

**Sri Ramana Smarana-amrutamu - Sri Ramana Reminiscences - Telugu by G.V. Subbaramayya; published in 1960s & 2000.
now - Web upload in Resource Centre - Audio (10 Audio files of 10 hours + content + Pdfs of Telugu + English text for reference)**

Note: Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi – a great Master (Paramarta-guru), was untiringly inflicting spiritual teaching to those who sought Him, without circumstantial limitations. Subbaramayya was a combination of literary interest, social position & of family limitations. But he was the one, who went often from Nellore – Andhra Pradesh, to Bhagavan from the year 1933, as if he carried a big vessel to plunder the grace & upadesam. With a record of date-wise events connected with Bhagavan & himself, he shared the same through this compilation of his Reminiscences.

Sri G. V. Subbaramayya, the Author of *Sri Ramana Smarana-amrutamu in Telugu & Sri Ramana Reminiscences in English*, was one of the privileged few who moved with Bhagavan with childlike familiarity and had His Grace in full measure. Originally written in Telugu is also translated into English by him. An educationist, professor & poet, he was one of the older devotees whose approach to Bhagavan was exceptionally spontaneous. There were some who trembled before Bhagavan when speaking to Him. Such was His majesty. The turning point and the greatest influence was of course, the coming into his life of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. Let's quote what he himself has to say about it: *"The pole star of my life is of course my gurudev Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. At a time of distress in 1933 I was drawn to Him and the very first darshan plunged me into the ocean of peace and bliss. Ever since He has been the light of my life. He is my mother, father, guru and goal. He is my all-in-all; and in Him my little self and all its moorings were consummated and sublimated. In a word, He is the embodiment of grace. At every step in the least incidents of my life I have come to feel with a growing consciousness the guiding hand of that Divine Grace that is Ramana"*. A keen student of English literature he took his degree in 1922 and became a lecturer and later on Principal of the P. B. N. College at Nidubrolu. Proficient in his own mother-tongue, Telugu and in Sanskrit, as much as in English, his writings included a poetical rendering of Kalidasa's great lyric *Megha-Duta* in Telugu verse and a collection of his English poems in two volumes. A good

conversationalist, he used to draw Bhagavan spontaneously into talks over a variety of topics. He has translated Bhagavan's teachings into English notably the *Ramana Gita* in verse. By virtue of his association with Bhagavan and the teaching he imbibed he became a familiar figure in Andhra Pradesh where, in his retirement he was spreading Bhagavan's Gospel in various places. After 1963 he set himself the task of rendering *The Andhra Maha Bharatam* into English verse and has almost completed it receiving the blessings of Kanchi Kamakoti Sankaracharya and the eminent scholar and statesman, C. Rajagopalachari. Subbaramayya has recorded in *Ramana Reminiscences* how a *sthita-prajna* or *Jnani* like Bhagavan appears to react to the happenings of the relative world of phenomena that we see and experience and how a *Jnani* could appreciate love and devotion such as Subbaramayya evinced towards Bhagavan. "Self-realization," Bhagavan used to tell his devotees "is not a new acquisition but only a removal of the clouds that hide the Reality that we always are, by the extinction of the superimposed non-real ego, that makes us see and experience diversity in the one Universal Self, through the process of Self-Enquiry". A few days before the *Maha-samadhi* of Bhagavan, Subbaramayya went to see Bhagavan and implored Him for grace; *Bhagavan, Abhayam Yeevala* (Bhagavan, give me protection) and quick came the reply *Yichanu* (I have given it)! The Author passed away in May, 1970.

Note: Since the **generated** titles of the Telugu & the English Reminiscences of Subbaramayya are complementary to each other, both the contents & the Texts are provided here.

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My Reminiscences of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi - Subbaramayya**1933 – The first visit to Ramanasram (English Text- Pages.1-11; Telugu Audio file No. 1- 1933- 37- Telugu Book pages: 0-40- 57min)**

My first pilgrimage to Ramanasram was on **June 8th 1933**. From Kancheepuram where I had accompanied my mother to attend the Brahmotsavam of Varadarajaswami, I travelled alone to Tiruvannamalai. I was at that same time in great sorrow, having suffered my first bereavement the previous December, when my two-year-old son died suddenly from what the doctors could only describe as heart-failure.

For over two years I had been reading the works of Bhagavan and other Ashram literature; My main interest had been literary rather than

philosophical. I had been struck with wonder at the style of the Telugu *Upadesa Saram* which, in its simplicity, felicity and classic finish, could equal that of the greatest Telugu poet Tikkana. I had felt convinced that a Tamilian who could compose such Telugu verse must be divinely inspired and I had wanted to see him. But my immediate quest at the time was for peace and solace. In the morning I had *darshan* of Bhagavan in the old Hall. As our eyes met, there was a miraculous effect upon my mind. I felt as if I had plunged into a pool of peace, and with eyes shut, sat in a state of ecstasy for nearly an hour. When I came to normal consciousness, I found someone spraying

the Hall to keep off insects, and Bhagavan mildly objecting with a silent shake of his head.

As I now heard Bhagavan saying something, I made bold to ask Him a question. "The *Bhagavad Gita* says that mortals cast off their *worn-out* bodies and acquire new bodies, just as one casts away the *worn-out* clothes and wears new garments. How does this apply to the deaths of infants whose bodies are new and fresh?" I asked. Bhagavan promptly replied: "**How do you know that the body of the dead child is not *worn-out*? It may not be apparent; but unless it is *worn-out* it will not die. That is the law of Nature.**"

Then I asked another question: "At one place the Lord declares in the *Bhagavad Gita*, 'All the Universe is my manifestation. There is nothing other than myself.' Elsewhere in a whole chapter, He goes on saying, 'I am the moon among the stars, I am the King among men' etc. How can we reconcile the two statements?" Bhagavan replied, "**The latter is only the Lord's answer to Arjuna's query: 'How can I reach you through constant meditation? Where, where can I recognise you?' Arjuna's question makes it clear that he cannot at once realise the truth of the first statement. So, the Lord, out of His compassion, enumerates the several manifestations of Divine glory for Arjuna to meditate upon. In fact, all teaching of the Scriptures is not enunciation of absolute Truth. It must be suited to the stage of the aspirant and must satisfy his present need.**" Immediately after lunch, I left the Ashram even without taking leave of Bhagavan. I came and went incognito as an utter stranger.

1936 – The second visit to Ramanasram

After nearly three years, I again visited the Ashram in the spring of 1936, this time with a note of introduction from G. Sambasiva Rao Garu. As I handed the note to Bhagavan, even before going through it, He gave me a knowing nod and gracious smile and said, "**Why the introduction? You have come before; you are not new.**" To add to my wonder, I now felt as though my dead father had come back alive; the resemblance was so striking. Lest it should be dismissed as my fancy, I might add that my cousin V. V. Narayanappa who saw Bhagavan later, observed to me "Bhagavan looks the very picture of my uncle, your father." That settled my relationship to Ramana for all time. He

was not only *Guru, Maharshi, Bhagavan*, but my father. My approach to Ramana has ever since been that of a child to its parent, quite fearless, free and familiar.

Some years ago, I had been initiated into two *Mantras* and was enjoined to repeat them a minimum number of times every day. I had been doing it punctiliously, but now after entering the Ashram, I had no mind to repeat the *mantras* or do any kind of formal worship. After a few days I was seized with the fear of incurring sin by failing to observe the instructions of my initiation. So, I put it to Bhagavan Himself, making a clean breast of my default. Bhagavan Smiled and said, "**Just because you have done so much of *Japa* (repetition of *Mantras*), its merit has brought you here. Why should you now fear while enjoying the fruit of your *Japa*?"**"

I had also at this time a more serious trouble. I had been practising breath-control (*pranayama*) as taught by Swami Ramatirtha in his works. There came a stage when I felt a terrible sensation as though my head would crack and break into pieces, then I stopped doing it, but every day the sensation was recurring at the time of practice and the fear was growing that disaster was imminent. So, at dead of night, when Bhagavan was alone, I approached him with my tale. He said laughing, "What! Again, you are seized with fear! **These are the usual experiences of people who do yogic exercises without the immediate guidance of a Guru, but having come to me, why should you fear?**" Then Bhagavan added in an undertone: "**Next time you get that sensation, you think of me and you will be all right.**" From that moment to this, I have never felt it again, and so there has been no need to think of Bhagavan on that account!

The next day at noon after all persons except me had left the Hall, an old villager approached Bhagavan and complained of excruciating pain in the stomach for a long time. Bhagavan turned to me and said smiling, "Look here; this man is having chronic stomach ache. Instead of going to a hospital, he comes to me. Am I a doctor to cure him?" At once turning serious,

Bhagavan whispered to me, "Take him to the office where you will find *Prasad*. Give it to him." Of course, I obeyed. At the time, I felt that it was as much a boon to me as to the old man. For I had been looking askance at *Prasad*-offering as a superstition. So this direction of Bhagavan to me was enough to cure me of my scepticism.

After returning home, I wrote to the Ashram offering my literary services. In reply I was asked to attempt a Telugu verse-translation of *Ramana Gita*. Accordingly, I did the first canto and submitted it through the post. As that time V. V. Narayanappa was in the Ashram and he wrote to me on June 21st, 1936 that Bhagavan told him, "The translation is good. Usually, translations seem more difficult to understand than the originals. But here the style is easy, and the ideas have been well expressed. It is all right." Encouraged by these gracious words, I completed the work, and later at the instance of Bhagavan I added to it my Telugu renderings of some more works of Kavyakanta Ganapati Sastri and one composition of *Daivaratha*.

On October 6th of the same year, *Prasad* was received by me from the Ashram for the same Narayanappa who had been laid up with typhoid fever. In the Ashram letter it was written, "I hope he too, by Bhagavan's Grace, will recover soon and be restored to normal health." The patient had been running a high temperature, and the doctor had warned that October 6th and 7th would be critical. But on the 6th, as the *Prasad* was given, the temperature, to the surprise of everyone, fell considerably, and on the 7th it came down to normal. This token of Bhagavan's Grace not only saved the devotee's life, but served as an ocular proof of efficacy.

In the ensuing Dasarah vacation I again went to the Ashram to offer my completed translation of *Ramana Gita* at the feet of Bhagavan. Heeding my prayer, Bhagavan scrutinized the manuscript and made the necessary corrections. In canto 9, verse 10, He corrected the original text itself adding *Para*, (*Nadi*) to the names of *Sushumna* and quoted from *Amritabindu Upanishad* in support. In canto 16, verse 5, He gave *vishayi* (subject) as alternative reading to

vishaya (object) and preferred it. "For," said Bhagavan, "some people talk of the Supreme Being as the 'object' of meditation and worship, as for instance when they say 'It is better to be tasting the sugar-candy than to be the sugar-candy itself.' Can there be a greater sacrilege than to compare the Source of all being to an insentient thing? If the Real Self be the object, who is the 'subject'? so it is better to read *vishayi* (subject).

Referring to canto 5, verse 6, Bhagavan observed that by His own experience He first knew the spiritual Heart to be in the *right* side of the chest. Later He read about it in a Malayalam edition of *Ashtanga-hridayam* and in *Sito-panishad* and also heard the biblical quotation, "A wise man's heart is at his right hand, but a fool's heart at his left" (*Ecclesiastes X 2*). "Why, even a child," added Bhagavan, "when he affirms 'I', points his finger always to the same place on the *right* side of his chest and never to his physical heart or between his eyebrows or to his head." Concluding the topic Bhagavan made a revealing remark "Indeed," said He, "all I knew was by direct experience at first. My later reading of the scriptures only confirmed my previous realisation. From them I learnt nothing new."

On the eve of my departure, I recounted to Bhagavan the sufferings of my wife, who was grief-stricken by the sudden bereavement. "Has she no male child afterwards?" enquired He. I replied "No". Bhagavan sighed and said, "Alas! What a pity!" This took place on October 18th, 1936. My wife delivered a male child on August 1st, 1937. When the baby was later shown to Bhagavan, his first question was, "What is the child's name?" As I answered "Ramana Prasadam" (Ramana's Grace), Bhagavan exclaimed, "Indeed! Is it?" and to my consternation, he fed the baby with two bananas as if to demonstrate His *Prasad*! It did not in the least upset the child's digestion.

At my leave-taking, the *Sarvadhikari* handed me *three* packets of *Prasad*. I enquired for whom they were intended. Bhagavan who was then having his oil-bath in the same room (which in those days served as both the dining

room, office and also Bhagavan's bathroom), replied: "One for your family, one for Narayanappa and one for your friend." The friend's name was not specified nor did I ask for it. The next day after I returned home a letter redirected from the Ashram was delivered to me. It had been written by Mr. R. P. Reddy, Zamindar, to my Ashram address, praying for Bhagavan's Grace for his old grandmother who was then on the verge of collapse, having stopped taking food for some months. I at once understood whom Bhagavan meant by 'your friend', and hastened to Mr. Reddy with the *Prasad*. A few days later, Mr. Reddy met me and reported that the *Prasad* proved the turning point for his grandmother. She was now taking food and was on the road to recovery. She keenly desired to make some offering in token of her gratitude to Bhagavan. My friend was not content with the customary presents to the Ashram, but as he knew that I had been translating *Ramana Gita*, he insisted on printing the book in the finest get-up, and the Ashram, on behalf of Bhagavan, accepted the devout offer. This was another marvel of Bhagavan's grace.

During the Christmas of 1936, I attended **Bhagavan's Jayanti** celebration for the first time. I also submitted my Telugu verse-translation of *Ramana Chatvarimsat (Forty Verses in Praise of Ramana)*. I had already sent by post my rendering of *Ramana Vibhakti Ashtakam* (Eight Grammatical cases in Praise of Ramana). While scrutinising the two works, Bhagavan said that in the first verse Daivaratha, the author of the latter work, had described Bhagavan as "Mountaineer", (*Parvathiya*) but Nayana (*Kavya-kantha*), his Guru, urged him to change it to "the son of Parvathi" (*Parvatthya*). Incidentally, Bhagavan would always refer to Kavya-kantha as Nayana. He now related the story of how He came to do so. In the beginning, Bhagavan addressed him as Sastry Garu in view of his great learning and seniority in age. But Kavya-kantha protested and prayed that Bhagavan should call him *Sirrah*, which of course Bhagavan could not bring Himself to do. Kavya-kantha's disciples were calling him *Nayana*, which meant father, but also

could mean 'darling son', like *Tata* in Sanskrit. So, as a compromise, they both agreed that Bhagavan too might thereafter address Kavya-kantha as *Nayana*.

Bhagavan further informed us that Daivaratha was now living in Nepal, held in high reverence as 'Maharshi Gajanan Sarma.' Some time ago a visitor, it seems, asked Bhagavan where Daivaratha was. Even as Bhagavan was replying that his whereabouts was not known, the day's mail was handed to Bhagavan, and the very first letter was from Maharshi Gajanan Sarma of Kshetram, Nepal. In it he had written that though he was so far away, he always felt that he was only at the feet of Bhagavan. As if to bring home that feeling, the letter enclosed a photograph of Daivaratha with a flowing beard. Bhagavan added that it struck him at the time as if Daivaratha himself appeared in person and answered the query, saying 'Here I am'!

Bhagavan also recalled that when Nayana was Composing the 18th canto of *Ramana Gita*, a visitor brought some fine-looking, golden-coloured ripe mangoes in a tray, and seeing them, Nayana compared Bhagavan's complexion to that of ripe mango fruit in verse 4. Verse 10 in the same canto had been fantastically interpreted, but fortunately Nayana noticed it before it was sent to the Press, and wrote the commentary explaining its technical terms from *Mantra Sastra*.

Many Western visitors had come for the Jayanti celebration. One of them, Mr. Maurice Frydman, a Polish Jew of subtle intellect, plied Bhagavan with ingenious means for practical guidance for Self-realisation. Bhagavan followed his arguments with keen interest but kept silent all the time. When pressed to say something, Bhagavan only quoted from the Bible, "Be still and know that I am God," and added a rider that the Lord said 'know' and not, 'think' "that I am God." We understood Bhagavan as meaning that all these arguments were spun by the intellect, the stilling of which was the only way to Realisation.

Another visitor, Mr. Duncan Greenlees said, "Bhagavan, while we are in your presence, a certain halo of purity and peace seems to surround us. It

continues for some time after we leave. Then it disappears and the old stupidities return. Why is it so?" Bhagavan replied, "It is all the work of the mind. Like the battery it wears out and has to be recharged. But when the mind-control is perfect, there will be no further trouble."

As Mr. Greenlees watched the South Indian way of coffee-drinking, raising the cup high above the lips and gulping down its hot contents in one continuous stream, he looked aghast, and raised laughter by remarking; "Bhagavan, I do not know whether after your *darshan* I am going to have a further birth, but if I should have one, I pray that I may not be born a South Indian, to be spared the ordeal of thus swallowing the liquid fire!"

From an All-India Muslim Religious Conference at Tiruvannamalai, some prominent Muslim divines came for Bhagavan's *darshan* and asked "What is the goal of all religions?" Bhagavan promptly replied, "Peace through surrender. That is what *Islam* means." At this answer they were all immensely pleased.

Someone asked, "What is meant by saying that the world is false?" Bhagavan strangely answered: "It means that the world is real" and quoted a Sanskrit verse which says, "The world seen as world through ignorance is false, but the same world seen as Brahman through knowledge is real."

1937 – Frequent visits to Ramanasram

Availing myself of a short holiday in Feb. 1937, I again went to the Ashram to submit my translation of Kavya-kantha's *Gita-mala* in person. As I entered the Hall and was prostrating, to my consternation, my five-year-old daughter, Lalita, went very near to Bhagavan and asked him, "What is your name, Sir?" Bhagavan replied with a counter-query, "What is your name?" "My name is Lalita", said she, and repeated her question, "What is yours, please?" Now Bhagavan pointing to Himself with His right hand on the right side of his chest said "What! don't you know ME?" She at once answered "Oh yes! I simply asked for fun." At this Bhagavan burst into laughter.

Lalita was over-active in the Hall, pulling Bhagavan's punkah, meddling with His books and things, unmindful of the Ashram rules. Thrice Bhagavan asked her, "What are you doing there?" and thrice she replied, "I am keeping quiet." At this Bhagavan remarked, "This child is so busily active, but at the same time she affirms that she is keeping quiet. A little child says this but the elders are unable to understand." From now, she became a favourite of Bhagavan who cajoled her to dance and sing Tamil songs that she had learned from a Tamilian teacher. Bhagavan evidently enjoyed the entertainment and His Grace seemed to overflow on the occasion.

Lalita's leave-taking was a most moving scene. As she knelt down, Bhagavan who was then squatting after his breakfast, tapped her on the back with his stick saying, "This is to keep you in mind lest you should forget." Then He lifted her and hugged her to His breast. He told the people then present "The speciality of this child is this. She has no sense of newness or strangeness. All beings and all things she take as her own."

The original *Gita-mala* contained only ten hymns. One of them *Indra Gitam* had been translated by Kavya-kantha himself. Bhagavan added to the series another old verse of Kavya-kantha, *Taraka Rama Gitam* for my translation. Bhagavan also informed us that Nayana composed *Renuka Gitam* in praise of the Deity residing at a nearby village, *Padavidu* which is called *Kundalipuri* in the hymn.

Seeing me busy at this time with *Ramana Gita* and its appendices, Bhagavan jokingly observed, "For your college work you draw a salary. But what is your payment for this labour?" I replied that I was not really so disinterested, on the other hand I sought a much higher reward than monetary remuneration. Curiously, in the middle of the following month, I received a surprise offer, by wire, of Chief Examinership on the day previous to the commencement of the Examinations. Later I learned how it happened. The authorities, it seems, had by oversight, appointed one Examiner less than the required

number, and discovered their mistake just on the eve of the Examination. So they drew from the reserve-list where my name stood at the top and wired me their offer. It was so unexpected that in the circumstances I regarded the good fortune as a miracle of Bhagavan's Grace, and when next I saw Bhagavan during the summer, I related what had happened and said that for my work on *Ramana Gita*, I did receive payment also at Ramana's own hands.

To my letter requesting permission for a longer stay during the summer of 1937, I received a most gratifying reply from the Ashram dated May 9th, 1937, saying, "You are quite welcome here whenever you feel convenient . . . Since you are considered as one of us . . . you may stay as long as you feel convenient . . . I need not say that you are not of the category of visitors." This I cherished as a token of Bhagavan's special Grace, and ever since, I have been going to the Ashram at least three times a year.

As I entered the Hall that summer, Bhagavan and attendant Madhavaswami exchanged glances and laughed. As I looked puzzled, Bhagavan asked Madhava swami to explain. The latter said, "Bhagavan was preparing the 'contents' for your *Ramana Gita* and remarked that its author might himself come and fix them up. Just as Bhagavan finished writing the last word, lo and behold! you appear on the scene!" Then I realised as never before how Bhagavan's will and not mine own brought me here.

Shortly after my arrival Bhagavan humorously appointed me as *Sutradhari* (stage-conductor) for M. S. Venkata-ramayya, a veteran devotee and my old Professor to whom I had been of some service in negotiating his daughter's marriage which had been recently celebrated. That noon Venkataramayya sought Bhagavan's permission to take me and V. Venkata krishnayya, author of *Ramana Charitram* for dinner at his residence. Bhagavan smiled approval and said, "But no one invites *me* to dinner. Let me see how you can dine without me. Has it not been said: 'I becoming *Vaiswa-nara* (the fire of life)

enter into the bodies of all creatures, and mingling with the upward and downward breath, I digest the four kinds of food?'" Venkata-ramayya put us both in a cart which on the way turned topsy-turvy so that its wheel was smashed. We miraculously escaped unhurt. On return I related to Bhagavan what had happened and said, "Bhagavan, you were indeed with us all along. Otherwise, we should have been crippled."

One night in the dining hall Bhagavan enquired whether there was country orange pickle. The *Sarvadhikari* was annoyed to find that there was none. The next afternoon the outgoing Ashram mail that was as usual submitted for Bhagavan's perusal by G. L. Narasimha Rao, contained a letter by the *Sarvadhikari* to a Madurai devotee asking for a basket of country oranges. Bhagavan flared up on reading it, and remarked, "To these people salvation seems to lie in country oranges! Otherwise, why should we write to someone for them? Would they not come of their own accord if they are destined to come? Well, do as you please." So, saying he threw that letter at Narasimha Rao and just as the latter was withdrawing in trepidation, a Railway contractor entered the Hall with two sealed basket-parcels for which no R. R. had been received. In those days it was the invariable practice to show first to Bhagavan anything that came to the Ashram before it was taken inside. Now Bhagavan laughingly observed "What! Are these parcels country-oranges? Open and see." When they were opened, lo! they both were baskets full of country-oranges! At once they were taken into the kitchen for being cut and pickled. Again, Bhagavan said, "Perhaps one basket has sour oranges and the other basket sweet oranges," and sent someone to make sure before mixing them up. It turned out to be exactly as Bhagavan said. The sweet oranges were peeled off first and their slices were distributed among all the devotees then and there. Seized with wonder, I enquired whether we should consider the incident as a miracle or as a mere chance-coincidence. In reply Bhagavan quoted a verse from *Yoga-vasistha* which says: 'This *prajna* which is treasured up in the heart of the wise is

Chintamani (the mystic precious stone). Like *Kalpa-lata* (the celestial creeper) it fulfils instantly whatever is thought of. He also cited Sankaracharya's definition of *prajna* in *Viveka-chudamani* as 'thought that is pure consciousness devoid of *vasanas* (fluctuating tendencies).' Later Bhagavan, out of His Grace, gave both the quotations to me in His own writing.

V. Ananthachari took immense pains in the printing of the Telugu *Ramana Gita*. When his services were appreciatively referred to in the preface, he pleaded hard with Bhagavan that his name should not be so mentioned. Bhagavan told him, "Why do you worry ? To ask for the omission of your name is as much egotism as to desire its inclusion. So let it be. After all, who knows who is Ananthachari?"

During this vacation, I became acquainted with Echamma who, along with Mudaliar Pati, had been serving food to Bhagavan and His devotees for over thirty years. Her house was an open choultry for all Ramana's devotees whom she treated as her oven kith and kin. For me her heart always overflowed with affection. She used to narrate countless anecdotes of old times which brought Bhagavan much closer to my heart. Two of them I shall mention here. Once while Bhagavan was living on the Hill, Echamma going up with the food-basket, was met by a party of pilgrims who were returning with a look of sad disappointment. On enquiry, they told her that having come from a distant place, they had searched and searched for Maharshi but could find Him nowhere. Promising to show them Bhagavan, she took them with her, and as they had *darshan* of Bhagavan, they were utterly amazed and abashed. For they had seen Him before with a cod piece, working along at raising a mud-wall, and mistaking Him for a coolie, they had asked Him 'Where is the Swami?' Bhagavan, it seems, had replied, "I do not know." When Echamma, after their departure, remonstrated with Bhagavan for having misled the poor pilgrims, Bhagavan replied, "What! Am I to tell them 'Lo and behold! Here is the Swami!' "When Bhagavan was

assaulted by robbers, Echamma, it seems, was absent from the town. On hearing the news, she got alarmed, hastened back to the Ashram and seeing Bhagavan, she burst into tears. Bhagavan made light of the incident and told her, "Why are you excited? There is nothing unusual. Just as you people serve me with eatables and other things, these robbers have served me with blows. They are also my devotees!"

At this time, a French visitor, Marcel Rieu, and I became friends. Mr. Rieu knew little English, and I knew no French. One day Bhagavan noticing us together in the Hall wondered how we could converse. I explained how we communicated mutely through our feelings. Bhagavan said 'Yes, Silence is the true medium of the heart.' He seemed pleased with our association.

One morning, Panna Lall, I. C. S., then Commissioner of Allahabad Division, U. P., who was visiting the Ashram with his family, complained to Bhagavan that though he had riches, power and every material comfort, he could not find peace. Bhagavan asked him, "Why do you want peace? Why can't you be as you are?" Panna Lall replied, "Because I don't feel happy otherwise." Then Bhagavan said, "It is like this. A man suffering from headache will not rest quietly until he has taken the right medicine and got rid of the ailment. For health is our nature, and not illness. Likewise, **Peace is our nature. Indeed, we are Peace. But forgetting that, we seek Peace from external sources. It is an impossible quest and causes all this trouble. The moment you withdraw your mind from external objects and turn inward, you taste real Peace and feel happy.**"

Panna Lall presented a super-fine betel-nut powder which melted in the mouth and gave the flavour of pan supari. Bhagavan appreciated it much and graciously gave me also a little to taste. When, shortly afterwards, Panna Lall was elevated to the Chief Secretary of the first Congress Government in U. P. I felicitated him, wondering whether his nut powder tasted by Bhagavan brought him the fortune like the puffed rice of Sudama (Kuchela) munched by Lord Krishna. In reply Panna Lall wrote on March

27th, 1938 “of the many letters of congratulations which I received on my present high post none gave me more real happiness than yours. It confirmed what was in my own heart that *I owed this great honour to Bhagavan’s Grace.*”

One day, having just read a biography of the late Ammani-ammal, sister of the late Dr. T. M. Nair, Bhagavan spoke highly of her learning, philanthropy and devotion. In her last illness, she wired to Bhagavan praying for a peaceful end. Just when Bhagavan was perusing her letter, she expired in her home. As Bhagavan was narrating this incident, He was so moved that He shed tears. One early morning **Bhagavan explained how we have a glimpse of the real Self every day. Between sleep and waking there is a momentary twilight. The waking-consciousness begins with the I-thought. Just before the rising of the ‘I-thought’, there is a split second of undifferentiated, pure consciousness. First unconsciousness, then the light of pure consciousness, then the I-thought with which the world-consciousness floods in, this is the order. The middle state is Self-awareness. We can sense it if we are sufficiently alert and watchful.**

Bhagavan further explained how the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep are designed for our enlightenment. Bhagavan said, **“In waking, I exist in this world with this physical body. In dream, I manifest out of myself a world of forms and identify myself with one. In deep sleep, I am unconscious of any world or form and yet I do exist. For, if I did not exist, I could not return to waking-consciousness. Then what is the common source of the three states? It is nothing but ‘I’ or ‘I am’. Here Bhagavan quoted God’s reply to Moses in the third chapter of Exodus. “And God said unto Moses ‘I AM THAT I AM’; and He said: Thus, shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: ‘I AM hath sent me unto you.’”**

Bhagavan also pointed out the error in the common notion of the *Pancha Kosas* (five sheaths) namely, matter, life, mind, intellect and bliss as sheaths fitted one within another and having the Self innermost. He said that an apt analogy for the five sheaths would be the scented kerchief. It has material (cotton or silk), texture, dimension, colour and scent, corresponding to the

five sheaths. But the five are not distinct from one another, they coexist together in every fibre of the kerchief. Likewise, the five sheaths are together integrated in the Self.

My long stay this time made the departure a wrench for me, and my feelings found vent in some Telugu verses which I composed on the way and posted to the Ashram. In the opening verse I wrote, “Leaving Thy feet and going to my place, alas! I feel like the new daughter-in-law leaving her mother’s home and starting to go and settle in her mother-in-law’s place.” The Ashram reply stated “your letter with the ‘*padyam*’ full of your feelings was perused by Bhagavan.” The very next time I returned to the Ashram, Bhagavan greeted me saying, “Lo! the new daughter-in-law has come back to her mother’s home! You people, treat her as becomes her.” **I have realised that these gracious words were not mere fun, but truly described Bhagavan’s attitude towards me at all times. It was pure parental love.**

On October 31st, 1937, my two-year-old daughter Indira suffered two fits, the second more severe than the first. Suddenly she became unconscious, all vital organs stopped functioning and she seemed practically dead. The Allopathic doctor declared his helplessness and advised Ayurvedic treatment. Branding between the eyebrows by an old man with his lighted tobacco-pipe made the child moan feebly and slightly revived the vital functions. Still she did not rally but lay moribund. Two Ayurvedic physicians sent for, one after another, could not be found. At this crisis my eye lighted upon the picture of Bhagavan, and I prostrated saying within, “O Bhagavan, all human aid having failed, you alone must save her.” Getting up, I mechanically opened the drawer, took out a telegraph form, and sent an express message praying for Bhagavan’s Grace upon the child. The telegraph authorities sent word that the message would reach the Ashram at 7 p.m. *Precisely at 7 p.m.* both the Ayurvedic physicians arrived simultaneously and V. V. Narayanappa also came, put into my hands an envelope addressed to me, and said, “Here is Bhagavan’s *Prasad* for the child.” It struck me as a

miraculous response of Bhagavan to my prayer. Narayanappa explained that it was the *Prasad* which I had got for him the previous year when he had been ill, and which he had preserved in the same envelope. He felt he should make use of it for the ailing child. The two doctors consulting together treated the child and assured me that she was out of danger. That night, sleeping beside the child, I had a marvellous dream. I was in Bhagavan's Hall. Bhagavan was reclining on His couch as usual. In front of Him stood a dark, fierce-looking person of gigantic stature. Bhagavan with His forefinger motioned to him three times to leave the Hall. Accordingly, the stranger left by the first entrance. Then Bhagavan turned to me, called me near and enquired, "How is your child?" I replied, "Bhagavan, by Your Grace, she is better." Then Bhagavan said, "She will be all right, don't fear," and put His hand on my back. At His touch I thrilled and the dream melted. The next morning, I received the following reply from the Ashram: Received your wire last night at 7 p.m. and it was perused by Bhagavan. We assure you of Bhagavan's blessings on the child that she may recover. Pray be not anxious.

In reply to my letter relating the above incident and the dream, the Ashram authorities wrote: **We are very glad to note that through Bhagavan's Grace your child recovered from almost a critical state. It is Bhagavan's Grace, and indicates the mystery of the working of His benign Grace and your deep devotion.**

During Christmas, when I again visited the Ashram. I asked Bhagavan what He thought on reading my telegram. He merely said, "Yes, I read your message and also noted that the clock was then striking *seven*." I persisted, asking, "Bhagavan, did you not think that you must do something to save the child?" Straight came Bhagavan's reply, **"Even the thought to save the child is a *sankalpa* (Will), and one who has any *sankalpa* is no *Jnani*. In fact, such thinking is unnecessary. The moment the *Jnani's* eye falls upon a thing, there starts a *divine, automatic action* which itself leads to the highest good."** The conversation was all in Telugu except the English phrase '**divine, automatic action**' which Bhagavan Himself uttered. ... [End of Audio file no 1](#)

[\(English Text- Page: 11 to 20- Telugu Audio file No. 2- 1937- 39- Telugu Book pages: 40-88- 66min\)](#)

One morning M. V. Ramaswami Iyer, the veteran devotee and composer, who was sitting beside me in the Hall, happened to go through my notebook which contained my free-verse compositions in English. He was so pleased with them that he at once showed them to Bhagavan saying that they had been written by me in the manner of Rabindranath Tagore. Thereupon Bhagavan graciously read them all. In the song entitled *Eureka*. **Bhagavan read 'cross-world puzzle' for 'cross-word puzzle' and wanted to correct Himself. But I felt that Bhagavan's reading improved the sense immeasurably, and I craved permission to adopt it.** When He came to the song 'Under the Microscope,' He asked a chemistry professor then present, "What would Science say about it?" The Professor simply smiled. **Bhagavan read aloud the piece 'I and Thou' and as He reached the last words: 'I without me, am Thou. Thou without Thee, art I; Indeed, I and Thou are one' - He burst into laughter. I casually quoted Tagore's Song 'I run like the musk-deer, mad with my own perfume. I seek what I cannot get, I get what I do not seek.'** Bhagavan liked it so much that He explained its meaning to His devotees in Tamil.

I enquired whether Poetry and other Fine Arts could be used as a *Sadhana* (means) for Self-realisation. Bhagavan said, "Anything that makes for concentration of mind is a help. But in the cultivation of every Art, there comes a stage when you feel an *alam-bhav* that is, that you have had enough of it, and you would then transcend it." When I pointed out that Rhetoricians have described *Rasa* (aesthetic pleasure) as *Brahmananda sahodaram* (akin to the Bliss of the Absolute), Bhagavan said "Why *sahodaram* (akin)? It is *Brahmanandam* itself. For have not the scriptures proclaimed *Raso wai sah* (He is *Rasa*)? Indeed, *Brahmananda* is the only *Rasa*. All other *Rasas* are only its dim shadows."

The morning before I left, Dr. Syed, Philosophy Professor of Allahabad University, put a question. "Bhagavan," he asked, "what is the purpose of creation?" Usually, Bhagavan gave His replies in Tamil, Telugu or Malayalam and got them interpreted. This time Bhagavan spoke directly in English. He put a counter-question: "Can the eye see itself?" Dr. Syed replied "Of course not. It can see everything else, but not itself." Then Bhagavan asked, "But if it wants to see

itself?" Dr. Syed paused and said, "It can see itself only reflected in a mirror." Bhagavan seized the answer and commented, "That is it. Creation is the mirror for the eye to see itself." Now I asked whether Bhagavan meant 'e-y-e' or 'I'. Bhagavan said that we could take it figuratively as 'e-y-e' and literally as 'I'.

In the spring of 1938, as the original *Ramana Gita* was being reprinted, I was asked to write the Telugu prose-translations of *Ramana Chatvaarimsat* and *Ramana Vibhakti Ashtakam* and they both went into the work as appendices. I also submitted my Telugu verse-rendering of Bhagavan's selections from *Sivananda-lahari*, the letter acknowledging them on March 22nd, 1938 said, "Bhagavan has perused the ten verses from *Sivananda-lahari* and they are found quite correct. They convey the meaning correctly."

On my departure from the Ashram, I had forgotten my pen. It remained with Bhagavan for three months and then was returned to me through Yogi Ramayya Garu. On receiving it, I composed a Telugu verse envying the good fortune of the pen that enjoyed the vicinity of Bhagavan for so long and was sanctified with being handed by Bhagavan to Yogi Ramayya. "How much I wish, O pen," I concluded, "that we could change places with each other!"

The Ashram letter dated May 18, 1938 acknowledging my prayer in Telugu verses composed at the recent celebrations of my eldest daughter's wedding and my elder son's *upanayanam* (sacred-thread investiture) contained the following observation:

"They (marriage and *upanayanam*) are considered so momentous in the life of a Hindu that *upanayanam* is coded rebirth; hence the Brahmin is termed *dwija*; the marriage settles the destiny of a Hindu girl, her whole outlook on life gradually undergoes a change, and her partner becomes an object of worship. It is a parting of ways. Unless such ideals guide one's life, it is not worth living. On such occasions one is naturally moved to the depth of one's being. Bhagavan's Grace is ever working miracles, and the devotee melts to his bones when

he thinks how at times, he is saved in spite of himself. The words *Karuna-purna Sudhabdhe* seem to linger in some remote part of the consciousness at all times, and when it occurs to the mind, it possesses the mind so completely that all other thoughts vanish, and one feels the Grace and the Peace that passeth understanding. Your poems are much appreciated and are preserved."

Bhagavan had used *Praasa-yati* rhyme-caesura in His Telugu *Upadesa Saram*, N. Balarama Reddy, a Telugu devotee, raised a doubt whether *Praasa-yati* was permissible in *dwipada* (couplet). I said that Bhagavan's utterance, being *Aarsham* (of the Rishi), was not subject to the rules of grammar and prosody. Indeed, **the metres themselves owed their origin to Rishis. As a matter of fact, *Praasa-yati* had been used in *dwipada* verse by old poets. I now submitted, by mail to Bhagavan some lines of old poetry in *dwipada* metre using *Praasa-yati* and also a copy of *Chandassu* an authoritative work on prosody by Vedam Venkataraya Sastri in which the use of *Praasa-yati* for *dwipada* was expressly approved.**

In the summer-vacation of 1938, I visited the Ashram taking my children and son-in-law for Bhagavan's *darshan*. On the very day of arrival, my son-in-law, while bathing, lost his wedding-ring. A vigorous search was made in which the new servant in charge of the bathroom took the lead. Doraswami Iyer who held the Home portfolio in the Ashram tossed a coin which indicated that the ring could be recovered, then he unlocked the servant's box in spite of the latter's protests, and found the ring secreted at the bottom. The man was summarily dismissed. This incident impressed us as a special token of Bhagavan's Grace.

The great event of this season was Bhagavan's Telugu translation of a passage from *Yoga-Vasistham* into *Siisa-maalika* metre which was the first of its kind from Him. It was the description of the Heart by Vasistha Maharshi to Rama. Vasistha tells Rama that the real Heart is not the physical heart but

chit that is, pure knowledge or consciousness. Curiously the passage occurs where the methods of breath-control are enumerated. Usually, breath-control is taught as a means to mind-control. Here the fixing of the mind in the Heart is recommended as the most effective means by which the breath subsides of its own accord, and *vasanas* (tendencies) that have gathered momentum during many previous lives drop off. This confirms Bhagavan's teaching in *Upadesa Saram* that the mind and breath are branches of the same force, so that by control of one, the other is automatically controlled. The versification and style of this *Siisa-maalika* showed the same classical excellence as Bhagavan's previous Telugu compositions.

At the instance of Bhagavan I also translated into Telugu verse Bhagavan's selections from *Yoga Vasishtam* containing Vasistha's instruction to Rama on the art of living. In the last verse which says 'Whatever part you have taken in life, play it well', I added in my Telugu rendering the phrase *Saisava lila* (the sport of childhood). Bhagavan seemed to appreciate this addition and a reference was made to it subsequently in the Ashram letter dated July 5th, 1938 in the following terms:

"*Saisava lila* is a happy phrase, and that we believe correctly portrays the attitude of the mind one should cultivate according to the *slokas*. Has not Christ also said "Unless thou be even as these children, thou shalt not enter the Kingdom of God?"

Bhagavan also commended the art of translation especially of a great work. He said, "Ten times' attentive reading is writing. Hundred times' writing is translating."

Someone narrated his visits to various sages in the world. All of them evoked his reverence equally. Whom to follow was the dilemma for which he sought Bhagavan's guidance. Bhagavan said, "**The Teachers may be many; but the teaching is the same. Follow that.**"

A Vaishnava devotee, who was a high official at Simla, brought all the idols that he worshipped daily, and handed them to Bhagavan, probably desiring the sanctity of Bhagavan's touch. Bhagavan seemed much interested in examining them. The devotee said, "**Bhagavan, people scoff at me, calling me a 'superstitious idolator.'** "Bhagavan told him, "**Why don't you retort by calling them worse idolators? For, do they not wash, dress, embellish, feed and thus 'worship' their body so many times every day. Is not the body the biggest idol? Then who is not an idol worshipper?"**

One who was practising *Mantra-Japa* (repetition of a mystic formula) enquired how many times he had to repeat the *mantra* for achieving *siddhi* (realisation). Bhagavan said, "**You must go on repeating until the consciousness that you are doing it disappears. Then you realise that you are not repeating the *mantra* but the *mantra* repeats itself without your effort. That is *Sahaja Sthiti*. That is *siddhi* (Realisation).**

"In fact," added Bhagavan, "The 'I' sense (*sphurana-AHAM*) is the greatest *mantra*. Even *Pranavam* (OM) requires some explanation as the combination of A. U. M. etc., but the 'I' sense is self-evident and automatic."

After my return, I was frequently consulted by the Ashram regarding the English translation of *Upadesa Manjari* and its publication under the title *A Catechism of Instruction*. This constant contact with the work of Bhagavan I felt to be a great blessing and good *sadhana*.

Having learned that Rajendra Prasad and Jamnalal Bajaj were coming for Bhagavan's *darshan* I wrote and sent two verses in Telugu saying that **their visit to Ramanashram was in keeping with the ancient Indian tradition of rulers being entertained in the Rishi Ashramas**. The Ashram in their reply dated August 16th, 1938 wrote: Rajendra Babu was entering the Hall when Bhagavan was reading your letter. How happy it would have been if the whole country had but one language! The two stanzas are much appreciated and they have gone into the record.

When I submitted to Bhagavan the resume of my lecture on 'None other than a Rishi can compose poetry', the Ashram in their letter of August 27, 1938 made the following comment:

"The topic is a highly interesting one. The cultured mind, whether poetic or religious, lives in *rasaanubhava*. It seems that what is real and abiding is within. It is the source of life, of the mind and the intellect. The lotus of the intellect blossoms into genius as one reaches the profound depths of the self. This is the secret of life, moral and intellectual. Hence has Jesus said, 'Unto him who seeks the Kingdom of God within, every thing shall be added.' All these talents are cultivated or rather developed when the mind is free from desire, is all humility and tenderness, through *ananya bhakti*, in other words, when the ego is destroyed. That is how the genius of all the great saints is accounted for. So this is true education, and one may compare with advantage what Prahlada says in the *Bhaagavatam*."

Referring to the death of **M. S. Kamath, editor of the *Sunday Times***, the Ashram in their letter of September 18, 1938, observed: It is a great loss. Words fail to express our deep sorrow. His profound devotion to Bhagavan and selfless service to the Ashram are universally admired. Such was his eagerness for service that the Ashram had only to say the word, and the needful was done to perfection.

Due to my inability to be with Bhagavan during the Dasarah season, I wrote two Telugu verses consoling myself that it was perhaps Bhagavan's help to cure me of identification with the body. The Ashram acknowledging them on October 11, 1938 wrote:

"The two poems express fine sentiments made so familiar to us by Bhagavan's philosophy. When Pascalline Mallet was about to leave

the place, taking leave of Bhagavan, He remarked: 'It is the steamer and the train that go and not you.' "

Seeking permission to dedicate to Bhagavan my Telugu book *The Reminiscences of Vedam Venketraya Sastri*, I wrote five verses which I submitted to the Ashram, saying that since all streams of *kavya rasa* (poetic taste) flow and merge into the ocean of *Jnana* (knowledge), it was but fitting that my work on *kavya Guru* (Master of Poetry) should be dedicated to *Jnana Guru* (Master of Knowledge) and that indeed the two great names were but the same Real Self. The Ashram letter dated October 18, granting the permission stated: The dedicatory verses express a deep philosophical sentiment. We hope the learned reader will understand its significance correctly.

I sent Bhagavan an account of a discourse on *Prarabdha* (the fruit of past deeds) before His Holiness Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Pitham, in which it was argued that since the *Dasama*, even after knowing himself to be the tenth one, must suffer the pain of his wound till it was healed, a *Jnani* even after self-realisation must endure *Prarabdha* while the body lasted. The Ashram reply of December 17, 1938 stated:

"We read with interest the discussion about *Dasamathva Siddhi*. It is all a matter for *Bhavana*, even the consciousness of the *Siddhi*. In other words, as long as the mind puts any construction on the circumstances in life, it will be subject to the notion of 'I' and 'I-am-the-doer'. With regard to the subsequent pain while the wound is being healed, as long as there is the body, there is the pain. But **the mental complex of a *Jivan-mukta* is entirely different from that of the layman. We posit a mind to the *Jivan-muka* but it is nothing of the kind of which we are conscious ourselves. It is a mind that has become one with the Spirit which is beyond the three states: waking, dream and deep sleep.** So then, having realised this identity, the mind of the *Jivan-mukta* stands aloof from the sensation of pain, for has he not consciously reached that state (sleep) where we are unaware of the sensation of pain? Since we

identify our awareness with the wakeful state, we are unaware of ourselves in deep sleep, whereas the *Jivan-mukta* is aware of the 'unawareness' of sleep, so that *he finds himself free from pain even when there is the pain.*

“Where is *Prarabdha* to such a Sage ...? Life in the Ashram, to be in His Presence is real *retirement*, for the ego retreats or is made to retreat, and that without conscious effort, for where there is effort, there is the ego. To Be, free from the ego, is the *Bliss* of life.”

In the Christmas of 1938, I again had my usual 'retreat' at the feet of Bhagavan. Referring to the *Siddhi* (demise) last August of Chivukula Venkateswara Sastri, the 'Vaidarbha' of *Ramana Gita*, I related how he took *Sannyasa* shortly before his end, and sitting straight with crossed legs in the lotus posture, chanting 'OM' incessantly, he passed away in peace. Bhagavan observed that such was the usual manner of a Yogi's demise, and indicated the ripeness of the departing soul. “But”, added Bhagavan:

“a Jnani is indifferent to death as to life. Even if his physical consideration should be most wretched, even if he should be stricken with the most foul disease, and die rolling on the ground and shrieking with pain, HE remains unaffected; HE is still the Jnani.”

Now as we recall what happened to Bhagavan Himself toward the close of His life, the above words acquire a poignant, prophetic significance.

One morning Bhagavan quoted from a journal the following sentence: **“Where psychology ends, philosophy begins”** and added His own remark, **“Where philosophy ends spirituality begins.”**

When someone asked how the sensuous, intellectual and spiritual joys are correlated, Bhagavan said, “All other joys are like the foam and bubbles to the ocean of *Brahmananda* (the Joy of the Absolute). *All joys being only to one who has given up desires.*”

Alluding to the story of Brahma and Vishnu being the sons of Siva, Bhagavan said, “Siva signifies the state of the Great Dissolution. Where things dissolve, there they must originate. Hence Siva is the original source of the entire creation including Brahma and Vishnu. In that sense, Brahma and Vishnu are the sons of Siva.”

Questioned as to what changes He underwent after coming to Arunachala. Bhagavan replied, “I am ever the same. There is neither *sankalpa* (will) nor change in me. Till I reached the Mango Grove; I remained indifferent with my eyes shut. Afterwards I opened my eyes and I am actively functioning. Otherwise, there is no change whatsoever in me.” “But, Bhagavan,” said one, “we do note so many outward changes in you.” “Yes,” replied Bhagavan, “that is because you see me as this body. So long as you identify yourself with your body, you cannot but see me as an embodied being. So long as the doubter is there, the doubt persists.”

One night, Bhagavan, in a jocular vein, envied the luck of 'Bhagavan' in the temple. “My Namesake there,” said Bhagavan, “is not compelled to eat the offerings made by devotees every time, as I am compelled. The priest makes *Nivedana* (offering) by muttering *mantras* and waving his hands, and then takes the things away, but you people insist upon my eating everything.” In those days the practice was to distribute every eatable to Bhagavan and all persons present immediately after it was offered. So innumerable distributions, especially of dried grapes and sugar candy, the usual offerings, would be going on at all hours. As it was found to be detrimental to Bhagavan's health, the practice was later changed and the things collected were distributed at the time of meals.

Bhagavan also spoke about the temple architecture and explained how the *sanctum sanctorum* was in the innermost shrine farthest from the entrance, so that a visitor passing one *prakara* after another and going on and on would become filled with the sense of sanctity and the spirit of devotion by the time he comes before the Deity. *Pradakshina*, that is, going round the

shrine is also intended to serve the same purpose. Its culmination in *Atma-pradakshina* by turning round one's own self is significant. "Moreover" said Bhagavan, "as we face the Deity, we say 'O Lord, O Father, here is my *pranama* (salutation), and as we prostrate, we *shut our eyes*. If we are saluting the idol, why should we close our eyes? Really then, we are prostrating to something within ourselves, and not to the image before us. We are thus unknowingly worshipping our Real Self."

* * * * *

Early in 1939, I was frequently consulted by mail about the English and Telugu translations of the Malayalam article on Bhagavan by Appan Thampuran of the Cochin Royal family. Later, in the spring, I was asked to write a free rendering in Telugu of an article by Sundara Krishna Vasistha (T. K. S.) on Bhagavan's mother. My manuscript was lost in transit and so I did the translation over again and submitted it. Acknowledging it, the Ashram wrote on April 10, 1939: We are glad to receive your excellent translation of the article on the Mother and it has been sent to the press today. It is the Divine Will that you had to rewrite it.

Regarding the untimely death of an ardent devotee, G. Satyanarayana Rao, the Ashram in their letter dated April 18, 1938 (**This date may be 18.4.1939 or compilation error of placing here, as the sequence is 1939 from the previous para*) wrote: It is sad news, the demise of beloved Satyanarayana. The Lord's ways are mysterious that the children should not have the loving care and protection of the father, and there are no near relatives of their mother on her side. We pray that His Grace may guide their future.

The same letter acknowledging my farewell verses in Telugu to His Holiness Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Pitham said:

"The Telugu verses are really moving and you have a knack of putting profound thoughts in simple, short verses. No wonder the Swami was visibly moved."

My eldest daughter, Manikyam, wrote in English and submitted the impressions of her *Pilgrimage to Ramanashram*. The Ashram letter acknowledging it on April 8, 1939, said:

"With a refreshing simplicity of expression, it is so very like that of a child For the breadth of comprehension, the aptness of the title, the wealth of details and the depth of sentiment which one may not miss while it refers to Bhagavan and the elevating atmosphere of the Ashram, the essay is a commendable attempt. That so many details should have been cogently put together speaks well of her good memory and clarity of thought."

Soon after my arrival with my family at the Ashram in the summer of 1939, Bhagavan showed me His Telugu translation of *Vasishto-padesam* from *Yoga Vasishtam* into *Sisa-padyam* along with some alterations and separate renderings by some devotees at His request and suggested that I might make further changes in His poem and also write my own version, I wrote down something and returned the whole file in a couple of minutes. Bhagavan with a look of surprise, perused my writing, and acclaimed: **What have you done! You have merely copied my original draft.**

"What else should I do, Bhagavan?" I said, "Nothing would be more preposterous of me than to meddle with Bhagavan's utterance which is like Veda. I copied it only for my *parayana* (reverential reading)" Bhagavan smiled and said: you are a clever man!

The next day Bhagavan made a revealing declaration about Himself. He said, "Even in the beginning I realised that I am not the body. After I came to Arunachala all sorts of questions cropped up whether I am one with the All-pervading Reality or different, whether that Reality is Non-dualism, Dualism or qualified Non-dualism etc. Even the idea 'I am Brahman' is only a thought and is not *Atma-nishtha* (Self-abidance). That one should give up all thought and abide in the Self is the conclusion of all religions. Even *Nirvikalpa*

Samadhi is only a stage in 'Sadhana' (practice). It implies going into *Samadhi* and rising from *Samadhi*. For me there was no necessity at all to do any *Sadhana*."

Bhagavan's occasional utterances were then being published in Tamil verse by Muruganar under the title *Guru-Vachaka-Kovai*. Some of the poems in it were Bhagavan's own compositions. Bhagavan explained some of its ideas as follows:

"To surrender *Atma* (self) to God is like making an idol of jaggery, then plucking off a bit of it and offering it to the idol itself.

"Even to pray that I should become the instrument of God cannot be self-surrender."

"It is baseless to feel proud of having made self-surrender. For you had the self only by deceiving the Supreme Being to whom the Self rightly belonged. So, to surrender the self is like restoring the stolen property to the proper authorities."

About this time the Ashram authorities enforced a rule that women devotees should leave the Ashram at sunset. Previously they had been permitted to stay till 8 p.m. Several ladies like Ponaka Kanakamma, Mrs. Melkote, my wife and others were unhappy about it because it meant deprivation of *non-Vedic Parayana* and of Bhagavan's company at the night-meal. They knew that it was no use appealing to Bhagavan because he was the first to obey every Ashram rule scrupulously. When, for instance, the dinner bell rang in the middle of some singing or *parayana*, Bhagavan would immediately get up saying jocularly (The Ashram is giving *Bhiksha* (alms) out of grace. If we delay, they will be justified in refusing to serve us food. So let us hasten! The lady-devotees had therefore nothing to do but to swallow the bitter pill. In this connection, my little daughter Lalita created a funny incident. She went straight to the *Sarvadhikari* and told him, " 'Swami' what you want is that men and women should not remain together in the Ashram during the night. Then why don't you let us women stay here with Bhagavan

at night, and you men folk go and shift for yourselves? That would be chivalry."

The Swami laughing replied, "You are a dangerous child. Pray keep quiet".

Another day Bhagavan talked of *Kaivalya Navanitam*. It was composed originally in Tamil by Tandava Rayan four or five centuries ago. As early as 1854, it was translated into German and English under the title *The Butter of Bliss*. Bhagavan had this edition with Him. It was also rendered into *Arya Vrittas* in Sanskrit by His Holiness Sankaracharya of Puri. Bhagavan had seen a copy of the work in *grantha* characters with Subrahmanya Iyer, a Vakil of Vellore. The later Telugu version curiously did not acknowledge its Tamil origin.

Incidentally, Bhagavan spoke about the use of drugs for practising Yoga. He said: I do admit that drugs have some beneficial effect. A certain drug can make the whole body melt and flow like the Milky Ocean. One Pattabhi told me that when he was given Chloroform before an operation, he experienced a Nectareous bliss and longed for that state again. The Chinese look like skeletons, but when they take opium, they feel like giants and do any difficult work. These drugs must however be taken limitedly and secretly. Otherwise, all will demand them. Moreover, after some time the drug-habit will become a great fetter and obstacle to *Jnana* (knowledge). Its addicts will not flinch from any crime to satisfy their craving. So, it is best to remain desireless. Having seen the effects of all these drugs, **I have decided that to BE as we are, is best. To Strive for knowing one's *Swarupa* (Real Self) through Self-enquiry, though it may be a little difficult, is the only safe path.**

The next day someone asked, "What is this 'I'? Where does it arise? How can it exist in all things?" **Bhagavan replied: What the 'I' is and where it arises, you ask the 'I' itself. To state that I am in all things is like saying that the mirror is within the image. The truth is the other way. Just as the image is within the mirror, so all things are within the Real I.**

Bhagavan spoke commending the practice of going round the Hill. Bhagavan said, "Other sacred hills are described as the abodes of some Deity. But Arunachala is God Himself in the shape of the Hill. So special sanctity attaches to going round Arunachala. It has been said that one who has completed the round once in the proper way remains as *Brahmakara i.e.*, the Absolute embodied. The proper way is to walk as slowly as a Queen in full pregnancy. The red sores in the foot caused by the pricking stones on the way, it is said, will become the diamonds in the crowns of the Gods."

The next morning Bhagavan recalled an anecdote. Some time ago Soma-sundara-swami approached with a new notebook and requested Bhagavan to write one *Aksharam* (letter) in it first. *Aksharam* also means the Indestructible (self). So Bhagavan wrote in Tamil, "One *Aksharam* shines always of Itself in the Heart. How can it be written?" It had now got into *Guru Vachaka Kovai* and was later translated into Sanskrit and Telugu by Bhagavan Himself.

Bhagavan also explained another verse from *Guru Vachaka Kovai*: ***Jnani is ever in ecstasy and fullness, sporting in Chidaakasa (Heaven of Cosmic Consciousness). For the world to attribute to him Siddhis (Thaumaturgic Powers) is like determining the glory of the sun from the motes in the sun-beam that is projected in a dark chamber.***

The next evening my wife was bitten on the foot by a monkey. Bhagavan, on hearing of this, came out onto the veranda where she was sitting beside Echammal, saw the bleeding wound and spoke to her, making gracious enquiries. He asked me to take her to the hospital immediately and get the wound dressed. Marvellously the wound healed up within three or four days and did not even leave a scar. My wife used to say afterwards that it was no real accident but a gracious contrivance by Bhagavan. Out of her shyness and desire not to disturb the presence of Bhagavan with her children, my wife used to sit outside the hall and have Bhagavan's *darshan* as He was moving out. So, to pour out His Grace upon her by going near and talking to

her, Bhagavan brought about this accident, she used to say. She further thought that the monkey proved a friend to her as Hanuman to Sita and felt eternally grateful to it. At the time of her leave-taking, Bhagavan again enquired about her wound and wondered why she was going so soon. That night Bhagavan during dinner said that 'aviyal' was prepared at the wish of Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami who was offering *Bhiksha* in connection with his entry into his new house, and Bhagavan wished that my wife and children were there to taste it. Such was his abounding Grace! One morning Bhagavan pointed out a curious coincidence. Just as Bhagavan was writing the words 'kartha' in the 'proof' of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, a boy started reciting in the hall 'karthurajnayaa' of 'Upadesa Saram'.

Alluding to '*Devi-kaalot-taram*', Bhagavan explained its terms *kala* and *Maha Sunya*. ***Kala* means time that is fully ripe. Only at the ripe moment does the seed of knowledge sink into the mind. *Maha Sunya* means THAT, other than which there is nothing. That verily is the SELF. So, to fill *Maha Sunya* is only to BE THAT.**

Referring to '*Guru Vachaka Kovai*', Bhagavan quoted from it the verses giving a spiritual interpretation to three Hindu festivals. First 'Naraka Chaturdasi' is the day on which the ego that is the monarch of the Naraka kingdom, namely, the body, was slain by the *Chakra* (Wheel) of *Jnana* (knowledge). Bathing in *Jnana* is the bath in that festival. Secondly, *Dipavali* is the effulgence of the Self that shines out when the bodily attachment, that is in the shape of Naraka, has been slain. Thirdly, Pongal is the Reality of single *Rasa* (taste) that swells in the heart by the Grace of Guru when *Maya* (illusion) that subdues man with varied tastes has been overcome. You acclaim the feet of such Guru by shouting 'Pongal O Pongal'. This Pongal is not one day's affair but goes on unceasingly throughout the year.

In the afternoon Bhagavan narrated the context of *Upadesa Saram*. Muruganar was writing in Tamil verse the story of Lord Siva's sport in Daruka forest. The *Munis* (seers) in that forest became too proud due to the potency

of their *karmas* (rituals) and hurled *kritya* (a *sakti*) against Siva. To humble their pride Siva and Vishnu disguised as Purusha and Mohini enticed the *muni's* wives and the *munis* respectively. The *munis*, now repenting, sought refuge at the feet of Siva who graciously initiated them into knowledge. Muruganar, at this stage, prayed to Bhagavan to compose Siva's instruction to the *munis* which He alone could do. Accordingly, Bhagavan wrote *Upadesa Undiyar* which He Himself translated later into Telugu, Sanskrit and Malayalam as *Upadesa Saram*. Bhagavan told us that this Puranic story was not to the liking of Nayana who thought that it cast a slur upon the sanctity of Lord Siva.

In the evening Bhagavan recalled a marvellous occurrence. He said, "Some time ago, a paralytic was brought in a conveyance and brought into the Hall in the arms of some persons and placed before me. I was looking at him as usual. After about half an hour, the man with some effort got up by himself, prostrated, and rising came forward and handed to me a notebook. I found it to be his horoscope wherein it was stated that he would be stricken with paralysis and just at this time he would have *darshan* of a Mahatma by whose Grace he would be cured miraculously. The man after expressing his fervent gratitude walked by himself to his conveyance outside the Hall. All the people present were struck with wonder which I also shared because I had not con-sciously done anything for him. Now Bhagavan again repeated that a *Jnani* could not have any *sankalpa* (will) of his own.

The next morning Bhagavan spoke about the Guru's aid to Self-Realisation. He said, "As one enquires for whom is this Realisation, one's individuality goes, and the delusion that the Self has yet to be realised leaves him. This alone is the Grace of the Guru. The Guru can only dispel the delusion that the Self has not yet been realized, but to grant Self-Realization is impossible not only for the Guru but even for *Iswara* (God). To pray for the grant of Self-Realisation is like asking 'give myself to me'. Because of identification with the body, there arises the delusion that I am an individual. That creates the further delusion that the Guru is an individual other than myself. Really the Guru is not other than Self.

"The aspirant for knowledge should beware of *Siddhis* (thaumaturgic powers). Even if they come and court him of their own accord, he should reject them."

That day Bkagavan decided to add three quotations from *Guru Vachaka Kovai* to the *Anu-bandham* (appendix) of *Ulladu Narpadu*. They are the 14th, 16th and 33rd verses of the latter. Later Bhagavan translated them into Telugu prose and at His instance I wrote them in Telugu verse.

The next day Bhagavan was in a reminiscent mood and spoke about his old attendants. One Ayyaswami served Bhagavan from 1911 to 1921. He was ever active and very earnest about his duties. He went to his native place and died there.

Now Bhagavan spoke about His mother as follows: "After mother attained *Siddhi*, I used to come here to mother's Samadhi frequently. One morning I came here and I had no mind to return. So, I stayed on. Many gentlemen from the town came and urged me to come back to Skandashram, but my mind did not change. **The same *Sakti* (Power) that had brought me from Madura to Tiruvannamalai got me down here now from the Hill; I had no *sankalpa* (will) whatsoever.**

"After mother breathed her last, her body glowed with a divine resplendence. She looked not like a corpse, but like a Yogini in meditation. Immediately after the body was bathed, that effulgence subsided: It was our intention to give her *Samadhi* secretly and in private. In the night she expired; by 5 a.m. early morning we brought her remains to Pallakuthu, but even by that time, all people of the town had gathered there in a vast crowd."

Someone asked if mother knew beforehand that her end was approaching. Bhagavan replied, "She did not say it in so many words. But a few days before, she expressed a wish to see her grandson Venkattu and accordingly he was brought and shown to her. From this we may presume that she felt some inkling of her approaching end." In reply to another question

Bhagavan stated “It was a fact that a metallic sound was heard at the moment of her death. But my attention was not in it then.”

With regard to another old attendant Bhagavan said: When Palaniswami was about to die, I served him also just as I had done my mother, by placing my left hand on his head and my right hand on his Heart. As I thought that life was extinct, I placed the body on the ground and withdrew one or two steps. At once he opened his eyes and half-closed them. Life passed out through his eyes.

Questioned whether there was any distinction between the end of a *Yogi* and that of a *Jnani* Bhagavan said, “In the hymn ‘*Na Karmana*’ it seems to me that the attainment of *Brahma Loka* through *Archiradi-marga* has been predicated for *Yogis* and *Brahmathwa Siddhi*, i.e., oneness with Brahman for *Jnanis*. But ‘*Vijnani-swariyam*’ interprets ‘*Paranta-kale*’ as not unconscious in death, and ‘*Brahma-loka*’ as ‘*Brahma Aloka*’ that is, Realisation of Brahman.”

Questioned about the brain and the Heart, Bhagavan said, “The brain as the nerve-centre holds good only for waking-consciousness. But there must be a further centre for the real I or Self, and that is the Heart.”

The day before the *Maha-puja* celebration I was put in charge of the Visitors Room. In the evening as soon as I entered the Hall, Bhagavan asked me whether anyone had sent for me. I replied, “No, Bhagavan, I was all the time on duty in the Visitors Room and I am now coming to do my usual prostration.” Whereupon Bhagavan smiled and said, “I was just now enquiring of Venkata-krishnayya about you, as I did not see you the whole afternoon. Immediately I see you enter. As Venkata-krishnayya is still here, I am wondering whether anyone ran and told you to come.” “No, Bhagavan,” I repeated, “no one called, me, I came of my own accord.” Just then Bhagavan was talking of Mr. Abdul Wahab, retired Deputy Superintendent of Police, who was His classmate and old friend. His pet name was Saab Jaan. It seems Saab Jaan recognised his old friend in a photograph of Bhagavan with one Vijayam Naidu at Madurantakam and on enquiring learned of Bhagavan’s whereabouts. Later he came to see Bhagavan and strangely enough Vijayam Naidu was also in

the Ashram then. Both met before Bhagavan to their mutual surprise and recalled their previous meeting at Madurantakam.

On *Maha-puja* Day (June 11th 1939) Saab Jaan himself arrived and was introduced to me by Bhagavan. I met him separately and learned from him how at Villupuram Junction, his entry into a compartment of the Katpadi train was obstructed by three Burmese, who raised their daggers to stab him and how in the nick of time he was rescued by a Hindu who received the stab-wound on his own arm and disappeared even before Saab Jaan could thank him. Saab Jaan said that he thus had a foretaste of Bhagavan’s Grace. He further informed me that Venkataraman (Bhagavan) while at school was a prominent player on the football team of which Saab Jaan was the captain. Once in a match Bhagavan’s foot was injured and He ran a high temperature of 104.6° which made them all feel anxious. He said that Venkataraman and he were chums and used to meet each other very frequently in their houses.

That afternoon when Saab Jaan came to take leave, Bhagavan was in Pallakuttu giving the *Maha-puja* feast to a vast troop of monkeys who sat in a row and came by turns to receive food at Bhagavan’s hands in a most orderly manner. After all of them were fed, they cried together in chorus as if to express their thanks. Then Bhagavan came back to the Ashram with Saab-Jaan who felt it quite an ordeal to walk slowly on sand in the hot sun without shoes while Bhagavan, who never had any footwear seemed to enjoy the stroll. After Saab Jaan’s departure, I related to Bhagavan all that I had heard from Saab Jaan. Bhagavan observed that Saab Jaan must have started from his place just at the time when he was being discussed in the hall the previous day. *End of Audio file no.2*

(English Text- Pages: 21-28- Telugu Audio file No. 3- 1939- Telugu Book pages: 88-122- 50min)

Another arrival on the *Maha-puja* Day is also worth In the evening when someone inquired about the purpose of creation, mentioning. The morning mail brought a packet of tiny leaflets entitled 'Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi' for free distribution. To my great surprise, Bhagavan, while giving me the leaflet, pointed out to me my own 'Prayer' in English, printed on its cover page. At Bhagavan's bidding, I read it out in the Hall as follows:

“Where the riotous rest and are lulled into soft slumber,
Where speech conceals into silence and thought flows into its
fountain-head,
Where this gigantic ego drops to a point, vanishes and lo! emerges as the
Infinite One,
Where the atom and the universe, the soul and the Over-soul, unite in
one eternal-luminous-Being,
There, O Self of self, let me awake.”

Bhagavan explained that G. Ramachandran of Ceylon, an ardent devotee, had noticed that poem in my letter to the Ashram, and took a copy of it and had it printed at Maradana (Ceylon) in the leaflets presented for the occasion. Bhagavan then asked Sundaresa Iyer to translate it into Tamil.

Two days later Bhagavan incidentally spoke about his know-ledge of Telugu. Even at Madura he knew a little Telugu because one Lakshmayya, a Telugu knowing relative always talked to him in Telugu only. It was this Lakshmayya that used to call him 'Ramana' long before Kavya-kantha designated Him 'Ramana Maharshi'. The great philosophical work in Telugu *Sita-ramanjaneyam* was read by Bhagavan when He was staying in Pachai-amman Koil. It was brought to him by Gambiram Seshayya, the questioner in *A Catechism of Inquiry* who, Bhagavan informed us, was a Telugu Brahmin of Mulkinad (Hyderabad) descended from the renowned Ministers Akkanna and Madanna. Bhagavan remembered having read in that book that *Sushumna*

Nadi is *Tapo-marga* (the way of Penance) and *Amrita Nadi* is *Moksha marga* (the way of Liberation).

Bhagavan replied, “To know the inquirer is the purpose. The different theories of creation are due to the different stages of mind of their authors.” Now Dr. Syed asked for some positive method to know the Self after eliminating the non-self. Bhagavan replied, “When the non-self is eliminated that which remains is reality. It is not to be attained because it is not outside of you. It cannot be defined or described in words because it is for the ripe soul after complete self-surrender to the Guru, to realise for himself. To the realised soul these questions do not arise at all. He lives like the sole monarch or like the child without any cares or worries. He smiles at people discussing the Reality with their minds, which is like the gnat swallowing the whole ether and emitting it out.”

Then Bhagavan narrated, in a most dramatic and thrilling manner, the famous story of King Janaka and sage Ashtavakra to show how self-surrender automatically brings about Self-Realisation: Having read somewhere in the scriptures that the Self could be realised in the interval between a rider putting one foot in the stirrup and raising the other foot for mounting, King Janaka summoned all Pandits in his kingdom and demanded of them either to prove the statement or to denounce it. They could not prove it; but as it was a scriptural saying they dared not denounce it. The King, enraged at this, put them all in prison. Sage Ashtavakra passing near Janaka's kingdom was informed of the above and warned not to enter it. Nevertheless, he went in, was summoned before the king and questioned about the saying. He replied that he could prove it under certain conditions. First the king must accept him as Guru and obey him implicitly. Secondly, he must immediately set free all the Pandits. Thirdly, he must surrender the kingdom and all his personal possessions. King Janaka carried out all the conditions. Now the sage calling him, 'Janaka' as he was no longer the king, ordered him to follow him (the sage) alone, with a horse, outside the capital city. There he asked Janaka to

place one foot in the stirrup and raise the other foot, and then said, “Now comes the supreme condition, *you must surrender your self*. Are you willing?” Janaka said, “Yes.” From that moment Janaka stood transfixed with one foot in the stirrup and the other dangling in the air, apparently like a statue. (Here Bhagavan imitated the posture of Janaka). His people coming and seeing him in that state got alarmed and begged the sage to show grace and save him. The sage said, “Janaka, why are you like this? Ride home on the horse.” To the great relief of the people, Janaka rode home and obeyed the sage in everything like a bond-slave. “Now do you admit the truth of the scriptural saying?” asked the sage. “Yes” said Janaka. “Then, rule the kingdom as before” said Ashtavakra. “Is not the kingdom yours now?” Janaka asked, “Yes” replied the sage “but I order you to rule the kingdom in my name.” “I obey,” said Janaka.

Alluding to the story of Sita being asked by the wives of the Rishis to show her husband which she did by merely bowing before Rama, Bhagavan referred to a similar story about a girl and her lover in *Kaivalya Navanitam*. He also cited the story of *Minakshi Vijayam*. Goddess Minakshi originally had three breasts. She fought and vanquished every god. When she came before Lord Sundaresa, the third breast disappeared and she bowed her head before the Lord.

The next morning an old devotee, Rangaswami Iyengar, came for Bhagavan’s *darshan* with his grand-daughter. The child would salute Bhagavan only in secret but not openly before others. Thereupon Bhagavan called this *Ekanta Bhakti* (secret devotion) and illustrated it with a story from *Bhakta Vijayam*. A king was apparently immersed in worldly activities and never showed the least inclination to worship God. His Queen, who came of a pious family was much distressed at her husband’s lack of devotion. One midnight while the king was fast asleep, she noticed his lips moving, and applying her ears close to his mouth she heard the continuous whisper ‘Ram, Ram’. She discovered how deep and fervent must be the king’s devotion

that his lips should be muttering ‘Ram Nam’ even during sleep. She went into an ecstasy and immediately summoning the Prime Minister, ordered that the city should observe a festival the next day. Accordingly, the city was adorned with festoons, and grand music greeted the king’s ear as he awoke. He pressed his queen for the reason of this festivity. The queen’s words as she related what had happened came as a shock to him and exclaiming ‘What! You heard me repeat ‘*Ram Nam*’, the king fell down dead.

Bhagavan followed up the above narration with a story of Saint Tukaram. A priest had ordered that the Holy Name should not be profaned but chanted only under prescribed conditions of purity. Tukaram was given to continuous repeating of ‘Ram Nam’, and so one day while answering calls of nature, he was muttering the same. The priest passing that way heard the chant, and noticing the chanter, pounced upon him indignantly and ordered him to stop defiling the sacred name. Tukaram shut his mouth, but at once innumerable sounds of ‘Ram’ ‘Ram’ emanated simultaneously from every pore of his body. The priest, wonder-struck prostrated before the saint, apologised and withdrew the foolish order.

Incidentally Bhagavan cited the tradition that Nama Dev himself, having some crores of *Ram Nam* still to be chanted, took birth as Tukaram to complete the chanting.

Bhagavan also read and explained a passage from *Tayumanavar* in which the mind makes a plaint to the Soul, that the latter has described its friendship with the mind and *prana* (breath) at the bidding of an outsider, and is trying to control and suppress them, though in vain.

Two days later, the bandage was removed from the eczema patches on Bhagavan’s back and sides. Bhagavan was being treated by Dr. G. S. Melkote (till recently a Minister of Hyderabad State) who was then staying with his family in the Ashram. The doctor had himself been ailing from heart disease and came here in a very weak and almost precarious condition. By Bhagavan’s Grace he rapidly improved in the Ashram, and at the same time he had the privilege of treating Bhagavan for eczema. It looked like a mutual

accommodation between Bhagavan and the doctor. Indeed, it seemed a *Lila* (sport) of Bhagavan's Grace: For, on the eve of *Maha-puja*, Bhagavan insisted upon all bandages being removed and on *Maha-puja* day there was such a glow of health around Bhagavan's body that no one would suspect any skin disease. The next day the bandages were again resumed and were finally removed today. At their removal Bhagavan humorously remarked, "Now I have attained '*Bandha Moksha!*' (liberation from bandage)." I said that the healing seemed to depend upon the doctor's programme. Bhagavan replied, "Yes, the doctor wants to go away only after removing the bandage."

The next day we had an excellent *Vina* music performance by Srimathi Lalita Venkataraman, daughter of M. V. Ramaswami Iyer. Bhagavan listened with rapt attention. The climax was reached in the final song '*Saranagati*' (Surrender) and our minds were submerged in a flood of ecstasy. When we returned to the normal mood, Bhagavan observed, "So we have again come down to the earth. Where have we been? People talk of *Gandharva Loka* (the World of music). Where is it? I tell you we have been in *Gandharva Loka* all this while." Bhagavan complimented the musician saying, "The speciality of Lalita is this. You cannot say whether she is singing or playing *Vina*. The two sounds merge together so completely."

A little later a young girl, the sister of Saranathan was tripping and dancing in the Hall. Bhagavan followed it with absorbing interest and remarked, "We are now in *Deva Loka* (World of Gods). Where children play there is *Deva Loka*. Bhagavan appreciated the *abhinayam* (acting), though she could not possibly understand the *Bhava* (idea). Bhagavan also spoke of 'Kathakali dance' in appreciative terms.

While going up the Hill, Bhagavan referred to the misunderstanding between two prominent devotees and wanted me to convey to them, the following message: **Whoever condemns us is our friend. For he condemns only**

our body which is our enemy. The enemy's enemy is the best friend, is he not? We should really beware of those who praise us.

In the afternoon Bhagavan extolled the glory of Arunachala Siva. In *Siva Purana*, Arunachala is said to be the incarnation of Siva. This is the original *Linga* formation. Owing to this only, the system of worshipping Siva as *Linga* has come into vogue. Siva is also said to have incarnated as the boar, like Vishnu. *Adhyatma Ramayana* while narrating the episode of Rama slaying Khara and Dushana says that Rama is an incarnation of Siva.

When Bhagavan made a casual reference to *Allah Upanishad*, Dr. Syed stated that it was interpolated by a Brahmin in Akbar's court. Bhagavan observed that Hinduism accepts Mahomed and Christ as prophets, but it cannot accept either as the only and final prophet. Dr. Syed quoted a saying of Rumi that one hour spent in the company of a wise teacher is better than one hundred years of prayer.

Bhagavan pointed out the inconsistencies in the differing versions of Vararuchi and Bhartrihari and observed that much of the so-called historical criticism is nonsense. Bhagavan clinched the issue when He said, "Anything that appeals to our reason, let us accept even if a child should say it. On the other hand, anything that is repugnant to reason, let us reject even though it might come from Brahma."

The next morning I met the two devotees separately to convey to them Bhagavan's message. Even before I opened my mouth, they both expressed their eagerness to make up their quarrel. This struck me as an apt illustration of the same *Sakti* (Power) working all round. They then met near the Hall, shook hands and promised to forget and forgive. As this was being reported to Bhagavan, one of them enquired what was to be done with their previous correspondence, "Are we to burn it, Bhagavan?" asked he. Prompt came Bhagavan's reply, "What is the use of merely burning paper? It has got to be burnt in the heart."

Bhagavan, while returning from the Hill, joked with the child Ganesan. Bhagavan pinched his hand and pleaded, "I have pinched 'Ganesan' and not 'you'!" Now noticing the name 'Ganesa' written on the child's hand, Bhagavan asked, "What is Ganesa? Is it the hand?"

Now, as I was walking by His side, Bhagavan narrated to me a similar incident that happened some time ago. The youngest child of Seshagiri Iyer (Sadananda), a teacher in Mylapore and ardent devotee, approached Bhagavan and said, "Tata (grandpa), touch me." "Then," said Bhagavan, "I touched its hand like this." So saying, Bhagavan now touched my hand and thrilled me. Then the child said, "You touched only my hand. Did you touch me?" "I wondered at the child's retort," concluded Bhagavan, as He re-entered the Hall.

As the doctor came to apply some ointments, Bhagavan said, "What the doctor proposes to give me now is 'preventive treatment'. In *Kaivalya Navanitam* the disciple tells his Guru, 'By your instruction I have attained knowledge. But you know, Master, that even after the devil has left off possession, it is bottled up in *Yantra* (a mystic contrivance) and is buried underground so that it may not rise again. Similarly I pray for some device that would prevent the resurrection of this devil of ignorance.' The Guru's reply to it forms the latter portion. Likewise, Arjuna though he told Krishna in the *Gita* 'Delusion is destroyed and knowledge is imbibed' confesses later that he has forgotten the Lord's teaching and requests Him to repeat it. Krishna's reiteration in reply is the *Uttara Gita*."

The next morning, addressing Mrs. Noye, a new American visitor from California, who seemed to be suffering from some mental distress, Bhagavan said, "Get rid of the notion 'I am impure'. The self is ever pure. All this is the work of the mind. If you get at the basis of the mind, all these wrong notions disappear."

In the afternoon the Rani of Vijayanagaram had *darshan* of Bhagavan who remembered that the late Rajah had presented the Ashram with a tiger-skin and a tiger-head, and that a picture of Bhagavan seated on the skin had been sent to the Rajah. The Rajah's mother, an ardent devotee, had often been writing about her son's illness. The Rani asked, "What is peace?" Bhagavan replied, "Our very *swarupa* (nature) is peace. We assume restlessness for ourselves and crave for peace. In fact we are in peace always. The *Veda* speaks of the Self as 'full of peace and immortal'. To be ourselves in fullness is peace or bliss. To strive for peace is like standing head-deep in fresh water and complaining that thirst has not been quenched. One wonders whether the water itself is causing he thirst." The Rani, while departing, observed to me, "I put the traditional question and Bhagavan gave the traditional reply, but what has struck me is the glow of peace in Bhagavan's face and body. Indeed He Himself looks the Soul of Peace. This is my new discovery."

When someone asked, "How much sleep does a *Jnani* require?" Bhagavan replied, "Sleep is necessary to one who thinks 'I have risen from sleep'. But to those who are ever in changeless Sleep, what need is there for some other sleep? When the eyelids feel strained, it will do to close the eyes for a while. The three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep are for the mind and not for the body."

In the evening Bhagavan narrated from a Malayalam book *Aithihya Maalika* the story of a carpenter and ten Brahmins (*Mantrik, Agnihotri, Yogi*, etc.). The carpenter dug pits on high ground corresponding to the acts of each Brahmin and proved their futility. Bhagavan observed: "What is the use of digging any number of pits without noting the water level? Just so, there is no use worshipping any number of Gods in whatever ways, without knowing *swarupa* (ones' own self)."

Bhagavan told a story to illustrate how scandal-mongering against us may prove a blessing in disguise. A *pariah* couple met a Nambudri Brahmin. The

pariah told his wife, “Lo! A Brahmin is approaching, let us step aside.” The woman said, “There is no need. How can our approach be pollution to one who is keeping his own daughter? You call the wretch a Brahmin!” The man replied, “You are the hundredth person to repeat that scandal. Now the Brahmin’s curse is lifted.” He explained himself thus: “While the Brahmin’s wife was cooking food, a leech fell from the roof into it and died. The Brahmin hearing about it ordered her to give the poisoned food to their servants. Yama the ruler of Hell at once directed his accountant Chitragupta to enter that sin against the Brahmin’s name and ordered a mountain of leeches to be piled up for torturing the Brahmin when he should go there after his death. This Brahmin was a devotee of Chitragupta and used to pray to him every night before sleeping. So now Chitragupta taking pity upon the Brahmin appeared to him in a dream and warned him of the punishment in store for him. When the Brahmin fell at his feet in terror, and implored for some means of escape, Chitragupta advised him to conduct himself towards his grown-up, maiden daughter so as to provoke the scandal that he had illicit intimacy with her. When a hundred persons had uttered the scandal, the sin would leave him completely, being distributed among his slanderers. The Brahmin did accordingly; and you are the hundredth slanderer. So I say that the Brahmin’s curse is now removed.” Bhagavan drew from the story the following moral: “Having the best intention, but act in such a way as not to win praise, but to incur blame. Resist the temptation to justify yourself even when you are just.”

In the night, Bhagavan said: “Some hold the view that even the *Jnani* must experience *Prarabdha*. Then the question arises, ‘What about the fruits of his fresh actions during that period of experience?’ They reply that those actions are like fried seeds which are of use only for eating, but cannot sprout. Then what about their merits and sins? Those who praise them share their merits, those who blame them partake of their sins, it is said.”

The next morning Bhagavan was reading another story in *Aithihya Maalika*. A poor man, ill-advised by someone, followed two apparent Brahmins (who were really the heralds of God Narayana) in spite of their dissuasion, towards ‘Badari Narayan’. Just at this point, the mail was brought to Bhagavan. The first letter was from Badari Narayan. Bhagavan said, “Just now, in the story, we were at Badari. In this letter we are also at Badari Narayan. Is it not wonderful?” After going through the mail, Bhagavan completed reading the story of Badari Narayan, how the astrologer was cursed by Narayana’s heralds with downfall on a particular day, and how he sought to avoid it in vain.

In the afternoon Bhagavan related another story. A Brahmin and his cook went on a pilgrimage. The cook dipped a bitter-gourd in all *tirthams* (holy waters). When he cooked it afterwards, it tasted bitter as before. “So.” said Bhagavan, “how can the bitter taste in the pilgrim go by mere bathing in holy waters, unless the mind becomes edified and sweetened.” Bhagavan also narrated two more stories from the same book.

The next day Bhagavan casually informed us that three verses in *Upadesa Undiyar*, the 16th, the 28th and the 30th verses, were originally drafted by Muruganar but were revised by Bhagavan.

The next morning Bhagavan stayed on The Hill unusually late. Thereupon a false rumour spread that Bhagavan might have gone to Skandashram to witness the obsequies of a Malayali Swami who had attained *siddhi* the previous night. So, I went up the Hill with Annamalai Swami and soon found Bhagavan just returning. Bhagavan observed, “This Hill is like my own house. The sky was clouded and the weather was cool. So, we forgot the passing of time, and roaming here and there we delayed.” Bhagavan added, “This Hill is full of lemon-grass. Its mere smell assuages the fatigue of hill-climbing. Scientists may extract oil out of this grass.”

A young Bengali handed to Bhagavan the following questions in writing:

1. How can we conceive God?
2. What is God and where is he?
3. How can we know our past lives?

Bhagavan called the slip a 'question-paper' and asked me to interpret His replies as follows:

1. As you think yourself, so you conceive God.
2. First know what you are. Then you will yourself know what God is and where He is.
3. Even with the limited knowledge of our present life, we are so much oppressed as to be unable to shake off the ego. If we should get to know of our past lives also, the difficulty would be all the greater because the ego would then be much more strengthened. So, it is better not to worry about knowing the past, the future or even the present.

In the evening, Bhagavan informed us that today, namely June 22, 1939, was the Guru Puja day of Manikya Vachakar, and He sat in deep silence for so long that the sanctity of the occasion sank into our souls.

The next day Bhagavan incidentally informed us that the preface to the third edition of *Ramana Gita* was written in Sanskrit by Kavya-kantha himself and that it was later translated into other languages. Likewise the introduction by Kasi-bhatta Krishnaraya Sastri was also translated into Tamil and Malayalam. "In the Sanskrit preface," said Bhagavan, *Tiruchuli* was translated as Trisula-puram. The correct rendering of the Tamil word would be 'Avartha-puram'. Then Bhagavan narrated how at the time of *Pralaya* (Dissolution), Lord Siva held up that plot with His *Trisula* (Trident) and thereby caused a *Chuzhi* (Whirlpool) in the waters. That is *Tiruchuli* (Sacred Whirlpool). Bhagavan added that Pranavananda interpreted *Tiruchuli* as *Pranavam* (OM).

In the afternoon Bhagavan read out some extracts from an article in *Harijan* entitled "God and *Satyagraha*." It contained a striking statement that

without this mind the body could itself function well within certain limits. Bhagavan observed that people dreaded what would become of them when the mind should be destroyed.

Bhagavan casually said that He came to know of *Pranayama* (Breath control) only after coming to Arunachala. The description of *Jnana Pranayama* as *Naaham* (Not I), *Koham* (Who am I), *Soham* (He am I) was Bhagavan's own. Bhagavan said that even *Soham* must be transcended for it would again be a *vritti* (thought). Bhagavan added "To expound what can be known in one word, a crore of *Sastras* have come into existence."

Pointing out the distinction of a *Jnani* Bhagavan said, "To the doer of any *Upasana* (worship) or *Dhyana* (meditation), there are effort and relaxation. But *Jnani* has neither. For, leaving the Self, where can he be, and what can he do? All thoughts vanish at the remembrance of the Self. A stage will some time be reached when one will laugh within one's self at these, *Dhyana*, *Yoga*, *Pranayama* etc.'

Someone asked, "It is stated in the scriptures that the Self will reveal itself only to one whom it chooses. Then what is the use of our effort?" Bhagavan replied: **The Self will draw unto itself an aspirant only when he becomes introverted. So long as he is extroverted, Self-Realisation is impossible. Many people try to define the Self instead of attempting to know the Self and abide in It."**

Questioned about rebirth, Bhagavan said, "If there is a birth *now*, there must be past birth and future birth. One must inquire 'to whom is this birth?' The rise of the I-thought is real birth."

Bhagavan quoted from *Kaivalya Navanitam* as follows: "To say 'I have attained the Self is like digging a pit and asserting that *Akash* (Space) has entered into it. Is it not *Akash* that gave room for the pit? . . . A child was crawling in pursuit of its own shadow to seize the head of the shadow, but of course, it receded and eluded. The mother, noticing this, stopped the child and made it catch its own head so that it seemed to the child that a

hand seized the head in the shadow. At this the child was satisfied. Similar is the Grace of the Guru.”

The next morning, at breakfast, Bhagavan asked me “Do you know this ‘chutney?’” I replied, “No. It tastes excellent, though.” Then Bhagavan smiled and said, “It is raw bitter-gourd.” It could hardly be believed but for Bhagavan saying it, because it had no trace whatsoever of bitterness but on the other hand was very palatable. Then I composed a Telugu verse expressing wonder how Bhagavan could remove bitterness so completely from raw bitter-gourd, and praying the He might likewise wipe out the bitterness of ego from within *us*. As soon as He returned from the Hill, I showed the piece to Bhagavan who read it out with evident pleasure and interpreted it to the Ashramites. Bhagavan explained that sour mango and coconut were mixed to counteract and suppress the bitter taste in the chutney. Bhagavan added, “Bitter-gourd is good for digestion and the raw bitter-gourd acts as a laxative.”

When the Bengali translation of *Upadesa Saram* was recited by a lady-devotee, Bhagavan explained the sequence of thought between the 22nd and the 23rd verses. In the former, the body, senses, breath, mind and nescience are described as *asat* (unreal) and *jadam* (insentient), while the ‘I’ is *eka Sat* (the one Reality). Then the question remains. Is the ‘I’ *Chit* (sentient) or *Jadam* (insentient)? To this, the reply is given in the next verse. *Sat* (Reality) *chit* (sentient). The ‘I’ is *Sat* according to the previous verse. Therefore the ‘I’ is *chit*. Bhagavan humorously called this reasoning ‘the rule of three’, the first axiom in Mathematics.

Bhagavan also quoted from the *Bhagavad Gita* the line which means “Fixing the mind in the Self, one should not have the least thought,” and He observed that it contained the quintessence of Wisdom.

Early the next morning, at 3-40 a.m. some of us went round the Hill. At our start Bhagavan said that we might return by 7 a.m. We came back even by

6-40 a.m. On seeing us, Bhagavan humorously remarked: “You seem to have hastened for breakfast. You were perhaps meditating upon ‘stomach-god’ during your round!” The usual time was 6-30 a.m. breakfast, but that day, as if to teach us a lesson, it was postponed to 7 a.m. However, to compensate for the delay we had some extras, ‘*vadai* and *sambar!*’

Later Bhagavan asked me to read out some verses in Kaivalya Navanetam treating of Satchidananda while Bhagavan followed them with the Tamil text and made a running commentary. He said, Chit and Ananda are latent even in plants, animals etc. But Sat, Chit, Ananda are really known only to the Realised soul or Jnani.”

Bhagavan illustrated Maya (delusion) by telling how a child mistakes the reflection of the moon for the reality. Bhagavan also gave an example from His own observation of a monkey. The monkey approached a mirror, attracted by some sweetmeat placed in front. It was first scared away by its own image in the mirror. Then it searched for the image and finally after knowing it to be unreal, the monkey took away the sweetmeat not minding the mirror. Bhagavan, while narrating this acted the incident wonderfully.

Bhagavan explained how faith in a Guru and the scriptures helps one to realise the Self, by citing the following illustrations: In dream a king is bitten by a dog. He feels helpless and destitute of medicine, although in reality he has all medicines and doctors at his disposal. For the dream wound can be healed only by a dream doctor with a dream medicine. Likewise, you dine sumptuously, sleep and dream that after hard work in the sun you are fatigued and hungry. That dream hunger can be appeased only by dream food.

Illustrating the force of past samskara (cultured) and vasana (tendency), Bhagavan said, “we eat indigestible stuff. We suffer for it repeatedly. While suffering, we take a solemn vow not to touch it again. But as soon as we are well, the craving for it returns.”

Replying to Dr. Syed who raised the issue of Reason versus Faith and casually referred to the difference between spurious and genuine Gurus, Bhagavan said, “It

all depends upon the condition of the disciples. There have been disciples who, by blind faith in the word of the Guru, have lifted up the Guru himself.”

Bhagavan also remarked that there might be exceptional cases of even animals and plants attaining Self-Realisation.

In the evening Bhagavan referred to the description of the Self as ‘the smallest of atoms, the biggest of big things’ and said, “The hailstone falls in the ocean. It falls in the shape of a small drop. At once it melts and becomes the ocean itself. Likewise, the source of the Self is a pinpoint. When it is searched for, it disappears, and only fullness remains. Hence the Self is called the ‘atom’. We are like the icebergs floating in the ocean of *Ananda* (Bliss).”

Referring to *Mouna* (Silence), Bhagavan said: **Silence is of four kinds - Silence of speech, Silence of the eye, Silence of the ear, and Silence of the mind. Only the last is pure Silence and is the most important.** The commentary of Silence is the best commentary as illustrated in Lord Dakshinamurti. Only Silence is the Eternal speech, the One Word, the Heart-to-Heart Talk. Silence is like the even flow of electric current. Speech is like obstructing the current for lighting and other purposes. However much a *Jnani* might talk, he is still the Silent One. However much he might work, he is still the Quiet One. His voice is the Incorporeal voice. His walk is not on the earth, it is like measuring the sky with the sky.”

During the evening meals, Bhagavan pointed out to me the dehydrated jack-chips and said that the jack fruit was sent all the way from Kakinada.

After dinner, Bhagavan read out the Tamil version of my English “Prayer” translated by Sundaresa Iyer and closely revised by Bhagavan Himself. He explained its *Ahaval* metre and its meaning. He also read out His new verses in *Guru-vachaka Kovai*, explained their meaning, and asked Sundaresa Iyer to copy them for me.

At my departure the next morning, I told Bhagavan that I was taking three Tamil works of His for study. Bhagavan smiled approval and said, “It will not be very difficult. Narasinga Rao and Lakshamma have studied them. In the beginning, Tamil might be somewhat unattractive owing to peculiar pronunciation and paucity of sounds and letters, but after some study, you will like it very nicely. That was how Nayana also used to feel.” ... End of Audio file No.3

(English Text- Pages:28-34- Telugu Audio file No. 4- 1939- 40- Telugu Book pages: 123-155- 52min)

On the eve of Dasarah I was asked to translate into Telugu an article on Bhagavan by His English devotee, Major A. W. Chadwick, who after rendering distinguished service in the first World War turned spiritual and was drawn to Bhagavan and has since remained at His feet permanently. When I went to the Ashram during Dasarah vacation, I learnt that my Telugu rendering was felt to be somewhat prosaic. It was suggested that I might try to put the same ideas in Telugu poetry. The article and its translations in different languages were meant to be used for the coming *Shashti-purti* (Diamond Jubilee) celebration of Bhagavan. So, the Ashram authorities were in a great hurry to get them printed. On the morning of October 17th, in the inspiring presence of Bhagavan, I composed sixteen verses in two hours, and at the instance of Bhagavan, I read them out in the Hall. When I came to the fifteenth verse which stated:

“On this occasion (*Shashti-purti*) as we gather at the feet of Bhagavan, we should neither discuss philosophy nor estimate our individual progress in spirituality, but simply pour our hearts out for His gracious condescension in living with us and befriending us these sixty years”, my voice became choked with emotion, and failed. Bhagavan also shed tears. With great difficulty I somehow completed the reading. With Bhagavan’s approval, those verses were sent to the Press that very day under the title *Karuna Purna Sudhabdhi* (Nectureous Ocean of Grace).

The next day Bhagavan casually narrated the story of Mira Bai’s visit to her Gurujī. The disciples refused permission for *darshan* on the ground that their Guru would not see the face of a woman. Mira Bai expressing surprise observed: “I thought that there is only one *Purusha* (Man) and all the rest of us are women.” When these words were communicated by the disciples to their Guru, he at once realised that Mira Bai was a *Jnani* and he himself came out and saluted her. Sometime after Bhagavan told this story as Subbalakshamma, an old devotee, and myself were discussing it, the idea struck us that according to Mira’s sayings Bhagavan is the sole *Purusha* (Man) and

therefore His *Shashti-purti* (completion of sixty years) is specially significant. Subbalakshamma suggested that I put this idea in a poem. Accordingly, soon after I returned home, I wrote two verses which ran as follows:

1. "Men do marry their own wives at their *shashti-purti* celebration. Truly we the so-called men and women on earth are all women, and you, Ramana, are the only *Purusha* (Man)! So at *your shashti-purti* also, *you* must marry us all who are *your own*"
2. "For this wedding, O Ramana, *you* are the bridegroom, *you* are the priest, *you* are the congregation, *you* are the ritual, and the *mantra* is Silence!"

These verses were sent to the Ashram to be shown to Subba-lakshamma. A few days later, to my surprise, I was informed by the Ashram that these two verses would also be included in the booklet of the sixteen verses that was being printed. I explained to the Ashram that the two verses were written in a playful vein and were not meant for publication. In their reply on October 29, the Ashram stated:

"We understand your point of view with regard to the two verses sent from Nellore. Their intrinsic worth can be judged by one who has a universal understanding of the human heart, so that even if they are written in a vein of playful tenderness, the real appeal they make to the reader is akin to what you find in His hymns from which we selected a few that you may find them ready without need for reference. And have we not entitled the booklet *Karuna-purna Sudhabdhi* (the Nectareous Ocean of Grace), and how can our sentiments be inappropriate when we merely follow His footsteps?"

Then followed the four quotations from Bhagavan's *Akshara-mana-malai* (the Wedding-Garland of Letters) under the significant title "The original strains that gave the echo".

"After abducting me if now Thou dost not embrace me, where is thy chivalry, O Arunachala!"

"Does it become Thee to sleep when I am outraged by others, O Arunachala!"

"Enfold me body to body, limb to limb, or I am lost, O Arunachala!"

"Let us enjoy one another in the House of Open Space, where there is neither night nor day, O Arunachala!"

Copies of the booklet were sent to all Telugu devotees along with the invitation for the *shashti-purti*. At the celebration on Dec. 27th 1939, the verses were sung in Bhagavan's presence by Chenchu-krishnamma, a musically talented devotee, who however omitted the last two verses. **Bhagavan smiled and remarked to me that the reciter, as she was a woman felt needless delicacy, because she failed to understand the universality of their spiritual significance which transcended the sex distinction.**

When I reached the Ashram during Christmas, the *Shashti-purti* season had already commenced. The whole preceding week was a continuous festivity which culminated in the celebration on December 27. At the time of my arrival, I was suffering from severe partial headache which was the after-effect of a nervous fever. Chintha Dikshitulu a distinguished Telugu author, homeopath and fellow-devotee, treated me for two days in vain. On the third morning, as I was seated in Bhagavan's presence on the pial in front of the Mother's shrine, M. V. Ramaswami Iyer noticing signs of suffering in my face, made enquiries of my ailment in a loud tone. I came out and whispered to him about my trouble. He chided me for not having told Bhagavan about it. As soon as I returned to my seat. Bhagavan enquired what I had been saying to Ramaswami Iyer and got from me full details of my disease and the treatment. Unable to sit up on account of the pain, I went and lay behind a shelf in the book-stall. It was about 10 a.m. An Ashram worker brought coffee for someone, and missing him, pressed me to take it. The moment I

drank it, the pain suddenly subsided and never recurred afterwards. I felt this was another miracle due to Bhagavan's Grace.

On the *shashti-puri* day I composed six Telugu verses on Bhagavan, and without signing my name, I inserted the paper in the day's mail. Bhagavan, as soon as His eye lighted upon the writing, looked at me with a gracious smile and after perusing them, asked me, "Where and when did you post these verses?" "From my Heart, this morning!" I replied. Bhagavan laughed, and asked me to read out the verses and also the English poems of K. Vaidyanatha Iyer, a teacher and an ardent devotee. My fourth verse stated:

"The fortune of the whole universe lies in the palm of your hand, O Bhagavan. So, I pray that you may take on the lives of us all, and have the greatest longevity."

As it was being read, Bhagavan shook His head and snapped His fingers as if to scout the sentiment. This acquires a prophetic significance from later happenings. It looks as though Bhagavan has done just the reverse of the prayer. He seems to have cut short *His* physical existence to add to the length of *our* lives.

Early the next morning, as *Ramana Chatvarimshat* was being recited, when the 31st and 32nd verses were reached, Bhagavan told me, "Here Nayana calls me the cook of Siva who cuts up the human animals in their ego and with them prepares the meal of Siva!" I said that the comparison was doubly appropriate because even in the ordinary sense Bhagavan was a cook *par excellence*.

The next day Rao Bahadur A. Devaraja Mudaliar, a prominent lawyer and intimate devotee, asked how Bhagavan could observe distinction among His devotees. "For instance," added Mudaliar, "shall we be wrong if we say that Subbaramayya is shown a little more favour than others and is made to act as the High Priest of this Order?" Bhagavan smiling replied, "To me there is

no distinction. Grace is flowing like the ocean ever full. Everyone draws from it according to his capacity. How can one who brings only a tumbler complain that he is not able to take as much as another who has brought a jar?"

On the last morning before my departure, Bhagavan quoted two verses from Muruganar and explained them as follows: -

1. **"That which is said to be beyond the beyond, and is at the same time inside of the inside and shines within the Heart itself - the Real Self, is verily Venkata Ramana. Do adore Him."**
2. **"Like the cock that throws aside the diamond taking it for a pebble, you may also belittle this Arunachala Ramana mistaking Him for a common fellow-man while He is really the Supreme Self. So, beware!"**

When my train halted at Katpadi I put the above into Telugu verses along with my own farewell poem and submitted them by post to Bhagavan.

Shortly after my return home, I had a marvellous experience of Bhagavan's Grace. It was early morning. I had been sitting for a long time in meditation. Gradually I felt lighter and easier. Finally, when I felt as light as a feather floating in the wind, I lost the body-consciousness. Still, I was fully aware. I flew at a great height in the sky. After a time, I saw big '*Gopurams*' (temple-towers) fully illumined against the background of a majestic Hill and knew that the place was Tiruvannamalai. In a few minutes I was hovering over the Ashram near the cowshed on the south and came down to a few feet above the ground. I saw Bhagavan casting a torch light into some bushes near by. I bowed to Bhagavan even from the mid-air. Immediately I rose to a great height and flew back. On the return flight I saw down below, some blazing fires and heard gun-shots, at one place. I continued the flight till I recognised my home town. Then I stopped, descended and came back to my seat in the central hall of my residence. At once I regained the body-consciousness and opened my eyes. Except that the body disappeared and reappeared, my

awareness was continuous, without a break. The next day I read in the Papers that at the town of Arcot, between Tiruvannamalai and Conjeevaram, there was a big riot and incendiaries were thrown *that very night* and the Police resorted to firing to disperse the mob. I never had a like experience before or after, and I can only regard it as a miracle of Bhagavan's Grace for affording me His actual *darshan*.

* * * * *

Early in the spring of 1940, I was asked by the Ashram to assist in the new edition of *Unnadi Nalubadi* (Reality in Forty Verses) in Telugu. Besides the previous edition which contained the prose of Bhagavan and the verse of G. L. Narasimha Rao corrected by Kavya-kantha and Bhagavan Himself, there were two Telugu versions, one in *vrittams* (quatrains etc.) by the late Ponaka Sessa Reddi and another in couplets by V. Venkatakrishnayya. Obviously the bringing out of a new edition under the circumstances presented a difficult and delicate problem which I, by myself, could not solve. So, I took all the versions with me when I went to the Ashram for the summer vacation and told Bhagavan my difficulty. It was also proposed to increase the number of verses in *Anubandham* (Appendix) to forty and to include the Sanskrit version of slokas. Bhagavan gave a characteristic solution to the problem. The Telugu prose and Sanskrit sloka for each verse were to be printed on the left page, and parallel to them the *dwipadas* and *vrittams* in Telugu were to be printed on the right page. For the original forty verses, the *dwipadas* of G. L. Narasimha Rao were to be chosen and for the *Anubandham* renamed *Sukti Sudha* (The Nectar of Wise Saws), the *dwipadas* of V. Venkatakrishnayya were to be taken. The *Vrittams* for both were to be partly by G. L. Narasimha Rao and partly by Ponaka Seshu Reddi. It was a nice balancing of the various contributions and the edition proved to be a perfect success. Here was a fine illustration of a *Jnani's samatva buddhi* (sameness of mind) and practical wisdom.

Incidentally Bhagavan informed us that in Narasimharao's translation of verse 23, while the Tamil original read "This body does not say 'I,'" Bhagavan expanded 'this body' into 'this *corpse* of a body', and He explained saying "Even while we are alive, this body is a corpse. It appears so bright and active only on account of the presence of our Self in it."

Bhagavan also narrated another interesting incident. While translating the original *Forty Verses* into Sanskrit, Nayana, it seems, demurred to the 12th verse which says "True knowledge is devoid of knowledge and ignorance". Bhagavan reminded Nayana that he had himself written the commentary for the 27th verse in *Upadesa Saram* which expressed the same idea. Then Nayana was satisfied. "This shows" said Bhagavan, "how *maya* would mislead even the best scholar."

I had been asked to go through another Telugu translation of *Ramana Gita* in *Theta Giti* metre by Naru Naganarya, a poet and devotee. I did so with pleasure and submitted the manuscript to the Ashram. It has been published under the title *Andhra Ramana Gita*.

At this time, I was blessed with the rare good fortune of working with Bhagavan in the kitchen. The hours of duty were between 2-30 a.m. and 4 a.m. Bhagavan would come punctually at 2-30 a.m. and first spend some time in cutting vegetables with the workers and devotees. Then He would enter the kitchen and prepare 'sambar' or 'chutney' for breakfast, and occasionally some extra dishes also. R. Narayana Iyer, Sub-Registrar, Kalyana Sundaram Iyer, the bookstall officer, and I, used to assist Bhagavan. At first I was an ignoramus in the work. As I saw Bhagavan perspiring profusely near the oven, I tried to fan Him, but Bhagavan objected. He would not allow any special distinction to be shown to Him. I stopped, but as Bhagavan's attention was engrossed in work, I gently repeated the fanning. Bhagavan turning to me, laughed and said, "You want to do it on the sly. But you do not even know how to do it effectively. Let me teach you." So saying, He held me by the hand and taught me the proper way of waving the fan. Oh!

How I thrilled at this touch and thanked my ignorance! From the kitchen we would adjourn to another room for grinding the mixture. I did not know at first how to hold the pestle and grind. Bhagavan placed His hand upon mine and turned the pestle in the proper way. Again what a thrill! How blessed was my ignorance! After the work was finished, Bhagavan would take out a bit from the dish, taste a little of it and give us the remainder to taste, and sometimes when our hands were unwashed, He would Himself throw it into our mouths with His own hand. That would be the climax of our happiness. Then He would hasten back to the Hall and lie reclining on the couch and appear dozing as the Brahmins arrived for *Parayana*. Squatting so close to Bhagavan, chatting and joking with Him and partaking of the fruit of His gracious labours, what a privilege and good fortune! That was indeed the most blessed period in the lives of us three. Its very recollection will thrill us throughout our lives.

This work with Bhagavan had its rigours as well as its pleasures. Though Bhagavan was all mercy and Grace, He was at the same time a strict disciplinarian. He would not tolerate the least sloppiness. Everything must be done to perfection. Nothing should be wasted or spoiled. He would demand full attention and implicit obedience to His directions. One night an advocate devotee insisted on sharing in the work. He was asked to shift a vessel containing 'sambar'. In the movement, a few drops were spilt. At once Bhagavan said, "You are fit only for arguing before the Court. This work is not for you." The poor man never again volunteered. Each one was allotted a duty and he must take his cue from the mere look of Bhagavan. My duty for instance was to supply salt and water, and whenever Bhagavan glanced at me, I must bring either of the two, understanding the need. Usually, we used to wake up at 2 a.m., finish our ablutions and be ready before time to report for duty. Once, however, I was late by five minutes. The work was already going on. Bhagavan tasting the preparation said that salt was a little excess, and turning to me, He added, "Since you were absent, I thought of

you at the moment of adding salt, and that is the reason for this excess." That was Bhagavan's way of reprimanding me for unpunctuality. Another time the sour ingredient was slightly excessive. Bhagavan, tasting it, joked and said, "Acidity is the elective remedy for *pittam* (giddiness). Since most of the persons who come here are more or less giddy, this preparation will do us all a lot of good!" But even such errors were rare. As all the devotees and visitors would readily testify, the preparations were of excellent taste. The mere touch of Bhagavan's hand appeared enough to make them so delicious. It seemed like sprinkling nectar upon them.

While doing the work, Bhagavan had a way of teaching the highest wisdom through homely, casual remarks. One night when a vegetable grown in England was being cut, a worker remarked, "How nice it would be if this vegetable could be grown in our Ashram garden!" At once Bhagavan retorted saying, "Where do you think it was grown? That was also *our* garden. Otherwise, how could *we* get it? Indeed, all gardens in the world are *our* Ashram gardens!" Another time when 'sambar' was being boiled, Bhagavan observed. "It must be boiled fully and all the effervescence must completely subside. Only then will it be good and acquire the right taste."

Another time, at about 3 a.m., we were with Bhagavan in the grinding room. I was called and told that some people were waiting for me near the Hall. I found that they were a party of women and children from Nayudupet. They were starting to go round the Hill and wanted Bhagavan's *darshan* and blessings. I curtly told them that it was impossible to see Bhagavan at that hour, and I went in. Bhagavan asked me what the matter was, and hearing it from me, He said, "Poor people! Why should they go away disappointed? Tell them to come to the back door, and I shall meet them there." Accordingly, I informed them, and they ran there. Bhagavan stood on the doorstep, and there was no attendant in the way. The whole party fell at His feet, touched them, kissed them and bathed them with tears. In short, they seemed to loot and plunder His Grace while He looked on beaming with

benignity. I envied the good-luck of the party, and realised the full force of calling Bhagavan *karuna-purna-sudhabdhi* (the Nectareous Ocean of Grace).

One day Bhagavan recalled an incident of 1931 *Chitra-purnima* (Full-moon night of *Chitra* month); after a heavy meal that night, one of the devotees quoted a song of Avvaiyar, which voiced the complaint of the soul against the stomach as follows: Thou would'st not stop eating even for a day. On the other hand, thou would'st not accept two days' food at a time. Thou dost not realise my trouble. It is very difficult to live with thee, O stomach.

On hearing this, Bhagavan, it seems, observed that the stomach had greater reason to complain against the Soul and parodying the above song, **Bhagavan Himself wrote the stomach's complaint against the Soul as follows:**

“To me the stomach, thou dost not allow respite even for half an hour by abstaining from food; thou dost not realise my trouble at any time. It is very difficult indeed to get on with thee, O Soul.”

I now translated both the songs into Telugu verses.

Four days later I got a letter from home saying that my son Ramana-Prasadam had an accidental fall and fractured his collar-bone and that he was being treated in the hospital. Bhagavan, when He was shown the letter, pointed to His own collar-bone on the right side and said that it would be a simple fracture and the bone could be easily set in a child. On hearing this, I felt so much reassured that I no longer worried about it, and when I returned home a month later, I found that the fracture had occurred exactly at the spot pointed out by Bhagavan and that the boy was nearly all right. I then remembered that Ramana Prasadam was himself the Grace of Ramana.

On the eve of the *Maha-puja* celebration which fell on May 30, Bhagavan narrated the story of *Matrubhuteswara* which was the name of the Deity in the Mother's shrine and also in the ancient temple at Tiruchirapalli. The Tamil rendering of the name was *Tayumanavar*. It meant “God that became

Mother.” When Bhagavan installed a ‘Lingam’ on His Mother's Samadhi, Kavya-kantha under a happy inspiration named it *Matrubhuteswara*. Alluding to the story and explaining the appropriateness of the name to the Deity in the Mother's shrine, I wrote an article in English for the *Mahapuja Day*, under the title “Worship Mother as God”, from which is extracted the following:

“It is related in the *Puranas* that when a woman devotee was in the throes of child-birth and no midwife was present to attend on her, the Lord Himself appeared as Mother and brought about a safe delivery. So the Lord came to be worshipped as *Matru-bhuteswara*. Likewise, when the world was big with *Maya* (Delusion) and was in sore need of the Gospel of Self-inquiry, the Lord taking shape as Mother helped in the delivery of Bhagavan who is the very embodiment of that Gospel. It is most fitting therefore that mother should come to be worshipped as *Matrubhu-teswara*.”

The same idea was also expressed in a Telugu poem of prayer which I composed on the *Mahapuja Day*.

The next day Bhagavan quoted from *Arunachala Mahatmyam* the stern warning of *Devi* (Goddess) to *Asura* (Demon) and translated it into Telugu prose and verse as follows:

“This holy place is ever the abode of righteous beings and devotees. Those mean wretches who wish ill to others here will suffer from many scourges and die. The might of the wicked perishes here in a minute. Fall not like a moth into the blazing fire of Lord Arunachala, the Fire-Mountain.”

Three days later, my mother who came for Bhagavan's *darshan* put through me a question: “Is it permissible for women to do *Pranava-Japam* (repetition of OM)?” Bhagavan replied, “The ultimate purpose of *Pranava-Japam*, as of

every other *sadhana* (practice) is *Jnana* (knowledge). For those who seek *Jnana* through any *sadhana*, there are no prohibitions, be they men or women.” Bhagavan added, “People often get attached to their particular *sadhana* and take it as an end in itself. They forget that all *sadhanas* in the world such as *Pranayama* (breath-control), *japam*, *penance*, *yajna* (Sacrifice), *yoga*, etc. are only a means to a common end, namely *mind-control*. So all these doubts arise.”

Two days afterwards, Jagadiswara Sastri an old devotee, Sanskrit poet and scholar, was brought for Bhagavan’s *darshan*. He had been gravely ill and had just been discharged from the town hospital. Those of us who had seen him some time before, had given up all hope, but he recovered miraculously. He now looked like a mere skeleton, and I expressed wonder how such a weak body could live and move. Bhagavan smiled and said, “Yes, it looks as though some Spirit has got into the body and is conducting it!” He further informed us that it was Jagadiswara Sastri who, while living on the Hill, once wrote the words *Hridaya kuhara madhye* (in the middle of the Heart’s cave) and not knowing what to write further, implored Bhagavan to complete the verse. That was how the famous *sloka* came to be composed by Bhagavan. From his sick-bed in the hospital, Jagadiswara Sastri composed a prayer to Bhagavan in some Sanskrit verses one of which stated: “If you think me worth saving, do show Grace and save me even now, O Lord! It does not befit you to reckon my sins and merits. You have the power to create and destroy the universe without any aid from others. Then why do you now deceive me by saying that the Law of *karma* is supreme and must work itself out.” I later translated it into Telugu verse. Here was another miracle of Bhagavan’s Grace.

It was June 10, 1940. The radio announced the fall of Paris to Germany and the entry of Italy into the war against the Allies. At about 3 a.m., Bhagavan, Narayana Iyer and myself were at work in the grinding room. I had just heard a rumour that to counteract the action of Italy, Turkey had declared war on

the side of the Allies. I asked Narayana Iyer, who was the latest arrival from the town whether he had heard any such announcement on the radio. Before Narayana Iyer could reply. Bhagavan Himself said “No, it cannot be true”. Narayana Iyer confirmed this rare reply of Bhagavan, and turning to me, observed “France, a first-rate Power has fallen in *three days*. Then do you think our Britain can hold out longer than *three weeks* at the most?” Upon this, Bhagavan again observed “Um! - but Russia - “. Abruptly Bhagavan cut short his speech and resumed silence. Neither of us had the courage to ask Bhagavan what Russia was going to do, though it appeared strange that Bhagavan should mention Russia who was at that time friendly to Germany. It will be remembered that war broke out between Germany and Russia only one year afterwards, and it was in fact Germany’s attack on Russia that turned the tide of fortune in favour of the Allies. Here was afforded a peep into the Omniscience of this seeming recluse who was supposed to know nothing of the world. ... End of Audio files No. 4

(English Text- Pages: 34-41- Telugu Audio file No. 5- 1940- 41- Telugu Book pages: 155-188- 55min)

At this time, I was preparing a new edition of the *Bhagavad Gita* for a friend who had been annually distributing copies of the *Gita* free to local students and had exhausted the previous edition. One day I prayed to Bhagavan to select some verses from the *Bhagavad Gita* to be printed in the first pages of the book for daily recitation and easy remembrance by students. Bhagavan at first hesitated saying that there were already so many *Gita* selections in the field. But finally heeding my repeated prayer, Bhagavan selected forty-two verses and gave them a new sequence. Bhagavan followed it up by translating them Himself into Tamil and Malayalam verses and encouraged me to translate them into Telugu verse. All these versions with the original Sanskrit were published by the Ashram. Bhagavan added to them an invocatory verse in Tamil and Malayalam which was translated into Sanskrit *sloka* by Jagadiswara Sastri and into Telugu verse by myself. It said:

“He who seated in Arjuna’s chariot spoke the Gospel to Arjuna and removed his distress, may that embodiment of Grace save us!”

I also wrote a Telugu verse of jubilation which stated: “The same Lord who *then* spoke the *Gita* has *now* taken shape as Ramana and is Himself giving us the nectareous essence of *Gita* to taste. What a fortune!”

This was later translated into Sanskrit and other languages. Incidentally Bhagavan made some interesting observations on the *Bhagavad Gita*. Referring to *Viswarupa-Sandarshan* (Vision of the Universal Form), Bhagavan said: “The whole episode is really a wonder. Krishna tells Arjuna ‘Now here within my body you see the entire universe movable and immovable, and also *whatever besides you would like to see.*’ If it were a form, however vast, how could Arjuna see in it *whatever he (Arjuna) fancied?* Again, the Lord says, ‘You see all *Gods, Siddhas, Maharshis* etc. within my body.’ Arjuna admits that he sees them all, and in the same breath he says that they are all bowing to the Lord and singing hallelujahs! Now where do they stand in relation to the Lord’s body, inside or outside? Where does Arjuna himself stand? These seeming inconsistencies will be obviated only when we realise that **what Arjuna is being shown is not *Viswarupa* (Universal Form or shape) but *Viswa-Atma* (The Self as Universe).**”

When Arjuna complains in the sixth chapter that the mind is fickle and overpowering, Krishna agrees but affirms that the mind can be controlled by *abhyasa* (practice) and *vairagya* (non-attachment). A little earlier, the Lord tells Arjuna that wherever the fickle mind wanders, it should be withdrawn from there and fixed in the Self. “Now,” said Bhagavan, “the withdrawal of the mind from its regions of wandering is true *vairagya*, and the fixing of the mind in the Self is true *abhyasa.*”

Referring to Krishna’s description of His Gospel as the supreme secret which should be disclosed only to His true devotees and never to others, Bhagavan explained the doctrine of *adhikara* (fitness). If the highest truth is taught to

the unworthy, it is bound to be perverted and abused. In fact, the *Asuras* (Demons) like Hiranyakasipu were also *Brahmavadins* (expounders of Brahman). They too declared “I am God”. Only, by the ‘I’ they meant their ego. So they recognised no higher authority than their ego, and felt free to commit any sin. Indiscriminate preaching of the highest Truth irrespective of the disciple’s fitness will therefore spell disaster and is forbidden by the Lord.

Referring to the 46th verse in the second chapter, Bhagavan said, “All Scriptures have validity only to those who recognise their own ignorance and seek enlightenment. Persons who are immersed in ignorance never bother about scriptures of whose very existence they are quite oblivious. On the other hand, the *Jnani* who sees nothing other than the Self cannot be bound by any authority - even that of the Scriptures. All Scriptures only propound Brahman whereas the *Jnani* is Brahman Itself.”

When someone asked about the difference between *Prajnana* and *vijnana*, Bhagavan replied, “*Swarupajnana* (Self-awareness) is *Prajnana*. *Anubhava-jnana* (Knowledge through experience) is *Vijnana*.”

Another time, I asked Bhagavan to explain the distinction between *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman) and *Brahmaaham* (Brahman is I) in *Ramana Gita* chapter IV, verse I, Bhagavan said, “By meditating on *Brahmaaham*, the sense of indirectness goes away. By meditating on *Aham Brahmasmi* the sense of separateness is removed.”

On the 17th of June, R. Narayana Iyer told Bhagavan of his vain efforts at matrimonial alliance for his eldest daughter and said that he would make no further attempts unless he received a specific direction from Bhagavan. Just at that moment the mail brought a journal named *Progress*. Bhagavan read out its motto “You can succeed if you know the power that is in you”, and said that here was the reply to Narayana Iyer. The latter, regarding it as a

clear token of Bhagavan's Grace, took up at once a new proposal and succeeded this time.

A few days later, Rao Bahadur A. S. Krishna Rao, a veteran lawyer and statesman of Nellore, came for Bhagavan's *darshan*, and after relating his own career, he said that his one desire now was to do *susrusha* (service) at the feet of great souls like Maharshi and to attain salvation. So he prayed for Bhagavan's advice and guidance. Bhagavan told him, "What *susrusha* can you do at your age? You need not go about and do anything. Just cling steadfastly to the thought 'I must attain salvation', and that itself will lead you to salvation."

One morning while serving breakfast, Santamma, informed Bhagavan that she wanted to start for her place that night. Thereupon Bhagavan turned to me and said:

"Look here! Santamma wants to go *tonight*. Lest in her hurry and hustle at the time she should forget, she wants to take leave in advance."

It so happened that Santamma had to cancel her trip. The next morning as she appeared as usual for serving breakfast, Bhagavan gave her a smiling look and again remarked to me: "Why does not Santamma inform us now about her cancellation of journey just as she announced yesterday morning her intended departure?"

Bhagavan further added:

"This reminds us of the parable of *Kantha-bharanam* (Necklace). A woman missed her necklace and went about searching and enquiring of everybody about it. In fact, it was all along on her neck. Suddenly she felt its presence and kept quiet. When the others asked her whether she had recovered her necklace, she would merely reply

'yes' and not give out the whole truth, for that would be loss of face to her."

When the whole gathering laughed at this narration, poor Santamma could only look abashed. Another devotee Basavaraju Sitapati Rao also said one day: "Bhagavan, I am starting tomorrow." Bhagavan simply replied: "Why *today's* leave-taking for *tomorrow*? Let tomorrow take care of itself." It turned out that Sitapati Rao could not start the next day. The next morning Bhagavan, seeing him, cut a joke saying: "Yes, Sitapati Rao is right. He will go not today but some tomorrow!" Having learned the lesson of these incidents, I never afterwards went to take leave of Bhagavan until the last moment.

In reply to my letter from home informing that Ramana Prasadam had his bandage removed but still looked very weak, the Ashram wrote on 8-7-1940, as follows:

"We are glad to hear that Ch. Ramana-prasadam has his bandage removed. A good tonic given to the child for some time continuously would have good effect and help to build a robust constitution. Happy and smiling children are a treasure to the parents, and *we are all but His children whose Yoga-kshemam is His sole Concern.*"

The letter contained the following postscript: "*Having read this letter He remarks that He has just completed the Tamil translation of the verse 'Ananyas-chintayanto Mam yogakshe-mam vaham-yaham.'* So *THAT is THAT.*"

R. Narayana Iyer, my culinary colleague, in his letter of July 12, 1940, describing how Bhagavan's Grace alone helped him to celebrate his daughter's marriage successfully on July 7, wrote as follows: "Till Thursday evening I did not know that the marriage was to be settled and to take place on the Sunday following. No preparation whatever was made . . . What could I do? Just a day's interval and nothing done. I appealed to Bhagavan and wrote a letter of *saranagati* (surrender) with tears trickling from my eyes.

From that very moment the burden was lifted. I go to Tiruvannamalai only to find that I had no work. Buildings, cooks, vessels, servants, provisions, in fact every detail had been arranged and everything went off very well. It is wonderful. The nerve-racking suspense, frantic efforts at the last moment, and the frenzied wanderings look like a dream *now*, and I only chant and chant like a *mantra* the words, ‘You will succeed if you know the Power that is in you’.”

It was Krishna Jayanti day. I was reciting Bhagavan’s *Upadesa Saram*. Just as I sang the last words *Ramana Vagiyam* (This is the utterance of Ramana), the postman put into my hand a book-packet which was Bhagavan’s Tamil translation of *Bhagavad-Gita-Saram*. At this coincidence, I felt thrilled and I realised how Krishna was truly reborn for me that day and how the *Gita* of Bhagavan Krishna and the *Gospel* of Bhagavan Ramana are one and the same. As I was writing to the Ashram, I heard a street-beggar recite a Telugu song with the refrain “This is no lie but truth, yes, truth. After *darshan* of Sad-Guru there is no more trouble of rebirth.” This coincidence also struck me as marvellous. Then and there I copied the song in that very letter and related the circumstances. In reply the Ashram wrote on August 20 as follows:

“Subba-laksmamma related the circumstances when the booklet reached you. On reflection one is led to conclude that together they constitute but an instance of the Unmanifest manifesting itself. He is the *sarva-bhuta-sayastittah*, and hence did the press send the booklets to enable a copy to reach you on the particular day it did. And through how many hands it has passed that it should come to you just at the moment when the Lord residing in the hearts of His devotees prompted you to recite the verses concluding with *Ramana Vagiyam*.

“Of deep significance also are the verses the street-beggar (Daridra Narayan) sang. The Lord’s Grace is *amogham* (infallible) in that it emancipates the soul and the second verse suggests the means made possible only through His Grace.”

When my Telugu rendering of the *Gita* selections reached the Ashram, B. Virabhadrayya, B. A., then Deputy Collector, Chittoor, who, it seems, was at that time in the Ashram in connection with his son’s *upanayanam*, happened to read the poem and offered to get one thousand copies of it printed, and the devout offer was accepted by the Ashram. This was a further fruit of Bhagavan’s Grace.

Another touching expression of Grace by Bhagavan was His practice of transliterating His works, which He alone could do, for the benefit of His devotees, unmindful of the immense labour involved. Accordingly Bhagavan sent me His Malayalam version of the *Gita* selections in Telugu script. Likewise He transliterated my Telugu version in Malayalam script for His attendant Madhavaswami. So the next time I went to the Ashram, I was struck with surprise when at the bidding of Bhagavan, Madhavaswami repeated from memory the entire Telugu poem without a single mistake!

I again visited the Ashram on the night of October 5th and immediately heard of an incident that had occurred that day. Madhava-swamy, who was usually very prompt and punctual in serving Bhagavan, forgot somehow, it seems, to prepare the *paan* that day. He suddenly remembered it, prepared and brought it, so that there was some delay. Bhagavan declined it and declared that he did not want it thereafter. Madhava-swami felt very bad for his fault and begged Bhagavan to accept the *paan* in token of His forgiveness. Bhagavan assured him that there was really nothing to forgive but He stuck to his refusal. Two days later I composed Telugu verses entitled *Tambula Vilapam* (the lament of *paan*) in which the *paan* claims to have been serving Bhagavan like other devotees and bewails that it has now been

dismissed for no fault of itself but on account of Madhava-swami's unconscious negligence. It prays that Madhava-swami might be forgiven and it might be allowed to resume its devotions. Bhagavan had a hearty laugh over the poem and explained its meaning to the Ashramites with evident pleasure. But neither this poem nor all other appeals had the least effect on Bhagavan's decision. Bhagavan declared: "I have been waiting for a pretext to discontinue this habit of *paan*, and now it has come. I have nothing against Madhava. It was really no fault of his. It had to happen like that. Everything occurs for our good. If, as you say, you all feel like giving up *paan* yourselves, by all means do it. I would welcome the change." Bhagavan never afterwards touched betel leaf.

At this time, I heard from Subbu-laksmamma about an incident which also illustrates Bhagavan's adamant firmness in matters of principle. I noticed that Bhagavan never used to raise his hand to hold rasam, buttermilk etc. that were being served. It seems that one day years ago, Subbu-laksmamma while pouring the buttermilk slowly into Bhagavan's hand happened to linger a little too long before His leaf. Bhagavan noticing it, said, "Are you stopping equally long before every leaf? If not, why this distinction to me?" thereafter, in spite of entreaties by her and others, Bhagavan never again held out His hand to receive anything during meal.

The next day, Bhagavan gave me a *sloka* by Kavya-kantha which was to be used as the invocatory verse for *Ramana Chatvarimshat*. It said:

"I bow to the lotus-feet of Sad-Guru Ramana Maharshi, who, having transcended darkness, showed me Divinity resplendent."

I at once translated it into Telugu verse. The next morning, printed copies of the *Gita* Selections in Telugu were received at the Ashram. I had remonstrated against the non-inclusion of Bhagavan's portrait in the booklet. So, to please me, a nice picture of Bhagavan with the above prayer-verse, was attached to one copy, and it was graciously presented to me by

Bhagavan with His own Blessed hand. Since that day happened to be Mahanavami and also my birthday, it struck me as very auspicious and fortunate and trebled my happiness. It also reminded me of a like coincidence in the past when I received the Tamil version of the same work.

The very day I returned home, my youngest daughter Alagamma, named after Bhagavan's Mother, had an accident. She fell on the oven and sustained burns on the arm. I wired the fact to the Ashram and got a reply conveying Bhagavan's blessings to the child. By His Grace, the wound healed up rapidly.

During the Christnas of 1940 when I was at the Ashram, Bhagavan told us about the verse-contests He used to have in Malayalam when He was living on the Hill. **One Kunju Krishna Menon, composed off-hand a verse in praise of Ramana. Bhagavan also composed extempore another verse in the same metre in praise of Lord Arunachala.** Again in 1914-1915, one day when Bhagavan had gone out, Amritanadha Yatindra wrote a verse in Malayalam on a slip of paper and placed it on the seat where Bhagavan used to sit. The verse said:

"In a cave on the top of Arunachala dwells Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi entitled the Treasure of Grace. Who is He? Hari? Siva Guru? Vararuchi? or some great Yati? My heart is consumed with the desire to know the glory of my Guru."

When Bhagavan returned and picked up the paper from His seat, the writer made himself scarce. Then Bhagavan wrote on the other side of the slip His reply in the same metre as follows:

"The Supreme Self Who Sports as Awareness in the cave of the lotus-heart of all souls beginning with Hari, is Ramana of Arunachala. If you enter the Heart where the Supreme Being shines, open the Eye of Knowledge and seek (with melting love) with utmost earnestness, then the truth of it becomes quite plain to you."

Neither spoke to the other about the affair but when Amritanadha showed Bhagavan's reply to the other devotees, it was hailed as a most momentous pronouncement of Bhagavan about Himself. The Tamil version became a part of the daily *parayana* (recitation) in the Ashram. I later translated both the question and reply into Telugu verses.

* * * * *

That year Bhagavan's Jayanti which fell on January 13, 1941, synchronised with the *Bhogi* (Bonfire) festival, and so I went to the Ashram again within a few days after the Christmas vacation, to attend the *Jayanti* celebration. On the *Jayanti* day I composed *Pancha-ratnams* (Five verses) in Telugu, saying that the only real *Bhogi* (Enjoyer) in the Universe is Ramana and by coinciding with *Ramana Jayanti*, the *Bhogi* festival achieved full significance. The verses further said:

"Make all the past *vasanas* as straw, and the entire pile of *karmas* as firewood; kindle them with the fire of *chit* (knowledge), and then you have the true 'Bonfire' for *Bhogi Ramana Jayanti*."

A young man whom Bhagavan introduced as the son of His old school-mate Ranga Iyer, recited *Ramana Kalyanam* (Ramana's Wedding) composed by himself. Ramana is depicted in it as a bridegroom with *Jnana* (knowledge) for His bride. An elaborate description of the marriage is given with all the usual ceremonies and songs adapted to the occasion. Bhagavan followed the whole reading with amused interest, making humorous comments here and there. Turning to me, Bhagavan said "You punned about *Shashti-purti* marriage for Swami. What do you say to this? Here is a regular marriage with every detail. Anyhow people like to drag a Swami into matrimony, whether they call the bride *Jnana* or something else, because that seems to tickle their sense of the ludicrous." I said, "We cannot look upon Bhagavan as a mere *Sannyasi*. In fact, Bhagavan is the biggest *Grihastha* (house-holder) and the Ashram is His everlasting marriage-pandal. The poem appears as a

sort of revenge by wedlock against Bhagavan for having renounced it." Bhagavan laughed heartily. He informed us that M. V. Ramaswami Iyer had also written a love-poem in a similar vein, calling it *Ramana Srin-gaaram*. Bhagavan concluded, "Whatever people have within their own selves they attribute to Swami. Well, let them please themselves that way."

While returning I composed on the way a farewell poem in Telugu and sent it to the Ashram. It said: "Like a girl who has spent just three days of festival in her parental home and is going to her mother-in-law's place, like a lad who has been at play all the time and at the end of the holidays, is dragging his steps towards the school, like a soldier who has parted from all his kith and kin and is marching to the battlefield, like a beggar who dreamt that he was king, and wakes up all on a sudden, I have passed three days in the perfect bliss of *Ramana Jayanti* celebration and am now forced, alas! to leave the feet of Bhagavan and go to my place."

The Ashram acknowledging the above poem wrote on January 18, 1941: "The poem with the moving sentiments of devotion and love has been noted in your book. It is very thought-provoking."

On returning home I found a friend P. T. Gopal-acharyulu, B. A., B. L., in great anxiety owing to the serious illness of his son and his father. I gave him the *Prasad* and also conveyed to the Ashram his prayer. By Bhagavan's Grace, both the patients recovered normal health.

On the Telugu New Year Day that is March 28, 1941, I addressed to Bhagavan a Telugu poem praying for the destruction of falsehood, anger, hatred and unrest, and for the establishment of peace and happiness throughout the world. Acknowledging it, the Ashram wrote the next day: "We hope by Bhagavan's Grace, the peace with justice for which the world is groping will be established in this year."

About the time of *Mahapuja* on May 19, I was having *jatasoucham* (pollution from child-birth) because my brother had been blessed with a son. I

enquired of the Ashram whether I could attend *Mahapuja* with pollution. In their reply on May 14, the Ashram wrote:

“Merely for the reason that one has *jatasoucham*, one need not postpone the journey to this place. *It is a pilgrimage that cleanses all.*”

On the *Mahapuja Day* Bhagavan composed a verse in Telugu saying: **“Originally Arunachala Linga came into being in the month of *Dhanus* under the star *Aardra*. Only the day on which Hari and other deities worshipped Lord Siva as He emerged from the Linga is *Siva Ratri* (Siva’s Night) in the month of *Kumbha*.”**

The next day I composed another verse on the birth of Bhagavan in the same metre as the above, saying: **“That same, sacred day when originally Arunachala Linga came into being, at Tiruchuli, as the fruit of the penance of Alagu and Sundaram was born the incarnation of Skanda, Bhagavan Ramana.”**

Bhagavan wrote down this verse in His notebook just below the former. Shortly afterwards I wrote to my brother G. Venkatesayya, then at Chittoor, asking him to send to the Ashram some mangoes. The letter was posted in the evening, and to our surprise a basketful of mangoes was received from him the very next morning. The letter enclosing the R. R. stated that my brother on seeing some fine mangoes in the market suddenly conceived the idea of sending them to the Ashram and that he immediately purchased them and booked the parcel by the train. His booking the basket exactly synchronised with my writing to him. Bhagavan who had seen my letter of the previous evening and was now shown my brother’s letter with the R. R. smiled and said, “It is really wonderful.” It was indeed a wonder of Bhagavan’s Grace. A few days later when Seshu Iyer, B. A., B. L., came for *darsan*, Bhagavan made an appreciative reference to Seshu Iyer’s English poem entitled “Diamond and Carbon” and called it *Sesha Darsan*. It ran as follows:

“Diamond is carbon and no other,
Mind and matter are like diamond and carbon.
Diamond reflects the light it receives, and shines,
Carbon absorbs the light it receives and is dark.

Mind like diamond has dirt and spots, before cutting.
Diamonds alone cut diamonds, and spots become removed.
Enquiry removes the spots of egoism and dirt of ignorance.
Diamonds-cut shine as unique gems of purest ray,
Self-enquiry makes thee Self-luminous and illuminating all”.

On my arrival this time, I heard the stunning news that Bhagavan had discontinued going to the kitchen. It seems the kitchen workers failed to carry out Bhagavan’s direction regarding the surplus buttermilk, and that resulted in its wastage. From that day Bhagavan stayed away and never once stepped into the kitchen despite apologies and entreaties. This report fell upon my heart like a thunder-bolt because it meant deprivation of a rare privilege. Thereupon I wrote a Telugu poem *Pakasala Vilapam* (Lament of the Kitchen). In the early hours of the morning, the poet goes into the kitchen to work as usual. He finds the place plunged in darkness and silence. As he looks round disappointed, there appears before him in a vision the culinary Goddess who describes herself as a devotee of Ramana and recalls the glory and privilege which she enjoyed while the Lord used to honour her with His daily visit. Now with tears streaming from her eyes she bewails the sudden withdrawal of grace from her by Bhagavan. The relish has gone from the chutneys, sambar, pickles and other preparations. The interest in vegetable-cutting and other cooking operations has disappeared. In short her very life has left her though she looks outwardly the same as before. She is lingering still in the hope that some day Ramana’s heart may melt and He may renew His Grace to her.

Bhagavan seemed to enjoy the poem immensely He not only read out and explained its contents but dramatically acted the scene before the kitchen-workers. As for any practical effect upon Bhagavan’s decision, it shared the same fate as *Tambuula-vilapam*. When I wondered if a little practical response would not be better than all the theoretical appreciation, Bhagavan laughed and said, “Things happen as they must, and they cannot be changed. Your job and mine have no doubt ended. We can now enjoy our leisure. It is all to the good. These people must not always hang upon me. They must learn to do things by themselves. So, don’t worry about it.” I confess that even these gracious words of Bhagavan did not bring me much consolation. ... [End of Audio file No.5](#)

(English Text- Pages: 41 - 49- Telugu Audio file No. 6- 1941- 42 - Telugu Book pages: 188- 230 - 65min)

This time, my two daughters, nine-year-old Lalita and five-year-old Indira also came and stayed in the Ashram for a few days. Lalita was Bhagavan's old favourite and Indira was a fresh entrant into his favour. As usual Bhagavan asked both the children to sing and dance in the Hall. Indira would respond readily, but Lalita having grown by now into a little lady, needed much coaxing to commence her performance. Bhagavan said, "What Lalita, I never asked anyone for anything. But now you have made me seek your favour. Look at Indira. She is a good child. Do emulate her example." So both the girls sang and danced together while Bhagavan sat up and looked on, beaming with gracious pleasure. This 'entertainment' became a daily feature of Bhagavan's 'Durbar' during the children's brief stay. One day Indira turning over the pages of Telugu *Upadesa Saram* (new edition) picked up the first two letters of bold type in the four lines of a Sanskrit verse by Bhagavan and read them together aloud as ***Deham-Naham- Koham-Soham***. The words read together meant. "I am not the body. Who am I? I am He." Bhagavan on hearing this, said "Very good! That will do. The rest of the stanza you need not read. What you have read is the quintessence of wisdom. Make it your *Mantra*." Every time Bhagavan saw Indira, he would ask her to repeat her *Mantra* so that she soon knew it by heart.

One evening Lalita, having had her meal early, left with the ladies for the town. Indira now remaining alone turned to me and complained of hunger. Bhagavan at once took note of it and severely reprimanded me for delaying to feed the child. He said, "What is your meditation worth if you neglect to serve the child?" Such was His abounding Grace to children. When the two girls went to take leave of Bhagavan, it was morning and Bhagavan was starting to go up the Hill. He patted Indira most lovingly and said, "So you go to your place while I go to *my place*", pointing to the Hill. Significantly it proved to be their last leave-taking. After reaching home, both the children wrote to me. Lalita wanted me to convey her salutations to Bhagavan and to inform him of her promotion to the next class. Indira wrote that she was

constantly repeating the *Mantra* and meditating on Bhagavan. On perusing these letters Bhagavan looked most graciously pleased.

One night, Bhagavan graciously enquired about my son-in-law's health which had been causing anxiety for some months. After hearing my tale of domestic cares and worries, Bhagavan looked me full in the face with utmost sympathy and spoke in melting tones: "Why can't you be like me? You know how I was when I arrived in Tiruvannamalai. There was a time when I went round the town begging for food. In those days I was observing silence. So, I would pass down the street halting for a moment in front of a house and gently clap my hands. If there was no response, I would pass on. Whatever food was thus got by me and other associates, we would mix into one mass and take a morsel each. That we ate only once a day. Now you see what changes have come outwardly, what buildings have been raised and how the Ashram has grown all-round. But *I am ever the Same*. Only the sun rises and the sun sets. To me there seems no other change. So, through all the vicissitudes of good and evil, you be like me and whenever you are prone to depression and melancholy, you remember me." These gracious words of Bhagavan have been with me ever since and protect me as a talisman against all the ills of life.

One morning Bhagavan read out from Jagadisa-nanda's article in *Free India*, the following sentence:

"Through *Pravritti*, God forgets Himself into Man; through *Nivritti*, Man remembers himself into God."

When the mail came, Bhagavan also read out the following sentences from the letter of an American lady, Veronica: "Greater is He that is within me than He that is within the world. This little, manifesting 'I' cannot express, but Thou knowest."

Two days later Bhagavan casually referred to His two selections from the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Teshameva* etc. (X. II) and *Jnanena* etc. (V. 16) and remarked

that the sense of both the *slokas* was combined in a single verse of *Bhagavatam Aruneneva* etc. which means:

“As soon as ignorance is destroyed by knowledge as darkness by dawn, the Self then manifests Itself like the sun.”

He further pointed out how the same idea is conveyed in a single line of Manika-vachakar’s *Tiruva-chakam, Inrenak-karuli* etc. which says:

“This day on me in Grace Thou risest bright, a sun bidding from out my mind the darkness flee.”

Bhagavan held that *prakasayati* (illuminates) in the *Gita* verse (V. 16) must be construed figuratively, because *Tat param* (That Supreme) is Self-effulgent and is not illumined by anything else. He further said that *Adityavat* (like the sun) in the same verse must be taken with *Tat param* and not with *Jnanam*. He cited in support another verse from *Bhagavatham avachchinna iva* etc. which says:

“The Self appears as if conditioned by ignorance. But when that (ignorance) is destroyed, the Absolute Self shines by Itself like the sun when the cloud has passed.”

That morning Bhagavan appreciated the taste of Malabar *Kanji* (gruel) that was brought and served by a devotee. Bhagavan added that its relish would be enhanced if it is taken with *aviyal* (a preparation of several vegetables). So I requested the *Sarvadhikari* to arrange for the preparation of *Kanji* and *aviyal* in the Ashram itself, and he kindly agreed to do so on the third day.

The next morning Bhagavan casually quoted a *sloka* from *Hamsa Gita* of *Bhaga-vatham* which says:

“As the man blinded by drink forgets the cloth which he has put on, so the Self-realised Sage does not see the perishable body whether it lives or dies, separates or joins, according to the law of *Karma*.”

This was later translated by Bhagavan Himself into Telugu and Tamil verses.

It was the June 16, 1941. There was a fresh spurt of activity in the Ashram kitchen. All lights were on from the small hours of early morning. The Ashram rules were relaxed for the women workers so that they were busy in the kitchen along with men even from 3 a.m. Bhagavan Himself for once crossed the threshold, peeped inside and gave instructions. What was it all about? *Kanji and Aviyal were being prepared for breakfast*. The news spread like wildfire. The dining hall wore a festive appearance as we sat in rows, and special cups were provided for all devotees. *Kanji* and *aviyal* were the main items served. Bhagavan gave the lead for the proper way of sipping the *Kanji* with the *aviyal*. Unlike the usual practice, these two items were served repeatedly and in unlimited quantities. Bhagavan said that to do justice to these special dishes, we should forego coffee for the moment. For Himself, He gave up even his *kashayam* (medicinal drink) to increase the intake of *Kanji*. A very few of us rose to the occasion and abstained from coffee. But for the others, of course, coffee was also served. After the others left the Hall, Bhagavan turned to me and said, “It seems you were responsible for today’s preparations. So you must emulate me and do full justice.” Then He called for more cups. I said that my stomach was over-full. But Bhagavan assured me saying, “Don’t fear, it will not do any harm. Within half an hour it will be digested, and you will feel more than the usual appetite.” After this, Bhagavan drank two more cups with beaming looks while I followed His example. He smiled approval at what I did, and said “That’s it.” . . He then radiated Grace all round. It was indeed a sight for the gods!

When Bhagavan returned from the Hill, I wrote and presented two Telugu verses entitled *Amritapanam* (Nectar-potation) which said:

“People hate to drink *Kanji*; but today by Bhagavan’s Grace, I have drunk *Kanji* with *aviyal*. What they call *Amrita* is nothing but this.”

“Formerly you shared cold rice and *Kanji* with your cowherd friends. Did its taste equal this? Later you were feasted with *Kanji* in Vidura’s house. Was its taste either equal to this, O Lord?”

Bhagavan seemed to enjoy these verses. He read out and explained them with evident relish. He also narrated the story of Krishna at Hastinapura (Delhi) preferring the humble hospitality of Vidura to the royal dinner offered by Duryodhana. On entering Vidura’s house, the Lord called for *Kanji*. As it was being poured into His hands He spread out His two other hands also to hold it, so that not a drop might be spilt. His liking for *Kanji* was so great. Bhagavan also informed us that in Malabar, *Kanji* is the universal diet. It is taken by the prince and the peasant, by the rich and the poor. The former might add some special ingredients but the main substance is the same. So the Malayalis are nicknamed *Kanji*-drinkers.

The next day Bhagavan read out from the letter of an English devotee the following reflections on Easter:

“Easter makes me think of the resurrection of myself into the Eternal.

“Easter means the death of winter and the rebirth of spring, in other words, the death of thought and rebirth into the bliss of Self.”

The next morning after the mantra, *Na Karmana Na Prajaya* etc. was recited, Bhagavan observed that the former half propounded *Sadyo-mukti* (immediate Deliverance) and the latter half *Krama-mukti* (Gradual Deliverance). Bhagavan added that in the phrase *Paramritat*, *Para* meant *Brahmayuh* (Brahma’s life-period).

The next day, referring to *Sitaramanjaneyam*, Bhagavan explained that *Amanaska-yoga* did not mean loss of *Prajna* (Awareness). It only meant that the mind became one with *Swarupa* (Self).

The next evening someone referred to a passage in *Prasnopanishad*, *sarvam pasyati, sarvah pasyati*, and requested its elucidation. Bhagavan explained saying, “It only means that the seer, the seen and the sight are all the Self and not other than the Self. One sees the Self as *sarva* (the all).”

The next night, Saturday, Bhagavan was resting under the verandah of the Hall, and I was lying on the pial opposite. At 10 p.m., Bhagavan asked the attendant Krishnaswami, “Has Narayana Iyer come?” Krishnaswami replied “No”. Narayana Iyer who used to come every weekend from Polur, had informed me that this Sunday he had some work at Vellore and so would be unable to visit the Ashram. To my surprise he appeared before me that Sunday morning. He explained that he had finished his work in Vellore on Saturday evening and returning to Polur that night, he suddenly made up his mind at 10 p.m. to come here on Sunday as usual. So his decision exactly synchronised with Bhagavan’s enquiry about him. This was another marvel of Bhagavan’s Grace.

That Sunday Bhagavan read out from a journal called *The Spiritual Front* the following passage:

“Remember; it is only when we have attained unto that Peace which passeth understanding within ourselves, that we can expect to see Peace manifested in the world around us.”

In the afternoon, Bhagavan related the story of a King, who, under the spell of a magician, had a vision of marrying a pariah woman, which later proved true. He also narrated how the Brahmin Gadhi had a taste of *Vishnumaya* (the delusive power of God Vishnu). Bhagavan concluded, “What is only dream to you may be reality to another. Such is the nature of *Maya*. It cannot be overcome except by the conquest of the mind.”

Bhagavan also explained the difference between *srishti-drishhti vadam* espoused by Kavya-kantha and *drishhti-srishti vadam* supported by K.

Lakshmana Sarma and others. According to the former, the Universe is created by God, and man merges into Godhead through *Jnana-Siddhi* (attainment of knowledge). According to the latter, both Universe and God are the illusion of man formed by the outgoing mind. To the question “How can God be the outcome of man’s illusion?” This school replies with the analogy of a dead parent or a king appearing in dream and evoking at the time the sentiments of filial devotion or loyalty in the dreamer. In conclusion Bhagavan declared:

“Without the seer, the seen, be they worlds or gods, cannot exist. All those objects of sight depend upon the seer. The purpose of all objects of sight is only to point to the seer. The purpose of all creation is verily to get at the creator.”

Bhagavan next referred to Kavya-kantha’s view of *Yoga* and *Jnana*. He said: “The *Sushumana nadi* rises from *Muladhara* and goes up to *Sahasrara*. From there it *descends in front* and reaches the Heart. When it turns downward, it is called *Para Nadi* or *Amrita Nadi*. This is Nayana’s view; and this accounts for the path of *Jnana* being called *Purvamarga* (front way) and the path of *Yoga* being named *Paschima-marga* (back way). As in the path of *Yoga*, *Kundalini* (the Serpent-power) arises in the *Muladhara*, so in the path of *Vichara* (inquiry), *Anthah-Kundalini* (Inner Serpent-power) blazes up in the Heart.”

Then came a happy event. Echamma’s nephew Krishnamurthi and his bride, after their wedding, came for Bhagavan’s *darshan* and blessings. Bhagavan had gone out and just then re-entered the Hall. *He sat straight on the couch with His feet resting on the ground*. The young couple at once prostrated at His feet while He rained His Grace upon them. Due to the exceptional devotion of Echamma, this was but to be expected. I only wished I had a camera to photograph that blessed scene!

The day of my departure arrived. My son-in-law had been ailing badly and I had not heard from home for a fortnight. My mind was full of misgivings that his health must have deteriorated. As I went to take leave of Bhagavan, I was seized with a dread of losing hold of my sole support and falling into an abyss. I wept and told Bhagavan how I dreaded returning home. He gave me a long look of infinite compassion and said, “Don’t fear. Your people have not written to you expecting your arrival. You will find your son-in-law much improved.” When I reached home, I rejoiced to find that Bhagavan’s words were perfectly true in every respect. What a touching marvel of Bhagavan’s Grace!

On the evening of August 6, 1941, I was transliterating my notebook the *Anubandham* to *Ulladu Narpadu*. Just as I transcribed *Devanar ? (Who is God)* in verse, the Ashram letter dated August 5, 1941 with Ramana’s Gracious Blessings, was handed to me by V. V. Ramanayya. I felt as though to the query ‘Who is God?’ there came promptly the answer “Ramana is God”, and the answer was delivered by ‘Ramana’ Himself.

It was the last day of August, 1941. Alagamma, my two-year-old child, had a high fever the whole day. In the night, while her mother was taking her meal, I was rocking the cradle. All on a sudden the child gave a terrible cry, and as I took her into my arms, I found her body stiff. All the vital organs had stopped functioning, even the complexion turned blue. The baby was apparently dead. The doctor who had been treating her declined to come. Another doctor was sent for. In the meantime, my wife took the child from me, sat before the picture of Bhagavan, and holding the baby in her arms, without the least sign of alarm or distress, she chanted ‘Ramana’, ‘Ramana’, ‘Ramana’ unceasingly. After about ten minutes’ chanting, signs of life reappeared and the vital functions revived in the child. It was nothing short of a miracle. Then the second doctor came and treated her successfully. When my wife was chanting, I sent a telegram to Bhagavan reporting

Alagamma's condition and praying for Grace. Acknowledging the message, the Ashram in their letter on September 1, 1941 wrote:

"The wire has been duly received and was placed before Bhagavan. *With Bhagavan's Grace Alagamma will recover from the illness. The anxious time should have passed by now.*"

When I reported how the child revived and improved, the Ashram wrote again, on the 3rd.

"We are glad to receive your letter ... *Bhagavan's infinite Grace is alone our protection, and it is infallible. What more do we want and what more is there to say?*"

During my stay at the Ashram the following Dasarah vacation, I heard from Bhagavan Himself an account of Sankarananda Bharati Swami. The Swami, who had never heard of Bhagavan, had been doing *Sadhana* in the Himalayas for the realisation of Brahman and had a vision of a sage whom he later identified from a photograph as Ramana. So convinced that Brahman was identical with Ramana, he came all the way to Tiruvannamalai to have *darshan* of Bhagavan. He stayed with Bhagavan on the Hill for some time, and as the climate did not suit his health, he most unwillingly sought Bhagavan's permission to return to the Himalayas, and offered at His feet nine farewell *slokas* in which he related his Himalayan vision and prayed that the Divine image of Ramana might ever glow in his heart. I copied the verses in my notebook.

One morning Bhagavan while perusing an issue of *the Vision* read out the following statement of G. S. Baci, which I took down:

"In the Grammar of God, there is no Number but Singular, no Gender but Common, no Tense but Present, and no Person but First."

I was also shown by Bhagavan two humorous and witty *slokas* by Sundaranda Swami in which the Swami compares Bhagavan first to a potent exorciser, and secondly to the nine planets. I copied them down. It was full-moon day. As usual, Bhagavan got clean shaven. When we all assembled in the Hall that afternoon, He jocularly remarked that He now changed from a bearded old man into a baby. "In fact," He added, "*Jnana* is perpetual babyhood."

That day a most extraordinary thing happened to me. It was Saturday, and I was to attend college on Monday, so I wanted to start that noon. After arranging everything, I went to Bhagavan to prostrate and take leave. On all such occasions, Bhagavan would either say, "yes, go" or give a silent nod of approval. But this time Bhagavan said, "Your college reopens on Monday. Why should you go now?" I at once replied, "I won't go now. I shall stop," and I cancelled the arrangements. That whole afternoon, He was specially gracious to me and took great pains to teach me the Malayalam alphabet. That evening as He was starting to go up the Hill, I again asked Him whether I might go by the evening train. He enquired whether it was a through train. I replied "No it will stop at Katpadi". Bhagavan said, "In that case, why should you spend the night at Katpadi station? Why not be here?" I again postponed my journey. The next early morning train was the last for me. So at about 5 a.m. I went for Bhagavan's *darshan*. As soon as He saw me, He enquired whether I had taken breakfast and got ready to start. I said, "Yes" and prostrated; as I got up, His look at me had completely changed, His eyes were wide open, fixed and steady. He seemed to be seeing through me and beyond me into the Infinite. I had never had such a gaze from Bhagavan before. I felt like Arjuna in *Viswarupa Sandarshan*. I was face to face with pure, Divine Majesty, and stood spellbound. Five minutes, ten minutes passed. The cartman was pressing. I mumbled the words "I take leave", but there was no response, not the least change in the lustrous, long gaze. I came away overwhelmed with awe and fear. Everyone said that the way

Bhagavan now treated me was unprecedented and that it signified some momentous change for me. This forecast was confirmed by an event that occurred in my home within three months. On return home I found that Hindu-Muslim rioting had broken out in my town, that many innocent people were suffering and that the situation was daily deteriorating. I reported it to the Ashram and prayed for the restoration of peace. In reply the Ashram wrote on October 31, 1941: "All is sad news from Nellore. We hope by Bhagavan's Grace better conditions will soon be restored". The situation returned to normal within about a month.

In November Bhagavan's sister and brother-in-law, who were on a visit to Nellore, called at my place with their grandchild and blessed my family. We all felt it was a special token of Bhagavan's Grace and I voiced this feeling in my letter to the Ashram on November 11, 1941.

"Please convey to them my *Namaskarams* for having visited our place. On seeing them we felt almost like having *darshan* of Bhagavan."

On the same date, Mr. Panna Lall, I. C. S., then Adviser to the Governor, U. P., wrote to me saying that he presided over a lecture on the Maharshi by B. V. Narasimha-swami at Lucknow, and concluded thus: Please remember me when you go to the Ashram and convey to me something of its atmosphere in a long letter from the Ashram.

A letter from the Ashram dated December 11, 1941 read: "We are glad you are coming here for the *Jayanti*." A word was wrongly typed between 'you' and 'are coming' and scored out. As it turned out, a great bereavement prevented me from going. I now see some significance in this seeming trifle. Nothing from Bhagavan could be without significance indeed.

My wife had a sudden, serious, pre-delivery complication, and was admitted into the hospital on the 23rd of December, and that very night she delivered

a still-born child. On the same day I wired to the Ashram reporting her condition and praying for Bhagavan's Grace. I followed it up with a letter giving details, but to my amazement I received no reply till the December 27. That evening I got word that her illness took a serious turn, and as I was hastening to the hospital, the following letter from the Ashram dated December 26 was put into my hands:

"Your card has been received today, and it was placed before Bhagavan. The wire was received on the 23rd, and it was also duly placed before Bhagavan . . . *The telegram gave a wrong name as 'Subramanya' which prevented us from addressing a reply.*"

The letter concluded with 'His Gracious Blessings'. But before I reached the hospital with it, all was over. As the body was still warm and my hand seemed to feel the pulse-beat, I could not believe that she was dead until the doctor, at my request, examined her once again and pronounced life extinct. Till then I was all anxiety, but at that moment I felt as though a heavy weight were lifted from my mind and a Heavenly Peace descended upon me. I became a new man altogether. Instantly my mind's eye opened out to the beatific Presence of Bhagavan. I thrilled at the sweet serenity of Bhagavan's gracious look. From then on, my mind became fully conscious of Bhagavan's guidance. Of all the frenzied mourners gathered at the time, I can say with truth that I was the only calm person. I took the lead and arranged everything. I did my best to console the others. I acted like a perfect automaton. My conduct in that crisis was to me the greatest marvel of Bhagavan's Grace. The next morning, sitting beside the body, I addressed a postcard to Bhagavan writing of the fact of her death and adding: "Now I dedicate these motherless children to your feet. Hereafter they are your children, not mine. I feel utterly helpless and surrender to you. Pray do with me and these little ones as you please."

Later on, I learnt from my colleague K. Suryanarayana who was present in the Ashram at the time, that when this card was brought to the Hall, Bhagavan perused it in silence, and gave to it a long and fixed gaze just like the look He had given me at my previous departure. The Ashram's reply dated December 29, 1941 read as follows:

“We are extremely sorry, one and all, to hear of the great calamity that has befallen you and the family. The card was placed before Bhagavan. Words fail to express the inexpressible sorrow. Who can give expression to the voiceless grief of the children who are too young to know what life is, and too tender to be consoled? It is like cruelly pulling out the stem of the flower, which supports the petals. May Bhagavan's Grace protect them, may His motherly love help the motherless children who are too young to know even their helplessness! Our deep sympathy goes to you all.”

The stream of sympathetic letters that now poured in was felt by me as so many voices through which Bhagavan was speaking to comfort me and to assure me of His gracious protection and guidance. One letter from a fellow-devotee read: “I suppose it all had to be and, while it almost looks callous to say so, is meant in the divine dispensations of an inscrutable Providence for your ultimate good. For otherwise our Bhagavan who, we know, does care for you, would not have let this happen. I am sure however that He will bless you with the faith and fortitude so necessary to bear this great blow. *I am sure Bhagavan would have been by your side in the hour of agony when your life-partner was snatched away*, and that He would have helped you to beat the pang of separation with some amount of resignation and calm . . . Better run up to Bhagavan as soon as your circumstances permit it. For He is our only solace, though all else may fail us.” Another brother-devotee wrote as follows:

“In the magnitude of your distress, words would sound empty. The soothing balm must come from Bhagavan, and I know He would not forsake us who have come to Him for refuge . . . *I feel without an atom of doubt that our Bhagavan is the visible God on earth, that He is indeed the Infinite in finite form and that He is all love and kindness. I should proclaim this even if He should probe my heart with red-hot steel.* Let us pray to Him to give us the strength to stand the ordeal of life with its staggering ups and downs.”

One curious letter from a girl student of mine in a village received on the very day of cremation may be here mentioned. She had heard, it seems, that Bhagavan was visiting Nellore and staying in my house. She enquired whether it was a fact so that she might come and have His *darshan*. This innocent letter served to confirm me in my conviction that Bhagavan was with me in my home at this juncture.

* * * * *

Among my many wonderful experiences of those days was a vivid dream-vision of Bhagavan walking over the ground of obsequies with his staff and shell, and directing every detail of the ceremonies. This further strengthened my faith in His personal guidance. There were also moments when my mind would weaken especially in solitude and give way to grief and despair. As though this tendency in me was anticipated, letter after letter came from the Ashram, giving exhortation and warning. The letter of **January 2, 1942** read: “As you say, Bhagavan is our only Refuge. He is the Supreme, Absolute Being Itself . . . May His Divine Grace give you peace of mind!” Another letter of January 14, said:

“For the children the loss is a great tragedy. There can be no substitute for the mother, and a mother like theirs. Words of sympathy cannot console you, but words of wisdom you have read and heard and should have imbibed. The words of the *Gita* express

the eternal Truth, and you have studied the text very closely and carefully while you were at it. It would be wisdom to imbibe that truth; otherwise we would only be the *sabda-garhana yantram* (gramophone) . . . *If the precept is not put into practice, the result is that the mind will overwhelm and annihilate the man. You should not allow the mind to eat away the heart . . .*

A couple of days back a devotee who was with Bhagavan continuously for several years, passed away all of a sudden. All who knew him felt much, when Bhagavan remarked: 'That which is not real (the body) you take as real and anguish is the only result'."

On March 14, 1942 an esteemed devotee sent me a note conveying Echamma's message from the Ashram that I should go there at once. Knowing Echamma's relationship with Bhagavan, I felt that it was no less than a call from Bhagavan Himself.

On April 25, 1942 and again two days later, an ardent fellow-devotee, A. Devaraja Mudaliar, wrote to me informing me that on April 13, Bhagavan had an accidental fall on the Ashram steps and that his right-side collar-bone was fractured. That morning, it seems, after breakfast Bhagavan while crossing the Ashram steps to go up the Hill, noticed a dog chasing a squirrel on his path and interposed his walking-stick to prevent the attack. The stick slipped and Bhagavan fell down. This accident exactly synchronised with a momentous political event, the sudden retreat of the invading Japanese fleet from the Madras coast owing to the countermanding orders from the home Government. Some of us saw a profound significance in this coincidence and drew political parallels for the squirrel and the dog, and believed that Bhagavan averted the national disaster by taking it vicariously upon his person. In any case, the alarm and anxiety caused by the news of this accident served to divert my mind from the oppressive sorrow of the recent bereavement. The second letter further stated as follows:

"Last evening Bhagavan referred to your letter while talking to Narayana Iyer. He appreciated that under your present circumstances you could not come here earlier."

This struck me as a still more direct call from Bhagavan and at once I wrote to the Ashram expressing my desire for early *darshan* of Bhagavan. To this I received a reply dated May 2, 1942 saying:

"We are glad you will be able to come here . . . and we hope that you will stay with us till after the *Maha-puja*."

About this time, under the stress of overwhelming emotion, I was composing a Telugu poem entitled *Ramana Sandesam* (Ramana Message) in which the poet prays to Ramana to convey his message to his departed love. On June 1, 1942, as I was penning in one verse the words which mean "*Just before going to Tiruvannamalai*", the son of Chidambara Sastri, a learned, old devotee entered and said, "Sir, my father wants to know when you are going to the Ashram. He requests you to send him word *just before going to Tiruvannamalai*." This verbal coincidence also struck me as wonderful, and added spurs to my intention to visit the Ashram.

When on the morning of June 12, 1942, I entered the Hall and sat in a corner, Bhagavan did not seem to notice me. The collar-bone having been well set, Bhagavan had discarded the sling, but still looked very weak. At that time he appeared unusually silent and with half-shut eyes like one in a trance. But soon after lunch the attendant called me saying that I was wanted by Bhagavan. Now I knew of course that Bhagavan would be alone and resting. As I came into his presence, hanging down my head, there emanated a piercing shriek wherefrom I knew not. At once all my physical faculties failed me and I collapsed. When I came to myself, Bhagavan called me close to him and made me sit near his feet. He spoke only a few words, but his tranquil look overflowing with Grace dwelt long upon me and most effectively healed my heart's wound. The gist of what he said was this:

“The thought that she has gone must be got rid of. She has not gone anywhere. *She abides in the Self* as the Self. How can she be non-existent? Without God’s existence, can we exist? Likewise, without her existence, where are the children, where is the family?”

Thereafter I met him alone almost every midday and freely poured out the surging emotions of my heart. Bhagavan would give me patient hearing and a word or two of true solace. On June 17, I complained to him saying, “Bhagavan, nowadays she does not appear to me in dream. So even that comfort is denied to me.” At this Bhagavan smiled sadly and said, “What! Do you find comfort in dream-vision?” “Yes, Bhagavan,” I replied “I should be a hypocrite if I hid my real feeling.” On hearing this, Bhagavan sighed and kept silent. That night I lay on the pial opposite the verandah where he was sleeping, I saw a big choultry. The door was ajar. A group of elderly Brahmins blocked the entrance and were peeing in. My old uncle of Benaras was prominent among them; and pointing out someone inside, he told them, “Look there. She is the eldest daughter-in-law of the house. She is not an ordinary woman. She is all gold. On hearing this, I too was impelled by curiosity to stand tip-toe behind these Brahmins and to look in over their shoulders, when lo! I beheld my dear, departed wife. She was seated on the floor, and I must confess that never when she was alive did, I have such clear and vivid vision of her as now. A flood of bliss engulfed me for how long I knew not, until there suddenly rushed upon me the consciousness that it was all a dream! A dream! This thought let loose on me such overpowering sorrow as I had never felt before. Unable to contain myself I sat up and saw Bhagavan returning to the Hall with a torch in His hand. Immediately I got up and followed Bhagavan inside the Hall sobbing all the time. It was then 5 a.m. Bhagavan sitting erect on the sofa, noticed me and asked, “**What! Why are you like that? Did you have the dream?**” I replied, “**Yes, Bhagavan,**” and with great difficulty I related to him my dream. Then he said, “**Why do you grieve now? You wanted the dream-vision and you had it. You thought it would bring comfort. Instead, it has proved a crushing grief. All illusion is sorrow. Only the Real Self is true happiness.**”

Then as if to divert my mind he enquired “Did you observe anything beside the choultry?” On hearing this query, I recollected that there was a big river flowing nearby, and I told Bhagavan so. Then Bhagavan remarked that the river might be the Ganges and the place Benares. His words somehow had a soothing effect upon my nerves and lifted the load of sorrow from my heart. That morning I got a letter from that same uncle of Benares reminding me of the date for my wife’s monthly ceremony and asking me to return home in time. When I showed that letter to Bhagavan, he said “This is really wonderful. This uncle of yours pointed out your wife early this morning, and again now he is pointing to her in this letter.” The whole incident was a grand mystery, a miracle of Bhagavan’s Grace and it made me recollect the famous lines of Shakespeare: “There are more things in heaven and earth; Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

I completed *Ramana-Sandesam* in the Ashram and submitted it to Bhagavan the morning of June 20, Bhagavan sent for me at midday and told me thus:

“Yes, she has heard your message, and her reply is just what she said to you in a recent dream as recorded by yourself in verse 10, part II, that is: ‘Believe me, I have never gone anywhere, I am always with you.’ That is *her ‘Sandesam’* (message), *Hitherto she appeared to be apart from you. But now she is with you and in you.* That is the truth. You need not worry about *her*. *She* is quite all right. Only you and the children are suffering from the *thought* of her loss.”

I wrote in my diary at the time: “These interviews were the most unforgettable moments of my existence and had a healing effect on the wound of my heart.” I must add that besides the Gracious Presence and Personality of Bhagavan, the sympathies of Echamma and many other devotees in the Ashram contributed to my solace. ... End of Audio file No.6

(English Text- Page: 50 to 61- Telugu Audio file No. 7- 1942-46- Telugu Book pages: 230-278- 65min)

At this time, I also became acquainted with Swami Narayanand Saraswati of Banaras who was on a visit to the Ashram. He knew the whole of the *Bhagavad-gita* by heart, and was reciting all the eighteen chapters daily in the presence of Bhagavan. The scene of his leave-taking was unforgettable. He prostrated, and prayed in Sanskrit addressing Bhagavan as *He Narayana Swarupa* (O, self of Narayana). Bhagavan placed his hand on Swamiji's head and lifted him up.

An Ashram letter dated July 15, 1942, which was sent along with some recent publications of Bhagavan's works, stated:

“Regarding Bhagavan's teachings, they constitute the *Upanishad* of the *Upanishads*. Several devotees well versed in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* have said that in the light of Bhagavan's teachings the texts they had studied previously acquired a new significance.”

A few days later I had a peculiar dream. I dreamt that I was in the Ashram but could not see Bhagavan anywhere. I searched and searched, and wept and wept at not finding him till fatigue overcame me and plunged me into slumber. Then I again had a dream (within the dream) that I sat face to face with Bhagavan. In that position I recollected the previous disappearance of Bhagavan and dismissed it as a dream. I felt that my being then in the presence of Bhagavan was the only reality. This vision was so vivid and realistic that by comparison the waking-consciousness after I awoke seemed hazy. The hard core of reality seemed to melt and dissolve. The dreaming and waking states having submerged their boundaries seemed to flow into each other, to mingle and become one. As I related the above experience in a letter to the Ashram, I wondered whether I was really awake; whether the so-called waking activity *including the writing of that letter* was not part of an extended dream - *As I recall that incident now, I may be pardoned for confessing a doubt whether even this writing is not also a continuation of*

the dream from which the final waking will be into the one Reality that is Bhagavan. The Ashram reply dated July 24, 1942, was illuminating. It stated:

“The experience you refer to is not uncommon. To some of those for whom the world of sense-perception has lost its claim to exclusive reality (it is neither real nor unreal) either through intense, whole-hearted cogitation as to what is abiding in this impermanent world, or through undistracted adherence to ideals of conduct, or as a result of having seen what life is, to those few . . . the distinction between the dream of the world and the world of the dream is only apparent, so that even the long span of outward life is totally transformed by ever so short an experience of the inward life of a dream. What is happier than to be a mere spectator of all the states of the mind? What else is wisdom but to be that?”

At that time a Moulvi Saheb who was my colleague in the College was suffering from a chronic ailment, and at his request I wrote to the Ashram praying for Bhagavan's Grace. The reply dated July 28, 1942 not only conveyed Bhagavan's Gracious Blessings to my friend but also presented to him an Urdu edition of *Who Am I?* The letter observed: “The one solace to all the ills of life is to study Bhagavan's teachings and imbibe the wisdom contained therein.” The postscript to that letter added: “While turning the pages of the book sent, the following passage occurred to our mind; and as referring to the point mentioned in our last letter, it may interest you: ***'Except that the waking state is prolonged and the dream-state is momentary, there is no other difference between the two'.***”

During the Dasarah vacation of 1942 I again visited the Ashram. The temple-building work was progressing steadily. The institution of *Laksharchana* (worshipping the Goddess one lakh times) in the temporary Ashram shrine during *Navaratri* was a new, impressive feature. We rejoiced to find the Ashram prosperous and expanding its activities in many directions. But the Ashram life was visibly changing. What with the rushing crowds of visitors in

ever-increasing numbers on the one hand and the declining health of Bhagavan on the other, it became necessary to restrict the time for *darshan* of Bhagavan. So, the old Ashram life of close intimacy with Bhagavan became well-nigh impossible under the new conditions, and this was saddening especially to old devotees. At the time of departure, I submitted two Telugu classics *Kaivalya Navanitam* and *Amukta Malyada* to Bhagavan, with a prayer for perusal at leisure.

In response to the invitation for the Rabindranath Tagore Day celebration under the auspices of the Nellore Progressive Union of which I was then Secretary, the Ashram sent on October 22, 1942, the following gracious message:

“Organising such functions to express one’s deep sentiments of homage to the great sons of India is one of the best ways to propagate the ancient cultural heritage which is the proud privilege of ours to hold aloft for the whole world to see, accept and follow. We hope by Bhagavan’s Grace the function will be successfully celebrated.” The next letter dated November 1, 1942, referred to the two books left by me with Bhagavan and stated:

“The revision of *Kaivalyam* was completed. Whenever time permits (besides other things there is also the proof-correction of a Tamil book), *Amukta-malyada* is being gone through.”

This gave a glimpse of Bhagavan’s busy life. The use of passive voice throughout the sentence and the omitting of explicit mention of Bhagavan were also noteworthy and significant.

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I again visited the Ashram on the last day of the year. It was a few days after the *Jayanti* celebration. **Early morning on the New Year Day 1943**, I went round the Hill along with my devotee-friend R. Narayana Iyer. On that day two

other friends Sadhu Arunachala (Major A. W. Chadwick) and A. Devaraja Mudaliar handed to me as a New Year present their *Jayanti* tributes to Bhagavan in verse and prose respectively. The Sadhu had sung:

“My giving is a gain,
It will not be in vain.
For every thought I one by one discard
Will grow another feather in the wings
That carry me to Freedom . . .”

Mudaliar subscribing himself as “Ramana Baby” had written:

“I am confirmed in my old belief that I am by nature, temperament and capacity ill-fitted to be the young monkey that can cling to its mother by its own force and must therefore content myself to be the mewling kitten which the mother cat must hold firmly by the neck and carry wherever she may like.”

In the presence of Bhagavan, Mudaliar gently admonished me for failing to attend the *Jayanti* and added: “I believe that Bhagavan expects us, His children, to gather at His feet especially on such occasions.” Bhagavan smiled and said:

“The feet of Bhagavan are everywhere. So where can we gather except at His feet? Time and space are no barriers to the gathering of hearts.”

In spite of the festive air that as usual pervaded the Ashram for some time after the *Jayanti*, I came away much depressed in mind as Bhagavan appeared very weak and anaemic. On the occasion of my wife’s first annual ceremony which fell on January 15, 1943, I received from the Ashram the following gracious message: “May the departed soul rest in Peace! She has left the children to you, and the happiness and well-being of your children

is your happiness and well-being. In them you should find the joy that will relieve your gloom. May Bhagavan's Grace be with the children and you!"

The letter added the following laconic reply to my enquiry about Bhagavan's health: "There is much improvement in health and everything will be all right in a few days."

As I knew that the Ashram was generally reticent about personal enquiries about Bhagavan, I did not feel reassured by the Ashram reply. So, I wrote to other friends for detailed information regarding Bhagavan's health. From their replies I learnt that Bhagavan had a spell of hiccups continuously from 14 to 18 of January when he could not take any food. After the hiccups subsided, Bhagavan was found to have lost all appetite, and he showed symptoms of jaundice. The one difficulty in treating Bhagavan was that he would not take any special diet which went against the rule of sharing his food equally with all those present. When Dr. Srinivasa Rao offered to Bhagavan the latest medicine sent by Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami from Madras, Bhagavan, it seems, told the doctor: "It was sent to you, so you had better take it." Consequently, Bhagavan was very much reduced. Giving the above details, Sadhu Arunachala (Major Chadwick) wrote on 21st January:

"All that we can do is to pray to Him to do what is best; anyway, I have given up worrying about it because however much I worry outside, directly I enter the Hall, it all drops off, so I am convinced that everything will be well."

The Sadhu also composed a poem telling Bhagavan, in fact, ordering him to get well. The poem concluded with the following stanza:

"Fulfil your promise, stop this game, I now demand as right,
For us it's not at all the same, We weep to see your plight;
As humble children we implore, That by an act of will
You cease to make us suffer more By throwing off this ill!"

On January 27, I also wrote adding to the general prayer my humble voice, in two Telugu verses which meant:

"The fortune of this entire universe is in the palm of your hand, O Supreme Being of unique glory; so pray take the longevity of us all on yourself alone and eke out your life, O Sire.

You are our beloved Father; you are the nectareous ocean of Grace; do forgive us our faults and reign over us forever as now, I fall at your feet and pray."

On February 7, I had an alarming note from the veteran devotee M. V. Ramaswami Iyer saying, "I do not know if you have had information about Bhagavan's weak state of health. We are all very much in anxiety." But three days later he again wrote saying: "Glad to inform you that Bhagavan's health is much better now. He is taking some food as usual." The next day the Ashram also wrote as follows:

"The prayer of all the devotees is one and is addressed to the ONE, Himself. By His Grace we find that the prayer does not go unheeded.

There are sure signs of improvement, the weakness is incidental, and owing to the nature of the complaint, the progress is slow. What is it He cannot do, or we can do by ourselves?"

About this time my daughter Indira was suffering from whooping-cough and when I wrote about it, the Ashram replied on March 17 as follows:

"We hope by Bhagavan's Grace Indira is improving in health. *All is real and all is unreal, and God has made man to reconcile this paradox in life. A hard taskmaster is He, which also is both real and unreal.*"

On March 30 my friend R. Narayana Iyer wrote enquiring when I would come to the Ashram. He said: "Nowadays it is all very silent and we don't have the

soul-stirring talks we used to have in your company. We all look forward to your arrival eagerly. Bhagavan's body has got over the illness . . . but it is very weak."

On the Telugu New Year Day which fell on the 5th of April, I was presented with Rs. 16 by T. Rami Reddy, a fellow-devotee and a munificent patron of learning, and I made over the amount to the Ashram. Even as Fortune was crowning me with this 'honour', disaster was lurking round the corner. Indira was laid up with smallpox for two weeks, and on April 13, the *Jayanti* day of Rama, she shuffled off the mortal coil and attained the lotus-feet of the Lord. On hearing this, the Ashram wrote:

"We are grieved to learn that Indira has left you . . . During the last few months you and your children suffered much mental anguish, and your home became anything but a home and now the beloved child is gone. How immense must be the grief of your aged parents seeing your home and your suffering? *Who can describe the feeling of ONE who is at once the Father and Mother of His devotees?* May His Grace give you Peace!"

On May 15 the Ashram presenting me *Andhra Ramana Gita*, wrote:

"By separate post we have sent a copy of the *Andhra Ramana Gita* by Naganarya Kavi whose manuscript you read and corrected diligently some years ago. Only a hundred copies are printed, mainly due to scarcity of paper and also for the reason that we have, besides the original *slokas* and their translation in Telugu, the excellent translation you had given in Telugu verses. We hope by Bhagavan's Grace you are able to find peace of mind. May His abundant Grace flow to you that you may find peace."

On May 21, M. V. Ramaswami Iyer wrote from the Ashram a touching letter of condolence for Indira's demise, in which he referred to the recent death of another devotee's son as follows:

"At a time when many of us are in deep mourning for the loss of Mr. Bose's son twenty years old, this bereavement of yours has opened the wound . . . I would only suggest to you to come here as *nowhere else* can peace be obtained . . . Let us turn our mind from the world and learn to be dead to its cruelties. In fact one has to try this when one advances in experience. That is why our forefathers have shown us a way out of this in seeking out the truth of Self."

On May 26, acknowledging the humble contribution which I had offered "together with a broken heart." the Ashram wrote:

"We got your fiver and this we can use for the *Mahapuja*. The other 'thing' offered, Bhagavan must make it whole. May He do so."

On July 23 the Ashram sent me an article on Bhagavan by Mme. Hiddinghe to be rendered into Telugu and wrote as follows:

"It will do if the translation is completed in about two weeks. Those who cannot read English will get the benefit of the study by the French lady.

There seems to be no other alternative than to take life as unreal as a dream, and having that understanding one has to develop perfect equanimity. This is really a superhuman task which Bhagavan's Grace alone can help His devotees to accomplish. May it be so accomplished!"

On August 5 the Ashram sent me a poem entitled "The Song of Slavery" by Chaganlal Yogi. The poet extols the virtues of 'slavery' and concludes:

"They would rather die, they say, than be a slave;

The ego's struggle, I say, is slavery itself;
To be Thy slave, thou Self of all, is the only way to Freedom;
I would rather live long, O benign Bhagavan, and remain forever Thy
humble slave."

The Ashram letter commented thus on the poem:

"The writer's desire to be a bond-slave gets added significance if one knows that he is a tried public worker of Congress camp and has been jailed several times. By nature he is independent and would not care for others' favours. Life seems to be a tremendous paradox!"

At this time, I was ailing from cracks on the feet and also on the hands. So, I got the Telugu translation of Mdme. Hiddinghe's article written to my dictation and submitted it. The Ashram acknowledging its receipt on September 6, 1943 wrote:

"We are going through your translation and we see you have very carefully followed the English article. Satyananda Swami who is here also read your translation and much appreciated it.

We trust by Bhagavan's Grace you are rapidly improving in health."

On the same day a tomb was erected on Indira's grave and on it was inscribed the *Mantra* taught to her by Bhagavan namely, "*Deham Naham Koham Soham.*"

In the ensuing Dasarah vacation I went as usual for Bhagavan's *darshan* and derived much solace from His presence and gracious words of comfort. This time on arrival I first had a bath and so after a little interval I saw Bhagavan. He at once wondered whether the train was late that day and added that he thought he heard the train's whistle at the right time that morning. I really felt ashamed to explain my delay. Anyway I learnt the lesson for all time. Ever afterwards as soon as I reached the Ashram, I would first 'report myself' to Bhagavan and then do anything else.

One morning Bhagavan while explaining a verse in *Upadesa Saram* said:

"Breath-control can only produce *Manolayam*, i.e., temporary suspension of the mind. One-pointed meditation and concentration alone can lead to *Manonasam*, i.e., destruction of the mind."

On this I complained that in my meditation I was often prone to sleep. Bhagavan told me:

"Of course, one should be alert in *Sadhana* and guard against sleep as far as one can. But if sleep overpowers, it does not matter. The moment you wake, you catch up the current of your meditation and continue. So sleep will prove no hindrance."

One evening while returning to the Ashram after His walk, Bhagavan graciously enquired how my house construction was progressing. I pointed to the Ashram hospital building by which we were then passing and said that my building was just in the same stage as that hospital.

On December 22, 1943 the Ashram acknowledging my invitation for *Griha-pravesam* (the house-warming ceremony) wrote:

"May His Grace bless you all on the occasion!"

* * * * *

On February 19, 1944, on urgent summons from the *Sarvadhikari* I went to Madras to meet him there and help him in securing for the Ashram temple construction some articles of steel and iron which were then subject to Government control. By Bhagavan's Grace we succeeded in our endeavour.

I attended the *Mahapuja* in the Ashram which was performed on May 16, 1944, and stayed on till the end of the month. One day Bhagavan quoted from *Rama Gita* a *sloka* which meant:

“The magician deludes the gullible, himself remaining undeluded. But lo the *siddha* (displayer of thaumaturgic powers), himself first deluded, deludes others.”

Bhagavan had always discouraged the hankering after *siddhis* (Thaumaturgic powers) as a dangerous diversion from the path of Self-Realisation and had translated in Tamil a portion of *Devikalottaram* which contained a condemnation of *siddhis*. Bhagavan now rendered the above *sloka* into Telugu verse. Another day Bhagavan cited a *sloka* which extolled the merits of water as follows:

“In indigestion water acts as medicine; when there is no indigestion, water serves as tonic. Water at the end of the meal serves as Nectar; but water at the beginning of a meal acts as poison.”

Bhagavan Himself had an aversion to stimulating drinks like coffee, tea etc. and always preferred water. He used to drink water only at the end of his meals, and also occasionally whenever he felt fatigued, as after a walk, Bhagavan translated this *sloka* also into Telugu verse.

Still another day Bhagavan recollected a *sloka* which praised buttermilk highly thus:

“Buttermilk mixed with cardomom, ginger, lemon-juice and a little salt is of rare relish even to Indra (the Lord of the Gods).”

Bhagavan Himself liked thin buttermilk prepared in the above way. One noon at lunch I observed that Bhagavan was not getting proper nourishment by taking too thin buttermilk. He promptly replied laughing: “Oh! You want me to take curds! Then I need not use a writing-table!” He explained saying: “Already I am feeling this stomach heavy enough. If I carry out your suggestion, it would soon grow into the bulk of a writing-desk.”

He rendered the above *sloka* also into Telugu verse. All the three Telugu verses composed by Bhagavan at this period were in the same metre.

One afternoon as Bhagavan re-entered the Hall, the attendant turned on the electric fan as it was sultry. After a few minutes Bhagavan insisted on stopping it, He said: “When one is tired, the breathing becomes a little hard and irregular. Then the fan serves to harmonise the breath. That is all its purpose. To continue fanning afterwards would be a waste.” Bhagavan was opposed of course to any form of waste.

On May 26, 1944, Bhagavan recollected and repeated a *sloka* addressed to Him long ago by Kavya-kantha in a letter, which makes references to Bhagavan’s associates of those days. It ran thus:

“To Him praised by Palaniswami who has cast off the trammels of birth, to the Bee that strolls in the lotus-heart of Gambhiram Seshayya, to the doctor that has cured the slow-witted Krishnayya from the disease of phenomenal existence, to that Son of the snake-adorned God (SIVA), appearing in the guise of a Yati (ascetic) I prostrate.”

On May 31, 1944, Bhagavan called to mind a Tamil stanza which He had composed for a picture of Lord Krishna imparting the *Bhagavad Gita* to Arjuna. It meant:

“He who seated in Arjuna’s chariot, spoke good
Words and dispelled Arjuna’s distress, may that
Embodiment of Grace save us!”

At Bhagavan’s suggestion it was used as the invocatory verse for Bhagavan’s Selections of the *Bhagavad Gita*. It was rendered into Malayalam verse by Bhagavan Himself, Sanskrit *sloka* by Jagadiswara Sastri, and into Telugu verse by me.

The next day I had to cut short my sojourn in the Ashram and return home on receipt of a message that my youngest daughter Alagamma was laid up with typhoid fever. In three weeks she recovered by Bhagavan's Grace.

On June 9, 1944 the Ashram letter asked me to correct the proof of *Nenevadanu* (*Who Am I?*) making the necessary grammatical corrections and to transcribe the *sloka* '*Deham Naham Koham Soham*' on the last blank page and write its word-for-word meaning and paraphrase to be printed in the book. I did accordingly.

At this time, I wrote twice to the Ashram praying that Bhagavan might be pleased to render His *Ulladu Narpadu* (Reality in Forty Verses) into Telugu verse Himself as He had done His *Upadesa Saram*.

On June 11, 1944 the Ashram replied as follows:

"All the aspects of the valuable suggestion made by you were considered. It is a matter in which one cannot say 'This should be done, that should not be done, and what will be done will be done. Perhaps the best course is to consider that nothing remains to be done. For is it not said: '*Nothing remains to be done by that supreme Yogi who has destroyed the mind and is abiding in the self*'. (*Upadesa Saram*, v. 15)"

While correcting the proof of *Nenevadanu* I had suggested that the title might be altered as *Nenevaru* which would be sex-less and also closer to the Tamil original. The Ashram reply dated June 15, 1944 appreciated my suggestion but concluded thus:

"The masculineness in the title appears as that in '*Purusha*' in *Gita* xiii, 22. After referring to the *Gita*-text we feel '*Nene-vadanu*' is all right."

Then as desired by the Ashram I also corrected the proof of *Vichara Sangrahamu*.

Adverting to inclusion of the *sloka Deham-Naham; Koham-Soham* in *Nenevadanu*, the Ashram wrote:

"When we first made the suggestion to include the *Eka Sloki*, we hesitated. We now feel the suggestion made is really appropriate. Does not the one *sloka* epitomise the contents of the book and also add something to what is contained in the previous pages."

In the ensuing Dasarah vacation during the last week of September 1944, I paid my usual visit to the Ashram.

One evening Bhagavan recollected a poem of Kavya-kantha in which the poet exhorts all men to worship at the Divine Feet of Saint Ramana. The Sanskrit verse was composed in the Tamil metre of *Thiruppugaz*. I wrote down the poem in my notebook to Bhagavan's dictation.

At this time, I was anxious to get a bridegroom for my daughter Lalita. In that connection I had an idea of going to Kolar from the Ashram. When I sought Bhagavan's advice, He merely said, "Don't worry. It will happen when it is to happen." Somehow, I got the impression that Bhagavan did not approve of the Kolar plan and I dropped it. The next day Bhagavan recited a stanza from *Tiruppugazh* entitled *Kalyanapattu* (Wedding Song) and gave its Telugu rendering as follows:

"Thou who of yore aimedst the *Vel* (*Shakti*) against the Ocean, Thou who wert a Yama to the whole family of Suura and his warrior-kinsmen, Thou who pattest Thy chest as saying 'I am the Reality at the core of the four *Vedas*."

“As my child beheld Thy splendour when Thou camest riding on the cloud-blue peacock, she fell in love with thee. Pray let Thy Grace present her the fragrant garland that adorns Thy chest.”

Bhagavan said that it was a general belief that if a girl’s parent should do *parayana* (repetition) of that stanza, her marriage would soon come off. I noted down both the stanza and its Telugu translation and started doing its daily *parayana* about the end of September, 1944; Lalita’s marriage took place in February, 1945.

On September 28, 1944, I was asked by the Ashram office to write to the fellow-devotee V. Anantachari reminding him of his promised contribution. His reply stated:

“Your letter dated 28-9-1944 from the Ashram to hand. Was it telepathy that I sent the M. O. on that very day? Perhaps I was writing out the M. O. form as you were writing the letter there.”

This incident was typical of countless happenings in the Ashram. Whatever it might be called, it was an unmistakable token of Bhagavan’s Grace. Circumstances did not permit me to attend the ensuing *Jayanti* celebration of Bhagavan on December 30, 1944.

* * * * *

Mildly censuring for my absence, A. Devaraja Mudaliar wrote on **Jan. 1, 1945**:

“I don’t approve of your having stayed away . . . You may well be content that you can have Bhagavan in your heart and that even better than some of us who are here near him but in a physical sense; and that thereby you could derive from Bhagavan all the Grace you want, even better than some like me who are always here, but have not yet learnt to draw on His Grace. But we want you to be here on all such occasions as the *Jayanti* and I have a *silly* notion that

Bhagavan too wants us His children if possible, to gather at His feet on the Jayanti day, of course only for our benefit. You may laugh at this notion but I am not afraid.”

The above letter reflects the human side of the relationship between Bhagavan and His devotees.

On January 5, 1945, Suri Nagamma wrote a letter informing me of Echamma’s peaceful, sudden demise on the night of 27-12-1944. Echamma had always treated me, as she did other devotees, with more than maternal affection. She had regaled us with innumerable anecdotes about Bhagavan in former times. For thirty years she had been taking from the town and serving the midday meal to Bhagavan and devotees at the Ashram daily without fail. So the news of her death came as a shock and grieved me. On hearing of her death, Bhagavan is said to have feelingly observed:

“I often told her not to undergo this trouble; but she would not listen. Unless she served food to her Bhagavan, she would never eat herself. Now Mudaliar Pati is continuing in her line. So *Echamma has shuffled off her load; but my load still remains.*”

On January 27, 1945, I wrote to the Ashram about Lalita’s marriage which was to take place the following month. My letter with a note enclosed by Lalita herself addressed to Bhagavan sought His approval for her marriage and solicited his presence at the function. Two days later the Ashram replied as follows:

“Yours of the 27th is placed before Bhagavan along with Lalita’s bashful letter. Such devotion at a tender age is sure to grow into a treasure of spiritual merit that only a few can claim to possess. We are glad to hear that Lalita’s marriage will take place on the 24th of February. The enclosed reply is for her. By Bhagavan’s Grace, the function will come off successfully.”

The enclosed reply was in Telugu written by Suri Nagamma at the instance of Bhagavan. It seems that Bhagavan Himself selected a picture of His as a present for the wedding couple and asking Nagamma to enclose it in a letter to Lalita, told her what to write. The letter stated:

“Bhagavan is graciously pleased to hear of your marriage. *He is presenting Himself to you in this enclosure. He will be present with you not only at the junction but always.*”

Of course, the picture has become the Deity of daily worship to Lalita. The wedding was followed by a serious illness of the bridegroom and of my mother. They both recovered soon by Bhagavan’s Grace.

I attended the *Mahapuja* in the Ashram celebrated on June 4, 1945, and stayed on for about a fortnight. One morning Bhagavan read out from Madhava swami’s notebook his former utterance on *mounam* and now rendered it in Telugu. I took down in my notebook the Tamil and Telugu versions as Bhagavan dictated. They ran as follows:

“Mounam (silence) is but the state of Grace that emerges within as One Word.”

Incidentally Bhagavan narrated how several years ago the late Somasundaraswami brought to Him a new notebook and pressed Him to write ‘one *Aksharam*’ in it. Thereupon Bhagavan wrote a Tamil *Kural* (couplet) which meant:

“One ‘Aksharam’ (letter) is itself ever shining in the Heart. Who can write it down?”

Later Bhagavan rendered the verse into a Sanskrit *sloka* and Telugu couplets. Now Bhagavan was graciously pleased to transliterate the Tamil verse in my notebook, and I copied down the Sanskrit and Telugu versions. The next day Bhagavan recollected a Tamil *Venpa* (quatrain) in praise of God Vinayaka which He had composed in 1912 on Vinayaka Chaturthi day. He now gave its Telugu paraphrase:

“Him who begot you as a child you made into a beggar, then you lived everywhere as a child just to support your huge stomach. *I am also a child. O child-God in the niche, encountering one born after you, is yours a stone-heart? Do look at me.*”

Another day Bhagavan dwelt upon the special holiness of Arunachala and of Tiruchuli, His native village. He quoted a Tamil hymn which He had formerly composed in praise of the Deity of Tiruchuli, Bhuminadheswara in the manner of the famous song of Manikyavachakar beginning with the word *Anbudai* as follows:

“The one Good (Lord), the Supreme Effulgence that shines ever inseparable in beautiful Tiruchuli as He dances ever blissfully in the Heart of loving devotees, may He grant me such love as melts the bones, and so shine in my Heart!”

The one idea common to Manikya-vachakar and Bhagavan is ‘the blissful dance of the Lord generating such love as melts the bones.’ Bhagavan also cited two more verses on Tiruchuli which He had composed long ago in collaboration with Iswara-swami.

The ideas of the Lord’s blissful dance and bone-dissolving love impressed me so profoundly that they haunted my mind for days. On June 14, 1945, I composed a Telugu poem entitled *Ramana’s Stroll*. It ran:

“Facing Thee, His darling child, O Ramana, as Thou comest with slow, faltering gait, as if Thou wert measuring the sky with Thy feet, Arunachala thrills with the Heart’s emotion, and dances without motion.”

At that time there was in the Ashram a small sickly, lame puppy who, we feared, would die any moment. But under Bhagavan’s constant care he not only recovered health but began to eat ‘idlis’ (rice-cakes) daily with so much relish that Bhagavan nicknamed him ‘Idli Swami’. Relating this incident I wrote on June 15, 1945, a Telugu verse meaning:

“O Ramana, you once (as Lord Krishna) straightened and beautified the hunchback woman out of your abounding Grace. So now you have reared this little lame puppy to a fine ‘Idli Swami’. How wonderful!”

Two days later I composed the following couple of Telugu verses on *Ramana’s Grace*:

“Seeing you caress peacocks, squirrels, cows, dogs, monkeys and children with such tender Grace, *anyone must melt to his bones*, O Ramana!

So many birds and animals coming to you have attained deliverance. Likewise, do bless with Grace this human animal that has sought refuge at your feet, O Ramana.”

On June 19, 1945, I wrote my ‘Farewell Prayer’ in six Telugu stanzas. In them the poet blesses Bhagavan addressing Him as ‘The Supreme Reality, the Incarnation of Grace that has taken birth in this world as ‘Sad-Guru’ (True Master) to dispel the distress of Devotees’. The poet complains that his nerves have become too tender and sensitive on account of his many past affections and so he begs for *abhayam* (reassurance and refuge). The poem concludes with the following prayer:

“The courage that never quails under any distress
 The equal bearing of honour and shame,
 The same benevolence towards all
 The gratitude for others’ good deeds,
 The sense of fullness that Thou art everything,
 The eternal devotion to Thy lotus-feet,
 The knowledge that every occurrence is Thy doing,
 The wisdom that everything happens for the best,
 The enquiry ‘To whom are all these thoughts’ (To me)
 ‘Who am I?’

The consequent subsidence of all thought
 And flash of Reality as Self-Realisation,
 O Father Ramana, grant to Thy child.”

On June 20, I returned home via Madras. The next day Nagamma went from Madras to the Ashram. As soon as Bhagavan noticed her, it seems, He enquired whether she saw me at Madras. Of course we could not meet. The above was intimated to me by Nagamma in her letter of June 28. This incident only goes to illustrate with what gracious care Bhagavan was following the movements of even the humblest devotees.

In response to my enquiry regarding a reported accident to Bhagavan, the Ashram wrote on September 9, 1945:

“Bhagavan’s health is now all right. It is a slight sprain, and Srinivasa Rao is here to do the needful!”

The same doctor attended upon Aurobindo’s fracture also.

During the ensuing Dasara vacation I visited the Ashram and was relieved to find that Bhagavan had got over the sprain. But He was now having rheumatic pains in the joints and was being given massage and electric treatment. There was keen competition among the devotees to do the massaging in which the doctor devotees as experts had the lion’s share. Bhagavan who fairly distributed His limbs among the devotees would not however allow more than the minimum massaging. Sometimes He would massage Himself, and while so doing He once humorously remarked:

“These people are doing this in the belief that they will acquire *punyam* (merit) from it. Why shouldn’t I have a share of the *punyam* myself!”

On Maha-navami day which was my birthday, I made *Pradakshinam* round the Hill with R. Narayana Iyer. As we returned a little late, Bhagavan asked the reason. My friend replied that as it was my birthday, I insisted upon our

taking breakfast and coffee on our way in the town. Bhagavan at once remarked:

“I see! Subbaramayya gave you his birthday party in a hotel but did not invite us all to it!”

The next day Bhagavan was talking of Self-Realisation. He said:

“What is Self-Realisation? A mere phrase. People expect some miracle to happen, something to drop from Heaven in a flash. It is nothing of the sort. Only the notion that you are the body, that you are this or that, will go, and *you remain as you are. Indeed, Realisation is but another name for the Self.*”

On October 21, 1945, I returned home.

Early in December I learnt that Skandashram, the former residence of Bhagavan on the Hill, had been repaired and that Bhagavan spent a day there with devotees. On my enquiry the Ashram wrote on December 10, 1945:

“The story about Skandashram is something of a romantic dream. Some Rajah from the United Provinces who was naturally fascinated with the Skandashram offered to contribute liberally for its repair. When he was pleased to spend the day at Skandashram, and found that it had been in disuse for a long time, he offered to get it renovated. When that was also done, Bhagavan was pleased to spend the day at Skandashram, and about five hundred devotees came there. Food etc. arrangements were made for all these. In his last letter the Rajah suggests the supply of electricity to the Skandashram which means lighting up the entire hill path of nearly one mile. Just prior to the taking up of the Skandashram work and of re-laying the path, a pukka stone culvert was constructed at the commencement of the path adjoining the Ashram rear, the cost of this culvert construction . . . being the contribution of N. Balarama Reddy of Utukuru. Even the labourers who now worked at the Skandashram are the children and descendants of

those who in former days first built the Ashram. *That devotion binds the devotees is the one outstanding fact. May, by Bhagavan’s Grace, this devotion ever increase and expand so as to embrace the whole of humanity!*”

The next day I got a letter from Nagamma vividly describing the function at Skandashram. She wrote:

“I had the good fortune of participating in the function at Skandashram. I felt much for your absence. Bhagavan seated on the sofa underneath the shade of trees looked grander than an emperor anointed for a coronation. With Arunachala as the throne, with the thinly clouded sky as the white umbrella, with the trees fanning a gentle breeze on either side, with the spray of the hill-stream as the oil, that Emperor of Yogis sat as in coronation durbar while the maiden Nature raised to Him the camphor-flame of sunshine. How can I describe the scene, my brother? It must be only seen and felt. That unique, resplendent glory of Bhagavan cannot be depicted even by Brahma. How then can I do it?”

In the last week of December, I went to Amritsar in the Punjab in connection with an offer of chief Professorship in English from the Central Khalsa College there. At the outset I sought Bhagavan’s advice whether to accept the offer or not. The Ashram replied on December 12, 1945, saying:

“The matter referred to in your Telugu letter will have far-reaching consequences. *Bhagavan’s Grace alone, which is the most potent force anyone can invoke, must lead you. May it do so!*”

Circumstances compelled me to decline the offer eventually and the net result was that I could not attend Bhagavan’s *Jayanti* celebrated in the Ashram on December 21. By Bhagavan’s Grace my journey to and from Amritsar was converted into a pilgrimage as it provided opportunities to visit the sacred shrines on the way. Especially at the Golden Temple in Amritsar

and at the Lakshmi Narayana Temple in New Delhi I felt as in the beatific Presence of Bhagavan. Also, later at the time of the post-Partition communal massacres in Amritsar, I realised how my non-acceptance of the offer was the saving Grace of Bhagavan.

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Early in January, 1946, I received from Nagamma a copy of Bhagavan's recent rendering into Telugu of His own Tamil preface to His Tamil translation of Sankaracharya's Hymns in praise of Lord Dakshinamurti. Bhagavan wrote as follows:

“Brahma, the Creator of the Universe, had four sons born of his mind, namely, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujata. They heard from their father that they were intended to help in such works as the creation of the Universe. But they were averse to the work and they desired Peace. So they went in search of those who could show the way to Peace. As they were fully ripe for initiation, that Embodiment of the Highest Grace, the Supreme Lord Himself appeared before them as Dakshinamurti in the Silence of Self-abidance with *chinmudra* (the sign of pure Consciousness). Seeing Him, they were attracted like iron to the magnet, and in His Presence, they remained like Him, in Self-abidance.

“To the most competent persons who cannot however recognise the truth of the Silence of Self-abidance, Sankaracharya has explained in brief in this poem the Universality of the Self, namely, that the *Sakti* (Power) that manifests as the obtrusive Universe, the onlooker and the visual light, and subsides, is none other than the Self, and so is all full of Self.”

In her letter on January 13, 1946, striking a personal note Nagamma wrote: “Echamma who was like a mother to me has gone. Now my

sole female aid here is aunt Alamelamma (Bhagavan's sister). *Bhagavan Himself, whom I look upon as mother, father, Guru and God, is protecting me in every way just as the bird while hatching preserves its egg underneath its wings. Brother, there is no limit to the Grace of that Mahatma.* Unless it be the merit of some former life, why should He shower such Grace on this humble being? With what offering can I discharge the debt? What is there to offer? Oh! my madness! enough!”

For the ensuing summer vacation, I had planned to visit the Ashram at the end of May 1946. But Nagamma in her letter dated April 26, 1946 informed me that the *upa-nayanam* of the two elder sons of Venkataraman would be celebrated on the 19th of May and that *Maha-puja* would be performed on the 25th of May in the Ashram, and she urged me to reach the Ashram in time to attend the above functions. She further wrote that her letter had the approval of Bhagavan. So, I started on the 13th of May with my children, Lalita, Ramana Prasadam and Alagamma. The Rajah Saheb of Venkata-giri whom I happened to visit on the way entrusted me with a cheque for Rs. 116 as his contribution to the Ashram and this I felt to be an auspicious instance of Bhagavan's Grace. ... [End of Audio file No.7](#)

(English Text- Pages: 62 – 73 - Telugu Audio file No. 8- 1947- Telugu Book pages: 279 – 327 - 65min)

Bhagavan was graciously pleased to note that Alagamma bore His mother's name, and He always addressed her as *Amma* (mother). Alagamma enquired childishly why Bhagavan needed to carry a walking-stick. Bhagavan jocularly replied that it was the third leg which grew in old men, and He retorted by asking her, amidst general laughter, why she bore two horns - meaning the two pigtailed into which her hair had been plaited. He quietly added that the fashion of two pigtailed did not seem to enhance the beauty of our children. Alagamma never again wore two pigtailed. One morning we and Nagamma with her nieces Vidya and Swarna, went up the Hill and visited Skandashram in a party. The children particularly enjoyed playing in the perennial spring (discovered by Bhagavan) flowing by Skand-ashram. When we returned and reported our visit to Bhagavan, He was much pleased and he graciously told many anecdotes relating to Skand-ashram. Bhagavan informed us that the Skand-ashram was named after one Kandaswami, a mason devotee, who built the Ashram. I remarked that the name was doubly significant as Skand-ashram because the abode of Bhagavan who was believed to be an incarnation of God Skanda. Bhagavan simply said: **“Names and forms might vary, but Reality is the same.”**

Another morning the little child Swarna invited Bhagavan to accompany her to her native place. She wondered why Bhagavan would not tour round the country to bless His devotees. Bhagavan replied:

“Why do you think ‘I’ won’t accompany you? You always take ‘me’ with you in your heart. But as for my going round physically, do you know the consequences? The whole Ashram and even the visitors would accompany me. Will you entertain us all? Then so many people who come here for *darshan* would go away disappointed. Even when I went to Skandashram for a few hours’ stay the other day, there was so much dislocation. So, the best thing would be for me to remain here alone. Then the routine would go on smoothly, and all can be certain of finding me here.”

One night, Bhagavan quoted a stanza from *Bhagavatam* (Canto XIII verse 36) and gave His own Telugu translation which He had composed in the previous January:

“Just as the man blinded with drunkenness sees not the cloth that he has on, so the Self-Realised *Siddha* knows not whether the perishable body is existent or non-existent, whether by force of *karma* it has gone from him or come to him.”

This observation of Bhagavan sounded somewhat ominous in view of His failing health.

On the occasion of the *Mahapuja* on June 25, 1946, I composed *Pancharatnam* (five verses) in Telugu in praise of *Matrubhuteswara* (Mother-God), the Deity of the Ashram shrine. The first two stanza follows:

1. “When you officiated at the confinement of a woman-devotee, you assumed Motherhood by your *Shakti* (Divine Power). But now you have yourself turned woman, Universal Mother and given birth to our world-renowned Divine Teacher - (Bhagavan). So with devoted minds we adore you, O Mother-God!
2. “Him, Ramana, whose life on earth shines as a new original commentary upon all Upanishads,
Whose whole life presents an essential synthesis of all religions,
In Whom the knowledge of Brahman reputed to be most difficult manifests itself visibly,
Who is the sole living banner of the world displaying the imperial glory of Self-abidance,
Who is the Supreme Lord, the ocean of mercy that out of affection for devotees condescended to take birth,
Him, Ramana, hast Thou born as Kumara (son) on earth, O Mother-God!
To Thee I prostrate.”

That morning as Bhagavan sat in front of the shrine amidst a vast crowd with a fence of railings around His seat, He jocularly whispered across the rails to Alagamma who was squatting nearby: “See Mother, how they have bound your son and put him here in jail!”

At this time a person nicknamed Vibhuti Swami who was camping some distance from the Ashram was administering *Vibhuti* (sacred ash) supposed to be the panacea for all ills and so was attracting huge crowds. On their way they would also enter the Ashram and have *darshan* of Bhagavan. Early one morning, seeing the crowd, Bhagavan remarked to me smiling:

“My ill-health is really a blessing in disguise. For, seeing this massaging for me, these people think, ‘Poor Swami! he himself is ailing. What can he do for us?’ and so they leave me alone. But if I too dispensed *Vibhuti* or *Tirtham* (holy water), I should have been mobbed and smothered!”

One afternoon T. P. Ramachandra Iyer, V., myself and others went in a party to Gurumurtam. On our way we were entertained to a rich repast of fine mango by a devotee Narayana Iyer (retired telegraphist). We found that the corner in Gurumurtam where Bhagavan used to sit was now filled with tobacco bundles emitting a disagreeable odour. In the mango-grove nearby, we were also shown the spot where Bhagavan had sat motionless in continuous *Samadhi* for months, exposed to wind and rain, and where for the first time, at the entreaty of devotees, He opened His eyes, looked out on the world and broke His silence. On our way back we saw Ayyankulam into which Bhagavan threw all His personal belongings on the day of His arrival at Arunachalam. We also visited the temple on its bank, which was said to have been sanctified by the stay of His Holiness Adi Sankaracharya during his pilgrimage. We were in such high spirits that we started *Bhajan* (group-singing) led by Viswamurti and continued to sing and dance all the way to the Ashram. Bhagavan graciously enquired about our trip and I

reported everything to Him. At the instance of Bhagavan, Viswamurti repeated the Telugu song that depicts the ten incarnations of God Vishnu. Bhagavan seemed to like the singing. The next day the manager of Gurumurtam happened to come for *darshan* and Bhagavan drew his attention to our report about the tobacco bundles. The man expressed regret and undertook to remove them immediately and to keep the place clean and open to visitors.

On May 28, 1946, a curious letter was written to me by a patriot-friend, Ramachandrani Venkatappa. He had asked me to get Bhagavan’s *Prasad* for his child. On the above-mentioned date he was thinking of writing to remind me of his request. Just then his brother-in-law Paidipati Pullayya who had returned from the Ashram the previous night, came and voluntarily gave him the *Prasad*. Immediately he wrote to me marvelling at the Power and Grace of Bhagavan that he should receive the *prasad* even before writing for it. So he now felt doubly assured of Bhagavan’s protection. He also quoted the saying of Kalidasa:

“The tokens of Divine Grace send forth good even in advance of them.”

I submitted the letter for Bhagavan’s gracious perusal

Two days later I got a letter from Lalita, who with the other children, was now at Madras. She wrote that they were all so profoundly affected by their recent stay at the Ashram that they now ‘lived, moved and had their entire being’ in Bhagavan Himself. Bhagavan’s verses became their code-words. For instance, if at meals they wanted ghee, they would say *Ajya dharaya* (Like a stream of ghee - *Upadesasaram*); if they wanted water they would shout *Svootasa Samam* (equal to a stream of water - *Upadesasaram*). Bhagavan perusing this letter was graciously pleased to remark: “Lalita writes well.”

One morning in June Bhagavan, while going up the Hill, told me jocularly about the Golden Jubilee of His advent at Arunachalam proposed to be celebrated on September 1st, 1946. He said "Venkatachalam Chetty had a brainwave. The idea of such a celebration first occurred to him; and since he made the proposal, it seems to have caught everyone's fancy." Thrilled with the joy of this news, I composed the following sonnet that very day:

"At Arunachala, lo and behold!
 Wonder of wonders! This half century
 Transcendent Truth-Awareness-Ecstasy
 Itself as living Person doth unfold,
 Whose presence all in peace and bliss doth hold,
 At Whose one word or glance all doubts do flee,
 Who radiant with pure Divinity
 Looks out for souls to save and rightly mould.
 T'is Ramana Maharshi world-renown'd
 God-man, self's Self, embodied Love and Truth.
 Ye mortals all, in dense ignorance bound
 Come, seek His Grace and see the Light of Truth.
 Miss not this rarest chance at any rate,
 But taste the Bliss of Self ere t'is too late."

At the instance of Bhagavan, I read it out in the Hall. It was later rendered by me into Telugu verse.

To start back on June 19th after a fairly long stay with Bhagavan gave me unbearable anguish which was voiced in a Telugu verse included in a letter written by me from Madras:

"The one month passed like one minute!
 Neither could I find voice to say 'adieu'
 Nor could my feet move leaving my Beloved Father!
 How hard is this exile, the bitter fruit of Karma!"

Nagamma, in her letter dated July 14, 1946, conveyed to me the sad news that ten days ago Madhavaswami the devoted attendant of Bhagavan

passed away at Kumbhakonam mutt and that Kunju Swami went and performed the Samadhi rites.

To my query about the Golden Jubilee the Ashram replied the next day as follows:

"There is no particular programme for the Golden Jubilee celebration. Of course, all devotees are expected to attend the function, and there will be publication of the Souvenir volume which contains articles by devotees who have had as yet no opportunity to write of Bhagavan and His teachings. Owing to paper-scarcity we had to limit the pages."

As desired by Nagamma I copied from my notebook, Bhagavan's Telugu rendering of His definition on *Mounam* in my letter to her. Acknowledging it, she wrote on September 30:

"As I mentioned the matter casually to Bhagavan, He took your letter from me for verification and read it out from beginning to end. Then brother T. P. Ramachandra Iyer was present. Bhagavan told him jocularly that his name was not included among those to whom the letter conveyed compliments. Your copy tallies with the Telugu definition of *mounam* in Ramachandra Iyer's note written by Bhagavan Himself. It adds:

'Mounam is the state of Sakti (Power of Grace) that emerges from within as One Word'."

On August 7, 1946, the Ashram sent me a copy of *Upadesa Saram* and asked me to prepare it for the next edition and send it back. They wrote:

"Such correction as you make in the copy now sent, will be carried out in the proof when the book is taken for printing."

I did accordingly.

About this time, Oruganti Narasimha, Yogi of East Godavary who had practised Yoga under a Guru in the Himalayas, expressed a desire to visit the Ashram for Bhagavan's *darshan*. A Yogic friend of his had, it seems, visualised and measured the subtle bodies of several great personages like Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo. But he could not take measure of Bhagavan as His subtle body extended beyond the Yogi's ken. When I wrote to Nagamma conveying the above information, she replied as follows:

"It is a very good thing that Narasimha Yogi intends to come here. Bhagavan read your letter fully in the Hall and observed: 'I have already heard of Narasimha Yogi. Let his friend who claims to have determined the dimension of our subtle selves as so much, first see and measure out his own (subtle) Self'."

I could not attend the Golden Jubilee celebration chiefly on account of transport trouble. My letter regretting my misfortune contained a Telugu verse:

"Ramana is Kumara (Son of God Siva) Who out of His Grace incarnated on this earth. God Siva Himself stands yonder as Arunachala. May the Golden Jubilee celebration of their first meeting be a glorious success!"

The Ashram reply, dated September 6, 1946, ran as follows:

"Your letter of the 1st. instant full of devotion has been duly received and perused by Bhagavan . . . The verse is good and it has been read before Bhagavan.

Does distance matter to a loving heart? Is not Bhagavan omnipresent? Bhagavan is Karuna (Grace) personified, and hears and grants the prayers of His sincere devotees.

The Golden Jubilee celebrations are a grand success. In spite of transport difficulties, several devotees from far and near managed to get here for the function. The proceedings started with the usual *Veda Parayanam* which commenced at 4 a.m. on that day. The whole of that day Bhagavan was seated in the spacious Kottam put up for the occasion and the whole of the forenoon was spent in the reading of verses and songs composed for the occasion by the devotees. They were in several languages.

The afternoon proceedings started exactly at 2-30 p.m. *Swastivachakam* with *Purnakumbham* by Brahmins reciting *Riks* and Salutation Slokas to Bhagavan started the evening function. Justice Kuppaswami Iyer presided. There were speeches in English, Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam in praise of Bhagavan and His teachings. Music by Musiri Subramania Iyer and party, which was excellent, and *Veda Parayanam* closed the proceedings of the day. Everything went on according to programme and excellently."

On September 26, 1946, a friend told me that the Golden Jubilee celebration was being shown in the news-reel at a local cinema and took me to see it. It was very vivid, thrilling and impressive. I learned that was the last day of the show and so I thanked my fortune and my friend for the timely information. The next morning, I wrote about the picture to the Ashram. The Ashram reply dated 29-9-1946 stated:

"We have heard from devotees in Madras and Bombay also that the film has been simultaneously released."

When I visited the Ashram the ensuing Dasarah vacation, I was congratulated by many fellow-devotees for having seen and described the picture. Bhagavan said that I was the first informant about the picture. He was graciously pleased to add:

“So, you need not regret that you could not attend the function here. Indeed, you have seen it better and more comprehensively than many who participated in it. Has it not been said that one who witnesses a procession from the window has a better view than the processionists themselves?”

For me the event of this season was the visit of my old revered Guru, Prof. D. S. Sarma, with family, to the Ashram. Bhagavan treated him with special Grace and marked respect. One morning as Prof. Sarma, with some of us, was going up the Hill to visit Skandashram, Bhagavan met and greeted us on the way. He was heard to tell His attendant:

“There you see the big ‘Sir’ going. He is our Subbara-mayya’s Guru. So, he is the Professor’s Professor!”

On October 4, 1946, the *Mahanavami Day*, which was also my birthday I did *Giri pradakshinam* (going round the Hill) in the early morning with my friend R. Narayana Iyer. On our way back we did worship at the Arunachaleswar temple. We also witnessed the procession of the Deity on our way and accompanied it some distance. This struck me as very auspicious. That day I composed and submitted to Bhagavan my birthday prayer in a Telugu verse as follows:

“What festival is the day of birth! Who am the ‘I’ that was born?
So enquiring if we seek the Source, the born ‘I’ disappears, and lo!
flashes the unborn Self. Pray grant me the festival of that *unborn*
day!”

In the evening Prof. D. S. Sarma put a question and Bhagavan replied at length. The full text of the question and the reply which was later presented to me by the Professor himself is given hereunder:

“Q. In the lives of the Western mystics we find descriptions of what is called the mystic way with the three well marked stages of purgation, illumination

and union. The purgatory stage corresponds to what we call the *Sadhana* period. Was there any such period in the life of Bhagavan.

A. I know no such period. I never performed any *Pranayama* or *Japa*. I know no *mantras*. I had no rules of meditation or contemplation. Even when I came to hear of such things later, I was never attracted by them. Even now, my mind refuses to pay attention to them. *Sadhana* implies an object to be gained and the means of gaining it. What is there to be gained which we do not already possess? *In meditation, concentration, and contemplation, what we have to do is only, not to think of anything but to be still. Then we shall be in our natural state.* This natural state is given many names - *Moksha, Jnana, Atma* etc. - and these give rise to many controversies. There was a time when I used to remain with my eyes closed. That does not mean that I was practising any *Sadhana* then. Even now I sometimes remain with my eyes closed. If people choose to say that I am doing some *Sadhana* at the moment, let them say so. It makes no difference to me. People seem to think that by practising some elaborate *Sadhana* the Self would one day descend upon them as something very big and with tremendous glory and they would then have what is called *Sakshatkaram*. The Self is *Sakshat* all right, but there is no *karam* or *kirtam* about it. The word *karam* implies one’s doing something. But *the Self is realised not by one’s doing something, but by one’s refraining from doing anything by remaining still and being simply what one really is.*”

Referring to this talk Professor Sarma later wrote to me on October 7:

“Don’t you think it contains statement which should go into any permanent record about this great Mystic of Southern India?”

That desire of my Professor has been here carried out. The Professor also added in the same letter:

“Your idea of putting together all the accounts of the Maharshi which have so far appeared and expanding them with the approval of the subject of the biography at every step is excellent . . . The sooner it is done, the better. It can be satisfactorily done only by men like you and Swaminathan. The biography should be absolutely objective, terse and accurate with no verbiage or flourishes or exaggeration.”

Alas! In spite of our best efforts, the above proposal could not be carried out, mainly due to the failing health of Bhagavan.

After return home I had two dreams in one night of Bhagavan. In the first dream I saw Bhagavan walking on slippery ground. Fearing that He might stumble I approached Him with a view to guard His person. But Bhagavan instead held me firmly by the hand and led me safely across the ground. In the second dream Bhagavan presented me with a far off soap and said that it would cleanse the inner being as well as the outer body. In reply to my letter relating the above dreams, the Ashram wrote on October 20:

“Maheswar, who for us is appearing in the form of Ramana, is ever guiding us, warding off evil. Let our trust and faith in him increase more and more. Your dreams are to serve this purpose alone.”

In the last week of the month, in order to get over the mental depression of three tragic bereavements, I occupied myself with translating Bhagavan’s *Ulladu Narpadu and Anubandham* into Telugu *Sisamalikas*. The way in which this labour of love soothed my stricken Spirits was a further token of Bhagavan’s Grace.

On November 26, 1946, Nagamma informed me in a letter that Bhagavan was indisposed with cold and cough due to the rainy season.

On December 5, 1946, Vemuri Parthasarathi Rao of Masulipatam sent for my perusal his *Nivedana* a collection of psalms dedicated to Bhagavan on the day of the Golden Jubilee celebration. He wrote in a covering letter:

“Though we are new to each other, it is, I feel, the spirit of Bhagavan that reveals now our eternal fraternity . . . Yes! Hearts speak to hearts in greater freedom and joy when language fails. Their link is nought but love.”

I visited the Ashram during the Christmas of 1946. I laid my Telugu *Sisamalikas* at the feet of Bhagavan who, at my entreaty, was graciously pleased to peruse and correct the manuscript. *Ulladu Narpadu* verse 7, I had written:

“The Perfection which is the source of birth and dissolution of the World and of consciousness and which shines without birth and dissolution is that Reality.”

Bhagavan removed ‘that’ before ‘Reality’, saying that Reality should not be qualified. In verse 20, my version read:

‘If there be no God, can the Self exist?’ Bhagavan altered it thus: ‘As the Self is none other than ‘God’. In verse 32, I had written: “To think ‘I am That’ ‘I am not this’ shows utter lack of mental strength.” Bhagavan removed ‘utter’ saying that my use of that word overstated the truth. In verse 12, while reading the sentence. ‘That which is devoid of knowledge and ignorance is true Knowledge,’ Bhagavan said that Nayana (Kavya-kantha) first demurred to this statement. Then Bhagavan, it seems referred him to *Upadesa Saram* stanza 27: ‘That which is devoid of knowledge and ignorance is true Knowledge. What else is there to know?’ which Nayana himself had expounded in his commentary on that work. Then Nayana, it seems, was convinced. Narrating this, Bhagavan observed:

“Such is the power of *Maya* that it sometimes unsettles the mind of even the most learned.”

One day Bhagavan casually repeated Kavya-kantha’s prayer verse in Sanskrit on *Sahayavalli* the Goddess presiding over Tiruchuzhi, and I noted it down.

'May *Sahayavalli's* gracious glance which as it fell sanctified our Guru, Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi and made Him realise the Supreme (Self), give *Sahayam* (succour) to those afflicted with *Samsara* (phenomenal existence)!'

On December 26, 1946, Bhagavan narrated in the Hall the story of Jnaneswar and read out from *Maha-bhakta Vijayam* the dialogue between Jnaneswar and his father. At the instance of Bhagavan, I translated one sentence in it as follows:

"The mind was conquered by Janaka of firm Knowledge like the monkey dancing to the rod's movement, and not by Suka who to leave off attachments fled to the forests for refuge."

That night, as Bhagavan was sitting and chatting in the dining-hall, the attendant Krishnaswami came with the walking-stick to take him out. Rising at once Bhagavan remarked jocularly: So, the trainer is coming with the rod, and to its movement the monkey here (pointing to Himself) dances!"

* * * * *

The next day I returned home. Soon afterwards, as advised by the Ashram, I wrote to the Editor of *Swatantra* reminding him of the Golden Jubilee Souvenir presented for review. **On January 7, 1947**, he replied saying:

"I gave the book to Dr. R. Vaidyanadha swami, M. A., D. Sc., Ph. D., who in my opinion is the most competent man to review it. He promised to send the review on Saturday. If it comes in time, it will be published in next week's *Swatantra*."

In my letter to the Ashram dated January 4, 1947. I wrote a prayer that for the sake of us devotees, Bhagavan should regain good health and live till at least another Jubilee. To it the Ashram replied on 11th:

"We have made a special note of your *prayer*, and it is also the prayer of all the devotees. His Grace shall prevail."

As it turned out, Bhagavan lived till His Septuagenary celebration.

On 20th, Nagamma wrote from the Ashram conveying the sad news that Ramanatha Brahmachari, a long associate of Bhagavan, died at Madras where he had gone a fortnight ago. The Brahmachari whom Bhagavan used to call *Vadhyar* (school-master) was humility itself. Paying my tribute to him I wrote to Nagamma and suggested that the best way of honouring his memory would be to sing his devotional hymn *Ramanaramubhuti* before Bhagavan. On 30-1-1947 she replied that she read out my letter to Bhagavan and that *Ramanaranubhuti* was already recited by the Cuddalore devotees in the Hall as soon as the news of the Brahmachari's demise was received. She also conveyed the disconcerting information that Bhagavan was very much emaciated.

The *Swatantra* review on the Golden Jubilee Souvenir appeared on February 15, 1947. The next day the Ashram wrote to me commenting on it as follows:

"It is well that the Editor found the space for such a long review which, no doubt, is learned. The author however seems to have adopted a relative standard for evaluating the Absolute. It looks so utilitarian to try to judge the highest Realisation by the results achieved in the different walks of life. Even granting the validity of this standard, it is for those interested in the functions of the 'State-self' - (if such a conception is considered as having a basis in the *Upanishads*) - to endeavour for a 'contact' with the silent Exponent of *Atma-Vidya*, and not for the Master who has transcended all relativity to try to effect such a 'contact'. The reason is simple. The master is concerned with what is eternal and unchanging whereas the man of the world is directly concerned with and interested in worldly achievements."

The following letter written by me on the above lines was published in a subsequent issue of the journal:

“*Swatantra* is to be warmly complimented on the learned and brilliant review . . . The description of Ramana Maharshi as ‘a warrior at the core’ and of His *Ulladu Narpadu* as reading ‘very much like the curt, military appraisal of a master-tactician planning a decisive coup’ is as true as it is felicitous . . . Also, the exposition of the Maharshi’s ideal as ‘utter Silence . . . that massed up, in-gathered, pre-creative and proto-creative level (of consciousness) in which there is no trace of auditory or visual elements’ is superb and cannot be improved upon. The review raises to one’s mind two fundamental issues:

- (i) Can the Absolute be evaluated by a relative standard?
- (ii) (ii) Is it not for ‘the interests germane to the State-self’ to endeavour for a ‘contact’ with the silent Exponent of *Atma-Vidya* rather than to expect the reverse to happen, for the obvious reason that the latter is concerned with what is eternal and unchanging while the former aim at temporal, material achievements? (In fact the tenth canto of *Ramana Gita* brings out the Maharshi’s response to a ‘contact’ of that kind).

The story of the boy who played the truant from home in quest of the true Self and steadfastly pursued his goal in the face of all vicissitudes is not quite accurate. In fact the Maharshi realised the true Self at seventeen while he was still at his Madura home which he left later only at the call of his Divine Father Arunachala. His *tapas* ever since has been not of any formal, traditional type but simply ‘the abidance in the Self’. Ramana is a unique instance of one who, when quite young, unaided by any Guru or spiritual lore, almost

accidentally attained Self-Realisation, and in his approach to any question displays absolute originality and directness. His case should therefore be of the utmost interest even to strict rationalists and researchers of psychology.”

On the occasion of the *Sivaratri* festival which fell on February 19, 1947, I composed five Telugu verses entitled *Ramana Koluvu* and enclosed them in a letter to the Ashram. The poem plays on the three meanings of *Kovulu*, namely, (i) service or worship (ii) Durbar-hall and (iii) measure. The hymn is as follows:

“1. This is *Sivaratri* when *Hari* and other gods worshipped *Siva* who was emerging. Does it not behoove us now to worship Ramana Maharshi, the sanctifier of all mortal and immortal creation, the *Kumara* (Son-God) who is sitting in Durbar on the lap of the father (Arunachala)?

2. At one time He destroyed the wicked demon Taraka burst open the Krouncha hill and thus served Heaven. Now, likewise, He is serving the earth. Does it not behoove us to worship Ramana Maharshi?

3. To ‘serve’ or to ‘worship’ does not mean an attempt to measure Ramana with mortal intellects which are bound by Time and Space. Can the common scale measure the Cardinal Mountains?

4. The same disgrace that overcame Brahma and Vishnu for undertaking to measure Arunachala will surely fall on the small minds that presume to measure Ramana.

5. ‘Who is it that serves or worships?’ In this thought-furnace let us throw our ego and reduce it to ashes. That would be the true service or worship of Guru Ramana the Supreme Self, on *Sivaratri*.”

Acknowledging my letter, the Ashram wrote on 22nd:

“The poems have been noted . . . The letter to the Editor of *Swatantra* will serve the purpose well.”

In the last week of March, 1947, Rayasam Narasimhamurti, an advocate of Bhimavaram, sent to me a little contribution wishing me to utilise it in the service of Bhagavan. On being informed of this, the Ashram authorised me to use it for the printing of my Sisa-Malikas of *Ulladu Narpadu* and *Anubandham*. The amount sufficed for the purchase of paper and *Vysya Press* with characteristic devotion did the printing free. The way in which the book came to be published was indeed a further token of Bhagavan’s Grace.

About the middle of May, 1947, I visited the Ashram. The great event of the season was Bhagavan’s Telugu composition of *Ekatma Panchakam* in the Tamil metre, *Venba*. Previously Bhagavan had translated two of His own Tamil *Venbas* on *Birthday* into Telugu verses in *Venba* metre. But this was the first time that Bhagavan wrote original Telugu composition in *Venba* metre. He later rendered the five verses into Tamil *Venbas*, Muruganar then wrote the benedictory *Venba* which Bhagavan Himself had to translate into Telugu *Venba*. Bhagavan had once remarked that the metres in different languages were interchangeable, that in fact Nayana had composed some *slokas* in *Venba* metre and also in *Tiruppugal* metre. This innovation of a new metre in Telugu was quite in accordance with the tradition of the ancient Rishis. *Ekatma Panchakam* is also a *Mantra* of which the *chandas* (metre) is *Venba*, *The Rishi* is *Ramana* and the *Devata* is *Ekatma* (The One Self). The poem is indeed a masterpiece of succinctness and sublime wit. It resembles Sankaracharya’s famous *slokas* in praise of Dakshinamurti to whom it makes an explicit reference in the last stanza. It expounds *Ekatma* (The One Self) as the latter sets forth *Sarvatma* (The Universal Self). In the first verse, the Self dreams Itsself and Its whereabouts in the manner of a drunkard. (Self-Realisation.) In the second verse, the Self queries about Itsself

and Its whereabouts in the manner of a drunkard. In the third verse, the Self locating Itsself in the body commits as ridiculous a blunder as seeing the screen in the picture. In the fourth verse, the Self mistakes the gold of Itsself for the ornament of the body. In the last verse the ever-present Self is expounded in *unspoken speech* (Silence) in the manner of Guru Dakshinamurti. The printing of this work raised a problem. Usually, in Telugu poetry the spacing is according to sense; but Bhagavan insisted that these stanzas must be spaced, as they must be read, according to the division into feet especially as the metre was new in Telugu. After due consideration, Bhagavan graciously accepted my compromise suggestion that the stanzas might be spaced according to *both* the sense and the metre, the *latter* being distinguished by small perpendicular lines. Later Bhagavan Himself rewrote the poem as *Kalivenba* by adding the links between verse and verse. This was His usual practice in His other Tamil poems in *Venba* metre.

Inspired by Bhagavan’s example and greatly encouraged by Him, a few of us Andhra devotees began to compose in *Venba* metre. Guruswamy Iyer of Tiruchuli taught me its rules. On May 27, 1947, I translated *Arunachala Pancharatnam* into Telugu *Venbas*. Bhagavan perused and corrected the work with much pleasure. He also declared that I had an aptitude for *Venba* composition.

Desai, a retired judicial officer of Gujarat, and his wife were constant visitors to the Ashram. One day Bhagavan told me that Desai always begged to be allowed to do some personal service. Bhagavan was much moved at this request of the old gentleman and held him up as an exemplary devotee.

On May 30, 1947, during *Veda Parayanam* I was struck by the Vedic description of God as ‘the Lord of Thieves’, and I composed five verses in Telugu depicting Bhagavan as the Master-Thief as follows:

“1. Lo! even by casting a half-glance Thou stealest completely the stores of sins of all people. Salutation to Thee, O Ramana, Master-Thief!

2. Throughout the world Thou revealest Thyself directly as 'I' 'I', and yet art invisible to all. Salutation to Thee O Ramana, Master-Thief!

3. The veteran thief breaks only into big houses and steals ornaments; but Thou enterest within ourselves and stealest our Heart. Salutation to Thee, O Ramana, Master-Thief!

4. The thief skilfully steals our belongings only. But Thou knock'st away our ego and stealest ourselves. Salutation to Thee, O Ramana, Master-Thief!

5. We beings are all thieves as we have robbed the property of the Supreme Self. Hence salutation to Thee, O Ramana, Master-Thief!"

On reading these verses Bhagavan appeared graciously amused.

In the second week of June, 1947, Chunduru Venkata Reddy and party came from Bezwada for Bhagavan's *darshan*. Venkata Reddy was so overcome with emotion that in spite of remonstrance by the attendants he laid his head on Bhagavan's feet and bathed them with his tears. In the evening, as Bhagavan was returning from the cowshed, Venkata Reddy caught Him on the way for a group-photo near the gate adjoining the guest-room. The sitting was hurriedly improvised. I was then returning from the Ashram Hospital after treatment for sore eyes. Chinnaswami (*Sarvadhikari*) noticing me shouted that I and another devotee P. T. Muthuswami should join the group. When I mildly protested that I had no place in it, the Swami overruled me saying that the group should include *Nammal* (our men). As I was going behind, Bhagavan said:

"Come nearer and stand beside Chinnaswami" I obeyed with an overwhelming sense of the favour conferred by Bhagavan's Grace.

On June 13, 1947, the *Mahapuja*, i.e. the *Maha Samadhi* day of Bhagavan's Mother was celebrated in the Ashram. On that occasion I composed and

presented five *Venbas* in Telugu entitled *Matru Panchakam* (Five Hymns to Mother):

- "1. Mother is God, Mother is Goddess,
Mother is father, Mother is progeny,
Mother is All, Mother is self,
May Mother protect us always!
2. Mother is Peace, Mother is Power,
Mother is the All-creator, Protector,
Mother is Love, Mother is Yogamba
And Mathrubhuteswara indeed.
3. Mother's Grace has manifested as Ramana Rishi,
Mother has given Her Son (Kumara) to us
Mother's will has created the Ashram,
Mother being the Soul Itself.
4. Motherhood is the State of no birth;
The shrine of birth is the All Mother;
The Beauty of Motherhood and Fatherhood
Is Self-aware Bliss of Consciousness.
5. Mother is now verily Thayu-manavar
Who officiated at the confinement of a devotee,
Realisation of Mother spirit is indeed the Great
Adore we the Mother for ever."

[Adoration]

One noon, T. P. Ramachandra Iyer, Subrahmanyam, Director of Public Health, and myself went up to Skandashram and returned. As we took leave at starting, Bhagavan wished that He could accompany us. When we came back, He said, smiling, that without stirring from His seat He also went with us up and down the Hill in spirit. "Indeed" He added, "it has been well

observed that *Atmapradakshinam* (turning round one's own self) is *Bhupradakshinam* (going round the World)."

At this time a new creature, the white peacock presented by the Maharani of Baroda, became the darling of Bhagavan. All the way from Baroda he had travelled in a saloon with an attendant. Though very young he was wonderfully active and intelligent. He had his cage just beside Bhagavan's couch and was watched by Bhagavan day and night. He would get up on Bhagavan's book-rack and gently peck at the books with his beak as if he wanted to read them. He would daily visit the work of temple-construction that was then going on in the Ashram. So Bhagavan designated him 'the building-supervisor'. Occasionally he would also enter the dining-hall and walk between the rows of people seated at meals, and so he earned from Bhagavan the title *Assistant Sarvadhikari!*

One noon Subbalakshamma observed that the white peacock who was being so much fondled by Bhagavan might be Madhavaswami, the late attendant of Bhagavan. A little later as I entered the Hall, Bhagavan said that some people believe that the white peacock was the reincarnation of Madhavaswami; and ever afterwards Bhagavan used to address him as 'Madhava'.

On June 20, 1947, I composed eight Telugu verses on the white peacock in *Mayura Vrittam* (peacock-metre) and presented them to Bhagavan in the Jubilee pandal. He appeared greatly pleased with them and handing them to Srimati Lalita Venkataraman, he suggested that she might sing them with her *vina*. Within half an hour she brought her *vina* and got ready to sing. Just then the white peacock was absent. Bhagavan said, "But the hero must be present to hear his praises sung! Where are you, Madhava? come." Lo! at once the white peacock jumped down from the roof of the pandal; and while Lalita Venkataraman sang, he spread out his tail feather and danced as Bhagavan sat and watched him with beaming eyes. When the singing

concluded, the peacock walked to the *vina* and pecked at its strings with his beak. Thereupon Bhagavan told the singer, "Madhava wants you to repeat the song." So she sang once more and the peacock danced again. It was a sight for the gods to see.

As desired by Mrs. Talyarkhan I translated the verses as follows:

"1. O White Peacock, speak quick, art thou Ayyaswami who saying "I will never leave you whatever might happen" to serve his own Guru, assumed this shape on earth?

2. (Or) say O White Peacock, art thou Madhavan so sweet-natured who while enjoying the bliss of serving the feet of Ramana was snatched away by dull Fate, and has returned thus to Ramana on this earth?

3. Without any diffidence or hesitancy for being new thou cheerfully exercise'st supervision everywhere in the Ashram. Thou also seekest to set books aright. Say, O White Peacock, how hast thou acquired this devotion?

4. Seeing thy lustre, thy beauty, thy graceful gait, thy tremulous gestures, thy gleam and glitter. O White Peacock, our eyes thrill as though Heaven had descended upon earth to dance.

5. Bhagavan incessantly gives thee His look overflowing with Grace, love, and great compassion; and He always talks of thee with exceeding zeal. Thou art verily Goddess Lakshmi of Ramanashram, O Peacock!

6. To run as fast to hear the *vina*-music and dance, so finely and wonderfully, to get imprinted thus in the pure mind of Ramana of Arunachala, thou mayst be the Goddess Saraswati incarnate, O Peacock!

7. Perhaps the radiance of *Satvaguna* (purity and light) has thus manifested in shape. Perhaps the Vedic utterance *That Thou art*, Bhagavan's exclusive possession complete perfection art thou alone, O White Peacock!

8. Where is this Arunachala! Where is that Baroda! Having been born there, to have thus joined Maharshi here, art thou the Peacock of God Skanda. O thou of moon-like body? Hail to thee, O beloved Son of Bhagavan!”

One noon I remonstrated with Bhagavan for taking very diluted buttermilk which contained little nourishment. At this Bhagavan laughed and replied: So, you want me to take thick buttermilk or curds which would be better still. Isn't it? I too see the advantage. By so doing I would be getting a writing-table free of cost!

I said that I didn't understand His meaning. He explained:

“Already I have a big belly, by taking thick buttermilk or curds, it would bulge out still more into the shape and size of a table which I could conveniently use for writing on!”

So, He pooh-poohed my suggestion as He always did any advice for improving his diet.

One evening a young French couple visited Bhagavan in the Jubilee pandal. The young man put a question: “Which book is the best guide to Truth?”

Bhagavan replied:

“All scriptures declare that Truth is *within* yourself, that in fact you are That. Then how can you find Truth in books that are *without* (outside) yourself? Your searching for Truth in books is like the light seeking itself in the shadow.”

The young man again asked:

“Does the *Bhagavad Gita* help us to dive within ourselves and get at Truth?”

Bhagavan: “Certainly.”

Finally, the youth asked for Bhagavan's favourite verse in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Bhagavan at first parried the question but when the young man pressed it with earnest entreaty, Bhagavan replied: *Ahamatma Gudakesa* in Chapter X which was interpreted thus:

**I am the Self, O Gudakesa, dwelling in the Heart of everything;
I am the beginning, the middle, and likewise the end of all beings.**

I had to start back on June 25, 1947. Early that morning Bhagavan enquired in the Hall how I would travel as all trains between Katpadi and Villupuram were then suspended. I replied that I would go by bus. Then Bhagavan said: “You have to book your seat in advance and be at the bus stand early as there is likely to be a great rush of passengers.” Soon after Bhagavan left for His ablutions, the Rajah Saheb of Wanaparti who had come with an offer to purchase Bhagavan's Madura home (now 'Ramana Mandir') for the Ashram, and who was present in the Hall at that time, came to the guest-room, got himself introduced to me by his Secretary, Raja Rao and his friend M. Macdoor, and kindly volunteered to take me in his car to Madras where he was also going with his Secretary and his friend that day. Thanking him for the offer, I however insisted that he should obtain the approval of Bhagavan for it. When Bhagavan returned to the Hall, the Rajah Saheb told Him about his offer to me. At once Bhagavan turned to me smiling and said: “So, you are saved all the bother of a bus journey and can now travel in comfort - You are lucky!” Accordingly, I accompanied the Rajah Saheb in his car to Madras and had the additional fortune of halting at Kanchipuram on our way and visiting the temples there. This struck me as another marvel of Bhagavan's Grace. ... [End of Audio file No.7](#)

(English Text- Pages: 74 – 82 - Telugu Audio file No. 9 - 1947-49, Telugu Book pages: 327-370- 55min) On July 1, 1947, J. C. Nanavati, an ardent devotee, wrote to me from Bombay: “Although I am bodily here and expect to be here for some months more, my heart longs to be back in the holy presence of Bhagavan.”

On the same date occurred the sad demise of A. R. Doraswami Iyer, a veteran devotee and energetic personality in the Ashram, whose special project was the garden. In my letter to the Ashram dated 4th, I composed two Telugu verses which paid a tribute to the untiring services of the deceased devotee and offered the following prayer:

“May the creepers and plants of the Ashram garden that have grown under the vigilant, fostering care of Doraswami Iyer spread ever the fragrance of his sweet memory.”

In a letter dated 12th, R. Narayana Iyer made the following remarkable observations:

“I consider my life itself as a long prostration to Bhagavan, our father. When I think of it, since the day I came into His presence, is there any conscious moment when he is away from my thoughts? . . . I have come today, light as a lark . . . now no worry, no load on my heart. What has happened? you will ask. Nothing but an hour in Bhagavan’s presence this morning. I don’t meditate ever. I don’t know how to do it, or if I try, just the opposite happens. A vast train of ideas, pictures from all corners of the globe come up. So I simply sit. Yet something happens. Something inside me gets contacted with something invisible from Bhagavan, and I don’t even know it. But I am sure it is the case.”

On August 21, 1947, and again on September 30th, Nagamma wrote to me that Bhagavan was getting weaker and thinner without apparent cause of ill-health. This information naturally filled my mind with anxiety.

On September 8, 1947, the Krishna Jayanti Day I composed two Telugu verses on Bhagavan as follows:

1. “That day He spoke *Gita*; even this day He has graciously vouchsafed the essence of *Gita*. That day *Natha* (God Vishnu) was Krishna; today is Guru Ramana. Know ye the Truth.
2. Indeed the Guru is Brahma, Vishnu, Siva and verily the Supreme Brahman. So I adore the lotus feet of Guru Ramana.”

About this time there was brought out a new edition of *Vichara Manimala*, a Tamil summary of the famous *Vichara Sagara* (by Saint Nischaladas), which had been written by Bhagavan in the notebook of Arunachala Mudaliar and published by that devotee in 1909. Now at the request of some Andhra devotees, Bhagavan graciously rendered it into Telugu and it was published under the same title. One sentence in it read: “As soon as the slight obstacle of the finger, etc. is removed, the dazzling sunshine manifests itself. Likewise, as soon as the slight trace of ignorance is removed from the mind, Brahman shines automatically with ‘Self-Illumination’. I could not understand the reference to ‘the finger’ in the simile of the above passage, and Bhagavan graciously explained, through Nagamma’s letter of 30th, that it referred to the common practice of seeing the sun but holding a finger before the eye to avoid the glare. When the finger is dropped, the sun appears in its full splendour.

I again visited the Ashram on October 14, and stayed there during the Dasarah vacation. The temple building was approaching the final stages. Every day we did special worship with a thousand names, etc. and the Goddess Yogamba was splendidly decorated in one of Her manifestations.

T. Rami Reddy of Nellore, who was also on a visit to Bhagavan, presented all the Ashram workers with new clothes. Jagadguru Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Pitham was now camping near Tiruvannamalai. Someone asked whether His Holiness and Bhagavan ever met. Bhagavan replied:

“When were we separate that we should now meet? We are always together.”

One afternoon Bhagavan stood near the guest-room leaning on his walking-stick and was talking to a poor-looking young girl and a boy. As I was passing that way, Bhagavan called me, and pointing to them, He sighed and said, “These are also motherless children.” As He spoke, a tear glistened in His eye.

Another day Bhagavan showed me some Sanskrit *śloka*s composed long ago by Sundarananda Swami. One of them contained the following dialogue:

‘Hullo! *Bhikshu* (*Sannyasi*), whence are you coming?’
‘From the side of Arunachala.’
‘Anything particular there?’
‘Yes, a certain *siddha* (sage) named Ramana is there distributing, out of His Grace, *bhukti* (food) and *Mukti* (Salvation) to the virtuous.’
‘How did he acquire that power?’
‘Through God-realisation by his own hard penance.’
‘I am wonder-struck. I shall hasten thither to see him’.

At this time Bhagavan had a bad cold. He had very much reduced His food intake, though he would never admit it, but on the other hand would say that he was eating too much. I left the Ashram on December 26, 1947, in great anxiety because of Bhagavan’s ill-health.

On November 1, 1947, Nagamma wrote to my immense relief, that Bhagavan was now improved in health, His cold having subsided; and that He was taking more food. This was confirmed by the Ashram letter of the 3rd. It was further corroborated by a letter dated 17th from A. Mahadeva

Sastri, the son of late Kavya-kantha, who was then on a visit to the Ashram. Again on 26th, Nagamma wrote reiterating the same reassuring news. I felt as though Bhagavan Himself out of his Grace was speaking through so many voices to relieve my anxiety.

I went to the Ashram on December 22, 1947, to attend Bhagavan’s *Jayanti* celebration, which was celebrated on 29th. On that occasion I composed five Telugu verses which might be summarised as follows:

“1. Today is the most auspicious day when Ramana Maharshi incarnated on the earth. Ye devotees, foregather, adore the lotus-feet of Ramana.

2. To save all these souls that regard Him as Mother, Father, Guru and God, the Supreme Self verily assumed name and form on the earth as Ramana. Ye countless devotees, plunder that infinite treasure of Grace. Why so many words!

3. Thou hast achieved brahma-padam (the status of Brahman) even without studying Brahmapadam (the word Brahman). Without initiation from Guru (Master), Thou knew’st to initiate Guru (Father Siva).

Though Thou hast renounced the world in boyhood,
Thou own’st the whole world as Thy family.

Though merged in the Samadhi of Silence, Thou, hast proclaimed the goal of Reality.

Power and Peace, Truth and Refinement, hard dispassion and soft compassion have uniquely blended in Thee. How can I describe Thee, O Ramana!

4. In the most wicked world and in this age of lowest depravity, our former virtue has brought to us Thyself our Master. So, it now rests with Thee, O Bhagavan, to perfect and save us all out of Thy full Grace.

5. O Thou constellation of all virtues, that hast manifested as the ideal of the human world, blessing to Thee!

O Thou *Satchitanand* (Being-Knowledge-Bliss) that hast taken this form of Grace, victory to Thee!

O Thou Son of Arunachala that destroyest the demon, world of dark ignorance, happiness to thee!

O Thou blessed one that hast miraculously attained Self-realisation in boyhood, benediction to Thee!

O Thou Divinity that hast incarnated to captivate the hearts of devotees, love to Thee;

O Thou Universal Captain that art steering the ship of the world out of peril, long, long life to Thee!"

* * * * *

The New Year 1948, began for me in the Ashram with a serious illness. During a visit to Skandashram I had a sudden attack of diarrhoea which confined me to bed in the guest-room for two days. As I used to spend most of my time in the Hall, Bhagavan noticed my absence on the first day itself and He sent word that I should take medicine immediately and avoid the fruit juice diet usually prescribed by allopathic doctors. On the third day, in the early morning, I heard someone outside the guest-room window calling me by name. I looked, and lo! it was Bhagavan Himself. He enquired "How are you?" I replied "Slightly better". I was thrilled and overwhelmed by Bhagvan's gracious condescension. That morning Chinna-swami (the *Sarvadhikari*) called me and administered a dose of *Ayassinduram* of which he had a stock. He also insisted on my eating a little rice-meal. Thereafter I recovered rapidly. But Bhagavan vomited that night at dinner and fell ill, as

though He had taken my sickness on Himself. So I returned from the Ashram on January 4, 1948, in great anxiety about Bhagavan's health.

On January 9, 1948, Balarama Reddy wrote from the Ashram saying, "His cold is gone and He is looking normal. But I continued to hear alarming reports of deterioration in Bhagavan's health and made anxious enquiries. On 23rd I had letters from the Ashram, from R. Narayana Iyer and from Nagamma all reassuring me about Bhagavan's recovery. Narayana Iyer wrote:

"I showed your card to Bhagavan. As He was reading it, He commented: 'Then I wasn't eating well. Now I am eating like a glutton. How much better I should be considered now!' From this you can draw your own inference. His health hasn't been good for nearly a year. His hands and legs are thin . . . People who haven't seen Bhagavan for a year or so get alarming impressions and spread their negative thoughts. This is not desirable."

Nagamma's letter also repeated the above-quoted words of Bhagavan and warned me not to give credence to hearsay reports on Bhagavan's health.

On 18th Nagamma wrote that as the old Hall had not sufficient space for the ever-increasing crowd of visitors, Bhagavan shifted His seat to the Jubilee Mantap open on all sides and was now giving *darshan* there day and night. The almond and mango trees intertwined and look like natural pillars, the fine cage behind and the little bathing-pool for the white peacock in front with the sparrows sporting in it form a beautiful scene. Nagamma also described in a Telugu verse how she once enjoyed the sight of Guru Ramana being attended by the white peacock on one side and a rainbow-coloured peacock on the other. The picture got imprinted on the screen of her heart. She wished that she were a great poet or painter to do justice to the celestial spectacle.

On 21st, the Ashram sent a gracious message wishing success to the anniversary celebration of the Nellore Cow Protection Society of which I was then the Secretary.

The message added:

‘May your Society continue its useful service for a long time with Bhagavan’s blessings!’

On May 6th. I visited the Ashram with my elder son Sundara Rajan. The next day we consulted Raju Sastri (a reputed astrologer who led the *Veda Parayana* before Bhagavan), regarding the horoscopes of my boy and of two girls. He said that there was perfect agreement between the former and one of the latter. He added that the ‘Guru Balam’ (the strength of Guru) was so great that their marriage must take place on the 21st instant. He repeated it to Bhagavan after the evening *Parayana*. On enquiry I replied that I did not contemplate the function at that time. Bhagavan remarked:

“What is destined must happen whether you intend or not.”

I took Bhagavan’s words as a hint that I must go ahead with the function. So I wired to the girl’s father and got him to the Ashram the third day. Raju Sastri drafted the Lagna Patrika. It was corrected and approved by Bhagavan. Then Bhagavan told the bride’s father and myself:

“Now you both can go, see the function through and come back with the couple.”

Though the interval was very short, the ‘Guru Balam’ was such that the celebration went off very well. On 18th J. C. Nanavati wrote from Bombay:

“I wish Sundara Rajan and his bride a long, happy, prosperous and harmonious life with devotion to Bhagavan.”

The next day Nagamma presented the couple with a photograph of Bhagavan and wrote that it *was handed to her by Bhagavan Himself*. The picture has since become the object of our daily worship. The same day R. Narayana Iyer wrote:

“May Bhagavan shower His blessing on His staunchest devotee! . . . May Seshamma rekindle the light of the home and radiate joy and happiness. May Sundararajan and his wife vie with each other in their devotion!”

On the 21st the marriage day, the Ashram wrote:

“Biksha has been given today and *Prasad* is sent herewith. May Bhagavan bless the function to go well and the couple to lead a happy and harmonious life.”

On June 10th the new couple and party including myself visited the Ashram and had *darshan* of Bhagavan. On seeing the very young bride Bhagavan called her ‘a bride of the old times’. Bhagavan was now graciously pleased to hear my daughter Alagamma recite *Upadesa Saram* in Sanskrit and Telugu. Just then Bhagavan was correcting the draft of the *Kumbhabhishekam Patrika* for the mother’s temple. He called Alagamma to Him, and saying “Mother, this is your affair”, He handed her the *Patrika*.

After the party left, I stayed on in the Ashram. **The eighteenth of June, 1948**, is memorable in the annals of the Ashram as the holy day of **the Cow Lakshmi’s release**. On that day, early in the morning, Jagadiswara Sastri informed Bhagavan that Lakshmi was seriously ill. Bhagavan, after breakfast went to the cow-shed and saw her lying prostrate and breathing hard. Bhagavan sat beside her, took her head into His arms, and gently stroked her neck. He fixed His gracious gaze on her eyes. At once Lakshmi’s breathing became steady and harmonious. As their eyes met, tears trickled from both. Those of us who stood close by could not contain our emotions. Nearly half

an hour passed this way. It was indeed a sight for the gods. At last Bhagavan addressed her in the tenderest voice saying:

“Amma (Mother), Lakshmi, what dost thou want? I must now go to the Hall as the people there will be asking for me. But *wherever I may be, I will never leave thee. I will be always with thee. Thou art all right.*”

Lakshmi breathed her last peacefully at 11-45 a.m. That afternoon Bhagavan composed a Tamil Venba saying:

“The twelfth day in the bright half of the third month of the year Sarvadhari - Friday with the star Visaakha - declare it as the day when the cow Lakshmi attained Vimukti (Salvation).”

Bhagavan Himself rendered the verse later into Telugu and Malayalam *Venbas*. It was a unique honour to the cow. Bhagavan observed that He had not sung like this even at His Mother’s demise.

That evening the cow’s body was carried in a procession to the pit dug near the entrance beside the *samadhi* of the Ashram birds and animals. After elaborate worship with *Vedic* chanting, the body was laid inside the cavity that had been stocked with salt, camphor and sandal powder. A vast crowd had gathered. Bhagavan sat in a chair near the pit throughout and supervised everything. He now threw His handful of *Vibhuti-prasad* on the body, and all the others followed suit. The pit was then closed with earth. We reassembled with Bhagavan in the Jubilee pandal and *pori* (puffed rice) was distributed to all. Later Bhagavan’s Tamil *Venba* was inscribed on Lakshmi’s *samadhi* on which was set up a life-like statue of the cow.

Lakshmi had held a unique position in the Ashram. From a calf she had grown here and had presented many calves, mostly on Bhagavan’s birthdays. She would majestically walk up to Bhagavan ignoring the presence of all others, and sometimes lick His body; and Bhagavan must

feed her with hill-plantains, iddies and other things with his own hand. Bhagavan’s tenderness towards her was striking. One evening while thus feeding the cow, He had told me that, though she was in the form of an animal, she could understand every syllable of what we said. Now He explicitly declared in writing that she had achieved Salvation.

Along with several other devotees I also paid homage to the cow’s memory in six Telugu verses, in which the ignorant human race that arrogates to itself a position of superiority over the animal creation, is exhorted to feel humble before this Divine glory of the cow Lakshmi.

On June 27th Nagamma in her letter gave an account of the tenth-day ceremony after the cow Lakshmi’s demise. She wrote:

“Yesterday Bhagavan was pleased to tell us the contents of your letter. A day or two after you left, Bhagavan composed a *Venba* in Malayalam on Lakshmi . . . Today is the tenth day since Lakshmi passed away *Pooja* was performed near her *samadhi* till 10-30 a.m. Viswanatha Swami read out Bhagavan’s three *Venbas* and his own Sanskrit *sloka*. G. Subba Rao recited your verses and his own Telugu *Venba* . . . The Paper containing Dr. Syed’s article on Lakshmi also arrived today and Dr. Syed himself read it out. The *Pooja* went off well . . . After you left, we met here the grandson of Arunachalam Pillai who first brought Lakshmi to the Ashram with her mother. From him we learnt that Lakshmi came here first in 1926. Their native village is Kumaramangalam. The person who looked after Lakshmi in the town was a Canarese man named Pasupati Iyer. Bhagavan asked me to write the above to you.”

On July 29, Nagamma again wrote as follows:

“I composed the story of the cow Lakshmi in 64 *dwipadas* (couplets) . . . Bhagavan has rendered the 68 *slokas* of *Atmabodha* by

Sankaracharya into Tamil *Venbas*. It took Him ten days and was completed on the 27th. This is the important event at the Ashram.”

I later learnt that a Muslim poet presented his Tamil translation of *Atmabodha* to Bhagavan and that it served as the occasion for Bhagavan’s composition.

On August 23, Nagamma informed me in a letter that Bhagavan was having toothache.

Oruganti Narasimha Yogi visited Bhagavan on 3-9-1948 with family and stayed in the Ashram for three days. He had told me that a friend of his gifted with Yogic powers saw and measured the ethereal light around many saints and sages, but could find no limit to the halo of Bhagavan.

On September 5th Nagamma wrote saying that Bhagavan’s toothache had subsided but that His old ailment eczema now reappeared. She poignantly added: Just as you said, it is only our *Prarabdha* which is afflicting His body.

I went to the Ashram as usual during the ensuing Dasarah vacation in October. Soon after arrival when I went for *darshan* at about 7-15 p.m., Bhagavan was sitting on His couch in the Jubilee pandal with eyes closed, and the devotees were just beginning to recite the Telugu *Upadesa Saram*. I quietly prostrated and sat down. As the *Parayana* ended, Bhagavan opened His eyes, saw me and asked when I had come. Hearing my reply, Bhagavan observed:

“It is very curious. Just as they began the Telugu *Upadesa Saram*, you came to my mind. Now opening my eyes I see *you*; and you tell me that you entered at the beginning of this Telugu *Parayana*.”

Early next morning, as they were reciting the line in *Ramana Chatwarimsat* ‘*Laharim Prama-dasya Sada Vahata*’, Bhagavan informed me that Narendra Kesari Sarma of Nepal had composed 52 Sanskrit verses in *Sikharini* metre

in praise of Bhagavan under the title *Ramana Lahari* and presented it at his first *darshan* of Bhagavan. Immediately T. P. Ramachandra Iyer brought and showed me the manuscript. That very day a letter was received from Narendra Kesari Sarma, which concluded with a *sloka* meaning:

**“Though dwelling at Arunachala,
Bhagavan Ramana is the sun to the lotus of the Heart,
And the moon to the ocean of Grace;
May He save us!”**

As Bhagavan showed it to me, I copied the *sloka* in my notebook. On October 15th, Bhagavan casually quoted a *sloka* which meant: “Knowing *Jiva*, one is seized with fear; Knowing Brahman, one becomes fearless.”

He also cited a famous *sloka* from *Atma Bodha* which contains a pun on the phrase *Atmarama* and an implied comparison between the career of Rama and that of a Yogi, as follows:

**“Having crossed the ocean of Moha (delusion),
Having killed the demons of lust and hate,
The Yogi reunited to Peace,
Shines as Atmarama (one who rejoices in the Self).”**

I rendered it into a Telugu *Venba* and submitted it to Bhagavan. He corrected it, and with evident pleasure He remarked how nice it would be if the whole work could be thus translated into Telugu.

Bhagavan also pointed out an important verse in the Tamil *Arunachala Mahatmyam*, which was omitted in the Telugu version. The next day I translated it into a Telugu *Sisa Padyam* and submitted it to Bhagavan. He appeared pleased with it and had it copied and attached to the Telugu work in the appropriate place. The verse read thus:

**“All rocks here are Lingas; This is the realm of Siva.
The trees here are the celestial plants;
Water here is the Ganges flowing from Siva’s plaited hair;**

**All food here is but ambrosia;
To walk one step here is to go round the whole world.
Any utterance here is the Word of Veda;
E'en slumber here is Samadhi;
Can any other place equal this sacred Arunachala?"**

Two days later, as I started back in the evening, Bhagavan remarked:

"This is again so very curious. The wheel has come full round. It is now 7-15 p.m., and once again they are beginning to recite the Telugu *Upadesa Saram*. So, the same poem that gave you welcome is now bidding you farewell."

With this gracious benediction of Bhagavan I was over-whelmed. At the end of December, I again visited the Ashram and stayed for a fortnight. This time I arrived in the morning. Bhagavan had just risen for his constitutional. He pointed me out to Nagamma and said smiling, "So he has come." Nagamma replied that she was sure of my coming because she heard the 'crow's message' when Bhagavan enquired of me early that morning. Later Bhagavan informed me that G. Sambasiva Rao would shortly celebrate his *Shashti-purti* (completion of sixty years) at the Ashram.

* * * * *

It was the 9th of January 1949. The day was doubly auspicious to me as the *Shashti-purti* day of G. Sambasiva Rao and was also the day of my wife's annual ceremony. That very morning G. Sambasiva Rao arrived. Bhagavan while going to the dining-hall asked me, "Did you see the bridegroom?" I replied, "No." Then Bhagavan turning back, pointed to Sambasiva Rao, and smiling, "There he is." The day's mail brought a tribute in verse to Sambasiva Rao from M. Ramakrishnayya of Nellore. Bhagavan, giving them to me for perusal, enquired whether I had composed any verses for the occasion. Taking it as a directive I penned a few verses on my esteemed friend, and then being in the mood I also wrote five verses on my wife. Soon after lunch, sitting behind the dining-hall I was delighted to see Bhagavan walking down the Hill. It was long since Bhagavan had discontinued going up the Hill for

reasons of health. So this rare *darshan* of Bhagavan on the Hill-slope like the vision of God Siva climbing down Kailasa, filled my heart with ecstasy. At noon we learnt that His Holiness Sankaracharya of Puri Jagannath had arrived in the Ashram and would see Bhagavan at 3 p.m. At 2-30 p.m. I went to Bhagavan who was now alone in the Jubilee-pandal. As soon as He saw me, He said, "Now our boy would be placing the *pindam* (oblation) at Vishnu-padam." I was struck by this observation, as in fact my son Sundararajan was that day performing his mother's ceremony at Gaya. Bhagavan also graciously perused my verses on my wife and gave me a long, compassionate look. The last verse read:

**"In this night of my life in which the path is shrouded in darkness
Lo! two sacred lights do pierce the gloom.
One is Ramana, the Light of Arunachala;
The other is the light of thy memory, O beloved."**

Bhagavan now asked me to call Sambasiva Rao and jocularly observed: "The bridegroom's function must be concluded before the *Sannyasi's*." When Sambasiva Rao came, Bhagavan asked me to read out the verses of M. Rama-krishnayya and of myself. My last verse stated that nothing was wanting for the bridegroom except the bride who had departed from this world seven years ago. On hearing this, Bhagavan protested saying:

"Where has she gone? You forget the very name Sambasiva Rao. He is *sa + amba Siva*, i.e. Siva together with the mother-Goddess. The *Amba* is part and parcel of Siva always."

With this comment Bhagavan received the verses from me and graciously handed them to Sambasiva Rao with His silent benediction.

Now the pandal was full of devotees. Bhagavan sat bolt upright in the lotus-posture. His Holiness Sankaracharya entered clad in saffron robes, holding his *dandam* (staff). He saluted Bhagavan in ceremonious style and sat near His feet. Bhagavan gave the Swami a long gaze radiating Grace. All were wrapped in Silence and thrilled with the beatific Presence. Bhagavan now

shone as the living representative of Dakshinamurti proclaiming the Truth of the Supreme Self in Silence. It was indeed a sight for the gods.

On January 10, 1949, my son wrote to me as follows:

“Yesterday morning I went to Gaya and performed mother’s ceremony . . . At noon I placed the six ‘pindas’ over the Vishnu-pad. I also visited in the evening Buddha Gaya where I offered prayers . . . I felt as though Bhagavan was actually there guiding me throughout.”

The Ashram was now very busy with preparations for the *Kumbhabhishekam* of the Mother’s shrine which was to be celebrated during the third week of March, 1949. The budget for the function was estimated at Rs. 50,000. O. P. Ramaswami Reddiar, an ardent devotee, was then the Chief Minister of Madras. He now visited the Ashram and in a private meeting he said that as North Arcot was a chronic famine area the provision of rice for large-scale feeding presented the greatest difficulty. He urged Sambasiva Rao and myself to collect 20 candies of paddy from our Nellore district which was famed as ‘the granary of South India’. He promised all facilities of transport from the Government.

Our efforts at paddy collection in Nellore succeeded far beyond our expectations and indeed demonstrated the visible operation of Bhagavan’s Grace. To begin with, we approached our Municipal Chairman A. C. Subba Reddy, through his brother A. Venkata Reddy, a staunch devotee. Subba Reddy readily promised to make up all deficiency of our collection in reaching the target of 20 candies, to get all the paddy milled free and to transport the rice in the Co-operative Stores Lorry to the Ashram. The last promise was most valuable in view of the threatened strike on the South Indian Railway. N. Balarama Reddy contributed five candies on behalf of himself and his relations. T. Rami Reddy besides making his own contribution accompanied us to see some donors. Not only known devotees

but even politicians willingly responded. A few gave money in addition to their paddy offerings. My *sambandhi* A. Subrahmanyam gave, besides paddy, cow-ghee for *Homam* (ghee-oblation). Still there remained a deficit of nearly four candies and it was made up by A. C. Subba Reddy’s generosity. This was indeed a wonderful experience for Sambasiva Rao and myself. One incident will serve as an example. It was *Maha-sivaratri* day. In the morning we both started by bus to a village named Allur. Sambasiva Rao had arranged for our breakfast at Mopur which lies on the way. Our intention was to visit Allur in the afternoon with our Mopur host. But engrossed in our talk, we forgot to get off at Mopur and discovered our mistake too late. So we had to go straight to Allur. There we got off at the terminus without any idea of what to do. I then remembered that the local High School Headmaster M. Narasimhachary was my old student. So we both went directly to his house. Narasimhachary was glad to see us. He not only received us heartily but insisted upon our lunching with him. After the meal he accompanied us to all prospective donors in Allur and secured for us a cordial reception everywhere. He further undertook the responsibility of collecting the paddy in that village and sending it to Nellore. He helped us so much though he had never seen Bhagavan. He also entertained us to a sumptuous dinner and saw us off in the evening. So, on the *Sivaratri* day we the *smartas* were entertained as in our Ashram and were highly helped in the holy mission by a *Vaishnava* devotee. We felt it as characteristic of Bhagavan’s universal spirit. The twenty candies of paddy was milled and ready for transport. The Government had granted a permit in my name for collecting and milling the paddy and another special permit to A. S. Subba Reddy for transporting it in his lorry from Nellore to Tiruvannamalai. At the eleventh hour there arose a bottle-neck. The Regional Transport Officer at Vellore, not satisfied with the transport permit to A. C. Subba Reddy, refused to give petrol coupons unless he received special orders from the higher authorities. So, on March 13, 1949 I went to Madras with an application from Reddy to the Government for the requisite coupons. The function was

to commence the next day. Leaving my luggage in the Central Station cloakroom, I hastened to see the Chief Minister, O. P. Ramaswami Reddiar. He was surprised and at once he telephoned to the Provincial Transport Officer saying that this was like the proverbial refusal of the boon by the priest, in spite of its having been granted by God. D. S. Sastri another devotee who was then with the Chief Minister took me in his car and introduced me to the Provincial Transport Officer, M. Hanumanta Rao, who was himself a devotee, but as it was Sunday evening, we could not contact any Regional Officer till late in the night. Only at about 10-30 p.m. I got the coupons and returned to the station to find that the cloakroom and the canteens were all closed. So with hungry stomach I lay down on the bare floor to sleep. I felt like doing *tapasya* (penance) but at the same time I was in a seventh heaven of bliss for having succeeded in my mission. The next morning, I rushed to Vellore and from there I accompanied our lorry in its first trip with the rice bags. When I entered the Ashram Bhagavan was seated in the special pandal adjoining the temple amidst a vast crowd. As soon as I appeared at the entrance, Bhagavan noticed me as if He had been looking out for me. He at once observed to Sambasiva Rao: "Look there! Subbaramayya has come. You were saying that he would not arrive till tomorrow."

So, He greeted me with a gracious look and sweet smile. It was a matter of supreme satisfaction that Nellore had responded so magnificently. Her gift, which was free and voluntary, was made at a time of strict rationing when paddy was selling at over Rs. 400 per candy. Many of the donors attended the function with their families and offered devout homage at the lotus-feet of Bhagavan. The Ashram was filled with special pandals for chantings, *Homams* etc. and wore a festive appearance. With special electric decoration of rainbow colours on a large scale it looked like a fairy-land in the night. The music and chanting and *Homam* went on night and day. Innumerable visitors who flocked for the occasion were well lodged and

sumptuously entertained by the Ashramites who worked tirelessly. It was a marvel of efficient organisation and cordial co-operation, and it was a most impressive demonstration of Bhagavan's Grace.

The whole function occupied four days from 14th to 17th of March. All the four days the Ashram resounded day and night with various rituals, group-chantings, processions, pipe-music and the bustle of huge crowds. The main function *i.e.*, *Maha-kumbhabhi-shekam* (Sanctification with water) was performed on 17-3-1949 from 11 a.m. to 12-30 p.m. on the top of the temple-tower, and it was witnessed by lakhs of people from the ground, from terraces, from tree-tops and from the Hill. It was also graced by the presence of His Holiness Sankaracharya of Puri Jagannath. That night the *Maha-bhishekam* and *Sri Chakra Puja* took place inside the temple till 11 p.m. The temple hall was decorated like a Durbar and within it, on a stone-couch overspread with cushions, a scarlet cloth of gold and a tiger skin, was seated Bhagavan like *Maha-Vishnu* in *Vaikuntam* or *Maheshwara in Kailasam*. The pipers were all the time playing excellent music in the Hall. Streams of devotees were pouring in and bowing before Bhagavan. Even then the Ashram routine was observed and dinner was served as usual before 8 p.m., but Bhagavan refused to stir from His seat till the whole *puja* was concluded. As the others withdrew, I took up the duty of mounting guard near Bhagavan and directing the crowd that bowed and passed in front. Bhagavan glanced at me and enquired, "Why have you not gone for food?" I replied, 'I shall go with Bhagavan.' Bhagavan graciously nodded. It was indeed a most glorious and memorable moment of my life. In reply to my letter after returning home, the Ashram wrote on March 28: Your sacred wish that the Mother's Shrine which is the perfection of sanctity shall, forever radiate peace and knowledge, is the wish of other devotees also and Bhagavan will bless us by granting our wish. ... [End of Audio file No.9](#)

(Audio file No.10- English text- Pages: 83 - 96 (1949-50) & Telugu Book: 370-432- 82min)

With the conclusion of *Kumbhabhi-shekam* our happiness too seems to have concluded, and a new chapter of gloom and anxiety opened. **A few days before the function a small growth on Bhagavan's left arm was removed surgically by the Ashram doctor. Most of us, including myself, did not know it at the time. Shortly after the celebration a new tumour appeared at the same place and grew rapidly. It was also removed by operation on 27th, and the spot was treated with radium.** Though I heard of it, I could not go and see Bhagavan as my daughter Alagamma was then critically ill with double-typhoid. **On May 9, R. Narayana Iyer wrote** from the Ashram as follows: "Bhagavan is well and is improving. He has perplexed doctors and defied them. Well, quite an alarm was created. They said that the arm must be amputated as the tumour would again grow or grow somewhere inside. Unthinkable! What could we do? Those of us who could not vocally express the emotions surging inside were suppressing tears while some exhibited them. Muruganar placed at the feet of Bhagavan some verses. So, the prayers are heeded and the tumour is said to shrink . . . I mentioned that your little daughter is having typhoid. Immediately He said 'Yes. Otherwise, he would be here'."

Just as I was copying in my notebook the first letters of the above verse 'A-d-i' (which means 'foot'), my son Sundararajan who had just returned home handed to me a silver foot saying, "This is *Vishnupadam* (the foot of Vishnu) which I have brought from Gaya." This striking coincidence served to convince me that Ramana is none other than Vishnu, I at once inserted the *Vishnu-padam* adjacent to the word 'A-d-i' in the notebook and it has remained there ever since.

On that very day Nagamma also wrote conveying the same information. Her letter contained her Telugu verse of prayer: How can any illness afflict the great doctor who cures the disease of birth? It must be our offence. Enough of this test. Do relent and recover, O Ramana!

Again on 19th, Narayana Iyer wrote: "Bhagavan Himself said that you would have rushed up but for the illness of your daughter... So, you are here practically with all your mind, just keeping your body there for some acts of

parental duty to a motherless girl. Our Bhagavan is the father and mother not only for your daughter but for all of us, and He is sure to safeguard our interests and welfare. Bhagavan's operation wound is said to be healing and the tumour is said to be shrinking though the doctors are not able to say anything definite yet."

On the same day the Ashram also wrote: The wound in Bhagavan's arm is healing. On 31st Sambasiva Rao wrote reassuringly: His health is all-right; the wound is almost healed up. It will be completely closed up in 5 or 6 days. No reason for any anxiety.

In the second week of June, as soon as Alagamma began to convalesce, I hastened to the Ashram. On arrival I found Bhagavan seated in the dining-hall for breakfast. He had a bandage on the left arm. The moment He saw me, He graciously enquired: "How is Alagamma?" I replied that she was improving. After breakfast I was kindly permitted to accompany Bhagavan to the enclosure of the cowshed where Rangarao, the old devotee and Ayurvedic physician, changed the bandage. The tumour was blood-red and of the size and shape of a small cauliflower. The sight was staggering, though Bhagavan was laughing and joking all the while to divert our attention and encourage us. Bhagavan had now shifted to the temple-hall and was going through His routine as usual. He was answering the questions of visitors and using me as the interpreter. But there was frequent oozing of blood from the wound necessitating changes of bandage, and Bhagavan was visibly weakening.

One afternoon I submitted for Bhagavan's perusal a passage in a journal which stated that the will-power of the patient, if sufficiently strong, would be most efficacious in curing any disease. Bhagavan perused it, smiled, and gave it back without any comment. But that night after meals I overheard from the guest-room Bhagavan telling T. P. Ramachandra Iyer and the attendants: "**Subbaramayya wants me to cure myself with will-power. He**

indicated as much by showing me an article today. But the Jnani has no will of his own. Neither has he a body nor the ills to which it is heir."

The next afternoon Bhagavan asked a woman devotee, Lokammal to sing a lullaby song in Tamil on Krishna and He briefly interpreted it in Telugu and acted every stanza as it was being sung. His gracious acting with the right-arm was very moving. That evening He enquired about my translation of *Atma Bodham* into Telugu *Venbas*. He heard and corrected a few verses. He wanted to go through the whole work, but reluctantly yielded to our proposal that, to avoid giving strain to Him, I might get it corrected by Muruganar.

The next evening, I was sitting near Bhagavan leaning against a pillar in the Temple-Hall. Bhagavan noticing the entrance of Bose, a devotee, informed me that Bose was very weak with heart-trouble and asked me to shift a little and give him my seat. This compassionate consideration was characteristic of Bhagavan.

On June 25th 1949, I composed and submitted to Bhagavan eight Telugu verses entitled 'The Distressed Cry of Devotees'. They voiced the devotees' prayer that Bhagavan should cure Himself for the sake of the devotees who found in Him their sole refuge and could not live for a moment without His gracious glance. They denied that a *Jnani's* body could be liable to disease. How could a temple be affected by pollution? It was all the sin of His devotees that was thus afflicting Bhagavan, and only He could forgive us our sins and heal Himself. This was child's play to the Supreme Self who by His mere Presence created sustained and dissolved all the worlds. The verses concluded with declaring the duty of the devotees as follows:

**To keep your teachings constantly in mind,
To watch your conduct attentively and learn the lessons thereof,
To dispel the delusion of the ego and abide firmly in the Self like You-**

**That is the service which all devotees should render to You their Sadh-Guru,
O Ramana!**

At the end of June, I returned home in hope mingled with anxiety having extracted a promise from a brother-devotee, N. Ramachandra Rao, to write to me frequent bulletins of Bhagavan's health. Accordingly, I was getting letters from him and from Nagamma. From them I learned that on July 3, some Madras doctors examined Bhagavan and returned 'as there was no chance for their further treatment'. On 5th a new herbal treatment was begun by an old villager who had formerly treated Bhagavan for a fracture. The two volumes of *Yoga-ratnakaram* dealing with the treatment of ulcers and tumours, which I sent to the Ashram were, it seems, perused by Bhagavan and entered in the Ashram Library. I heard that on 15th, Bhagavan, while returning from the cow-shed, tottered and nearly fainted but soon revived and improved. That very day my younger son Ramana Prasadam had an attack of high fever which lasted ten days. Meanwhile N. Ramachandra Rao returned from the Ashram to Bangalore and wrote despondently that the herbal treatment was not successful and that the devotees were worried and anxious. So as soon as my son's fever subsided, I rushed to the Ashram on 27th. On account of frequent bleeding from the tumour, Bhagavan had considerably weakened. As the ulcer turned septic, He was running a temperature. To my enquiry how the tumour would go, Bhagavan simply replied: "As it came, so it will go."

Dr. M. Guruswami Mudaliar, with a team of doctors, arrived from Madras and examined Bhagavan. They held a consultation and advised diathermic operation by which not only the tumour would be removed but the diseased tissues would be electrically burnt up. But Bhagavan insisted that the permission of the herbal specialist should first be obtained for change of treatment. Accordingly, he was summoned and persuaded to give his consent. On 30th my mother wrote to me from home saying that Ramana-prasadam had a relapse of fever on the very day of my departure and urged me to return home immediately. The next morning when that letter reached me. Bhagavan had a sudden dropping of the growth and copious bleeding. For the requisite dressing and treatment, all visitors had to be kept out of

the Hall. That noon as I went to take leave of Bhagavan in the dining-hall, I broke down with the double distress. **Bhagavan graciously consoled me saying:**

“Don’t worry. Be at peace. Everything will be well. *To be is our nature, not to go and come.* But if you must think in terms of coming and going, think that you are coming to the Ashram and not going from it. It is all a trick of the mind.”

When I got home, my boy had high fever and was delirious. He did not recognise me. The fever was diagnosed as typhoid, and in spite of administering the latest wonder-drug Chloromycetin, it lasted two months, that is till the middle of September, when the boy recovered by Bhagavan’s Grace. Meantime I was receiving frequent letters about Bhagavan’s health. On August 3, N. Balarama Reddy wrote: “No further falling off of the growth. No temperature yesterday and He looked all right. Slight temperature today. Present general condition gives no cause for anxiety.”

The operation was performed on 7th Aug. 1949. The next day Balarama Reddy wrote:

“Bhagavan underwent the operation yesterday. Dr. Guruswami Mudaliar said the root of the malady was removed and he hoped it would not recur . . . Bhagavan has just shifted from the hospital to the Hall. At the time of the operation there were here a dozen doctors. Bhagavan entered the hospital as it struck seven. At eleven the doctors came out and said the operation had been a success and the arm had been put in plaster. At half-past eleven today the plaster was removed and Bhagavan is looking all right.”

On 13th, the Ashram wrote: Bhagavan’s health is improving satisfactorily.

Again on 31st, the Ashram informed me: The local condition on the arm is quite satisfactory according to the doctor’s report. There is no fever at all. There is still some weakness.

In September, October and November the improvement in the health of Bhagavan was so well maintained that the Ashram regained confidence to attend to the publication of Bhagavan’s works and wrote several letters instructing me to supervise the reprinting of *Vichara-sangraham* and *Viveka-chudamani* in the Vysya Press.

But alas! Our hopes were short lived. In the first week of December another tumour appeared a little above the wound of the old one and it grew rapidly. So, **on Dec. 19th 1949, a fourth operation was performed** and it was removed. As the Allopathic Doctors declared that they could not do anything more besides the dressing of the wound, T. S. Iyer, a retired Accountant General of India residing at Mayavaram, who was a renowned Homoeopathic expert, was sent for and arrived on 24th. The next morning, I reached the Ashram. I learned that Bhagavan was still in the Ashram Hospital and that devotees were allowed to file past Him in a row only for half an hour in the morning and evening. However, I was kindly granted special permission to have *darshan* immediately after my arrival. I was advised not to speak to Bhagavan or disturb Him in any other way. On seeing Bhagavan, I was stunned at the change in His appearance. He lay flat on the bed. His body was pale like paper. But His face and eyes shone all the brighter for the physical emaciation. He spoke no word but His silent look showered His Grace on me all the more. On 27th my mother wrote from home anxiously enquiring how Bhagavan was, what diet He was taking and *whether He was able to talk in a firm tone*. That very morning as I stood before Him for a moment in the queue, Bhagavan spoke to me for the first time since my arrival as if in response to my mother’s prayer. He spoke with effort and in a feeble voice. He enquired whether the reprinting of the Ashram books was completed in the Vysya Press. I replied that *Vichara Sangraham* had been reprinted and I added that the copies were shortly expected.

The Homoeopathic treatment was said to be taking effect. Bhagavan’s wound was slowly healing and His general condition was improving. He

resumed the rice-diet which was served to Him in the hospital. For a whole week I was in daily correspondence about Bhagavan's health with T. P. Ramachandra Iyer who was now at Madras. Chundi Viswanadham of Nellore visited the Ashram with his family and on his return, he wrote on 29th: In Bhagavan's inspiring Presence in the Ashram and in His *darshan* I have, during this stay, experienced a repose. On that day and the next day, I had special *pooja* done in the Ashram temple and in the Town temple for Bhagavan's health. I also went round the Hill praying all the while for Bhagavan's speedy recovery.

On 30th I made bold to enquire of Bhagavan about His health. He simply directed me to T. S. Iyer. Accordingly, I met him in his room at noon, and he kindly gave a full account of Bhagavan's present condition, which was very encouraging and reassuring. Incidentally he noticed a patch of eczema on my left foot, which had been persisting for eight years and had defied all treatment. It was itching badly and I was constantly applying an ointment as a palliative. T. S. Iyer after noting my replies to his queries about it gave me some internal medicine. The very first dose had a wonderful effect. The itching stopped immediately and the ointment has never been applied since.

After a few months' treatment under strict diet-regulation, the eczema disappeared completely and has never since recurred. When I informed Bhagavan about it, He was much pleased. It was certainly of Bhagavan's Grace. On 31st my son Sundararajan wrote from Patna informing me that he performed his mother's annual ceremony at Banaras on the 29th and praying "that Bhagavan will not have any further impediment (the like of which we have witnessed twice) on His way to shower His gracious blessings on us."

* * * * *

On the New Year Day in 1950, Bhagavan surprised us all by quietly shifting at 9 p.m. from the hospital to the small room opposite the Temple-Hall. Many did not know that until they were directed for *darshan* to the northern verandah of the temple and Bhagavan came out and was seated on a sofa in the

narrow corridor before the room. This was a great improve-ment for which the devotees were immensely thankful, as they could sit and have *darshan* of Bhagavan all the time He sat outside. But as the crowd was too large, the women's-section squatted for *darshan* in the coconut grove facing the room.

The next day a bound copy of *Vichara Sangraham* sent in advance by the Vysya Press was perused by Bhagavan and handed to me at the morning gathering. In the afternoon Mr. Duncan Greenlees came for Bhagavan's *darshan*. Immediately on seeing him, Bhagavan asked me to fetch from the Office and deliver to Mr. Greenlees a telegram which a friend of his had sent to the Ashram enquiring about his present address. This shows what a keen interest Bhagavan continued to evince, even in the trivial affairs of His devotees, in spite of His serious illness. To His Grace nothing seemed to be too small. On January 3, 1950, a telegram brought the most sorrowful news that R. Pattabhirama Reddy passed away at Nellore. I immediately submitted it for perusal by Bhagavan and prayed that the departed soul might rest in Peace. That was the last service I could do to my best friend and fellow-devotee.

On Jan. 5th 1950 Bhagavan's Jayanti (70th birthday) was celebrated. That day Bhagavan gave *darshan* for two hours longer than usual. Elaborate worship was done in the temple and *harati* was presented to Bhagavan and then sent round among the devotees. There was a very large gathering of devotees and visitors who had come from long distances. That noon as I was lying in the guest-room prostrate with grief at the demise of my Reddy friend, an attendant came and said that Bhagavan wanted me to read out my last Telugu verses at 3 p.m. before the assembly. It diverted my mind from the sorrow, and showed how Bhagavan's Grace was working to lift me from my despondent state. As I stood before Bhagavan and repeated *The Cry of Devotees*, my voice became choked and I broke down several times. The

friends who observed Bhagavan at the time told me that He was visibly moved and shed tears.

The gradual healing of the wound, the maintenance of a normal temperature, the return of appetite and the steady improvement in the general condition of Bhagavan under the Homoeopathic treatment of T. S. Iyer gave us room for subdued optimism. The silent gatherings morning and evening were imbued more and more with the spirit of deep peace and mellow serenity that seemed to emanate from Bhagavan's beatific Presence.

On the 14th, at noon, with special permission from the Sarvadhikari, I went to take leave of Bhagavan and broke down completely. Bhagavan called me close to Him and asked me to touch the affected arm. He graciously consoled me, saying:

“Don't worry. *It will go. As it came, so it will go.* The body itself is a disease which may be termed *Sthoulyam (Grossness)*. The subtle Spirit is encumbered with this lump of flesh called the body. The body is dead even while the man is alive, for it is but insentient matter. Only the spirit gives it an appearance of life and activity

You people talk of the tumour and name it *Sarcoma Cancer*. But believe me when I tell you that in my view there is no tumour, no *Sarcoma Cancer* at all.”

For about a month after my return I received encouraging and reassuring health-bulletins from the Ashram. On 19th, T. P. Ramachandra Iyer wrote: The Madras doctors who came last Sunday were satisfied with the progress made and the wound was said to be healing very well. They suggested skin-grafting and the application of Penicillin, but these suggestions are not adopted for the present.

The next day R. Narayana Iyer wrote: Bhagavan's condition is said to be satisfactory in the sense that there is no complication. The earlier wound

has healed completely and the later one is gradually healing. Skin graft was not permitted. Restriction in diet has resulted in constipation . . . His general condition is of course very weak. He must be having some pain also. He does not show it. We have the usual sittings before Him, and in His usual way He peers into all those who come in His presence.

On the same day J. C. Nanavati also wrote to the same effect and added: As Sir Chunilal Mehta of Bombay is now here, I had the opportunity of going into Bhagavan's presence in his company at 3 p.m. yesterday. It was the sweetest experience, inexpressible in words. His Grace is overflowing. My constant prayer is that He may make us His worthy instruments.

The next day the Ashram wrote: Good progress is being made towards recovery of normal health... On 25th, T. P. Ramachandra Iyer again wrote: Bhagavan is keeping up improvement... On the last day of January, J. C. Nanavati wrote again: Bhagavan's bodily health is quite all right . . . Till yesterday He was looking a little weak, but today He appeared quite alert and in a jovial mood . . . This morning I took the opportunity of conveying your enquiry about His health and your *Namaskar* to Him. He said 'Hm, Hm' and then nodded His head.”

On February 2, Dr. T. S. Iyer wrote from the Ashram: “I reached this place on the evening of January 26th. For two or three days before my arrival there was an appearance of slight redness and slight inflammation in a portion of the arm, which caused some alarm. I felt that it was due to the stoppage of the action of the medicine, and so I commenced fresh doses from the following day. Now Bhagavan is progressing satisfactorily on the whole.

Again on 6th Dr. T. S. Iyer wrote: The doctors from Madras came yesterday and found His progress quite satisfactory. They have advised some addition in the dressing, the use of Codliver oil, and I have agreed to this. I have started the next dose from this morning, and shall complete it by Wednesday.

On 8th, R. Narayana Iyer wrote: Bhagavan's looks improved. He sits as usual, and people can have His *darshan* for two hours in the morning and evening. Of course, He is not able to walk by Himself.

But a new note was struck by T. K. Sundaresa Iyer in the following letter dated 16th: Bhagavan's general health is satisfactory . . . But there is an apprehension that the tumour is threatening to appear again.

The next day R. Narayana Iyer wrote confirming the above information: The tumour has come again, just below the shoulder-joint. Bhagavan's daily programme continues as before. But He look tired and weary. Though there is no cause for immediate alarm, the matter is causing serious anxiety.

On 19th. M. Venkatarama Iyer of Mayavaram wrote: Rapid growth of another tumour just above the previous one is found . . . This has given anxiety to one and all . . . Bhagavan must be having pain throughout the arm, but He is always with a smiling face.

The next day, T. K. Sundaresa Iyer wrote again pouring forth his agony: There is no temperature. Dr. T. S. Iyer has returned to Mayavaram. The Madras doctors are unable to do anything. Moose from Malabar has been sent for . . . *Pray, pray and pray. Even prayer I cannot do. I am like one dazed.*

On 22nd, R. Narayana Iyer also wrote: The thing has grown again to the size of an orange . . . The arm looks swollen and a bit dark. Moose from Cochin has come . . . Well, what can we do? We must keep aglow the spark inside kindled by our father.

On 24th, R. Narayana Iyer wrote again: The Ayurvedic Doctor Moose has commenced his treatment. In all humility he appears to have said that he would do his best and that with Bhagavan's Grace he might successfully treat the case. He is, besides a doctor, an *Upasaka*. He seems to have said that he worshipped Dhanvantari to give him success in his present mission . . . Yesterday I told Bhagavan that you had written. He at once said, 'I too was

just reading his letter,' and so many others behind me said, 'He has written to me - he has written to me.' Well old boy, I thought as much.

The next day the Ashram wrote: The Malabar Doctor Moose is now giving the treatment. We have to see how the particular improvement comes about since now the tumour is present.

The same day G. Sambasiva Rao wrote: I am glad to tell you that today the pain has subsided somewhat. Dr. Moose expects the tumour to subside.

On 26th, Dr. T. S. Iyer, regretting his failure, wrote: It is most unfortunate that in spite of all my attempts, the medicines did not make sufficient impression to arrest the development of the tumour.

These reports made me feel so anxious that, at the beginning of March, I again, hastened to the Ashram. The tumour had increased to the size of a coconut and the dressing was a dreadful sight. With T. K. Sundaresa Iyer I went round the Hill and did special worship in the Durga temple of the town for Bhagavan's health. Lalita's sealed letter sent through me was delivered to Bhagavan along with the day's mail. He perused it for long, scanning every line and word with overflowing Grace and kept it to Himself, underneath the pillow. With the frightful growth of the tumour and with its frequent bleeding, Bhagavan's vital energy was being sapped and His body appeared very weak and anaemic. However, His face and look did not betray the least trace of pain and suffering, but on the other hand glowed all the more with Grace.

Now I got acquainted with Dr. Moose. Besides being an eminent *Ashta Vaidyan* he was a pious soul leading an austere life and endowed with a high literary talent. He approached and treated Bhagavan as a humble devotee would serve his Master. On March 6, he showed me his Sanskrit poem entitled *Adi paadastava shatka maataa* (Garland of six verse-tributes beginning with the alphabet 'a'). The first letters of the stanzas were in the

alphabetical order. There was also a concluding verse and a prayer-verse: The whole poem may be thus translated:

“1. By serving Whose feet even a dullard becomes purified of all *karma*, Who observes no difference among all beings, Him, Ramana, I adore for the highest good.

2. Who with His gracious look rejoices even the remotest devotees while He abides in the Self and bears the bliss of knowledge in the heart, Him, Ramana, I adore for the highest good.

3. Before Whose glory even the potentates that excel Indra feel quiet and humble and prostrate in their thousands always, Him, Ramana, I adore for the highest good.

4. The Supreme Self hidden from the three *Gunas* (qualities) that govern even the trinity of Siva, Vishnu and Brahma, Him, Ramana, I adore for the highest good.

5. Who has been variously described by many people as having realised in Himself the essence of the gist of the three *Vedas* by His own power, Him, Ramana, I adore for the highest good.

6. By dwelling at Whose lotus-feet the devotees, like the swans, attain the heights of Heaven and the beatific vision of *Manasa Tirtham* (*lit*: the holy place of the Mind) Him, Ramana, I adore for the highest good.

Concluding Verse

This poem is the spontaneous outpouring of overwhelming devotion felt on prostrating to His feet. May it commend itself to Him, the Supreme Master Ramana.

Prayer

Through ignorance we are here labouring about a matter that transcends all Science. O Bhagavan, O embodiment of Grace, pray grant us what is good.

Your body is our body. It may be of no use to *you* but *we* need it. So, pray preserve it and save us, for we know no refuge other than you.”

Dr. Moose was daily applying leeches to the tumour so that they might suck away the bad blood. One noon they got stuck up so hard after the blood-sucking that they could not be easily detached. This must have caused terrible pain. Bhagavan not only bore it all cheerfully but cut a joke saying: These leeches like so many *Jnanis* seem to have gone into *Samadhi* (trance)!

On 12th I received and submitted for Bhagavan’s perusal a letter from my son Sundara Rajan who was then at Patna. It said: I am greatly pained to learn that another tumour has grown on Bhagavan’s arm and that it is causing much anxiety in those who have His holy *darshan* there. You can then well imagine how more anxious I am here. *We have seen enough of doctors. In all cases and at all times, Bhagavan is the only and the best doctor for Himself. I can only wish and pray in all sincerity that He should cure Himself soon and recover normal health in order to bless us with His Grace and holy darshan for a long time. Please convey these prayers to Bhagavan.*

Bhagavan not only read it aloud but turning to the attendants He said: Look here. Listen to what Subbaramayya’s son has written, and He interpreted the italicised portion of the letter in Tamil. As He was doing it, I, unable to contain myself, wept. Bhagavan consoled me saying: Why do you worry? It will go. As it came, so it will go. Like your boy, Kittie (Miss Osborne) has also written: *Bhagavan knows what is best for us.*

These gracious words were like soothing balm to the wound of my heart.

That evening as we all sat in the presence of Bhagavan, T. K. Sundaresa Iyer submitted for His perusal the draft invitation for *Maha-puja* in the Mother’s Shrine which was to be held on May 8, 1950, and he told Bhagavan that I

was entrusted with the duty of getting it printed in the Vysya Press at Nellore. Bhagavan corrected it minutely, called me to Him and gave detailed instructions about its printing. The keen interest that Bhagavan evinced in this matter heartened us greatly.

Early next morning, as I went to take leave of Bhagavan, He was cutting jokes with Dr. Sankara Rao, recalling anecdotes of His treatment by Dr. Melkote, years ago. On seeing me Bhagavan reminded me of the *Maha-puja* invitation forms and told me to get them printed soon. Now I asked Bhagavan what reply He would give to Lalita's letter. Bhagavan paused and said with a most gracious look: "Tell her 'yes'." So I returned home with ease of heart.

On 16th T. K. Sundaresa Iyer wrote: There is not much of a change in Bhagavan's health that can be reported.

T. P. Ramachandra Iyer's letter of the same date gave more details: The tumour remains the same as when you last saw it. The bleeding has not stopped, nor is it continuous. It is profuse sometimes . . . Temperature has been normal always in the mornings but with a tendency to rise in the evenings. At 8 p.m. during the last two days it was 100° . . . Yesterday the Madras doctors came and saw Bhagavan. They are not quite satisfied with Bhagavan's general condition.

The above information was confirmed by the report in *The Hindu* of the same date, of an interview with Dr. R. Subrahmaniam and K. K. Nambiar, Dr. Subrahmaniam said: The Maharshi's general condition is weaker than what it was ten days back. He is becoming anaemic. His temperature has started rising in the evenings, and yesterday His circulatory system showed evidence of strain on it.

On 17th, R. Narayana Iyer wrote: Dr. Moose appears to have been heckled with questions when Bhagavan intervened and said: 'Why do you cross-examine him like Alladi? Ask me. I will tell you. I am feeling better after he

began his treatment, much better than at any time during the eighteen months.

The letter also reported an earth-tremor that day at 1-15 p.m. On 19th R. Narayana Iyer wrote again: According to Allopathic diagnosis and opinion, the condition is serious and even critical. Blood is oozing out and there is general weakness. It is said that even the heart has become weaker and there is a slight murmur. The pulse is slightly weaker. The cancer is also growing, the growth appearing to diminish when there is a fall of a piece over-grown . . . Only *kanji* is being taken. Ordinary men should have collapsed by now for all that is seen. But our Bhagavan has withstood . . . This morning he fell down, there being none to support. Anybody would have had a shock and heart-failure. But Bhagavan slowly got up and kept his routine, and during *darshan*, nobody could see or say anything.

The next day the same friend again wrote: Bose is willing to get Kaviraj Sen by air at any cost . . . Kaviraj it seems has treated such cases . . . Bhagavan carries on in just the same way beaming with smiles, cutting jokes and looking very cheerful.

The same day Major Chadwick also wrote: Bhagavan fell down yesterday and made the tumour bleed and vomited twice . . . The tumour continues to grow, He has a slight temperature at night, His heart seems to be weakening.

On 21st, J. C. Nanavati wrote: There has been no change since you left, except that due to daily bleeding, the blood in the system is naturally reduced and the body gets weaker. Yesterday in the morning session, He was beaming Grace for a long time. I have no words to describe His look, and everybody felt immensely happy.

The next day R. Narayana Iyer wrote: Dr. Moose said that he was not worried about the cancer but about His general condition . . . Yesterday the Allopathic doctors said that the heart and pulse were weak and that no

system could stand this indefinitely. This morning Bhatia (Surgeon-General) examined Him and said that the heart and pulse didn't seem bad and that it was will-power or something that was sustaining Him. Some consulting astrology, put a limit by the 2nd of April (Eclipse). Other people's astrology is hopeful.

On the same day the Ashram, referring to two colleagues of mine, Janakirama Sarma, and Kota Subrahmanya Sastri, who had gone there for Bhagavan's *darshan* with a letter from me, wrote as follows: The required conveniences are being looked to for the visitors sent with your letter.

(As I am writing this on May 8th, 1956, the sacred anniversary day of Bhagavan's *Maha-samadhi*, another colleague of mine, C. Padmanabha Rao, comes with a request for an introductory letter to the Ashram which he intends to visit shortly. This impresses me not only as a curious coincidence but as a special token of Bhagavan's Grace on this auspicious day).

On 23rd, R. Narayana Iyer wrote: If physical conditions are anything, Bhagavan's condition is surely deteriorating . . . But the way in which Bhagavan is holding up is remarkable. Nothing from His face. The disease, if it had attacked an ordinary man, would require morphia and even then he would yell with such pain that it could be heard in the whole hospital. Not one word. Bhagavan is not only enduring but showering Grace with a smile. Image of Jesus on the Cross presents a picture of pathos and martyrdom. But our Father is Grand-Beatific-Majestic.

On 25th A. Devaraja Mudaliar wrote: Nothing encouraging to report about Bhagavan's health. Apparently, the malady is daily growing worse. Nothing but Bhagavan's Grace can save the situation.

On 26th R. Narayana Iyer wrote again: The temperature was 96° yesterday and vitality was at a low level. The lamp is burning aglow and God knows from which oil. Kaviraj is coming tomorrow morning.

The next day the same friend again wrote: Bhagavan has nausea and He vomits anything that enters the stomach . . . He has had no food for the last 3 or 4 days. A little orange juice is His sole food. He is very, very weak. Pulse is low, heart very weak, blood-circulation dull, legs are swollen and hands too. All doctors have absolutely no hope . . . The routine is gone through with strain. I sneaked into Bhagavan's room yesterday and asked him with tears what it all meant. He just whispered 'It will go'. Does it mean the cancer? I hope so.

On 29th Nagamma wrote with truly feminine delicacy: Till yesterday Bhagavan was giving *darshan* as usual. But since then he has stopped coming out onto the verandah, and we are asked to have His *darshan* by the raising of the screens in front of the room. That is the position. The *Kumbhabhishekam* anniversary comes off on 2nd April. You can come here by then if convenient.

On the same day A. Devaraja Mudaliar also wrote: The Calcutta Kaviraj arrived here yesterday . . . He has decided to treat Bhagavan. He also thinks that the disease has advanced too far and that Bhagavan's condition is serious.

The next day R. Narayana Iyer wrote: Bhagavan's condition is said to be slightly better today after a few doses of Kaviraj . . . Bhagavan passed urine today, and the swelling in the legs and feet is slightly reduced. He was forced by Kaviraj to take some milk. The only other food He is having is fruit-juice. Outside sitting and *darshan* is stopped. He could not stand or walk. People are allowed to see Bhagavan from the general bathroom or just go to the parapet and peer through the holes in it as in a zoo.

On 31st Mar. 1950, *The Hindu* reported that Bhagavan was completely bed-ridden and that His condition was causing anxiety. That afternoon I started, and I reached the Ashram the next morning just in time to join the queue. Bhagavan reclined on the couch and was facing us as we passed in a row

before the parapet and had a glimpse of Him. His face and eyes were beaming with grace as usual, and my brief look had a reassuring effect on my mind. Immediately afterwards, the attendant Rangaswami met me and said: Bhagavan has taken note of your presence in the queue. He told me: 'See, our Subbaramayya has also come. Poor man! he would have seen the report in yesterday's papers, and rushed in alarm. Go and greet him'.

This gracious notice and message overwhelmed me with emotion. An atmosphere of gloom and despair had developed the Ashram, and most people were seized with fear that the worst would happen on the 2nd of April. All signs were also such as to confirm the ominous foreboding. A big honey-comb was noticeable overhead in the tree adjoining Bhagavan's room. For days Bhagavan was not taking any food, and His kidneys were hardly functioning. The dreaded day dawned and all devotees were holding their breath in suspended animation. But most surprisingly, at 9 a.m. we were told that Bhagavan was having his shave as usual on the full-moon day. At that time, I was valuing the Matriculation Examination papers in which a question related to the life of Lord Buddha. Every candidate without exception had attempted that question and had written as follows: That day being a full-moon day, the Lord had His shave and bath. He then called his disciples and said to them. When I am gone, Truth shall be your master.

As I read this over and over again, the coincidence struck me as most significant and illuminating. The above quoted words of Buddha repeated in every answer-script rang in my ears as if it were the last message of Bhagavan Himself. After some time, the barber Natesan came and told me how Bhagavan Himself sent for him, sat up throughout the shave and cut jokes with him. After the shave Bhagavan had his usual bath. He urinated a little and looked quite fresh and cheerful. All this seemed to give the lie to the gloomy predictions for the day.

That night during the lunar eclipse, R. Narayana Iyer and myself went round the Hill. When the eclipse was at its climax, we noted two red lights moving near the top of the Hill that was inaccessible to human approach. Having heard that the great *siddhas* who dwelt invisibly in the Arunachala caves would manifest themselves on such special occasions, we were awe-struck at the sight, and on our return, we reported to the Ashram what we had seen. On April 3, the Kaviraj came again, and, after urgent consultations, it was decided not to give strong medicines to Bhagavan at that stage. The next morning the Maharaja of Bhavanagar, the then Governor of Madras, and the Maharani came for Bhagavan's *darshan*. They were received by the *Sarvadhikari* and O. P. Ramaswami Reddiar, former Chief Minister of Madras, and conducted into Bhagavan's room. They had already seen Bhagavan when they visited Tiruvannamalai at the time of the renovation of Patala Lingam. They had also presented a pair of white peacocks to the Ashram. Now they anxiously enquired of Bhagavan himself about his health. He is said to have replied: All is well.

After *darshan* they worshipped in the temple and received *prasad*. It seems that though they had no official programme they came solely for the purpose of seeing Bhagavan. Their visit coincided with the time when Bhagavan was to take his meagre diet. But Bhagavan put off even that, saying, "Amidst so many urgent duties the Maharajah is hurrying to see me. I must not keep him waiting here." Only after they left did Bhagavan have His diet. When nine months later, the Maharajah unveiled Bhagavan's portrait at Nellore, I told him this incident and he was deeply moved at so much Grace showered upon him by Bhagavan.

On the same day, that is, April 4th, 1950, a photograph of Bhagavan reclining on a raised bed in His room was taken by a famous French photographer. In view of Bhagavan's weak condition, *darshan* was restricted to the queues in the morning and the evening, and except the personal and medical attendants, all others were strictly forbidden to see Bhagavan. So that night I started back with

a heavy heart. As I neared the wicket-gate of Bhagavan's room, Jaya-devalal who was guarding it whispered to me: "Do you want to see Bhagavan?" I replied "yes, but there is no permission". He said "Never mind, get in", and he pushed me in. Bhagavan lay alone facing the entrance as though He was expecting to see someone. As soon as I got up from prostrating at the doorstep Bhagavan said, "Come in." As I went in and stood before Him,

Bhagavan asked me: "What do you want?" I said with streaming eyes: "I want Abhayam," ("security from fear"). Bhagavan replied with overflowing Grace: "Saree Icchanu" ("Yes, I have given it"). Bhagavan added. "Don't fear. As it came, so it will go." At once I felt as though a heavy load were lifted from my heart and as I touched His Lotus-Feet with my hands and head a thrill of ecstasy passed through my frame, and I felt like being plunged in an ocean of Peace and Bliss. That vision of Bhagavan and His gracious words granting me *Abhayam* have taken permanent abode in my being and are guarding me from all life's ills.

On 6th R. Narayana Iyer wrote: Bhagavan's condition is the same. Daily so much blood goes out through the tumour and so little is taken in to recompense by way of food, and He is getting weaker, Urination is very scanty. Terrible pain on the back of the hand, above the spine and neck. It seems Bhagavan remarked: 'If that goes, everything will go'.

The Ashram wrote the next day:

Bhagavan's health is in the same condition as when you left. Some pain in the head which has since appeared is going down.

On the same day R. Narayana Iyer also wrote: I was very happy to see your card. It was handed over to me as I was in the queue this morning for Bhagavan's *darshan* and I went on reading it with your prayer for *Abhayam* echoing and throbbing in my heart . . . I learn He is better today in every respect generally. The queue system continues. The headache seems to have become less severe.

T. Rami Reddy who returned after seeing Bhagavan wrote on 10th: The state of Bhagavan is very serious . . . I am thankful to have had the opportunity of paying my respects to Bhagavan. He is calm and quiet and gracious.

The same day R. Narayana Iyer wired to me as follows: Atmosphere tense, considered critical.

Simultaneously A. Devaraja Mudaliar also wired: Condition very serious.

The above messages were confirmed by T. Ramachandra Rao who wrote on the same date: Since yesterday His health is serious . . . This morning we had no *darshan* of Bhagavan.

On the morning of the 11th of April, as I was starting to the Ashram, a fellow-devotee, S. Kolandavelu Mudaliar, came to my house and conveyed to me a phone message from Tiruvannamalai which said that Bhagavan's condition was improving and that there was now no cause for anxiety. This made me postpone my journey.

On the same day R. Narayana Iyer wrote: On Sunday night at 8-30 p.m. Bhagavan's condition was considered very critical. No liquid food even. No motions, no urine. Pulse very, very feeble. Blood-pressure very low. Heart weak. Temperature 96.8° and frequent hiccoughs . . . Next day the tension continued. Bhagavan asked in the evening if there was the queue in the morning. *Sarvadhikari* replied that it was suspended for some time. Bhagavan said that He would suspend taking even a drop of water till all that came had their *darshan*. So there was the queue last evening. Bhagavan sat steady as before, suspending hiccough, pains and everything. After *darshan* I learnt that hiccough started. He is taking some food, that is, a little buttermilk and fruit juice. No medicines. His general condition is growing weaker.

Later in the day the same friend also wired: Anxious condition continues steady.

The next day the Sarvadhikari wired: Health as before. Hoping improvement.

On the 13th and 14th of April R. Narayana Iyer wrote two letters but could post them only on the 14th so that they both reached me the day after the event. They contained the following: My reply wire 'Anxious situation continues steady', sums up the situation correctly. With pulse so feeble, heart sounds inaudible, temperature sub-normal and blood-pressure between 36 and 38, who could say anything? Blood-pressure at 60 itself. they say, is a danger zone. If it descends to 50, they give up altogether . . . Now Bhagavan has obliterated the dividing line between Life and Death. This morning at the close of the queue, I and Muruganar went and stood for a while. Bhagavan was lying flat with upturned face and closed eyes. What wonder! Grace unbounded He turned towards us and gave us a long, lingering look. He closed His eyes and, in a few seconds, opened them again and looked at us with compassion. The look went into me, overpowered me. Oh! Bhagavan, what does all this mean? What is Thy mystery? Tears trickle as I write . . . My dear friend, brother, shed thy tears too, in silent prayer to our Lord, our Father. (14-4-1950) Writing these two cards I went to the queue and could not send them to the post . . . He has defied doctors. Last night He became so still and stiff that all felt it was the end at 12-30. At 1-30 a.m., he slightly moved and stretched His hand. What could anyone say? They have given up taking temperature, blood-pressure etc. He had definitely declined to take any medicine. He talks occasionally . . . The ring and resonance of His voice reassures. But there is no going up in the condition towards improvement . . . come if you can, don't mind if you can't. We are ever with Him.

On the morning of the 15th of April, a friend informed me that the radio announced the demise of Bhagavan during the previous night. Immediately, I telephoned to Tiruvannamalai and got confirmation of the fact. I was further told on the phone that the *Maha-samadhi* rite would be completed by noon. I tried my best but failed to secure a conveyance to dash off to the Ashram and

have a last look at the sacred body. It was perhaps part of the *Abhayam* granted to me that I should be spared the heart-rending sight. (As I am writing this on Friday, May 11, 1956, I hear about the demise of Durgah Subrahmaniam Sarma early this morning. Sarma besides being the foremost scholar and poet of Andhra is also a devotee of Bhagavan. This coincidence strikes me as significant)

On 15-4-1950, N. Ramachandra Rao wrote: Bhagavan disappeared last night at 8-47 p.m. He has taken his place in the hearts of his devotees.

On the same day R. Narayana Iyer wrote a letter which he continued on the next day also and then posted. It read as follows: "You will have known by now. It is all over. Last night I was sitting in front of my house after food. In the eastern sky, from the southern horizon, a meteor, bright and big, shot up and went slowly, like an arc, towards the north with a long trail of lustrous light and disappeared in the Hill of Arunachala. Suddenly it flashed in my mind that it portended something about Bhagavan and I rushed to the Ashram. I saw the doctors springing into the room of Bhagavan and the end was known. Yes, it is all over, over. The river from which we have been drinking with delight has emptied itself into the Ocean. We can taste no more its sparkling water, Oh, that this too, too, solid flesh would melt and flow in a stream of tears into the track of the sacred river! I have wept and wept till my heart is dry and I feel like a forlorn child . . . Blankness stares at me. Oh, Bhagavan . . . hast thou not said 'The mother has always in her mind the child that does'nt cry'? . . . Hast Thou gone like the meteor to yonder Hill? How, how can I reach thee? ... (16-4-50) Every time I attempt to write, so many scenes pass before my mind . . . What a fool that I did not catch the import of his words just a few days back: 'All this will go' with a wave of his hand. A few weeks back, in reply to my query how long the hand takes to heal, he said: 'Nobody considers how old I am and how long I am in this body.' Yes, he wanted to prepare us all for the end. In his infinite compassion he gave opportunity to all far and wide to come and have their last *darshan*. Like the meteor he has passed from our ken . . . This morning I went to the Ashram, and like a lamb gone astray bleating plaintively, going hither and thither, I went everywhere and saw the Ashram as I had seen in a dream a

month ago without the figure of our revered father. . . Though I had not the privilege to be with Bhagavan when life was in the body, I pushed myself after and was with the last remains to the end in the *Samadhi* pit till 9-30 p.m. last night. I am resting today . . . overwhelmed with the silence and the stillness of the sepulchre.”

On 16th S. Parthasarathi Naidu the then Principal of Mrs. A. V. N. College, Visakhapatnam, who had never seen Bhagavan wrote as follows: “I am very sorry to hear of the demise of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi the Source of spiritual peace and inspiration . . . I hope the Ashram will continue to receive guests who resort there to get peace and solace to their troubled minds. Present or absent He will continue to bless the visitors of the Ashram.” On the same day, as if in response to the above hope, the Ashram wrote: “The *Maha-bhishekam* of the *Samadhi* will be performed on the 24th. May Bhagavan’s Eternal Grace protect and guide His devotees!” This brings the narrative to a natural end. Every day that passes makes me realise more and more the three divine attributes of Bhagavan, viz. Omnipresence, Omnipotence and Omniscience, and above them all, the Divine Grace that is Bhagavan Himself. I shall therefore relate three incidents that illustrate the above experience, and then conclude -

On 19th G. Sambasiva Rao, the veteran devotee of Bhagavan who returned to Nellore, informed me at about 7 p.m. that on account of the vast crowds that flocked for Bhagavan’s *darshan* during His last days, the Ashram provisions had been utterly depleted and that the Ashram was badly in need of rice for Bhagavan’s *Maha-bhishekam* ceremonies that were to be performed on the 24th of April. He urged that we both should approach some rich friends as we had done for the *Kumbhabhishekam*. As I was then connected with the University Examinations, I was unwilling, for obvious reasons, to go to any one for any obligation. G. Sambasiva Rao then suggested that I might approach at least N. Venkata Reddy of Kovur, a well-known philanthropist, who was my old student. Even for that I expressed unwillingness. Early the next morning what was my wonder to see N. Venkata Reddy himself drive to my house for the first

time since he had been a student years ago. He said that he came to consult me regarding the scheme for a poor student’s scholarship fund that he wanted to institute. He casually noticed the picture of Bhagavan hanging in front, and referring to His recent *Maha-samadhi* he enquired whether I would go to the Ashram to attend the obsequies. I replied in the affirmative and asked whether he would be willing to contribute to Bhagavan’s *Maha-bhishekam* as he had done to the *Kumbhabhi-shekam*. He at once replied: ‘Yes Sir. What greater good can I do than that? I shall carry out whatever you suggest.’ I suggested that he might contribute some paddy or rice which was now badly needed at the Ashram. He promised that he would immediately get two ‘putties’ (candies) of paddy milled and would transport the rice so as to reach the Ashram on the third day. He was as good as his word. A few days later another friend, K. Venkata-subba Reddy of Singa-peta also volunteered to contribute one ‘Putty’ (candy) of paddy for the *Maha-puja* celebration at the Ashram. These two incidents were a godsend to me. For, after the demise of Bhagavan I was passing through the worst depression of mind and spirits. I was feeling like the Pandavas after the passing of Krishna. I thought that I was now utterly helpless and that the little usefulness of my life was at an end. **These incidents came as an eye opener, Bhagavan is still as powerful as when in flesh and blood and, moreover, is pleased to use me still as His instrument. Even if I wanted to fall away, He would not leave.**

This gave me a tremendous amount of energy and self-confidence. In May 1950, I was in Visakhapatnam in connection with a meeting of Examiners. I was lodged in the Staff-room of Mrs. A. V. N. College for the night. It was customary for me every morning to prostrate before a picture of Bhagavan immediately after waking. That early morning, I felt the absence of Bhagavan’s portrait. I casually laid my hand upon a Bombay journal on the table, and on opening it, lo! what should I see but a picture of Bhagavan in his last illness with an article paying homage. I felt as if Bhagavan Himself was telling me: “What little faith have you? Am I not with you here and everywhere, now and forever?”

One-night last year (1955), I had a marvellous dream. In a big choultry on a hill-top I saw Bhagavan and Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Pitham seated before me. My heart overflowed with joy to see the two great Souls together. Sankaracharya enquired how far I had advanced in my study of Sanskrit. Bhagavan replied to him saying that my Sanskrit knowledge was up to the mark. Thereupon Sankaracharya recited a 'Rik', from the Vedas and asked me to translate the rik. I did it to his satisfaction. Then Tirtham (Holy Water) was brought in a vessel. Bhagavan first took a spoonful and passed it to Sankaracharya who also tasted another spoonful and handed it to me to distribute among the vast crowd of devotees that filled the hall. I went round and as I served the last person, I found that the last drop of Tirtham was gone. Then I brought back the empty vessel. Sankaracharya asked me whether I had taken the Tirtham myself, I replied "No." Then Bhagavan observed "It does not matter. Distribution to others is Prasad (Grace) to yourself." Now leaves were spread before all for Bhiksha. As it was getting dark, I tried to switch on the electric lights. At my first trial the lights did not burn. But as I turned the switch a second time, all the lights flashed on and I woke up. "Distribution to others is Prasad to yourself." Verily these Reminiscences are the Tirtham that has been distributed to the readers, and that is the Prasad (Grace) of Bhagavan to This humble servant.

12-5-1956; 10-05 a.m.

Postscript: **Just when I finished writing the last word, my daughter Alamma came running to me and served me coconut water saying 'Here is Tirtham from Mother after her worship of God.' SO THAT IS THAT!**

OM TAT SAT

Note: Audio file No. details for the Telugu Book- pages matched with the above English Text (year-wise reference)

<u>1- 1933-37</u>	-	Telugu- 1-40 & 1-11 of the above English Text
<u>2- 1937-39</u>	-	40-88 & 11-20
<u>3- 1939</u>	-	88-122 & 21-28
<u>4- 1939-40</u>	-	123-155 & 28-34
<u>5- 1940-41</u>	-	155-188 & 34-40
<u>6- 1941-42</u>	-	188-230 & 41-49
<u>7- 1942-46</u>	-	230-278 & 50-61
<u>8- 1947</u>	-	279-327 & 62-73
<u>9- 1947-49</u>	-	327-370 & 74-82
<u>10- 1949-50</u>	-	370-432 & 83-96

Year-wise page numbers of the Telugu book & the above English text of the same

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