

In Quest of God

Swami Ramdas (1884-1963)

To those who always remain absorbed in My meditation, to those ever harmonious, I bring full peace and security.

Bhagavad Gita, 9:22

It was about two years ago that Ram first kindled in the heart of His humble slave, Ramdas, a keen desire to realise His Infinite Love. To strive to approach and understand Ram is to recede from the world of vanishing forms, because Ram is the only Truth—the only Reality. Ram is a subtle and mysterious power that pervades and sustains the whole universe. Birthless and deathless is He. He is present in all things and in all creatures who only appear as separate entities, due to their ever-changing forms. To wake up from this illusion of forms is to realise at once the Unity or Love of Ram.

Love of Ram means Love of all beings, all creatures, all things in this world; because Ram is in all and all is in Ram, and Ram is all in all. To realise this Great Truth we who, through ignorance, feel as separate individuals, should submit ourselves to the will and working of that Infinite Power—that Infinite Love: Ram, who is one and all-pervading. By a complete surrender to the will of Ram, we lose consciousness of the body, which keeps us aloof from Him, and find ourselves in a state of complete identification and union with Ram, who is in us and everywhere around us. In this condition, hatred, which means consciousness of diversity, ceases, and Love, consciousness of Unity, is realised. This Divine Love can be attained by humbling ourselves to such a degree as to totally subdue our egoism, our self-assertion as a separate individual existence. Having reached this stage we, by the awakened consciousness of Unity or Love, are naturally prompted to sacrifice all the interests that concern the body for the welfare of our fellow men and fellow creatures, who are all manifestations of the same Ram.

Struggle and Initiation

For nearly a year, Ramdas struggled on in a world full of cares, anxieties, and pains. It was a period of terrible stress and restlessness—all of his own making. In this utterly helpless condition, full of misery, “Where is relief? Where is rest?” was the heart’s cry of Ramdas. The cry was heard, and from the Great Void came the voice “Despair not! Trust Me and thou shalt be free!”—and this was the voice of Ram. These encouraging words of Ram proved like a plank thrown towards a man struggling for very life in the stormy waves of a raging sea. The great assurance soothed the aching heart of helpless Ramdas, like gentle rain on thirsting earth. Thenceforward, a part of the time that was formerly totally devoted to worldly affairs was taken up for the meditation of Ram, who, for that period, gave him real peace and relief. Gradually, love for Ram—the Giver of peace—increased. The more Ramdas meditated on and uttered His name the greater the relief and joy he felt. Nights, which are free from worldly duties, were in course of time utilised for *Rambhajan* with scarcely one or two hours’ rest. His devotion for Ram progressed by leaps and bounds.

During the day, when cares and anxieties were besetting Ramdas due to monetary and other troubles, Ram was coming to his aid in unexpected ways. So, whenever free from worldly duties—be the period ever so small—he would meditate on Ram and utter His name. Walking in the streets he would be uttering, “Ram, Ram”. Ramdas was now losing attraction for the objects of the world. Sleep, except for one or two hours in the night, was given up for the sake of Ram. Fineries in clothes and dress were replaced by coarse *khaddar*. Bed was replaced by a bare mat. Two meals were reduced to one meal a day, and after sometime this too was given up for plantains and boiled potatoes—chillies and salt were totally eschewed. No taste but for Ram; meditation of Ram continued apace. It encroached upon the hours of the day and the so-called worldly duties.

At this stage one day, Ramdas’ father came to him, sent by Ram, and calling him aside, gave him the *upadesh* of Ram Mantram—“Sri Ram, Jai Ram, Jai Jai Ram!”, assuring him that if he repeated this Mantram at all times, Ram would give him eternal happiness. This initiation from the father—who has thereafter been looked upon by Ramdas as *Gurudev*—hastened on the aspirant in his spiritual progress. Off and on he was prompted by Ram to read the teachings of Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, of Buddha in *Light of Asia*, of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, of Mahatma Gandhi in *Young India* and *Ethical Religion*. The young plant of *bhakti* in Ram was thus nurtured in the electric atmosphere created by the influence of these great men on the mind of

humble Ramdas. It was at this time that it slowly dawned upon his mind that Ram was the only Reality and all else was false. Whilst desires for the enjoyment of worldly things were fast falling off, the consideration of *me* and *mine* was also wearing out. The sense of possession and relationship was vanishing. All thought, all mind, all heart, all soul was concentrated on Ram, Ram covering up and absorbing everything.

Renunciation

Now from the narrow pond of a worldly life Ram had lifted up his slave to throw him into the extensive ocean of a universal Life. But to swim in the wide ocean, Ram knew, Ramdas wanted strength and courage, for gaining which Ram intended to make his ignorant and untrained slave to pass through a course of severe discipline, and this under His direct guidance and support. So, one night while engaged in drinking in the sweetness of His name, Ramdas was made to think in the following strain:

O Ram, when Thy slave finds Thee at once so powerful and so loving, and that he who trusts Thee can be sure of true peace and happiness, why should he not throw himself entirely on Thy mercy, which can only be possible by giving up everything he called 'mine' ? Thou art all in all to Thy slave. Thou art the sole Protector in the world. Men are deluded when they declare, 'I do this, I do that; this is mine, that is mine'. All, O Ram, is Thine, and all things are done by Thee alone. Thy slave's one prayer to Thee is to take him under Thy complete guidance and remove his 'I'-ness.

This prayer was heard. Ramdas' heart heaved a deep sigh; a hazy desire to renounce all and wander over the earth in the garb of a mendicant in quest of Ram wafted over his mind. Now Ram prompted him to open at random the book "Light of Asia", which was before him at the time. His eyes rested upon the pages wherein is described the great renunciation of Buddha, who says:—

“For now the hour is come when I should quit
This golden prison, where my heart lives caged,
To find the Truth; which henceforth I will seek,
For all men's sake, until the truth be found.”

Then Ramdas similarly opened the New Testament and lighted upon the following definite words of Jesus Christ:

“And everyone that hath forsaken houses or brethren, or sisters, or father or mother or wife or children or lands for my name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life.”

Then again he was actuated in the same way to refer to the *Bhagavad Gita*, and he read the following *sloka*:

“Abandoning all duties come to Me alone for shelter, sorrow not, I will liberate thee from all sins.”

Ram had thus spoken out through the words of these three great *avatars*—Buddha, Christ, and Krishna—and all of them pointed to the same path: renunciation. At once Ramdas made up his mind to give up for the sake of Ram all that he till then hugged to his bosom as his own, and leave the samsaric world. During this period, he was very simple in his dress, which consisted of a piece of cloth covering the upper part of the body and another wound round the lower part. Next day, he got two garments of this kind dyed in *gerrua* or red ochre, and the same night wrote two letters—one to his wife, whom Ram had made him look upon for sometime past as his sister, and another to a kind friend whom Ram had brought in touch with Ramdas for his deliverance from debts. The resolution was made. At five o’clock in the morning he bade farewell to a world for which he had lost all attraction and in which he could find nothing to call his own. The body, the mind, the soul—all were laid at the feet of Ram—that Eternal Being, full of love and full of mercy.

Adoption of *Sannyas*

The morning train carried Ramdas away from Mangalore and dropped him in the evening at Erode, a railway junction. He had taken with him a sum of Rs. 25 and a few books including the *Gita* and the New Testament. At Erode he found himself strangely helpless without any plans or thought for the future. He did not know where he was being led by Ram. He wandered about for sometime and when darkness fell, he approached a small, low hut on the roadside and finding at its entrance a middle-aged mother, requested her to give him some food. The kind mother at once welcomed him into her hut and served him some rice and curds. The mother was very kind. With great difficulty could she be induced to accept some money for the food supplied by her.

On leaving the hut, he proceeded to the Railway station. He laid himself down in a corner in the station and took rest for sometime. He did not know what to do or where to go. At midnight, a bell rang to announce the arrival of a train. He got up and found near him a Tamilian, who inquired of him regarding his movements. Ramdas was unable to say anything in reply. Ram alone could determine his future. Here this friend promised Ramdas to take him with him as far as Trichinopoly, for which place he was bound. Money was given him for the purchase of a ticket for Ramdas, and both boarded the train. It was evening when the train reached Trichinopoly station. Alighting from the train, he proceeded to the city. All the time, all the way from Mangalore, the divine mantram of Sri Ram was on his lips. He could never forget it. The utterance of Ram's name alone sustained and cheered him. Taking rest for the night on the verandah of a house by the roadside, next morning he started on foot to Srirangam, about seven miles from Trichy. He reached the place at about 8 o'clock.

Here Ramdas was first let into the secret of Ram's purpose in drawing him out from the sphere of his former life and surroundings—and that purpose was to take him on a pilgrimage to sacred shrines and holy rivers. At Srirangam the beautiful river Kaveri was flowing in all her purity and majesty. Going up to the river, he bathed in its clear waters. Here on the banks of the Kaveri he assumed, by Ram's command, the robe of a *sannyasin*. It was a momentous step, and by taking it Ram gave him an entirely new birth. The white clothes previously worn by him were offered up to the Kaveri, who carried them away in her rushing waters. The *gerrua* or orange-coloured clothes were put on, and the following prayer went up to the feet of Almighty Ram:

O Ram! O Love Infinite, Protector of all the worlds! It is by Thy wish alone that Thy

humble slave has been induced to adopt *sannyas*. In Thy name alone, O Ram, he has given up *samsara*, and cut asunder all bonds, all ties.

O Ram, bless Thy poor devotee with Thy grace. May Ramdas be endued with strength, courage and faith to carry out in Thy name, Ram, the following vows and bear all trials and all kinds of privations that may beset the path of a *sannyasin* in his passage through the rough and perilous life of a mendicant:—

1. This life be henceforth entirely consecrated to meditation and the service of Sri Ram.
2. Strict celibacy be observed, looking upon all women as mothers.
3. The body be maintained and fed upon the food procured by *bhiksha* or on what was offered as alms.

Srirangam

The thrills of a new birth, a new life, with the sweet love of Ram was felt. A peace came upon Ramdas' struggling soul. The turmoil ceased. Ram's own hands seemed to have touched the head of his slave—Ram blessed. O tears, flow on, for the mere joy of deliverance! Sorrow, pain, anxiety and care—all vanished, never to return. All glory to Thee, Ram. The great blessing came from Ram: "I take thee under my guidance and protection—remain ever my devotee—thy name shall be Ramdas."

Yes, Ramdas, what a grand privilege it is to become the *das* of Ram who is all love—kindness—all mercy—all forgiveness!

Now, he came up to a *dharmashala*, close to the river and found some Sadhus sitting on the floor of the passage leading out to the main road. They were busy performing *Rambhajan* to the accompaniment of cymbals and *ektar*. They were singing the glorious name of Ram. Ramdas also squatted beside the two young *sannyasins* and placed his *lota*—procured at Trichy—in front of him to receive *bhiksha* from the pilgrims, who passed that way after their bath. The *bhajan* of the two young devotees was really very sweet. Time passed most pleasantly. It was about 12 noon that the *bhajan* came to a close. Looking upon the cloth spread in front of them the young Sadhus observed only 3 quarter anna pieces lying on it—all they had got for the day. With a disappointed look one of them remarked:

"Since morning we have been singing the glory of God, and He has given us only this

much. Hunger is pinching the stomach. How are we to procure food, O God? Is Thy *bhajan* from morning till now worth only 9 pies?”

This question was at once answered by Ramdas: “No, young brothers, no value can be set upon your *bhajan*. God is always kind and loving. He never forsakes those who depend upon Him. Ram has sent through His humble slave money for your food today.”

So saying, he dropped into the hands of the Sadhus one rupee out of the amount he was then carrying with him. The poor Sadhus simply stared at him in amazement. Their eyes were filled with tears. They exclaimed:

“O God, Thy ways are wonderful—pardon, pardon Thy unworthy slaves, we doubted Thee and Thy love. In future, grant that we may never blame Thee, but bear all sufferings patiently in Thy name.”

The Sadhus then left the place. Looking into his own *lota* Ramdas discovered in it 2 pies. His heart leaped with joy at the sight of these tiny coins, the first proceeds of *bhiksha*! Buying two small plantains with the coins he ate them with all pleasure. At this time in the same line in which he was sitting there was another Sadhu on the right, whilst the young Sadhus aforementioned were on his left. Now, this Sadhu coming forward enquired as to where Ramdas was proceeding. He could not, of course, find a reply to his question. Ram alone could do so. Receiving no reply, the Sadhu proposed to take Ramdas with him to Rameshwaram whither he was going.

O Ram, Thy kindness is indeed very great. To guide Thy helpless slave Thou hast sent to him this Sadhu—why? He can be taken to be none other than Ram Himself.

From time to time Ramdas met Sadhus who not only led him on the pilgrimage but also took every care of him. All these Sadhus, shall, by Ram’s will, go by one name, ‘*Sadhuram*.’

Rameshwaram

The guide was at once accepted. Ramdas had then with him about Rs. 9, which amount he handed over to the Sadhuram and felt much relieved by doing so. To carry money is to carry anxiety with you; for it draws your attention to it now and again. On making over the money, he suggested to the Sadhuram to get the rupees changed into one anna coins and have them all distributed to the poor, who were begging at the doors of temples, and this desire he carried out. Now, Ramdas threw himself more completely than ever on the support of Ram with only two clothes and a few books,

all his possessions in the world. He started with the Sadhuran, whom Ram had sent as a guide. He led him to the railway station and both got into a train running to Rameshwaram. No ticket—Ram was ticket and all in all.

Whilst in the train, Ramdas continued his meditation of Ram. The train traveled on until it reached a station about six miles from Rameshwaram. Here a Ticket Inspector came into the compartment in which Ramdas and his kind guide were seated. After checking the tickets of other passengers, he approached the Sadhus and cried, “Tickets—Tickets”.

“No tickets, brother, we are Sadhus”, was the reply.

“Without tickets you cannot travel any farther. You have to get down here”, said the Inspector.

At once getting up, Ramdas told the Sadhuran that it was Ram’s wish that they should alight at that place. Walking out of the station they came to the high road. Here the Sadhuran grumbled over the action of the Inspector. To this Ramdas said:

“Brother, we cannot travel all along to Rameshwaram by train. Pilgrimages should be made on foot. But somehow Ram was kind enough to take us on the train so far. We have only to walk a distance of six miles in order to reach Rameshwaram. It is the will of Ram that this distance should be covered on foot. Be cheerful, brother.”

They started to walk. When they traveled about two miles Ram brought them in touch with a barber. Till then, since he started from Mangalore, Ramdas had not had a shave. So, here, he first got his beard, moustache, and head all shaved after the manner of *sannyasins*. As they were nearing Rameshwaram, they came to a tank by the roadside named *Lakshman kund*. After bathing in this tank they passed by a number of small tanks, bearing different names.

At last Ram directed their steps to the famous temple of Rameshwaram. The temple is a gigantic structure. One actually loses oneself in the bewildering passages, corridors, and aisles that lead to the place of worship. When the Sadhus approached the Holy of holies they found the door open; the worship of Rameshwar was going on in all its ceremonial *éclat*. O Ram! All glory to Thee! The occasion and the place sent thrills of joy into Ramdas’ soul. Here Ramdas came in touch with some *mahatmas* who had come there on pilgrimage, of whom one, Swami Govindanand, was very kind to him. The Swami said that he belonged to the Mutt of Shri Siddharudh Swami of Hubli and offered an invitation to Ramdas to attend the *Shivaratri* festival in the Hubli Mutt, which was then shortly to take place.

In the Cave

Now, at the prompting of Ram, Ramdas, desiring to remain in solitude for some time, placed the matter before the Sadhuran. The Sadhuran was ever ready to fulfill his wishes. Losing no time, he took Ramdas up the mountain behind the great temple. Climbing high up, he showed him many caves. Of these, one small cave was selected for Ramdas, which he occupied the next day. In this cave he lived for nearly a month in deep meditation of Ram. This was the first time he was taken by Ram into solitude for His *bhajan*. Now, he felt most blissful sensations since he could here hold undisturbed communion with Ram. He was actually rolling in a sea of indescribable happiness. To fix the mind on that fountain of bliss—Ram—means to experience pure joy!

Once, during the day, when he was lost in the madness of Ram's meditation, he came out of the cave and found a man standing a little away from the mouth of the cave. Unconsciously, he ran up to him and locked him up in a fast embrace. This action on the part of Ramdas thoroughly frightened the friend, who thought that it was a mad man who was behaving in this manner and so was afraid of harm from him. It was true, he was mad—yes, he was mad for Ram, but it was a harmless madness, which fact the visitor realised later. The irresistible attraction felt by him towards this friend was due to the perception of Ram in him. "O Ram, Thou art come, Thou art come!" with this thought Ramdas had run up to him. At times, he would feel driven to clasp in his arms the very trees and plants growing in the vicinity of the cave. Ram was attracting him from all directions. Oh, the mad and loving attraction of Ram! O Ram, Thou art Love, Light, and Bliss. Thus passed his days in that cave.

For food, he would come down in the morning, and going into the city, beg from door to door and receive from the kind mothers of the place handfuls of rice in his small *lota*. When the *lota* was a little over half-full, he would return to the cave. Collecting some dry twigs, he would light a fire over which he would boil the rice in the same *lota*. Water was at hand. A small stream of pure, crystal water was flowing down the hill just in front of the cave, and in this stream it was also most refreshing to take the daily bath. This boiled rice was taken to appease hunger, without salt, or anything else, and only once a day. To share with him in this simple fare, a number of squirrels would visit the cave. Fearlessly, at times, they would eat from his hands. Their fellowship was also a source of great joy to Ramdas. Everyday, he would wander over the hills amidst the shrubs, trees, and rocks—a careless, thoughtless child of Ram! It was altogether a simple and

happy life that he led in that mountain retreat. The kind-hearted Sadhuras would meet him everyday, either up the hill or in the city, when he came down for *bhiksha*. A day came when he received Ram's command to leave the place—where to, Ram alone knew.

God is Everywhere

They traveled to Kalahasti. After a day's stay here, they left for Jagannath Puri. It was noon, the Sadhuras and Ramdas were in the train. A Ticket Inspector, a Christian, dressed in European fashion, stepped into the carriage at a small station, and coming up to the Sadhus asked for tickets.

"Sadhus carry no tickets, brother, for they neither possess nor care to possess any money," said Ramdas in English.

The Ticket Inspector replied: "You can speak English. Educated as you are, you cannot travel without a ticket. I have to ask you both to get off."

The Sadhuras and he accordingly got down at the bidding of the Inspector. "It is all Ram's will," assured Ramdas to his guide.

They were now on the platform, and there was still some time for the train to start. The Ticket Inspector, meanwhile, felt an inclination to hold conversation with Ramdas, who, with the Sadhuras, was waiting for the train to depart.

"Well," broke in the Inspector looking at Ramdas. "May I know with what purpose you are traveling in this manner?"

"In quest of God," was his simple reply.

"They say God is everywhere," persisted the Inspector. "Where is the fun of your knocking about in search of Him, while He is at the very place from which you started on this quest, as you say?"

"Right, brother," replied Ramdas, "God is everywhere, but he wants to have this fact actually proved by going to all places and realising His presence everywhere."

"Well then," continued the Inspector, "if you are discovering God wherever you go, you must be seeing Him here, on this spot, where you stand."

"Certainly, brother," rejoined Ramdas, "He is here at the very place where we stand."

"Can you tell me where He is?" asked the Inspector.

"Behold, He is here, standing in front of me!" exclaimed Ramdas enthusiastically.

“Where, where?” cried the Inspector impatiently.

“Here, here!” pointed out Ramdas smiling, and patted on the broad chest of the Inspector himself. “In the tall figure standing in front, that is, in yourself, Ramdas clearly sees God, who is everywhere.”

For a time, the Inspector looked confused. Then he broke into a hearty fit of laughter. Opening the door of the compartment from which he had asked the Sadhus to get down, he requested them to get in again, and they did so, followed by him. He sat in the train with the Sadhus for sometime.

“I cannot disturb you, friends. I wish you all success in your quest of God”. With these words he left the carriage, and the train rolled onwards. O Ram, Thy name be glorified!

Kashi

The city of Kashi is a city of magnificent temples, the domes and turrets of which, when viewed from a height, lend a charm to the scene on the banks of the holy river Ganges. The whole of India rightly recognises that Kashi is one of the most important shrines of Hindustan. Everyday, pilgrims by thousands are pouring into the place from all parts of India. As Ram took Ramdas on this pilgrimage in winter, the cold was very great here, and the Sadhuras and he had not sufficient clothing, and sleeping as they were in an open place on the bank of the river, the cold was felt very acutely—especially by the Sadhuras. The Sadhuras was getting impatient everyday. His main object of traveling in the North seemed to have been fulfilled after visiting Kashi. Now he wanted to return to South India. Ram’s will. Nothing happens in this world that is not subject to His divine will. Ram’s ways are inscrutable.

Next day, the train carried the Sadhuras and Ramdas to Ayodhya, the place where Sri Ramachandra lived and reigned. It was night when the pilgrims reached the place. They rested for the night in the open passenger-shed outside the station. The cold was intense. The Sadhuras suggested that they should lie down back to back, the backs touching each other. This device was adopted in order to exchange one another’s heat of the body for mutual warmth. Really an original idea! Thus passed the night. Early next day, both proceeded to the city and then to the Sarayu river. Washing the hands and feet, the Sadhuras suggested that no bath need be taken as the cold was very great. So, returning from the holy river, they visited various *mandirs* of Sri Ramachandra and

Hanumanji, secured food at a *kshetra*, and that very night caught a train going down towards Bombay.

Now the Sadharam had once and for all decided to close the northern India pilgrimage and hence the journey towards Bombay. O Ram, Thy will is supreme. Although Ramdas has yet to visit more shrines of north India, it is beyond Thy humble slave to know the reason for Thy taking him to Bombay. Every move Thou givest to the situation of Thy *das* is considered by him to be for the best. The train traveled, taking the Sadhus south and south. Station after station was passed. At a small station, while the Sadharam was dozing, some passenger who had not perhaps any pot with him, took away, while alighting, the brass pot of the Sadharam, who woke up and discovered his loss after the train had left that station. He began to fret over the loss a great deal; in fact he wept bitterly over it like a child.

The next station was Jhansi which was duly reached. Here the ticket inspection was very strict. So the ticket-clerk pulled down these Sadhus as well as many others from other carriages, and led them all near the gate, leading out of the station. There were in all about ten Sadhus. The ticket-clerk made all of them stand in a line on one side of the entrance or exit; it was both. The passengers were now going out of the station and the clerk was collecting tickets at the gate, his back turned against the Sadhus, who were made to stand only at arm's length from the clerk. The first in the line of the Sadhus was a young *sannyasin* with a *jatah* or tuft of matted hair. Whenever the ticket-clerk had a momentary respite from the collection of tickets, he would turn round and clutching the *jatah* of the young Sadhu, who was nearest to him, shake his head violently. The next moment he had to attend to ticket collection. When the stream of passengers thinned and there was some break, he would again handle the head of the Sadhu and give it a shake or inflict blows upon it with his fist. While this was going on, by a look at the face of the Sadhu, who was next to him in the line, Ramdas made out that there was a happy smile on the face of the young Sadhu.

Love Conquers Hate

The Sadhu seemed to enjoy the treatment. He was calm and contented. Ramdas, wishing also to taste the pleasure, requested the Sadhu to exchange places with him and thus offer him also the unique opportunity of receiving the attention of the ticket-clerk. But the Sadhu would not be persuaded to abandon his enviable position. Off and on, the clerk was meting out this treatment to

the willing Sadhu. This continued for nearly half an hour. The ticket collection work at last stopped. Now the clerk was totally free from work, and he turned right towards the Sadhus. He approached the other Sadhus, of whom Ramdas was the second, with the object of handling them roughly one by one. Ramdas felt much relieved to see that his turn had at last come. The clerk coming up caught his hand in a firm grasp and looked on his face in which he discovered a most welcome smile, bright and beaming. At once he let go of his hand and drawing himself back a few steps seemed to have given himself to some thinking. It was Ram who was at work. For next instant, he asked all the Sadhus to go out of the station. Accordingly all the Sadhus left the station and went out one by one.

O Ram! When Thy invincible arm protects Thy slave, where was fear for him? One thing was proved incontestably and beyond any doubt: Thou disarmest the evil intentions of an adversary when he approaches you in a violent mood by meeting him with a smile instead of with fear or hatred. Love can surely conquer hate. Love is a sovereign antidote for all the ills of the world. After all, the whole occurrence might be only Ram testing the Sadhus to see if they would lose their self-control under provocation. All that Ram does is for the best.

Now the time was about 2 o'clock past midnight. It was pitch dark. So the Sadhus sought for a place on the station for taking rest for the night. But conditions for this were far from favourable. The station was full to overflowing, as it were, with passengers. Every available nook and corner of that portion of the station intended for passengers was occupied, and they were all scattered on the floor, sleeping in fantastic postures—all space filled up. However, Ramdas and his guide, the Sadhuram, crept near a pillar where there was found room for both to sit on their legs. The cold here also was very severe. The Sadhus sat up close to and pressing each other, so much so that they seemed almost moulded into one piece. *Rambhajan* was going on. Ramdas became unconscious and dozed away where he sat and did not wake up until he was roused by a strong and shrill voice asking all passengers to take to their feet and walk out of the station. This was the order of the railway police.

Ramdas opened his eyes and instantly became conscious of his body which was discovered to be in a peculiar condition—the legs had turned so stiff with cold that they had stuck fast at the bend of the knee-joint, and on a look at them he further made out that from the knee downwards both the legs had swollen, and also the feet, as though they were stricken with elephantiasis. However by rubbing them briskly with both hands for about five minutes, he could unlock the

stiffened joints. Slowly rising up, he hobbled along for some distance. As he walked on, the stiffness disappeared. About 8 a.m. they reached the city of Jhansi, about four miles from the station.

Ram, the Friend of the Poor

During his visits to the village, the villagers tried to dissuade Ramdas from staying in the jungle at nights, as they warned him of tigers and other wild animals, because the place occupied by him formed part of a dense and extensive forest. But when the all-powerful Ram was there to save him where was fear for him and from whom? Ram is pervading everywhere—in all things, in all beings, in all creatures. He continued there for eight days, when he received the command from Ram to move on.

A small incident which took place here has to be chronicled at this stage. One day, when he was passing the small bazaar of this place with his *lota* in hand, he felt thirsty. He now approached, as he walked on, a number of small low huts on one side of the road. Going up to one of them, at its entrance he found an old mother sitting. He begged of her to give him some water in his *lota*. The old mother shook her head and said:

“Maharaj, you cannot take water at my hands.”

“May Ramdas know the reason for this objection?” inquired Ramdas.

“The simple reason is,” put in the mother, “I belong to a very low caste; to be brief, I am a barber woman.”

“What of that?” said Ramdas, nothing surprised. “You are Ramdas’ mother all the same; kindly satisfy the thirst of your son.”

She was highly pleased at this reply, and going in brought out a seat for him and her water vessel out of which she poured some water into his *lota*. He quenched his thirst, occupying the seat so kindly offered by her. Now the old mother said that she was utterly miserable. Left alone in the world, she spent all her days and nights in pain, fear, and anxiety. Ramdas then assured her:

“O mother, there is no cause for fear and anxiety or for a feeling of loneliness when there is Ram to protect us all—Ram is always near us.”

“But a poor, weak-minded woman like myself does not possess any faith in Ram, because I am a sinner.” So saying the mother burst into tears.

“You shall have faith, kind mother, by the grace of Ram. Don’t despair, Ram is always the friend of the poor and the humble,” said Ramdas.

“Then show me the way,” asked the old mother.

“Repeat the one name ‘Ram’ at all times of the day and at nights when you are awake. You may be sure that you will not feel lonely or miserable as long as you are uttering that glorious name. Where this name is sounded, or meditated upon, there resides no sorrow, no anxiety—nay, not even death.”

Saying thus, Ramdas started to go, when she begged him to visit her again the next day. As desired by her, he went to her hut again the following day at about the same time.

“Well mother, how do you do?” was his question.

There was a cheerful smile on the face of the mother. She said that she had acted upon his advice and was finding herself much relieved from fear and cares. Then she offered him some *laddoos* which she said she had got from the sweetmeat shop.

“Mother, this is not what Ramdas wants; he wants something prepared by your own hands,” said he.

At this she went in and got for him a piece of *roti* or bread made by her, which he ate with no small amount of pleasure. Later, he saw her once again, when she was busy uttering “Ram, Ram!”

God Never Punishes

By Ram’s command Ramdas came back to Jhansi, where Mahadev Prasad welcomed him most heartily, and pressed him to spend a few more days with him. At this time Ram brought him into contact with more than a dozen friends at Jhansi, who were all very kind and hospitable to him. Of these, one young friend named Ramkinker was extremely kind. One day, in the course of a conversation, he heard that on the Himalayas there were two shrines—Kedarnath and Badrinath—and the path leading to these places was very difficult, and also the cold there was very intense. O Ram, it was all your suggestion. For him there was always a fascination for dangerous journeys and perilous places. Kedarnath he had read of in the splendid writings of that great Mahatma Swami Rama Tirtha. His mind was made up. Ram prompted, and the resolution was sealed that he should visit these shrines, however difficult the path that led to them. He expressed Ram’s wish to

his friends. Mahadev and others, who valued his frail body so dearly, did not at first appreciate the idea. They said that the journey was a terrible one, and it would prove so especially to Ramdas, whose body was so weak and emaciated. He replied:

“Ram has given his fiat, and Ramdas obeys, placing full trust in Him. The burden is on Ram to see that he is taken care of; even if his body were to drop off at the will of Ram, he would not grumble. He will then be Ram’s entirely. Go he must.”

At once Ramkinker, the young friend, proposed to follow him on his journey to Kedarnath and Badrinath. So, he had to remain at Jhansi for some days more at the request of these friends, which gave Ramkinker sufficient time to make his preparations for the journey.

Some other incidents in connection with his stay at Jhansi have to be narrated here before he describes his pilgrimage to the Himalayas. After the resolution was made, he was taken over by Ramkinker, who kept him in a *Rammandir* near his own house and carefully looked after his personal wants. In this *mandir* there was a *pujari* known as Pandaji. O Pandaji! How very kind you were too. At midday, everyday, Ramdas would saunter out in the hot sun and walk in the streets of Jhansi for two or three hours. The heat of the sun at midday in that season was very severe; but he would not mind it. Observing this one day, Pandaji, who was treating him as a child, warned him thus:

“Look here Maharaj, you are everyday going out at midday and wandering about in the hot sun. Your head, which is clean-shaven, is always uncovered. If you are obstinate, I shall have to lock you up in the temple before I go out.”

With this threat—an indication of his great love for Ramdas—he would press him to sleep in the afternoon and would not leave the *mandir* for midday meals until he saw Ramdas asleep. O Ram, how kind Thou art!

One day, during his midday walks, Ramdas got thirsty, and he discovered on the way a well at which some mothers were drawing water. He went up to the place and requested one of them to give him some water to quench his thirst. In reply, the mother who was asked for water said:

“Maharaj, I am a Mahomedan and you being a Hindu monk, it is not proper that you should accept water at my hands.”

“O mother!” replied he, “Ramdas knows no caste distinctions. He finds in you that Universal Mother, Sita, as he finds in all women. Therefore, do not hesitate to provide your son

with some water.”

The mother was strangely surprised at this reply, washed the water-pot thoroughly and, drawing water afresh, poured it out in the hollow of his hands, and he drank as much water as he wanted. Then he continued his walk. For about ten days he was staying in the *Rammandir*, and during evenings a number of friends of the city would come and put him various questions about Ram, and he would try to satisfy them by such replies as were prompted him by Ram Himself. On one occasion a certain friend came up specially to have a discussion with him on a religious point.

His first question was: “Who are you?”

“I am Ramdas,” was his simple reply.

“No, you speak a lie there,” retorted the friend. “You are Ram Himself. When you declare you are Ramdas, you do not know what you say. God is everywhere and in everything. He is in you, and so you are He. Confess it right away.”

“True, dear friend, God is everywhere,” replied Ramdas. “But at the same time, it must be noted that God is one, and when He is in you and everywhere around you, may I humbly ask to whom you are putting this question?”

After reflecting for a time, the friend was driven to say: “Well, I have put the question to myself.”

This reply was given as a desperate attempt to reconcile his first contention. If he would say that the question was put to Ramdas there was a clear sense of duality accepted by the disputant himself—“I and you.”

“As a matter of fact,” put in Ramdas, “Ram does not speak; the moment he speaks he is not Ram. Speech creates always a sense of duality: the speaker and the man spoken to. Ram is one and indivisible. It is sheer ignorance for a man—whose ego is a great obstruction for his complete realisation of the oneness of God—to say that he is God.”

The friend persisted for some time more to uphold his argument and eventually gave it up. At the desire of Ramdas, who liked to stay for some days in a retired place, the friends at Jhansi took him to a garden about a mile away from the city, where there was a small shed. Here he lived for some days, visited every evening by a number of friends.

Here again a schoolmaster came for a discussion. He belonged to the Arya Samaj started by that great Saint, Swami Dayananda Saraswati. This friend, in the course of a talk, became very hot and excited. The point was about the *shuddhi* movement set on foot by Swami Shradhanandji.

Ramdas was clearly opposed to this movement as he is, in fact, opposed to every effort on the part of anybody to create differences in religious faiths. That all faiths lead to the same goal is a most beautiful and convincing truth. At the close of the discussion, the friend exceeded the limits of decent talk. However, Ramdas was cool and collected by the grace of Ram. At parting, he assured the friend that he loved him most dearly in spite of any objectionable words used by him. Next day, about the same time, this friend came again in a great hurry. He could scarcely talk. He could only whisper; his throat was choked up. His condition was pitiable.

“O Maharaj,” he exclaimed falling at the feet of Ramdas. “God has punished your slave for having used rough words to you yesterday. See how my throat is choked, and I can’t speak out properly.”

“O friend, Ramdas is really sorry to hear this, but be assured of this—God never punishes. God is love and is always kind. Our own doubts are our enemies and create a lot of mischief. The so-called evil is of our own making.”

At once, pulling out Ramdas’ right hand the friend rubbed the palm on his throat and, strange to say, his throat cleared and he began to talk more clearly and in a few minutes he was all right!

“Behold! Maharaj, how powerful you are!” he cried exultantly.

“You make a mistake, dear friend,” replied Ramdas. “Ramdas is a poor slave of Ram, possessing no powers at all. Your faith alone has cured you and nothing else.”

From this time onwards the friend became very much attached to him and was very kind. O Ram, Thy ways are so wonderful that Ramdas gets utterly bewildered at times.

The friends at Jhansi whom he met daily in that city were all very charitable in disposition—especially were they kind and hospitable to Sadhus. When he was living with Mahadev Prasad, he found this friend a pattern of charity and humility. Mahadev would never send away a hungry man from his door without feeding him. He would forego his own meal to satisfy a hungry man. His heart was so soft and so tender. Mahadev’s humility was exemplary. Ram certainly gave Ramdas the society of this friend so that he might know what true charity and humility meant in actual practice. Ramkinker—the young friend who accompanied him on his pilgrimage to the Himalayas—made it a rule to utilise about ten per cent of his salary for charity. This is really a beautiful hint for all. While speaking of charity, the ideal of charity followed by the householder of northern India is indeed very noble and lofty, the ideal of the ancients, namely,

that the householder has no right to exist as such if he does not share his food everyday with a hungry man of no means, such as a beggar or a Sadhu. In fact, it is declared that a man assumes *grihastashrama* with the specific object of carrying out this noble ideal. There are some *grihastas* who would not wait for a guest to turn up but would go seeking for one in the streets, in temples, or *dharmashalas*; such is the piety of the householders. Ramdas' experience in southern India was also full of incidents in which charity played a most laudable part. In fact, the whole of India is a great land of charity.

Himalayan Journey

On the fourth day, they started on their journey higher on the hills. As they climbed higher and higher, the scenes and landscapes they saw were found to be simply enchanting. On the right the sacred Ganga was rushing downhill in all her glory, and on the left, high, rocky hills, full of foliage and trees, presented at once a thrilling and absorbing sight. The very air there was charged with the divine presence of Ram. The far-off hills and valleys, the varied-hued sky in which the white fleecy clouds assumed fantastic shapes, the snow-capped mountains, hundreds of miles away up, dazzling in the rays of the sun as though they were covered with sheets of silver: all these constituted indeed an imposing sight! O, the charm of the scenes! O Ram! poor Ramdas cannot find adequate words to describe the grandeur, the beauty, the wonderful glory of the sights that met his bewildering gaze.

As he walked on, he drank deeper and deeper of the splendour of Ram's infinity and was lost, lost, lost in the intoxication of it all. O Ram, Thy kindness to Thy slave is really unbounded. From day to day both Ramkinker and Ramdas walked on at a high speed. Ramdas felt no fatigue, no pain, no discomfort of any kind. He was as fresh as ever. It was all due to Ram's grace, whose name was always on his lips. Thus mountain after mountain was traversed, and as they climbed on grander and newer scenes presented themselves before their wondering sight. It was a journey in the land of enchantment. It was all a bewitching dream full of the glory and greatness of Ram. There Ram exhibits His marvelous powers. He is a mighty conjurer, vision after vision dances and flits before your eyes, and unconsciously you fall under the subtle charm and spell of this great Magician. You forget what you are and where you are. You are simply absorbed and lost in the surroundings—like a wisp of smoke in a hurricane.

Ramdas was walking at high speed—nay, he was veritably flying; even the difficult ascents were scaled in no time. Most of the time, he was unconscious of his body. His mind was entirely merged in Ram who alone appeared to him in those enchanting scenes. Higher and higher climbed the indefatigable pilgrims. Ramkinker, who had a heavy bundle to carry, complained of Ramdas' running speed, since he could not keep pace with him. But Ramdas was not his own master. Ram was his master. At a certain place they missed each other, causing anxiety to both; but Ram brought them together at a stage called Rudraprayag. Thousands of pilgrims are every year ascending these hills and during this season, from March to June, a regular stream of people is going up and coming down the hills. All the pilgrims, Sadhus, and others whom Ramdas met on the way were very kind to him. Some rich merchants from cities like Bombay were very solicitous. Because Ram is kind, all are kind, and Ram is in all.

The mountains are peopled by hill-tribes—a fair-complexioned and well-built race. They live by cultivation and cattle and goat-breeding. Naturally their lives and ways are simple. Their faith in God is very great. “Ram, Ram,” is always on their lips. If you talk to them they tell you with a glow of pride that they are the descendants of the Rishis that lived in those hills. Their clothing is wholly made of wool. Males wear long woollen coats and drawers and a black cap, and women, rough blankets in place of *sarees*. These blankets are prepared there out of the wool yielded by the sheep they tend. So the food-stuffs and clothing—the two essentials of life—are the produce of their own labour. Even while walking from place to place, every man and woman carries a quantity of wool which he or she is spinning on the way. They have simple pit looms on which they weave the yarn into cloth. Since their mode of life is free from the baneful touch of modern civilization, they live simple, pure, honest and pious lives.

At different stages of the journey over the hills, under trees or in small huts or caves, are seen Sadhus engaged in austerities. To seek their company and remain there, for ever so small a period, is a great privilege. The society of a Sadhu is a much needed bath for the mind. The pure atmosphere he creates around him by his meditations is the river in which the mind bathes and is purged of evil thoughts and impressions. Upon these sacred hills are the *ashramas* of such famous Saints as Narada and Agastya Muni. There is also a place called Pandukeshar where the Pandavas are said to have halted for sometime during their journey to Kailas. There is a temple here and some old inscriptions, upon plates of copper. The first place visited by Ramdas and Ramkinker on the heights was Trijugarain. The ascent to this spot was sharp and steep, and it was a plateau

surrounded by hills covered with snow. Hence the cold here was intense. The pilgrims remained here for one day.

Then after descending some distance another chain of hills was mounted. Here the path was narrow, rugged and dangerous; frail, rickety bridges had to be crossed; at three places large tracts of snow had to be traversed. On account of the perilous nature of the path, every year many pilgrims are reported to have slipped down the cliffs and been washed away in the rushing torrents of the river, many hundreds of feet below. One instance of a narrow escape may be mentioned here.

At a certain stage in the middle of an ascent, Ramdas was sitting on the path awaiting Ramkinker. This was the edge of a high cliff, and the river was flowing far below. The path was very narrow. A girl of about 16 years, full of energy and activity, was coming down on her return journey. It was a sharp descent. Her pace was rapid and the sharp downhill path only accelerated her speed, and in spite of herself she was running down at uncontrollable velocity. Down, down she came. She was excited, her face was flushed, and she knew she was being drawn down automatically, and it was beyond her power to control herself. Instead of running towards the hillside, she was staggering down to the edge of the path—the very brow of a precipice.

Ramdas watched the scene with breathless suspense. He was silently calling upon Ram to save her. Ram alone could and none else. Now she came up to the edge, and with a superhuman effort controlled herself. She had come to the very brink. Part of her left foot was out of the edge. O Ram, how terrible a condition! Ram, Thy name be glorified. Ramdas looks and sees the girl falling on the path right across uttering Ram, Ram. Saved, saved! Ram saved her! She got up; did not wait a minute, but continued her walk further down. Dauntless girl! What a marvelous faith in Ram is thine!

The other was the case of an old woman who gave up her body in the basket in which she was being carried by a sturdy mountaineer who was specially engaged for the purpose. At certain stages in the journey this carrier would lower down his burden for relief, and the last time he did so it happened to be near the place where Ramkinker and Ramdas were resting on the roadside. The bearer, as usual with him, lowered the basket on a rock and asked the old mother to step out of the basket for sometime. But receiving no reply, the hillman peeped into the basket and a cry of surprise and pain started from him.

“The poor woman is gone”, he exclaimed.

O Ram, Thy will is done. Then walking higher and higher, Ramdas and his kind guide eventually reached Kedarnath. This was indeed a grand place. It was plain land in the midst of high towering mountains covered with snow. The cold here was extremely severe. O Ram, Thy kindness to Thy slave was so great that Thou hadst made him almost proof against cold.

Mathura, Gokul, and Brindaban

Mathura is the birth-place of that great incarnation Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna is the veritable personification of Love itself. His imperishable name lives still green and in all its pristine glory in the minds of all people in India. The *Bhagavad Gita* stands unrivalled in the depth of its philosophy, pointing out the one Goal all human endeavour should aim at as the ultimate accomplishment of all life and existence. Mathura still remembers vividly the child Krishna and his charmed life, which is proved by the variety of *mandirs* in the place in which he is worshipped daily in the form of gaudily dressed idols. On the day of Ramdas' arrival at Mathura—Ramkinker being laid up with fever—Ramdas, before he came in touch with the new Sadhuram, went to the city in quest of the holy river Jumna. Ram, who was ever ready to offer help to him, now brought him in touch with a Brahmin going towards the river. He came of his own accord towards him and proposed to lead him to the river.

Having reached the holy Jumna, Ramdas first washed his clothes and then descended into the river for a bath. But before doing so, he placed his small *lota* on one of the stone steps, and into it he also put his spectacles. Finishing the bath he was returning to the spot where he had placed the *lota*, and he was only a moment too late, because a monkey coming up carried off the spectacles. Now without spectacles he could not clearly see objects at a distance. The Brahmin guide seeing this was annoyed. But Ramdas unperturbed said:

“It was all Ram's wish,” and thought within himself that perhaps Ram meant to restore his failing sight.

But the Brahmin would not rest content. He requested two boys standing nearby to run after the monkey for the pair of spectacles. The monkey, meanwhile, was jumping from one turret of the temple to the other closely followed by a number of other monkeys, who thought the first one had got some eatable in its grasp. However, in about a quarter of an hour, the boys returned, bringing with them the pair of spectacles in a sound condition. It was after all a test of Ram on his

humble slave. After visiting some temples of Sri Krishna by the kindness of this Brahmin guide, he proceeded next day to Govardhan, in the company of the new Sadhuram.

Govardhan was situated at a distance of 14 miles from Mathura. They reached this place at midday. Here was the famous hill of Govardhan, which is said to have been lifted by Sri Krishna and supported on the tip of his little finger to protect the cows and cowherds—his playmates—from the heavy torrent of rain sent down by the angry god Indra. But this hill is fast diminishing and has come down almost to the level of the surrounding land. The stones cut out from the hill have been for the most part used in the erection of houses at the place. However, to represent the hill, a piece of rock from it is preserved, enclosed by an iron fence and with a top roof. Upon this rock pilgrims pour ghee, milk, curds, *etc.*, and offer *puja*. Even from this rock bits are knocked off by the pilgrims and carried as mementos. After securing food at a *dharmashala*, Ramdas and the Sadhuram rested for a while in the afternoon.

In the evening, both the Sadhuram and he were out on the road going about the town when they heard from a distance the sound of *bhajan*. Thither Ram led him and the Sadhuram. Shortly after this, they found themselves in a small *Rammandir*, and in front of the images about half a dozen Saints were sitting and singing the glorious name of Ram to the accompaniment of cymbals, *tamburine*, and *mridang*. The words were “Hare Ram, Hare Ram, Ram Ram, Hare Hare! Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare!”

This *bhajan* was sung repeatedly in a variety of tunes producing in the atmosphere an electric influence full of peace. In this place he remained for nearly four hours fully absorbed in the charming sound of Ram’s name. Next day, he and his guide started back for Mathura, and after a short stay there Ramdas, who missed the Sadhuram, proceeded alone to Gokul, lying at a distance of about five miles. Ah! Gokul is the place where Sri Krishna grew up as a child, played his games, and exhibited his extraordinary powers! Here also the blessed Jumna flows. It was here in this river, perhaps, that Sri Krishna rode and danced on the hood of the venomous serpent Kaliya. After a day’s stay here, he returned to Mathura, whence he proceeded to Brindaban about six miles off.

Brindaban is a very delightful place. Here the same Jumna flows in all her tameness and purity. There are beautiful natural gardens of *nim* and other trees on the banks of the river. To sit under their cool shade, when the fresh breeze is blowing over the place from the bosom of mother Jumna, is to enjoy heaven itself. He was charmed with the place and stayed on the banks of the river for a fortnight, made the dry sand his bed and seat for the night, and the shade of the trees a

little above, his resting place for the day. Moonlit nights here were all-bewitching. The very air seemed to be charged with the presence of that Love incarnate, Sri Krishna, and when soft breezes were blowing they seemed to be carrying into Ramdas' ears the maddening music of Sri Krishna's flute, and the silvery sound of the tinkling tiny bells of his blessed dancing feet. Now and again, a deep, soft, and resonant voice would travel in the air—"Radheshyam, Radheshyam." Ramdas lived there in a state of complete ecstasy and rapture, Days passed by unconsciously. The whole stay seemed to be one long-drawn, sweet, and pleasant dream.

At Brindaban, he visited many *Krishna-mandirs*, of which the *Ranganath-mandir* is a huge and picturesque structure. It resembles a fortress enclosed by high massive walls. The gateway and interior building and roofs are all made of stone artistically carved. The command came at last from Ram to leave. Returning to Mathura, he got into a train directed by the friends of the place.

Sri Siddharudha Swami

Ramdas, catching a train going still southward, reached Hubli at last. The idea of going to Hubli was put into his head by brother Ramakrishna Rao of Bombay, who is a great *bhakta* of the famous Saint of Hubli, Sri Siddharudha Swami. Ram took him here to obtain for him the *darshan* of this great Sage. It was past midday when he reached the Mutt of Sri Siddharudha, which is about three miles distant from the railway station. The Mutt consisted of three sets of buildings. The first one in the lines was a solid block of granite over which was erected a tall conical *gopura*. This temple was intended to serve as a repository of the remains of the Swami after he had entered *mahasamadhi*. The other two were extensive buildings constructed in such a way as to leave a large, square yard in the interior. Of these, the second one was a *dharmashala* wherein reside *sannyasins*, *bhaktas*, and pilgrims. Facing the Mutt there were two beautiful tanks. On the other side of the tanks there was a grove of trees yielding cool shade. The Mutt was situated in very charming and healthy surroundings.

Ramdas, entering the Mutt, was through the kindness of friends there duly introduced to Sri Siddharudha, at whose feet he prostrated himself most reverently. Here he spent about ten days most happily. In the mornings and evenings there were reading and exposition of religious texts. Ramdas listened to, nay, drank in the words of wisdom that fell from the lips of the learned Sage. Ram had so arranged matters for him that the *upadesh* the Swami gave during those days

happened to be just what would lead him further in his spiritual progress. At other times, he would wander about in the fields behind the Mutt and remain mostly at the tomb or *samadhi* of the late Kabirdas, the great Muslim Saint of that place. Ramdas was clearly able to experience a spiritual atmosphere charged with peace and calmness inside the Math and *dharmashala*, especially at the time of the presence of the great Swami. Sri Siddharudha was a great Yogi of an advanced age. He was kind, affable, hospitable, and full of tranquility.

Now news reached Mangalore that Ramdas was staying at the Mutt at Hubli. His former wife but present mother—as all women are mothers to Ramdas—and his child came there to fetch him. Sri Siddharudha Swami was appealed to by them in the matter and the kind-hearted Saint advised him to go with them to Mangalore. Ramdas submitted to the order, feeling that it came from Ram Himself. Ram always means well, and He does everything for the best. The mother (that is, Ramdas' former wife) proposed to him to return to *samsara*, to which he replied:

“O mother, it is all the work of Ram. Ram alone has freed humble Ramdas from the bonds of samsaric life, and he resides now at Ram's holy feet. He is now the slave of Ram and prays to Him always to keep him as such. To trust and acknowledge His supreme powers of protection over all, and believe that He alone is the doer of all actions and possessor of all things, is the only way to be rid of the miseries of life. Therefore, O mother, throw off your burden of cares and anxieties and approaching the divine feet of Ram, live there always in peace and happiness. This is all poor Ramdas can ask you to do.”

Now, under the kind care and escort of the mother, he started by train and reaching Mormugoa embarked upon a steamboat which took them in due course to Mangalore. As the party came up to the *bundar*, Ramdas, as bid by Ram, walking in advance, directed his steps straight to the Kadri hills, where he remained for the night. Next day, by Ram's will, he visited the house of brother Sitaram Rao—a brother by the old relation and a great *bhakta* of Ram. A few days later, he had the happiness of the *darshan* of his Gurudev (father by old relationship), who had given him the *upadesh* of the divine *Rammantram*. Now Ramdas stays by Ram's command in a cave called Panch Pandav Cave on the Kadri hill, and lives there a serene life, devoting his whole time in talking about, writing of, and meditating on that all-loving and glorious Ram.

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram!