

Dr. Shuddhananda
Bharati

Ramana Maharshi

Shri Ramana Vijayam

Biography



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Editor's Notes

Ramana Maharshi

Here we have the opportunity to discover the writings of sage Shuddhananda Bharati and some fruits of his life in poetic form. Included are reflections and everyday words that resonate and vibrate within us, also keys for learning to know, learning to listen and feel the voice of our soul.

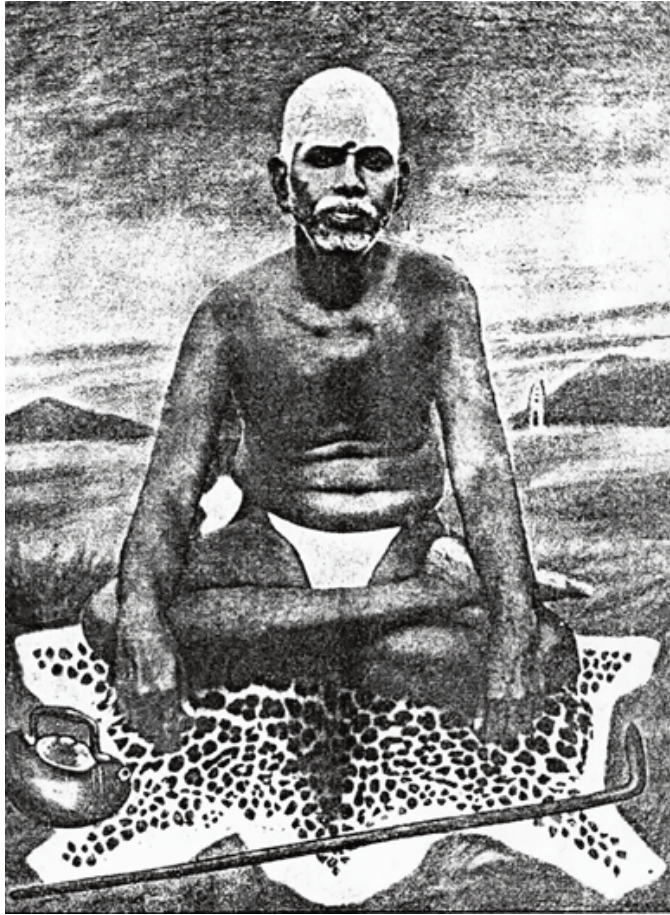
The clarity, peace and inner serenity found in this Divine Self help us to get through all the twists and turns of life. Shuddhananda Bharati expresses here the love to Ramana Maharshi, his friend.

A warm thank you to Savitri, Sindhu, Nivetha Velupur and M. Srinivasa Rao Nagaraja Kumar for their help for the beautiful translation and preparation of this book. They have, with their meticulous work, been able to help me to fully express the thoughts of Kavi Yogi Maharishi Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati about Ramana Maharshi.

It is a real pleasure for me to present *Ramana Maharshi* to you. Thank you, Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati, for having transmitted *Ramana Maharshi* to us.

With the blessing of *Aum Shuddha Shakti Aum*.

Christian Piaget



Ramana Maharshi

Worship the One who is the Tanmaya,
The Chinmaya,
And the representative of Shakti and Shiva;
Worship the One who is complete.

Courage!

*The night is through,
The chain of slavery
It is already broken –
I am full of courage!*

*Peace in the morning,
A golden sun rises
Like a lion, superhuman
To accomplish my dream.*

*A hopeful smile,
Docile as a child
Who plays in the infinite
With a fiery star.*

*My journey is over.
I enjoy time.
The universe is my nest
Of eternal spring.*

Song of Unity

*Unite. Unite, Unite, Oh Souls,
Unite and play your roles.
Unite in mind, unite in heart,
Unite in whole, unite in part.
Like words and tunes and sense in song,
Let East and West unite and live long.
Trees are many; the grove is one.
Branches are many; tree is one.
Shores are many; sea is one.
Limbs are many; body is one.
Bodies are many; self is one.
Stars are many; sky is one.
Flowers are many; honey is one.
Pages are many; book is one.
Thoughts are many; thinker is one.
Tastes are many; taster is one.
Actors are many; the drama is one.
Nations are many; the world is one.
Religions are many; Truth is one.
The wise are many; Wisdom is one.
Beings are many; breath is one.
Classes are many; college is one.
Find out this One behind the many.
Then life shall enjoy peaceful harmony.*

Peace Anthem

*Peace for all, peace for all.
For all the countries, peace.
Joy for all, joy for all.
For all the nations, joy.
A rosy morning peace,
A smiling summer joy (Peace for all).*

*All for each and each for all:
This is the golden rule.
Life and Light and Love for all,
For all that lives our love (Peace for all).*

*Work and food and clothes for all.
Equal status for all.
Health and home and school for all.
A happy world for all (Peace for all).*

*No idle rich, no more beggars;
All are equal workers.
No more tears, no more fears;
The heart is full of cheers (Peace for all).*

*No atom scare, no fat mammon,
No room for war demon.
Like leaves in trees, like rays in the sun,
We are one communion,
One Divine communion (Peace for all).*

*The good in you is good for all.
Your life is life for all.
The God in you is God for all.
Your love is love for all (Peace for all).*

*For he or she or it or the rest
This collective life is best.
This Universal Life is best,
North or South, or East or West (Peace for all).*

*Peace for plants and birds and beasts,
For hills and streams and woods.
Peace in Home – land and air and sea,
Dynamic peace we see.*

Peace for all, peace for all.

Immortal Peace for All.

Presentation of Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati

11th May 1897 – 7th March 1990

The wise one to the cosmic age

Although more than 90 years old, in his school in the south of India, *Kavi Yogi Maharishi* (great divine visionary, wise poet), Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati worked like a young man of twenty. When he was asked his age, he answered: “My age is Courage!”

The Yogi wrote several hundred works in English, French, Tamil, Hindi, Telugu and Sanskrit; and five thousand songs, and fifteen hundred poems in French. The magnum opus of the man conscious of the presence of God in him, *Bharata Shakti*, (in 50,000 verses) described his ideal: only One Humanity living in communion with only One God in a transformed world! *Bharata Shakti* is a monumental and unique work. The Yogi depicts the essence of all the religions, of all the prophets and saints, all the approaches of Yoga and all the cultures on an allegorical fabric. It is a book for any age that all spiritual researchers and all nations should read and meditate on.

His commitment is summarized in his book celebrating his life, *L’Ame Pèlerine (Pilgrim Soul)*. The three poems mentioned in the opening express perfectly his ideal.

His mantra, *Aum Shuddha Shakti Aum*, nourishes our souls and guides our steps toward the inner joy *Ananda*. It means: the light of Grace and power of the pure supreme Almighty bless us with peace, happiness and prosperity!

That beauty and greatness of the soul of Yogi Maharishi Dr. Bharati Shuddhananda bloom and scent the entire Earth with their divine message and spiritual and unifying benefactor!

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Shri Ramananjali

*Behold the face that
Spreads happiness and pleasure everywhere,
Can bestow liberation to all,
Brings the wandering mind to a halt at just one glance,
Reveals sights to you that only the rarest of the eyes get to see,
Gives you the faith that there is an ultimate truth in this universe,
Shows you the truth as it is,
Is respected by one and all,
That blesses you with the bliss of the soul,
That reflects the cosmic dance of Shiva and Shakti,
That brings unshakable tranquility to the mind,
That has the smile of a freshly blossomed flower,
That even the Goddess of Knowledge adores,
That frees you from the shackles of Karma,
That wins over the minds of the beholders,
That is bound to be everywhere in this universe,
That reflects the state of Nirguna and patience,
That enlightened beings flock to see,
The face that is loved and worshipped by the entire universe.
This is the face that leads you to break away
from your worldly bonds.
This is the light that dispels the darkness of sins.
This is the face that can trigger your awareness
of the three levels of the being
And performs the three tasks that govern the universe.
This is the face that bestows the strength to succeed.
This is the face that symbolizes the holy Annamalai.*

Shuddhananda Bharati

Suryodhayam

Vishwaroopam harina jaatavedasam
Paraayanam jyotirekam tapantam
Sahasrarashmihi Shatadhavartamaanaha
Praanaha prajaanaam udayatyeshu Suryaha

The One on whom the universe is shaped after, the light that brims with rays, the one who has realized it all, the fundamental being of it all, the distinct light, the one who radiates the heat of penance, the one with a thousand rays, the one who functions in a thousand different ways, the one who is the life of the living beings – such an almighty Sun rises!

Aum Namo Bhagavathey Ramanaaya

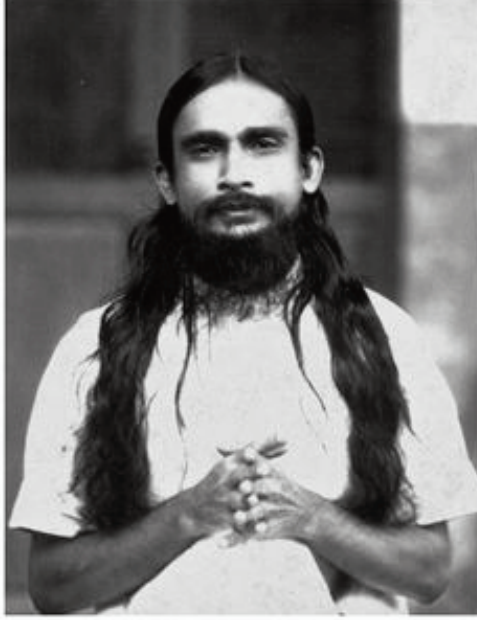
Foreword

By Shriman K. Lakshmana Sharma

A necessity was felt for publishing the nectar of Ramana's biography for his countless devotees who had accepted him as their spiritual Guru and their Ishta Devta. A number of biographies of Ramana have been released in the past, but all of them have plenty of errors, because these creations do not depict the story of his life in a way that it could reach the mortals caught in their worldly struggles. Previous authors had, under the influence of their preformed beliefs, and likes and dislikes, let their minds propel them through the task of writing these biographies. Three years ago, an enlightened disciple of his – Shri Narasimha Swami – began researching into the life of Ramana, and, when required, clarified with the man himself, on certain aspects of his past, wrote a near-flawless biography of his in English. After the release of this book, devotees of Ramana began to eagerly wait for such a near-perfect book in Tamil too. This book, written by an enlightened soul, consisting of forty chapters, divided in five sections, is an answer to their prayers. The author of the new book is Shri Shuddhananda Bharati.

Many are already familiar with this author. But, due to his self-imposed silence and solitude, and his dedication to master the Yogas for the past few years, Shri Shuddhananda Bharati needs to be introduced to those who don't know him.

Swami Shuddhananda Bharati is one of the blessed divine beings to incarnate on this land. It is true that India, on the economic front, is backward. But the land called Bharat has given birth to countless sons and daughters who had dedicated their lives for the spiritual upliftment of the entire universe. Swami Shuddananda Bharati renounced the world at a very young age and started practicing meditation and yoga, drawn by his previous birth, *Vaasana*. He has written a number of books. Pained by the poverty and gloom that gripped the nation, he worked hard to improve the lives of fellow-humans. He realized that knowledge and enlightenment were the way out of misery, and began an earnest search for a Guru.



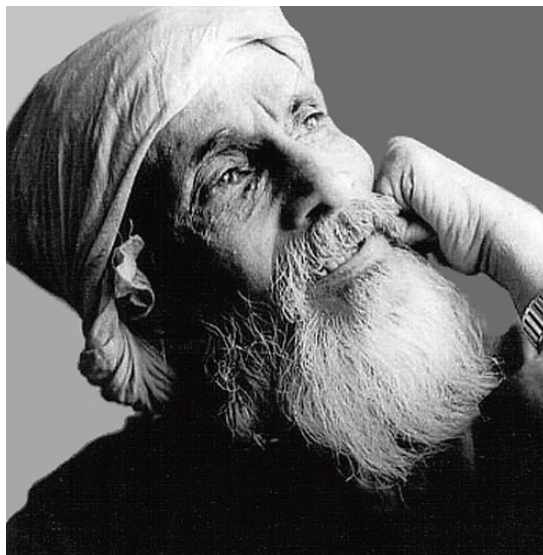
Swami Shuddhananda Bharati

With blessings and with the knowledge
that lies dormant in you,
May you shine with happiness.

There is only one God in this universe,
And He resides in all the beings.

It was the sincerity of his quest that made him see that Shri Ramana Bhagavan was his teacher and god. He visited Ramana's ashram, received his blessings and began meditating with renewed dedication. Since Ramana himself showed him the way to enlightenment with his timely *Upadesha*, there can be no one else better qualified than

Swami Shuddhananda Bharati to write this biography, with a perfect blend of devotion, reverence and dedication. There is no doubt that his *Sri Ramana Vijayam* will continue spreading Ramana's message to the future generations. Many question the authenticity of the stories and characters described in ancient texts like the *Bhagavatham*. They also wonder the extent of poetic license taken by the authors in retelling these tales. But, Shri Ramana, about whom the book talks, is very much among us all. There are plenty of people to vouch for his miracles. I honestly do not have the eloquence and the power to describe the book. You will have to read it for yourself to experience the book. Seek refuge at the feet of Shri Ramana! Now is the best moment.



Shuddhananda Bharati

Gurumanimala

The meaning of the mantra 'Aum,'
taught by the knowledgeable,
Exists beyond the illusions played out in physical forms;
The essence of which brings pleasure
that is beyond the senses.
That which cannot be perceived by the mortal eyes;
That which cannot be seen apart from those
who have attained it;
The purest of the pure, which the atheists cannot see;
The Chitparam truth,
In the form of an enchanting light of Shiva.
He saw this – the light in its truest form –
And described it to the masses,
thereby sharing with them,
The pleasure of beholding it.
I bow my head to that Guru, the soul of Arunagiri.
I let him win over me in his form as the Shiva Lingam.
I install him in my heart as such,
With an intention to conquer my mind,
And break the hold of the never-ending agony
that grips it.
With effortlessness, he quietened the inner restlessness.
This soul, that took the form of a man
To liberate mankind from the darkness of ignorance,
To free me from the temptations of the senses,
This is Ramana, the truly enlightened one that the
universe adores.
He merges within me as myself,
And let's love and energy surge in my veins.

He is the sweetness that flows into my heart.
He stays in me.
He wakes up with me.
He senses when I do.
He goes where I go.
An inseparable part of me,
He resides there, but he is within me.
I reside here, but he makes me sit there.
The purest light of Arunachalam,
The one with the kindest of eyes.
The one who is detached from it all,
 the one whom everybody belongs to.
The one who doesn't seek anyone, or shuns them.
Here is someone who treats the emperor
 and pauper alike,
Who teaches self realization,
The enlightened being who rises like the morning sun.
He resides in the cave of the heart,
Like the storm, he rose to destroy Maya,
For those who seek the truth, he shows them the way.
He conquered the three Gunas and became complete.
The man with feet that are blessed,
The one who speaks with kindness and patience.
Here is the one who, without years of penance,
 found the answers to
 "Who am I? What is the reason for my existence?"
He personifies the god that resides within.
The lion among saints,
The sun that witnesses everything
 but remains detached from it all.
Like the pitch that remains constant throughout,

Like the wind that cannot be imprisoned,
In the golden mortal body, with the awakened Kundalini,
Here is a celestial being that resides among us.
His mind absorbs things that are incomprehensible
to others,
To this virtual world, he brings peace and healing,
He cultivates devotion with songs, dances,
and blissful chants.
To the misguided mortals who look for pleasure outside,
He teaches them the art of controlling your breath
and mind And finding the highest bliss within.
“You are the happiness that you so desperately seek.
Your heart is your true self.
Grab hold of it and stay there,” he says.

Shri Ramana Vijayam

Section I

Ramana's childhood

Swaroopam Dhyana, meditating on the form

Oh Aadhi Paramatma,
The ruler of the universe,
The King of the internal drama,
The one who encompasses all the Gunas
You are the purest one,
The one beyond discriminations,
Who is always in a state of bliss,
The light of peace and piousness
The personification of 'Tat tvam asi.'
You are the sweetest refuge for life.
You are beyond the limitations of the world.
You are the message;
 you are that which is relished by Shiva!
The flood of light and bliss,
You are the true emotion of the heart,
You are the complete and captivating Satchidananda!
"Control your wandering mind, look inward, and ask
yourself who you are;
You will then realize what your Aatma Swaroopam is,"
Thus, you sum up the secret of the universe,
And, armed with this weapon, trigger the quest for light.
One truth there is in this universe,
The two extremities of emotions, you do not belong

The three Gunas you have mastered,
The four arts you have in your command,
The five senses you have conquered,
The six religions you have known,
The seven stages of spiritual evolution you have surpassed,
The eight Siddhi you have acquired,
The body with its nine orifices,
Like the Dashaman story,
 you guide the ignorant to the path of Aatma.
You detach yourself from the events around you
 and sit as an observer.
Your heart is immune to the provocations
 that define this world.
You reject these false stimuli as non-existent.
You have understood the meaning of stillness.
Waves of thought do not disturb you.
Desire does not trouble you.
You are the learned one that has mastered
 even the untaught.
While the rest of the universe finds itself in the midst of
the battles of the Gunas,
You have matured enough to see through the tricks.
“The arrival of the sun dispels darkness,
The lotus blooms, the dew drops evaporate.
A number of activities begin.
Living beings stir from their sleeps and begin their day.
Like the Sun that quietly witnesses these reactions,
Put your faith in the lord who runs this universe,
And hold on to His feet!
When ego begins to grow, bitterness grows too;
When the ego dies away, so does bitterness.

Without letting the mind wander, sitting quiet is a special
kind of bliss," you say.
You are the solution to your difficulties, you said.
You, the Siddha, the perfect saint,
The merciful, the devotee of the Lord,
The blessed poet, the one who played with words.
Like the nectar that flows from the full moon,
The more I talk about you, the sweeter the words taste.
Let us all meditate on this light of knowledge!
You are the cure to the fear of death,
The light of happiness that spreads joy wherever you go,
The wealth of knowledge, the feast to the hungry soul.
The treasure that couldn't be found
 in the corners of the universe,
Is right within us all, you say.
Oh one with an irresistible magnetism,
Oh person with simple demeanour.
Oh ocean of tranquility, oh Satchidananda!
The one who is worshiped by all as
 Bhagawan Ramana Paramahansa,
I got the opportunity to talk about your greatness
 to the world today.
A rare gift you are, oh burning spark of divinity!
Here I am, here I am, I said.
Be always there in my heart.
This is bliss to me, this is the eternal truth!

Shuddhananda Bharati

Swaroopa Dhyaanam

Oh Aadhi Paramatma, the ruler of the universe!
The king of the internal drama,
Oh Master of all the Gunas,
Oh the purest,
The one blessed with divinity,
The one who stood beyond caste and
religious discrimination,
The one who is always in a state of bliss,
The guiding light to peace and righteousness,
The essence of Tat Tvam Asi,
The sweetest refuge for the living being,
The one that is beyond the differences that perpetually
exist in the world,
Oh source of knowledge, Oh bliss of Shiva!
Oh river of Jyoti Paramananda!
The truth of the soul,
Oh complete Satchidananda!

Aum

Jitham jagad kena? Mano hee yena!

Who conquers the one?

The one who has conquered his mind!

Shri Ramana Vijayam

Shri Ramana Vijayam

Section I

Ramana's childhood

1. How do I describe this blessing?

*“For someone who was running away from misery,
He guided me to the path of eternal bliss;
The feet that showed me the true meaning of happiness
Are holy enough to reveal the essence of the universe
to the celestial beings.”*

The Chinmaya who explained the inner meaning of the complexities in the universe, without uttering a single word, who fed me without feeding; how do I describe you, who quietened the restlessness within me and made me see bliss? How do I describe your appearance in words? Unless I behold you with your knowledge as my eyes, how could I even attempt to describe you, your enlightened state of being, or the vast ocean that your patience is? Writing about your childhood is like painting a picture of your life. Writing about your present life is like capturing your shadow. Knowing your inner self is the real process of learning. Happiness is the state of meditating on Ramana with a pure heart. He is the nectar that has to be contemplated upon to enjoy its sweetness. The object that cannot be read out from the texts, heard through spoken words, or materialized through constant

prayers, can be only beheld by slaying the inner 'I,' with selfless love, and by filling the heart with him.

Oh the vast ocean of knowledge! The source of light that dispelled the darkness of my ignorance in a flash! The magnet that completely won over my heart with just a glance! With just your eyes you bestowed everything on me that I was looking for. You took the pearl of enlightenment, placed it safely in my soul and gave me a place in my heart, saying, "This is your treasure; enjoy it and reside here." You are my creator who took me beyond the constricting 'I' to the boundary-less 'us.' You are the guru that taught me the meaning of who I am, along with the true meaning of the all-powerful Chin Mudra. You are the tree of wisdom that taught me to look within and showed me the truth that the further I look within, the more blissful the quest becomes. "Live in your heart; look within. The more you look, the greater the pleasure," you said. You are the compassion personified that taught me how to recognize the divinity that lies within. How do I describe you?

"The more I thought about You, oh Almighty, the more You lit up my inner being and blessed me with the gift of never-ending bliss."

The Chinmaya who revealed me that You were the ultimate truth that everybody else searched for, high and low. You took the form of a mortal when you were born in Thiruchuzhigai. Like the mountain of light, you grew. You lived among us like mortals; and to those who were in the quest for truth, you showed them the path. The Absolute truth, you are the beauty that beauty bestows. Bestowed with the power to speak without speaking, see without

seeing, hear without hearing, partake without eating and travel without moving, you are one of the gems of Mother India; the child of Tamil Nadu. You are the fountain that quenches the thirst of the soul; you are the feast to the hungry beings.

Who could add light to the day? Who would try to put a lid on the mighty ocean? Who would want to move the mountains? Who could bestow more beauty to the flowers? Your love, your sweetness, your beauty, your peace and tranquility, your sense of self-satisfaction continues to spread far and wide. Who could contain your expansion? What would you call the vanity of a man who claims that he can describe you in words? You are that which remains unchanged forever and everywhere. All the living beings in this world are a tiny fragment of you. All their minds belong to you; all their physical beings are yours, and you are the dispassionate witness to all the happenings of the universe. Your mere being is knowledge, Shakti and Karma.

Like a mute, I point to the fountain of knowledge that you are. The world cries in anguish, tortured by Maya and caught in the web of the three Gunas. It has lost its mind. It neither knows the meaning of life nor the true nature of the elements that surround it. It fails to recognize God too. But you are that and much more. This lamp burns like the mountain of camphor – brightly and intensely. Truth can never be kept hidden. The herbs of these hills will cure your insanity and illnesses. This is Arunagiri. This is *Aatmarama!* This is Ramana!

Oh Ammaiappa (mother and father personified, another name for Lord Shiva and Parvathy). This is how my soul

calls the universe. Oceans of blue ink and pages as wide as the skies might run out, but I still wouldn't have completed my task of describing you. I write without writing. I meditate upon you with these words. The spiritual child that was born out of my devotion for you and your blessings, wants to hear the tale told. He implores me to reveal the person who had given him the source of knowledge. To him, I narrate this story. To him, I sing your glory. Help me in this quest. With these words, I offer my prayers at your feet.

Oh Guru!

*Oh Guru, help me break free from the shackles;
You are beyond the Gunas, you are like the ever-growing mountain,
Blessed with the bliss that Shiva bestows,
The truth, the wisdom that exceeds the texts of the world,
The holy sight that dazzles the eyes.
You are the bond that transforms into feeling,
The light that the mind beholds!
You are the truth! You are the truth!
Oh Bhagwan, you are the light that rules the world,
The rare light of blessing.
You have no beginning or an end.
But you rule the souls of this world and bestow upon them, the
everlasting bliss and happiness.*

2. The stream of life

*Search for the divine light;
everything else will slip away from you as time passes by.*

In the year 1916, my soul was suddenly besieged by hunger for knowledge. Reading the biographies of enlightened men, studying the scriptures and writing and singing about them became my passion. I interacted with the learned men of all the religions. I read the *Bhagavad Gita* and began to debate extensively with those who had read the holy text and followed it in their lives. With the belief that selfless service to the masses was the best way to conquer the ego, I got myself involved in a wide range of social activities, in my search for the Purushothama. My body needed energy to accomplish these tasks. Hence I practiced Hatha and Raja Yoga. Despite the flurry of activities, the emptiness within me remained. Hatha and Raja Yoga bestowed some special powers to the body. The body and mind began to work in unison, but that didn't seem like such a huge accomplishment. My attention shifted to religion, literature, mass communication, ashram-based learning system, politics, social upliftment and village empowerment, but peace eluded my mind. Music and fame tried to lure me, but their pleasures were momentary. Garlands of praises adorned my neck, but the bees that were attracted to those flowers stung me. There is an ocean of bliss within me, of Satchidananda. Not finding it was the source of my miseries. No worldly object could replace that. A thirst was born within me to find this eternal peace, to put an end to the turmoil of the mind. I wanted to be the Brahma bhoota Prasanna Aatma, attain Brahma Nirvana and to perform my activities as an offering to the Brahma Yagna.

*Control the devilish mind that wanders everywhere,
And learn to channelise it in the right path.*

This became the motto of my life. But, worldly duties kept me busy in my public life. No matter how peaceful and refined the inner mind was, the feeling that 'I was the doer' just wouldn't go away. It is this feeling that becomes the root-cause of attachments and cravings. The harder I tried, the more my mind wandered. This was because I still hadn't come to know about the mountain of knowledge. I looked for the answers in Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism and Sikhism, but the answers continued to elude me. Finally, I gave up all the religious texts and said, "Oh Lord, You are the witness to everything. You are the creator of everything. I'm Your child and I feel orphaned. Guide me! You are the charioteer of my life and I go wherever You take me." I gave up my efforts and decided to seek refuge at the Lord's feet. My ego vanished. All the tasks that I had performed with the sense of 'I' now became chains that bound me. "Why am I binding myself with these chains?" I asked myself. My karmic bonds ended. Each time the feeling of 'I' raised its head, a divine voice said, "It is not you, but me!"

*The thoughts of 'I' and 'mine' can hinder your progress;
Acknowledge it all to Him, instead.*

The feeling that surged within me guided me to this truth. The reins were finally in His hands. Even if I slipped occasionally, He held me firmly. Within me, the conviction kept growing stronger and stronger that I was on the right track. I was convinced that He was operating me. This is the gist of all the religious texts. I still didn't know how to behold that energy with my eyes, or how to unite with it forever. This was the hunger that was eating me up. From

that day onwards, with the sincere desperation of a child that cries for its mother, I began to search for the Lord. Night and day, I chanted the Shuddha Shakti mantra and performed my Pranayama. Most of the days were spent in silence. This created a fire within me. No matter what I did, I felt a powerful hand guiding me.

It was in this state that I occasionally ran into people who spoke to me about Ramana Maharshi. Someone would first bring a picture of his. A while later, somebody else would come with information about him. Let me describe this incident in detail later. An emotional bond of sorts began to grow. An invisible magnet pulled me. It became a habit for me to listen about Ramana from all those who came from Thiruvannamalai.

During my stay at Tamil Gurukulam, a disciple of Ramana arrived. Everyday, I used to ask him about Ramana and he would narrate stories of his miracles. It was very comforting for me. His natural state of calm, the greatness of his company, the power he wielded over the universe, the strength of his Aatma, the peace that emanated from him, the caves where he meditated and the details of their constructions – every morsel of information was precious for me. With it, I also began to meditate on Ramana’s most powerful tool of self-discovery – “Who am I?” From then on, the madness of the external world began to fade away and I was able to sense the presence of something else within me. I felt that becoming consciously aware of this presence was the secret of eternal peace. The thirst to meet this enlightened soul and permanently establish this sense of peace within me began to grow.

Much before this incident, an acquaintance of mine, Shri V. V. S. Iyer, had gone to Thiruvannamalai to attend a political meeting. As soon as I saw him, I began to enquire about Ramana Maharshi.

“Tamil Nadu is indeed blessed that Ramana Maharshi chose this land to incarnate in. He is like the mountain of light. My primary reason for going to Thiruvannamalai was to see him. He is more majestic than the mountains themselves. I felt a strange peace in his presence. The country is fortunate that he was born here. Bharati, you must meet him sometime,” he said. Since then, Ramana Maharshi occupied all my thoughts. The arrival of Shri Ganapathi Rishi at the Gurukulam’s graduation ceremony was like another indication from Ramana. Like the peacock that dances at the sight of rain clouds, my mind rejoiced. His majestic presence, his artistic ability, his mastery over the Vedas, his voice and the way he spoke – everything about him was impressive. We were being taught the ‘*Gyathikaranam*’ of the *Brahmasutra*. That day’s lessons were about people who have realized the Aatma. What does he know? What is knowledge? Why does he know? Are the knower, knowledge and learning the same? Or, are they different? What unites them? What makes them distinct? Answers to these questions were excellent fodder to the brain, but the mind continued to feel restless.

That day, I lost my interest in studies. Life is about looking inwards. Ganapathi Rishi too reiterated the same fact. My respect for him grew tremendously. If a disciple could be so enlightened, one could only imagine the prowess of his

Guru! I had to first make myself worthy enough to learn from him. My efforts began to bear fruits. Whenever possible, I consciously began to slow the pace of my mind. I began to perform the tasks with dedication to the Lord. The ego began to vanish. The mind was not attached to the fruits of my labour. The mind stopped wandering. But, there were commitments to the external world that kept me occupied; this was by force of habit. The brain gravitated towards meditating in solitude. In search of the ideal place to meditate, I wandered among the jungles and riverbeds of India. Finally, I found one at the Bahubalinathan Temple, near Belagola, Mysuru. On the hill temple, I happened to stay with a group of Jain monks. The beautiful caves of the mountain were charming, but my mind was plagued by a restless hunger to meet Ramana. One night, during my meditation, a powerful wave of affection swept through me. I felt as if I would die if I didn't see the Maharshi immediately.

The next day, I left Mysuru for Thiruvannamalai. I could sense electricity coursing through my veins. I left my belongings at the residence of a politician friend and immediately went to the hills. When I visited the caves where Ramana meditated, I felt a sense of embarrassment and empowerment. "Oh, how have I wasted my life! I had wandered aimlessly. There is nothing more stupid than trying to teach others when I myself had so much to learn!"

Avidhyaayaamantare vartamaana:

swayam dheera: panditam manyamaana:

Janganyamaana:

pariyanti mooda andhanaiva neeyamaana yathaandhaa:

“The ignorant, in their stupidity, assume that they have mastered everything, and stumble around and hurt themselves over and over again, like the blind man who leads the blind.” When the Almighty is running everything to perfection, why do we so desperately try to interfere with it?

*The ones who don't know how to control the mind
That dances to the tunes of the stomach,
The ones who know how to merge the body
with the cosmic universe,
The ones who know how to don different characters,
When are they going to realize that here stands
the true destiny of our lives?
Like the pouncing tiger, the Self Realized Ones know
how to control their breath,
And turn their eyes red.
The religion that they gave, they know it inside out.
They know how to play by creating the illusion
of difference in the six religions,
They are the enlightened souls that have conquered
the universes that we see around us.*

With tears in my eyes, when I entered the Virupaksha cave, I was told by one of the men present that Bhagawan was deep in meditation. I sat, for more than half an hour, waiting to see him.

All along, my soul wept! The determination strengthened. The mind that wandered outside began turning inward. After visiting Skandashramam, my feet dragged me back to Ramana ashramam. It was as if a magnet was drawing me here with its power of love.

The body and senses failed to register where the feet were going. "Bhagawan Ramana" – that was the only destination. With the enthusiasm of the waterfalls, the soul lost its obsession with "I" and "Me." Like the river that rushes to the ocean, the mind was ready to completely surrender itself at the feet of the Guru. There are no more waves to disrupt this river in this lifetime! Here is the ocean of enlightenment; the mountain of light! Like the weasel that gets drawn to the burning light, I was running towards him!

3. This is the Mountain of Light!

A mind that is completely settled and doesn't wander, is mightier than the mountains

The time was around 6.30 in the evening. The range of mountains stood majestically before me. Although Ramana's Ashram was at the foot of the hill, it looked as if it humbled the mountains themselves. The holy breeze from the ashram gently blew over the mountain with a fragrance of 'Shivoham.' There was no crowd at that time. There was peace and welcoming solitude in the ashram. Each and every inch of the ashram looked like the temple of Ramana. Overwhelmed with love, tears and joy, I rushed in. I first met Ganapathy Muni. "He is here," he said and pointed towards a temple. I couldn't observe anything else. I couldn't even see Bhagawan there. I wanted to meet the Muni first and then see Bhagawan. The Muni was chanting Vedic slokas flawlessly. I left my belongings outside and when I stepped in, it was as if an entire galaxy of light was seated on the right side of me.

He looked like a blazing comet. Blinded by its light, I fell at the feet of the Munivar and offered my salutations to him. Before I could say, "I have come..." he said, "There sits the Bhagawan," and pointed towards the dazzling light. Here was the object of my search, sitting so near me. In my mind, I would have imagined a thousand versions of this first glimpse. There were so many things I had planned to do. I wanted to be perfectly prepared when I saw him for the first time. But, all of it vanished in a fraction of a moment. I immediately turned to my right and there he was! It was not a human form that first met my eyes. First, it looked like a heap of sacred ashes. Then, my eyes noticed the beam of light that he was. It was only later that the mind registered the man, sitting with his legs folded. Here was the Bhagawan who had been haunting my soul! Even before I uttered a word, he said, "Bharati! The one who wrote *Bharata Shakti!*"

I fainted. When I recovered, I could hardly speak! Joy! Bliss! How could I even describe it? Here was a man who had conquered time. A man who knew the universe, like you and I would know the back of our hand. And, he knew the insignificant me!!! Like old friends, he welcomed me. I had never come across such pure love anywhere in my lifetime. How tremendous is his clarity! His love! His kindness! All the doubts in my mind vanished. I felt like a newborn again!

*Esha hee drushtaa sprashtaa shrotaa
ghrataa rasayitaa manta boddhaa kartaa
Vigyanaatmaa purushah sapareksharey
aatmani sapratishatey*

“He is the one who sees, touches, hears, smells, tastes, thinks and knows; he is the doer, the scientific mind, the Purusha. He has his mind fixed on the immortal Paramaatma,” says the Prashnopanishad. Here I was, standing in front of the man described in those verses!

*Have the boundaries of the ocean been breached?
With eyes pouring tears of joy
With bliss engulfing the body
His miracle made my heart melt.*

*He became the beginning and the end
And gave me a glimpse of eternal bliss
In his silence, he said so many things!
Shankara! Shankara! Shambo!!!*

This is all that I can say. The rest ought to be experienced. The mind continued to be delirious. Bhagawan asked, “Will Bharati eat here?” “Sir, where else but here can I find the food for my hunger? I have searched in the jungles and on the mountains. Finally, I found the divine herb that I was looking for. Even a handful of prasadam received from you would bestow me Brahmagyanam. With your blessings, this being will become the field where *Shivanandam* grows. Oh Bhagawan, this soul has been ravished for ages. Only you can provide food for it. That was why I came to you,” I said and fell at his feet.

When your eyes fell on me and your hands touched me, all the wounded thoughts of my poor soul had healed!

The ocean of kindness sat up. It was not a human that my eyes perceived in front of me. It was a Jyotirlingam before which I stood. His head looked like the top of the Jyotir-

lingam; his feet, when he sat in Sukhaasana, looked like its base; and his torso resembled the body of the Lingam. My eyes were not playing tricks on my mind. This was what I saw that day. I realized that Sadhguru, the mountain of light and Jyotirlingam were all the same. This is how a living and breathing Jyotirlingam would look like. Here in front of me was the noble soul that had truly conquered love and hate. The instance continues to stay fresh in my mind like it happened only yesterday.

*Like the crows that invites its kith and kin
At the sight of food,
Here I am,
Summoning all those who can hear me
That right in front of me is the royal food called Shiva Bhogam,
Come feast on it before our mortal bodies perish!*

Isn't this the treasure that the mind seeks, in the midst of pain and ignorance? It is the ignorance of this knowledge that makes mankind suffer the vicious cycles of Maya.

*Like the sky that arches itself to feed the nectar of bliss and truth,
Drunk with this heady potion, I look for the Lord,
While I get rid of the ever-decaying feeling of 'I.'*

The thoughts were basking in the warmth of the new fire that burned within me. I couldn't bring myself to ask any questions. There were no questions to be asked. I didn't come there to ask questions. Everything that I had learned and read appeared inconsequential. The books became suddenly worthless. The mere sight of Bhagawan made me feel as if I had found everything that I was looking for. 'Shanti Samruddham Amrutam' (the nectar of peace and

abundance) was bubbling within me. The inner voice became quiet. The feeling of effortlessly floating in the rays of divinity that was flowing out of Bhagawan was fascinating. Verses were gushing in my mind.

*The tigers in the jungle frolic with the cows
With your mere look, you can tame the mad elephant
The divine Kamadhenu would come running to you.
You are the ruler of this world; you are the king of the words;
You are the highest form of penance.
The sight of your enlightened face would make even the Siddha
Purushas want to get acquainted with you
All the sages would sing your glory
Is it easy to sing the praises of someone whom the earth and the
skies bow down to?*

Later, when the discussion shifted to *Bharata Shakti*, I got to tell him the history of the initiative. In the past, whenever I was asked about it, there was false pride and vanity in me. My chest would swell with a sense of pride. All of it was gone this time. The silence within kept getting deeper. Like the field that lay empty after harvesting, the mind felt spotlessly clean. He was the land, the seeds, the plant and the harvest. He was the speaker, the words and the listener! This is the glory of Bhagawan. Those who experienced it know how blissful it is. The Bhagawan then began his discourse, feeding his listeners with food for their hungry souls.

Shri Ramana Ashram

The day began, with peace and a strong sense of divinity engulfing the entire ashram. From beyond the visible

skies, the light of knowledge illuminated it. The inmates of the ashram were busy with their respective chores. In the presence of the never-ending source of life that Bhagawan is, everybody is constantly active and full of energy. Bhagawan is Buddha Himself! He is Lord Muruga! He is lotus-eyed. Those eyes can burn the maya that clouds the mind. His peaceful presence is the greatest cure for the restless monkeys that thoughts are. In his presence, the mind moves beyond "I" and his words reverberate like the divine spells. They put an abrupt end to futile arguments and open the doors to the inner self. It is like being blessed with Chidambara darshanam, which unravels the mysteries of the universe and shows everything just the way they are. If you hear him with hunger in your soul, his words will make sense to you at your level of spiritual maturity. No matter what the question is, he would patiently answer you. He would interact with you with the innocence of a child. Caring for those who had accompanied you; sharing the food and love with the cows and dogs that live in the ashram... how could I describe the serenity and greatness of the ashram that brimmed with soul-satisfaction, happiness and peace! The events that occurred there and the sincere dedication and love of the devotees who fell at Bhagawan's feet when he clarified their doubts – it was like watching them transform into enlightened beings right in front of my eyes. Love for the Almighty surged within me. It was like a divine lullaby.

His smile was the message, truth was his being and the light in his eyes were the fire of penance.

Each and everyone who stood in front of him sensed it.

Ramana ashram was like Brindavan. When Ramana stood in the midst of the cows, his body glowed like Krishna's did. He didn't have a flute in his hands, but his words were sweeter than the music that flowed out of it. The peace and tranquility that they brought to the soul is something that the flute could never match. They had the glow of *Bhagavad Gita*. It was like watching a live Upanishad in front of the eyes. All the teachings of the Vedanta stood, personified as a human. This is Bhagawan Ramana! The saint who lived on the lap of the Arunagiri Mountain.

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