

**WHERE THERE IS A WILL THERE IS A WAY  
(A SKIT ON SRINIVASA RAMANUJAN)**

By

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(Narrators Prof. Probefacts (lady) and Dr. Digrecord (gentleman) enter).

Prof. Probefacts : - Good evening, ladies, gentleman and dear students. We welcome you to this educative programme, a drama 'WHERE THERE IS A WILL THERE IS A WAY'. Dr. Digrecord, would you please enlighten us about the programme.

Dr. Digrecord : - Certainly, Prof. Probefacts. The drama being presented is about Srinivasa Ramanujan, a prodigy in Mathematics groomed into one of the great mathematicians of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century by providence and through his own indomitable will. He was born on Dec 22, 1887 in a small town Erode of erstwhile Madras presidency (*present Tamilnadu*). Chinnasamy was his nick-name.

Prof. Probefacts : - Oh, my friend give me some chance to say about Ramanujan. Ramanujan's father kept accounts for a cloth-merchant at Kumbhkonam. His mother Komalambal was an ardent devotee of Goddess Namagiri of Namakkal. She was a pious, orthodox woman. His parents inherited only poverty and misery.

Dr. Digrecord : - Ramajunan was influenced by his mother more than his father. He had a serene and meditative disposition, extra ordinary perception and inborn mathematical bent of mind. At the age of twelve, he solved all problems in the Loney's Trigonometry Part-II.

Prof. Probefacts : - As a student of Town High School Kumbhakonam he was very much attached to a gymnastic master Sathyapriya Rayar, who was ill famed as mentally deranged.

Dr. Digrecord : - My dear friend, Ramanujan is standing by the side of Rayar in the scorching heat on-the bank of River Cauvery. He is absorbed in hearing the frenzied utterances of Rayar with rapt attention.

Dr. Digrecord : - It is true. Hurry up my friend, let us listen to them.

## SCENE-I

(Time: Early morning. Bank of River Cauvery. Rayar, after having a bath in the river, is standing on the bank wearing a wet dhoti and he is wiping his wet head with a towel. Later on he looks at the Sun directly and recites with a ringing loud voice. Ramanujan clad in buttoned up coat and dhoti, wearing Thengalai Thirunamam is standing by the side of Rayar looking at him with reverence. He has tuft. He is carrying a folded chart with him)

Rayar:

पूषन्नेकर्षे यमसूर्य प्राजापत्य व्यूहरश्मीन् समूहतेजः ।  
यत्तेरूपम् कल्याणतमम्  
तत्तेपश्यामि योसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि ॥यम

(completes reciting).

Rayar: (nodding towards Ramanujan whispers) Ramu, this is in praise of the Sun god. This is from the age old Isa-upanishad. (Laughs loudly). Naturally, our ancestors were nature worshippers. The Sun which is regular in its appearance, is the cause of all climatic changes and therefore, it was revered with fear and awe.... Listen (explains): **Pushan** the nourisher of the world; **Yama** the controller. (Laughs, hysterically) Ah, Ramu, the Sun is YAMA, the controller, why? why?. He controls the Solar system: Our ancestors must have guessed that Sun is the centre of our Solar system and our Earth is one of the planets revolving round it. Our ancestors were great Visionaries.

Ramanujan: I dreamt of numbers yester-night also. They paraded in my dream revealing their hidden characteristics.

Rayar: (Holds Ramanujan firmly and laughs hysterically) really.... (Whispers) These dreams are the manifestations of your true love for mathematics. (Laughs hysterically) Concentrate... Concentrate on whatever you cherish most, (seriously) that would be yours. (Whispers) Sh, sh... Concentrate.... Concentrate.

(Both of them look up and gaze the Sun. Gradually they fall into trance. Rajagopalachary and Subramanian enter, absorbed in their conversation).

Subramanian: I don't agree with what others say. I have seen Chinnaamy solving problems of his College friends staying in his house. He's really a genius.

(In the meanwhile R-chari observes Ramanujam and Rayar)

R-chary: (pulls Subramanyam back, whispers) Sh.... wait...look.... Chinnaamy is with him here also. They aren't aware of anything around them.

Subramanian: (seriously) It's high time we do something to sever their intimacy. Otherwise poor Chinnaamy would also be ill famed.

R-chari: He would be totally spoiled by this fool. That's why Rajagopalan doubts Chinnaamy's ability. He has thrown a challenge to Chinnaamy.

Subramanian: (contempt) Rajagopal?, that head strong? .... What's his challenge?

- R-chari: *(whispers)* If Chinnasamy solves this problem Rajagopalan accepts Chinnasamy as a genius. .  
*(Just then Rayar's hysterical laughter makes them turn with a start)*
- Rayar: **Concentration..... devotion.....Concentration with devotion, made the great sages to realize the TRUTH.** *(Laughs)*
- Ramanujan: **What is the ultimate TRUTH? Does it exist?**
- Rayar: *(Seriously)* Certain matters are beyond arguments and discussions.  
*(Whispers)* The answer is within you.... *(Laughs)* It's in your mind.  
*(Laughs hysterically)* It's the creation of your mind. Ramu.... creation of our mind.
- Ramanujan: My mother says, Goddess Namagiri is the ultimate TRUTH. She says Tayar alone brings SALVATION.
- Rayar: THE GODDESS NAMAGIRI? *(Laughs)* a manifestation... only a manifestation, of that formless, eternal, IDEAL GOD. *(Laughs hysterically)*..... **All these deities are images of that IDEAL SUPREME GOD.....** *(Whispers)* Ramu, **sharp line-segment physically drawn is your NAMAGIRI. EUCLIDIAN LINE-SEGMENT is the IDEAL GOD.** Why Ramu?, . . . why?
- Ramanujan: *(with some understanding)* **IDEAL EUCLIDEAN LINE-SEGMENT is a breadth-less length, which is impossible to physically draw. However sharp the line-segment be, it isn't our ideal line-segment, but, only its representation.**
- Rayar: There you are.... *(Hugs Ramanujan)* you're right Ramu.... Absolutely right... *(Whispers)* But without drawing these sharp line-segments, is it possible to concentrate on a rider in GEOMETRY? *(Laughs hysterically)* Like-wise, without these images it's difficult to concentrate on that SUPREME IDEAL GOD, who is form-less and eternal. *(Whispers)*.... Hindu Religion is criticised for its IDOL-WORSHIP. But all religions have one form or the other to help them in their concentration. Some have a book, some have a wall, some others some other forms ..... RELIGION... RELIGION..... *(Laughs hysterically)*..... what's religion? Ramu, what's religion?..... *(Whispers)* **Human mind left alone in the wilderness gets over-powered by fear, ..... it imagines mystery all-around..... A weakling left alone in a dark-room assumes haunting forms around him. He lights a candle..... and realises the TRUTH..** *(Seriously)* **Religion is a candle lit by an intelligent MAN. It is the creation of a human-mind:...** *(Laughs hysterically)* **All religions are based on certain AXIOMS, statements which are readily acceptable as truth. But they are also stuffed with postulates, not readily acceptable as truths.** *(whispers)* **People revolt against postulates which aren't convincing to them.** *(thinks)* AXIOMS ....., POSTULATES ..... AXIOMS, *(laughs hysterically and goes without minding others)*..... AXIOMS.... POSTULATES.. AXIOMS..... I'VE

FOUND mathematics of RELIGION.. AXIOMS..  
POSTULATES.....AXIOMS..... -

*(This sound continues for a few seconds from behind the screen and gradually dies down.*

*Ramanujan is not aware of Rayar's exit. He is still meditating. Subramanian calls him loudly, when he does not respond, he goes near him and touches him).*

Subramanian: Chinnasamy, Chinnasamy, look here, wake up man, wake up.

Ramanujan: *(slowly recovers)* What a bliss it was! Ah'.... what a bliss! *(Complains)*  
Why did you drag me to this world?

Subramanian: *(apologises)* Sorry, Chinnasamy, I can't understand your devotion to that half-wit? He must have mesmerised you!

Ramanujan: *(with pain)* Don't insult ME, Rayar is a highly evolved soul.

R-chari: Chinnasamy, what makes you stand hours together with rapt attention, hearing to his incoherent blabbering!

Ramanujan: *(Sarcastically)* I always appreciate your flowery English, but never the substance of it.

Subramanian: Chinnasamy, please forgive us... Look, we were coming to you to get a problem solved. *(Looks at R-chari)*. Aren't we lucky to meet him on the way?

R-chari: *(nods approvingly)* Really Chinnasamy, please help us to solve an algebraical problem.

Ramanujan: *(with interest)* Tell me the problem.

R-chari: *(winks at Subramanian knowingly)* What are the values of x and y satisfying a simultaneous equation,  $x + \sqrt{y} = 7$  and  $y + \sqrt{x} = 11$

Ramanujan: *(after a second)* The value of x is 4 and of y is 9. It's so simple.

Subramanian: Wonderful! Rajagopalan lost his bet.

R-Chari: Sure! Chinnasamy, How do you get answers in a moment? Really you are a Genius.

Ramanujan: Please don't praise me.... *It's all the blessings of Goddess Namagiri: One night, she wrote on my tongue in my dream. Since then, soon after hearing a problem, its solution flashes in my mind. It's all HER BLESSINGS.*

R-Chari: I heard you have solved all the problems in progressions. But progressions are not taught in the school. How could you solve them?

Ramanujan: *(confides)* ***One night, I heard a peddler's voice in my dream. (as he begins to narrate, his eyes are half closed so that white part of his eye-lids are seen). He was selling some pills at an anna each. But he did not know the use of only one pill, I bought it for six paise and immediately gulped it. Soon after, ideas about solving problems on progressions flooded my mind. (Both of his friends look at each other knowingly and shrug)***

Subramanian: Math's Master Ganapathi Subbayar is coming!

*(All of them wish the Master as he enters. Ramanujan hands over the roll of paper to the master).*

- Master: *(receives)* Fine! .... I knew that you can frame the time-table, but not so quickly. Thank you Ramu, thank you very much.
- R-chari: *(with surprise)* What? Does Chinnasamy frame the timetable. Is it not the work of experienced teachers?
- Master: *(with admiration)* He is My Ramanujan. I admire his analytic mind and synthetic ability. That's why I asked him to help me in framing the timetable of our Town High School. Ramanujan, how could you complete it in such a short time?
- R-chari: Be careful Sir. He may start narrating one of his eerie dreams.
- Master: Don't worry. I've heard many of them... These dreams are the manifestation of his yearning towards mathematics. I really envy him for his noble passion.
- Ramanujan: Sir, did you peruse my note-book?.
- Master: *(with affection)* Yes Ramanujan, it's wonderful! I am really moved by your industry. You've not ignored even a single problem in the Loney's Trigonometry. Really commendable.
- Ramanujan: Did you go through the book till the end, Sir.
- Master: Yes Ramu. You should solve some more problems.
- Ramanujan: *(puzzled)* Sir, I've discovered an infinite series for Trigonometrical functions  $\sin A$  and  $\cos A$  in terms of the angle  $A$ . Are those series correct Sir ?
- Master: *(with pity)* ...Did you discover those series?..... Ramu, they were discovered by Leonhard Euler long back.
- Ramanujan: *(desperately)* Sir, I discovered them on my own.
- Master: *(consoles)* Cool down Ramu. Listen, this is the fate of all those who try to discover on their own, without studying the development made in that field till then. You must know the recent developments made in maths, before you venture to invent on your own.
- Ramanujan: *(with grief)* Sir I discovered them on my own. All my efforts went waste.... What shall I do? .... Oh! Goddess Namagiri, What shall I do?
- Master: Ramu, be brave. Look, why don't you study some recent books on mathematics?.... *(thinks)* I remember a new book. Its name is '**SYNOPSIS OF ELEMENTARY RESULTS IN PURE MATHEMATICS**'. It is written by **C.S. CARR**. It is in our college Library. I shall procure it for you today. *(exits)*
- Subramanian: Don't be disappointed Chinnasamy. You are a genius, be brave.
- R-chari: *(seeing Ramanujan not being consoled)* Chinnasamy, don't you know the maxim 'failure is the stepping-stone for success'. God will help you, come on. Let's go.

### Narration: (1902-1910)

- Dr.Digrecord:- *SYNOPSIS OF ELEMENTARY RESULTS IN PURE MATHEMATICS*' by C.S. Carr opened up new vistas during Ramanujan's mathematical excursions.
- Prof. Probefacts:- The book having 6165 formulae was a challenge to the inquisitive mind of Ramanujan. He derived all the formulae independently. It gave a good foundation for his future contributions to mathematics.
- Dr.Digrecord:- Ramanujan secured first division in the Madras Matric Examination and in 1904. he joined F.A. class as a 'Junior Subramanian Scholar'. Ramanujan continued in his mathematical excursions and started jotting down the results obtained in a notebook. He learnt differentiation, integration, investigated Euler's constant and Bernoulli numbers on his own.
- Prof. Probefacts:- Ramanujan failed in F.A. Examination in all subjects, except in mathematics. He shifted his residence several times from Kumbhakonam to Madras and back. He secured admissions in colleges, but failed to succeed in F.A. Examination. Disappointed Ramanujan took refuse in his mathematical adventures.
- Dr.Digrecord:- His father Srinivasa Iyengar sought the help of his wife and Prof. Sheshu Iyer to convince Ramanujan to concentrate on all the subjects, and to get a degree. But Sheshu Iyer and Komalambal, who were confident of Ramanujan's ability, encouraged Ramanujan to venture in his desired subject.
- Prof. Probefacts:- In those days child marriage was a common practice. Many parents having marriageable daughters approached Ramanujan's parents for matrimonial alliance.
- Dr.Digrecord:- Twenty-two year old Ramanujan married nine year old Janaki on July 14, 1909. Soon after, he had to undergo a severe surgical operation for some kidney trouble.
- Prof. Probefacts:- By the time he recovered from the illness and went in search of a job, he had recorded his mathematical inventions in a notebook. This notebook became a part of his being. He showed this note-book to elders who were interested in mathematics and sought their help to secure a job in order to pursue his mathematical excursions without being a burden to his parents.
- Dr.Digrecord:- Dewan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao, collector of Nelloor, who was also a founder Secretary of the INDIAN MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY, was one among them. Ramanujan was introduced to Dewan Bahadur by Krishna Rao, a relative of Dewan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao.

## SCENE-II

*(Twenty-three years old Ramanujan wearing a buttoned up coat and a dhoti, having a knotted tuft on his head and having a frayed note-book in his hand, enters. Dejection is writ large on his face. Rajagopalchari and Krishna Rao; both studying in F L, enter from the other side)*

R-chari: Krishna Rao, look, Ramanujan is here... Aye... Ramanujan

Krishna Rao: Ramanujan, did you meet my uncle? What did he say? *(Ramanujan doesn't reply)*. Come on, be sportive. Did you meet my uncle?

Ramanujan: Yes, I did. *(sobs)* He returned the note-book and said *(again sobs)* **'though you are not a moral fraud, you might be an intellectual fraud.'** *(wipes tears. R-chari looks at Krishna Rao.)*

K-Rao: Did he say so?...It's too bad....He shouldn't have said so....Very sorry Ramanujan, I apologise. Excuse me. ...Listen, as the secretary of THE INDIAN MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY, my uncle might have seen many self-styled inventors proved fake later-on. He doesn't believe anything at the first sight. Don't worry, forget it.

R-Chari: Krishna Rao, I think it is too cruel to say so to Ramanujan.....Ramanujan please excuse us.

K-Rao: *(to divert the topic)* Ramanujan, you haven't shown me your notebook yet. If you don't mind, can I see? *(Ramanujan gives the book reluctantly.)*

R-chari: Ramanujan is a genius. I know him since our school days. It's a pity, world is blind.

K-Rao: *(turns the pages with curiosity)* Marvellous, these results should have influenced my uncle!... Why did he say so? *(shows a page)* What's this Ramanujan?

Ramanujan: *(looks at it)* They're ELLIPTIC INTEGRALS.

R-chari: Ramanujan, is this your recent-addition? I haven't seen it?

Ramanujan: Have you forgotten, we have not discussed math for the last two years! I wrote this last year.

K-Rao: Ingenious! How could you get such ideas Ramanujan?

R-chari: *(trying to cheer up Ramanujan)* Why don't you tell us, atleast me. The name itself is fascinating... Please Ramanujan.

Ramanujan: *(as though to himself)* One night I had to stay in Madras. I went to Rajagopalan's house.

R-chari: Rajagopalan!... Do you mean the head-strong, whom you defeated in a challenge?

Ramanujan: *(nods approvingly)* His father allowed me to sleep in a room of their out-house. A monk was already sleeping there. *(As he narrates, he closes his eyes so that the white part of his eye lids are only seen)* **The monk had draped his saffron robe as a curtain. While I was asleep, I had an unusual dream; in my dream I saw the drops of blood oozing out of the robe. An unknown hand was seen writing a few mathematical results on it. I memorized all of them and noted them on a paper. These are the results, which I noted down then.**

*(R-chari listens to Ramanujan attentively, while K-Rao looks at them with wonder. In the meanwhile a post man enters.)*

Post man: Ramanujan. A registered parcel for you.

*(He hands over a parcel and a slip to Ramanujan, takes his signature on the slip and exits. Ramanujan opens the parcel carefully and takes out the bundle of papers anxiously. Turns the pages and gazes at a sentence written on the margin of a page)*

K-Rao: I fear, he might have narrated his awful dreams to my uncle. Otherwise my uncle would never be so harsh.

R-chari: Believe me, Ramanujan would never tell these to any stranger. He is too shy, would be more eloquent in the presence of only a few. Fortunately, I'm one among them. I'm sure he hasn't told any such thing to Collector.

K-Rao: I pray it to be so !...but,...these eerie dreams !....

R-chari: These might be due to his association with a gymnastic master Sathyapriya Rayar. Rayar was a queer person, despised by one and all, as mentally deranged. But he was a friend, philosopher and guide to Ramanujan. When Rayar was chained and locked up as he became uncontrollable, Ramanujan collected food for him from house to house and fed him. Such was their friendship.

K-Rao: What a mystery!...look, he's engrossed in reading!

R-chari: *(goes to Ramanujan)* Ramanujan, what's that? Any good news?

Ramanujan: *(with dejection)* My own papers, returned as usual by prof. Saldhiana.

K-Rao: What? Did you send your papers to Prof. Saldhana of Bombay! *(Ramanujan nods his head approvingly)* Really great! Has he written any comments?

*(Ramanujan shows the page he was reading to R-chari, R-chari reads it aloud.)*

R-chari: ***"The theorems are all wonderful, but the results are not got step by step. You have no familiarity with new discoveries. I am not able to appreciate your work and help you"....***See, Prof. Saldhana has written the theorems are all wonderful. Is he a, great mathematician?

K-Rao: *(becomes excited)* What else? He is one of the renowned mathematicians of India. Ramanujan, you have made it. Come, follow me. *(Drags Ramanujan, R-chari follows them.)*

**CURTAIN DOWN**



Dr.Digrecord:- Dewan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao, Collector of Nellore, had come to Madras on vacation. He was the founder Secretary, of The Indian Mathematical Society.

Prof. Probefacts:- Krishna Rao took Ramanujan and R-chari to his uncle Dewan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao's house. K-Rao had made up his mind to help Ramanujan.

### SCENE-III

*(Dewan Bahadur Ramchandra Rao's study room in Madras. Dewan is preparing to go out. He sees a news-paper just arrived and sits on a sofa and, starts reading. K-Rao enters silently. He has Ramanujan's parcel with him)*

Dewan: Krishna, now a days newspaper is not coming regularly.... tell the vender, if he can't supply it in time cancel the order, ask some one else to give the paper.

K-Rao: Yes uncle...*(hesitatingly)* I met Ramanujan...

Dewan: *(absent mindedly)* Good, ask him to supply the newspaper, but warn him, he should supply regularly and in time.... *(Goes on reading the newspaper)*

K-Rao: All right uncle, ...I met poor Ramanujan.

Dewan: Ramanujan! Oh! You're talking about that self-styled mathematician. Sorry Krishna, I can't help him.

K-Rao: Please uncle...

Dewan: No Krishna, I can't help him. Explain to him, let him not waste his time and also mine. *(Looks at the parcel in the hands of Krishna Rao)* Who has sent this parcel? *(Extends his hand to receive it).*

K-Rao: *(while handing over)* Prof. Saldhana.... from Bombay.

Dewan: *(while receiving)* He must have sent those articles sent to him for his review. Long awaited parcel. *(Looks at the address and returns).* Why are you giving it to me? This has come to Ramanujan. *(Picks up the newspaper).*

*(K-Rao receives the parcel, opens, pulls out the papers, and searches the pagecontaining Prof. Saldhana's remarks.)*

K-Rao: *(While showing the remarks)* Uncle please read the remark of Prof. Saldhana about Ramanujan's work.

Dewan: *(starts reading reluctantly)* **The theorems are all wonderful. (Becomes alert and reads it again) theorems are all wonderful, but the results are not got step by step. You have no familiarity with new discoveries.... I am not able to help you.** *(Looks at K-Rao thoughtfully).*

K-Rao: Uncle, eminent mathematician Prof. Saldhana has remarked Ramanujan's theorems as wonderful. As the Secretary of the Indian Mathematical Society, please do something to encourage him. He was very much disappointed to day.

- Dewan: Poor boy, I shouldn't have abused him like that.... Krishna, ask him to send some of his best results to our Journal.... *(Sits thoughtfully)*
- K-Rao: Uncle, more than anything, he needs a job....
- Dewan: That's right. He hasn't passed F. A. even. He cannot get a decent job. What is the use of recommending him for some menial job?
- K-Rao: Uncle, you must help him. Here is his application.
- Dewan: *(receives the application and reads)* hm... hm... Oh! what's this! ***I have however been devoting all the time to mathematics and developing the subject. I can say...*** hm... hm... *(thinks)* Really strange! ... He's mad after mathematics! .... Krishna, ask him to see me.
- K-Rao: He is here now, just outside. Shall I call him in?
- Dewan: *(smilingly)* Krishna, you are true to your name. Alright call him in, good things shouldn't be delayed. *(K-Rao hurries out happily; Dewan gets up and paces up and down thoughtfully. Ramanujan and R-Chary follows K-Rao.)* Ramanujan, did you read Prof. Saldhana's remark? You see, he has also felt that your results are abrupt and not got step by step. In the absence of those missing steps you are bound to be misunderstood. Why don't you give a few more relevant steps to make your results more clear?
- Ramanujan: I feel they are adequate, mama. I shall try to add a few more steps.
- Dewan: Copy some of your best results and send them to our Journal... Krishna, get me my letter pad. *(Receives a letter pad)* Do you know Mr. S. Narayana Iyer, Manager of Madras Port Trust? *(Ramanujan nods his head negatively, Dewan writes something on the letter pad and gives it to Ramanujan)* Don't worry. Here is his address and I have written him a letter also. He will help you in writing articles to our Journal. He is the treasurer of Indian Mathematical Society and a good mathematician. He will surely help you.
- Ramanujan: *(pleads)* If you please help me in getting...
- Dewan: I know... At present it is difficult to get you a decent job. Don't worry I shall see . . . . You can collect Rs. 25 every month from Krishna, till you get a job.  
*(Takes out twenty five rupees from his pocket and holds them towards Ramanujan)*
- Ramanujan: *(hesitates)* Thank you Sir.... I don't want money. .... I want a job. Please.
- Dewan: Look, you are one of us; just like Krishna.... Take the money. *(Thrusts it into Ramanujan's hand)*. Ramanujan, one request please, *(looks at others wittingly)* Make your work on mathematics a little more intelligible to people like me also, so that your works are assessed properly.

*(Ramanujan touches the feet of Dewan, when all the rest look at him with admiration).*

### Narration: (1911-1914)

Dr.Digrecord:- SOME PROPERTIES OF BERNOULLI'S NUMBERS, the first article of Ramanujan, which appeared in THE JOURNAL OF THE INDIAN MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY, attracted the attention of many mathematicians of India and abroad.

Prof. Probefacts:- Dewan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao sent some of Ramanujan's papers to Prof. C.L.T. Griffith of Madras Engineering College seeking his comments and evaluation. Prof. Griffith appreciated the work of Ramanujan and sent them to Prof. M.G.M. Hills of University College, London, to Prof. Henry Fredrick Baker, an analyst and a Professor of Astronomy and Geometry, and to Prof. Earnest William Hobson, another well known analyst who is famous for his work on the foundations of projective geometry.

Dr.Digrecord:- On the advice of Prof. P.V. Sheshu Iyer, Ramanujan sent an article to Prof. G.H. Hardy F R S, Cambridge University. Prof. Hardy recognised the genius in Ramanujan.

Prof. Probefacts:- Things moved fast. Madras University broke its convention by awarding a research scholarship to an undergraduate Ramanujan. Professors in Cambridge University decided to bring Ramanujan to England.

Dr.Digrecord:- Prof. E.H. Nevil, a senior wrangler of Cambridge University, who was to visit Madras to deliver lectures on certain phases of Higher Mathematics, was entrusted the task of bringing Ramanujan to Cambridge.

### SCENE - IV

*(Cambridge University campus. Prof. Hardy is seen reading a sheet out of a bunch of papers in his study room, gets up, folds the sheets, looks at the entrance anxiously, then paces up and down. Calling bell rings. Two professors enter; Hardy receives them at the entrance.)*

Hardy: Welcome, welcome *(shakes hand with both of them)* Please come in Dr. Barnes, Dr. Littlewood, please be seated *(all of them sit)* Weather is fine today. *(Gets up)* What would you like to have?

Dr. Barnes: Thank you .... nothing. Please don't trouble yourself.

Hardy: It's my pleasure. Some thing soft?

Littlewood: As you please.

*(Prof. Hardy moves towards the shelf having drinks. Prepares three glasses of drinks.)*

Barnes: I met Dr. Hills on the way. He was surprised to hear about your interest in Ramanujan.

Hardy: *(while keeping the glasses on a tray)* hm... I tell you Ramanujan is a prodigy.

Littlewood: Do you mean, that he is merely a prodigy.

- Hardy: Not an ordinary prodigy, of course... a prodigy, having potentials to become a great mathematician, of course under the influence of suitable stimulus, if provided.
- Barnes: I heard, he's just a matriculate. . . Who introduced him to our circle?  
(*In the meanwhile Hardy brings the tray containing glasses of drinks, and places it on a tea-poy. Each one takes a glass and say 'cheers' and sips*).
- Hardy: Prof. Griffith.... (*Sips*) I mean, Prof. Griffith of Madras Engineering College.... (*Sips*) Ramanujan was introduced to Prof. Griffith by one of the Indian Professors. His works fascinated Griffith (*sips*) He sent them to some of us, including Dr. Hills. What is his opinion?
- Barnes: Not encouraging.... He's very critical about our interest in Ramanujan.
- Hardy: (*thinks*) Probably Dr. Hills must have seen some of Ramanujan's results like '*sum of all the natural numbers is minus one upon twelve*', '*sum of their squares is zero*' and '*sum of their cubes is one upon two hundred and forty*'
- Littlewood: Surprising! How could he commit such blunders?
- Hardy: It's due to his ignorance in divergent infinite series. He isn't aware of modern developments in mathematics. Look, while proving '*sum of all natural numbers is minus one upon twelve*', he subtracts one infinite series from the other... he finds the sum of an infinite geometric series when its common ratio is one.... (*All laugh*). But I've seen his better results also. Theorems in his first letter to me, defeated me completely.
- Barnes: What did he write to you? What are those theorems, Hardy?
- Hardy: You have seen my article ORDERS OF INFINITY. In it, I've mentioned '*no definite expression has been as yet found for finding the number of prime numbers less than a given number*'.
- Littlewood: That's right.... I remember.
- Hardy: Ramanujan has found an expression. *It is in the form of a definite integral of one upon log x ranging from 'mue' to n, when 'mue' is 1.45 and n is the number less than which, number of prime numbers are to be found.* He has sent some more results on number theory, hypergeometric series and elliptic integrals.
- Barnes: Has he sent proofs for his results? Excuse me.... Prof. Hills is skeptical about Ramanujan's work, only because of not sending convincing proofs for his results.
- Hardy: No, . . . Proofs are not descriptive, but only sketchy.
- Barnes: He must be reluctant to send us proofs.
- Littlewood: May be, he doesn't trust us, then.
- Hardy: I don't think so... do you have any reason to say so?

Littlewood: Yes, I have... I was told that some of his Indian friends have been suggesting to Ramanujan, that the scientists of England desire to steal his ideas.

*(All of them laugh)*

Hardy: I feel, *Ramanujan's brain is akin to those of calculating boys. He sees the results in a few steps and feels no further steps are necessary....* Any way Nevil's report on Ramanujan should clear the suspicion if any.

Barnes: That means, Prof. Nevil has met Ramanujan in Madras.

Hardy: Yes, he has. I received a letter from him today. He has seen the complete works of Ramanujan. Now, Nevil is all the more convinced of bringing Ramanujan here.... *(Worry)* But, it seems there is a hitch.

Littlewood: What! . . . Is he not willing to come over here?

Hardy: Not exactly, it seems Hindu orthodoxy doesn't approve of sailing across an ocean, it is considered a taboo.

Barnes: Nonsense! Aren't we seeing so many Hindus in England? A lame excuse, that's all

Hardy: Dr. Barnes; conformists, pragmatists and reformists are common for all religions. We have to live with them. *(Thinks)* But what I feel, if Ramanujan doesn't come over here, it would be a great loss to the world of mathematics.

Barnes: You are right. In India, he would never have a ready access to modern mathematical literature, advice and constructive criticism about his works from eminent mathematicians.

Littlewood: Oh! How sad it is! The religious taboo destroying a budding mathematician!

Hardy: *Don't you know the case of Sir Isaac Newton? If King Charles-II had not interfered, we would have lost a brilliant scientist and a mathematician permanently.*

Barnes: *It was in connection with TRINITY FELLOWSHIP, Newton had to take the HOLY ORDER after the expiry of the fellowship. Charles-II exempted Newton, because he was the head of the Church of England....* but, in Ramanujan's case....

Hardy: Let's hope for the best.

**CURTAIN DOWN**

Prof. Probefacts:- Eric Harold Neville, in his letter dated Jan 28, 1914, wrote to Francis Dewsberry, the registrar of Madras University. The letter states, *The discovery of S. Ramanujan of Madras promises to be most interesting event of our time in the mathematical world. From the first results he communicated, the mathematicians of Cambridge at once believed that he had uncommon ability, and the effect of personal acquaintance with the man and conversation as to his methods has been in my case to replace that belief by certainty. Unassisted by knowledge of contemporary achievements in Europe, Ramanujan has developed two of the most fruitful theories which have been studied there during the last ten or fifteen years. Who can say had his power not been employed in the invention of these tools, what other machinery he might by now have built, on what uses unnoticed by the others he might have observed for the process themselves? Inspiration is not confined to the making of a single discovery, and it is always a loss to science when two men do the same work. I see no reason to doubt that Ramanujan himself will respond fully to the stimulus which contact with Western mathematicians of the highest class will afford him.....*

Dr.Digrecord:- E.H. Neville left no stone unturned to enable him to take Ramanujan to England along with him. But Hindu Orthodoxy, which considered sailing across an ocean a taboo, stood as an insurmountable obstacle in the way of his desire.

## SCENE V

*(Ramanujan, C.V. Rajagopala Chari and Subramanian enter)*

Ramanujan: Prof. Nevil is a great mathematician and a perfect gentleman. He has written a letter to Mr. Dewsberry about me. I felt embarrassed to hear about myself, when he read the letter to me.

R-chari: You're right. He is a perfect gentleman and a great teacher. I attended one of his lectures. You know I am not a math student, but I could follow his lectures clearly. What a scholarly discourse, but how simple his explanations were!

Subramanian: I agree with you. His lectures on differential geometry was really marvelous. Ramanujan, what has he written about you?

Ramanujan: He has written, *(with shyness) my name would become one of the greatest in the history of mathematics. (Sadness) Provided I respond fully to the stimulus to be afforded by the western mathematicians of the highest order.*

R-chari: Then you must go to England. Really has he written what you say, Chinnasamy? how great he is!

- Subramanian: Rajagopal, **our Chinnasamy is really great! We didn't know it, till an outsider told us.** What a pity! Chinnasamy, your bad days are over. Now our people will be ready to do anything for you.
- Ramanujan: What Nevil has written about me would be true, only if I go to England,... But, I don't think, I would ...
- R-chari: What are you saying? You must go.
- Ramanujan: My mother didn't permit me to sail across the ocean. My father-in-law is of the opinion that I could do better remaining here itself. You know my father. When all my family members are against my going, how can I go?
- Subramanian: Don't you know your mother, Chinnasamy? She would never come in your way. How do you know she is against your going to England?
- Ramanujan: I received her letter to day.
- Subramanian: She hadn't received our letter yet when she wrote this to you. Our letter must have reached her to day. Wait, she'll surely agree.
- R-chari: How are you so sure?
- Subramanian: Chinnasamy and I wrote a letter to her, explaining fully what Prof. Neville, Prof. Sheshu Iyer and Dewan Ramachandra Rao strongly feel about Ramanujan's trip to England. I wrote a letter to my mother also to convince mami.
- R-chari: Subramanian, why did you write to your mother? Don't you know your father? He would do anything to stop a man becoming unorthodox.
- Subramanian: *(with worry)* you're right. I shouldn't have written to my mother.
- Ramanujan: Don't worry Subramanian. I'm also not interested. If I go, the people in England would laugh at me seeing my dress, this tuft and all.
- R-chari: Look, don't you know the proverb, '*be a Roman while you're in Rome.*' Why should you go like this?
- Ramanujan: My parents would never permit me to remove this tuft *(touches the tuft thoughtfully)*
- Subramanian: Look!, Subbanarayanan is coming in a hurry. His father Prof. Narayana Iyer must have sent him for you Chinnasamy.  
*(Subbanarayanan enters running)*
- Subbanarayanan: *(gaspng)* Ramanujan, we're going to Namakkal to day. Father sent me for you. Hurry up, otherwise we may miss the bus.  
*(Drags Ramanujan and runs along with him)*
- R-chari: Good idea. Goddess Namagiri would surely guide them properly. Subramanian, why're you worried?
- Subramanian: Rajagopal, I shouldn't have written to my mother. I fear, my father might put more hurdles. Oh God, please forgive me.
- R-chari: Don't worry Subramanian, nothing will happen. Don't you know from Bhagvad Gita,

नहि कल्याणकृत् कश्चित् दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥

(Subramanian looks at him with a puzzled look)

Sorry, its meaning is: '*one who does good never faces any difficulty.*'  
You've written to help Ramanujan. Don't worry; your letter would do no damage.

## CURTAIN DOWN

Prof. Probefacts:- Komalambal was in a great predicament. Her motherly love was against sending Ramanujan to an unknown foreign land and her orthodox family background supported it.

Dr.Digrecond:- But her pragmatic desire for her gifted son's progress was urging her to face any opposition for the sake him.

Prof. Probefacts:- At last orthodox Komalambal decided to seek the advice and blessings of the family deity, Goddess Namagiri.

## SCENE VI

(Ramanujan's house at Kumbhakonam. Srinivasa Iyengar, dressed as a thengalai Iyengar, comes out of the pooja room reciting a sloka)

Iyengar:

आकाशात् पतितंतोयं यथा गच्छतिसागरम् ।

सर्वदेवनमस्कारः केशवंप्रति गच्छति ॥

(He sits on a chair, takes a book kept nearby)

Aye Komu, what're you doing. Won't you give me a cup of coffee?

(Komalambal dressed as an orthodox vadagalai Iyengar woman, holding a silver tumbler enters. Keeps the tumbler on a wooden plank kept near her husband, and awaits. Iyengar takes the tumbler, lifts the dhoti used as his upper garment as a screen to cover his face and lifts the tumbler and pours the coffee directly into his mouth without touching the tumbler with his lips.)

Komalambal: Goddess Namagiri solved our problem. My vratam paid dividends.

Iyengar: Which vratam? What are you saying?

Komalambal: Yesterday's vratam. Don't you remember?

Iyengar: You are always performing one vratam or the other.

Komalambal: To my surprise, Goddess Namagiri advised me not to come in the way of chinnaamy's glory and fame by stopping him from going abroad.

Iyengar: What are you saying? Explain it clearly.

Komalambal: Yesterday, after performing vratam, I slept for a while. In my dream, I saw our son seated on a stage, surrounded by white Rajas of England, who were paying respect to him. I heard a voice whispering to me, not to stand in the way of his glory.

Iyengar: It's your illusion, otherwise how could Tayar command you to be unorthodox.



Komalambal: Shantam papam! (*Touches her cheek with both palms as though she is apologizing*) Never say so, it's not good for us. Chinnasamy should go to England. It's her will.

Iyengar: What? Goddess Namagiri would never say so. You're mistaken.

Komalambal: What's the meaning of that dream? You tell me.

Iyengar: (*with disgust*) Dream! What is a dream? Dream is an illusion, seen by one with indigestion and suffering from disturbed sleep. That's all. Is there any meaning for such a dream? ... An illusion ... nothing but an illusion.

Komalambal: I dreamt Chinnasamy's birth, was that an illusion?.... I dreamt Chinnasamy's marriage with Janaki, was that an illusion? Like wise this dream is also the command of Tayar.

Iyengar: Don't remind me of those days. (*Patently*) I pity that poor girl Janaki. You're so fond of her. What would she do if Chinnasamy goes to England?

Komalambal: She's a true Tamil wife. She finds happiness in her husband's glory.... Don't you know, I was against sending Chinnasamy till yesterday night? ...If Ammal's wish is so, he should go.... (*In the meanwhile, some one knocks the door*) Chinnasamy must have come. (*Rushes to open the door*) Wait Chinnasamy I'm coming. (*Opens the door, sees an elderly orthodox shaiva bramhin, covers her shoulder with upper portion of her saree, stands on a side with respect*). Subramanian's father has come, call him in.

Iyengar: (*gets up, goes to the door*) Please come in Iyer, really we're honoured, please come in. (*Iyer enters, both of them sit, Komalambal stands by the side*)

Iyer: Where is your son Chinnasamy? Hasn't he come?

Iyengar: He hasn't come.... Don't you know he is in Madras?

Iyer: I know that. That's why I had been to Madras he wasn't there.

Komala: Subramanian's father might have been to Madras to see his son. He is really a lucky person.

Iyengar: Do you think, his son is like your Chinnasamy? He is a gem. Soon he will be an engineer. How glad we would be, if Chinnasamy were to become a teacher at least...hm ... It's all what we deserve.

Komalambal: Why do you always underestimate your Son? .... How many got appreciation from the white Durais? You don't know his real worth.

Iyer: (*irony*) Right you are.... Other than your son how many would care to send their ancestors to the wretched hell by sailing across the ocean,...

Komalambal: How does reverred Iyer know it? Who told reverred Iyer?

Iyer: Who else?...My son Subramanian.... he had written to his mother asking her to convince you to send Chinnasamy to England. Fortunately I received that letter. I rushed to Madras, without even informing my wife. ... But your son wasn't at Madras.

*(in the meanwhile Subbanarayanan and Ramanujan enter)*

Subbanarayanan: Mami,...mami...Goddess Namagiri blessed Ramanujan.... He has to go to England, it's the will of Tayar.

Iyengar: What're you saying? Say it clearly.

Subbanarayanan: *My father, Ramanujan and myself went to Namakkal to seek the blessings of Tayar. We stayed there for three days begging for her blessings. Yesterday night, she blessed Ramanujan in his dream and commanded him to go to England.*

Iyer: *(with anger)* Rubbish.... How could Devi command an orthodox brahmin boy to sail across an ocean... It's his desire, which he dreamt... Iyengar, don't be carried away by this nonsense and push your seven generation to the ROURAVA NARAKAM.

Komalambal: I don't like any one insulting the Goddess in my house... I know, it's the will of Tayar. HER WILL is obeyed always in this house. Subbanarayanan, Chinnasamy come in and take food.

*(Komalambal goes in and the two boys are to follow her. In the meanwhile)*

Iyer: *(with anger)* Wait Ramanujan, ..... listen.. If you sail across the ocean, your family will suffer for it.... They would be kept out of our community as out-caste, ... think and act... If you are so adamant and decide to defy the wishes of elders, don't instigate your intimate friend Subramanian also to commit such a heinous crime, we aren't so much advanced to condemn our seven generations to wretched Hell.

*(All are stunned to hear such an outburst.)*

## CURTAIN DOWN

Dr.Digrecord:- Prof. Neville contacted all those who mattered to raise funds for Ramanujan's stay in England. Madras University set aside a sum of Rupees ten thousand to secure Ramanujan's visit to England for a couple of years.

Prof. Probefacts:- Every arrangement for his voyage was attended to by Mr. Arther Davies and Mr. Littlehails.

Dr.Digrecord:- Ramanujan's parents and his wife came to Madras to stay with him for a few days and returned to Kumbhakonam before he left for England.

Prof. Probefacts:- He stayed for two days with Dewan Ramachandra Rao in a moffusil station to learn the use of fork and knife while taking food in the western style.

Dr.Digrecord:- Ramanujan, looking trim in his newly cropped up head and close fitting trousers and coat, started his journey to England from Madras port by S S Navasa on Feb 26, 1914.

Prof. Probefacts:- He was given a warm welcome by Prof. E.H. Neville on his

arrival at London on April 14, 1914.

Dr. Digrecord:- He stayed in the house of Prof. Neville at Cambridge until residential accommodation was made available for him.

Prof. Probefacts:- Dr. E.W. Barnes, Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College took the responsibility of guiding Ramanujan in introducing him to the updated Western mathematics.

## SCENE - VII

*(Dr. Barne's Chamber in Trinity. Dr. Barnes and Ramanujan are seen discussing seriously)*

Dr. Barnes: These results are really marvelous. It's impossible to imagine such theorems are being thought of in India. Of course, you sent some of these results, which really excited us... But, do you know we were really surprised to see among them results like '*sum of all natural numbers is minus one upon twelve*' and so on. *(Ramanujan laughs heartily)*

Ramanujan: As you are aware of now, I was ignorant of divergent infinite series those days and I could not find any lacuna in my argument. I wanted to know earnestly, why an exact science like mathematics gives such unusual results.

Barnes: Prof. Hardy admired, your intellectual honesty. He was often quoting your latter in which ...

Ramanujan: I had written, '*any, one reading these results would suggest a lunatic asylum as the safest place for me to live in.*'

*(Both of them laugh heartily. Hardy enters.)*

Hardy: Shall I join you? May I know the reason for your jubilation?

Barnes: We were just recalling the results sent by Ramanujan to you and Prof. Hills.

Hardy: *(smiling)* Do you mean, the summation of natural numbers? What made you to remember that now?

Barnes: I was just reading his beautiful theorems on 'partition'. Suddenly I remembered his results, which created confusion here.

Hardy: *(laughs, soon becoming serious)* Ramanujan is really a great person. I admire him for his intellectual honesty.

Ramanujan: *(embarrassed)* Hardy, kindly don't praise me.

*(Ramanujan goes to his study table, studies a journal. Barnes is seriously studying Ramanujan's note books. After a while he looks with surprise)*

Barnes: Look Hardy, the presentation in these notebooks resembles a popular book. It is....

Hardy: *(Looks at the pages of the notebook)* Could it be C. S. Carr's 'A SYNOPSIS OF ELEMENTARY RESULTS IN PURE MATHEMATICS'?

Ramanujan: *(looks up)* Yes, I referred to that book when I was a High school student. I worked out all the theorems in it during those days.

- Barnes: What, did you work out all the theorems in it? It has many theorems.
- Hardy: Yes about six thousand theorems. He must have worked out all of them, otherwise, how could he have such a mastery in Integral Calculus? ... *(Ramanujan agrees by nodding his head)* Ramanujan how did you come across that book?
- Ramanujan: A teacher of mine asked me to refer that book when I was very much disappointed by knowing one of my results were already found by Leonhrard Euler... *(Writes on a paper)* ... this was the result. He consoled me, and advised me to acquaint myself with recent developments in the subject, and suggested me to refer this book. *(Continues his study)*.
- Barnes: A good suggestion indeed... But Hardy, is it not a very ordinary book containing a list of formulae?
- Hardy: You're right. But Ramanujan has a MIDAS TOUCH. Whatever he touches, it becomes immortal.  
*(Hardy looks at Ramanujan with admiration. Ramanujan continues studying a journal with interest. After a while he gets up with surprise and exclaims showing the journal).*
- Ramanujan: Hardy, look at these identities. I knew them long before. I had found them while I was working in the Madras Port Trust Office.  
*(Ramanujan shows a page from his notebook)* Look, I have recorded them in this notebook.
- Hardy: Ramanujan, how did you arrive at these identities?  
*(Ramanujan explains by working out on a sheet of paper. Hardy and Barnes are surprised by seeing his unusual explanation and also the results recorded by him in his notebook at Madras).*
- Hardy: *(to himself)* A solitary Hindu pitting his brains against the accumulated wisdom of Europe! .... Barnes, Prof. L.J. Rogers has published these results recently. Do you remember the exact year?
- Barnes: I think it is during 1895. But they are not yet published anywhere outside England. How could Ramanujan know about them!
- Hardy: *(Shrugs)* He has learnt on his own. *(Thinks)*... A rare coincidence, similar to that of Isaac Newton and Leibnitz, ... such coincidences are not uncommon, though they are rare... *(Thinks)*, Ramanujan, write a letter explaining these functions and identities to Prof. Rogers in detail. Let us wait for his comments.

## CURTAIN DOWN

### Narration: (1915-1918)

Prof. Probefacts:- Prof. L.J. Rogers responded to the letter of Ramanujan and honoured him by sending proofs for two of the forty identities on 'partition' sent by Ramanujan to him. He agreed to the suggestion

made by G H Harty to name those identities as  
'ROGERS -RAMANUJAN IDENTITIES'.

Dr.Digrecord:- Several papers of Ramanujan were published in Journals of Great Britain and India. The Cambridge University conferred B A Degree (by research) on Ramanujan in March 1916.

Prof. Probefacts:- Super activity of Ramanujan could not be maintained on account of his food problems. He was extremely rigid in his food habits and cooked his own food.

Dr.Digrecord:- The cold weather of England was most unsuitable to him who was used to hot, blazing, bright, sunshine of Madras.

Prof. Probefacts:- As a result of all these, Ramanujan first appeared to be unwell in the spring of 1917. He went into a Nursing Home at Cambridge in the early summer of 1917 and left it by Sept. 1917. He was admitted to the Matlock House Sanatorium in Matlock, Derbyshire, sometime before Dec. 1917.

Dr.Digrecord:- Prof. Hardy wrote to Sir Joseph John Thomson, President of the Royal Society and Master of Trinity College at that time, thus:

*Dear Thomson*

*I would like to say what the position about Ramanujan is. I wouldn't have done so if you hadn't asked me; I am much afraid of prejudicing him by persistent pushing, in view of his double candidature for a Fellowship and the F.R.S..... Everyone, me too, is frightened of the continual illness and solitude affecting his mind..... But there is no doubt that (especially after his disappointment in these Fellowships) any striking recognition might be a tremendous thing for him. It would make him feel that he was a success, and that it was worth while going on trying..... I write on the hypothesis that his claims are such as, in the long run in any case, could not be denied. This is to me quite obvious. There is an absolute gulf between him and all other mathematical candidates.*

*Yours sincerely,  
G. H. HARDY*

Prof. Probefacts:- Hardy's letter is undated, but could have been written before 21 February 1918, for the candidates for election to the Royal Society were considered by the Council of the Society on 21 Feb. in which Ramanujan's name was included.

Dr.Digrecord:- Ramanujan was elected as a *Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS)* on May 2, 1918.

Prof. Probefacts:- Ramanujan got readmitted in Matlock House Sanatorium under the care of Dr. Kincaid and Dr. Labhu Ram.

Dr.Digrecord:- A.S. Ramalingam, a native of Cuddalore came to England as a student of Engineering Science and graduated at London King's College. He was meeting Ramanujan often.

Prof. Probefacts:- Ramalingam visited Ramanujan in Matlock House Sanatorium, on Sunday the June 16, 1918.

### SCENE - VIII

*(Morning of June 16, 1918. A ward in the Matlock house Sanatorium. Ramanujan is seen lying on a bed. A nurse enters in, feels his pulse, keeps a thermometer in his mouth reads the chart hung on the wall.)*

Nurse: You've a visitor Mr. Ramanujan, Mr. Ramalingam from Jarrow. Shall I send him in?..... *(Ramanujan nods affirmately, nurse exits)*

Ramalingam: *(while coming in)* Ramanujan, how are you? *(Nurse re-enters, takes out the thermometer and reads)*

Ramanujan: *(tries to get up)* I'm fine Ramalingam, I'm very glad to see you. *(Sinks on the bed)*

Ramalingam: Please don't get up take rest. *(Nurse writes the thermometer reading on the chart and exits; Ramalingam takes the chart and studies)* Oh! The temperature is regularly raising every night ... it's very bad, I never thought it so bad. How sad?

Ramanujan: Thank you very much for your parcels and telegram... when did you come here?

Ramalingam: I came here today, early in the morning

Ramanujan: Did you get any accommodation here?

Ramalingam: Yes, I'm staying in one of the guest rooms, it is all right.

Ramanujan: What about your course in Horse-riding? Any date fixed for its test?

Ramalingam: It's at Woolwich on July 31... I started my journey after finishing my riding practice... If I succeed in this riding test, I would be absorbed in the Indian Public Works Department... Did you receive my telegram congratulating you for your election as a Fellow of the Royal Society?

Ramanujan: Yes, thank you very much. I'm sorry I couldn't send a reply.

Ramalingam: I was really angry with that,... but now I regret. All of us are proud of you Ramanujan,.... Aren't you the first Indian to get elected as a F. R. S?

Ramanujan: No,.. I'm the second. The first Indian is Karsetji, who got elected in 1841.

Ramalingam: You must be the first one to get elected in the first nomination itself.

Ramanujan: No, Ramalingam, I'm the second; the first one is Neil Bohr..... *(Smiles)* Are you disappointed? ... Don't think I'm second to none!

Ramalingam: How can you say that? you're the first Indian, more over a matriculate who got elected as a F R S in the first nomination itself and I am absolutely right.

Ramanujan: *(laughs heartily)* I surrender... You are a good soldier indeed!... How would you leave your ground!... I'm moved by your affection towards me. *(Emotion)* Thank you, thank you very much.

Ramalingam: Ramanujan, I'm just reflecting the popular opinion about you. I haven't met any mathematician so far, who doesn't appreciate your ingenious mathematical results with wonder and regard... *(Sorrow)*  
Now I'm really worried to see you bed-ridden. *(Wipes his tears)*

*(A nurse enters pushing a trolley having several bowls covered with lids. She keeps those bowls on a low-table kept near Ramanujan's bed and exits. Ramalingam lifts lids of each bowl, examines and replaces the lids on all of them.)*

Ramalingam: Is this cooked rice? Awful! Half cooked rice! Are these fried pappads?.... Some are over fried and others are not fried at all!.... Better not to say anything about others... Is this your daily food?

Ramanujan: Ramalingam, this is a non-vegetarian sanatorium. These people do not know the preparation of vegetarian food. What is the use of blaming any one?... *(Sorrow)*

Ramalingam: Haven't they given a menu? *(Ramanujan points towards a chart hung on the wall. Ramalingam reads the chart, presses a calling bell. An elderly nurse enters.)*

Elderly nurse: *(with indifference)* What's the matter?

Ramalingam: Would you call the matron please?

Elderly nurse: I'm the matron, any thing?

Ramalingam: I think, food supplied here is not cooked properly... The rice is not fully boiled,.. The pappad...

Matron: *(with irritation)* What if? This is all what we can do, excuse me I've got work to do. *(Turns to move out.)*

Ramalingam: Wait a minute please, would you please permit me to teach a few recipes to your cook?

Matron: No, sorry... Kitchen is out of bounds for visitors.

Ramalingam: Matron, I was served macaroni for my breakfast in the dining hall. Why isn't it given here?

Matron: *(indifference)* Mr. Ramanujan doesn't like it.

Ramalingam: You can serve some fruits with this.

Matron: *(contempt)* Fruits!... in these days!...

Ramalingam: If not apples and grapes, bananas would do, they must be easily available.

Matron: *(impatience)* Mr. if you have any complaint please talk to Dr. Kincaid, *(Ironical)* bananas.... fruits. Are they available these days! you haven't seen this part of the country,... hm ... *(she goes to the exit door, sees some one coming, welcomes him with a broad smile)* Good morning Dr. Ram. Mr. Ramanujan has improved a lot.

Dr. Ram: Very good morning. Any one under your expert care would surely improve. *(Feels the pulse of Ramanujan)* Mr. Ramanujan you've improved a lot. *(Seeing Ramalingam, extends his hand, both shake hands)* I'm Dr. Labhu Ram.

Ramalingam: Engineer Ramalingam,... glad to meet you Dr. Ram.

Dr.Ram: Very kind of you Matron, where are your tasty sweet rice and pudding today?... those were very delicious indeed!

*(Matron looks at the covered bowls kept near Ramanujan and at Ramalingam guiltily, smiles broadly when Dr.Ram looks at her.)*

Matron: Thank you Dr.Ram,... what other interest do I have, other than serving the sick.

Dr.Ram: Good, keep it up. Mr.Ramalingam, I'm busy at present. *(Hands him a visiting card)* Here's my address. You're welcome at any time. *(Extends his hand to shake hand, shakes hand)* See you...*(to Ramanujan)* Mr.Ramanujan, you've improved a lot. Take food and medicine as prescribed. Bye, *(Dr.Ram and matron exit.)*

Ramalingam:How is Dr.Ram?. This matron is a crook. Are you happy here?

Ramanujan:Dr.Ram is kind towards me. I'm all right.

Ramalingam:Why don't you take marcoroni?... It goes well with cheese.

Ramanujan:I relish it with cheese... But cheese is not available.

Ramalingam:Who told you so?... this matron?

Ramanujan:Yes, she told me, as it is the wartime, cheese is not available.

Ramalingam:Nonsense! Even if these are controlled items because of war, Sanatorium should get first priority in these matters. Matron is a crook! She said bananas are not available. But I have seen a gentleman carrying them to the next ward. They might be costly, but they are available. No, Ramannujan, be frank, are you happy here?

Ramanujan: Any way I've to pull on in this sanatorium till I recover. Don't you know '*some are never choosers*' *(with deep sorrow)* I'm one of them. What is the use of feeling unhappy, one should endure when that is inevitable

Ramalingam:Why should you?. Is there any agreement that you must stay here?

Ramanujan:I know, there is an agreement between Prof.Hardy, Dr.Kincaid and Dr.Ram that I should stay here till I recover.

Ramalingam:Nonsense!. How could an unhappy patient recover? Are there not better sanatoriums. Have you tried with India House?

Ramanujan:Yes,.. India House couldn't suggest any other better sanatorium than this, I've to reconcile with this.

Ramalingam:Unfortunate... the Department of India Office, with its mighty influence and with knowledge renowned all over India, not able to find a suitable vegetarian sanatorium for you! It's an unwelcome surprise.

Ramanujan:What ever you may conclude, it's a fact. I have to be here. *(sad)*

Ramalingam:Unfortunate!. You can't improve here, I shall write to Hardy, I shall talk to Dr.Kincaid and Dr.Ram. Till then, you must eat well and fatten up. These people do not know to prepare your vegetarian food. Why don't you take chicken and fish. What's wrong with cod-liver oil?



Ramanujan: Have you read the menu? That is my limit... You know our people in India... My family might be suffering for my crime of crossing the ocean... I don't want to further it by indulging in more unorthodox ways of life. I kept my word to my parents till I was admitted here. I cooked my vegetarian food and did not forget to perform religious rituals daily. But here? . . . No Ramalingam, I can't bring more suffering to my family.

Ramalingam: Ramanujan, I can't understand you. Do you think your family is under social boycott!. Never think so. We are living in the 20th century. More over, your family is the family of Mr. Srinivasa Ramanujan F.R.S. The world oppresses those who are meek and submissive and worships those who are strong and assertive.

Ramanujan: *(thinks)* You are right, in those days, we were depending on some one, even for our daily bread. But now, though not rich my family need not depend on anyone. *(Sadness)*... but my conscience doesn't permit me to change my food habits and leave vegetarianism.

Ramalingam: All right, I shall write to Prof. Hardy about the need of shifting you from here. Till then, don't neglect your health. Write to me about your needs. I shall try my best to procure them for you, take rest... *(Gets up)*

Ramanujan: Thank you. Your visit has inspired in me an interest in life, why don't you stay for a day or two?

Ramalingam: *(thinks)* O.K., I shall see you in the evening.

### CURTAIN DOWN

Prof. Probefacts:- Ramalingam stayed in Matlock House Sanatorium for three days and got acquainted with the general condition of the sanatorium. He noted Ramanujan's deteriorating health condition with concern, and came to the conclusion of shifting him to any other vegetarian sanatorium, with the consent of Prof. Hardy and Dr. Ram.

Dr. Digrecord:- Ramalingam decided to break his return journey to Newcastle at Swinton, to visit Dr. Ram and discuss about Ramanujan fully. He left Matlock directly after lunch on June 18 and went to Swinton by train to meet Dr. Ram and his family at Mexborough.

### SCENE IX

*(Dr. Ram's drawing room at Mexborough. He is seen reading some voluminous medical book, calling bell rings. He goes to the door and greets)*

Dr. Ram: Welcome Mr. Ramalingam, welcome... Please come (*leads him to a sofa, both sit.*) You must have had a terrible journey from Matlock!

Ramalingam: I was a bit lucky,...I could get into a direct train at Belper and reached Swinton comfortably... Thank you for accepting my request by phone to meet you.... It seems you're busy in referring some book. Am I disturbing you?

Dr. Ram: Not at all,... I'm glad that you took the trouble of coming over here.... All the more, you have come to discuss my patient... I admire your sincere concern towards your friend.

Ramalingam: Dr. Ram, I don't like to waste your valuable time, kindly excuse me if I am blunt..... Is there any agreement between you, Dr. Kincaid and Prof. Hardy on the length of time Ramanujan has to stay at Matlock?

Dr. Ram: (*with surprise*) Not at all, who told you?

Ramalingam: Ramanujan... He believes so... He is not happy in the sanatorium... He is from an orthodox Brahmin family. Matlock is a non-vegetarian sanatorium... I saw his menu. He was to be given 'scrambled eggs on toast and tea' for breakfast. Anyway I didn't see him taking scrambled eggs. But, if it is true, you can very well imagine the mental agony of an orthodox Brahmin.

Dr. Ram: I'm only a visiting doctor of Matlock Sanatorium. Dr. Kincaid asked me to look after Mr. Ramanujan. That matron is an efficient nurse and caretaker. I feel you are over emphasising certain common lacunae here and there..

Ramalingam: Sorry, I beg to differ,... that matron is a crook,... I was told by Ramanujan, how she was serving delicious food only on the day of your scheduled visits. I heard, your visit on last Sunday was not a scheduled one. Am I right?

Dr. Ram: (*thoughtfully*) Yes... It was not.

Ramalingam: You should have just lifted those lids to know the truth. Half boiled rice and badly fried pappad were the menu on that day..... Of course, he was given a cup of milk. She told me that even bananas are not available. But I'd seen someone taking bananas into the sanatorium. They might be costly but are available.

Dr. Ram: (*interrupts*) Ramalingam, there might be some areas which need attention, I agree.... But, as the situation demands Ramanujan should also adjust himself. He has a fancy for his palate, and very adamant in the matter of food. I tell you there are a very few doctors who would care to have Ramanujan in their Nursing Homes and fewer still who would bother with humoring his palate. I assure you Dr. Kincaid is one of those very few.

Ramalingam: May be, I've my own doubts. (*Cynically*) Is it advisable to serve Ramanujan with eatables like pickles and chilies?

Dr. Ram: *(emphatically)* Not at all. Such eatables are injurious to Ramanujan's health. They should never be served to him.

Ramalingam: Dr. Ram, believe me. With great difficulty I got an appointment with Dr. Kincaid. He couldn't spare me even a full 5 minutes. When I asked him the same question he told me distinctly that Ramanujan could eat anything that he liked and that nothing was injurious or objectionable.

Dr. Ram: *(wonder)* Very strange!, unbelievable!.

Ramalingam: *(emotional)* I have heard, when the patient has gone too far to be remedied, and when it is a question of a few weeks or months, he might be given anything to eat to make him comfortable in the last days of his life. Is this the object of Dr. Kincaid in permitting me to give anything to Ramanujan to eat?

Dr. Ram: *(stunned)* I can't believe a word of it. Sorry, I'm not suspecting you, but....

Ramalingam: *(charged with emotion)*...**WAR,...** *with all its horrors might have made us callous to the wholesale slaughter and loss of lives....(sobs)...* **but, should Ramanujan be given up?.....** *(Sobs and wipes his tears).*

Dr. Ram: *(consoles)* Please, Ramalingam, please don't get emotional. Ramanujan will be alright, nothing to worry. Dr. Kincaid is an efficient doctor and a humanitarian. I'm not able to guess, under what pretext he said so about Ramanujan's food. Don't you agree that Ramanujan is very adamant regarding his palate? Don't you agree that he must also adjust with the situation?

Ramalingam: I'm very sorry, *(controlling his emotion)*, excuse me for my outburst. I agree with you, but I strongly feel, when the patient is not willing to stay in a place, he must be shifted to a place of his liking. Otherwise, any effort to cure him would bring no result.

Dr. Ram: You're right. Let's think about it and decide. It's better to consult Prof. Hardy first.

Ramalingam: I shall consult my friend doctors and then I will write to Prof. Hardy.

Dr. Ram: I think there is some misunderstanding about Dr. Kincaid. He is a very busy doctor. He must have told you so, when he was preoccupied with some other problem. I assure you Dr. Kincaid is a perfect gentleman.

Ramalingam: Must be, you know him better. Very kind of you for sparing your valuable time....

Dr. Ram: Why don't you meet my family? Come on let's go in.

### CURTAIN DOWN

Prof. Probefacts:- Some time after the end of June 1918, Ramanujan left Matlock.

He was admitted in Fitzroy House, the hospital run by the Home Hospitals Association in Fitzroy Square, London.

Dr.Digrecond:- He was elected to a Fellowship at Trinity College on October 13, 1918. By the end of 1918 his health improved and his selection to the Royal Society and Fellowship at Trinity may have been instrumental to this.

Prof. Probefacts:- Ramanujan was admitted as a patient in Colinette House in Colinette Road, Putney in S.W. London during January 1919.

## SCENE X

(COLINETTE HOUSE, PUTNEY, Ramanujan is seen reclining on his bed and writing seriously. Hardy enters )

Hardy: Good evening Ramanujan, how do you do?

Ramanujan: *(stops writing tries to get up)* I'm fine Hardy, thank you *(sinks on the bed due to exertion. Hardy rushes towards him and helps him to lie on the bed).*

Hardy: Please don't get up take rest. No need for any formality.

Ramanujan: *(recovers)* I want to sit for a while. *(Hardy helps him to sit on a sofa. Both sit.)*

Hardy: Ramanujan, how do you feel, are you comfortable here?

Ramanujan: I'm comfortable, thank you. I don't think you had been to your house now. You are always kind to me.

Hardy: Don't worry Ramanujan, it's nothing ... I was on the way to my house and just dropped in. I came by a cab having 1729 as its registration number. I don't think it is an interesting number.

Ramanujan: It's not so, *(thinks for a few seconds)* It's the smallest number, which could be expressed as sum of two cubes in two different ways.

Hardy: Is it so!. What are those two ways?

Ramanujan: One way is *sum of twelve cube and one cube*, the other one is *sum of ten cube and nine cube*.

Hardy: Wonderful! *Is there any number which could be written as sum of two quartics in two different ways?*

Ramanujan: You mean sum of two numbers each raised to exponent four? Sorry I can't remember. But it must be a very huge number.

Hardy: *(Thinks for a while, searches for a scrap book in his brief case and turns the pages and looks at a particular page)* Yes I got it, you're right, it is a huge number, in your Indian notation the number is **sixty crores fifty three lakhs eighteen thousand six hundred and fifty seven**. This is the smallest number, which could be written as sum of two quartics in two different ways.

Ramanujan: Interesting, what are those ways?

- Hardy: *One way is the sum of 59 raised to exponent four and 158 raised to exponent four, the other is the sum of 133 raised to exponent four and 134 raised to exponent four.*
- Ramanujan: Wonderful! how could you work out these results?
- Hardy: I didn't work out these. It's by Leonhard Euler.
- Ramanujan: *(cynical smile)* Euler is always ahead of me.
- Hardy: *(laughs)* Are you remembering your first disappointment? I assure you, your mathematical results are in no way inferior to his.
- Ramanujan: I don't think so. *(Morose)* I haven't done any work for the last two years.
- Hardy: Why do you say so? *(Encourages)* You have done wonderfully well. Your contributions would be better mathematical tools for the coming centuries. I feel those who honour you, are honouring themselves, as you're above those petty honours. You are really second to none in the field of math.
- Ramanujan: Thank you Hardy, all these what I have done are the blessings of you. But now a day I feel as though I am a spent force,
- Hardy: *(interrupts)* I received a report about your health. Experts feel a change of place and climate would help in improving your health. Tropical climate would be ideal. So, India would be an ideal place for a change.
- Ramanujan: No Hardy, I would be of no use to any one in India. I wish to work more here, after my recovery.
- Hardy: Please think it over Ramanujan. You have not yet comfortable with our food habits. And you haven't met your family for the last five years. The family re-union would surely improve your health.
- Ramanujan: No Hardy, Don't you know our rigid Hindu custom? *(With sadness)* I would never be accepted by the community. I knew the price I have to pay for coming over here. When I go back I shall never be allowed to attend even a funeral.
- Hardy: Listen, the scholarship of Madras University is for five years. Its syndicate approved it to be effective from April First of this year. You would be rich by 250 pounds from then onwards. I don't think you would face any financial difficulty in India. Have you replied Mr. Francis Dewsberry?
- Ramanujan: Not yet, why shouldn't I stay here and continue my work?
- Hardy: Why not, you can always come over here whenever you desire. I have requested the Madras University to create a permanent chair for you in the University. You can come over here whenever you wish and continue your research. It is for the sake of your health, you have to go to India for a short time till you recover. Write a reply to Mr. Dewsberry thanking him for all he has done to you.

- Ramanujan: Please wait Hardy, I shall write now itself. *(Writes a letter and gives)*  
Please read this letter. *(Hardy reads it to himself in the beginning and gets surprised at seeing a certain portion of the letter and reads aloud with wonder.)*
- Hardy: What? *"The total amount of money to which I shall be entitled will be more than I shall require,.... and that the surplus, after my expenses are met, should be used for some educational purpose such as in the reduction of school, fees for poor boys and, orphans and provision of books in schools..."*. Ramanujan... *(with emotion)*... hats off to you.... you are really great.
- Ramanujan: Hardy, I believe that *any money which comes to one's share beyond his actual needs is only to be received as 'Trust Funds' for social good and for the benefit of those who are in need.*
- Hardy: *(moved with emotion)* Marvellous, your *Gospel on Wealth* is really marvellous. If every one in the world adopts your 'Gospel on Wealth' there would never be a World War. Hats off to your nobility. *(Bows with respect)* If you don't mistake, Shall I ask you a personal question?
- Ramanujan: Why this formality. Ask me.
- Hardy: Ramanujan, Do you feel religion is essential to keep the man disciplined?
- Ramanujan: Yes, a true religion is very much essential to keep the man disciplined.
- Hardy: A true religion! What do you mean?
- Ramanujan: *True religion is the one, which helps us to regulate our lives.... In my opinion whatever may be the religion one follows that should help him to regulate his life to reach the God Head by approximating to the upright path, as an asymptote approaches along the curve and finally touches it at infinity.*
- Hardy: What a beautiful explanation, brilliantly put in the mathematical vocabulary. That is why the world honours you as a great mathematician of the century.

## CURTAIN DOWN

### NARRATOR:

Ramanujan was received by his mother Komalambal and a few of his well wishers at Bombay Port who arrived by SS Nagoya on March 27, 1919. A warm reception was accorded to him at Madras Railway Station on his arrival by train on April 2, 1919.

Ramanujan's health was at its low ebb. He was taken to different places like Kodumudi, Coimbatore and Kumbhakonam for a change of climate and expert medical aid.

A.S. Ramalingam, after his arrival in India in Sep. 1918 tried to meet Ramanujan's parents. He had noted down their address in a diary. He became an engineer (I S E) in Bangalore from Feb. 1919 and married a niece of Sir. C.R. Reddy in Bangalore in Dec. 1919. Ramalingam met Ramanujan at Kumbhakonam.

### SCENE XI

(Ramanujan's parents house at Kumbhakonam. Ramanujan is reclining on a bed, spread on a cot and seriously writing on a slate. Komalambal enters.)

Komalambal: Chinnasamy, your friend Ramalingam has come to Kumbakonam. He has sent word, he may.... come at any time to see you. (arranges his bed and keeps other things in their places).

Ramanujan: Amma, he was very much helpful in England. You should have seen his concern about my ill health. Very noble soul.

Komalambal: (with devotion) Goddess Namagiri, it's all your blessings! (Folds her hands with reverence It s all Her blessings, we don't know in what form She helps us! (Exits)  
(after a while Ramalingam enters)

Ramalingam: How do you do Ramanujan?

Ramanujan: Welcome, Ramalingam, Welcome.... please be seated. I received your marriage invitation. Sorry I couldn't attend.

Ramalingam: Don't worry (with concern). You have terribly gone down since I met you at Madras in May.

Ramanujan: What to do? So many are worried about me.... I shouldn't have come to India at all.

Ramalingam: Why do you think so?... Why don't you make up your mind to recover? Aren't you happy?

Ramanujan: Ramalingam, I consider you as one of my intimate friends, next to Hardy..... I know, you may not agree with me, but without Hardy I wouldn't be what I am.... He used

to come daily and discuss with me about mathematics.... I was doing much work and I had a pleasure of sharing my thrill of discovery with Hardy,....(regrets).... But here....

Ramalingam: Ramanujan, Hardy is a gentleman. I never underestimated him.... I was a little unhappy at seeing your condition at Matlock House Sanatorium.... Of course, that is the best they could do, I agree.

Ramanujan: Kindly do me a favour. Don't discuss about Matlock House Sanatorium with any one. It embarasses me and many.... You know there are certain things which should never be made public..... If it leaks out in a natural way, we can't help it.

Ramalingam: I appreciate your feelings. I have never discussed about it so far with any one and I promise you, I would never discuss it with any

one in future also. You needn't worry about it... (to change the subject)... Ramanujan, I was surprised to hear that you were angry with your mother publicly, when you landed at Bombay. I could never believe it.

Ramanujan: (with regret) Yes Ram, it's true.

Ramalingam: Why?... Ramanujan you are...

Ramanujan: Listen Ram, my Janaki, as you know, is in no way inferior to any mythical Sita or Savitri. Those Pathivratas lived with their husbands and enjoyed the pleasure of family life, a few days at least.... But... my Janaki... (Silence for a few minutes)... she has never seen her family life ... I had to undergo kidney operation before Janaki came of age. I left for England soon after. Now, you know what I am!.... I could never give her the pleasure of married life.... On my journey back home, I was full of her thoughts. I was yearning to meet her in the Bombay port soon after I reached India. But when I saw my mother alone, I got angry and rebuked her in front of others for not bringing my Janaki to receive me. But, I shouldn't have done it.

Ramalingam: It is not your fault Ramanujan. Anyone in your position would have reacted the same way..... Your mother should have cared for your feelings and brought your wife to receive you at Bombay.

Ramanujan: (justifying his mother's action) Do you know? My mother could read horoscopes. She believed, if we live separately for a few months, I would recover soon.

Ramalingam: Are you not living with your wife even now?

Ramanujan: But, I have convinced my mother and now my Janaki is living with me. My Janaki is taking care of me now..... (sobs)... But I pity her Ram. What pleasure did I give to that poor girl?... How can I bring happiness to that innocent soul?

Ramalingam: You become healthy, that is the only way you can make her happy.

Ramanujan: You are asking me to do the impossible.... It is nothing but a mirage.

Ramalingam: Ramanujan, are you saying so? I can't believe it! What an indomitable WILL you had! An ordinary matriculate of an economically most backward family from a remote corner of India. You drew the attention of the most conservative colonial Britishers to get elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society and a Fellow of the Trinity College.... Are you saying so!.... Why don't you exercise the same WILL to recover yourself?... *Where there is a WILL there is a WAY.*

Ramanujan: (muses) Where there is a WILL there is a WAY. What a fine maxim? How many times I would have repeated this maxim in my life! You are right Ram; it's this maxim which is sustaining my failing health.



It is this maxim which is enabling me, even now to finish my recent findings.

Ramalingam:(surprised) Are you finding something new, even now? I can't follow your mathematics, but can I know the name of it at least?

Ramanujan:I have named it as 'Mock theta functions'. They are different from 'False theta functions' which are already known..... (regrets).... I am really missing the valuable guidance, fruitful discussions and unreserved appreciation of that noble Hardy..... I should have stayed in England.

Ramalingam:(to change the topic) I was told about your reluctance to sail across the ocean, before going to England. Now you are feeling otherwise. You accepted the change in your outfit, but you remained a strict vegetarian. Similarly, is there any change in your belief ?

Ramanujan:My belief is based on the influence of my mother and my spiritual mentor Sathyapriya Rayar, though they are poles apart in their beliefs.

Ramalingam:Rayar!..... yes I remember, you have told me about him once. Was he not misjudged by others?

Ramanujan:They were all wrong. He was a highly evolved soul. His spiritual influence made me accept the offer of voyage to England. I couldn't follow what he uttered then, but I was experiencing bliss in his presence. Now I am realizing the meaning of those unconnected words.

Ramalingam:Ramanujan, I feel religion is essential to keep the man disciplined. What is your opinion?

Ramanujan:I agree with you.... True religion is the one which helps us to regulate our lives.... In my opinion *whatever may be the religion one follows, that should help him to regulate his life to reach The God Head by approximating to the upright path, as an asymptote approaches along the curve and finally touches it at infinity.*

Ramalingam:What a beautiful explanation, brilliantly put in the mathematical vocabulary. That is why the world honours you as a great mathematician of the century.

## CURTAIN DOWN

### EPILOGUE

Ramanujan was finally brought to Madras in Jan, 1920; and was housed in Numberumal Chettiar's Bungalow in the Harrington Road, Chetput. Ramanujan's health deteriorated rapidly, but his creative mind was ever lively and active. It was investigating mathematical truths like 'Mock theta functions' and related 'q-series'.

Expert medical aid available at the time, best efforts of his well-wishers with their yearning desire to save him, and devoted service of his kith and kin, all went in vain. The cruel hands of death snatched away the best mathematician of the century on April 26, 1920.

'The work done by Ramanujan on 'Mock-theta functions' and related 'q-series' during his last days in India was accidentally found by Dr. George E Andrews, Chairman of the Pennsylvania State University during his visit to Trinity College Library sometime in the spring of 1976. Dr. Andrews, who is working through the latest materials of Ramanujan says "anybody who has the opportunity to study Ramanujan working at his peak is overwhelmingly impressed with the incredible genius of the man. He was a very intuitive mathematician. The papers of the genius are a daring and a unique leap whose nature remains a mystery even today. When I am working on these materials I am struck awe struck by the incredible mental powers that this guy must have had."

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Report in HINDU – Nov. 17, 1968

## **When U. K. Policemen Winked at an offence**

New Delhi : Nov. 16

Dr. S. Chandrasekhar the astro-physicist narrated at the national institute of sciences this evening the story how British scientists and police winked at the violation of their regulations and laws to protect the Indian mathematics prodigy, Srinivasa Ramanujan and to clear obstacles to his receiving honours slated for him.

Two months before he was elected fellow of the Royal Society, Ramanujan attempted to commit suicide by throwing himself on the rails in the London underground. He was saved because a series of miracles led to the failure of the switch of the electric train that would otherwise have run over him.

Ramanujan was taken to a police station but was let off without being charged with a criminal offence when his friend in Cambridge's Trinity College, Prof. Hardy testified that Ramanujan was a fellow of the royal society and that fellows of the royal society were not arrested in England for committing an offence.

Twenty years later prof. Hardy learnt from the chief of the Scotland yard that the police were not really taken in by his bluff. Not only were the fellows not exempt from the laws of Britain, but a police check had shown that the conferment of the honour was two months away.

The police chief told prof. Hardy that Ramanujan had been let off only because the police did not want to harm a distinguished Indian Mathematician.



When a few months later he appeared before the examiners of Trinity College of Cambridge for election to the College's fellowship, Ramanujan carried in his pocket a medical certificate saying he was mentally sane. For the Trinity College regulations specifically barred the insane from being elected to its fellowship, and his attempted suicide could have been construed as a sign of insanity.

But none of the examiners sought to disqualify Ramanujan on technical grounds. The certificate remained in the pocket and he became the first Indian fellow of the Trinity college.

Dr. Chandrasekhar himself a fellow of both the Royal Society and the Trinity College, narrated these two episodes as illustrative of the British character 50 years ago.

He heard them from prof. Hardy while he himself was at Cambridge and thought fit to put them on record for the first time this evening when he received the "Srinivasa Ramanujan Medal" of the National Institute—P.T.I

—Courtesy : The Hindu, Madras.

லண்டனில் ராமானுஜன் தற்கொலை செய்துகொள்ள எடுத்த முயற்சியைப்பற்றிய செய்தி பிரபலமடையாமல் சில நாட்களில் அடிச்சுவடே இல்லாமல் மறைந்துவிட்டது. தனக்கு ஏற்பட இருந்த பேராபத்திலிருந்து தன்னுயிரைக் காப்பாற்ற லண்டனின் பாதாள மின்சார இணைப்புகள் திடீரென்று தடைபட்டு வண்டியை நகரச்செய்யாமல் நிறுத்தியது ஸ்ரீநாமகிரித் தாயாரின் அருளென்றே ராமானுஜன் தன் வாழ்நாள் முழுவதும் நினைத்தாராம்!

### புலவர் பட்டம்

ராமானுஜனின் கணிதத்திறமையைப் பாராட்டி 1918 மே மாதத்தில் ஓர் சிறப்பான விழாவிற்கும் ஏற்பாடு செய்யப்

**Bust from the Commemorative stamp released on  
75<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan**



***SRINIVASA RAMANUJAN***  
(December 22, 1887 – April 26, 1920)



Prof. E.H. Neville,  
Fellow of the Trinity college



Prof. G.H. Hardy,  
as Ramanujan knew him