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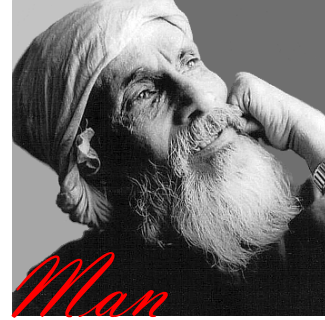
presents

A Study

K. S. Ramaswamy

SASTRIAR

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Story of a Man

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A Study

*of all the works of
Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati*

Sri Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswamy Sastriar

Notes

This book was offered to the seer-poet, savant, yogi Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati of Tamil Nadu, for his 50th Birthday, 11th May 1947. It was a well merited appreciation, this loving souvenir of the life and poetic genius of Seer-Poet Yogi Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati, presented to him by the well-known and voluminous writer on Indian Art and Culture. This work reflects the purity of the poet's soul and the godly perfume of his soul-thrilling heart. It is a living picture of the Divine Spirit which sings in the poet. Let him live an Immortal among the Immortals that have elevated humanity to the heights of divinity!

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Cover : Beach the Vougot in Bretagne

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Peace Anthem

Peace for all, peace for all
 For all the countries peace
 Joy for all, joy for all
 For all the nations joy
 A rosy morning peace
 A smiling summer joy (Peace for all)

All for each and each for all
 This is the golden rule
 Life and Light and Love for all
 For all that live our love (Peace for all)

Work and food and clothes for all
 Equal status for all
 Health and home and school for all
 A happy world for all (Peace for all)

No idle rich, no more beggars
 All are equal workers
 No more tears, no more fears
 The heart is full of cheers (Peace for all)

No atom scare, no fat mammon
 No room for war demon
 Like leaves in trees, like rays in the sun
 We are one communion,
 One Divine communion (Peace for all)

The good in you is good for all
 Your life is life for all

The God in you is God for all
Your love is love for all (Peace for all)

For he or she or it or rest
This collective life is best
This Universal Life is best
North or South, or East or West (Peace for all)

Peace for plants and birds and beasts
For hills and streams and woods
Peace in Home - land and air and sea
Dynamic peace we see

Peace for all, peace for all

Immortal Peace for All

Song of Unity

Unite. Unite, Unite, Oh Souls
Unite and play your roles
Unite in mind, unite in heart
Unite in whole, unite in part
Like words and tunes and sense in song
Let East and West unite and live long
Trees are many; the grove is one
Branches are many; tree is one
Shores are many; sea is one
Limbs are many; body is one
Bodies are many; self is one
Stars are many; sky is one
Flowers are many; honey is one
Pages are many; book is one
Thoughts are many; thinker is one
Tastes are many; taster is one
Actors are many; the drama is one
Nations are many; the world is one
Religions are many; Truth is one
The wise are many; Wisdom is one
Beings are many; breath is one
Classes are many; college is one
Find out this One behind the many
Then life shall enjoy peaceful harmony

**Presentation of
Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati**

11th May 1897 – 7th March 1990

The wise one to the cosmic age

Although more than 90 years old, in his school in the south of India, *Kavi Yogi Maharishi* (great divine visionary, wise poet), Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati worked like a young man of twenty. When he was asked his age, he answered: "My age is Courage!"

The Yogi wrote several hundred works in English, French, Tamil, Hindi, Telugu and Sanskrit: five thousand songs, and fifteen hundred poems in French. The magnum opus of the man conscious of the presence of God in him, *Bharata Shakti*, (in 50,000 verses) described his ideal: only One Humanity living in communion with only One God in a transformed world! *Bharata Shakti* is a monumental and unique work. The Yogi depicts the gasoline of all the religions, of all the prophets and saints, all the approaches of *Yoga* and all the cultures on an allegorical fabric. It is a book for any age which all spiritual researchers and all nations should read and meditate on. This work was completed and appreciated by Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Romain Rolland, Annie Besant, Bertrand Russell, George Bernard Shaw, Dr. Suzuki and so many others. It installs the author among the great, men such as Dante, Homer, Racine, Shakespeare, Vyasa, and Valmiki.

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati is one of the greatest Tamil poet, having translated into this language: *Gita*, *Upanishads*, *Veda*, the *Bible*, the *Koran*, *Avesta*, the *Buddha-Dhamma-Sangha* and *Tattvartha Sutra*, the life and teachings of Lao-Tseu and Confucius. From their original languages, he also translated into Tamil *The Divine Comedy* of Dante, the tragedies of Racine, the comedies of Molière, the dramas of Corneille, Shakespeare, Goethe and the novels of Anatole France, Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas and others.

Shuddhananda's works are innumerable. Malcolm Macdonald, who chaired the Congress on the Unity of the Conscience in Singapore, said in his short speech about him: "He is such a remarkable man, having such a diversity of raised gifts, that it is difficult to know where to start and where to finish when one speaks about Kavi Yogi Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati. Few men have achieved as many things in only one human life." His name appears moreover in the Encyclopaedia of the World's Great Men, which says: "Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati is the author of literary works of varied styles: works epic and lyric, melodramas, operas, comedies, pastoral, romance, novels, biographies, commentaries on famous works and texts. *Bharata Shakti* is his magnum opus." He had a presentiment that

he would receive the Nobel Prize for Peace or for Literature but did not live to see it. His commitment is summarized in his book celebrating his life, "*Experiences of a Pilgrim Soul (Expérience d'une Âme de Pèlerin)*."

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God I loved and lived in him,
Making His commandment
Leave to Man his entire talents
This is my will!

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati

Courage!

*The night is through,
The chain of slavery
It is already broken –
I am full of courage!*

*Peace in the morning,
A golden sun rises
Like a lion superhuman
To accomplish my dream.*

*A hopeful smile,
Docile as a child
Who plays in the infinite
With a fiery star.*

*My journey is over;
I enjoy time;
The universe is my nest;
Of eternal spring.*

Chapter I

I. A Great Poet

A great poet is no mere writer of verses. He is a creator of life and superlife and a revealer of the ideal gleaming through the real, of the Divine shining through Nature and man. He appears to be a dreamer of dreams, but in reality, he is a denizen of a world which is more real and bright and joyous than ours. He is “a priest to us all, of the wonder and bloom of the world.” He is an explosive force who often breaks up the bad old world to build a brave new world. In a famous lyric Arthur O’Shanghnessy says:

*We are music makers
And the dreamers of the dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers
And sitting by desolate streams;

World-losers and world-forsakers
On whom the pale moon gleams;
And yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.*

It is thus true that poets, while seeming to be gazing away from the real towards the ideal, are really helping to release the ideal from within the real and to build the Kingdom of God upon the common earth. As Shelley says in a famous passage in *The Defence of Poetry*:

“Poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge. It is at the same time the root and blossom of all other systems of thought.”

“Poetry is the record of the best and the happiest moments of the happiest and best minds. Poetry reanimates the sleeping, the cold, the buried image of the past. Poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world.”

“Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.”

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati says in equally felicitous terms: "Poets are harbingers of the New Dawn, Koils of Renaissance, awakeners of new life in mankind and eye-openers of humanity. Poets are the sculptors of civilisation."

"True poetry is a mantra of the Real, dynamic song-thrill of Soul-Bliss. It is an immortal blossom of Divine communion which breathes with the aroma of cosmic beauty and Nature's ecstasy. The true poet is poetry itself. He is the muse of Nature and the messenger of God in her heart. The poet's vision is far above the eyesight and the mind's vision. It is the soul's vision of the ensouled Divine. It gushes out of the inner fountain of bliss and flows into an ecstasy of beauty, emotion and rhythmic expression." Swamiji says further in his *Seer-Poet*:

"Poetry is the art of arts. The ear enjoys music, the eye painting and dancing. But something deeper is required to enjoy real poetry. The head, the heart and the soul must go together to live within oneself what the poet has embodied in his verse. Poetry is not an array of words set to a metrical beat. It is not a Johnsonian jingle. Poetry is a great formative power. It reveals the "One" in Man, Nature, and the universe of beings. The real poet is a messenger of truth and a mediator between life and the Spirit. His song falls in dizzying streams of flaming dreams, from the pinnacles of the secret spirit. The poet is a creator of the creative world. His words flow from the mystic height of cosmic consciousness to cherish earth and humanity in all the spheres of life; social, cultural, political, economic, aesthetic, moral, spiritual and educational. It kindles a creative emotion in the nation, animates it with a heroic fervour, and a sense of beauty and harmony, love and unity, and inspires dynamic progressive action and activities. The seer-poet's poems are forces of universal evolution."

Such a seer-poet is Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati and I regard the above delineation as admirably and appropriately applicable to his own poetry. Shuddhananda is a *born poet* and poetry is with him a natural passion and a natural realisation. He lisped in numbers and numbers came even while he was a little boy. He sings:

*A mystic singer plays this flute and how, I do not know;
When the gentle scented zephyr plays prelude
To bird-voiced rosy dawn of peace;
When the occult smile that hangs on Aurora's lips
Kisses my silent wakeful self;
When the delightful rays of the rising sun
Strike the strings of my secret heart;
When the cosmic life plays before my eyes
In rapturous forms of men, women and children;
When the evening glory enchants my meditation,
When the star-gemmed book of eternal Knowledge*

*Opens above my soaring dreams
When the midnight hush calls my soul
To transcendent heights of bliss
A mystic singer plays this humble flute;
My songs, O friend, are His cadenced breath
Perfumed with the flowers of consecration.*

Shuddhananda's poetry is the flowering of his spirituality. It is the Gangetic flood which comes from the Himalayan heights of his heart. His entire life is a song-offering and he offers every blossom of his muse to the Universal Mother. He is a God-centric seer-poet. Here are a few flowers offered to God in Nature:

*My thoughts and words fail before Thy splendour
My human brush blushes before Thy wonder;
O sky-wide Self, life-embodied Awareness,
Silent Witness that watches me
Through the open eye-lids of day and night,
O Impersonal-Personal Lover,
Nature is Thy thrilling form,
Flowers are Thy winning smile,
Star-gems are Thy ornaments,
Rain-clouds are Thy compassion,
Torrents are Thy flood of Grace,
Koils echo Thy sweet voice;
Parrots speak Thy lovely words;
Fruits show us Thy hospitality.
Cosmic life is Thy ceaseless breath.
The fair sun-gold-smile of the coral dawn,
The gracious look of Thy sapphired-lotus eyes
Fishing for devoted hearts,
Thy universal Beauty inspiring the sweet divine arts
Of poesy, music, painting, dance, drama and sciences
O how Thy manifolded-Unique harmony of manifestation
Enraptures my Spirit! Hail God in Nature!
It is Thou that giveth expression to my speechless ecstasy.
Thou art my self, my song and the soul of my song-flood!
I surrender myself into Thy hands as an aspiring vina;
Tune my fervour into torrents of song-thrill, Divine Artist!*

The Master tuned the harp and the poet sings its bliss:

*Limitless is the joy of my heart;
My song-flood breaks all bounds;
My fervent love transcends words;*

*O Silence that creates the universe,
At the instance of Thy inner flute-call
My soul forgot past agonies;
My art became a nectared-thrill of the soul
Born of surging ecstasy.*

Poesy is "The honeyed-thrill of the Spirit," says our poet.

II. A Great Yogi

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati was born of pious Brahmin parents, at Sivaganga, Ramnad District, Madras Presidency. His parents, Jatadharar and Kamakshi, were learned in Sanskrit and Tamil religious lore and led a life of *Japa*, meditation and philanthropic service to afflicted humanity. Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati was born on 11th May 1897, as the youngest of the four children. His parents and his grandmother Minakshi Ammal used to tell *him stories from the great epics of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavatam, Shiva Puranam*, etc. The atmosphere of his home was resonant with holy songs and chantings of the *Gita*, the *Upanishads*, *Devaram* and Thayumanavar's hymns. It was in that way that linguistic and cultural patriotism was imbibed along with his mother's milk. I know what such an experience has meant to me and I deplore its lessening influence in these vainglorious days.

Though Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati studied in an ordinary English school, his home environment and his natural spirituality lifted him far above the secularism and hedonism of the day. In his seventh year his uncle promised to give him all his immense wealth, after adopting him as his son. But Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati said, "I am the son of Shakti (the Divine Force). Wealth! Your wealth too belongs to Her. Give it away to her hungry children in the street." The uncle then playfully asked him to go away to his Mother Shakti! The boy ran up to Goddess Minakshi's shrine at Madurai, and sought the grace of the universal Mother. There he heard devotees singing Thevaram, Tiruvachakam, Thyumanavar's songs, and made a vow to compose holy poems and songs and place them at the Feet of the Divine. In his ninth year, he met a guru who intensified his double gifts of poesy and spirituality. It was that great saint who realised the purity of his mind and gave him the name of Shuddhananda, namely, the blissful soul pure in thought, word and deed. Tamil poesy flowed in a swelling stream from his lips but he used to read it to the Divine in his heart, and throw it away. He had no attachment for anything except the Divine Grace. One day his Tamil Pundit Devasikhamani Iyer, happened to watch the boy, while he was writing on the wall:

*Seek ye the Light Divine alone; all else
Will break off and then vanish like bubbles.*

The savant forbade the young poet to destroy his poems and songs, and advised him to preserve them and master Kamban's immortal Ramayana. Shud-dhananda Bharati did accordingly. He also read the hymns of Maharshi Thayu-manar and *Bhagavad Gita* with great reverence.

When his parents proposed marriage to him nine times, he firmly said "No, I cannot imagine woman, except as the universal Divine Mother." He removed his sacred thread and became an anchorite. He sought the company of saints and sages, and shunned worldly attachments. In a famous letter to his elder brother at that time, he stated that he felt that all beings were his children and that he was born to dispel the poverty, ignorance and slavery, that seemed to be the lot of Indians on earth.

He felt and argued that if any compulsion was applied against his freedom of thought and action, he would, in the interest of humanity and as a divine urge, rise in rebellion and revolt. He stated further in the same letter, that his way was Pure Spiritual Socialism, and that he wanted to devote his heart and soul to God, and his hands to the service of Man. He regarded all humanity as an embodiment of God: Unity of God and Unity of Souls is the basic principle of his Spiritual Socialism. He sings in a long poem on Unity of Consciousness:

*From clod to God, from sky to earth,
All are dovetailed in me.
I am bottom; I am zenith
My life is ether-free.*

*God unites; mental man divides;
And yet one religion he needs;
Awake O Soul, and see who hides
Behind the veils of castes and creeds!*

*Awake arise and march onward
From peace to peace, my soul!
Blaze thy way beyond light and shade
To "One" that is the All!*

*Let us think of that only Truth
Whose temple is the universe;
Then our path shall be very smooth
Among men of nature diverse.*

Though he wanted to become an ascetic, he did not like the idea of going to others to beg for his food. He has never begged even God for gifts. He would work hard and earn enough for his bare subsistence, and devote his care-free life to

the disinterested service of uplifting his people. He fitted himself at Pasumalai for a teacher's life, the noblest of professions as he called it.

While he was there, he studied the Holy *Bible* and wrote a life of Christ in poetry, which was later published by the Rev. Mr. Popley. Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati admired the Christian missionary's zeal and spirit of service, and had a passion to do work in that spirit for the benefit of the mother tongue and the Motherland, and for the propagation of his Pure Spiritual Socialism. He dedicated his entire life for the all-round welfare of his motherland and its Dharma. It was during those days that he came in contact with the great poet Rabindranath Tagore at Madurai. Tagore heard some of his poems and encouraged him to enrich his mother tongue.

He then took service as a teacher in Kattuputtur. While he was there, he often used to go to Nerur, three miles off, for peaceful and steady meditation, for one or two days, at the shrine of Sadasiva Brahmendra, the supreme Yogi of the Tamil Nadu in recent times. He was also a trained scout master and took much interest in the scout movement. He used to take his students and scouts on excursions and teach them lessons on rural improvement, patriotism, righteousness and spirituality and make them render help and service to the rural folk. He never took food without doing a good turn and dedicating a song or two to the Divine to whom his life was an utter surrender. He himself worked for rural welfare and Harijan betterment wherever he went, and his works were well-known in the villages on the banks of the Cauvery river. He did admirable work in the field of adult literacy among the villagers and in the field of prohibition, and he made adults as well as children perform *Bhajana*.

To sing the Divine glory and dance in ecstasy was his passion and he never blushed to sing and dance, even in the open street. Many people gave up meat, alcohol and evil habits on hearing his songs, which were full of the soul's message to the heart of humanity.

In his own class, he used to begin work only after going round his students and blessing them to become heroes in life and praying to God fervently to make them supermen. He was an able and devoted teacher and used to teach his students not only their text-books, but also ethical and spiritual lessons which left a deep impression upon their lives. He got them to take an interest in manual and vocational instruction and made them masters of one craft or another. He aimed at the harmonious development of the brain, body, heart, emotions, morality, aesthetics, industry and social efficiency both in his students and his scouts.

One day, while he was engaged in mixing chemicals to make match sticks, there was a sudden, dangerous explosion by which he was injured in the wrist. He providentially escaped worse consequences. The scar of that injury still remains on his left hand, and urges him on to fulfil his life-mission, while yet the soul

breathes in his body. That incident made a deep impression upon his mind, and he felt that God saved him from death, for a life of dedication to humanity.

During the days of the Non-cooperation and Khilafat movements launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920, he met Mahatmaji, and devoted himself to his ideal of truth and non-violence and the simple life of sacrifice. During those days he lived in the local mosque, read Al Quoran, wrote a fine poetic work on the Prophet and His teachings, and won the love and respect of several Muslim savants and Moulvis. He used to do regularly the five Namaz and live upon dates and milk. One day, he went with his Hindu and Muslim friends and his students to the Kattalai station when Mahatmaji was travelling to Trichinopoly. He offered his Khaddar garlands to Mahatmaji and then saw him again at Trichinopoly. He spoke boldly on political platforms and toured with Congress workers to do constructive work. The school authorities, though they had much regard for his genius and holiness, did not like his political activities. He himself felt the shackles of slavish servanthship, and suddenly resigned his post one day with two pithy phrases: "Freedom calls; no more walls!" The teachers and the students presented him with a farewell address, to which he replied: "I leave an arm-chair life, to lead a life of meditation and service. I throw off this coat and turban to be a free pilgrim of God's Truth. I leave this palatial building to live like wind under God's heaven. I leave school-mastership to be nobody's master, but to be a very simple and humble servant of God in the human aggregate. I leave a profession to fulfil the mission of my life. Let your blessings guide me from sacrifice to sacrifice, until nothing is left in me except God, who is my pure Self."

Shuddhananda thereupon devoted himself to Yogic Sadhana at Nerur, and later at Talaimalai and Kollimalai, allowing God to lead his destiny. He had no care of the morrow nor of the body. Whenever hungry, he used to take two handfuls of Bengal gram, soaked in his Kamandal and three bananas, which he bought and he never begged anything from anyone. Wherever he went, Nature's beauty inspired him to poetic contemplation, and poems flowed from his heart like a cataract. He had no attachment, even for them; he used to leave them with a friend, and go away to fresh fields and pastures new. If the least desire or egotism rose in his mind, he would at once set fire to his manuscripts, or throw them into the river; and many poems met this fate, for there was room in his heart only for God, and God alone. His life thus sped, alternating between meditation and poesy.

By providential design, he won the friendship of the great hero and savant V. V. S. Ayyar and the great poet Subrahmanya Bharatiar who were then at Pondicherry. He came to know them first only by means of letters. Later on he met them. Sri V. V. S. Ayyar and Subrahmanya Bharatiar read Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati's *Bharata Shakti* and other works with great appreciation and

admiration. Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati wanted to take part in the daily *Desabhaktan* edited by V. V. S. Ayyar but just on the day when he went to Madras, Sri Ayyar was arrested and taken to the Bellary gaol.

A little later, Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati, at the request of a bosom friend, became a teacher in a national school at Devakottah, on a pay of Rs. 50 per month. He used to spend five rupees p.m. on himself, give ten to the poor, and save the remainder to form a fund on which he could live later on and render service to the Motherland. He used to spin his own yarn and weave his own cloth. He persuaded the villagers to spend their leisure in spinning yarn and did a lot of work to produce Khaddar and popularise cottage industries. He left the school when it was proposed to convert it from a national school to an ordinary school.

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati spent considerable time in Yogic practices and the remainder of his working hours in writings and philanthropic service. Every night he used to do Bhajan and hold religious classes. Sometime later, Sri V. V. S. Ayyar founded a Gurukulam, at Shermadevi in the Tinnevely District and called the Yogi to assist him. Both belonged to the Bharadwaja Gotram; and the Gurukulam was named Bharadwaja Ashram. Dr. Shuddhananda after visiting Rameshwaram and bathing in the Setu, turned a new page in his life by entering the Bharadwaja Ashram. He served the institution with zeal and assiduity. He revised and completed his monumental poetical work *Bharata Shakti*, which he had written in 1920. He also wrote innumerable patriotic and spiritual poems and songs, as the mood prompted and inspired him. He took a very considerable part in the editing of V. V. S. Ayyar's *Bala Bharati*. After V. V. S. Ayyar's sudden death under tragic circumstances, he edited *Bala Bharati* and ran the Gurukulam for some time, and was later the editor of *Samarasa Bodhini* at Tanjore for a period of time.

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati devoted his time more and more to the constructive programme of the Congress at Pamani, Palayur and other villages. He also did humanitarian work to prevent the slaughter of animals in the name of religion. He established the Gautama Nilayam at Tiruvidaimarudur and conducted a magazine named *Tozhil Kalvi* (Industrial Education). He was also the president of the Palayur Shakti Nilayam. For some time, he edited a magazine called *Iyarkai* (Nature) at Conjeevaram. He studied the Jaina and Buddhist scriptures intensively, and wrote the life and teachings of Mahavira into a volume of poems called *Jinanandam*, and that of Buddha into a book called *Buddha Vijayam*, and a drama popularly known as *Buddhar Karunai* (Buddha's Compassion). He conducted an All-India Naturopathic Conference during the National Congress sessions at Madras. He also conducted a sanatorium and cured patients. He was for some time the president of the Naturopathic Association, Bezwada. He was also connected with the Youth Movement of Sadhu Vasvani.

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati travelled in North India up to the Himalayas and returned to Madras to edit the Tamil Daily, *Swarajya*. He was then one of the platform leaders of the Tamil Nadu. He extensively toured the country on the Congress mission. But his vision was a Divine India (see his work bearing this name) and not a mere political country of the western type. He did not like the party politics of those days of mutual glorification or mutual vilification. He was not for the council entry programme of the opportunists of those days. He was for solid and useful action that would release the masses from poverty and ignorance. "India can be free only by unity of consciousness and dignity of unselfish service and never by vociferous cliques. To spiritualise, industrialise, militarise, and socialise the country, is the way to liberate it for the service of humanity," he said in his last leading article and left politics to devote himself to *tapasya*.

It is said that he saw the vision of the *Bharata Shakti* once while he was delivering a political speech at Tuticorin. That effulgent vision made him feel the "One" Cosmic Divine Energy that pervades all and leads human evolution. It changed his entire course of life and angle of vision. That was his last public speech. He got down from the platform and turned from political work to spiritual work. He did *tapasya* amidst the beautiful natural scenery of the Mysore State, remained for a month in Belagola and then went to see Sri Ramana Maharshi at Tiruvannamalai. He lived in meditation and *samadhi* up the hill in the Virupakshi cave.

Some years ago, he felt an inner urge to go to Pondicherry and see Sri Aurobindo. He was attracted by his spiritual dynamism, and offered to him all his possessions. Since that time he has been living a life of intense Yogic Sadhana and meditation. He wrote there a great and unique book called *Yoga Siddhi*, and another big work of Self-Experiments called *Atma Sodhanai*. He touched up all the previously written works including the *Bharata Shakti* and has also written many new ones.

*A Study
of all the works of
Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati*

Carried out with the collaboration and help of Daye Craddock

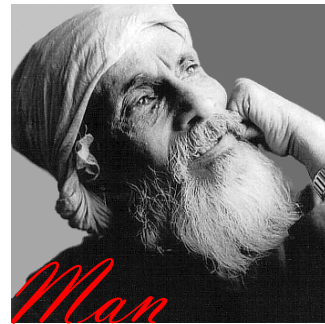
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