



THE RAYS OF GRACE

(An Account of a Devotee's Experiences with her Guru)

Rohini Krishnakumar hails from Elakkadu near Palghat in Kerala. This is her first book. This account of her Gurudev (Parama Pujya Sri Shantananda Puri Maharaj of Vasishtha Guha, Himalayas) shows how intensely she was devoted to her Guru even before she ever set her eye on him. Her emotional account of her search for her specific Gurudev from the time she came across the latter's book "Fragrant Flowers" will certainly take any reader to experience vicariously the stages of agony she had passed through by not being able to know the whereabouts of the author of the book "Fragrant Flowers".

The second portion of the book deals with various miracles-like experiences in the post - initiation period of Rohini. Really speaking, the so called miracles are the result of the immense faith and the intense devotion the author had towards her Guru.

If nothing, by reading such incidents, one's faith in God or the ultimate Supreme Being certainly gets strengthened. This book is sure to make their longing for Guru/God more and more intense.



ROHINI KRISHINAKUMAR

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THE RAYS OF GRACE - An account of a Devotee's
Experiences with her Guru

© Publisher

First Edition : October 2012

Publisher :

**Parvathamma C.P. Subbaraju Setty
Charitable Trust**

13/8, Pampa Mahakavi Road,
Shankarapuram, Bangalore - 560 004

Design & Printing :

Omkar Offset Printers

No. 3/3, 1st Main Road, New Tharagupet,
Bangalore - 560 002

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SAMARPANA

*This book is dedicated
With veneration to
the Lotus Feet of my Revered Guru*

H.H. Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj

Of Vasishta Guha, Himalayas

► CHAPTER - 1

It is very easy to understand the word meaning of 'GURU' but the actual meaning is much beyond the reach of definitions. Especially these days it isn't difficult to have a guru but having a guru who has surpassed the ocean of 'samsara' is definitely very difficult. Writing about one's guru is surely not easy as it requires the guru's special grace. One should be able to convince the reader and at the same time realize within as to how great it is to have a 'GURU'. However the delight and the sense of security that a disciple enjoys on reaching his guru is something which cannot be portrayed by mere words. What else can bring in more relief to you than 'waking up' while having a night mare? Similarly there is nothing in this universe which is capable of granting you the happiness that can compensate the bliss that you enjoy from the Master. Guru's teachings are one and the same to all his disciples and it is the disciple's duty to have an open heart to accept what his guru gives.

We cannot predict when and how God will choose us to be His own. It can happen at any moment for anybody. There are no fixed entrance tests for his acceptance. Guru is God himself. It's beyond words and feelings and one has to realize it with his own experiences. This is exactly like the condition of a pregnant woman. Before the delivery, she has so many doubts and anxieties and no explanations can make her understand the pain. But after the delivery, no questions about it remain. Now she knows!

Now, you might be thinking, 'is it really that happy to have a guru?' Well, my answer is that, believe in it strongly and pray to God. He will definitely give you that paradise. To be frank, I never had the intention of writing about my Gurudev, as I believe, to write about one's guru, one has to know him completely, not his biography, but his real nature. I consider myself fortunate in getting a chance to taste little drops of sweetness from his honey bag. That single drop is more than enough for me to realize how great my Gurudev is.

“My Lord, pranams at your holy feet! This disciple does not want anything else other than you. I have heard, one has to do tapasya to have darshan of God

but you came before me without making me face any such hardships.....”

It really makes me wonder when I think of how God played a wonderful drama in my life. Just as my Gurudev used to say about him, I being a villager was not aware of ‘guru’, ‘shishya’ etc. but I was very much attached to lord Krishna.

I studied in an ordinary Malayalam medium school and until I met my Gurudev, I never even tried speaking a sentence in English properly. “swamiji, I don’t know to talk and write English fluently” was the initial sentence I told my Gurudev when I met him for the first time. But within an hour I came to know that language is never a barrier between a guru and a disciple. He taught me that guru never judges a person looking at his family background, academic skills or wealth. Guru’s eyes will always be on our true nature and one cannot cheat him listing out his materialistic achievements. Guru knows everything even though he never tells,” I know everything...”

I write this, neither for gaining anything nor for creating an impression in you that I am a great sadhaka. The pleasure that I enjoy now is much more

than what words can express. I really feel the difficulty in picturing my Gurudev in such a small way as it is just like trying to take the whole water of ocean in a small pot. Even then, let me now start the story of my journey towards my guru....



► CHAPTER - 2

I would not say that reading was my hobby in childhood. I read books not because it was my hobby; I was not left with any other option. I was the only child of my parents and in those days, children were not having so much to study. I had plenty of time. My father and his brother were having all kinds of books and I started reading them just for the sake of passing time. More than that, in those days, my mother had to read some holy book to her mother-in-law for one hour every night. Mostly, life history of some great mahatmas like Sri Ramakrishna paramahansa, Nityananda swamiji of Bombay, Shirdi sai baba etc. were mostly read. By nature, I am not a brave person and sleeping alone was a nightmare for me. So I had to wait for my mother to finish reading. God compelled me to listen to all these and slowly I too enjoyed listening to the miracles which the holy men performed. Once, I happened to visit a festival which was usually held in a temple that was next to my house. Adjacent to the

temple, there was an open ground and many games were conducted for children and immediately after praying, all children were found to be in the ground playing games and buying bangles and balloons from the shops which were set up in connection with the festival. In one shop, I saw many photographs of birds, film stars, gods and goddesses etc. and the game was that, we should turn behind and throw a coin. The photograph on which the coin landed would be given to us. I had three coins with me and wanted to try playing it. I threw the coins thrice and got photographs of Sri Rama Krishna Paramahansa, lord Krishna and Shirdi sai baba. I felt very happy as I knew about all of them much before receiving their photographs. I carried these photos home, covered the three sides of my study table with paper and placed the photos on the table. That became my temple and I started worshipping them with an expectation that I too would have some experiences that are miraculous. I was very talkative in my childhood. So my father's mother gave me punishment that daily I should sit along with her in pooja room praying until she completed her pooja and japa. I never kept quiet even there. I started talking to the photos of gods and goddesses in the pooja room. Later on, this habit became my main sadhana. Faith

and experiences are the two sides of the same coin. If your faith is very strong, surely God will provide you with instances to increase your faith. Without faith, you cannot make a single step towards your guru. I can list out hundreds of incidents that have happened in my life which have increased my trust in my guru. But I don't think there is any need to explain those now as I am writing this not to tell about my life, but about my journey towards my guru.

“Oh Gurudev, how lucky I am to have you as my guru! My lord, pranams at your holy feet....”

As I mentioned earlier, we cannot predict how god will create a situation. When the time comes, surely he sends somebody to show the path. In my case, the god's messenger came in the form of my daughter's music teacher, Mr. S, from whom I came to know about my Gurudev. Mr.S was the disciple of Late Poojya Satchidananda Swamiji of Kanhangad. He too being spiritual, used to spend hours with our family after every music class, talking about J. Krishnamoorti's talks whom he admired and I could hear the cream of Vedanta, Upanishad etc. from him at a very young age itself. He used to encourage me to read selected books of J. Krishnamoorthi, Bhagavan

Ramana, Nissargadatta Maharaj etc. and I would pass my time reading those books from his collection. In later years, my husband was working in Muscat and after leaving my daughter in the school I was absolutely free from all work so that I could spend most of my time reading.

One day, Mr. S, came to my house with a paper which was an application form for studying yoga in Shivananda Ashram in Rishikesh, Himalayas. As he was not very good in English, he wanted my father to fill the form and asked all of us to pray that his application gets selected. In another two weeks or so, he came to know that his application was selected and informed us about the good news. The day before he left for Rishikesh, he came to my house and spent a little time with us. He took everybody's blessings as it was his first trip to the Himalayas. When my turn came I asked him, "What will you bring for me from Himalayas?" He asked back, "What do you want? Rudraksha? Or any special photo?" I still remember my reply. I told him that I wanted something special and not any of those he listed. He laughed and said, "Oh, something special? What can that be? Pray to God. If He gives me something special, I shall surely

give that to you.” I do not remember whether I prayed for that ‘special gift’ which I asked him but God did not forget to send a special gift for me through him and later through that gift, He himself came to me in the form of my GURU.

After returning from the Himalayas when he came for teaching music he gave us a detailed description about his daily events in the Himalayas. Days passed by and everyone almost forgot about his trip. One day, when he was about to leave I suddenly asked him, “Hey, you didn’t get me anything from the Himalayas. I had asked you to get something special.” He looked at me and laughed. Without giving me an answer he left. Usually the music class was once in a week only but the very next day he came to my house with a book. I thought he came to meet my father to discuss about some book in his usual way. But without talking much to others he came to me and gave the book in my hands and told, “I only have this book as something special from the Himalayas.” I asked him as to why he felt that particular book was so special. Slowly he started narrating an incident which he had never mentioned earlier though he had shared with us a detailed account of each day’s programme of his trip.

He told us that after reaching Rishikesh he could see so many sanyasins wearing ochre colour dress and in his initial days he did namaskar to each one but soon realised that it is simply not possible to do it as he couldn't do it. So he decided to do pranams by bending the head.

One day, while he was going for a morning walk he could see a sanyasi walking towards him and the brightness in the sanyasi's face attracted him so much that he was forced to do sashtanga namaskara before the swamiji. Mr. S told me that the smile on Swamiji's face was something so special and his appearance also seemed to be different from other sanyasins. He told me that this swamiji blessed him and when he was about to take his leave, the swamiji took a book from his bag and presented it to him. That very evening, the Shivananda Ashram authorities had arranged for a satsang exclusively for their yoga students and they were informed that a great mahatma had agreed to deliver a speech and it would be their good fortune to listen to him. All students lined up for welcoming swamiji and Mr.S told me that he was astonished when he saw the mahatma's face as it was the same swamiji whom he met in the morning. He noted that the entire

ashram authorities were giving a lot of respect to the swamiji. Mr. S then told me, “I only got this book in a special way, so I wanted to present this book to you....” But Mr. S did not tell me that the book which the swamiji gave was written by swamiji himself. Now I can say that it was really a special gift because in all these years which I spent with my Gurudev, I have never seen him carrying his books anywhere and rarely he used to present his book to an unknown person. So it makes me believe strongly that my Gurudev sent his book especially for me. It is my Gurudev who caught me even before I knew anything of him.

“My lord, I do not know how to express my gratitude to you. If only you had not sent your book, it would have taken me many long years to reach you. But I am absolutely sure that one way or the other you would have made me reach you because for how long a time a seeker can be kept separated from his Master? My lord, pranams at your holy feet.



► CHAPTER - 3

With this elaborate introduction, I took the book from him. I read the name of the book, ‘FRAGRANT FLOWERS’. The title gave little surprise to me. Usually spiritual books have peculiar headings which will either be the name of some god or name of their Master or something related to Vedanta. ‘FRAGRANT FLOWERS’...yes!! The name was absolutely apt for the book. You cannot have any substitute for that name because through this book the reader gets the divine fragrance of God and that fragrance will haunt the real reader so much that he/she will begin the search to find out the source of the fragrance.

I just opened the book and the page having the Swamiji’s photo came to me. I looked at HIM.....

I never felt it was Just a photo. I cannot explain what my feelings were at that time. The entire body was filled with happiness. Tears rolled from my eyes;

I totally forgot everything about myself for a while. I immediately rushed through the book and took the last page and made sure that swamiji was still alive. Because usually such books reach only after the Maha Samadhi of the author. But to my luck, I noticed that swamiji was still alive!! I felt extremely joyful and I asked myself as to why I was feeling so much happiness without reading even a single sentence of the book. I didn't know anything about him but I could feel that my mind had completely surrendered itself before him. This was not the first time I have read a spiritual book. Still why did I feel so much enthusiasm? Telling all these things to myself, I once again opened the book and was surprised when I got the same page containing his photo. Once again all those feelings came back to me in just a single sight! Well, how can I explain it more? May be it was the play between the guru and disciple. Guru was pouring his love through the photo and without knowing anything the disciple was enjoying the bliss.

Without meeting him personally, without hearing any of his lectures, without reading even a single sentence of his book, I told Him – “You are my Gurudev. I want you as my Gurudev. You should accept me as your

disciple” and I bowed at his feet. I didn’t know that it was so difficult to have a guru like him then. Due to my ignorance, even before analysing as to what quality factors I should have to have a Mahatma like him as a guru, I demanded from God for getting swamiji as my guru. But God was so benevolent that he ultimately granted my desire....you might think, Did God grant me my desire the next day....no, never!! Each day, each second, my urge to see my Gurudev increased. I forgot everything else, The entire body and mind forced me to pray for just one thing ‘Show my Gurudev’.

My eyes were always on the photo of my Gurudev. My Mind was always praying to him. Perhaps, the habit of communicating to God by talking to the photograph was a training given to me by Lord in my earlier days due to which I could easily reach out to my Gurudev by looking at his photo. I began loving him so deeply and started reading the book. It was a short autobiography of my Gurudev. Throughout the book I enjoyed his devotion and love for his guru. I noticed how a guru was taking care of his disciples. Each line was a teaching for me and I gained everything from the book. Every sentence filled me with bliss and I myself did not know when I finished the book. Even

now, when I am filled with sorrow or doubts, I open the book and I get all the answers matching with my situation. It is just like a bible for me. I do not remember exactly how many times I have read this book. My voyage through the book was such that I felt as if I too was meeting all the mahatmas mentioned in the book. My longing for meeting my Gurudev increased day by day. In his book he had not mentioned where he would be available if anyone wanted to meet him.

I kept praying to Gurudev and sometimes quarreled with him. I asked his photo, “You have written in your book that if you have so much longing to see the Guru, the latter will come to your door step. Then where are you?” I did everything like a hysterical person but in front of everyone I acted normal. Each second I cried, prayed and argued within my mind. Those days I kept “Fragrant Flowers” with me always. Swamiji’s photo gave me all the courage to search for him. Sometimes I felt that it was not a mere photo. I spent my nights looking at his face in torch light. Days passed by and I decided to search for Gurudev’s other books in nearby libraries.



► CHAPTER - 4

In Palakkad, there is a branch of Sri Ramansramam whose founder was Swami Sureshananda (much later I came to know that Swami Sureshananda had taken sanyasa from my gurudev's guru, swami Purushothamanandaji maharaj) Before leaving for the ashram I opened the book and prayed to the photo, "Swamiji I am going to search for your book. If you are really hearing my prayers I should get a proof of it in the form of one of your books. If I don't get any proof I am ready to accept that you will not accept me as your disciple". But again I added, 'Gurudev, please don't let down my faith in you. I want to be your disciple.' I prostrated again and again before his photo and left for the library.

The ashram was 20km away from my house and throughout the journey I kept praying for getting a proof. Otherwise, I will have to accept that he is not my guru which was heart breaking for me. I reached the ashram in half an hour. It was a small ashram

but very peaceful. For a moment, I felt ashamed of myself for not making a visit to that ashram all those years though I had passed by the ashram gate several times. I begged for pardon from Bhagavan Ramana. I stood in front of Bhagavan's photo and looked into his smiling face and prayed, "Bhagavan, I have heard that you are the guru of all gurus. I too like you a lot. But unfortunately, you are not there in your physical form. I want a guru who is alive. In a number of books I have read about disciples' memoirs about their gurus and I too like to spend few days with my guru. Bhagavan, I think I got my guru but he also should accept me. I know nothing.....Please help me to get him."

Filled with tears I did namaskar to him and also to the photograph of Swamiji Sureshananda and entered into the ashram library.

I enquired for the man in charge of library and asked him regarding the procedure for borrowing a book. There again, I got a negative response. He told me that it was the ashram policy, not to lend any books for an unknown person and I did not have any membership of the ashram library. He gave me permission for reading any book I choose but I wasn't given the permission to borrow the book. I told him that I was from a distant

village and sitting in the library and reading would make me getting delayed in reaching home. Even then he denied the permission. I prayed once again to Bhagavan and gave my last try. I told the librarian about my father-in-law who was his friend and luckily that worked. He agreed to lend me one book with the condition that I was to return it in two days.

He led me to another room which was quite big. It was filled with huge cupboards. He unlocked about three to four cupboards and gave me a sheet containing the list of books from which I could choose. If I were to choose from the sheet, it would take me two days just to make a choice so I gave up that idea. He stood next to me and asked me to make my choice quickly. I can never forget that moment....!! I asked myself, “how will I find my Gurudev’s book from this bulk?” I closed my eyes and I could see Swamiji’s face very clearly in my mind. I prayed to him, “Gurudev, without seeing the books, I am going to touch a book. It should be yours my lord. Please don’t leave me. I want you as my Gurudev. “For a moment all the mahatmas I had heard about and read in books came to my mind and I pleaded with them to help me. I touched a book!!!! Even now, I can feel at the tip of my finger the size of

that book. I opened my eyes and took the book. It was a very old book which hardly had a proper book cover. It neither had the front page nor the back page.

Papers were brown in colour and it was a book written in Malayalm....I decided for myself, “It cannot be Gurudev’s book. He has not given me a proof.” I was in utter grief. I somehow managed to get out of that room. The man in charge asked me to sign a few papers. With extreme difficulty I did everything and managed to maintain my face away from all as tears were flowing and I could not control myself.

When I reached home I literally threw the book to a corner and rushed to the photo. I felt as if he was laughing at me. I was extremely frustrated and felt like a loser. I told him that henceforth I will never look at his face and I will not touch his book also. I kept the book little away from me and I really felt the pain of parting. I closed my eyes and slowly tried to convince myself that he was not my guru but.... I failed to do it. It was only his face which came to my mind and felt as though he was telling me to go and see the book which I borrowed. Two to three times, the same command came to me and I could see myself asking him back, “how can it be? It is in Malayalam. You

don't know Malayalam. Then how is it possible?" But the command came strongly, "Go and see the book. Talk after that."

I rushed to take the book and started reading. Out of my anxiety I didn't go page by page. I was searching for the author and found that it was my Gurudev's guru, swami Purushothamanandaji maharaj's autobiography, 'ISHWARA KARUNYAM'. I was so thrilled. What more proof I wanted? Even though I didn't get his book, he gave me the book of his guru. I kept the book along with Swamiji's photo and did namaskar. Praying to my gurudev's guru, I told him, "Guru maharaj, my pranams to you. From my gurudev's book I have read that you were so compassionate and loving. Moreover I have read about your attitude towards your disciples, caring, so loving. I believe your disciple will be like you. To my bad luck, I have not still met him. Please bless me to get him, Maharaj. He should accept me as his disciple." Till the day I met my Gurudev I prayed daily to Maharaj.

After getting Maharaj's autobiography I had a feeling that my guru had accepted me. Few days passed with extreme happiness. But this could not last for long. Slowly the pain of separation came to me

again. I thought of all the possible means to contact my guru. There was no address, phone number and I knew nothing about him. I discussed with all my family members but no one could give a positive advice as to what could be done next. One evening I was enjoying the cool breeze and nice climate and had ‘Fragrant flowers’ in hand. I simply opened the book and suddenly my eyes stuck on a phone number along with an address. The address was that of Mr. P.S. Venkatesh Babu, Omkar Offset Printers of Bangalore. Till then, even though the book was with me all the time I had not noticed anything except Swamiji’s photo and of course his writings. I was sure that the person whose address was given in the book would not know Malayalam due to which I requested my father to have a talk with Mr. P.S. Venkatesh Babu and enquire about Swamiji. When my father was talking over the phone I was extremely anxious, hoping for a positive reply. But there again I could not catch hold of Swamiji so easily. Mr. Babu told my father that he did not have any idea about where Swamiji would be and neither did he have any contact address or phone number as Swamiji was a wandering monk. He promised that he would surely let us know if he gets any information about Swamiji. My mind was once again taken back

to the same old position. After about two to three days I again persuaded my father to contact Mr. Babu. But the reply remained the same. Later, even though I tried persuading my father to make a call, he refused saying that there should be a limit for everything. Now I just had a single choice which was to ring up Mr. Babu myself. I gathered some confidence and contacted Mr. Babu. Even now I am not sure what I spoke and how I spoke to him. Naturally, he could make out that I was having a lot of difficulties to converse in English. But the unforgettable attitude of him is highly admirable. He kindly convinced me that he would let me know where Swamiji was if at all he gets any information. Several times I called Mr. Babu but he never showed any resentment in answering me. I wish to mark my sincere gratitude and pranams to him.

More than a year passed away. I am leaving the freedom to the readers to imagine my mental situation. I had no assurance that I would be able to meet swamiji. But at the same time I was very confident and had faith on my guru which impelled me to continue the search for him.



► CHAPTER - 5

One day around ten in the morning I heard my phone ringing. From the very ‘HELLO’ which the voice said, I could make out that it was none other than Mr. P.S. Venkatesh Babu. With utmost excitement I asked him, “Did you get any information about Swamiji?” His ‘YES’ gave me a second life. He said, I just came to know few minutes back that the Swamiji is in Sri. Ramanasram at Tiruvannamalai. But he is in absolute silence (maunam); even if you go, he will not talk. It is up to you to decide whether to go or not.” I thanked him from the bottom of my heart and apologized to him for all the troubles I had caused. I do not have words to express my gratitude to him. Without his immense help I do not know how much more time it would have taken to meet my guru. My humble pranams to him.

As soon as I kept down my phone I rushed to my father asking him to take me to Sri Ramanasramam. My entire body was thrilled and filled with happiness and

enthusiasm. But he refused saying that it was simply not possible to make a sudden visit to Ramanasram, giving me three reasons. Firstly, he did not have enough money and that day being Sunday it was not possible to withdraw cash (we used to keep only limited amount in the house). Secondly, we had not reserved any tickets for our journey. Thirdly, the most important one was that it was mandatory to seek permission from the ashram for providing accommodation well in advance. I could understand the reasons behind his refusal but I said, “Lord has given me excellent food and bed and kept me in luxury for the entire 365 days. I don’t mind starving and sleeping in the street if required for getting my Gurudev”. However, my father was not ready to accept all those reasonings and told me that he was not ready to take the risk. I told him that I could arrange for the required money by borrowing cash from my neighbour. My father was shocked on hearing that and readily rejected my idea saying that all these years we had never borrowed money from any one and it was shameful to ask someone else for money. I justified my point saying that since we had never borrowed money all these years, they can easily understand the urgency of the situation and would definitely help us.

Before even listening to my father's reply, I rushed to my neighbour.

I told my neighbour about the situation and he gave me the required amount without a single question. I had successfully crossed my first hurdle with the grace of God. Even then my father was not ready to take any risk and told me that I could leave for the ashram along with his friend Mr. Bhaskaran if he was willing to take me. This gave me a lot of hope as I was very sure that Mr. Bhaskaran would definitely accompany me. I rang him up and without any second thoughts he readily agreed to take me to the ashram but asked me to get the permission from my husband as well. That embarrassed me a little as I was very sure that my husband would never say NO to my desires and especially for this one. He had always given me immense freedom to do whatever I wished. Without his strong support it would have been impossible for me to reach my lord.

I informed my husband about the situation and told him that I would be leaving along with my father's friend. He was equally thrilled on hearing that I could finally meet Swamiji and asked me to get started soon without any delay. I felt proud of him and expressed

my gratitude to Bhagavan for having given me a wonderful person as a companion in this life. Seeing my happiness and eagerness, my daughter aged about 10 years expressed her wish to come along with me. Later my father and mother also decided to join us. The house was filled with anxiety about going for a trip. My daughter and mother were engaged in packing required things and my father and his friend left for reserving tickets. I pinched myself and asked, “Is this real or a dream? Am I going to meet my Gurudev at last?” I stood in front of the photograph of Bhagavan Ramana and looked into his eyes and the smiling face. I told him, “Bhagavan, since many years I have heard about you and the sacred Tiruvannamalai. Now I am going to reach there....I never thought I would be able to meet my Gurudev in your abode. I consider that this is your blessing and you are going to give me my guru.”

Deep inside there was still a tinge of worry about getting rejected by Gurudev. At the same time I was confident that he would accept me. Just like what you might be thinking now, I too was wondering as to how I was getting contradictory feelings at the same time!! My father was still worried about the accommodation

but I somehow managed to convince him and asked him to have faith on ‘God’. When the lord has solved two problems which my father listed, will he not solve this one also for me? I firmly believed that my Gurudev will show me a way.

We reached the railway station one hour before the scheduled time. It would be very true if I say that I was not in this world at all. I was not aware of anything that was happening around me. For the first time I felt as if I was not in the body. My Body was performing all the work assigned for it in a mechanical way and I was lost in the thought of my Gurudev. What will be his first word to me? How will I tell him all these? Just as I read in “Fragrant Flowers” about my Guru’s meeting with his Gurudev will he also ask me why I took one and a half years to reach him? Thoughts made me land in an imaginary world. I could not sleep even for a minute in train. I somehow wanted to reach him. I felt that my watch was going slow and the speed of the train was also slow.

By 11.30 am we reached TIRUVANNAMALAI. This was in May 2000 that I touched this holy place!! I bowed to Arunachaleswara inwardly and took a little mud and put it on my head. This was the sacred land....

Bhagavan Ramana's land. I had heard that so many siddha purushas lived in Tiruvannamalai and they are still there somewhere invisible to our eyes. I imagined Bhagavan's giri pradakshina also. Finally we reached the ashram gate. Oh! What a joyful moment that was. Every grain of sand there had got the fortune of Bhagavan's paada sparsha. That very thought stopped me for a while. I could see a large photograph of Bhagavan with the Arunachala hill in the back ground. I felt that Bhagavan was still there and my eyes started searching for my Gurudev. Quickly I covered all the corners of the front yard. We entered the ashram office room. I stood outside with a motionless mind.

As expected, we were denied accommodation in the ashram as we did not give prior information. I heard the rest of them discussing about the other possible ways available for staying. I was not in a position to pay attention to all that. Little did the words fall into my ears. Without telling anything to anybody I stepped inside the Samadhi hall. I walked closer towards the statue of Bhagavan....tears started rolling down from my eyes. I felt a special happiness which I had never experienced till then in my life. I prayed, "Bhagavan, I am coming to you for the first time travelling all

the way from Kerala and you wish that I should not be given a room in your ashram? It is equally O-K. I accept whatever you give as your Prasad.” I prostrated before him and came out of the hall.

I could see my companions waiting for me. We took our baggage and decided to leave. Just as we moved three or four steps, we heard someone calling out for us by clapping hands. We rushed to him and he said, “Since you all have come for the first time, we do not wish to deny you accommodation. We have a room but there are no cots or beds. If you all are willing to adjust in a single room with mat and pillow, we can give you the key.” We all agreed readily without any second thought. With Bhagavan’s grace, I had crossed all the three hurdles. We moved towards the room allotted for us and quickly started getting ready to get back to the ashram and see the swamiji. Once again God gave me a clear proof that if only we have faith in Him, He will never let us down. I thanked Bhagavan for granting me permission to stay in the ashram for three days. In my later years, the Ashram used to grant me more than twenty one days at a time. My thousand pranams at your holy feet....



► CHAPTER - 6

In an hour, we were all back in the ashram. We decided to enquire about Swamiji in the ashram office. What was his room number? How can we meet him? etc. I remember entering the office room with my ‘Fragrant Flowers’ in hand. I opened the page carrying the photo of Swamiji and showed it to a man sitting in the front office. As soon as I showed, he arranged for a small boy to take us to Swamiji’s room. We all followed the boy. All were walking ahead of me. I crept like a snail. I could hear the rhythm of my heart. I felt a total blankness. The boy led us to a small room and said that it was locked and he did not know where swamiji had gone.

I thought in my mind, “This is the room where my guru stays”. In my heart, I did namaskar to the place. I could see cottages here and there when I looked around. Even the trees, flowers and leaves seemed so perfect there! What a beautiful place!! Meanwhile, all others decided to get back to Samadhi hall. I just

examined the door once again. It was written 'A2' (that time Swamiji was staying in room number A2 but in the following years he has shifted to A1.) His glowing face came to my mind. I told him, "Gurudev, I thought you would be waiting for me....after one and a half years, when the long awaited moment comes, I see the door closed. Are you giving me an indication that the door to me will never be opened?" Thoughts filled my eyes with tears. By then, my parents began asking me to go along with them to the Samadhi hall. They did not understand what was passing in my mind, though I was in front of the closed door. But I felt that my guru was inside the room and I was standing out pleading with him to open the door.

In temples, for certain pujas, the doors leading to the Lord would remain closed and the devotees anxiously wait outside for the doors to open and have the darshan of the Lord. We will be sure that the doors would certainly open after a while. But here, I do not have any guarantee that the door towards my guru would open similarly...there is absolutely no fixed time for it to open and accept the seekers as his disciples; so, naturally, the eagerness and prayer was definitely double than usual.

For some reason the desperate condition of my mind was washed off and my eyes were stuck on a small paper placed in between the door knob. It was kept in such a way that it could not be spotted so easily by people. I took the paper and it said, “Sorry I am going out for my personal work. We will meet at sharp 5.30 pm”. I read the message several times. The first message from my Gurudev! I showed the paper to my companions and they asked me to place it back. But I was sure that it was for me and took it along with me. In my later years with my Gurudev I had found that usually he never left any kind of message at the door step for anyone when he went out.

We decided to go for giri pradakshina in an auto rickshaw in order to spend time until it was 5.30. I desired to remain at the door step waiting for Gurudev but I was compelled to go along with others. We set out for pradakshina from the main gate of Sri Ramanasrama. The driver was a pleasing man and he explained each spot very clearly. My mind kept thinking about meeting Swamiji. Though my eyes were looking at various objects nothing was registering in my mind. As the vehicle was moving, I saw a bright light. I could not see anything other than the light and slowly Swamiji was visible in the light, coming from the opposite side.

There was definitely some extraordinary attraction in his face and I got only a glance of him. I recognized his form. For the past many days and nights I had looked at this form in the photo. Throughout these days without wasting a single moment I prayed for seeing this form. I begged in front of all known and unknown mahatmas for their blessings just to have this darshan. For a moment I felt like jumping off the vehicle but I managed to remain seated. Silently, I did pranams to him and touched his feet firmly and prayed, “Gurudev, it is going to be 5.30 and we are going to meet. Please do not say that you cannot give me diksha”. My Heart was choked with heaviness. Fortunately, My companions were not attentive to all those except my daughter. At all times her eyes would be on me. Till that day, she had been noticing her mother’s restlessness. Late in the nights, she used to sit along with me though she did not know what for I was praying and crying. She gave her company by asking simple questions without disturbing me. Sometimes, I noticed that she too sat by my side closing her eyes. Always it was impossible for me to do anything without her knowledge.

As soon as I saw Swamiji, I asked the driver to take us back to ashram. He told us that it wasn’t good to stop the pradakshina half away but I somehow convinced

everyone and returned to the ashram. My mind and body were in some sort of delight which I had never experienced before and even after. My parents went for buying some fruits for swamiji but I did not feel like getting anything and stood there empty handed. My thought process had clogged after seeing his form. In other words, I felt that I was detached from my body.

As Swamiji had mentioned in the paper, exactly at 5.30 we reached in front of his room. Through a grilled window I peeped inside and saw him sitting on a cot. Hearing the sound of the footsteps from outside, he suddenly got up and came forward to welcome us. His face was radiant with joy and peace. His warm and generous smile and the brilliant penetrating eyes made me feel that I had at last reached my lord! Without closing my eye lids for a second, I stood staring at him. I felt he was looking at everyone else other than me. The rest of them did namaskar to him except me and my daughter. I went near him and very much wanted to touch his feet. Deep inside I told, “Gurudev, when once I catch your feet it would be impossible for me to take my hands off your feet.” Even while I did namaskar he did not pay any attention. His eyes were on others. I felt very sad and begged him in my heart, “Please look at me my lord.at least may I have your

nayana diksha. Why are you so cruel to me? Can't you recognize me?" My mind was constantly talking to him but he did not show any signs of knowing all that. I told within myself, "However much you may ignore me I will not leave you. If you don't accept me I will be here till you give me diksha" and I kept quiet.

Just in the same way as I felt, my father also noted that swamiji did not look at me at all. So he told him, "Swamiji, it is because of my daughter that we are here today. She read one of your books, 'Fragrant Flowers' and wanted to meet you." Even then he ignored me. Suddenly he took a piece of paper which was lying behind him and wrote something. He looked at me and called me near him by action and directly handed over the paper to me.

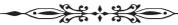
That particular moment I experienced the height of happiness and full of anxiety I did namaskar to him and took the paper. I read the lines and it said, "Lord Guruvayoorappan is always with you and protecting you...." He wrote to me a blessing to fill the soul with utmost happiness. I took a paper and wrote, "swamiji, I don't know to speak English fluently, still I want to speak to you. I remember your meeting with your Gurudev...." Reading that he laughed like a small

child. Even now I wonder how he was able to laugh with so much innocence and charm. Again he wrote to me, “Tell me what you want? Big job, money, fame, position etc. ask me whatever you want”. I replied, “My lord, I thank you for offering all these but I only want you as my guru. This is my humble request and I do not want anything else”. Reading that he again laughed loudly and suddenly became serious. He started writing the reply for me. Meanwhile, others were sitting still and my father asked me curiously as to what jokes I was writing to that were making Swamiji laugh. I kept quiet as I was not in position to reply. They did not know that I was demanding diksha from Swamiji and I was only after it. By then Swamiji had finished writing and given me the paper. He had written, “Guru is not a body. There is no need to search for a guru outside. He is within you”. It was a teaching and I understood that he was trying to convince me that there was no need for diksha. That very thought made me cry. Seeing my grief, he looked at me with all love. Even now I cannot forget that ‘Karunya bhava’ flow of compassion from the heart.

I realized that he was everything for me. My Lord had come to me in the form of my guru. What else do I want other than this? I decided then and there that

if at all I have a guru, It should be him. If not, I do not want a guru in any of my future births. There was no one to substitute him in my heart. My mind completely surrendered itself at his feet. I wrote, “Swamiji, I agree with whatever you have written as I do not understand any of those. I only know that I want you as my guru. It is fine if you cannot give me diksha now but I will not leave from here until you give it to me”. He turned his attention from me and started conversing with others through writing. Time passed and it was almost the time for dinner and every one decided to take his leave. But I did not move. I saw others moving out of his room but I remained seated. He looked at me and wrote in a paper smiling, “I will give you diksha tomorrow. Come early morning around 4.30 am”. I caught his feet and expressed my happiness. He laughed again.

I do not know how to reach out to you the bliss I felt. Even if I spent time describing page after page the joy I experienced then it would be a small drop out of an ocean of the happiness I felt and I leave it to your imagination.



► CHAPTER - 7

The night was filled with excitement and thrill. I could not get sleep at all. I passed my time waiting for the clock to turn 4 am. I was reminiscing on the moments I spent with Gurudev. When I reached there I saw swamiji awaiting my arrival. Early morning his face was so bright and I felt as if some rays were coming from his entire body giving him an extraordinary radiance. I did namaskar. I was accompanied by others as well and swamiji directed the rest of them to stay outside as during mantra diksha time only the disciple is permitted to hear the mantra. Swamiji closed the door and sat in front of me. In another corner of the room I could see a Swamiji, Swami Sadashivananda, who was a disciple of Anandamayi ma. I had met him and taken his blessings also the previous day.

Swamiji began explaining to me what a mantra meant. Suddenly, breaking the silence of the room and my mind I heard a BAAAANG noise. For a second I could not understand as to what was happening. Even

Swami Sadashivananda who was in his meditation opened his eyes and we all looked towards that direction of the noise I saw that my daughter had opened the door without tapping it or asking for the permission of Gurudev and she herself closed it suddenly as if no one should hold her back. She stood in front of Swamiji and said, “Swamiji, I am also having diksha”. I still remember Swamiji’s surprised face. But what surprised me even more was that Swamiji asked her to be seated next to me without any reluctance. He gave diksha to both of us. I was silent without asking any doubts regarding spiritual matters but I saw my little girl getting clarified all her doubts one after another. She was eager to know each and everything. It went on for more than two hours as Swamiji was so conscious as to make her understand everything so clearly. I was absolutely astonished seeing Swamiji’s patience and seriousness in teaching even a ten year old child the essence of Vedanta in the simplest manner. I saw in him a Master who was ever willing to teach the alphabets to a child and at the same time guide an expert researcher also without any hesitation. He taught me that for a guru all his disciples are equal irrespective of the age group they belong to. It is obvious that only a scholar can express the same concept in most simple as well

as in the most elaborate way and I bowed again and again to him for his ideal attitude with no pretension and exhibition of his knowledge.

“Oh Gurudev, who else is there to replace you? Where can I see a person with so much love for everyone, other than my Guru? Gurudev, pranams at your holy feet...!”

The wheel of time kept rotating and came the departure day. Emotions overpowered me and I felt the entanglement of the outer world coming back to me. All those days I spent with him, I was in a divine world and was not aware of any family relations and the very thought of moving from my Master filled me with grief. Not just then, every time I have to leave my Gurudev and move I feel the same sadness. During my departure he never looked at me. He only said, “Don’t worry we will meet soon”.

When I went near him and was about to take his leave, I could not control myself... he took a paper and wrote, “Guru is not separate from the disciple. There is no need to be sad. I will be always with you”. That single line washed off my tears. I really felt its meaning deep in my heart. I did namaskar and got up. As soon

as I moved, my little daughter took my place. She was in a very happy mood. She did namaskar and while getting up she suddenly asked swamiji, “Gurudev, I want something”. I got scared as I was not having any idea as to what the girl was going to ask him. I blocked her from asking by closing her mouth. Immediately Swamiji interfered saying, “Do not stop her. Allow her to ask whatever she wants. What is wrong with it?” once again he revealed that whether small or grown up, disciples have equal rights in front of their guru. He considered everyone equal. With all his love he caught her small hands and asked, “what do you want?”

She quickly replied, “I want to go to my father. I am missing him so much”. Swamiji asked, “where is your father?” At a single stretch she explained in detail saying that her father was in Muscat and for the past 5 years he was trying to get a family visa but his firm was not ready to sponsor the visa. Swamiji heard her desire with full attention and replied, “If I tell you one thing, will you do it without fail?” she hurriedly replied, ‘YES’. He then took a big book and showed it to her. Ram nam was written in that. He instructed her to write Ram Nam similar to those written in the book 108 times daily. Again she came up with her

doubt asking him, “if I write like this, can I reach my father Gurudev?” He laughed loudly and promised her saying, “Yes, yes, you can. Within 6 months you can surely reach your father.”

I got a shock listening to it because I had totally forgotten about that matter. In fact, in those days whenever I visited temples or met any saints, my only prayer would be this only. But here, even when Gurudev had asked me what I wanted, I never thought about this once even. My mind was only after taking diksha. However, my guru had grasped my inner lying sorrow through my daughter and was solving it for me.

“Gurudev, who else will do like this other than you?”
Guru is the embodiment of love; he is the embodiment of truth. The real meaning of love can be learnt only from a guru... Pranams my lord!!”



► CHAPTER - 8

With a heart that was filled with the misery of parting from my Master and with the hope of being back in the sacred land of Bhagavan Ramana, I started my journey back to my native place leaving Thiruvannamalai. When I boarded the bus to reach my house after a journey of 8 hours, the time was around 9 in the night. It was the last bus going by that route due to which I could see only a few people in the bus scattered here and there. I got the window seat. The environment was pleasant with the full moon dispersing its rays which seemed like a garland for the dark sky. I slipped into a divine romantic mood with my mind reminiscing over all the cherished moments with my Gurudev. Suddenly, I remembered his words, “I will be always with you”. That very thought gave me goose pimples. In a fraction of second, my mind was disturbed with a doubt asking myself, “Gurudev, are you really with me? Every Master says so but how can I believe? If you are really with me, can you give

me a proof?” but before I could complete the thought my attention was drifted away to something else. I saw one side of my bus elevating from the ground and the side in which I was seated moving down and about to tumble into the paddy fields. I heard the alarming sound and the bus was filled with screaming noises. I was seated just behind the driver and saw him trying his level best to control the vehicle but nothing seemed to be working out. I left everything and called out; “GURUDEV” firmly closing my eyes... at that very second the bus came back to the normal position and all were relieved by escaping from an accident. Slowly I opened my eyes and I could clearly see the smiling face of my Gurudev asking me “Is this proof enough for you? Or you want more?” I jumped from my seat with a tremor. “Oh my lord, was it your leela?” I inwardly begged him for pardon. For More than half an hour, I saw the driver and his helper checking with a torch light for the possible reasons for the near-crisis but how can I tell anyone that it was an instance given to me by my guru to eradicate even the slightest of the doubts which I had about him from my mind?

Who else can increase our faith in the lord other than a Guru? Here, what was the need for him to prove that his words will always be true to an ignorant person

like me? Who am I to test his words? Even then, out of utmost compassion he gave a strong proof. After that, whenever we travel by air, my husband and daughter used to tease me, “Now please don’t allow your mind to entertain any kind of stupid doubt about our Gurudev.”

“Oh Gurudev, once again I beg your pardon for doubting your words, my lord...!”

Even after returning, I often strongly felt my gurudev’s presence everywhere. I became aware of the secure feeling of my mind which made me think that I was under the shade of a divine umbrella and there was nothing to worry. In between I got the luck of contacting Gurudev over the phone. Those days there were no means of getting him frequently as he wasn’t having any mobile phone. Whenever he heard my voice, he laughed and asked me, “How do you catch me like this?” I always replied, “Gurudev, how can anyone catch you without your permission? It’s only because you allow and bless, I get to hear your voice”. Here I remember Lord Krishna’s story. When Yasoda ma tried tying Krishna, the length of the rope was not enough at all but when Krishna allowed her, a short rope was sufficient to hold him.

I spent most of my time looking at Gurudev's photo and his face filled my heart and mind. However, I had a desire for wanting a photo of Swamiji with his drishti falling on the one who looks at it. I decided to write to Gurudev, asking him for a photograph. Those days Gurudev was in Vasishta Guha, Himalayas. I wrote to him mentioning my desire and told him, "Gurudev, in that photograph, I should be able to feel your presence and you should hear me through it."

In three weeks or so, I was blessed to have a letter from Gurudev with a photograph enclosed. His letter said, "I do not know if this photo serves all your demands but this is the only photograph which I have of mine." He wrote to me saying, his presence would always be there in the photo and he would listen to me through it. I liked the photograph very much and it was just as I desired for and felt as if he was looking at me. All my prayers were answered by Gurudev, whenever I prayed to him through that photograph.

Once myself and my daughter were spending time together talking about our days with Gurudev. Suddenly she became emotional and started crying aloud saying she wanted to see Gurudev. She was of a small age then and I tried my level best convincing her

that Gurudev was in Himalayas and it was impossible to meet him soon. Then she began crying saying she wanted to talk to Swamiji. Gurudev never had a mobile phone and there were no means to contact him. to console her. I took her to Gurudev's photo and told her to pray and he would surely hear her.

Next day morning, there was a call and we elders were busy with some works and naturally, my daughter picked the call. There was a loud scream saying, "Swamiji....." and we all rushed towards her. Yes! That was a call exclusively for her. The very first question he asked her was, "why did you cry yesterday? Am I not always with you?" None of us could talk to Gurudev that day except my daughter. I do not know how to explain her happiness at that moment.

In another instance, my daughter came to us with a circular from her school which said that there was going to be an increase in school fees from the next month. We were really worried thinking about where to cut short our other expenses. I kept thinking over the matter and finally placed the circular before Gurudev's photo and left the topic with a faith that my guru will show us a solution.

In an hour or so, I got a phone call from neighbour asking me if I could take tuition for her children. She told me that she got my number from one of my colleagues and the teacher who taught her children had shifted to a distant place and they were in need of a teacher. I agreed to her without asking anything regarding the fees. When she asked me about it, I told her that I never demand any money and anything she pays would be fine. But the amount she told just surprised me as that was exactly the increase in the amount of the proposed school fees! Not a pie less or more. I suddenly remembered the incidents which Swamiji had narrated in his book, 'Fragrant Flowers'. Within a week, my daughter brought to us another circular saying that the school had cancelled the idea of increasing the fees as the government of United Arab Emirates had refused to accede to the request put forward by the school authorities and were not given the permission.

Not just for me, prayers for the fulfillment of the desires of others were also answered through that photo. But Gurudev once told me not to enjoy the results that the photo gives. He told me not to expect or wait for the result after praying. Whenever I shared

with him the incidents that had happened praying to his photo, the answer always remained a beautiful laugh. He jokingly used to ask me, “Hey, will you give me that photo for a day?” What I want to stress is that whenever we are praying and doing pooja, we should try to feel that it is not just a mere photo. The presence should be felt within and one can no doubt, enjoy the bliss.

Any disciple can travel close to the guru only if the Master wills. The approach of the disciple is most important. If you see him as your guru, he becomes your Master himself. If you see him as your friend, he becomes your best friend. He takes up any role depending upon what you want him to be for you. Guru isn't different from us. He is the source of ultimate wisdom.

It did not take long for my guru's words to come true. In less than six months my husband got a job in Dubai and the new firm agreed to sponsor his family visa. It did not surprise me much because by then I really knew that there was nothing impossible by Guru's grace. I conveyed the news to Gurudev and he said, “Everything happened so soon because of the strong faith of yours in the guru. I did not do anything”.

I asked him, “Gurudev, are you testing the extent of ego sprouting in me when I listen to that? I always want to sit at your feet. I am sure even if I have little ego, I will not get that fortune to sit at your feet. Allow me to be in your presence always, my lord.”

Everything went on smoothly and arrangements for the departure were made. When we contacted the travel agency to block two tickets we were told that there were no tickets available for the whole of September. Though we made enquiries from time to time the reply always seemed negative. Luckily, I happened to get Swamiji through phone and told him about the matter. He told me, “Hey, you have not quarrelled with your Krishna. Have you? If he can grant you all these, why would he not solve this problem? You will get a ticket for September 3rd”. The same day evening I got a call from the travel agency informing us that there were exactly two cancellations being made and they can place our booking instead, for September 3rd. With my guru’s immense grace and grace alone, we landed in Dubai.



► CHAPTER - 9

Every single bit of knowledge man has acquired till date about any subject is only through his own experiences. 'FAITH' in one's guru is an important ingredient for making any spiritual progress and the best supplement to boost the faith is surely 'EXPERIENCE'. Since we are submerged in the ocean of ignorance, a Master proves to his disciple that he remains as his immortal guardian throughout not just in spiritual matters but even by wiping off all the sorrows in the world. When once the disciple has caught hold of the hands of his Master, he should have absolutely no doubts about the correctness of the Master's path. Even when the disciple loses the direction by drowning in the tides of vasanas and Prarabdha, the Guru out of his enormous compassion and kindness, drags this disciple on to the right track. Guru is just like a mother who always prays that her child should get the best in the world. Even in my case, I can quote umpteen number of instances that have happened in my life by

the sheer grace of my Master. At several points in my life when I was in utter helpless situation he glowed in front of me showing me the path and gave me the entire strength to face any situation in life.

When we landed in Dubai we knew very little about the country and the major task in front of us was to find a good school for my daughter. When we enquired about the school from our friends, each one gave different answers. By September all the schools had reopened and half of the academic year was already over. It added to our difficulty in getting an admission. We did not have a car for ourselves then and so hired a taxi to visit a school. We told the name of the school to the taxi driver and got into the car. As we were new to the place we did not have any idea where the driver was taking us. After travelling a while, he stopped the car at the front gate of some other school and not the one which we wanted to visit. We asked him why he stopped the car and he said, “Sir, this school is the best. Don’t go for the other one”. Even now we do not know why he did so. Usually, drivers are very particular about taking the passengers to the place they want to go. He dropped us at the door step of the school and left. The building of the school looked imposing

and we were worried if we would be able to afford the fees. We stepped inside and enquired at the reception counter about the formalities for taking admission. She asked us to wait while she arranged for interviews and question papers for conducting entrance tests. I could see my daughter's face turning red and black with nervousness. She was clutching her father's hand. Just then we saw a man coming out from an office room. He had extremely formal attire and saw us waiting at the reception. He approached us asking why we were waiting. We told him about our requirement. He was the principal of the school and he immediately directed the receptionist to collect the necessary documents and admit the girl without any entrance tests or interviews. It was one of the leading schools in Dubai and people had to wait for hours just to collect the application form even for admission at the kinder garten level. Later we came to know through our daughter that she was the only exceptional case who didn't have to go through any admission procedures fixed by the school authority. How will all these be possible without the grace of the guru? Gurudev, pranams at your feet!

I waited eagerly for the year to come to an end to go to my Master. After I got initiation from Gurudev, I did not meet him. I reserved my ticket very well in advance; almost three months prior to the month in which I was to travel. Myself and my daughter packed our baggage with much enthusiasm as we kept reminding our mind that it was time for us to meet our Guru. My husband could not get leave due to which he could not travel along with us. However he was very happy for both of us and told us that he would await our arrival back to listen to the wonderful moments we would be spending with swamiji. We reached the airport and moved to the check-in-counter to get our boarding pass issued. On giving the passport to the authorities to issue boarding pass, they told us that our tickets were not confirmed and we were in the waiting list though we had paid the full fare to the travel agency. We argued with the airport authorities and they took us to the information control room and showed us our names in the waiting list. I saw the serial number indicated against our names; 52 and 53. My husband called the manager in charge of the travel agency but instead of giving the proper answer, he was apologising to us. Airport authorities informed us that they were helpless as we neither had a confirmed ticket nor a good chance in the

waiting list. I was put in an utterly helpless situation where nobody could help me out. I had counted days for meeting my Guru and I simply could not digest the thought of not being able to travel. I prayed to my Gurudev, “Gurudev, you know very well how eager I am to see you. I know you have so many disciples so you may not want to see me but I have only one Guru and I want to see you somehow. I have heard that Guru can do even things that God himself cannot. I have full faith in you. Please do something my Gurudev!”

I remembered the miracles performed by Lahiri Mahashay mentioned in the book ‘Autobiography of a yogi’, by Paramahansa Yogananda. I closed my eyes and left the matter at my guru’s feet. We were waiting there not knowing what was to be done next with the airport so crowded as it was the month of June during which all schools had vacation and everyone was leaving for their native place. We were about to return from the airport and just then a lady, who was an airport authority came to us and asked us what the problem was. We showed her our tickets and explained to her about the situation. Due to the heavy rush, the authorities had closed the check in counter very early. She checked in her computer and found two people

were late in reporting. She cancelled their booking and placed ours instead and told us that if we were ready to go to Calicut instead of Cochin, she can arrange for the journey. We readily agreed. In fact, Calicut was much closer to my native place. She stamped our tickets and put her signature asking us to proceed immediately for further formalities as that flight was to depart one hour earlier than the one in which we were supposed to travel. With guru's grace, we landed in India earlier than we were supposed to and also to a place nearest to our destination. When we thanked Gurudev for this, after meeting him, with a laugh he said, "Is it? Very good. But I did not do anything".

"Oh Gurudev! If it were not your grace, then how else can a person travel by an air ticket that had no confirmation? Again you taught me that in any situation where one is stranded and is praying without losing the faith in his Guru, the solution for the problem will blossom in front of us with his grace."

I can quote several instances which took place in my life but I cannot mention them for several reasons... If I state all those, the book will contain nothing but miracles alone and I do not want to create such an impression that my Gurudev is a miracle monger.

As I mentioned earlier, experience is the greatest Master and I pray to lord that each one of you get a chance to experience the showers of love and grace of a guru.

I quoted my experiences just to stress that guru is not different from God and the Strong faith in your guru can change your destiny.



► CHAPTER - 10

Time, space or distance never stands as a barrier for a Master to reach out to his disciple. He might leave a great imprint of lesson in your life at the most unexpected moment thereby forcing his disciple to remain vigilant both outside as well as inside. Guru is always in the highest awareness and keeps an eye on his disciple. Just like a small child having the tendency to imitate its parent, a disciple in due course copies his Guru in several aspects of life. Each second the disciple spends in the company of his guru, it is very important that he constantly observes his guru.

Once when I got the fortune of staying with Swamiji in one of my Guru bhai's house, my Gurudev taught me a lesson which I can never forget. All the members of the house had taken initiation from my Gurudev and we all had memorable moments with him. Throughout morning Swamiji had answered innumerable questions put forward by a crowd and we all forced him to retire for rest early at night that day.

He went to bed around 8 pm and the rest of us stayed awake talking. To be frank, even though we all started our talks about spiritual matters, in due course it got diverted from the track. When it was around 11.30 at night he called my name twice. I rushed to him and he asked me, “What is the time now?”

I replied, “Swamiji it is 11.30 now”. He asked me, “Till now you didn’t sleep? What were you all doing?” I told him that we were all talking till then.

He told, “Talking? Talking about what? God or Brahman?” I replied, “No swamiji. We were not talking about God.” Suddenly Gurudev replied in a different tone, “Why have you all wasted so much time? When can I see my disciples talking for hours together only about God?” he told me. “Guru seva is not just giving medicines to Guru on time and washing the feet of the Guru. The real seva for the Guru is following the instructions given to you by him.” I felt ashamed of myself hearing that. After that, every time I was caught in any sort of unwanted conversation I always remembered that and refrained myself from it.

For a spiritual seeker ‘patience’ is a very important quality that he/she must definitely possess in order

to move closer to his/her Master or even to the lord. We cannot expect the green signal always in the first attempt itself. We have to keep trying, sticking on to the words of guru and have patience. At times we may not pay the necessary attention to some of the casual talks with guru but the true meaning hidden in even a casual talk will be revealed to us much later only. Though it appears to us as a simple matter, the depth contained in it would be disclosed sooner by Guru. With the grace of his Master, the disciple learns his teachings and it is the same grace that should help him to apply those teachings in life. Ultimately everything is the grace of the Master alone that should lead us.

Let me share with you a few incidents through which my Master taught me to have patience and not to run after anything in life, in the simplest way. He used to always tell that life is a pre-planned drama of the lord and he being the director knows the requirements of all.

Swamiji used to take ghee along with rice for his lunch. He was never particular about taking ghee but we, his disciples would compel him to have at least a little for our satisfaction. One day it came to our notice that the bottle containing ghee was almost empty and as

usual all those who were present there were very eager to get the chance of buying ghee. But swamiji asked us to wait till evening. Out of impatience I told him, “Gurudev, why to wait till evening? In ten minutes I will go and buy it.” He told me, “If I tell something, listen to it. It means something. I do not know why I asked you to wait but there will be something. You just wait.” Later I totally forgot the matter as I too got engaged in listening to the conversation between Gurudev and many people who came to visit him. By evening a man came to meet swamiji and he did namaskar. He took out a big bottle containing ghee from his bag and told Gurudev that it was specially made for swamiji in his home. He asked Swamiji to accept it and bless him. Swamiji accepted the bottle and gave it in my hands. With a smile he asked me to keep it in the shelf. After half an hour, a lady came to swamiji for his blessings and gave a bottle of ghee asking him to accept it. Similarly, the same day there was another man also from elsewhere who offered swamiji ghee seeking gurudev’s blessings. While he gave me the third bottle I touched his feet and told him, “Gurudev, I really understood the meaning of WAIT”. He looked at me and laughed loudly. Similar incident happened twice to my knowledge.

I remember another incident told by one of my Guru bhais, Mr. A. was to travel along with Gurudev in a train. While sitting in the train, suddenly Mr.A told Gurudev, “Swamiji, I feel hungry. I will go and buy biscuits and come back soon”. Swamiji asked him to wait. For two minutes Mr. A. remained silent and afterwards again told, “Gurudev I will come soon” and left the train. This time Swamiji did not respond. Mr. A told me that when he returned after getting the biscuits he saw Swamiji with his hands full of different types of biscuit packets. Seeing him, Swamiji laughed and told him, “See the biscuit packs. I told you to wait but you were not patient. After you left, few devotees who came to see me off have offered me these.” I am sure just like myself he too will never forget the meaning of ‘WAIT’.

Through all these he taught us not to go after any material goods. If it is necessary, God himself would get the things for us. Every moment I spent with swamiji was a learning experience. There were many lessons to be learnt from each one’s experience with Gurudev.

Once when I was doing my japa, suddenly I heard my phone ringing. I stopped my chanting and was

surprised to see that it was Gurudev on the other side of the phone. His first question to me was, “what were you doing?”

I told him that I was doing my japa. He asked me “Oh! You got up and came to pick the call while doing japa?” His voice changed and he told me, “look here, even if the sky falls on your head, you should not divert your attention to anything while doing japa. Understood?” He put off his phone before I could reply.

Later when such distractions came while doing Japa, just when my body slowly began to respond, I immediately found my Guru’s voice ringing in my ears which made me ignore the distractions and continue the japa.

“Oh Gurudev, who else can teach in such a marvellous way? Each and every second you are teaching me and it’s only with your grace that I am able to understand your teaching. My lord, pranams at your feet.”



► CHAPTER - 11

Guru's love and karunya (compassion) is never limited to his own disciples alone. Whoever comes in contact with him would certainly enjoy all the sparks of his celestial love. Knowingly or unknowingly the rays of grace will fall on all those who reach his presence. When the grace touches the persons with luck, they can see the changes that it brings in their life.

One day after doing pradakshina around the Samadhi of Bhagavan I came out of the Samadhi hall and was going to Swamiji's room. On the way I heard someone enquiring about swamiji for meeting him. When I heard the other man's negative reply I interfered in between and told him that I would take him to Swamiji's room. He had his entire family accompanying him. He was a completely unknown person to me and out of inquisitiveness I asked him, "How do you know Swamiji?" he started sharing his experience.

He told me that the incident happened two years back. He was a businessman and due to some reason his business collapsed. He was stuck in between so many liabilities and did not know what to do. With an intention of committing suicide he came to Tiruvannamalai on a Guru poornima day. While going around the Arunachal hill he decided to visit Bhagavan's ashram also. From the Samadhi hall he happened to see swamiji and he blindly followed Gurudev to his room. Swamiji asked him to take his seat. He told me that what surprised him the most was Swamiji's first question to him asking him if he had taken his lunch that day. Due to his utter sorrow and thoughts of committing suicide, he had forgotten totally about food. Swamiji filled his hands with some eatables. On seeing that he lost himself and began crying as he felt that his own mother was giving food to him. Swamiji consoled him and asked him about his problem. Hearing his difficulties Swamiji gave him a mantra to chant daily along with an one rupee coin. He blessed and told him that everything would be alright in due course.

He told me that within a short period his business flourished and he was able to pay back his debts and

had surplus amount with him. When we reached Swamiji's room my Gurudev could not recognise him even though he tried explaining a lot. Swamiji told him, "Sorry, this body is becoming old and am not able to remember. Moreover daily so many people come to meet me; so it's difficult for me to remember all." He spent a little time with Swamiji and while leaving he kept two bundles of money at the feet of Gurudev which the later rejected outright. The man became so sad and kept pleading with swamiji to accept it. Suddenly Swamiji took one bundle and without looking how much it contained began distributing to all those who were present in the room then. That day each one got a good amount. Swamiji blessed him and he returned happily.

Gurudev never posed as a serious Master to any of his disciples. Each of us had wonderful time with him. Just as a father entertains his children, at times Gurudev used to announce that he would take us out for a trip some times to Arunachaleswara temple or to some nearby ashrams. Twice I had the fortune of going for giri pradakshina by walk along with Gurudev. Each moment he filled our heart with happiness cracking jokes and explaining each and every spot on the way.

Once, on a pleasant evening, myself and my daughter were present in Swamiji's room along with another disciple of Gurudev, Ms. K. All of a sudden we got a desire for going for giri pradakshina with our Guru. When we expressed our wish to Swamiji he agreed and he himself arranged for a taxi. We were extremely thrilled and waited with eyes wide open for the taxi to arrive. We wanted to go around the hill as well as to Arunchaleswara temple. The taxi arrived and we began our trip with our Master. Half way through, Swamiji told us that it would rain and would be better if we avoid the temple visit that day. We all told him in a single voice, "Swamiji, it isn't cloudy! How will it rain?" It was quite sunny then and there were no signs of rain at all in the sky which made all of us say so. With a smile he said, "I do not know. but I felt so." All of us wanted to go to the temple too but without expressing the sadness we sat in the car and were prepared to return to the ashram. But to our utter surprise, Gurudev asked the driver to take us next to the temple. We were so shocked and asked with smiling faces, "why Gurudev? You told us that we should return to the ashram?" with utmost love and care he told us, "yes, I told so. But I saw all of your faces were so gloomy on listening to it. What does it matter for me? If you all want to go, let us see, we will go."

Can the Guru be ever wrong? Just as we reached the temple and got out of the car there was a heavy down-pour with roars of thunder and flashes of lightening. We had to rush into the temple covering ourselves with everything that was available with us. As soon as we entered into the temple we apologised to Swamiji for not listening to him and thereby bringing trouble for him too. He told, “Doesn’t matter. You are in the presence of lord Shiva and your Guru is there with you. Do not worry about anything. Enjoy the present and relish the beauty of rain.” We spent more than an hour in the temple waiting for the rain to stop. But we always thanked our Gurudev for gifting us with such a wonderful moment which we can never forget.

A Guru takes into consideration even the smallest of the desires of his disciples. Even while knowing the consequence of facing hardship, Gurudev was ready to grant us our wish, putting him in trouble. “Oh Gurudev, is there a word that can appropriately describe your kindness and love? I know not...”

Gurudev often shared his memories about his Guru with us and several times I had seen him being emotional while talking about his Maharaj. Even after so many years if the love for Guru has to remain so

strong and unchanged, the depth and the purity of a Guru-shishya relationship can be imagined. After having had the fortune of experiencing the divine and pure love of a Guru, the disciple would not get easily lured by the so called ‘love’ from any of the relations in the world. How can an insect floating in the honey find the sugar syrup sweeter? Like in a fairy tale, my Gurudev added indelible pages in my life by granting me the fortune of accompanying him to Anandashram at Kanhangad to meet the same Swami Satchidananda whose disciple ignited the urge in me to find my Guru.

At several points in life, when we do not get what we wish we tend to shift the blame to the Master asking him as to why he is not listening to our prayers. But we must always remember that the Master is not our bell-boy. What seems to be ‘good’ for us at this moment may not be so in future. What is required is the total belief in one’s Master that he will never let you down and the utmost confidence that he will never loosen his hands from yours leaving you stranded in the walks of life.

Once I happened to visit yogi Ram Surat Kumar’s ashram which was very near to Sri Ramanasramam along with Swamiji and a few of his other disciples. We

went to the ashram by auto rickshaw and spent a little time in the ashram. Few other people who were present in that ashram also joined us in listening to Swamiji's satsang and told us that they would drop us back in Sri Ramanasramam by their car. Everyone got seated in a car, other than myself. When I found that there wasn't enough space left in the car I told Gurudev that I would come alone by an auto rickshaw or so and that he could leave along with the rest of them. But as the car left beyond the reach of my sight, I felt some uneasiness in my heart and prayed to Gurudev, "Swamiji, I am left alone now and that is fine. But in life, please do not leave me alone and move away, Gurudev. I will not be able to withstand any parting from my lord." I could not catch an auto and so I decided to walk up to Sri Ramanasramam. As I was about to reach the gate of Sri Ramanasramam, I saw my Gurudev sitting on a small raised platform placed in front of the gate which filled my heart with anxiety and surprise. I rushed to him and asked him why he was waiting there and he said, "How can I take rest leaving my disciple alone half way through? So I was waiting for you to come."

For a moment I did not know how to respond to my Gurudev as I felt that the words or feelings of love

and reverence that I have were nowhere in comparison to his profound love and care. I felt that I had nothing to return and place before him for his concern and kindness. I stood speechless.



► CHAPTER - 12

Memories about the Master or the Lord bring so much happiness in all of us, however much it may seem to be a difficult task to remain in ‘constant memories’ of the Lord even while engaged in other activities. Gurudev used to emphasise always on the importance of being in ‘Sathatha Smarana’ and total surrender to Lord which would further take us closer to the Lord. He used to quote several instances that had happened in his life where God himself arranged everything that was required by him even when he himself made no efforts to solve the problem.

In the year 2011 when Gurudev was staying in Sri Ramanasram he was diagnosed with viral fever. Gurudev was never accompanied by anyone permanently and hence did not have anybody to help him out. Just then Mr. M, who was from Anandashram, Kanhangad happened to visit Gurudev. He had planned to stay in Ramanasramam for two days but extended his stay to fifteen days seeing Gurudev’s health condition and served him night and day.

In another case which happened during Gurudev's graduation period, when he received his degree certificate he found that instead of his name, Janaki Ramanan, in the certificate it was written wrongly as Janaki Raman. He belonged to a small village and there was nobody to advise him for getting his name amended. When he wrote to the Senate authorities, they replied that it will be considered as a change of his name and detailed a process of announcing it in the Gazette of India and twice in Newspaper and sending an application to them with a fat fees along with cuttings of his announcements in the Gazette etc. Next month it was necessary for him to go up to Chennai for an interview. When he went for the interview Swamiji decided to visit the Senate in Chennai to check if something could be done. Just as he reached the office, in the front gate he saw one of his college mates who recognised Swamiji and asked him about the purpose of his visit. He told swamiji that he was working in the department which was dealing with the certificates etc. and it was his immediate superior who was in charge of making such corrections. He took the certificate to his superior and got the name changed from 'Raman' to 'Ramanan' by adding an 'an' with the same ink that was used in the certificate and got the correction made

by the same hand who had originally written, without any formal procedures. Every incident that has taken place in Gurudev's life is a teaching for his disciples about the incomparable mercy of the Lord.

“My lord, I cannot explain completely about anything that you have gifted me, in a perfect way with clarity. I feel whatever I have written is just a scribbling and never a fair note. Pranams at your holy feet.”

Here is a rare instance where I prayed to my Gurudev's photo and got Dr. S's problem solved.

Dr. S who was known to me in India came to Abu Dhabi on a long official trip. Dr. S used to come to my house at Dubai. While at Abu Dhabi to write a number of papers for an examination on the medical side, held by his medical firm. One day he rang me up and told me that the 17th paper was so tough and so his performance was extremely poor. There the pass mark was 85 out of 100 (85/100). Dr. S was dejected about his failure. I told Dr. S “I have my Guru's photo by praying to whom my every problem used to get solved. I shall also pray for you this time before my Guru's photo which I have been using only for my very own family members and not for outsiders.

Dr. S was very sceptical about this as he knew how badly he had fared in his papers. But I went and immediately prayed for Dr. S's success in front of my Guru's photo. After three days Dr. S rang up in an excited manner and informed me that he had got 85% in that paper. This again proved that 'Guru' and the supreme lord are one and the same, capable of solving any sort of problem if we pray to them.

Guru is an endless ocean of love and kindness. Let us row the boat of life in that ocean with the paddle of devotion and enjoy the utmost bliss. Make HIM the subject and object of life. As my Master always says, "have the 'CRAZE' for the lord and the 'GRACE' automatically flows." Let us make ourselves inseparable from him at all times. If he is an OCEAN, let us be the WAVES. If he is the ROOT, let us be the SOIL which sticks on to it. If he is the LIGHT, let us be the SHADOW.

May 'The Rays of Grace' envelope you and take you to the real SOURCE of your life, who is not separate from the Master.

JAI GURUDEV





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1. Books published by Shri Purushottamananda Trust

Sr.	Title of Book	Year of Publication
1	Autobiography in Malayalam	1956
2	Autobiography in English	1994
3	Autobiography in Hindi	2007
4	Updeshamrit	1979
5	Nectar of Spiritual Instructions	1986
6	A Peep into the Gita	1990
7	Gita ki ek Jhalak	2000
8	Adhyatma Varta	2000
9	Spiritual talks	1990
10	Guide to Spiritual Aspirants	1986
11	Souvenir (in Hindi and English)	2004
12	Souvenir (in Hindi and English)	2011

2. Books authored by His Holiness Swami Shantananda Puri ji

Sr.	Title of Book	Year of Publication
1	Srimad Bhagavatam : Its message for the Modern Man	1998
2	Sadhanas in Bhagvad Gita	1999
3	Srimad Bhagvat - Adhunik Manav ke Liye Iska Sandesh	2000
4	Srimad Bhagvad Gita ki Adhyatmik Sadhanayein (In Hindi)	2001
5	Fragrant Flowers	2002
6	Jivan Mukti : Liberation- Here & Now	2002
7	Stories for Meditation	2003
8	Answers to basic spiritual questions of Sadhaks	2003
9	Sri Lalita Sahasranama Stotram : An Insight	2003
10	Instant Self- Awareness : Talks on Asthavakra Gita	2004
11	The Quantum Leap into the Absolute : Essence of Asthavakra Gita	2005
12	Golden guidelines to "Who am I"	2005
13	Sadhanas according to Yoga Vasishtha	2005
14	Infallible Vedic Remedies	2005
15	Musings of a Himalayan Monk	2006
16	Stories for Inspiration	2006
17	Srimad Bhagavatam : Its message ... (In Malayalam)	2006
18	Sadhanas according to Tripura Rahasyam	2007
19	Pearls of Wisdom Sublime	2007
20	Sadhanas from Adhyatma Ramayanam	2007

21	Gita's Sthita Pragna Darshan - A crash course for Moksha	2008
22	Gita's Sthita Pragna Darshan (In Malayalam)	2006
23	A quintessence of Uddhava Gita	2008
24	The Ecstasy of Love Divine : Essence of Narada Bhakti Sutra	2009
25	Living Happily Forever	2010
26	Sadhanas from Kaivalyopanishad	2010
27	The Spiritual Journey of a Himalayan Monk- Biography of Swamiji	2010
28	Gita Sarah	2010
29	Sadhanas from Devi Kalottara	2010
30	Sadhanas from Kenopanishad	2011
31	Sri Shiva Sahasranama Stotram (As per Linga Purana) Revised	2011
32	Selected Gems from Ashtavakra Gita	2011
33	Sadhanas from Vivekachudamani	2012
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3. Other documents authored by H.H. Swami Shantananda Puri ji

1	Clarifications of doubts of a Sadhak
2	What I Pray for
3	Gems from Srimad Bhagvatam
4	Gems from Guru Gita
5	My experience of keeping Silence(Mowna)
6	Mantra Pushpam
7	Sri Suktam- an Exegesis
8	Sri Ramana Suprabhatam
9	An Open Letter to a Sadhak
10	Boat Leela of Lord Krishna
11	Message on 82nd Birthday of Revered Swamiji
12	The 108 Names of Guru with their meanings in Hindi & English
13	Introduction to Vasishtha Guha
14	Introduction to Vasishtha Guha (In Hindi)
15	Karma, sadhana, renunciation, grace & self realisation
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Other related books available on the website are- 'The Guru', 'At the feet of my Gurudev' by Swami Nirvedananda, 'Swami Nirvedananda- A True Sannyasin' & 'Rays of Grace' (Oct 2012) by Rohini Krishnakumar a disciple of H.H. Swami Shantananda Puri.

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This document is released by H.H. Swami Shantananda Puri on 15th Dec 2012 for information of all devotees and interested readers.