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| Jan / Feb 1999<br>Vol.9 No.1 | <div>ॐ<br/>नमो भगवते श्री रमणाय</div> | Produced & Edited by<br>Dennis Hartel<br>Dr. Anil K. Sharma |

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## Eternal Bhagavan

by *Shantammal* - Part III

continued from the *Nov/Dec* issue

MP 3

When I first came to Bhagavan, I saw a bright light, like the sun, and Bhagavan was in the midst of it. Later on I used to see a light between my eyebrows. Once I saw a big light come out from Bhagavan's head and fill the hall. In that light everything disappeared, including Bhagavan. Only the feeling of 'I' was floating in the luminous void.

When I related these experiences to Bhagavan, he said: "Yes, such visions do occur. To know how you look you must look into a mirror, but don't take that reflection to be yourself. What is perceived by our senses and mind is never the truth. All visions are mere mental creations, and if you believe in them, your progress ceases. Inquire to whom the visions occur, who is their witness. Free from all thoughts, stay in pure awareness. Out of that don't move."

When I cooked, Bhagavan would come to the kitchen to taste the food and see whether the seasoning was just right. Once he said: "The Maharajas employ special taste experts and pay them huge salaries. I wonder what will be my pay."

"I am a beggar, Bhagavan, and all a beggar can offer is her life," I said, and Bhagavan nodded lovingly.

One of the visitors was leaving the Ashram. He stood before Bhagavan with folded hands and prayed: "I am going far away. I do not know when I shall be coming back, and if at all I shall be allowed to see your holy face again in this life. I am so much less fortunate than those who have the benefit of your constant presence. How can you help me, a sinner in a distant corner of the world, unless you think of me? I implore you, give me a place in your mind."

Bhagavan replied: "A Jnani has no mind. How can one without a mind remember or even think? This man goes somewhere and I have to go there and look after him? Can I keep on remembering all these prayers? Well, I shall transmit your prayer to the Lord of the Universe. He will look after you. It is His business."

After the devotee departed, Bhagavan turned towards us and said: "People imagine that the devotees crowding around a Jnani get special favors from him. If a guru shows partiality, how can he be a Jnani? Is he so foolish as to be flattered by people's attendance on him and the service they do? Does distance matter? The guru is pleased with him only who gives himself up entirely, who abandons his ego forever. Such a man is taken care of wherever he may be. He need not pray. God looks after him unasked. The frog lives by the side of the fragrant lotus, but it is the bee who gets the honey."

One day, when I was still new in the kitchen, I served Bhagavan with a few more pieces of potato than the rest. Bhagavan noticed it and got very angry with me. He turned his face away and would not look at those who were serving food. I could not make out the cause of his anger and wondered who it was who had offended him. The women who worked in the kitchen would collect around him to take leave of him in the evening after the work was over. Usually he would exchange a few words with us, inquire who was accompanying us, whether we had a lantern, and so on. That evening he gave me a sign to come near.

"What did you do tonight?"

"I don't know, Swami, have I done something wrong?"

"You served me more curry than others."

"What does it matter? I did it with love and devotion."

"I felt ashamed to eat more than others. Have you come all this way to stuff me with food? You should always serve me less than others."

"But, Bhagavan, how can I treat you worse than others?"

"Is this the way to please me? Do you hope to earn grace through a potato curry?"

"Out of my love for you I committed a blunder. Forgive me, Bhagavan, I shall respect your wishes."

"The more you love my people, the more you love me," said Bhagavan, and the matter was closed. A good lesson was learned and never forgotten.

Two devotees of Swami Vilakshananda, a husband and wife, came to Bhagavan. They told Bhagavan that their guru had asked them to repeat Rama's name constantly and surrender the merit of it at the guru's feet. Bhagavan laughed, and said: "If the guru takes the benefit, what remains with the devotee? It is like keeping the capital, but abandoning the interest." *Muruganar*, who was present, said: "Their guru takes the name, which the interest, and leaves the mind, which is the capital. Bhagavan robs us of both the interest and the capital." As he talked tears were flowing in a stream from his eyes.

Two women came from Kumbakonam to meet Bhagavan. One of them was a guru and the other her disciple. They were leaving by train the same evening. In the afternoon the disciple brought her guru into the Hall and made an elaborate seat for her in front of Bhagavan. Every now and then the disciple would go up to Bhagavan's sofa and whisper. "In everything, she is just like you, Swami...she is in the same state as yourself.... Please let us have your blessings.... Will you teach us briefly the path of salvation? What is attachment? How to be free from Maya?" She was going on like this for quite a long time. Bhagavan never replied. Evening was nearing. The disciple felt hurt. "Swami, please instruct us...Swami, proceed with initiation quickly, it is getting late.... Be quick, Swami. You know we have to catch the train. Hurry!" The poor lady was getting desperate. "At least tell us something. They all speak of ignorance, what is ignorance?" Bhagavan turned to *Muruganar* and, in his mercy, said: "Ask her to inquire within. Who is ignorant?" Muruganar told them: "Now you go, your initiation is over." And they went away.

Bhagavan talked about it later: "Everything must be done in a hurry. Everybody has some train to catch. They visit Swami in a rush and want to carry away a parcel of liberation. They read something here and there and think they are quite learned." (Whenever there was a chance to snub our ego, Bhagavan would never miss it). He continued: "Before the people come here, everyone has the most sincere desire to work for his own liberation, but when they settle down, the ego goes to their heads and they forget why they came. They imagine they are doing me great service by feeding me and think altogether too much of themselves. The feeling of self-importance that they have when they serve their guru destroys their hope of enlightenment. Only humility can destroy the ego. The ego keeps you far away from God. The door to God is open, but the lintel is very low. To enter one has to bend. Are you doing me greater service than the man who for years was like my shadow? What was the good of it? The same man went to court against me and got me cross-examined! Even if a trace of ego is left in the mind it will rapidly increase and ruin you spiritually."

concluded in the *Mar-Apr* issue  
from *Ramana Smrti Souvenir*, part 2, Ch.2

## 1999 Desk Calendars of Sri Ramana Maharshi

The 1999 Desk Calendar depicts seven outstanding portrait photographs of Sri  
Ramana Maharshi

which were taken by Mr. G. G. Welling of Bangalore in 1946.

It measures 9.25 inches square, showing two months on each page, with the current  
month displayed simultaneously on both the front and back of the calendar. This  
handsome calendar was professionally designed and offset printed in a limited  
edition on matte art card.

Verses from Upadesa Saram are quoted on each page.

Price: \$9.00, Plus \$2.00 Shipping

## Ellam Ondre (All is One)

continued from the *Nov/Dec* issue

This 4 part series is available as *a single article*

MP 3

In our *Sep/Oct 98* issue we documented how Sri Bhagavan took particular interest in the study of this small Tamil book, *Ellam Ondre*. Below is the fifth chapter of the text.

## Chapter V - ACTION

1. All action is God's. His power has fixed each thing into its own individual function. By His agency the insentient objects and the sentient beings do their work. All actions are His.

2. All are doing their respective work. So what has God to do with it? We will first consider the sentient beings and, later on, the insentient objects. We are sentient beings. Let us first see whose actions are ours. We all desire a higher state and work for it. But our achievements are not uniform. Sometimes the goal is the same and so is the work, but why is there a difference in the results? Here God makes us understand that the action is His. Otherwise all must be alike. The difference in the conditions cannot be accounted for. Can there be anyone who does not wish to improve his position? Whatever their intention towards others, their intention towards themselves is surely honest. The conditions of people of the same intention are yet different. This is because all actions are God's.

3. All beings have the same intention; yet their efforts are of different degrees, so also their states. After saying this, the question arises: What is effort? Is it not simply a mental image? All these images have the same origin, namely, the common intention of all. Why then should the image of effort differ in each? Here too God makes us see that all actions are His.

4. If it is said that notwithstanding the same intention, the effort can vary according to individual capacity, the question arises: What is the source of this capacity? It is of the body and mind. The environment may also affect it. One must take account of all the factors before one makes an effort. However, these factors are not under one's control so that the effort may not be equal to the task. Therefore all actions are God's.

5. Again, if it is said that the body, the mind and the environment will gradually be made equal to the task, it implies a present incapacity. This is to admit that all actions are God's.

6. Now, is it for good or bad that people do not gain their objectives? It is certainly good. Why? Most of them are selfish. Judge for yourself if their success is for the good of the world or otherwise. You may ask: Should not the attempts of the unselfish be entirely successful? Though to all appearances they may look unselfish, yet they are not free from blemishes. These depend on the ego. If the imagined unselfishness has given rise to a sense of superiority over others, God frustrates their purpose and teaches them that "You are also like others and I govern you". On the other hand, free from selfishness and free from ego is the representative of God, within whom the cloud of ego that conceals God does not exist and from whom God is ever shining forth. To such a one of true purpose (Sattva Sankalpa) all his intentions come out true. God shines forth directly in him. There is no darkness in him. Only he knows the Divine purpose as it is. Through him God fulfills the purpose of His creation. All actions are God's.

7. If it is asked: Is there not a single person of true intent? And why should not the world have all blessings in full? The answer, which is a secret, is that the sages who are aware that all actions are God's, wish to make it known to others as well. There is no greater good than to know that all actions are God's and not our own. This knowledge contains all the blessings in itself. Therefore the intention of the sages is to clearly instruct others in the knowledge of God and His actions. Even so, they do not say "Know God this very instant," but they teach the ways and means to knowledge and encourage us in right conduct-this much only. They do not say, "Be emancipated at once." Why? Because this is not possible for the common people. Nor do the sages say to God, "Liberate the people at once." Because the sages are free from the ego and think, "God knows what He should do and when to do it. What is there for me to say to Him?" Thus they wish only to do their work, without any interest in the fruits this work may produce. They have known that God alone dispenses the fruits of actions. Simply they watch the course of events in the world and do their work, never thinking of creating a world of their own. Why? To do so is a form of egoism. The creation is as it should be. Everything is in order. All actions are God's.

8. Knowing their actions are subservient to the Higher Power, how could they hope to achieve something dear to their hearts? No, they cannot. They will do their work simply as a duty. The scriptures say, "Do work, but do not think of its fruits." Just as anger unconsciously overpowers a man even though he is determined not to get angry, so also the sages of true intent (Sattva Sankalpa) may be shocked by the iniquities of the world and unwittingly think, "God, let that be made good!" If so, then it will certainly happen and good will prevail. This is the cause of some extraordinary events in the world. These extraordinary events are the results of a wish stealing into the mind of a sage. This is the law of nature. Who can change it? All actions are God's.

9. Whatever takes place, it is in the natural order of things. Also, it is right. Everything happens by His will alone. In truth, it is not wrong to think "He makes the thief steal." Why? Because at the time of punishment He also makes the thief suffer for the robbery. Thus, there should be no ill-will directed towards the thief. Such is the fruit of the knowledge that all actions are God's. Although there is no ill-will towards the thief, there is a dislike of theft. This is also the result of our knowledge that all actions are God's. How is this? Because the thief himself dislikes theft: Would he keep quiet if his own belongings were stolen by another? He would not. Who can be unaware that good is right and evil is wrong? Therefore the knowledge that all actions are God's will bring into the world an era of orderly conduct. Our knowledge does not extend further. We can repeat only what we know. We need not worry about what lies beyond our knowledge. This too is God's will.

10. One of the fruits of knowledge granted to us by God is the knowledge that all actions are God's. We are powerless to ask God, "Why do you act thus?" Because the fruits of our actions are not always according to our desire, all religions admit similar states of our powerlessness. In other words, because our powers are limited, we cannot but say that all actions are God's. The law which applies to us, applies to insentient objects also. Our law is no better than theirs. All is one. Even though some do not admit that all actions are God's, yet they admit their own incapacity. This itself is the act of God.

— Concluded in the *Mar-Apr* issue

## The Journey of My Heart

Passages from the Diary of a Pilgrim to Sri Ramanasramam

part 8, continued from *Nov/Dec, 1998*

MP 3

## January 19, 1983 - Sri Ramanasramam

Today I met again with Ramaswami Pillai and we talked for two hours.

"Do you think it is important that we live with few possessions?" I asked him.

"You must not make an effort to live with or without possessions. You must live with the conditions that prevail. The mental state alone is important. However, you must not have or be a slave to any want. Really, you only should have what is necessary for keeping body and soul together, and in good health. Also, you should not associate with all kinds of people."

Then he again spoke of the path of Self-Inquiry: "In the path of surrender, the ego can very easily remain. However, Bhagavan has said that real surrender can come only when we know, 'Who am I?'"

"You have convinced me that I must try to do Self-Inquiry in a serious way," I replied.

"I shall miss Paul and you," he said. "As a boy, I would beg our guests, 'Take me with you!' I would run down the road after them, crying, until I felt satisfied. During Bhagavan's time I would have to accompany devotees to the train. I especially loved those devotees."

This afternoon at 5 P.M., *Kunju Swami, Natesan* and I climbed the hill. Rather than follow the path to Skandasrama, we took the path to the left and sat together on a rock. Kunju Swami told me, as if a deep voice from within me spoke, "When a person follows the path of devotion, obstacles will arise." In his own life, the moment he saw Bhagavan's picture he had a great desire to come to Bhagavan. At that time, his teacher, a man with whom he was studying Kaivalya Navaneta and other works, vehemently opposed his going to Bhagavan. He even threatened that some ill would befall him if he went to Bhagavan. In course of time, the teacher had to go away and Kunju Swami without his knowing, came to Bhagavan. Ultimately, the teacher also came, realized Sri Bhagavan's greatness and entrusted Kunju Swami lovingly to Bhagavan's care.

"If your lakshya (aim or goal) is Bhagavan alone, everything else will fall into place," *Kunju Swami* emphasized, "but there will be obstacles. If your lakshya is something small or trivial, it may be missed, but if your aim is the Mountain - which is so great - you cannot miss it. Be like the Mountain - calm, immovable!

"Now, a worldly example: we have Sri Ramanasramam. While all sorts of things may happen in the Ashram, it is not run by any individual. Sri Bhagavan's divine shakti alone runs the Ashram. Similarly, in any of Bhagavan's Ashrams, no single individual runs the Ashram. Regardless of whoever may leave, Sri Bhagavan will continue His work and the Ashram will also continue.

"In this context, your attitude toward all humanity should be one of brotherhood and of natural and spontaneous friendliness. You should not hate or harbor a single bad thought for anyone, nor should you allow a single thought about whether or not someone likes you. It is completely immaterial.

"Whoever comes or goes, an Ashram established in the Name of Sri Bhagavan and Sri Arunachala must grow! There is not the least doubt about it!

"I have admired Bhagawat," he continued, "I wondered what tapasya he must have done to attract such people as you. And to send you all here! (It is remarkable!) Yet, whatever happens you must remember your Lakshya of Sri Arunachala and be calm with your mind at the feet of Bhagavan."

## January 20, 1983

Ramaswami shared with me a few details about his personal life. He came to Bhagavan at the age of 25. At the age of 31 or 32 he was living in a temple in a village when he became mad with ecstasy. He said, "It was evening about 6 o'clock when I had that first experience. I was surprised, not shocked. There was Consciousness-as though I was being told, 'This is what you sought.' It lasted only a few minutes at first. Later, the experience would return. 'What is the meaning of this coming and going of this experience,' I thought, 'I want it when I want it!' Then, I got it. I was in that state for three months. I was like a mad fellow wearing a dirty loin cloth and I didn't bathe. I wouldn't enter into any houses. If I got some hunger I would beg for food.... 'Happy' is not the word to express that state; 'Ecstatic' is also inadequate. That experience is still there with me, like an undercurrent. Some devotees came and took to Bhagavan. At that time I got the confirmation that it is 'That'. I came with only one loin cloth and ate in His presence. When I arrived he was sitting on the sofa, and it somehow appeared to me as if he was sitting there waiting for me."

"...if I am Bhagavan's devotee, to deal with me is more dangerous than to deal with Bhagavan! I may forgive, but Bhagavan will not...."

"Your business is with the thinker-not with thoughts. Whenever your attention is given to thoughts, you must return it to the thinker."

Ramaswami turned his attention to my picture of Bhagavan and said, "You may become calm and peaceful by looking into Bhagavan's eyes. In the Hall we would sit and gaze on his eyes; he would not blink. It is something like a child sucking from the mother's breast. The child is not exactly awake-it is blissful. It ingests the milk without swallowing. The mother's love is so great; the milk flows in a current to the child. In this same manner, we receive the current (of grace) from Bhagavan's eyes. Bhagavan's grace is so great, you cannot escape it!"

## January 20, 1983 - Afternoon

With bananas anduffed rice in hand I ran up to the Ashram for an ox cart pradakshina with *Kunju Swami*, Ganesan and Paul. Climbing aboard, the four of us sat cross legged: Ganesan first, then Kunju Swami, me, and Paul at the back. Side-by-side we bumped blissfully down the road.

*Kunju Swami* explained how it could be that many of Bhagavan's direct disciples, apparently out of their mind at the time of death, would be alert and clear in their recollection of Bhagavan. Moreover, they would reassure Ganesan that Bhagavan's grace was with them and they experienced the awareness of Him within.

The mere contact with Bhagavan was sufficient to awaken Divine Knowledge in a person. *Kunju Swami* said, "Knowledge of the world is a separate thing, which may be affected at the time of death. The inner awakening might not be apparent during one's life due to the person's vasanas. Particularly in one's last days many vasanas may have to come forth. The mind may become irrational, but it is the finite mind."

Kunju Swami reassured us, "Don't think that because you didn't see Bhagavan in the body that same inner awakening has not occurred to you. It is written, even to think of Arunachala assures one of liberation! But, for thinking of Arunachala, YOU do not get the credit!" He was speaking in a playful, exuberant vein. "Not Arunachala makes the person remember Him. Such is the power and greatness of Arunachala that even! the most ignorant person, once having known of it, will have to think at least once a day of Arunachala."

*Kunju Swami* continued his encouraging overflow: "Once a person has come to Bhagavan, he cannot escape! In the *Marital Garland of Letters*" Bhagavan wrote, 'I had but thought of you as Arun, and lo! I was caught in the net of your grace. Can the web of your grace ever fail, Oh Arunachala?' In Tamil, the emphasis here is on the fact that the net of Bhagavan's grace 'cannot' be escaped!"

"I am very happy and content to be caught in the net of His grace," I said. Kunju Swami laughed.

— continued in the *Mar/Apr* issue.

## Ramana Satsangs

Satsangs with recitations, songs, readings and meditation have been going on in a few places near or in large cities. Some of them are weekly. If you would like to attend any of these, please see the *Sri Ramana Satsang online* pages.

*"The Maharshi"* is a free bimonthly newsletter distributed in North America by *Arunachala Ashrama*, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Center. You can subscribe to this newsletter's announcements *by email*. All back issues are available as *html pages* and in *Acrobat PDF* format from 2000 to the present. *Books, images, videos* and *audio CDs* on Sri Ramana Maharshi can also be found in the *eLibrary*, the *On-line Bookstore* pages and the Ashrama's *YouTube* channel.

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