



Will ZULKOSKI

MEETINGS WITH

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

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*Photo : Yogi Ramsuratkumar with Truman Caylor Wadlington
(left) and Will Zulkoski (right) in 1973.*

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN - January 2008
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INTRODUCTION

Will Zulkoski¹ met Yogi Ramsuratkumar in 1973, at a time Yogiji was living in Nature, near the station, under the punnai tree. Will was one of the first Westerners to come in touch with Him.

What is known of Will is just what we can read in Hilda's Charlton book, which has been put on the website of the Yogi Ramsuratkumar Bhavan, along with a French translation. Another part has come out with the book "Under the Punnai Tree", for which somebody was sent to Will to record an interview.

During one of Yogiji's darshans, He asked Lee Lozowick to go and meet Truman Caylor Wadlington and Will, who also were living in USA. He did more than asking. He required, three times, knowing Lee's reluctance as Will and him were 'as day and night'. Here is the exchange between the interviewer and Will concerning Yogiji's request:

¹ The real surname of Will was Zulkoski and not Zulkowsky, as corrected in Dec. 2015 by his friend Barry Toobman who knew Will for 30 years and worked with him. We don't know from where this mistake has come.

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- *Tom*: (Yogi Ramsuratkumar) remembered you very strongly. '96 or '94, I don't know, whenever he mentioned you to Lee.

- *Will*: Yeah.

- *Tom*: And as I saw it, Yogi Ramsuratkumar called Lee back three times, in succession to make sure that he really understood that Yogi Ramsuratkumar wanted him to have Lee visit you and Caylor and this other person.

- *Will*: Yeah.

- *Tom*: And each time. First time it was like a lightly stated request, and next it was more, a little bit stronger, and then last time he said it, it was emphatic, kind of like, you **are** gonna do this.... Just seemed like it was really, really important to him.

Never the guru will ask one of his devotees to pay a visit to another one without any reason. Up to the devotee to find that reason, and he has to find it, it is the purpose! He does or he does not. The devotee has something to learn from the other. In the same way, never will a Master go to his disciples (here we speak of a trip), but the disciples go to him. Lee Lozowick paid a very short visit to Will, forced to do so in order to respect his Master's 'command, but then sent one of his students, Tom Lennon, to go to Will for recording his memories about Yogi Ramsuratkumar.

*Now, Will had begun to write a book, entitled “**Meetings with Yogi Ramsuratkumar**”. It seems that he stopped writing when Tom Lennon came to him. Why? Maybe did he think that, as he spoke during 4 tapes, he had said everything he could and that it was useless to continue writing. Or, as i was told,*

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maybe was he discouraged... Obviously, even if Will knew that a book will be published using his interview, he was clever enough to know that only a part of it would be used. However he stopped. Will passed away some time later.

Will's interview was partly used for the book "Under the Punnai Tree".

In December 2007 in Tiruvannamalai, Ma Devaki gave us everything she had of Will's papers, including the text of the interview, asking us to go through them in order to see whether some material could be useful. Parts of this interview are missing. We went in contact with Hilda Charlton's group in New York City which did everything to help us and went all the ways to try to get some of Will's writings, but nothing came out, there are nowhere. Therefore we must do with what we have of this interview. The missing parts are important: Tape 1 face A, tape 2 face B and tape 3 face B. Some parts of them could be retraced in some isolated pages as well as in the book "Under the Punnai Tree."

So, we have worked on this interview and did in such a way that all Will's words are respected. As far as possible, we have removed the interviewer's questions or cuts, so that Will words flow naturally, and we have just removed the words when Will began a sentence, stopped it and began another one. Very few footnotes have been added.

Will passed a long time with Yogi Ramsuratkumar. And reading his words, we can feel his deep love for the one who became his Master. Will is so humble and dedicated, never searching any fame. He came to be part of Hilda Charlton's

group where he was loved. All people that knew him speak of him with high regard. And another thing that has to be known is that Will financially participated in the first book on Yogiji, which was Caylor Wadlington's book, and the publication of this book was very important at that time, knowing the very hard times Yogiji passed through then. He also helped financially other friends for their trip to India.

We think that what he had to say – and he had to say something since he began to write a book – has to be known by all Yogiji's devotees. For sure, like most of Americans, Will likes speaking in terms of 'energy' etc... but this is very secondary, and he expresses the main thing, "But the greatest gift, I think, is not any physical prasad but the gift of consciousness – his blessing. That's the greatest gift."

It is surprising that, concerning Yogiji, as said before, we find mention of Will's name only in Hilda's writings that have been published in the 'Souvenir 95' by the Ashram. Now we can also find some of them in the book "Under the Punnai Tree". But Will was on the way to write his own book, independently. It would have been great to have such a book, not mixed with a long and everywhere coming self-projection of some other American devotee... Will's evidence is very important, and it is why we have decided to publish on the Internet the two chapters Will had already written, as well as his words during the interview, even if a part is missing. It would be a real loss if we don't do anything, as Will's writings would be lost forever.

It is why, under the title he chose, you will find them here in the form of a book and in two parts, the first part being the two

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chapters he had already written, and the second part giving his words during the interview.

(Gaura) Krishna, 16th January 2008

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FIRST PART

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YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

CHAPTER I

OM, today is the start of a book entitled MEETINGS with Yogi Ramsuratkumar. The purpose of the book is to share my experiences and relate those of other people as well with Beloved Yogi Ramsuratkumar. Yogi Ramsuratkumar was called Swami by most of the local people at the time i met Him in 1973.

As a background, i grew up in West Virginia then moved to Indiana in the sixties where i attended Indiana University. After dropping out of graduate school, i had a fascination for the yoga philosophy. While in grad school, I married my wife, Joan who fortunately shared my interest in yoga, not hatha yoga though, but in the how and why of creation. At the time, the Vietnam War was really heating up and Uncle Sam was looking for warm bodies to fight in the war, but that whole notion was alien to the very fiber of my being. By God's Grace, i received a conscientious objector status and worked in Indiana Univ. Medical Centre in Indianapolis for two years in lieu of the draft. At the time, I had a clerical job at the

medical centre evening shift. i had plenty of time to read after my duties were finished and read ail of Sri Aurobindo's works and Swami Vivekananda's works that i could get my hands on. After working this dull job for two years, my wife who had taught grade school and i decided to go to India to meet the real saints.

During this time my wife and i were going to Bloomington on the weekends and we met Truman Caylor Wadlington, who was living with several people in a house, one of whom had spent time at Sri Ramanashram in Tiruvannamalai. We were influenced along with Caylor to go to Tiruvannamalai as the friend had recommended Sri Ramanashram very highly. Caylor was only 19 years old at the time and free of all worldly ties. Lucky enough for someone to pay his way to India, he arrived six months before my wife and i came in October 1970.

When we arrived in Tiru² in October 1970, Caylor met us and found us a house to rent in the Bose Compound opposite Ramanashram. It took awhile to first adjust to India as the culture shock was quite

² A lot of towns in Tamil Nadu begin with the prefix 'Tiru', but, of course, Will means 'Tiruvannamalai' here.

strong initially, Tiru was not a thriving urban place that it is now but, rather a dusty south Indian town where few people even spoke English. There were only two cars in the whole town at the time and all transport was by foot or horsedrawn cart called jet cars. Ramanashram was on the outskirts of town. Buses were always totally overflowing with passengers. Our rented house had no running water. Bathing and cooking water had to be drawn from the main compound well by the compound servant. After six weeks, we started to feel more grounded though we felt like we were foundering. Although we were going Ramanashram every day, we felt that we needed a living teacher to help us make the transition from intellectual spirituality to practical spirituality. Shortly after our arrival in Tiru, Caylor told us that he was leaving for Madras to live at the Theosophical Society in Adyar without any explanation. This made us feel more isolated as there few westerners to communicate with. After going to Sri Ramana's samadhi and praying to meet a living teacher once Caylor had left, an old friend from Bloomington, Indiana showed up the next day named Wendel Field, who had shared the same house with Caylor. Wendel is a really great artist who also was searching for the mystical truths. He had just come from Sri Aurobindo ashram in Pondicherry which at the time was a day's journey from Tiru, and was on his way to see Sathya

Sai Baba in Puttiparthi³. After dinner and tea at our modest bungalow, we went up to the roof to see the spectacular sunset. Suddenly all three of us got the inspiration to go to see Sai Baba that very night at midnight. There was a bus at midnight to Bangalore which was an all night journey. Luckily, Wendel knew the directions to Puttiparthi as information in those days was always sketchy at best on how to get to various places. The local bus to Puttiparthi left at noon and reached the destination eight hours later. The driver was the postman and delivery man stopping at every local village on the way taking numerous tea breaks at local people's houses on route. At eight p.m. we finally reached Puttiparthi after traversing some very tough dirt roads the last three hours. It felt like we were on the moon the place seemed so distant. We arrived in a really dusty village with lots of little tea and fruit stalls and photo stalls selling photos of Sai Baba. We three were the only westerners on the crowded bus. Mr Kasturi, the ashram manager was there to greet us as Sai Baba had requested him to meet the nightly bus and give him the names of the foreign visitors. Mr. Kasturi then lead us into the ashram near the bus stop and showed to our accommodations which was a small room shared by fifteen other westerners.

³ Puttiparthi.

The next day Sai Baba spoke to Wendel and told him that he would see him the next day. We were all excited as in those days whoever came in your party, if one was called for an interview, the rest could go in as well. As it happened, fifteen new foreigners came the next day and Baba called in all the new people. Wendel had purchased all new clothes in preparation for the interview. When the call came for the interview, we were all excited, but did not know what to expect. Sai Baba ushered us in and called a devotee from Madras to translate for him. Baba then sat on the floor with all of us and began to talk in simple phrases in English. He said God was everywhere and that he was God but we were God as well. Then he began materialising various objects such as gold *aum* rings and crystal *japa malas* with his sleeves rolled up so we could see no trickery was involved. He was extremely loving and simple appearing without ego. He was reading people's minds as to their problems and many broke down in tears. He then turned to Wendel and asked him if he wanted a private talk. There were stairs leading to his private quarters behind a curtain and that is where the private talks were held in those days. You could hear every word Baba spoke to Wendel during the private talk and after a few minutes Wendel emerged while Sai Baba stayed behind the curtain with only his hand and head

protruding. Sai Baba then pointed his finger in my direction motioning me to come behind the curtain. Sai Baba was standing up a few steps so that we were face to face. He summed up my life in a few sentences saying that i was the black sheep of the family, that i lacked concentration, and that i had no worries because my heart was pure. The next thing he wanted to know is what i wanted. I told him that i did not know but wanted to open my heart to love. Then, he hit my chest quite hard with his hand and instantly i felt my heart chakra open so far that i was totally flooded with bliss and light, so much so that i almost passed out. For the next three days, i felt so filled with bliss, love, and light that i felt that i was floating more than walking. Everyone only appeared a light being with a personality that seems completely incidental to their existence.

After the third day Baba called my wife and i in for another interview. We were the only two westerners in that room and although he spoke in Telegu, his native language, i felt i understood every word. He called me for another private talk and told me all the thoughts that i had in the past three days. He told me not to worry that he was always helping me wherever i was.. Next, he called in my wife Joan, and spoke to her with me present. We both felt such love and encouragement for our lives. He told my wife that her

face would be like the sun. Baba gave regular interviews to ail the westerners every two weeks or so. As time passed the number of westerners went from sixty odd to about a hundred plus. Sai Baba would leave Puttiparthi to disperse the crowds after big festivals for Whitefield outside of Bangalore where he has a college.

We stayed at the ashram for nine months in all originally planning for a three day trip. We had left all of our passports and traveller's checks in Tiru and brought clothes and money for a three day stay. Only after three months, we returned to Tiru to pick up our things and clear out the house we rented. By Sai Baba's Grace, we never lacked anything as all the western devotees looked after each other as family and shared whatever they had together which was quite extraordinary.

After almost nine months, my wife Joan came down with hepatitis, we decided to return to Tiru so she could recuperate. Sai Baba had just left for a month tour of North India, so the timing was perfect. Arriving in Tiru on the bus at night on the full moon, i alighted from the bus feeling very blissful feeling the presence of the Holy Mountain Arunachala. We stayed with an old Ramana Maharishi devotee named Rhoda Mc Iver. She was a Parsi lady from Bombay

married to a Scotsman. She was very kind to us and was very helpful in Joan's speedy recovery with her cooks wonderfully prepared meals. She told many stories of being around Ramana Maharishi for years. We also met Mrs. Osborne, wife of the late Arthur Osborne who wrote books on Sai Baba of Shirdi as well as Ramana Maharishi. Three weeks later, Joan was feeling much better and we met Caylor in Pondicherry at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. He introduced us to Satprem who written many books on Sri Aurobindo and the Mother through a friend on the beach. We asked Satprem about having a living teacher and he replied that life itself is our best teacher and will teach us every thing we need to know. Also, we put a note in requesting darshan with the Mother of the ashram. She responded via Her secretary Mr. M.P. Pandit, also a prolific writer on Sri Aurobindo, asking us to wait three more days and said we could see Her. On May 15, 1971, we were very fortunate to get her darshan. Over a hundred devotees lined up for the darshan, each given a free small fresh bouquet of flowers to present to the Mother. The Mother sat with Her back towards the line as you entered the room which was filled with the most amazing golden light. As the line came around each person came on front of the Mother seated. She greeted each person very lovingly. Joan simply put her head in Mother's lap and Mother stroked her head

so gently and lovingly. When i came next, Mother simply stared into my eyes for a long time. It was really intense, then i had a selfish thought and Mother nodded that darshan was over for me. Afterwards, we saw the bouquets that we offered to Mother were placed on Sri Aurobindo's Samadhi. It was a wonderful vibration there and Mother passed Her body in 1973.

We returned to Tiru only to get a 'Quit India' notice from the foreigner's registration office in Bangalore. We came on a six months tourist visa which we tried to extend another six months but were turned down. We had gotten an extra five month, just by applying for an extension by the vast bureaucracy of the Indian Gov't. On the last day as we were packing up to leave Tiru for Bangalore on the midnight bus, Caylor unexpectedly shows up about six pm and tells us that he has met a swami around the mountain that he wants us to meet. First, he has to get permission from the swami for us to come. Around ten pm, Caylor returns and tells us it is too late to see the swami. Only then does he tell us that it is Yogi Ramsuratkumar. When he approaches Swami and mentions our names, Swami then tells Caylor that He knows us and that it is our duty to go back to America to do some seva as that is in our natures, but we will meet the next time we come to India.

Returning to Bombay for the flight to the States, we stayed with Maurice Friedman, an elderly Polish Jew who came to India in 1930 as an engineer. He was a devotee of Ramana Maharishi as well as J. Krishnamurti. Maurice was a real character with a razor sharp intellect. He was living with Miss Petit, a lady from a wealthy Parsi family in Bombay who supported him. J. Krishnamurti and the young Dalai Lama had been over for tea at their residence on several occasions. Maurice takes us to see Nisargadatta Maharaj about who he is editing a book of conversations called I AM THAT. Maharaj is quite a powerful presence, utterly simple, and totally without pretence. At the time, he was really not known outside of Bombay and only considered a local saint. Maharaj lived near Grant Road Station, the red light district in Bombay in a very simple house. His family lived down stairs and Maharaj lived upstairs where you had to climb a ladder to enter. Maharaj was very gracious to my wife and i. He even gave me prasad once after i visualized breathing in His essence during our meeting. Though a jnani, Maharaj did nightly bhajans to His guru with tear filled eyes. After the book, I AM THAT, hordes of westerners descended on Bombay to see him, It became the spiritual IN scene.

CHAPTER II

We came back to the U.S. and settled down in the Washington D.C. outskirts in Silver Spring, Md. Joan got a secretarial job and i got a construction clean up job. For two years during the time we were in the D.C. area we ached to back in India and were determined to return as soon as possible. Prior to starting work, Caylor wrote informing us that he has written a book on Yogi Ramsuratkumar and can we pay to get it printed. Luckily, we had half the money and raised the other half by donations from friends. The money was quickly sent and Caylor had the book Yogi Ramsuratkumar, The Godchild, Tiruvannamalai published. Several months later, Caylor sent us eighty copies of the book and we distributed all the copies to various bookstores and libraries around the USA.

During the first summer back, a friend calls and wants us to join him to see Sant Kirpal Singh who is in the D.C. area. We go and it turns out to be an initiation ceremony unknown to us. We all receive the mantra

en masse and are given forms to send in. A few months go by and my wife receives a call from the local Kirpal Singh rep and he wants to know why we have not been sending our forms relating our experiences in. She tells him that we are following Sai Baba. He tells her that Sai Baba only knows magic and she tells him if he can come over and materialize something she will gladly touch his feet.

A friend from Sai Baba returns from India named Serenity to visit us and tells she is moving to New York to study with Hilda Charlton. Hilda had lived in India eighteen years and met many of the great saints at that time such as Nityananda, Sai Baba, Papa Ramdas and Mother Krishnabai, Mahadevananda, a 150 year old saint, Yoga Swamigal in Sri Lanka, and many others. We had heard many good stories from Sai Baba's ashram about Hilda as she had sent many people over to see Baba from New York. In fact many of the first people we met there were sent by Hilda. She was also giving spiritual classes at St. Luke's Church in the West Village.

Several months go by; Serenity calls us from New York and invites us up for the weekend to her apt on the east village. Having only passed through New York City before, we are in awe of this massive city. Serenity, a regular visitor to Hilda's apt on the upper

west side of Manhattan, while we are staying in her tiny apt, receives a phone call from Hilda. Hilda tells her she wants her to bring us to her apt to meet us. We are completely surprised because we have never met Hilda before. Hilda graciously sees, that very afternoon. She is wearing a sari and there is something completely unearthly about her. She is soft spoken and you feel that she can see right through you with her penetrating yet compassionate eyes. She asks if we would like to meditate with her. We say that would be wonderful. We sit in her room with her along with Serenity and another friend Lou. Hilda then has us close our eyes and then so gently rubs our third eye area in the middle of the forehead with her finger. With that gentle loving touch Joan and i are transported instantly into a blissful, peaceful and loving state of consciousness. After what seems like a short time, an hour has elapsed. Hilda brings us gently down. She then asks how the meditation was and we respond that it was wonderful. She asks Serenity and Lou how their's was and they say it was okay. She comments that "it's not your day kids" to them. It was unforgettable experience. On the way out she gives Joan her private telephone number and tells her that if Will goes too high and cannot come down , give her a call.

Back in the D.C. area, we are restless to return to India. We write a letter to Caylor asking him to please ask Yogi Ramsuratkumar if it is a good time to return to India. Weeks later, a letter arrives from Caylor, who has written after a long session with Swami about the matter.

When we opened the letter, we were thrilled. Caylor had stated that Swami had told him that we should not delay our trip any longer as we had already postponed a year. Swami told us that Mother India's arms were always open to us. Swami was encouraging us to come as soon as possible. Swami wrote the last two sentences in the letter. *"My Father Blesses Will"* and *"My Father Blesses Joan"* signed *"Yogi Ramsuratkumar"*. Needless to say, we were thrilled that a real yogi in India would be sending two sinners such grace and love. We were filled with joy for days after receiving this letter.

Now we prepared for our trip to India planning to meet Caylor in Madras and go to Tiruvannamalai to meet this wonderful swami who had been kind enough to answer our letter.. About a month or so before our departure to India, Serenity called with an invitation to spend a long week end in upstate New York with Hilda, who would be holding a small private gathering at a friend's property bordering a

state forest. We accepted this opportunity to get together with Hilda again. We caravanned with four other cars from NYC and drove up to Stan and Grace's cabin in the Catskills in early September of 1973. Twenty people were invited in all. We all stayed in tents while Hilda, Grace and Stan stayed in the cabine. There was singing, bonfires, cookouts. And Hilda invoked the magical presence of the Native American Indians as well as Krishna. During one session when we were meditating, Hilda touched my third eye and I went into an altered state for about seven hours. I felt that everything was just light and nothing more. At the end of the weekend, we said goodbye to Hilda, who told us to see her in NYC just before departing to India.

At last, we were off to India again, stopping at Hilda's apt first where she gave us a letter to give to Sai Baba and gave us her blessings for the trip. We reached Bombay in late Oct. 1973. Once again, we stayed with Maurice Frydman in Bombay for a few days to recover our jet lag. We went to see Maharaj again, but this time the place was full of westerners that had migrated from Tiruvannamalai and was no longer held in his bungalow, but a large hall. Maharaj was answering all the usual philosophical questions put to him by the westerns. For some reason Maharaj singled Joan out and told her to remain and study with him.

However, our sites were set on Yogi Ramsuratkumar in Tiru.

We met Caylor in Madras and after a day or so we all set off for Tiru together. We arrived in the early evening in Tiru where we tracked down Swami to some advocate's house where he was spending the evening. He indicated to Caylor that he had a fever that day and could he bring these friends tomorrow. So, Caylor stayed with Swami and we went to Ramanashram. The next morning, we all rented bicycles and rode into town and out towards the railway station. In a farmer's field, we see Yogi Ramsuratkumar dressed with faded plaid blanket around his torso and wearing a rather tattered white jupa, a traditional thin long sleeve white cotton shirt with several strands of rudraksha beads around his neck. His white beard flows freely on this breezy day. He has the innocence of a child. He is utterly playful and delightful and greets us very lovingly. After asking him what he has in his bulging pockets, he pulls out a hand full of nellica, that look like cashew halves but are darker in color and taste quite bitter as herbs. He invites us to try some and laughs when we say they are bitter. He says after you chew them for a while they sweeten up in your mouth. Later, I discovered this herb in one of the prime ingredients in Tibetan Medicine and also in Ayurvedic medicine as

well. At any rate, He is concerned that we are not used to the tropical sun and has us sit together under a small palm tree though it is a cloudy day. The next thing I know is I close my eyes and waft into a tremendously deep inner space which is utterly tranquil and devoid of all stress. It is like being in a well of tranquillity and the light is extremely soft. When the experience occurred, I never wanted to leave the state and made up my mind then and there that I would never leave that space. After this decision was made, I could hear Swami's voice say «*Mr. Will, come this side, no good to be on that side. No good tea, coffee, or cigarettes on that side.*» My mind is made up; I am never leaving that side. Again Swami says "*Mr. Will, come this side. No good to be on that side, no good tea, coffee or cigarettes on that side*". I am not budging from my space. Then I feel a circle of light around me. Swami now speaks slowly and distinctly "nine, eight, zero, two" and I am instantly back in body consciousness. For the next ten minutes or so Swami is roaring with laughter occasionally slapping Caylor on the arm saying, "that must be Will's number." After this experience, I feel that Swami is my Guru.

Every time I asked Swami about the number 9802 and its meaning he always said that it was "*this beggar's madness*". Swami would always refer to Himself as

"this beggar" or "this madman" or "this sinner", rarely would he use the word I. After some photos of Swami, Caylor and Joan, then Swami, Caylor and Will, Swami sent us away. Caylor stayed as he was leaving back for Madras the next day but Swami invited us to see Him the next evening in the main bazaar in Tiru.

At eight pm every evening Mon- Sat, most of the stainless steel and brass shops in the main bazaar closed for the day. The bazaar was situated in front of the main entrance or *gopuram* (approx. 267 ft tall) to the huge Arunachala Iswara Temple in the centre of town. This two thousand year old temple occupying twenty five square acres is dedicated to Lord Shiva worshipped here as the fire aspect. It was at that time and place every evening for years Swami was to be found on a certain shop's stoop, whose owners were Swami's devotees kept a very worn straw mat stored for Swami. As soon as the owners left, Swami rolled out the straw mat on the concrete stoop, sat down and settled in until the next morning. Swami told us to come at eight pm and we came at night for the next two weeks. We would stay until 5:30 in the morning, then Swami would head back to the farmer's field near the railway station and we returned to our room near Ramanashram. Most evenings Joan and I were the

only ones with Swami, though at times other people would come by to speak with Swami. Swami thanks us for sponsoring Caylor's book about Him and whenever other locals come, He tells them that we financed the book and looks very pleased.

As we approached Swami sitting in the bazaar each evening, he would call out in a loud voice "*come on Mr. Will*" with a jovial laugh, then he would indicate where He wanted us to sit. It was always in a spot that He designated. By eight pm the bazaar was only lighted by kerosene lanterns or candles and Swami always had candles on hand so He could see those He was speaking with. The candles were always placed so Swami was in the shadows and you were in the candle light. Swami was filled with joy and mirth and it was really contagious no matter who came, they were soon laughing and had forgotten all their troubles. Swami's first question was always how could this dirty beggar possibly be of any help to anyone and then laugh. Swami did smoke some times quite a lot, but only when people came around. Also, there were always several large burlap bags near Swami filled with his possessions, namely old newspapers folded in a certain way, old clothes, new clothes never worn and even empty cigarette package wrappers. Swami is on another wave length, at one moment totally jovial, the next moment totally serious, filled

with the most amazing wisdom. He seems to completely see through each person and each situation that appears before Him. Most of time he is staring over the head of the person with whom He is speaking, moving His lips as if reciting a mantra and moving his right thumb and middle finger together constantly.

His presence is so powerful that all that you know and have seem so meaningless, yet Swami claims that He does nothing, all is the work of the "*Father*". He says that He is only doing the "*Father's work*". The depth of His wisdom, understanding, and compassion for those coming to see Him is truly so profound that few can actually comprehend what is even happening. He is constantly laughing about what a madcap and a sinner He is. Yet behind His smoking, dirty and worn clothing, there is a real majesty of spirit, a radiance, an underlying bliss and joy in His very Being. He takes such an enthusiastic interest in everything that you feel in essence that He has the simplicity of a child. His name even means child of God. He insists that you say Yogi Ramsuratkumar instead of Ramsuratkumar, but Swami is alright.

Sitting with Swami every night for two weeks straight, we marvel at being in the presence of such a

great soul. Each morning, we seem to float back the two mile walk to our room near Ramanashrarn, feeling that we are more in spirit than body after being in Swami's radiant presence. We feel more alive than we ever have. Swami insists that we stay up the entire night and not sleep. If we nod off, He is quick to say "*sit up Mr. Will*" or "*sit up Joan*", but sometimes He doses off Himself. Seldom do others come, some locals come just out of curiosity, others are quite familiar with Swami and the laughter flows. Usually as we are leaving Swami, He thanks us for helping Him which always puzzles us, because we do not have a clue as to what is really happening.

After three nights, in the middle of the night about three am, He starts telling me My future via the third person.. He tells Joan that Will is going to be a great healer one day, throwing dirt over people's heads and they would be perfectly healed and that even heads of state would come to see him. Also that he would be a good spiritual teacher one day, having about fifteen disciples and be more of a one on one teacher. Other statements Swami made also that i cannot share. When I tell Swami how could all this happen as I am only an ordinary person, He put up both of His hands over His head in Blessing and says it is "*Father's Will*" That night Joan had a revelation that she told Swami that He was not a beggar but really a king

amongst men. His response that this was a divine revelation to Joan and gave her His Blessings. After that night we were really amazed with event that unfolded. Our only hope is that some day we can come to understand what He is really all about.

Most evenings Swami would order tea from the local chai stalls. Swami had several attendants who did all of the errands; however Swami never had any money but had numerous accounts in town at various tea stalls and hotels, local parlance for restaurant. Once every six months or so a devotee from Madurai would come to see Swami and then pay off all the accounts. One hotel proprietor who graciously fed Swami for years ended up owning many hotels in town. Even drinking tea with Swami was a unique experience. The tea was brought in a pot with the cups empty. Swami would then place each cup carefully in front of each person, then proceed to pour the tea or *chai*. Once the tea was poured, after Swami sipped His tea, then could the rest begin. This was the protocol. Once I unconsciously moved my tea cup closer after Swami had placed it. Swami then stopped, gave me a fierce look and told me firmly I had just spoiled His work. He said then that he had to make some adjustment to compensate for my blunder. I never moved my tea cup again, needless to say as I felt so horrible. Swami later explained that drinking tea together unifies when

people of all different backgrounds meet, it is at least one thing that they have in common at that moment.

When you are in the company of these great souls, you make every effort to accommodate their program and realize that only in serving them can you possibly go forward in your own evolution. You realize that your spiritual goals are quite vague and that you do not have a clue how to get there anyway.

Near the end of the first two glorious weeks with Swami, He suggests that we go to *Ananda ashram* in Kerala to see Mother Krishnabai. *Ananda ashram* is the ashram of Papa Ramdas and Mother Krishnabai, located in Khanangad⁴, Kerala. Papa Ramdas was one of Yogi Ramsuratkumar's gurus, who initiated Swami with the Ram Nam mantra. Papa Ram Das had passed his body in 1963, however.

Within a few days we start on our journey to Ananda Ashram. We proceed via Bangalore, stopping briefly at Whitefield where Sai Baba has a college and where he stays in Bangalore. At the time he is in Bangalore, but the western scene has really changed. Many of the western devotees are singing *bhajans* or devotional songs under the influence of *ganja*, Indian pot and Sai

⁴ Kanhangad

Baba is quite displeased as he feels that it is a bad example to the young Indian students. He stops giving group interviews to the western devotees as a result, with only a few exceptions. We however realize that this is no longer where we feel comfortable in this scene and within a day or so, are on the road to Ananda Ashram.

After an arduous bus trip from Bangalore to Mangalore, we catch the Southern Railway train to Khanangad. It is a hot dusty little town on the Arabian Sea. We proceed to Ananda Ashram. It is a small but friendly ashram a few kilometres from the railway station. Joan is put in the ladies dorm and I am assigned to the gent's dorm. In the main hall, the name of Rama is chanted or sung most of the day. The place is completely saturated with the name of God and the vibration is not of this world. Beside the main hall is Mother Krishnabai's room. She is elderly and stays in bed most of the time, but the westerners can come in and sit with Her for an hour each day at 4 pm. You can ask questions and there are only about no more than 10 - 15 westerners there at the time. Her radiant eyes tell you that She is living in another realm of consciousness. While we were there, a Spanish couple came with an eight year old daughter. These people were just travelling through India as tourists with no belief in gurus but when the daughter saw Mother

Krishnabai, she spontaneously prostrated before Her as soon as she was brought before the Mother.

She tells you that She does nothing and that Papa as She calls Him does everything. She is so kind and gracious to all who approach Her. She seems to thoroughly know what is happening on the ashram and constantly on top of the issues involving the ashram though she spends almost all of Her time in bed.

Each morning and evening the ashram so lovingly brings fresh milk to our rooms. All the westerners seem to bond together very nicely. We also meet Swami Satchitananda who is the main administrator of the ashram but also an homeopathic doctor.

On the way to the latrine in the middle of the night half asleep one night, I find my self repeating "*Sri.Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*". Such was the saturation of the name in the air, it implanted itself into my consciousness though I was not in that practice. Also we met and shared stories with a wonderful German friend from Canada named Hetman, who had an amazing amount of real mystical experiences. Herman was travelling around India as a sadhu or holy man only wearing white clothes.. He was a real seeker of God and truth, yet ever kind and

humble. We share our experiences Herman about Yogi Ramsuratkumar and he tells us that he is planning a trip to Tiruvannamalai. We also read the numerous books written by Papa Ram Das about His spiritual pilgrimage to God Realization, which we found tremendously inspiring. We also visit a cave built into a huge rock near the ocean that the great saint Swami Nityananda lived in for ten years in Khanangad.

After spending two inspiring weeks at Ananda Ashram, we tell Mother Krishnabai that we are leaving. She tells us to come early the next morning to Her room and She gives a garland of flowers to place on Papa Ram Das's samadhi shrine that morning, where the sound of *om* or *aum* is chanted 24 hours a day. It is called the OM Mandir. Also she gives us 16 large Kerala bananas to eat and tells us not to share them. Her love and kindness were really wonderful, it was the last time we were to see Her. She passed Her body in Feb. 1989.

We now head for the beaches of Goa. After spending a week on the beaches filled with young mostly naked westerners tripping on recreational drugs and visiting the shrine of Saint Francis Xavier in Panjim, Goa, we head for Bombay with the idea of going up to Mount

Abu in Gujurat to see some Jain saints. Many of the Jain Saints do not wear any clothing despite the cool temperatures in the winter. Once we get to Bombay, our friend Maurice Frydman tells us that it is too cold to venture up to Mount Abu that time of year. So, we decide to go back to Tiruvannamalai to spend more time with Yogi Ramsuratkumar.

Returning to Tiru, we are once again nightly visitors to Yogi Ramsuratkumar in the bazaar. He is however more strict this time around. We are constantly on our toes to be in harmony with His movements. We try to become His perfect servants as best as we are able, as this is the only way we can harmonise with Him. Finally, we understand that He has His mission to do what He calls "*the Father's Work*" and seems to be totally immersed in this work. We try to blend in with out causing any disturbance to His spiritual work. We stay more in the background now and are more observers to the uniqueness of His work and mannerisms which are really quite eccentric at times. We have the chance of witnessing some really interesting moments with Him. For example, a young American man with a shaved head who had just come

from seeing Anandamayee⁵ Ma, a famous North Indian Saint, appears one evening while we are sitting with Swami. He tells Swami that he has graduated summa cum laud, i.e. first in his class, from Harvard University and has completed three years at John Hopkins Medical School. As a result of his medical studies, he realizes that pain and suffering are everywhere and has come to India to find out what is the root cause of suffering before he goes out to practice medicine. Swami first asks him what a dirty beggar like Him could possibly tell a Harvard grad. Swami listens nicely to the man for about two hours and then the man leaves. A few minutes after the man leaves, Swami turns to us and says that *"this beggar could do nothing for that man."*

About ten minutes later, Swami tells us that Anandamayee Ma had made a blessing over that man's head and that He did not want to disturb it.

Another time, an Indian family brings their son on a Sunday. Swami spends the entire day in the bazaar often on Sunday. The son though in his early twenties has a really short attention span. He is not able hold a job as a result. Swami has the young man repeat the

⁵ Anandamayī Ma. This 'ee' used by Will is only used for English, which is the only language to pronounce 'ee' as it does, while it does not pronounce 'i' the same manner all the other languages do.

name of Rama nine times in a row. To this family, this is a big breakthrough and they leave greatly relieved and grateful to Swami. About an hour later, they returned with a large quantity on bananas and other fruit. Swami gives them some prasad and they leave with tears in their eyes.

Many people during our time with Swami come to ask about marriage advice. The south Indians are very traditional in having arranged marriages. The parents would come with the list of candidates and want Swami to tell them what was the best match Swami would tell them just to read the names. Once He heard the names, He would say pursue only one or two of the names and leave the rest.

Swami was big on names. No matter who came with whatever problem, Swami wanted always to know the names of those involved. He would usually write the name of the person in the air with His finger in Hindi, His native tongue. He then would proceed to describe that person in complete detail getting their essence. He quickly got to the root of the problem and usually had a solution as to how the problem could be resolved.

A Canadian girl came to see Swami to get His advice on her very young niece with a major health problem. After hearing the girl's name, Swami asks if the parents can change the name. The girl replies that the family would not do this. He then suggests a new name and tells her if only she uses the new name the niece will be alright. As I am listening to this discussion, I am facing Swami and can see an owl landing on a 'distant rooftop in the night. The next question Swami asks the Canadian girl "*do you have owls in Canada?*"

An American young man named John Gilbert comes from Sai Baba's and says that he has cancer and can Swami heal him. Swami studies him visually very intensely for about twenty minutes, then declares that He sees no evidence of cancer. He tells John that if he feels there is a problem to tell himself that he is not the body. Swami then laughs and jokes with John and he feels totally uplifted. John did die a few years later at Sai Baba's ashram due to cancer, supposedly.

One evening when we come in the evening, Swami asks Joan to roll out His straw mat just as we come at eight pm. He gives her very specific instructions on how this should be done. She does not really listen closely, and in the midst of her endeavour, Swami

tells her to stop and sit down. He does it Himself and then says to me, "*Will, Joan thinks this beggar is very arrogant*". She later confides to me that is what she was thinking. When we are with Swami there is only one way to do things, that is His way and you learn that quite quickly.

On several occasions, Swami would have me sit right next to Him and He would gently stroke my arm for maybe fifteen or twenty minutes. Afterwards, I would feel like every atom in my being was changed and like I was altogether a different person from that time on. It was quite remarkable. After these experiences I realized that all change only comes from Grace and that our individual efforts on the spiritual path do not really count for too much.

At this time, usually on Thursdays, we were going during the day to see an unusual saint named Poondi⁶ Swami, who lived about twenty five kilometres way road in the tiny village of Poondi. The village was about two kilometres off the main road to Vellore. Poondi Swami sat a few feet off the road from the one bus stop in Poondi in a little open hut constructed by His devotees. He literally sat there for almost eighteen

⁶ Pundi Swami. Same remark concerning the 'oo'.

years without moving and only lying down at nights the last year of his life. He sat in the same spot without getting up the entire time. He would shift positions of His arms and legs but never stand up during all those years. He supposedly ate three meals a day but never passed any water or bowels during the entire time. The local people referred to Him as a karma eater. Poondi Swami had very long grey hair wrapped up on His head and a long grey beard and was wrapped in what looked like a white sheet. His eyes told that He was far removed from this world. He would always avoid your eyes directly by looking away when you looked at Him. He usually sat with one leg crossed over the other and when you came up, He would put some holy ash on your forehead. Sometimes, I would make a stupid prayer that He should enlighten me and then this big barrage of coughing would come from Him. People would bring Him cigarettes to smoke and He would smoke the entire cigarette in a few seconds without ever exhaling. Others brought bottles of soda that He would drink in one large gulp. Many people gave Him money, but he usually just held it or threw it behind him. About six sadhus lived nearby and served Him. They took the money collected and bought bicycles for this small poor village that they rented out very reasonably. The village was so small that it only had one tea stall and no eateries. Every time we came, one

sadhu who spoke English would always invite us to eat with the sadhus. On one occasion, the sadhu told us no food was available from them and within a few minutes a lady from the village sent us a full meal and stainless steel container for that purpose. Two incidents come to mind, once Caylor was here with a inmate of Sri Ramanashram and a man offered Poondi Swami a soda, that Poondi Swami was very reluctant to accept, then finally grabbed the soda and in one gulp drank the entire bottle. Poondi Swami then told the man that he did vile things and Poondi Swami would take it from him and he would go do these things again.

One American friend named Ira who was a devotee of Neem Kerali Baba, who had previously passed his body, from Chicago came and asked Poondi Swami where he could get the darshan of his guru. After five minutes standing before Poondi Swami, Ira got his answer in perfect English “go to the North”. After another ten minutes, Poondi Swami answered where in the north? “Brindavan” was the reply. After that Ira’s luck ran out with regards to questions. Poondi Swami's standard reply was 'go and come' in Tamil. Also, the small local school children would line for Poondi Swami's Blessings before school each day.

Two other stories come to mind. Each time we caught the Vellore bus going to Poondi Swami's (place) on Thursdays, we had to take another local bus the two kilometres into the village. Each time we tried to pay the conductor for that trip, he always refused our money to our surprise. Then one day the English speaking Sadhu introduced us to a man from Vellore who had told Poondi Swami that he needed money and within two weeks won the state lottery in Tamil Nadu. That man came every Thursday to thank Poondi Swami for his good fortune and would always pay our fare whenever he saw us getting on the bus. One day when we were there that sadhu read us a letter written from Paris by a French couple having visited Poondi Swami a few years prior. These people stated that Poondi Swami had physically materialized before them in the next pew while they were praying at a cathedral in Paris. Poondi Swami passed His body in 1983 and thousands of people all over India and abroad came to see this mysterious saint.

Almost every Friday, we would stop at the tomb of a Muslim saint named Haji Baba on our way to see Swami. The tomb was in a poor neighbourhood near the government hospital in Tiru. We had read about Haji Baba in a book by Mouni Sadhu called *"In the Days of Great Peace"*. The author had come to

Ramana Maharishi when He was alive and discovered this treasure. Haji Baba was a contemporary of Sri Ramana and also lived in Tiru with His twelve disciples. He was a Muslim saint that had walked to Mecca four times from India. Just before Haji Baba passed his body, He said that God was pleased with his service and promised whoever came to his tomb would have all their prayers answered as he would see to it personally. After inquiring from a few locals, we located the tomb and started to come every week. Usually surrounded by a retinue of screaming children as we were nearing the small tomb, things quieted down as we came to the tomb where the old caretaker as his daughter shooed away the kids. The old man had patch over one eye and was the caretaker as well as one of Haji Baba's original twelve disciples. The tomb was very simple with a concrete mound as the tomb covered with many dried garlands of flowers. The tomb had thatched roof as well and short walls on each side. The old man would have you sit quietly and then take a peacock feather and touch the middle of the tomb with it then gently brush your arms and head with the peacock feather. The vibration of the place was really fantastic, and when you felt the peacock feather, it was so beautiful you felt totally uplifted. We always brought incense and sweets for the caretaker and his daughter. They always treated us with the utmost respect though our Tamil was not

good enough to communicate with them verbally. Many years later, the tomb was incorporated into a large Muslim cemetery with high wall around it making access almost impossible to non Muslims.

Past Sri Ramana Ashram on the road to Bangalore as you went on the road going around Arunachala clockwise, there was a small road leading directly to the foot or the mountain. As you approached the area, about one half mile out you could feel a powerful peace and presence. There was a cave in this area inhabited by a recluse named Jungle Swami. He lived in the cave for many years only coming out on full moon nights. Sri Ramana was a welcome visitor but the crowd that came to see him on his monthly outing were an unwelcome disturbance to him so that he left the place, but thirty years later, his vibration of peace and a subtle presence could still be felt a half-mile away.

While staying near Sri Ramana ashram, we would often take our meals at a small tea stall to the side of the main gate to the ashram run by a old gentleman wearing only loin cloth who had once been a cook in north India. He was simply known as "tea stall swami". He made wonderful chapattis for many of the westerners and this place was regular hangout for

those of us that were living off the ashram. We met James, a very tall young English barrister there and convinced him to come down to see Yogi Ramsuratkumar with us one evening. Swami immediately focused on him and told him that he would dedicate his life to India just as Annie Besant, one of the founders of the Theosophical Society, did. James left saying what a bunch of "poppycock". However within two weeks of that meeting, a wonderful saint named Jillelamudi Amma from Andhra Pradesh came through Tiru on her only south Indian trip and James followed her. It was not till years later that I even knew of what became of James. He lived at her ashram for over twelve years, took a Indian wife after his guru passed her body and now lives in Mysore with his wife and two children.

Two girls from Germany come one afternoon to see Swami. Their names are Ute and Else and they have written to Swami several times and sometimes sent packages of cigarettes in the mail to Swami. Swami jumps up and exclaims "Ute and Else" once He finds that these two are the same girls who have been writing to Him. He apologizes for not answering their letters saying what a dirty sinner He is. Swami lavishes attention on them and they are overjoyed. They decide to spend two weeks in Tiru and each at

different times to undergo a fast and silence for three days in the bungalow where they are staying. As each one is fasting Swami really concentrates on them in their absence and comments on their concentration and dedication to this task they have undertaken on their own volition. When they return, Swami is pleased with their individual efforts. A young Englishman named Charles appears later coming each day with them but Swami never acknowledges him whatsoever. As they are leaving to go to north India to Brindavan, they ask what their sadhana should be. Swami says that ...

(following text missing ...)

SECOND PART

YOGI RAMSURA KUMAR BHAVAN

MEETINGS WITH YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

Tape 1, side A is missing

8 November 2002

Tape 1, Side B

...

Will: Yes, because he was just fanning. And I remember one scene where Swami, when he was fanning - this was in '78, Hilda had gone up to Sai Baba's and then this guy and I had come back, because it was Gurupurnima... Somebody gave him a brand new set of clothes. So he looked, first time I'd ever seen him perfectly clean. You know, I mean, he never took a bath. I said,

- *Swami, did you get a bath this year?*

And he said,

- *Oh, this beggar was just too busy."*

And his idea of a bath was walking in that ghat⁷ in the main temple, walking in and walking out. That was the bath for the year. And so, he said he was just too busy. He just had too much to do. But he never smelled or anything. His clothes smelled a bit musty, but there was never an odor, never any foul smells or anything. He smelled, just totally smelled like his clothes were a little musty and that was it. ... And then, when he looked, he had brand new clothes on, he looked like a maharaja. I said,

- *Swami, you look like a maharaja tonight." ...*

But the old clothes, he never threw anything away. A big burlap bag held everything. And when we first met him we were going out to the fields, Joan and I were carrying each a burlap bag and everybody else was carrying a burlap bag to Swami because he smoked a pack of cigarettes. He threw the wrapper down on the ground, and before he got up that package was in that burlap bag. He never threw out anything, he never threw out newspaper. Nothing was thrown out, ever, including his clothing. Everything was just stored in those bags. Don't ask me why; so those bags, he said he didn't want them to (go) to the

⁷ Steps going down to the pond.

ashram, but he said those were his legacy to the town of Tiruvannamalai.

He was not very happy with the people of Tiruvannamalai. He said, *"Don't take any money from Tiruvannamalian people. They haven't been good to this beggar."* He was pretty strict about that. But basically... he asked Caylor to write that book because the DMK was so horrible to him. They were threatening everybody, and they cut off his food, cut off everything; so, when the book came out, people from other parts of India, like especially Bangalore and Madras and other metropolitan areas, were coming and giving him food, and things like that. So he told Joan and I once,

- By you helping with the book, getting money for the book published," he said, "you've helped this beggar stay in Tiruvannamalai, and thereby this universe itself."

Now, ... I remember this one real arrogant guy named Albert who was a part of Hugo Meyers' group; Hugo Meyers, an homeopath who had an ashram over on the other side of Tiruvannamalai. Albert used to be a part of his group, he was just there. He went down, he came to Swami, down to see Swami, and told him,

- *What? You sit around and do nothing. How do you rationalise your existence?*

After that, we came that night, Swami says he's rarely met a person like Albert [laughing]. And Albert was real cocky. He used to ride a big (bike). He always had this, perfectly tanned body, always wearing the little tin, the dhoti, hair coiffed up perfect and perfectly pressed dhoti and, you know, these muscle guys, and riding this big bike, macho, and stuff like that.

Anyway, Swami had everybody come to see him. Some people weren't so nice, but most people came with devotion... And Swami was quite mystical. Some guys went there three or four times and they wanted to know what they should do in India. (About) one of them, Swami put on his glasses and walked up and down about five or six times – this was down in the brass bazaar at night - and he said, "*Oh, you should go to visit all the Buddhist pilgrimage sites in India.*" And then, he gave people all kinds of spiritual advice. If you asked him anything like, "What is kundalini?" he would just say,

- *Ah, what does this filthy beggar know about kundalini? That's for scholars and that's for real yogis. ...*

We always had to be up and out by five thirty, at his place, because he had to move out. He didn't like to go past five thirty. And I remember once, Swami was taking a nap, and Joan says, "*Swami, it's time for all good yogis to be up.*" Swami says, "*How about fake (yogis)?"* ... So he was really, really quick. I mean, he was, like, instant. He was totally in that instant moment, he was just very, very alive. And that's why he was always fun. You always felt so spontaneously alive with him because he was always so charged, and every time, I remember, we were going home, we kind of like floated home because there was no cars or buses or anything that ran over there, we just had to walk about two miles, two or three miles from Ramanashram. But he was really a ball of light, a ball of fire. But we always had a lot of fun. He always liked to laugh and he always made jokes. Jokes were always about himself and how crazy he was. Once, I remember, was in the dining hall there⁸. We were coming to see him and I had been there in '96, I hadn't been there in '95 because I had been very sick and didn't have much money and everything. So I came in '96 and it was the first time I came to that dining hall and I came to the back... There were those little guys

⁸ In the Ashram.

in their green uniforms⁹. They seated me in the way back. So Swami looks up and yells, "*Will!*" So I come up. And every day, every day I was there, It was only there for five, maybe six or seven days, Swami had a mat put out right in the front of his little platform....I think Richard came later.

(Addressing to Richard): Was that '96, or '97? 'That was another year. You came, and then I said,

- *Oh Swami, Richard's here.*

And he said,

- *Oh, come, have him bring up, come up.*

And so Richard would come from the back, and there were some other people I had. So Swami said, "*Bring him up, bring him up.*" And anyway, it was quite lovely. And Swami said he was always grateful to Joan and I (to have) helped him so much, so he said we earned some very good karma for that. He said, "*You and Joan have earned*" something.

⁹ The servants and workers in the Ashram.

- *Interviewer:* Richard, when were you in Tiruvannamalai?

- *Richard Schiffman:* First year, maybe '77, or '78, or something like that. And I had heard of Yogi Ramsuratkumar, but I didn't know much about him. I think I heard that Hilda had said something about him...When we went down there, he was just sitting under the shed and there were several people around offering tea and things and he just sat there and called us up and he had me sit right by him, and he was stroking my hand and he was asking me,

- *"Who are you and what do you do and where do you come from?"*

And very sweet. He asked me my name, I said,

- *Richard.*

And he said,

- *Richard the Crusader.*

And I said,

- *No, not the Crusader.*

And then friend Phil said,

- *You mean Lion-Hearted.*

And then Yogi looked at me and said,

- *Lion-Hearted?*

And I said

- *No.*

And he said

- *No, no, no. Not Lion-Hearted. Crusader.*

Then, we went to see him, sometimes, under the tree, ... sometimes outside the temple, and each time he would see me he'd say,

- *Oh, Richard the Crusader has come.*

and he was very sweet. And I wondered why he was calling me that, I mean, in the back of my mind. Well, to fill you in a little, but when I first sat in his presence, my thought was, Well, this is really the Holy Land. You know, only in India does someone who looks like a beggar, sitting on the street like that, and yet people are revering him and seeing divinity in

this person, and I thought, 'Well, this is really India. This is the real India. Businessmen and well-dressed people and everyone just coming to see him like that.' So anyway, at the end of our week or so we took leave of him, he was out at the tree and we started to walk away and maybe got about fifty feet away when he called me back, and he said,

- *You're wondering why I called you 'the Crusader.*

And I said,

- *Yes.*

And he said,

- *Because you've come back to the Holy Land.*

which was sort of picking up on my thought. And then he said,

- *You're also wondering if Sai Baba is going to speak to you.*

which was interesting because I hadn't mentioned that, but I was staying at Sai Baba's ashram and he hadn't given me an interview at that stage, which wasn't unusual. People stay years without getting called in.

But I was wondering if I would ever speak to Baba, and he said,

- *Don't worry. He'll talk to you as soon as you get back.*

And the day after I got back to Puttaparthi, Baba called me in for private interview. So, and then, another time I came back – many years later I came and stayed in Ramanashram, and I was with a friend and I wanted to introduce him to Yogi. So Yogi was at that point staying in town, in a little house near the (temple in) Sannadhi street. Word got around that we were going to visit, and so before long we (arrive), like, ten, eleven people (were) coming with us. And so we went to the house and the attendant came out and said,

- *Can I help you?*

and we said,

- *Yes, we've come to see Yogi Ramsuratkumar.*

So he went in and then he came out again and said,

- *Yogi would like to know how many people?*

So we counted and, I don't know, it was eleven or whatever, and he went back, and then came out again and said,

- *No, Yogi's resting, He can't see you.*

So, of course, I was a little disappointed because he had been so sweet to me the first time, and now he wasn't even going to see us. So, we left, and then a few days later my friend Ken and I were going to leave Tiruvannamalai, so we were going to the bus stand and we thought, "Well, let's take our leave in the temple" - in the Shiva temple - so we went and had darshan. We were leaving to go to the bus stand to leave town, and out of the shadows, I don't know where he came from, but Yogi just jumped out and he went like this to both of us and then he ran away as quick as he could. He just, kind of blessed us and ran away. And that's the fellow who I wanted to take, originally before this big crowd, came. And then, it was explained to me that he doesn't like big crowds and sometimes, like if there's one person who he's not comfortable with, he won't let the group in. And, in fact, there was one person with us, I later found out, whom Yogi would never see, I mean refused to see. And this person, when he found out we were going, he thought, well, maybe I'll get in. [*all laugh*]

- *Will*: Yeah, Swami was great.

- *Interviewer*: So, when, did you visit with him just on two occasions?

- *Richard*: Once, I'm thinking probably in the '70s ... in the late '70s and then, the next time, maybe in the '80s, mi-'80s, and then with Will, the last time, in 96; it was probably February.

Well, also, I remember the first time I met him, he gave me a bunch of grapes and said, "*Feed everybody.*" So I went and fed everybody... And I didn't know what to make of him. I mean I had heard he was a great yogi, and he would always say, "*This beggar doesn't know anything.*" I think I asked him some spiritual question, to me Yogi said, "*This beggar doesn't know anything.*"

He didn't have the teaching, didn't act like. You know, I mean, like Will said, he'd smoke and he was denying that he knows anything, So, and I didn't know anything about him. I mean I just had heard the name. He was very sweet, and I felt good around him. He was really kind to me. But beyond that I didn't know what to think. But there was one time, what was it? I think he had just said something like, "*This beggar doesn't know anything,*" and then I said,

- *Well, have you seen, have you had darshan with Satya Sai Baba?*

I guess I was thinking, 'maybe you should see Sai Baba, you know [*laughs*]. And he said,

- *Yes, this beggar has seen him.*

And then I said,

- *You've seen him in Puttaparthi? In his ashram?*

And he said,

- *No, this beggar has never been there.*

And I said,

- *Well maybe you've seen him in Whitefield*

He said,

- *No, this beggar never went to Whitefield."*

And then I said,

- *Well, Madras. He goes to Madras occasionally.*

He said,

- *No, this beggar never saw him in Madras.*

- *Then, Swami, I said, maybe you had a vision or something?*

And he said,

- *No, no, no. This beggar doesn't have visions.*

And then I said,

- *Well, where'd you see him?*

He said,

- *I see him every day.*

And I said,

- *You mean, inwardly. You see him inwardly every day?*

He said,

- *Yeah.*

He pointed at the sun. *[laughs]* He said,

- *I see him every day."*

[long pause]

And then Will and I saw him that last time with, and hang out with Brett¹⁰.

Brett and I were roommates at Ammichi's ashram. We were the only people who could put up with each other. *[Will is laughing]* I mean, Brett's great, I love Brett, but we were kind of, a bit curmudgeons who never, kind of, fit into the whole situation... He was with Ammachi, he was there for a long time... He wasn't there in the ashram the whole time... We ended up going to Ammichi's at about the same time, and so, we usually were roommates.

I mean, at one point we were actually in Ramanashram's quarters. We had the best room in the house, but that last time with Will and Phyllis and everything, I remember, it was really remarkable. Going into that huge hall, and then he'd just be sitting there, all alone, just kind of looking up, or saying something. You know, maybe kind of like *[laughing]*, we'd touch the feet of the statue and then prostrate to Yogi and it was just the very - strange, this huge, empty hall with the dirt floor, and *[laughing]* like a

¹⁰ It must be Bret Carlson, who had passed some years in Ma Amritananda Ma Ashram in California. Bret was (and is still) living in Tiruvannamalai at that time.

surreal sort of situation. And then, Will and I don't know if Phyllis was there that time, he called us out once and he was talking about Northern Ireland and different things.

- **Will:** Oh, yeah, because, remember what we saw? That Irish guy was there who was leading some tour, right? Remember? He was some Irish guy who was leading some tour, and his people were there. Was that guy from upstate there? The guy Jerry? Yeah, Jerry was in that group, because he was in with that Irish group. And Jerry had since come down a few times at Ammichi's.

- **Richard:** I think you and I were sitting there one day.

- **Will:** Yeah, well, we got to see him twice. Yeah.

- **Richard:** And he started talking to us about the Northern Ireland. I thought that was interesting. Yeah, twice he called us, and once I asked him to bless - I had all these crystals, Indian crystals, and I asked him to bless them.

I think he didn't really like the idea. He kind of held it over [Will laughing]. "This beggar doesn't believe in those things." [all laughing]

- **Will:** "You keep it," you know? Every time you wanted to give him a crystal, he said, "No, no. You keep it."

- **Richard:** Well, I wanted him to bless it.

- **Interviewer:** Well, we've seen him bless people. Professor Longaragi(?)? ¹¹ The gentleman from Madras? Who has a sister in Navidica (?) Academy? ¹² He's the sadhu who said that Yogi Ramsuratkumar initiated him. And he has a staff, and on two visits I saw him bring his staff and present it to Yogi Ramsuratkumar, and Yogi Ramsuratkumar would run his hands up and down it, both ways, and cover the whole thing, and give it back to him. That was really kind of interesting, to watch that.

- **Richard:** Yeah, well, he actually said - he held the crystal up for a while and then, it's interesting that a friend of mine who's kind of clairvoyant, I just gave

¹¹ We correct : Prof. Rangarajan.

¹² Here, it is a little bit funny. Actually, Sadhu Rangarajan was the Head of the *Sister Nivedita Academy* in Madras...

him a rock and said, "Well, what do you feel in this rock?" and he just kind of closed his eyes and said, "Tiruvannamalai?" He said, "I feel Tiruvannamalai."
[Laughs]

*

- *Will*: The nicest times I had with Swami was - my wife died in 1989, she had cancer and it depressed me but we met a saint in Bombay... - it was fifteen years before. He told us:

- *Whatever you do, don't go for ayurvedic treatment. Only go for naturopathic treatment.*

But at that time she was in UP¹³... Anyway, she was getting her treatment from Vansala¹⁴... So then Swami was sitting down at the house, still down at the house on Sannadhi Street, and so I went to see Swami and - I think it really must be in '88 or '89, something, I don't remember, or early 87'? And then, I went to see Swami and he says,

- *Will, you always come to see me.*

¹³ Uttar Pradesh, one of the Indian states, in the North.

¹⁴ A town (we don't know about it - Vansala, or Bansala?)

So he says,

- *Tomorrow I'm going to come and see you*

So I was staying down at this Krishna Vrindavan Lodge, down street. At that time it was the Udipi Vrindavan Lodge. ... They always have pictures of Him and stuff up there. But one time it was mostly hotel, and then a restaurant at the back. But, of course, when Indians say "hotel," they mean "restaurant." But anyway, so that time they had mostly lodge rooms, so I was staying there. I had a room on the ground floor, and every day, for about a week, or maybe six days. Every morning Swami would come see me. I would hear a little tap at the door about five thirty or quarter to six. He'd come in and we'd just sit together ... usually for the average of four, five, six hours. Two of us. So he would come in, then he would usually sit on the bed and there was a chair, and then they always have a little glass for water, and he would use that as his ashtray. And most of the time he just sat around... Oh, I'd like to hear him singing, he'd be singing Shri Ram, Jai Ram, something like that. But he used to like, he loved, to talk about J. Krishnamurti. You know we talked about Krishnamurti. He had great reverence for Krishnamurti.

He said that for years he had gone to his talks in Madras, because Krishnamurti used to always give a series of talks in Madras – not just one talk but a series, because I went to see him, I had gone to his talks. So he used to go there, and he said he'd take the bus there, and get off the bus, and have a cigarette and he'd go to the talks. And then he said, after the talks he'd always try to get an interview with Krishnamurti, but each time, the secretary would say he's not available. So one time, one year, Swami said Krishnamurti was way up on an upper balcony, and Swami said:

- *Oh, I'd like an interview with Krishnamurti.*

So the lady says he's not available and so Krishnamurti comes downstairs and just yelled at the secretary,

- *This (man) has been trying to see me for years, and you always tell him I'm not available. It's not true. I'm available."*

So they talk, and Swami says,

- *Well, Krishnamurti, I have always been, what is the difference between Ramnam, saying the Name of God, and what you're, saying?*

And Krishnamurti says there's absolutely no difference. So, anyway, that was good. And then he gave Swami a big hug. So that was really nice, because Krishnamurti was always down on gurus ... And Swami himself told me - each of these teachers come for a certain group - he thought that Krishnamurti would more appeal to people who are more in the mind state rather than in the devotional state. The mind people, who have to explain everything. Of course, Swami went way beyond what they knew *[laughing]*...

When Krishnamurti died, because Krishnamurti died in '93, '95? Maybe Krishnamurti died in the '80s, well, maybe about '90'... But anyway, He said that he was afraid that when Krishnamurti died, his teachings would die. And he said his teachings were very, very great, very great teachings, very direct. And he'd always tell me, go through Krishnamurti's books.

It was interesting, somebody came once and he asked him about Krishnamurti. The guy said, "You should go to the talks." And at that time, Krishnamurti was just finishing talks in Madras and he was going to go to Bombay, so he told him, "Go to Bombay and see Krishnamurti." So the guy goes to the airport, and who does he see at the airport? J. Krishnamurti.

And anyway, the attendant left, so he walked over and said, "Sir, what is your name?" And he said, "J. Krishnamurti," And he said, "Oh God! I've always wanted to talk to you." And so Krishnamurti talked to him for a few minutes, but he said he felt just like the whole universe disappeared...

*

So, anyway, he got a great blessing from that, but he thought, "Boy, Swami's really got something here." He asked me to go and, I see him right, everything, all the ducks there, lined up. So, and then somebody else had come with this guy. There was a car and they weren't leaving, when Swami had his house, and of course the owner saw him on the veranda, and he didn't go in the house... in Sannadhi Street. He always saw people on the veranda.... That's the only time I'd ever gotten into the house. (In the front porch), that was where all the common people got. But when Hilda came, we were taken into the house.

And of course, Swami's bags, and then things were like that much dust under it [*laughing*], like cleaning brand new outfits with that much dust ... But he said, it wasn't proper for Hilda to be out there because

people were urinating on that wall and he didn't want Hilda... [laughing]. He said we must accord her some respect ... So that was the only time I got in the house. (It) was very, very sparse (inside). There was nothing. Swami had a mat, his mat on the floor, and there was no furniture, just piles of newspapers and some bags, burlap bags. And totally untidy. Completely untidy. But that's just the way he lived...

- **Richard:** Anyone live in that house?

- **Will :** No, no. Well, Parimal¹⁵. With Parimal. And then one time there was a couple of young boys he had who were his attendants for a short time. And I hear they were orphans and they were attending them. Swami was giving them food and stuff like that. One of these little tykes, I think he was seven - the little kid was like, really, "You can't see Swami." So then Perumal came, then he saw this kid being real brusque with me, so he took the kid aside and had a talk with him, and after that the kid was really nice to me. Every time he'd say, "Yeah, yeah, come on in!" The kid would say, "No, you can't see Swami!" (What a shock. Then once, the kid was telling me I couldn't see Swami and then Swami walked out and said, "*It's all right. He's all right.*" [laughing] But he was very,

¹⁵ We correct : Perumal (Sadaiyan).

very funny. So, getting back to that time, he'd come to my room every day, and each day we would sit and talk, just all kinds of topics, on any topic that I wanted to discuss, or he wanted to discuss or anything like that. And then there would be about ten o'clock or so, maybe nine, ten o'clock, Swami would say, "*Should we go for something to eat?*" And I'd say, "*Yes, Swami,*" and so we'd go, there was a restaurant in the back. There was only one table we would sit at. It was like the last table in the back. So he said, "*Go see if that's clear.*" Either it had just cleared or it was empty. So then, when we'd go, all the people who were serving the food would come over and touch his feet. Bring the food and touch his feet. And then, when I went to pay the bill, they wouldn't take any money. When Swami would eat in the restaurant, that was blessing enough. And it was very nice...

I remember one time, suddenly the Congress Party people came and talked a couple hours to Swami about, just in my room there, just Swami and I and the Congress Party people. And he always liked the Congress Party...

- *Interviewer*: They were speaking in Tamil or something?

- *Will*: Yeah, a little bit. Mostly in English. But even, sometimes when people would come and they spoke - you see, Swami's native tongue was Hindi. Anyway, most of the time, whenever they came, even if they spoke Hindi, he would insist they talk English. But on rare occasions, somebody who was like a big Northern, some guy came from some big government official in the North, and he was on leave or something, his family was from there, so they spoke in Hindi, but the rest of the time he was always speaking in English. But Swami had a big thing, his big thing was names. If you wanted to know anything about anybody, where these people came and they were interested in marriage or their matrimonial (affairs), "*Just tell me. Read the names.*" And then, if he'd hear the names he would say, "*Stop. That's the one. Only concentrate. Don't ... forget the rest.*" So once, somebody wrote us a letter saying they were having a hard time at the school, and we had lived at this guy's house before we came to India, because Joan's parents used to live in the DC area. So anyway, the guy was writing... the teacher was having an affair with the principal, and it was no good and ... He was really upset. And Swami just (showed) the letter and he said, "*Can I see the handwriting?*" And he'd just glance at it. That's it. He told us all about the guy. He said, "What's the guy's name?" And he said, "*Let me see the handwriting.*" He said, "*I got it.*" He

described him perfectly. Absolutely. Right down to the feet. And anybody who came with a problem to heal, he'd always just say, *"Tell me the name."* And then he would be like writing it in the air in Hindi. Because that was his name. That was just my assumption, because Tamil wasn't - Swami spoke very bad Tamil [*laughing*]. It was very rustic Tamil; it wasn't the high, refined Tamil. And the Tamil I know was all street Tamil, for ordering stuff like that. Anyway, so he always used to say, *"Tell me the name"*, and whoever came, he really always concentrated on the name. And a couple of times somebody came ... I remember, one girl came from Canada, and she had a niece who was very young, just like a newborn, but it had some very significant health problems, and Swami said, *"Is it possible to change the name?"* And he said, *"No, no, the parents ... They'll never call him anything else"...* He said, *"Well, you call him Such-and-such. I'm giving a new name, and you call her that." ...* The name was big thing. Supposedly your name has like a vibration in the universal who you are. It has a vibration ...with your soul that's taken that vibration. Some people would come and this German guy came, Swami came, he's a very, very, very high guy, and he had a tremendous amount of mystical experience, I mean real, real yogi experiences, this guy, really.... And so Swami looked at him and says, *"That's not your given*

name." And he said, "Yeah, you're right." He says, "I was born in, Germany but we moved to Canada during World War II, so my mother didn't want the Canadians to have an association with the German name, so she started to call me Henri." So Swami says, "Please use your regular name. Please use your real name." And anybody who came, if you weren't using your given name, Swami knew it. He just said, "That is not your correct name. Please use your name given."

We have all these females who are always changing their name. They think they're going to change their karma. Your karma's in no way in Tom, Dick, or Harry [laughs]. But anyway, he was really, always a stickler for that. Sometimes he would write to me in Hindi. You know, just, he would write it out in Hindi, on paper. And he did a whole series actually in bronze for me... in my house upstate... One night he just said, *"I'm going to make some drawings for Will."* And he just did all these beautiful (things). He made about ten, he made at least ten, these ten sheets.

..... ? ... "Five, five, five." And then Joan said,

- *Well what does that mean*

- *Oh, that's the number of marriage.*

But he wasn't listening to Joan.

- *There is a fire on the hill. Don't worry. Don't have any fear. It won't hurt your. You are in Tiruvannamalai. All is well.*

And he runs all these things like this. He was always saying that the hill was fire. Because, the hill, that Shiva temple on the hill, is a fire temple. Oh, I wanted to just go back, so Swami and I are walking, so we go to breakfast, down, when he was coming to my room. Then he would say, "*Will, shall we go to the temple?*" And I'd say, "*Sure, Swami, let's go to the temple.*" So he would take my hand and we'd walk hand-in-hand to the temple and he would be singing *Shri Ram, Jai Ram, Jai Jai Ram*. I felt like I was walking on another level. Wow! Just holding his hand, him singing *Shri Ram, Jai Ram, Jai Ram*, I mean we were just walking on another plane of existence. And then, when we got near, where all that stuff, that big area in front of the temple all burned down, but they all these big, kind of ancient palms and stuff like that. And these little ladies would come, I mean I would have tears in my eyes; their devotion to Swami was so fantastic. They would have be selling these little beads, and then,

each little lady they would put a garland, one of her little garlands around Swami's head, and she would be in tears and she'd go down and touch Swami's feet. That would just like move me to tears. These people had such absolute, simple devotion. There was no bullshit; there was no intellect, just total, complete devotion. Sometimes we'd go out to the market, and sometimes these people would stop Swami and Swami would talk and say, "*Yeah, sure,*" and I'd give it to them and he'd say,

- *Will, you know, these people have no money. We must help them in some way or other.*

And whatever he had he just gave them. Never a thought of needs.

But then, sometimes we'd go into the inner sanctum, Swami and I together, and then we'd go around and sit together, we'd walk around those trees by the side of the temple there and then we'd go and sit in the very back of the temple, way in the back, around the other side, where the Ganesh is, always pulling around the other side, just the two of us. And he'd be telling me about the history of Tiruvannamalai and the city, and how the temple got built and how everybody got a boon from God... That was a really special time, just the two of us together.

And every day, for five days, or six days, he came every single day. And just the two of us, hanging out, just like brothers. This was, boy, this was a golden opportunity, it was just so nice because you could just be so one-on-one with Swami. It was just completely nice. I'd never had such a good experience before. Because most gurus, they're pretty standoffish. They don't give you much of their time. But here he was, freely sharing his time with me. I wrote him a letter in '84, because Hilda was gonna go in '84, and I wanted to come and spend a month before Hilda came. And he wrote a letter back to me saying, there's no need to come. There's no need. This beggar can't spend any time with you if you do come, that there's no need. He says when it is necessary, and he said it's very rare for this beggar to spend so much time with (somebody). But he said, when you are in need, this beggar will be there. But now, there's no need. And then, he told me some word, there's something he wrote for me a long time ago, I remember it was in the early '70 when I met him... And then, he said, there's no need to be here. Just - and he put this in big letters - remember the Father all the time. So, I showed the letter to Hilda... She said, "Oh, yeah, he's saying (?)"

Well, the next time I went back because Joan was very sick. She'd gone to Tiruvannamalai, and she was

staying at the same hotel. And she was very ill at that time. Anyway, she went twice. Once she went with Arveni (?), and he was a guy who lived in Bombay, he used to be a follower of Krishnamurti. And, anyway, ... Arveni's comment, you know, seeing Swami, "*Why doesn't he ever bathe?*" [laughing] He couldn't figure that one out. But then, once, when we're done, we're talking, we'd mentioned (the) name (of) the father of Krishnamurti, and he'd been very nice to us. So Swami said, "*Oh, yes. He's one of the few people of Krishnamurti's disciples who is living the teaching.*" And so we told that to Arveni, and he was really amazed, quite happy that somebody was staying in that house (...). But anyway, Joan was at that same hotel, when she was very ill, and he would come every day. And then, she was staying up in her room, and it's not proper for a man to come into a lady's room or anything like that, so she would come and meet him at the restaurant. So then Perumal, or one of the guys, would come up, and she would come and be just talking in the restaurant with him. And he was very, very compassionate, very loving, very kind, and everything like that.

Interviewer: And so Yogi Ramsuratkumar knew that your wife had cancer?

Will: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Did he give any instructions about that?

Will: No. At that time, in fact, she was taking Tibetan medical treatment up in Vansala. Anyway, I was up there, and then she got really ill and we brought her down to the hospital. We found a hospital in Bombay. So that's where she died. And I telegrammed every single day, there was either a telegram or the speed post came in two days, saying what her condition was. And then, when she died, we took the ashes down and He held the ashes and we put them up on the (?). But he had a whole bunch of people, I remember, there were about a dozen people in a sort of waiting room, and He said, "*Oh, this beggar's busy tomorrow.*" But he actually cleared them out. He said, "*Please come back in about an hour.*" But he made them all leave.

[End of tape]

[Tape 2, face A]

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Tape 2, Side A

So Swami booted everybody out, and then he had them come back in one hour, and then he quietly talked to us about Joan passing, and although I sent him some letters and telegrams ... anyway, we had the body cremated, in a Bombay crematorium, and then brought the ashes down. So Swami then said, "*Come early morning,*" and the next morning we came about six a.m., and spent an hour and Swami just sat and held the ashes - we had them in a small stainless steel can - and he held the ashes for at least an hour. He didn't say a word. He was just making various kinds of hand gestures, just quietly with the ashes. And then he said,

- *Okay, you can start.*

And so then we went up the hill, up near Skandashram, overlooking the main temple. (It would) be a good place to have her ashes scattered.

And then that was next year, then I went (in) '90, and Ma Devaki was there and these two other ladies were there, and they both, they were both sadhu ladies, one lady from Finland and one lady from Spain. (One) was Kirsti. But anyway they were there, and they'd been there since the '70. So Ma Devaki was there, but that time she was still living in Coimbatore and she was a professor. And so, I was coming down there one day, and I'm there, and Swami's there, and the two ladies. I get the feeling Swami was going to give me something. He walks in, so he's looking around, he says,

- *Nobody knows this beggar. Nobody knows this beggar. There's only one person who does know this beggar, and that's Will.*

And he goes inside and he brings back this sketch that somebody sent, kind of a rough sketch of Swami with his fan. I say, "Swami, it's beautiful, but I have this huge painting from Wendel He goes back in, next thing he comes out, he has these two fans, tied together with a string he's carried for ten years.

- *Will, would you like these, Swami then asks. Can you keep it nicely?*
- *Aw, I'll keep it very nicely.*

So then, I had it at my house upstate, it was really, really nice, but I saw him carry those, he carried that fan for ten years. So I felt really lucky. I thought, 'Wow, this is a great blessing.' And he said,

- *You know, Will, I couldn't give you that fan before.*

And then, you know, I didn't ask him why, or anything. You don't look a gift horse in the mouth. You just say, "Oh, wow." I was like, floored when he was walking out with that fan. And I went, and then I even bought a little hard suitcase, I didn't care what Amali (?) said, it wouldn't get squashed if I had all soft luggage. And so, I have this, I have a fan in my bag, and I saw Aruna (?), that little lady on the bed who was kind of sick..., that little French lady... So she was a one-time devotee of Yogi Ramsuratkumar, but that Om Swami had poisoned her mind. So she saw me carrying that fan in the bag. I was coming back to my room at the ashram there, and she said,

"What have you got in that bag?" "Oh, nothing." Made this [sound effect of zipping by] right by her, because I didn't want to go into Swami giving me that.

Anyway, Swami's very, very gracious, and once, Ma Devaki was coming, she was a real devotee of God, and I remember Swami said would she ever get married, and she said no. If she did ever get married, she would marry the person she loved, she wouldn't have any arranged marriage. ... He was kind of teasing her... Swami is very funny at times. So, then she kept coming more regularly, more regularly, more regularly, more regularly, and then finally she just wanted to move in, move to Tiruvannamalai. She was having a lot of the photos and stuff that were taken and there was a guy down at the ashram, that very wealthy guy ... He inherited the *Nutrine* sweet's fortune. *Nutrine* sweets makes almost all the candy for India. He inherited that whole fortune, but a couple of years after being that situation, his wife, his kids died within a month. And his mother and father died within a month. So he was left with this huge fortune, and then he decided, you know, death is in the end anyway. And so he moved to Tiruvannamalai, gave up, gave his brother control of the money, interest in the company. Then he adopted a daughter, some local girl, as a daughter, and at that time he was finding a lot of the pictures of Swami and the calendars and

stuff and I remember Ma Devaki going to his house and talking to him about various things, and her coming over and they wanted the prints and he said to her, "*I'll get the prints.*" He had a very good camera. He was taking some photos.

So he was living in Tiruvannamalai, and he drives a nice car. But he was a very sweet, humble guy. So I asked him if he was still coming to see Yogi Ramsuratkumar, he said no, there was too much of a (?) there. Anytime there is a (function) there tends to be like a zoo-like atmosphere. But Swami was very good, actually, at containing the zoo-like atmosphere because he was relatively unknown, and he always said, the really great ones don't need to have their own ashram. They just don't need it. They just don't need it. They're content, they're doing what they're doing whether you know about them or not. They're still doing what they're doing, You have no impact on them. They're not interested in the publicity. They have no need for it. There's no need for it. There's no social need, there's no spiritual need. And I guess I'm a person like that, who always felt, if you're doing your thing, then you don't have to draw attention to yourself. I mean if you're really, really doing your thing, whatever it is, and no matter who you are, in what field you are, if you're really doing your thing, then you don't, if you're really, really seriously doing

it, in any way, shape or form, then you don't need all the attention. Attention is not necessary. And that's what he was doing.

And somebody came, this little girl Shanti, Hilda raised - was born with a third eye. So, she came down to see Yogi Ramsuratkumar, there were over twenty-six people. Swami didn't want to see them all, he only wanted to see Hilda, Shanti and Vali, and, of course me, because I was like the mediator. I had set up all the things with her, with him. Anyway, while he said, "*Oh, can I see the letter?*" So again, he just goes, "*Okay, I got it.*" He just touched it. "*Oh, okay, I got it.*" He says,

- *Oh, we must write a letter, a thank you to Hilda.*

So he wrote a letter, he had Joan write a letter, "*I just want to thank you for all your help,*" and mentioned Yogi Ramsuratkumar, and then Swami signed it "*Your son, Yogi Ramsuratkumar.*" So then Hilda gets the letter, and then I'm hearing, this is a year or so later, because I was in India a year, and then I came back and everybody said, when Hilda got that letter she was in ecstasy for weeks. She said,

- *My God, a really great yogi has written me. This is a great, great yogi.*

And she had that read twenty or thirty or forty times. "Read that letter over again to me. Read that letter." And then she had written a letter to us, but thanking Yogi Ramsuratkumar. So then, Swami had us, he had us read that letter to him thirty or forty times. He says,

- *Oh, what did that letter say again? Oh please, read that letter to this beggar again.*

It was just a very short letter. So then Hilda said, "Oh, I've got to meet Yogi Ramsuratkumar."

So then we came back and we met Hilda in New York and then Hilda says,

- *Will, this is somebody I have to meet. I have to meet this yogi. He's a great yogi.*

So, but then when Hilda saw him, she says,

- *Will, he's way, way off the charts. I mean, he is so far out. He is just so far out.*

And then she mentioned like the Brotherhood of the Great white body and every other yogi.

- *Oh, he's way, way beyond all of that stuff.*

But I remember talking with Swami. We talked about every kind of subject you ever imagined. We talked about Castaneda and all that stuff.

- *Oh Will, you should go see Don Juan.*

I said,

- *think he's dead, Swami.*

- *Okay. Go see Castaneda.*

I said,

- *Well, nobody knows what he looks like."*

[laughing]

But Castaneda used to come and see Hilda. But, you know, nobody ever saw his picture. He would never allow his picture to be taken. And somebody asked Castaneda, have you ever seen anybody with that, you know, in that egg and all that thing, the way he

described Don Juan's aura, and like that? He said, "*Yeah, Hilda.*"

So he was really impressed. But apparently from what he saw, the light around her was the same as the light around Don Juan. But I told,

- *You know, Swami some of the Don Juan stories and all that...*"

and this beggar says,

- *Oh, Will, you should go down and see Don Juan. Go spend time with Don Juan"*

But I go,

- *"Swami, he's dead." [laughing]*

But I always kind of liked those stories.

... He read all the books on J. Krishnamurti's life. There was some new book, he says,

- *Oh, this beggar's has read it.*

And he tells me to read the books on Krishnamurti. He was very interested in Krishnamurti. He told "*Have you read that book?*" and I said no. And he said,

- *You know, we don't know what Krishnamurti's life is. He's very secretive in his life. There may even be women involved. We don't know.*
[laughter]

So, but he always thought Krishnamurti had a great teaching, was a great presence. And really, really impressed by Krishnamurti. And I remember that guy, Franklin Jones, Da Avatar. He thought Krishnamurti was some throwback, spiritual throwback. He called Krishnamurti a spiritual anachronism. And I thought, boy, well, Da Free John, he's not free and, he's a John...

We went to see Krishnamurti, we went to Madison Square Garden, and we went to Carnegie Hall. And each time, Krishnamurti would come out, and before he started his talks, he'd always stare long and hard at Hilda, and Shanti and Vali. I'd tell Swami that. He said,

- *He never stared at you?*

I said,

- *No, not that I'm aware, Swami." [laughing]*

Swami's always very playful. I always liked it.

Well, when you can get somebody who, on that level, is willing to talk to you, and it's always kind of interesting, if they're willing to talk to you one-on-one, you're kind of blown away by the fact that ... But I always felt very free, and I always felt free to speak my mind and ask him any questions, express any doubts or anything. He always gave really good answers, not weird stuff, not negative stuff, but always just very direct answers.

Last time we were there, with Richard, was it '90. I think '99, and then Swami would say,

- *Will, how many cigarettes are you smoking?*

- *Oh, we're not smoking, Swami.*

- *Will, how many cigarettes again are you smoking?*

And then I said,

- *Swami, whenever I have the urge to smoke, I smoke through you.*

He just cracked up. He really liked that answer. So sometimes I used to write him a letter saying, “*This beggar, this and this and this.*” ... Swami once told me,

- *Will, when I get your letters, I don't know whether they're from me or from you. [laughing]*

[long pause] But he was profoundly interested in politics. And I remember when Indira Gandhi was assassinated, Swami took that very seriously. And there was some word got back, when Hilda heard that - Hilda was never really interested in politics. She never had that interest in all that stuff. But somebody asked Swami what he was doing and he said, well, part of his mission was to work with the politicians, because they had so much negation, (so much) negative thinking on them, dislike and hatred and all that, that to keep them away from that; their focus was to receive a higher energy. And I remember when I went down to see Swami, when I got there, I think the year when Bill Clinton was elected. When was that?

'92? So I was down at Swami's house, in Sannadhi Street, and for some reason Swami wasn't around. I don't know why, where he was that time, but I went, and Perumal was there. But somebody came and they translated with Perumal, because Perumal didn't speak any English. She was one of Swami's attendants for about twenty-five years, or over that. Anyway, he said Bill Clinton was a good man, and then I understood, when Swami said somebody was a good man, he means he could work with the energy. That's what that, kind of like, DONG. Okay, that's what he means, when he says they're a good man, he can work with the energy. I remember, once, Swami talking about Nixon. And he said he was the most clever President we've ever had, but he didn't mean clever in a good-way, you know. Clever in a manipulative, scheming way. But he was smart, he was clever, but he wasn't - you know, Swami never said - and then there was, the same time, that guy write the letter about the Waldorf School, and Swami said he felt that was the best system of education he had ever heard of. (He knows about it), because we told him this guy taught at Waldorf School, where Rudolph Steiner's stuff was. He said, Oh, this is the best system of education that Swami's ever heard of, and he said, somebody coming out of a Waldorf school will never turn into another Nixon. So he wrote that in a letter. We said, No, please don't write that in your letter *[laughing]*.

Because Nixon was like a crafty, calculating, scheming, paranoid nut. Did you guys see that movie Anthony Hopkins played Nixon? It was Nixon; it was called Richard Milhouse or something like that. Quite a good old movie... But anyway, Swami never liked Nixon. He never thought Nixon was a good guy. He liked the Kennedys. He said there was something different there, in that they couldn't be bought, that they think they had so much money they couldn't be bought, so they could run on principle rather than something like that.

So he was always very direct, but the trouble was that if you didn't know him, you just saw like this guy sitting up there doing weird things, smoking and acting funny or something like that. But, for me it was much more intimate, I saw a much more intimate side of him, actually relate to him, and have him relate to me as a person. It was really a very unique 'experience. I'd never have the grace to have that with another person, but this must go back from past lives here, because we seemed, we could talk. The minute you try to concoct anything like this it falls to shreds. But if it happens spontaneously, then you just flow with it, that's all. You don't think anything about it and you don't realize it was so extraordinary until you kind of sit back, kind of, like, look at how other people

have experienced ... didn't quite have the same level or something. But I just felt I was very lucky just to have these experiences at that level of intimacy, and the level of openness. He felt comfortable having me around, and I felt comfortable being around him. But sometimes I'd go there and ... once I went there and said, "*Swami, I'm here for two weeks, can I come back in the evening, and kind of pack my stuff away in Tiruvannamalai?*" Then I come the next day and he says, "*Good seeing you.*" And this is a bad omen when (he says this).

- *Nice seeing you, Will. Good we met.*
- *Thank you. But Swami, I'm here for two weeks.*
- *Do as you like. But this beggar feels you should go to Puttaparthi.*

[laughing] I had to drag myself on the bus to go to Puttaparthi. 'But', that was his always bottom line: "*Do as you like, but this beggar feels ...*" ... But he was always very direct, and he never really went in. I observed him pretty closely, he never wanted anybody, he was never interested in anybody worshiping him, at all. Oh, sometimes he would say,

"Oh, this beggar ... doesn't have any boundaries." And if they truly believed who he was, then they wouldn't have to come, because there is no boundary. He doesn't have any limits of being here or there or whatever, being in form. So I remember Caylor asked him a question, which was a very interesting question. He said *"What is the difference between realized beings?"* And so he says, there is no difference. One such a being has gone beyond identification with the body, then it's the role he has had to play. And he said he had played, he said he came to play a beggar and he had to play it perfectly... But it was interesting, when people asked all these kind of esoteric questions, he's so beyond mind, you know, that kind of like, mental hullabaloo stuff we go through. I mean, he was up working, he was working in the cosmic spheres, or whatever, and all that was just like extremely... he had no ...

Then it was just like kindergarten. You ask some question about, you know, oh, why do we (behave with) the earth like that? You know, you're some high-tech archaeologist. It's like a child's question. You can't even relate to it. You can't answer. In the West we have this idea, this overdevelopment of intellect and underdevelopment of heart, and stuff like that. But Swami was also a very passionate person, very moving... People did small things for him - that

lady brought that food.. And I remember, once, Swami was out of his body, he asked Caylor, he said,

- *Sit by his body for three days.*

I don't know where they were, in Tiruvannamalai someplace, and Swami said he was leaving his body for three days, and Caylor was just to watch the body, to make sure nothing happened to that body. And then, when Swami came back in the body after three days, he just looked at Caylor and he had tears of gratitude that Caylor had done this for him. He didn't expect it, he just had such gratitude.¹⁶

¹⁶ Correction received from Caylor on the 24th Dec. 2015 :

"The matter concerning my sitting with YRSK's body has become muddled over the years. Will mentions the incident in his memoir. He recounts, from what I told him, that I looked after YRSK's body for THREE DAYS. And that something like this transpired several times. Some details have gotten confused over time. The first time this happened, Yogi Ramsuratkumar and Perumal and I stayed together at Om Nama Sivai Guhai for THREE days. This must have been in 1972. I have exact dates in my notes. Several friends of mine also came and went during those days. It was quite an inspiring, even jubilant, scene. Lots of photos were taken. On one late afternoon when everyone else, including Perumal, was gone, he asked me to sit at his side and sternly instructed me not to allow any disturbance to "this beggar" under any circumstances. He proceeded to lie on his back on the bare ground without any movement for THREE hours

He was also very moved by his dogs. He was very much upset that Sai Baba died, that Sai Baba was taken away by the dog collector in Tiruvannamalai. And Swami was, like, upset for a week. He was saying, "*He took my dog, he took Sai Baba, he took them.*" And you could just feel that he was feeling all the suffering the dog had gone through.

He had two dogs, actually, One, he had Satya Sai Baba, and I remember the second one was definitely by the pound. I don't know what happened to the first one, but that dog used to be a character, because Swami lived in the temple, he would spend a lot of time in the temple, and every time the dog saw Swami he would go, "W-o-o-o, w- o-o-o-o, w-o-o-o-o." [*laughing*] And of course, the Brahmins hate dogs. They'd pick up stones, they'd hit the dogs with all kinds of stones. So that dog was really in great peril, because every time it saw Swami, it would just really howl its head off. And every time it came, it would always follow Swami around the temple. Since we were with Swami, he would follow us home to our compounds and stay overnight, and then after a while

or so. When he "came back" so to speak, no further explanation was given. So Will confused 3 hours with 3 days! This happened on just one other occasion..."

it was, constantly, not only in the temple but hanging around Swami every single day, and that's when he took it and he fed it. And, once, somebody pushed that dog down the stairs, those big stairs that were at the top of that thing, and Swami was really, really mad. He wasn't mad but... he took the dog in his lap and he was stroking the dog's paw for about an hour, and he said,

- *Oh, Sai Baba, you're gonna be all right. You're gonna be all right. You're gonna be all right.*

He was very very touching to this dog.

9th November 2002
New York City

When I came to see Yogi Ramsuratkumar after visiting Ammachi in 1990 - I came in January or February - I said I'd seen Ammachi and he said, "Oh". He was very happy that I'd seen Ammachi and then he told me that, when he'd met Ammachi and he thought that she was the Divine Mother. But then later on we had talked with the Ammachi people and said that some devotees were there, and they said that he did a full prostration before Ammachi and then she had him come up on stage and sit with her when she gave the program down in Tiruvannamalai¹⁷. So, that's how I know. And there's supposedly a picture of them together, but that person was the photographer but she was not able to find that picture at Ammachi's ashram. She had misplaced it. But I would have loved to get a copy of that picture. That was in 1990, but I

¹⁷ We have always to take care of what is said by people that want other Masters to be less than theirs.... It is childish behaviour. Other people say something else ... And nobody has any picture of this meeting. As Will, many would want to get a copy...

had a feeling that she was in '88 or '89, because I know she did two trips to Tiruvannamalai.

Interviewer: You also mentioned an interesting story about, we were talking about Parem¹⁸ and who he was. You mentioned an interesting story regarding Caylor.

Will: Perumal. Perumal. Yeah. Caylor had bought him a cow, and Swami wasn't very happy about that because it took him away from Swami for a couple of years. And Perumal was such a good, right-hand person to Swami that the other guys were always kind of incompetent. When he sent Perumal out to do something, it got done. But the other people, Durai(?)¹⁹ and George, they weren't very, they weren't as reliable... Caylor had this idea, I don't know where he got the money. I'm not sure of the story about how he got the money, and a cow is a couple thousand rupees, not cheap. So anyway, Perumal then had the idea that he would buy this. He gave money to Perumal to buy a cow. He bought the cow, and then he was selling milk for about two or three years. Then

¹⁸ Perumal. Mistake from the interviewer or from the typewriter who does not know about Adaiyan Perumal. So we correct in Will's answer.

¹⁹ It must be another mistake from the interviewer who did not understand the name correctly. We don't know any Durai or so. At that time, Perumal, George and Jagannathan were the three with Yogiji.

after that the cow dried up, and then Perumal came back to Swami. I remember seeing Perumal riding around on his bicycle and delivering the milk and stuff like that.

Interviewer: So he actually just left Yogi Ramsuratkumar's company for several years.

Will: Well, he came occasionally and he didn't totally break off contact, but it wasn't the same level of devotion and service that he had before. I mean, same level of devotion but not level of service, because he was distracted. And Swami was always very powerful [laughing]. And then Swami just said, "Oh, he has a cow now." Swami just didn't seem pleased with that. It wasn't a thing that he was very pleased with Caylor for doing that.

Interviewer: You had also mentioned Yogi Ramsuratkumar corresponding with an American.

Will: Well, He was actually Dutch. His name was Sri Raman, and he used to raise horses. When I met him he was eighty and that was at Sai Baba's. He had gone down to see Yogi Ramsuratkumar. I wasn't there when he met him, but then, as a result, he always called Yogi Ramsuratkumar "the old fox." So then, once, we got a letter there - when Joan and I

were hanging out with Swami, we were going to the field every day with him, and a letter came and it was addressed to "*The Old Fox.*" "*Dear Old Fox,*" and then Swami signed it. He had Joan write the letter back, and he signed it "*The Yellow(?) Fox.*" Anyway, we sent it back on. And the funny story is Swami blessed the letter. You know, any time he did anything he really put a lot of effort into that... Joan said,

- *Could I carry it back?*

So Swami said,

- *Sure, but keep it in a newspaper.*

So she said,

- *No, no, it'll be all right. I'm just going to keep it in my hand.*

(It was then) a long walk from the town - from the railway station into the town was probably like half an hour walk. And it was very hot. So her fingers were sweaty, and it made a hole in the envelope. And Swami saw that, and Swami was really mad. He said,

- *What? You spoiled this.*

So then he drew something, he made like a circle around the hole and did something, but he told Joan it would never be the same. It could never be the same. So he always said that when he put, wrote a letter, he always put something into it. And whenever you got a letter from him you just felt really such joy and happiness come over you. And I was lucky to get a bunch of letters from him over the years. And one I have framed, that he sent me when I wanted to come in '84 and he said it wasn't necessary to come but, quote, "remember." But that was, he always, he was very, very upset, because you have to do everything exactly his way. Once he sent Joan and I to the post office to mail something. Three or four steps after, we stopped, and we're turning back to ask him a question. He said,

- Once this beggar sends you, you don't turn back. You don't break the momentum of what this beggar is doing.

So he was very strict. We were going to ask him, How do you want it sent? And whatever, and whatever, and whatever, but he just was very furious... We take the things very casually, but what he does, everything is very serious. Really, everything. There is no waste of energy with him.

*

When Hilda came in '78, after Joan had gone away - she'd gone back to the States because her vacation was up, Hilda was supposed to come - Swami had me book a hotel, book a bunch of rooms near the temple when he was down on Sannadhi Street. Anyway, then he came and then he called me the night, like the whole day Hilda was coming. He called me, like I used, I'd tell him eleven and then waited, and he wasn't there, and so Perumal said, "*oh, you know, come and stay and stay and stay. He's coming.*" And then, it was like one o'clock and we didn't know when Hilda was coming in. So, at one o'clock in the afternoon, I was sitting up on the platform, Swami comes and says,

- *Tell me, you'll tell me whenever Hilda's here. I want you to give me notice as soon as she comes. And then I want you to bring her here immediately.*

And he spoke with such power at that time that every atom in my body was vibrating. It was like, "don't screw this up". I had never just seen him radiate such power before. I mean, just, my body. Every atom. I

felt like when I walked away, my whole body was just completely tingling. So I thought, “boy, don’t screw this up [*laughing*].

So anyway, Hilda said, when she was at the bus - they were coming from Madras - she said she felt like a set of big ears was just listening to her. And then she came in about eleven o'clock. She got in about eleven o'clock, but she was very tired, so I went over immediately and I told Swami she's here. So, then, I had a taxi waiting there. Swami gave me very specific instructions. Only seven people can be here, when Hilda's here, excluding me. When I went to the room where Hilda was, there were exactly seven people there. I said, "*Hilda, Swami has given me very, very explicit instructions. Only seven people could come, exactly seven of us.*" So we walked in, and there was seven people. So, Shanti and Vali and Hilda and a couple of other people. And then I came and we knocked. So we came outside of Swami's little gate there and Hilda was standing there.

- *Wow! she says, This whole area is just filled with such golden lights.*

She was really impressed. She says,

- *Really. Amazing golden lights.*

And then Swami came in, and he was very gracious, he came in and sat down. And for a long time he just sat on the ground, and Hilda brought one of these little, it was like, little folding chairs. They're like what you take to the beach or something. They are quite low, you sit low in them. But she had a hard time sitting for a long time. She's very healthy but she just couldn't sit, cross-legged and stuff like that, or sit on the floor for a long time, so she had that little chair. So she sat before Swami and he looked at her. He didn't say a word for half-hour, forty-five minutes, he didn't say one word. He just looked at her, and he just kept looking at her, and looking above her and everything. Then after a half- hour he said,

- *Hilda, how do you feel?*

Because she was really tired. They'd been travelling all day. And she says,

- *Swami, I feel like I've just gotten up in the morning.*

So he says, "*Oh,*" and he just had a big smile, and then everybody went around the room, "*What is your name?*" "*What is your name?*" "*What is your name?*" "*What is your name?*" Then Shanti and Vali came up

and then he had them just sit before him and asked them some questions. The girls, one was about eleven, one was nine, and both very, very advanced souls. And Swami just gave them a lot of attention. And then, he was always having me to do the interpreter, because he understood my English. He was very used to my pronunciation and everything, and even when I wrote he said he could always read my handwriting, even though nobody else could. But I wrote this letter. And Hilda looked in and "*Will, that's not readable.*" And she made me type it, and so Swami was surprised it was a typed letter, and I couldn't type, somebody else typed it. And anyway, so Swami said,

- *Will, there's no problem. I can read your handwriting, there's no problem.*

...

[end of side A]

MEETINGS WITH YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR

[Tape 2, Face B missing]

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

9 November 2000

[Tape 3, Side A]

... *you know, your son has a good job, he works here.*"

He said,

- *It'll be fine. Don't worry about anything like that. Don't worry that he does not work for the government or anything like this. You have a very successful stand here.*

And, as we were leaving, the guy was looking at me with just such appreciation in his eyes for bringing Swami into his shop. [laughing]

Then there was another guy we used to go down to. There was a shop called the *Shri Sundra Tea Shop*, and that's just down the road, go down to that car street, down, and then you make a right and there's the bank down there and stuff like that. I don't know if *Shri Sundra Tea Shop* is still there, I think something else is there now, but anyway, the guy was from

North India, so Swami would go over there and they would sometimes speak in Hindi. And the guy really made really, really great tea. He made one of the best teas in Tiruvannamalai, and plus he made homemade milk sweet *palgoa*, which is like that milk candy. They keep boiling down milk, and then it becomes like this little sweet, white cream. And it's really, really rich. But it's really, really good. And it's hard to find anything that's, quote, "such gourmet" in Tiruvannamalai [*laughs*]. So we'd go in there, and then that man would also make chapattis, because he was North Indian, and Swami (is) North Indian (and) liked chapattis. So Swami would always get the chapattis so they were, they would get real, real soggy so he could gum them...

Right at the end of that car street there was a statue of Gandhi. So on Gandhi's birthday, every year, Swami used to go down and sit there by the statue and chant, "*Gandhi ki jai, Gandhi ki jai*", or something, just chant the whole day about Gandhi. And he, Gandhi, was also a good devotee of Ramnam. And when he died he was saying, "*Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram.*" Swami always liked that about him. He thought Gandhi was a great guru and really could benefit India. Swami was always very kind of concerned about the destiny of India, that they had, there was the right political people. That was a real big concern of

his. That was always on his mind. Who was going to be the best? Who could serve India?

*

- **Interviewer:** Any other saints that Yogi Ramsuratkumar had talked about?

- **Will:** Well... there was a guy who used to come from Tindivanam, some yogi. Tindivanam is down by Pondicherry. And this guy was a poet. He was a Tamil poet. He used to come and he would just go on, he had hours and hours of poetry dedicated to Yogi Ramsuratkumar. But Swami knew he was coming. He kind of disappeared... And so Swami would say, "*Oh my God, that yogi's coming,*" and he would zip off or he couldn't, he would be trapped. It was really very funny. But this guy would always praise. Swami didn't hear his praise because he didn't want have any. It was good for other people, he didn't care. That wasn't what, didn't help him do what he was going to do.

There's a very funny story. There was a guy who came with Swami, and he ran a little photography shop down in Tiru, and he was always complaining these various yogis were coming and asking him to take

free photographs of them sitting by some crematorium or by some graveyard or something, and he was saying it cost him a lot of money, and he wasn't getting paid for these photos or anything. And then Swami would say it's a great blessing to serve these yogis. Don't mind the cost. It's a great blessing. You'll see. And then later, that guy had so much business that he owned all the photograph shops in town. He expanded a chain, so every photographic shop in town he owned. Swami just told him what was what, and don't nickel and dime your stuff, you're getting great grace from all this stuff. Don't, don't be petty. And the same with those people who served him at that restaurant, Udipi Brindaban Lodge. They own pretty - all the restaurants now in Tiruvannamalai are under their control. Most of the restaurants. The big restaurants are all under their control. They expanded that much... (I mean) their family. They expanded all. And they were the few people that really served Swami day and night and day and night.... Before, they were on the main street, and then Swami and I and Joan would go in there and they would serve us meals and stuff like that. And they always had a big picture of Yogi Ramsuratkumar, and Vishnu and all this stuff. But they were always, they would give him coffee, they would usually run over there, the kid would always run over there, or Perumal would run over there. And of course there was never an account.

You know, Swami (had) an account. And somebody would come and pay it. But then, when Swami got that house, a lot of money started coming, so he paid the shops in advance, at that point. So he had a credit line, rather than a debit line [*laughs*]. Which was really fun, because...

I remember once, there was a group of people come and Swami had ordered like one of those really bright lanterns that pump full of kerosene. And so, all the people had left, we had to have the lantern on real bright all night because Swami said he paid for it and we couldn't waste it... This was when he lived in the bazaar, when he was still down in the bazaar...

But my kind of relationship was different. It was Swami and I were talking. It was just a different kind of relationship than most people had with him. I'm thinking about it now because I just kind of took it for granted then. But now I'm thinking, Wow! This is pretty unusual. Most people didn't get that opportunity, or weren't that lucky, or whatever. So we could just sit around, we would sit with Swami and we'd talk for hours and hours and hours. Just the two of us, mostly. And then sometimes Joan was there. And Joan was always the quiet type. She never really answered, never asked anything but sometimes she would think. But once there was a funny story:

She rolled out a mat. He just was living down in the bazaar there, at nights. He said,

- *Please roll out my mat.*

and he gave very explicit instructions how to roll out this little ratty mat. And she didn't do it properly. So then he said,

- *Stop!*

So he went and did it. He said,

- *Please Joan, sit down.*

So, she was sitting there, and I guess internally she was boiling, really boiling mad. So Swami looks over and says,

- *Will, Joan thinks this beggar is very arrogant.*

She told me later, "*I was thinking exact that same*".

So anyway, there were no secrets with Swami. I always was out in the open, I always thought, "Well, these people really know every thought, so you can't hide anything from them, so there's no pretending to

be little “Mr. Goody Two Shoes.” There were all these people go around and then all of a sudden they're so holy. Ah, bullshit, they don't live a life like that. That's all fake. And the saints know it. They're not fooling anybody. They're sure as hell not fooling me, and I'm not even a saint. So I always have to laugh at those kind of people... But anyway, Joan was a good soul, really. A really good soul. But Swami was really amazing. A lot of times I wouldn't see him for a year, and I didn't write, and I got thinking. So one time, my house upstate I was just like, Oh man, these people are bugging me and it's just too much politics and I just want to get the hell out of here. Maybe I'll move to California. So anyway, I go to see Swami, he's down at the house, and I go in the gate, and he looks at me, I'm the only one there. He takes a look at me and he says,

- *Will, I don't like that thought you're having.*

I didn't say a word. My first day there, my first one minute there. So he greets me and he says,

- *I don't like that thought. Please change that thought. That thought is disturbing this beggar.*

(The thought was that) I didn't want to be at my place upstate. So he said,

- *This beggar is only happy when you're there.*

That was the first thing. He didn't have to ask me what the thought was. I knew what the thought was. This is how attuned he was. You couldn't pull any punches. There was absolutely no way.

So another time I remember, after Joan died, I was at the Ramana ashram the next year and, during lunch time, all these very, very attractive young German girls were kind of parading around. I thought, "Gee, maybe I should get remarried." The same evening we're down the town, Swami looks at me and says,

- *Oh, you want to get remarried.*
- *Oh no, no, Swami.*

It was like a cloud on a clear day, wafting through the air. No, no, no, no, no. It was like Boom, like Aah-h-h. So after that I tried to watch really my thoughts, not to have those kinds of thoughts. Really, he knew. I mean he just knew.

And there's some funny stories. There was a guy who was a plastic surgeon and his wife from Texas. Actually it was up on the hill, and I met them at Ammichi's and then I met them at Tiruvannamalai

again. I saw them up on the hill wandering around, so they said,

- *Hey, isn't there some yogi down in town?*

So I'm thinking, "Ah, I don't know." I really would have liked them to talk with him. So then I gave them the address and everything and we went down there to see Swami and he was busy. There were a lot of people. Swami said,

- *"I'm too busy to see you.*

And so then they said,

- *Oh, Will sent us.*

And he said,

- *Oh, Okay. Come back in an hour.*

So then he saw them for two hours. So the next day I go there and they say, "*Gee, we had,*" and then they saw Him the next day and they said, "*It was so wonderful, Thank you so much for sending me to see Swami.*" Then I went the next day and I walk in the door and five minutes later Swami says,

- *"Time to leave." [laughs]*

And I'm like, Oh no. What did I do? And that was really funny.

And there was another story. There was this guy named Tom Sawyer who's a friend of Richard and who's from D.C. He's a bit of a psychic nut. He's always a little on the very psychic side. He heard voices and he heard that Sai Baba didn't want him to work anymore. Since then he's just been a lazy bastard. But he's really psychic, and he does have some insights and all that. So he went down to see Yogi Ramsuratkumar, and Swami came to the gate and he took one look at him and says,

- *I'm sorry. It's not possible for me to see you.*

He was turning away, and he said,

- *But I know Will.*

This thought came to him very quickly. And Swami says,

- *Oh, you know Will, Okay, come in.*

(Swami) gave him a two-hour interview. (He) said it was the best two hours of his life.

So then there's another story. A couple from California went down, and again, that little vestibule was totally full of people. And these people, I forget their names, I met them at Ammachi's. So anyway they came to the door and Swami said,

- *Oh, I'm sorry. It's all booked up,*

and so Swami talked to them for half an hour at the gate. He didn't ever open the gate. He talked to them; he gave them an interview for half an hour and kept everybody else waiting. ...

Then this story where somebody came and... they said, "somebody came from such-and-such, someplace or other in America". Swami said,

- *Do you know Will?*

And they said no, and he said

- *Sorry, you shouldn't be here.*

So, anyway...but I thought, “well, at least I’m lucky, Swami remembers who I am.” It's really nice if the guru can remember you. That's really a great blessing!

*

I met him actually in '73. That was the first time I met him. But he claimed me in '71. Because we all went,

- *Swami, we didn't meet till '73.*

He said,

- *No, no, we met in '71.*

Because Caylor went to talk to Swami about us, and that was the end of '71. But Swami already knew who we were. So it was '71. He always just said it was '71, and he wouldn't take '73 for an answer. By my book, by my calendar he was not interested in all that, it was '71.

*

- **Interviewer:** There was another saint who used to come down to see him, from Brindivan ?

- **Will:** Sri Pad. P-a-d. And he was a saint up there in Brindivan²⁰. I never met him. I went to his ashram, he was out some place or else. But anyway, he came down to Tiru, and I knew of somebody who was his disciple, and he said every time he came to Tiru he saw Swami and they would walk around the hill together, and he said whenever he walked with Swami it was always like he was walking in a different world, because you're just in a different consciousness. And somebody sent me e-mail, maybe Veronica. There's a lady named Veronica Schwartz, she lives in Fairfield and she was a Maharishi person. But she lived in India for a while, ten or twelve years. She spent a couple of years in Tiruvannamalai, and she had this boyfriend who was like a stellar yogi. He (was) for five years at Ammachi's. He used to go up to Virupaksha cave, and he would have himself locked in the Virupaksha cave for fifteen hours a day. His name was Bernard. Even Ammachi said, when she first met him, she said, "*Give me ten people like Bernard and (I'll do) the rest.*" Anyway, so she went down and she used to say that sometimes she'd have a

²⁰ We think that the word was not well understood or transcribed. It must be Vrindavan.

big fight with Bernard. So one time she went down to Swami, and Swami said, *"Hold your ground, and don't give in every time. You have a right to disagree. You have a right to (have) your opinion. He's not always right."* Then somebody asked Ammachi, this Bernard guy used to come back and forth from Tiruvannamalai to Ammachi's ashram. So he asked her about seeing Yogi Ramsuratkumar, and she said, *"Go as often as you can to see him. Spend as much time as you can."* So, he was very, very impressed, you know. She was very impressed by this, who he was and what he was about.

*

When we were with Swami, when we were hanging out, I was spending all that time with Him. We lived in India from '73 until '75, a year and that's when we spent most of the time with Swami. And I remember once, we were by the railway station, where the farmer's field is, and this man came and Swami was off someplace or other, and so we talked to this man for about an hour, because Swami went to this woman's house. This man, he worked for *All India Railways*, and he was like a union representative. So

he said every year they would always had their conferences, they'd make a note to have a conference in some holy place; they'd have a pilgrimage at the same time. They're pretty clever. So he'd seen almost all the saints in India, and he liked Swami the best because he thought he was the most carefree and the most joyous happy. And this was a very intense country. And he said whenever he went to the gurus he never asked for anything. He always made it a point never to ask for anything specific. So he went and only asked for their grace. Please just give him their grace. And he had two sons; they were both in university in the States, one at Purdue and one some place else. And he didn't have to pay for any of it. They paid everything. So, at any rate, there was a lot of wisdom in this guy. And so I thought that was a very good (person), he said he'd been to place on the railway line. So he always liked Swami the very best. He said he was the most happy and carefree. And Swami said,

- *Well, what can this beggar do for you?*

and he would just say,

- *Give me your grace, Swami, that's all I want, is your grace.*

And that's the smart thing. When you go to these saints' you gotta know how to praise, and so.

There was a story ... there was a guy named David Rothman, very, very smart guy, a very very successful lawyer in Francisco. But anyway, he went to see Swami, and there was a group of people at the time we went, and they were seeing Swami. So Swami went around the room and asked everybody what they want. And everybody said, I want this and that, and this guy said,

- *"I just want whatever you want to give me."*

And Swami says,

- *All right.*

He says,

- *I'll make all your decisions for you.*

That's pretty smart. [*laughs*] So, he was a lawyer, your classic always making decisions... So anyway, this guy is really wealthy. He'd come to the city, he'd usually come to New York. So his daughter took over his apartment and he moved to Lake Tahoe for tax purposes. (It's) across the line in Nevada, so he

doesn't have to pay California taxes. And also his firm, where he was a full partner, he resigned, and he got a big severance from them. Plus they said we'll keep you on retainer for fifty thousand a year, as a consulting attorney. We want to pick your brain. And he was a mediation attorney. So then, he and three other guys, formed like a mediation Company of their own, and they were real, real successful. He'd come and he'd only stay at the Plaza in New York. That's four hundred a night. But that was back in the old days. That was in the '80s. He would come to Hilda's class and he would take my wife and I out to dinner sometimes, we'd come over to the Plaza. Of course I never had a suit coat or anything, and he'd say, "Oh, I don't have an extra suit coat so but there's some in the dining room. You can't go in without a suit coat." But...

(Here a page is missing, page 16 of this side of the tape)

Every time we went to see Him, Joan and I were there, and Him, and a new person would come, He would instantly get up and walk, either run away, literally run, not really fast but, or He'd do a very,

very quick walk...Usually, you blink and He was gone. In any direction. But He was just out of there. He explained this once; because, he said, he always had to make an adjustment for that third person, for that what'd I say? Let's say, if the three, you and I and Swami were sitting together, and X comes there. Well, Swami would then get up and leave but he'd come back ten minutes later and he would sit, because he had made the adjustment. Because if he didn't make the adjustment he said he couldn't be there. And then he would always say, it's this *beggar's madness*. And you could not change the subject on Him. Let's say, if you were talking to Swami on a certain subject, you couldn't just jump over to another subject. Caylor used to do that, and Swami would yell at him. He'd say it was like derailing a freight train. He had so much momentum that the energy going in that direction, you just can't jump over here. He would make that point over and over again to Caylor: please don't do that to Him. That was just not the way He operated. You had to play by *his* rules, and his rules were: you stayed on that subject until that subject was over. Then, perhaps, after there was an interval, you could introduce another subject. But you just couldn't go jumping around.

...

Swami was a very complicated being. You are not dealing with a simple thing, you're dealing with somebody who is highly, highly complex and light years out, and we can't even fathom it so. There's just, like, endless ramifications about; every time you cross a line, you knew you crossed a line [laughs]. He let you know very quickly that you crossed the line, and BOOM, that was it. And once you got the correction, you made the adjustment. But, that was His rules. And every time, and no matter who it was, it wouldn't matter if this person knows Swami for twenty years came and sat down again, He would jump up and run away. Didn't matter. Just because He said He had to make an adjustment.

And I remember Hilda came. She went to Sai Baba's and then she came back (in 1978). Hilda, Shanti, and Vali came back, and she wanted to have some more conferences with Swami. Swami had us, "*Please tell her. Please come and see me before Hilda comes.*" So I went there. At normal times he would come out around eleven. Usually around eleven, before eleven, he was in his house, or he was at the temple. But he would come over to those stairs by the house and sit there. It wasn't before eleven. Anyway, I came over around quarter of eleven, and I was going to tell him, "Hilda's coming over around two." So I waited and

waited and waited and waited, and no Swami. So then, I think Perumal came, and I said, "*Oh, Perumal, I'm waiting for Swami. I want to tell him Hilda's coming at two.*" So I go back to the hotel. So Hilda says, "*Will, let's go right now.*" Now I can't argue with Hilda. She said, "*I saw Swami's face, which means he's telling me to come.*" So we get in front of his house. And just then Swami is walking by, coming back to his house from someplace. I don't know where he'd been. Anyway, then he goes, and then he looks at me and he says,

- *Can't you do anything right?*

And I'm like, Oh God! I'm between a rock and a hard place. And so Hilda said, "*I should go.*" I said, "*No, no, please, Hilda. Don't go. That'll make it worse.*" So then she comes, so we wait ten minutes in the rickshaw. Perumal was inside, and Perumal explained that I'd been waiting for hours and hours and hours and hours but he never showed. So then he came out and he says,

- *Oh, I'm so sorry.*

He says,

- *Please excuse this beggar's manners, Hilda. Please come in.*

and he says,

- *So sorry. My mistake. This beggar's madness.*

And that was a big relief. But I thought, 'Oh, man, I'm cooked!' 'Cause he was like, really like, Whoa!

So the whole thing with these people, their quality of being, it makes you be absolutely on your toes, I mean absolutely. You have to be at peak performance or else you get squashed like a bug. But that's pretty much, and it makes you feel very alive and very concentrated and very one-pointed. You're not just hanging out. This one of Hilda's kids came. He was like a hanger-outer, and Swami came the first day and he said, "oh"; he wanted to just come and hang out with Swami for three months. And Swami just looked at him and after about an hour he said,

- *Well, we've met. You don't have to come back any more.*

And that was it.

He would never say, "Time to leave," he would always say, "*This beggar will take leave,*" which means, "time to go." But in no uncertain terms. And he was very strict.

There was a lady who came from Ammachi, some Russian-Jewish woman, but she's a bit nutty. I think she came to the ashram and she came down, I think when Swami had his house over on, remember when he had darshan, he had darshan at that house, where he lived, for a year, couple years... Sudhama House, Sudhami sisters, whatever²¹. So she went over there, and apparently Swami told her to sit, here. And, she didn't listen. So she got up, he said, "*Please sit here,*" and he pointed right there. She sat there, then she got up and she wanted to ask a question, so she marched right over to Ma Devaki and she said, "*I wanna ask Swami a question.*" So she was again directed to sit down and return to her seat, which she did. A few minutes later, she got up again, to come over again to ask Ma Devaki she had some question for Yogi Ramsuratkumar. And at that point, Swami said that he would be leaving her now. And in no uncertain terms. She was not smart enough to follow the protocol. How hard is it? You come to see a master, they ask you to do something simple. She couldn't follow it.

²¹ Sudama. Sudama sisters.

Then there was several times when people would come, and Swami, especially when he was sitting up on that little platform up there, he would tell people, "*You sit here,*" and he would guide them. He would physically come over and put them here and say, "*You sit here. You sit here. You sit here, and you sit here.*" He would guide everybody where he wanted you to sit. And a lot of times he was very funny, because at night, he had a little candle, but the candle was always away from him, so it was hard to see his face. All you could see was the glow of his cigarette. And that light was so he could see the faces. And I remember several times people coming and them just constantly getting up, and constantly wanting to change seats, and Swami would get up and often physically back and put them in their seat and say, "*This is your seat. Right here. Please don't leave it.*" And sometimes they still didn't get it. He didn't actually dismiss anybody, but when he wanted you to sit, that's where he wanted you to sit. You had no choice in that matter. And it wasn't up for discussion.

[end of tape]

MEETINGS WITH YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR

[Tape 3, face B missing]

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

[Tape 4, Side A]

We begin with the text only where it concerns Yogi Ramsuratkumar.

...

Interviewer: Do you have any recollections of stories of Yogi Ramsuratkumar on Arunachala?

Will: There's a very funny story. There's this very, very gorgeous girl I met at Ammachi's, and she'd come to Tiruvannamalai, and she was wandering up on the hill, and it was a very hot part of the day. And Swami just appears out of nowhere and says,

- You shouldn't be in this hot sun. Take some shade. Go find some shade.

And then disappears.

And so Perumal used to tell me that he and Swami used to walk around the hill a lot, especially in the '50s. I mean, Swami came there in '59. And for a long part of that time Swami would just spend most of

his time up on the hill, and wandering around the hill and everything like that. And there are certainly all the pictures they were all taken up on the hill. And they would eat, they would camp out there, they would practically live on the hill, and then Perumal's wife would bring them up food and stuff like that. And so he kind of shied away from town, I think until later. And of course the temple was always one of his main spots, his main habitats. Sometimes we'd see him in the temple. Maybe we'd just spend the whole day with him, and then maybe we'd go back later, and then he'd be at the temple. And then, as soon as he'd see us in the temple grounds, he would just look up, he'd grab all his stuff and just, run. And then I'd ask him about that and he always said he had to always constantly make adjustments, and so he was doing' something then. That work couldn't be interfered with. So then he'd have to go out and make an adjustment. But especially the temple. He always said the temple was, like, where he ... before the ashram was there, where he kind of did most of his work. Because there's a large grounds, you have twenty-five square acres there, and there's a lot of places, little niches you can hide and not be noticed and not have anybody bother you or anything like this. And so I think he did a lot of his, like his kind of cosmic work, and that was like his work area. And so when people saw him, he wasn't really keen on having a conversation or having

any social interaction at that point. I mean that was as far as I could figure it out.

- *Interviewer: He would go to specific places up on Arunachala?*

- *Will: He just kind of wandered around a lot, and... oh, somebody just sent me this ...oh, Bharatiya sent me ... she used to be Bernard's girlfriend. She sent me this email, and apparently there's this one story of Swami sending some guy (who) came to see him and, he asked, "what should I do?" And Swami said, "Oh, go for a walk around the hill." But the guy got on an inner path and went by someplace, really close to the mountain, and he came, he said there was some, like, newspapers around there and stuff like that, and there were some kind of habitations that he didn't see anybody around, but he just figured somebody must be living there. And so he came back to see Swami and said,*

- *Hey, you know, I had this interesting experience. I came upon this cave that looked like it was inhabited because of newspapers and everything.*

And (Swami) says,

- Oh yeah, there's some yogi there. He's seven hundred and some years old...He says, You know, we shouldn't bother those kinds of people anyway.

There's various stories that somebody came and once asked him, very specifically, about, Arunachala being, quote, "a holy mountain." Oh, he said, it didn't matter this hill or that hill, that they're all the same. But that was the story he gave to somebody else... But then again, I remember sometimes people would come. There was one guy, who used to come from Vellore, or someplace around there, who was a loony guy. I never met him. Anyway, he would go and he would always make a pilgrimage to the top of the mountain, and he would always come to Swami first to get a blessing before he did this. And Swami would be really concentrating his whole day on whether that guy made it or not, or what he was. And then, be relieved when the guy came down and then gave him a report of what happened and what he experienced and everything like that. But I never went to the top of the mountain... I know Caylor's been to the top many times, of the mountain. I've never been to the top. It's too much strain to go over there and too much walking, and I've never known the way and there are certain paths you have to come to go up there. I've

never done it...Did we have to go **on** the mountain?
No, no. We were always just down in town...

Sometimes Swami asked me specifically to go around the hill. So then sometimes I'd cheat and have to take a rickshaw or ride a bike. *[laughs]* So, I said,

- *"Swami, I went around the hill but I got a bike to go on."*

He says,

- *"All right. You went around the hill. That's enough."*

But he would make a specific request. Because sometimes I'd be really out of it, or really tired, or whatever, I'd just say, I'd get a rickshaw and take it around the hill and say, *"Well, I've been around the hill."* *[laughing]*

... after this, the conversation goes on others ashrams and saints in Tiruvannamalai ... Vilananda, Pundiswami ... Let us take just the interesting passages :

... And that was the big thing Swami kept saying, that once you go beyond body consciousness, identification with the body, then you've gotten someplace. Other than that, you don't have anything. Ultimate freedom is to be beyond body consciousness.... Swami was very much of that thing. Once you went beyond body consciousness ... He didn't really say these things, he just kind of hinted. He never had a teaching per se. Well, he did. He actually had a main teaching. His main teaching was ... every time we came to see him initially, and everybody who came, he usually gave them the same advice and it was always the same, "*Find your master. Serve them well...*" That was it. That was it. But (when) you think about it, that was pretty solid. There is no bullshit in there. It's all real simple, and he seemed to think, and it was his opinion that you couldn't do it by yourself, that that was delusional. You could not, because as Ramana kept saying, is the ego going to turn himself – is the thief going to turn himself into the police? Of course not. The ego wants to keep stealing. The ego wants to keep surviving, so it does all this crazy stuff...

The conversation continues on Pundiswami, then about some Sadhu Om :

... And then we'd come down and see Swami, and we'd ask him about Pundiswami. And he said he hadn't been, but he thought there was something there from Pundiswami. He said, "This beggar feels that there's something there." And sometimes, Swami wasn't very specific about things, but he kind of gave you a hint that it was okay, you know. We're in town, we'd go there. And there was another place that he used to send people to. When Aruna was there, she was this French lady who lived in Tiru since '69 - she died recently, a couple years ago, about two years ago. She used to go down and see Swami, and she was in kind of a bad element. There was this guy who was teaching Tamil, kind of classical Tamil, and he was this called Sadhu Om, and he has this place as you go down to Swami's, there's a little samadhi there at Sadhu Om's place. They serve meals for foreigners, and stuff like that. He was very jealous of Yogi Ramsuratkumar. He used to really badmouth him, and after that, Aruna - her name was Alaheinz (?) got kind of poisoned, but Swami used to tell her, go down to Haji's tomb.

Now the conversation goes on Hajii's tomb...

... Once, Swami met somebody there, and they went in the tomb. They went in the tomb together. And Swami liked that place ... He always said that place is very powerful, and he told Aruna not to go there too much because, you know, you might have a stray thought that you didn't accidentally intend to think but it could still be fulfilled, because it might be subconscious or something...

Then Will speaks of Narikutti Swami and his master Yogaswamigal from Ceylon etc... we skip it.

In Tiruvannamalai, it's like a ... that whole energy is very unforgiving. It's very stark. It's very demanding, very, there's not softness there. It's all kind of harsh, harshness, a strictness, maybe that's the thought-form of the yogis. There's no fooling around. You should attend to the business there, with your meditation and all that stuff. But that was always my experience, and then I'd talk to other people, who had been there for a long, long time, and they would all concur that that was pretty much ... high vibrations. Of course, when Joan and I were there with Swami, we had nothing but when you get that kind of personal attention, it takes you into another dimension. You know, it's not the harshness of somebody who's loving and compassionate and sweet and hilarious. You just feel like you're on top of your game. But other than that, I

found Tiru to be a very harsh place. And without Swami there, ameliorating circumstances there ...

I remember Richard and I went to see that Lakshman, that guru next door, the guy in the fancy house with the satellite dish on his house Lakshman and Saradha. Just the next door of the Ashram... If you're facing toward the hill on the ashram, they're on the left side. You go down and there's a row of houses, it's the big, fanciest house down there ...

Afterwards, Will speaks of other people, and of some Daskalos from Cyprus to whom Will went, and who said,

(looking at) a picture of (Satya) Sai Baba,

- *One big hang-up. He wants adoration, and it's like living in a gilded cage.*

Looking at Ammachi picture, he says,

- *Now. This is how everybody should be.*

Then he looked at Yogi Ramsuratkumar's picture:

- *Oh, he's merged with the Father."*

MEETINGS WITH YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR

Then he continues to speak about Daskalos... a part that we skip.

[end of tape]

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

Tape 4 side B

The conversation continues, speaking of Daskalos ...

Then :

- **Interviewer:** Speaking of things that may be considered miraculous, do you have any stories you want to relate about Yogi Ramsuratkumar and things that might be labelled miracles?

- **Will:** Well, there was one story. I didn't hear this first-hand; I heard it second or third-hand. But anyway, some couple came, and they had a young kid, and the kid was born with a club foot. So they bought it down, in the first week after the birth. And Swami rubbed both legs for about a half-an-hour. A year later they came back and they said they couldn't remember which leg was bad. And I remember a lot of times he would stroke my arms, sometimes he would sit there and stroke my arms fifteen or twenty minutes. I felt like a different person when I left, each time. When he put that energy, it was like he was rearranging every atom in my being. And I was very lucky, because, the last years, when I went in the '90s, every time he used to start stroking the arm, and things like this, and ... I don't know how to call these experiences, but they're the best kind of miracles, because they're not outward,

they're kind of inward, it just felt like, more kind of using his delight and transforming the vibrational, who you are into something much more refined. But each time, I remember going there and feeling...

Usually I'd go Ammachi and I'd had some nice experience, and then I'd go to see Swami and it was like the whole experience was tweaked(?) way out. Then I'd feel like, completely different after I walked out of there. I mean really just a few days. I'll be there three or four days. And I felt completely, completely different. Everything with him was so subtle. And I remember asking him about him sitting in the big hall and what was happening in there, and he said he wanted to create an atmosphere so even the densest person could feel something in the air, so that's what he worked, he worked, a couple years just sitting there every day. And he was working to just purify that atmosphere, and bring that vibration to such a high, high, high state that even the most densest person on earth could walk in there and feel that, hey, there's something there that's, that's beyond me.

And that's what he did...Because he was working with these elemental forces and blessing that place with such a power, absolutely astounding. And I'd really like to go there with a real, real super good, clairvoyant and have them see really what they saw,

what their take on the place was, because every time I go there I'd just feel more familiar with the place, that he's left something there; to have something that's like a transformative vibration. And all you have to do is walk into it and stay there for a while and be open, and something will happen to you. But to me that's the great miracle, not pulling something out of a hat or materializing something, like Sai Baba, is to me extraneous. There's no point to it. You see it once all right, it blows your mind. But after that, what's the point? Are you transformed? No, it's a trap.

After some words on some other people, the transcription stops, at page 4. The rest is missing...

Excerpts from missing parts

1) ***p. 3 and for of some face of some tape. Only the pages 1 and 2 for this face are missing (tape was spoiled and was stopped).***

- ***Interviewer:*** Was the light on?

- ***Will:*** No, there was no lights in there. Usually we just had a candle going.

- ***Interviewer:*** This was before the pumped up kerosene lanterna...

- ***Will:*** Yeah, yeah., That was just a rare thing. Some big group would come and he'd only ordered that for one night, but there was some group, about twenty people.

- ***Interviewer:*** You'd lay down and he'd still keep talking?

- ***Will:*** Yeah. Or sometimes he was silent, but always something. Swami always looked like he was real, real busy doing something. Like he was really

busy. Sometimes his eyes closed and just you could almost see him doing stuff. Even though he was silent. And then you'd wait. We'd never kind of disturb him, because we knew he looked like he was really busy. So, it wasn't our place to interfere with that... When he (seemed) relaxed a little more, then we could bring up whatever we wanted to talk about or issues and it really wasn't ever personal stuff. I never really asked him much personal because I didn't think it was important. But just like, more kind of interested in that overview of things, how he thought things worked. This is the smartest man I have ever, the most aware man I have ever talked to in my whole life. I mean, we were talking; I mean, I had a three years of graduate work in political science, history, all this stuff, economics, whatever. And he knew more about politics than anybody I ever talked to in my life. I mean, he just knew. He said he knew he was behind all the bad stuff that was going on in the world. He knew who was... we talked about China, we talked about everything. He knew just the intricacies of all these governments, and how they worked and who was in charge, and all that. He was absolutely astounding, completely astounding in how much he really knew. And there was just never any end to it. He knew, you know... At that time the DMK party was a coalition, and that Karunanidhi was the head of it. But there was a coalition of the Christian, kind of

fundamentalist preachers, who were down there to convert those heathen Indians into Christians, and supposedly that was like a back door for the CIA to get in there, to do all that stuff. They used those Christian missionaries to do a lot of their spy work. And Caylor had actually met a couple guys; one guy in particular was a spy. He said he was army intelligence, and he was coming around to just nose around South India and stuff like that. The guy is a spiritual seeker. But he told Caylor out-and-out, he was, army intelligence. And you get a lot of things like that. So Swami was always a little wary about these Christian things. He thought they made a coalition because the DMK was the outcast, and the Christians and the Muslims, that was kind of a very shaky political thing. But they all hated the Hindus, so they would do anything to get back at the Hindus, to get revenge on the Hindus. So he was always very leery about that whole party, that whole concept, and to what lengths they would go to, to stoop to take advantage of people, to threaten people.

[rest of tape is empty, because it was spoiled]

2) page 4 or some face of some tape

...was sitting there, and Hilda always told her never, ever to let on what she was thinking, or ever show any kind of emotion. But when she came to Yogi Ramsuratkumar, she sat before him and her mouth just like dropped. She was just staring at him. Hilda kept saying,

- *What do you see, Vali? What do you see?*

And she kept saying,

- *Light.*

So she was really impressed. So, anyway, she said,

- *How big is the aura?*

And she says,

- *Well, it goes from horizon to horizon.*

So she was really impressed.

If Hilda said: “he was good, he was good.” Hilda is a yogi herself, really advanced. Her experiences were just nothing short of miraculous. She was meditating five hours a day. Oh, I started this very funny story. Hilda had written, well, actually this guy had shown, when we lived in, we went away from Tapovanam, we went to Madras for about seven or eight months at Theosophical Society. During that time Caylor had gotten involved with some kind of guy who was claiming to be enlightened and he was really just a goddamned black magician. But anyway, so we all got kind of drawn into this. So this guy wanted to get some LSD and he thought that LSD was the key to enlightenment. So we all kind of, involved in that, and anyway, he had kind of designs on my wife, this guy. Anyway, so he split us up. We were gone for about four months. She's gone. She went to live with him. And so I went to Tiruvannamalai, and I thought I was going crazy. I thought about killing myself. And then I went to see Swami, and I wrote him a letter and he sent me a telegram: Come if you think some help is here. And so I went there, and I thought I was just going out of my mind because I hadn't slept for days, I hadn't eaten for days, and he just took both of my hands, he held both of my hands, just like this, his hands over my hands together. And I was totally normal after that. And then, he just told me to be quiet. Silence is the greatest power. Don't think about

anything. Don't worry. Just don't think about anything. Just, in silence is the greatest power. So then, within about a month, Joan came back. I said,

- *Should I write a letter?*
- *No, no, all we need is silence.*

He really is a great master. In the meantime, I had gotten myself this little, it was little... I had my doubts. So I wrote Hilda a letter. So then Hilda wrote me a response, and then Swami

3) Pages 17 and 17 of some face of some tape

- **Interviewer:** And then?

- **Will:** I don't know. It's curious to see what they look like...

- **Interviewer:** And they came down just recently, when he was very ill?

- **Will:** Yeah. Yeah. That was just before, a couple months before he died, they came down. But he sent them very quickly back. He sent them pretty quick. I don't know if it was to Anandashram. But that was usually where he sent people. And it was very funny because he always used to send Kirsti up there.

She shouldn't be thinking, "Oh, Swami's my guru..." She'd come down and she'd say, "Oh, time to go to Anandashram" *[laughing]* The other one, the other lady, the Spanish lady, Rosario? He also sent her to Anandashram. Once she came with her sister, and her sister is from Spain. So anyway, every time Kirsti would come, Swami would say,

- *Kirsti, don't you ever want to go back to Finland?*
- *No!*
- *But (are there not people who) miss you in Finland?*
- *No.*

He was pretty funny.

- **Interviewer:** Do you have any recollections of Yogi Ramsuratkumar talking about Papa Ramdas, outside of his reference to his Father?

- **Will:** Well-yeah, I remember he told some stories about Ramdas, Papa Ramdas. He was there on the ashram... Whenever he got a picture of Papa Ramdas, he would just end up staring at it for hours and hours and hours and hours. And then when Hilda came, she said a very interesting thing. She said,

- *Will, you want to know something? she says. He is standing on Papa Ramdas' shoulders. He's way, way, way, way beyond Papa Ramdas.*

And, also you have to say: realization isn't a fixed realization. It's not like that. It's not like an end game. It's like this infinite consciousness, infinite being. And that's what I heard him, when I was on this LSD trip. I say, "Ah, (it's) helping, is it?" and the voice came, it said, "As far as you can go, as much as you can take." So, she said there is infinity... You go to the next level and the next level and the next and next, next, next, next, next. And so it's just constantly going.

- *Interviewer*: Did he talk about things such as receiving the mantra from Papa Ramdas, or anything along those lines?

- *Will*: Well, we just talked about, generally. He always just said he thought the name of Ram was enough. That's all you had to do. And he would say, if anybody chants the name of Ram, that's enough. And he didn't put down anything, but he just said that chanting Ramnam was all that somebody could do. And then he told me about etheric markers; he said that, like that name of Ram has been repeated so many times, it's like, in the air. He said - I mean, basically, what I figured out - he said, his work is in the air. And Hilda actually confirmed that, too. She said,

MEETINGS WITH YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR

- Will, he's really not working on this plane, he's working in the air and he's like all the ethereal

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN

**3) *Other missing parts but used in the book
"Under the Punnai Tree":***

Gnanananda had just passed. That was the time we were spending twenty-four hours a day with Swami, and we were walking down the street when a car stopped. There was a twenty-minute conversation that happened and Swami turned to us and told us to get in the car. Next thing we know, we're in Tapovanum²²! We had a room there, and Swami stayed in the room with us, but then after a while he was sleeping on the veranda. At one point he seemed to get annoyed, and finally he said we should clear out - he said he couldn't juggle two things at the same time. So then we decided to go to the Theosophical Society in Madras.

We never met Gnanananda Giri. He had just passed his body, and that's why his disciples were coming to get Swami-because Swami used to go there, and every time he would come to Tapovanum, Gnanananda would call him and say, "Spend one more day." Sometimes it would be weeks, weeks, weeks, weeks, and he'd want to get out of there. So then, he would just sneak out!

²² Tapovanam

But while we were there, right after Gnanananda died, everybody was vacating the ashram. They were all going back to their native places. The devotees were concerned because everybody was abandoning ship, so they had him come as kind of a stopgap measure. They were sweet people, and Swami said to everyone,

- *"No, no, no. Gnanananda Giri is still here. He's still here. Don't leave. Don't go. This is your place. You've been here twenty, thirty years. Why are you going back to Delhi or Bombay or whatever?"*

And so he told everybody not to leave, but he changed the format. Gnanananda was very, very strict. They never sang bhajans. They did have the (Vedic) chanting mantras, in a certain meter, in an almost martial style. Swami was singing, and he got them to sing bhajans every morning at four o'clock when they woke up. He'd then tell them to put in more melody; they didn't have to be so rigid.

*

“Swami did give us food training, just to be around him every day and to be always thinking of how could we serve him: what exactly is he going to need next?”

How are we going to respond? There was always an anticipation of what would be the next thing he would want.

Hilda used to say: “Will and Joan are the only ones who show me the proper respect. They know what the proper respect is, and the rest of you don’t have a clue.” They argued with her. They had differences of opinion. I always said what I thought but I never challenged her, like, “You’re wrong.” But people did all the time. They just didn’t have any idea that when you were around somebody who has that wisdom and intelligence – that level of awareness – you’re not in a position to argue with them. You shouldn’t be in a position to argue with them, anyway; it shows your stupidity, your egotism, your grossness. It’s not something you should be proud of! You should be really humble about your own stupidity. I found that quite the contrary with some people’s actions around saints.

*

I remember a lot of times we would go and buy big bags of puffed rice for Swami. It was very funny because Swami was staying at one of the little shops that closed at night, and he carried this bag of rice around. There was a little mouse that came every

night to get the puffed rice, and Swami just laughed. That was so cute, this little mouse. Anybody else would have freaked out with a mouse eating from their food, but he would just say,

- *Oh, we have a visitor, now.*

He never made a big thing out of it. Oftentimes we brought out our little blankets and we just laid down on the concrete there with him, with just a candle going. We never fell asleep, though.

*

Everything I got from Swami was always Prasad. It was his way of sharing on a material plane – always kind of fun and very loving and giving. I never took it lightly; I just always felt this was a great blessing from him. He didn't have to do any of it. We were just lucky to be there and to be on the receiving end. The fans he gave me were the greatest gifts. I don't let anyone touch them. He just said,

- *You can have these fans. Would you like these fans?*

But the greatest gift, I think, is not any physical Prasad but the gift of consciousness – his blessing. That's the greatest gift.

*

At that time I didn't really believe it, but now I see that people from Russia are coming to India like crazy. Swami was kind of a visionary into the future, and now I can see that it's possible, not through him directly but through his disciples, that some change in consciousness will happen just because of his name. People have a contact, or they experience something to perpetuate who he was in the body by transforming their normal being around his model – not in the sense of becoming who he was, but just to take what he has given and add that into their mix. That would be a good key for personal transformation as well as for transforming the earth, because he said that if you're in this for personal transformation, it's not enough. That's just too limited. Too selfish.

The real work of devotees is to transform the earth – to take this vibration that he has given and then try to project that out. I have my own personal way of tuning to his vibration – who he was and what he was about – and then trying to project that out. Transformation, that's what the whole think is about.

It's not me personally taking liberation for myself. It's long term meditation, long-term prayer, long-term spiritual practice. He has been the vehicle of transformation, and he always said that if people would chant "Yogi Ramsuratkumar", then they could tune in to who he was on some level, and that would be transformational – a vibrational transmission.

*

What's remarkable about these beings like Yogi Ramsuratkumar is the amount of light that their body has to sustain and can sustain without going out of consciousness – into samadhi or something like that – and still be functional on earth.

*

He was very adamant that the name Ram is all you need, but he wasn't pushing anything down anybody's throat. He always said he tried to go to the path of whoever came to him. If they wanted to come and talk about Marx, he talked about Marx. He didn't divert their path, he only tried to go with what they were interested in. He was very flexible that way. Once Joan and I were out in the field with him and we were asking,

- *Why are saint incarnated in India, particularly?*
- *Well, he said, in this yuga India has always been the playground of the saints because where else in the world, even though you're a nobody, with nothing, will they give you food and shelter and honor you and revere you? There's not other country in the world."*

He said that's why the saints always incarnate, take birth in India. In this country or in Russia they would be locked up in some mental institution – treated like freaks. He also said that there was a lot of persecution of the saints, especially in the Middle Ages in Europe. He said that's why the saints love to come to India and keep incarnating there over and over and over again, because that reverence is always there for them.

*

Swami had one love. It was lemons. He loved lemons. We call them limes. So whenever I went to the bazaar to get (something for him), it wouldn't be flowers, it would be lemons, because every time anybody came, he always gave them a lemon. I have so many dried-out lemons that he gave me – all gifts from him! I never ate them, I kept them and they just shrank and

shrank. Any time I would bring lemons, he always had a big smile on his face, like I knew what he wanted.

Once I went to Ammachi's ashram, and I knew I was going to see Swami in Tiruvannamalai, so I bought a lemon and took it to her. Ammachi was giving darshan and I said: "Could you bless this for Yogi Ramsuratkumar?" She took the lemon, closed her hand around it, and then she gave it to me; I had never seen her do this before.

Swami was at Sudama house, and I came up for darshan in a long queue. At the time Swami's hearing was really bad. For a couple of years he had a hard time hearing everybody, and then it got better. His hearing became normal again. So, I brought this lemon from Ammachi and put it directly into Swami's hand. His eyes got really bright, and then he started smelling it, taking deep breaths even – just relishing it, you could tell. He didn't say a word.

Then a big smile came over his face. I said to Ma Devaki, "*Tell him this lemon is from Mata Amritanandamayi.*" She got the name wrong and Swami said, "*Ammachi!*" He looked over with a big smile and he said,

- *Oh, Will's brought this beggar something very fine.*

Big smile! He just kept sniffing at it, smelling it. He totally ignored everybody else and was just sniffing this lemon for a long time; every time he sniffed he had this big smile on his face. Then, he walked up and down. At that time when he was giving darshan he would pace up and down, with the people on either side. Every time he walked past me he had this beautiful, big broad smile because I'd brought him something nice.

*

He told us why the scriptures were being interfered with. He said that in the old days the scriptures were in the air, and all you had to do was be silent and you could tune in to the scriptures and "hear" them. He could feel it, he could live it. But now there is electromagnetic interference from the TVs, from the radios, from the short waves, the cellphones, from all the static we're putting in the air electronically, and it's interfering with the scriptures – it's a big impediment. He says that's why the dharma is falling, because people can no longer hear the scriptures when they are quiet.

He said that, because of nationalism and the new global consciousness, there had to be a new reality, a new set of scriptures for the behaviour of nations, not just for people. He thought that was a very important thing that has to be done, but he didn't ever say how, or when, or where this was going to come. Once he made a comment to somebody from Hilda's group,

- *Your satellites are interfering with this beggar's work.*

He was so sensitive that he could feel what the influence of the satellites was and what they were up to.

*

He would do this every day (peering at the Sun through a crack between his fingers). He was connected with the sun. The central Sun – the light behind the whole universe. That's the energy he worked with, for hours on end. He was murmuring, not a prayer, but repetitions – a mantra, or something. It was just like he was communicating with something.

Once a devotee came back from seeing Sri Shankaracharya of Kanchipuram. He said that the

Sankaracharya said “*Do you go to see Yogi Ramsuratkumar?*” The devotee said, yes, then the Shankaracharya said:

- *Next time you come, you bring Yogi Ramsuratkumar!*

Then he said,

- *Oh, he belongs to the sun!*

The big Sun. I asked Hilda about that and she said: “That’s his path – light. His whole path is just light.”

*

4) Other missing parts.

Once we were walking down to go out to this field where we usually went. In South India, there are a lot of rice paddies with little dams between them, and those very thin dams are the path you walk on so that you don't spoil the crops. We are walking with Him, carrying our big burdens early in the morning, by the beautiful Mountain Arunachala. We weren't being so observant – we were so enamoured with the beauty of the mountains, the beauty of the fresh air, the beauty

of the crows and all the birds and everything. He stopped dead on the path, and Joan was in front and she hit right into him, and I hit into her. It was like the Marx Brothers. He really gave it to us for that. He said,

– *This beggar doesn't want you to think about any mantras. Don't think of any gurus. Don't even think of God. Be observant and do what he says to do.*

He said,

– *We have this work to do nicely and that's all you have to be concerned with.*

We really learned to be aware after that.

*

His awareness was really fantastic. Once a girl from Canada came to see Him. She was sitting opposite to Him, and Joan and I were sitting on the side, facing another direction. It was about midnight. In Tiruvannamalai, they have a lot of owls, and in the distance, in the direction that Joan and I could see, a little owl came and perched on a very, very far roof. It was there for about a minute and flew off. And the very next thing He said to the girl was,

– *Tell me, do you have owls in Canada?*

We were just astounded because we had been sitting there so quietly, and then we noticed the owl. He wasn't even facing in the same direction that we were. He would have had to see it out of the far, far corner of His eye, and yet it seemed as if He were giving this girl all of His attention.

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHA...

Will's last visit at the Ashram

It is in February 2004 that Will came for the last time to the Ashram. Later, this visit was narrated by Ma Vijayalakshmi in an article published in the Maha Kumbhabhishekam 2016 Special Issue of Saranagatam. We felt that it was necessary to reproduce it here.

Remembering Bhagavan

Ma Vijayalakshmi, Tiruvannamalai

Will Zulkowski had darshan of Bhagavan Yogi Ramsuratkumar in the early seventies and had been an ardent devotee since then. He and his wife Joan had spent memorable time, sometimes lasting months, with Bhagavan. They had become aware of his subtle spiritual influence on several planes. Whenever they came to him there were new lessons to be learnt and new dimensions of his personality revealed. When Will came to Tiruvannamalai in February 2004 he shared with us some of his experiences with Bhagavan.

Will and Joan had been students of Hilda Charlton, a spiritual teacher in New York. Hilda had spent several years in India under the guidance of her master Swami

Muktananda of Ganeshpuri and had attained a high spiritual state. Even before meeting Bhagawan Yogi Ramsuratkumar, Hilda had interacted with him on the subtle plane. She came to Tiruvannamalai in 1978 to have darshan of the "Hidden Saint" of India. Yogi Ramsuratkumar. Will was at the time in Tiruvannamalai and Bhagawan told Will that he must bring her straight to him, whatever the time might be. Hilda turned up at 11.30 p.m. Will took her to Bhagawan's abode at Sannadi Street. She came with 26 persons but Bhagawan permitted only seven persons to accompany her into his abode.

Hilda, on entering, touched the ground at Bhagawan's feet. Bhagawan said, "Is that necessary?" Hilda said, "Yes, it is necessary." Will recollected that Bhagawan gave some instructions to Hilda. While doing so, Bhagawan had poured such energy into it that Will felt his entire body tingle with the rush of energy. Such cascading energy that Will thought he would faint.

The other details of the meeting have already been written by Hilda herself and already republished in Saranagatham and so will not be repeated. There are however a few observations of Hilda which are very precious to us. Hilda said, "Other Yogis are on this plane but your Master (Yogi Ramsuratkumar) is on a

much much higher level. He is bringing cosmic energies and channeling them for our sake. Other saints bless devotees. Yogi Ramsuratkumar burns away our Karmas.... He takes on our Karmas."

Will recollected another incident, part funny, part tragic. There was one Shri Raman, a Hatha Yoga teacher, eighty years of age but fit as a forty year old-who had come to have darshan of Bhagawan. He used to fondly call Bhagawan "Old Fox." He had once written a letter to Bhagawan, addressing him, "My dear Old Fox"!

Bhagawan wrote a reply (This was in the early seventies when Bhagawan still wrote some letters) and signed himself "Old Fox"! Will's wife Joan was asked to carry the letter carefully, preferably inside a cover, upto the post Office. But she confidently carried the letter in her hand. The sweat in her hand put a hole in the letter. Yogi Ramsuratkumar was very angry. He said that the work can be done in a particular way only in that particular instance and if it is spoilt it cannot be rectified. He drew a circle around the hole and sent it.

Will also recollected the work of Bhagawan at the time of the Maha Samadhi of Swami Gnanananda Giri of Tapovanam. According to Will Bhagawan wanted

to go to Tapovanam on hearing about the Mahasamadhi of Swami Gnanananda Giri. Some persons travelling in a car offered a lift to Bhagawan to go to Tapovanam and he, together with Will and Joan, got into the car. On reaching the mutt at Tapovanam all three were given a room.

After a couple of days Bhagawan left the room and moved into the varandah. Thereafter he avoided Will and Joan altogether, and a few days later told them to clear out.

Will and Joan were bewildered and hurt and did not know what to make of situation, but they left.

They had to wait for five years to get the answer. Bhagawan clarified that he was working on the situation at Tapovanam and could not pay attention to Will and Joan.

Moreover, he said that their presence could not help the atmosphere.

Recollecting another aspect of Bhagawan, Will narrated a nasty experience. An old man had developed a strong enmity to Will and had practiced black magic which produced heavy negative effects on Will. He was off food for fifteen days and was in

a state of great confusion. He wrote about this to Bhagawan, who asked him to come to Tiruvannamalai.

When Will came to Bhagawan, he made Will sit next to himself and held his hand for an hour. Thereafter Will was completely free of the evil effects.

Narrating an incident concerning a Britisher, Will said that James Cairn came to have darshan of Bhagawan, probably in 1974. Bhagawan blessed him and said he would dedicate himself to India. The disdainful Britisher that he was, James dismissed it as "Poppy cock."

About two months later James met a woman spiritual leader from Andhra Pradesh, and for twelve years he became her ardent fan and follower. After her Maha Samadhi in 1986 James decided to continue in India. Now at a loose end, he advertised in the matrimonial columns, and married an Indian woman and is now father of 2 children. After all this he admitted how right Bhagawan was!

Will Zulkowski, an ardent devotee of Bhagawan wanted to come to Tiruvannamalai, sit down and write his experiences with Bhagawan but alas! Bhagawan had other plans for him. A few months after his visit

to the ashram we learnt he had passed away. A noble soul, steeped in Bhagawan's love, who would surely have enriched our lives with his writings, has left us, but surely Bhagawan has absorbed him as one very dear to him.

Glory to Yogi Ramsuratkumar

YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR BHAVAN