

Maha Tapasvi



Life Story of
Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni

MAHATAPASVI

Life Story of
Sri Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni

Original in Telugu

A. V. Ramana

(Grandson of Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni)

Translated by

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Sri Ramanasramam
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Tiruvannamalai 606 603
INDIA

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First Edition: 2005– 500 copies

(Printed by A. M. Sastry)

Second Edition: 2009 – 1000 copies

CC No. 1136

ISBN: 978-81-8288-098-6

Price: Rs.100/-

Published by

V.S. Ramanan

President

Sri Ramanasramam

Tiruvannamalai 606 603

Tamil Nadu, INDIA

Email: ashram@sriramanamaharshi.org

Website: www.sriramanamaharshi.org

Typeset at

Sri Ramanasramam

Printed by

Sudarsan Graphics

Chennai 600 017

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Kavyakantha Vasishtha Ganapati Muni was a luminous personality, an embodiment of all that is great of the ancient Indian culture. His literary achievements are phenomenal. On February 23, 2009, the holy day of Maha Sivaratri, the 11th and final volume of his *Collected Works* in Sanskrit was released in Sri Ramanasramam. Scholars, poets, and sadhakas will be delving into these texts for centuries, as the versatile genius of his compositions is yet to be fathomed.

Ganapati Muni's spiritual attainments mystify the imagination and his devotion to Guru Ramana was unshakeable. However, within the heart of this colossal personality, this genius of many disciplines, was a genuine humility rarely seen in great men down through the ages. It was Ganapati Muni who first proclaimed to the world that this little-known Brahmana Swami was a Jagadguru (world teacher) and his lustre would spread across the spiritual horizon of the globe, attracting seekers from every continent of the earth. He gave him the name Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and took him as his sole refuge in life.

In the first part of the 20th Century, Ganapati's life was so inextricably interwoven with the Maharshi's that numerous seekers drawn to the Sage of Arunachala would also seek inspiration from this great Vedic seer and tapasvin. Even today, at the samadhi shrine of Sri Ramana, Ganapati Muni's verses in praise of the Master are recited daily.

We are indebted to the late Sri A. V. Ramana, Ganapati Muni's grandson, for taking up the task of recounting the exploits and experiences of this great Vedic seer of the 20th Century, and to the late Srimati Sonti Anasuyamma for making it available to the English reading public.

PUBLISHER

PREFACE

Ganapati Muni beheld a yogi sitting in absolute silence on the Arunachala Hill. He recognized him to be a great rishi, accepted him as his Guru and declared that he should henceforth be called Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

He also declared that they both had a close relationship in their previous lives and expressed in verse that Sri Ramana was a manifestation of Kumara Swami, the son of the divine parents Uma and Siva, while he was the incarnate Ganapati, their elder son.

Ganapati Muni was a rishi, poet, patriot and reformer who obtained the grace of the Divine Mother to achieve literary excellence and knowledge of the essence of all things.

Tapas is defined as an intense spiritual effort. Tapas performed for the fulfillment of a desire is not true tapas. Divine visions are only the projections from one's own mind. Until we reach the ultimate knowledge of the Self, we have to continue tapas, and this is what Ganapati Muni did.

He said that brahma granthi is the knot between the unreal self and the real Self. Tapas is necessary to break this knot, and it is also an essential aid to education. Knowledge achieved through sixty years of study is accomplished with only six years of tapas, and Ganapati Muni himself proved this point by mastering the Tamil language with just ten days of tapas. Ganapati Muni engaged in severe tapas for

the redemption of his Motherland from slavery and ignorance. He awakened the Divine Sakti in the hearts of freedom fighters with his speeches and reformist ideals.

Each aspect of the Muni's life provides adequate material to embody numerous books. To attempt to give a thorough biographic account of such a great personality is not possible without prolonged and dedicated research. I therefore limited my effort to bring out his literary excellence and the tapas he performed.

Dr. K. Subrahmanian was a high official in CIFL Education Institute of Hyderabad and the well-known columnist of 'Between You and Me' and 'Know Your English' in *The Hindu* newspaper. He was a great devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi and lived in the service of his Master to the last minute of his life. He was the inspiration behind me taking up this great task of writing the biography of Nayana (Ganapati Muni).

One day Dr. Subrahmanian asked me, "Mr. Ramana! Nayana's biography has not been written properly. Why don't you do that?"

I was stunned: "How can I, Sir, since I have not even seen my grandfather. How can I attempt to write his biography?"

K. S. was silent for a moment. Then he looked into my eyes and coolly asked, "Has everybody who wrote on Rama seen Sri Rama?"

His devotional approach shook me up. He suggested that I should write in an attitude of surrender. Thus, I began to write.

My father, the late Sri Mahadeva Sastri, had a strong desire to publish a biography of Nayana in a glorious style. He was not satisfied with the existing biography. He used to say that the greatness of his father's life lay mainly in his literary works and tapas. Therefore, one who wants to produce his biography must do research into his works and through proper sadhana bring out the essence. In the course of conversation over many years, he informed me of numerous unpublished events relating to Nayana's life. I strongly believe that my father's creative urge proved to be the primary impetus of my writing this book, for which I owe him supreme gratitude. I offer my prostrations to him, Sri Ramana and Ganapati Muni.

Sri Acharya Appalla Someswara Sarma, a scholar, respectable, simple, an adept in grammar and prosody, read with great interest the whole book and gave the necessary touches to it. He also blessed me. I proffer my humble salutations to Sri Vedula Subramanya Sastry, Sri Pudipeddi Lakshmana Murthy and my sister and poet Srimati P. Visalakshi for giving me sufficient encouragement in bringing out this work.

The collection of material for this biography presented enormous difficulties. My elder brother, Sri Purandar, sister, P. Indira and younger brother, Sridhar helped me in this task. *Vasishtha Vaibhavam*, a Sanskrit biography of Nayana, proved to be of much help in my effort. I offer my regards to the elders and blessings to the young of my family who gave me their hearty co-operation. The members of Sri Ramana Satsang of Hyderabad encouraged me by publishing

one chapter in each of the issues of the satsang's magazine, *Sri Ramana Jyoti*.

If the erudite and laymen, devotees and researchers, find this work valuable, I will consider that to be the great blessings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and Nayana.

My humble salutations to all great souls.

A. V. Ramana
(Maitra Varuna)

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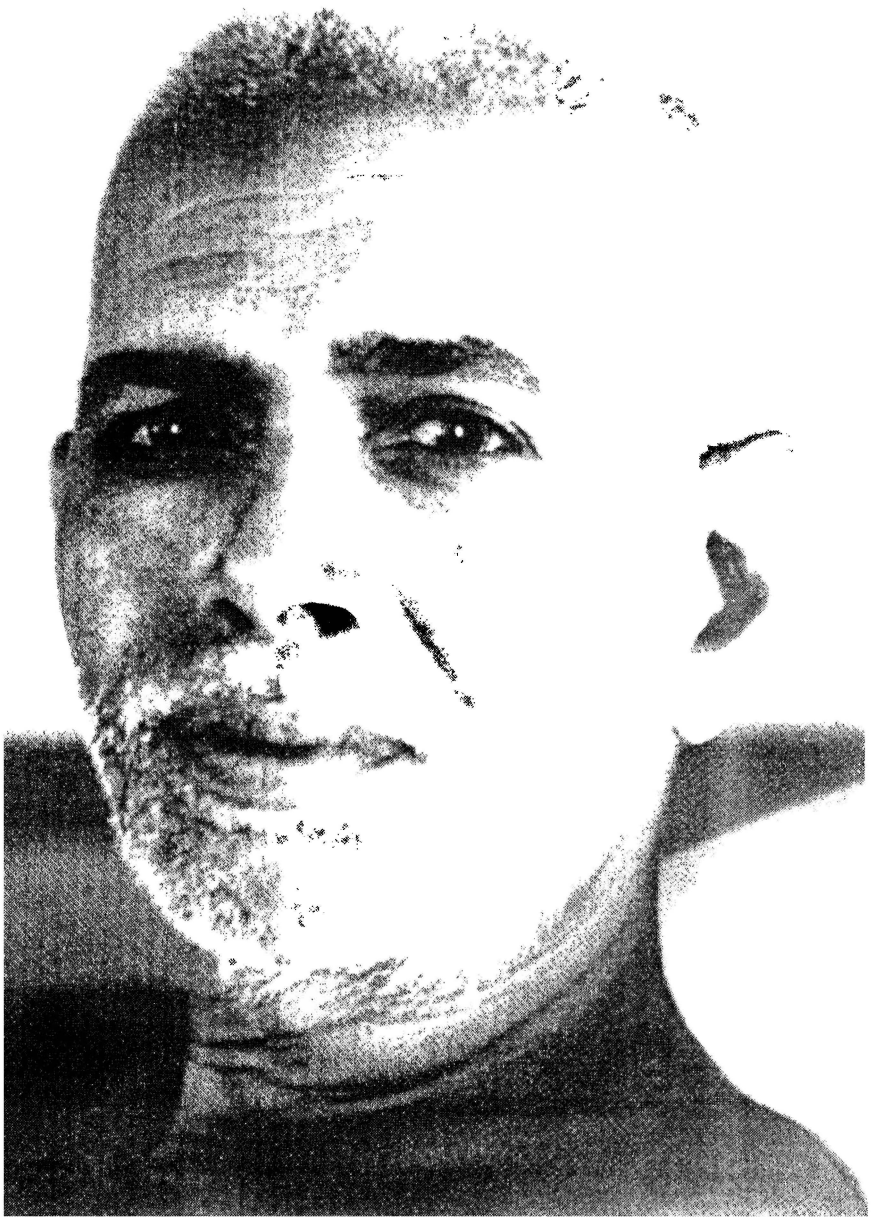
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PART I

Chapter 1

TAPAS

Prakriti and Purusha are the forms of Shakti and Ishwara. This universe is called Prakriti. The principle of Pure Intelligence immanent in creation, maintenance and destruction is Purusha. Shakti is the Mother aspect and Purusha is the Lord. Ancient sages have declared this truth: that the earth, fire, sky, water, wind, sun, moon and jiva are the eight manifestations of these two principles. The austerity involved in the search of this truth is called tapas. The real goal of all people is tapas. But many of them are intensely involved in the search of worldly achievements. Our Puranas tell us that men, gods, and demons, in their search for eternal truth, have taken up tapas as the means.

Sati was the daughter of Prajapati Daksha, and the wife of Lord Siva. Once Daksha was performing a sacrifice and Sati went uninvited to attend the sacrifice. Daksha ignored his daughter and spoke derogatory words about Siva. Unable to bear this insult to Siva, her Lord, Sati lit the Yoga fire and burnt herself in it.

Sati took another birth as the daughter of Himavan and was called Parvati. She wanted to do tapas to win Siva's love. Hearing of the decision of her delicate little daughter,

Menaka, mother of Parvati, got very perturbed and pleaded with Parvati not to engage in tapas, as it was torturing the body.

“U (O’ dear)! Ma (Please do not)” were the words Menaka used, pleading with her daughter. Afterwards the two letters were combined to make the word ‘Uma’, the name of Parvati.

In this context the greatest poet of India, Kalidasa, used the word Uma in his epic poem, “Kumara Sambhavam”. Almost equal to Kalidasa in poetic talent, a very great man of austerity and recipient of boons from Sri Bhuvaneshwari Devi (Goddess of the Bhuvaneshwari Temple, in Orissa), Ganapati Muni gave a more edifying meaning to the name of Uma.

भवत्यसावतो भवान्यनादिरन्तवर्जिता
जगन्ति माति नित्यमोरसौ तदभ्युधा य्युमा ।
रसात्मिकाश्यतेऽखिलैरसौ ततः शिवोच्यते
परैवमीशितुश्चितिस्रिधा बुधैरुदीर्यते ॥ 1-2-9

Because she is the Eternal, she is called Bhavani. Because she is the Eternal Bliss that everyone aspires for, she is called Shivaa. Because she is the measuring principle that measures Ishwara, the Lord of the Universe, she is called Uma. And thus is the Parashakti is glorified by elders. – Uma Sahasram

Here Ishwara’s quality of limitation is described as Uma. It can also be interpreted as the limiting faculty in the creational process. As the limited has to transcend itself to merge with the unlimited Lord, the originator of Creation, Parvati had to do tapas. This insistence on her mother’s

part to make the daughter give up the tapas was an idea which might have been distasteful to Ganapati Muni. So he tried to give a more appropriate interpretation to the word 'Uma', and erudite scholars of the day highly commended this effort of Ganapati Muni. Those who engage in tapas do not give up their basic concept under any pressure. They never give up their vision of the truth and stick to it in word and thought. This is the real vision of tapas (Tapo-drishti).

Once an ashram doctor applied surgical spirit on Bhagavan Ramana's hand where an injection had to be given. As it felt cool and pleasant, Bhagavan asked the doctor what the liquid was. The doctor replied, "Surgical Spirit". Bhagavan laughed at this word and joked that a touch of 'spirit' (meaning Atma) would be very nice to be given to everybody. What a glorious twist to the meaning of an ordinary word!

Our scriptures describe the world of tapas as one of seven worlds called, Bhuh, Bhuvah, Suvah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah and Satyaloka. Tapas means an intense austere effort to reach the goal. The Vedas declare that this creation is the outcome of the Lord's tapas. The whole creation is always in search of happiness. The tapas which is done for material acquisitions becomes a torture when intensified. Tapas done for attaining the Lord's feet is elevating.

Our Puranas tell us that both gods and demons did tapas. In this sort of tapas there is a desire or some purpose to be fulfilled. It may be done for the welfare of the world or for destruction. When such tapas is rewarded all of humanity

is influenced according to the desire of that tapasvi. Tapas develops the inner strength of the tapasvi, the doer of tapas. Tapas in the field of spirituality makes the mind pure and draws it inwards towards the Self or the Atman.

One can attain powers or siddhis through tapas. Telepathy and clairvoyance are some such siddhis. Once a sadhu performed tapas for fourteen years and got the siddhi of emanating perfume from his body. He went to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and boasted about his siddhi. The Paramahansa just smiled and told him that he wasted a precious fourteen years of life for a trifle.

Most of the people who start tapas want some desire to be fulfilled. They are like a kite with a broken string. They concentrate on having a vision of some god or other, and on getting the same, rest satisfied with it. The mind which is the instrument of tapas always deludes the aspirant and he begins to think that the achievement of his limited purpose is the be-all and end-all.

Bhagavan Ramana described the nature of the mind as “an adept in deluding. It always stays with you and deludes. ‘Sit firmly on my mind lest it elude Thee and flee, O Arunachala!’ he sings in verse seven of “Aksharamanamalai”.

That which brings about the destruction of the mind is tapas. A steady mind is the first step for the destruction of the mind. For practising this steadiness, aspirants look for an undisturbed place. Some people torture the body with practices like standing on one leg, standing on the head and so on, thinking them to be tapas. Actually it is enough to sit in a restful posture and control the mind. Forests,

hills, caves, river banks and seashores are considered conducive places for tapas. Sri Ganapati Muni says that a steady mind does not need a particular place for tapas.

The power got by tapas can increase or decrease according to the way it is used. Maharshi Viswamitra is an example to this truth. He often wasted the power of his tapas in fulfilling his desires and those of others.

In the modern age, people can live as householders and also do tapas. That effort which elevates one is tapas. "To attain perfection in the arts and to protect one's country, tapas is necessary," declared Sri Ganapati Muni. His life is an example of practical tapas which was practised only by rishis in the past. The concept of tapas is not properly understood by the present generation. He showed by practical demonstration what tapas is from beginning to end. To attain the acme of tapas he surrendered himself to Sri Ramana Maharshi. The Muni was an adept in the science of mantras and tantras and gained the knowledge that both the dual and non-dual religious practices lead to the same goal.

Ganapati was considered equal to Kalidasa and Sankara in poetic compositions. He brought about a healthy revolution both in literary and philosophic thought. He was like Charaka in his knowledge of medicine, a Parasara in astrology and a Varahamihira in astronomy. He was a great lover of his country. He would obtain the vision of any god he meditated upon. He got the greatest siddhi of Kapala-bheda (breaking of the cranium) while living. He became Sri Ramana's close disciple and a model of righteousness

and humility. He was the living embodiment of tapas and so he ought to be described as a 'Mahatapasvi', a great one in the field of tapas.

Chapter 2

HIRANYAGARBHA

नभोऽन्तरे प्रचक्षते हिरण्मयाङ्गमीश्वरं
दिनेशबिम्बपूरुषं हिरण्यगर्भमाख्यया ।
विराजमानमक्षरं विराजमन्तरे नृणां
सवित्रि तत्ववेदिनामियं तु नामकल्पना ॥ 1-2-21

O Savitri! The person who is effulgent in space is called Ishwara. He, who is reflected in the Sun is called Hiranyagarbha. Virat is the name given to the Eternal Truth inherent in human beings. These are the names given to you by those who know the Truth.

– Uma Sahasram

“When righteousness is transgressed, when people discard the right path and when evil predominates, a ray of light from Hiranyagarbha descends to the earth as an incarnation,” say the elders. Lord Krishna declares the same in the *Gita*.

These incarnations are of various types: Paripurna (full), Avesa (emotional), Amsa (partial), and Kala (a facet). There are also Rishi (Seer), Muni (ascetic), Pracharaka (missionary), Duta (messenger), and Kumara (Son) incarnations. There are usually some incidents heralding the descent of an avatar. There were some such incidents before Sri Ganapati Muni was born.

Arasavalli is a small village two Kilometers from the town of Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh. The village is famous as the abode of Suryanarayana, the Sun-god. A temple to the sun was built here by the Eastern Kalingas between the 7th and 8th Centuries A.D., and became a famous pilgrim centre. The beautiful idol of the temple is made from black stone and possesses very powerful vibrations. The temple is especially designed so the early morning rays of the sun touch the crown of the idol.

From a village named Kaluvarai, fifteen miles distant from Srikakulam, a brahmin family arrived in Arasavalli on the day of the full moon in the month of Magha (February), 1878. They came to fulfil the vow of performing the first haircut ceremony of their son. The journey was made in a bullock cart, as no other type of transportation was available in those days.

Ayyala Somayajula Nrisimha Sastry was the head of the family. He was about thirty years old. He was accompanied by his wife Narasamamba and a four year old son, Bhima Sastry. Nrisimha Sastry was an initiate in the Dwadasakshari Mantra, which he repeated always. He was a landlord and the village officer. Sastry was proficient in astrology and medicine. He was an upasaka (worshipper) of the great method of Sri Vidya. He was a great lover of his country and a highly cultured person. His wife was a devotee of the Lord and a cultured lady. She prepared and served food to guests with genuine love, like the goddess Annapurna of Varanasi. Once when Bhima Sastry fell ill, the parents took a vow that they would have his first haircut ceremony performed in Arasavalli.

After the haircut, the child was made to bathe in the temple tank and after finishing the rituals the family entered the temple. Immediately Narasamamba surrendered herself to the Sun and fell into a trance. As the husband understood her condition, he gently held her hands and walked with her round the temple.

They spent the night in the temple. Narasamamba woke up from the trance early the next morning and told her husband about the vision she had the previous night. A god, holding a vessel of fire in his hand, issued out of the Sun-god's idol, and putting the vessel in Narasamamba's hand, disappeared. From that moment onwards, she was filled with great joy and elation. She did not know whether it was a blessing or otherwise.

Sastry was a great upasaka, and when he heard of the details of his wife's vision, he looked at the top of the temple tower. He understood that the god emanating out of the idol was Hiranyagarbha, who is the presiding deity of the sun. He assured his wife that the god had blessed her with a child who would be born with the power and energy of the Sun-god.

Filled with devotion, joy and ecstasy, the family returned to their home. Soon Narasamamba conceived a child.

Chapter 3

THE TRUTH OF THE WORD (Akshara)

भगवति निजौ साक्षात्पुत्रौ बृहस्पतिपावकौ

गणपतिगुहावेतौ वेषान्तरव्यवहारतः ।

भरतधरणीखण्डे हेतोः कृतसम्भवौ

कलकलयते काले देवि व्यधाः कथय द्रुतम् ॥ 9-34-7

O Mother! Please tell me why you have made your own sons, Brihaspati and Agni, be born as Ganapati and Guha in this land of Bharata, in these tumultuous times.

– Uma Sahasram

When Narasamamba was in the seventh month of pregnancy, her husband took her to her parents' house and left her there for the delivery of the child. He entrusted his brother, Prakasa Sastry, with the welfare of the family and left for Varanasi to bathe in the Ganga and visit the temple of Visweswara during the month of Kartika.

He reached Varanasi in due time and engaged himself in the customary austerities – bath in the Ganga and visits to the temples of Annapurana and Visweswara, the main deities of Varanasi.

Bhakti is the uninterrupted flow of grace of God in us. Bhakti fulfils the desires of the aspirant. But man dissipates all his time and energy running after the fulfilment of selfish desires.

Nrisimha Sastry was a a man of discernment. He was austere and knew the value of life. His life was one of total dedication to God and it brought him the grace of the Sun-god of Arasavalli.

It was the eighth day after the new moon in the month of Karthika, in the year Bahudhanya. Nrisimha Sastry was sitting in front of the idol of Dumti Ganapati near the temple of Visweswara in Kasi. He was repeating Navakshara Ganapati Mantram. It was two hours past sunrise. The concentrated gaze of Sastry beheld a vision of a boy crawling out from the idol towards himself. The child climbed on to his lap. Sastry understood that his tapas was fulfilled.

Tears of joy gushed down his cheeks as he prayed to Ganapati. Sastry interpreted the vision as an indication of the birth of a son, so he started his journey home.

As expected, he received the good news of the birth of a son as soon as he reached Kaluvarai and proceeded to Logisa Agraharam. Sastry was surprised to hear that the child was born exactly at the time of his vision. Thus a divine child was born to Nrisimha Sastry on 17-11-1878.

The boy who was born by the grace of the Sun-god and god Ganapati was named Surya Ganapati.

In "Ganapati Suktam", Ganapati, the son of Ishwara, was described as Brahmanaspati and also Brihaspati, the Lord of poetry and all knowledge. Ganapati was the scribe who wrote down all that was dictated by Vyasa Maharshi who classified the Vedas in a lucid form. He was the word incarnate. The self-same god Ganapati is said to have taken the form of Ganapati Muni who later became the disciple

of Sri Ramana Maharshi, the world teacher. Ganapati proclaimed the young sage as 'Maharshi' and gave him the name of 'Ramana'. This time the god Ganapati in the form of Ganapati Muni became the scribe to Sri Ramana. He composed *Sri Ramana Gita* and various other treatises.

यद्दीपाद्रमणाख्याद्व्याप्तं गाणपतीषु ।
 वाणी भित्तिषु भले गीता चित्र विलासं ।
 आलंबेन विहीनं व्योमाभं परिपूर्णम्
 निश्शब्दं गुरु रूपं तद्ब्रह्म स्फुरतान्मे ॥

May that form of the Guru, the unsupported, subtle as space and perfect silence, which emanates from the lamp called Sri Ramana, and is painted on the walls of words of Sri Ganapati as pictures, called Ramana Gita, intuit me!

– *Guru Githam*



Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni

Chapter 4

THE FAMILY

एतामाहुरविद्यां बीजं संसारवृक्षराजस्य ।

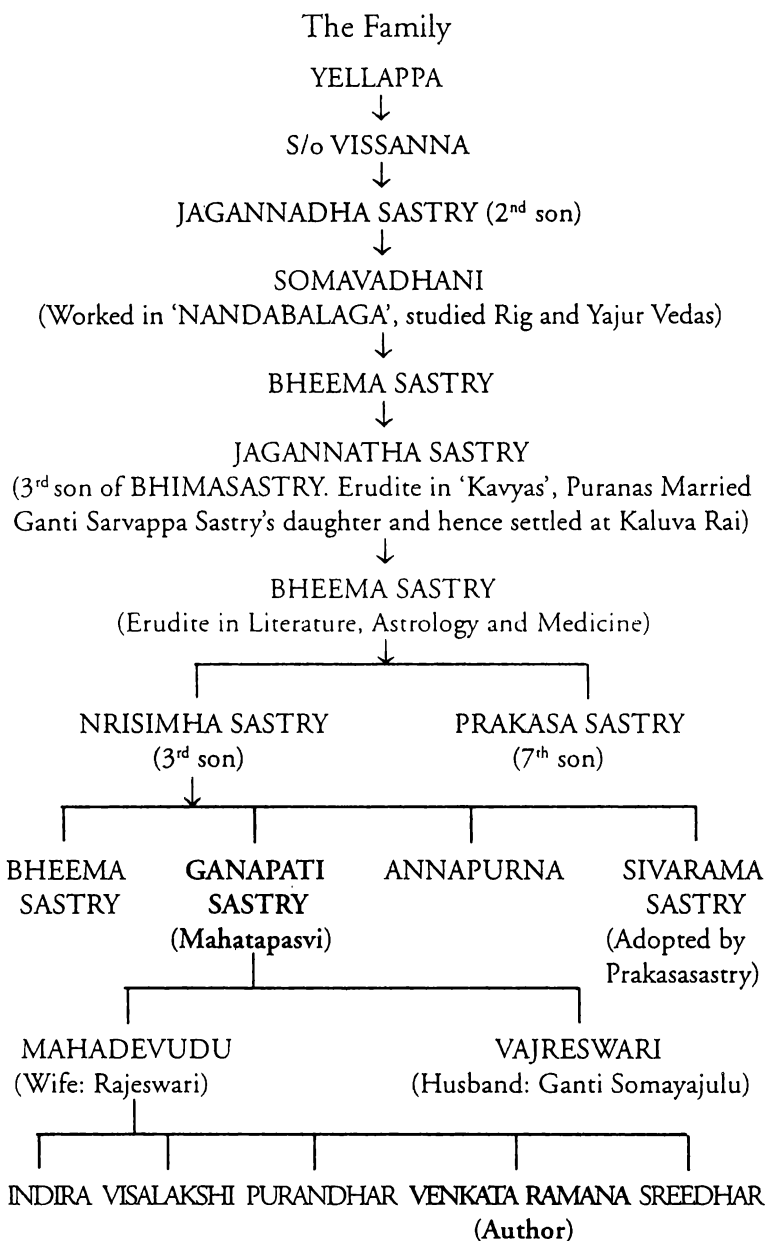
सर्वरसफलयुतस्य प्रारब्धजलेन देवि दोहदिनः ॥ 1-4-13

This ever changing cycle of birth and death is the great tree whose seed is the perception of difference, which is called avidya or ignorance. Prarabdha, or the resultant of past deeds that has started to bear fruit, is the water that sustains this tree. The juices of the fruits of this tree are the nine essences – the esoteric, fearsome, heroic, terrific, comic, etc.

– Uma Sahasram

There is a village called Valangaiman near the holy city of Kumbhakonam in Tamil Nadu. Certain Vadama brahmin families of this village had migrated to the Andhra areas a few hundred years back. They settled themselves in the Godavari River basin. As they came from Dravida country (Tamil Nadu), they were called Dravida Brahmins.

Among them, the family line, 'Ayala Somayajulas', who are the descendants of the rishis, Vasishta, Mitraravarna and Kaundinya were very famous. Ayala Somayajula Vissanna was the founder of this line. They acquired the title of Nawab through their activity. One of his sons, Ellanna, and his branches went to the east and settled down in Vijayanagaram, Bobbili, Sitanagaram, Parvatipuram and Palakonda Taluks.



Chapter 5

THE CURE

योगिनो बोधयन्तीमां । योगेन नियतव्रताः ।
सर्वार्पकस्य देहे सा । स्वयमेव समुल्लसेत् ॥

O Mother! Yogis surrendering themselves totally take refuge in Thee, get Thy guidance through yoga and are steady in meditation on Thee. Thou shinest in them as Yourself in all glory.

– Prachanada Chandi Trisati

Those great souls who are born for a purpose do not manifest themselves with striking emblems. They move around among people as ordinary men. When needed, they manifest their powers unassumingly under particular circumstances. Bhagavan Sri Ramana was a simple boy called Venkataraman, until he had the death experience at the age of sixteen. No one knew the cause of that experience. It must be understood as God's will.

There are some siddhas who are absolutely silent, sitting in inaccessible places, and there others who exhibit strange behaviour. Whether they are always in the state of yoga or not, none but themselves know. Hence our elders say that only a realized soul can recognize another realized soul.

Surya Ganapati was a normal child up to his sixth year. The only defect in him was that he would not speak. He

understood what was spoken, but would not reply and not even call his mother 'Amma'. He was not interested in either play or study, or even food. He had to be forced to do anything needful. The boy used to sit silent with closed eyes most of the time. Sometimes he used to lose outward consciousness. The body would get warm at times, without any apparent cause. This condition of the child naturally worried his parents.

When someone opined that he was dumb and someone else that he was perhaps epileptic, the mother felt extremely sad. Nrisimha Sastry also could not understand this condition of his son. As there were no symptoms of any disease whatsoever, Sastry wanted to try one of the cures described in medicine for neuro-cleaning. He heated a piece of turmeric and applied it on the temple of the boy where 'Amritanadi' is located.

After this treatment, the boy started to articulate, and said, 'Amma!' for the first time. Narasamamba's joy knew no bounds when she heard her son call her name. Now pure speech, fine and poetic, gushed forth from the boy's mouth. This flow of pure speech made people wonder if the boy was not a great scholar. The goddess of speech danced on his tongue. 'If what ailed the boy till now was only epilepsy, this treatment would not have brought about such a scholarly fluency,' thought the father.

Later when Nrisimha Sastry had darshan of Bhagavan Sri Ramana, he understood that the treatment he gave to the boy in his childhood was faulty and felt his mistake was grievous. His granddaughter, Visalakshi, described his

feelings in her book, *Vasishta Vijayam*. Sastry must have disturbed the yoga of his son. “Yogis sometimes behave like children, mad people and pisachas,” so say the elders. However, the wonderful boy became a poet par excellence.

Chapter 6

EDUCATION

Maharshi Satyavachas, son of Radhitara, declared that the Truth is the most glorious thing. Maharshi Paurusishti, son of Purusishti, declared tapas to be the greatest thing to be achieved. Maharshi Naaka, son of Mudgala, considered Swadhyaya and Pravachana (study and dissemination of Knowledge) to be the highest goal to attain.

Study (Swadhyaya) and teaching (Pravachana) are the basis of relationship between the teacher and the taught. A great saint who was studying the Vedas wished and prayed for another birth to continue his study of the Vedas. So, education (Vidya) means quite a prolonged sadhana. Sri C. D. Deshmukh, a great administrator and scholar, said that Sri Ganapati Muni was the last in the line of the great traditional Sanskrit poets. Sanskrit is called the language of the gods because one can understand the Vedic culture only through the study of Sanskrit.

Foreign rule and the influence of foreign missionaries and other religions have alienated the people of India from the Vedas, Vedic culture and also Sanskrit. During the British rule, by the impact of English education and its influence, foreign culture has seeped into the life style of Indians. Ganapati Muni's father, Sri Nrisimha Sastry, had profound love of Sanskrit and Telugu languages and a sincere belief

in the gurukula educational system. His love for the spiritual traditions and ancient culture of India was no less. The tradition was to perform upanayanam, give mantradiksha to the student and then leave him in a gurukula (educational centre). At the gurukula, tapas was also a part of the curriculum. The Vedas declare:

तपश्च स्वाध्याय प्रवचने च दमश्च स्वाध्याय प्रवचनेच

tapashcha svadhyaya pravachane cha
damashcha svadyaya pravachanecha

Penance and self-control (result) from self-study and teaching.

Nrisimha Sastry had great foresight. So he performed Surya Ganapati's upanayanam and gave him the Gayatri Mantra and also the twelve mantras. Thus the father became the first Guru to Ganapati.

Sri Ganapati Muni later proclaimed that tapas is a method of education. In 1927, Ganapati Muni gave a Presidential address at the Silver Jubilee celebrations of Sri Krishna Devaraya Bhasha Nilaya, in which he elaborated on the need for tapas for the student of languages. The following is the gist of the lecture.

There are two methods of linguistic knowledge. One is learning the language methodically and the other is by doing tapas. The great writers in both Telugu and Sanskrit have mastered the language of their choice by doing tapas intensely and produced many masterpieces in those languages. By the power of tapas the paravak (the greatest source of the Word) in the muladhara gets activated and showers its grace on the devotees. Thus graced by the

paravak the devotee becomes irrefutable in all fields of knowledge. Though I have a very good opinion of regular and methodical study, I have more trust and belief in tapas. A person who has done tapas for a few months has more power of the word and is more knowledgeable than one who has studied systematically for years together. The library of the muladhara is a bigger and vaster one than the greatest library in the world. The muladhara library is locked. The lock is called brahmagranthi. Tapas is the only key to open this lock. So, every student and every poet has to do some tapas of repetition of a mantra and try to open this brahmagranthi lock. At the end of the tapas the library which holds the knowledge of the whole universe opens itself to the tapasvi.

As there were no gurukulas as of old, Ganapati was sent to his uncle Prakasa Sastry to learn both the Sanskrit and Telugu languages. Ganapati had a photographic memory and could learn anything taught only once. He would retain it and later repeat it perfectly. He also became proficient in the basics texts – *Amaram*, *Balaramayanam* and *Siva Sahasram* – before he completed his eighth year.

Ganapati learnt astrology from his father and at the same time discovered a unique method of calculating a calendar of the year. He prepared a special calendar in his ninth year.

The boy Ganapati possessed the power of prediction since his childhood. He could foretell exactly whatever anybody wanted to know about their future. This surprised one and all, and people from far and near came to him for

predictions. Ganapati's fame spread in all the four corners of the region in no time. Ganapati was also a leader in sports. He excelled in swimming, cards and chess. When a pack of cards were distributed among the players he would know exactly what the other players had in their hands.

Even before completing ten years of age, Ganapati became proficient in the fields of grammar and logic. He started composing poetry in Sanskrit. Seeing his gift in composing verses, his Gurus, Prakasa Sastry, Venkateswara Sastry and Venkateswara Ghanapathi wanted to test the boy. They asked him to compose in verse form on the subject of the birth of both the Pandavas and Kauravas, within 48 minutes.

Ganapati composed the story on the subject in 34 minutes at the rate of one verse a minute. The Gurus were wonderstruck at his erudition and blessed him from their hearts. Ganapati also composed a Khanda Kavya, *Sukanya Charitam*, in his childhood, which delighted the heart of his father.

Education in a gurukula was holistic. Along with various subjects, ethical values were also taught and inculcated in the pupils.

Chapter 7

AWAKENING

गणपतये स्तनघटयोः पदकमले सप्तलोकभक्तेभ्यः ।
अधरपुटे त्रिपुरजिते ददासि पीयूषमम्ब त्वम् ॥ 3-11-20

O Mother Divine! Thou givest nectar to the son Ganapati through Thy breast, amritam through the dust of Thy lotus feet, to the seven worlds who have surrendered to thee, and rasa through Thy glorious lips, to Siva who conquered the three worlds.

– Uma Sahasram

Amrita is the opposite of mrita, death. Because there cannot be death to knowledge, knowledge is deemed amrita. Arts are created out of knowledge and hence arts are also amrita. Makarandam is the experience of the rasa in any art. The power of knowledge emanating from the 'Chit' power of the Divine Mother, manifests itself through the mind and intellect of individuals as art. The people who experience the rasa of art enjoy the makarandam.

As is described in the sloka quoted above, Ganapati has declared that as he was the son of the Divine Mother, he was receiving knowledge from the Divine Mother's breast, as the milk of sustenance.

Sri Sivapadahridaya Pillaiyar was a resident of the town Sriyali. His wife Bhagavati gave birth to a son named Aludai

Pillaiyar. When the boy was three years old, the father took him to the temple of Tiruttoniappar. He made the child sit in a corner on the steps of the temple tank and, while repeating Aghamarshana Mantram, entered the tank to bathe. As the child could not see the father because he was dipping his head underwater in the tank, he started crying loudly, "Appa, Amma (Father! Mother!).” The Divine couple, Siva and Parvati, the deities of the temple, heard the cry of the child. Siva asked Parvati to give him milk from her breast. The child who drank the milk of knowledge from Parvati Devi’s breast immediately started to compose and sing divine poetry. The child was Jnana Sambandhar, who was also called Dravida Sisu.

This is how the Divine Mother conferred grace on that boy. She blessed Ganapati also in the same manner, and Ganapati began to compose nectar like poetry from his early childhood. He received the nectarine grace of the Divine Mother through his own mother’s milk. Since the time when Surya Ganapati entered the womb of Narasamamba she became a great devotee of the Lord and a storehouse of spiritual knowledge. She adored this child, considered his birth as a boon from God, and her love for him was more spiritual than mundane.

God awakens the hearts of those who are born for divine purposes. They will not be bound to a mundane life. King Suddhodana tried to restrict his son Gautama to the pleasures of kingly riches, but one hour’s journey through the town opened his eyes to the evanescent nature of the world and made him one of the greatest spiritual

personalities of all times (Buddha). Similarly, the time was ripe to awaken the heart of the boy Ganapati.

On October 12th 1888, Mother Narasamamba was stitching leaf plates inside the veranda of the house. Ganapati was sitting nearby reading a book. Mother was then in full pregnancy, expecting delivery at any time. She was very tired and weak. As she was reserved in her manners, she did not tell anybody about her weakened condition. Suddenly she called out “Suryam!”. Ganapati responded without his eyes leaving the book.

“Is today auspicious for the delivery of a son?” the mother asked Ganapati who was famous for prophecy.

Though the son did not understand the purport of the mother’s anxious question, without lifting his eyes from his book, he replied very casually, “If there is going to be a delivery, twins will be born and the mother and children will die.”

Ganapati’s uncle, Prakash Sastry, who was within hearing range of this conversation was stunned at the reply of his nephew to the mother’s query. He knew the condition of Narasamamba and the cause of her question. He took his nephew to task for replying so heartlessly and casually to his mother. Tears shimmered in the eyes of the innocent boy.

But the mother, whose faith and devotion to God was unshakable, knew and accepted God’s will in her own life. She understood that her son, in his innocence, proclaimed only the inevitable and she embraced him with tears of joy.

The word of the child was the will of God. Narasamamba gave birth to twins in the evening and left her mortal coil

along with the twins. The happy family was now submerged in sorrow.

The house soon filled with relatives and some of them scolded the boy for his unseemly prediction. The boy did not take to heart these scoldings because his mind became withdrawn at this unforeseen tragedy. He began to contemplate on the extreme sorrow that the death of a loved one can produce. He asked himself, 'What was this entity that left the body of my mother? If life is so short, what is the greatest achievement to aspire for?' Ganapati had now become a seeker of Truth. The holy life and the death of his mother became the first spiritual lesson to awaken Ganapati to seek the Reality.

The flute which was giving out divine music till then became mute and silence alone reigned.

Chapter 8

HITOPADESA

ब्रह्माण्डे यावदस्तीह हृदितावच्च विद्यते ।
व्यष्टेरनुभवो यावांस्ततो मनसि नाधिकम् ॥

All that which is contained in the cosmos is in the heart. All that which a person experiences resides in his mind. Hence, he who has intuitive knowledge can know everything.

– Viswamimamsa

Elders say that he who sees the whole world as one, has no need of any external symbols, like the wearing of the sacred thread. A real seer has to be steady in the knowledge of his Self. This knowledge is called 'Prajna' or consciousness. This Prajna can be attained by fixing the mind in the heart. The light of mental cognizance is limited. It cannot give anything more than personal experience. Only when this steadiness in the Self is achieved can a man become a 'Krantadarshi', knower of the beyond. Only such a one can be a true poet. He who does not get involved in the knowledge of the past, present and the future and is dedicated to the Divine Mother engaging himself in extolling Her divine qualities, can manifest them in pure, glorious words. This is the knowledge that Ganapati gained after the death of his mother.

ममत्तु विमला हृद्या विद्या महेश्वरि याऽभव-
 न्मनसि च परा चित्रा शक्तिश्चिरन्तनि याऽभवत् ।
 वचसि च महद्भाग्यं श्लाघ्यं यदीड्यतमेऽभवत्
 तदयि गलितं मत्तो वित्तत्रयं भवतो भुवि ॥ 9-34-12

O Mother! I previously had 'Hridaya Vidya'. I had great, lasting and glorious power. There was grandeur in my word. Alas, since I am born on this earth, I have lost all these three treasures.

– Uma Sahasram

Ganapati was still observing silence, even after two months after his mother's death. He was meditating all the time on the Divine Mother and would not show any interest in play or studies. He always sought solitude and seemed to be searching for some goal. People thought that the boy was still grieving over his mother's death. Some thought that he was angry at the scolding he got. It was Prakash Sastry who scolded him most. Hence Sastry started to cajole Ganapati with soft words, but these kind words were met with silence. Ganapati heard with a sweet humility all the consolation that Sastry was giving, but would not open his mouth.

Nrisimha Sastry was dispirited due to the loss of his wife in the prime of her life. He was 43 years old when he had to face this great calamity. Added to this sorrow, his son Ganapati began to behave strangely. Sastry faced all these difficulties with extreme composure.

Until the age of ten, Ganapati continued in this silent mood. Now he had passed his childhood and entered

boyhood, and was a little wiser. So, Sastry hoped that the boy would now listen to him if he spoke softly. He wanted to elicit from Ganapati what was troubling him. One day, after lunch, Sastry called Ganapati to him and gently asked him what his problem was.

Sastry: "Ganapati, dear son, it is two months since your mother left her mortal coil. Since that time you have become moody and silent. How long are you going to continue in this mood? Your teachers are waiting for you to resume your studies. Why do you not cast off your sorrowful mood and resume your studies?"

Ganapati lifted his face and looked steadily at his father with all humility, but would not reply.

Sastry: "Are you angry because people have scolded you? How can you be blamed for your mother's death? Whatever had to happen, happened. If you become cheerful once again, my heart will rejoice."

Ganapati did not know what to reply. He did not know his own mind. He knew the predicament of the father. He did not want to break the silence. So, he went on listening to his father in silence. The persistent obduracy of the son angered the father.

Sastry: (in a harsh tone) "Silence is the attitude of rishis and tapswins. The silence they observe is tapas, it is yoga. You are not like them. You are still living a mundane life. Your attitude is one of obstinacy. This is the quality of unwise people."

The word 'tapas' that issued out of the father's mouth must be father's message, thought the son. This then is the

method to be followed in the search for Truth. Ganapati, at last, understood the purpose of his life. So, he prostrated to the Divine Mother in his heart, and with a beaming face broke his silence. He told his father: "Dear father! I want to perform tapas. Please bless me."

At this strange request of the son, Sastry remembered the ancient story of the five year old Dhruva. Suniti and Suruchi were the two wives of King Uttanapada. Once Suruchi's son Uttama was being fondled by the King, while the mother stood by enjoying the good fortune of her child. Dhruva, the son of Suniti entered at that moment and seeing his step-brother being fondled in the lap of the father wanted to be fondled like his brother. When the boy expressed his desire, Suruchi spoke to him in harsh words, saying that one, born from the womb of an unfortunate woman, should not hope for the good fortune of sitting on his father's lap. If Dhruva wanted to enjoy the glory of sitting on the lap of his father like Uttama, he had better do tapas, propitiate the Lord Vishnu, and get the desire fulfilled by being born to her.

The child Dhruva got extremely hurt, and being a Kshatriya, could not accept the insult. So he decided to do tapas to propitiate the Lord and set out for the forest. Seeing the determination of the child, Maharshi Narada appeared to him on the way and told him, "Tapas is a great auspicious yajna and should not be used for paltry purposes. Children should be beyond praise and insult and must rise above them." The sage thus tried to pacify Dhruva. But the child would not be diverted from his purpose and asked the sage

to bless him and show the way to fulfilment. Finally, sage Narada gave a mantra of Vishnu to Dhruva.

After performing severe tapas for six months Dhruva had the darshan of Lord Vishnu. Dhruva folded his hands with great devotion and wanted to praise the Lord, but being only a child of five, was not able to praise the Lord. Lord Vishnu understood the inability of the child and touched his head with His conch. At this touch, Divine words of praise issued forth from the child's mouth and the Lord gave him the boon granting his desire. Because of the touch of the divine conch, Dhruva later got his eyes opened and felt sad at his own stupidity in asking for mundane things when the Lord Himself appeared before him.

A person should be pure and spiritually ripe to perform an auspicious thing like tapas. Tapas prompted by a momentary impulse of renunciation does not give any lasting good.

Ganapati was also a child like Dhruva. He must first become a tapasvin in the field of studies. His studies must be utilized for the upliftment of humanity. He might afterwards become a spiritual giant by performing great tapas.

Nrisimha Sastry knew the workings of his son's mind. So, he advised the child to first master his studies and later, when he grew up sufficiently, he could think of tapas. Ganapati understood his father's advice and gave up his attitude of silence and thus pleased his father. Now the boy started paying full attention to studies.

Chapter 9

MARRIAGE

श्रीखण्डचर्चामिव कल्पयन्त्यो मुहुः कपोलेषु सखीजनस्य ।
श्रीकण्ठकान्ताहसिताङ्कुराणां श्रीमन्ति कुर्वन्तु जगन्ति भासः ॥
2-5-1

May the brilliant waves of light from the beautiful smiles of Parvati (Siva's consort), which always spread like white Chandana paste on the cheeks of her friends, make the worlds prosperous.

– Uma Sahasram

Here is described how Mother Uma smiles at the time of her marriage with Siva. In this pure soft and delicate poem, the author has described the smiles of Uma, in a rare poetical simile, comparing them with white chandana paste. The qualities of this sandalwood paste are purity, pleasurable and beauty. Parvati's smiles fascinate Siva, who conquered the god of desire, Kama. Chandana paste increases the fire of desire. The inspiration for the thought of marriage which arose in Siva, the Lord of the universe, was the smile of Parvati. It is a rare simile, compared with the paste of sandalwood.

Jaya and Vijaya are the bosom friends of Parvati. The light of her smiles spreads on their cheeks like chandana paste. This description brings out in innuendo that the

cheeks of Jaya and Vijaya appear like the flags of the success of Parvati's smiles. The poet prays to the Mother to spread that glory on the whole world and make it prosperous.

As Ganapati had such great ability to describe the Mother's marital glory, Mother Parvati appears to have made him adopt a householder's life so that he might have the right perspective of marital life. The boy who was incessantly thinking of only tapas was wedded to a girl who was both beautiful and humble.

In the taluq of Bobbili, there is a village called Bommikapadu, at a little distance from Ganapati's village, Kaluvarai. Visalakshi was the only daughter of an orthodox brahmin named Karra Bhushana Sarma, a resident of Bommikapadu. She was fair and good-looking, with large brilliant eyes. Her horoscope foretold that she would become the wife of a great rishi. Visalakshi's father, who was searching for such an ideal youth, happened to hear of the extraordinary poetic talent and rare intellect of Ganapati. So Bhushana Sarma went to Kaluvarai to offer Visalakshi to Ganapati in marriage.

Nrisimha Sastry received Visalakshi's father with all honour and both of them studied the horoscopes of the boy and the girl. As the horoscopes matched perfectly, they agreed to get them married.

Ganapati, when he heard of his father's intention of getting him married, asked him whether marriage was not a hurdle to tapas. His father answered, "No, boy, marriage is not proscribed in the tradition of the rishis. The ancient rishis were mostly householders and they did tapas also.

There is no indication of sannyas in your horoscope. Therefore, you may get married and observe the tradition of the rishis.”

Ganapati had great faith in astrology and he knew that his horoscope did not show that he would become a renunciate during any period of his life. So, he let his father decide the issue of his marriage.

It was then customary for a girl to be married in her eighth year. The sloka, “*Ashta Varsha bhavet Kanya . . .*” describes this custom. Accordingly, Visalakshi of eight years was married to Ganapati who was in his twelfth year.

It turned out that in later years Ganapati never advocated renunciation. Even his son was advised to get married when he wanted to start on the path of tapas. The Theosophical Society wanted to groom Mahadeva, Ganapati’s son, as a Vedapurusha, like lord Krishna, by making him an adept in Mantra, Tantra and Yoga methods. Ganapati rejected the proposal outright.

Even after the death of Visalakshi, Ganapati did not adopt sannyas. His belief was that tapasvins should also be involved in the welfare of the society. The two books, *Sadacharabodhini* and *Karma Sutras*, exemplify his attitude towards society.

Chapter 10

LITERARY GLORY

वन्दामहे महादेवं यस्य वन्दारवो जनाः ।
नविन्दति पुनर्मातुः कुच कुम्भ पयोरसं ॥

I salute Mahadeva, by prostrating before whom, man is not born again to drink the milk of a mother's breast.

– Early poems of Ganapati

In the field of literary achievement, education is a necessary process. Only a few can excel in this, as true aspiration is a rare thing. If a student wants to become established in the world of literature, he must have a fearless attitude and probe to the root of the subject at hand. He must have an independent and analytical approach, an unbiased critical appreciation, and a thorough mastery of linguistic nuances to become a perfect student.

Ganapati completed the study of the five great poetical works in Sanskrit (*Pancha Kavyas*) in his fifteenth year. He studied *Champu Ramayanam*, *Kuvalayananda*, *Pratapa Rudriyam* and many more great works in Sanskrit literature and got a thorough command of the divine language. He developed a special style of his own and was praised by great scholars. Since his childhood, Ganapati had held the opinion that poetry should cater to the changing needs of the society and literature should promote the welfare of society.

Orthodox poetic rules and regulations should not limit it. With this attitude in mind, Ganapati, in his fourteenth year, threw a challenge to the literary world: "If this, my poetry, does not cater to the pleasure of some inept minds, what do I lose? Does a cuckoo sing for the pleasure of a crow?"

This was not a pronouncement made in ire at somebody's adverse comment of his poetry. It is only the declaration of his independent thought, the outcome of his revolutionary approach. If Ganapati had the courage to point out the inadequacies in Puranas and epics, it was due to his independent nature and his intense desire to serve society. In one of the sittings of the Indian National Congress meetings, Ganapati met Gandhiji and expressed his opinion that it would be greatly beneficial to the nation if Sanskrit could be made the official language. Gandhiji expressed his doubt about the feasibility of Ganapati's proposal, as only very few people knew the language. At this, Ganapati took up the task of making Sanskrit easy to learn and created a simplified Sanskrit called "Laalibhasha" and presented it to the elders of the Congress. They were wonder struck at this undaunted spirit of Ganapati.

Ganapati once wrote the poem, "Bhringa Sandesam" in the mode of Kalidasa's "Megha Sandesam," choosing his wife's long plaits of hair as the messenger, but destroyed it afterwards.

The influence of the poet Kalidasa and Sri Sankara is very much evident in Ganapati's works. Spiritual thought embossed in beautiful poetry is the method nearest to his heart. He followed in the footsteps of Sankara to delineate

the subject of his choice. His great devotion to these glorious gods of poetry can be understood by these tributes he paid to them:

कृपावलोको नगकन्यकायाः करोतु मे निर्मलमन्तरङ्गम् ।
येनाङ्कितः शङ्कर एकतत्त्वं विश्वं लुलोके जगते जगौ च ॥

4-13-3

May that merciful look of the Divine Mother, which Sri Sankara became dedicated to, and which transformed the whole universe into a single being, purify my innermost heart.

कालीकटाक्षो वचनानि मह्यं ददातु मोचामदमोचनानि ।
यत्पातपूतं रघुवंशकारं नराकृतिं प्राहरजस्य नारीम् ॥

4-13-4

May that gracious look of the Divine Mother Kali, which made the world of scholars declare Kalidasa, the author of 'Raghuvamsa', a glorious incarnation of Mother Saraswati, the Goddess of wisdom, endow me with the poetry which purifies all sinful utterances.
— Uma Sahasram

During his adolescent period (ages 14 to 18), Ganapati completed the Sanskrit grammar treatise, *Siddhanta Kaumudi* and studied at the State Government School in Bobbili town. He studied both grammar and prosody under a famous scholar in Logisa Agraharam, the village of his maternal grandfather. He also read the Puranas and epics of Vyasa and Valmiki and acquired the ability to give discourses on them.

Ganapati's wife Visalakshi joined him at this time. Understanding her husband's ideals, she assisted him in all

his projects with her whole heart and soul. Nrisimha Sastry and other family members felt immensely happy at Visalakshi's amiable nature and sweet behaviour.

Chapter 11

AN UNFRUITFUL EFFORT

विज्ञानि यन्मुहुरिदं च मनश्चलं यत्
सौख्यं नकिञ्चदपि यद्यदुपर्यसौख्यं ।
त्वा माश्रितस्य च ममाखिल लोक राज्ञि
मत्तः परो जगति को मनुजेषु कल्की ॥

O Empress of the worlds! In spite of surrendering my heart and soul to Thee, my efforts are still unfruitful. My mind wavers all the time. Is there any one more unfortunate and sinful than I?

– Uma Satakam

Ganapati left Dusi and reached Tekkali village. The excessive strain of the journey made him very weak. He was hungry. He stood before a house and begged for food. The mistress of the house saw his pitiable condition, but at that moment there were only a few morsels of food left over from the previous meal. She thought a few minutes and as Ganapati was only a boy, she decided she could serve him with that food. She fed him with all love this small quantity of food. Ganapati quickly consumed it and lay down to sleep on the floor of the verandah of the house. Laying there he began to reminisce.

‘It was now two months since I left home. Visalakshi had gone to her parent’s house to perform an austerity,

during the month of Sravanam and I, along with my elder brother Bhima Sastry and a friend Venkateswara Sastry, went to the city of Rajamahendravaram to perform tapas. After about four days' stay Bhima Sastry could not withstand the strain of tapas and went home. Now only Venkateswara Sastry remains as my companion. We both looked for a suitable place for tapas, but could not find one in that crowded city of pilgrimage.'

Reflecting in this manner, Ganapati gradually glided into a peaceful sleep. At about 7 p.m. the landlord finished his dinner and came out holding a lantern in his hand. He saw Ganapati clearly in the light of the lamp. As the light got focused on him, Ganapati woke up. The landlord offered him dinner. Ganapati was not feeling hungry as he had a late meal. Just then, two persons bound for Varanasi came and joined them. Ganapati was thinking of travelling to that place also. Hearing this the two visitors felt happy that they had another fellow traveller to join them on their journey.

Then they opened a pack of cards and started playing a game. While Ganapati and the other guests bound for Kasi were playing cards, the other end of the veranda was occupied by some elderly people and the landlord. Ramadas, the landlord, gave some horoscopes to be perused to an elderly man among them. The astrologer was giving out the results of his reading. Ganapati who was on the other side of the veranda heard these readings and as he found them defective, blurted out that the astrologer did not know anything of astrology. The old man naturally got angry and challenged the lad to give the proper readings of the

horoscopes, if he could. Ganapati studied the horoscopes and gave out the readings easily and perfectly. The landlord Ramadas saw that the boy was no ordinary person and regretted that they fed him with left over rice. He asked Ganapati to stay for a few days in their village, but, as Ganapati had good company for his journey to Kasi, he declined the offer of Ramadas.

The next morning, Venkateswara Sastry returned home and the three pilgrims started early for their destination. Ramadas and the old astrologer were there to see them off. Ramadas told something aside to the astrologer. The old man accompanied the pilgrims up to Nandigramma village and made arrangements for their boarding and lodging in a choultry.

In that village, there lived a great scholar called Achyuta Rama Sastry. The old astrologer introduced Ganapati to A. R. Sastry. Sastry was very much surprised to see Ganapati, as he had a dream the previous night of an elephant entering the choultry. He was now facing such a bright lad who called himself Ganapati (the elephant-faced God, son of Mother Parvati). Sastry was immensely pleased to know of Ganapati's prowess in astrology and took him to the house of Sri Krishnama Naidu and introduced the boy to him.

Though Krishnama Naidu was very prosperous, he had been suffering from ill-health for a long time. He had two wives, but no progeny and consequently there was no joy in his house. Krishnama Naidu lovingly greeted Ganapati and asked him to read his horoscope and tell him what was wrong in it. Ganapati carefully studied the horoscope and

told Krishnama Naidu that his ailment would continue for three more months and after that he would be healthy and have a son by his second wife. Ganapati also told Naidu that he would also adopt a boy. Extremely pleased and relieved of his worries, Naidu pleaded with Ganapati to stay in Nandigrama until he recovered from his illness. Out of compassion Ganapati agreed to the proposal.

Ganapati enjoyed the hospitality of Naidu and made himself lovable to all and sundry by daily exhibiting his various talents. He participated in literary discussions, played chess adeptly with four people at the same time, recited poems both backward and forward, read out any page stipulated before a book that was thrown into the air hit the ground. With Ganapati's various exploits, Naidu's home rang with joy and jubilation. Thus three months passed in a trice and Naidu recovered from his illness. At the end of the three months, Naidu called Ganapati to him and told him that he had sent word to Ganapati's father and within a day or two he would arrive to take Ganapati home.

Naidu said, "Ganapati! You have divine knowledge. I am blessed by your sojourn in my village. You are still quite young. Why should you think of going to Varanasi now? Please go home with your father. If you wish to do tapas anytime, I will send you Rs.50 per year and help you in any other way you want. There is ample time for you to engage in tapas. Please heed my advice and go home with your father."

The next day Nrisimha Sastry arrived in Nandigrama and Ganapati agreed to go home with him.

Chapter 12

BHADRAKA

भद्रतर मूर्ति भद्रतम कीर्ति ।
रुद्र तनयं तं गायत महान्तम् ॥

*Sing the glory of the great Ganapati, son of Lord Siva,
who has a resplendent form and the most auspicious fame.*

– Ganapati Gitam

Whenever any new project was taken up, Gandhiji used to offer it to Sri Ram, praying that though the initiative was his, the result was Sri Ram's. He thus used to do all work with a dispassionate attitude. Great ones work in this manner, and whatever is done is attributed to the Will of God.

Tapas is usually undertaken with a desire for Liberation. But Ganapati said he did not desire Liberation. His sole prayer was for the well-being and liberation of his country. From his childhood Ganapati's sole aim was to see his country liberated from foreign rule. The tapas he did was for this end.

Though his first attempt fizzled out, he neither despaired nor gave up this ideal. Actually, his desire for tapas increased. His father did not want to discourage him, but tried to advise him on the proper method of action. He said, "Son, tapas is sacred. A propitious time must arrive for commencing tapas. Simply going to holy places and banks

of rivers and seas will not suffice. There must be God's grace. There is no use in getting frustrated or agitated about it. Please be calm and leave the issue in the hands of the gods Ganapati and Suryanarayana who gave you this birth. In the meantime, you can start by performing the Sri Chakra Puja. You know that our family worships the Mother in the Sri Vidya method. I will initiate you into this method and the mantram. You can participate in the worship done at our home."

Sastry initiated his son with the mantra of Maha Ganapati. Accepting his father's advice, Ganapati started performing the Sri Chakra puja. This turned out to be the seed that sprouted into the grand tree of tapas in the life of Ganapati.

Sri Vidya is also called Atma Vidya and Chandra Vidya. The Supreme Power is worshipped as the Divine Mother and the Supreme Self. This worship is of three modes – Kaula, Samaya and Misrama. The sages Sanat Kumara, Vasishtha and Sri Suka followed the Samaya method. The word Samaya means 'He is with me'. This is not different from the dual concept of God. Sri Sankara describes this method in his composition "Soundarya Lahari". The Kundalini Shakti has to be awakened in the muladhara chakra and taken up to the sahasrara after passing through the six chakras that are situated between these two. Ultimately, Ganapati Muni got the kapala bheda siddhi (the power to break open the cranium for release from the power of bondage) by following this method. The method of the ascension of the kundalini to sahasrara has been described by the Muni in "Guru Gitam" as follows:

आधारे धृतमूलं हादाब्जे कृतवासं ।
शीर्षाब्जाय वहद्यत् पश्चात् इन्द्रिय शक्तै ॥

That Shakti which is rooted firmly in the muladhara chakra, resides in the anahata chakra in the heart and ascending to sahasrara in the head descends to occupy all the five senses. This is the pranava form of the Shakti. May it inspire me through the name of Sri Ramana. — *Guru Gitam*

यातायात विहारै राधारेषुच शीर्षे ।
संचारं विदधानं किञ्चा शेष विसारि ॥

May that Shakti which moves in and out in the six chakras and pervades everything inspire me through the name of Sri Ramana. — *Guru Gitam*

अवतरणं ध्यातं चेद् आरोहण मद्भुतं भवेच्छक्तेः ।
यस्मिन्निदं शरीरं भवति महावैद्युताग्रियन्त्रमिव ॥ 1-4-10

He who meditates on this power which ascends and descends in the spinal cord experiences this power as the vibration of an extremely powerful electric motor. — *Uma Sahasram*

It was Navaratri time in the year 1897 A.D. The worship of the Divine Mother started on the first day of the lunar month Aswayujam in the house of Nrisimha Sastry. All the residents of the village used to visit the house to partake of the prasadam and tirtham. On the platform, a Sri Chakra Yantra of light pink shade was installed and worshipped. This yantra is considered to be the form of the Divine Mother. That year the worshipper was Ganapati, whose face shone with a divine lustre. He stayed in a transcendental state during the puja.

On the full-moon day the worship was completed. After undergoing the great strain of fifteen days of austerity, Ganapati was very tired and lay down to relax.

“Ganapati! Ganapati!” Somebody was calling him in an extremely soft, loving voice. He opened his eyes and looked around. He saw a luminous form stepping out of the altar. It stood near him. Ganapati saluted the peaceful, hefty form with folded hands. He looked like an ancient Rishi with a long white flowing beard. Then Ganapati respectfully asked him who he was.

“I am Bhadraka,” replied the form. Ganapati looked at him steadily for a few minutes.

Ganapati: “Might that be the son of Mother Parvati?”

“Yes, of course,” Bhadraka replied.

Ganapati: “Lord! I am blessed by your gracious presence. Please bless me.”

Bhadraka then told Ganapati: “Go and visit the pilgrim centre Nasika, in the state of Maharashtra, and do tapas there. Lord Siva will bless you with many boons.”

Ganapati was pleased beyond words and prostrated before Bhadraka, who then disappeared. Ganapati related this experience to his father and started for Nasika on 18-11-1897 A.D.

Chapter 13

THE PURIFICATION OF NASIKA

निज विषयपरं वित्तं शिवचरण परं चित्तं ।
इह जगति सतां येषां जयति चरितमेतेषां ॥

Those fortunate men are praiseworthy who have the wherewithal to live and are devoted to Lord Siva.

— Siva Sahasram

Nasik is a holy place in the state of Maharashtra. It is near the Brahmagiri Mountain and a pilgrim centre of great fame.

When Sri Rama, along with his brother and wife, was staying in Panchavati, Surpanakha, the sister of Ravana, approached and asked Rama to wed her. Sri Rama in a joking mood asked her to go and ask Lakshmana as he was unmarried at that time. Lakshmana also was in the same mood and asked her to go back to Rama. Rama told her that he already had Sita for a wife and so he could not marry her. Enraged at this treatment, Surpanakha shouted that if Sita was the hindrance she would devour Sita. Sensing that the situation was getting out of control, Sri Rama asked Lakshmana to chop off Surpanakha's nose and ears. Lakshmana did accordingly. The place where Surpanakha's nose fell was called 'Nasika'. It became a pilgrim centre later on. There is a temple for Lakshmana in Nasik.

At a distance of twenty-five kilometres from Nasik, there is a famous pilgrim centre called Tryambakam. The idol of this place is Lord Siva. It is one of the twelve famous Jyotirlingas in India. There is a big tank in this place called Kusavartanam. Brahmagiri Mountain is the source of the great river Godavari in South India. This river was brought into existence from the world of light (Dyuloka) by the sage Gautama and so it is also called Gautami, the daughter of Gautama. Godavari's flow is placid in this place. Many people take up residence there to perform tapas.

Mystics say that Brahmagiri is the Brahmarandhra, Kusavarata is Sahasrara and the place of Triputi is Tryambakam. When Ganapati reached Nasik an epidemic of smallpox had broken out. People who wanted to enter Nasik were quarantined until the resident doctor certified them as healthy. So Ganapati was stuck in the place of quarantine for the first few days. The owner of the house in which the quarantined people were lodged was a lover of scholars. Ganapati introduced himself to him and impressed him with his erudition.

In the evening as dusk arrived, nature started to show its soothing face. Ganapati who had been confined to the quarantined building, came out into the open space. He saw the moon shining with her enchanting smile and recalled the famous sloka from Kalidasa's "Raghuvamsa," describing the scene when King Aja was departing to attend the Swayamvara of Princess Indumati: "*Nidra... Vijahati Chandrah.*"

When King Aja was on the way to the Swayamvara, dusk fell. The moon rose and Aja slept in his tent. The vaitalikas (heralds) sang the following sloka to awaken him:

निद्रावशेन भवताप्यनवेक्षमाणा
पर्युत्सुकत्व मबला निशि खण्डितेव ।
लक्ष्मी विनोदयति येन दिगन्तलम्बी
सोऽपि त्वदानमरुचिं विजहाति चन्द्रः ॥

The face of a King, the Moon and the lotus are the favourite abodes of Lakshmi (beauty). Now the king who has slept favoured the lady Sleep, and Lakshmi got jealous and went to stay with the Moon and was comforted. But, alas, now even the Moon is waning. So, O King! if you wake up, Lakshmi will come back to stay in your face. Please be kind to Lakshmi.

There is a poetic pun in this. A lady angered at her lover's inattention leaves the house, but comes back later. The lover has to condone his darling's angry mood and take her again to his bosom.

The owner of the quarantine building heard this beautiful sloka melodiously sung under the moonlight by Ganapati. He understood the innuendo in the sloka, but out of mischief he asked Ganapati how a husband could accept a woman who has gone to another man's house.

Without a moment's hesitation, Ganapati replied: "The Moon who was born from the same ocean of milk along with Lakshmi was her own brother and not any other man. So the objection should not be raised. When a woman is in

distress, it is but natural to resort to her parent's home." The owner of the building was pleased with this explanation and told Ganapati, "Please send your Lakshmi of poetry home and sleep. Tomorrow I will release you."

The next day Ganapati came out of quarantine and roamed throughout Nasik looking for a suitable place for tapas. He could not find one and so walked to Tryambakam. He bathed in the Godavari River, had the darshan of Ishwara in the temple and meditated there for some time. By the evening he reached Kusavartanam and spent the night in a poor brahmin's house. Next morning the brahmin introduced Ganapati to a doctor who was known for treating scholars with respect. The doctor welcomed Ganapati with respect and showed him Nilambika Temple as a fitting place for tapas. The doctor also arranged that Ganapati would daily receive hot water for bathing and meals. Ganapati spent his daytime in tapas and took rest in the doctor's house at night.

One week passed in a trice. The doctor came to understand that Ganapati was not only a poet of great calibre, but also a great tapasvi. One day a wealthy man who was a lover of literature and himself a scholar, having heard from the doctor about the prowess of Ganapati, visited the doctor to meet Ganapati personally. Importuned by the doctor, Ganapati agreed to perform an Ashtavadhana (the ability to exhibit eight endeavours at the same time) that night. Many interested pundits and laymen gathered to see the performance. Though weakened by strenuous tapas, Ganapati performed his first avadhana to the surprise of

all. The wealthy scholar's (Ramabhavu) admiration and devotion to Ganapati grew immensely and he took him to Nasik to show him a proper place for tapas.

But after reaching Nasik, he kept Ganapati in his own house and started to spread Ganapati's fame through conducting literary gatherings at his home. He seemed to have forgotten the promise he made to show Ganapati a place for tapas. Seeing the trend of Ramabhavu, Ganapati on his own started to search for a place to do tapas. He found a neglected Lakshmana Temple at some distance from the city. He was about to enter into its precincts when some person rudely grabbed him and shouted, "Thief, thief!" The man was the pujari of the temple. He began to curse and beat Ganapati. Though he was trying to convince the pujari of his innocence, the pujari was in no mood to hear it and dragged Ganapati by his hair to the village officer.

While Ganapati was being dragged through the streets, one gentleman who had seen him earlier at Ramabhavu's house stopped the pujari and asked him why Ganapati was being ill-treated.

"I took out the vessels for worship of God and kept them outside. I went in to bring water and by the time I came out some of the vessels were missing. Expecting that the thief would return for the remaining vessels, I hid behind the door. This thief has come just as I expected. I won't leave him." So saying the pujari started beating Ganapati again violently. Seeing the stupidity and violence of the fellow and unable to bear the pain of the beatings, Ganapati

suddenly got very angry. His anger gushed unexpectedly in the form of a verse, cursing the town of Nasik:

ध्वस्तप्रध्वस्तमनुजा क्षतविक्षतविग्रहा
कीर्णप्रकर्षपर्यन्ता नासिकेयं भविष्यति ॥

May this Nasika be devastated by broken idols, depraved men and deserted streets.

The pujari immediately stopped beating and stood trembling. He understood the curse and his mistake, fell prostrate at Ganapati's feet and sought forgiveness. Ganapati forgave the pujari, took leave of the gentleman, walked along the Navachuti Road, saw a deserted temple and settled himself in it. There he started tapas with Sivapanchakshari Mantra.

As if the curse which blurted out of Ganapati's mouth had to be fulfilled, a violent smallpox epidemic devastated parts of Nasika. Then suddenly arose a big storm which shook the city. Ancient trees fell down, houses collapsed and the storm subsided as suddenly as it began. The epidemic subsided with this storm and the officials of Nasik felt immense relief.

Later Ramabhavu heard about the incident that angered Ganapati. He searched out Ganapati in the deserted temple and offered his heartfelt apologies to him. Ramabhavu arranged for Ganapati's food (which was only milk) and saw that his tapas was undisturbed. Ganapati did tapas for forty days. Lord Siva was pleased with his tapas and gave him darshan in the form of a naked sadhu. Ganapati praised Siva thus:

किं यागै रतिदारुणेन तपसा किं वा किमथ्यचनैः
 किं स्नानेन सुपर्वपुण्यसरितो नानाविधैः किं व्रतैः ।
 कामारे करुणानिधे पशुपते भूतेश गौरीपते
 शम्भो शङ्कर चन्द्रचूड जगतां नाथेति नामावळे ॥

*O Lord Siva! Enemy of desire! O Compassion Incarnate!
 Lord of all elements! Divine Spouse of the Divine Mother
 Parvati! Sambhu! Sankara! He who has the Moon in His hair!
 Lord of the Universe! What other tapas, worship, vows, baths
 in holy rivers are necessary to those who sing your name
 incessantly?*

Lord Siva told Ganapati, "Go home, Ganapati, you will have a son." He touched Ganapati through one of his rays of light and disappeared.

Ganapati gave up his tapas and started his homeward journey.

Chapter 14

NANDA BHAGAVATI

बृन्दारकाराधितपादपद्मां
नन्दामिमामिन्दुसमान वक्त्राम् ।
आलोक्य विन्ध्याचलवासिनीं ना
नालोचयेत् संसृतितो भयानि ॥ 7-25-22

He who has had the vision of Nanda Devi, who has a beautiful face like the moon, whose feet are worshipped by the gods and who has taken up residence at the foot of the Vindhya Mountain, is blessed with no fear of rebirth.

– Uma Sahasram

Ganapati who had returned home by the order of Lord Siva, told his father: “Father, I am not able to understand why Siva is so unkind to ask me to return to worldly life.” Apparently, Ganapati was not happy with the result of his first attempt at tapas.

The father replied, “Certain experiences are inevitable due to prarabdha. Unless one’s mind is thoroughly purified, tapas cannot be fruitful. There may be unknown longings lurking in the heart. God’s power of delusion (Maya) may also be the cause. Some tests are necessary for the sadhaka’s spiritual progress. We cannot understand the ways of Lord Siva. For the time being, continue worship, repetition of the mantra and meditation. This has been

just the first step. You may think of another pilgrimage for tapas later.”

Thus the father soothed his son's wounded spirit. Five months passed at home. Visalakshi became pregnant. Arrangements were being made to send her to her parent's home for the delivery of the child. Ganapati thought this would be a good opportunity to start for Kasi (Varanasi) to do tapas. Nrisimha Sastry did not object.

The first step in the pilgrimage to Kasi was Prayaga, the confluence of the three rivers, Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati. Ganapati took his bath in this confluence and proceeded to see the important places of the town, which were many and interesting. He visited the Sankha Madhava Temple in the evening. He sat for meditation, keeping his bundle of belongings by his side. When he opened his eyes at dawn he saw the bundle was missing. Except a brass vessel used for drinking water and a little change in his dhoti, every thing else was stolen. Ganapati bathed in Ganga and then bought some beaten rice with the little change he had. This satisfied his hunger for the time being. He did tapas for ten days on the banks of the Ganga, but was unable to secure any real peace. He wandered along the riverbank hoping to meet some tapasvi who could guide him in tapas. Very much tired by the long walk, he lay down in a swoon on the bank of the river.

After a while Ganapati awoke to the sensation of someone tenderly stroking his head. He opened his eyes and saw a sadhu. The sadhu got him some milk and rotis (wheat cakes) and coaxed him to eat. Ganapati looked

around him and was surprised to see that he was in an ashram. He thanked the sadhu for his help.

The sadhu found out from Ganapati that he was searching for a suitable place to do tapas. So he called a man from the ashram and asked him to show the place called Hamsatirtham to Ganapati. The sadhu gave Ganapati a shawl, dhoti and some food. Ganapati duly reached Hamsatirtham but, as he found himself in the company of some pilgrims to Kasi, he did not stay there for long.

On the way to Kasi, there is a famous pilgrim centre called Vindhychala. Nanda Bhagawati is the presiding deity of that place. Ganapati left Hamsatirtham and visited the temple of Nanda Devi. The idol appeared to Ganapati as if she was the Divine Mother, inviting her son with a glorious smile. Ganapati spontaneously praised the Mother:

पादं ददासि मनसे किमु? पापिनो मे
 पारिप्लवाय भुवनादिक वासनाय ।
 दूरे स तावदचलेन्द्रकुमारि कामो
 देवी प्रणाममुरी कुरु तावतालं ॥

O, Mother! Daughter of the Himalayas! Thou hast always placed Thy feet in my heart. I am very unsteady and full of worldly tendencies, though the desire for sex is not there. I surrender myself to Thee entirely. I prostrate before Thee. Accept my salutations, and that in itself is a blessing to me.

Can the Divine Mother reject such a pure prayer? Thus surrendering to the Mother, Ganapati sat in meditation. Strangely, his body rose three feet above the ground. As soon as he came out of his trance, he prayed to the Mother thus:

अवन्ध्य विन्ध्य भूमिभृत्तटालया दयावती ।
विचारधौतचेतसा मियं भयं व्यपोहतु ॥

May the Devi who has taken abode in Vindhyachala, giving out boons desired by the devotees, with infinite compassion, remove fear in those who have purified their hearts with proper enquiry.

Enquiry is also tapas. An aspirant purifies his heart by sustained enquiry. Attachment, anger and fear are emotions of the mind. Ego and attachment are the cause of fear. They must be dissolved to attain Self-Realization. Aspirants can remove all fear by surrender and enquiry. Ganapati prayed only for this.

He started for Kasi on the next day, via Vyasa Kasi.

Chapter 15

DURGA MANDIRA YOGI

वाराणसी शुभ्रगिरेरनूनं क्षेत्रं पवित्रं भुवनत्रयेऽपि ।
अर्थे प्रजानां विधृतान्नपात्रा गौरी स्वयं यत्र विशालनेत्रा ॥

7-25-21

The town of Varanasi is no less sacred than the pure Himalaya Mountains. It is the most sacred in the three worlds. Mother Visalakshi, the wide lotus-eyed deity, Herself extends her hands holding a vessel of food for everybody. Therefore she is called Annapurna.

– Uma Sahasram

God's grace is not limited to human beings only. It envelops all beings, rivers, mountains and all other inanimate things. A special power pervades certain places, in the same way as it resides in yogis and munis. Just as mother earth bears with all the births, deaths, quakes, storms, floods and wars, yet does not lose her balance, there are some holy places, ponds, rivers and mountains in India which maintain their sanctity always. These places are chosen by yogis and jnanis for tapas. One of the most revered places of India is Varanasi, situated on the banks of the Ganga. It is famed for bestowing liberation.

दर्शनादभ्र सदसि जननात्कमलालये ।

काश्यांतु मरणान्मुक्तिः स्मरणादरुणाचले ॥

To visit Chidambaram, to be born in Kamalalaya, or to die in Varanasi will secure liberation. But the mere remembrance of Arunachala gives Liberation.

This is the purport of this sloka. Bhagavan Sri Ramana says that death means the merging of the mind in the Atma (Self). The effulgence of Atma is said to be Varanasi.

Ganapati finally reached holy Varanasi. As his maternal uncle, Somayajula Bhavani Sankaram was residing in Kasi, he had no problem of food and lodging. He took a bath in the Ganga and walked to the temple of Sri Visweswara. The first deity he praised was Lord Ganapati:

एकादलानां प्रवरं सुतानां
 रुद्रस्य मन्त्राधिपतिं नमामि ।
 शास्त्राणि सर्वाण्यपि यस्य कीलाः
 सूर्यानपोद्यं तिमिरं हरन्ति ॥

O Lord Ganapati! The greatest among the eleven sons of God Rudra and remover of the darkness of ignorance by the fire of scriptural knowledge, which even the Sun cannot effect, the Lord of all mantras, O Heramba, I salute thee.

Ganapati's mind went back to the time (before his birth) when his father had the divine vision of a child crawling out from the idol of Dunti Ganapati and sitting on his lap. Bhadraka who had inspired him to do tapas was also an incarnation of this same deity. Then emotion, born of intense devotion, produced a gush of tears that streamed down his cheeks. Ganapati instantly burst out with a verse in praise of Dunti Ganapati.

कार्यं न मे किमपि तत्खलु निर्जराणां
 रूपं न मे किमपि तत्तव कोऽपि वेषः ।
 इष्टं नु कष्ट मथ कस्य करीन्द्रवक्त्र
 शिष्टं तु मे किमपिनाम नराङ्गसङ्गी ॥

O Lord! If this human form (my body) is another of your innumerable manifestations, please start moving into action. Dance. Do not be silent. May your ganas (gods of faculties) remove this curtain between us. Why are you delaying, my Lord? Please be kind to me!

Ganapati visited Lord Visweswara and Mother Annapurna and then went to his uncle's house. This very first visit to Visweswara Temple gave him immense happiness and tranquility. In Varanasi, his routine was to bathe in the Ganga, have darshan of the Mother and Father of the Universe and sit for meditation opposite Dunti Ganapati's idol, as his father did before his birth. He continued this routine for two months.

One day while he was returning to his uncle's house, he heard a group of scholars talking of a congress of scholars somewhere, which they were going to attend. Ganapati introduced himself to them and asked for the particulars of the congress. Vidwat Siromani Sri Sivakumara Dutt was in Kasi and conducting this meeting of scholars at his house. Sri Sivakumar was the headmaster of a school in the state of Darbhanga in Bihar. He was the disciple of Bala Sastry who was a great scholar of Andhra Pradesh and himself was a great scholar. So, eager to meet such a great soul, Ganapati went to the meeting. Exhibiting his knowledge and brilliant

intellect, Ganapati won the attention of Sivakumar Dutt. Sri Dutt foresaw a glorious future for Ganapati. He told Ganapati to attend the Congress of scholars in the place called Navadweep in Bengal. Ganapati wondered if he could get admittance into the Congressional Hall by himself and asked Sri Sivakumar to kindly help him.

Sivakumar said, "Please do not worry. I will give you an introductory letter to the Secretary of the Congress and it will secure your admittance."

Ganapati felt very happy to receive so much consideration from such a great pundit. He understood that his prayer to Dunti Ganapati was being answered. He prostrated to the deity mentally and got ready to reach Navadweep in time for the Congress.

The next day, he did not go to the temple. He did his usual worship and was studying something when he heard his name called from the doorstep. A sadhu entered the room saying, "I heard through Bhavani Sankaram that you are here. I am your old acquaintance. Do you not recognize me?"

Ganapati had never seen him before. He was wondering how he knew him and said humbly, "No Sir, I am not able to recognize you."

Sadhu: "I am Somayajula Suryanarayana. People call me Durga Mandira Yogi. Durga Mandir is in Ramnagar. That is my regular residence."

Ganapati: "Which is your native place, Sir?"

Sadhu: "It is very near your own village. Just now I am coming here after meeting your parents."

Ganapati: "How is it that you knew me before?"

Sadhu: "I am your well-wisher. So you are quite close to me. Do you not know Bhadraka?"

Ganapati was very much surprised. He asked the sadhu how he knew Bhadraka who appeared in his dream.

Sadhu: "He is Bhadraka and I am Suketu. At present fourteen divine beings have taken birth on this earth. You are one of them."

This sadhu seemed to be a very interesting person. Ganapati asked him if he could foretell Ganapati's future.

Sadhu: "You are a natural tapasvi. You will attain fulfilment through a person called Sthula Siras. Before this you will attain perfection in the literary field through the grace of the Divine Mother."

Ganapati was awestruck at the authoritative prediction of the yogi. He saluted him and said that he would write a letter to his father about him.

"All right. I will add a few lines to that letter," said the sadhu. Ganapati then and there wrote a letter to his father and gave it to the sadhu. The sadhu wrote a postscript saying, "Sir, your son will be doing tapas. Please do not fetter him with family matters."

The sadhu took the letter, wrote the address in English, volunteered to post it and went away.

The next day Ganapati wanted to meet the sadhu and went to Ramnagar and enquired about him. The people there told him that there was no sadhu of that description in Ramnagar. Ganapati wondered who the sadhu could be.

Chapter 16

GRACED WITH NECTAR

गोपालिनीवेषभृतं भजस्व लीलासखीं तां भुवनेश्वरस्य ।
इष्टं हृदिस्थं तव हस्तगं स्यात् कष्टं च संसारभवं न भूयः ॥

7-25-16

Worship Mother Bhuvaneshwari who has manifested as Gopalini (Shepherdess) and who is the playmate of Lord Bhuvaneshwara (Lord of the universe) and the desire of your heart will be fulfilled. You will also be saved from the fear of all worldly difficulties.

– Uma Sahasram

Dasa Maha Vidyas are the ten great paths of worship of the Divine Mother. Ganapati has described them in his “Sutra Kavyam”. The ten Vidyas are Kali, Tara, Sundari, Bhuvaneshwari, Bhairavi, Prachanda Chandi, Bhumavati, Bagalamukhi, Matangi and Kamalatkika. Though the Mother is one and the same, she is worshipped through many forms and realized as such.

Bhuvaneshwari Vidya is the fourth mode of worship. All our thoughts rise from the ether called Hridaya (Hridaya-kasa). Likewise, the thoughts of creation and other allied thoughts are called Maya. So, Bhuvaneshwari means Maya and also Paramakasa. The Supreme Goddess in this form is the bestower of all the desires of the devotees. So devotees worship Her with the bijaksharas ‘Om Hrim Om’.

The words of the Durga Mandir yogi, stating that Ganapati's literary tapas will be fulfilled, were ringing in Ganapati's ears. As he desired to do tapas in a very powerful place of worship, he took the permission of his uncle and proceeded to Bhuvaneswar, the famous pilgrimage centre in the state of Orissa.

Bhuvanaeswar was only a good size village when Ganapati went there for tapas. Now it has grown dramatically and is the state capital. It is called the city of temples. Historians tell us that at one time there were as many as five hundred temples in and around this place. In later years, Ganapati Muni used to say that because of so many Siva temples situated in this place, it was very conducive to tapas. The famous Lingaraja Temple with its highly Utkal-style sculptures is the main temple of Bhuvaneswar. On the left side of Lingaraja Temple, the temple of Bhuvaneswari is situated. For the first two days Ganapati went round the temple observing the glory and grandeur of the sculptures and construction. On the third day he bought a few plantains, put them in his bundle and sat for meditation in front of Mother Bhuvaneswari.

Every morning Ganapati used to meditate until 11 a.m., eat one of the plantains for lunch, throw away the peel and resume meditation. He performed tapas like this for six days. On the seventh day Ganapati, as usual, opened his eyes at 11 a.m. and found that there were no more plantains to eat. He understood his position and ate one of the six peels that were thrown away during the past six days, and continued the tapas.

Gauri Sankar Panda was one of the priests of the Bhuvaneswari Temple. He was observing Ganapati throughout this period and was struck with wonder at his austerity. He thought it would be meritorious to serve such a holy man. When Ganapati opened his eyes at 11 o'clock, on the eighth day, he saw a glass of milk in front of him. He drank the milk and continued his tapas. Ganapati's tapas went on like this for twenty days. On the twenty-first day Mother Bhuvaneswari bestowed Her grace on him. The all-compassionate Mother of the universe appeared in front of Ganapati with a blissful smile, holding a vessel of nectar in her hands. She sprinkled a few drops of the nectar on Ganapati's tongue.

Mother Bhuvaneswari's face shone ever so cool, like the moon; Her smile was the source of nectarine springs; Her heart, full of compassion; Her eyes, the canopy of protection. Ganapati was submerged in this glorious vision of the Divine Mother. Regaining consciousness, he still experienced the taste of the nectar dropped on his tongue by the Mother. He understood that the appearance of the Mother was not a mere dream. Her presence was very much real. He had never before experienced such bliss.

The enchanting form and smile of Sri Bhuvaneswari were so deeply imprinted in Ganapati's mind that henceforth she was praised in all his glorious works. He composed many verses describing the smiles of the Mother in his great composition "Uma Sahasram", which is a thousand verses to Uma, the Mother.

अखिलजगन्मातोमा तमसा तापेनच आकुलानस्मान् ।
अनुगृह्णात्वनुकंपा सुधार्द्रया हसितचन्द्रिकया ॥1-1-1

O Mother of the entire Universe, Uma! We are afflicted with ignorance and misery, bless us with thy grace, which ridicules moonlight with its coolness of nectarine compassion.

– Uma Sahasram

Ganapati had the divine experience, which poets like Kalidasa and Tenali Ramalinga, had had in the past, that is, the grace of the Divine Mother that awakened divine poetical inspiration in his heart.

Chapter 17

BIRTH OF A SON

In the context of stages of life and society, Bhagavan Ramana said:

To go by stages is a social rule intended for the generality. But if one is a pakvi, a well developed being, he need not mind this rule. Young or old, man or woman, brahmin or outcast, if one is paripakvi, fully ripe, he or she can and does go straight to the goal, without minding the stages. Sannyasa does not lie in taking to the begging bowl, or having a clean-shaven head, or putting on an orange-coloured robe.

When the brahmacharin (the student), with his purity exalted by celibacy, becomes by detachment an ideal householder (grihastha) for the service of others, or of society, the Light naturally flashes forth.

Then for the purpose of tapas, for concentrated effort, the third ashrama (vanaprashta) is intended. When by ardent tapas, the tapasvin becomes crystal-pure and fit, the fourth ashrama (sannyasa) automatically comes. As I said, it is not an external thing that one assumes.

– *Sad-Darshana Bhashya and Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*

In this respect, Ganapati was beyond these customs of the ashramas. He was an ascetic who did not wear the ochre

robe. He was a thorough celibate. He was also an ideal householder. Home was never a bondage for him, as his father was very co-operative. His wife also never objected to any of his tapas. She was a true helpmate in his tapas. A wife of a rishi, in the true sense. She took mantra diksha from her husband and herself engaged in tapas. Bhagavan used to refer to her as mother (Amma). When her husband went on a pilgrimage, she remained at home doing mantra japa and dhyana.

Visalakshi gave birth to a son on 14-02-1899. Ganapati, who had finished his tapas had a dream on the night prior to Visalakshi's delivery (13-02-1899). He saw a cow giving birth to a calf in that dream and understood this to mean that his wife had given birth to a child. Before returning home, Ganapati visited Virajapuram, a holy place near Bhuvaneswar, on the banks of the river Vaitarani. His father and all of Ganapati's other relatives were very happy that he had his tapas fulfilled.

After returning home, for one full week, Ganapati recounted the incidents of his pilgrimage and tapas. In that context, he asked his father about Durga Mandir Yogi. Nrisimha Sastry took out the letter he received from Kasi and showing it to Ganapati asked him, "Son, there is a picture of you drawn here. Who has drawn this?" Ganapati looked at it and was very surprised to see what was in that letter. He remembered to have written that letter on yellow paper, but this same letter was now on pure white paper. The lines he wrote appeared to be pushed down and his own picture was drawn above the lines. There was also a

message written by the yogi. 'As it was the yogi who posted that letter, that picture must have been drawn by him,' thought Ganapati.

"Father, this yogi told me that his name was Somayajula Suryanarayana. He seems to know the Bhadraka who appeared in my dream. He said he was Suketu and he also knew the parents of my previous birth. And now looking at this letter, we must infer that he must be a Divine Being," said Ganapati.

After thinking for a moment, Sastry agreed. "Before you were born, your mother and I visited Arasavalli and had the darshan of the Sun-god Suryanarayana. The names that Durga Mandir Yogi mentioned seem to agree with the Sun-god Suryanarayana. Probably he was Suryanarayana Himself." Ganapati agreed with his father.

As soon as Ganapati's son entered his third month, Ganapati, along with the other members of his family, went to Visalakshi's parents' house to perform the purificatory rites. The child was named Mahadeva Sastry, as he was the boon of Siva to Ganapati.

Chapter 18

THE PATRONAGE OF A KING

In olden times, it was said that a king is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu. Protection of the land and culture was his duty. A poet is a seer. His life and writings are an intrinsic element of the country's culture. Hence a friendship between the poet and the king nurtures the welfare of the land and is very desirable. Promoting the welfare of scholars, poets and artists by the royal families of our land has been an ancient tradition of India. After the advent of the British rule, kings lost their glory and power and had to subsist on the meager pittance given to them. Therefore, they had only enough means to maintain their own family and a limited retinue. Under these adverse conditions, some landlords continued the custom of inviting scholars and poets to their court and advanced their welfare.

Near Srikakulam there was an estate called Mandasa. The ruler of this estate was a virtuous king who used to honour poets, scholars and artists. In the year 1900, as part of the celebration of the New Year of the Indian Calender (Ugadi), scholars and poets were invited to Mandasa from far and near to participate in a seminar. Ganapati was one of the invitees. The seminar hall was decorated grandly and the whole atmosphere looked like a grand spring festival. Ganapati Sastry was one of the scholars who knew both

Telugu and Sanskrit languages. During the meetings, the richness of Telugu and Sanskrit languages shone in their full glory. Scholars read out their compositions and recited others they had learnt. The audience went into raptures at this cascade of poetry.

Under the care of the solicitous King of Mandasa, Ganapati was comfortable and happy. The Astavadhana that Ganapati performed during the festivals was a great success, dazzling the imagination of the spectators. Ashtavadhana is the display of dealing with eight subjects at the same time. The King of Mandasa was very pleased with Ganapati's intellectual prowess and asked him to stay on in his court.

The prince wanted to be initiated into the Sivapanchakshari Mantra. Ganapati told him to get the permission of the state priest for the initiation. The priest was a Vaishnavite, so naturally he was averse to the proposal. One day the priest started an argument with Ganapati Sastry in the court of the King. As he was totally routed in the argument, he uttered a mantra to make Ganapati dumb. Because of Ganapati's spiritual stature, the priest's mantra did not work on him. But Ganapati got very angry at this malpractice of the priest and scolded him soundly. He told him that argumentation is only to clear doubts and not to inflame tempers, and it was unmannerly on the part of a priest to resort to such tricks. All the people in the assembly were stunned at the behaviour of the priest. The King intervened at this juncture and pacified Ganapati. The priest apologized to Ganapati and there was peace.

One day a yogi arrived in Mandasa. It was rumoured that when he meditated he levitated in mid-air, four feet above the ground. In a semi-dark or almost dark room, he would give darshan through a window exhibiting this feat. Nobody was allowed to go into the room. People could see him only through the window. Two disciples of the yogi stayed outside the room and recounted the glories of the yogi to the public. People came in crowds to have the yogi's darshan and offered money and material.

The King became curious. One day along with Ganapati Sastry he went to see the yogi. They had his darshan through the window and wanted to see him personally, but they were not allowed by his disciples. The yogi would not speak when he was in yoga, they said. Sometimes people who are engaged in tapas do not want to be disturbed. But secrecy need not be maintained for that reason alone. When Ganapati heard of this secrecy of the yogi, he suspected some mischief. So, he asked the King to get the door opened. The disciples protested. The King also hesitated. But through Ganapati's pressure the King got the door broken open. There to the surprise of everybody, was a huge balance for weights thoroughly blackened with black paint. It was not visible through the window because of the blackness. The yogi sat in one of the pans and it was balanced with a heavier weight on the other pan. So the yogi was sitting in the pan at the height of the window four feet above the ground.

This mischief made the King very angry. But Ganapati pacified him saying that the yogi resorted to such tricks

only for the sake of food and shelter. Therefore, he could be forgiven. Ganapati asked the King to give some money to the yogi and tell him not to resort to such tricks and cheat people. This attitude of Ganapati towards erring people made him more respectable in the eyes of the King.

It was time for Ganapati to start for Navadweep and took leave of the King. The King provided Ganapati some financial help and other necessities. Ganapati, along with two companions, left Mandasa for Navadweep.

Chapter 19

SADACHARA BODHINI

सत्यं स्वर्गस्य सोपानं सत्यं पुण्यं परं मतम् ।
सत्ये रमन्ते धीमन्तस्तस्मात्सत्यं वचो वदेत् ॥

Truth is the stepping stone to heaven. Truth is the greatest virtue. The wise always uphold the Truth. One should always tell only the Truth.

न किञ्चिदवमन्येत मनसा देहधारिणं ।
देहे सर्वस्य जीवाख्यो लोकनाथो ह्यवस्थितः ॥

One should not ill treat or look down upon even the smallest creature. Because the Lord of the world resides in each and every being.

आचारहीनः पुरुषस्संपदा परिहीयते ।
आचार एव पाण्डित्यं न शास्त्रेषु प्रवीणता ॥

He who does not follow the laws will be bereft of all prosperity. Because abiding by the laws is wisdom and not erudition in the scriptures and sciences.

यान्याचरन्ति कर्माणि सन्तो लोकहितंकराः ।
भजन्ते तानि सर्वाण्यप्याचारपदवाच्यताम् ॥

Those benevolent acts that holy ones perform are all called laws.

– Sadachara Bodhini

The eastern part of India was called the Vanga Country. The present Bengal is part of it. This is the holy land that gave birth in recent times to such holy men as Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, and to many great heroes, saints and reformers down through the centuries. It is the land of learning. It is also the abode of Mother Kali, of whom the people are ardent devotees. The grand Nava Ratri festival is performed with great devotion in this region.

In Calcutta (now renamed 'Kolkatta'), the capital of Bengal state, there are two very famous temples of Kali. Ganapati who started off to attend the scholars' meeting at Navadweep visited Calcutta first, which is one of the seats of Dasa Maha Vidyas (the ten great modes of worship of the Divine Mother).

Ganapati praised the Mother Kali in the following extempore verse:

सङ्गीयमानं स्थल मार्यबृन्दैः
 बृन्दारकाणां सरितस्तटेस्ति ।
 यः कालिकां पश्यति कालकेशीं
 तत्रास्य कालादपि नैव भीतिः ॥

This glorious place, situated on the divine river Ganga, is highly praised by groups of noble men. He who sees Kali, with pitch black hair, will never be afraid even of Kala, the Lord of Death.

The two forms of Kali are very much different from each other. The one worshipped in Kalighat is terrible to look at, with all the paraphernalia for animal sacrifices. The

one in Dakshineswar is sweet-smiling and beatific. Kali of Kalighat is the manifestation of Time and looks terrible as though she is drinking the blood of the animals sacrificed. The Dakshineswar Kali, having been fed on Sri Ramakrishna's offerings, looks like a compassionate goddess who removes the devotees' mental afflictions. However, both are compassionate towards their devotees, granting them boons.

Ganapati first visited the Kali of Kalighat. He stood in front of the idol and closed his eyes meditating on the kind and compassionate Kali, who inscribed bijaksharas on the tongue of the poet Kalidas and made him one of the greatest poets of the world. When Ganapati opened his eyes, they fell upon an extremely cruel event. A buffalo was garlanded with flowers and tied to the post of sacrifice. Some men were chanting mantras and performing some ritual. Ganapati felt that the animal was pleading for its life and with great pain he shouted, "O, Mother of the universe! What is this cruelty? You are the compassionate Mother of all beings. Is it proper for you to ask for the blood of innocent animals? Do you accept this cruelty to animals? Will you not please give proper knowledge to these fools who are engaged in this superstitious, cruel spectacle?"

Then Ganapati went and shouted at the men who were conducting the ritual near the altar: "Please, will you not stop this cruelty? Do you kill this animal to please the Mother of all the worlds? Is not cruelty to animals a great sin? Please stop this sacrifice!" The Tantric sacrificers looked angrily at Ganapati and stopped the chanting of the mantras. Everybody looked at Ganapati gravely. All the people who were gathered

there were afraid of the outcome of the intrusion of Ganapati. Ganapati went still further and standing on the altar himself, told the priests to sacrifice him if necessary to fulfill their wishes. By Ganapati's effective intervention, the sacrifice was stopped, at least on that day. Some of the onlookers praised Ganapati and some derided him.

This was Ganapati Muni's first act of social reform. Till that time he was interested in nothing but tapas. In the scriptures, Vedic ritual prescribes only cereals as offerings to the gods, and nowhere do we see any mention of animal sacrifice. That which is conducive to the good of all is recommended and not anything harmful, like the slaughter of animals. This point was argued by Ganapati on that day.

Ganapati's revolutionary approach began to express itself even at the age of fourteen when he compiled a text of 102 Sanskrit verses and named it *Sadachara Bodhini*. Divided into five chapters, it challenged the age-old orthodox customs. He divided our customs into three categories: Karmachara, Jnanachara and Mana Achara.

Karmachara deals with marriage, leading the life of a householder, controlling the waywardness of the mind and living a life of worship, japa and meditation.

Jnanachara describes how to love all beings as the manifestation of the Lord, have sweet speech, serve wise men, listen and reflect on the stories of great men and the search for Truth.

Mana Achara tells how to aspire for the welfare of all beings, how to respect all women and keep the mind unpolluted by likes and dislikes.

“We have collected all this knowledge from the essence of the scriptures,” declares Ganapati. This book is lauded even now by many scholars.

While in Calcutta, Ganapati visited the home of Ramakrishna Paramahansa at Dakshineswar. Upon seeing the image of Kali, he was inspired to compose the following verse:

सुधाकरालङ्कृतचारुचूली शिवां मतिं नः प्रददातुकाली ।
यन्नामगायी किल रामकृष्णो धीराग्रगण्यः य परमालुलोके ॥

May Kali, who has the moon adorning her hair, and singing whose glory Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa attained Liberation, bestow on us pure intellect.

Chapter 20

THE FLAG OF SUCCESS

सुधां हसन्ती मधुचाक्षिपन्ती
यशोहरन्ती वनिताधरस्य ।
परिष्करोत्यस्य कवित्वधारा
मुखं हरप्रेयसि लोकसे यम् ।। 4-13-19

O Beloved of Lord Siva! He whose face is the recipient of Thy gracious look, his tongue becomes the repository of the flow of poetry, whose sweetness scorns ambrosia, ridicules honey and robs the fame of lovely women's lips.

– Uma Sahasram

Indian culture is embedded in Sanskrit lore. Sanskrit, which is considered the language of the gods, is the foundation of many Indian languages. In times past, when this language was shining in all its glory, there were many seats of learning, such as Amaravati, Ujjaini, Nalanda and Navadweep. Under the influence of foreign rule, three of these seats lost their glory. Only Navadweep in the state of Bengal retained its glory and respect for the Sanskrit language. It flourished there to some extent until recently. Scholarly symposia were conducted which attracted participants from all over the country. Contestants were tested, debates conducted and certificates for their learning in various subjects were presented at the Navadweep Vidyapeeth, which was considered the seat of Saraswati, the goddess of learning.

Both connoisseurs of learning and lay people enjoyed the scholastic meetings. Only men of great learning could get admission to participate in these conferences. And these were usually elderly scholars who were awarded certificates and titles. No Southerner had yet entered this arena until Ganapati's arrival. It was the general opinion that only North Indians were proficient in Sanskrit.

Ganapati wanted to attend this prestigious assembly along with his friends. Before leaving Kasi for Navadweep, he had obtained a letter of introduction from Sivakumar Dutt, Pandita of Kasi, addressed to Sitikanta Vachaspati, the secretary in charge of admissions. Sitikanta Vachaspati was a scholar teaching in a grammar school in Navadweep. When Ganapati arrived in Navadweep he started to look for this grammar school, but every door looked like the door of a school and none could guide him to Sri Vachaspati. The whole place was grandly decorated and both laymen and scholars filled every nook and corner. Nobody was ready to believe that a young boy like Ganapati was a scholar.

Their search appeared futile and Ganapati saw that his friends were very tired and hungry. They sat on a high pial in front of a big house and opened their bundles to eat the flattened rice they brought with them.

Ganapati then thought, 'Why is Mother testing me? Why could nobody guide me to the Secretary to make arrangements in such a small place?' He sang and appealed to the Divine Mother:

देवलोक पूजितान्घिरीश्वरस्य भामिनी
मानसाभिधान वारि संभवार्पण प्रिया ।

साधुकामदायिनी दुरात्म काम घातिनी
वीरलोक माननीय मादधातु मामुमा ॥

May the Beloved of Lord Siva, whose feet are worshipped by all the gods, who is pleased by the surrendering of the mind, who fulfills the desires of devotees and destroys the desires of the evil-minded, make me honoured by the valourous!

The owner of the house where Ganapati was sitting heard this invocation to the Mother. He opened the door and saw Ganapati and his friends. He introduced himself to them as Kulabhigna from Mithila, who had come to attend the scholars' meeting. He enquired of Ganapati: "You seem to be a scholar. This is the house I have been given to occupy. Have you had your food? Please accept my hospitality."

Ganapati and his friends felt happy at this turn of events. Kulabhigna and Ganapati had a good chat on literary matters. Ganapati told Kulabhigna about his intention of participating at the assembly of scholars. Kulabhigna told him that he was acquainted with Sitikanta Vachaspati and would introduce Ganapati to him on the next morning. They all had good sleep and felt quite refreshed in the morning.

In the morning, Kulabhigna took Ganapati to the house of Sri Vachaspati and introduced him. Vachaspati read the introduction letter of Sivakumar, wherein Ganapati was praised as almost equal to Hanuman, and a verse from the *Ramayana* was quoted describing Hanuman's valour. This convinced Vachaspati of Ganapati's qualifications, and he gave him permission to talk at the conference.

The examination of the scholars began promptly on time. The hall was aptly named Hari Sabha, as scholars from various areas were present. The President of the meeting, Ambika Dutta, adorned his seat amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras. Ambika Dutta was an extempore poet. The hall became silent as he took his seat.

Sitikanta Vachaspati brought Ganapati along with him and sat him in the front row by his side. Ganapati asked Vachaspati in Sanskrit, "Who is this gentleman?", referring to the President. As the hall was silent, Ganapati's question was quite audible. The President heard it and was perhaps a little amused and said:

सत्वर कविता सविता गौडोहं कश्चिदम्बिकादत्तः ।

I am one Ambika Dutta of Gouda Country, a sun among those who compose instantaneous poetry.

The verse was left unfinished. Ganapati took up the challenge and completed the verse introducing himself as:

गणपतिरिति कविकुलपति रति दक्षो दाक्षिणात्योहम् ॥

I am the leader of poets, very capable in poetry. I am a Southerner called Ganapati.

The first half of the verse which Ambika Dutta composed had only two words, Kavita and Savita in alliteration. Ganapati excelled Dutta in alliteration and used many letters of alliteration. Ganapati did not stop at that. He pointed out that while Dutta was the adopted son (dutta) of the Mother Ambika, he was the begotten son of the Mother. He said:

भवान् दत्तः अहंत्वौरसः ।

This audacity of the youth frightened the audience. A boy just entering youth to challenge a great scholar of middle age was considered audacious. But Ambika Dutta understood that the youth was a tough fellow and immediately the examination started. Ganapati was given four puzzles to be solved:

स्तनवस्त्रं परित्यज्य वधूः श्वशुर मिच्छति ।

Removing the upper garment, the lady wishes for the father-in-law.

वत्सरस्येकदा गौरी पतिवक्त्रं नपश्यति ।

Once in a year Parvati does not see the face of her husband.

सूर्यः शशान्केन समं विनष्टः ।

The Sun is lost along with the moon.

पिपीलिका चुम्बति चन्द्र मण्डलम् ।

The ant kissed the moon.

Ganapati solved these puzzles in verse.

हिडिम्बा भीमदयिता निदाघे घर्म पीडिता ।

स्तन वस्त्रं परित्यज्य वधूः श्वशुरमिच्छति ॥

Hidimba, the wife of Bhima, unable to bear the summer heat, removed her upper garment desiring breeze, who was her father-in-law (Vayu, ie. wind).

Ganapati further clarified his point by mentioning Hidimba instead of Draupadi, who was also Bhima's wife. Hidimba was a woman of the Rakshasas clan and unsophisticated, whereas Draupadi was a sophisticated queen of Kshatriya clan and therefore would not discard her upper garment.

चतुर्थ्या भाद्र शुक्लस्य चन्द्र दर्शन शंकया ।
वत्सरस्येकदा गौरी पति वक्त्रं न पश्यति ॥

On the day of Vinayaka Chaturthi, which is the fourth day in the month of Bhadrapada, Gauri does not look at the face of Siva, her Lord, as Siva adorns his hair with the moon. (The moon should not be looked at on that day, as there is said to be a curse on it.)

राहु स्त्रिकोणेच गुरुस्तृतीये कलत्र भावेच धरा तनूजः ।
लग्ने च कोष्ठे यदि बालकः स्यात् सूर्यः शशाङ्केन समं विनष्टः ॥

If the horoscope of a child has the planet Rahu in the 5th and 9th houses (corners), and Brihaspati in the 3rd house, and Mars also in the 3rd house, it is the position of the wife. Even if the Sun and Moon are in the Lagna, which although auspicious, they will lose their brilliance and so seem not to exist. Their power will be eclipsed and the child will be ill.

सती वियोगेन विषण्ण चेतसः प्रभोः शयानस्य हिमालये गिरौ ।
शिवस्य चूडाकलितं सुधाशया पिपीलिका चुम्बति चन्द्र मण्डलम् ॥

Siva was separated from Sati, his consort, and was despondent. He lay himself on the mountain Himalaya. Thinking that the moon in Siva's hair was nectar, an ant licked the moon to satisfy itself.

All the audience appreciated these clever and apt solutions to the seemingly impossible puzzles.

The examination was continued. Two verses, one from "Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa" and another from "Kavya Prakasa"

were given to the young poet to give a detailed explanation describing all the nice points of the compositions. The sloka in the “Kavya Prakasa” was given along with the meaning. Ganapati was required to appreciate the sentiment and the beauty of the verses in all their aspects, and then immediately contradict the meaning. Finally Ganapati was to show that actually there was no contradiction.

The two verses were:

न मृगयाभिरतिर्न दुरोदरं न च शशिप्रतिमाभरणं मधु ।
तमुदयाय नवा नवयौवना प्रियतमायतमानमपाहरत् ॥

– *Raghu Vamsa*

स्तुमः कं वामाक्षि क्षणमपि विना यं न रमसे
विलेभे कः प्राणान् रणमख मुखे यं मृगयसे ।
सुलग्ने को जातः शशिमुखि य मालिंगसि बलात्
तपःश्रीः कस्यैषा मदननगरि ध्यायसि तु यम् ॥

– *Kavya Prakasa*

Ganapati gave a detailed delightful explanation of the verses and the sentiments involved and while at first praising the beauty and aptitude in the second sloka, he immediately contradicted it, distorted the whole sentiment by saying that because the word, ‘yam’ was used, the whole thing became only an imagination on the part of the woman and that an imaginary emotion cannot bring out true sentiment. Speaking on this at length for quite some time, at one point Ganapati stuttered. He said सर्वासां instead of सर्वेशां.

Ambika Dutta was waiting to grab hold of such a lapse on the part of Ganapati. So, he thundered at Ganapati to stop. Dutta said:

अनवद्ये ननु पद्ये गद्ये हृद्येऽपि ते स्खलति वाणी
तत्किं त्रिभुवनसारा तारा नाराधिता भवता ॥

“Your verses are spotless. Your prose is charming. But yet your speech falters. Why, have you not worshipped at the feet of Tara, the essence of the three worlds?”

Ganapati was unfazed by this abrupt interruption and discovered a mistake in Dutta’s verse. Instead of saying, “Tarah Sara”, Dutta said, “Sara Tara”, committing an error in his eagerness to alliterate his words.

Immediately Ganapati countered Dutta:

सुधां हसन्ती मधु चाक्षिपन्ती यशो हरन्ती दयिताधरस्य ।
न तेऽलमास्यं कविताकरोति नोपास्यते किं दयितार्थं देहः ॥

Poetry truly sweet, laughs at nectar, challenges honey and takes away the fame of women’s lips. Such poetry does not adorn your mouth. Have you not cared to worship the one who halves his body with the woman?

Hearing this taunt, Ambika Dutta’s face flushed red. How dare a youth in his teens point out his mistake! He said:

उच्चैः कुञ्जर माकार्षीः बृहितानि मदोद्धतः ।
कुम्भिकुम्भामिषाहारी शेते सम्प्रति केसरी ॥

O, Elephant! Do not make much noise, in rut. The lion which eats the meat of the elephant’s temples is sleeping nearby.

Dutta again made a mistake due to his love of alliteration. He should have said, आमिषाहारः. Instead he said आमिषाहारी. Ganapati retorted with vehemence and pointing out Dutta’s mistake said:

समासीनो रसाले चेत् मौनमावह मौकले ।
लोकः करोतु सत्कारं मत्वा त्वामपि कोकिलम् ॥

O, crow! If you are sitting on a mango tree, be silent. Let the world honour you that you are a cuckoo.

Ambika could not bear this insult from this youth. He blurted out in anger:

ज्योतिरिङ्गण न किं नु मन्यसे यत्त्वमेव तिमिरेषु लक्ष्यसे ।

O, Firefly! Do you not understand that you can shine only in darkness? (You are shining by picking out the mistakes of others).

Ganapati was not one to take an insult quietly. He retorted in the same vein.

किंनु दीप भवने विभाससे वायुना बहि रहो विधूयसे ।

O Lamp! You shine only amidst four walls. If you come out into the open, you will be blown away. (Your erudition cannot shine in scholars' meetings and the like, where giants of erudition will overthrow you).

Ganapati did not stop with this. Seeing that Dutta was spoiling his poetry for the love of alliteration, he said:

अपुष्पा चूतलतिका विपन्ना सा सरोजिनी ।
हेमन्ते हन्त रोलम्ब निरालम्बःक्व मोदसे ॥

The mango is not yet in flower. The lotus has not bloomed as it is still winter. O poor bee! Where will you find pleasure now?

There is a double meaning in this sloka. One of the meanings is that Dutta was struggling with alliteration and so could not compose good poetry. The second meaning was that Ambika Dutta had married a second time a girl who had not yet attained puberty. Her name was Sarojini (सरोजिनी).

When Ganapati pointed out these facts of his life without knowing them, Dutta understood that Ganapati was not an ordinary scholar, but an evolved being. Dutta was at his wit's end and asked Ganapati to sit down.

Vachaspati noticed his predicament and understanding that the situation was getting beyond control, he got up on the dais and asked both the parties to stop attacking each other personally. He offered a solution that both of them could deride each other's native lands and stop further personal attacks.

Ambika Dutta ridiculed the Southerner's saying,

भटटोऽखिलोऽटटोपरिवार वध्वा ।
निपीय मध्वारभते विहारम् ॥

Bhattas (South Indian Brahmins) sitting on the terraces drinking alcohol start sporting with courtesans.

Ganapati immediately took up ridiculing Bengalis, as Ambika Dutta was a Bengali.

असुव्ययो वास्तु वसुव्ययो वाप्यमी न मीनव्यसनं त्यजन्ति ।

When money or even life was at stake, the Bengalis do not stop eating fish.

Ambika Dutta joyously got up and with moist eyes embraced Ganapati, applauded his wit and poetic talent.

The audience warmly applauded. Ganapati begged forgiveness for his rude behaviour during the debate. Kind-hearted Ambika Dutta smiled and said that the delightful way in which you composed those two words meaning fish ('amee na, meena') was enough to procure his pardon.

The test did not stop with this. Ganapati was asked to compose one verse per Chapter of Mahabharata (totaling 18). He was barred from using the words अपि, हि, त and च in the verses. Composition of any verse without the help of these words is very difficult for any scholar. But Ganapati, blessed by Mother Bhuvaneswari, made his mark in composing the required verses. Ganapati also gave a beautiful commentary on those verses.

Ambika praised Ganapati at length and the assembly of learned men and scholars bestowed on him a grand title, 'Kavyakantha', which means 'he who has poetry in his throat'. Ganapati received the titular certificate amidst chanting of Vedas and applause from the audience.

Chapter 21

TARA MANTRA

भवति परा वाग्भैरव्याख्या
पश्यन्ती सा कथिता तारा ।
रसनिधिमाप्ता जिह्वारङ्गं
मातङ्गीति प्रथिता सेयम् ॥ 10-38-16

The faculty of the Word is called Para Devata. She is said to reside in the Muladhara Chakra as Tripura Bhairavi, in Manipuraka as Tara and Matangi in the vocal centre which is the seat of all rasas (essences, tastes).

Omkaara is called pranava or the primordial sound. The Word is ingrained in this sound which is the base for all thought and sound. In its first manifestation, it resides in the muladhara chakra and is called para vak. Because She is the manifestation of Consciousness (Para Devata), She is called Tripura Bhairavi. This Sound manifests itself as pasyanti (the power that sees) in the heart centre (anahata chakra) and in the manipuraka as Tara Devi. This energy is the Light that can see through everything. This is the source of thought and causation. Thoughts arise from the pasyanti, reach the vocal centre and become the word, which is called vaikhari, or the power and method of speech. In this form, she is called Matangi. From the throat this uttered word dissolves in the ether as madhyama. The yogis can see the

forms of para and pasyanti in the turiyavastha or the fourth state, beyond the waking, dream and sleep states.

Man can become wise if he has mastery over the power of speech.

To get this mastery, this mastery of the Word, one must do sadhana along with intense study. Tantrik sadhakas get this mastery through worshipping the Mother Divine. When Ganapati's voice faltered in the scholars' assembly at Navadweep, the President, Ambika Dutta, ridiculed him and asked him if he had not done the worship of Mother Tara. This taunt entered deep into Ganapati's heart. People living in South India did not know of this method of worship, and Ganapati had no training in it. Since this mode of worship is practised in Bengal, Ganapati decided to get mastery over this mantra of Tara while he was there.

He sent his friends and followers back home and then proceeded to Murshidabad along with Kulabhigna. He stayed a few days there, met the King, exhibited his erudition and was honoured by him. Then he proceeded to Vaidyanatham, a holy Siva Kshetra.

Ganapati visited the temple, prostrated before Lord Siva and searched for a convenient corner to do tapas. He sat in meditation and when he next opened his eyes it was dark. Someone who was waiting there for him in the dark approached Ganapati and requested him to come to his house where Ganapati would be supplied with food and shelter while he continued his tapas.

This unexpected solicitude from a total stranger surprised Ganapati. Suresh Mitra, who was visiting the temple, saw

that it was not safe for Ganapati to do tapas there, as his bundle of clothes were opened and his money and belongings were stolen by some miscreants as soon as he sat for meditation. Ganapati agreed to Suresh Mitra's proposal and went to his house.

Suresh Mitra took him home and entertained him with all love. Mitra was a poet and scholar, who mastered the Tara Mantra which Ganapati was seeking to learn. Ganapati felt that the Divine Mother herself must have arranged his meeting with Suresh Mitra. Mitra agreed to initiate Ganapati into Tara Mantra, but it had to be done only through the medium of a woman. So Suresh Mitra took Ganapati to a tank nearby, kept a woman as a medium and initiated him into the Tara Mantra.

Ganapati repeated this Mantra for ten days and attained mastery over it. After that he wrote a treatise on "Dasa Maha Vidyas" (The Ten Great Methods) and Tara Vidya was one of them. Tara Vidya is the second of the ten Maha Vidyas of the Mother. Tara is the pranava. She bestows the pasyanti Shakti on the worshipper. 'Om' is the masculine form and 'Tara' the feminine form of the 'Word'. Tara and Neela are the names of the goddess of learning, Saraswati. 'Om, Hrim, Hroom, Phat' or 'Hrim, Sreem, Hroom' or just 'Om' can be repeated till the sound of the mantra is merged in the source, which is pranava. This is the attainment of mantra Shakti, or the fulfilment of the japa.

Ganapati did not stop at this. He recalled that there is a Vedic method called 'Udgitha Vidya', and incorporated it

in his work, “Viswamimamsa”. He harmonized both these Vidyas and gave them out as aphorisms.

मूले स्थित्या भैरव्याख्यां तारां देवीमुद्गीथेन ।

सेवेतार्यो विदितरहस्यो मातङ्गीं तां गुणगानेन । 10-38-23

Knowing the inner meaning of the worship, I worship Bhairavi through concentrating in the Muladhara Chakra, Tara as 'Udgitha' and Matangi through extolling her qualities.

– Uma Sahasram

Ganapati initiated his wife into Tara Mantra and through her many others, and thus he became the first person to propagate Tara Mantra in South India.

Chapter 22

MOTHER LIGHTNING

मन्यन्ते केऽपि घनं पर्वतमुक्तं निगूढया वाचा ।

प्रादुर्भवति गभीरध्वनिरविषह्या यतः शक्तिः ॥ 1-1-20

The mystic language of the Vedas describes the dark rain-bearing cloud as Parvata (mountain). The terrible sound or thunder which emanates from this cloud and which is the source of this formidable power, electricity, is called the daughter of Parvata, Parvati.

– Uma Sahasram

Parvati is said to be the daughter of the King of the Mountains and it is the Himalayan range which is referred to as the 'Mountains'. If She is the Mother of the world, the creator of everything, how can She be the daughter of a mountain? So, there must be another deeper and secret interpretation to this story.

Between Bhuvaneswar and Baleswar stations, on the Orissa railway line, there is the station of Dhan-Mandal. About five kilometers from the station there is an estate called Dantavani. The Zamindar of that estate heard from the King of Mandasa about the extraordinary prowess and scholarship of Ganapati. He wanted to meet Ganapati, and decided to convene an assembly of scholars in his place and invited Ganapati through the King to attend it. Ganapati, went to Dantavani, along with his younger brother Sivarama

Sastry. He exhibited his prowess in the meeting to the joy and wonder of the Zamindar. Honoured by the Zamindar, Ganapati took leave of him and started for the station.

Ganapati and his brother were seated in a cart drawn by two bullocks. The Zamindar of Dantavani told the driver of the cart to take good care of his guests and bring them safely to the railway station. When the cart reached the outskirts of Dantavani a sudden thunderous downpour of rain broke loose.

Due to the thick, black clouds and heavy downpour the road was submerged in total darkness. The bullocks were trudging through the storm with great difficulty. There was no place in sight where they could take shelter. They got thoroughly drenched. Unable to see in the darkness, the driver was afraid that some mishap may occur. Ganapati, taking in the seriousness of the situation, closed his eyes and prayed to the Divine Mother. Suddenly, the pitch-black clouds parted and a terrific flash of lightning struck before them, revealing that they were on the verge of falling into a deep gorge. Because of the lightning, the eyes of the bullocks got momentarily blinded. They abruptly stopped and all were thereby saved from a headlong plunge into a deep gorge. The cartman then realized that he had deviated from the normal trail. Steering the bullocks back on to the main trail, he was relieved. From then on lightning flashes lit their path and they could safely traverse the distance.

Ganapati was in meditation all the time, immersed in the Mother's compassion that had taken the form of lightning, which saved them from a great catastrophe.

पर्वतश्च पुलोमाचयः सजलोयं घनाघनः ।
पार्वतीति तटिद्धेवीं पौलोमीति च तां विदुः ॥

The words Parvata and Puloma are the names indicating a rain-bearing cloud. Therefore, that lightning which issues forth from this cloud is called Parvati and Poulomi.

शैवानां भाषया देवि त्वं तटिद्देवि पार्वती ।
इन्द्राणां भाषया मातः पौलोमि त्वमनामये ॥

O Tatit Devi! Saivas (devotees of Siva) call you Parvati and devotees of Indra call you Poulomi.

– Prachanda Chandi Trisati

In Sanskrit there are thirty-three names for a cloud. The thirteenth one is 'Parvata'. The energy emanating from this cloud is electricity or lightning. This energy is in ether, wind, earth, water and all beings.

It is a tradition in India to celebrate the birth and wedding of Parvati. Anything created must have a form. That form that is created is the 'tatit' or lightning. Fire is inherent in electricity. Sound issues forth from this. God Vinayaka is the god of sound. So he is the Sabda Brahma (sound form of the Supreme) born out of electricity or lightning. Hence he is said to be 'Vaidyutagni'. These are the mystic forms of the Divine Mother and her son Ganesha.

The cart reached the railway station and was about to cross the railway line, as the gate was open. Suddenly there was another flash of lightning and the cartman was startled to see a freight train speeding up the railway line in their direction. He stopped the cart just in time, avoiding another catastrophe. The cartman thanked the goddess of lightning

which saved them again. When they finally arrived at the station, Sivarama aroused Ganapati who was in deep meditation all this time. They bought tickets and boarded the train for Srikakulam.

To perceive the infinite form of the Mother, we must transcend the finite and understand Her as not just the daughter of a mountain but as the Universal Mother. The vision should expand from the personal to the universal. Ganapati knew the Mother's personal aspect, but now his understanding deepened as he experienced Her impersonal aspect, perceived as Lightning, the power of electricity.

Chapter 23

KANCHIPURAM

काञ्ची रमण्याः कुरुतां गृहस्थे
काणैर्मुदं कामपि किङ्किणीनाम् ।
काञ्ची भुवः पुण्यपुरी यतीन्द्र
त्वामम्बिकानामरवैर्धिनोतु ॥ 7-25-10

O Ascetic! The sound of bells on the belt and anklets of a woman gives happiness to householders. May this holy place, which is the waist belt (Kanchi) of the Goddess Earth, who is famed as Sri Kamakshi, give you happiness by the sound of the repetition of Her name.

– Uma Sahasram

Ganapati had become thoroughly introverted since he received the grace and understood the compassion of Tatit Devi, the Mother in the form of lightning. His meditation continued during the train journey. When the train was approaching Srikakulam station, Sivarama asked his brother whether they should get down. As Ganapati was deeply immersed in the meditation of the Mother's grace, he opened his eyes with difficulty and told Sivarama that he would like to continue the journey as far as the money they had would take them. Sivarama understood the condition of his brother and bought two tickets to Vijayawada Junction.

By evening they reached Vijayawada. They got down from the train, bathed in the holy river Krishnaveni and had the darshan of the diety Kanaka Durga. They sought shelter in a choultry for the night and they boarded a train for Renigunta the next morning. In due course they reached the famous holy city of Kanchipuram.

This holy town seems to be shared by the gods Vishnu and Siva. Vishnu is worshipped as god Varadaraja at one end of the town and as Siva at the other end, worshipped in the form of Ekamranatha. Mother Kamakshi Devi is the spouse of Lord Siva.

Kanchipuram is considered the waist-belt of Mother Earth and the sound of the bells of that belt merge devotees in bliss. Here also is found a famous monastery, Sankara Mutt, established here by the great Advaitin Sri Sankaracharya.

Ganapati and Sivarama bought some bananas with their remaining money and then started going round the city. Though a house would have been more convenient for rest that night, they did not trouble themselves with the thought of accommodation and were prepared to spend the night on a pial of a house or under a tree. At one place they saw a board on a wall of a house advertising an astrological centre. They entered the house and introduced themselves to Narayana Jyotishka who was running the centre. Ganapati started talking about astrology and saw the horoscope of the astrologer himself. Narayana Jyotishka was very much pleased with Ganapati and requested him to stay in his house. He begged Ganapati to teach him the secrets of astrology.

Consequently, Ganapati and Sivarama spent a month in Kanchipuram. Ganapati was teaching astrology to Narayana Jyotishka and Sivarama in the day time and spending the night doing tapas in a dilapidated Hanuman Temple situated between the rivers Khsiravati and Vegavati.

One day they received some money and a letter from their father requesting them to return home. He told Narayana Jyotishka about his intention of going home. Narayana said, "On the route to your home there is a very famous holy place called Arunachala. Lord Siva manifested himself there as a Jyotirlinga (Linga of fire). Tapasvins like you should surely visit that place. You can proceed to your hometown from there. Please visit Arunachala without fail."

Narayana's words of advice touched some chord in Ganapati's heart. He was thrilled by the word 'Arunachala', as if he had some unknown relationship with it. Ganapati closed his eyes and meditated. After a few minutes he opened them and said, "Yes, we must indeed visit Arunachala."

Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, the Pontiff of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, had great love for Ganapati. Ganapati was lauded and felicitated by the Acharya from whose hand he received gifts.

Once when the Acharya was walking in the streets of Madras, he heard a girl singing the following song at a gathering:

सेवक पातक शमनं दैवं
मानस वाञ्छित फलदं दैवं ।
सज्जन रक्षण चतुरं दैवं
दुर्जन मर्दन परुषं दैवं ॥

We prostrate to Him, the destroyer of His servant's sins, the bestower of the fruit of desires, skilled in the protection of noble souls and ruthless in vanquishing the wicked.

The Acharya recognized it as a composition of Ganapati and so much enjoyed the recital that he asked the girl to be brought to his Mutt to sing it there.



Virupakshi Cave: Ganapati Muni Sitting to the right of Bhagavan Ramana

PART II

Chapter 1

ARUNACHALAM

तन्त्रविदो नवयोनि तु चक्रं
शोणधराधररूपमुशन्ति ।
अर्धममुष्य वपुर्मदनारे -
रर्धनगेन्द्रसुते तव गात्रम् ॥ 7-26-14

O Daughter of the King of the Mountains! Those who are versed in Tantras (the methodology of worship of Siva and Shakti) have declared Arunachala as the Sri Chakra with nine entrances. Half of this is Thy form. The other half is the form of Lord Siva.

– Uma Sahasram

The pilgrim centre of Tiruvannamalai is about two hundred kilometres from Madras. It is a Siva Kshetra, in the district of North Arcot of Tamil Nadu State in South India. The Puranas say that Siva, Arunachaleswara, has manifested Himself here in three forms. One form is the unmoving form or the Arunachala Mountain, which Sri Ramana extolled as an effulgent fire of Knowledge. It is also said to be the combined form of Siva and Shakti. It has nine corners like the Sri Chakra Yantra and

Sri Ganapati says that both Advaitins (non-dualists) and the Shaktas (worshippers of Shakti) worship this mountain. It is the belief that gods as well as siddhas circumambulate this hill.

This mountain is the abode of Sri Ramana Maharshi and it is considered holy also because of his residence there. Sri Ganapati Muni says about the hill:

तद्भागधेयमसमानमनेकमौनि
 वासार्जितं क्षितिभृतः खलु लोहितस्य ।
 अङ्गीचकार भगवान् रमणो महर्षिः
 अन्येषु सत्सु यदिमं बहुषु स्थलेषु ॥

Arunachala possesses unequalled glory and many rishis live on it. Hence Sri Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi selected this hill for his residence, though there exist many other holy places.

The distance around the hill is nearly 14 kilometres. Siddhas and yogis are believed to live unseen on the hill.

The second form of Arunachaleswara is the Lingam in the temple, which is on the eastern side of the mountain. This is the single form of both Siva and Shakti:

अस्तु नगेश्वरनन्दिनि लिङ्गं तैजसमेतदिहापि तवांशः ।
 वीतगुणस्य विना तव योगं देवि शिवस्य कुतः खलु तेजः ॥

7-26-15

O Mother! Arunachala may be called the Linga of Fire (one of the five places of worship of the five elements). But thou art part of this Linga as well as part of the Hill. Can Siva who is devoid of attributes possess Light without being united with Thee?

– Uma Sahasram

The Puranas tell us that both the gods Brahma and Vishnu failed in their attempt to find out the head and feet of Arunachala, the Pillar of Fire which appeared before them when they were contending for the supremacy of the worlds.

The third form is of a siddha. Lord Siva, in the form of Arunagiri Yogi, goes about this place giving succour to his devotees.

In the month of Karthik, a great festival Brahmotsava is celebrated in Tiruvannamalai. When the star Krittika is in the ascendant, a huge flame will be lit on top of the hill Arunachala. Sri Ramana has described the significance of the beacon light to his devotees in a verse:

Getting rid of the 'I am the body' idea and merging the mind into the Heart to realize the Self as non-dual being and the light of all, is the real significance of darshan of the beacon light on Annamalai, the centre of the universe.

The following conversation recorded in *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* provides further insight into the greatness of Arunachala.

A Muslim devotee, Dr. Syed asked Bhagavan:

Dr. Syed: I have been reading the *Five Hymns*. I find that the hymns are addressed to Arunachala by you. You are an Advaitin. How do you then address God as a separate Being?

M.: The devotee, God and the hymns are all the Self.

D.: But you are addressing God. You are specifying this Arunachala Hill as God.

M.: You can identify the Self with the body. Should not the devotee identify the Self with Arunachala?

D.: If Arunachala be the Self why should it be specially picked out among so many other hills? God is everywhere. Why do you specify Him as Arunachala?

M.: What has attracted you from Allahabad to this place? What has attracted all these people around?

D.: Sri Bhagavan.

M.: How was I attracted here? By Arunachala. The Power cannot be denied. Again Arunachala is within and not without. The Self is Arunachala.

Someone remarked: It is said that they get mukti unasked who live or die within a radius of 30 miles round Arunachala. It is also admitted that only by Jnana is liberation obtained. The Purana also remarks that Vedanta Vijnana is difficult to get. So mukti is difficult. But life or death round about the Hill bestows mukti so easily. How can it be?

M.: Siva says, "By My command." Those who live here need no initiation, diksha, etc., but get mukti... Such is the command of Siva.

D.: The Purana also says that those who are born here are Siva's group of followers, such as ghosts, spirits, disembodied beings, etc.

M.: So it is said of other kshétras as well, e.g., Tiruvarur, Chidambaram.

D.: How does mere life or death here confer mukti? It is difficult to understand.

M.: दर्शनादभ्र सदसि जननात्कमलालये ।

काश्यांतु मरणान्मुक्तिः स्मरणादरुणाचले ॥

darsanadbhra sadasi jananat-kumalalaye.
kasyantu maranan-mukthih smaranad-arunachale.

“To see Chidambaram, to be born in Tiruvarur, to die in Benares, or merely to think of Arunachala, is to be assured of Liberation.”

Jananat Kamalalaye means “by being born in Kamalalaya”. What is it? It is the Heart.

Similarly, *Abhrasadasi* - In the Seat of Consciousness. Again, Kasi is the Light of Realisation. Remembering Arunachala completes the verse. It must also be understood in the same sense.

In September 1903 A.D., during the Navartri festival, Sri Ganapati Muni and his brother arrived in that holy place.

Chapter 2

HIRANYAGARBHA

जिह्वा तु वेदिस्तव तोयपूता
लोकप्रसंग स्तव तत्र धूमः ।
ज्वाला जगन्नाथकथा पवित्रा
चेतोघृतं जुह्वति यत्र संतः ॥

O Heramba! The wise meditate on you as Yajna Purusha. They perform the yajna making the pure tongue (the voice) the primal element, water as the Veda, the seeds of worldly desire as the smoke, the stories of Siva as the tongues of fire, and their own minds as the ghee. That is the yajna of Atma-Darshan (Self-realization).

– Herambopasanam

The dynamic aspect of Siva is Maha Maya. She merged Herself in Siva and shines as Light. She is worshipped as Apita Kuchamba in Arunachala. Apita Kuchamba means “the Mother whose breast milk is undrunk.” A mother feeds her child with the milk of her breast and the child is sustained on this milk. This is the sustenance aspect of Mother Nature which is called ‘Anna Shakti’. Apita Kuchamba does not give this Annam (food), but gives the milk of Knowledge to her devotees and is therefore called Apita Kuchamba.

Lord Skanda is the younger son of the Divine parents. He is an adept in Hridaya Vidya (Knowledge of the Heart).

He is always immersed in the knowledge of the Self and disseminates it through perfect silence, which is far greater than speech.

The elder son of the Divine Parents is Heramba or Ganapati. His position is to disseminate Knowledge through words. How can he act in such a silent atmosphere? Can ordinary mortals understand this great silence? If everybody tries to communicate through silence, who will bring it into word form? Even though Ishwara is Silence, He is also Pranava, the word 'Om'. Heramba is endowed with noble and unassailable strength to make this power of the word reverberate from the Arunachala Hill.

At dusk, Ganapati and Sivarama arrived at Arunachala. It is the custom of the Southerners to visit the temple of a place as soon as they arrive, even before bathing. Such a visit is called dhuli darshan. Ganapati and his brother went straight to the temple and stayed there till 8 p.m. There was little traffic on the roads and the town was silent. Unsuccessfully, they begged at one or two brahmin houses for food. It was the day of ekadasi, a day of fasting, so nobody had cooked any food.

Ganapati and Sivarama were very tired and hungry. They thought it better to settle down on the pial of some house and try to sleep. Accordingly, they selected the pial of a house and settled themselves on it to sleep. Suddenly, a brahmin with a shining face came running from within and said that he was performing ekadasi and that the event was not complete until he fed at least two brahmins with good food immediately. He begged them to accept food at his house.

It was 10 p.m. and it looked ridiculous to talk of dwadasi or ekadasi at that time of the night. But, since the brothers were hungry, they accepted the invitation, had the feast and came back to the same pial and slept soundly till the morning. The brahmin had given them betel in the end and they left the tops of the leaves on the pial while eating the leaves and nuts.

Early in the morning, Ganapati woke up and wanted to wake up the brahmin host of the previous night and thank him before they moved out. But when he looked at the house, to his surprise, he saw it was not a house but the temple of Vinayaka. Ganapati noticed the betel leaf remnants on the pial, understood that as the brahmin or his wife were not to be seen anywhere, and it was the outside of a temple where they slept, it could have been nothing other than a vision.

Ganapati awakened Sivarama and said, "See, brother, how wonderful is God's grace! We did not even enquire the name of the brahmin who fed us last night. See there the idol of Heramba. He is looking at us with a smiling face!"

माहात्म्यं ननु वक्तुं कश्शक्तः पुरुषस्ते ।
हस्तीन्द्रानन भाग्यं सर्वेषां तव हस्ते ॥

O Lord Ganesha! Who can describe Thy greatness! The prosperity of everybody rests in Thy hand.

Ganapati and Sivarama saluted Ganesa. Ganesa looked on as though he were blessing them.

Chapter 3

DEVOTION AND GRACE

भारतभूवलयेऽत्र विशाले सन्त्वनघानि बहूनि गृहाणि ।
आस्यविगीतसुधाकरबिम्बा शोणगिरौ रमतेऽत्र मदम्बा ॥

7-26-6

There may be many blemishless mansions in this land of Bharata. But, my Mother, whose face defies the Moon, has selected this Arunachala as Her abode.

– Uma Sahasram

Uma, who was the goddess of Ganapati's heart, had graced him with honey in Bhuvaneswar. Ganapati interprets the name 'Uma' as 'U' = Siva and 'Ma' = the measuring power that measures Him. He spoke of Her as that power which is beyond name and form. This Goddess Uma is the same Apita Kuchamba who manifested Herself in Arunachala. This Supreme Shakti had blessed him in other forms also, but the way she blessed him as Apita Kuchamba is entirely different. The various verses composed in Her praise give evidence of this.

Having partaken of the prasad of Vinayaka, the brothers took up their residence in a choultry near the temple. For three days they had no problem of food and shelter. Ganapati engaged himself in the worship of Mother Apita Kuchamba. As the Mother was giving Her darshan in visions of various

forms, Ganapati started composing verses out of devotional ecstasy. He praised the image of the Mother in the temple:

शिल्पविदः प्रतिमां प्रविशन्ती स्वल्पविदां तरणाय चकास्ति ।
शोणधराभृति सम्प्रति लब्धा हन्त चिरादियमेव मदम्बा ॥

The Divine Mother, who entered the sculpted image, blesses even tiny intellects with Her grace. She blessed me with her darshan in Arunachala.

स्थापित मूर्ति रियं तव नम्या पूजयितुं जगदीश्वरि रम्या ।
शोणनगार्धं मिदं तव रूपम् कीर्तयितुं नगजे धुतपापम् ॥

Mother of the universe! Thy form which is so worshipful in sculpture is beautiful to be worshipped too. Thy form is half of Arunagiri, and when praised, removes all the sins of Thy devotees.

The Vedas are the horses of Siva. The Upanishads are the cream of the Vedas. They bestow complete Knowledge of the Spirit. But the Divine couple of Arunachala bestow the secrets of this life and more. It can only be experienced, not described. Apita Kuchamba blessed Ganapati with this knowledge.

वेदतुरंगविलोचनभाग्यं वेदशिरोनिचयैरपि मृग्यं ।
शोकविदारि सुधाकिरणास्यं शोणगिरौ समलोकि रहस्यम् ॥

Out of my extreme good fortune I had the darshan of the Mother in Arunachala. She is the joy of the eyes of Siva, who has the Vedas as His horses and the light of whose moon-like face dispels darkness, and who cannot be grasped even by the Vedas.

The word 'bhagyam' denotes the results of merits and the word 'mrigyam' denotes that which is to be searched. The secret of life means the form of the Mother. The meaning of the whole poem is that yogi Ganapati was blessed with the good fortune of having had the darshan of such a glorious Divine Mother.

True tapasvins do not desire anything for themselves. Their only desire is the welfare of the world and protection of Dharma. Ganapati Muni understood that the smile of the Divine Mother is capable of bestowing Knowledge. Therefore he prayed to the Mother to save the scholars of India, who are satisfied with the mere knowledge of the scriptures and do not have the knowledge of Brahman, i.e. the Supreme Being.

आगमविन्मति कैरवणीनां बोध मजस्र मसौ विदधानः ।
पातु महेशवधू वदनांशो हासशशी सकलानि कलानि ॥

May the moon-like cool smiles of Maheswari, that shine in glory, fill the lotus hearts of scholars with the knowledge of Brahman and save the denizens of Bharat.

आयतलोचनचुम्बितकर्णा दानयशोजित तोयदकर्णा ।
शोणनगेशमनः प्रियवर्णा नाशयताज्जगदार्ति मपर्णा ॥

May Mother Aparna, whose eyes almost touch her ears, who like the cloud showers boons greater than those of the famous Karna (of Mahabharata fame), and has a very fair complexion which pleases Siva, destroy the sorrow of the worlds.

There are innumerable verses like this composed by Ganapati Muni.

Sivarama reminded his brother that three days had passed since they occupied the choultry, and suggested that they should find some alternate accommodation.

Chapter 4

HARA SAHASRA MALA

अरुणाचलरूपेण परिणाम मुपागतं
ज्योतिर्मयं परब्रह्म ज्ञानाय मम कल्पताम् ॥

May Parabrahma who has manifested Himself as Arunachala bless me with knowledge.

– Hara Sahasram

Ganapati and his brother vacated the choultry and were not bothered much about where they should go next. But the problem of hunger had to be faced. They could get on for some days by begging for food at some houses around lunch time. But they had to go without food at nights. Though Ganapati was used to this sort of life, Sivarama found it hard. Since it was several months since they left home, Sivarama suggested that they might go home, as their father would be waiting for them. Ganapati did not want to leave Arunachala. Mother Apita was giving him darshan off and on and Ganapati was not inclined to give up this extreme good fortune. He told his brother that some Shakti has brought them there and this Shakti does not leave him, so he could return home alone, if he wished.

Sivarama protested, "How can I return without you, and what shall I tell them if they ask me why I left you here and came home alone? And you are quite aware that your wife will be waiting for you."

Ganapati wanted to stay at Arunachala, find a job and bring his family there. With this thought in mind, Ganapati lifted his face to the mountain and started upbraiding it, "Everybody praises you as the giver of eternal happiness. You are not giving me even a full meal. How can you give happiness to your devotees?" In this mood he immediately composed a sloka:

वृत्तिदानविमुखेन किं त्वया दीयते निजमनामयं पदं ।
किं ददाति हर सर्वसमर्पणं विष्णिशाशकलदान दुर्मनाः ॥

O Lord Arunachala! Can Thou who art unwilling to give even a job for livelihood, bestow eternal knowledge? Can a shopkeeper who is unwilling to give even a piece of turmeric in charity, give a piece of land to anybody?

Immediately Ganapati felt very bad at taking God to task, and prayed within, 'O Lord, did I ask you for anything? As Vinayaka, did you not provide me with food? I have begged only in the houses of brahmins on Sannidhi Street and you have provided me with food all these days. It is unfair of me to take Thee, Siva, to task. Well, I will now ask Thee what I want and see whether Thou are compassionate'.

Then and there Ganapati decided to compose a garland of songs and offer them to Siva. Thinking thus, Ganapati told his brother that we should wait until the Navaratri festival is over before leaving Arunachala.

By the next evening, Ganapati had composed thirty-six slokas. Along with his brother he carried these garland of verses in his hands, stood before Nandi, facing Lord

Siva at the Arunachala Temple, closed his eyes and began reciting the slokas:

अरुणाचलरूपो वः करुणावरुणालयः ।
 भुवनाधिपतिः कश्चिदवनाय प्रकल्पताम् ॥
 इहालङ्कारमाधुर्यध्वनयो सन्तिवा न वा
 एको नामध्वनिः शम्भोरस्यादातुं विदां मनः ॥
 अलिङ्गयन्तां चित्रार्थैः प्राचां वाचो विपश्चितां ।
 यश एव महेशस्य भाषया मधुभूषणम् ॥

One by one, the slokas were offered at the feet of the Lord. Ganapati and Sivarama were immersed in devotion and tears flowed freely from their eyes. People who visited the temple at that time were very much attracted by the beautiful sonorous singing that issued out of Ganapati's mouth. Tears flowed down from the eyes of all the listeners, which included sadhus and others who lived on the mountain.

The following day, residents of the town started thronging the temple at the time when Ganapati began singing his verses on Siva. People started to invite him and his brother to have food at their houses. Everyday Ganapati composed fresh slokas and it was a poetical feast to all the scholars, poets and devotees who attended the daily recital. Yogis and ascetics from Arunachala hill also attended and blessed Ganapati. Seshadri Swami was one of the yogis who heard Ganapati's rendering of the slokas.

On the tenth day of the festival of Navaratri, Ganapati garlanded Lord Arunachaleswara with a thousand verses. The elite of the town who heard this beautiful exposition in

Sanskrit offered Ganapati a post of Sanskrit teacher in a Sanskrit school in Tiruvannamalai.

Chapter 5

I PROSTRATE BEFORE THEE

त्वय्यर्पित मनसा त्वां पश्यन् सर्वं तवाकृतितया सततं ।
भजतेऽनन्यप्रीत्या स जयत्यरुणाचल त्वयि सुखे मग्नः ॥

O Arunachala! Having surrendered the mind to Thee, beholding everything as Thy Form, he who worships Thee with undivided love will be submerged in Eternal Bliss.

— *Arunachala Pancha Ratna*, by Sri Ramana Maharshi

Not long after his wife and son joined him in Tiruvannamalai, Ganapati climbed the hill with his family to have darshan of Mouni Swami, as Ramana Bhagavan was then called. They sat before the Swami. “Deva, prostrate before Swami,” Ganapati told his son. But the child did not heed his father’s words and started playing at a distance. Meanwhile Jata Swami came on a visit to Mouna Swami. He told Ganapati, ‘Sir, you are a scholar. Can you interpret the sloka, “*Suklambhara Dharam...*” so as to describe Vishnu?’

Ganapati immediately took up the challenge and said, “Why only to Vishnu’s description? I will interpret it to suit Mouni Swami himself.” So saying, Ganapati interpreted the sloka to describe Mouna Swami.

शुक्लांबरधरं - Wearing white cloth as a garment.

विष्णुं - All-pervading.

शशिवर्ण - Complexion like the moon.

चतुर्भुज - He who has gobbled up the four enemies:

Kama, Krodha, Mada and Matsarya.

प्रसन्न वदन - Who has a peaceful countenance.

ध्यायेत् - To be meditated upon.

सर्वविघ्नोपशान्तये - for the removal of all obstacles.

Jata Swami, who was not in the habit of praising Mouna Swami, was somewhat discomfited at this interpretation by Ganapati. And Ganapati had no inkling then that four years later he would surrender to the Mouna Swami as his Sadguru.

All of a sudden, Mahadeva who was playing at some distance, came running and prostrated at the feet of Mouna Swami, saying, "I, Mahadeva Sarma, prostrate at thy feet." Mouna Swami lifted the boy up with all love and fondled him. Later Swami said that it was surprising how such a small child of four could surrender in such a manner. From then on there grew a friendship between the child Mahadeva and Mouna Swami. In later years, Mahadeva used to say, "It was simply unforgettable the way Bhagavan showered his grace on me!" All through his life Mahadeva was calm and introverted. He used to be called 'Devudanna', meaning godly person.

Chapter 6

MY COUNTRY, MY PEOPLE

आत्मीयदेशरक्षणे शक्तं करोतु सर्वदा ।

पापद्विषां प्रियंकरी वासिष्ठमिन्द्रसुन्दरी ॥

O Mother Indrani! O Thou who art the lover of the enemies of sinners! Make me ever strong to protect my country.

– Indrani Saptasati

Ganapati did not take up tapas on the hill or temples of Tiruvannamalai. His attention was now drawn to fathom the secrets of the Vedas through critical appreciation. To repeat the mantras of the Vedas with proper intonation became his tapas. Ganapati immersed himself in this study of Vedas, delving into the culture of the Vedic times. Ganapati studied Tarka and Vartika of the school of rishi Jaimini.

Keeping his mind steady in the search of Truth, opening the inner library of the Muladhara Chakra and delving into the material and spiritual truths of the rishis, Ganapati gained a deep understanding of the Vedas. Like the modern scientist, the rishis have thoroughly investigated the secrets of the nature of this world of five elements. The knowledge of the phenomenal world that the modern scientists have acquired was already embedded in the Vedas.

The Truth which is the fundamental basis of creation was searched and discovered by the rishis and their experiential knowledge was revealed in the Vedas. Hence the Vedas are a beacon light, revealing new knowledge. The culture of the rishis was a glorious period of Indian History. The fall of our Hindu culture began when the Vedic knowledge was forgotten by its people. Spiritual degeneration is the main cause of foreign domination and the attitude of slavery of the Indians. This knowledge was revealed to Ganapati through his systematic study of the Vedas.

Ganapati thought that the renaissance of India's Vedic culture was the urgent need of the times. He began giving discourses on the Vedas and Literature and through these teachings inspired a righteous way of life and patriotism in his countrymen. Till then the general public's notion of meritorious action was limited to visits to holy men and temples. But now, through his lectures and personality the people of Arunachala began to understand the value of the Vedas and the way of life they prescribed. Attracted by his dynamic personality, people in the thousands started to visit Ganapati. Some came to get their doubts cleared; some arrived in search of Vedic studies, and some to receive mantras from him.

Ganapati's fame extended beyond the borders of Tiruvannamalai to other towns and municipalities in South India. Many became his disciples. One of them was Satanjeri Ramaswamy Iyer from Madras. Iyer was the descendant of the famous saint Upanishad Brahma, and so lived a pious and austere life, following his family tradition. Iyer worked

as a clerk in the High Court of Madras. Very much impressed by Ganapati's discourses, he invited the Muni to Madras. Obliging his disciple's request, he went to Madras and stayed in Iyer's house during the holiday season. The whole family felt blessed with the visit of their master Ganapati.

When Ganapati was in Madras, a gathering of educated people who were conversant with the Sanskrit language was arranged. Many among the invitees were influential political leaders. Some students who had heard of the extraordinary erudition of Kavyakantha also attended. As Ganapati was famed as the recipient of the 'Kavyakantha' title many gathered to see him.

At one such gathering, Ganapati's voice rang out in sonorous tones describing the rishi culture of yore and the present deteriorated condition of the society. But suddenly he became silent, his mind introverted and he sat in meditation.

The congregation waited patiently for some time. When they found that Ganapati was not going to speak anymore, one of the men came near and asked Ganapati, "What are you meditating on, Sir?" Ganapati said sadly, "दशां देशस्यैतां प्रतिपदमयं ध्यायति जनः (This poor soul is thinking of the state of this country)." The members of the gathering could not understand the purport of this statement. Gradually Ganapati came out of his meditative state and explained:

कुलीनः क्षुद्राय प्रवर इति दत्ते निजसुतां
 अनार्यान् विज्ञाश्च प्रभव इति गायन्ति शतशः ।
 बलं बाह्वोर्लुप्तं हतमपि च वाग्वीर्यमरिभिः
 दशां देशस्यैतां प्रतिपदमयं ध्यायति जनः ॥

A person of noble birth gives his daughter in marriage to a mean fellow thinking him to be a good bridegroom; some persons are praising ignoble men as mighty lords; physical strength is lost. The power of speech is curtailed by enemies. This unfortunate person (I) is thinking sadly of the condition of his country.

अरिभिरध यैः क्रांता एते मुहुर्मुहुरुद्धतैः
 करमविकलं दातुं धीरो न कोऽपि विलोक्यते ।
 क्व तव दयितास्ते ते पूर्वे धरे भरतादयो
 यदजित भुजादुर्गस्था या तवाम्ब न भीरभूत् ॥

O my mother India! There is no fearless heroic person who can save you from the onslaught of arrogant enemies who occupy and harass you off and on. Where are King Bharata and the like under whose reign you were safe and happy!

Those were the days when voices were raised here and there for the independence of the country which was suffering under foreign (British) rule. In Kavyakantha, the citizens of Madras found a hero who had girded his loins for India's redemption. The inspiring, dynamic discourses of Kavyakantha infused in them new courage to face the oppressors.

The day after Ganapati Sastry's speech, many eminent scholars came to meet him. Among them were Vedam Venkataraya Sastry, Tandulam Subrahmanya Iyer, Panchapakesa Sastry and Rangayya Naidu. Sri Venkataraya Sastry came to have a doubt cleared. As soon as he said, "I have a doubt," Ganapati composed a verse extempore, which had a double meaning:

स्य तु सर्वज्ञशिरोमणि दीधिति दोष प्रदर्शनेऽपि पटुः ।
भवतां शंकाः शंकरहरिणदृशोहासनवशास्त्री ॥

1. *This Ganapati, who is the ever new delightful smile of Mother Parvati, is able to point out mistakes even in the composition 'Didhiti' of Bhattacharya. He, the most knowledgeable person, can clear your doubts, if any.*

2. *This Ganapati who is the form of the ever new delightful smile of Parvati, which can reveal the dark spots in the Moon, which is the decoration on the locks of Siva, who is the personification of all Knowledge.*

Not only were there two meanings in this one verse, it contained the courageous declaration of Ganapati being the son of Mother Parvati. All the eminent scholars who gathered there understood that Ganapati was no ordinary scholar, but a real Kavyakantha who was the embodiment of Knowledge. They talked on various matters to their heart's content. Tandulam Subrahmanya Iyer wanted to hear one more extempore composition of Ganapati. He requested Ganapati Sastry to compose a verse which can mean all the gods Skanda, Ganapati, Parvati and Siva. Immediately Kavyakantha broke into verse:

जगतीधरजामाता भवतां भव्याय भूयसे भवतु ।
कञ्चिदपि किञ्चनमपि यद्वीक्षा विदधाति शक्रसमम् ॥

जगतीधर जामाता - *The son-in-law of the King of
Mountains, Siva.*

जगतीधरजा + माता - *The Daughter of the
Mountain, Parvati, the Divine Mother.*

जगती धरजा + माता - *To whom (Skanda and Ganapati),
the Daughter of the Mountain is the Mother.*

*May the gracious look which makes even a beggar an Indra
make you prosperous.*

With this stroke of excellence all of them considered
Ganapati as their master and bowing, departed.

Chapter 7

LITERARY MEETINGS IN MADRAS

The scholars in Madras who saw a Kalidasa and a Sankara in Ganapati invited him repeatedly to regale them with his mellifluous discourses. Appreciating his modernistic approach, a large student population gathered around him wherever he went. He was a guru to both the old and the young alike, as he was in harmony with all. Many became his disciples in South India and he initiated many into various mantras. Disciples used to recount about the peace and tranquillity of doing mantra japa in his presence.

Growing popularity deprived Ganapati of his privacy. Tapas was not possible in such an atmosphere, as most of his time was spent in literary activity. Later, at the pleading of his disciples, Ganapati visited Madras a second time. This time he was accommodated in the house of his student Doraiswamy Iyer. Naturally students in large numbers gathered there.

One student asked, “Master! Have you gone through English Literature?”

“I have not studied the English language. But if you tell me any story concisely, I can explain the poetic excellence of the composition,” replied Ganapati. Doraiswamy related the story of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. Instantly Kavyakantha started his composition:

The story of Macbeth flowed forth in Sanskrit from his mouth in an amazing manner. The audience was thrilled at his uncommon poetic excellence. Kavyakantha went on explaining Shakespeare's treatment of the story. The English educated students who gathered there acknowledged that Sanskrit is a powerful and beautiful medium of expression.

There was a meeting arranged in Tiruvellikeni that evening, under the aegis of Sri Srinivasa Sastry, the eminent scholar. The meeting was attended by eminent scholars like Halasya Sastry, V. Venkataraya Sastry and Nilamegha Sastry, who were to be the examiners in a test of solving puzzles.

Ganapati Sastry got up on the dais ready for the test. The puzzles were thrown at him in rapid succession. He solved them all with ease and precision. Then the scholars ran out of puzzles. At last, Sri Venkataraya Sastry declared, "Vasishta Mahasaya, you removed all our problems." Everybody appreciated his pun on the word समस्या (problem).

Ganapati did not know anything about unethical scheming in the field of scholarship. He once came to understand that there could be malpractice even in 'Avadhanas'. Once a meeting was conducted in Mylapore under the guidance of a scholar called Narayana Sudarsana. The competition was between a poet and a scribe. The poet was Ganapati. He was asked to describe the scene of the marriage of Sri Rukmini Devi and Sri Krishna. It was child's play for Ganapati to compose extempore poetry. He was composing at a fast rate. The scribe acted as though he was writing down even faster and prodded Ganapati for more

verses. After sometime Ganapati understood that some mischief was going on and asked the scribe to read out what he had written. The scribe read out a little, but it was not Ganapati's compositions. The style of the verses was definitely that of Narayana Sudarsana. The audience immediately got wild and took the president, Narayana Sudarsana to task. At the end the scribe owned up to his deceit and accepted defeat. That test over, another one was conducted, which is called 'Nyastakshari'.

A sloka is broken into pieces, the pieces are numbered according to their position in the sloka and given to the performer one by one. The performer remembers the words according to their number and constructs the poem again. Again there was malpractice. Instead of following the normal procedure, Ganapati was given all the numbers at the same time. The audience objected to this unfair method. But, as Ganapati had an uncommonly brilliant memory, he could arrange the words in perfect order. To the surprise of the audience, he even reversed the poem and recited the whole composition back to front. The whole congregation applauded Ganapati's superhuman feat.

Next Ganapati gave a thorough commentary of the piece and revealed the wrong usages in it. The author of the sloka was Narayana Sudarsana himself and so he kept quiet even though he was insulted. Lastly Ganapati appreciated the poetry of the composition and glanced at the President. Narayana Sudarsana was ashamed at the magnanimity of Ganapati and asked pardon for his malpractice. The congregation felicitated Ganapati with great aplomb.

Ganapati concluded his literary exploits in Madras and returned to Tiruvannamalai. There was an offer of a post of Telugu Pundit in the Vellore Christian College waiting for him when he returned home. The disciples of Madras had arranged for this offer. At first Ganapati was unwilling, but was finally persuaded by his admirers and he shifted his family to Vellore.

Chapter 8

INDRA SENA

शक्ता देवि विधेह्यार्ताना मवने ।

इन्द्रस्येव भुजां वासिष्ठस्य मतिम् ॥

O Mother Indrani! May Thou bless Vasishta's intellect in the same way as Thou bestowest strength to the arms of Indra for relieving the distress of devotees.

भिन्नां संघ सहस्रैः खिन्नां शत्रुभरेण

पातुं भारतभूमिं मातर्देहि बलं नः ॥

O Mother! Please bestow strength on me so that I may save Bharat Bhoomi, my country, which is divided into thousands of parties and is in great distress due to the burden of enemy.

— *Indrani Saptasati*

Ganapati felt there was an acute need for the propagation of Vedic Knowledge in India. He desired that India could become once again a great civilization if the society honoured and emulated India's ancient traditions.

When Sri Ganapati, with a divinely glowing countenance and brilliant eyes entered the Vellore Christian College to take up the post of Telugu Pandit, the Principal of the college stood up and saluted him with all reverence, joining his palms in the Hindu method of greeting. This was something unprecedented in the history of the college. The principal said later, "I saw the prophet David in him."

Religious propagation is nothing new for the British. In their schools and colleges text books were replete with biblical quotations and praise of the greatness of Christianity is interspersed in the text of books. Indians and their religion were not much respected by the British members of the staff, who commanded, or demanded, all the respect. The students, who knew neither the greatness of the Indian culture nor of the Sanskrit language, gave precedence to the learning of the English language. The students who did know something of their own cultural greatness were afraid to show it. Ganapati did not like educational institutions becoming centres of religious propaganda. 'Educational institutions must be centres to disseminate knowledge and not to promote religious propaganda. Knowledge beyond the constrictions of religion can be had only in an independent atmosphere. Colleges must have such an atmosphere', thought Ganapati. He was inculcating these ideas among both the teachers and students of the college. He also started to lecture on the greatness of Hindu Culture and Vedic knowledge.

Some Christians met Ganapati Sastry and said, "Sastryji, you will know the greatness of Christianity if you study the Bible!" Sastry replied, "I have great respect for Christ as a teacher. There are aphorisms in other religious scriptures also, just as there are in the Bible. They are all meant for individual development. If you are after real knowledge, why do you not read the scriptures of other religions also? The Bible alone will not suffice to give you that knowledge. Are there not great commentaries in other religions? We are

Indians. Ours is the culture of the Vedas. It is not a religion born out of the spiritual development of just one. The Vedas are the treasury of the spiritual knowledge of very many seers. They do not contain any narrow ideology. You have come to our country. It is better for you to adopt yourselves to the tradition of this land. Instead of doing that, you are deriding us. Is it fair? We have immense faith in our country. Our country's culture is our culture. You are wrong in criticising it." The Christians were stunned at this chastisement by Ganapati Muni.

Day by day the students were rejuvenated by Sastry's exhortations and got over their diffidence about their nation and its traditions. Teachers like Sivasubrahmanyam and Sarvepalli Narasimham (Pranavananda) became Ganapati Sastry's disciples. Ganapati Sastry started a union called 'Indra Sena', recruiting students who were enthusiastic and energetic. As Hindus, in general, are dedicated people who surrender the results of their actions to God, this union adopted the same ideal. It included in its agenda the welfare of the society, along with spiritual unfoldment. The Ideology of the Sena was as follows:

1. Education must be devoid of religious propaganda.
2. The British have no authority to strangle the beliefs of the Indians.
3. Vedic knowledge must be inculcated in the Indian minds.
4. Everybody is fit to acquire knowledge. There should not be any discrimination among men regarding caste, creed and religion.

5. Every member must meditate in his heart and awaken Indra Shakti, which is inherent in all.

Inculcation of Vedic knowledge was the prime activity of this society. The lessons promoted the culture of the Vedic times, the equality of men and women and unselfish action. The greatness of Hindu culture was instilled into the minds of the students through Ganapati Sastry's speeches. Sastry firmly believed that it was impossible for the country to get independence unless Divine energy was acquired by the grace of God. He used to maintain that even if independence was achieved, it would be unstable unless acquisition of material and spiritual freedom was attained. Therefore, he drew up a plan of individual development before preaching revolutionary methods.

The one-line Gayatri mantra '*Indro Visvasya Rajati*' इन्द्रो विश्वस्य राजति' (Indra – Siva – is the ruler of the world). was given to the members of Indra Sena as a pledge. '*Umam Vande Mataram*' was their slogan. The society considered that the Universal Mother Uma was Bharata Mata, their Motherland.

Many people joined this society under the leadership of Ganapati Muni. Many branches shot up in Madras, Chittoor and places nearby.

Even though this society took up spiritual enlightenment as its prime concern, the British rulers kept Ganapati Sastry under surveillance, as slogans raised for independence of the country were brought to their attention.

Chapter 9

DIVINE VISION OF MOTHER RENUKA

यः कुण्डलीपट्टणराजधानी मालोक्ते कामपि कृत्तमस्ताम् ।
निस्सार मानंदकलाविहीनं संसार मेतं स जहाति बुद्ध्या ॥

7-25-8

He who has the darshan of Renuka Devi, who has the Kundalipura as Her capital, Her head severed, will give up this worldly life which is without substance and devoid of a trace of happiness, and become detached from it.

– Uma Sahasram

Padai Veedu is a place of pilgrimage which lies on the river Kamandalu near Vellore. The deity Renuka Devi who is worshipped by the Gods, who is the embodiment of the ten great Vidyas and who is the mother of Parasurama, resides here. Padai means the head of a snake. Veedu means a house. The Sanskrit synonym is Kundalipuram. Kundalini Shakti is another name for the power of Indra. This power is coiled up like a snake in the Muladhara Chakra of man. It is awakened raised to the Sahasrara Chakra by yogis. The Shakti in this process will raise its head like the snake and passing through the spinal chord, which is called veenadanda, reach the head. It is called Kundalini because it rises like a snake uncoiling itself from

a supine position. When it manifests itself in the yogis, the yogi's cranium gets broken. Chchinna Masta is the Shakti which has Her head severed. Therefore, when the Kundalini breaks open the cranium, it is called Chchinna Masta Devi.

In 1906, Ganapati arrived at Padai Veedu with his family during the Navaratri festival. As soon as he had the darshan of the Goddess, he understood Her power and decided to do tapas there. During the holidays in December, Ganapati came here and took up a vow of forty days' tapas. For thirty-nine days the tapas went on without any hindrance and his body weakened considerably. But as the Kundalini Shakti was awakened frequently, his face shone with a lustre. On the last day of the tapas, Ganapati was in deep meditation sitting in the temple. At midnight he had a severe pain in the vertebral column. Unable to bear the pain, Ganapati lay down on his back and started meditating. Suddenly his body grew tall like a Palmyra tree. He heard the tinkling sounds of anklets. With a sweet smiling face, Goddess Renuka appeared before him. Her loving look and smile cooled down the turmoil of Ganapati's heart. He touched Her feet with trembling hands. Tears were flowing down his face while he praised the Mother in verse:

भाहि विविधाकृतिमती द्विजसमूहे
 पाहि गतिहीनमखिलेश्वरि कुलं नः ।
 देहि बहुकाल भजकाय वरमेतम्
 याहि नगनन्दिनि यशः शशिवलक्षम् ॥ 9-35-2

O Mother Parvati! Bestow good thoughts on our people. Save our Bharata clan which has become destitute. Give me, who am thy devotee since long, this boon. Maintain your fame which is as cool as the moon. – Uma Sahasram

वारयति घोरतरपातकसमूहम्
 वर्धयति धर्ममपि शर्मकरमन्ते ।
 किंकरजनस्य न किमावहति भव्यम्
 शंकरपुरंध्रि तव पादपरिचर्या ॥ 9-35-3

O' Divine Spouse of Sankara! Worship of Thy feet removes the gravest sins, bestows victory, righteousness and showers wealth and prosperity on thy devotees. – Uma Sahasram

Mother Renuka's heart melted at this prayer of Her ardent devotee. She raised Her hand in blessing and asked Ganapati to follow Her. She scratched Ganapati on his left thigh. An electric shock went through his whole body and his back ache disappeared. Ganapati got up and prostrated before the Mother. Followed by Ganapati, Mother Renuka went around the temple to the bilva tree at the back. She sat under the tree and Ganapati sat at Her feet. After some time She rose, and followed by Ganapati went into the temple of Ekamukha Kumara Swamy (The One-Faced Kumara Swamy). She took the weapon of Shakti from Kumara Swamy's hand, gave it to Ganapati and went back to Her temple and disappeared.

Ganapati woke up from this miraculous vision and opened his eyes. He was lying down in the same position as he was previously. But, there was the mark of blood at the place Renuka Devi scratched his thigh. He was

overjoyed at the Mother's grace and again lost himself in meditation.

Again the same vision appeared. This time the Mother scratched his right thigh, went round to the North side of the temple, returned to the sanctum sanctorum and disappeared.

Ganapati was elated at Mother Renuka's extreme compassion and grace. He considered the bestowal of Kumara's Shakti weapon as the giving of a divine weapon. He then returned to Vellore.

Chapter 10

RETIREMENT

किन्तु सुकृतं मया कृतमखिलेश्वरि किं तपस्तप्तं ।

क्रीडयसि मां प्रतिक्षणमानंदसुधानिधावन्तः ॥ 4-14-12

O Empress of All! What merit have I acquired and what austerities have I performed that Thou hast been making me swim in the ocean of Bliss?

– Uma Sahasram

Having the vision of Renuka, the Goddess of all mantras, Ganapati became the master of all mantras. Mother blessed Ganapati in the form of Renuka, roused his Kundalini and made him swim in the ocean of Bliss. She became a ready-responding goddess to him. Till then she was responding to the call of the members of his family. It was his father Nrisimha Sastry, whom Ganapati considered and revered as his guru, that gave him the mantra and taught him the Sri Vidya which evoked the grace of the Mother of the Universe.

In the third quarter of the night on 2-11-1907, Ganapati had a strange vision which made him tremble. Ganapati was lying down in a meditative mood, reflecting on the grace of the Divine Mother. A white-robed gentleman appeared and saying, “I am giving up my body. You have to take up the job of the welfare of the country after me. So get up and start tapo-yatra,” and then disappeared.

The next day the newspapers published the death of Colonel Alcot of the Theosophical Society. Colonel Alcot was born in America. He was influenced by the Indian philosophic thought and came to India in 1878 to start the Theosophical Society. Ganapati believed that he was one of the chosen men born for promoting the welfare of mankind.

इतरो भाग्यशाली रमणीयैः प्रसंगैः ।
वितनोति स्वजातिं जगति श्रेष्ठनीतिम् ॥

Another fortunate person (Colonel Alcot) lifts up the moral stature of the nation through ennobling speeches.

– *Indrani Sapta Sati*

Some students belonging to Indra Sena stopped attending classes and concentrated on the societies' activities. The parents of these students were worried and complained against Ganapati to the principal of the college. The Principal of the College, Mr. Harris, warned Ganapati to stop influencing the students in this manner. As though waiting for such an opportunity, Ganapati immediately resigned his job.

Ganapati intended to go to Arunachalam for tapas and wished to convey the intention gently to Visalakshi. She was pregnant at that time. He said, "Visala!" in a soft endearing tone. Visalakshi opened her eyes and looked at her husband.

Ganapati: "I am again inspired to do tapas. I have resigned my job. I have decided to go to Arunachala. I want your permission."

Visala: (With a jubilant face) "All right, Sir, as you please."

Ganapati: "You had better go to Kaluvarai with our son."

Visala: "No. I am able to meditate peacefully here. We will remain here till you return."

Subrahmanya Sastry and Kalyana Rama Sastry were two brothers related to Satanjeri Ramaswamy Iyer. They were staying in Ganapati's house and studying under him. Subrahmanya was called Appu Sastry and was treated by Ganapati and his wife as their adopted son. Both these families became very close. Ganapati told Appu Sastry to look after the welfare of his family. He wrote a letter to his father, Nrisimha Sastry, and asked him to send some money monthly for the maintenance of Visalakshi and the children. Thus he settled the family matters to the satisfaction of everybody and started for Arunachala to do tapas.

Chapter 11

MOBILITY OF THE IMMOBILE

करुणामृतपूर्णसुधाजलधिः। स्मरणादरुणाचलः ॥

*Ocean of Ambrosia filled with the Nectar of Compassion
(Liberation) by remembrance of Arunachala.*

– *Bhagavan Ramana*

In November, 1907, the Karthikai Deepam festival had already begun in Arunachala when Ganapati arrived. Representing the manifestation of Siva as Jyotirlinga (lingam of fire), this festival is celebrated for ten days every year. The day when the star Krittika is in the ascendant in the month of Karthika is the tenth day of the festival. On that day a beacon of fire is lit on the crest of the Arunachala Mountain at 6 p.m.

On one of these festival days, the deity of the Arunachaleswara Temple in Tiruvannamalai is ensconced in the big chariot of the temple and pulled through the streets surrounding the temple. The citizens of Tiruvannamalai gather in huge crowds to have the glorious darshan of God Arunachaleswara, who is static as a mountain. The whole town is decorated and shines with a festive atmosphere on those festive days.

Ganapati reached Arunachalam and first visited the Lord and Mother of the world in the temple. He had planned to do tapas in the temple of the care-taker deity of the town,

Marakata Syamalamba. He requested his friend, Vasudeva Sastry, to assist him in the tapas. Sastry agreed to look after his physical needs.

On the first day of Ganapati's tapas he heard the sound of anklets at midnight from the temple of Syamalamba. It was perhaps the time when Lord Siva as Nataraja performs his dance. Sri Ramana Maharshi once described the scene of Siva's dance: "Though it is His nature to be still, Siva dances in Kanaka Sabha in Chidambaram, while Parvati, the daughter of an immobile mountain, looks on at His Power. But know that in Arunachala, while Siva stands still in His towering grandeur, Parvati merges in His umoving Self."

Ganapati was seeing this glorious dance of the Lord and was immersed in bliss. Suddenly the sound of the dance stopped. Demoniatic laughter and another hideous dance started. 'Oh Lord! What an awful condition is prevailing in India. It is just to counter such a situation that I have started tapas. These demoniac forces are destroying the country of the glorious tradition of Vedic culture where the Divine couple dance in bliss. So it seems that these forces are still following me', thought Ganapati and prayed to Mother Syamalamba.

उक्षरजवाहनस्य जीविताद्वरीयसी
 पक्षिराजवाहनादिवर्ण्यमानवैभवा ।
 केकिलोकचक्रवर्तिवाहनेन पुत्रिणी
 वारणारिसार्वभौमवाहना गतिर्मम ॥ 9-35-4

May Mother Durga, who is the Beloved of Siva, who rides the bull, who is praised by Vishnu, whose vehicle is the eagle,

and other gods; She who is the mother of Kumara, whose vehicle is the peacock, and She who rides the lion, which is the enemy of the elephant, be my refuge!’

– *Uma Sahasram*

Ganapati wanted to change the venue of tapas. The next day he reached the southwestern side of the Arunagiri Mountain where there is a small temple called Nirruti Lingam. He settled himself there in a small room and started tapas. It was the seventh day of the Brahmotsava, or Karthikai Deepam festival, of Arunachaleswara. Arunachala started going round the town on his great chariot. It reached the choultry on the South side of the temple. It was the same choultry which gave refuge to Ganapati and his brother when they reached Arunachala on their first visit. The Ganapati Temple which gave them shelter and food was nearby. Perhaps the Lord remembered his elder son! The chariot bearing the Lord got stuck in the middle of the town. The citizens tried their utmost to move it, but the chariot would not move. There was no visible cause for the immobility. Special worship and bhajans were of no avail. The whole town got frightened and worried. Some surmised that some untoward incident might have happened to cause this. Some said some holy person might have been ill-treated and some were afraid that an unknown calamity was impending.

At 10 o'clock in the night, helpless, the priests got down from the chariot and went their homes. The chariot was left in the middle of the street and everyone turned homeward.

Ganapati was in deep meditation in the small room at Nirruti Lingam Temple. Suddenly, a form appeared before Ganapati. It was the Chief priest of Arunachaleswara Temple. He said, "Acharya! God is calling you. The chariot got stuck. It will not move until you come and have darshan of the Lord." Ganapati opened his eyes. There was nobody about. So he closed his eyes. Again he heard a voice, as if coming from nowhere. "Ganapati! God is calling you, get up." Ganapati understood the order of the Lord. He immediately rose and reached the place where the chariot was stuck. He inquired about the trouble and as it was not the proper time to move the chariot, he went back to Nirudi Lingam.

किं यागै रतिदारुणेन तपसा किं वा किमभ्यर्चनैः
 किं स्नानेन सुपर्वपुण्यसरितो नानाविधैः किं व्रतैः ।
 कामारे करुणानिधे पशुपते भूतेश गौरीपते
 शम्भो शंकर चंद्रचूड जगतां नाथेति नामावली ॥

O' Lord, Siva! The repetition of any of Thy names, Sambhu, Sankara, Chandrachuda, Jagannadha, Pasupati, Bhutesa, Gauripati and others gives all prosperity and eternal bliss. Of what avail sacrifices, severe austerities, baths in holy rivers and vows?

Ganapati, repeating the Lord's name, reached the chariot by early morning of the next day, climbed up the chariot and touched Lord Arunachala's feet. As though God had accepted his prayer, a flower from Arunachala's feet fell on Ganapati's head. There was no end to Ganapati's joy. His whole body trembled with emotion. His voice got stuck in his throat. Tears

flowed down his cheeks. Ganapati told the citizens of the town, "God has blessed us. No more fear for us. Start the chariot," and he himself joined them. The immovable chariot of the previous night moved smoothly without a hitch. All the devotees were joyous and proclaimed loudly, "Glory be to God."

The people immediately surrounded Ganapati who was the cause of this miracle. But the devotional fervour of Ganapati had not subsided. He gave the slip to the crowd and ran up the hill at great speed to reach the Virupaksha cave. It was 2 p.m. by the time he reached the cave. Mouna Swami was sitting on a rock outside the cave smiling as though he was expecting Ganapati. With the darshan of that peaceful, pure, steady face, from which a cool moon-like light emanated, Ganapati's fervour subsided. Mouna Swami recognized the great scholar Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastry who translated the verse "*Sukalambara dharam...*" in different ways four years earlier.

Sitting before the Swami, Ganapati recalled his vision of Renuka and of Her giving him the divine weapon. He saw in Mouna Swami the single-faced Kumara, and then the words of Durga Mandira Yogi flashed into his mind: "This is Sthula Siras who can bestow tapas-siddhi to you." At once an overwhelming sense of humility, obedience and total surrender of the soul to the Guru possessed him. Ganapati prostrated before Mouna Swami, took his feet in his hands, the right foot with the right hand and the left foot with the left and with total surrender said: "I have read all the sastras, performed japa of the famous mantras to my heart's content, observed hundreds of penances and austerities, yet I have had no realisation. Is my tapas tainted,

is there any shortcoming, or perhaps I do not know the method. I am said to be a learned man, yet I do not know. I take refuge in thee. Please tell me what tapas is. Help me!”

How great is Arunachala who brought about the meeting of these two great souls! It was Monday, 18-11-1907 (Kartika Sukla Chaturdasi, with the star Aswini in the ascendant).

Chapter 12

THE GURU'S TEACHING

वन्दे श्रीरमणर्षे राचार्यस्य पदाब्जम् ।

यो मेऽदर्शयदीशं भान्तं ध्वान्त मतीत्य ॥

I bow to the Lotus Feet of the Master, Rishi Sri Ramana who showed me God, who shines beyond the darkness of ignorance.

– Sri Ramana Chatvarimsat

Ramanopadesa, Ramana's teaching, was imparted to Ganapati on the Arunachala Hill. Ramana Maharshi was the acharya and the sishya was the great scholar Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastry. When Sri Ramana Maharshi taught the direct path to enlightenment, the Hindu race was steeped in foolish orthodoxy and moving away from the sacred knowledge of the Self.

Mouna Swami blessed Kavyakantha and taught him with ever so soft words the essence of tapas. Ganapati's heart was filled with unparalleled joy. Sitting in Virupaksha cave, he meditated on this superb teaching of his master and rendered it into a Sanskrit sloka for the benefit of mankind.

अहमहमिति कुत आयातीति विचारयन्नुदयस्थाने लीनं मनः
तदेव तपः ।

जप्यमानस्य मन्त्रस्य ध्वनिः कुत उदेतीति विचारयन् यस्थाने
लीनं भवेत् मनः तदेव तपः ॥

Search within for the place where the 'I-I thought' rises, the mind will subside there. That is tapas. Repeating a mantra, search for the source of the sound of the mantra and the mind will subside. That is tapas.

In verse, Ganapati Muni described the reason of the advent of Sri Ramana Maharshi:

अधुना त्वं महाभाग ब्रह्मज्ञानस्य गुप्तये ।
शास्त्रज्ञानेन संतृप्तैः निरुद्धस्यागतो धराम् ॥

O Great one! Thou hast manifested thyself to save those who are satisfied with only the intellectual grasp of scriptural texts by bestowing on them true knowledge of the Self.

– Ramana Gita

Ganapati had told Mouna Swami that he performed mantra japa. Therefore the Swami's instructions were framed as a means to experience the splendour of the Self by tracing the source of both the 'I-thought' and the sound of the mantra.

Ganapati was thrilled. Waves and waves of bliss rose up and soaked his frame. He sat there, at the feet of the Sage, and meditated until evening. He was completely satisfied. He was convinced that no ordinary person could have imparted to him such a message. He made enquiries about the name of the Swami from the attendant. Finding it was Venkataraman, he made it brief and beautiful as 'Ramana' and acclaimed the Mouna Swami as 'Maharshi', the great Seer.

Next day Vasishtha Ganapati Muni wrote to his intimate disciples: "I have found my Master, my Guru. He is the Sage of Arunachala known as Brahmanaswami. He is no

ordinary Swami. He is a great Seer, a mighty spiritual personality. To me and to you all he is Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Let the whole world know him as such.”

When Ganapati Sastry was staying with Bhagavan, Bhagavan would address him in the respectful manner in which elders are addressed. Bhagavan used to address even monkeys in a respectful way. Ganapati was one year senior to Bhagavan. But this practice pained Ganapati and he pleaded with Bhagavan to desist from this practice and begin to call him by name using ‘thou’ instead of ‘you’. Bhagavan then thought of addressing him as Nayana, which could be used to mean both a father or a child. The solution satisfied both the disciple and the Guru. Bhagavan, however, refrained from using ‘thou’.



Bhagavan Ramana with Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni

Chapter 13

A GOOD INTENTION

दिव्यं घनतेजः कुर्वन् ध्वनिमंतः
संपश्यदशेषं मूर्तिः प्रणवात्मा ॥

The soul of Pranava (Om) is the Divine radiance which inspires sound in all beings and witnesses the creation. The unmanifest sound in the universe is this light. It is Om. This is the unified form of Ishwara and his Shakti.

– Uma Sahasram

Ganapati informed his wife and father about his great good fortune of getting a real Master. Mahatmas and saints can be seen from time to time, but the darshan of a Jnani is rare. It was the rare good fortune of the citizens of Arunachala that such a Jnani, the Maharshi, was living on the mountain in their midst. Visalakshi came to have Bhagavan's darshan along with her son Mahadeva. As soon as Bhagavan saw her, he said, "Amma (mother) has come." Since then everybody addressed Visalakshi only as 'Amma'. Nayana wanted to do tapas in the presence of the Guru. Bhagavan told him to go and stay in the nearby cave that he would sometimes use, which was under the shade of a Mango tree. Nayana named it Chutaguha (Mango Tree Cave).

पुण्या चूतगुहा सेयं रमणेन महर्षिणा ।
अधिष्ठिता सेवकानां पापहंत्री विराजते ॥

The meritorious Mango Tree Cave which is the residence of Sri Ramana Maharshi, shines, destroying the sins of his servants.

Nayana first sanctified (worshipped) the cave and then took up his residence in it. A lady called Echammal used to bring food to Bhagavan daily. When Nayana started living near Bhagavan, she used to provide food for him also. Nayana, as a result of this convenience, could engage himself in tapas all the time.

For three days Nayana was deep in meditation, in search of the source of the 'I' thought. He was swimming in the ocean of Chit (Knowledge), unaware of the external world. The Divine Mother, Apita Kuchamba, wearing a white silk saree, a pearl crown and a garland of parijata flowers, smiling like the cool moon-light, appeared before Nayana. What a glorious vision, dazzling white all around. Mother's dress was white, the parijata flowers around the neck were white, Her complexion was white and Her smile, which was disseminating knowledge in silence, was white beyond compare! Ganapati's was overwhelmed with ecstasy and the poet in him spontaneously gushed forth:

सहादरेण यो वलक्षपारिजातमालया ।
 गलस्थलीविभूषया ध्वनिं विनैव भाषते ।
 महेशपुण्योषितो मनोज्ञहास एष मे
 विभूतये प्रकल्पतां विधूतये च पाप्मनाम् ॥

May the smiles of Uma, the Divine spouse of Lord Maheswara, who wears a garland of white parijata flowers and speaks with love without words, bestow prosperity on us and burn away our sins!

The Mother blessed him, raising her hand. She said, "Ganapati! You have realised that which is beyond forms. Shall I take leave?"

Instantly, Ganapati remonstrated:

तवार्चनं निरंतरं यतो विधातुमस्म्यहं ।
न विश्वनाथ पत्नि ते विसर्जनं विधीयते ॥

*O Mother! I am determined to worship Thee constantly.
So, You cannot go away.*

Mother: "People have Divine visions according to their prarabdha (results of previous actions). You do have such a prarabdha. May I now take leave my son?"

Ganapati: "Mother! How can You just leave me thus? Please instruct me. I have vowed to serve my country. What should I do?"

Mother: "My son! Write a book complete with all the knowledge of the scriptures, which is beyond the controversy of saguna and nirguna aspects of God and acceptable to all those who are versed in mantra and tantra methods. That book will become a spiritual guide to the country."

Ganapati said, beaming with all joy, "Yes Mother! Give me the strength to write such a scripture within twenty days."

Mother said, "So be it," and disappeared. Ganapati prayed thus:

अर्चनकाले रूपगता संस्तुतिकाले शब्दगता ।
चिंतनकाले प्राणगता तत्त्वविचारे सर्वगता ॥

*She is the form during worship,
The sound when praised with words, the
The Life force during meditation and
All-pervading during enquiry.*

Chapter 14

COMPOSITION OF UMA SAHASRAM

येनाम शांतिं परमां वहन्तो नामानि शीताचलपुत्रिकायाः ।
संङ्कीर्तयन्तो विजने वसन्ति जयंततातादपि ते जयंति ॥ 8-31-6

Those who give up everything and live in solitude, repeating the names of the Daughter of the Himalaya Mountain, will attain bliss greater than that of Indra, the father of Jayanta.

– *Uma Sahasram*

The Divine Mother has many names. But Nayana selected the name of 'Uma' for the deity of his 'magnum opus' *Uma Sahasram*, a thousand versed composition. 'U' means Siva and 'Ma' means the limiting or measuring power. So She became Siva's power of limitation. This is Nayana's interpretation of the word Uma. 'Ishwara' means he who creates the worlds with the 'I-thought'. 'Uma' is His power that measures up everything and is the changeful quality of the created worlds. The tangible worlds along with the mind, intellect and the ego all come under the concept of jagat, that which moves. A sadhaka (aspirant) can progress in his spiritual development with the grace of this power. Uma is the qualitative form of Parashakti. She manifests as the power of tapas in sages. This power was experienced by Nayana and hence he named this work as *Uma Sahasram*.

There is a difference between a composition executed with intellectual effort and one executed out of experience. Divine power is invested in a work which is composed out of experiential knowledge. Nayana has described how he composed *Uma Sahsram*:

दर्शितं रमणःसर्षेर्यावद्वाक्यैर्मिताक्षरैः ।
 यावच्च पितृपादानां विज्ञातमुपदेशतः ॥
 तन्त्रेभ्योऽवगतं यावत्प्राचामाचारशासिनां ।
 यावत्परमपुण्यासु कुलगोष्ठिषु च श्रुतम् ॥
 विदितं विविधं यावदितिहासविलोकनात् ।
 यावदप्यात्मना दृष्टं तपता विपुलं तपः ॥
 अधिकृत्य महामायां भुवनानामधीश्वरीं ।
 अत्र स्तोत्रे प्रसङ्गेषु समस्तं तत्प्रदर्शितम् ॥

I have rendered this poem in praise of the Goddess of the Universe, Mahamaya (the great power of illusion). With the help of that which was given out in the condensed words of Sri Ramana Maharshi, with the help of the teaching received from my revered father, with that which was obtained through traditional knowledge, with what I culled from the mantras and tantras, aided by the study of the great epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata and with what was illumined through the immense tapas I did, I could deliver this poetry.

Nayana intended to make this composition of a thousand verses within twenty days. He started the work in the presence of Bhagavan Sri Ramana on Tuesday, November 26th, 1907, which was the sixth day after the full moon in the month of Kartika in the year Plavanga. He would read

out to Bhagavan in the evening what was written during the day. Bhagavan and all the disciples present enjoyed the readings.

One evening at 7 p.m., Nayana was reading out this sloka:

छिन्नां भिन्नां सुतरां सन्नामन्नाभावादभितः खिन्नां ।
एतां पातुं भरतक्षोर्णी जाये जिष्णोः कुरु मां शक्तः ॥

O' Mother! Give me the power to save the land of Bharat, which is terribly mutilated and lacking food.

'Food' here means strength and mental acumen. As these were lacking in the present day India, she (India) is torn asunder and going hungry. Hence Nayana was praying for the strength to rectify these deficiencies in India.

Mother Uma was also enjoying this poetry of Nayana and worked a little mischief. After reciting this sloka, Nayana felt intense hunger. Echammal, who was daily supplying food, was not expected until 8 o'clock. At the time of Nayana's recitation of this sloka, Echammal had just started her cooking. She put rice and dhal in vessels and lit the fire under them. Meanwhile, a woman came and told her that Nayana was very hungry and wanted food immediately. Echammal told her that she had just started cooking food and it would not be ready for some time. After examining the pots, the woman told her that food was cooked and asked Echammal to open the lids and see for herself. To the utter surprise of Echammal, the food was really cooked. She at once took the food to Nayana and told him about the wonderful incident. Nayana smiled and wondered at the Divine Mother's handiwork.

Nayana's right thumb blistered by writing continuously for ten days. Still he continued writing for some more time. By the 19th day, only 700 slokas were composed. The thumb was swollen and writing became impossible. Three Hundred slokas had yet to be composed and there was only one day left. But Nayana's face showed no signs of worry, as he had laid all the burden on the Mother and so was in perfect peace. Now the responsibility was the Mother's.

That night a Vaidya (Doctor) named Punyakoti of Tiruvannamalai had a dream in which a brahmin appeared and told him, "The Muniswara on Arunagiri has a blister on his thumb. Go and treat him!" The next morning, Punyakoti went up the hill and started observing Bhagavan's fingers. Bhagavan knew of his intention and so guided him to Kavyakantha. The Doctor operated on the blister, bandaged the finger and gave some medicine to alleviate the pain.

Even though the finger was treated, it was still impossible to write. Nayana's disciples offered to write at his dictation. As Nayana was rather weak due to the operation, he told five of them to come at 8 p.m. that night to take down what he would dictate. It was Sunday, the first day of Margasira month (15-12-1907), the last day scheduled to complete the composition. Maharshi sat on a high stool and he went into samadhi. The Muni sat at his feet, while the five disciples sat around with paper and pens in hand. Nayana started to dictate five verses simultaneously, at the rate of one line of the verse to each disciple. After dictating to the five disciples, he would come back to the first and dictate the second line and go on dictating to each one the

second line of the verse they were writing. Each verse had a separate metre, so that five slokas in five metres were done at one time. The verses flowed spontaneously at this glorious feat, unparalleled in the history of poetic composition.

Midnight arrived and the last five slokas were written down. Three hundred slokas were composed and written down in exactly four hours. The scribes took a deep breath in great relief and looked at Nayana. Nayana was in a trance-like state. Bhagavan was absorbed in samadhi throughout. For five minutes there was absolute silence. All of a sudden Bhagavan opened his eyes and spoke: "Nayana! Have you taken down all that I have said?"

Those words broke Nayana's trance and with moist eyes, devotion and joy shining on his face, he touched Bhagavan's feet with both his hands and said, "Yes, Bhagavan! All that you have said has been received!"

Chapter 15

ON THE ELEPHANT

O Lord! Divine of Arjuna's Chariot! The rishis have revealed Thy quality of saving. Thou hast brought the souls to discipline and saved them. Thou art always Atma without qualities. Worship of Thy qualities is yoga and enjoyment.

– Vasishtha Mahadeva Sastry

While Nayana was devoted to Bhagavan, the child Mahadeva made friends with Bhagavan and played with him, showing his Guru bhakti in his own way.

Nayana had composed a rare, great work with uninterrupted austerity for twenty days. Bhagavan knew his disciple needed rest and recuperation. The nerves of Ganapati had been heated up tremendously and so Bhagavan took him to Sapta Jhari (seven springs) on the hill and had him stay there for one week, which eventually cooled his nerves. By the grace of Uma Devi, Nayana got the powers of clairvoyance, clairaudience and thought reading.

The news of Nayana's new composition reached far and wide. Nayana's disciples begged him to read out *Uma Sahasram* and expound the meaning of the slokas. Nayana agreed and asked them to make arrangements for the boarding and lodging of those who came from far away places. Pachaiamman Temple (Marakata Syamalamba) was selected as the venue of the discourses on *Uma Sahasram*.

The disciples accordingly sent invitations to all concerned. Visalakshamma came from Vellore with son Mahadeva. On seeing him, Bhagavan asked him lovingly whether he remembered him. Mahadeva did not say anything as he did not remember. He said, "*Aham Bho Abhivadaye*" (Sir, I prostrate before you) to Bhagavan, went away and started playing at some distance. Meanwhile some visitors came to see Bhagavan and asked whether Bhagavan remembered them. They had come once before, and Bhagavan did not remember them and so kept quiet.

Now Mahadeva came running to Bhagavan and asked him, "What did those visitors ask you Bhagavan?"

Bhagavan replied, "They asked whether he remembered them."

"And what did you reply, Bhagavan?" asked Mahadeva.

"I just kept quiet, as I did not remember them," said Bhagavan.

"I did the same to you." Saying this quickly, the child ran away. All those present laughed.

At Nayana's request, Bhagavan changed his residence to Pachaiamman Temple. Nayana and his wife used to go to the town frequently on some errands leaving Mahadeva with Bhagavan. The child had a good physique, long wavy hair and he used to wear vibhuti (ash) on his forehead and arms and kumkum on the forehead. He used to look like a young yogi and attracted the visitors who came for the darshan of Bhagavan. Bhagavan used to talk and play with him affectionately. Thus they became friends.

One day, Bhagavan had Deva sit on his back while he swam in the tank of the Pachaiamman Temple. Deva found it very enjoyable and started jumping on Bhagavan's back shouting, "Go, go, hei, hei!" Bhagavan found it difficult to stay afloat while Mahadeva was jumping on his back. He told Deva to stop jumping, but the child did not heed. With great difficulty, Bhagavan brought him to the shore and scolded Deva mildly, "Deva, you do not know how to swim, and made it difficult for me to bear you. Is it proper? I thought that both of us might drown."

Deva replied, quite innocently, "Why Bhagavan! Even if I did not know swimming, you knew. Is it not enough?"

Deva's mischief extended to other things. Once he stopped visitors from going to Bhagavan and told them that Bhagavan was in samadhi, and if they had anything to ask they could ask him, and he would answer them. He would not let them go near Bhagavan till Bhagavan himself told him to let them. After talking with Bhagavan, the visitors asked Bhagavan about the child and his ability to answer their questions. Bhagavan smiled and said that Deva was quite capable.

The visitors were immensely pleased and took the child with them to the temple. At dusk Deva came back and told Bhagavan with a beaming face that he rode on an elephant.

The actions of Jnanis are inscrutable. A child who rode on his back also rode on an elephant. Bhagavan took Deva on his lap and asked him to go to sleep as he was very tired. Nayana and Amma returned from town and were overjoyed to see their son lovingly fondled by Bhagavan. The mischievous child and the gracious Guru!

Chapter 16

THIS IS KARTIKEYA

अङ्गजुषे रमणाय नु दातुं
मानववेषधराय गुहाय ।
शोणनगार्धतनो बहु दुग्धं
मातरपीतकुचेह विभासि ॥ 7-26-18

O Mother, spouse of Lord Siva! Thou hast manifested here as Apita Kuchamba to give the milk of your breast to Guha, your son, who has assumed a human form as Ramana and sits in your lap.

—Uma Sahasram

Nayana began the recitation of the *Uma Sahasram* on schedule. Bhagavan sat on a pial and listened. The “phalasaruti” (the merit of reciting the composition) was read out:

यदि गायन्निमं ग्रन्थमुत्तरेदापदः कृती
महिमा स महेश्वर्याः शीर्षं स्यादुन्नतं न मे ।
अय मम्बापरप्रीते रुद्रारो वाङ्मयाकृती
अर्थः कश्चिदनेनापि नतां यदि मया जितम् ॥

Those who read this poem will surmount all difficulties, by the grace of the Mother and not mine. This exposition is an expression of my devotion to the Mother's feet. Hence if it gives any benefit to good people I will gain credit indeed!

Honey flowed from Nayana's voice filling the whole atmosphere with its sweetness. The area reverberated with the Divine sounds of *Uma Sahasram* and, to the devotees, Nayana looked like Lord Vinayaka Himself. On account of the joy and elation felt by all the listeners, everyone lost track of time. Some began having Divine visions. Even after the recitation many devotees were reported to have had visions and dreams of the Divine Mother.

One day Mother Parvati appeared to Narayana Ghanapati (Nayana's disciple) in a dream and asked him to recite some slokas from *Uma Sahasram*. He started reciting a sloka. She stopped him and asked, "Ganapataye Stanaghatayoh" to be recited. She heard with pleasure, Ghanapati's recitation and smiling, disappeared.

गणपतये स्तनघटयोः पदकमले सप्तलोकभक्तेभ्यः ।

अधरपुटे त्रिपुरजिते ददासि पीयूष मम्ब त्वम् ॥

O Mother! Thou art giving ambrosia to Ganapati from Thy breasts, to all thy devotees from Thy lotus feet and to Lord Siva from Thy lips.

After waking up Narayana Ghanapati thought over the meaning of this sloka and on analysis found out that as Nayana declared himself in "Navadeepa" as the son of the Mother, She appeared to have liked this sloka more than other slokas. Ghanapati came to Ramana and Nayana and told them of his dream.

Mother Uma did not stop with introducing in this way her elder son Ganapati to the world, but on the next day she made her younger son known to the world. Bhagavan

was sitting silent with a far-away look. Nayana was sitting at his feet. Some disciples were sitting around Nayana. Suddenly, there was a bright glow around the Maharshi's head. There arose six star-like lights from this glow, touched Bhagavan's forehead one by one and receded and merged back into the glow. The glow gradually merged in Bhagavan. After some moments Bhagavan's mouth uttered, "Who am I?" in indistinct low tones. Nayana heard the words and with great joy and enthusiasm said, "Why, Bhagavan, you are god Kartikeya," and prostrated himself at Bhagavan's feet. He explained to the disciples present about Bhagavan's being Skanda, that is Kartikeya.

यानायात्र न केकिनां कुलपतिः स्नानाय न स्वर्णदी
 पानाय क्षितिभृन्महेन्द्रदुहितुर्न स्तन्य दुग्धामृतम् ।
 गानाय प्रमथेश्वरा स्सवयसो नैवात्र वीणाभृतो
 वासं शोणगिरौ करोषि भगवन् क्रौंचाद्रिभेत्तः कुतः ॥

O Lord Kartikeya! You do not have the peacock as your vehicle here. There is no divine stream Ganga to bathe in. There is no milk of the breast of the Daughter of the Mountain King to drink. Neither are there the commanders of Pramathas for you to play with, and no divine minstrels with lutes to play music for you. So, then, Lord! Why have you taken residence on this Arunachala?

Nayana composed ten slokas praising Sri Maharshi. These ten slokas were later included in Nayana's "Sri Ramana Chatvarimsat" (Forty Verses in Praise of Ramana). By his grace, along with the darshan of Lord Kartikeya, Nayana also got the intuition of the mantra, 'Om Vachadbhuvē namah' (ओं वचद्भुवे नमः) for japam which he explained in *Sri Ramana Gita*.

Chapter 17

THE CREATOR OF CULTURE

THE POET (KAVIH)

क्षांतं किं मम दुरितं शान्तं किं देवि ते स्वांतं ।

अनुगृह्णासि विचित्रंमामप्यपराधिनां प्रथमम् ॥ 4-14-13

O Mother! Have my sins been forgiven? Or, has Thy heart become soft and peaceful? Why am I, who am the first among sinners, been thus blessed by Thee?

– Uma Sahasram

This is a bit surprising. How can Nayana, such a great man of austerities, be a sinner? In Sanskrit, there is a great saying, “ उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ”, which means “*For great souls this whole world is their family.*” Their view will always be universal. The troubles and pleasures of all humanity are felt as their own. The life force in the whole creation, the dynamic energy, enmeshed in worldly matters, is hidden in all as ignorance and is struggling to come into the open and is therefore devoid of peace. When that Divine Shakti becomes peaceful it is the end of all sin. Nayana’s tapas was for the welfare of the whole creation. He uses the word, ‘sinner’ in the sense of the ‘sins of the world’. As such, if the Divine Mother could forgive him, the whole world is forgiven and there is peace all around. Nayana’s national, or rather universal, spirit is represented in this sloka.

In March of 1908, after proclaiming Bhagavan as the world teacher (jagadacharya) and composing the great Vedantic, metaphysical and invocational work, *Uma Sahasram*, Nayana approached Bhagavan with great humility and told him that he still had the freedom of the country at heart. He said that his disciples wanted him to give discourses in Madras on *Uma Sahasram* and enlighten them. He requested Bhagavan for permission for the trip to Madras.

Before taking leave he asked the Maharshi, "Is the seeking of the source of the 'I-thought', sufficient for the accomplishment of all my aims, or is mantra dhyana needed?" Maharshi answered, "The former would suffice." And, when asked about the fulfilment of his aim, the Maharshi added, "You had better throw the entire burden on the Lord (Ishwara). He will carry all, and you will be freed from the burden. Let His will prevail."

न्यस्यतां भरः सकल जित्वरे ।
कार्यं सत्करे जगदधीश्वरे ॥

Rest the burden on the Lord who is the sole conqueror of the worlds and performer of all good deeds.

नित्यया धिया निहितया स्वयं ।
स्थीयतां त्वया हृदि परात्परे ॥

Be still in your mind and leave all in the hands of the Lord; be unwavering in your heart.

भावनिर्णयप्रभु रसौ पुमान् ।
कार्यसाधने भवति शक्तिमान् ॥

He, who makes all decisions, has the power also to fulfil His mission.

भूतभव्यकृत् भुवनभूपतिः ।
कारये दयं कुशलकारिणः ॥

That Lord who is the Lord of the Universe and the dispenser of past, present and future will arrange for the proper work force.

साध्य मुत्तमं समयतश्चरेत् ।
मास्तु संशय स्तव विदांमते ॥

O Scholar! Whatever good is to be, God will see to that at the proper time. Leave everything to Him with unquestioning faith and be at peace.

Taking this advice of Bhagavan, Nayana started for Madras along with Vasudeva Sastry.

The citizens of Madras gave Nayana a hearty welcome. As the poet of *Uma Sahasram*, he was deemed almost equal to the poet Kalidasa and revered and served with great devotion. Nayana gave discourses daily on the various aspects of *Uma Sahasram*. He also told them that Sri Ramana was a Maharshi and has taken birth as a human being to show mankind his simple universal and direct method of Self-enquiry which would lead to Self-knowledge and liberation.

One day Nayana went to a holy place called Tiruvottiyur near Madras. He visited the temple of the famous Tripura Sundari and while he was ecstatically invoking the deity, a student prostrated before him and touched his feet.

Having finished his meditation, Nayana made the student sit by his side and asked for his parentage and other particulars.

He said, "Master! My name is Kapali Sastry. I am studying Sanskrit. Hearing your invocation of the Mother,

I am very much impressed. Having come to know that you are the famous tapasvi and poet Kavyakantha and thinking that one can get salvation serving you, I have come to beg for your grace to make me your disciple.”

Hearing this humble plea of the boy, Nayana closed his eyes and meditated for a few minutes. He understood that the boy had a very bright future. He glanced at Mother Tripura Sundari's face that was looking at the boy with favour, and Her smile conveyed this secret to Nayana. He was filled with joy and paternal love towards Kapali. Nayana blessed Kapali.

Together, both of them circumambulated the temple and saw an old well in a corner. Kapali told the story about this well. “This temple was a Kalika temple at first. Somehow, the Mother got angry and entered the well, goes the local story.” Instantly, Nayana composed this poem on Mother Kali:

कूपे विभासि किल कोपवती त्रियामा
 चारिण्यशेषजगदीश्वरि कालि भद्रे ।
 विभ्राजदादिपुरवासिनि दासमापत्
 कूपादुदंचय पदाम्बुज भक्तमेनम् ॥

O Kali, O Bhadra! O Adipuravasini! We hear that you got angry and took this well as your abode. Please come out and uplift this devotee from the well of calamity!

Both the Guru and sishya had a hearty laugh at this twist to the story.

After Ramana's darshan, Nayana had given up literary displays, like the meetings of scholars and avadhanas. He

became more introverted and inclined towards tapas. Bhagavan was a clear example, verifying the existence of the Reality and the possibility of its attainment.

But Kapali wanted very much to witness the previous glorious poetic feats of Nayana. He pleaded with Nayana to agree to perform a nyastakshari method, a type of literary feat. Many scholars attended this meeting. Fifty-six squares were drawn on a slate in four rows. Nayana was asked to put numbers in arithmetic progression in them and construct a verse in the 'Vasanta Tilaka' metre. As soon as Nayana started to write, a scholar started giving out the letters. Nayana composed a beautiful sloka as required:

प्रीतिं ददाति विपुलां श्रियमातनोति
निर्माति नूत्नसमयं दुरितं धुनोति ।
आर्द्रीकरोति हृदयान्यपि देवतानां
कस्मै शुभाय न भवेत्कविता विदोषा ॥

Pure poetry gives pleasure and immense prosperity, creates new times, removes sins, melts even the hearts of gods. What merit does poetry not give?

It is the poet that rejuvenates the culture, gives direction and meaning to life, creates inspiration and joy in the hearts all. Nayana knew this and applied his gifts to the service of his fellowmen and country.

Chapter 18

HELPING HAND OF THE GURU

यातायातविहारे राधारेषु च शीर्षे
संचारं विदधानं किं चाशेषविसारि ।
आलंबेन विहीनं व्योमाभं परिपूर्णं
निश्शब्दं गुरुरूपं तद्ब्रह्मा स्फरतान्मे ॥

May that form of the Guru, which travels to and fro in the six chakras and the sahasrara and pervades everything, and which is without support, and is like ether, complete and silent, inspire me.

– *Guru Gitam*

The disciple surrenders himself to the Guru totally. There is no more individuality in the disciple. Hence there is no more sorrow and only bliss reigns. Bhagavan declared this as the secret of surrender.

When *Uma Sahasram* was finished, Bhagavan opened his eyes and asked, “Have you written down all that I have said?” and Nayana immediately replied, “Yes, Bhagavan! All that you have given out with grace has been written down.” Even though there were two forms, that of Bhagavan and Nayana, the ‘I’ that was speaking through them was the Guru, Ishwara or the Atma.

Pranavananda Swami requested Nayana to compose, “Guru Stuti”, in praise of the Guru. Nayana, who was extolled

as the harbinger of new times, and a great poet, one day entered the temple of Tripura Sundari in Tiruvottiyur and saw a small temple of Ganesa in a corner of the garden. As the atmosphere of the place looked very peaceful, he entered it and immediately became absorbed within. He remained in the temple for sixteen days without any consciousness of the world outside.

Mother's Shakti started Her subtle movement in his chakras. His body became the temple. He was immersed in Bliss. Suddenly there appeared to be an obstruction and severe pain was felt in the backbone. Nayana could not sit straight and had to lie down. Slowly he laid himself on the floor. Ganesa, the temple idol, was looking on as Ganapati prayed:

नाखेयाति सुरो वा त्वं चेत्किंचिदुदास्यम् ।
आधारे विदधासि स्कंदस्याग्रज लास्यम् ॥

O Ganesa, elder brother of Skanda, please make your dance in the muladhara a bit slower. Then this human being will be able to get up.

Miraculously, this prayer was heard by Bhagavan in Virupaksha Cave. The next instant he was standing before Nayana and the pain in Nayana's back subsided with the touch of Bhagavan's hand. Tears gushed forth from Nayana's eyes, as he prostrated before Bhagavan, touching his feet.

Later, when Nayana went to Arunachalam on 17th October 1929, he recounted this experience of Guru's grace to Bhagavan and Bhagavan confirmed it, replying: "One day many years ago during my stay at Virupaksha Cave as

I was lying down awake, I suddenly felt my body carried up higher and higher till all objects disappeared and all around me was nothing but white light. Then the body began to descend and objects began to appear. I said to myself, 'Evidently this is how Siddhas move about at will.' The idea occurred to me that I was at Tiruvottiyur. I was on a high road and I went along. On one side and at some distance away from there was a Ganapati Temple. I went in and talked, but with whom or what, I did not recollect. Suddenly I found myself again lying in Virupaksha Cave. I mentioned this immediately to Palaniswami who was always with me."

Nayana had found that Maharshi's description given to Kapali Sastry of the place at Tiruvottiyur a few days after the event, exactly tallied with the Ganesa Temple in which he carried on his tapas.

After obtaining the grace of the Guru in this way, Nayana went back to Vellore.

Chapter 19

THE STORY OF RENUKA

पापानि मे हरतु काचन कृत्तशीर्षा
माता पदाम्बुजभुजिष्यवितीर्णहर्षा ।
या भक्तलोकवरदानविधौ विनिद्रा
वासं कमण्डलुधुनीपुलिने करोतु ॥ (7-4-3)

May Mother Renuka who resides in Kundalipura (Padaiveedu) on the banks of river Kamandalu, remove my sins. I have surrendered at her feet. She is always alert in bestowing boons to her devotees.

– Uma Sahasram

Mother Renuka is the sixth manifestation of Parashakti. She is described as Vajravairochani by the Vedas.

The sky is Parashakti. The Shakti which shines as the dust particles in the sky is Renuka. Rishis described the sky as “the great dust”. She splintered light into various groups of dust and hence is called Renuka by Tantrics. As she does not have a head, she is called ‘Asira’. The destruction of ahamkara is the beheading of Renuka in the story of Renuka in the Purana. Nayana has explained this beheading as an analogy to the kapala-bheda of the yogis. Nayana had this kapala-bheda experience and so he authoritatively declares it.

Nayana considered this story of Renuka of the Puranas as rather misleading and wanted to reconstruct it. After he

reached Vellore from his sojourn in Madras he concentrated on re-arranging this story. He stayed most of the time at home, as Srimati Visalakshi was nearing confinement. Nayana had some books from the library in Padaiveedu and started to work on the story of Renuka.

The story of Renuka in the Puranas goes like this:

Renuka was the wife of Sage Jamadagni. She was a great pativrata, chaste dedicated wife. She once saw a Gandharva's reflection in the water. This Celestial being was passing on his chariot in the sky with great pomp. Renuka felt dazzled for a split second. Jamadagni heard of this lapse on the part of Renuka and asked his son Parasurama to behead her. The son obeyed the father. Renuka did not let her head fall to the ground but held it in her hand.

Nayana eulogises this story in *Uma Sahasram* thus:

छेदाय चेद् गतरजा मुनिरादिदेश
चिच्छेद चेद्बहुगुणस्तनयः सवित्रीम् ।
दाह्यं शरीरमखिल प्रभुरीशशक्तिः
यद्याविवेश च कथा परमाद्भुतेयम् ॥ 7-28-5

In anger, the rishi ordered his son to cut the mother's head off; the virtuous, dutiful son obeyed the father's command and Shakti pervaded the body from which the head was cut off. This story is a rare wonder. — *Uma Sahasram*

पुत्रः प्रियस्तव शिरः सहसा चकर्त
कृत्वा च हर्षभरिता भवतीननर्त ।
नो तस्य पापमपि नो तव काऽपि हानिः
नाशोऽस्य हा भुजभुवामभवद्विपाकः ॥ 7-28-6

Your dear son cut your head off. No sin accrued to him. You danced after the head was cut off. You were not at all harmed. Oh! But the incident was the cause of the destruction of the warrior-clan.

– Uma Sahasram

अम्बैव सा सुरभिरर्जुनभूपतिर्या
वीर्याज्जहार स च भार्गव आजहार ।
तस्या हतेः परगृहस्थितिरेव हेतुः
गंधर्वदर्शनकथा रिपुकल्पितैव ॥ 7-4-7

The story of Renuka's attention being diverted by the sight of the celestial being was a figment of enemies' imagination. In fact, the cow Nandini, said to be stolen by the King Kartavirya was Renuka herself. Parasurama killed the evil king and brought her home. Living in the house of the enemy was the reason for which her head was cut off. Renuka was pure. Otherwise she would not be worshipped.

– Uma Sahasram

Nayana reconstructed the story thus: Kartavirya was the king of the Haihaya clan. He acquired many powers (siddhis) from sage Dattatreya. He was an able King, but subsequently became arrogant. Satya who was the sister of Renuka was his wife. King Prasenajit was the father of the sisters.

In course of time, because of his arrogance, king Kartavirya started to harass the virtuous. People were afraid of him, but he could not be killed by anyone less powerful than Dattatreya. Parasurama was such a one. Jamadagni and Renuka invested Parasurama with the necessary strength and power and made him kill Kartavirya.

Once Renuka visited her sister Satya. She was pleased with the hospitality of Satya and in return invited Satya to her home. After some time Kartavirya, along with his entourage and family, went into the forest to hunt. Forgetting the boundaries of his own land, he entered deep into the forest where Jamadagni had his ashram. Meanwhile their provisions were almost consumed and they were alarmed. Fortunately, they located Jamadagni's ashram and learned now that Renuka was their mistress' sister. Having come to know that Satya and Kartavirya were in the forest, Renuka invited them to her home and fed the whole company with a delicious feast by just sprinkling the water from her kamandalam. Seeing this power of Renuka, Kartavirya wanted to possess her. He gave a stunning blow to Jamadagni and while he was in a stupor stole away Renuka. She was bound by the women of his retinue as he was afraid to touch her. Jamadagni regained consciousness and appraised his sons of the atrocity committed by Kartavirya. He invested Parasurama with his power of weapons (astras) and sent him to retrieve his mother. Accordingly Parasurama killed Kartavirya and brought Renuka home. Parasurama was asked by Jamadagni to behead Renuka as she lived in an enemy's house for some time. Thus Renuka became the cause of destruction of the evil Kshatriya clan and was worshipped as Krittika Shakti (one who cuts off evil), and Parasurama was called Kartikeyan (son of Krittika) afterwards.

While Nayana was reconstructing the old puranic story, Visalakshi gave birth to a female child who was named Vajreswari, which is another name of Renuka.

Chapter 20

REVELATION OF A MANTRA

संहोत्रमित्यद्भुत शक्तियुक्तं
वृषाकपेदर्शन मम्ब मंत्रम् ।
या वैदिकं ते मनुजो भजेत
किञ्चिन्न तस्येह जगत्यसाध्यम् ॥

O Mother! There is nothing impossible for him who repeats the mantra 'Somhotra' (संहोत्र), which is endowed with wonderful power. It is your mantra from the Vedas, which has been envisioned by Ganapati (Kavyakantha).

– Indrani Sapta Sati

In this sloka, Nayana has declared that he had the darshan of a mantra and that mantra pertained to the Vedic texts. Only a rishi can have this sort of mantra darshan. All our Vedas are full of mantras thus envisioned by rishis. Mantra gives success to the sadhaka. Vedic mantras are full of meaning. If repeated with full dedication, success is sure to follow. Because Nayana was of the rishi tradition, he was enabled to have the vision of mantras.

“We are the children of God,” says the *Bible*. Bhagavan who surrendered himself to God said, “O My father! I have come at Your command.” “*Appa vukku pillai adakkam*,” (The son obeys the Father) he said while receiving the prasada of Arunachaleswara. All these things point out only one Truth.

The Creator of the Universe, Indra, is the father of everybody and the Prime Mover of the universe. He is the one in the form of 'I' who resides in the hearts of all jivas. All His children have a right to call on Him. He who has seen the Father in his pure heart can merge in the Father and become one with Him. This is the truth of mantra, meditation and steadiness.

After his daughter was born, Nayana took up residence in Padai Veedu, the place of Renuka. Worship of Renuka, tapas, and the recitation of *Uma Sahasram* were his routine activities. Renuka Devi was always dancing on his tongue and in his sight. Kundalini Shakti used to travel up and down in the backbone of Nayana. The secret of Hridaya Vidya, which he received from Bhagavan, was inspiring him.

One day Nayana was sitting in the temple of Ekamukha Kumaraswami. A man with matted locks went past Nayana, entered the temple, took the weapon from Kumara's hand, placed it on his shoulder like an axe, came out, looked at Nayana, walked a few yards and disappeared. Though surprised initially, Nayana took him to be Parasurama, the son of Renuka. Kumaraswami who appeared in the form of Sri Ramana also appeared as Parasurama. For Nayana, they were both the one essence in different forms, parts of the same power.

When Nayana was thus happily meditating, he remembered a sukta from Rig Veda:

रायस्कामो वज्रहस्तं सुदक्षिणं पुत्रो न पितरं हुवे ।

– *Rig Veda 7: Sukta 32*

This Sukta is in 27 padas in the brihati metre while this particular mantra is in virat metre as if it is an armour to

the whole sukta. This mantra first flashed before the rishi Vasishtha and then to his son, Shakti. Hence this mantra is in their names. After them only Nayana had the intuition of this mantra. Nayana gave this mantra much importance:

रायस् - The wealth of this world and heaven too.

कामः - Desiring which,

वज्रहस्तम् - (Him) Indra who has the weapon

Vajra in his hand,

सुदक्षिणम् - who is on the right side of the body,

पुत्रो न पितरम् हुवे - I call as a son calls his father.

When Parasurama was cutting off the head of his mother, this mantra came out from her as a teaching. There are twenty letters in this mantra. In the Puranas, it is written that Renuka beat her breast twenty times which was simply distorting this teaching of mantra. This mantra pertains to the Astra Vidya. Parasurama was the recipient of this mantra. The meaning of this mantra was distorted to mean Parasurama conquering the world/twenty times. The inner meaning of this Purana is nobler than this superficial definition.

The Paradevata is in the form of Shakti in our body. She is active in all the six chakras and is extolled as the Mother of the Purusha who is shining in the heart as 'I'. She is recognized as the seven matrices. This energy is the source of thoughts, that is, the mind. Mind is the cause of ego in those who identify themselves with a body. Kartaviryarjuna is the embodiment of that ego. The backbone is the Vajradandam.

The power that rises like a serpent in the sushumna, which runs through the backbone, is called Renuka. There

must be an awakening (breaking) of nadi (nadibhedana) for the purification of the mind. If a snake is beaten with a club, it will be smashed. But if it is cut with a sharp instrument, it will be neatly cut into parts. In Yogis, this breaking of the nadis must be sharp and neat. An axe is an apt instrument for this purpose. The mind which works in the ego is impure by its involvement in the fulfilment of desires. That is the symbolic stealing of Renuka by Kartavirya (the arrogant ego). To bring her back, the neck, which is the base of the mind had to be cut off. Therefore the mind has to be destroyed before the pure Shakti can reach the head or sahasrara chakra. This is symbolized by the severing of Renuka's head with an axe. In this yoga, when the Kundalini Shakti rises, the cranium of the yogi splits. This is called the method of Jyotir Vidya in the Upanishads. It gives direct and indirect Knowledge and also miraculous powers. Nayana experienced this Vidya. (This is a concise explanation).

Nayana, who had the darshan of this mantra, became a 'new Vasishtha' and taught this mantra to many disciples. He believed that mantra would give its worshipper all prosperity.

Chapter 21

UMA SAHASRAM MANUSCRIPT GOT WASHED AWAY

भगवती गगनस्थलचारिणी जयति संगररंगविहारिणी ।

सुकृतशत्रुमतिभ्रमकारिणी हरिहयारिहयादिविदारिणी ॥

May the powerful Mother shine in glory, who journeys in the sky, who dances in battlefields fields, who confuses the minds of the enemies of the righteous and who destroys the enemies (like Nahusha) of Indra.

– *Indrani Sapta Sati*

Enjoying the bliss of the service of the feet of the Divine Mother and swimming in the ocean of grace, Nayana had the revelation of Her true story. He envisioned Her to be the protecting armour of the Indians, showering Her grace on them, as embodied in his “Song of Renuka”. This song was repeated daily by his disciples. It became a ‘Protection Mantra’ to the Indra Sena Society, which took up the task of redeeming India from foreign rule. For those who repeat it, this mantra has a Divine power, which protects and also wards off evil. Joy reigned abundantly in the houses of those who repeated it.

Nayana was a great patriot. He composed many verses in *Uma Sahasram* invoking the grace of Uma to free his country from slavery. Those who were devoted to the

British government expressed concern to the authorities that the *Uma Sahasram* may give rise to rebellion. The government had already identified the Indra Sena Society as a rebel group. Therefore, Nayana was considered a problem for the government. There was an official notification published in the newspapers by the government: "A rebel society has been started and has many students affiliated to it. A person named Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastry, in the garb of an ascetic, is moving about in villages in the name of tapas. He is at present in Padai Veedu, a holy place of Renuka worship. This rebellion is going to spread like gun powder. The officials should be wary and take proper precautions."

The next day there were reports contradicting this news. Sri Subrahmanyam, who was a professor in Vellore Christian College, wrote an article in the *Hindu* paper strongly criticizing the government's attitude against Nayana.

The Governor gave orders to ban *Uma Sahasram* and to arrest Nayana. Two detectives of police were deputed to arrest Nayana. Appu Sastry informed Nayana of this development. Nayana was unruffled at this turn of events and cheerfully remarked, "Renuka in the form of Draupadi destroyed all the enemies of unrighteousness in the Kurukshetra war. Now also she has taken up the weeding out of unrighteousness in the form of Durga." Nayana looked at the face of Mother Renuka and She appeared to be red with anger, ready to destroy evil doers.

वैरिगण निर्दळनखड्गवरपाणे

वाससि पदोदशनवाससि च शोणे ।

नेत्रमिष पावकविशेषितललाटे
पापमखिलं जहि मृगाधिपति घोटे ॥

O Mother, Thou, who hast a Lion as your vehicle, a sword that destroys your foes in Your hand, whose feet, lower lip and dress art red in colour, and who hast fire in Thy forehead in the form of an eye, please destroy all sin.

Nayana was sitting in an easy chair at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. The book, *Uma Sahasram* was placed on a stool in front of him. Nayana sat with half-closed eyes in dhyana. Suddenly, a stranger came and reverentially touched his feet. Nayana opened his eyes and asked him what he wanted. "O Master! I am impressed very much by your literary works. I want to become your disciple and serve you," said the stranger. Nayana closed his eyes and meditated for a few minutes. He opened his eyes and said, "Those who are seeking truth should not resort to lies. Since you are a detective, please attend to your job," and again closed his eyes. The man was stunned. By this he understood that Nayana was a great soul. Meanwhile some more policemen arrived on the scene. They showed a search warrant to Nayana and started searching the whole house for the book *Uma Sahasram*. The book with big bold letters was, in fact, sitting right in front of Nayana. But, as if through some magic, the policemen could not see it. As they could not find the book they were in a dilemma whether to arrest Nayana or not. As the governmental order was to arrest Nayana along with the book, they were afraid of arresting him without the book. So they departed, saying they would come another time.

This incident frightened Doraiswami and some other disciples of Nayana and, thinking further harassment inevitable, Doraiswami took the manuscript of *Uma Sahasram* to the nearby Kundalini River and buried it under a rock, in a bed of sand. This rock was called 'Pambadichchan Parai'. Doraiswami thought he could recover it later at a suitable time. But, as God willed it, there was heavy rain that night, the river rose in spate and the manuscript was washed away forever. Nayana only heard about this exploit of his disciple in the morning. He was not perturbed. He said with a smile that everything was the sport of the Mother. He asked the disciples to convey the news of what happened to the *Uma Sahasram* manuscript to Sri Bhagavan in Tiruvannamalai.

When Nayana was in meditation in front of Renuka in the evening, he heard his inner voice speaking: "Do not worry. The composition is not lost. Through the flow of the river, it has become a powerful weapon. The power of *Uma Sahasram* has merged with the people and has given them dynamic energy to blow the bugle of Independence. The mantras, tantras and philosophic contents of the work will become the weapons of war. That work is the Shakti of the Divine Mother. If the people are to gain strength to fight for independence, the *Uma Sahasram* should merge in the hearts of Indians and make them strong and energetic. That is what has happened now. You are a great poet. You can compose many more poems. Start the struggle!"

Nayana was overwhelmed with emotion at this merciful grace of the Divine Mother. He touched the feet of Mother Renuka. Renuka smiled and blessed Her son.

The meaning of 'Pambadichchan Parai' is that it is a rock struck by a snake. The serpent force that rises in the backbone of the yogi breaks the knots on its path and reaching Sahasrara showers nectarine grace. The cutting off of Renuka's head denotes this and this is its inner meaning. *Uma Sahasram* had submerged just at this place and Nayana construed that he was going to have this experience soon.

Having understood Mother's divine intention, Nayana bowed to the Mother's Will and went home.

Chapter 22

ARRIVAL OF F. H. HUMPHREYS

अभिषिक्तस्य माता तव तेजोंशभूता ।
सुदशां सेवमानां अनयत् पश्चिमाशाम् ॥

O Indrani! The Mother of the anointed one, who was born as a partial manifestation of Thyself, has brought glory to the Westerners who served Thee.

अयि कालं कियंतं दयसे पश्चिमस्याम् ।
इत इन्द्राणि पूर्वा मवलोकस्व दीनाम् ॥

O Indrani! How long will Thou look at the West with kindness? Please look with kindness at least now at the East, which is much distressed.

न वयं पश्चिमस्याश्शचि याचाम नाशम् ।
कृपयैतां च पूर्वा निहताशामवाशाम् ॥

O Mother Sachi! We do not ask for the destruction of the West. We ask Thee to save the East, which is in distress. This is our hopeful request.

– *Indrani Sapta Sati*

This invocation is the weapon that Nayana started to use to invoke Indrani's Shakti in the world. The protection of righteousness and of all humanity is the goal. For this purpose Nayana invoked the mercy of all gods and he also praised the Virgin Mary:

कलया तदातिबलया कविता पुरुषस्य योगमखिलाम्ब विना ।
अखिलेश्वरप्रहिततेज इयं सुत जन्मने किल ददावनघा ॥

O Mother of all! The sinless one, endowed with Thy strong rays, gave birth to her son, the light of the Lord of all, without the necessity of contact with a male.

सुररक्षकस्य मदयित्रि दृशां नररक्षकस्य जनयित्रिपरे ।
कुलरक्षणाय कृतबुद्धिमिमं कुरुदक्षमद्भुतपवित्रकथे ॥

O Mother of such a saviour of man! Please make this being capable, who is trying to save the country.

A humble gentleman, named F. H. Humphreys, was posted as assistant Superintendent of Police to the Vellore division. In 1911 he came to India for the first time and as soon as he got down from the ship in Bombay, he was attacked by a virus fever and remained in Bombay for some time to recover. One evening he had a vision of a man in white robes, long beard, looking Christ-like. The man sat on his bed, placed his hands on him. Humphreys felt like an electric shock run through his body and soon the fever left him.

When Humphreys arrived in Vellore to join his post, he engaged a Munshi named Narasimhan to teach him the Telugu language. One day Humphreys asked the Munshi whether he knew of any Mahatmas.

At that time the Theosophical Society was propagating the news that Maharshi Maitreya, who was the Messiah, would take birth for the welfare of the world. Having interest in Eastern Philosophy and the spirituality of yoga,

Humphreys heard this declaration of the Theosophists and was very keen to have the darshan of Hindu rishis.

But the Munshi was suspicious of Humphrey's request because at that time there was still police surveillance of Nayana. Munshi thought the question was a ruse to catch Nayana and so he told Humphreys that he did not know of any Mahatmas.

The next day Humphreys accosted Munshi and said that he had seen Munshi's Guru in a dream. He requested to see the photo of Munshi's Guru. Munshi brought some photos of great souls and put the photo of his Guru Ganapati concealed among the pile. Right away Humphreys picked out Nayana's photograph and said, "Munshiji, is this not your Guru's photo? He appeared to me in Bombay and cured my illness. Please, take me to him. I want to have his darshan."

This convinced Munshi of Humphreys' sincerity and with pleasure took him to meet Nayana. Humphreys was overjoyed to have seen a real Hindu rishi for the first time. He discussed many philosophic matters with Nayana. Nayana recognized the spiritual hunger in Humphreys and took him to Sri Ramana Maharshi in November, 1911. Describing his visits to Sri Ramana, Humphreys wrote an article for the *International Psychic Gazette*, in which he mentioned: "The Maharshi is a man beyond description in his expression of dignity, gentleness, self-control and calm strength of conviction."

This was the first known foreigner to have visited the Maharshi. He was also the first person who gave to the West

the message of Sri Ramana's teaching, and thus planted the seed for the teaching of Ramana to spread far and wide.

Chapter 23

THE PILGRIMAGE TO GOKARNA

तीरे विपश्चिद्वर पश्चिमाब्धे
गोकर्णगां लोकय भद्रकर्णीम् ।
बुद्धिं शिवांसर्वमनोरथानां
सिद्धिं च यद्यस्ति मनोऽधिगन्तुम् ॥7-25-13

O Scholar! To attain the right attitude of mind and fulfilment of all desires, please go and visit Gokarna on the West coast of India and have the darshan of Kali who goes by the name of Bhadrakarni in that Holy place.

– Uma Sahasram

Nayana performed the thread-investing ceremony (Upanayanam) of Mahadeva as soon as he completed ten years of age. The boy gradually got used to the repetition of the Gayatri Mantra and also steady meditation. This might have been the grace of Bhagavan. Even Nayana was surprised at Mahadeva's steadfastness. "He must have had some remnants of Karma left over from the previous birth. That is the cause of his birth," said Nayana about the boy. In *Sri Ramana Gita* it is written: "*Mahadevasya Janani Dhirasya brahmavadinah.*" This means that Nayana had declared indirectly that Mahadeva was a knower of Brahman. The boy's habits were also peculiar. He was the ordinary Mahadeva in day-time, but after 12 midnight, he was always

in yoga. If anybody asked him why he would not sleep, he used to answer, "I sleep while sitting." He never used to admit that he was in dhyana. From midnight to 4 a.m. he used to sit and exactly at 4 a.m. would start chanting "Guru Stuti" and other slokas till 6 a.m.

There is an adage, "That which you think at the time of death, that will you become (in the next birth)." All the children of Mahadeva could understand his state only at the moment of his death. He appeared to be in perfect health, but all of a sudden he said to his son, "Purandara, the prana is leaving me! Well, let it go." Turning on his left side he said, "Salutations to Mother, Father and Guru. Bhagavan Ramana! Narayana! Siva, Siva!" and the life breath left him.

This happened in Kharagpur. Unless one is blessed by God or the Guru one cannot have such a death. Bhagavan Ramana must have blessed Mahadeva.

एकेनाऽपि सुपुत्रेण तपोयुक्तेन साधुना ।
आह्लादितं कुलं सर्वं यथा चन्द्रेण शर्वरी ॥

Just as the moon gives happiness to the whole night, a son (even one), good and austere, gives happiness to the whole family.

Nayana, along with Mahadeva and his wife started for the pilgrim centre of Gokarna in 1912. They planned to visit Kaladi, the birth place of Sri Adi Sankara first and then go to Gokarna by the sea. As planned, they visited Kaladi first and then boarded the boat for Gokarna. When the boat started at 6 p.m., the full moon was just beginning to shine in the night sky. At 10 p.m., the boat reached an island on which

there appeared to be no human habitation. But at the distance of a mile or so, the silhouette of a grove could be seen. The boatman anchored the boat and got to the shore on a ladder made of rope. Unknown to the passengers some residents of the island would drink intoxicants in that grove and the boatman may have gone there to join them. In the meantime some of the passengers also got down to the shore to enjoy the scenic beauty in the moon light. After half an hour there was a rumour that this was Gokarna and the boat will not move any farther. There was a brief clamour and a number of passengers got down hurriedly. Meanwhile the boatman returned and told them that it was not Gokarna and rushed them to get back on the boat. There was some scampering and Mahadeva who was holding his father's hand was thrown back. Nayana and Visalakshi could board the boat but Mahadeva could not. He fell into the water and a passenger lifted him. But he was then shoved off the boat again and in the rush nobody took notice of the boy. The boat started and Mahadeva was left alone on the shore. Neither the boatman, nor the passengers could hear his wailing and shouts.

It was a desert island and neither man nor beast was to be seen. There was no visible habitation or any lights shining from houses. The boy got frightened and for a moment considered walking towards the grove, but refrained, thinking if his father and mother returned they would not find him. Tears rolled down the cheeks of the desolate child. His fright increased as the night progressed. Mahadeva then prayed to Bhagavan, sat on a sand dune and started repeating the Gayatri mantra, taught to him by his father. He was

immersed in dhyana within a short time. All around him the sand began to blow, but the boy did not cry or move. Thirst or hunger did not touch the child either. The boat returned only on the morning of the third day. Nayana got down from the boat and was wonderstruck to see his boy's steadfastness in meditation. Due to the wind and sand the boy had a severe rash on his body. Nayana touched Mahadeva and awakened him. Mahadeva broke into tears at the sight of his father. Nayana soothed him with consoling words and prayed to Renuka to make him healthy. They returned by boat to Gokarna.

Though Nayana was a householder, he used to search for caves and mountains for his residence while performing tapas. He did not like to stay in choultries like other pilgrims. When he went searching in Gokarna, he found a dilapidated Krishna Temple. Father, mother and son took up their abode in that temple. Nayana told Mahadeva that, as he was given the sacred thread, he should go out and collect alms and feed his parents. Mahadeva agreed to this and collected food from only three houses as they were only three of them to feed.

One day a scholar arrived at Nayana's place and after talking to him for sometime realised that Nayana was a great scholar. This news spread like wild fire in the city. In Gokarna, there was a holy soul named Hosman Sastry who was running a Sanskrit school. The teachers of that school came to Nayana one day and asked him to come and have a look at the Vidyapeeth where they were working. Nayana agreed to their proposal.

Scholarship is of two kinds. One which can be got through learning books and the other is through awareness in the heart. Nayana wove this concept into a sloka thus:

स्वाधीने हृदये वाणी सर्वमर्थं च पश्यति ।
मनसा रञ्जिता वाणी व्यष्टेरनुभवं मितम् ॥

When the word comes out of the awareness in the heart, it reveals everything. When it issues out of the mind, it is limited to the person's individual experience only.

Hence a scholar is one who speaks with an intellect which is in contact with the heart. Such a one is a real scholar and poet.

In Gokarna, Ananta Sastry was a reputed scholar. He was a devotee of Vishnu. He was an adept in discoursing on Vishnu Tattva. One day, he happened to discuss with Nayana and it became impossible for him to withstand Nayana's flood of exposition when he started to discourse on Indra Tattva. Ananta Sastry understood that Nayana was a Maharshi like Veda Vasishtha, accepted defeat and became Nayana's disciple.

The scholars of Gokarna came to know that Nayana was also a great astrologer. They requested Nayana to teach them the subtleties of Jyotisha (astrology). Nayana agreed to teach them in his own particular way the secrets of Jyotisha. He therefore kept his tapas in abeyance and took up teaching Jyotisha. At that time he wrote some books on Jyotisha – *Tribhava phala Chandrika*, *Nirnaya Samgraha* and *Laghu Samhita*, etc.

Nayana was teaching for three months in Gokarna when he received a telegram informing him of his father's sudden illness. He immediately started for Kaluvarai along with his family.

Chapter 24

FATHER'S DEMISE

तपोनिर्धूतपाप्मानः तथातथ्याभिधायिनः ।
वेदवेदांगतत्वज्ञाः ऋषयः परिकीर्तिताः ॥

Those are eulogized as rishis who have washed away their sins with tapas, who speak the truth always, who know the essence of Veda and Vedanga and act according to them.

Under Nayana's initiation, sadhakas used to get immediate results, as there was so much power in Nayana's speech and look. It was as if the celestials used to walk along with him wherever he went. Nayana's father, Nrisimha Sastry, gave him the mantram through which he could realize the Divine Mother. Unless he himself was a great worshipper of the Devi, Sastry could not have imbued his son in this manner.

Nrisimha Sastry had the darshan of Sri Ramana in 1910. Total silence reigned between those two gurus of Nayana. Nrisimha Sastry evoked and received Bhagavan's grace.

Till 1912, Sastry was performing the worship of the Divine Mother. After that he was prone to frequent fevers. After Nayana received the telegram in Gokarna, it took Nayana one week to reach Kaluvarai. The elder son Bhima Sastry and the younger one Sivarama Sastry were attending to the father. The father passed away on December 5th,

1912, before Nayana reached home. He was sad that he could not see his father before his demise but realized that God's will prevails under all circumstances.

PART III

Chapter 1

PERFORMANCE OF THE GREAT SACRIFICE

To remember Atma is to be infallible.
To forget Atma is to be fallible.
To remember is the most worthwhile thing.
He who constantly remembers attains You, Hari Haya.
Attaining You is to remain in one's Self.
Keeping hold of the Self is tapas.
Losing hold of the Self is worldliness.
To be in the Self without any thought
Is the great State of being in You, O Indra!

– Ganapati Muni

“Worship Indra and study the Veda” is the great injunction. Nayana taught this path to the scholars of Gokarna. Indra is the creator of the worlds. He is the effulgence that shines as ‘I’ in all beings of the world. He is the King of devas and God of yagna (sacrifice). The debt to the devas can be redeemed through sacrifice, say the scriptures. Life, mind and senses are given to us by the devas. Hence these are their manifestations in us. It is our duty to offer them to the devas. This is called total offering of

ourselves. Surrender and enquiry into the Self are the two methods of this offering. In the path of yogis, this sacrifice to the devas is their own inner-sacrifice. It is possible through study of the Vedas also. "Worship Indra who is shining in all beings as 'I'. Analyze the Vedas and through inner churning attain the Truth." Upon his return to Gokarna, Nayana told this to the scholars residing there, revealing the truth of Indra.

At one end of the town of Gokarna there is a mountain called Uma Maheswara Mountain. There is a Vinayaka Temple on the mountain surrounded by a beautiful garden. Upon their return, Nayana's family selected this temple as their residence. Here Nayana started a sacrifice called Vedakosa Mathanam (Analysis of the Vedas), which comprises the analysis of the Vedas, proving our debt to the devas and explaining the various aspects of Agni (fire). Nayana and Amma (Visalakshi) spent the daytime in meditation. There was a congregation of scholars and discussion among them in the evenings. Like before, Mahadeva would go into the town and collect alms, which was mostly rice and dhals. Amma used to cook these items. After some days Visalakshi thought the boy Mahadeva was getting too tired and so asked Nayana to find out if some other student can join Mahadeva in collecting alms.

There is always a Divine purpose behind the thought of Mahatmas. The Gokarna Vidyapeeth was started by one Ganesh Sastry. He was given the title of 'Hosmana'. Vighneswara Bhadati was his son-in-law. He was a brilliant person, wise and humble and was known to all as Ganesh

Bhatt. He wished to run the Vidyapeeth in the best possible manner. To do that he knew that he must educate himself thoroughly. He first finished studying the Vedas and started learning the kavyas (poetic works of great poets). He took mantra diksha from a guru named Ramdas, learnt hathayoga and meditated often. On the arrival of Nayana, Ganesh Bhatt's development in these fields accelerated considerably. Sri Ramana used to say, "First you meditate and at the right moment the Guru himself will come to you and shower his grace. You need not run about in search of a guru." This saying of Sri Ramana became true in the case of Ganesh Bhatt. For this Amma's suggestion was the motivation.

One day Nayana told his disciples that he wanted a student to assist Mahadeva. At once Ganesh Bhatt came forward and introduced himself in the traditional method by touching Nayana's feet with his head. With great pleasure Nayana lifted him and kissed his forehead. The moment Nayana touched the boy's forehead with his lips the inner faculties of Ganesh Bhatt started blossoming. Nayana saw that the boy would become a great yogi and began addressing him as Daivarata, which ultimately became his permanent name.

In the valley of Sahyadri, at a distance of four kilometers from Gokarna, there is a small village on the seashore called Sannabela. The Dharma Parishad of Gokarna planned to perform a sacrifice in the Sannabela village. As the performers of the sacrifice knew Nayana to be a great tapasvi, they wanted him to be adhyaksha (supervisor) of the sacrifice. An ashram was constructed in Sannabela for

Nayana's residence. When the sacrifice began, Nayana was received with the chanting of mantras and a purna kumbham by Brahmins. As the intended sacrifice was a very big one, many people from far-off places attended. Appu Sastry and Kalyana Rama Sastry also arrived from Vellore, but as God would have it, as soon as Appu Sastry arrived in Gokarna, he came down with jaundice.

When Nayana stepped into the ashram, he prayed to the local guardian deity, Vana Durga. Immediately she graced him with Her darshan. Nayana prayed to her to let the sacrifice be a success and be the guardian and 'Annapurna' (supplier of food) to all those who attended the sacrifice. She smiled gracefully on Nayana. On the next day, early in the morning, Vana Durga Herself appeared to Amma as an old woman and gave her some leaves, telling her that the juice of the leaves will cure Appu's jaundice. According to her instruction, Amma gave the juice to Appu and he was healed within a short time.

In the month of Phalgun, 1913, the sacrifice was started with a thousand hotrus and three thousand helpers for the homam. Nayana guided the sacrifice. There reigned a Divine atmosphere all through the sacrifice. Guests were given all amenities and were sumptuously fed. Discussions by scholars were conducted. Nayana's speeches were enthralling and many people had Divine experiences.

This sacrifice became the final reward of the Vedakosa Mathanam tapas that Nayana started. Nayana composed *Yoga Sara Gitam*, compiling the yoga vidyas of the Vedas and revealing their mystic meanings.

बहुळयोगि वाङ्मधनतोऽमृतम् ।
 अनुभवक्षमं तदिदं माहृतम् ॥

This ambrosia of Yoga Sara, which is the essence of the pronouncement of many seers, and which can be experienced, is given out to you.

Nayana became silent after this pronouncement. The assembled nobles (people) saw Veda Vasishtha in the glorious individual of Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni. On the tenth day of the bright half of Chaitra month the grand sacrifice came to a conclusion.

Chapter 2

THE SAMATATTAVA DARSINI

संकर्षणस्यांशमनन्यशक्ति मन्तनामान ममुं नमामि ।
रामं तृतीयं रमणीयगात्रं रमानिवासाननपुंडरीकम् ॥

I bow to Balarama who is the partial manifestation of Samkarshana, of infinite power, of the name Ananta, of a beautiful form and a face like a lotus which is the seat of Lakshmi Devi.

– *Tattva Ghanta Satakam*

During the time when Nayana was living at Arunachala after taking Sri Ramana as his Guru, the Saiva Siddhanta Sabha arranged a great meeting in Arunachala. They came and requested Nayana to preside over the function. Nayana would never say no to anything. He therefore instantly agreed. The news was broadcast over the whole town.

There are many cults in Hinduism, like Dvaita, Visishtadvaita, Advaita, Saiva, Vaishnava and others. All the cults ultimately teach the oneness of God. If it is limited to the worship of one's own cult, nothing is lost. But the difficulty arises when each cult declares its own belief as the absolute truth and all others false. The war of Palanadu in Andhra Pradesh is proof of the dangerous consequences of this attitude. Nayana, by nature, was very innocent and he would give forthright expression to what he felt by

conviction and experience. But Nayana came to know only on the morning of the function that there were some particular procedures to be followed in the case of this Saiva Siddhanta, and whatever a disciple utters would be considered as the Guru's word. So, whatever Nayana spoke would be Ramana's word.

Tamil Nadu is the repertory of devotees of Siva. The great Saiva devotees were called 'Nayanmars' and Bhagavan was a great devotee of Arunachala Siva. Hence Nayana went to Bhagavan the morning of the function and asked, "Bhagavan! Saiva Siddhanta Sabha asked me to lecture on Saiva Siddhanta, and I have agreed. Truly, I do not know anything about it. What is this Siddhanta?" Bhagavan smiled at Nayana's predicament. He asked for the book *Siva Jnana Bodha* to be brought and pointed out the twelve main aphorisms of Saiva Siddhanta and gave a concise commentary on them.

Having thus secured the Guru's grace, Nayana gave a superb lecture in Tamil to the astonishment of all the audience. After the meeting, Nayana went to Sri Ramana and told him, "Bhagavan, what I spoke today was by your grace only. The Saiva Siddhanta which I never studied became a 'gooseberry in the palm of my hand'." This was an example of Nayana's humility and dedication to Bhagavan.

Another such event occurred in Udupi. Udupi Kshetra was a stronghold of Vaishnavism. Amma and Nayana went to Udupi in 1913. Nayana had the darshan of the famous Udupi Sri Krishna in His temple and composed extempore ten slokas on the ten incarnations of Vishnu, which are called

Dasavataras. The temple authorities were astonished at the grandeur of the poems. These slokas were later printed as “Dasavatara Gitam,” in the book *Gitamala*.

Near Udupi there is a kshetra called Badabandeshwar. It is a Balarama kshetra. It has many hills and streams. Seeing the peaceful atmosphere of this place, Nayana decided to do tapas there. He left Amma in the house of Vasudeva Sastry’s daughter in Udupi and himself went to Badabandeshwar and chose for tapas a little cave with a small stream nearby. He was totally absorbed in tapas for fifteen days there. His clothes became dirty, due to wind and sand. His body became weak, due to lack of food. Suddenly, a handsome, strong looking youth appeared before him, displaying the abhaya mudra. Nayana understood the form to be Balarama and wanted to get up to greet him, but was too weak to rise. The youth put his hand on Nayana’s back and energy passed through the youth to Nayana, giving him abundant strength. The youth took Nayana to the stream for bathing and then went to the town and told someone to take food for Nayana and serve him. After that he was not seen anymore.

From then on the authorities of the Mutt in Badabandeshwar looked after Nayana’s wants. Nayana stayed five more days in the cave and after completing his schedule of tapas walked into town. Immediately the Vaishnava community surrounded him and arranged for a meeting. Nayana was requested to speak.

Seated on the stage he closed his eyes and meditated on Balarama who appeared to him on the hill. As Nayana began

to speak, profound revelations issued out of his mouth which transcended all creeds and sects, harmonising them in the form of ninety-two slokas. All the founders of all the cults appeared before Nayana's mind's eye and he declared:

ऋषिभिर्वामदेवाद्यैर्यद्दृष्टं मंत्रदर्शिभिः ।
तस्य शास्त्रस्य सारोऽयं मया संगृह्य कीर्तितः ॥

I have given out concisely what was revealed to the Seers of mantras, Vamadeva and others.

Nayana invoked all the acharyas, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha and Srikanta in a sloka separately and concluded saying that aspirants can attain Brahman through service, yoga and jnana. The audience felt as though all the acharyas appeared before them on the stage in the one form of Nayana.

In the course of his talk, Nayana said, "Balarama is the Rama that bestows the knowledge of weaponry (अस्त्रविद्या प्रदातः रामः ॥), Sri Rama, Dasaratha's son, Bhargava Rama, Renuka's son, and Balarama were always worshipped by the Hindus. And Skanda, Balarama and Parasurama are the partial incarnations of the same deity. They are tapasvis and Gurus who are steady in the Heart (Hridaya Vidya), and if one is seen, the other two also will be seen." He also said that these are the founders of Hridaya Vidya and one of them, Skanda, has incarnated as Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Suddenly a boy came out of the audience and held Nayana's feet and pleaded, "Lord! My father died. I am a brahmin boy. My mother changed her faith to Christianity. Although I love Vedic rituals very much, the pundits here

refused to perform my upanayanam, sacred thread ceremony. Please give brahmopadesam to me. I will follow the right path with all sincerity.” Nayana immediately called for the Dharma Parishad (assembly of ritual authority) and told them that fitness for rituals consisted in the firm faith of the devotee who performs them. Since this boy was very sincere, they should perform the upanayanam for him. The Parishad agreed and did the upanayanam.

Amma asked Nayana what benefit he had through the darshan of Balarama. Nayana told her that he received the power of weaponry and gained a modern theoretical view. “Balarama’s strength is going to save our people in their fight for independence,” he said.

This new revelation of equality of all beliefs took shape as the composition titled “Tattva Ghanta Satakam”. This work was a favourite piece of poetry of Sri Ramana.

वेदांतशास्त्रशतकान् सकलान्विचार्य
 प्राचामृगागमदृशां मतमादधानः ।
 क्षेत्रे फणीश्वरकलाजनितस्य पुंसो
 घंटाशतं गणपतिः कविराडकार्षीत् ॥

Having gone through all philosophies, according to the light of the Rig Vedic Rishi’s, in the Kshetra of Balarama, who was a manifestation of Adishesha, the poet Ganapati created this ‘Tattva Ghanta Satakam’.

Chapter 3

THE DARSAN OF DAHARAGUHESA

त्वदीया सा शक्तिस्सकलजगदन्तेऽप्यनलसा
पुरा कार्यस्यान्ते तनयमयि हित्वा नृपरिपुम् ।
अविक्षत्काकुत्स्थं दशमुखकुलोन्माथविधये
सहस्रांशुं हित्वा शशिनमिव घस्रेगलति भा ॥7-27-11

O Mother Renuka! Having finished destroying all the world and concluded the work of destroying the Kshatriyas through Parasurama, Thy power then possessed Sri Rama, leaving aside Thine own son Parasurama, for the destruction of the whole force of Ravana.

– Uma Sahasram

Once a devotee asked Sri Ramana, “Swami! What would have happened if, after receiving the whole essence of *Gita*, Arjuna had refused to fight?” Sri Bhagavan replied, “That unified power which brought all of them to the war front would have forced Arjuna to fight.” This reveals that the Divine power does all things. This is revealed by Nayana in the above sloka.

Sri Rama and Parasurama were contemporaries. The purpose of the avatar of Parasurama was to destroy the kshatriyas, who became arrogant with their vast material power, and reveal to the world that the power of tapas is

greater than mere physical strength. Sri Rama's goal was to destroy the whole race of demoniac forces.

The Puranas tell us that Parasurama became angry on hearing that Siva's bow had been broken by Sri Rama. He accosted Sri Rama when he started for home. In this encounter, Parasurama's strength entered into Sri Rama through Parasurama's bow, which was given to Sri Rama to test his strength. But Parasurama was the avatar of Kartikeya and was always centred in the Self. Through the grace of his mother, he possessed the Kundalini Vidya. The power that is possessed by such a Maharshi would be Prachanda Chandi or Krittika. This power is necessary to protect Dharma and so it accrued to Sri Rama from Parasurama and was useful in the destruction of demoniac forces.

Parasurama who was born as a partial manifestation of Kartikeya, graced Sri Rama. In the same way, Balarama, who was born with the power of Ananta and helped Sri Krishna, say the seers of truth. Nayana has declared Sri Ramana also as the avatar of Kartikeya. The manner in which Parasurama appeared to Nayana once again was very strange.

There are two kshetras of the name of Gokarna in India. One is the kshetra in the state of Karnataka. The story goes that the Lingam in this kshetra was installed by Ravana. But it was god Ganapati, in truth, who installed it there. To get Atmalinga means to get Atmajnana, Self-knowledge, which is not possible with the aid of the ego, and possessiveness. That was why Ravana failed to secure Atmalingam. There is another Gokarna kshetra in Andhra Pradesh. On Mahendragiri Hill in Srikakulam District, there

is a temple for Gokarneswara. This hill is located in the small Zamindari of Mandasa. This is a Kshetra of Parasurama. It is believed that the Pandavas of Mahabharata had stayed in this place. Mahendragiri is high above sea level and covered by a dense forest. It is infested by wild beasts and there are some villages of mountain tribes around the hill.

Gokarneswara is the Lord of this hill. Every year a festival is conducted here on Sivaratri. The Mandasa King's family worships Siva on this day. When people climb the hill, they take torches along with them and beat drums so that wild beasts are kept at a distance.

Between 1913 and 1915, Nayana travelled to many parts of the country. He participated in assemblies of scholars in many places, like Secunderabad, Kumta, Karkala, etc. He travelled in the North along with Amma. At the end he went to Mandasa and met his old friend, the Raja of Mandasa. Nayana camped in Mandasa at the request of the Raja.

Nayana did tapas again in Bhuvanewar during November and December of 1915. Nayana used to say that every rock in Bhuvanewar was the form of Ishwara, just as they say that every particle of sand in Brindavan had been sanctified by the touch of Sri Krishna's feet. Bhuvanewar was considered a great cemetery, the abode of Siva. Nayana wanted to rewrite *Uma Sahasram* in that place. As Nayana's memory was very keen he started writing *Uma Sahasram* as much as he could recollect. They were arranged in 'Stabakas', or bouquets of slokas. He left blank spaces in between them. Possibly he left some places empty where he did not remember a sloka.

In 1916, Nayana's favourite disciple, Daivarata, came to Mandasa to visit him. Some disciples used to come from Arunachala also. Meanwhile, Sivaratri approached. Preparations for the festival began in the temple on the Mahendragiri. With great curiosity, Daivarata asked the King of Mandasa, "O King! I am surprised to hear that Gokarneswara has manifested on Mahendragiri. Is it also, like the lingam in Gokarna, an Atmalingam?"

The King replied, "We do not know who installed this lingam. People say that it is self-manifested. But I know that my ancestors built this temple." Nayana, who was hearing this conversation with closed eyes, opened his eyes and said, "It was installed by Kumara Swami. It was worshipped by Parasurama."

On Sivaratri, arrangements were made for the King and his family to climb the hill. Amma, Nayana and Daivarata started along with them. As soon as they entered the temple, Nayana's mind became indrawn. The worship of Gokarneswara was completed. Nayana went near the lingam and touched it with his hand. He felt something like electricity pass through his spine. After the worship, all the people came out of the temple and walked about on the mountain. Nayana and Daivarata went a little distance away from the crowd and looked around. Nayana said, "Daivarata, this place reminds me of Padai Veedu. Parasurama must have travelled around this place. Even now he will appear to tapasvis. Look at the shape of this mountain. It looks in its southern portion like a cow lying down. Mother Renuka gave Kundalini Vidya to Parasurama. Egotism, possessiveness and

sense desire are the enemies of an aspirant. Mother Renuka is the power that cuts off the nadi granthis and makes one separated from the head (the power that dissolves the mind). Parasurama was Kartikeya himself who knew the real nature of the Self through the breaking of Rudra-granthi. This lingam is the lingam that Parasurama worshipped. This is a holy place for doing tapas.” Daivarata prostrated to Nayana and begged him to allow him also to do tapas along with him. Nayana smiled and touched Daivarata’s head and said, “So be it.”

Nayana told Amma, “I will do tapas in the presence of Dahara Guhesa. You please go to the town along with the family of the King. Daivarata has decided to stay with me. Food can be sent once in three days. The King will see to that. You need not worry on that account. Please permit me to engage in tapas.” Amma was used to Nayana’s ways, so she agreed immediately. The King was somewhat troubled, though. “There are many wild beasts around here. What will you do?” he asked. Nayana reassured the King, saying that wild beasts do not harm tapasvins. By the evening all the people went down. Nayana and Daivarata remained on the hill.

Near the Gokarneswara Temple, Nayana selected a nice slab to sit for meditation. Soon he became withdrawn and Daivarata became the protector to watch over him. Twenty days went by in intense tapas. The intensity of Nayana’s tapas can be gauged by the following verse:

नभसः शीर्षद्वारा प्रवहन्तीं य इह विग्रहे शक्तिम् ।

अनुसन्दधाति नित्यं कृतिनस्तस्येतैरलं योगैः ॥ 1-4-8

To those meritorious people who, with a steady application of the mind, see continuously the power that descends from the sky into the body through the top of the head, no other methods of yoga are necessary.

– *Uma Sahasram*

Day by day Nayana's countenance gained radiance. On the twentieth day, an unearthly form came out of Dahara Guhesa, neared Nayana and looked at him with extreme grace. That form had an axe in his hand, wore white robes and looked like a rishi. He was none other than Parasurama. A ray of light issued out of his forehead and touched Nayana's head and entered his body. Nayana's body immediately felt an electric energy running all through it.

With this experience, Nayana stopped tapas. Daivarata saw an aura behind Nayana's head and understood that his tapas was successful. "Daivarata! I have attained Parasurama's grace. Shall we go home?" asked Nayana, and both of them went home. It was the first time that Daivarata saw his guru doing tapas. He prostrated to Nayana with all devotion.

The King's family and the people of Mandasa saw the radiance of Nayana and wondered at Nayana's tapas-Shakti.

Chapter 4

THE BIRTH OF SRI RAMANA GITA

महर्षि रमणं नत्वा कार्तिकेयं नराकृतिं ।
मतं तस्य प्रसन्नेन ग्रंथेनोपनिबध्यते ॥

Bowing to Sri Ramana Maharshi, who is the Lord Kartikeya born as a human being, this, his teaching, is being brought out as a book with a pure mind.

– Sri Ramana Gita

He who has realized the Truth is a rishi. He is a guide to seekers of Truth. He reveals the method in which he had realized the Truth. Those who have faith in him follow him. The modern concept is प्रत्यक्षं परमं प्रमाणं, “We believe only that which we can see,” which means that the modern generation believes only that which can be seen. Sri Ramana is an acceptable rishi to the modern generation. His teaching is beyond any cult, creed or religion, and time and space. It accords with the Vedas.

Darsanam means experiential knowledge. It is also called vidya. In the Vedas, many vidyas have been prescribed to know the Self. To search for the real ‘I’ and being steady in the knowledge of it is called Vaiswanara Vidya. The heart is the Supreme Akasa or Daharam. Rishis declared that Daharam is Atma. To be always merged in this Daharam is Atma Nishta. Dahara Vidya is Hridaya Vidya. Sri Ramana had experiential knowledge of this Vidya.

The Maharshi's real teaching was in Silence. To propagate his teachings in word, Ganapati himself became the scribe, in the same manner that Lord Ganesha was the scribe for Vyasa. On 29-12-1913, Nayana asked Bhagavan some questions, knowing that the answers would benefit seekers. He rendered these questions and answers into seventeen slokas and made it into a Chapter called "Upasana Pradhanya Nirupanam".

Till 1917, nothing further was thought of. When Nayana reached home after having the darshan of Parasurama on Mahendragiri, a disciple, Ramanatha Brahmachari, came from Arunachalam to see Nayana. He showed a sloka to Nayana which was composed by Bhagavan:

हृदयकुहरमध्ये केवलं ब्रह्ममात्रं
 ह्यहमहमिति साक्षादात्मरूपेण भाति ।
 हृदि विश मनसा स्वं चिन्वता मज्जता वा
 पवनचलनरोधादात्मनिष्ठो भव त्वं ॥

In the centre of the Heart-Cave there shines alone the one Brahman as the 'I, I', the Atman. Reach the Heart by diving deep in quest of the Self, or by controlling the mind with the breath, and stay established in the Atman.

This verse is the essence of Sri Ramana's teaching. In 1917, a scholar called Jagadiswara Sastry started to compose a verse enunciating Ramana's teaching and wrote the first line, 'hridaya kuhara madhye', and could not proceed any further. He brought the unfinished verse to Bhagavan and Bhagavan completed the verse. This verse finally reached Nayana.

Nayana was very glad to see the verse. In the year 1917, he, with wife Visalakshi, went to Arunachala to have Bhagavan's darshan. Hearing the news that Nayana was in Arunachala, Daivarata arrived from Gokarna. Kapali Sastry and some other disciples also arrived. All of them were scholars and they all used to gather daily in front of Bhagavan and ask certain questions. The all-compassionate Bhagavan answered them. This began on 7-7-1917. Nayana codified all the questions and answers into a book called *Sri Ramana Gita*. Sri Bhagavan once said of *Sri Ramana Gita*: "In 1913, Nayana asked some questions and got answers for them. As the ideas were strongly imprinted on his mind when somebody asked something, he would create a sloka extempore and say it is found in *Sri Ramana Gita* at such and such a place in such and such a chapter. All this was done when he did not even put pen to paper to write *Sri Ramana Gita*. When he started to speak authoritatively, nobody could counter him. He used to be quite emotional. After doing like this for a long time, he wrote this *Gita* now."

One devotee expressed a doubt, "Bhagavan! What would Nayana have done if somebody asked, 'Where is that *Gita*?'" Bhagavan smiled and said, "Who would have dared to oppose him or argue with him? Who was there who had such courage?" His demeanour was so authoritative that none could counter him. After creating *Sri Ramana Gita*, he sometimes quoted slokas extempore as examples and say they were in *Sri Ramana Gita*. When somebody pointed out that these slokas were not found in that book, he would

say that they were from the *Maha Ramana Gita*, which, of course, only existed in his head at that time.

Sri Ramana Gita, like the *Bhagavad Gita*, has eighteen chapters. It begins with upasana (worship) and ends with a chapter on the greatness of siddhas, extolling Sri Ramana. It is useful in everyway to householders, ascetics, sadhus, Brahmavadins, Sankhyas, Indians and foreigners alike.

Even the questioners in this book were not ordinary men.

1. 'Daivarata's' name was Gajanana. He was Nayana's disciple, a vedic scholar and great devotee who composed "Vibhaktyashtakam" on Sri Ramana.

2. 'Yoganatha Yatindra' was a sannyasin, formally known as Sankaranarayanan.

3. 'Kapali Sastri' was Nayana's disciple, commentator of "Sad Darshana", a Sanskrit scholar, poet and devotee of Sri Ramana.

4. 'Visalakshi' was, of course, Nayana's wife. She was versed in Sri Vidya worship and was a great tapasvini in her own right who had Tara Mantra siddhi.

5. 'Bharadwaja' (Karshni) was the son of Sri Krishna Iyer. He was an overseer by name Vaidyanatha Iyer.

6. 'Bharadwaja Vaidarbhi' was native of Ongole, Andhra Pradesh and known as Chivukula Venkata Sastry. Later, after taking sannyas, he was called Upanishad Brahmendra Saraswati.

7. 'Amritanatha Yatindra' was from Kerala.

It was the combination of all these great personalities that brought about such a great work!

गळंती गंगेयं विमलतरगीतैव महतो
 नगाधीशाच्छ्रीमद्रमण रूपाज्जनिमती ।
 पथो वाणीरूपात्गणपतिकवेर्भक्तहृदयं
 समुद्रं संयाति प्रबलमलहारिण्यनुपदम् ॥

This pure Ganges, named Sri Ramana Gita, is born in the Himalaya, which was the great Ramana Maharshi and flows through the words of the poet Ganapati Muni, purifying the many evil elements, to merge in the ocean of the hearts of the devotees.

Sri Ramana Maharshi was not very much versed in the Sanskrit language, but by association with Nayana, knowledge and proficiency grew. Once Nayana asked Sri Ramana to compose some slokas in Sanskrit and Sri Ramana said he did not know how to. He asked Nayana to teach him the metre to compose in. Nayana then taught Sri Ramana the metre aryavritta. As a result, Sri Ramana composed five slokas, titled, "Arunachala Pancharatna". Nayana was extremely pleased with these slokas and added them as the invocatory slokas to *Sri Ramana Gita*.

When this was done, Pranavananda approached Nayana and asked him to compose an epilogue to *Sri Ramana Gita* on Sri Ramana Guru. Nayana agreed and composed "Guru Gitam". Though the context of the compositions varied, all these became adjuncts to *Sri Ramana Gita*.

Chapter 5

DESCENT OF THE NEW VEDA

वेदाः सर्वे परावाणी शुद्धज्ञानमयाहि ते ।

अंतरस्यात्मनः साक्षात्ते स्युः शब्दमयं महाः ॥

As the Vedas are the Paravak (Divine words), they are pure knowledge. They are the light of the Atma in the form of words.

– Visva Mimamsa, by Ganapati Muni

Pranava is the base of all the sounds. Hence 'Om' or Pranava is called Sabda Brahman. Even before the sound 'Om' is formed the sound exists. In that state it is Shakti or Energy. In the language of the mantras, it is called Suddha Chit, or Pure Knowledge. That is the swara or sound form in the Vedas. All knowledge has this sound as its source. He who masters this sound is the master of all knowledge. The worship of sound is worship of God Himself.

He who can envision the Para sound is a rishi. This is possible through tapas. The Knowledge of Vedas is the knowledge of the Truth. A rishi becomes a medium of the revelation of Truth. Paravak is beyond the senses, mind and intellect. A rishi in deep meditation realizes the Truth and suddenly expresses his experience in word form. That becomes the Veda mantra.

Veda mantras are infinite. They are not limited to a place or time or beings. They are eternal. But language has

limitations, as we know. So the Eternal Truth of the Vedas becomes experiential knowledge and the ultimate language in them becomes silence. The inner meaning of Sri Ramanā's saying, "Real heart to heart talk is silence" is this. But for the welfare of the world, the Truth of the Vedas has to be brought out into language. In that process, the concept becomes permanent while the language becomes impermanent. Hence the elders say that the Vedas declare the Truth indirectly.

The seers of yore have declared the Vedas to be a guide given for the welfare of the world. Nayana said that such Vedic revelation is possible even now.

Nayana declared:

1. The Vedas are sound-oriented mantras. They give knowledge of God and spiritual experiences. They can be revealed through tapas and insight.

2. The Veda is the best knowledge of Brahman, which can be acquired through experience and sadhana. The word which is heard through tapas reveals the knowledge of Brahman.

3. When a rishi expends all his energies and knowledge for the sake of Truth, Truth reveals itself in his heart. That is called a revelation.

4. The Vedas are the ever-flowing sound of Truth. They are endless and the rishis see them by tapas.

5. The Truth is revealed according to the fitness of the sadhaka.

6. Just as the rishis had in the past, even now, Vedadarshan is possible.

7. Through tapas and insight, darshan of Truth can be gained. In the same way mantra darshan also is possible.

Not only did Nayana give out this teaching, but also he initiated the new Vedic darshan. It happened like this:

In 1917, Nayana left Mandasa and reached Arunachala. Amma also followed him. Hearing that Nayana was in Arunachala, Daivarata also came to Arunachala. Nayana introduced Daivarata to Bhagavan. Daivarata was very much impressed by Bhagavan's sahanishta (constant abidance in the Self), which inspired him to experience the same. Nayana understood the disciple's aspiration.

Nayana, Daivarata and Amma travelled to Padai Veedu, which was a favourite place of tapas for Nayana. "Daivarata! We will do tapas at Mother Renuka's feet." Nayana told Daivarata.

"O Guru! I am blessed to have darshan of Sri Ramana, by your grace. Bless me that I may do tapas in your presence," said Daivarata. As if to indicate Renuka's pleasure at hearing those words, a flower from her feet dropped and the priest gave it to them.

A small hut was constructed and on the 9th day of the Bhadrapada month, the three of them began tapas. Daivarata was progressing at a fast rate. A strange, wonderful radiance was seen around him. Nayana noticed one day that when Daivarata was in deep samadhi some indistinct words were heard coming out of him. Nayana did not show much interest in them at first, but on the second day also some mantra sounds issued from Daivarata's mouth. Nayana was curious and so he went near Daivarata and carefully listened

to what the sounds were. They sounded like Vedic mantras. Nayana was surprised, praised Renuka Devi and came to understand that Renuka was Vedamata, Mother of the Veda. The total Shakti of the Vedamata was showering grace on Daivarata. To Nayana's eyes there appeared some message in the Mother's countenance and with his inner vision he understood Mother's message. He started to write a new Veda on the spot. He praised the Mother first:

वेदमाता भगवती शब्दब्रह्मात्मिका परा ।
तत्त्वं प्रबोधयत्वाशु लेखिनी ब्रह्मचोदिनी ॥

The Mother of the Vedas in the form of the 'Word' is inspiring me to write the Truth of Brahman. May She bless us to attain the Truth quickly!

Immediately Nayana started to write down what was issuing out of Daivarata. Let us hear from his own words how this yajna (Divine activity) was performed:

“Valuable words should be written down even if children utter them. Due to the great respect I have for the Vedas and my great love for my disciple, I have started to arrange the mantras issuing from Daivarata, knowing them as ‘Chando-Darsanam’.

“Some words were coming out fast and indistinct; some were incomplete. Ignoring the indistinct words, I picked up the distinct ones and wrote them down. With the intention that these mantras would benefit all people in general, the description of the gods in the mantras was put in an order. The mantras were divided into mantra suktas and anuvakas and a commentary was written by me for the whole work.

“Daivarata was only twenty-five years old at the time and did not have much scholarship in Sanskrit, though he practised yoga since his childhood. This discipline of yoga was useful in doing tapas and resulted into the work ‘Chando-Darsanam’. The mantras are similar to the mantras of the *Rig Veda*.

“I have great love for Daivarata. He is a yogi, tapasvi, knower of Truth and one who had darshan of Veda mantras. His behaviour, education, tapas and yoga reminds one of the rishis of yore. Hence I proclaim that he is a Brahmarshi,” wrote Nayana.

This great, auspicious work was started on the full moon of the month Kartikam and finished on the full moon of the month Magham. The composition “Chando-Darsanam” is considered as a new Veda. The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan has published it and an English translation has also been published. With great humility, Daivarata said that it was Nayana who made him pronounce these Veda mantras.

Nayana proclaimed his Guru Ramana as a Maharshi and has also declared his disciple Daivarata as Brahmarshi. We have heard of many who have eulogized their gurus, but we have not heard of anybody who eulogized his disciple like Nayana. This shows Nayana’s greatness.

वेदद्रष्टा स भगवान् ब्रह्मर्षिः ब्रह्मणस्पतिः ।
वाचं संचोदयत्वाशु वेदार्थस्य प्रकाशने ॥

May Bhagavan Brahmanaspati, who had grasped the Vedus, shine through my word to reveal the truth of the Vedus.

Chapter 6

THE POWER OF WEAPONS

अस्त्रं मम भवध्वंसाय रटतां ।

सुत्राम तरुणि श्री मातरसताम् ॥

O Mother Indrani! Sri Mata! Please shine as my weapon for the destruction of the evil doers. (Please become my weapon).

– Indrani Saptasati

Ours is the atomic age. The superpowers are thinking of storing atomic weapons in the sky and using them when necessity arises. Critics of these powers are challenging this proposal and talking of peace. “Space War,” “Sky War” are captions of some articles published in newspapers. The essential thing in these destructive weapons is power. As long as it rests in inanimate things, there is no danger of any sort. Hence our ancestors kept this power under check. Atomic power is not something unknown to them. They acquired power through tapas and used it for the good of the world. They had the power to destroy the whole world, but they made peace with nature and lived peacefully. This is one of the questions that Maharshi Valmiki, the author of *Ramayana* asked Narada Maharshi:

आत्मवान् को जितक्रोधो द्युतिमान् कोऽनसूयकः ।

कस्य विभ्यति देवाश्च जातरोषस्य संयुगे ॥

Who is the man who is self-controlled, has conquered anger, is radiant, is without jealousy, and is feared even by the gods when he gets angry in war?

This shows that conquering anger means to deploy anger with discrimination. When those lovers of peace show anger, it turns out for the good of the world. When Maharshi Viswamitra and Durvasa got angry, their curses and hard words always turned out to benefit humanity. When Sri Krishna got angry at Bhishma and took up his Chakra to kill him, his action exemplified his commitment to protect righteousness.

Nayana, who followed the path of these rishis, acquired weapons by tapas. His goal was to free the country from foreign rule and to restore Vedic culture to India. God blessed him with a great guru like Ramana Maharshi and through his blessings Nayana could bring out his Guru's teachings in the book *Sri Ramana Gita*. But can the society be uplifted easily when it is steeped in foolish orthodoxy, traditions and customs? Nayana in his own way used his weapons to destroy foolish orthodoxy. An example of how he did this happened in Sri Ramana's presence.

Palani Swami was a Malayalee who served Sri Ramana for a long time. He was a sannyasi and had little formal education. He started serving Sri Ramana when Ramana was still called Brahmana Swami. Palani was keen to understand the truth of the scriptures and used to bring some books from a library and read them with difficulty. Bhagavan understood his desire and used to take those books, read them and explain the contents to him. Bhagavan

used to say that it was only then that he was surprised to read and learn about how other people had also experienced the true nature of the Self.

Once in 1914, Seshadri Swami came to visit Sri Ramana on the hill and had a meal along with him. While eating, the food particles were strewn all around by Seshadri. Palani got angry at Seshadri Swami's method of eating and said, "If you are going to eat in this way, I will not give you food any more." Seshadri Swami did not seem to mind Palani's admonition, but he never again came for food.

After completing the new Veda in February 1918, Nayana came to Sri Ramana along with his wife. As soon as they entered Arunachalam, they went up the hill to Skandasramam where Ramana was staying. Nayana was talking with Sri Ramana about "Chando-Darsanam" well into the night. Everybody was intently listening to Nayana's narration and it became dark before anybody noticed. Nayana also did not notice the passage of time. But Sri Ramana realised that it was past the time they could go back to the town and told Palani that Amma and Nayana would spend the night at the Virupaksha cave and the cave should be cleaned and kept ready for them. When Bhagavan was staying in Skandasramam, Palani used to occupy Virupaksha cave. Now, he did not like at all that Nayana and Amma, who were householders, would stay in the cave, but he could not say no to Sri Ramana's request. So he slipped away to the town without giving Nayana the key to the cave.

After it became very dark, Amma and Nayana started to go down the hill to the cave accompanied by Sri Ramana.

When they arrived at the cave it was locked. For sometime they waited for Palani, but he did not come. Nayana sensed Palani's aversion to Nayana's occupying the cave. Palani's view was that householders should not stay in the place where sannyasis lived. Nayana felt sad at his foolishness and prayed to the Mother in the following verse:

अद्य क्रोधं विमोक्ष्यामि खाण्डवेऽग्निमिवार्जुनः ।
भुवने प्राणिभिः पूर्णे परितोऽपि च विस्तृते ॥

I am throwing this weapon of fire (anger) on this extensive world full of myriads of beings, like the fire that Arjuna threw on the forest of Khandava.

Nayana threw a small stone (pebble) at the lock on the cave. The lock broke open with a sound. Amma opened the door and went into the cave. The pebble that Nayana threw went on making a hole in the mountain. Nayana saw this and sitting on a stone started to pray.

सलिलं क्षिपतश्चापि धुन्वतश्चापि पर्वतान् ।
यथेन्द्रस्य तथेशस्य पुत्रस्य मम वैमहः ॥

Let my effulgence be fruitful like the effulgence of Indra which rains water or breaks the mountains, as I am the son of the Lord.

Within fifteen minutes, Arunachala was covered with dark clouds and torrential rain flooded the mountain. People in Arunachala were very much surprised at this sudden change of weather. Suddenly a big sound of a thunderbolt was heard. Nayana opened his eyes and saw his Guru in front of him radiating peace. Nayana then felt that his Guru

spoke as follows: “Nayana! Do not worry. The weapon that you have released will become the beacon light of Independence for India. It will be the inner strength of the protectors of Dharma and will be the starting point of human progress.”

दूरं याहि कुवाद धर्मवृष ते नेतः परं पंगुता
 दुभ्र्रांते भुवनं जहीहि परितो वर्धस्व संसत्सतां ।
 सोदर्येण समन्वितो भुवमिमां प्राप्तो गुरुग्रामणीः
 शूरान्तःपुरनेत्रविभ्रमहरो देवो भवानीसुतः ॥

O Perverted Logic! Go far away. O Bull of righteousness, you are not anymore lame. O Illusion of the false! Banish yourself from the world. O Wise men! May you prosper, because the Lord Kumaraswami who had destroyed the demon Sura has come down to the earth along with his brother.

Nayana had praised his Guru Ramana thus.

On the next day they heard that a lightning bolt destroyed the old chariot of the Arunachaleswara Temple. Nayana thanked Mother Uma, who gracefully averted the disaster of the destructive weapon that he threw at the world in anger.

Since Sri Ramana appeared to Nayana as a form of Kartikeya, Nayana depicted him as a manifestation of Kartikeya in many of his works. Once he asked Bhagavan whether it was proper for him to do so. Maharshi did not say anything. On the next day, Bhagavan showed to Nayana a Tamil verse in venba metre and told him that Eswara Swami wrote the verse in venba metre on Vinayaka and, at his request, Bhagavan also wrote one on Vinayaka in Tamil.

In that verse, Sri Ramana wrote that Ganapati was his brother and so he begged god Vinayaka to save him. Nayana read that verse and his eyes filled with tears at the love Bhagavan showed towards him. Nayana felt this was proof enough of his declaration that Bhagavan was a manifestation of Kumara Swami (Kartikeya).

Chapter 7

ALAGAMMA'S DEMISE

*'Alagu Sundarampol agamum niyumur
trabhinna yiruppom Arunachala'*

– *"Aksharamanamalai"*

O Arunachala! Like Alagu and Sundaram, let us be inseparable.

Shakti and Siva are One, inseparable. Their bodies are a form of play. Shakti denotes the female and Siva denotes the male aspects. Sadhakas can perceive their unity. Ramana Maharshi sung of these two aspect of the Divine in his "Aksharamanamalai". He describes the oneness of Siva and Shakti as the oneness of his own father and mother Sundaram and Alagamma. Their union was ideal as is evident in their being the parents of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Their names also have the same meaning – beauty. Maharshi lost his father early in his life, but he had the good fortune to serve his mother until her end and thus redeem the debt of a son to his parents.

Due to circumstances and old age, Alagamma came to live with Sri Ramana in 1916. At first she was doubtful whether the son, who was an ascetic without a house, would be considerate towards her. She also thought that Sri Ramana's disciples might not agree to her living with her

son. And they did actually object, at which point, Ramana stood up, went over to Alagamma, took her by the hand and said, "Mother let us go. We can find a place somewhere else to live." At that point, in unison, all the disciples begged him and Mother to stay.

In those days, the offerings that his disciples collected and those that people brought to Ramana were sufficient to feed everyone in the Ashram, and there was no need of any cooking.

Not long after the death of his wife, Nagasundaram, Ramana's younger brother, also came to Arunachala to stay at Bhagavan's feet. He took sannyas and became Niranjanananda Swami. As Virupaksha Cave had become too small, all of them moved to Skandasramam and the Mother then started cooking for all of them.

The equality shown by Bhagavan cannot be described in words. All creatures, animals, birds and humans were equal in his vision. As Alagamma was used to traditional customs, she could not give some of them up easily. She would be particular about purity of body and dress and would not eat certain food items like onions. She could not give up her attachment to Bhagavan as her son. But she was by nature a simple woman and a sincere devotee. She used to sing many devotional songs that were full of deep philosophic content. Some of these songs used descriptions of different food preparations in an allegorical sense, to set forth Vedantic teachings in common household language.

Sri Ramana wanted his mother to go beyond all physical and mental bondage. For that purpose he trained her in

various ways to break through her extreme orthodoxy. "Amma! Somebody touched your saree." "Alas! There is nothing to eat except onions today." "This vessel was touched by someone. What will you do?" Bhagavan used to tease her with such comments. Gradually Alagamma was made to understand the uselessness of many of these small orthodox customs. She had great faith that Ramana was a Divine soul and now and then she had had visions of him in Divine forms. Once he was seen by her as a great light and another time as god wearing serpents as jewels.

Under the guidance of her son, Alagamma's vasanas were gradually weakened. She wore an ochre-coloured sari and served food to all the people who came to see Sri Ramana.

In 1922, her health began to deteriorate and Sri Ramana served her during her last days. On 19-5-1922 it looked as if her end was near. It was the ninth day of the dark half of Vaisakha month. Alagamma's breathing became shallow and the Maharshi placed his right hand on her heart, left hand on the top of her head and sat by her side looking at her with full attention. Describing what happened next, he later said:

"The latent desires and the remnants of the previous birth's tendencies were rising up furiously. Consciousness of the external world subsided. So the subtle body started seeing in the subtle worlds scene after scene." The Maharshi subdued these tendencies by his touch until they subsided completely in the heart at 8 p.m., when she attained liberation. Nayana and Niranjanananda were among those who sat with her until the end and heard the last sound of death, which sounded like a metallic thud.

Thus Mother Alagamma attained liberation by the special grace of her son. When someone said casually, “Amma has gone,” Bhagavan corrected him saying, “No, Amma has merged, she has become One.”

Now the question arose of how to dispose of the body – cremation or samadhi (burial)? In the 12th Chapter of the *Ramana Gita*, there is the answer to this question: “To a woman who is Liberated after her death, only samadhi is prescribed, not cremation.” So Ganapati Muni suggested only samadhi should be performed. Everybody agreed and the body was buried under the shade of an Aswatha tree near Palithirtham.

On the Maha Puja day, Nayana composed six verses on the Mother and titled it “Soundaryamba Shatkam”:

दुंदुभिवर्षे वृषषष्ठदिने माधवकृष्णदलीय नवम्यां ।
भागवत्वासरनिशि शततारा संयुक्तायां प्रथमे यामे ॥

In the year Dundubhi, in the month of Vrishabha, on the sixth day of the dark half of Vaisakha, on Friday night, with the star Satabhisha in the sky, during the first three hours of the night,

भारद्वाजी पाराशर्यं श्रेष्ठकुलोद्भवसुंदरपत्नी ।
गुरुगुह भागजरमणमहर्षेर्माता पूता चारित्रेण ॥

Born in the gotra of Bharadwaja and wife of Sundara, who was of the gotra of Parasara, mother of Sri Ramana Maharshi, who was born as a manifestation of Sri Guruguha and a pure soul,

त्याजितमानससङ्गा हंसी शिवपदभक्तिक्षालितापंका ।
गुहकरशक्त्या रुद्धप्राणा तत्क्षण धूतसमस्त विकल्पा ॥

A Hamsi who has no attachment, she, who has washed away all her sins through devotion to Lord Siva's feet, having her life breath controlled by the power of the hand of Sri Guha, and instantly having her vikalpas extinguished,

निगमांतवतो वेदं ज्योतिः सर्वजगत्सु व्याप्तं ज्योतिः ।
सुतगुहदृष्ट्या व्यक्तं ज्योतिः सौंदर्याबा समभूज्ज्योतिः ॥

That Saundaryamba has become the light, which is known by the declarations of Vedanta, which pervades all the worlds and which became enlightened by the son who is Kumara Swami himself.

रमणमहर्षेः करसरसिजद्वयमकरंदस्फुटधारेव ।
अत्र समाधौ सौंदर्याबादेव्यास्तीर्थं नवमघशमनम् ॥

May the holy water of the samadhi of Saundaryamba become the Remover of Sins (अघशमन), like the honey born out of the lotus hands of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

जयतु महर्षेर्माता पूता जयतु समाधिः कोऽपि तदीयः ।
जयतु महर्षिस्थापितलिङ्गं जयतु च तीर्थं नवमघशमनं ॥

*Glory be to the mother, pure, of Sri Ramana Maharshi!
Glory be to her samadhi! Glory be to the lingam installed by the Maharshi! Glory be to the holy water of the new thirtham, Aghamarshana!*

Sri Ramana installed the lingam on Mother's samadhi while Nayana was chanting Veda mantras. Nayana's wish was that a Vedic university should rise in that holy place, but Swami Niranjanananda wanted a temple to be built on the samadhi of the Mother. Niranjanananda's initial attempts

to this end were not very fruitful. Frustrated, he went to Bhagavan one day and told him, "I want a temple to be constructed on Mother's samadhi, but all my efforts so far are not bearing any fruit." The Maharshi told him, "Go and consult Nayana on this matter. With his cooperation you will succeed." Niranjanananda consulted Nayana, who was very pleased with Bhagavan's comment regarding himself and told Niranjanananda, "If Bhagavan says so, let it be." Although it took ten long years of construction. the temple of Matrubhuteswara rose up in all glory.

The Maharshi, in an unanticipated manner, made Nayana's desire also fruitful. One day Bhagavan came to visit the Mother's samadhi and never went back. He said that some force had brought him there and did not let him depart. Afterwards, it became known as Sri Ramanasramam. As the Vedic knowledge (Sri Ramana) itself resided there, naturally it became a world famous centre of knowledge of all Vedas.

Chapter 8

KAPALA BHEDANAM

आत्मस्थस्य सहस्रारं शुद्धं ज्योतिर्मयं भवेत् ।
तत्र जीवेन्न संकल्पो यदि सान्निध्यतः पतेत् ॥

*The Sahasrara of one who has realized the Self is pure light.
Any intention which falls in it casually will not live because of
the Knowledge of Self.*

– Sri Ramana Gita

The Shakti which is the cause of creation is Parameswari. This Shakti moves about in all creatures. The Shakti in the body is called Kundalini. It starts in the basic Muladhara Chakra, rises to the heart centre and reaches the head and pervades the whole being (body). This is the cause of all movements in all creatures. It works as ignorance in those who think they are the bodies. In those Jnanis, who are devoid of any desire, it is pure Kundalini Shakti. It shines in the heart centre as 'I' and mingles with Sat and as a result the yogi becomes steady in the Atma. During tapas, yogis get these darshanas. This is called Kundalini Vidya.

The truth of this Vidya can be seen in the Renuka-Jamadagni story. Obeying the order of the father, the son Parasurama cuts off the head of the Mother Renuka. This action, when viewed casually, is suprising and appears very

cruel. But the seekers of truth give an explanation considering this act as a part of Kundalini Vidya.

व्यापोह्य शीर्ष कपाले (splitting of the skull) is a pronouncement in *Taittiriya Upanishad*. When we study this anuvaka, we understand that when the yogi raises the Kundalini Shakti to the head, it breaks open the cranium and along with the Shakti outside the body, Kundalini moves in and out of the body. And, the state of this yogi is described like this:

“He himself gets independent sovereignty; he attains the Lord of the mind; he becomes ruler of the speech, the ruler of the eyes; the ruler of the ears; and the ruler of knowledge. Over and above all, he becomes Brahman, which is embodied in Akasa, identified with the gross and subtle and has Truth as its real nature. It is revealed in life by those whose mind possesses immortal Bliss.”

Taking these words in good faith, with the hope that if the prana leaves the body through the head, they can attain Liberation, certain ascetics have their heads broken by a coconut at the time of their death. It has become a custom with some ascetics. If we look into history, we may find that certain yogis had attained Kapala Bhedana Siddhi, but there is none who lived after attaining that siddhi.

In the story of Parasurama, he cuts off the head of the mother which means that he had his mind broken in the head and the Shakti in him started going in and out of the body after mingling with the Shakti outside the body. At such a time, Nayana says, the yogi's body becomes like a very powerful electric motor.

In *Uma Sahasram*, Nayana wrote:

अवतरणं ध्यातं चेदारोहण मद्भुतं भवेच्छक्तेः ।
यस्मिन्निदं शरीरं भवति महावैद्युताग्रियन्त्रमिव ॥

In him, who knows by experience the descent of Shakti from the sky through the head into the body, the Shakti rises from the Muladhara with terrific speed. When it rises surprisingly like this, this body becomes a veritable powerful electric motor.

If we analyse this sloka, we come to understand that this Kapala Bhedana process is itself being described as cutting off of Renuka's head. Actually, it was by the Mother Renuka's grace that this siddhi of Kapala Bheda was given to her son Parasurama. Bhagavan says 'Chit' is 'Jnana'. The cutting off of ignorance itself is cutting off of the head. Probably this is the cause of Asiramma (Headless Mother) being worshipped by the people.

After Parasurama, Nayana is the only one in the modern times known to have got this Kapala Bhedana Siddhi. From the time of the darshan of Renuka in Padai Veedu, Nayana had the experience of the movement of Shakti in him as he described in certain slokas of *Uma Sahasram*. He described the existence of Jada and Atma Chaitanyas separately in him.

कापि मोदलहरी तव वीचिर्निर्गता दशशतारसुधाब्धेः ।
पूरयत्यखिलमम्ब शरीरं नेह वेद्मि परमे जडभागम् ॥

O Mother Divine! Thy Divine blissful wave rising from the milky ocean of Sahasrara is filling up my whole body with the Shakti of the Self. I do not have consciousness of any dull part in my body.

सेयमुत्तमतमानिपतंती शीतलात् दशशतारपयोदात् ।
 प्रेरितादखिल राज्ञि भव्यताबुद्धिसस्यमवतात् रसवृष्टिः ॥

O Queen of Everything! The glorious shower of rasa (sentiment) that I am experiencing now is directed by Thee and is flowing from the cloud of Sahasrara downwards. May this rain of rasa protect the crop of knowledge.

This grand secret of yoga is impossible to be articulated by an inexperienced soul. Nayana had this great experience in Arunachala. He was residing, along with his wife, in the mango-cave on Arunachala at that time. He was most of the time in meditation. The flow of Shakti was gradually increasing and on 20-08-1922, it gave rise to Kapala Bhedana Siddhi. Nayana wrote a letter about this experience to his uncle Prakasa Sastry:

Great good News: Kapala Moksham

Tiruvannamalai

Tuesday, 22-08-1922

O Uncle!

Your letter to hand. Starting from 3 p.m. till night, Kundalini Shakti rose up powerfully filling the Sahasrara which merged me in an ocean of electric power. I did not know what to do. I was not sure that the body would withstand this Shakti. I had not even the strength to speak. At 8 p.m. I was in the cave. The two parts of the cranium got loosened and because of the heat, separated a little. It may be called broken also. This is Kapala Moksha. This is a sort of breaking the knot loose. I think this is the idea of Chchinna Masta. After that, this Shakti flowed out like

gas from the head to the outside for three minutes. Then I became all right. Now, the electric power (Shakti) is freely going out and coming in. A hand put on the head without touching it feels the power-like gas flowing. That means the bodily electricity has mingled with nature's electricity.

Nayana

While Nayana was having this experience, his family was with him. They saw a light coming out of the top of his head, forming a round circle of light on the roof of the cave and filling up the whole cave with glow. They were somewhat afraid and went to Skandashramam and told Bhagavan about the strange light. Bhagavan came and applied castor oil on Nayana's head and cooled it. The next day, Bhagavan got a pair of wooden sandals for Nayana and told him never to touch the ground without them. Nayana took the sandals from Bhagavan and told Bhagavan that he was receiving Paduka Diksha (initiation through sandals) from Bhagavan.

तव च्छिन्नं शीर्षं विदुरखिलधात्र्यागमविदो
 मनुष्याणां मस्ते बहुलतपसा यद्विदलिते ।
 सुषुम्नायां नाड्यां तनुकरणसम्पर्करहिता
 बहिःशक्त्या युक्ता विगतचिरनिद्रा विलससि ॥7-27-21

O Mother of the Universe! When with great strength born out of tapas, man (yogi)'s head is broken into two, a great Shakti rises in the central Sushumna Nadi detaching itself from the body and senses and joins the Shakti in the cosmos. Thou art called the Kundalini Shakti which has awakened from sleep. Hence the tantrics who know the scriptures call you Shakti without a head (Chchinna masta). — Uma Sahasram

Chapter 9

THE NECTARINE CLOUD INDRANI

रक्षितुं भरतविषयं शक्तमिन्द्रहृदयसखी ।

चंद्रबिबरुचिरमुखी सा क्रियात् भुवि गणपतिम् ॥

May the moon-faced consort of Indra make Ganapati able to save his mother land.

– Indrani Saptasati

After the Kapala moksha siddhi, Ganapati had all the other siddhis in his possession. Many people used to come to visit Nayana. As the cave of the mango-tree was very small, a platform was constructed outside the cave and a thatched roof provided over it. As Nayana wanted to be near Bhagavan, he did not want to leave that cave. He lived there from 1917-1926. The family also stayed with Nayana. Mahadeva was accommodated in Appu Sastry's house for studies. He used to visit his parents during holidays. As the daughter Vajreswari was married, she used to visit her parents often. Mahadeva also got married in 1918.

After Kapala Moksha, Nayana's constitution changed. When any metal touched his body, the metal would become yellow like gold. So, he stopped touching any metal. He had to wear wooden sandals always. He had to sit on a wooden table. His previous habit was to eat food in a metal plate and wash his hands in the plate. Now he changed the

metal plate for a leaf-plate. One day, when he was sitting beside Bhagavan for meals, due to habit, he washed his hand on the leaf. The water flowed under the leaves of other guests. Everyone was stunned as people should not eat on a plate when someone else's food or water touched their plate. Bhagavan understood the predicament of the guests and said, "It is Ganapati's prasada, eat," removing their embarrassment.

Sri B. S. Rama Rao, who worked for the Chandamama Press in Madras, heard of Nayana's Siddhi of turning metal into gold. He wrote about his experience: "When I was studying in the intermediate class, Nayana's lecture was arranged at a place in Madras. I knew that Nayana had Swarna-siddhi. I put a two-anna coin under the blanket that was spread for Nayana to sit on. Nayana came, sat on the blanket, shot up like one who had an electric shock and removed the blanket. He saw the two-anna coin and threw it away. I immediately took it up and saw that the coin had changed to a yellow colour. Till recently I kept the coin with me and showed it to many people."

Whenever Nayana came out of the cave, a small drizzle would fall on him. He used to consider it as the grace of the gods. Mother Indrani used to rain ambrosial grace on Nayana often. Indrani is the consort of Lord Indra. Nayana was a poet who did not seek any reward. She is moreover Vajravairochani (effluent like a diamond). Nayana would never leave her. Nayana thought that the Shakti that was being showered on him was so great that if it was given to the residents of this earth, India would be resplendent with prosperity. There would be overwhelming strength in the arms of freedom-fighters.

Nayana prayed to the Mother: "O Mother! What can I offer you in return for the infinite grace you are showering on me? I shall compose a garland of flowers with slokas to decorate you. Please accept them and, as a sign, show me your strength and beauty through these slokas of your praise, and may they gladden the hearts of those who read them."

Thus humbly offering this prayer, he started to compose slokas on Indrani. Every day after he composed slokas and read them out, there would be a small cloud in the sky and a ray of lightning would appear, as if Mother had smiled on hearing the slokas. Nayana would exclaim, "There! Mother has approved!" Thus Nayana composed many slokas. Usually a composition of this type would have the flavour of Bhakti. But Nayana's slokas described also the present inglorious condition of the country, the cause for it and the remedy.

अगति मवीर्यादपगत धैर्या ।
अवतु शची मे जनिभुवमार्याम् ॥

*With no progress and virility, my country lost all courage.
May Mother save my mother land!*

भिन्नां संघसहस्रैर्खिन्नां शत्रुभरेण ।
पातुं भारतभूमिं मातर्देहि बलं नः ॥

O Mother! Give us strength to save our mother land, who is very much distressed due to oppression of her enemies, and divided into thousands of cults.

अध्वनो गलितचरणा मध्वरक्षिति मविभवां ।
आददातु पथि विमले वैभवे च हरितरुणी ॥

Having slipped in her path and losing all glory, stands this country of sacrifices. May Indrani restore her lost stability and glory!

छिन्नां भिन्नां सुतरां सन्ना मन्नाभावा दभितः खिन्नां ।
एतां पातुं भरतक्षोर्णी जाये जिष्णोः कुरुमां शक्तम् ॥

O Mother! Being mutilated, deteriorating and very much distressed due to lack of food, is this land of Bharat. May you bestow strength on me to save this country!

There are causes analyzed and remedies suggested for this dire state of his country. Nayana wrote some slokas infusing strength into the leaders of the freedom movement.

जगतां चक्रवर्तिन्यसितकटाक्षः जलदः
भक्तिभाजां शिखिनां नर्तनाय ।
सुकृती कोऽपि नाटचे बहुले तत्र मातः
जगतीसारभूतानुपदेशान्करोति ॥

O Queen of the worlds! Your look of black colour is becoming a black cloud for the peacocks (of devotees) to dance. In such various dances of yours, a holy man (Sri Ramana) is teaching the essence of knowledge. Please shower your grace on him.

अपरो नव्यकाव्या न्यनवद्यानि धन्यः ।
विदधात्यप्रयत्नाद्बुधभोगक्षमाणि ॥

Another blessed one (Ganapati Muni) is creating irreproachable new poetic works of import for the enjoyment of the wise. Please give them your help.

इतरो भाग्यशाली रमणीयैः प्रसंगैः ।
वितनोति स्वजातिं जगति श्रेष्ठनीतिम् ॥

Another fortunate one is awakening his race with teachings in mellifluous speeches. Be merciful to them. (This suggests Colonel Olcott of Theosophical Society of Madras).

जगतां मातरेको महसा पुण्यशाली ।
विधुतारि स्वदेशं कुरुते वीतपाशम् ॥

O Mother of the worlds! Another holy man is redeeming his country from the slavery of enemies (Gandhiji). Please bestow strength on him.

पर इंद्राणि साधुर्बत विस्मृतविश्वः ।
रमते सिक्तगंडः प्रमदाश्रुप्रतानैः ॥

O Indrani! Another ascetic (Aurobindo) is playing with tears of joy forgetting the world. Please protect him.

Thus he composed 700 slokas and compiled them into "Indrani Saptasati". They are grouped into a hundred slokas. In every hundred slokas, there are four groups of twenty-five slokas each. In every twenty-five slokas, the second and twenty fourth slokas are of a patriotic nature. The slokas of the first hundred have twelve letters to each line and the second hundred have fourteen, and thus they go on in arithmetical progression, ending with twenty-four letters in the last hundred slokas.

Chapter 10

THE CALL OF POLITICS

न मम परमे मुक्तावाशा न वा विभवाष्टके
न च गजघटापूर्णायां वा महेश्वरि सम्पदि ।
न च मधुमुचां वाचां सर्गे निरर्गळवैभवे
मुनिभुवि कुतो जातः सोऽहं तदेव समीर्यताम् ॥

9-34-19

O Mother! I have no desire for Liberation. Neither have I any desire for the eight prosperities. The sweet poetic flow that issues out of me also does not satisfy me. Mine is only one question: for what purpose am I born in this world? Please inform me of this purpose and get things done by me.

– Uma Sahasram

In the political field of those days, the main social issues were untouchability and freedom of woman. For a scriptural solution for these problems the National leaders called scholars, religious pontiffs and sadhus to give their considered opinion. Because of the faith people had in their religious customs, these issues became a big problem. The caste system and other customs were also derided by some groups. There were endless arguments produced by both sides, for and against these customs, and so the solution was elusive. Reformists and orthodox parties tried their best

to oppose each other's opinions. These political clouds darkened the Arunachala sky also.

In 1916, Sri Bayya Narasimham presided over the state congress committee of Madras. Again in 1923, a committee held a conference and invited Nayana to speak. He attended both the conferences. Nayana spoke of the freedom that women enjoyed in Vedic times. As a result of this speech, he became a member of the Congress party. In 1924, the All India Congress Committee met in Tiruvannamalai. Mahatma Gandhi, Malaviya, Annie Besant and other leaders attended the meeting. Nayana gave the inaugural speech and it influenced many leaders. In December of the same year, there was a conference in Belgaum, under Gandhiji's leadership. Gandhiji proposed that Hindi should become the National language. Nayana opposed the idea. He argued that the Hindu culture is based on Sanskrit and the culture can prosper only when Sanskrit is sponsored. Otherwise, he said, the country would degenerate. Gandhiji opined that Sanskrit was limited to only one section of the population and so will not be acceptable to all. Immediately, Nayana promptly countered saying that Sanskrit was the oldest language which was used in all sections of Indian Society. In the end, Nayana's argument was overridden. But this meeting helped Nayana to create 'Laali Bhasha' (Easy Sanskrit).

Nayana did not speak against the caste system of the Hindus. Historically, caste is not the outcome of birth, avocation or status of a person. It is decided by the quality of a person. When sattva is dominant in a man, rajas is less and tamas has a nominal influence on him, that man is

considered a Brahmin. Brahmins are always steady in the thought of God and are able to lead the society in spirituality. The power of the Kshatriyas (caste) can be seen in the leaders. They possess valour, rebellious temperament and egotism to a greater or smaller degree. They have more rajo guna and less sattva and tamo guna. Those who have more of tamo guna and less of rajo guna and sattva guna are called 'Vaisyas'. Those who have tamo guna more or completely are called Sudras. In Hinduism, there are no actual barriers making these castes separate from one another. The society gives respect to them as per their mental development and behaviour. This used to be the Vedic culture. Nayana was bound to only this culture.

In 1927, the National Congress held many meetings in Hyderabad, Machilipatnam and other places to sort out the problem of untouchability. Nayana participated in those meetings. On 25-02-1927, there was a meeting held in Sri Madapati Hanumantha Rao's house. The conversations held at that meeting took the form of questions from a variety of people, while Nayana gave the answers.

Q: What are the common values of Hindus?

A: Faith in Vedas. To give equal rights to all. Unless these two are guaranteed, people will not have proper faith. The Hindus must accept the Vedas just as Christians accept the Bible.

Q: This is an ideal. All are called Hindus. Who are Hindus actually?

A: Those who believe in the system of the four castes are Hindus. Even an agnostic is a Hindu if he accepts the

standard of Vedas. For example, the Sankhyas do not believe in God. But they accept the Vedas and hence they are Hindus.

Q: How should Vedas be propagated?

A: The important portions of Vedas should be translated into national languages.

Q: Are the Buddhists Hindus?

A: No. Buddhists, Jains and Brahma Samajists do not accept the Vedas and hence they are not Hindus. Arya Samajists are Hindus.

Q: Must caste differences exist?

A: Everyone should become a Brahmin. Till then, the inner differences inside the castes must be removed. There should not be grades of merit inside a caste. The unity of customs alone brings about Brahminhood. Customs started by those who have realized God have to be accepted as authoritative. Equality means that the customs like upanayana have to be common to all. Inequality in other things, like customs, have to be removed. Because there is a difference between a vegetarian and non-vegetarian, inequalities cannot be removed in the food habits.

Q: Can others be admitted into Hindu religion? What would be the caste of such people?

A: If one has been converted to another religion from Hindu religion, they can be converted back to Hinduism. They will be of the same caste from which they had been converted. Such people can be called 'Aviseshas'.

Q: Are castes good?

A: If there is discrimination, it is certainly bad.

Q: Can Smritis be written afresh now?

A: They can be.

Q: How can they be exercised?

A: There must be a Council of Pundits. They have to ordain the rules.

Q: How should the untouchables be treated?

A: They can be treated as Sudras.

Q: What is the use of social reformation?

A: The social reformers might teach freedom. But they cannot bring about right attitudes. They are trying to remove the defects in the society, like the defects in marriage, for example.

Q: Can the four Ashrama idea be revived?

A: They must be in accord with the present conditions. In the Gurukula system, the present hostel type of accommodation can be arranged. Women also may have Gurukulas. Women also can be invested with the sacred thread (upanayana). In Rig Vedic times, women used to have the ceremony of Mounji Bandhan (tying a cord around the girdle). Women must have upanayanam done before puberty. Women can also be Vanaprasthas.

Q: How to solve the problem of Brahmins and non-Brahmins?

A: By giving the right to study Vedas to all.

Q: In certain Smritis, Sudras are barred from access to the Vedas. How do you reconcile this?

A: They are temporary injunctions. When such things are written on the basis of jealousy, they are not to be taken as the standard. Smritis which go against the Vedas

need not be taken as standards. The Sutras which are written denying access to the Vedas are hatred oriented. They are against Vedic pronouncements and so need not be taken as the standard.

Q: What is the difference between Sudras and the untouchables?

A: Very little. The eating plates are kept separate.

Q: Are the panchamas degenerated Aryans?

A: No, they were aboriginal tribes. Not degenerated Aryans.

Q: Is inter-dining permitted between the Aryans and Panchamas?

A: There is no scriptural objection. There is only a custom of objection to inter-dining. This custom is very strict in the Southerners. Because they were tantrics, there is a lot of protection from evil sights. In the scriptures, Inter-dining is permitted in the first three castes. Sudras are not to be fed in the same line as the other three castes.

Q: Who are Mlechchas?

A: He who speaks unspeakable things is a Mlechcha, but none else.

Q: Are marriages after puberty prescribed by Sastras?

A: Yes. But the maid who is married after puberty is not impure. There is a purificatory ceremony prescribed for such a woman. Child marriages are not bad. But consummation must be performed only later.

Q: Can women be celebates?

A: Yes.

Q: Why should not marriages be performed in the Western method?

A: The customs are different in different countries. Those in our country who got married in the Gandharva method went mostly into the Purda system. In our country and countries like Arabia, due to the hot climate, emotions rise up quickly. It is not like that in cold countries like England. Customs of one country do not suit other countries.

Q: What is the goal of Hindus?

A: The goal is that everybody should study Vedas and wear the sacred thread.

Q: What is your opinion about 'Age Consent'?

A: I am neutral in that controversy.

Q: Is unity of all religions possible?

A: It is not possible. But if the social customs are deleted from Hinduism, the Vedic religion alone can bring about unity in the world.

Q: May women remarry?

A: They may. There is a scriptural sanction for that. There are instances quoted in the Puranas and Yayati's story also is an example of it.

Q: How to preach devotion and idol worship to lay people?

A: The radiance in the sun, fire on the earth, and Rudra in the sky have to be worshipped. The worship of the sun is good to both the scholar and the layman.

On that evening at 5 p.m. more than two hundred Hindus placed Nayana in a palanquin, took him in a procession and gave him the title of 'Muni'. The Andhra Samvardhini Grandhalaya, Secunderabad also felicitated Nayana.

Nayana had to face much antagonistic criticism because of his social and political views. Some followed him and some rejected him. But nobody had the courage to face him and argue.

Lastly, Nayana wrote a few books, like, *The Constitution*, *Panchama Mimamsa* and *Panchajana Charcha* and then retired from politics.

Chapter 11

A GRAND PERSONALITY

परिपाकेन काले स्युः सिद्धयस्तान् तपस्यतः ।
प्रारब्धं यदि ताभिः स्याद्विहारो ज्ञानिनोऽपि च ॥

By such ripeness siddhis may in course of time come to the seer and, if prarabdha lies that way, even a jnani may sport such powers.

— Sri Ramana Gita

Many people used to ask Sri Ramana about siddhis. His answers used to be like this:

Devotee: For spiritual progress, are not siddhis like the disappearance of the body necessary?

Maharshi: What do you mean by that? Are you the body?

Devotee: No. But in spiritual progress bodily changes occur. Do they not?

Maharshi: What sort of changes are you expecting? What for?

Devotee: Is not disappearance of body a sign of progress?

Maharshi: So, then, those who speak and write and are visible are ignorant in your opinion?

Devotee: Not like that. The Maharshis like Vasishtha and Valmiki had such powers, I think.

Maharshi: That was their prarabdha. Due to prarabdha, they must have acquired siddhis and also jnana. Why are

you craving for such siddhis which are obstacles to jnana? Does a Jnani think that his gross body is an obstacle?

Siddhi means achievement. It is not proper to associate it with the mystic powers. Nayana who possessed those siddhis after Kapala Moksha was averse to exhibit them. But the world does not leave such people alone.

Nayana attended the political meeting held at Vijayawada in December 1925. He spoke on the existing social evils and methods to remedy them. The orthodox people resented Nayana's modern attitude. But, the youth were inspired by his speeches. A student called Cheruvu Ramakrishnayya was one such youth. One day he invited Nayana to his house for food. The father of the youth was quite an orthodox person. He used to perform offerings to the fire daily. He knew that Nayana did not observe orthodox customs and so he asked his son to make Nayana sit in the backyard of the house till the offerings to the fire were over. The son was embarrassed, but Nayana told him not to worry and obey the father as he was the master of the house. Nayana asked for a newspaper and sat on a chair provided and started reading the paper.

During the worship of fire the custom is for the wife to bring hot coals to start the fire worship. Ramakrishna's mother went into the backyard, made coals hot and while bringing them in a pan looked at Nayana. To her great surprise, Nayana appeared to her like the god Ganapati with the regular face of an elephant sitting on the chair. She ran into the house and told her husband, "What are we doing here? While god Ganapati is sitting in our backyard, we are

worshipping him in the house. O come and see!" She brought her husband and showed him Nayana who was looking like Ganapati. The old man also was very surprised and apologized to Nayana for his behaviour and brought him into the house. Nayana himself chanted the mantras and finished the ceremony.

The devotees who came to see Bhagavan used to visit Nayana regularly. Once a devotee went to Bhagavan and asked for permission to put the caste marks of the Vaishnavas on Bhagavan's forehead, as he wished to see Bhagavan as a Vaishnava saint. Bhagavan laughed and told him to go and paint Nayana who was in the mango-cave. There was a mystic meaning in this suggestion. Ganapati was a manifestation of god Vishnu and it was proper to decorate Nayana with the emblem of the Vaishnavas. The devotee went to the mango-cave and saw that Nayana was in deep meditation. The devotee very silently decorated Nayana and had his desire fulfilled without Nayana being conscious of the fact. When Nayana and Bhagavan were having lunch together, Bhagavan laughed and asked, "Nayana! What is that on your forehead?" A devotee brought a mirror and showed him the marks of Vaishnavism on his face. Nayana laughed and looking at Bhagavan found that Bhagavan was wearing the Saiva vibhuti marks on his forehead. So he said, "What is on your face is the same as that which is here!" and everybody enjoyed the joke.

About this time, Mahadeva was married and the bride was brought home. Nayana arranged to rent a house in the town and the family was shifted there.

Nayana started to write a novel in Sanskrit, depicting the existing social life. He wanted to make it a historical novel with exposing the bias on the freedom and rights of women in social and family life. Nayana had a plan in his mind to write the novel both in Sanskrit and Telugu languages. The novel was named 'Poorna' with about 200 chapters and the scene was set in the period of Andhra Maha Vishnu, the founder of Andhra Desa. The characters and story were all planned systematically. But not on paper. As Bhagavan said, everything was planned in his brain, not on paper. Nayana used to narrate part of the story he planned to the disciples who used to gather round him in the evening. The venue of the narration was Arunachala Temple.

In 1926, Nayana's daughter Vajreswari was brought for delivery to the parent's house. She completed seven months of pregnancy. One day she had a stomachache and also diarrhoea. She was unable to bear the strain. A native doctor was called. He gave medicine and asked a particular type of plantain fruit to be given to her. Unfortunately that particular fruit was not available in that season. Nayana could do nothing and sat along with his son in the temple and started the narration of his story. A fruit vendor approached them with the particular plantains in his baskets and asked, "Are you Ganapati Sastry? I was asked to give you these plantains." He gave a few plantains to Nayana and disappeared into the temple. Nayana immediately told Mahadeva to run after and find out who he was, but the man was too quick for Mahadeva. Nayana said, "He is none other than Aruanchala" and bowed to Lord Siva.

Chapter 12

DEMISE OF VISALAKSHI AMMA

स्वरूपे वर्तमानानां पक्कानां योषितामपि ।
निवृत्तत्वा त्रिषेधस्य हंसीत्वं नैव दुष्यति ॥

Since there is no such prohibition in the sastra, there is nothing wrong in fully ripe women abiding in the Self and becoming ascetics.

– Sri Ramana Gita

Bhagavan was staying in the Virupaksha cave in those days. Once there was a reference to “Sankara Vijayam” of Sri Vidyananya Swami. Bhagavan said, “Because Sri Vidyananya was a worshipper of Sri Vidya, he wanted to build a town in the shape of Sri Charka.” Immediately, Nayana said that in “Arunashtakam” of Sankara, there was a reference to Arunachala as “Sri Chakrakriti Sonasailavapusham Sri Shodasaratmakam”. Also, in the *Arunachalapuranam*, it is said that this hill is in the shape of Sri Chakra. Hence we got a place, unasked for, in the shape of Sri Chakra. Bhagavan is the Emperor. If ten houses are built around the hill, it will become a great Kingdom. Vidyananya must have meant only this. Here is the Army Chief, and here is the exchequer. After saying this, Nayana arranged everything in a trice. It is well known that Sri Chakra has a special place in spiritual matters!

Visalakshi Amma was a great soul who worshipped Sri Chakra regularly. Visalakshi and Ganapati Muni were a holy couple like Vasishtha and Arundhati. Like the great poet Jayadeva and his wife, Nayana and Visalakshi were an ideal couple. When a couple are dedicated to each other, Grihas-tashrama can become the best ashrama. Even a tapasvi like Nayana became despondent when Visalakshi once went to attend to her children's needs and said, "Without you, my tapas has become a cry in the wilderness." The love of a dedicated couple is divine. The atmosphere of a rishi's ashram would remind us of such a love.

In 1922, Bhagavan came down from Skandasramam and settled at his mother's samadhi. Consequently a hut was constructed for the convenience of the devotees. Gradually that place turned out to be the present Ramanasramam. Visalakshi Amma seems to have requested Bhagavan to get a temple with Sri Chakra constructed in the ashram. Bhagavan valued her word and took great care to get Sri Chakra installed during the construction of the temple over Mother's samadhi. Most probably this was the Sri Chakrapuram of Nayana's description.

Usually every woman desires worldly prosperity, like a house, a good husband, children, money, etc. She would not like to live in caves and forests. But, contrary to this, Visalakshi Amma desired to be with her husband in caves. She did tapas along with Nayana.

As soon as she set foot in Arunachala, Bhagavan said, "Amma has come." From that day she was Amma to everybody. Nayana's disciples were considered as her

children. She used to cook food for all of them. One day on a Vinayaka festival she cooked a type of rice balls called Modakas. Usually a very big ball in the shape of Ganapati will be prepared and set aside to be given to the washerman. The usual idea is that one who eats it does not study well. Visalakshi served that Modaka to Nayana on that day. A disciple objected to this. Then Amma said, "O, Let him eat it. We have already too much of learning here!" All present laughed at her joke.

She wanted women not to be like frogs in a well. They should have the right to perform tapas along with men. They could also live a Hamsini life. In support of this she made Nayana ask Ramana two questions about woman:

1. Is there scriptural sanction for women, who are steady in the Self, to leave the house and be Hamsinis (ascetics)?
2. If a realized woman leaves the body, is the body to be buried or burnt?

Bhagavan gave replies to these pertinent questions:

1. If women are ripe and steady in the Atma, they can live as Hamsinis, as there is no objections in the Sastras to it.
2. Jnana and Mukti are the same to both men and women. Hence a liberated woman's body should not be burnt. Her body is a temple. The same demerits for burning the body of a liberated man exist for liberated woman.

At the time of Nayana's Kapala Moksha, Amma had progressed quite a lot in achieving Kundalini Vidya. Nayana made it known in his letter to his son:

“She, Visalakshi, has become Yogeswari, as her name signifies. She is doing 12,000 of japa of Prachanda Chandi Ekakshari and intense dhyana daily. The meditation is not born of effort. It is born out of grace. She is able to remain any length of time with half-closed eyes. That state started yesterday (14-1-1922). She says that her body becomes electrified at such times. There is great radiance in her divine face, and this is visible to everybody. You please serve your mother by writing her letters. She has attained new stability in yoga.”

From 1926 Visalakshi's condition started to deteriorate. The body started wasting due to anemia and indigestion, but her tapas got progressively stronger. Her radiance attracted people. With the help of her husband's and Maharshi's grace, she became steady in the Self and got Liberation on 26-7-1926 at Arunachala. That day, according to the Indian Calendar, was Monday, the second half of the month of Ashadha.

Nayana eulogized her as: “The moonlight of the clan of Atreyas, the daughter-in-law of Vasishtas, mother of Mahadeva, who was a Brahmavetta (a realized soul), a great one among the Pativratas (devoted and chaste wives), who is a lover of service to the world, adept in Panchadasi Vidya, the first guru of Tarini Vidya to the south of the Vindhya mountain and a friend in tapas, Visalakshi has become Visalakshi Mata!”

Chapter 13

PROPOGATION OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI'S TEACHING

नवकुंकमरेणुपंकिलस्य स्मरणात्ते सततं स्तनाचलस्य ।
स्वयमप्यचलो बभूव शोणशशिधारी जगतां सवित्रि शंके ॥

O' Mother Savitri! Thinking constantly of the nipples of your breasts applied with red Kumkum paste, Siva has become the red-hill (Arunachala).

– Uma Satakam

Hearing this sloka, all the people sitting around laughed heartily. Ramana himself laughed and said, “Even Arunachala has to emote at hearing Nayana’s poetry!”

Nayana laughed and said, “I will not tarnish His qualitylessness, do not worry.” Again, Nayana composed some more slokas:

कमलासनकंजलोचनादीन् अवमत्यत्रिदशान्नगेशकन्ये ।
अगुणे रमसे नगेऽत्र शोणे क गुणान्पश्यति जातिपक्षपातः ॥

O daughter of the King of Mountains! Rejecting Brahma, Vishnu and other gods, you have chosen as your spouse the attributeless Arunachala Mountain. When there is partiality to one’s own clan, who cares for qualities!

– Uma Satakam

कुसुमादपि कोमलं वपुस्ते हृदयेशस्त्वरुणोगिरिः कठोरः ।
प्रचलाऽखुतुरंगमस्य मातः समनुध्यायबिभेमि चेतसेदम् ॥

O Mother! Your body is softer than a flower. The body of your husband is very hard (being a hill). Your son's vehicle is a rat which is very fickle. O Mother of such a son! I am terrified of all these troubles of yours.

– Uma Satakam

Nayana used to regale daily the devotees of Ramana with his poetry like this.

In such a beautiful atmosphere, the lack of Alagamma's and Visalakshi Amma's presence was keenly felt by the devotees of Ramana. After his wife's demise, Nayana started the propagation of Sri Ramana's teaching in right earnest. As Nayana stayed in the Karnataka area for some time, many Karnataka people became devotees of Ramana. Nayana spoke about Ramana in many places in Tamil Nadu also.

Nayana started at this time writing "Viswa Mimamsa".

रमणस्य गुरोः प्राप्य कटाक्षं ज्योतिरद्भुतं ।
कुर्मो विश्वस्य मीमांसां यथाबुद्धं यथा श्रुतं ॥

Getting the wonderful light of guru Ramana's graceful look and from our knowledge and what was heard through elders, this treatise on the analysis of the universe is being written.

– Uma Satakam

Adi Sankara taught Atmabodha, taking man as the centre of analysis in "Saririka Mimamsa". Nayana took the universe as the centre of analysis. This can be said to be based on the Vedic mantra, "Viswamevedam Purushah". In this book in

which Sri Ramana's teaching is described, some ideas were included, taking them from *Sat-Darsanam* and *Ramana Gita* also. This is an independent venture. At first thirty-seven slokas were written and then expanded to 394 slokas. Students of Tattwa Sastra should definitely go through this book.

Nayana was thus immersed in writing. One day Nayana received an invitation from the Secunderabad Sri Krishna-devaraya Andhra Bhasha Nilayam to speak in the Silver Jubilee Celebrations to be held on the 16th, 17th, and 18th of February, 1927. They requested Nayana to come a month earlier. Nayana accepted the invitation and wanted to go there a month before the date of the Jubilee celebration, but he was laid up with urinary trouble before the Pongal festival.

About this time a sadhu came to Nayana's house and asked for Nayana and told his son-in-law, who was sitting on the outer pial of the house, that he came from Kanyakumari to see Nayana. The son-in-law told him to wait and went in to inform Nayana. Nayana came out, but the sadhu was not there. Even a search in the nearby lanes proved futile. 'It must have been Arunachala who came to relieve me of the malady', thought Nayana. Very soon his trouble subsided and he started for Secunderabad after the Pongal festival was over.

As soon as the news of Nayana's arrival spread in Secunderabad, many elders came to see him. Some were given mantra-diksha. Nayana's talks were arranged in many different venues throughout the town.

“Mahatmas are born often. Every decade we find a Mahatma appear. But it is very rare for a Maharshi to be born. It is our great good fortune that Sri Ramana Maharshi is now in our midst. Go have his darshan. It is liberating.” This is what Nayana preached to many at this time.

On February 16th, 17th, and 18th the Silver Jubilee was grandly celebrated and thousands had the benefit of hearing Nayana. He told gatherings, “Like Hatha, Raja and Bhakti Yogas, study also is a Yoga. This is called Swadhyaya Yoga. Just as action (karma) without Yoga does not bear fruit, study without Yoga is also not fruitful. It does not give one a proper perspective. Karma performed without expectation of its fruit is Yoga and in the same way, Swadhyaya, with proper analysis is Yoga. Everybody who studies a book must have this in mind while he studies a book.”

The essence of Nayana’s speech was published in the Silver Jubilee Souvenir released in 1928. This message awakened the youth of the day.

In Bolaram and Gadwal also Nayana’s lectures were held. In the Dravida Sammelan, under the presidentship of Sri T. Virabhadhrayya, Nayana was seated in a palanquin and taken in procession to the venue.

After the meetings were all over, Nayana went home to Kaluvarai. From there he went to Sunki on the invitation of some scholars. Sunki was a small village situated amidst orchards, at a distance of 9 Kilometers from Parvatipuram on the river Nagavali. It was Mahadeva’s father-in-law’s place. It is a place sanctified by the constant chanting of Vedas, tapas and sacrifices. Even now the chanting of the Vedas is

carried over the Nagavali waters from this holy place. Sri Viswanatha Rama Somayajulu is revered as a holy man by all the residents of the surrounding villages. He was a celibate and well read in the Vedas, an embodiment of hospitality and a great social worker. He had a younger brother who worked as his right hand. Rajeswari was his youngest sister who was wedded to Mahadeva. As Somayajulu was fond of both social work and Vedic culture, he convened a meeting to decide on a proper code of conduct for both these endeavours. The famous Sri Tata Subbaraya Sastry, Sri Peri Kasinatha Sastry and Adibhattla Narayana Das attended the meeting. As Ganapati Muni was younger than all of them, he would sit in the audience and watch the proceedings. For three days many social and scriptural matters were discussed. On the last day of the function, Kasinatha Sastry noticed Nayana quietly writing something down. He came near and saw what Nayana was doing. Nayana codified all the proceedings of the function of three days in the form of aphorisms. He embraced Nayana and said, "Ganapati, you are a real Ganapati. Sitting quietly you have given shape to the entire proceedings of the meetings. Very nice work."

Nayana stayed in Sunki for some more time and wrote some treatises like "Dharmanusasanam" and "Devata Siddhanta Taravali." He gave mantra diksha to Somayajulu and some others. They became very devoted to Nayana and served him with great love.

Chapter 14

THE DIVINE PLAY

केचिद्योगविदां पुरस्सर इति प्रज्ञानि बुद्ध्या परे
साधुः कश्चिदितीतरे गुरुधिया केप्यङ्घ्रिपद्मं तव।
सेवंते रमणाभिधान मनुजक्षेमाय जातिःक्षितः
द्वित्रास्तां गिरिजांक पीठनिलयं जानन्ति देवं गुहं ॥

O' Ramana! Some consider you as a great yogi, some a great Jnani, some a sadhu and some others their guru. Only two or three people know you as an embodiment of Kumara Swami who always sits on the lap of Mother Uma.

– Sri Ramana Chatwarimsat

Only when one has risen above the body idea can he know the correct meaning of the word guru. For that there must be total surrender. When you surrender totally to the guru, you will understand that guru is Ishwara and Atma (Self) (ईश्वरो गुरुरात्मेति).

Almost all gurus teach us that they are not the bodies and neither are we. We are all Atma. Sri Ramana used to consider the body as inert matter. He dissuaded worship to his body. He liberated and is still liberating numerous seekers by his divine mercy. Nayana describes him not as a human form, but as a divine being who has taken the human form. Nayana used to tell devotees not to close their eyes when they sat in front of Bhagavan as they could see with physical eyes the Lord Himself.

Sri Aurobindo wrote a poem called the Mother. It is a book which reveals the Shakti aspect of God. Aurobindo had the opportunity of going through “Uma Sahasram” of Nayana, shown to him by some of Nayana’s disciples who went to Aurobindo Ashram to stay there for good. He gave a fitting comment on the book, “This is a wonderful work. The author is a super human being. His divine voice rings out in every sloka of the work! I would like to see him.”

Nayana went home to Kaluvarai from Sunki to perform Visalakshi Amma’s anniversary. He then started to write “Indra Sahasranamam” (thousand names of Indra). He culled these names from Rig Veda. This was written in the method of Lalitha Sahasranamam and Vishnu Sahasranamam. He completed the work in Arunachala in 1927 and showed it to Bhagavan. Bhagavan felt interested when he saw certain names of Indra like Achakraya, Swadhaya, Vartamanah, Anilah, Suparnah and Kiejah. This can be used in daily worship. Phala Sruti was also given.

Muruganar was one of the foremost devotees of Bhagavan. He was a great poet in Tamil language. He composed a poem describing Siva’s ‘Lila’. A scene was to be described about Siva giving out Knowledge of the Truth to the rishis who were performing a sacrifice in Darukavanam. Muruganar thought that it would be proper and nice if Bhagavan himself wrote the poem pertaining to that scene. Sri Ramana accepted Muruganar’s request and composed the Tamil poem ‘Upadesa Undiyar’. Bhagavan asked Nayana to write a commentary on it. Nayana took the book with all humility and devotion from Bhagavan’s hand and in a voice choked with tears said

to the people around, "We all think we are great Pundits. Can we write one such sloka?" Nayana promptly wrote the commentary as requested by Bhagavan.

Sudhanva (Doraiswami) came from Aurobindo's Ashram to request Nayana to come to Pondicherry at the invitation of Sri Aurobindo. As soon as he heard of the invitation of Aurobindo, Nayana had a vision of Aurobindo.

परं इंद्राणि साधुर्बत विस्मृत्य विश्वं ।
रमते सिक्तगंडः प्रमदाश्रुप्रतानैः ॥

Oh! Forgetting the world and silent in yoga, Sri Aurobindo is enjoying bliss with tears flowing down his cheeks.

Nayana met Sri Aurobindo and the Mother when they were sitting alone. For ten minutes all of them sat in silence. Then Aurobindo turned to Sudhanva and asked, "Is Nayana a worshipper of Ganapati?" Sudhanva told Aurobindo that Nayana was Ganapati's manifestation. Aurobindo told him that he saw god Ganapati on the forehead of Nayana.

Next evening the Mother sent for Nayana. They were alone for forty-four minutes meditating together. The Mother sat with closed eyes and Nayana sat with eyes open. Afterwards the Mother told Kapali Sastry, "The moment we started meditating, my mind entered into great depths. I never reached this state in meditating with anyone else."

The disciples of Nayana hoped that Nayana would stay back in Aurobindo Ashram for good. Kapali Sastry was translating Aurobindo's "Janani" into Sanskrit. He requested Nayana to write the foreword to the translation. Nayana started writing with the first invocatory sloka:

वंदे श्री रमणषराचार्यस्य पदाब्जं ।
यो मेऽदर्शयदीशं भान्तं ध्वान्तमतीत्य ॥

I bow to the feet of Sri Ramana Maharshi who showed me Ishwara who is shining beyond darkness.

Everybody understood that surrender to a guru occurs only once in a lifetime and the power in the disciple is the power of the guru. With this understanding the disciples lost all hope of keeping Nayana in Aurobindo Ashram.

One week passed and Nayana was still in Aurobindo Ashram. Nayana's disciples who were at Ramanasramam got worried with the thought that as the conditions were not too good at Ramanasramam at that time, Nayana might choose to stay put in Aurobindo Ashram for good. At last they voiced their concerns before Sri Ramana himself. Bhagavan said enigmatically, "Oh! Where will he go? Where is the place to go? He will certainly come back." As Bhagavan predicted Nayana came back after a week's stay at Aurobindo Ashram.

"They all felt your presence as soon as they saw me there," said Nayana to Bhagavan. Bhagavan beamed a gracious smile at this.

Nayana wrote many slokas on the guru at various times. Bhagavan carefully collected them all and kept them in one place. They were forty in number. After Nayana's passing, Bhagavan titled the collection "Sri Ramana Chatvarimsat." These verses are chanted daily before Bhagavan's samadhi shrine. In 1936 they were printed in a book form. After some time, K. Natesan, a devotee of Bhagavan and a disciple

of Nayana, went to Aurobindo Ashram. They showed him the sloka, "Vande Sri Ramanarsher ...". He copied it and brought it to Bhagavan. Bhagavan liked it and asked it to be made the invocatory sloka to "Chatvarimsat". This invocatory sloka is daily recited before the recitation of the "Sri Ramana Chatvarimsat" at Bhagavan's shrine.

The summer of 1929 was very hot. Nayana could not bear the heat. It was impossible for him to stay in the mango-cave. Muruganar understood his condition and invited him to the jack fruit orchard in which he himself was staying.

Nayana who wrote the commentary to "Upadesa Saram," wrote "Manisha Sangraha" as a supplement to it. Writing aphorisms is a difficult job. The matter should be very concise but thorough. Nayana was the unique scholar who wrote aphorisms in the method of the rishis of yore. Nayana defined Atma, Time, the World and Nature in these aphorisms. He also gave out the Vidya (knowledge) that was the essence discovered by the rishis.

Due to the heat, Nayana's health continued to deteriorate. the Ashramites who saw his condition wrote about it to Daivarata who was in Gokarna. Daivarata was then going to the banks of river Bhadra for tapas. So, he sent two of his disciples to bring Nayana and settle him in Sirasi, which was a summer resort. Daivarata formally invited Nayana through a letter. Bhagavan also agreed to the proposal and encouraged Nayana to go to Sirasi.

Reluctantly, Nayana got ready to leave Tiruvannamalai. He visited the Mother in the temple and prayed to her:

शोणनगार्धतनोऽनिशमङ्गे धारयसेऽयि गृहं रमणाख्यम् ।
आगतमप्ययि हा मुहुरम्बोच्चाटयसे गणपं ननु कंस्मात् ॥

O Mother! who is half of Arunachala's body! You are fondling Ramana in your lap all the time. Even though I have come to you, you are driving me away now. Why?

Thus with a sad heart Nayana took farewell of Bhagavan and Arunachala.

Chapter 15

NAYANA'S BLESSINGS

पुष्करानुजन्म वह्नि शीतभानुपूर्वजै -
नीलकंजबंधुना च संयतैरुदेति या ।
नृसिंह शक्ति रुद्रविक्रमोग्र मानिनी
मंत्रराजरूपिणी महेश्वरी गतिर्मम ॥

May She, Maheswari, who wakes up along with all gods, very powerful, the form of the great mantras and the power of Nrisimha, be my refuge (to the Peetham of Chandramouleswara).

– Devi Stotram

Nayana prostrated to Bhagavan, got his blessings and started for Sirasi. Near Gokarna, in the state of Karnataka, in the valley of the Sahya mountains, there are some villages. Though they are sparsely populated, they abound in spices of rare plants, which have made this area a centre of business. And as this area is 2000 feet above sea level, it is also famous as a summer resort.

Nayana reached Gokarna and stayed for three days in the house of Daivarata. As Daivarata went to the banks of the Bhadra River for tapas, his family members served Nayana. Sitarama Bhadati, the younger brother of Daivarata, was an Ayurvedic physician. He lived in Kuluve village, a little distant from Sirasi. As Daivarata had informed him of

Nayana's arrival, he came to Sirasi and made arrangements to take Nayana to Kuluve. On the fourth day after his arrival at Sirasi, Bhadati took Nayana to Kuluve in an automobile.

At 11 p.m. Nayana asked Bhadati to stop somewhere to take rest. They had been travelling since early morning. They saw Lakshmi Nrisimha Chandramouleswara Peetham on the way and stopped there for the night.

This Peetham is really Sankaramatham (Pitham started by Viswananda Bharati). Both Vishnu and Siva were worshipped in that Pitham, which is on the banks of the river Salmali. The kings of Sonada-Swarnavalli were the endowers of the Matham.

Sri Sarvajendra Saraswati was the authority of the Mutt when Nayana visited it. He had already heard of Nayana's fame and thought it was his good fortune to serve him. With sincere respect, he supplied Nayana with all the facilities available. After taking rest for sometime Nayana enquired about the welfare of the Mutt.

With a heavy heart, the Pithadhipati told Nayana that though the Pitham was quite prosperous in the past, at that time the benefactors of the Mutt, the Kings of Sonada and Swarnavalli, caught up in a court dispute, were ignoring the needs of the Mutt. For the last three years there was a shortage of funds even for the daily worship. They were somehow running the Mutt from the offerings of devotees.

Hearing this story, Nayana felt very sad and his eyes were brimmed with tears. He felt distressed at the condition of the kingly class who had surrendered the country to foreign rule.

उदित विरोधा स्वयुतभिदासु । चतसृषु जातिष्वबलतमासु ॥

There are many internal differences in the four castes. And so, there are quite many infights among the four castes.

मुहुरपि लोके क्षितिसुरशीले अजगणकल्पे भुजभुवसंघे ॥

The Brahmins lost their character due to worldliness. The kings have started fighting among themselves.

चतुरविरोधिब्रतहृतसारां अविरतनेत्र सृतजलधारां ।

भरतधरित्रीं भुवननृपालः अवतु दयालुः सितगिरिशालः ॥

May Lord Siva who resides on the Silver mountain, save the land of Bharat which cries incessantly and has lost its strength due to the cleverness of the enemies.

As soon as Nayana prayed thus, he had a vision of Arunachala. Nayana, like Christ in the past, prayed: "I have come to pray to you as the representative of the Indians."

अरुणधरित्रीधर हर दूनां भरतधरित्री मव शिव दीनाम् ॥

O Siva! Please save our land of Bharat which is in distress.

हर भरतक्षमाजनवरदूतं कुरुचरितार्थं गणपति मेतम् ॥

O Siva! I have come to you as the messenger of the land of Bharat. Make me, Ganapati, fulfilled with purpose.

Hearing Nayana's prayer, the Pithadhipati felt that Lords Siva and Vishnu were present then and there. He asked Bhadati to stop somewhere to take rest. He felt bad to have given pain to Nayana with the distressful account of the condition of the Mutt. So he told Nayana, "Acharya!

I consider your prayer as a blessing to this Pitham. So, I will henceforth dedicate myself to the uplift of the country in the method of Adi Sankara.”

Nayana said, “Yes! That was the goal of Sankara. These Pithams have been started only for that purpose.”

Nayana took rest for the night in that place and next day, before starting for Kuluve, wrote down the prayer on a paper and told the Pithadhipati to keep it on the altar. After some time the benefactors of the Mutt won their case in the court and resumed their maintenance of the Peetham. Attributing Nayana’s blessings as the cause of this good fortune, they kept the slokas framed in the Mutt.

Chapter 16

BROTHER PASSES AWAY

पोषविधाने शीतं दैवं शोषविधाने तपनं दैवं ।

सर्गविधाने विकसदैवं प्रलयविधाने मीलदैवम् ॥

The deity is cool in sustaining activity, hot in drying up activity, blooming in creative activity, and converging in destructive activity!

As Nayana resided in Gokarna for a long time, many people around Gokarna became Nayana's devotees. Daivarata, Nayana's disciple, was also much esteemed by them. Therefore, in Gokarna they celebrated Nayana's birth anniversary on a grand scale, and later, his samadhi anniversary after his passing.

By the time Nayana reached Kuluve, people arrived in crowds from the adjoining villages to have his darshan. The local populace invited him in the traditional Vedic method. A hut was constructed for Nayana's stay and everyday huge crowds gathered to have thirtha (holy water) from Nayana's hands. In the evening, a big crowd used to gather to hear Nayana speak. Nayana used this opportunity to spread Ramana's teachings. The people aired their woes to Nayana and the holy mantra water that he gave them assuaged their difficulties. Nayana also spoke on Ambika Shakti, which is the peaceful Shakti, the good and pleasing Shakti of nature and so forth.

Once the people of Kuluve arranged a big meeting for Nayana's scriptural talks. A platform was erected outside the village precincts and there were stacks of hay all around in the fields. As Nayana spoke the audience was in raptures. Suddenly four or five hay-stacks started burning. The audience was agitated, but Nayana told them to be calm and uttered a Rig Veda mantra – वनेम पूर्वोरियो मनीषा अग्निः सुशोको विश्वान्यस्याः ॥ – and threw a piece of dried grass towards the fire. Wonderfully, the wind threw the burning hay hither and thither. That weakened the fire and it gradually came under control. Water was then poured on the remaining fire and it subsided completely. Through this incident, the people's esteem for Nayana grew tremendously, though Nayana considered the incident inauspicious.

The relatives in Kaluvarai heard that Nayana's health was not good and that he went to Kuluve for rest. They were very worried. After the death of Nayana's father, his brother Prakash Sastry was looking after Nayana's affairs with the help of his other brothers, Bhima Sastry and Sivarama Sastry. Sivarama Sastry was sent to Kuluve to plead with Nayana to come to Kaluvarai.

Sivarama was Nayana's friend in tapas and his arrival made Nayana very happy. He accompanied Nayana to ever so many holy places and served him to the best of his ability. When they met they embraced each other and tears flowed down their cheeks. Sivarama asked Nayana to come home with him as his health was not good. Nayana replied that he was all right in Kuluve and the people there looked after him with great care. They both slept quite well that night.

The next morning, the brothers finished their ablutions and sat for meditation. After some time, Sivarama had a mild pain in the heart. He informed Nayana of this. He took some rice with buttermilk for lunch and suddenly the pain in the heart became very intense. Sivarama shouted thrice, the breath rattled thrice, and he fell dead into Nayana's hands. It was 7-02-1930.

"My brother is no more. He has come to me and died like a hero," said Nayana sadly. He then performed the obsequies.

That night the wife of the landlord, Seethamma, had a dream. She saw a woman disturbing a dead body. Sivarama got up from the corpse as a bright young man. She asked him, "Are you alive?" "Yes," he said, "I am going to the banks of Narmada to do tapas." and disappeared. She told Nayana about her dream. Nayana said in a deep tone, "That addict of tapas, that lover of tirthas, went to Narmada to perform tapas. The Will of God is at work."

When uncle Sivarama passed away, it became Mahadeva's duty to look after his father. He soon reached Kuluve, along with his wife, to serve him.

Chapter 17

THE SAT-DARSANAM

सत्तत्त्वसारं सरलं दधाना मुमुक्षुलोकाय मुदं दधाना ।
अमानुषश्रीरमणीयवाणीमयूख्यभित्तिर्मुनिवाग्विभाति ॥

The word of the Superhuman Ramana, giving out, simply, the essence of Truth, and giving happiness to all the seekers of Truth, is shining through the words of Muni Ganapati.

– Sat-Darsanam, Phalasaruti

Every seeker naturally aspires to realize the Truth. Aspirants resort to various methods, like worship, repetition of the name, and tapas to achieve this end. As a result certain people develop a keen desire to reach the goal. The fitness of the aspirants must be tested by themselves on the touchstone of certain principles. They must question themselves thus:

1. Can I take up a work that I dislike giving up one that I like?
2. If some one tells me that the search for Truth will totally change the present mode of my life, am I ready to give up the old mode and take up a new one?
3. When the search proves to be very difficult, am I ready to continue my sadhana uninterruptedly?
4. Even if I face death will I, like Nachiketas, continue the search for Truth?

If a person can answer these questions in the affirmative, he can certainly attain Liberation. *Sat-Darsanam* is a book that can safely guide an aspirant to the goal, the attainment of Truth.

Sri Ramana wrote a treatise in Tamil called *Ulladu Narpadu*. This is a purely philosophical work. It can be considered to be on par with the *Upanishads* and *Brahma Sutras*. Bhagavan asked Nayana to translate it into Sanskrit.

Nayana ultimately went with Mahadeva to Kaluvarai and stayed there for four months. But at the incessant request of the Sirasi citizens, he went back to Sirasi in February 1931.

A great personage called Pundarika Raya had spent some time in foreign countries, worked as a barrister, came back to Sirasi and built an ashram to spend his later life in peace. But due to certain conditions he could not stay in that ashram. So it was arranged for Nayana to stay in the ashram, which was called 'Anandashramam'.

The residents of Sirasi, Sri S. D. Viswamitra, S. P. Pandit, Sundara Pandit and some others were providing for Nayana's needs. Kapali Sastry came there with his family. To the delight of Sirasi residents, Nayana was giving discourses in Kannada. There was daily chanting of Vedas, and japa and homa were going on regularly. The atmosphere reminded one of a rishi's ashram of yore.

Viswanatha Brahmachari personally brought the Tamil composition of the "Forty Verses" to Nayana. Nayana was extremely glad to receive the order of Bhagavan to translate the composition into Sanskrit. He immediately wrote the following letter to Bhagavan to express his joy at receiving such a glorious proposition from him:

O Guhavatara Bhagavan!

You already know through the letters of Kapali, Sundara Pandit and Viswanadha that I am engaged here in tapas, along with my followers. For the last three days there are experiences which are giving me extreme happiness. Many people are getting Bhagavan's darshan in their dreams. They all sincerely believe that it is the sure grace of Bhagavan.

Lord! That nishta (steadiness), which I got through God's grace, is becoming experiential to me here. I am experiencing Atma in the cave as separate from the body. But I consider it as incomplete because it is not different from the worldly experience. For the attainment of that complete nishta, I am praying to you to send your grace which can jump over many miles of distance in a trice. The Shakti which I used to experience previously was a heavy flow and was only a flow of force. But now the Shakti is very light and is a flood of light. I hope through the grace of Bhagavan the gods will get inspired and reform me for the fulfilment of the great purpose. May you send your graceful look as reply to me.

Mahadeva, Viswanatha, Ranga, daughter of Sitarama and Kapali, along with his wife are permanent residents of this ashram. The sister of Sundara Pundit and Devendra Sarma come here in the evenings. All of them are eager for Bhagavan's grace.

Servant of Bhagavan,
Vasishta Ganapati

Reading out Bhagavan's Tamil poem, explaining its greatness, composing the proper translation in Sanskrit and describing the poetic excellence of the poem to Kapali, Viswanatha and Mahadeva, Nayana completed the translation of "The Forty Verses" into Sanskrit in four days, finishing it on 14-03-1931. The Sanskrit translation was given the name of "Sat-Darsanam". Two copies were taken. One was sent through Mahadeva to Bhagavan with a letter.

Anandashramam, Sirasi

17-03-1931

Bhagavan, World teacher!

The heart prompts me to send a letter to your presence once a week. On Saturday, 14-03-1931, "Sat-Darsanam" has been completed. Bhagavan's meaning of *Sukla Chandas* (*Yagnavalkya Sutra*) was done into upajati metre. Whatever merit there is in my work is Bhagavan's own. From that Saturday my vision began to be transformed. I am seeing all things as one. I am praying to Bhagavan to make this vision permanent. I am observing all these various forms in the one Sadvastu like bubbles on water. Rejecting these bubbles, I am trying to see the Suddha Sat Rupa (Absolute Existence).

Eager for your grace,

Vasishta

Mahadeva started for Arunachala with the "Sat-Darsanam" in his hand. Kapali Sastry had an inner prompting to write a commentary on "Sat-Darsanam". He told Nayana about his desire and Nayana gave his approval.

All the prayerful poems Nayana composed on various gods were compiled into a book and titled *Gitamala*. Nayana gave a copy of *Gitamala* to Mahadeva to be given to Bhagavan.

Meanwhile the upanayanam of Daivarata's son was decided to be performed in Gokarna. He came in person and invited Nayana to Gokarna for the ceremony. Nayana wrote his next weekly letter to Bhagavan from Gokarna.

Gokarna

21-04-1931

O Bhagavan! The All pervading!

As Daivarata requested my presence at his son's upanayanam, I had to come to Gokarna. I will start from here on Saturday. He who is the dweller of the cave, he who resides in the bodies of beings and expands in the hearts of yogis, he whose inner expansion is called the second birth, he whom the knowers of mantras extol as Vaiswanara and the scholars as Virat Purusha, he who is the embodiment of knowledge, to whom knowledge is the body, residence and weapon, he is my younger brother to whom I prostrate.

The Elder one

Mahadeva went to Arunachala and handed over the copy of "Sat-Darsanam" to Bhagavan. Nayana made some changes in the translation from the original and Maharshi was glad and approved of them. Mahadeva informed Nayana about Bhagavan's approval. Nayana, with great elation replied to Bhagavan.

Anandashramam, Sirasi

28-04-1931

O Bhagavan, The Merciful!

I have received the letters from Mahadeva and Sundara and came here from Gokarna. Appu couple has arrived. Viswanatha also came along with me to Sirasi. Kapali's commentary on "Sat-Darsanam" is progressing well. The changes I have made in the "Sat-Darsanam" seem to have been approved by you as true to the original, according to Mahadeva's letter. It made me ecstatic. *Sat-Darsanam* will turn out as a glorious book after Kapali completes his commentary. Mahadeva writes that the sloka I composed in the chapter, "Exchanges between Guha and Ganapati" was enjoyed by you and made you smile. Mahadeva had the fortunate vision of seeing your glorious smile, it seems. That news itself made us happy beyond measure. I wish my child, *Gitamala* may be fondled with Bhagavan's own hand.

After the great treatise, "Upadesa Saram" of Bhagavan, this "Sat-Darsanam" seems to be popular and is studied as a text in many ashrams. It is rendering a lot of help to aspirants. To the seekers of truth, "Sat-Darsanam" is a revealing treatise.

Chapter 18

DEVOTIONAL LETTERS

अतीतगुणजालाय नैष्ठिकब्रह्मचारिणे ।
नमो मायामनुष्याय गुरवे तारकारये ॥

I bow to the guru who is beyond qualities, who is constantly poised in his movement in Brahman, who is an embodiment of God and who is Kumara Swami, the enemy of Tarakasura.

– Sri Ramana Chatvarimsat

Everyone knows that Maharshi does not possess any desire. A yogi like Seshadri Swami tried to find out whether Bhagavan had any thought or desire and failed in his attempt. In spite of this, Nayana pleaded with the Master to exercise at least one intention, in the following letter:

Anandashramam, Sirasi

24-03-1931

O Bhagavan, Karanaguru!

By God's grace, we are all immersed in the light of the mercy of Bhagavan. O the destroyer of illusion! Even now my mind's differential concept has not died. If you radiate a moment's desire, I know this will disappear and my identification with the whole world will result. But I know that there does not exist, even a slight thought of desire in you. Only the Lord is able to create such a thought in

you. You may ask why I resort to this roundabout method of prayer. Why does God, instead of Himself showering grace, make someone else do it? Only holy people know this secret. It is the divine rule that when an avatar is awake in the world, God does not do anything Himself. Hence I am praying to God to create such a thought (initiative) in your mind.

Your brother of the previous birth.

By the removal of the ego, God can be realized. Hence, Nayana extolled the Maharshi as one who crushes and cooks the ego into a shapeless mass. In Sirasi also a lady seemed to be doing the same thing, as he relates in this letter:

Anandashramam, Sirasi

15-07-1931

O Glorious Being!

By God's grace, all are well here. Because of constant rains, days are short. But heated up by a divine energy, our hearts are quite active. There is no sunshine at all. But we are all feeling as though we are under full sunshine. We do not forget that this cooking of our being is done by a cook called God. This job of a cook has no remuneration. A lady also is helping you in this activity. Who is she! She is goddess Renuka whose son Parasurama crushed the arrogance of kings and who is the sixth manifestation of God Vishnu. Above the devotees and the all-knowing Jnani's, there is the Lord who activates all of them. May He get food cooked quickly through the agency of this cook and enjoy the food.

The cooked food
in the form of Man

New Year Blessings!
Anandashramam, Sirasi

14-04-1931

O Bhagavan, Dweller of Dahara!

I desire you to accept our good wishes on the day of this New Year and bless us, showering prosperity with your grace. By your kindness may this year be a fully successful year for us. My Lord! Tapas having ripened, ego destroyed, steady in the original state, all the senses fixed in Bhagavan, I was thinking that everything was achieved. May my steadiness in knowledge lead me to steadiness in the knowledge of the Source. I know that this ultimate desire will be fulfilled. I am awaiting that blessed point of time. Even though this person is far away from thee, may he shine as if in your presence. O Lord! You are always dwelling in my heart. I am always lying at your feet. You are my Lord who deposes me and I am your servant who carries out your order.

Entirely yours,
Vasishta

Anandashramam, Sirasi
9-06-1931

O Bhagavan, Playing in human form!

Please accept our prostrations on the occasion of the Mahapuja of Sri Mata (The Mother). Like Kausalya to Sri Rama, who gave succour to the rishis and like Devaki to Sri Krishna, who disseminated Yoga Vidya, like Renuka to Parasurama, the celibate since childhood, like Maya Devi to the Buddha, the saviour of all creatures, like Mary

to the Son (Christ), who bore the sins of mankind, She, who had, with these qualities in one place, given birth to you for the welfare of mankind, for the destruction of the darkness of ignorance, to drive away perverted intellects, to impart the Truth, is Saundaryamba, the divine spouse of Sri Sundaram Iyer, to whom I prostrate. I prostrate to the Matrubhuteswari Bhagavati in whom she, Soundaryamba has taken her abode.

Reading Sundara's flowery letter, the Ashram is as though emitting its perfume. The letter which reveals the message of Bhagavan was also received. My heart rests in peace. Kapali's commentary of "Sat-Darsanam" is almost finished.

He who wears the dust of Sri Ramana Bhagavan's feet,
Vasishtha

The "Sat-Darsanam" that Nayana brought out reached Ramanasramam and attracted many scholars. But some people brought to Bhagavan's notice that certain slokas deviated from the original. Bhagavan supported Nayana's exposition. Sundara Krishna informed Nayana of this and Nayana's joy knew no bounds. Immediately he wrote to Bhagavan his feelings.

Anandashramam, Sirasi

3-06-1931

O Bhagavan, Friend of the Distressed!

Sundara Krishna conveyed through his letter Bhagavan's exposition. Our doubts were cleared. The clarification that you gave, "The non-existence of the

limited is the same to both the Liberated and Ishwara” has removed all our doubts. There is Ishwara who is the Lord of Creation. The Liberated has a personality. Their experiences are the same and devoid of thoughts and thoughtlessness. This has become clear to us through your words. Hence the argument that “Sat-Darsanam” is giving scope to drishti-srishti argument is annulled. This answer inheres in “Sat-Darsanam” itself.

Commentary on Sat-Darsanam (offering)

Anandashramam, Sirasi

7-04-1931

O Bhagavan, the descendent of Parasara!

We are all safe and sound by the grace of Bhagavan. The commentary on “Sat-Darsanam” has been started by dear Kapali. I myself suggested the name “Bhashyam” (commentary) keeping in view the greatness of the original. Kapali says that when observed properly, “Sat-Darsanam” has great depth. I understood its depth as soon as it was given out by you. Even though the text is quite small, it is aphoristic in its exposition of the secrets of tattva and yoga sastras (the sciences of yoga and tattva). Still there is no derogation of other religions in it. Even then the attitude of others is strangely countered. The arguments touch the hearts of scholars and lay persons alike. Though no scripture is taken as a standard, it shines out as the essence of all Vedas. By explaining these, the commentator has to contradict quite a number of points.

There are new things to be understood also. But the commentary should not be too vast. As the points clarified are not to be skipped, but only the most important ones should be selected for commenting. If a little of Bhagavan's grace is received by Kapali, he would be able to do the job.

**Unwavering Devotion to the Guru,
Ishwara and Motherland (Offering).**

Nayana's love of Motherland was greater than his love of tapas. Gandhiji took up the method of Karma-yoga (service) to serve his country. To serve the people and to promote knowledge, Nayana took up tapas as the means, as explained in this letter.

Anandashramam, Sirasi

5-05-1931

O Bhagavan! Illusion of human form!

Here it is all well and good. O Lord! I am eager to present at your feet my present condition. Some consider great happiness as the supreme goal. Some others consider the highest attainment in yoga as the most desirable thing. The state of being beyond pleasure and pain seems to be the target of some others. Conquering death happens to be the ultimate desire of some people. But I consider the destruction of desire as the most beautiful goal to reach. Some useless desires have subsided. Some have been experienced and died. Some were driven out and destroyed. But Lord! I do not know whether there is any sense in it. One desire is left over. I do not have the power

to resist it. Neither have I a desire to shove it off. I am praying for God's help. Bhagavan, perhaps knows it (the welfare of the country).

Yours

Anandashramam, Sirasi

22-07-1931

O Bhagavan, Lover of Thy devotees!

The glory of the result of repetition of mantra was attained. The essence of Yoga was perceived. The scriptures were well-read. Tapas was done with severity. The rise and spread of the Kundalini Shakti was experienced. The source of 'I' was reached. In silence the nature's ripening was witnessed. The sense of separation was given up. Attachment to phenomena was rejected. Still I was not satisfied. Now I want to get satisfaction only through devotion. There are three objects to this devotion – one is Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, the second is Bhagavan Indra and the third is Bhagavati Mother Bharat Bhoomi (Mother India).

Your Devotee since long,
Ganapati

Nayana's letters, which are like standards in Bhakti, Jnana and Yoga are many. Only some of them were given here as examples.

Chapter 19

LIMITED BODY; UNLIMITED SHAKTI OF TAPAS

तव शक्तिझरीपतनं बहिरद्भुतवृष्टिरिव ।
इदमंतरनंतबले मदिरारसपानमिव ॥

O Devi! When your power falls on the outside (head) it feels like a wonderful shower. When it works inside it feels like intoxication due to drinking.

– Prachanda Chandi Trisati

“Dhyana must be continuous like an electrical current. That is called Samadhi or Kundalini Shakti,” said Maharshi. When Kavyakantha had the kapala bheda, Maharshi applied castor oil on his head and cooled the heat. He said, “I am here to look after Nayana. But who is there for me?”

The energy called Taijasa runs from Muladhara to Sahasrara every moment. A yogi who has attained this Kundalini Shakti knows this movement like the movement of the respiration. The mistress of Kundalini Shakti, called Prachanda Chandi is described by Nayana in three hundred verses. He describes his own experiences also in that stotram. To one who has experienced this immense, immeasurable power, the body naturally becomes a hindrance.

Nayana’s body which was the playground of this Shakti could not adjust to strong tastes like hot, sour, and saltish

tastes. But devotees used to bring varieties of food as offerings and he had to taste at least a little of them for their satisfaction. As the body was getting older, it could not bear this situation. His body started to show signs of diabetes, but Nayana would not let anybody know of it. Some slokas in "Prachanda Chandi Trisati" indicated the condition and suffering of his body.

सहता मिद मम्ब वपु स्तव नाट्यमपारजवं ।
बहिरंतर शत्रुसहं भजतां बहुलं च बलम् ॥

O Mother! Let this body be able to bear the speed of thy dance. Grant it the power to withstand the onslaught of both inner and outer enemies.

पृथिवी च सहेत न ते तटिदीश्वरि नाट्यजवं ।
करुणा यदि देवि न ते वपुषामिह का नु कथा ॥

O Mother Lightning! Even the earth cannot bear the speed of your dance. As such, what about this human body, if your compassion is not there?

वार्धकेन बलकान्तिहारिणा धारणेनकटुकार्यकारिणा ।
ग्रस्तमेत मधुना पुनः कुरु त्राणदे युवकवत्पदाश्रितम् ॥

The body is getting weak through old age. Unless you give youth again to this body, which has taken refuge in you, it cannot hold the dance of your Shakti.

The sojourn in Anandashramam did not suit Nayana. Though it was very congenial to sadhana and scholarly activities, Nayana was not able to eat the offerings of the devotees. Mahadeva came to Sirasi to attend to Nayana. As

Kuluve was more conducive to Nayana's health, he was taken to Kuluve.

Mahadeva took great care of Nayana and Nayana got well in course of time. Daughter-in-law Rajeswari used to prepare the food that suited Nayana. Thus Nayana spent a peaceful life in Kuluve from 1932-1934. He wrote the aphorism text of *Dasa Maha Vidyadi Sutra Granthavali* during that period. This was the scripture of the ten avatars of Parashakti. Nayana had the revelations of all the mantras enunciated in that book. During this period he also started to write a novel in Sanskrit called *Poorna*.

Mahadeva had five issues of female children, but only two of them survived. For the purpose of getting a male child, Nayana initiated Rajeswari into Indra Mantra. After repetition of this mantra, Rajeswari had four children, three of them were male and they survived.

As Nayana's health recovered, the disciples wanted Nayana back in Anandashramam. They started collecting funds to improve the ashram. Mahadeva was afraid that Nayana's health may again worsen if he went to Anandashramam. So, he pleaded with Nayana that they had better go home where a small hut could be constructed exclusively for Nayana and the family could serve him.

Nayana, who knew the future, looked at his son's face, which radiated devotion to his father, and agreed.

Chapter 20

THE FINAL CALL

पाहिवा पशुपते जहीहि वा जीवनं तव पदोः समर्पितं ।
देहि वा विमुखता मुसेहि वा प्रार्थये किमपि नाथ नापरम् ॥

O Lord of all creations! Save me or leave me. Nevertheless, my life is dedicated to thy feet. I do not ask of Thee anything else, whether Thou showerest Thy grace or otherwise.

– Siva Satakam

Once there was a devotee of Rama living on the banks of river Godavari. One day, Rama appeared to him in a dream and told him to start on a boat to Bhadradi. On the way, Pushpaka Vimana (divine plane) would be sent for him, in which he would be taken to Vaikunta (Vishnu's abode).

The next morning the devotee told his wife about his glorious dream with great joy. Accordingly the couple got ready and boarded the boat. The devotee was immersed in contemplating on Sri Rama and the wife was looking all around for the plane which was to take them to Vaikunta. When they had travelled half-way on the Godavari, she saw the Pushpaka coming down from the sky. She cried out, "There is the Pushpakam," and started to collect her bundles. The devotee silently boarded the plane and it started going up. The poor woman who was still collecting her bundles was, of course, left alone!

Nayana, who was always immersed in the thought of God did not differentiate one place from the other. Once a gentleman said to Sri Ramana, "Bhagavan, I have travelled two days to come here!" Bhagavan told him, "It was not you who travelled. Only the body travelled." Jnanis have no attachment to relatives, friends or children as others have. Only compassion towards the whole creation flows out from them.

All the friends and relatives of Nayana were overjoyed to see him in Kaluvarai after a long, long absence. The news that Nayana was going to stay permanently at Kaluvarai made them all very happy. People used to come in crowds to have Nayana's darshan and it became a great trial for Mahadeva to manage them. But he dealt with them all with great care and consideration.

Mahadeva was trying to construct a two-room Kutir for Nayana, at a distance of two furlongs from the house. Nayana decided to enter it on 14-9-34. Meanwhile the Andhra University was celebrating its anniversary in Visakhapatnam. Having heard that Nayana was so near at hand in Kaluvarai, the Andhra University Secretary invited Nayana to speak, sending him a special invitation. Sir S. Radhakrishnan was the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University at that time. He was the nephew of Nayana's disciple, Sri Sarvepalli Narsimham, who later took the name, Pranavananda. Sri Radhakrishnan had heard of Nayana through his uncle. He used to listen to Nayana when Mahadeva was being taught Sanskrit by Nayana. Now he was very happy to have the opportunity of hearing Nayana's lectures.

The anniversary celebrations were performed on a grand scale. Nayana gave lectures on the *Mahabharata* on two consecutive days.

In his lecture he said: "The *Mahabharata* story happened in Vedic times. The names of the *Mahabharata* heroes were mentioned in the *Rig Veda*. The great-grandfather of the Pandavas, Santanu, was the youngest brother of Devapi, who was the author of *Rig Veda Suktas*. Sri Krishna existed 138 generations previous to Chandragupta Maurya. The authors of the Puranas changed the story of *Mahabharata* of the Vedic times and posited Vishnu in the place of Mahendra, who was the Lord of Creation. Indra was depicted as a vile character and given the position of Parjanya, the god of rain." By articulating his interpretation, Nayana inspired many enthusiastic critics. The great scholars Tata Subbaraya Sastry and Kasinathuni Nageswara Rao attended the meeting. Nayana's lectures were published in the daily *Andhra Pathrika*.

Sri Radhakrishnan thought it would be good for the development of the department of Oriental research if Nayana would work in that department and offered him the post of Dean of the department. But Nayana declined the offer, saying, "Dean? Who is Dean?" He turned down the offer as he did with the professor's post in the University of Calcutta. As is usual with ascetics, he was averse to power and position. But he wrote a critical work on Bharata (India), called, "A Critical Analysis of the History of India" at the insistence of the critics of Indian History.

Learning that Nayana was residing in Kaluvarai, Maruvada Prasada Rao arrived from Kharagpur. He was the son-in-law of Nayana's paternal cousin Suryanarayana Sastry. Prasada Rao was worldly-wise and a good conversationalist. He was distressed and had performed various kinds of a pujas because he believed afflicted planets affected him in a negative manner. He wanted to take Nayana to Kharagpur as he had faith that Nayana's presence would relieve him of his planetary afflictions. So he insisted on taking Nayana along with him to Kharagpur. Both Mahadeva and the son of Sivarama Sastry opposed the proposal of Prasada Rao. Still Prasada Rao was adamant and promised to take the utmost care of Nayana's health. His wife also pleaded piteously with Nayana to come and stay in her house for at least two months. Mahadeva did not know how to counter this request of this lady. He brought Nayana from Sirasi to Kaluvarai expressly to give him a peaceful atmosphere among his own relatives and so built an ashram and a date was also fixed for the grihapravesham (house warming) of the building.

Nayana heard the arguments of both parties. He knew the intention of Prasada Rao and his son's feelings also. Nayana closed his eyes and meditated for a few minutes and opened his eyes saying, "Well, the call comes, I have to leave."

On 14-09-1934, along with Simhalu, Sivarama's son, Nayana left Kaluvarai for Kharagpur in the company of the Prasada Rao couple. Mahadeva was very much distressed.

Chapter 21

THE GRACIOUS LOOK

मुधा क्षिपस्यद्रिसुते कटाक्षान्

कैलासकान्तारमहीरुहेषु ।

इतः किरेषत्तव नास्ति हानिः

सिद्धयत्यभीष्टं च समस्तमस्य ॥ 4-13-21

O Daughter of the mountain! Your gracious looks are going wasted falling on the trees of the Himalayan forests. Please direct them a little towards me. You do not lose anything, but this creature benefits infinitely.

– Uma Sahasram

In the Himalayan region, the supremely high peak of Kailasa is shining pure with snow. This kingly peak is considered the abode of Siva and Parvati, and it declares to the whole world the peace loving nature of the land of Bharat. Nayana used to say that the gracious looks of Mother Parvati are the source of the spiritual glory of Adi Sankara and other great rishis who lived and are living on this holy mount Kailasa.

In such a divine and sacred atmosphere, a holy man was pouring oblation to the sun. A devotee standing nearby was witnessing the scene. Suddenly the holy man looked at the devotee and asked him to stretch out his hands. He poured some water into those hands and looked at the devotee with infinite grace.

This was a dream that a gentleman called Guntur Lakshmikantam had ten years prior to Nayana's trip to Kharagpur. He strongly resolved to himself that the same holy man of his dream should be his guru. He was the son-in-law of Akella Suryanarayana who in his later years became Jnanananda Bharati. At the time when Nayana was living in Kharagpur, this gentleman was living in Calcutta maintaining the firm belief that his guru would come to him.

Nayana resided in Kharagpur in the house of Prasada Rao. The Pontiff of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati was camping in Kharagpur at that time. Nayana went to have his darshan. Nayana used to be always in full dress, a dhoti, a shirt and an overlap. He would not change them even at meal-time. Since he had the Kapala Bheda, Nayana had discarded even the ritual dress of silk at meal-time. A man had to be in the traditional dress with no upper garment to meet the Pontiff of a Mutt. So, the attendants of Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati stopped Nayana at the gate. But the Swami saw Nayana from a distance and came out to meet him. He covered Nayana with the shawl on his own shoulder, invited him inside and made him seated. Swami arranged for a meeting of scholars and praised Nayana's greatness in tapas. Nayana sang "Ambika Gitam" in all thankfulness and prostrated before the Pontiff. The citizens of Kharagpur now understood the greatness of Nayana, and many from the elite of the town became his disciples.

Later, Nayana gave an inspiring lecture at the Indian Institute. A denizen of Calcutta, Namani Suryanarayana,

was very impressed with Nayana's lecture and invited him to Calcutta. Nayana accepted the invitation and reached Calcutta on 24-11-1934. His accommodation was arranged in the house of Guntur Lakshmikantam.

As not many people in Calcutta were acquainted with Nayana, all others except Sanjiva Rao left for their jobs in the morning. Therefore, when Nayana arrived, Srimathi Suramma, Lakshmikantam's wife, was the first person who received Nayana and looked after his needs. At noon Lakshmikantam came home and was stunned when he saw Nayana for the first time. His heart beat fast, he perspired profusely. He was speechless with wonder! This was the holy man who he saw in his dream ten years previously! The guru who appeared in the Himalayan region in a dream was now here, in flesh and blood, in front of him, in his house! Lakshmikantam regained his balance, did obeisance and asked his guest about his welfare.

He was invited by the Telugu, Tamil and Malayali societies of Calcutta. They arranged for Nayana's lectures. Nayana gave out some autobiographical points also in his Calcutta lectures. He cleared the doubts of the audience on such topics as the 'world', 'aeons of time', 'Avatara', and 'Vedas'. Many had the opportunity of learning about the life and teaching of Sri Ramana and the greatness of Ramana and of Nayana himself.

Everyday there was satsang in Lakshmikantam's house. Nayana initiated many into Indrani Mantra. He spent a happy time in Calcutta with Suramma attending to his requirements of food and other comforts.

The holy man of Lakshmikantam's dream was a dweller of the Himalayas. To clear a lingering doubt in his mind about Nayana, he one day asked him if he ever visited the Himalayas. Nayana said softly, "I come from Himalayas and you saw my abode there in your dream," and looked at him with a smile full of grace. That look immediately made Lakshmikantam's mind turn inward.

Lakshmikantam wrote Nayana's biography in Telugu and translated many of his works into Telugu. He said that the cause of all his development was Nayana's grace alone.

Nayana's disciples made arrangements for an ashram in Kharagpur for his stay. Nayana was brought to Kharagpur in the third week of August 1935. On 1-09-1935, which was the festival of Ganapati, Nayana was seated on a platform and worshipped in the building of the Andhra Pathasala. The worship was done in the regular Vedic method of inviting and sending off the god which was considered an ill omen by some. But Nayana did not mind whatever his devotees did.

Chapter 22

MAHA NIRVANA

योऽन्तस्सुखो अन्तरारामस्तथाऽन्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः ।
स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥

That yogi who is happy within himself, who is rested in himself, who is enlightened within, being Brahman himself, attains the Bliss of Brahman.

– *Bhagavad Gita, Chapter V, verse 24*

As soon as Nayana heard that Mahadeva begot a son, he went to Kaluvarai from Kharagpur. The child was named Purandara, a name of Indra. In the meantime, a site for an Ashram was procured in Kharagpur and the resident disciples of Kharagpur began to insist on Nayana's return. To oblige them, Nayana started for Kharagpur on 21-9-35.

In December 1935, the corner-stone was laid for the Ashram in Kharagpur. Many people from Calcutta attended the function. Nayana promised to return after the construction was completed and went to Calcutta along with Lakshmikantam. He stayed with him and finished thirty Chapters of the Sanskrit novel *Poorna*. The meaning for 'Viswa Mimamsa' was written down and the 'Criticism of Indian History' was partly done at this time. By then the construction of the Kharagpur Ashram construction was finished and the disciples came to Calcutta to take Nayana to Kharagpur.

Nayana entered the Kharagpur Ashram on 25-4-1936. Simhalu, son of Sivarama Sastry, came from Kaluvarai to attend on Nayana. As the house of S. Suryanarayana happened to be close to the Ashram, Nayana's food was arranged to be sent from his house. It became rather difficult for Suryanarayana to send food for two people daily. So, Simhalu started to go for Bhiksha into the town. On Saturdays, homam would be performed in the Ashram and many people used to attend it. In the evening, Nayana used to speak for a short time on various topics.

The houses of the disciples were far away and it was quite late by the time Simhalu returned from Bhiksha. Therefore, Nayana used to be alone much of the time. At that time, he could digest only liquid food, but he never told anybody of his difficulty. As a result, he got a carbuncle in his armpit. It was a diabetic carbuncle, but was treated as an ordinary abscess. Diabetic symptoms began manifesting.

One day Nayana told Suryanarayana, "I will remain here only for three months." He did not understand this remark of Nayana. 'Where will you go Sir, after the three months?' Suryanarayana asked. "I will go to get my works printed and published," said Nayana. Suryanarayana considered it as a joke.

A disciple called Manikyam wanted Nayana's horoscope to be read. "There is a period of dangerous change running, you can see it in the horoscope," said Nayana. But the disciple did not understand.

One day Nayana said, "My divine body is well assembled and separated from the gross body and is under my control. I am going to attain the Siddha Purusha state."

On 21-7-1936, Nayana was very weak. He could not get up from his bed after his afternoon nap. The doctor asked him to be given glucose. But Nayana would not sip even a drop of water. Seeing this condition, Suryanarayana got perturbed and sent a telegram to Mahadeva and informed Lakshmikantam by phone.

As Nayana's tongue became hardened he could not speak properly. Nobody knew or cared about this condition. Not even the doctor noticed it.

Mahadeva reached Kharagpur on the evening of 23-7-1936. Lakshmikantam also arrived from Calcutta along with his wife. They gave Nayana a glass of fruit juice and Mahadeva inquired, "How are you, Nayana?" with tear-brimmed eyes. Nayana smiled at them and wrote on a piece of paper, "As you have come here just now, you can have a holiday."

It was then 1 p.m. on the 24th of July, 1936. Nayana drank some fruit juice and got up. He went to the verandah to ease himself and came back. After a little while, there was a big rain shower. The roof of the hut leaked in many places. The Ashram was not cleaned properly and so was rather dirty. Lakshmikantam looked around and said, "This hut is not comfortable for you. It would be better if you shifted to the house of Parvatisam." Immediately Nayana said, "Tomorrow is Saturday. Moving out at 2-30 p.m. would be nice." Nobody understood the meaning of those words. Lakshmikantam left for Calcutta.

On 25th, Nayana looked quite jubilant. He had two easy motions and felt light in the body. But the Shakti started

rising from the base of the spine. Upto 2-15 p.m., homam was going on. Nayana got down from his cot and heard the mantras chanted.

At 2-30 p.m., Nayana lay down on his bed and closed his eyes. The cranium separated. Mahadeva cried out with great sorrow, "Father, what is your message to me?" Nayana stopped one moment before leaving the body, and said, "जप ध्यानाधिकं दैवताराधनं महामनीः Japa, dhyana and worship of the Lord are great and should be performed daily." The life of Nayana left the body through the head to the cosmos.

A great poet, mantra drashta, an emperor among yogis, a rishi and a great tapasvi, Vasishta Ganapati Muni left the body for the lap of Mother Maheswari to be steady in the state of Anamaya.

In Arunachalam, Bhagavan sat in profound silence since the morning. The next day he received a telegram informing him of Nayana's Nirvana, "Nayana has gone! Has Nayana gone? Where does he go? He has come here!" saying Bhagavan turned away to wipe a tear.

Chapter 23

SALUTATIONS TO NAYANA

श्रीमत्सर्वज्ञकल्पः सकलगुणनिधिः पूजनीयः परमात्मा
साक्षाद्विद्येशवाचस्पतिरिव सकलश्रौततत्त्वार्थवेत्ता ।
अंतेवासी महर्षेः रमणभगवतो राजयोगी तपस्वी
वासिष्ठः श्री मुनीन्द्रः जयति गणपतिः काव्यकण्ठो कनीन्द्रः ॥

A Knower of almost everything, a most virtuous man, a worshipful being, Paramatma, almost Brihaspati Himself in knowledge, knower of essence of all the Vedas, disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi, a Raja Yogi, an austere man of penance, descendent of Vasishta, a great poet, Kavyakantha Sri Ganapati Muni stands glorified!

– *Daivarata Gajanana*

A rishi is the director who establishes noble values and protects the culture of our society. Sri Ganapati Muni was the last such rishi in Bharat who tried to re-establish the degenerating culture of the Vedas. There was a divine purpose in his manifestation. The secret of the combined manifestation of Sri Ramana and Ganapati Muni is to reveal the meaning of the word tapas¹. Their relationship of guru

¹ Search within for the place where the 'I-thought' arises. The mind will subside there. That is tapas. If repeating a mantra, search for the source of the sound of the mantra and the mind will subside. That is tapas.

and sishya is a continuation of their previous births and their life reflects this relationship which is highly extolled in the Vedas.

Tapas is the goal of human life which starts with a strong aspiration to attain the goal of human life. A true human being is one who awakens the Shakti underlying in himself, attains and remains steady in Self-Knowledge. Only such a one can become a true patriot and serve his country in a selfless spirit.

'Om' is the basic sound which is the source of infinite energies. A word spoken with perfect understanding and shining with Self-knowledge has the power to produce the desired effect. The present knowledge of external phenomena is the product of the mine of knowledge inherent in many great souls. Nayana's life reflects this truth.

We see the brilliance of Adi Sankara as a teacher, demonstrated in the life of Nayana and his spirit of silence in Sri Ramana Maharshi. Nayana declared himself as the messenger of gods. Bhagavan used to say about Nayana, "When Nayana sings poetry, the gods stand in rows to hear him." Nayana was a Vachaspati (guru of the gods) and Bhagavan was the silent one. One was a Muni and the other a Maharshi.

Nayana did tapas for the welfare of his country. This truth runs throughout his poetry. In his Sanskrit novel *Poorna*, he depicted the living conditions of women in those days. Nayana could not complete it. His son Mahadeva Sastry completed this novel and named it *Satya Prabha*. It takes the reader back to the times of Srikakula Andhra Maha

Vishnu, who was the founder of Andhradesam. This story was published in a magazine four decades ago.

The philosophic works of Nayana are beacon lights. The mantra parts of his works are treatises on the methodology of worship. It is the duty of all to study his works thoroughly and improve their moral and spiritual stature. This is the best homage anyone can pay with heart and soul to this great grand master. Nayana lived for thirteen years after he attained Kapala Bhedana. The life of this rishi should be an ideal for all aspirants.

जयतु भरतक्षोणिखण्डम् विषादविवर्जितम्
 जयतु गणपस्तस्य क्षेमंविधातुमना मुनिः ।
 जयतु रमणस्तस्याचार्यो महर्षिकुलाचलो
 जयतु च तयोर्माता पूता महेशविलासिनी ॥

May the land of Bharat be rid of distress!

May Ganapati rest in glory who had this end as his goal!

May his guru Sri Ramana, the great Maharshi rest in glory!

May their Mother, the Divine spouse of Mahesvara, be glorified!

OM TAT SAT