरे गाँव में प्राथमिक पाठशाला भी नहीं थी; अपने बड़ों की सहायता से मैंने लिखना-पढ़ना सीखा। तेलुगु के प्रसिद्ध भक्त-कवि पोत्तन्ना द्वारा अनुदित 'भागवतम्' को बार-बार पढ़ा। एक दिन मैंने अत्यंत निष्ठापूर्वक प्रार्थना की कि 'भागवतम्' में वर्णित कपिल महामुनि जैसे सिद्ध पुरुष मुझे गुरु के रूप में मिलने चाहिए। मैं बहुत रोई और रोते-रोते थक कर सो गई। नींद में मुझे एक ऋषि के दर्शन हुए जो पद्मासन लगाकर दक्षिणामूर्ति (परिशिष्ट 5) के समान मौन मुद्रा में बैठे हुए थे। उनके चारों ओर एक पवित्र ज्योति-मंडल था। उस तेजोमयी मूर्ति को देखते ही मेरे पूरे शरीर में सिरहन दौड़ गई। जैसे ही मैंने उठकर उन्हें प्रणाम करने का प्रयत्न किया, मेरी आँख खुल गई, स्वप्न टूट गया; किंतु उनका स्वरूप मेरे मन में छप गया। जब कभी भी मुझे वह याद आता, मैं ईश्वर से प्रार्थना करती कि मुझे इस जीवन में ऐसे किसी महात्मा की सेवा का सौभाग्य मिलना चाहिए।

वर्ष 1941 में मेरे बड़े भाई ने मेरी रमणाश्रम जाकर रहने की प्रार्थना स्वीकार कर ली। भगवान श्री रमण की कृपा से मेरे मन से अंधकार ऐसे दूर

हो गया जैसे अहिल्या की जड़ता श्री राम की पवित्र धूलि से दूर हो गई थी। उनकी कृपा मुझ पर अनवरत ऐसे बरसने लगी जैसे किसी सूखे, झुलसे हुए खेत में वर्षा का जल, उसे हरा-भरा कर दे। गुरु की कृपा मिलने पर यह स्वाभाविक है कि भक्त उनकी स्तुति गाने लगे। कविता लिखने की जो प्रवृत्ति मुझमें सोई पड़ी थी, वह प्रकट होने लगी। वर्ष 1943 में मैंने महर्षि की जीवनी गीत-बद्धकर उनके सामने गाकर सुनाई। कुछ दिनों बाद मैंने 'प्रार्थना' शीर्षक से चार पद लिखे। महर्षि उन्हें देखकर हँसने लगे और अपने परिचारक से बोले कि इसके दूसरे पद में लिखा है, 'जबसे महर्षि अरुणाचल पहाड़ से उतर कर नीचे रह रहे हैं, उनकी सेवा के लिए बंदर नहीं हैं, इसलिए मेरे मन को, जो एक बंदर जैसा है, उसे अपनी सेवा में रख लो। यह बंदर भौतिक वस्तुओं के पीछे दौड़ता है, इसे बाँध दो और दंड दो, किंतु यह निश्चित करना कि यह तुम्हारी सेवा करे।'

भोजन कक्ष में परोसने वाले लोग महर्षि का विशेष ध्यान रखते थे। एक दिन खीर बनी, जो महर्षि को सामान्य से कुछ अधिक परसी गई। वे बहुत नाराज़ हुए और कहा, "कितनी बार मैंने तुम लोगों से कहा है कि ऐसा न किया करें। जब हाथ में कड़छी आ जाती है तो परोसने वाला समझता है कि अब वह कलेक्टर है, और बिना डरे जो चाहे कर सकता है," और इसी लहजे में वे बोलते चले गए।

एक बार एक भक्त ने महर्षि से 'उपवास' का तात्पर्य पूछा। बड़ी सौम्य दृष्टि से उन्हें देखकर वे बोले, 'उप' का अर्थ है 'निकट', और 'वास' का अर्थ है 'रहना'। वह कहाँ रहेगा? अपनी आत्मा में रहेगा। इच्छाएँ मन का आहार हैं, उनको छोड़ देने का अर्थ है 'उपवास'। जो मन को निराहार रख सकता है, उसे तन को निराहार रखने की आवश्यकता नहीं है। जो ऐसा नहीं कर सकता, उसके लिए शरीर को निराहार रखना बताया गया है, जो मन को शुद्ध रखने में सहायक होता है।

महर्षि ने एक बार मुझे बताया कि जब वे वीरुपाक्ष गुफा (चित्र 3) में

रहते थे, दोपहर के समय घास काटकर बेचने वाली कुछ स्त्रियाँ सिर पर भारी गट्टर उठाए, खूब थकी हुई पानी की खोज में आती। निम्न जाति की होने के कारण उन्हें जल-कुण्ड के समीप जाने की आज्ञा नहीं थी। गर्मी असह्य थी। जब तक घास बेचकर पैसे न कमाए, कुछ खा भी नहीं सकती थीं। वे इसी आशा से आती थीं कि स्वामी हमें पानी पिलाएँगे। मुझे उनके आने का समय ज्ञात था; इसलिए मैं पानी भर कर उनकी प्रतीक्षा करता। जैसे ही वे वहाँ पहुँचती, अपने गट्टर उतार कर नीचे फेंकती, फिर झुक जातीं और मुझसे कहतीं, “स्वामी, स्वामी, सबसे पहले एक कमंडलु भर पानी हमारी पीठ पर डालो।” मैं उनकी पीठ पर पानी डालता, ताकि उनकी थकान उतर जाए। फिर अंजलि भर-भर कर वे ठंडा पानी पीतीं, अपना मुँह धोतीं और थोड़ी देर आराम करने के बाद चली जातीं। उस सुख का अनुभव केवल वे ही कर सकती थीं। उन दिनों हम खाना नहीं बनाते थे। केवल भिक्षा से ही हमारा गुजर होता था। यदि कभी बनाया तो मैं चावलों में खूब सारा पानी और थोड़ा सा नमक डालकर उबाल लेता था। जब तक वे स्त्रियाँ आतीं, चावलों का पानी ठण्डा हो जाता। मैं प्याला भर कर उनकी अंजली में डालता। वे उसे अमृत की तरह पी लेतीं। उसका स्वाद और उससे प्राप्त प्रसन्नता केवल वे हीं समझ सकती थीं। इतना कहकर महर्षि संवेदना से आर्द हो उठे और मौन हो गए।

क्रमशः



‘TALKS WITH SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI’ was published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, in January 1955. These TALKS cover a period of four years, 1935-1939 and were all recorded by Sri Munagala S. Venkataramiah (later known as Swami Ramananda Saraswati), a very old disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi. The four years that are covered here, were the days when the Ashramam reached the summit of its glory. Maharshi’s health was on the whole good and the Hall where he sat was open day and night to welcome one and all. Visitors flocked there from every nook and corner of the world. There was hardly a country that was not represented at one time or the other. But war naturally interfered with this influx, though the number of Indian visitors steadily increased as time went on. But it was these conversations, mainly with Westerners, that were especially interesting; the modern tendency towards materialism and self aggrandisement, on which the West often prides itself, met its match here. Sri Bhagavan glowed like a sun, and even those who did not know him or agreed with his words, were fascinated and could not help but be elevated by his presence.

This publication has been received so well by the devotees and readers that as many as 14 reprints have been brought out so far. M/s. Shivilal Agarwal & Co. have recently brought out a Hindi version of this book. With the permission of the publisher and Sri Ramanasramam, we are serialising the same in our bi-monthly magazine DIRECT PATH-RAMANA GYAN. We hope our Hindi readers will benefit from this and find it interesting and helpful in their spiritual quest.” - Editor



श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत

301. एक महाशय ने श्री भगवान् के निर्देशों के पालन में हुए अपने अनेक अनुभव बड़े उत्साह से सुनाये तथा प्रसंगवश यह भी बताया कि वह तथा श्री भगवान् सप्ताह के एक ही दिन जन्मे तथा दोनों का नाम भी एक ही था

302. त्रिची के एक युवक ने 'उपदेश मंजरी' में वर्णित योग्य शिष्य के लक्षण 'अत्यन्त वैराग्य' पर प्रश्न किया। उसने पूछा : "वैराग्य क्या है ? सां. सारिक कार्यों से अनासक्ति तथा मोक्ष की इच्छा। क्या ऐसा ही नहीं है ?"

महर्षि : यह किसको प्राप्त नहीं है ?

सभी आनन्द चाहते हैं किन्तु अविवेक के कारण दुःख—मिश्रित सुख को आनन्द मान बैठते हैं। ऐसा आनन्द अस्थायी है। उसके मिथ्या कार्यकलाप उसको क्षणिक सुख देते हैं। संसार में दुख—सुख एक—दूसरे के बाद आते ही रहते हैं। दुखदायक तथा सुखदायक विषयों में सद्—असद् विवेक करना तथा अपने को केवल आनन्ददायक साधन में संलग्न रखना ही वैराग्य है। ऐसी कौन—सी वस्तु है, जिसके पीछे दुःख नहीं लगा है। वह इसकी खोज कर उसी में लगा रहता है। अन्यथा व्यक्ति का एक पैर संसार में तथा दूसरा पैर आध्यात्मिक साधना में रहता है। (एक में भी सन्तोषजनक प्रगति नहीं हो पाती।)

गुरु के कार्य के सम्बन्ध में पुनः प्रश्न किया गया :

महर्षि : अपने को बहुत अधिक दुर्बल जानकर तथा अपने आप सफलता प्राप्त न कर सकने के कारण व्यक्ति गुरु के रूप में अधिक शक्ति प्राप्त करना चाहता है।

303. श्री के० आर० वी० अय्यर ने नाद पर अधिक प्रकाश डालने की प्रार्थना की।

महर्षि : जो इस पर ध्यान करता है वही इसका अनुभव करता है। नाद दस प्रकार के हैं। अन्तिम भीमण नाद के बाद मनुष्य लय को प्राप्त होता है। यही उसकी स्वाभाविक एवं शाश्वत अवस्था है। नाद, ज्योति अथवा खोज एक ही जगह पहुँचाती है। (पूर्व के दो अप्रत्यक्ष साधन हैं तथा तीसरा प्रत्यक्ष है)।

भक्त : कुछ क्षणों तक मन शान्त रहता है और फिर उदय हो जाता है। क्या करना आवश्यक है ?

महर्षि : जो शान्ति प्रायः प्राप्त हो उसका अन्य अवसरों पर स्मरण किया जाय। वह शान्ति तुम्हारी स्वाभाविक एवं स्थायी अवस्था है। निरन्तर अभ्यास द्वारा यह सहज हो जायगा। इसे ही धारा कहते हैं। वही तुम्हारा वास्तविक स्वरूप है। नाद, दृश्याभास आदि ज्ञाता, ज्ञान, ज्ञेय की त्रिपुटी होने के सुचक हैं। आत्म-विचार के फलस्वरूप जो धारा उत्पन्न होती है, वह शुद्ध त्रिपुटी है अर्थात् भेद-रहित त्रिपुटी है।

26 दिसम्बर, 1936

304. एक स्विस महिला ने दृश्याभाव का अपना अनुभव श्री भगवान् को बताया। जब वह अपने पूर्णतया खुले हुए नेत्रों से बैठी थी तब उसने श्री भगवान् का चेहरा सुन्दर शिशु के समान होते हुए तथा श्रेष्ठ पुष्पों से सुसज्जित देखा। उस शिशुवत मुखमण्डल को देखकर उसका स्नेह उमड़ आया।

महर्षि : दर्शन तुम्हारे मन का ही है। इसका कारण तुम्हारा प्रेम है। पाल ब्रण्टन ने मुझे बहुत बड़े आकार में देखा था। तुमने मुझे शिशु के रूप में देखा। दोनों ही दृश्य हैं।

(महिला ने कहा : पाल ब्रण्टन ने मुझसे पूछा था कि क्या मुझे यहाँ कोई आध्यात्मिक अनुभव हुआ था, और मैंने इससे इनकार किया था। अब यह

अनुभव हुआ है।)

महिर्षि : दर्शनों के धोखे में न आना।

भक्त : यदि कोई यूरोप में मीलों दूर रहकर आपकी सहायता की याचना करे।

महर्षि : यूरोप कहाँ है ? वह तुम में है।

भक्त : मैं यहाँ आयी हूँ; मेरी कामना है महर्षि वहाँ पधारें (इतना कहकर वह कोमलतापूर्वक मुस्करायी। कुछ क्षणों तक मौन रहा।)

महर्षि : तुम स्थूल देह देखती हो, इसलिए परिसीमाएँ देखती हो। देश और काल इसी स्तर पर परिचालन करते हैं। जब तक तुम स्थूल देह देखती हो भिन्न-भिन्न देह में भेद-दृष्टि रहेगी ही। इसके विपरीत वास्तविक महर्षि का ज्ञान समस्त संशयों को दूर कर देगा।

क्या तुम अब भारत में हो ? अथवा भारत तुम में है ? अब भी यह भावना कि तुम भारत में हो, निकल जानी चाहिए। भारत तुम में है। इसकी सत्यता को जानने के लिए अपनी सुषुप्त अवस्था को देखो। जब तुम सुषुप्ति में थीं तब क्या तुम्हें यह भान था कि तुम यूरोप में अथवा भारत में हो ? तथापि तुम्हारा अस्तित्व उस समय भी अब की तरह ही था। आकाश तुम में है। स्थूल देह आकाश के अन्तर्गत है किन्तु, तुम नहीं।

पाल ब्रण्टन को जब दर्शन हुआ तो उनकी आँखें बन्द थीं, किन्तु तुम कहती हो, तुम्हारी आँखें खुली थीं।

भक्त : हाँ। किन्तु मुझे दर्शन कभी नहीं हुआ था; जबकि वे संवेदनशील व्यक्ति हैं।

कुछ क्षणों के पश्चात् महिला ने प्रश्न किया कि इस प्रकार के दर्शन देखना हितकारी है अथवा अहितकारी।

महर्षि : यह हितकारी है।

श्री भगवान् ने कहा : सम्भवतया तुम्हारे मन में एक शिशु का विचार था

जो दर्शन में दीखा।

भक्त : हाँ, केवल शिव का—उनके शिशु तुल्य चेहरे का।

महर्षि : यही बात है।

भक्त : किन्तु शिव तो संहारक हैं। (आशय है, बालक नहीं हैं।)

महर्षि : हाँ—दुःखों के।

कुछ क्षणों के बाद श्री भगवान् ने कहा : शीघ्र ही तुम सोने जाओगी। जब प्रातःकाल तुम जागोगी, तुम कहोगी : "मैं अच्छी तरह और आनन्दपूर्वक सोयी।" सुषुप्ति में जो था वही तुम्हारा वास्तविक स्वरूप है। वही अब भी है; अन्यथा यह तुम्हारा वास्तविक स्वरूप नहीं होगा। अब भी सुषुप्ति की अवस्था प्राप्त करो; यही शिव है।

क्या हमारा कोई आकार है ? शिव के आकार की कल्पना करने से पूर्व यह जान लो। क्या सुषुप्ति में तुम्हारा अस्तित्व नहीं था ? तब क्या तुम्हें किसी आकार का भान था ? क्या सुषुप्ति में तुम आकार सहित थीं ? तथापि तुम्हारा अस्तित्व था। सुषुप्ति में जो 'मैं' था वह अब भी है। तुम्हारा सुषुप्ति का अनुभव है कि तुम देह नहीं थीं। अब भी तुम वही हो — अर्थात् देहरहित हो। देहरहित होकर भी तुम निद्रा में सुखी थीं। अब भी तुम वही हो। जो सदैव रहता है केवल वही वास्तविक स्वरूप हो सकता है। सुषुप्ति में देह नहीं थी परन्तु केवल आनन्द का अनुभव था। वही अब भी विद्यमान है। आत्मा देहरहित है। यदि इस प्रकार तुम बिना देह के हो तब शिव देहसहित कैसे हो सकते हैं ? यदि तुम सदेह हो तो शिव भी सदेह हैं। यदि तुम नहीं हो तो वे भी नहीं हैं।

भक्त : तब यह शिव क्यों हैं?

महर्षि : शिव से तात्पर्य है आनन्द की मूर्ति, कल्याण की मूर्ति।

वह अन्यन्त प्रसन्न हुई। कुछ समय पश्चात् वह चली गयी। ■

Direct Path - Ramana Gyan

- Aim** : To propagate the teaching of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, the values and ideals. He silently practiced, and to illumine the seekers on the paths available in the conditions of the present day world.
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