

Treasures of the Heart: The Unforgettable Yogi Ramsuratkumar

- Perumal Sadaiyan



Yogi Ramsuratkumar

First published in June 1998 by Perumal Sadaiyan

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

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Author's Preface

Truman Caylor Wadlington was a 20 year old American who wrote the first ever book on Yogi Ramsuratkumar in English around the year, 1912. To collect information from Swami for the book, he followed Swami through out the day for many months, in the scorching mid-day sun, or sitting with him beneath the cactus-plant or walking with him bare footed on the thorn spreaded fields or standing erect behind Swami for hours and hours. The title of the book was

Yogi Ramsuratkumar,
The Godchild
Tiruvannamalai

This book was written to reveal Yogi Ramsuratkumar to the world. When Wadlington published the book, Swami said thus about the book "Perumal, thousands of people will read this book and lakhs of people will benefit by reading and understanding the book." Then Swami distributed this book to so many friends. Four of my other companions who served Swami, each asked for a copy and got it. Since I could not read English and Swami had told that it was a precious book, I thought I was not fit to receive it and did not seek a copy from Swami for me. When Wadlington was about to take leave to America he met Swami in the fields, and told him "all the copies brought are distributed except a damaged and soiled one, shall I send some more copies from Madras ?" He also enquired Swami to whom shall the damaged book be given. I immediately asked with anxiety "Sir, give it to me."

On hearing this, Wadlington laughed. Immediately Yogi Ramsuratkumar said, "Yes, let us give it to him" and gave the

copy to the author. Taking the book from Swami, Wadlington looked at me repeatedly and laughed. Then opening the book, he wrote a meaningful benediction on the first page, with his golden hand. This is what he wrote.

Dear Affectionate Perumal

"You too are serving the devotional duty. I, Truman Caylor Wadlington, do my important special devotional duty to Yogi Ramsuratkumar. But I cannot do it as you do it but you can do my duty if you think it."

Writing thus, he signed it and gave me that divine text by his own hands.

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Translator's Preface

Perumal as Sivanananda Perumal is known to his friends is the only person who has enjoyed long years of simple camaraderie with Yogi Ramsuratkumar. Every friend, well wisher and devotee of Yogi Ramsuratkumar is deeply indebted to Perumal, who has stood by Swami for almost four decades, with steadfastness and love, sometimes sharing the brutality that Swami received in the hands of ignorant men. During his early years in Tiruvannamalai, Swami moved in and around the town in a dhoti, using its upper end to cover his chest, carrying bundles of papers and always engaged in his unfathomable divine work. Many called him a madman and there were occasions when men gave full rein to cruelty. But there were a few who could see the divine in Yogi Ramsuratkumar. Of these Perumal is the foremost and reading his memories, one can have a glimpse of the extraordinary life of Yogi Ramsuratkumar.

Perumal hails from a pious and cultured family from Shanmugapuram in Kanyakumari District, devoted to Sri Muthukutty Iyya of Swami Thoppu. He always carries with him the sacred soil of 'namam' in a pouch and if we ask for it, he would put a mark on our forehead with loving benediction. In his speech we can enjoy the poetry and music that is characteristic of the southern parts. With not much formal education to his credit, he has at his disposal a vast oral stock of meaningful old Tamil songs. He was a prosperous metalwares merchant and owned two shops facing South towards Swami's residence and to the right of the chariot mandapam where he now keeps guard over Swami's bundles. Those who have had the privilege of spending sometime with him in the mandapam will agree that much can be learnt by simply sitting with him for a few hours.

Many years ago, when Swami used to sit under the 'punnai' tree near the railway station, one day, everyone assembled there, was given a sheet of paper and a pencil and told to compose a song on Swami by sunset. There were many scholars among those who had come to visit Swami that day and almost at once everyone got down to work. Sitting under a tree at a distance, Perumal spent the whole day watching Yogi Ramsuratkumar and wondering how words describe such a great and lovable man. By evening, one by one, everyone went up to Swami and handed over their composition. When Perumal's turn came, he placed the blank sheet of paper at Swami's feet and confessed his inability to write. Then in a moment of inspiration, Perumal who is a full-throated and good singer, sang a beautiful song, 'Marakka Mudiyyuma', offering it as a token of his heart felt love for Yogi Ramsuratkumar. This song in which the devotee says it is impossible to forget Yogi Ramsuratkumar having once seen him, is a favorite among Perumal's friends.

If is difficult to understand Perumal's relationship with Yogi Ramsuratkumar. He would speak of Swami as if Swami were a child who needed all our love and care and in the same breath salute him as the Lord. Perumal knows every spot in and around Tiruvannamalai where Yogi Ramsuratkumar worked and rested, sometimes for several days at a stretch. Swami would be obliged to suffer starvation and if Perumal was also with him, then Swami would pluck some herbs from the Arunachala hill, capable of arresting hunger and the two would eat a few leaves and drink some water. Whatever be the nature of experience, Perumal recalls it with deep respect and adoration for Yogi Ramsuratkumar. No one has ever heard Perumal complain. A few years ago, Perumal's wife, Smt. Padmavattamma was seriously ill. None of us knew about it. When I visited the Chariot mandapam quite by chance, I came to know of it. Rushing to his cottage, Sri Janarthanan and I

found his wife sinking. Even telegrams had been sent. By the grace of Yogi Ramsuratkumar she recovered and is in good health. The ailing lady did not have even proper mat to lie down. There were no good tumblers (cups) to serve coffee to both of us. Like his Guru, Perumal is also living happily with the pride of his poverty.

Perumal is a large hearted and kind man. But we cannot take him for granted. Seasoned through life's tribulations, which he does not elaborate in his book, Perumal is a mature, trustworthy and good man who has taken life seriously.

I took upon myself the good fortune and honour of translating Perumal's book into English. In doing so, I have taken a conscious and sustained care to preserve the narrative as it is, never allowing myself to intrude through stylistic alterations or interpretation. I request subsequent translators of other languages to honour the transparent simplicity of the text, for it is indeed suggestive of Perumal's personality.

Sujatha Vijayaraghavan
1-12-97
Camp: Tiruvannamalai

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Perumal Sadaiyan

Treasures of the Heart:

The Unforgettable Yogi Ramsuratkumar

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN



YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR

SRI ANNAMALAIYAR'S DARSHAN

One Sunday, around the year 1964, when all the shops were closed, I was seated alone, wrapped in a meditative solitude, in the bazaar in Tiruvannamalai. I was facing the eastern temple tower with its gateway that is known as the gateway of Righteousness and Wisdom. Many thoughts passed through my mind as I looked at the mighty Gopuram and the sacred hill, Arunachala. What a beautiful piece of art the tower was! Rising up to the skies, almost, with such intricate and varied sculptures, I wondered at the patron's benevolence, the man who had caused this magnificent creation in stone. The eastern temple tower was a befitting preface to the grand temple. Why would he have built this tower? Perhaps his devotion had compelled him to give a fitting expression to the name, the greatness and glory of the land of Arunachala. Such a work was surely the outcome of an unalloyed joy. If countless mystics, saints, devotees and renunciates have been drawn to Arunachala and have in turn sanctified this place with the imprint of their feet, it must have been a joy that had caused it all to happen. Some come to Arunachala, circumambulated the holy hill and sit down in meditation. Some walk around the hill and left, charged with spiritual energy, to pursue their askesis elsewhere. Some come to Arunachala and were simply absorbed into it. Thus ruminating, I gazed at the holy hill and the beautiful tower, steadily. All the while, my heart yearned for something which I could not define.

Suddenly at the feet of the temple tower, I saw a streak of something like a beam of light, swift and sudden like a lightning, transforming the evening for a moment. It was a human form moving forward towards me. The gait and manner of bearing were extraordinary and although the distance in between did not make it possible for me to see the face. I felt that it was the supreme Lord walking in a human form. But my mind could not be given to it wholly. Again and again my mind and eyes hovered around the hill and the tower. When I next lowered my eyes I saw the figure striding towards me purposefully, with a magnificent appearance and with a soft smile on the face. Although, I noticed these details, I looked away and looked up at the tower and the hill. Taking note of my studied indifference, the figure deliberately swayed itself from side to side as it walked forward, thus blocking my view of the tower and the hill. The figure came very close. I was irked because of the obstruction to my view and so I stared rather angrily at the figure. Swami must have known the reason for my annoyance for he looked at me keenly with a smile. Perhaps he was amused by my preference of the temple tower and the hill when he had presented himself so accessibly and willingly to me. This gait was Kingly and he looked tall and striking. He held a palm-leaf fan and four or five newspapers in his hand. He had draped himself with a green shawl. His locks lay in clusters around his face. His face was shining, and clean with a broad and brilliant forehead. Thus he stood blocking the temple tower and hill out of my view. A spurt of anger arose in me quite discernably but meeting him eye to eye my anger was put out at once.

I gestured affectionately with my left hand and invited him to sit by my side. At once, he sat down unhesitatingly. Again I reverted my eyes towards the temple tower and the hill. Though my gaze was fixed far away I felt that the person

seated next to me was watching me as if talking to me. I was sharply aware of his presence. Thus though we were seated side by side, we did not speak to each other. Almost twenty minutes passed in this way. He was looking at me keenly, which I could feel and I began to wonder why he was staring so. Perhaps it was my appearance, I thought.

I sported a beard and matted hair. Being a prosperous merchant, I wore a ring, a chain around the neck and a bracelet, all of gold. Though it was a holiday for the market, it being Sunday, only I sat outside the shops in the bazaar. Perhaps Swami wondered at this.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHATTARAI



SRI ANNAMALAIYAR'S DARSHAN

CHILLING THE COFFEE

While he was watching me thus, I thought that I should get him at least a cup of coffee. I turned to the elder and said, "Sir! Please take some coffee" in a loving tone and heard "Yes, alright" in reply in a deep tone. I felt the sound fill my mind and strike my body. I became alert at once and brought my eyes and mind under control. The next moment I clapped my hands to call the boys playing on the terrace above the shops on the opposite side. The elder seated next to me asked me, "Why do you clap your hands and call those boys?" I replied very humbly, "Sir! I called them to fetch the coffee." Then, Swami was pleased to bid me for the first time. "Not them. You go yourself to get it." This made me angry again, Perhaps it was a mistake to have offered coffee to this man. Now he is giving me orders. If I give orders there were ten people paid to carry them out. Who is this man, anyway, to bid me? Who is he? He does not know who I am. I am a merchant of some standing, the owner of a shop. It was I who invited him to coffee. Now, if I do not get him the coffee, I would be guilty of a lapse. So I must go to fetch it myself. I must fulfill my word. If he had asked for coffee, I could have given him a rupee and could have been done with it. Then I would have been free of error. Thus I rambled within my mind in a confused way. As if knowing my confusion, Swami asked me, "Why do you hesitate?"

I got up and began walking, looking on both sides to see if I was watched doing an errand. As I walked away, Swami called out "Bring two coffees!" Perhaps the elder was very hungry

and that was why he was asking for two glasses of coffee. Thinking thus I entered the hotel and gave an order for two glasses of fresh coffee to be prepared. The hotel owner asked me, "Why have you come yourself? If you sent word I would have sent the coffee to you through the shop-boy." I replied "Thank you, but no, Sir!" I must have walked about seventy yards or so, at least two or three people stopped me and offered to carry the coffee for me. "Give it me" each of them said. But I replied "I am taking this coffee for a venerable person. Therefore I must take it myself." Replying thus I reached the corner of the bazaar'.

The elder, I saw, was seated majestically, facing west, smoking a cigarette. Seeing this, I thought to myself that Swami had the habit of smoking. As soon as I presented myself with the coffee, Swami asked me, "While you were on your way here, did not anyone offer to fetch the coffee?" I replied "I did not give it to them. I brought it myself."

Taking the coffee, he poured it into four vessels and began cooling it by pouring it from one vessel into another. I was not able to understand the meaning of this act and was puzzled. After cooling the coffee, he gave me half the quantity and then looked at my beard and matted hair. Then he poured the other half of the coffee into the coconut shell that he had and holding it in one hand continued to look at me. I too sat looking at him, holding my share of the coffee.

After we had drunk the coffee, he collected the containers and said "You go and return it". I had thought of sending the shopboys for this work. But he said that I must go myself. I was annoyed at the way in which he was making me do one thing after another Anyway, I went myself.

THE CHARMINAR

On my way back I bought two and a half annas worth of Charminar cigarettes and a matchbox worth half anna, thus making purchases for three annas in all. I placed them before Swami. When I did this, Swami reacted as a man would when touched by a brand of fire and in a voice that matched his reaction he asked "Who asked you to buy this?" To this I replied without fear and in a very humble manner, "Sir! you did not ask for this. It was I who got it. In villages, after the meal is over, it is a general habit to chew a few leaves of betel, smoke a cigar or chew spices. So too, I thought that you would like to smoke a cigarette after coffee. Forgive me if I was wrong". In reply, Swami laughed with such a joy and love that it gladdened and filled my mind. Moreover, he patted me twice and this made me heart brim with a sense of fullness.

The next moment Swami asked me "Who are you? Where do you live?" I was rather taken aback that sitting outside my shop, he was asking me, who I was. I replied "This metal-ware shop is mine." Then Swami asked me, "At what time do you open the shop?" "I open the shop at seven thirty in the morning. The closing time depends on the customers. It may even be ten at night when the shop is closed". Then Swami asked me, "What is your name?" I replied thus, "Sir! My parents and elders have named me Sivananainda Perumal." At this he burst into a joyous peal of laughter. I wondered at the reason for the laughter and asked him, "Do you laugh because it is a very long name?" To this also he laughed. Still laughing he kept looking at me. Then, he asked me "Why do you sport a beard

and matted hair?" in a soft voice. I was inflamed with a great anger and exclaimed "That is one thing about which you should not ask!" and looked at him fiercely. Swami, however, continued to look at me very tenderly.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

BHAGAVATI AMME

Meanwhile Sri R.G. Balakrishnan Mudaliar of Tirupati came to see me about some business matter. Wishing to talk to my business associate I told Swami, "This is my shop, Sir. Please come tomorrow," in a warm and soft manner. I went with the businessman towards the temple. I turned back often to see Swami and founding him watching us from where we had left him.

We passed through the Gopuram and saw a saintly lady who spoke the Malayalam language and who was variously called Mother Bhagavati or Amme. Her name was Sabariamma. I offered her my obeisance. Immediately the mother said "Look! these people are troubling me. Please drive them away". I looked around and found that the people she was referring to were known to me and were a friendly sort. I approached them and told them, "This lady is divine. It is wrong on your part to mock at her or tease her." They laughed and the mother too laughed. However it was a well-known fact that the lady was a fire itself. None dared to go near her. She took great care that no one touched her bamboo staff, the coconut shell or her matted locks. When she laughed I was puzzled. I thought she was mocking me for not serving Swami as well as I ought to have. After all, I had got him only a cup of coffee. I felt that the mother's laughter was directed towards me as a reprimand.

Thinking thus, I reached the Rajagopuram. I had the habit of touching this Gopuram reverently and offering obeisance whenever I crossed it. This I did to acknowledge the greatness

of the King who had caused this massive temple to be built. I have never seen his portrait or statue. A small bas-relief of this great King can be seen somewhere in the middle of the Gopuram on one of the tiers. I would look up to see the figure and then touch the tower with my hands.

Having done this I went through the vast courtyard into the temple, that was been praised in the devotional hymns of the Saivaite saints. Though I went in for the darshan of Arunachala, my mind hovered around the person I had left behind in the payol of the shop. I felt that he too was indeed looking at me.

My business associate and I reached the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. My friend told the priest to have the worship performed with bilva leaves. The priest was a dear friend of mine. His name was Subrahmanya Gurukkal. He was a pious man. Seeing him there to officiate, I felt inspired. We placed the bilva leaves on a plate and gave it to him. The priest offered us water to purify our hands after which we touched the leaves, suggesting through this gesture that we were making the offering through the priest. When the priest went in, he asked me, "For whose welfare is the worship being offered?" We replied that we wanted it performed simply to offer our adoration. In a sweet voice, the priest began chanting the many names of Lord Siva starting with "Om! Sivayah Namah"! and began simultaneously to offer the bilva leaves. I felt as if the bilva leaves fell on my eyes. Tears began to roll down my cheeks profusely. Though I was standing in front of the holy of the holies, my mind was still outside the temple, contemplating Swami. After the ritualistic worship was done, the priest waved camphor before the deity and brought the plate to us. My companion asked me "Why are you shedding tears?" The priest also saw this but did not say anything. He gave us the

prasadam. Really, I was blessed with everything in life. Yet, why I wept, I did not know.

We then went to the temple of the Divine mother, Apeetakuchamba. There I had a very strange experience. I felt that the entire sanctum sanctorum was illumed with a green light. I could see that in a corner of the sanctum sanctorum a figure was seated. I asked my companion "There is a figure seated there. Are you able to see?" He looked carefully and said "Only the garlands offered to the deity are heaped. It is this that looks like a figure to you." I remembered at once the proverbial saying that for the cowherd who has lost his cattle every fence has the likeness of a cow. I felt convinced that my mind had become obsessed with the thought of the person I had met in front of my shop.

As we approached the Big Nandi, we saw that a few people were shouting at mother Bhagavati and attempting to drive her away with a stick. The mother retaliated and ran behind them to drive them away. When I saw the mother's anger and her enraged attempts, I felt rather amused and laughed a little. It came as a surprise to me that she was capable of anger. She scolded me thus, "You fellow! It is because of you they have escaped." Then taking me by hand she led me through the courtyard of the temple. One always had to be silent in the presence of this saintly lady. If we made requests to her, she would be angered. As I walked with her and my companion I wondered what the saintly man would prefer to eat. Some passers-by commented quite loudly "How is it that this lady unhesitatingly leads this bearded merchant by hand, without scolding him or driving him away?" Hearing this I replied, "Perhaps we were related in some previous birth. Maybe she now looks upon me as her grandson and so leads me thus." This lady was looked upon by many as a living Goddess.

If anyone, not knowing her true nature, - that was as fierce as fire itself - dared to touch her, she would give vent to her anger in a dreadful way. With this lady, we reached the ornamental hall or Alankara Mandapam. I wondered if Swami was still seated in the same place where I had left him, expecting me to return to him. So I took leave of Sabariamamma, "I would like to return to my shop," and she gave me consent in a loud voice "Yes, do." Thus encouraged, I turned in the direction of the shops and went forward, hoping to see Swami.

When I reached the shop I was disappointed not to find him there. With a heavy heart I walked down the bazaar. My companion suggested that we take our meal in a hotel. I felt quite disheartened that I could not offer a meal to Swami. As we walked to the hotel our group swelled to five people. We ran to Sri Subrahmanya Gutukkal who had officiated during the worship, coming down the road with his friend. As he approached us, he told his neighbour "This is the person who wept at the temple. Please ask his friend why he did so." To this I replied, "Sir! When you offered the bilva leaves chanting 'Om, Namah Sivayah' when the worship commenced, I felt as if the bilva leaves fell on my eyes. So my eyes began to water and then somehow, I continued to weep." The friend who accompanied the priest said, "Sir! Sri Subrahmanya Gurukkal is verily the child of Arunachala. His family are the hereditary custodians of the keys to the private chamber of Arunachala. Such is the fortune bestowed upon his family." On hearing this, I felt very happy. I offered my salutations and taking leave of them went to the hotel.

After I had my meal, I went home and completed whatever work I had to do there. I lay down but could not sleep. I was restless as though I had lost something. I chanted "Siva, Siva! Hara, Hara! Hara, Hara! Siva, Siva!" and then fell asleep.

THE MAGIC LAUGHTER

In the morning after ablutions, I had the habit of worshipping my parents and then offering worship to the sun. It is only after this that I would go and open the shop. Having done this, I went to the shop. Some friends dropped in. Some customers came. I was busy. Some time passed. I saw that the Swami whom I had seen the previous evening was coming towards the shop from the eastern side. At once, I received him saying, "Sir! Please sit there", pointing to a place in the shop. Without a word of protest, he sat down in the shop. I called the shop-boy and bid him fetch tea for all present including Swami. The boy returned shortly with tea for seven persons. I got down from the shop and offered the tea to Swami. He accepted it. Though we were six, tea had been brought for seven. I told the boy that the extra tea must be given to Swami. This too he accepted lovingly. When everyone had finished the tea, the boy went and returned the glasses. After that, only the three of us were in the shop - Swami, the shop-boy and myself. We did not speak.

While, we were thus seated together in silence, someone fetched my breakfast from the home. When I saw this, I thought to myself 'Yesterday I was unable to offer anything to this great man. Now my breakfast has come. I shall not repeat the blunder I committed yesterday. I shall offer the idlis to him now,' I took the tiffin-box and said "Let us eat" and looked up at Swami. Only then did I really see him. His eyes were like the two shining watery white kernels of a freshly halved coconut, as though they were filled with tears. He said gently "What is

sent is meant for one person only, for you." I replied "Sir! You please accept it." Again he said gently, "Let us both eat." I said, 'Yes' at once and opened the box. There were six idlis and a sufficient quantity of chutney and sambar to go with it. Swami ate three idlis. I ate two and a half and left the remaining piece in the box. I always had this habit of returning the vessel with something in it. My father had taught me that this morsel could feed a crow or sparrow or ant when the vessel is washed.

Then, pointing to the boy who had fetched the meal, Swami asked me "Who is this? What is his name?" I replied "His name is Raju. He is a brahmachari. A true friend." Swami called the boy near and asked him "Do you know the name of this beggar?" And then in a nectarine voice Swami revealed his name for the first time, "Yogi Ramsuratkumar". Looking me he asked me "What is your name?" To this I replied, "My parents and elders have named me Sivananainda Perumal." Then Swami burst into a marvellous laughter which seemed to be suffused with joy. It became contagious and all of us laughed for at least five minutes. As he laughed, his face blossomed into redness. Oh! there are many types of laughter! But I can never hear or see a laughter such as this. I have seen and heard many types of laughter. This was the laughter of perfect innocence that would enchant the mind of anyone. His laughter was such that my mind became empty of all thoughts and was totally transfixed in that laughter. It was a laughter which would gladden the hearts of all, a laughter that I heard and saw so fully that I would never forget it. I have a reason to elaborate upon this laughter. Have you seen your own mind feel a joy when you stand by the sea and watch the waves rise one after another and race towards the shore? The laughter of our Lord Yogi Ramsuratkumar was like the sprouting of sheets and sheets of golden grain when the dark-rain-bearing clouds shower down on parched earth. His laughter was gentle too,

like the soft rain-petals that touch and nourish fresh grain. The mind that revels in the golden colors of the sky, the wonders of the rainbow and the eye that has enjoyed those sights can understand what I am trying to say. Such was my state. It will be very difficult to understand his laughter that day, which was a dance of grace indeed. I cannot forget it. Since the day I knew that laughter it has stayed to brighten my mind, even now.

Soon after the others left, my friends in the neighboring shops came to me. Only Swami and I were in the shop. Quietly they began to ask me "Who is this? Who is this?" I replied, "What do I know? You may ask yourself." Yogi Ramsuratkumar got up and started to walk westward towards the Arunachaleswara temple.

A little later Sri N.G. Subramanya Chettiar, who was then the President of the Merchants Association, sent word for me. I hurried in response to the summons from our head. He looked and asked me, "The entire bazaar was amused by a sound of laughter from your shop which was like a roar of a king elephant. Everyone, who heard that laughter, are still laughing. Even those, that are standing nearby are laughing. Who is the Swami who laughed such a laughter?" "Sir! for the past two days a saint is seen moving around our bazaar. But I have not asked him his name or the place he hails from. However I am certain that he is a man of great penance, that he is a good and great man.

He is a man advanced in years, seems very learned, wise, a ripe fruit of wisdom," I replied lovingly. Quite satisfied, Chettiar laughed happily like a child. He too had a shop in the same bazaar, He was a man of good faith and was known for his piety. The sky may appear bare of clouds, but one can never see Chettiar's forehead bare without the sacred mark of the

Lord of the seven Hills. He was a fine elder. Perhaps one can see a dark spot in the sun or the moon. But Sri. N.G. Subrahmanya Chettiar was a spotless and good man. Laughingly he told me, "Sir! Such renunciates seem to gather in your shop and make merry. One day, you will also give up your trade and shop and become a mendicant yourself." I took it lightly and laughing in reply, left the place.

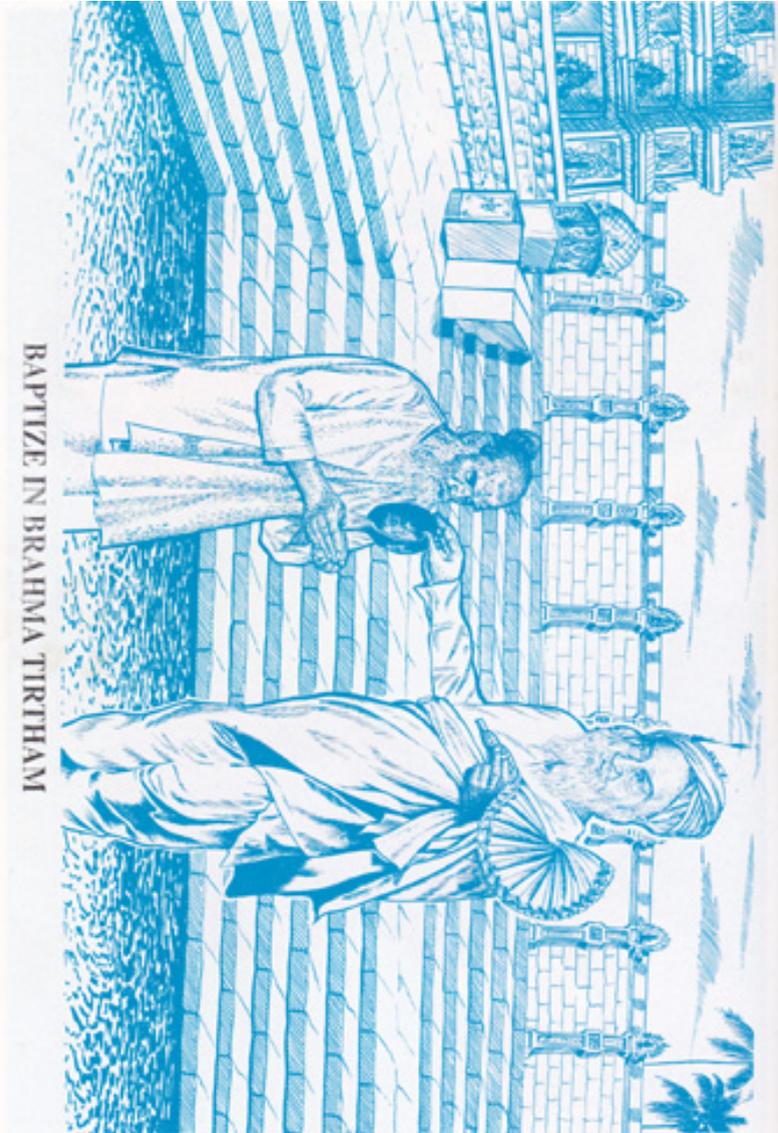
But that night I felt disturbed. Chettiar's words had upset me considerably. I wondered how I could tell these mendicants and renunciates not to visit my shop. What I could not ignore was Chettiar's inclusion of me in their group. I feared that the words of a good man would prove true. It was in this state of confusion that I closed the shop and then went to have a darshan of Arunachala and Apeetakuchamba. That night I lay awake in restless sleeplessness.

BAPTIZE IN BRAHMA TIRTHAM

The next morning, I woke up to the sound of the birds. I drew up water from the well and finished my ablutions. I repeated the name of my parents a few times, prostrated before the family altar and got up to start for the bazaar. I found my daughter standing in front of me with a glass of coffee for me. Looking at her, I was reminded of my mother. I took the coffee happily, thinking that my mother was giving it to me. But even as I drank the coffee a thought struck me. 'Ah! did that elder find something to drink this morning?' With this thought still in my mind, I took the keys of the shop from my wife Bhadrakali Ammal a jewel among women and went towards the east-facing Rajagopuram. I saluted the gopuram and turned in the direction of the shop. What I saw soothed my disturbed mind and made my heart swell with pride. The divine child Yogi Ramsuratkumar was pacing up and down in front of my shop. Seeing this, all my doubts vanished. As I approached him with affection, he stood smiling at me lovingly. I reached him in leaps and bounds, like a child that meets its mother after a long separation and prostrated at his feet. Patting me on my back, Swami said, "Enough! Let us open the shop." I saluted the steps of the shop and before unlocking the shutter I turned around to see him. He was watching me intently, unblinkingly and smiling joyously. The two shop attendants also joined soon after. One of them was Raju, the person to whom Yogi Ramsuratkumar had taught his name. As soon as Raju saw Swami, he prostrated. Swami said, "Enough, enough!" and patted him. Raju got up and looked at me. Immediately I

requested, "Swami, please take some coffee." But Swami refused and said, "No, please come with this beggar." Without a word of protest or even wondering why or where to in my mind, without any thought whatsoever, I said "Yes, Swami." Swami laughed happily at my response. When I came out of the shop, Swami grasped both my hands and holding me thus, led me with him. We entered the main entrance to the Arunachala temple, went through the Gopuram, had a darshan of the Big Nandi and came in front of the Kala Bhairava shrine, near the temple tank.

On the banks of the Brahmaturtha tank Yogi Ramsuratkumar stood facing north-west. His face was awe-inspiring and he seemed as if in serious communion with the holy hill and Arunachala. I was rather frightened to see him thus. Holding me by hand, he got down the steps of the tank and after saluting the water in the sacred tank, Swami washed his face, hands and legs. Then looking at me severely, with a serious expression on his face, he scooped up some water and splashed it thrice on my face. Just for a moment a strange thought went through my mind. This is how people who were considered deranged in some manner, were treated, I thought and was rather hurt. Then suddenly, I felt very hungry and began to feel weary. Slowly, I looked at my Lord Yogi Ramsuratkumar from his feet upward to his face. My Lord too looked at me graciously and holding my right hand led me forward saying "Do come." Bending down he scooped up the water with both his hands and poured it into my hands lovingly. I saluted his feet and I too accepted it lovingly. The water tasted like sweet milk. The water in the tank was covered with moss and dust and looked murky. 'Did it acquire this sweetness because of the touch of his hand? Or was this really the taste of the water here?' I thought to myself. The next moment he smiled and said, "Hmm!" and climbed up the steps with me following.



BAPTIZE IN BRAHMA TIRTHAM

ABODE OF SNAKES AND SCORPIONS

e crossed the small Nandi and passing through the southern Gopuram, my Lord began to walk westward. Keeping me close to his side and holding me by hand, he began walking southward hurriedly. His manner of walking was extraordinarily fast, seemed to me, running as it were. When we had walked a short distance two or three ladies, known to me, looked at me in surprise. They gestured to ask if the shops were open that day I replied "Yes, mother. The shops are all open. You go there. I shall come there soon" and continued to walk with Swami.

We walked past Agni Tirtham and crossed the Kali Temple, I felt a little tired. I was also a little worried that I had come so far. At that moment, my Lord Yogi Ramsuratkumar asked me in a sweet voice, charmingly in Tamil, in the accents of a child, "What is it, Perumal? Are you thinking of the shop?" Quite taken aback I replied "Yes, Swami." In response to this, Swami looked at me very tenderly. The next moment he began to walk quickly, with a firm and determined gait, past the Kali temple and reached the Dakshinamurthi temple nearby. He bent down to have a glimpse of the shrine there but did not let go of my hand.

After we had crossed the Dakshinamurthi shrine, on the opposite side we came to a small pond near which lay a narrow path. We took that path and walked some distance. After a while coming to a deserted cottage on the left, he walked past the thorny fence and entered the compound. Pointing to a locked room on one side, he said, "Look, Perumal. This is

where this beggar stayed." I looked through the window into that room. What I saw made me shiver: I was deeply moved and with tearful eyes and a heavy head, I turned and looked at the divine person standing near by, 'My Lord! was it here that my Lord lived?' I thought. What met he eyes in the room was dreadful. Many black scorpions of the most poisonous kind were scuttling about. There were red scorpions also moving about with chameleons and some other reptiles. There were several clusters of white ants providing sustenance to these creatures. On the bundle of papers, and old clothes, a small snake was moving about. Though I narrate this quite easily, what I saw was something that was so shocking that one cannot forget the scene having seen it once. Even now, I remember it vividly.

If there is one thing that our Lord Yogi Ramsuratkumar cherishes with great care, more than all material wealth, perhaps even more than his life, it is the 'The Hindu' and the 'Indian Express' newspapers which he would read everyday. These papers were stacked in one corner of that room. White ants had eaten through these papers, through the middle of the pile. Only the four corners of the pile were intact. On top of the pile, a snake with an open hood was dancing about. The rest was only a mass of white ants. Near-by lay a rust colored dhoti, a shirt and a green shawl that he had used. The white ants had not spared his clothes also. They had eaten through it as well, quite happily.

The room itself was a strange artifact. It had a roof of coconut-palm leaves. But they were so old, the palm fronts had just dissolved into dust for most part. Most of the roof was open to the terrible sun as well as rain. This run down, dilapidated and dangerous room frightened me. I held the bars of the window and turned around. Two black scorpions, with their stings

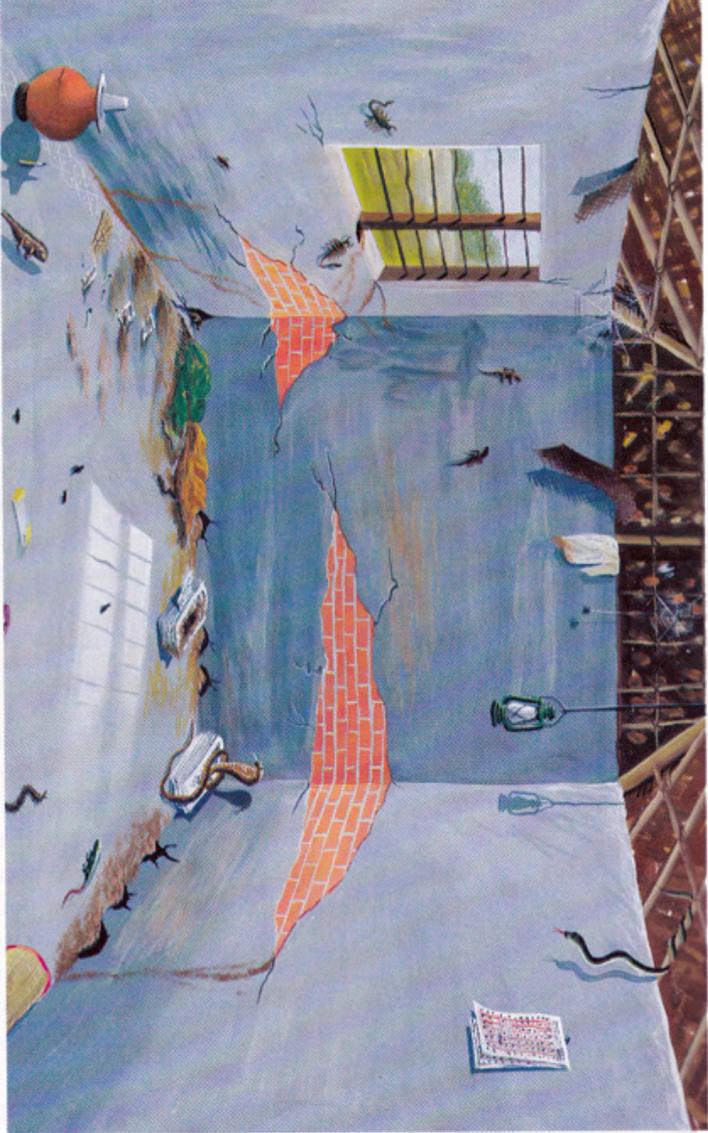
upraised, had begun to crawl towards my hand. Seeing this, Yogi Ramsuratkumar, whom I had turned around to watch, urged me to move, saying "Hmm! Hmm!" and I snatched away my hand just in time. The scorpions capered here and there on the window. Desirous of seeing the room once again, I entered it. My mind was disturbed by a number of thoughts. 'That such a great man had to live in such a dwelling or in the midst of poisonous creatures! A rare and great man not being understood by foolish people who beat and torture him. Yet how patiently he bore with all.' With such thoughts passing through my mind, I turned around and looked at Swami. "Let us go", he said. My eyes were filled with tears when I looked at that fine figure and face that was saturated with love.

Swami clasped both my hands and led me. We crossed the Dakshinamurthi shrine and walking further, we stopped at the Veerakali Amman shrine. Two of my acquaintances who were passing by in a cart stopped on seeing us and approaching us invited us to have some coffee. I hesitated because Swami was with me and noticing this, the friends insisted that their invitation had included Swami also. I conveyed this to Yogi Ramsuratkumar and he said, "Yes." We all had coffee together and then the friends left us.



ABODE OF SNAKES AND SCORPIONS

ABODE OF SNAKES AND SCORPIONS



ID MUBARAK

Swami and I walked past the Kali temple, then crossing the Seshadri Swami ashram, we walked past the Agni Tirtham (tank) and then walking very quickly, we reached the big tank that is known as the Lotus tank. To the west of the Lotus tank is the Dargah of the Stone Horse and is famous in these parts. Near-by is a large tamarind tree. We saw a dark figure, wearing a green shawl and a white cap, rushing forward towards Swami with a joyous smile and coming near, hugged him. Swami too returned the hug and holding the man with both hands reached the shades of the tree. Both men laughed happily. Seeing this I too laughed. Those that were near-by also joined in the laughter. This laughter lasted for several minutes though none of us knew why we were laughing. The laughter that Swami and the Muslim shared was a divine laughter, a laughter of innocence. That is why all of us too laughed. Then the Muslim friend asked Swami something in Urdu. Even before he had completed his question, Swami laughed loudly and hugged him. Returning the hug, the friend too laughed. Without the slightest feeling of remorse that I had left the shop to its own care and come away, I too laughed. In fact, in this laughter all memory of the shop had vanished. Swami then took leave of the Muslim friend and started.

It was the month of Chaitra (April - May). The heat and sun were unbearable. It was not possible to walk continuously on the road. In Tamil is a proverb which says that snakes let out in such heat would be scorched to death. Such was the heat and Swami walked southwards towards the Southern Gopuram,

quickly, holding me by the hand. We reached the Southern Gopuram. I said, "Swami! Let us rest for a moment in the shade of this tree and then proceed". In sweet and loving words Swami replied in Tamil, "There is no one in the shop, Perumal. Let us go to the shop." These words made me remember the shop. With some apprehension, I walked with Swami, without giving a reply. We entered the southern precincts of the temple, walked past the Brahma Tirtham, entered the Dhyana Mandapam and moving east, we crossed through the Vallala Maharaja Gopuram and through the Raja Gopuram came out into the bazaar. There a man came to us and wanted to prostrate to Swami. Swami moved away and said, "Not a moment is to be wasted. Let us go to the shop." I looked at Swami with some disappointment because of this response to the man who wanted to prostrate. Only later did I realise that what Swami did was right. The man was mentally deranged and unpredictable in his behaviour. Then walking through the street we reached my shop.

THE GREAT MEAL

In the shop, some of my customers were waiting for me. They had been waiting for several hours. My breakfast and lunch were both waiting for me. My wife who had fetched my food that day was also waiting. Looking at the two of us her eyes filled with tears. I wonder what she felt at that time or what she thought of my deserting the shop. Swami and I also stood watching her. Immediately she said, "Please come, Swami! I have brought food. Do eat, Swami". Swami gazed at her with reddened eyes. Then, turning to me, he said "Take your seat in the shop." At once I climbed into the shop and sat in my rightful place in front of the balance. Swami was standing in front of the shop. Swami was looking at my wife steadily. She invited him then "Please take a seat, Swami." Swami took a seat in the shop. The next moment the shop began to fill with customers. They made their purchases happily, accepting the price I quoted, without bargaining, soon the cash-box was full. My wife was watching all this. I was very happy. When I filled the cash-box, I felt that my wife who had seemed rather annoyed earlier was now pacified and happy. Yogi Ramsuratkumar, who knew all this, looked at her and warmly invited her to take a seat. My wife laughed and said with folded palms that she would stand. "Swami! The breakfast that I fetched in the morning and the meal that I have brought now in the tiffin-carrier are both there. Please eat" she said, Accepting the offer, Yogi Ramsuratkumar said gladly "We will eat, mother. Please sit down, mother." To this, again and again my wife replied that she preferred to stand. Then looking at me , Yogi Ramsuratkumar said, "Perumal must be very hungry. Let

us eat Perumal." I replied "Yes, Swami" and rising from my seat I took the tiffin-carrier and water-jug from my wife's hand and went into the shop. I left the tiffin-carrier inside and coming out poured the water into Swami's coconut shell bowl. I washed my hands and turned to fetch the carrier. Before I could do so our Lord Yogi Ramsuratkumar called out to me for he does not like to waste anything and said, "Give this beggar the breakfast which the mother brought in the morning." Before I replied, my wife said "No! No! Please eat the meal in the tiffin-carrier, Swami!" Perhaps Swami wanted us to eat the breakfast first and then the lunch. "Perumal is very hungry" he said. Laughing, I opened the box containing the morning meal and was surprised to find it fresh still. Swami broke off a piece of the idli and found that it had not got spoilt. The side dish, which was tomato chutney was also fresh because it had been well spiced. I told Swami, "It is fresh." Swami said, "Serve those four idlis and chutney to this beggar." My wife and I were very happy to hear this. I told her that the idlis and chutney were both fresh. Then I told Swami that of the four idlis two were for him and two were for me. Swami laughed and agreed to this. I served two idlis in his coconut shell bowl. He ate them very quickly. I thought that I would have done better to have served him all the four idlis.

Then, laughingly he asked my wife, "What have you brought for lunch?" She replied, "Swami, rice, paruppu, rasam, paruppu and Kootu," Swami said jokingly, "I have never seen paruppu rasam." Then to me he said "Perumal, mother has brought paruppu, kootu and rasam. Let us eat." I placed the dishes in front of him. "You too, sit down" he said. So I spread the leaf and sat down. I took the rice from one of the boxes in the tiffin carrier and served this and the rasam into his bowl. Swami mixed this well and ate with gusto. As he ate, he said, "Ah! Ah! Fine! Excellent!" I listened to his exclamations and sat smiling

and watching him quite forgetful of everything. Then the Lord whom we adore, asked me in a low tone, "Perumal, has mother brought paruppu and kootu?" Even before I could say, "It is in the next bowl, Sir!" my wife replied, "It is in the next box, Swami." At once Swami said, "Perhaps mother has saved the paruppu and kootu for Perumal" jokingly. But I was shocked even at this jocular suggestion and denied it vehemently, "Not so, Swami! Listening to you praise Ilrc rice and rasam I lost sense of everything. So loving were your words. That is why I stopped serving." I served the paruppu into the coconut shell bowl and tasting a little of it immediately Swami said, 'Aha! The paruppu is even more tasty than the rasam. Very tasty, very tasty, Amma!" My wife laughed happily. I somehow had a doubt. My wife was probably angry because of my leaving the shop and going away. Her anger would have been fuelled at the sight of my return, with Swami, holding his hand, as if I had no care in the world. Perhaps all these compliments were meant to placate my wife.

My wife could display a temper to match her name. Her parents had named her Bhadrakali Ammal. But she was called Padmavati. Goddesses when worshipped lovingly will respond with the grace of a mother. But when angered will turn dreadful.

Swami urged me to eat and I sat down. Then calling my wife he said, "Please serve Perumal at once, Amma!" Without a word of reply, she served me the food on the banana leaf. "Mother has prepared the paruppu and rasam very well. Eat well, Perumal", he said. My wife was by now thoroughly satisfied.

After the meal was over, my wife took the empty vessels from me and preparing to leave touched

Swami's feet, offered her salutations and said that she was leaving. Yogi Ramsuratkumar said, "No worry, Amma. You will be happy," and taking a withered 'samanti' flower from his pocket gave it to her and sent her home.

Meanwhile some customers came to the shop. I attended to the business. At that time a person came to the shop. He could not speak without stammering. Looking at the man Swami said, "Repeat this beggar's name. You will be cured of stammering and can speak well." Since then, that man developed the habit of chanting the name Yogi Ramsuratkumar whenever he passed by. But he could only say Yogi Ramsuratkumar.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHK (M)

THE KERALA NAIR

After this person left, only Swami and I were seated in the shop. After the day's business was over, at night I locked the shop. Yogi Ramsuratkumar and I left together. We walked down the eastern road in front of the Rajagopuram of Arunachaleswara and moved northward quickly. When we came near the statue of Gandhi, Swami said, "Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai" and turning westward came in front of the temple of Bhuta Narayanaswami and began to sing "Rama, Rama". He sang clearly and loudly as if the bell inside that temple was being rung. Singing the taraka mantra "Rama, Rama, Rama Rama, Rama, Rama", Swami crossed the road and walked northward. A bullock-cart was coming down the road straight towards Swami as if blocking his way or charging upon him. We climbed on to the platform and took shelter near a shop. I sensed danger. Singing "Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama" again, Swami crossed northward. Though it was dark, he walked fast.

A little further was a tea-shop. As we approached the tea-shop, the owner seeing Swami, came running out. "Welcome Swami, please take a seat" he said and took the bowl from Swami's hand. He filled it with tea and gave back the bowl. Swami drank the tea standing. Looking at me he said, "Perumal, you sit down." The tea-shop friend gave me also a full glass of tea.

That was a famous tea-shop, named 'Akila India Coffee Bar'. The owner of the shop Thangavelu Pillai who sat inside the

shop looked at me and Swami. He laughed. Then he asked me "How did you join Swami? Is the shop closed for the day?" in a courteous manner. As soon as I replied, "The shop is now closed because it is late in the day. Swami invited me to take a stroll with him, so I came." Swami laughed a wondrous laughter. On hearing it, Thangavelu Pillai, another friend Ramanujam and I, all burst into laughter. Though Thangavelu Pillai attempted to say something, nothing was heard in the sound of that laughter.

Soon after Swami said "Let us start, Perumal" and left the place. To the north of that shop is the Eesana Desika Math. Near the math, by the corner of the road, a Kerala Nair lived in a thatched hut. Swami stopped near this friend's hut. Seeing Swami, Nair called out, "Swami, I am coming." He came running out and patting him on his back Swami said, "We shall go that way." At once, Nair brought a vessel of water. Nair's hand was shaking as he carried the water-pot. Yogi Ramsuratkumar too noticed this and said, "Perumal, take the vessel." When Nair gave it to me he said, "This is your good fortune. I do not know who you are. It is a fine service to offer."

Swami began to walk northward where we came to the big cremation ground. The three of us walked in the dark over stones and bramble. The place was such that even in daytime it would not be possible to walk there. Yet in pitch dark we walked without injury from the stones and thorns to our feet. I have often thought over it. As soon as the work (the nature's call) was over, we came back to Nair's shop.

On reaching the shop, Swami said, "Let us sit for a while" and sat down. He took out a pack of cigarettes and a match-box from his pocket. He gave a cigarette to Nair and offered one to

me. I told him that I did not smoke. Swami and Nair had a smoke. I stood near-by meanwhile. As soon as Swami finished that work, he said, "Perumal, let us go." We took leave of Nair and returned the way we came.

Swami and I walked towards the railway station. It was very dark in those parts. There was a Pillayar temple near a tamarind tree. Swami said, "Let us sit on the platform of the Pillayar temple." Not a second had passed after we had sat down, a man passed by and Swami asked him in English, "What is the time?" The man replied "Ten minutes to ten." Swami got up and started for a friend's house just across the road. Reaching the house, he sat down on the verandah of the house. The man of the house came out saying, "Welcome, Swami! Were you delayed?" Swami replied "Yes." Then looking at me, he said, "It is very late, Peruma!. You go home. Tell mother that you were with this beggar." I replied, "As you say, Sir!" and touched his feet in obeisance when Swami patted me on my back and gave me leave to go home.

When I reached home, no one was there. Everyone at home and the women-folk near-by had gone to the Arunachala temple. That day Arunachaleswara and Apeetakuchamba had been specially decorated with sandal paste. So, wanting to have darshan, everyone had gone, locking the house behind them.

I sat on the payol outside the house. Many thoughts passed in my mind. I was troubled. 'Oh! I have not provided the night meal for that elder. Perhaps I have committed a blunder.' Thinking thus, I leaned back and fell asleep. The door was not locked. It was just closed. The night meal was also kept leady. But thinking that the door was locked I fell asleep.

At midnight, the ladies and the men-folk who had accompanied them, the family which lived upstairs, all returned and woke me up. They asked me, "Did you not see that we had kept everything ready for you?" I replied, "Yes, I am a fool. I was worried that I had not served Swami his night meal and with this one thought in my mind I had fallen asleep." "Why! you could have brought Swami along with you" they retorted. They gave me prasadam of Lord Annamalaiyar and the Divine mother Unnamulaiamma, kumkum, coconut, fruit and sandal paste. I applied the sacred ash on my forehead and after eating two fruits and some coconut, I fell asleep happily.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

THE DEVUDU SWAMI

The next morning, I finished my ablutions, repeated the name of my parents and came out to salute the sun. I offered my prayer to the Lord and took the keys of the shop from my wife. Reaching the bazaar, I saluted Arunachala, opened the shop, waved a camphor offering and sat down for the day's business.

A short while later Swami came to the shop. I welcomed him, "Sir! Please come. Please sit down!" Swami took his seat. I offered, "Please have some coffee!" Swami replied, "Tea is sufficient, Perumal." I called Raju and said, "Get two cups of tea." After the boy left, a close friend of Yogi Ramsuratkumar, a congressman and patriot, Subhan Bhai came towards the shop. His jubba had two pouches on the sides, beneath the elbows. It was a pleasure to see him walk his bearing was such. He would often say, "All good things will happen by God's grace, all's well by God's grace" and it would be sweet to hear these words.

As soon as I saw that great man I told the friend who brought the tea, "Get another cup of tea." But Swami said, "No, Perumal. We shall serve three out of these two glasses of tea. Get another glass." We did so.

Subhan Bhai began to talk with Yogi Ramsuratkumar in Urdu. "I rest on the payol of my house in Moghulpura," he said. I added jokingly, "Yesterday Swami also slept on a payol." Swami then said, "Perumal, the payol is the best place for men to rest. This fine man, Subhan Bhai, has built a palatial house.

But in the end they will put him on the payol." For my part, I said, "Swami I have seen such incidents happen in some houses. Some people would weep to tell me this." As I spoke a shadow of sorrow spread across Swami's face. His eyes filled with tears. Some painful memory perhaps.

As we sat chatting thus, Devudu Swami came there. He did not know Tamil. His look proclaimed that he came from a good background. He was a well-read man and was always very peaceful. He never asked anyone for food. He had the habit of crawling on all fours like a baby. I liked him very much. I had met him before meeting Yogi Ramsuratkumar. I always served him as a son would serve his father. But I was not inclined to consider him a saint, though I had affection for him. I would feel that the quantity of food I ate was too much and that I must give him half of it. It seemed my duty to see him properly fed. As soon as he saw me he would say, "Devudu! Devudu! Devudu! Devudu! Devudu! A lakh (laksham), Lakh, Lakh, Lakh, Lakh. Devudu! Devudu! Devudu! Devudu!" He did so on that occasion also. I replied, "What Devudu have we seen? You alone are enough" in an affectionate tone. Devudu Swami laughed and turning, pointed to me that Yogi Ramsuratkumar was standing. I did not grasp what he meant, at first. Then Devudu Swami said, "Perumal, I am off to Andhra in the 'Chiku, Chiku, Chiku' train." I told him, "You need not go anywhere, Devudu, Devudu. I shall serve you in every way. Even if you leave for Sivapadam, I shall do all that must be done. I shall build a samadhi for you and offer pooja", and laughed. This is how the two of us would talk to each other. Then, understanding Devudu Swami's gesture, I requested Yogi Ramsuratkumar to sit. Swami acceded to my request and Devudu Swami began to move towards the bazaar.

INNOCENT'S IRRITATING TROUBLES

The business in the shop was brisk. After some time, Swami called me, "Perumal! Please come." At once, I got down from the shop. "There is a small work that must be done. Let us go, Perumal" Swami said. I told the shop boys, "I shall be back soon" and then Yogi Ramsuratkumar and I started walking westwards towards Arunachalam's Rajagopuram.

We saw Devudu Swami crawling along. Some people were sitting in front of the Gopuram, some were standing about the place. A friend was selling some snacks like bun, bonda and vadai. I got one or two of these and leave it to Devudu Swami. Immediately Devudu Swami procl aimed in front of the Gopuram, "Devudu, Devudu, Devudu, A Lakh, Lakh, Lakh!" Children, elders and gypsies surrounded Devudu Swami. They would follow him about. He had a habit of giving away whatever he had, to children. "These are our relatives" Devudu Swami said, pointing to the gypsies.

Swami laughed aloud. Since Devudu Swami could not stand up, he would urinate while still in the crawling position. His clothes would be soiled. Some people disliked going near him. Yogi Ramsuratkumar and I, after exchanging a few words with Devudu Svami, entered the temple.

Through the Gopuram, we reached the shrine of Kambattu Ilayanr. It was on a pillar in this shrine that Lord Muruga revealed himself to Arunagirinathar the author of Tirupugazh, a long time ago. Swami and I went past this shrine, then past the Big Nandi which is located to the south of this shrine and then

saluting the Vallala Raj agopuram, walked westwards towards the elephant mandapam and reached the Brahma Tirtham tank to the south of this mandapam.

Swami said, "Let us sit on the eastern side for a while, Perumal." We sat down. Swami was looking at the Gopuram so intensely that I felt he was conversing with the Gods. Suddenly Swami got up and went down the steps of the tank. I too followed. Swami scooped up some water and first sprinkled it on himself. Then he sprinkled some water on me two or three times. I was quite annoyed that my clothes were now wet. I grumbled within my mind. At once, Swami looked at me and asked me, "What is it, Perumal? Are your clothes wet?" and I replied, "No, Swami." Then Swami said, "Let us start, let us start" and holding me by the hand, led me up the steps of the tank.

We turned southwards and walked through the Tirumanjana Gopuram, went out of the temple precincts and continued walking. We were walking fast. Some friends seeing me, inquired, "Sir! What is it?" I replied, "Nothing, Sir" and continued to walk. We crossed many friends. Swami walked with the majesty of a great warrior who has a thousand troops at his command. I too walked fearlessly and boldly with Swami, without worry. Truly I can only describe my state in this manner. In Duryodana's court, Karna was renowned for his great prowess as a warrior and for his sense of truth. He was a man of his word. When Krishna announced the war, Duryodana called his men and consulted them. They encouraged him and suggested a number of strategies, but Duryodana was not reassured. His mind was confused. Karna saw Duryodana's face was lacking lustre. After all had spoken, Duryodana turned to Karna who arose and spoke in an impassioned way, "When Karna is here to behead the five

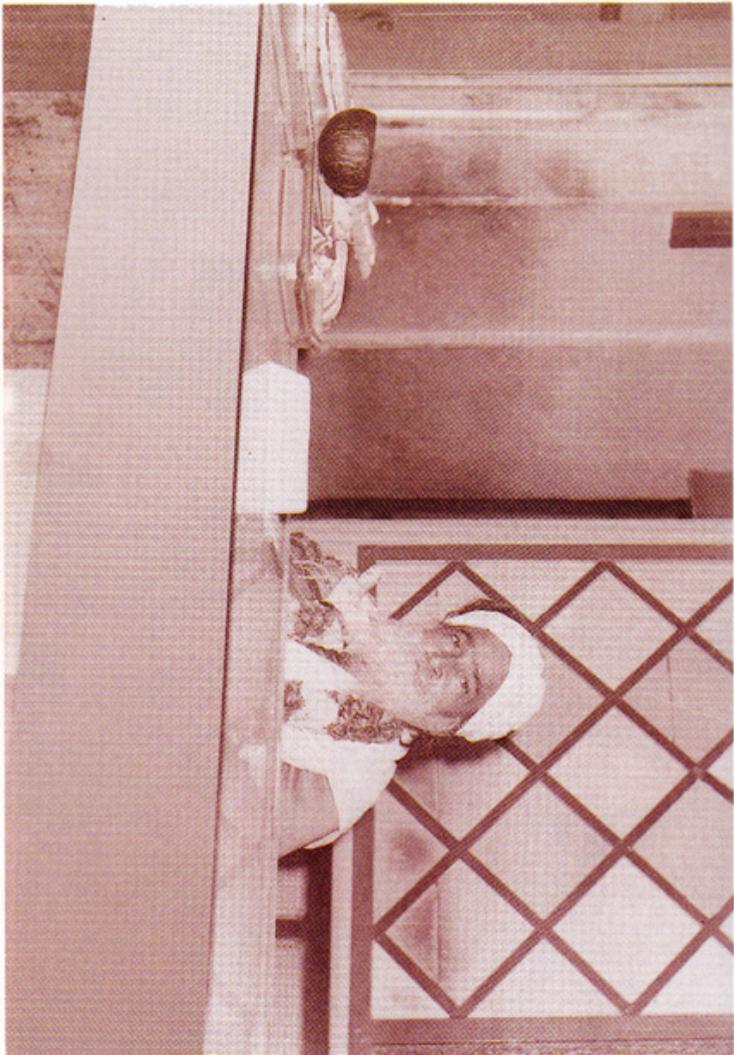
Pandavas with a single arrow, of what need is anyone else to you?" Hearing Karna speak thus, Duryodana was filled with courage. Thus did I too, walk with Swami, reposing all faith in him.

Great men such as Yogi Ramsuratkumar brush aside even hailstorms as if a few pieces of gravel have fallen on them. I walked alongside Swami. We went past Agni Tirtham, then Seshadri Swami's ashram, Kaliamma Temple, and then Ramanasramam near the Dakshinamurthi shrine, moving westward. It was a forest area. Cattle fairs used to be held in those areas. There were some Vathamadakki trees and tamarind trees there. That place was not frequented by people. Yogi Ramsuratkumar used to spend many hours in solitude there. Several miscreants used to harass Swami when he was there. It seems that Swami spoke of this to some persons near-by. But they turned a deaf ear to it. Some had threatened Swami that he would be beaten up. Swami showed me those places and said that he had suffered a great deal in that place. Immediately I told Swami, "A friend of mine stays near-by. I shall request him to give you protection. Do not fear anything." Swami said, "Only he who has suffered pain can understand fear. It is not possible to explain pain and fear to anyone". Then I told Yogi Ramsuratkumar, "It will not happen again, Swami!" Both of us then left the place.

On the way we saw a friend named Harikrishnan who was working in the fields. I knew him quite well. His house was close to his fields. I told him the difficulties and pain that Swami had suffered. Harikrishnan endorsed what I said, "Yes, Sir! He would be harassed when he would rest under this tree. Some would scatter the newspapers on all sides. They would snatch his fan. They would shout at him and drive him away, 'Don't come here again. Don't be here. Get lost!' I have seen all

this and heard it too. Once they snatched the shawl he was wearing and flung away his blanket. They would grab his newspapers and fly it on all sides. They will not allow him to read the newspapers. I have seen some people trouble Swami in this manner." I said, "At least now Swami must be protected. The miscreants must be watched over and we must take care that these incidents are not repeated." I made this submission very humbly. Harikrishnan replied, "Yes, Sir!"

From there we retraced our route back to the shop. We were hungry because we had been moving about for a long time. Hunger led to thoughts of the shop. From the fields Swami walked very quickly. I too followed him, walking and running behind him. As I neared the shop, I began to worry over the business.



SWAMI IN THE BUSINESS COUNTER

KARMUKHIL SIDHAN

When we came near the shop, we saw Karmukhil Sidhan and Tyagi Subhan Bhai seated in the shop. As soon as I saw the two of them, I was very happy. Even if the cash box had not been filled after sales, at least things were safe in the shop and not stolen. My meal was also ready in the shop. Addressing Karmukhil Sidhan and Tyagi Subhan Bhai I said "Let us eat." Tyagi Subhan Bhai replied "We kept guard over your shop. By God's grace a cup of tea will do." When Yogi Ramsuratkumar heard this he laughed happily. When Swami laughed all of us laughed. People passing by also laughed as they crossed the shop and continued laughing as they went. One lady stopped and enquired laughing, "Why so much of laughter?" In reply Karmukhil Sidhan said in a loving tone, "Mother! This is the place where the Trinity meets. There will only be laughter here. There will be no weeping in this place." Again Swami laughed. In that laughter we forget our hunger. We chatted merrily amidst all this laughter.

Tyagi Subhan Bhai and Karmukhil Sidhan were conversing in Hindi. Subhan Bhai asked Karmukhil Sidhan, "When there are so many prosperous and big merchants in this bazaar, why is it that sadhus gather together in Perumal's shop?" At once Karmukhil Sidhan replied, "This sacred place which was, in the ancient times first a mountain of silver and then a mountain of gold and is today changed into a diamond mountain is where Perumal's shop is located. Therefore Sadhus gather here. Bees gather only where honey can be found. Since the honey of

spirituality flows in abundance in Perumal's shop, wise men of resplendence and grace gather here."

Hearing this, once again Yogi Ramsuratkumar burst into a great laughter. It seemed wondrous to those who saw and heard it. It was an unforgettable day. I told Swami "Karmukhil Sidhan attributes a great penance to me, which I have not really performed. I have no experience of wisdom or devotion. However, I have no expectations when I serve You." To this Tyagi Subhan Bhai said, "If you serve with expectations, jnanis, mahatmas, yogis and sadhus will not come to you. We visit you in your shop only because you expect nothing. Mahatmas will give you all that you need even without your asking, by a mere glance or gesture. The gracious Lord Yogi Ramsuratkumar is near you. He will give you everything without asking." Yogi Ramsuratkumar burst out laughing. How shall I describe that laughter. It was as sweet as milk and honey. Only those that have experienced it can understand its greatness.

After a short while Swami and I partook of some food. Business was brisk in my shop. I was extremely happy and was chatting amicably with everyone. All the four people in the shop sported a beard.

After a while I saw Devudu Swami crawling towards the shop from the opposite line. One would be struck by something unique when one saw him. When I first saw Devudu Swami I had such an experience. His hair and beard was white and bright like a streak of lightning, like a petromax light in the dark, so beautiful. I wondered when he last had a bath. Only the rain bathed him. Even if the elephant is black, its tusks are lovely and white. Like that though Devudu Swami was dark, his hair and beard were beautiful. I wondered how long it

would have been since Devudu Swami last handled water!
This sadhu was now crawling towards the shop.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

THE BEARDED FLOCK

Yogi Ramsuratkumar said, "Perumal! Devudu, Devudu is coming." Immediately Karmukhil Sidhan said "The fifth beard has come." On hearing this everyone roared with laughter. Those who heard or saw that laughter surely forgot all their worries.

The proprietor of a shop near-by asked me, "What is this! Gathering together a madman and a sannyasi you make merry in your shop. Our fellow shop-owners are laughing at you. What will happen to your shop?" I felt a little frightened when I heard this.

After some time all the sadhus gathered in my shop began to leave. Devudu Swami said, "Perumal ! Devudu, Devudu, Devudu, Devudu, Lakh, Lakh, Lakh" and started crawling eastward. Karmukhil Sidhan went towards the temple. Tyagi Subhan Bhai and Yogi Ramsuratkumar prepared to leave. I requested them, "Sir! Please have some tea and then leave." They said "Yes" and sat down. When the tea came we drank it. Tyagi Subhan Bhai and Yogi Ramsuratkumar went towards the bazaar.

After everyone had left, I felt a strange fear. It seemed as though I had nothing and my mind plunged into a void. I recalled how Yogi Ramsuratkumar had taken me to the Brahma Tirtham in the Temple and splashed water thrice on my face. In villages it was the custom to make sacrificial offerings to the village deities. Before these sacrifices are

made, the temple priest would in a state of trance ritualistically splash water mixed with holy ash on the devotees. I remembered this. When I was alone I was troubled by this thought.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

LEELA TO ERADICATE FEAR

The next day also I was troubled by this thought. While I was in this state of mind Yogi Ramsuratkumar came towards the shop. At once i received him "Please come, Sir!" Swami seemed to be muttering something. He asked me, "What is it, Perumal? You look worried. What is the matter?" I replied "Nothing, Swami. When you are here why must I worry?" Swami asked me, "Is the business dull?" Then Swami called me and said "Go and buy a white paper." At once I gave him a white paper. Then he asked, "Give me some red Kumkum if you have". I gave him the kumkum also. Swami took the kumkum in his palm, mixed it with water and dipping his finger into this paste without pen or pencil, he wrote. As he wrote I watched and felt that the Lord of creation himself wrote. I was gladdened. When he wrote each letter, he looked in each one of the directions, and his face seemed to show great anger. His bearing was such that he seemed infuriated. His look encompassed everything that was in the shop. There was nothing in the shop that he did not see. My seat, the cash box, the balance, he looked at everything keenly. He wrote in such a way that the white paper turned red. Swami's body trembled as he looked around and wrote. Looking at me, he said, "Perumal! come here." His writings in red on the white paper were like the indecipherable writings of the Lord of creation. Giving me the paper, he said in a loud, clear voice, "Have this framed well and bring it at once." I would not be frightened even if a few stones were pelted on me. But the force of his words frightened me. I took the paper and immediately rushed to the Alankara Mandapam near-by. I took the paper to a glass shop, had it

framed excellently and brought it back at once. Swami was still on the same spot, the spot where he had given me the paper. Standing there, he was watching the shop. I reached him at once and prostrating to him. I gave him the glass framed paper. Swami took the picture and turning it looked at it from all sides, then he passed his hands over the picture and then pointing to a particular spot in the shop, told me to hang it there. I did so. Then he said "Perumal! Light two incense sticks." At once I lit two incense sticks. Swami saluted the framed picture. I too saluted it. Swami left after some time.

I continued to attend to my business. After two or three days, I had to go to Tirupati. My mind was not involved in the business. The only thought I had was to see Yogi Ramsuratkumar. Thus some days passed. Swami visited the shop often. Business was becoming dull. I incurred loss. I could not understand why. Such was the state of affairs.

TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS AND JAYA RAMA INITIATION

One day, Swami visited the shop. He seemed to be very happy. For a long time, I had cherished a desire. Since I could not see him often, I thought that it will be good to have his picture in my shop. I asked Swami that I wanted a photograph. To this, Swami replied, "My photo is not available. If you wish we can have ourselves photographed." At once we went to Aruna Studio which was near- by. Swami called me near and made me stand by his side. But I did not feel equal to stand shoulder to shoulder with him. So I told him, "Swami! I shall sit at your feet. That will do me good. It will also be a great fortune." Swami was wearing a green shawl, holding the fan in his upraised hand and had a gracious look on his face. Such was his appearance for our photo. Even now when I see that photographs, I recall my past. I feel that this is what Swami thought. Imagine a huge flower garden. The father shows it and tells his son, "Look at this flower garden. See these beautiful blossoms. Our mind should be like a flower. Then the whole world will prosper." I feel this to be the message from Swami whenever I see the photograph.

After the photograph session, Swami and I returned happily to the shop. The boy assisting me in the shop had fetched my meal. I told Swami. "Let us eat, Swami." He replied, "Not now, Perumal ! I shall take leave now." I had my meal and continued to attend to the work. That night, Swami visited the shop. He kept singing "Sri Rama Jaya Rama." Some days earlier, Swami had told a dumb man, "Chant the name Yogi Ramsuratkumar.

You will be able to speak well." This man had come to the shop that night. Swami told me. "Perumal! Ask him if he chants this beggar's name." I asked him, "Sir. Do you chant Swami's name often? Are you able to speak well now?" That man replied "Yes" and began to sing Swami's name mispronouncing one syllabus. He sang quite happily and I too listened happily. But Swami detected the mistakes at the beginning. I told Swami, "He seems to be cured. He sings quite well." But Swami did not accept it, "No! No! He is changing the name," he said and we told the man to sing the name again. He did a blunder. He said 'Yogi Ramsuratkamal', 'kamal' instead of 'kumar.' He made the same mistake again and again and could not correct himself. Swami kept saying, "Someone has changed him, Perumal."

That night two friends came from Gudiyatham, Purushothama Naidu and Sivaraman. Swami was talking pleasantly with them in English. So it was rather late when I closed the shop that night. All the hotels were being closed in Tiruvannamalai at that time of the night. Swami said, "Perumal! We shall eat with Purushothama Naidu and Sivaraman. I replied, "We can get some food packets in the madapalli of the Arunachala Temple. Shall I get it?" Swami laughed lovingly and said "We shall do so." At once I hurried to the Temple and told the person in charge of the madapalli "Sir! Three of us were talking with Swami. It became quite late. I need four food packets." He replied, "There are only two large packets of puliodarai." I told him to give it to me. Taking the packets I came out through the Temple to the shop, locked it and took the key bunch. The three of us took Swami to the open maidan in front of the Temple. Swami told us to sit down. Then Swami distributed the rice in the food packets by his own hand. We were eating joyfully. At that time the friends who had come told Swami, "Henceforth we shall never experience hunger or want. We

have been fed by your holy hand. So we shall never know hunger or want". The three of us chatted for a long time with Swami. That night Swami, the friends from Gudiyatham and I spent the night in the bazaar.

We awoke at five the next morning. We got some tea and drank it. Swami lovingly embraced the friends from Gudiyatham and blessed them. "Purushothama! For this beggar's sake the three of you stayed in the bazaar. Nothing to worry. You may leave," he said and saw them off. Then turning to me he said, "Perumal! You better go home. You did not go home last night. Mother will be expecting you." I agreed and taking leave of him went home.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHASKARAN

THE MADRAS VISIT AND THE LOSS

The previous night a friend of mine from Madras had come home on some business matter. He was there. As soon as he saw me he said, "Sir! Last night I looked for you in your shop. You were not there. I enquired near- by. They said you had gone out with a sadhu. So I came home. You were not here either. Mother and the others insisted that I take my meal and rest and assured me that you would certainly come. So I stayed. I have come because you and I have to go to Madras on an important business matter."

So, the two of us left for Madras. It took us four or five days to finish our work there. Then we went to Tirupathi. We had darshan of the Lord of the Seven Hills. Then we made the bulk purchases necessary for our business and booked it by rail. All this took us two or three days, after which we returned to Tiruvannamalai.

The next day I opened the shop and was seated there. Several friends told me, "Swami enquired about you. Since you were not here, he did not come." I felt upset when I heard this. Other friends who came to the shop also asked me, "Why has not Swami come to your shop?" I replied "I have not been here for a fortnight. It is a fortnight since I have seen Swami."

One day Tyagi Subhan Bhai came to the shop. Several days had passed since I had seen Swami. I was in a state of fix and was deeply disturbed. Business was going down. Every year goods used to be taken from my shop and sold at

Manalurpettai, a small town near-by, during an annual river festival. That year also three friends had taken goods worth Rs. 20.000/- for sales during the festival. But the three men who took the goods unloaded it at Chidambaram instead of Manalurpettai and had made off, making no payment to me. Four days after they had taken the goods from Tiruvannamalai, I went to Manalurpettai hoping to see how things were going and also to collect the money. At the bus-station when I got down, a local acquaintance asked me, "Sir! Why have you not put up a shop for this year's festival market?" I was shocked at the question and got into a state of panic. I replied, "Sir! In fact, this year three people have come to sell my goods," and he said, "No such thing. No one came with your goods." I went to the place of the festival market in a terrible state of mind. All my friends there asked me the same question, "Why have you not put up a shop this year?" At once I mentioned the names of the three friends and said that they had brought goods from my shop. No one there knew anything about this. My friend Ramanathan and I went to the bus-stop where the Tiruvannamalai buses halt and start from. We learnt that the goods were loaded on to the Chidambaram buses and that the three friends had purchased tickets to Chidambaram. I was very grieved. I thought that it had all happened by Arunachala's Will. I sent many friends to find out the three business acquaintances. A lot of money was spent in the process. This added to my sorrows.

After this I attended to the business in an unhappy state of mind. Many problems followed one after another, true to the saying that problems and calamities do not come alone. At that time I remembered an old poem where such a situation is described.

The cow calved, it rained torrentially, the house collapsed,

The lady of the house fell ill, the servant died,
The man ran to the fields to sow the seeds in the rain-softened
land,
But was stopped midway by the money lender,
A messenger came with the news of a bereavement,
While an invitation came for an important and unavoidable
feast,
A snake stung the man,
The king demanded the annual tax,
And the family priest came to collect the offerings
All at the same time.

Such was my predicament, like the man in the song.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

THE REINCARNATION

One day, my friend's mother enquired about Swami. Even before I could reply, she told me that he had passed away and asked me for further details. She said that she had heard that Swami had passed away somewhere near Ramanasramam, How can I describe the state of my grief when I heard this? My eyes filled with tears. Many thoughts rushed through my mind. Perhaps the people who harassed Swami had caused this. I had not taken his words seriously when he had told me about it. I had failed to stand by him and protect him. My friend Kaliappan and I walked hurriedly and crossed Ramanasramam. There we asked a friend about Swami. But he did not give a clear reply. When we asked another friend he said, "I too heard of it. But I have not seen the event myself. Some people have been talking about it. It rained continuously for six days, he may not have had anything to eat and may have died of starvation." I could not get a reply. I hoped that it was all just a rumour.

Thus while I spent my days in sorrow, one morning when I was on my way to the shop from the house, suddenly, I saw Swami near the Gandhi statue. I was shocked with joy leaped. My body trembled and my eyes filled with tears as I stood watching Swami. Cars and other vehicles were passing by between us because we were in the bazaar. I was standing on the eastern side and Swami was standing on the western side. Swami too saw me. He stood smiling at me. I stood thus watching Swami for about five minutes. Then I ran forward and putting my bag down, I prostrated at the feet of Yogi

Ramsuratkumar. My Lord patted me on my back and said "Rise, Perumal!" Then he asked me, "Are mother and children well at home?" I replied, 'All are well. When you are there what can worry us? We are contented.'" I could not say anything else then. Swami kept asking me "What? What?" Even then I could not speak. Sometimes I used to explain certain ideas with examples to Swami. I used to sing some songs to illustrate my point. I would never twist words or hide the truth or change the truth out of fear. Now too I told him the truth, through an analogy. I said "Swami! In the Mahabharata Krishna blew the conch to hide a truth and spread an untruth." At once, on hearing this, Swami burst out laughing.

Swami said, "Let us go" and started walking towards the shop. I then told him, "Many days have passed since we had tea together. Let us have some tea." Swami agreed and we went to 'Akila India Coffee Bar'. I took Swami's coconut shell bowl lovingly and giving it to the shop-man said, "Fill it to the brim with tea." The shop-man also filled it happily. Swami said, "Perumal! You too take full glass of tea." I told the shop-man to serve me a full glass. When I brought the tea, Swami said, "Perumal! Hand it to me." I placed the glass in his hand. At once Swami poured some tea from the glass into his bowl. Then he poured some from his bowl into the glass. Thus he mixed both and then gave me the tea. I took what he gave me lovingly and taking it to be nectar I drank it. Then, after returning the glass to the tea shop man we prepared to go to my shop.

Meanwhile an acquaintance of mine, a man of some standing, called me aside and said, "Sir! That fellow is a madman. He wanders around Ramanasramam. Don't have anything to do with him." I felt disgust and anger and looked at him without concealing my feelings. The man was a brahmin but was, I felt,

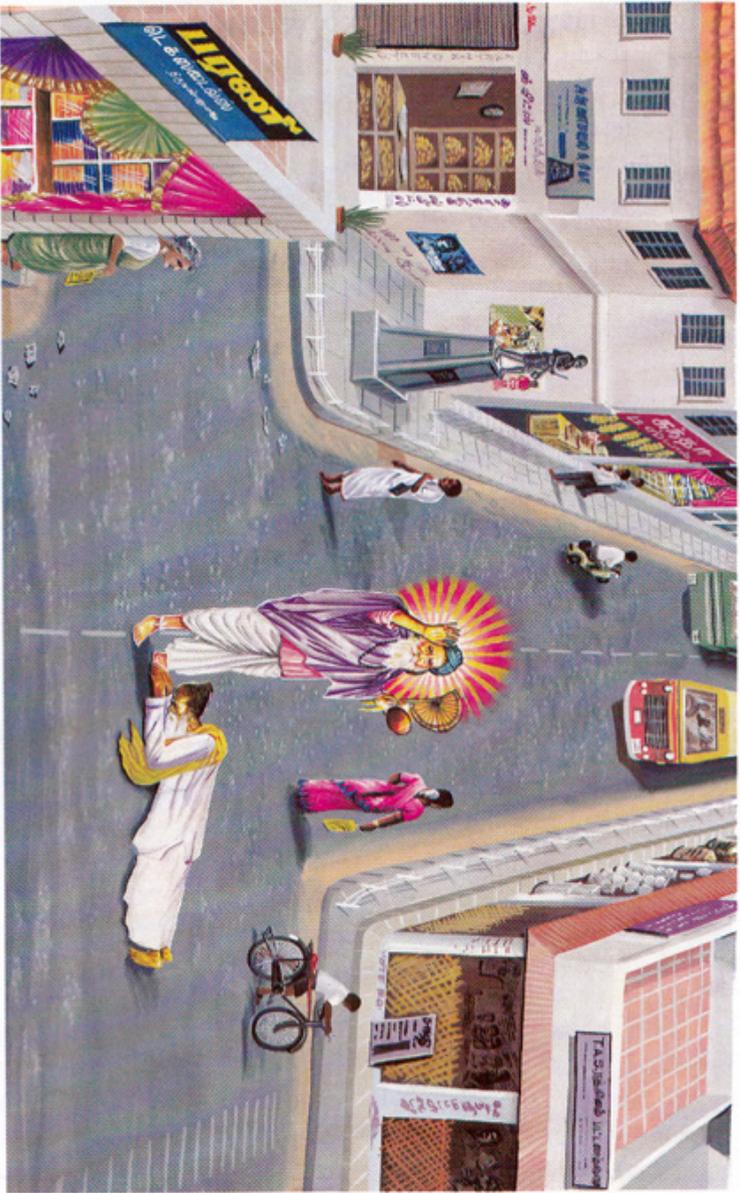
very disappointing in his attitude. I told him, "Sir! If we cannot help a person, at least we can refrain from harming the person." I did not want to take up cudgels with the man in front of Swami. I maintained silence, making a mental note to deal with the man later. I took Swami's bowl, washed it and returned it to him.

Swami asked me, "What did that elder ask you?" I realised at once that Swami had been keenly watching the exchange. When we came out of the shop Swami asked me again, "What did he say to you?" Immediately I replied, "He is a madman. A crackly fellow. He wanders around Ramanasramam. Why do you befriend him?" This is what he said." Swami was not angry when he heard this. He was not hurt. He was not angry nor did he betray any pain. He said "Rama! Rama! Ramal" thrice in a loud voice. He told me also to say so. I did. Even as I said so the elderly man who had cautioned me against befriending Swami, left the place.

Only after we had gone a certain distance I told Swami, "Please forgive me." Swami asked me, "Why Perumal?" I replied, "Sir! Many friends told me that Swami had attained Sivapadam near Ramanasramam. Fearing that it may be true my friend Ramanathan and I went near Ramanasramam and made enquiries. We were in a panic when we enquired but we could not ascertain if the gossip was true or not. We continued to ask friends. Some denied the rumour. Some others continued to spread the painful rumour. When it reached my ears, I was extremely upset. I was thoroughly disturbed. I returned to the shop in this confused state of mind. Tyagi Subhan Bhai asked me about this. I told him, "Sir! God does not die. Swami is the very embodiment of God" Tyagi Subhan Bhai replied, "By God's grace Swami will be well. He will come back." All this I told Swami.

Swami told me in reply, "These people will speak only like this. Father will look after everything. I am doing Father's work. This is Father's work. All that is spoken or asked or done is Father's work. Father looks after everything." How can I recount all that happened that night? I learnt that night that I must henceforth conduct my life with alertness and with a knowledge of right and wrong. Otherwise I would only face dishonour and destruction.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN



REINCARNATION

PRESERVING HIS BELONGINGS

The next morning I was seated in my shop in a disheartened mood, recalling the events of the previous night. Yogi Ramsuratkumar arrived. I did not even have the impulse to welcome him. Looking at my sorrow laden face, Swami called out my name in a clear and loving tone, "Perumal! Perumal!" that sounded to me like the ringing of temple bells. I could not speak and my eyes were blinded with darkness. When I floundered in this strange state once again Swami called out to me twice, "Perumal! Perumal!" standing near the weighing scales. I felt that I was slowly returning to life. I opened my eyes and saw Swami standing there. I saluted him and clearing some space by moving the vessels I invited him to sit down. Swami at once gave me a bundle he was holding close to his chest. It consisted in some newspapers and a book. Giving it to me he said, "Perumal! Hold this. Put them inside the shop." I put the papers and the book inside the shop. I told Swami, "There is a new dhoti also." Swami said, "Yes! Let all this be here." I put everything inside the shop in a corner and covered it with a piece of sack.

I sat in front of the balance. But my face betrayed my sorrow. Looking at me Swami asked me, "What is it, Perumal? Why are you looking unhappy?" Then I narrated to Swami all that had taken place. "Swami! Last night I had an experience," I said. Swami asked me, "What was the experience, Perumal?" At once I said, "Swami! though you know you ask as if you do not know. Last night did you wake me up and take away everything I had? From then on I feel frightened." Swami said,

"Perumal! Narrate the experience in detail." I began to narrate the experience in a detailed manner.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

THE DREAM

"Two sadhus of celestial beauty got down from the Rajagopuram and entered the bazaar. They were walking from west towards the east. The street they were walking through was called Bell Metal street. All the shops were open and business was going on. I was standing on the payol, outside my shop. I saw the sadhus. I was gladdened as I watched their gait and gestures. Even as I thought that though there are merchants more prosperous than I am, no one has invited them and offered them a seat, the two sadhus reached my shop and stood before it. At once I welcomed them saying, "Please come my Lords! Be seated!" But the two of them continued to stand and called me towards them. When I went near them I studied their divine appearance carefully. Both looked alike. They were verily the embodiments of Siva with long and heightened locks of the kind in which Siva wears the crescent moon. Their beards were long and their faces symmetrical, chest broad, eyes like smouldering fire with the bead within like crystal, reddened lips, feet like beautiful lotuses, a body that shone like molten gold and the forehead shining and clear. Both had the same appearance. One of them held a palm leaf manuscript and a sacred water pot. Another held a small jar of water and mendicants bowl made of gourd and had several small bundles on his matted hair. Again I offered them seats. But they did not sit. Still standing they beckoned me. Looking at the two of them I was again gladdened. I was transported into joy because such great and divine men had come to my shop. I stood close to them now and enquired what the matter was. The Lord who held the palm leaf manuscript said, "I will say something. Will

you repeat it?" I replied "Yes. Sir! Please say it. I shall repeat it." Then the other sadhu who had the water jug took my right hand and placing five rupees in it, closed it telling me to keep my hand closed. I kept the rupee note inside my fist. Then the first sadhu who held the palm-leaves and stood there like Siva said, "Repeat what I say." I asked what it was that I had to repeat. So in reply to my question they told me to say the following thrice after they pronounced it themselves. Thrice they said,

"O Wealth! Henceforth
You are my slave!"

I had never even dreamt of such a situation. In our tradition wealth is the very form of the Goddess Mahalakshmi. How could I call the Goddess of Wealth my slave! I was at that time too ignorant to understand the subtle meaning of their words. I did not know that I could indeed enslave the riches of the world. How could I repeat their words? So quite contrary to what they said I spoke these words thrice:

"O Wealth! Henceforth
I am your slave!"

No sooner had I spoken these words then the two divine ascetics disappeared. I became frightened and worried. My mind was disturbed by a number of unpleasant thoughts. I dreaded that some calamity would befall me? I feared that I may lose the path that I had been so carefully following all these years. 'Will I fall into ruinous habits? Will I have to put out my hand to all and sundry and be indebted to them? Will I have to face a lot of troubles? Will I suffer grinding poverty? Will I forsake good men?' It was when such thoughts troubled me that Swami asked me to narrate my experience in detail. I

told him everything. Swami patted me on my back consolingly and laughed well. Laughing and patting me on the back he said, "Nothing of the sort will happen. Such a situation will not come to pass. Don't worry". But I was angry. I was certain that what I feared would come to pass. How could Swami laugh when my situation was such? In a dejected tone I told Swami, "No. Swami! I am sure I am going to suffer a great deal. At that time I will go away to Kashi. You must bless me and make it possible for me to do so." Swami replied, "This Beggar is with Perumal. So you can go later to Kashi" and laughed. Then he said, "Take good care of the books and newspapers and the new dhoti which have been kept in the shop, Perumal!" I said, "When so many articles belonging to the shop are here, your things alone will not be lost. They will be safe." I offered Swami some tea and he agreed. At once I sent for tea. Swami handed me the tea lovingly. I got down from the counter and took it. Swami also drank his tea. Then two or three times he said, "Perumal! What you saw was just a dream. Don't worry about it."

In spite of all this reassurance my mind did not regain its equilibrium. I could not relieve myself of sorrow. Fear and a dread of the worst possessed me for several days. I thought that Swami did not give my feelings their rightful due. I had narrated some catastrophe to him and he had laughed lightly. I felt that he did not worry about it.

CRUCIFICATION

One day a friend came to the shop suddenly. I asked him what the matter was. He said, "Sir! In the northern quarters near the Durgamma temple in the small bazaar two ruffians are beating up your Ram Ram Swami." I jumped down and leaving the shop as it was, I ran. On the way I saw my friend Guruswami and a sturdy watchman standing near the main entrance of the temple. "Sir! Someone is beating up your Yogi Ramsuratkumar." I stammered and stumbled over the words. The three of us ran northwards and saw the terrible sight. How cruel it was! Should such a thing happen to a man of perfect penance and renunciate like Yogi Ramsuratkumar! When we neared the place we saw quite a crowd there. One man was brutally beating up Swami and the others were watching the spectacle complacently as if watching a show. The ruffian on seeing us stopped beating Swami. We went near Swami. All his newspapers had been scattered. His green shawl had been flung on one side. The ruffian was trying to snatch Swami's coconut shell bowl. Swami was holding it very firmly. The ruffian was also berating Swami in a foul language, showering insults and abuses. We pushed through the crowd and went close to Swami. As we approached, the rogue turned away and took to heel. Guruswami shouted, "Don't let him escape. Catch the rogue. Catch him" and ran after him. At once our Lord who is full of mercy for all, who is gracious even to the most evil of men and who is forever righteous said, "No Sir! Dont catch him." He stood there bruised and bleeding all over and yet said "Let this be for me alone." I was immensely angry to hear this. "What is this Swami? You tell us to let go of the rogue. If we

let him off he will come again!" Swami, "Let him come. We shall bear it. Let us do Father's work."

Yet, again and again I remembered the incident. People who came to Swami seeking his grace and help and professed devotion stood all around. On one side a group of ruffians stood. Bearing everything graciously, Swami stood alone on one side. Not one friend, not one devotee had the courage to stop the vicious act. No one had dared to pull up the ruffian and question him. I remembered an old proverb which describes the fate of a small cuckoo bird harassed by a group of brutal ravens. Swami too was like that cuckoo bird on that day, bullied and beaten and harassed by a group of wicked men.

After a while the crowd dispersed, Guruswami, Murugan, our beloved Yogi Ramsuratkumar and I alone were left. I picked up the scattered newspapers. Then I picked up the shawl from the road and shook of the dust. Swami's shirt was in tatters. Beneath a tear in the garment, I saw blood oozing from his body and scratches from nail marks. Tears flowed from my eyes as I saw all this. My mind had one thought then. How does he bear all this to serve the world and protect the People! I stood watching Swami. When Swami saw how disturbed I was he said, "Don't worry, Perumal! Father will look after everything. Let us do Father's work."

We then started walking towards my shop. On the way we saw Ramasami Udayar, a friend. We stopped to greet him. I narrated everything to him. At once he said, "Swami! Please come to my house." Swami looked at me and said, "Perumal! You go to the shop. I shall return later." He left with Ramasami Udayar.

Gurusami, Murugan and I went to a tea-shop near-by for a cup of tea. As we sat drinking the tea Gurusami told me, "Sir! We should not let off that rogue. We must see to it that he falls at Swami's feet." To this I replied, "Please don't make haste and beat the fellow. Let us do as Swami says. Of his own accord the rogue will fall at Swami's feet and beg for forgiveness." Then each of us went to our respective places.

When I reached the shop I saw Devudu Swami and Karmukhil Sidhan seated there. Seeing me Karmukhil Sidhan asked, "Why did you leave the shop? There was no one to take care, except this small boy." I told him, "Near Durgamma temple, on the northern road, a ruffian caught hold of Swami and beat him and tortured him brutally. On hearing that I left the shop and with two other friends went there. I am returning only now. Swami advised us not to hurt the rogue in any way." Karmukhil Sidhan replied, "Only fruit bearing trees will be stoned." I could not understand anything. Even as we were talking, Yogi Ramsuratkumar came there. Karmukhil Sidhan said, "Sir! Look, here comes Swami." At once Karmukhil Siddhan said and Devudu Swami left.

Swami's face was laden with sorrow. I offered, "Swami, I shall get some tea." Swami said, "Get some tea." Meanwhile another friend, Raju, who had got over his lisp and learnt to talk well by merely pronouncing Swami's name came there and chanted Swami's name happily, thrice. Swami laughed and said that tea could be sent for. Our Lord, Yogi Ramsuratkumar, is full of love and grace. He distributes and gives graciously and courteously. As the boy left to get the tea, Swami said that one more tea must be brought. I noticed that he had added one more to the number of people present in the shop. The boy left to get the tea. Soon after Tyagi Subhan Bhai arrived. Swami and Subhan Bhai hugged each other. A marvellous laughter

emanated from Swami. As soon as the tea arrived Swami gave the first glass of tea to Subhan Bhai who said, "By God's grace we get tea." Swami's attention was on the papers and books.

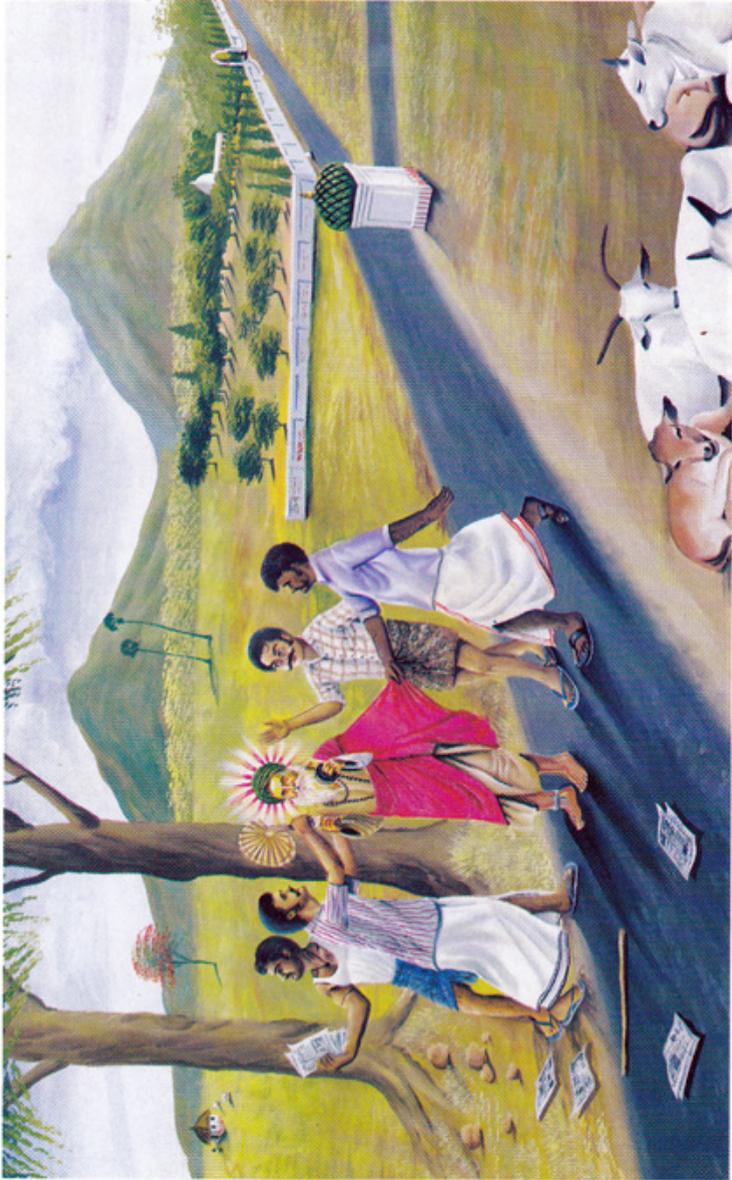
While we were seated thus talking and drinking tea, Mani Reddiar, from a village nearby, came and joined us. He said, "Swami! Please come to our village. Since you visited our village, our people have been doing well. You visited our village when the Kumbabhishekam of the Perumal temple took place. You blessed all the people. It is because of that reason our people are prosperous. So you must visit us often, Swami." The people of that village had great love and devotion for Yogi Ramsuratkumar. All the people of that village belonged to the Reddy community. They were pious and capable of righteous and charitable acts. They were educated, given to contemplation and were blessed with fertile lands and water. They were also peace-loving. All of them had a boundless love for Swami. This gladdened my heart. A friend of the name Tiruppugazh Mani requested Swami, "Please come to our village." Swami replied, "I shall visit Perumal's shop. So too I shall visit your village," When I saw how much Swami loved me I wondered what I had done to deserve it.

After some time Swami called me, "Perumal! Come! There is some small work." Without a word of refusal I got down from the shop and left with Swami. We walked through the big bazaar.

We reached the Dargah of the Stone horse. The watchman of the Dargah who was a man of goodness came forward. He saw Swami. Then in a soft tone he spoke to Swami in Urdu. I could follow only the words "Achcha! Achcha!" or "Good! Good!" that Swami said in reply. At once Swami hugged the Muslim friend. Both sighed and sat down. The friend began to narrate

something in detail to Swami in Urdu. Swami was listening keenly. I stood near-by, silently. A few seconds later the Muslim friend looked at me and began talking in Tamil. He said, "Sir! A week earlier I was very ill and on my death-bed. But even in that condition I yearned to see Yogi Ramsuratkumar and feared that I may die without seeing him. But Swami falsified my fears and came here himself to grant me his darshan. Sir! I have become deathless. It is that joy that makes me weep."

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN



CRUCIFICATION OF THE VILLAGERS



YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR

THE AMAVASYA FEAST

After some time Swami looked at me and said, "Let us go, Perumal!" Again Swami and I entered the main bazaar and walking through the market reached the Gurusurthi temple which was in the eastern quarter. Swami and I sat in the temple for some time and then rising we left and walking northwards reached the Vellore road. When we came there the siren which is blown at twelve o'clock in the afternoon was heard. On hearing that, Swami started moving northwards and said, "Come Perumal. Let us go."

We continued walking but suddenly Swami held my hand and stopped. I thought he was going to say something. At that moment, from across the road, a lady who came out of the house saw us and shouted a great deal. "Oh, Sadhu! Sadhu! I invited only you. Why have you brought another man along with you?" I could not follow anything. Swami did not give a reply. Both of us stood silently. In the meanwhile, the lady's shouting had attracted all her neighbours who began to stare at us.

Among the people who came out to look at us were my friends Rajaratnam Pillai and Kala who was like a sister to me. As soon as they saw me they ran and came to me. "Brother! Please come to our house!" they invited. I said, "Yes, Yes" and stood not quite knowing what was happening. But they would not let me off and continued to insist. So I told Swami, "Swami, they

are inviting me. I shall visit them and soon be back." Swami gave me permission to do so.

Seeing me off, Swami still continued to stand where I had left him. The lady who had earlier invited Swami and then shouted at him for having taking me along kept calling him, "Swami, come! Come, Swami!" But Swami did not move. He just stood there.

The friends who took me to their place made me stand in front of their doorway and washed my feet ceremoniously and took me into the house. I could not understand why they did so. I entered their house. Swami was watching all this. The lady who had shouted was also watching. She also kept calling Swami, "Come Swami, come please!" Swami did not give heed to her call but stood watching me, rooted to the same spot. When I sat down to eat in my friends' house, they said, "Today is amavasya, Swami. So we gain merit by feeding you." I replied, "I do not know anything about merit. I came with Yogi Ramsuratkumar and so I was able to have a meal in your house. It is my fortune." I rose after the meal happily and came out and sat on the verandah. The couple offered me 'tambulam'. They gave me five rupees along with the betel leaf and areca nuts. I accepted it and turned around to see Swami.

Swami was still standing in the same spot with the mid-day sun blazing overhead. I thought to myself, 'I have had my meal. But Swami has not eaten. He is still standing on the same spot. The lady has also been calling him for long. But ignoring the invitation he was still standing. What could be the reason?' I got up from the verandah to go to him. Swami signalled to me to remain where I was. Since the lady insulted us and objected to my additional presence Swami had made arrangements for a cordial meal with some friends and had till then stood on the

scorching road barefoot in the heat awaiting my return. Till I had been properly fed he did not pay heed to the invitation given to him. When he was assured that I had been taken good care of, he turned to step into the lady's house so as to fulfil his earlier acceptance of the invitation. Meanwhile he did not wish that I wait for him in the sun as he did for me. So gesturing to me to wait in the cool shade of the verandah, he put his divine feet on the threshold of the lady's house. The lady placed a wooden seat in front of him, Swami stood on it and she washed his feet ritualistically. Then he entered the house and at once came out, perhaps without tasting a morsel of food. Thus he blessed the lady and her home fulfilling the acceptance he had given. Coming out he called, "Perumal. Come, let us go!" I got up, ran to him and prostrated to him. How can I describe his grace? 'Look how you have turned away my companion and how well have fed him by the hands of friends'. Was it this that his gestures taught the lady? Mahatmas always feed and take care of those that are with them.

Sometimes Swami would tell a friend that he was bringing one or two people along but go there with nine or ten people instead. The host will be taken aback and in panic will ask what must be done. Yogi Ramsuratkumar would say, "Serve what is cooked." At once the host will gladly place all that has been prepared in front of Swami. Swami would distribute the food and eatables graciously. Everyone's hunger would be satisfied and all would be happy. It is difficult to understand the subtle meanings of Yogi Ramsuratkumar's acts. His actions seem harsh at times. But just as the jackfruit is thorny on outside and sweet within, so too Yogi Ramsuratkumar's words and deeds are subtle and filled with grace. I have learnt this truth.

Swami held my hand and coming to the road started walking southwards. "Let us go to the shop, Perumal!" he said. Leaving me in the shop Swami started walking westward towards the temple. When he left he told me, "There is some work to be done, Perumal!"

I attended to the business in the shop. I had no interest or involvement in the business. I felt as if I had lost something valuable. Many days passed thus.

One day Swami visited my shop again. He had many newspapers in his hand. "Let us put these newspapers along with the old bundle, Perumal!" he said. Immediately I took those newspapers and put it with the old newspapers. Swami asked me then, "How is the business going, Perumal?" "Not too well" I replied. I have never hidden anything from Swami or told a lie to him. I always had the habit of speaking to him in a straight forward and truthful way. Swami too would listen to me graciously.

One day Swami asked me, "Do you remember that we went to a house to eat and the lady shouted so much that her neighbours came to watch. Then a neighbour who came out to see what was happening took you to his place for lunch because it was amavasya. Had they invited you?" I replied, "No. Swami! They had invited me to their house on previous occasions. But I could not go. When they built their house they invited me for the house-warming. But only my wife and children visited them on that occasion. I did not visit them even on that day. Though they invited me many times I could not go. By taking me there and making me eat there you removed that lapse on my part. The credit goes to you." Again and again Swami asked me about that incident. Every time he visited the

shop he would ask, "How did you meet them? How do you know them?"

Meanwhile the lady who had invited Swami for lunch asked her neighbours, my hosts, "Who was that man with matted hair and beard? How is it that you know him?" My hostess had replied, "We were all tenants in the same building and lived as if we were one family. He is a metal merchant and owns a shop." Then the lady had wanted to know where the shop was. My hostess had told her that if one turned east from the bazaar and walked westwards, crossing the first shop, one could reach my twin shops. One day that lady came to the shop. She could easily locate me because of my beard and matted hair. But I could not recall her. She asked me, "Sir! Are you not the person who accompanied Swami on amavasya?" I asked her, "Who are you, mother?" and at once she replied that she was the person who had invited Swami for lunch. I burst out laughing and teased her a bit. "Mother, thanks to your shouting, some friends who came out to see what the matter was invited me." She also began to laugh and said, "I wanted to acquire some merit for myself by inviting Ram Ram Swami and feeding him on that day. That is why I called him home. I see him often in the temple. I salute him. He would give me flowers. He would bless me graciously. From the day we had Swami's darshan all of us at home are well. My husband and I live harmoniously and love each other. The children too, all of them, attend to their work. Now our family is happy. Whenever I see Swami I touch his feet for my own good." Then she purchased a few items from the shop and having paid for it, left, asking me to convey her enquiries to Swami. I felt some relief that day.

It had by now become my habit to walk in the streets and bazaars with Swami, chat with him late into the night sitting in

the shop and going home late afterwards. Swami would ask me to sing some songs. Yogi Ramsuratkumar himself sings very meaningful songs in a melodious voice. I would listen to him forgetful of everything else. I too would attempt to sing whatever I knew to the best of my ability. It has been my habit to keep humming while working.

One day i told Swami, "Sir! There is a room above the shop of my brothers Guruswami and Chelladurai. If you wish you can stay there. I shall ask them." Swami replied, "Alright Perumal! We shall see!" I asked Guruswami at once. He said "Yes, let Swami stay there." Swami stayed in that room for a few days because they had offered the room lovingly. During the day Swami would move about and attend to his work. At night he would return to the room. Sometimes he would go to the temple to meet friends and then visit the shop. Once I expressed a desire I long had to Swami, "Swami!" I said, "I wish to go to Kashi." Swami put an end to the matter by simply saying "This beggar is here."

MEETING THE MOTHER

Thus the days passed. Business was going down. When friends saw that the stocks in the shop had depleted and that I did not have the means to replenish the stocks again, they asked me about it. I replied, "It all happens by the will of God. If not today, he will give me tomorrow." Things continued in this vein.

One day Swami told me "Come, Perumal!" Without the least hesitation I left the shop and joined Swami. We walked through the bazaar towards the railway station. As we approached the place, I saw that my mother had come to Tiruvannamalai. She had taken a train from Tiruchendur to Tiruvannamalai, coming all the way to see me and her other sons who had also settled in Tiruvannamalai. She was escorted by my sister's husband. She had brought for her children several eatables such as murukku, vadai, special varieties of red bananas from her own garden, called sevvazhai and poonkadali, palm jaggery and palm tubers, all of which were packed in a basket which she carried on her head. She was wearing a white sari and held a bag in her hand. As soon as I saw my mother I told Swami, "Sir! Here comes my mother, the lady who has given birth to me." At once Swami let go of my hand. I ran forward and there on the road itself, I prostrated full length before my mother. My mother bent down and lifted me up, the basket on her head slipped down and landed on my back, heavily. I did not feel any pain because of my happiness in seeing her. My mother stroked my back and said, "The

basket must have hurt you." I replied, "There is no pain. I feel so joyous to see my divine mother that my back does not hurt."

Swami was watching all this. His eyes had filled with tears, I could see. I told my beloved mother, "Amma! Here is Swami. He is a great mahatma." My mother saluted him at once. Then she asked me "What brought you here?" I told her that it was Swami who brought me. "I am fortunate among your children to have seen you first, by Swami's grace." My mother asked, "How did Swami know that I was coming here?" And Swami replied, "This beggar does not know anything, Amma. Perumal and I came by this way. And father has given this beggar the fortune of seeing Perumal's mother." Then turning to me .Swami said, "Perumal! Let us take mother home." I asked Swami, "Swami! You said you had some work. Don't we have to go there?" He replied, "The work that this beggar wanted to do has been done. Let us take mother home." I invited Swami. "Please do come with us. Let us all go home." We all walked home. At home my brothers, sisters, wife and children were all very happy to see Mother.

My mother asked for a chair to be placed for Swami. My sister brought a chair and invited Swami to sit. Swami accepted. One of my brothers told him, "Swami! My mother is very sharp witted. She is also very patient. She never loses her temper. I have never seen her speak angrily to any of her sons." Swami spoke graciously, "We are also very happy to see such a mother. It is also heartening to see all of you in one place." Then he laughed in a wonderful way and added, "Today is a golden day." Swami then put his hand into his pocket and took out something. It was a 'Chamanthi' flower. He gave flowers to each and everyone present there. He kept on taking out flowers for all. I was surprised. I wondered when he had bought these flowers. After all he had been with me from morning! My

mother wanted to distribute the eatables that she had brought. At once my wife opened the packets, made an offering to the Gods and serving it on small plates gave it to Swami. Swami took it lovingly and ate it. I took the eatables from my mother's hand. Swami then told me, "Let us go, Perumal." I took leave of my mother. Swami also took leave of my mother. My mother said, "Why not go after lunch?" Yogi Ramsuratkumar replied, "We will return, Amma. We will come for lunch." In a short while we reached my shop.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

UPSETTING LOSS AND THE CRAZY WHITE ANTS

After some time a friend of mine from Tirupati came to see me in the shop. I was talking to him about some business matter. Yogi Ramsuratkumar said, "You attend to your work, Perumal shall return shortly" and left. I got up and called out, "Swami!" But he had left by then. My friend from Tirupati and I had planned to go to Tirupati in connection with the business. I wished to inform Swami and go with his permission. Swami was walking away swiftly. Anyway I decided to leave by the night train and return the next day itself and took the train that night. However in Tirupati there was some set back regarding the business which incurred me a loss. This upset me quite a bit. I left Tirupati even without going up the hill to have the darshan of Lord Venkateshvara. The turn of events in Tirupati created a permanent set back in my business.

As soon as I returned to Tiruvannamalai I searched out Swami. I told him that I had to go to Tirupati and had left without taking leave of him. I explained that I had got up to inform him of the impending visit but that he had left by then. "I have returned a sorrowful man from Tirupati" I said. Swami did not reply. He seemed to be in deep thought. Then looking at me he smiled. I told him, "Sir! I left for Tirupati without telling you and that is why I have suffered. Perhaps that is why you are laughing." Swami took my hand and held it close to him. He reassured me, "No Perumal, not so. This beggar does not know anything."

One day Swami came to me and said, "This beggar gave you some newspapers, a book and a new dhoti some time back. Where are they, let us see!" I began to look for it in the shop. Swami was seated in the shop. I had got up from my seat behind the balance and approached the place in the shop where I had kept Swami's things. I lifted the wooden seat which I had placed over the things and said, "Here they are, Swami!" Swami said "Take out the things." I lifted the bundle of newspapers with both hands. White ants had eaten through the bundle and so I was not able to lift up even one newspaper intact. They had all crumbled. I was shocked. Frightened, I did not know what to say. Earlier when Swami entrusted the things to me he had requested me to take good care of them. I had rather brazenly replied that when there were so many things in the shop, there would be no damage done to his things. Later, again on the day Swami visited my shop after being beaten up by some rowdies he had been glancing repeatedly at the pile of things. I had not paid heed to him and having once trusted me with the responsibility Swami did not enquire about his things doubtfully. "Swami! One dhoti alone has escaped the white ants!" I said. Swami gazed at it as if forgetful of all else. Then glancing keenly he said, "Take out your account books that are near by, let us see". When the account books were seen not one was damaged. In anxiety I told Swami, "Sir! White ants have eaten only your things! I have committed something sinful. I have not been able to preserve the things entrusted to me by a great person such as you." I always spoke the truth to Swami without fear. Whether it concerned the business, or friends or whether it concerned family matters, I never hide anything from Swami. If I did anything that went against my conscience I would tell him about it and beg his pardon. Once or twice I have even prayed to him to grant me clarity of mind so that I do not repeat the blunder. After listening to me Yogi

Ramsuratkumar would console me saying, "Do not worry, Perumal! Everything happens by Father's will."

That night Swami and I stayed in the bazaar. Swami sang 'Sri Rama Jaya Rama Jaya Jaya Rama' and I joined him in the singing. Some friends who were there joined us and all of us sang the divine Name. After the singing was over I sat watching his beatific appearance and blissful face. When everyone got up to leave, they were reluctant to go. They could not take away their eyes from him. Swami saw them off with loving and gracious words. Sometimes he would take out 'Chamanti' flowers and distribute them when friends took leave. Sometimes he would give sugar-candy.

One day many friends had gathered and we were all singing 'Sri Rama Jaya Rama Jaya Jaya Rama'. Soon after the singing was over Swami called me and said, "Perumal! Let us serve tea for all" in a very soft and loving tone. I ran to the tea shop and fetching the tea, served everyone. After drinking the tea everyone left for his place. Swami and I spent the night on the payol outside the shop. Many were the days that passed thus.

Business was dull. Day by day sales went down. Many friends told me, "You have not paid heed to your business because you have been spending your time in the service of sannyasis. If things continue in this way you will lose your shop." Their advice was given in goodwill. At home, the members of the family and my brothers warned me repeatedly, "Keep away from sannyasis." My business acquaintances avoided telling me directly. Instead they would speak to my friends. "What! The bearded man will not take care of the business, it seems. Looks like he will give it all up! We hear that he goes around with an ascetic. Why don't you people advise him?" Some friends would then come to me and narrate me all this would offer me

advice. To all of them this was my reply. "Sir! We have heard elders say that everything happens by God's will. What you hear is true. But that elder is not what you think him to be. It is true that I love him a lot. But I do not know if he is a great ascetic or maharishi or an avatar. It is not for this that I am his friend. Many sadhus come to my shop. I too have watched. Have you ever seen three or four sadhus singing and dancing in any other shop but mine? Has anyone so much as offered them a seat? Many sadhus come. But I have developed a deep love for Yogi Ramsuratkumar. I cannot forget him. If you ask me for the reason it is this. When I first saw him I felt deep within my heart that he must have been the precious child of fine people. His face was glowing with divinity and bliss. I wondered at his radiance. Looking at his majestic appearance and brilliance I felt that he must be of good and great blood. His parents and family must be people of righteousness and goodness. He would have clothed himself well and eaten dainty dishes. His family would have given bountifully to the poor and the needy. A man of such background, a veritable prince, is today moving about without food to eat or clothes to wear, draping a single piece of cloth on himself. A man who would have slept on a fine mattress does not even possess a torn mat today, but sleeps on the dust by the roadside. I thought to myself that if my father had been with me I would have served him without his asking me. I resolved that the least I could do for this good man was to give him a meal occasionally or a cup of tea. My love for him is the love a son bears for his father. If I do not see him I feel I have lost some part of my body." I explained everything in detail.

When things were such I told Swami one day, "Swami! It looks as if I should close down this shop, because business has come to a standstill. If I continue to run the shop I will only incur loss and suffer." From sometime Yogi Ramsuratkumar sat

gazing at the holy hill, very deeply. Then he suddenly turned around and looked at me. At that time Devudu Swami came to my shop. As he came he kept saying "Perumal! Lakh, Lakh, Lakh, Devudu, Devudu, Devudu." Then he said, "I am leaving in the "Chiku chiku vehicle! Leaving, leaving." When Yogi Ramsuratkumar heard those words he laughed a great deal. When I heard the laughter I too laughed. Devudu Swami left quickly.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

ARUL MOZHI ARASU

Soon after Sri Bharanidaran who was honoured with the title 'Arul Mozhi Arasu' or King of Gracious words came to Tiruvannamalai. He had devoted his life to encourage and spread devotion. He was a man of good qualities and piety. When I saw him I wondered if he had seen and spoken to God. His pen could scribe only truth, never falsity. He was given to contemplation and was wise. He was a poet, writer and lyricist. He had visited all the temples of Tamil Nadu and had written about the greatness, sanctity and uniqueness of these places, printing it in the form of books for the benefit of thousands of devotees. He had strengthened the faith of many. This man came to Tiruvannamalai. After visiting the ashramams at the foot of Arunachala, the maths, caves, temples and groves and after having seen the tapasvis, sannyasis and mahatmas he came to Arunachalesvara temple. He was surrounded by many devotees and his face was full of divine fervour. He was looking in all the four directions as if searching for something. His eyes had been blessed to see Yogi Ramsuratkumar in the form of a radiant new-born babe. This man visited Tiruvannamalai and wrote a book called "Arunachala Mahimai", in which he had mentioned about Yogi Ramsuratkumar. In that book he refers to Swami as 'The Divine Child'. He has described Yogi Ramsuratkumar as the Divine Child who blesses mankind through his words and gestures. Swami kept the book with great care.

One day Swami called me to go with him and took me to the Arunachala temple. I followed him as a calf would follow its

master. I had to almost run to keep pace with him. After quite some time, he got down the steps of the Brahma Tirtha tank. He sat on the Ornamental Steps, the four or five huge steps around the tank. "Sit down, Perumal!" he invited me. After a while, he took out a book from the folds of the newspaper that he held. "Read this book" he said. I read rapidly. "Read well. Read in a loud voice, Perumal!" he said. I read as he told me and came across the following sentence: 'A Divine Child has been born in Tiruvannamalai and day by day it grows to greater and greater glory.' Again and again I was told to read this sentence. He asked me, "Do you know what book this is, Perumal?" I replied, "What do I know of these things, Swami. You told me to read and I did so." Swami said, "The author of this book is the blessed Sri Bharanidaran." He showed me the cover of the book where I could see the name 'Bharanidaran' printed on it. He told me that the author had come to the Arunachala temple. We saw him too. After saluting him, we came out of the southern gate and went to my shop.

Later when Swami prepared to leave the shop, Raju the man who had the talking problem arrived. Swami said, "Let us see if you can say this Beggar's name?" That man mispronounced Swami's name. Swami laughed a little angrily and said, "Do you see, Perumal? Someone has put good sense into his head." I said, "Swami! He did it in ignorance. Forgive him. Now-a-days he speaks quite well.

Some days later some of my friends and I went to Palani. From there we went to Tiruvanaikoil, Viralimalai and Srirangam and returned to Tiruvannamalai after the pilgrimage. Soon after I returned I met Swami in the bazaar. Only then did I regain my senses. I saluted Swami when I saw him. I told him "Sir! There were several friends with me, that was why I could not meet you and inform you. Forgive me for that." Swami said, "We

shall open the shop." At once I told him, "Swami! I have no desire to open the shop. My partners have left me. The shop seems to be heading towards loss." Swami laughed and still laughing he said, "Perumal! I enquired about you in these parts. People said, 'That man will go to Tirupati one day, another day he will go to Tiruthani and yet another day, he will go to the temple at Palani.'" And then looking at me he teased "Are you searching for God going from temple to temple?" Then in a laughing way he said, "This beggar is with Perumal."

Several days passed in this manner. I decided to give away the shop. I sold it to a friend. After that I spent my days with Swami and visiting my house. Thus my life passed.

At that time I had a big problem which gave me great sorrow. But even then I never did anything that went against the truth. If I was accused of something that I was not guilty of I would just tell Swami everything as it was. I had the habit of speaking to Swami without fear just like a child speaking to its mother. Swami was very simple, unassuming and gentle that it was possible. I never did anything harmful to anyone nor act against my conscience. If at any time I had to disregard my conscience I took that to be God's will. So too when well wishers told me, "Sir! Your shop is located in the heart of the bazaar. You too are skilled in business. Yet if the shop has gone away from your hands it is because of your friendship with sadhus and sannyasis, especially 'Visiri Swami'. It is because of him you have reached this state. It is better that you cut off your friendship with him." I have never accused sadhus and sannyasis of bringing me to that state, especially Yogi Ramsuratkumar, whom some people referred to as 'Visiri Swami'. When friends warned me I told them, "Sir! 'Visiri Swami' has come to Tiruvannamalai to bless us all. So he lives here. He is not a man from nowhere. He comes of a noble and

prosperous family. He is highly educated and had a happy and rich life laid out before him. Such a man lives as a beggar in our midst bearing all suffering with peace and love. There is an old song in Purananuru which says, 'If it be difficult to do good to a man, good it is not to harm him.' So I serve him to the best of my ability. I have not given him anything much. I have not become a loser by giving him what little I could.'

After I replied thus to those friends I returned. I saw Yogi Ramsuratkumar. As soon as I saw him I was very happy. It gave me great joy to go with him wherever he went to work. Once a friend for whom I had much affection described Swami with a bad word. My heart was pained. I do not know how Swami knew of it or how he could have heard about it all. The friend cautioned me against receiving or serving Swami. I had only one thought in my mind. 'Such a great man has nothing of his own. Neither home nor family, not anyone of his own. Is it because of this people speak anything they like about him. Perhaps they take courage to do so because there is no one to defend Swami or speak on his behalf. Oh! People speak without a trace of human goodness or compassion.' Thus thinking I came back towards the temple. Swami was walking towards me. Even before I could speak a word, Swami asked me, "What was that friend talking to you about." At once, without hiding anything in my heart I told him everything. Yogi Ramsuratkumar told me, "Perumal! Let us forbear! Let us not be angry or disturbed." That night I stayed in the bazaar, outside the shops, with Swami.

While life went on like this, some friends went home and told the members of the family not to allow me to meet or serve Swami. This created tension and disharmony in the family. The ladies began to speak in such a way that it hurt me but I did not give much importance to those words. I consoled myself that

everything happened by God's will. I went stealthily to meet Swami so that others did not know.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

GRAINS BUSINESS

One day a friend came to my humble cottage and told me, "You know the people of the villages near-by, they also know you well. Now your shop is gone. It is not good that you carry on like this. Why not try to go the village and start a fresh business?" His words gave me confidence. I said "Yes." The friend suggested that we invest equally and run the business in partnership.

I told this plan to my wife and she too had the hope that it would all go well. I had no money to invest. My wife gave her jewels and on that we took a loan of Rs. 14,000/-. After a few days my business partner came. We left by a cart carrying the things we needed such as gunny bags, measures, scales, ropes and jute strings and gunny needles. We had decided to purchase cotton, in wholesale and then sell it. The friend said, "Sir! You must not see your Swami. Even if you do, you must not talk to him." Quietly, without giving a reply I got in and sat in the cart. After we had covered a short distance I lay down. Many thoughts passed through my mind. I feared that if I saw Swami I may have to talk to him, so I told the driver of the cart, "Sir! You must call only after we reach the bus-stand." When the cart reached the bus-stand the cartman said "Sir! We are at the bus-stand!" I got up and looked out. Convinced that Swami will not come anywhere near the place, I got down and walked perhaps, a few steps. But what a surprise! Just at that moment Yogi Ramsuratkumar was walking towards me. Glowing brilliantly, that vast ocean of grace called out

“Perumal” and bounding across the road came towards me. I told the cartman to pull the cart to the side of the road. My eyes filled with tears and I fell at the feet of the Lord. I called him "Swami!" and rising I stood gazing tearfully at his merciful face. The friend who was with me left angrily and entered the bus-stand.

Turning to me Swami asked me, "What is it Perumal? Why so far"? Where have you started for?" I told him everything without reserve, "Sir! That friend and I ventured to purchase grains on wholesale basis from the villages and sell it for a commission to merchants in retail shops in the town. Swami! We decided to do business on a partnership basis" I said. At once Swami spoke only one word with his golden lips. "No!" he said. "Perumal! Do not go into partnership with that man." When the cartman heard Swami say 'no' he was angered for he thought perhaps that Swami was preventing the business. I told Swami, "Sir! I have sold everything at home and invested it in this business. If I withdraw now I will have to face difficulties. I cannot let go of this as I have let go of the metalwares shop." I spoke to Swami as if I had not heard his words or as if I was an extremely skilled business man.

Again and again Swami repeated "Perumal! This business is not good for you." I could not accept what he said. The man who had entered into partnership with me was a man who held me in high regard. He was trustworthy. So I ignored Swami's words and left with him. I could not withdraw from the business I was to start. I left for the village. As we had agreed we purchased the grains. Loading it on lorries we brought it to the commission shops in the town market and attempted to sell it at market rates. My partner had experience in this kind of business. In the commission shop he did all the talking. Then the commission merchant told me, "Today the price is low.

Tomorrow the price will go up. We can have the deal tomorrow." Then the friend told the commission merchant to give me Rs. 10,000/-, which he did. At once the friend told me, "Today the prices are dull. I shall stay on and finish the sales tomorrow. You go back to the village and send in some more stocks." I believed his words and purchasing the stocks I sent it to the commission shop. After two or three days again I was given Rs. 10,000/- and told to purchase stocks. "Rice grain is now only Rs. 30/- to Rs. 35/- per sack" the commission merchant told me. I went again to the village. When I was having the grains measured my partner came there. I told him, "Brother! You said that we should invest equally. My share of Rs. 14,000/- has been used up. You must give your share of the investment." He said that he would go to Tiruvannamalai and get the money. He left taking the grain that had been purchased, measured and packed. Only fifteen days had passed since the business had begun.

The friend did not return from Tiruvannamalai with his share of the investment money. After two or three days, I returned to Tiruvannamalai and went to the commission shop. On enquiry I came to know that the friend had sold the grain that had been brought from the village, collected money and had left. I remembered Yogi Ramsuratkumar. I rushed home. On the way near Annachatram I saw Yogi Ramsuratkumar who is the beloved and gracious friend and a protector of the devotees. He was coming southward.

I did not lose heart. I believed that the business partner Kasinathan must have only gone to his place. So I decided to meet him at his residence. So calmly prostrated Swami. Swami smiled at me blissfully and asked me, "Perumal! How is the business going?" I replied, "Not bad, Swami! Grain is available in plenty. I am doing good business." Only later I realized that

Yogi Ramsuratkumar had asked me with full knowledge of everything that had happened.

I went straight home and asked, "Did Kasinathan come here?" My wife replied, "He did not come here. Did you not both go together?" I was frightened. Without giving any reply I left assuring her that I would come back soon. On the way I met a friend who told me, "Brother! Kasinathan borrowed Rs. 3000/ from me saying that he was doing business with you. I went to his house to get back the money three days ago. But he has vacated his house and has left saying that he was shifting to Tirupati." I trembled. His words only increased my fear and shock, like fuel adding to fire. With a heavy heart I went to Kasinathan's house. Annamalai Gownder, my friend who had rented his house to Kasinathan, told me as soon as I saw him, "Sir! Look what this Kasinathan has done. He borrowed money from me. He has also borrowed from the people nearby. He has told everyone that he is doing business with you." Then I told him, "Sir! He spoke very charmingly and assuringly. Then women at home trusted his words and sold their jewels for Rs. 14,000/- . I trusted him and went to the village with him. There we purchased grain only with the money I invested. But he was cunningly made money."

My Lord and master Yogi Ramsuratkumar knew that things would come to such a state. That was why he said, "Perumal! Do not go into partnership." He had warned me against venturing into this business. Yogi Ramsuratkumar Knows of the past, present and future. But knowing about his greatness I still had ignored his words. As if I did not have enough troubles now this too had come. With limitless sorrow I walked towards the temple. I wished to sleep there for some time.

As I approached Gandhi's statue I saw the Lord Yogi Ramsuratkumar walking southwards. I was also walking southwards from the northern direction. I saw Swami and at once prostrated to him. Swami saw my sorrowful face and knew of my grief. He took my hands in his. "Come Perumal! Let us eat some chappatis" he invited me. He took me to 'Sundar Tea Stall' which was run by a north Indian. Swami told me that the chappatis available in that place were excellent. I did not speak. My sorrow was such that I could not speak. The shop-man served chappatis in two plates. Swami took the chappati from one plate and serving it into his coconut shell bowl returned the plate. I took my plate from Swami and stood holding it and looking at Swami. Many thoughts passed through my mind. 'O Lord! You are a good and wise man. You were gracious and guided me. If only I had listened to you today I would not experience this sorrow.' I thought thus and stood by his side.

Then Swami asked me, "Perumal! How is the business going?" I felt choked and could not speak. Tears were streaming down my eyes. Looking at my condition Swami also felt the sorrow. His eyes filled with tears and the tear drops began to spill over the eyes. He told me gently, "Do not worry Perumal!" As he spoke he patted me in my upper arm with his left hand. His soft words and loving touch had the power to revive me. They could give life to a dying man. I felt as if a load had been removed from my mind. I stood unmoving. Then I too smiled a bit.

At once Yogi Ramsuratkumar said, "The name of the owner of this shop is Thangaraju." Then he called out, "Thangaraju! Perumal has smiled!" The shop-man did not know me nor did he know anything about the situation yet seeing Swami's kind treatment of me he welcomed me and smiled at me. Then

Swami said, "Let us go to the temple, Perumal!" and took me there. That night I stayed with Swami in the bazaar.

The next day I went home. I told my wife all that had happened. She became very upset. She accused me, laying the reason for the loss squarely on me. "How can one manage the household of a madman? Oh! I sold all my jewels and gave you the money!" She cried and wept. At that time a close friend of the family came to my house. My wife, whose names are Bhadrakaliammal and Padmavatiammal told him everything in detail. He too scolded me. He pointed out all my deficiencies and consoled my wife. Then he took me out of the house and advised me. I said nothing but "Yes, Yes!" for all that he said. Some days passed in this way 'What to do? Where to go? How to run my life?' Not knowing the answers to these questions I lay at home.

One day I came out of the house. If I could catch a glimpse of Yogi Ramsuratkumar in any nook or corner, I always felt blessed that I could see the Lord and rejoiced. I did not know how to run my life. I realized that Swami put me through these experiences only to ripen me. Of one thing I was sure without doubt. No matter how great the sorrow, even if one was drowning and had lost every possibility of rising above the sea of troubles and grief, every pain and sorrow vanishes at the very sight of Swami. Swami is the very embodiment of Bliss. This is why I could speak to him with love and without fear like a son. In the same way Swami too would speak to me lovingly and simply without a trace of his greatness. Thus many days passed.

Another kind of sorrow now raised its head. My close friends, relatives and the people who had known me now began to turn away their face when they saw me. Because of the loss and

suffering that I underwent they avoided and disliked me. My relatives and friends who had earlier been associated with me in business now felt that I should not continue to stay in Tiruvannamalai. Their words were harsh and their looks were like fire and it was too much for this madman to bear.

When my mind was thus disturbed I resolved to leave Tiruvannamalai and go somewhere else. A friend of mine from Madras wrote to me calling me there and also personally invited me. He came to my house and spoke to my wife and consoled her. "I shall take him to Madras. Don't worry about anything" he said. Padmavatiammal persuaded me to go to Madras and start afresh. But I could not tear myself away from Tiruvannamalai.

Sorrows and troubles increased. I would meet Yogi Ramsuratkumar at least twice or thrice everyday, in the temple or in the bazaar or on the road. But I never told him of my sorrows. He would sympathize with me and ask me lovingly, "What is it, Perumal! Why do you look so crestfallen?" Whenever Swami asked me thus I would only tell him one thing, "Swami! I wish to go to Kashi." This is the only desire I often expressed to Swami. No matter how many times I told him this he would reply, "Not now, Perumal! This beggar is here now." Now, when things had reached this state, I met him and told him of the desire to go to Kashi. Again he repeated the same words in reply. But I felt very comforted because I stayed with Swami for four or five days.



GRAINS BUSINESS

THE GREAT ESCAPE AND FINAL AMALGAMATION

One day my friend Thangapandian came to me and gave me fifty rupees. "What for?" I asked. He said, "For your expenses" and left. That night I went home. A guest had arrived. As soon as everyone saw me they asked me in one voice, "What! Have you not gone to Madras?" I thought to myself thus. Everyone is questioning me in one voice. I also have money for the bus ticket. Now there is no other go. I must leave for Madras. With some confidence I got ready the next morning. I took ten rupees for my fare and the remaining forty rupees I gave to my daughter Dhanaveera Bhagyalakshmi and told her, "Give this to your mother" and prepared to leave. But my thoughts were fully about Yogi Ramsuratkumar. 'I should not tell him that I was leaving for Madras. I should not meet him. I must leave for Madras without seeing him' I thought. I resolved to take the 'Lakshmi Saraswati' bus which left at two in the afternoon for Madras. The driver and the conductor of that bus were known to me. So they will stop the bus by the railway gate for five minutes. 'I should run and jump on to the bus before they started' I thought. My resolve was that I should not see Swami till I leave for Madras. So even when I was quite far from the bus-stand, I hide behind lorries and cars and walked to the bus-stand keeping myself well hidden. I did not spot Swami till I covered that long road. I moved carefully looking on both sides. But really the joke was on me.

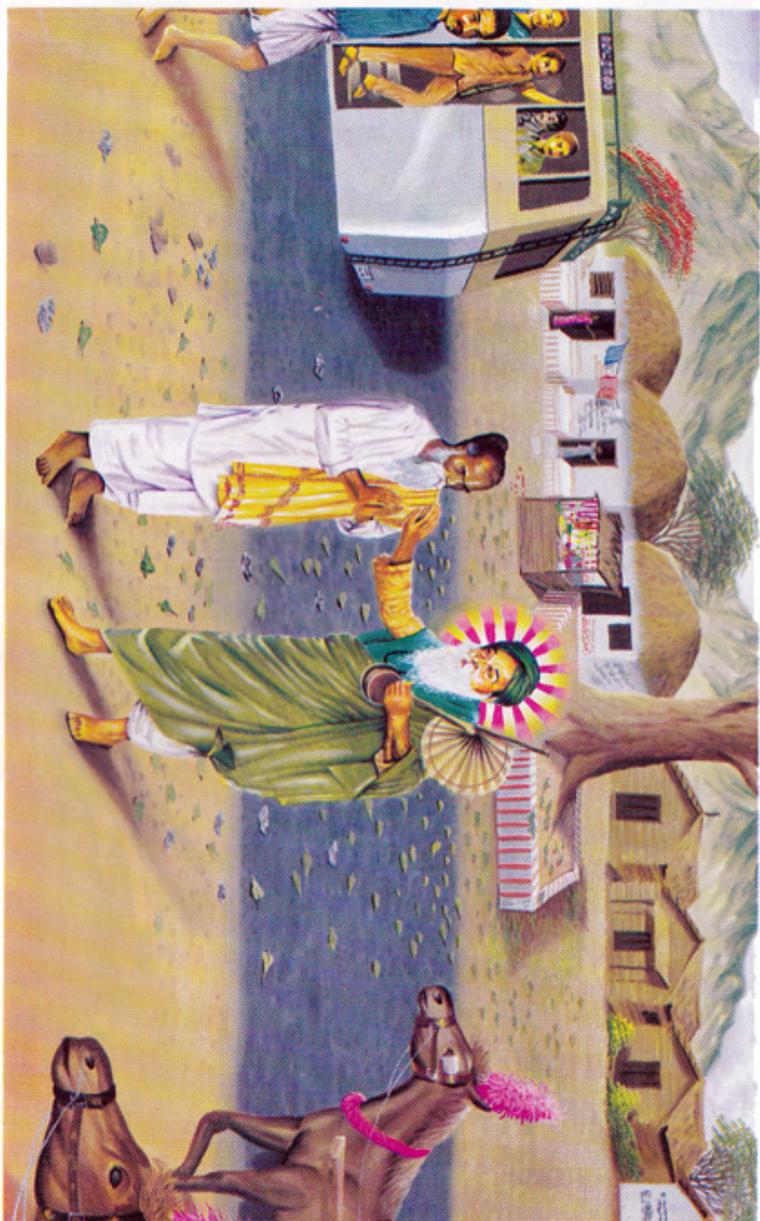
Yogi Ramsuratkumar had been watching me move like a thief. Opposite the bus-stand across the road there were thatched huts on both sides of a pipal tree. Two people, Nagammal and

Ranganathan, lived in those huts selling flower garlands in front of the bus-stand. Swami had been seated under the pipal tree between the huts and had been looking westwards. The road was so laid that from his vantage spot he could see almost upto the Rajagopuram of the main entrance to the temple. But yet it would not have been possible for anyone to spot him. He had been watching me smilingly as I walked along hiding and looking about guiltily like a thief. But I did not see him. My eyes had been only on the bus ahead of me. The bus was ready to leave. I must have been about a hundred and fifty yards from the bus-stand. I thought, 'The bus is about to leave. I have reached here without seeing Swami. Now I shall dash to the bus and get in'. I ran forward as if I had four legs instead of two. At that time the Lord of Arunachala, the Supreme Truth embodied, the Light of the World, the Pure and Precious Jewel of earth and heaven, that rare gem, the merciful God who had accepted me graciously, saw me rushing across the road. Immediately the Lord of mercy leaped forward and calling out "Perumal!" in the most loving tone lifted up his hands and stopped me.

Swami asked me "What is it Perumal? Where are you running in such speed?" I was panting for breath and could not speak. As I watched the face of my divine father who stood as if he were Divine Love itself in human form, tears rolled down my face. I just stood watching him. Very lovingly he took my hands and put an arm around my shoulder. All this was happening in the middle of the road. People who were gathered there were watching. Again Swami asked me in a soft tone, "What happened, Perumal?" I felt like laughing then. I told him as I laughed, "Swami! I am leaving for Madras. I planned not to see you or tell you about it. That is why I was running." Thus I told him the truth. My eyes were streaming tears.

Then Yogi Ramsuratkumar gave a slap on my palms. He put his hand on my head as if to bless me. Then as he gave a slap on my left shoulder he spoke these golden words, "Perumal! Henceforth we shall stay with this beggar. We shall trust this beggar and believe in him. We need not leave Tiruvannamalai and go anywhere. This beggar and Perumal shall stay here." At once I fell at his feet and prostrated. I told him, "Yes, Swami! I shall do so. Henceforth I shall stay with you."

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN



GREAT ESCAPE

THE GREATEST BOON

Still holding both my hands, Swami took me across the road to the place under the pipal tree. When we reached the place, he said, "Sit down." I sat down. My close friend, George came there then. Swami saw him and said, "Come George! Sit down!" That friend also sat down. At once, Swami asked me, "Perumal! Have you eaten?" I have a habit, not to say 'No'. Instead I would give some other reply. So I told him, "Yes." Then added, "I have told you a lie. I said 'Yes' because I did not want to say 'no'. That was false." Then Swami asked me a second question. Somehow, he wanted to trap me into speaking a lie perhaps. "Did you take leave of the people at home?" I said a short "Yes." I avoided saying, "Yes, Swami" confidently. Some people have the habit of saying "This is Truth." What they mean is that this is not 'Untruth' for they do not speak what is really 'Truth'. So too I said "yes." Swami told me then, "Now the time is half past two. You go home at once and bring this beggar some food." When I heard his words, many thoughts raced through my mind. With a confused mind, I looked at the face of our beloved Yogi Ramsuratkumar. His face was like a dry and drooping flower, the face of a man who had not eaten for days. His face which is always like a flower that is in full bloom was covered by a shadow. Looking at that gentle and lotus-like face, I started for my house.

My mind was still disturbed by many thoughts. I started from the pipal tree and walked westward towards my cottage. 'Perhaps he is really hungry' I thought. 'I have ten rupees with me. I could fetch a meal from 'Modern Cafe' I thought. The

very next moment, I thought that Swami will find out that it is a food from the hotel. He has asked for food from my house. Shall I again tell him a twisted truth? I thought. Then I thought of fetching some rice from my brother's house. But he will recognize the food as well as the vessel to have come from my brother's house. That would be a big lie.

I was in a dilemma. At home, if my wife asked me, the reason for my worried look, how could I tell her Swami's name and his desire to have a meal from home? She will not like it. It will only create more unpleasantness at home. Thus I slowly wended my way. But as I neared my cottage, a courage began to fill my being. I thought of my Lord within my mind. I prayed that I must not fail in this task. 'The Lord of Arunachala who never once expresses a need has sent me on this errand and I must not dishonour my name by not fulfilling it.' I spoke to myself, "Yogi Ramsuratkumar! I shall ask for some rice for you. Even if it be a bowl of salted, old gruel, please let my wife and others give it without refusal, Swami." I prayed and decided that if I could not get something at home then I would walk away towards the North once and for all.

When I went home, everyone looked at me. Padmavatiammal's sister said, "Brother has come!" My elder daughter came running to me. I did not sit down. I said, "Please put half of the food kept for my share in a container and give it for Yogi Ramsuratkumar." I told her. In reply, my wife called out, "Tell your father to have his meal. I shall give food for Yogi Ramsuratkumar. There is enough rice available." To me it was like a divine message. There was no limit to my happiness. I thanked the Gods and remembered my parents with reverence. I blessed Padmavatiammal and her children, "May you and your children live prosperously. May you receive the grace of Yogi Ramsuratkumar" in my mind, happily. I gladly ate the

food served to me lovingly by my daughter. My wife placed a carrier of food as she has said she would. I left the house immediately not to risk upsetting anyone. I took leave of my daughter. I walked towards the pipal tree. I was happy and walked proudly. With a smile, I walked quickly towards Swami and reached him.

As soon as Swami saw me, he welcomed me lovingly, "Come, Perumal!" I put the vessel of food at his feet. He told me, "Sit down, Perumal" and made me sit by his side. "Perumal! Did you eat?" he asked. "Yes, Swami. I have eaten". I laughed and said, "What did mother say?" Swami asked. My eyes filled with tears. I told him, "She did not speak a word of anger or refusal and I was joyous to hear her say that she will give you food". I fell full length at his feet. Swami patted twice or thrice on my back and said, "We shall rise."

Then he said, "Give me the rice." I opened the box. Seeing that there was rice and a carrier of spiced tamarind sauce, he said, "Mix the two well and put it in this beggar's bowl, Perumal! See what is in the other vessel!" I opened the other vessel and saw that there was some 'sundakkai vathal' or dried vegetable wafers of the most common kind. "Put that also and prepare the mixture" he said. I did as he said and served him in his coconut shell bowl. As he ate it he said, "Perumal! Padmavatiammal has prepared 'pulikolambu' very well. Aha! wonderful, wonderful." At once, I told him, "Swami! Since they did not have money to buy vegetables, they have prepared this spiced tamarind sauce." Swami laughed blissfully and ate the rice. He turned to George who was near-by and praised the food. When Swami finished eating and the vessels were to be washed, we heard the five o'clock siren. At once Swami said. "Let us start, Perumal. We shall go to the temple." I put the vessels in a bag. Swami took the newspapers that had been staked at his lotus

feet and giving it to me said, "Hold these tightly." Swami started and walked in the front while George and I followed. Since that day with a guileless hear, I am gladly performing every task that Yogi Ramsuratkumar gives me.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN



YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR



UNDER THE PUNNAI TREE



FROM PUNNAI TREE TO THERADY MANDAPAM

SHOWERING HIS BLESSINGS

Tapasya or penance is great and mysterious. We have read in the Puranas how much Visvamitra suffered during the period of his penance and what obstacles he had to overcome. A wise man whose penance is true is gracious to all when he himself suffers in every way. It is not possible to attain a state of tapasya simply by thinking of it. It cannot be described even by using the most exaggerated words. Only if one was prepared to suffer like a small worm that has fallen into the fire, only if one can rise above it and come out of it can one reach that exalted state. Having borne all difficulties and suffering, Yogi Ramsuratkumar glitters like a flower that has been born in flames of fire. He dwells in Tiruvannamalai filling the eyes and hearts of all those who see him and protects all men and creatures as if they were his very self. Rare indeed it is to see such a man of penance and wisdom on earth. May such a man of perfection who is truly the Jyothi of Arunachala protect us by his radiant penance and grace. I am one among the many devotees who has seen him and known him to be the Divine Mother and Father in One. Like the butter and ghee that is unseen in milk, like the sweetness that is hidden in honey, wisdom or jnana is the hidden in the fruit of suffering. Yogi Ramsuratkumar is plunged in a supreme penance in Arunachala and he showers his grace like rain, radiating the light of his tapasya, in an auspicious form. Swami's grace is not for any one person alone. I offer this book which records the memories of my heart at the golden lotus feet of Yogi Ramsuratkumar who is my Divine Father, the Divine Child who wears a green shawl and who holds a fan like a king. The

second part of this book will follow. In the next part I shall write about the divine reason for his incarnation, the many experiences he met with in his spiritual journey and the countless ways in which he showers his grace and mercy on the devotees that seek him.

May Yogi Ramsuratkumar bless us forever.

- Perumal Sadaiyan

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN



THE FINAL AMALGAMATION

