

Diary of Dr GR

Dr G RAMACHANDRAN'S
PERSONAL DIARY



Madhavi Mandiram Loka Seva Trust

Diary of GR

By: Dr G Ramachandran

Published by:

The Madhavi Mandiram Loka Seva Trust

Dr GR Road, Neyyattinkara,

Thiruvananthapuram 695121

Kerala, India, Ph: 0471-2223217

Layout and Cover: Brahma

© The Madhavi Mandiram Loka Seva Trust

All Rights Reserved

Printed at:

SB Press(P)Ltd, Tutors Lane,

Statue, Tvpm - 1

Phone: 0471-2478013, 2471904

E-mail: sbpress@satyam.net.in

Preface

After 17 years of gap this book has seen the light. Our beloved GR Mama had written what all needed by me in this life. What he had advised for me in person shall be taken by every youngster for their own.

I can only bow my head before God and be grateful to have had the rare sacred privilege of knowing Desikottama Dr G Ramachandran closely and growing up in the radiance of his greatness.

GR taught me the importance of Living Properly. How to behave, how to react in various situations and how to keep my vision above all daily chores and do my Thapas of Self Realization are the main disciplines in which GR mama trained me.

Let me bow before God Gurus and GR

Sister Mythili

10th September 2012

~

To

My Beloved Athma Sakha,

This Notebook is presented to Basa

To write his thoughts,

His wishes and

His instructions

to

B A S I and others.

BASI

13-7-87

~



This may be rightly considered as my **“Last Will and Testament”** concerning not only Madhavi mandiram House and attached properties, but, the future work of Sister Mythili as the next MANAGING TRUSTEE after me. She has already been nominated the next Managing Trustee by me under the power to do so in the Constitution of the Trust and as ratified by the unanimous decision of the Board of Trustees of Madhavi Mandiram .

My “thoughts and wishes and instructions” to Sister Mythili, whom I have called Basi often in these notes and to others are contained in the following pages which I will write after careful thought and in full possession of my mental faculties.

Madhavi Mandiram
NEYYATTINKARA

(Sd)
G.Ramachandran
14-7-87





Note 1



May the grace of God guide me
as I write these pages,
little by little and day by day

First of all let me make clear the major aims of the Madhavi Mandiram Loka Seva Trust.

1. To preserve, maintain and keep in good condition Madhavimandiram (House) as a memorial to my beloved mother, who gave the house to me with the treasures of all the photographs and library books etc.
2. To utilise to the best advantage the lands attaching to Madhavi mandiram by improving the soil and by suitable cultivation, so that the income will have to maintain the memorial to some extent.
3. To undertake appropriate cottage industries to give some employment to women and girls in our rural area (Ooroottukala specially) as we are doing now.
4. To run anganwadis for the care of children in our area.
5. And to teach Sanitation and nutrition to the mothers.
6. To actively work for Prohibition in our area, enlisting the support of women to keep their homes free of drunken troubles.

7. To enlighten mothers and women to understand Gandhiji's constructive programme and to participate in it wherever possible.
8. To continue the People's Education Programme (PEP) through study classes and popular talks.
9. To propagate "Sarva Dharma Samanatva" in the Gandhian spirit and thus destroy the poison of communalism.
10. To do whatever other things are needed to create a "SARVODAYA" Social Order in our rural area.

All this in our small way, consistent with our limited strength and resources and in the true spirit of

"The Small Is Beautiful"

15-7-87

(sd.)
G.Ramachandran



Note 2



**I shall write a few lines about
each item listed as aims**

I must stress that the first item is of the utmost importance.

It says that the Madhavimandiram House must be preserved as a Memorial to my beloved mother Madhavi Thankachy. She lived and died in this house for more than 50 years. Even after my revered father K.Govinda Pillai, who built the house, died about 20 years after the house was occupied, she lived here for some 30 years, taking care of Madhavimandiram and the lands attaching to it. While she lived she was the uncrowned Queen of this area, respected, loved and obeyed by the people of Ooruttukala. People remember her gracious personality and generous character to this day. More than once she said to me:

I was all the time away, living and working outside Kerala under instructions from Gandhiji and doing one or the other items of his "Constructive programme". I would come and see mother and spend a few days with her unfailingly once in 3 months at least. Of course I helped to maintain her in Madhavimandiram in moderate comfort all the time. So this house is full of her spiritual presence even today. I feel her loving presence close to me as I now live here. Not a day passes without her Athma blessing me.

It will now be seen why and how Madhavimandiram house is precious to me.

It is the temple of mother's spirit and full of my memories of her. My late wife Soundram came here again and again and the whole of Gandhigram came here once a year on her birthdays. And above all Mahatma Gandhi himself came here to see her and bless her on the 14th of January 1937 spending a whole day in Madhavimandiram on his way to Cape Kanyakumari. My revered father was then alive to receive Gandhiji. We have now the Brass plate inserted on the wall outside mentioning Gandhiji's stay for a day in Madhavi mandiram.

This house has therefore a sanctity, which I cherish. When I returned to Neyyattinkara in 1979, Madhavimandiram became of course my home, but with a significant change--in that Mythili became the spiritual grand daughter of my mother who was by then no more. Two years earlier Mythili had met my mother and received her fond blessings.

Mythili was the discovery of my late lamented wife Dr Soundram, who knew Mythili's well known family in Madurai. During the last 8 years, Mythili has taken charge of Madhavimandiram and the entire work of our Trust. She has been nominated the next Managing Trustee after me as mentioned before. It will be her duty to carry on the work of the Trust in the years to come.

16-7-87

(sd.)

G.Ramachandran



Note 3



This is about
the second item of the "Aims".

It concerns the lands attaching to Madhavimandiram. The soil is good and has been enriched during the last 7 or 8 years by manuring and cultivation. With proper care and planting more coconut and other trees and other suitable plants these six acres and ten cents can give a good income for our Trust.

Our effort must therefore aim at getting the best income possible from these lands. We have a wonderful spring-well, which has given water in even drought conditions and we have put in a pump which works well and sends the water to different constructed points all over the land. Sister Mythili is very keen on agriculture and some time later she should have a good agriculturist to help her in this work. I shall write down a few points about this work, which may be of some value as it is slowly and steadily developed.

1. Coconut cultivation: Our trees are mostly old. We must therefore plant fresh trees, at least 200 to 300 trees and see that none of them dies for want of watering. Annual manuring must not be neglected.

2. I am keen that some 20 new Jackfruit trees should be planted and brought up. Jackfruits will become cheap food for the common people. It will also be good food for us all.

3. Let us also plant a few more good variety mango trees. We have a few good trees already. We must not allow them to die.

4. We have already some good papaya trees. We must add some special varieties, which will yield big sized fruits at low heights.

5. We must not forget tapioca and chena. These two also will help food production in our area.

N.B. Our main objective will be more food for the common people in our area.

17-7-87

(sd.)

G.Ramachandran



Note 4



This is about
the third item of the "Aims".

This item of the "Aims" deals with our duty to take up some appropriate cottage and Village industries to give employment to the women and girls in our area.

Mythili herself selected one or two such industries for Madhavimandiram. It is entirely to her credit that she chose a unit for producing special Gandhigram type of sarees and another unit for producing artistic fibre goods. These two units have already made a good name and are doing fairly well.

Again it is to Mythili's credit that she started a mechanised unit for producing Sanitary Towels for women. This is something sorely needed by our women. The alternatives in current use are dirty rags etc., which do harm often. This is a somewhat specialised and skilled work engaging 4 girls. With our limited resources we have not ventured to take up any other cottage industry. We have not raised any special funds for these 3 cottage industries. But, we had to give some training to the girls to do this work with a bank loan.

For the Khadi-Sarees unit we received some financial help from the Central Social Welfare Board and for the Fibre unit we received some aid from the Kerala Khadi Board. For

Sanitary towels production unit also we had to take a loan from the Bank. We were hard put to it to get our Khadi Sarees' unit started and functioning. We received some technical assistance from Gandhigram for this.

The purchase of raw materials and the marketing of products did create a problem to begin with. But, luckily this professional problem has been more or less solved now.

18-7-87

(sd.)

G.Ramachandran

(Note 4 continued)

I should have said a few words about how the problem of marketing has been solved. This problem did once cause concern. Khadi sarees -- our special variety did sell fairly well--Mostly by sale to individual purchasers. But, we needed a steady institutional purchase. Our sarees had earned some fame because of their intrinsic excellence. But a steady market was needed.

Luckily, we secured such a market when the Delhi Khadi Bhavan placed an order of 500 sarees per month. We were only producing much less number of sarees per month. So now the problem became "the reverse", ie., to increase production beyond our present capacity. We have not enough trained weavers. We are now trying to get more trained weavers and specially women weavers. Many promised to come but do not come when needed. We have now no choice except to increase production. We have now one weaving

Master Supervising the work of the weavers. We need another-one more to cope with the work. We have to get this second person from Gandhigram. We have also to improve our fibre products. Unlike as in the case of our Muslin Khadi sarees, there is much competition in the case of fibre products. We cannot afford to be complacent with what we have achieved fairly well so far.

19 and 20-7-87

(sd.)

G.Ramachandran

**Note 5**

**This is about
item 4 and 5 of the "Aims".**

These 2 items speak for themselves and therefore perhaps need no lengthy explanatory notes. Nevertheless their importance may not be ignored. Our little children require much more care than they get now.

The first thing to note is that in their earliest years children (specially in the poorer homes) are entirely looked after by the mothers. The mothers are often illiterate and with little understanding of the value of personal and home cleanliness. Village children thus grow up in filthy conditions and this leads to several diseases from which they suffer.

You can write a whole Volume on this subject. Skin diseases, and stomach ailments are common. Also eye-diseases. We thus arrive at the imperative need for the education of the mothers--elementary education in Sanitation, and ordinary simple cleanliness. This can come as an essential part of our People's Education Programme (PEP).

We have noted that there is some clear improvement in regard to this matter in our rural area.

Mothers wash their children regularly and dress them in "showy dresses" and bring them to our Anganwadis. It is at

this point that Anganwadis play a significant role, provided they are run properly. Luckily, there are hundreds of Anganwadis in the Country. They must be brushed up from time to time to enable them to play their role effectively.

22-7-87

(sd.)

G.Ramachandran



Note 6



**This is about
the Sixth item of the "Aims".**

It concerns our anxiety about the drink evil in our area. Liquor is the enemy of the poor villager. Liquor among the rich in the towns is a different problem. These people eat good food including fruits and milk and curds and of course meat and fish. They can perhaps hold the liquor in their stomachs and carry on.

But in the case of the poor, who are starved and ill nourished, liquor acts very adversely in their stomachs. It affects their brains and reduces them to the condition of beasts in their homes. Liquor starves the family and life in the home becomes violent and degraded.

There is much drunkenness in our rural area and consequently many broken homes. We are all the time fighting this evil by enlisting the active help of women in the campaign. Wives and mothers are our allies. But with toddy and arrack shops everywhere, the State Government is tempting the poor to drink cheap and harmful liquor and earning "Sin-money" therefrom..

But, we shall never give up the struggle. We shall strive on holding to the faith that some day there will be a Government

willing to forego the "Sin-money" and refusing to tempt the poor. This is a duty from which we shall never turn away.

23-4-87

(sd.)

G.Ramachandran



Note 7,8,9



**This is about items
seven, eight and nine of the "Aims".**

These 3 items are close to each other and can be considered together and as included in our People's Education Programme, which we call, by the abbreviated title P.E.P.

This programme was originally formulated by me, when I was the Chairman of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission of India and was intended to be carried out by the thousands of workers of the commission.

The aim was to explain to the people the "WHY" and the "HOW" of every item of their work. Here in Madhavimandiram we have adopted P.E.P as our own , in a very small way.

If we can properly explain to the people in our small rural area, why we have taken up the special production of Khadi Sarees, of articles and particularly useful and articles made of fibres and also the production of Sanitary Towels for women, we will realise how the whole of our production work lends itself to education in elementary economics, sociology and even politics.

P.E.P as we have adopted it, is thus an important programme of women' s adult education. It fits in very appropriately

into our philosophy and practices of life in Madhavimandiram. It ties together all the little work we do and gives it direction and purpose.

24-7-87

(sd.)

G.Ramachandran



Note 10



**This is about
the final item 10 of the "Aims".**

This may appear to be a general winding-up item. It is certainly that. But it is much more. It lays down the aim of all the "Aims". It points out the objective of all our work--big or small. As a result of whatever we do, we want to bring the salient characteristics of "SARVODAYA" into our small rural society. What exactly this Sarvodaya is can be deduced -- partly at least-- from the explanations of the 9 items of the "Aims" already given in the previous pages. The filling up of gaps--little by little--has to be accomplished through the People's Education Programme. Ideology and practical productive work have to come together. This will take time and the earlier we begin the process the better.

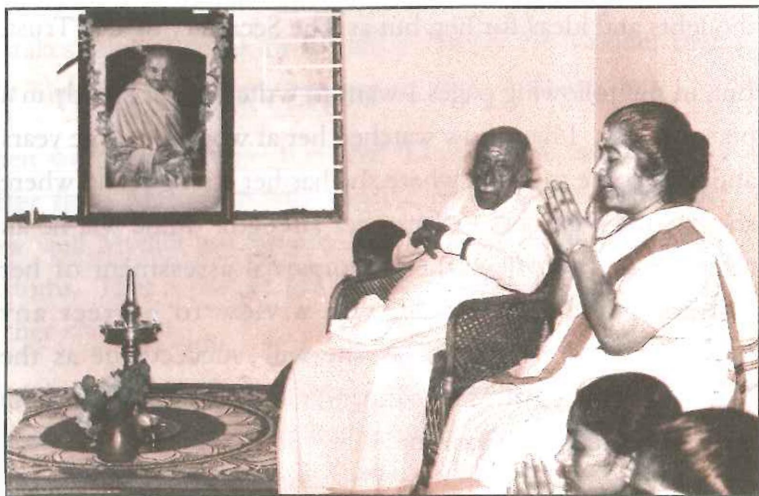
Some real intelligence has to go into this area of our work. Sister Mythili with her high intelligence and high education is well fitted to play this role. I can only pray with all my earnestness that her health will be able to stand the strain.

In subsequent pages I shall write my advice to her to enable her to have a clear mind, and a firm will to build up a small but beautiful Gandhian Centre of work in the sacred name of my mother Smt Madhavi Tankachi.

25-7-87

(sd.)

G.Ramachandran



Thoughts for Mythili

-Day by day-

Thoughts for Mythili - day by day

These thoughts are for Mythili personally. All that I have written in the previous pages till now are also of course thoughts and ideas for her, but as The Secretary of our Trust.

But, in the following pages I want to write for her strictly in a personal way. I have now watched her at work for some years and thus come to know where she has her strength and where she has her weakness or lacks her strength. Mine will be an affectionate, but, nevertheless impartial assessment of her character and her talents with a view to correct any imbalances. If she is to--as she will--succeed me as the Managing Trustee of Madhavimandiram she would need these friendly corrections from me.

I am almost 84 years of age. It is only with God's grace that I still keep the vitality of my mind even while physical disabilities are steadily increasing. In another 2 or 3 years my mental faculties are bound to decline. That is why I am writing all these now to help Mythili. I am certain she will not misunderstand any criticism of mine as she has complete Trust in my good intentions in rendering my advice to her.

She is a brave and sincere person with deep personal devotion towards me. And I have towards her nothing but admiration and the purest love.

The first thing to remember is that Mythili is a Tamilian with her home in Madurai, where she belongs to a noble and patriotic

family. Holding Post-Graduate degrees she knows her English.

But, this is a Malayalam area. It astonishes me, how quickly she has learnt to speak and read Malayalam. But, even so her Malayalam is flavoured with her Tamil. We have to make allowances when she talks in her Malayalam. I lived more than 30 years in Tamil nadu and it is easy to pick up the little mistakes when I speak or lecture in Tamil. No wonder then that Mythili's Malayalam can put up little mistakes too.

Then we have to remember that Tamil habits and customs differ from Malayali habits and customs. It is remarkable how well Mythili has adopted herself to Malayali habits and customs. That is part of her devotion to me and the sincerity of her character.

I think we all in Madhavimandiram should in turn absorb something of Tamil habits and customs. Tamil and Malayalam have become cultural cousins through the years.

Let us set up a good example of this Cousin-hood in our own small way. This is a matter to which we should give some earnest consideration. This might some day mean Cultural intercourse between Gandhigram and Madhavimandiram !!!

This Cultural intercourse has to be planned and organized. We should invite Tamil scholars to Madhavimandiram and send to Gandhigram and specially to the G.R.I. Malayalam scholars for short stay and one or two lectures from time to time. Other mutual programme might also be thought out. Mythili should give her consideration to this programme and make a start sometime before the end of this year 1987. I shall personally help her to do so.

Our first invitee from Gandhigram might well be Pankajam, the Principal of the Teachers' college and our first depute to Gandhigram might well be Mythili herself. Mythili and Pankajam sitting together may draw up details.

This Cultural exchange should be arranged atleast once a year. This will mean one event here and another event in Gandhigram once a year atleast.

Each such event will help to recall to our minds the memory of how once Dr Soundram and I worked together to take the message of Gandhiji to the people in the villages.

This idea can be incorporated into our People's Education Programme (P.E.P) to help bring a little closer together the "Giant" Gandhigram and the "pigmy" Madhavimandiram Trust. We should prove that the past is not dead and is still with us and that the future is entirely in our hands to shape.

26-7-87

(sd.)

G.Ramachandran



I



Rearing Your Personality

One may be handsome and yet lack personality. Personality is partly God given and partly cultivated like most other gifts a man or a woman may possess. You are lucky in this regard.

You certainly have a personality which is partly God given. You have also cultivated it to some extent but more conscious effort is still required. You have to know how persons are attracted to you because of your personality. Your study of Vivekananda has helped to shape not your mind only but the lines of your face. Here you see how the mind shapes your face and even affects your way of walking and talking. A strong, calm and clear mind moulds your face and gives you a personality.

My Basi, consciously cultivate your personality.

But do not forget for a moment that character is the foundation of personality. Character affects both the mind and the body. Nothing in us is outside its imperial sway. Character will show on the face, will affect even digestion, echo in what we speak and reveal in all our actions.

Beloved Basi, you have a noble character, but, it is torn to shreds when you lose your temper. Now I am at your weak point--short temper, your outburst of quick anger. This is

your deadly enemy. You must control and even subdue this enemy within you.

It induces ugly and cruel words. It is like a dark shadow on your personality. Your otherwise attractive personality becomes tainted when you lose your temper. The Basi I adore disappears and some ugly caricature of you appears and all grace is betrayed. I must not enlarge on this point anymore.

Because, you have already realized the truth of what I have written here, tried to conquer this evil in you and already succeeded in a measure. Go on trying more and more Basi, and I have no doubt you will emerge victorious and a radiant and most lovable personality.

This sure possibility must rouse your conscience and inspire your words and thoughts and actions. The world will then see in you the brilliant incarnation of Sister Nivedita.

May God bless you BASI.



II



**Your compassion
for those in suffering.**

I have been touched by this quality of yours. There are several instances. You take the poor sick personally to the hospital and get Doctors to attend to their illness. You spent your own money on them. You care for tiny children. I have in mind the two mouse like tiny children, hardly human to look at, whom you kept in Adi-kudir or Adi Bhavan every day while the poor mother was away at work feeding the children with milk-soaked in cotton for them to suck.

You bathe our dogs yourself and dry them as though they are human children.

How often you have helped poor girls even though we are not rich. How much you have nursed the sick personally. Your compassion for those in suffering has won my admiration so often.

But, in our present time compassion has to move from the personal to the community. The rural community around Madhavi mandiram is poor, ill nourished and disease ridden.

Here too, you have done well, but not enough. Your Doctor came periodically and regularly to check the health of poor mothers and children. But, this is curative work. You must

strengthen our preventive work. This becomes at this stage Health Education. Please organise a Health Society with a small fee for membership.

This Society must undertake in an organised manner preventive work. For this it should meet once a month with a Doctor also attending. I am not here writing the details of this programme. It is for you to plan and develop it. I may only mention that every member must maintain a Health card which will show how the member is doing, what her illness is and what is done to help her etc. These monthly cards should be preserved for reference and further action.

The point is that we should develop a Community Health Service at our own level. You should involve fathers also along with mothers in this Service. Membership may be on a family basis if it is practical. We are remiss in keeping records. One of our women with some education must be trained to keep records. Record maintenance is in my opinion a vital part of all social service. Please discuss this with our new Manager and let him make suitable arrangements. The whole of this programme arises from your quality of compassion.



III



Your Courage or Fearlessness

You are certainly a brave woman.

You travel alone on buses and trains.

You can talk to strangers when needed.

You can get people to do things for you.

For a young woman in India these are indications of her fearlessness.

You are afraid of any deep water because you do not know to swim. It is too late now to learn swimming. So, you must avoid stepping into water beyond your depth even to save a pet animal or a child. You must shout for help instead of jumping in, knowing you cannot swim.

You can deal with rude people putting them in their place.

You are afraid certainly of snakes. Most of us are afraid of snakes. You do not however ask for snakes to be killed for you have the conviction that a snake will not bite you unless you hurt it and so drive away the snakes. This is part of your ahimsa and your strict vegetarianism.

You are perhaps sometimes reckless. This needs correction. You must be calm in any crisis and act discretely. Basi, please

never forget this word of caution from me. All these relate to physical courage.

But, there is moral courage above physical courage. You have plenty of moral courage, which you bring into play when a moral challenge confronts you.

This is God's gift to you strengthened by your study of Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. And yet, occasionally I have known you to lack all the moral courage needed.

This is so with most of us, our moral courage fails sometimes and we become afraid.

The only remedy is prayer to GOD. Prayer is not a mechanical process. When prayer comes from the depth of our spirit then it never fails to give us the moral strength from which we might slip. You have enough foundational moral courage to build upon. Do so consciously in your prayer and meditation.

There is really nothing to be afraid of except "fear" itself. I myself do not claim to be absolutely fearless, because my faith in God is not absolute.

But, normally have you not known me to be fearless, physically and morally? (Of course you are fearless both physically and morally, my beloved Maman--Basi)

You know that priceless quotation from Mahatma Gandhi:-
"Fearlessness is the first condition of Spirituality.

The coward can have no morals"

The coward, who is afraid, can have no morals. Only the brave can be moral. Fearlessness and morality are blood

relations.

Basi, Be fearless in thought,

Basi, Be fearless in words,

Basi, Be fearless in action.

This opens the road to true freedom.

May you achieve that freedom. When you have achieved this freedom, men and women will listen to you. Your life will then become effective in terms of "The good, the beautiful and the true". You would then be a great woman.

May God bless you to be a great and noble woman.

I must at this point write a word of caution:

Anger is not fearlessness. Shouting in anger is not fearlessness. Lions and tigers become angry and roar when they are afraid, not when they are fearless.

A calm and strong mind, Quiet but intelligent action are among the outward signs of true courage. I have several instances of this in my experience.

Rajaji has such courage and more than any one else Gandhiji was the supreme example of it. We cannot all be a Rajaji or a Mahatmaji. But each one of us must approximate as far as we can to them.

You must do that Basi, with all the sincerity you possess. And I have no doubt you will succeed in climbing to great heights of achievement.

May God bless you my child.



IV



The effort, effort matters most:

Effort with most of us is Sporadic. We attempt something good with a bang and after a while the effort evaporates. Our intention is good but our effort is not sustained. Sustained effort alone can give us any Victory worth the name. Do we not see around us everyday how the lack of sustained effort snatches away achievement after achievement. This is particularly evident in present day students and youth. They have enthusiasm but without sustained effort.

Basi, it is not enough to have good intentions and a good start. Persevere, persevere in what you do. Cultivate sustaining power. Do not give up midway, but go on till the goal is reached. Victory or defeats are ends but the way to one or the other is effort. All our qualities come into play in our effort.

If we are morally weak our effort too becomes weak. If we have no sustaining power we break down half way. If we are cowards we turn away from risks and thus miss the road. If we have no adequate knowledge we grope in darkness and beat about the bush, and our efforts go in vain. Basi, you thus see it is effort that counts and that it is the touch-stone. Therefore, begin "effort" and bring all your high qualities to bear on it. Prove in your effort all that you are capable of. You can then leave the rest to God and feel confident you will win through.

A Poem for Basi

You came like a shaft of light!

When my life was lonely without

A lamp to lead me in the darkness,

Nor a firm hand to hold on in life's pathways.

Nor that I was weak or afraid

Nor uncertain of the goal ahead.

I stood unbeaten but without a comrade

My many sorrows and few joys to share.

It was then Basi you came into my life

Radiant with youth, courage and hope.

You took my hand and made me stand erect,

Not merely to watch the flow of life

But to plunge into the turbulent stream.

You came with the promise, you would help

To do the work I so much longed to do here and now,

That promise was the nectar for my life

A thrill that at last again I had a comrade,

After my heart's long hoped desire,

A comrade to hold my hand and walk my way.

*You shared my thoughts and dreams,
And as hand holding hand we together walked
On the troubled and busy ways of life,
We knew in our throbbing hearts
That God's grace was with us ever.
We have now come a long way
Trusting in God's unfailing mercy.
Next to God we trust in ourselves
Knowing that this Trust also comes from above.
Basi, You are the truth in my Soul
And the faith that never once fails.
You are the lamp leading me on and on and on.*

BASA GR



V



You must become a real Democrat.

In the Trust Board you are "First among Equals" when you become the Managing Trustee. I am reading a brilliant book by Jefferey Archer entitled "First among Equals".

You certainly know how to be a democrat. I know this about you, watching you at work. But this is an acquired virtue.

But there is in you an element of "bourgewasi" apishness, which comes out when some one annoys you or rubs you the wrong way. You get rid of this element in your nature. I say this because I too suffered from this defect. Long experience in life, working with equals has helped me to get rid of this element.

I may sometimes be intemperate but, I come out of it quickly and then behave like a Democrat. You must learn to do the same, my beloved Basi.

Second poem for Basi

*Some days have passed since we parted,
You to stay and bear the daily burdens,
I to go to a distant place for rest and cure,
And this was by mutual consent and desire.
Even so, we have never really parted.
We remain firm in each other's mind,
In daily communion of spirits,
Fondly remembering each other always.*

*I was with dear and fond friends
Who cared for me just as you have ever done,
And you busied yourself every day
With our work dear to us both.*

*You bore the double burden cheerfully
You faced unexpected situations with courage.*

*I am proud of you my beloved Basi,
And ashamed I left you alone to shoulder
The trials and tribulations of these days.*

*Your courage I truly admire increasingly
Your loyalty I shall cherish without fail.*

*A few days more and I shall see you,
Hear your joyous shout" Mama, Mama"
And feel the clasp of your dear hand
And bear witness to that loving smile
Which has lighted up my soul so often.*

*The love I have received here in this house
Has only deepened my love for you Basi.*

*I realise now, as never before in my life,
That we are in God's merciful hands
Mere little instruments of His will.*

Let us hold hands and sit in prayer

In utter submission to that mighty Will.

Let us surrender our lives to HIM without reserve

Let us do good works in His name

Let us help the poor and needy in His name

Let us heal wounds in His Holy name

Let us live to do His will in utter self-surrender.

BASA G.R.



VI



The need to co-ordinate your work

It is easy for me to say the work in Madhavimandiram is very small. That is against a lot of work I have done previously like the making of Gandhigram, the Chairmanship of the Khadi Commission, the Vice-Chancellorship of the Rural Institute etc. I am afraid this ignores the fact that Mythili, single-handed, is running Madhavimandiram. Only recently she has secured the services of a Manager cum accountant. The only other help has been Kasturi, the typist.

So far Mythili, the work is not small at all, but, big and heavy. I must therefore, give up telling her, that her work is small. I must say nothing to belittle your work, my beloved Basi.

Even so the following lines are written to help you. Please learn to co-ordinate your work. Treat the whole as one, under a properly made annual budget, under common supervisory eye, under a common inspection month-by-month or better week-by-week.

This is not to say you should not give separate attention to different items of work like agriculture, small industries, crèches etc. Separate attention and co-ordination are not contradictory but complimentary.

I wish you to understand this relationship. In it you will find one of the keys to efficient management.



VII

You must take care of your health

This is most important. Health of course is physical health even if that health is inextricably mixed with mental health. That only proves how the body and the mind are intimately linked together. Even so physical health must be taken care of by itself. There are innumerable conditions governing physical health like pure air, clean environment, nutrition, exercise, cleanliness of the body, recreation etc.

In your case, you have the sad reality of a polio leg. How much you have suffered on this count and how much your parents have done to alleviate your suffering I remember always as you have told me yourself. We may have common conviction on problems of our health.

You are as much concerned of my health at my advanced age as I am concerned about your health in your middle age. We shall remember all those common convictions.

What I write here now is against that background. I have experience on my side and so have you. Let me then settle down to write a few points for you to keep in mind about your health in the years to come but, beginning right from now on. They are not mandatory but, only advisory. You can modify them because of your own experience and

high intelligence. Be clear and firm however in your decisions.

a) Cultivate the habit of rising early, may well be at 5 am and having your ablutions. (not always bathing so early in cold and rainy seasons)

b) Keep your meditations at 6.30 am for half an hour or so including pranayama.

c) Read from Scriptures for another half hour. Not only from scriptures but also from great thinkers and writers.

d) Have your light breakfast with a glass of milk etc regularly at 8.30 am (In the mean time attend to any work in the house or office)

e) You should be at your office desk at 9.30 am and plan your work for the day.

f) At 11 am have some health drink, tender coconut or lemon squash. (not very cold).

g) Lunch at 1 pm with emphasis on curds, fruits and vegetables and very little or no rice. Chappathis preferable.

h) At 4 pm have any drink of your choice.

i) At 6 pm a glass of milk with any snacks of your choice.

j) Your exercise beside the morning pranayama etc. will be and can be only walking. You will have to walk a lot in the course of your work and that will be good. But, Basi take the utmost care never to trip or fall. Every time you fall down (because of your polio leg) it is like a blow on my heart--please remember that.

j) You must have plenty of mental recreations, music, T.V, and painting. Buy a good watercolour box and start painting. Read good storybooks besides your serious readings. Write your diary regularly--noting new ideas and thoughts and not merely recording important daily events.

k) Avoid writing things that may hurt someone or other. Self-study and self-criticism will help your growth. Your diary may well be a reflection of your Personality.

l) Do not get easily excited.

Raise your mind above daily trifles.

Small matters must not excite you.

Try to hold your young and vigorous mind under

Control, so that you will grow into a great woman.

m) Do not be satisfied with good intentions and ideas.

These are utterly useless unless you practice them.

Truth, Beauty, Goodness, these must be practiced--otherwise you betray them.

I have told this to you again and again.

What is my dream of you,
and for you

A noble, gracious, inspiring personality.

A character at once firm and gentle.

A mind clear without cob-webs.

A will to work and achieve results.

A deep sympathy and understanding of people.

A capacity to attract real friendship and loyalty

Ability to converse clearly and convincingly.

A big mind to understand others difficulties.

A keen intellect to plan and organise,

A woman of few words at proper times of emergency

but, words of wisdom and sympathy.

A good writer and speaker.

(these are important in public work)

A woman equal of men in courage, capacity and sacrifice

This my beloved Basi is my dream of you and for you.

May God in His mercy grant me my dream.

BASA GR.

22-01-88

I am resuming these notes after a long time. In fact after returning from Bangalore in September 87, it is only now I have taken up this note book, really after 5 months. I shall now on take up this writing for Mythili on important matters, which are in my mind.

My time is running out and no one can say what will happen any day.

What I write will be exclusively for Mythili with full freedom to her to show these pages at appropriate times to those she chooses whose co-operation and help she might need, specially after I am gone.

The following notes are therefore, very important. No one should go against what I write, who holds me in affection and respect.

23-01-88

Mythili, realize once and for ever that Kindness will always pay high dividends. Even ferocious animals respond to continued kindness. Much more will normal humans. Let us spread kindness and reap the responses.

You may of course demand discipline and hard work from all of us, but do so with genuine kindness in your heart. You will then never draw a blank. We want others to be kind to us and so we must be kind to others. To combine kindness with firmness is the art of leadership based on comradeship.

Leadership without comradeship will fail. Let your leadership be with comradeship. Let us all be co-workers who are also friends in Madhavimandiram. Think on this when you have your meditation.

24-01-88

I admire your love and service of your parents. They trust you and depend on you. You are thus a good daughter.

What is the challenge arising from it? You should gather daughters in Madhavimandiram. No one is only a wage earner nor a paid servant. More and more they should look upon you as a real chechi. Chechi here is just mother.

The joy and happiness you give your parents, you should in turn get for yourself. This alone will complete the circle of real mother-hood. The circle should not get cut in the middle. Keep the circle full. You will get a happiness for which there is no other equal.

01-11-1988

MADHAVIMANDIRAM
NEYYATTINKARA

TO

All those who have been my affectionate relations And
Real friends during my life, I write this Final request
with the earnest hope That They will grant it without
restriction or hesitation.

(sd)
G.Ramachandran

NOTE: I

Please Know and be sure in your minds that Sister Mythili
will be my successer as Managing Trustee of the
Madhavimandiram Loka Seva Trust; I have made my choice
as per the power given to me under the constitution of the
Trust Board.

Copies of this record are in the possession of Advocate
Sri R.Gopalakrishnan, the Legal Advisor and Sri V.Sankaran,
Advocate, Madurai.

NOTE: II

As successor Managing Trustee she will exercise the powers, which I enjoy today as the present Managing Trustee.

Her control will extend over the six acres and ten cents of land of the Trust, the Madhavimandiram house and other buildings constructed for our work during my life-time and also over all other buildings that may hereafter be constructed for the work of the Trust

NOTE: III

Note II refers to immovable and landed property only. The movable property including the car has been listed and has been recorded separately.

Except the Library and the furniture needed for it, the movable property, I have bequeathed, to Sister Mythili. [There are several items that even today belong to her as her father or other relations of hers gave them to her] Several things I have bequeathed to her, she intends to keep in a Museum that she hopes to build.

NOTE: IV

It is now 12 years since Sister Mythili began to take personal care of me in my old age under advice from my late lamented wife Dr (Mrs) Soundram Ramachandran. I have no words to express my affectionate gratitude to her. She has bravely and selflessly borne the double burden of the Secretary of the Trust and my personal helper taking care of our home. May God bless her.

NOTE: V

Sister Mythili is a Tamilian. Her grand father, who is no more, was Sri A.Vaidyanatha Iyer, a distinguished Lawyer of Madurai. He was also a leading Congress man. It was he who was instrumental in opening the great Meenakshi Temple in Madurai to the Harijans. He was imprisoned more than once in the freedom movement. His son, also an Advocate, is Sister Mythili's father, a Freedom Fighter and an Ex MLA.

She has managed to learn Malayalam enough to do her present work. It is just possible that some prejudice may operate against her in the minds of Malayalis. My earnest appeal to my affectionate relations and friends is not to allow this to happen. They must all stand by Sister Mythili and support her as the Managing Trustee.

This will be the elementary act of gratitude from us all to her for her own loyalty to me and the work of the Trust. Let us remember how much she sacrificed for me and the Trust .

She has left her own affluent home in Madurai to serve me and the Trust. She has taken nothing as salary or honorarium, whereas others working in the Trust take up to Rs.750/pm.

Her aim is only "Service" of poor women and children of this rural area. She has post-graduate degrees in Education and Sciences. A Brahmin by birth she is above all casteism and communalism. She is just an Indian first and last.

NOTE: VI

Mythili is worried about some immediate possible problems after I am no more. She has recently known about my elder brother's death in England and his funeral in Ruislip outside London. She knows all of us must die. She is not afraid of death, but only of problems of life.

What is to happen when I die? And she is left behind? She is very sad, she has to think about this matter, but she is brave to do so. Let me therefore, think for her and leave clear instructions to guide her.

NOTE: VII

I should be cremated in the Kerala manner. But, there will be no usual rituals.

The body would be carried straight to the funeral pyre on a cot and placed in position with plenty of white flowers and burnt.

The site of the grave will be near mother's tomb or at the place shown to Mythili by me.

The fire must burn strong with coconut shells. Sarvodaya Bhajans must go on while this is being done.

When the mud plaster of the grave has shrunk, people attending the funeral may disperse.

The funeral pyre will be lit by Mythili and no one else.

I shall have discussed further details with Mythili.

She will have my detailed instructions.

That means she will be in charge of the funeral and everything should be done as she directs.

I shall appoint a small group of persons in time to help Mythili to carry out my instructions.

Relations and friends should kindly know Mythili is simply fulfilling my personal wishes.

There will be no formal sanchayanam, but only Sarva Dharma prayers as the one I arranged after my brother's funeral. Invitations to the prayer meeting should be sent to relations and friends.

Sweet Prasadam distributed to all those who attend the meeting. This prayer meeting will be in the place of sanchayanam.

Further details, if any I shall tell Mythili in time.

The atmosphere should be one of sanctified prayers.

[One detail omitted is as follows:-

My eyes may be taken out by Dr SK Ramachandran and given to the Medical College Hospital. Any other organ of the body may also be removed in time before the funeral as decided by Dr.S.K.Ramachandran.]

Ashes may be collected in an "urn" if so desired by relations and friends and part of it cast into the Indian Ocean at Cape Kanyakumari near Gandhi Mandap.

These Instructions are written mainly to help Mythili who is both GRAND-DAUGHTER and GRAND-SON to ME.

NOTE: VIII

November 22, 1988. Tuesday

Do not judge people by their spoken words. This does not mean spoken words have no importance. The person who speaks counts. Remember his record of service to you. Then only evaluate his words.

Good friends can be poor speakers. Not good friends can be good speakers. So judge carefully through a period of time.

When you are sure some one is a real friend trust him and rely on him or her. Consult them and be guided by them without changing your Basic ideas.

Judge no one hastily one way or the other. But, when you have judged at last stand by it until otherwise proved. You will be surrounded by the deceitful and the selfish. Do not be afraid of them. Keep them out a distance and keep an eye on them. Let them not see you know them really. Disarm their suspicions. Thus you will know them better. Do not forget that most people are good only up to a point. Encourage them to be good, to be better. Human nature will often respond.

People may have motives; Be tolerant of motives but do not play into their hands. All people are not alike. Learn to know the black from the white. But be good to both without weakness. You are no one to change other people completely. Do not therefore attempt the impossible. But never miss doing all that is possible.

NOTE: IX

I write these lines because you are a young and attractive woman working with men.

This world is alas still a man's world and so a difficult world for women, unless you an extraordinary woman with unusual courage and unusual strength and with no failings of your own.

Be pure in mind and you will be fearless in your life

Always remember,

“Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality”.

NOTE: X

I will have to leave you behind, you being much younger. I am anxious about your future one moment full of confidence the next moment anxious when I think of the cruel and wicked world and confident when I think of your courage, capacity, vision and dedication. You are an extraordinary woman even as it is and your Tapasya will take you further onward and upward. That is my faith and my hope.

The watch words for you are:-

1. Learn to keep your body strong and healthy.
2. Learn to cultivate and regulate your diet.
3. Be fearless without being aggressive.
4. Be good to all; both the good and the bad as you may think and rightly.
5. Let your vision of your work expand and grow but understand your limitations.
6. Trust in yourself.
7. Trust in God.

To Mythili
Her charter of Freedom

*Living with me and Taking care of me with devotion,
I must not curtail your freedom.*

*You are a mature mind with considerable experience of
life and its problems.*

You have also garnered high culture.

I hereby grant you all the freedom you need.

*You are free to go anywhere you wish and return when
you wish.*

You have only to keep me informed.

I do say this with all my respect and affection for you.

Mama.

18-9-90

A marvelous Experience

It was pure ecstasy

It was spiritual absolutely

It made me live again richly

It made me wonder and remember

A past which can never fade

And all this, thanks to Mythili

Who suddenly gave a cassette of Rabindra Sangheeth.

The songs were those I have loved from my

Santhiniketan days.

As the songs came one after another I was lost in

Ecstasy.

I became unconscious.

They were Guru Dev Tagore's songs

Which make a priceless Treasure of Truth and beauty.

—GR

I thank God I have lived to have this profound experience. Long ago, I wrote in the "Current" magazine that Guru Dev's songs (not poetry only) were equal in Value to mankind as Gandhiji's Karma yoga of Truth and Non-Violence.

Both lift us up to GOD. Once again today I had this realization.

Guru Dev, the prophet of Beauty and the Mahatma, the prophet of Truth become one in the end.

Truth and Beauty are one.

"A thing of Beauty is a Truth for ever"

And so, I had this experience again.

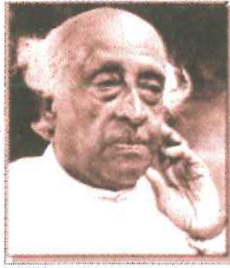
It was worth living so long to have had this ecstatic experience in my 87th year.

Life is thus good, true and beautiful.

God is great.

18-9-90

G.R.



Desikottama Dr G.Ramachandran

Blossomed:07-10-04

Withered: 17-01-95

Desikottama Dr G Ramachandran, one of the giants of those who were privileged to be moulded by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and Rajaji, represented a rare synthesis of the values the great men stood for, all their lives. GR distinguished himself as an authentic interpreter of the first two and set himself up as a practical reformer who sought to harmonize Gandhi and Tagore; in constructive Ventures and act as a bridge between the two.

Sri G. Ramachandran met Gandhi at Dilkush in 1921,during Gandhiji's famous "21 days fast". He was then a student of Mr. CF Andrews at Santiniketan. The discussions GR was privileged to have with Gandhi on the occasion drew him closer to the Mahatma. Ramachandran soon became an inmate of Gandhiji's ashram at Sevagram and under Gandhiji's direct guidance and supervision plunged himself into the national movement and the Gandhian Constructive Programme.

Gandhi chose him as a close disciple and entrusted to him several important missions. He was sent to Jamia Millia

Islamia as per the request of Dr Zakhir Hussain where he served a lecturer and taught spinning. Khadi work brought him closer to the common man and the distinguished Rajaji.

During the Freedom struggle, he courted arrest eleven times and spent seven years in jail.

He began Khadi work Khadi work selling Khadi yarn and cotton and became the Chairman of All India Khadi and Village Industries Commission of India. During his tenure as Chairman, started the People's Education Programme for poor.

His contribution to education, both Basic Education and higher Education, Khadi and community Development needs special mention. Gandhigram Rural University of which he became the Founder Vice Chancellor is a reflection on GR as an educationist and a constructive thinker. His experiments in Gandhigram showed us how rural children and women could be provided with facilities for growth and all-round development from birth to higher education.

Along with his wife, Dr (Mrs.) Soundram Ramachandran, he founded the "Institute of Rural health and Family planning Center", institute for 'Sanitary Inspectors' Training and Kasturba Hospital which won recognition and awards at the National level (especially for services in Family planning and women & child-welfare).

He was a powerful Orator and a brilliant writer. His Autobiography, "Adventuring with life" is a true reflection of his times and the aspirations of the millions who dedicated their lives for their motherland.

After 60 years of service in various cadres before and after independence, Dr GR came back to his hometown Neyyattinkara in 1980 and started an institution in the name of his beloved mother Smt Madhavi Tankachi. He donated all his landed properties to this charitable society "The Madhavi mandiram Loka Seva Trust". The Educational wing of this institution is "Mahatma Gandhi Vidya Peedom". We have Dr GR Public School under this wing with CBSE Affiliation. This is his last venture especially for women and children.

The milestones in the eventful life of this multifaceted personality and man of conviction and humour may be summarized as follows:

Joined Non Cooperation movement in 1920 and participated in the Tilak Swaraj Fund.

Become one of the earliest Honours Graduates of the Visva Bharati in 1924 and joined the Sabarmathi Ashram.

Took part in the Salt-Satyagraha Revolution in 1930 together with Rajaji at Vedaranyam. Sentenced to imprisonment for one year and a fine of Rs.500/-

Functioned as the Provincial Secretary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh in Tamil nadu and Kerala and member of the Central Executive Committee of Harijan Sevak Sangh.

Took active part in the Temple Entry movement in Tamilnad and Kerala (Vaikom) Spent six years as one of the general Secretaries of the Hindustani Tamil Sangh in Sevagram and actively promoted Basic Education in Tamilnadu, Mysore and Andra.

Was appointed the Chairman of the Basic Education Assessment Committee set up by the Government of India.

Become the General Secretary of the All India Village Industries Association, Maganwadi.

Appointed Educational advisor of Rajaji Government of Madras State.

Joined the Pattom Tanu Pillai Cabinet (in Travancore) as a Minister.

Served the Indian Express as an Editor.

Along with his wife Dr (Mrs.) Soundram Ramachandran founded Gandhigram in 1947 and was its Director for 15 years.

Was the member of the Rajya Sabha for 6 years.

Served on the Balwant Ray G Mehta Committee on Community Development.

General Secretary of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi for 3 years.

Founder Secretary of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, Editor of Gandhi Marg (English Journal)

Conferred the Degree of D.Litt by the Kashi Vidya Peeth, title of "Desikottama" by Viswabarathi University and Doctorate by Gandhigram Rural University.

Traveled widely: lectured in the universities in England, Germany, United States, Soviet Union, Poland Yugoslavia, Ceylon etc. spreading the message of Mahatma Gandhi.

Was a member of the delegation sent to Moscow by the Gandhi Peace foundation along with the Congress President UN Debar to take the message of peace and to prevent the use of Nuclear weapons.

Authored Several Books: Thought and Talks, Village Reconstruction Step by Step, The Man Gandhi, A Sheaf of Gandhi Anecdotes, Higher Values of life, Adventuring with Life etc.

Authored Several Poems, drawings and handicraft-items to his credit.

Received peace awards from Grambling University, USA and the Soka Gakkai International, Tokyo.

As a last “venture” founded the Madhavimandiram Loka Seva Trust, at the age of 76 bequeathing all his ancestral property (to the Trust) in memory of his mother Smt Madhavi Tankachi. The Trust runs Mahatma Gandhi Vidya Peedom and is involved in other activities mainly for women and children.



Social work wing Under this we have Soundram Farm; Paramahansa Yogananda Computer Lab; Sakthi Mandiram - for Socially handicapped women; Khadi and Village Industries; Welfare of mothers & children; Are the works under the Social work wing of the Trust.

Education wing Under this we have three day care centres ie., Crèches 3; Dr GR Play Home for children below 5 years; Dr GR Public School affiliated to CBSE, New Delhi; Continuing Education Centre; People's Education Programme Are the works under the Mahatma Gandhi Vidya Peedom.

We want to keep this institution just like this
remembering

“Small is beautiful”



