

**VINTAGE LETTERS:
SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA
(SRI SASHI MAHARAJ)
TO SWAMI PARAMANANDA**

[FROM VEDANTA KESARI 1984-85]

(A good letter is always an interesting piece of literature. It not only reveals the personality of the writer and the personality of the one to whom it is written, but also throws a flood of light on the conditions of those times. The value of the epistle becomes all the greater when it is a great saint who is writing and that to a saint in the making. We have great pleasure therefore in presenting to our readers this bunch of letters from Swami Ramakrishnanandaji Maharaj, the apostle of Sri Ramakrishna to the South, addressed to Swami Paramananda, who did so much for over a quarter of a century popularising Vedanta in America and the West. Swami Paramananda, whose pre-monastic name was Sureshchandra, came to the Belur Math in the

year 1900. Revered Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj was so much pleased with the good cheer with which the young boy used to carry out all duties assigned to him, that he named him Basanta, or Spring. Basanta Maharaj had his training at the Madras (now Chennai) Math during the years 1901-1906 under Revered Sashi Maharaj, who was as strict a disciplinarian as he was a loving teacher. Towards the end of 1906, Swami Paramananda left for America with Swami Abhedanandaji Maharaj.

Sri Sashi Maharaj used to write regularly to Swami Paramananda. These letters have been made available to us by the Vedanta Centre, Cohasset, Mass., U.S.A. The major part of these letters is in Bengali and has been translated into English by us.)

(1)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Triplicane,² Madras
March 16, 1907

My dear Basanta,

I cannot tell you how happy I was to get a description of your work in your letter. May you live long by the grace of Sri Sri Guru Maharaj and Sri Sri Swamiji, and be blessed by spreading the message of Sri Ramakrishna all over the world—this is my constant prayer at His lotus feet. How is your health? You have written to me that nowadays your health is not so well. Hope now you are healthy and strong. I am very anxiously waiting to get news of your well-being. As soon as you get this letter, relieve my anxiety by sending me your good news.

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

² Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras was housed at that time in the Ice House (now named 'Vivekananda house'), Triplicane, where Swami Vivekananda was accommodated during his stay in Madras, after his triumphant return from the West. The Math was later in the year shifted to its present site at Mylapore.

All your friends in Madras were delighted to hear about your proficiency in your work. I think that some of them will express their appreciation in their letters to you by this mail. There will be no limit to the joy of Narayana Iyengar. A few days ago he wrote me a letter. In that letter he has tried to express several things: the great similarity between your features and those of the Buddha; that like Him you too are a lover of people and desirous of helping humanity. Make him happy by occasionally writing to him.

You are having to work very hard. You are still a child.³ It is not an easy matter to conduct four classes a week. Be very careful about your health. The body of every living being is the veritable abode of the Lord. Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna is firmly and eternally seated on the altar of the heart in this Shrine. That is why negligence towards the body means lack of loving attention towards the abode of God, and therefore towards Him too. So you should take particular care of the body. You are always under the benign protection of Sri Sri Guru Maharaj and Sri Sri Swamiji. What do you have to worry about? You are, by your very nature, pure. Whoever comes in contact with you will also become pure. Whenever

³ Swami Paramananda was only 23 years old then.

anyone has seen you anywhere, he has immediately loved you. There can be no doubt that the people of America will love you and take care of you—you, who have such a stainless heart, guileless nature and a spirited personality.

Miss Glenn⁴ has great affection for you. She has recently written me a letter in which she has described you as a “pure, holy child.” Really, nowhere in the three worlds is there anything more powerful than purity. One who is pure is loved by all. You have attained this purity through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Swamiji. Guard it carefully. Although nothing is unknown to you, let me remind you of one thing. Purity is preserved in an untarnished manner only when one is able to regard all women as mothers: The human mind is very weak; under the snare of the senses, it regards one, who should be regarded as a mother, with other eyes. In this way it soon loses its ‘supreme treasure’ of purity and becomes truly destitute. I have said earlier that you are

⁴More familiarly known as Sister Devamata; she was the assistant and first disciple of Swami Paramananda. She lived in India from 1908 to 1909 in close personal contact with the Holy Mother, Swami Ramakrishnananda and other direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. She has left behind two excellent memoirs as a result of her stay in India—*Days in an Indian Monastery* and *Sri Ramakrishna and his Disciples*

well protected by Sri Sri Guru Maharaj and Sri Sri Swamiji Maharaj. You have nothing to fear. However, one ought to be always careful. Just because He is protecting, one ought not to harbour other thoughts in one's mind. Many fools forget their insignificance and weakness through the sway of lust. Then they start regarding themselves as regal, the possessors of all strength, equal to the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna; and imitating His ways, to what a pitiable state are they reduced! Let no one ever regard himself, even in thought, as the equal of that Inimitable, One-without-a-second, the Supreme Being, Vāsudeva. There is no sin greater than this. I have heard that women exert a great influence in America. If a weak man once falls into their clutches, he is lost for ever. But those who are initiated into the Matri-mantra of Sri Ramakrishna are always protected by all women as by their own loving mothers. You are aware of all this; still, I have again reminded you of it.

I was very happy to get the \$10 (or Rs. 30/- and annas 10) sent by you. I also heard that you have sent \$10 to the Math. But don't bother about sending money like this. Then your poverty-stricken Indian friends will endlessly pester you for money. It is my wish that you should save the

money that may occasionally be given to you by people for your maintenance. Let none of your Indian friends or foreign friends ever know that you have some money, or that you occasionally get some money. Because, ordinary people have greater faith and reliance on monetary strength, than on divine strength. People used to often pester Swamiji for money: He had written to me about it many times. I have carefully kept aside the money sent by you as a token of your love. I have written two letters to you and have sent you *From Colombo to Almora*.⁵ Remove my anxiety by letting me know whether you have received my previous letter and the book. How is your health nowadays? I am very anxious to know this.

With love and blessings,

Yours affectionately,
Ramakrishnananda

⁵ The book "*Lectures from Colombo to Almora*" comprising Swami Vivekananda's Indian lectures.

(2)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Triplicane, Madras

March 20, 1907

My dear Basanta,

I was very happy to get your letter and that of Kāli Maharaj in the previous mail. I am alone here for more than a month and a half. Through the grace of Sri Sri Gurudev, my body is in good condition. I hear that within the next ten or fifteen days a Brahmacharin will come from the Math.² Achyuta Rao does almost all the work. He is a fine, trustworthy person. Kasturi does the dishes. All is as it was before. I am in the same cottage. Due to shortage of hands, all the classes are temporarily suspended. Everything is going on well at the Math. Most Revered Śrī Śrī Mātā Thākūrāni³ is well. She sends you her love and blessings. Although my health is not so bad, I cannot work as hard as I did in the past. I don't feel like doing any work. I long to rest.

¹ May the lotus feet of Sri Guru be my refuge

² Belur Math, the Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission, in District Howrah, West Bengal.

³ Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother

I was very happy to hear a description of your work. 'I am the machine and God is the Operator'—be firmly established in this conviction. This alone is true knowledge, and nothing else. Only when one attains the fullness of Jnāna, does one feel this way. One, who has realized this, never takes a false step. When a person is guided by Sri Sri Guru Maharaj, is it ever possible for his mind to be inclined towards evil things? The special grace of Sri Sri Guru Maharaj is upon you. That is why He has given you such a clear sense of direction. I pray ceaselessly at His lotus feet for your supreme well-being.

Please convey my love and Pranāms to Kāli Maharaj.⁴ He has asked me to write about my travels. But my physical and mental condition is such that, for the time being, I am unable to do anything. So I shall give the responsibility of this task to Dr. P. Venkatarangam. He will do this with great joy,' Please convey my love and blessings to Sarada⁵, Motilāl, Sushil⁶ and Haripada⁷. Maharaj's⁸ health is not as well as it was before. That is why

⁴ Swami Abhedananda

⁵ Swami Trigunatitananda

⁶ Swami Prakashananda

⁷ Swami Bodhananda

⁸ Swami Brahmananda

very soon he will go to Puri with Baburam⁹ for a change. Within seven or eight days the construction work of this Math will start.

Please remember me to Miss Glenn and all members of the Society.

With love and blessings,

Yours affectionately,
Ramakrishnananda

⁹ Swami Premananda

(3)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Madras

4 - 4 - 1907

My dear Basanta,

I was very happy to get a couple of letters from you. Your mind is inherently pure, so bad thoughts cannot enter it. We came to know through Miss Glenn's² letter and yours, that you are working extremely hard. Once you were writing a letter and were prevented from continuing it by a headache. It is absolutely against the injunctions of Dharma to do physical or mental work excessively. Don't do so. It is to educate oneself that one instructs others. It is in the Lord's hands if people derive some benefit from it. One's only duty is to imprint firmly good thoughts in the heart by constant good company and conversations on spiritual topics.

Sri Sri Guru Maharaj could never endure the two words: Guru and *kartā* (Master). If anyone called him either Guru or *kartā*, he used to say that God alone is the Guru and the *kartā*. Man,

¹ May the lotus feet of Sri Guru be my refuge.

² Sister Devamata

blind as he is, can never be competent to be a Guru. He who becomes a Guru has transcended his human limitations and has attained divinity. So long as that has not happened, let not anyone, through delusion, regard oneself as a Guru. If one does it, one misses the path and courts suffering. "Friend, as long as I live, so long do I learn"—I first heard this from Sri Sri Guru Maharaj. Far from becoming a great figure by giving lectures, many times a person becomes a beast by doing so. By developing great pride, one acquires animal-like lower propensities, becomes selfish and is immersed in the ocean of ignorance. It takes one a long time to be rescued from that state. Do not forget this through the praise of women. "A woman's intelligence is terribly destructive"—this is an eternal truth. Women become fascinated by external beauty, manners and gestures, and eventually lure the one by whom they are fascinated. They are the cause of man's ruin. Of course, there are many women whose name is worthy of remembrance on waking in the morning;³ but when women and men come

³ One generally takes the name of God in the mornings. Here it means that there are many women whose lives have been very pure and holy. In fact, an ancient verse of Indian tradition does prescribe the constant remembrance of the names of five holy

together, even pure-natured women and pure-natured men lose their personal purity. In other words, if you are with women, try your utmost to remain unaffected, like the lotus leaf in water, by taking refuge at the feet of Sri Gurudeva. The grace of the Guru is flowing through you in a special way. There is no doubt that it is He who will protect you from all dangers. God is not outside, He is within you. To know Him, one must go inside. *Īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām hṛddeśe'rjuna tiṣṭhati*—'The Lord, O Arjuna, dwells in the hearts of all beings' (Gītā, 18.61 61).

It is not good to meditate excessively. Harm may come through that. It is better to do as much as one can endure. Kali Maharaj⁴ is a direct disciple of Sri Sri Gurudeva. He has become absolutely pure by the touch of the Master's body and by serving him. It is impossible for him to take a wrong step. He is a great soul. It befits him to do daring things. But you must not imitate him. ...It is easy to cause affliction to another, anyone can do so; but he who can endure affliction is a great man, it is he who will eventually become blessed

women—Ahalya, Drupadi, Sita, Tara and Mandodari—as a means to destroy the greatest sins:

Ahalyā Draupadī Sītā Tārā Maṇḍodari tathā |

Pañcakanyā smarennityaṁ mahāpātakanāśanam ||

⁴ Swami Abhedananda

by attaining the lotus feet of God. Read, now and then, Swamiji's lectures with great concentration. It is not good to be reading books always; read occasionally. I had written to you regarding the sending of money to India. That was only to save you from botheration, nothing else. You are a Sādhu; it is good that you have as little contact with money as possible. Remember the story of the kite and the fish.⁵ If anyone gives you some money out of love, then keep it with you. At times, it may be necessary. If you do this, then you will be free from worries over *artha* (money), which is often the cause of *anartha* (trouble).

All is well here by the grace of Sri Sri Gurudeva. The construction of the Math⁶ is almost completed. I will probably shift there after the Pūja.⁷ Accept my deep love and blessings, and convey the same to Haripada.⁸ Convey my Pranams and love to Kali Maharaj. Where is he now? My Pranams and love to Sarada Maharaj,⁹ and to Sushil¹⁰ and to Motilal my love and blessings.

⁵ See *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*
(Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1980), Vol. 1, p. 314

⁶ At Mylapore

⁷ Sri Sri Durga Puja

⁸ Swami Bodhananda

⁹ Swami Trigunatitananda

¹⁰ Swami Prakashananda

Sometimes I get anxious for your letters, so write to me periodically and relieve my anxiety. May Sri Sri Guru Maharaj bring about your supreme welfare, may you maintain unbroken Brahmacharya like Sri Mahavir¹¹, and do your duty and spiritual practices, and attain victory in this battle of life—this is my only prayer at the holy feet of Sri Sri Gurudeva.

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

¹¹ Hanuman, the great devotee of Sri Rama

(4)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Madras
13-6-1907

My dear Basanta,

I am quite worried as I have not received your letter for a long time. Relieve my anxiety by informing me by return-post, of your physical welfare. Right now all is well here through the grace of Sri Sri Gurudeva. It was terribly hot here for the past few days. We suffered greatly. Through the grace of Sri Sri Gurudeva, it is fairly cool now. The present inmates here are Rudrachaitanya—a boy from Cumilla,² Achyuta Rao and myself. The construction work of the Math at Mylapore is almost complete. Within a month or two, we shall move there.

Please remain there with great care. The gaze of everyone here is particularly focussed on you. Be particularly careful about women. The more good-natured, talented, beautiful and wealthy a woman is, the more must you regard her dreadful like a black cobra. You are steady, self-

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

² Now in Bangladesh

controlled and supremely devoted to God. It is impossible for you to miss your step. Even then I am saying these things to caution you.

At your request I am sending you the picture of Sri Sri Mata Thakurani,³ and copies of the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Sri Chandi, and a manual containing the vows of Brahmacharya. Acknowledge their receipt.

What do you all eat there? Eat whatever suits your stomach. Sri Sri Guru Maharaj used to say that if a man eats beef and yet keeps his mind always focussed on God, he is a true vegetarian and a Sannyasin; and if, living on *haviṣya*,⁴ he is attached to 'lust and gold', he is more despicable and vile than a cow-eater. Eat, by all means, fish and meat if that suits your stomach; one ought to be particularly careful about one's health.

Shukul⁵ is keeping well at Bangalore. Raja Maharaj⁶ and Baburam Maharaj⁷ are now in Puri.

³ Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother

⁴ *Haviṣya* food consists of boiled rice, boiled vegetables and ghee. It is considered very holy and conducive to spirituality.

⁵ Swami Atmananda, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who was then in charge of the centre at Bangalore.

⁶ Swami Brahmananda

⁷ Swami Premananda

Let me know what kinds of fruits and vegetables are available there. In my next letter I shall send you the English translation of the manual on Brahmacharya-vows. Where is Kali Maharaj now? Please convey my love and Pranams to him. Convey my love and blessings to Haripada and others.

How do you like that country? One who can endure all hardships for the sake of Sri Sri Guru Maharaj and dedicate one's entire life to his work, is a great soul and truly blessed.

With my heart's love and blessings, and awaiting your reply,

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

(5)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Madras
27-6-1907

My dear Basanta,

Received your letter of May 28th and noted all the news. I was a little anxious to get your news; now that your letter has arrived, the anxiety has left me.

One always faces opposition when one works. That is why Swamiji said, "No opposition, no success." You have written rightly: "It is good to receive sorrow and hardships; through pleasure, man attains to an animal-like state." Swamiji has concluded his advice on *Karma Yoga* with the following words: "He works best who works without motive, neither for money nor for fame, nor for anything else; and when a man can do that, he will be a Buddha and out of him will come the power to work in such a manner as will

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

transform the world. This man represents the highest ideal of Karma Yoga.”²

A real Jnani regards dishonour as nectar, and honour as poison. How many hardships had to be endured by Sri Sri Guru Maharaj and Swamiji! How many times were they subjected to insults! All this can be clearly understood if one studies their lives deeply. That is why Sri Guru Maharaj has said: “In the alphabet chart, there is only one letter for each sound-symbol-like ka, kha, ga etc., but there are three sa’s (śa, ṣa, sa). This is, as it were, the very first instruction of the Lord to all beings: ‘O man, forbearance is the greatest virtue in this world. He who forbears, lives; he who doesn’t, perishes.’ ”³

The grace of Sri Sri Guru Maharaj and Swamiji is particularly evident in your life, since they are teaching you the virtue of forbearance. He (Sri Ramakrishna) used to say, “When

² Swami Vivekananda, *Karma Yoga* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1978) p. 131. This is quoted in English by Swami Ramakrishnananda.

³ The three consonants (ś, ṣ, s) of the Bengali alphabet are pronounced in the same way: *sha*. In this context, they stand for the Bengali word *sahya*, which means forbearance.

blacksmiths want to give tarnished metal a particular form, they place it in the fire for a long time; when it becomes red-hot, they place it on the anvil and beat it hard with big hammers. After being beaten in this way, it acquires a form.” You have infinite forbearance; how can you suffer? The tree offers shade even to the person who is cursing it. A true Sādhu should possess forbearance like that of a tree. That is why Sri Sri Gaurānga Mahāprabhu has said:

**Tṛṇādapi sunīcena
taroriva sahiṣṇunā |**

**Amāninā mānadena
kīrtaniyaḥ sadā hariḥ | |**

“The Lord’s name is to be sung always by one who is humbler than even a blade of grass, with endurance like that of a tree and who being himself devoid of conceit bestows honours (on others). “⁴ If the mind is pure, joy and peace always abide in it. Be tulya-nindā-stutir maunī—’the same in praise and blame, and silent’⁵ and continue to do the work of Sri Guru Maharaj and Swamiji. You will attain great strength and a long life, and ultimately complete fulfilment.

⁴ Sri Chaitanya, *Śikṣāṣṭakam*, 3

⁵ Bhagavad Gītā, 12.19.

Through the grace of Sri Guru Maharaj, all is well here. All of us should be grateful to Kali Maharaj.⁶ Had he not maintained his Brahmacharya for the last twelve years and enduring all hardships had remained in that country, where would be the present Vedānta Society? Everyone has faults; ‘without an alloy, no ornament can be made’, said Sri Guru Maharaj. So instead of looking at faults, let us see, as far as possible, the virtues in everyone. You know all this; it is superfluous to add anything more.

Pay particular attention to your health. It is not possible to do any work when the body is ill. The man, who can save himself from the trap of woman’s enchanting form, is truly brave—*sa yuktaḥ sa sukhī naraḥ*—“He is steadfast (in Yoga), he is a happy man.”⁷ If you can live in that country for three or four years with unbroken Brahmacharya, great work will be accomplished through you.

I am selecting a verse from the Gheranda Samhita. This is for you to practice.

**Nāsti māyāsamaḥ pāśo
nāsti yogasamaṁ balaṁ |**

⁶ Swami Abhedananda

⁷ *Bhagavad Gita*, 5.23

**Nāsti jñānasamo bandhuḥ
nāhaṁkārāt paro ripuḥ | |**

“There is no bondage greater than Māyā; no strength greater than (that attained through) Yoga; no friend greater than knowledge; and no enemy greater than pride.” In order to dispel this pride Sri Sri Gurudev cleaned latrines like a scavenger. “Let me be abused. What! Should I not be abused? Do I deserve to be worshipped? No. God alone is worthy of being worshipped. Only the ‘I’ deserves to be abused. What virtue do I possess that people should accord worship to me? The ‘I’ is the support of lust, anger, greed, delusion, arrogance and envy; verbal abuse is the just reward for this ‘I’!” What crime had Prahlāda committed? His only fault was that he loved to sing the glories of Hari; loved to meditate on His form; loved to repeat His name and how he was tortured by his father for this! You know how many physical tortures he laughingly endured: being trampled by an elephant, roasted over fire, thrown from a mountain top, being given poison, etc. A mere lad like him could endure so much; we should be able to endure easily at least a billionth part of his suffering!

I am enclosing herewith an English translation of the manual on Brahmacharya.

Relieve me of anxiety by replying soon. With deep
love and blessings,

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

(6)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Mylapore, Madras

26-12-1907

My dear Basanta,

A happy New Year to you and all our friends there. I was very happy to get the Christmas presents sent by you. I shall be greatly helped by the fountain pen you have given me. Whoever has seen the notebook, pen wiper, letter opener, calendar etc. that you have sent, has been delighted. May Sri Guru Maharaj bless you. Presently, every morning I deliver a public lecture at the new Math. Three lectures have been given already. Tomorrow I shall conclude with the fourth one. I am enclosing herewith a short programme of my activities here. All our friends here were amazed to hear about your work there. None had expected that you would be able to flourish so much in such a short time. It is all the will of Sri Guru Maharaj!

Each letter of Miss Glenn² comes as a great boon to me. Her motherly love towards you is full

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

of care for you, and so deep that we seldom come across such rare examples. May God preserve her for the good of many, as well as, herself. Will you kindly remember me to all our friends? Please convey my love and greetings to each and every one of them. May the work of truth and purity thrive for ever and ever! May good men and women always shower blessings upon this benighted earth, and make her better and happier.³

Pay special attention to your health.
Convey my love and pranamas to Kāli Maharaj.

With love and blessings,

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

² Sister Devamata

³ This paragraph is written in English in the original.

(7)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Triplicane
24-1-1907

Sri Paramananda Swamiji—

My dear Basanta,

I cannot tell you how happy I was to get your letter of Dec. 25th. What news can be more joyful than knowing that you have safely reached your destination! Please convey my love and devoted Pranams to Kali Maharaj.² Trust he is keeping well. To Bodhananda my love and blessings. I was relieved to note that you have received a letter from Sri Sri Māta Thākūrāṇī³ conveying her blessings to you. There can be no doubt that through her blessings you will become an expert in everything, and victorious everywhere. I send you my love and blessings. I always pray to the Mother for your well-being.

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

² Swami Abhedananda

³ Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother

As requested by you, I have sent a copy of *From Colombo to Almora*.⁴ A hard-bound copy was not available. So a paperback has been sent. I am searching for a photograph of Niranjan Maharaj.⁵ I will probably not be able to send it with the books by this mail. I will send it by the next mail. When will the Gospel⁶ be published? The sooner the better. An Indian edition is being published at Madras.⁷

I had written a letter to you a few days back. Didn't you get it? I am not much used to writing letters. So please don't mind if I do not reply or I delay in replying to your letters. But do write to me whenever you get time.

⁴ A copy of the book *Lectures from Colombo to Almora* comprising Swami Vivekananda's Indian lectures.

⁵ Swami Niranjanananda

⁶ *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, which was eventually published by the Vedanta Society, New York, in December, 1907. Originally translated by 'M', it was thoroughly edited and remodelled by Swami Abhedananda.

⁷ This was brought out in the same year (1907) by the Brahmavadin Office, Madras, retaining M.'s original translation. Its second edition revised by the author himself and freed from its Biblical turns of expression, was published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, in 1911. A full English translation of the Gospel by Swami Nikhilananda was brought out in 1942.

I returned to the Math only three or four days ago. For a while I went on a pilgrimage to the South with Baburam Maharaj,⁸ his mother, sister etc. I have just received from Puri a telegram of Baburam Maharaj. They have all reached there safely. I revisited all the places I had seen with Kali Maharaj. In this trip, I also visited Kanyakumari, Tirupati, Tirukazhu-kundram, Chidambaram, Kanjivaram etc. I had to lecture at these places.

This year Sri Swamiji's birthday Puja and celebrations were observed with great eclat. We are still in the same cottage.⁹ I expect that the Math will soon come up on the land donated by Kondiah Chettiar. It looks as if we shall be celebrating Sri Sri Guru Maharaj's birthday at the present site itself. The Tithipuja falls on February 14th, and the Public Celebration will be on February 17th. There is hardly any time left. We are getting ready for the celebration.

⁸ Swami Premananda

⁹ The 'Ice House' (now named 'Vivekananda House') at Triplicane, Madras

Recently, Ramu¹⁰ almost got drowned in the sea, but was saved by Guru Maharaj's grace. A friend of his was bathing in the sea with others on the day of the solar eclipse on the last Amavasya. Suddenly he fell into a hole and began struggling. He didn't know how to swim. As soon as Ramu noticed this, he immediately swam towards him for rescuing him. He had even brought him a long way towards the shore, but a huge wave rose and parted them. No trace of that friend could be found. Alas, he died, the poor youth. Ramu somehow managed to get back to the shore with great difficulty. Men carried Ramu home and it took about a week for him to recover from his body pain. He had even fallen ill, but is well now.

Acknowledge the receipt of the books. I will not be able to send you Niranjan's photograph this

¹⁰ Sri C. Ramaswamy Iyengar (1871-1932), familiarly known as Ramu, played a very important part in the development of the Ramakrishna Movement in Madras city from its very inception. With his cousin Sri C. Ramanujachariar, he was the main pillar of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home at Mylapore, which has now grown into a noted institution training up poor and destitute boys to the highest values of life.

week. Shall send it next week. Write to me
sometimes. All are keeping well here.

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

(8)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Triplicane
16-5-1907

My dear Basanta,

Your card and letter made me very happy. Accept my love and blessings. I have sent you by this mail the Gita, Chandi, the photograph of Sri Sri Mata Thakurani and the manual on the vows of Brahmacharya. Acknowledge their receipt. You will be successful in whatever you do with steady devotion to Sri Sri Guru Maharaj and Swamiji. Egotism can have no place in your mind. Do whatever is necessary to keep your body healthy. Relieve my mind by sending news of your well-being. Miss Glenn² has sent me a long letter. She has written especially about you. Give her my love and blessings.

This time I am not able to write much because of hurry. I shall write more fully in the next letter. Convey my love and many many Pranams to Kali Maharaj. When you write to Hari-

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

² Sister Devamata

pada³ convey my love and blessings to him. My love and blessings to you too. Presently a boy named Rudra chaitanya is staying with me—a very good boy. Send him your blessings.

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

³ Swami Bodhananda

(9)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Mylapore, Madras
19-12-1907

My dear Basanta,

I was extremely pleased to get your letter and to know that you are giving many public lectures and conducting many classes every week. But keep an eye on your health. Through the grace of Sri Sri Gurudev, I feel much better than before; but still, very weak. How is your health nowadays?

Kindly convey my thanks to Miss Glenn² for her letters. They are so very good that I wait for them with feverish excitement on every mail day. How are you all getting on there? Do you communicate with all our centres there? How are Trigunatita,³ Prakash,⁴ Sachchi-dananda and Haripada⁵? Hope to hear from you every now and

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

² Sister Devamata

³ Swami Trigunatitananda

⁴ Swami Prakashananda

⁵ Swami Bodhananda

then. With my best love and blessings to you and all friends, I am⁶

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

⁶ This paragraph is written in English in the original.

(10)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

30-1-1908

My dear Basanta,

Your book, *The Path of Devotion*,² is excellent, and I am extremely happy to receive it. Strangely, the book arrived just on the birthday of Swamiji! On reading it, I felt as if Swamiji himself has been working through you. Through his grace, may you live long. The instructions in the book are priceless. Truth is its life, consciousness its substance, and love its soul, a supremely pure heart is its birthplace, and the Lord's lotus feet are its goal. The pure heart from which it had its birth, through the Lord's grace, may bring forth innumerable similar gems of books—this is my constant prayer at the lotus feet of the Lord. I hope Miss Glenn will bring with her many of these for sale. We are here awaiting her arrival. We

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

² Now also available in its Indian edition, published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras.

shall take care to see that she does not suffer any inconvenience.

With love and blessings.

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

(11)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Puri
14-10-08

My dear Basanta,

You will be glad to know that I am here in Puri at Sasi Niketan and am very happy to be at the lotus feet of Rakhil Maharaj.² The reason for my coming here is to take him to Madras to sanctify the Math, to Bangalore to establish a Math, and to Rameswar and other places for pilgrimage. Sri Maharaj has agreed to come. We shall probably leave for Madras within a week. Only Raja Maharaj, Nirode, Krishnalal and Yogin are here at present. Yogin has received Sannyasa from Raja Maharaj and has been named Umananda. He is serving Raja Maharaj, who is very pleased with his service.

It will take another month for the work of the Bangalore Math to be completed. Sri Narayan Ayengar is trying very hard to expedite the completion of the Bangalore Math. He has

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

² Swami Brahmananda. He has also been referred to in these letters as Sri Raja Maharaj.

extended an invitation to Rakhal Maharaj with an earnest request to open this Math.

Sister Devamata is keeping everything in readiness at Madras to accord him a suitable reception. She is glad to an infinite degree at the prospect of her seeing directly the most beloved child of Sri Ramakrishna Deva.³

How is your health nowadays?... Sri Raja Maharaj is very fond of you. His blessings are profusely being showered on you. You are most fortunate indeed! Sri Guru Maharaj⁴ and his children are very pleased with you. Therefore attain to fulfilment, doing His work with a fearless mind. Don't harbour enmity for anyone. Always think that you are but a machine, and He is the Operator. Even amidst sorrow and hardships, know that everything happens according to His will. This knowledge will free you from the clutches of all sorrows and trials. Do not let egotism raise its hood in your mind... No matter in what situation God places you, He will protect you well in every way. Know this and regard yourself as most fortunate. Do not delay in letting us know how you are leading your life there. Write to us at the

³ This paragraph has been written in English in the original.

⁴ Sri Ramakrishna

Madras Math address. Make special efforts to work harmoniously with the assistance of all. If you find it impossible to work harmoniously with others, then write to us immediately. Attain your goal of life by doing your work according to the instructions of Swami Brahmananda. My ceaseless prayer to the Lord to grant you supreme well-being. What more shall I write? I await your reply.

Sister Devamata is doing perfectly well. Her mind, as also her body, is getting nourished. Her affection for you is incomparable. She is quite well here.

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

My dear Basanta,

I am very glad to hear (of) your success at New York. I am glad that Swami Ramakrishnananda is in our midst. He requested me to go to Madras to see his newly built monastery.

With love,

Yours affectionately,
BRAHMANANDA

(12)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Puri
21-10-08

My dear Basanta,

I was very glad to receive your affectionate letter of 22nd September.

Maharaj conveys his love and blessings to you. He has been very gracious to you. Next Wednesday (28th October), he, Nirode, Krishnalal, Yogin and I are starting for Madras. Sister Devamata, Rudrachaitanya, Vairagya-nanda, Jiten (Visuddhananda, who has received Sannyasa from Sri Holy Mother), Ramanuja, Ramu and others are all awaiting our arrival in Madras. Sri Rakhhal Maharaj is to open the Math at Bangalore. He will also go on a visit to Sri Rameswaram and other prominent temples of the South.

Don't be anxious about Sister Devamata. Sri Guru Maharaj and his disciples have a special affection and love for her. She has innumerable virtues. Her minor faults will soon be rooted out by their grace.

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

Write a long letter to me to my Madras address giving all information about the work there. Sri Raja Maharaj is specially desirous of knowing about it. He will let you know what you should do after hearing from you. The mind of Sri Raja Maharaj has become united with the mind of Sri Guru Maharaj. Ah, what a wonderful state he is in! What inexpressible greatness! How fortunate you are to have received his affection!

I go quite often to have the Darsan of Sri Sri Jagannath, and feel blessed by partaking the Mahaprasada. The company of Sri Maharaj is gained through many merits. I feel blessed being in his company, which is rare fortune, indeed, even for the gods.

Convey my deep love and blessings to all our friends there. And to you my heartfelt love and blessings. I know, yours and mine is one inseparable heart. May you become a stainless Brahmacharin, an ideal Sannyasin and live long to do good to the world—this is my constant prayer to Sri Gurudeva.

By the grace of Sri Guru Maharaj we are all well here. Please convey my love and Pranams to all the revered Sannyasins there.

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

(13)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Mylapore, Madras
Sept. 9, 1909

My dear Basanta,

Devamata starts tomorrow to be with you. Even after receiving your telegram, the reason for her going is that if she is to go, the earlier the better, so that she may be helpful to you, if she is able to reach there before your work begins. By Sri Gurudeva's² grace, all is well here. Hope you too are keeping well physically and mentally through His grace.

Devamata is much benefited by her stay here for more than a year and a half. She is very lucky because paramaradhya (supremely adorable) Sri Holy Mother, Sri Baburam Maharaj,³ Sri Rakhhal Maharaj⁴ and others have blessed her specially. You will know everything in detail from her. However, being a woman, she is given to exaggeration. But, undoubtedly, Devamata is

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

² Sri Ramakrishna's

³ Swami Premananda

⁴ Swami Brahmananda

much better than many women in this matter. She appears to have some thirst for religion. Gradually she will become more religious-minded. But you must always behave with women very carefully. Devamata has a slight tendency to boss. Do what you think best. Keep her and the other women in good humour by your sweet words and good behaviour. The name (Devamata) that you have given her has become quite well-known. Everyone here knows her as Devamata. You too should never address her as Miss Glenn. Call her Devamata. She feels very happy at that. Baburam Maharaj, Sri Master Mahasay and many others feel that she is a *siddha-gopi*. Really, there is no doubt that she possesses much devotion to Sri Gurudeva. For this reason, Sri Holy Mother has showered her special affection and care on her. Hear of this from her.

Everyone here looks on you in a special way. Here all speak of your wonderful ability and expect much from you. So lead a very pure life. Preach the glory of Sri Gurudeva and Swamiji, and make yourself blessed always. You will be all-conquering only if you do not fall into the trap of women. Your highly pure and sweet nature can subdue even the very evil-minded ones. From your birth, you have inherited this power from Sri Sri Guru Maharaj. If you add to it, in addition, the

power of unbroken Brahmacharya, it will be excellent—like a gem set on a gold foil.

Your books have been appreciated much in India. We sell your books frequently. I cannot express in words how glad we were to know that by Sri Gurudeva's grace your health is now much better than before. Through His grace, I am slightly better, but I do not feel strong as before. This is a preliminary sign of old age.

Accept my heartiest love, and know it for certain that my blessings are always with you. Sri Sri Holy Mother has blessed you. Sri Rakhai Maharaj has also blessed you. I pray that by Sri Gurudeva's grace, Devamata may be of some help to your work.

"All the creatures in the world live on greed and lust once these two are given up of what use is this world?" He is a hero who has been able to control his tongue and lust. There is no doubt that you are such a hero... May Sri Sri Gurudeva and Swamiji bring about your supreme welfare.

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

(14)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Sri Sri Saptami Puja
The Math, BELUR P.O.
(HOWRAH)
21-11-1909

My dear Basanta,

I could not write to you by the last two or three mails. By Sri Sri Gurudeva's grace I'm sure you are keeping well and Sister Devamata has reached you by this time. I have come to Belur Math to have *darshan* of paramaradhya Sri Holy Mother, Sri Baburam Maharaj and of devotees. On the way, I visited Sri Raja Maharaj at Puri. He is still staying at Puri. Nirode and Krishnalal are with him. Baburam Maharaj and others at the Math are keeping well. Paramaradhya Sri Holy Mother too is keeping well. Accept love and blessings of everyone here.

In Madras Math, Rudrachaitanya, one Madrasi Brahmachari and the old cook Achyuta Rao are staying. I will return to Madras just after Puja. I am much worried as I have not received your news for a long time. Probably your work has already begun. Do not exert too much. Do your

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

duty only, the fruit is in His hands. He alone will attain to self-consciousness who is granted by the Lord. You and I are only the instruments. You will know all the news here in detail from Sister Devamata. Everybody in Calcutta loved her. She was also loved by all in Madras.

She has been leading a very pure and useful life here. She has won golden opinions from all sides. Please tender my love and blessings to her.²

Accept my heartiest love and blessings. Now and then I feel a strong desire to see you. Please remember me to all our friends.

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

² This paragraph is written in English in the original.

(15)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Mylapore, Madras
Sept. 12, 1909

My dear Basanta,

All of us are very anxious hearing from Devamata's letter the news of your illness. Take special care of your body. The body is the temple of God. When it is not taken care of, God is neglected. We all wish that if the extreme cold weather of Boston does not suit your health then, suspending the classes and public lectures this year, you should go elsewhere and pay attention to your health. Come to India for sometime if you wish. I will take special care of you here. Or if you do not intend to come here now, then go to some healthy place in America and stay there for some time. After you recover your health, concentrate on your work again. Paramaradhya (supremely adorable) Sri Holy Mother, Sri Rakhai Maharaj² and Baburam Maharaj³ have blessed you greatly.

My health is much better than before. Now I am feeling good under the treatment of Dr.

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

² Swami Brahmananda. Also referred to as Sri Maharaj.

³ Swami Premananda

Nanjunda Rao. I hope to recover my former energy in another week's time.

A boy named Surendra Vijay from Chittagong⁴ has taken Brahmacharya from Sri Holy Mother and he is staying with me. He is a good boy and has read up to First Arts. At present, Rudrachaitanya, Suren, myself and Achyuta Rao are staying at the Math. All the Swamis of Belur Math are keeping well. Sri Rakhhal Maharaj is keeping well at Puri.

May Sri Sri Gurudeva bless you greatly. May you regain your health as quickly as possible—this is my constant prayer at His lotus feet. Accept my heartiest love and blessings.

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

⁴ Now in Bangladesh

(16)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Mylapore, Madras
23-12-1909

My dear Basanta,

The letter which I sent by last mail was written in reply to your letter of 23rd November. That is, I have already replied in my last letter to the points you had wanted to know before I received your letter by this mail. By this it appears as if your mind and mine are tied in only one string in the form of Sri Sri Guru Maharaj. Whatever rises in my mind, also rises simultaneously in your mind. There cannot be any other reason for this than what has been mentioned above.

If it is proposed to build a room for Sri Sri Guru Maharaj on the upper floor, it will be not less than three to four thousand rupees. You may probably have nothing in your pocket if you give this amount at a time. So if you collect that amount from your close friends, it will be good. I wish that some money always remains with you

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

because, should you feel a strong desire to come to India, you can come easily without depending on the help of anyone. Of course, those who love you, do not keep you in want of anything and would continue to do so even in future. Still there is a great saying: *sarvam para-vaśam duḥkham, sarvam ātma-vaśam sukham*. 'Dependence on others brings all sorrow, and self-dependence brings all happiness.' At one time, all the clothes of Sri Guru Maharaj had been torn and he had only a single cloth left. He could easily have got a hundred pairs of clothes by telling Mathur Babu. But instead of doing that, he tore his cloth into two pieces and carried on. Perhaps you have heard of this incident earlier. Asking anything from anyone brings humiliation. If we must ask for anything, then it ought to be from God. Or we should ask for it from those who are His devotees. Keep this in mind always.

This year you should not exert much and should not go to Boston at all. It is the foremost duty of everyone to take proper care of this temple of God in the form of the body. It is good that Devamata has gone to you. She has affection for you like a mother.

I received \$25 and \$50 sent by you. According to your wish, I have sent Rs. 15/- to

paramārādhya Sri Holy Mother, Rs. 15/- to Sri Maharaj, Rs. 15/- to Sri Baburam Maharaj and Rs. 10/- for Guru Maharaj's worship, and the balance has been kept for use here. Thanks to nutritious food, my health has become much better than before. I will begin the class lectures again from tomorrow. In Christmas holidays, I will deliver the following four lectures at the Math: (1) 26th December, Sunday—Science, Modern and Ancient; (2) 27th December—Monday—Determination of Conscious Tendencies; (3) 28th December, Tuesday—Regions, Higher and Lower; (4) 29th December, Wednesday—Locus of the Soul. The lectures will start everyday at 8 in the morning.

Do not be anxious now to give lectures. First of all, become fit physically and then you may deliver as many lectures as you can.

Please remember me to Satyaprānā (Miss Kissam). How loving and kind she is! She has taken the pains of writing to me often and often when you have not been doing well; how much relief she has thus brought to me! I shall ever remember her with profound gratefulness. I should have written a separate letter to her, but as I know that writing you means writing to her as well, I have not penned a separate letter for her. My loving greetings to her. Please tell Sister Devamata that I

have sent her by this mail to the care of Miss Kissam, two cases of books containing 117 copies of Inspired Talks and 50 copies of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, through Messrs. Cook & Sons. I shall send the receipt by next mail. I am also enclosing a few lines to her.²

Accept my heartiest love and blessings. May Sri Guru Maharaj bless you greatly.

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

² This paragraph is written in English in the original.

(17)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Mylapore, Madras
17-2-1910

My dear Basanta,

Many thanks for your Rs. 1,000, which reached me yesterday. Let me know whether you have sent this money for my expenses or to build the upper floor of the Math, so that I may utilise the money accordingly. What more shall I write? May Sri Sri Guru Maharaj bless you greatly. Please pay particular attention to your health. Accept the love and blessings of paramārādhyā (supremely adorable) Sri Holy Mother. The birth anniversary of Sri Swamiji has been celebrated in a solemn manner at many places in India. The people here are gradually understanding the greatness of Swamiji. What power has man to preach God? It is God who preaches Himself. And only he, in whose heart God manifests and sings His own glory, can preach Him. None else can do so. God manifests Himself only in the heart of one who has effaced his ego in every way, and not in the heart of others. You do not possess any egoism, so He is

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

ever-present in your heart. What an inexpressible bliss is experienced by him who does not possess any ego! He never loses memory out of lust and anger.² Eternal peace abides in his heart. Knowing himself to be an instrument in the hands of the Lord, he rests content. He never takes a false step. Thus he relieves himself of pride, conceit, arrogance, jealousy, hatred etc. And what a great bliss he enjoys then!

With deep love and blessings,

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

² See *Gita*, 2.62-63.

(18)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Mylapore, Madras
24-3-1910

My dear Basanta,

By the last mail I have sent to you the book '*The Soul of Man*'. In this mail I am sending one copy of it for Miss Sherwood, and to you five copies of a pamphlet entitled '*Sri Ramakrishna Mission*'. By the grace of Sri Sri Gurudeva, His birth anniversary was celebrated here with great grandeur. By His grace, my health is much better than before. None of you need be anxious for me. Perform the work of Sri Sri Guru Maharaj with a peaceful mind and make yourself and all others happy. Sri Rakhal Maharaj² is at present staying at the Belur Math. He too is keeping good health. Paramārādhyā Sri Holy Mother is now in her birthplace and is keeping well. Accept her blessings. Pay no heed to the criticism by other people. Perform your own duties. Then the very people who are criticizing you today will praise

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

² Swami Brahmananda

you some days later. Know it for certain that a servant of God never comes to grief.

We are all extremely happy to learn that by Sri Sri Guru Maharaj's grace your health is improving gradually and you are feeling stronger. May you live long, may you serve Him continuously and live in this world with great joy—this is my constant prayer at His lotus feet. The more your love for God increases, the more you will feel the insignificance of sensual pleasures. You are being protected by Him, so no woman can harm you. On this earth there is no friend more intimate than one's own mother. So, if you can look upon all women as your own mother, then lustful tendencies towards them will not rise. This is the teaching of Sri Guru Maharaj. Never forget this precious lesson. He who hates women is still feeling the pinch of lust. So it is certain that one day he will go astray. But he who has learnt to respect and love all women as his mother would never be overcome by the demon of lust.

By Sri Guru Maharaj's grace, may He grant your supreme welfare. Accept my heartiest love and blessings.

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

(19)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Mylapore, Madras
30-6-1910

My dear Basanta,

I did not receive any letter from you in the last mail. Hope You are keeping well by the grace of Sri Sri Gurudeva. I am now much better than before. Now it is not so hot here.

No worker has come so far from the Math. So I think I may not go to Bangalore soon for a change. Besides, even if I don't go now, there is no harm. By Sri Sri Gurudeva's grace, my health is much better now and the intensity of heat too has become less.

Paramārādhyā (supremely adorable) Sri Holy Mother will be in Calcutta within three or four days. That is why the arrival of the boy who is due to come here is being delayed. He is at present moving with the Holy Mother and after escorting her to Calcutta he will start for Madras.

Hope you are enjoying your rest. There is no end to work. But it is not proper to labour

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

superfluously. We work really for our own benefit. Only God can bestow welfare on others. Is it in our power to bring about others' welfare? We are not able to bring about our own welfare, let alone that of others. Knowing this, the wise do not become conceited. Swamiji used to tell me always. "Sasi, never be perturbed, be at peace." Only he who is egoistic becomes perturbed. He cannot sleep because of his worries. A child of God remains always carefree as a child in its mother's lap. Think always that you are in the Mother's lap. She is constantly protecting you. So there is no cause for worry at all. The world is His empire. Preach His name and glory with a carefree mind and live forever in great joy.

Accept my deep and heartiest love and blessings,

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

(20)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Mylapore, Madras
5-1-11

My dear Basanta,

A very happy New Year to you. Hope all is well with you. I didn't get your letter by the previous mail. I think you must be very busy. The money you sent has reached here. From it, I have sent Rs. 15/- to Sri Holy Mother, Rs. 15/- to Sri Rakkhal Maharaj,² Rs. 15/- to Sri Baburam Maharaj³ and Rs. 10/- to Sri Sri Raghuvir (at Kamarpukur)⁴ all in your name. Nowadays with the exception of myself, almost all the devotees of Sri Sri Guru Maharaj are at Belur Math. By the grace of Sri Sri Gurudeva, they are all well. By His grace, I too am well in a way. At present, Rudra, Prakash, Dr. Hallock and I are here. Recently I sprained my left foot and suffered a little. I was bed-ridden for

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

² Swami Brahmananda

³ Swami Premananda

⁴ i.e., for the service of Sri Raghuvir, the family-deity of Sri Ramakrishna.

some days. By the grace of Sri Sri Gurudeva, I am well now. Paramārādhya Sri Holy Mother is now at Kothar.⁵ She is keeping well. She sends you her love and blessings. Also, accept the love and blessings of Sri Rakhal Maharaj and Sri Baburam Maharaj. After distributing money to them all from the Rs. 76/- sent by you, I have kept the remaining Rs. 21/- here. I have received the 50 copies of *The Path of Devotion*⁶ sent by you. *Inspired Talks*⁷ has not yet been received from the Press. I shall send it to you by the next mail.

Do not work excessively. I was very pleased to know that through the grace of Sri Sri Gurudeva your health is somewhat better. Don't forget that through lectures etc. we are in fact improving our own selves. No one but God has the capacity to

⁵ A place in Orissa where Sri Balaram Bose, a great lay devotee of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother, owned a huge estate. The Holy Mother was, on this occasion, the guest of Krishnabhavini Devi, the devoted widow of Balaram Bose.

⁶ A lucid exposition of Bhakti Yoga by Swami Paramananda (Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-600004)

⁷ The spiritual talks of Swami Vivekananda given to a selected(?) group of earnest aspirants at Thousand Island Park, New York. (Also published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras).

dispel the ignorance of man, He indeed is blessed who, regarding the praise of people as trifle, leads his life by doing the work sanctioned by Sri Ramakrishna.

Many thanks for Sister Devamata's illustrated postcard with New Year's day greetings. May she have a very happy new year to work through. I am so sorry that I am not able to write to her separately. But she knows my method of correspondence to be very irregular. I hope she will excuse me. My best love and blessings to her. Please tell her that we have settled with the Lawrence Asylum Press. Fortunately we have not to pay anything. She need not correspond with Mr. M-. He is not a very good man. My love and greetings to Miss Kissam and Miss Sherwood. A happy New Year to both of them.⁸

Don't be too circumspect about your own expenses. You are all alone there. So don't hesitate to spend money for your physical needs. By the grace of Sri Sri Gurudeva I have no wants here. Accept my heart's deep love and blessings.

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

⁸ This paragraph is written in English in the original.

(21)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Bangalore,
4-5-11

My dear Basanta,

I have come here for a change of air. The body was not so well. So I have come on the advice of the doctor. I feel much better since coming here. I did not write to you by the previous mail because my health was very bad. Also I did not get a letter from you by the previous mail. Hope by the grace of Sri Sri Gurudeva, you are keeping well. Accept my heart's deep love and blessings. Don't strain yourself excessively. My love and blessings to Sister Devamata, Miss Sherwood and Miss Kissam.

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

(22)

Śrī Śrī Guru-pāda-padma bharosā¹

Bangalore,
25-5-11

My dear Basanta,²

By the grace of Sri Sri Gurudeva, my health is much better after coming here. But the ailment from which I am suffering will take a long time to be cured. Besides, since the advent of the monsoon here, the weather is very damp. This is

¹ May the lotus feet of the Guru be my refuge.

² This is probably the last letter written by Swami Ramakrishnananda to Swami Paramananda. The doctors at Bangalore had diagnosed the Swami's ailment as galloping consumption for which there was very little effective treatment in those days. Hard and incessant work at Madras, insufficient attention to nourishment and rest, and his diabetic tendency had all conspired together to bring upon him this fell infection. He left for Calcutta towards the middle of June 1911, and entered into Mahasamadhi on August 21, 1911.

not good for my illness. So the doctors here are advising me to go soon to some other place. I think I will soon go somewhere else for a change of air.

Hope by the grace of Sri Sri Gurudeva you are physically and mentally quite well. By working too hard I have fallen into this present bad condition. My life should be a warning to all of you. You should never strain yourselves too much. You must do what will enable you to live long, preaching the message of Sri Sri Gurudeva, and thus making yourself and the men and women of the whole world blessed.

I was very happy to read the programme of your lectures. Narayan Iyengar is presently on a tour. He'll return in a day or two. When he comes I too will leave for Madras, because nowadays the climate of Madras is dry compared to this place. Never forget Sri Sri Guru Maharaj and Sri Swamiji. Lead your life keeping them as your ideals.

My love and blessings to Sister Devamata. I hope her eyes are not troubling her now. Please remember me to Miss Kissam and Miss Sherwood. Rakhai Maharaj has come down to Puri and is quite well. Accept his love and blessings. Sri Holy Mother is now in Jayrambati. Her love and

blessings to you. Accept my heart's deep love and blessings.

Yours affectionately,
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

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When I have gone down to the grave, I shall have ended my day's work; but another day will begin the next morning. Life closes in the twilight but opens with the dawn. —VICTOR HUGO