

Sri Mataji's Benediction

RELEVANT ENQUIRY

A young child walking, with his father, goes on enquiring about so many things in the worldly life and the father has to satisfy him with proper answers. It so happened that a big procession was passing on and the child as usual enquired about the procession. The child was provided with all possible answers to his innumerable questions regarding the marriage party. But finally the child asked his father whether he was married! Such a question may give rise to laughter from all corners since the enquiry was made out of innocence but not ignorance.

The most intelligent man enquires about what happens after death. Mention must be made here of Maharaja Parikshit, the great king who was accidentally cursed by the son of a Rishi that he would meet death from the bite of a serpent after seven days. When the king was informed of the unfortunate curse, he at once left his palatial home and went to the banks of the river Ganges to prepare for his impending death. Since he was a great king all sages and eminent scholars assembled at the place where the king was fasting prior to leaving his mortal body. Unexpectedly Sukadeva, the youngest contemporary saint, also arrived there and he was given the principal seat by all the saints and scholars.

King Parikshit, submitting himself to Sage Sukhadeva, made a relevant enquiry about his passing from the mortal world which was due on the seventh day. The king submissively enquired “What should I hear? What should I worship? What should I remember at this crucial moment when I am on the verge of death?” The Brahmajnani, having thus been pleasingly requested by



the king, answered all the questions authoritatively, for he had full knowledge of spiritual identity.

The Vedantha sutra begins with the basic inquiry about Transcendence: 'athato brahma jyonasa'. So long as man is in full vigour of life he forgets the naked truth of death which is the ultimate. Everyone thinks that he will never die although the evidence of death is before his eyes. An intelligent man knows that death is a certainty with his birth and, therefore, he prepares himself for the liberation from the disease of birth and death cycle.

Relevant inquiry should be made at a proper time and it will be fruitful only under the guidance of a Guru or a master or a sage like Sukhadeva having the knowledge of spiritual identity. Maharaja Parikshit made such enquiry and could reach the goal.*

INVITATION
PEDANINDRAKOLANU BRANCH PROGRAMME
11th ANNIVERSARY OF SRI SADGURU DEV'S
IDOL INSTALLATION
(28.01.2015 Wed To 01.02.2015 Sun)

10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon - Daily - Bhagavatgita (Bhakti Yoga)
Pravachanam by Sri Ramanuja Das

06.00 p.m. to 08.00 p.m. - Daily - Spiritual Discourse by
Sri Mataji

30.01.2015 Fri - Bhishma Ekadasi - Day of Sadguru Dev's
Idol installation - Samoohika Sri Sadguru Pada Pujas

31.01.2015 Sat - Sri Sadguru Dev's Float Festival
(Teppotsavam)

ALL ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

Babu Bhakta Samaj
Pedanindrakolanu

Editorial

NOTHING IS GREATER THAN THE GURU

Om Gururam Namaste!

We have entered the fifteenth year of this third millennium of the Christian era. Members of the editorial board of this spiritual magazine wish you, dear readers, a happy New Year. May Samardha Sadguru Sri Sri Sri Hanumat Kali Vara Prasada Babuji Maharaj's grace shower on all of us to face the challenges ahead in the Year of the Lord 2015! May we all under the motherly care and guidance of Poojya Sri Yogini Chandra Kali Prasada Mataji achieve progress in our efforts at self-realisation!

Sanaatana Dharma accords the Guru the highest status of God Himself. As the Sanskrit sloka says, "The invisible Mahadeva makes Himself visible in the form of the Guru to instill devotion in the minds of the seekers of Truth." For 'mumukshus' (those in quest of the Ultimate Truth), scholars aver, it is a very difficult proposition to secure a 'Satya Guru' (True Master) for guidance. Fortunately, thanks to Sadguru Maharaj's grace, He Himself has spotted and taken us into His fold, proclaiming "Why Fear? I Am Here!". That is our Gurudev's benevolence which flows like the perennial Ganga.

When we talk of Guru, our thoughts converge on Lord Siva's youthful manifestation, Sri Dakshinamurthy. Enraged by Daksha Prajapati's Siva 'nindana' that led to the self-sacrifice of Kaatyayani, the Lord's consort, Siva became uncontrollable. Fearing that this mood of His would destroy the three worlds, Lord Vishnu intervened to pacify Siva, who relented, became a recluse and retired to His abode, Mount Kailas, engaged in deep meditation as Dakshinamurthy. One day, the four great yogis - Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatsujata - who were the 'maanasika putras' of Lord Brahma approached Sri Dakshinamurthy for getting their doubts on self-realisation cleared. Sri Dakshinamurthy gave them a silent answer by showing them the 'chinmudra' of forming a circle with the thumb and the index finger and leaving the other three fingers open. The yogis at once realised that they should shed the three 'gunas' ('Satva, Rajas and Tamas) and get rid of the duality of 'I' and 'You'. It was indeed an eloquent silence of the Adi Guru. Similarly Lord Vishnu, as Krishna, played the role of the 'Jagatguru' (World Teacher) by preaching the 'Bhagavadgita' to Arjuna on the Kurukshetra war front.

In the Vaishnava tradition, the Acharya (Guru) plays the pivotal role of redeeming the struggling 'Jivatma'. Whether it is 'jaatakarma' (ritual to benefit the newly born child) or 'naamakarana (christening) or 'vivaha' (wedding ceremony), it is done in the name of the Acharya and with His blessings only. Even when death occurs, it is intimated to all near and dear as the soul ('Jiva') having reached 'Acharyan Tiruvadi' (lotus feet of the Guru).

Sikhism, the faith founded by Guru Nanak Dev, is the religion of disciples only, since there is no 'Guru' after Guru Gobind Singh. The manner with which Nanak Dev received enlightenment is an interesting episode in the history of that faith. Nanak was an employee of a petty shop and his job was to count the sale proceeds. One day when he was counting the coins, saying 'Ek, do, then.....baarah', he could not proceed further after 'theraah' (thirteen). He went on repeating 'theraah...theraah...theraah...' In Hindustani, 'theraah', which means thirteen, also means 'I am Yours'. Nanak started wondering 'Yours represents whom?' or 'to whom I belong?' As he meditated on this question he got the answer: 'Guru'. Immediately he shouted 'Waah...Guru!' 'Waah' is a soul-filling expression in North India. Thereupon, he sang the first 'sankeertan' of the 'Granth Saheb' (the holy book of the Sikhs), "Waahe Guru...Waahe Guru...Waahe Guruji..'. Later, 'Waahe Guru' has been interpreted by one of the ten Gurus of the faith thus: 'It is a combination of Vasudeva, Hara and Easwara, who are none but the manifestations of the Guru, the Paramaatman'. The Sikh temples are called 'Gurudwaaras', indicating that the Guru alone is the gateway to Godhead.

After attaining self-realisation, Mahavira and the Buddha preached their noble codes of conduct to their followers - Jains and Buddhists respectively. Moses taught the Jews the Ten Commandments showing the path of liberation. Jesus Christ preached his Sermon on the Mount that gave birth to Christianity. Mohammed became the last Prophet, after God revealed to him the tenets of the Holy Quran. Zoroaster was the preceptor of the Parsees.

All these religions accept the oneness of God and emphasise the need for individuals to lead a noble life as ordained by their respective Gurus. Thus 'Guru Tatvam' is universal. As the 'Guru Gita' states emphatically, "There is no greater Principle (Truth) than the Guru; there is no Penance greater than the Guru; there is no wisdom greater than the Guru. Let us bow to that Satya Guru in all humility."

Jai Gurudev!*

Thus Spake Babuji

SELF-SURRENDER BEGETS SELF-REALISATION

Sushumna Prasada

One morning addressing the devotees, Lord Babuji said, “Sweet and enlightened self (spirit) is there in everybody. That enlightened self or spirit is Paramatma, and it is not different from you. Just as the sweetness is there in sugarcane, the sweet and enlightened self is there in you. But man, steeped in illusion and ignorance, visits several places of pilgrimage to have darshan of God, though God is all pervasive. Though he visits holy places, he cannot see ‘Krishna Jyothi’. The plant lies embedded in the seed. If you sow the seed in the soil and water it, it will grow into a tree or plant. The fruit of it relieves your hunger. In the same manner, if you sow the seed of mind in the soil of detachment and pour the water of devotion, it will grow into a plant of wisdom (Gnana) offering the fruit of salvation. People who depend on him will be relieved of their spiritual hunger by consuming the fruit of salvation.”



In the course of this exhortation, Lord Babuji narrated the story of an Alwar (a great devotee), by name Madhura Kavi.

Madhura Kavi was a great scholar in the Vedas, grammar, prosody, astrology, law, logic, etc. He went on a pilgrimage of holy places. During the course of that pilgrimage, one night, he saw a splendid light in the southern direction and thought that a village might have caught fire. But he saw that sparkling light continuously in that direction. Hence he proceeded in that direction to see what it was. He found that light was coming from a cavity of a tamarind tree. On reaching the spot, he realised that the light was coming from a great saint by name Nammalwar. They met each other on account of their pious attachment in their previous birth. Nammalwar was actually waiting for the arrival of Madhura Kavi and Madhura Kavi felt excited to see the great Saint Nammalwar and expressed his doubts. Madhura Kavi asked him to explain vividly the experience of Jivatma (life force) when it entered the womb of mother and where it was previously.

There is a deep meaning in that question. A disciple who seeks the guidance of a spiritual master (Guru) should pose such a question to gain his grace and understand his preaching. An ignorant man fails to understand such a question. The great Saint Nammalwar

immediately understood the doubt of his disciple and remarked, ‘He (Jiva) will eat and live there.’ By entering the physical body, Jiva will experience the physical sorrow and happiness, remaining in ignorance. But the Divine Lord expects man, without yielding to the material attractions with his physical body, to seek the guidance of a competent Guru and receive Wisdom. That is the decision of Brahman. As Madhura Kavi had noble samskara, he considered Nammalwar as his Guru and sought his guidance by clasping his holy feet. The relationship between the spiritual master and the disciple is mutual. The Sadguru in advance knows clearly about the thoughts and desires that float on the mind of the disciple. He knows in advance the samskara of his disciple and awaits his arrival. That’s why Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa remarked the moment he saw Narendra ‘You are welcome Naren, I am anxiously waiting for your arrival.’ Narendra (Swami Vivekananda) was surprised by the warm and affectionate note in the voice of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

Previously Madhura Kavi visited many temples and prostrated before those idols. But it was not of much use to him as his doubts were not cleared. Only a Guru like the Gitacharya can clear the disciple’s doubts, and the disciple should approach him with total self-surrender like Arjuna. The Pandava hero was in the most bewildered state of mind and realised that a Supreme Master like the Gitacharya alone could wipe out his misery and lead him to the mansion of peace and bliss. He approached Lord Krishna with a sense of total self-surrender for he was unable to decide what was best for him. ‘Bhagavadgita’ (Chapter-2, Sloka-7) describes the statement of Arjuna thus:

***“Kaarpanya Dhoshopahatah Swabhaavah Pruchchaami
Twaam Dharma Sammoodachetaah
Yachreya Syannischitam Bruhi Thanme Sishyasteham
Sadhimam Twam Prapannah.”***

[My nature is weighed down with the taint of feeble-mindedness; my understanding is confused as to duty. I entreat You, say definitely what is good for me. I am Your disciple. Do instruct me who have taken refuge in You.]

“Likewise, Madhura Kavi became a wise man after becoming the disciple of Nammalwar and got all his doubts cleared. Madhura Kavi proved the worth of his name. By total self- surrender, the bitterness of ego got evaporated in the fire of self-surrender (Atmarpana) and the sediment of sweetness remained forever,” concluded Lord Babuji.*

Divine Mother Speaks A TRUE DEVOTEE

Japamala Prasada

Another year has dawned! At the outset, I invoke Lord Sri Gurudev's divine blessings to be showered on everybody for a peaceful, prosperous and healthy 2015. May Lord Sri Gurumaharaj bless one and all in the world with immense devotion, knowledge and detachment to achieve the ultimate truth, 'Atmananda'!

A seeker of truth encounters innumerable obstacles and difficulties in his spiritual quest. But a true devotee never looks upon them as difficulties. He is undeterred by the hardships. As a matter of fact, he looks upon adversities not as impediments but as gifts sent by the Lord Almighty to further improve his spiritual 'Sadhana' (practice). He thinks it is the Lord's way of testing his endurance and perseverance to make him flawless. We have millions of great devotees and Jnanis in our country like Sant Mira Bai, Jnandev, Namdev, Tukaram, Shaik Farid Das, Kabir Das, Kamaldas, Sakku Bai, Jana Bai, Tulsidas, Ramdas and Tyagaraja. Lord Gurumaharaj used to say "Our country has as many self-realised saints as the letters in the 701 slokas of the 'Bhagavadgita'. That is why Bharathadesam is called 'Ratna Garbha' (womb filled with diamonds).



We all know the story of king Parikshit from the 'Bhagavatam'. He was a noble king. He was also a staunch devotee of Lord Sri Krishna. In a moment of weakness, he succumbed to his own anger and insulted Sage Sameeka who was in a deep trance. Parikshit's story goes like this...

Parikshit gets separated from his retinue when a storm hits, while hunting in a forest. Wandering all over the forest, he feels very thirsty and goes in search of water to drink. He comes across a sage called Sameeka who is in a deep transcendental state and asks for water. But the sage does not answer as he is lost to the external world. The king calls him many times in vain. Finally, king Parikshit, frustrated and tired from all the

wandering and thirst, gets angry and takes with an arrow a dead snake that is lying nearby and throws it on the sage's neck and walks away. (A noble and pious king like Parikshit who has conquered his senses doing an ignoble act like this, has a background. This is the act of Kalipurusha, the ruler of Kaliyuga who wants to establish his supremacy).

After some time Sage Sameeka's son Shrungi comes and sees the dead snake on his father's neck and without thinking twice, gives a curse that whoever has done that nasty act would die of a serpent's bite in exactly one week's time. Sage Sameeka comes out of his trance and realises all that has happened and feels very sad. King Parikshit is a noble and pious man who looks after his subjects as his own children. In his kingdom, there is absolutely no place for unhappiness or want. Sage Sameeka himself goes to the king and reveals his son's curse and blesses him to attain the highest goal within those seven days.

Parikshit was undeterred on hearing of that curse, as he is already repenting for his ignominious behaviour. He realises that death is inevitable and wants to utilise the seven days left to him to realise the ultimate Truth. He renounces everything and with single-mindedness prays for divine guidance. That very moment, the greatest of great sages, Sri Suka Deva, comes there and Parikshit falls at his feet and begs him to enlighten him. King Parikshit attains self-realization by listening to the divine stories of the Lord Almighty with total surrender, utmost devotion and single-pointed concentration. He has not only forsaken his kingdom, family and worldly possessions but also food, water and sleep. Sage Suka Brahma is narrating the 'Bhagavatam' and Parikshit is listening attentively and pondering over it. He is absorbed in the glories of the Lord; His mind merges in Godhead. What does it matter now as to what happens to his body? He has gone beyond body consciousness!

That a true devotee never succumbs to any pressures, not even death, is proved by this story.*

**CURRENT PROGRAMMES
IMPORTANT PUJAS AND SATSANGS
AT SRI KALI GARDENS**

JANUARY 2015

- 01 Thu - English New Year - Vaikuntha Ekadasi (Mukkoti),
Uttara Dwara Darshanam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja,
Bhakta Samaradhana
- 05 Mon - Poornima - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 10 Sat - Sri Tyagaraja Swami Aaradhana
- 14 Wed - Bhogi - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana;
08.00 p.m. Bhogi Pallu to Sri Babuji
- 15 Thu - Sankranthi - Sri Guru Dasami - Sri Sadguru Pada
Puja, Satsangam, Bhakta Samaradhana
- 16 Fri - Kanuma
- 19 Mon - Maasa Sivaratri
- 20 Tue - Amavasya
- 26 Mon - Ratha Saptami
- 30 Fri - Bheeshma Ekadasi - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada
Puja

FEBRUARY 2015

- 03 Tue - Magha Poornima - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada
Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana
- 14 Sat - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 17 Tue - Maha Sivaratri - 03.00 a.m. Abhishekam with Namaka
Chamaka to Sri Sadguru Devulu;
05.30 a.m. Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Samoohika Ekadasa
Rudrabhishekam;
11.00 a.m. Sahasra Ghatabhishekam, Laksha
Bilwarchana to Sri Ramalingeswara Swami, Bhakta
Samaradhana;
06.30 p.m. Samoohika Kalyanams to Ramalingeswara
Swami, later Nagarotsavam
- 18 Wed - Amavasya
- 21 Sat - Aaradhana of Sri Lalithananda Saraswathi Swamini,
Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja.

MARCH 2015

- 05 Thu - Phalguna Poornima - Holi - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 15 Sun - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 19 Thu - Masa Sivaratri
- 20 Fri - Amavasya

(Continued in page No.28)

Children's Section
Tales of Sri Ramakrishna
SAINT NARADA AND TWO YOGIS

Ramana Prasad

Two yogis were doing penance for attaining Bhagavat-sakshatkara. Saint Narada happened to pass that way.

On seeing Narada, one of them asked “Sir, are you coming from Vaikhunta?”

Narada nodded in the affirmative.

“Then will you please tell me what God is doing?”



“I saw Him pushing elephants and camels through the needle hole,” replied Narada.

The questioning yogi then said: “Yes! Yes! It is not surprising at all. After all, nothing is impossible for the Lord.”

Listening to this conversation, the second yogi retorted thus: “This is absurd. This proves that the Devarishi did not go to Vaikhunta at all.”

The first yogi comes under the category of Bhaktas. His mentality resembles that of a child. He believes that nothing is impossible for God. Who can understand God and His deeds completely?*

STORIES OF DEVOTEES MADALASA - THE IDEAL MOTHER

Ramana Prasad

Once there was a king who ruled his subjects in a righteous manner and treated all of them with great compassion. He was a great devotee of God. He used to spend his spare time in the company of saints and follow their directives meticulously. Just as many birds take shelter on a banyan tree, so also many spiritual aspirants approached the king and acquired jnana. His little daughter Madalasa chose her father as Guru and under his guidance she became a Poorna Jnani.

After a few years she got married to Rithudwaja who was ruling the neighbouring kingdom. Madalasa put a condition at the time of her wedding that she should be given a free hand in bringing up the offspring in a manner she wanted. Rithudwaja agreed to this condition.

When she gave birth to a male child, the king christened him 'Vikranta'. Madalasa laughed at this. The king did not understand the reason. While rearing the child, she used to sing songs of vedanta tatwas full of philosophical meaning. When the child cried, she used to cajole like this: "Why do you weep? You should not weep because you are a 'Niranjana'. You are not the body. The body is just like the shirt you are wearing. Your parents and relatives are a myth. They never belong to you. Only 'Brahmanandam' is real. You are born to get it." She brought up the prince in such a manner that his orientation was always to become a Brahmajnani unmindful of worldly desires. If such Jnana Mathas like Madalasa were there, people would be free from greed and contempt. They would have been poised with a balanced attitude in times of joy and distress.

Vikranta renounced the world when he was very young, did penance in a forest and became a Brahmajnani.

Soon Madalasa gave birth to the second son. Rithudwaja named him 'Subahu'. Madalasa laughed again. The king could not understand the reason for this. She brought up the second child in a similar manner as she brought up Vikranta. She sowed the seeds of jnana in him. When he grew up, he also renounced the world and went to forest to do penance and became a jnani.

When Madalasa gave birth to the third son, the king named him 'Satrumardana'. She laughed as usual, and reared him by teaching Atma Vidya. The third son also became a Brahmajnani.

Rithudwaja started worrying about who would take the reins of kingdom from him, since every son born to him got Atmasakshatkara and were not interested in rulership. In fact, he wanted to take vanaprastashram after crowning the heir apparent.

Meanwhile, Madalasa gave birth to the fourth son. The king remembered her laughter whenever he did Namakaranam to them. This time he asked her to decide the name herself. She named him as 'Alarka'. The meaning of this name is 'mad dog'. Stunned, the king asked her "Devi! Do you think that this name is proper?"



With rays of wisdom emanating from her, she looked at her lord and said, "Do you think that the names you chose for his brothers suited them? 'Vikranta' means 'one who moves from place to place. Atma is all pervading. How can it move? You named the second son as 'Subahu' which means 'one who possesses powerful arms'. When Atma has no form, where is the question of having arms? You named the third child as 'Satrumardana'. How there can exist friend or foe to the all

pervading Atma? We give names only to follow the traditions established by our elders. There is nothing sacrosanct in these names. We give names only to identify the persons. In such a case what is wrong in the name chosen by me?”

The king had no reply. He asked her to grant him a boon. “Please allow at least this boy to become my heir apparent,” he begged. All those present there lauded him. She took pity and started training the boy in Pravritti Marga in contrast to the Nivritti Marga she taught to her other three sons. Although outwardly it appeared that he was getting trained in worldly knowledge which would make him suitable to perform the royal duties, she was always keeping him on the track of Atma Marga.

One day Rithudwaja decided to crown Alarka, so that he could retire to Vanaprastashram along with the queen. Madalasa called her son and said, “These worldly bonds are unavoidable. At a time when you are faced with any grave situation, please read the inscription in the scroll which I had rolled into the ring I am going to give you.” With this advice Alarka was crowned. Madalasa left with her husband to the forest.

Alarka was ruling the kingdom in a wise and efficient manner. He was treating people as his own kith and kin. As time passed, he felt that these worldly affairs were like passing waves of sea. Slowly his mind was contemplating on Brahman. He felt that the responsibilities he was carrying were bitter. Then he remembered the ring given by his mother. He opened the scroll and read the inscription. To his great joy, a cascade of great knowledge was opened to him. His ignorance disappeared and true knowledge dawned on him.

Its message was: “You are a Niranjana.” It means ‘You are unattached’. This was exactly what Madalasa taught to her other three sons in their childhood and has now made available to Alarka in a nutshell. After all, he is the proud son of Jnana Mata Madalasa. Soon he renounced the kingdom and went to the forest and became a ‘Niranjana’ in letter and spirit.

Now we have seen how when mothers impart spiritual knowledge to their children they shine as ‘Jnana Ratnas’ (gems of wisdom). This has become evident through this small episode picked up from the ‘Markandeya Puranam’.*

Devotional Stories

KARNA'S MATCHLESS MUNIFICENCE

My dear Chiranjeevulaara:

You must have heard the stories of Karna as a 'Daanaveera'. His munificence (ready to grant any boon to anybody for mere asking) was unparalleled. Let me narrate two tales which prove Karna's zest for benevolence.

The five Pandava brothers were envious of Karna's name and fame for his munificence. Despite their basically good nature and liberal help to others, they could not get the same name and fame as Karna. One day, Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas, asked Krishna in what way Karna was superior to them in offering gifts to the needy. Krishna smiled and said: "Okay, I will give you a test and if you pass this, I acknowledge you as the Daanaveeraas."

Krishna then turned a small hillock into gold and asked the Pandavas to gift the entire gold taken out of the hillock before sunrise the next day. "Oh, such a simple test! We will do that easily," Yudhishtira said. The Pandavas laboriously extracted the gold from the hillock and donated the bits of gold to every passerby. But by the time sun rose on the east, they could clear only one-fourth of the hillock. Yudhishtira accepted defeat.

With a beaming smile, Krishna told the Pandavas, "Now see how Karna fares in this test." He then sent word for Karna and gave him the same test. Karna immediately called residents of the nearby villages and told them to take the hillock of gold, and told Krishna "I have gifted the entire gold within in the stipulated time." In no time the villagers extracted the entire gold and happily left the place.

Krishna then told Yudhishtira, "Look at Karna's presence of mind. He could pass the test without much effort. That is the greatness of his benevolence." The Pandavas felt ashamed for their jealousy.

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Like Pandavas, Duryodhana was also not happy that he could not match the benevolence of Karna, in spite of his being

the ‘Raaraju’ of Hastinapura. Though Duryodhana valued Karna’s friendship, he could not but envy the Anga king on this count. Duryodhana expressed this feeling to his maternal uncle Sakuni, who said that he would make Karna taste defeat.

One day, a Brahmin approached Duryodhana and sought the prince’s help to celebrate his daughter’s wedding. Duryodhana promised that he would give him a lot of money for the purpose. But the Brahmin said: “Sir, I do not want money. I want a large quantity of firewood for the wedding.” Duryodhana laughed and said: “Is that all? I shall arrange a heavy load of firewood for you.” He then ordered the servants to collect all the firewood in the city and hand it over to the Brahmin. When the firewood was brought before the Brahmin, he said: “Sir, these pieces of firewood are useless, because they are wet due to the recent long spell of rain. I want firewood which is dry.” Duryodhana then ordered dry firewood, but the same could not be procured because all the firewood depots in the city had only wet wood. The Hastinapura prince was at a loss to know what to do. Watching this, Sakuni told Duryodhana, “Let us send this Brahmin to Karna and see how he could procure dry firewood.”

The Brahmin then went to Karna with the same request. Without any hesitation, Karna demolished one of his palaces, removed the wooden pillars which were not wet, cut them into pieces and handed the same to the Brahmin, who gladly took them and left.

Duryodhana, who watched this act of Karna, hugged him and said: “I now understand why you are called ‘Daanaveera’. None can match your munificence.”

Children, I hope you like these two tales which reveal Karna’s extraordinary benevolence. More than offering gifts, one should also apply one’s mind so that the gift that is given is useful to the beneficiary.

Yours affectionately,
Maathula*

Babuji's Fables

GOD'S SUPREME LOVE FOR ALL BEINGS

Dr. Swarnamukhi Prasada

Lord Krishna served as Arjuna's charioteer during the Kurukshetra war, and hence was aptly called as 'Partha Sarathi'. He also saved Arjuna from all the dangerous weapons throughout the war. In fact, He bore the brunt of all those weapons.

After a day's rigorous battle, all the warriors would go to their tents, and their attendants would clean their wounds, apply medicines, etc., and do other services to their masters. But Lord Krishna would instead go and wash all the elephants and horses that had taken part in the war, clean their wounds and apply medicines on them! Such was His divine love!

When the Kurukshetra war was over, and everybody returned to their tents, Lord Krishna told Arjuna to dismount the chariot first. Arjuna felt insulted by this, as it was the rule that the charioteer should get down first and open the door for his warrior master! But the Lord insisted that Arjuna alight first, and Arjuna reluctantly obeyed.

As soon as Arjuna got down, the Lord jumped out of the chariot. That very moment, the vehicle caught fire and was totally destroyed by the flames, and Arjuna stood aghast. Then the Lord told Arjuna how He protected him during those eighteen days from all the lethal weapons.

Moral: The Lord protects us from all the deadly weapons of Samsara. If not for Him, we will be burnt in no time.

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Down Memory Lane

GOD IS THE GREATEST SECURITY

Sushumna Prasada

“Most people come to me, being agitated with a sense of insecurity. There is no question of time, age or sex to feel this sense of insecurity. Some people in the pink of youth, who are expected to be in the finest of spirits with enthusiasm and cheerfulness, shudder with fear about their future,” Lord Babuji observed in one of his discourses. “Some youngsters come to me saying that future appears bleak to them as there is no guarantee of job after struggling hard to gain the required educational qualification. Middle aged people also shiver with the problem of insecurity regarding the future of their sons and daughters. Sex offers no exemption to this problem. Men or women, young or old, are afflicted with this problem equally. Old people complain that the negligence of their children makes them helpless with a threatening feeling of insecurity and the future appears dark and bleak to them.”

Lord Babuji pointed out that lack of trust or faith in God was the main source of their sorrow and worry. In all these cases, people concentrated on the future, ignoring the present. They had forgotten the saying ‘If you take care of the present, future will take care of itself’, Sadguru Maharaj said and continued the discourse.

Time is priceless. Time has to be utilised in the best possible way. If you take responsibility of the present with implicit faith in God, future automatically takes its own shape. People pondering over future neglect the duties and responsibilities of the present. In other words, the importance of the time factor has been ignored. When a person recognises that every second, every minute is precious, he will not waste time. He makes the best use of it and the future does not threaten him like a devil.

In the case of all people who come to seek his advice and help, fear of future is dominant. A genuine devotee never shirks his responsibility. A devotee who has complete faith that God (Guru) is his saviour has no need to entertain the feeling of insecurity for he has complete confidence that God will be by his side in the stress and strain of life and lead him along the right path. A genuine devotee would have a smooth sail in the sea of life as he wears the waterproof armour of divine security. Let me narrate an anecdote which proves the power and glory of divine security.

There was a poor woman who lived in a cottage near the forest with her only little son. Though she had no physical or moral support

from her kith and kin, her trust and faith in God made her lead a life of contentment and security. Her son went to school daily, passing through the forest. One day the boy came home shivering with fear and complained to his mother that he could not go alone in the forest as he heard the roar of a tiger. His mother consoled him saying that there was no danger to him from a lion or any other wild animal as he was secure in the hands of God. She told him: “Lord Krishna is your brother. He will be there in the forest looking after the cattle. So, be fearless and shed your timidity as you have the protective care of your brother Krishna, who would come to your rescue in the hour of any crisis. Just shout loudly, ‘Brother Krishna, come to my rescue’. He would immediately come and protect you.”

The boy had complete faith in the words of his mother and went through the forest courageously. The moment he heard the roar of a tiger or a lion, he would shout loudly ‘Brother Krishna save me, come to my rescue’. And Lord Krishna would respond to his call by appearing as a cowherd. He would hold the boy’s finger in His hand and accompany him till he crossed the forest, assuring him that there was no danger to his life as long as He was there by his side. This went on, and the boy used to go to school in a cheerful mood.

One day, his mother asked him whether he had seen a lion or tiger in the forest. The boy replied in a jubilant mood that he strictly followed her instructions. “Whenever I was afraid, I would shout loudly ‘Brother Krishna, come to my rescue.’ Immediately Brother Krishna would come, placing His hand on my shoulder. I would be thrilled by His miraculous touch. His sweet sight would make me forget everything else and I would begin to dance with joy. Mom, you have given me a wonderful and peerless brother. I am totally indebted to you. I cannot explain the thrill, joy and excitement I feel in His presence. I forget everything else.” The mother’s joy knew no bounds seeing the inestimable fortune of her son.

Narrating this story, Lord Babuji pointed out that the pure innocence and total faith of the boy in the words of his mother offered him matchless divine security. Nothing is equal to his mother’s marvellous guidance. Guru Maharaj remarked that any devotee who had total trust and confidence in the instruction of his Guide (Gurudev) like the innocent boy, finds his life secure in the protective care of God.

Lord Babuji concluded that if a devotee dedicated the present in the service of God, the future would hold no terror for him. The present offered a smooth rosy path for the future by the grace of Lord (Gurudev). It would drive away all sense of insecurity.*

SRI BABUJI'S 26TH PUNYA AARADHANA CELEBRATIONS

A REPORT

The 26th Punya Aaradhana of Sadguru Sri Babuji Maharaj was celebrated with all devotional fervour from 9th to 17th November 2014. On the inaugural day, Sri Mataji and devotees adopted deeksha at 6.30 a.m. and Sri Mataji lit the Akhanda Jyothi.

In addition to the daily programmes during the day, Sri Sadguru Punya Aaradhana was observed at night on a couple of days. Cradle service (Oonjala Seva) to Sri Babuji was conducted on 14th. A beautiful and artistic chariot was prepared by well experienced experts in carpentry from Hyderabad, and it was commissioned by Sri Mataji that day. On 15th at 5 p.m. the idol of Sri Babuji was taken in procession in the chariot.

Many devotees participated in Samuhika Sadguru Puja on 16th. At the time of Maha Mangala Harathi in the evening of 16th, innumerable lights were offered (Deepotsavam) to Sri Babuji. Maha Abhishekam to Sri Babuji with 'Rudra Namaka Chamakam' in Brindavanam was conducted at 3 a.m. on 17th, the last day of the celebrations. After the morning Sadguru Puja and Yaga Purnahuthi on 17th, Deeksha Viramana was performed. The same evening at 7 p.m. Sri Babuji was taken in procession in palanquin and at 8 p.m. the Float Festival (Teppotsavam) was conducted.

Many devotees took Babuji Deeksha for 41 days (Mandalam) on 8th October 2014 (Aswayuja Purnima) and it ended on 17th November.

Sri Sadguru Paduka Viswa Santhi Yagam was performed from 9th to 17th November under the aegis of Brahmasri Konduri Ramasubrahmanyam. All the devotees who took Babuji Deeksha participated in the Yagam on all the days.

The following are the details of the satsangs, held from 10th to 16th November.

On 11th, Sri Vijnananda Saraswathi Swamini of Sri Lalithananda Ashramam, Ongole, in her discourse, said, “Have faith in Sadguru. His lotus feet are to be treated as most valuable jewellery. You have to keep Guru’s feet in your heart with care just like you protect your money. If you serve the Guru sincerely, you have no birth and death.”

On 15th, Sri Dandi Nirmalanandagiri Swami of Sri Ashta Lakshmi Peetham, Tenali, in his discourse, described Sri Kali Gardens Ashramam as a Mahakshetram “since God, Guru and Jnana are available here”. Stating that the “Sadguru moulds the true disciples just like him (Sadguru)”, the Swamiji said that it was beautiful and valuable if an animal grew physically, but a human mind should develop devotionally.

On 16th, Sri Vidya Swaroopanandagiri Swami of Sri Sukabrahma Ashramam, Sri Kalahasti, explained, “Whatever we see, it will be destroyed some day or the other. Whatever knowledge we acquire externally is only temporary. But, the knowledge that oozes from one’s within cannot be destroyed. Through practice, one can become eligible for Guru’s blessings.”

Sri Brahma Vidyanandagiri Swami, also of Sri Sukabrahma Ashramam, Sri Kalahasti, said that it was our primary duty to feel and praise the glories of Guru. “The Guru is a liberated person and he does not have any wants or duties as he has had the taste of the nectar of Jnana”

Sri Pranavanandagiri Swami remarked that human life was not a waste, but meaningful. “You devotees in the Sri Kali Gardens Ashramam have become ‘Jnanis’ with the blessings of Sadguru Maharaj and thus you are all lucky. Guru is the greatest and Guru’s position is equal to that of Parabrahman.”

Sri Mataji in Her discourses from 10th to 16th, spoke elaborately about the impact of Maya on human beings; knowing about the ‘formless’ Sadguru only through His ‘form’; and the nature of Brahmajnani. She also emphasised that realising the formless God “is the real Aaradhana”.

Thus, the 26th Punya Aaradhana celebrations of Sadguru Sri Babuji concluded happily and on a grand note.*

WAITING FOR SRI RAMA—IV

(Continued from the previous issue)

Ramaswami Sampath

The loud sound of the snapping of the Siva Dhanus at Mithila was heard by Parasurama who was performing penance in the distant Mahendragiri. ‘Oh! The Siva Dhanus has been broken. That means the time has come for the moment I have been waiting all along,’ thought Parasurama, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Immediately, he took hold of his Narayana Dhanus and proceeded towards Mithila, with all the speed at his command.

By that time, the wedding of Sita and Rama was over and the royal entourage was returning to Ayodhya. Suddenly, they felt as if a storm was brewing to sweep them all. Dasaratha was perplexed and asked Kulaguru Vasishta what was happening. The sage replied: “Parasurama is coming towards us.” The moment Dasaratha heard the name of Parasurama, who had destroyed kshatriyas in large number to avenge the slaying of his father Jamadagni by Karthaveeryarjuna, the king started shivering.

As Parasurama neared the entourage, Dasaratha rushed towards him and fell at his feet. “O great sage! Has not your anger subsided after killing so many kings? Having renounced your violent ways and taken to ascetic order, is it fair on your part to confront us like this?” pleaded Dasaratha with Parasurama, who brushed him aside and straightaway addressed Rama thus: “Oh, you are the one that has broken the Siva bow. What was great about it? That bow had already suffered a crack during the duel between Narayana and Siva long ago.”

[Viswakarma once made two bows and presented them to Siva and Vishnu. Brahma, who was curious to know which bow was stronger than the other, encouraged the two Lords to have a friendly fight. Siva and Vishnu sportingly took the challenge and started shooting arrows at each other. At one stage, Siva’s bow cracked, and this enraged the Lord to fight with further vigour. Brahma, realising that things were getting serious, pacified both the Lords and put an end to the fight. The two bows over a period reached Janaka and Jamadagni]

Before replying, Rama bowed to Parasurama and asked him: “Oh, son of the great sage Jamadagni, what is your intention? Yes I broke Siva’s bow but never claimed that I am a great archer. What do you want me to do?”

“Let me see whether you can even lift this Narayana bow. If you can handle it effectively, I shall recognise you as a great archer,” said Parasurama.

With a beaming face, Rama then gently picked the bow from Parasurama and in a trice tied its chord and fixed his favourite arrow Kothandam on it. “Oh great Brahmana! I can easily kill you with my Kothandam, as it cannot go waste. But I do not want to slay a sage. Show me some target so that my Kothandam would be appeased.”

As Rama took the bow, Parasurama felt as if all his powers had been transferred to the prince of Ayodhya. Feeling satisfied that the Narayana bow had reached the right person, outwardly he accepted defeat and declared: “Oh Rama! I was only waiting for a great archer like you to hand over this bow. Since I have gifted all the kingdoms won from the kshatriyas to sage Kasyapa, I am left with only the powers acquired by my austere penance. You can target them and leave me alone to settle down somewhere on the western sea.” So saying, Parasurama left the scene, fully satisfied that his long wait had not gone waste.

After the humbling of Parasurama by his son, Dasaratha returned to Ayodhya in a joyful mood. Years rolled by. One day, Dasaratha thought thus: ‘The current planetary positions in the zodiac are not auspicious for me. May be, my end is nearing. Before that, I must crown Rama.’ He then called his ministers, political advisers and leading citizens for consultation and expressed his desire. All of them unanimously applauded the proposal. Dasaratha felt happy.

At the same time, he had a doubt in his mind whether his decision would be accepted by his father-in-law Kekaya, to whom he had promised while marrying his daughter Kaikeyi that the son born to her would be crowned. ‘He may raise some objection now quoting my promise. But then the situation was different, as I was issueless. Now things have changed. As per the tradition of Ikshvaku lineage, only the son of the senior most queen (‘pattapu rani’) should ascend the throne. So, there is nothing wrong in my decision. I must immediately send Kaikeyi’s son Bharata to his uncle. If I crown Rama in the absence of Bharata, Kekaya cannot do anything against the fait accompli. I need not worry about Kaikeyi, because she loves Rama more than her own son and her affection towards Rama is superior to that of Kousalya. Let me get Kaikeyi’s consent

for my decision. I shall ask her to be my charioteer for going to the forest for hunting wild animals. Isn't driving my chariot during war time and 'shikaar' (game) dear to her heart? In the forest, I shall talk to her in private and get her nod for crowning Rama.' Thinking thus, Dasaratha proceeded to the forest with Kaikeyi as his charioteer.

After the game was over, Dasaratha felt tired and preferred to rest underneath a tree, laying his head in the lap of Kaikeyi. At that time a bird couple was perched on one of the branches and talking to each other. Since Kaikeyi knew the language of the birds, she showed interest in listening to what they were talking, so as to while away the time.

The male bird told its mate: "My dear, do you know this man who is resting in the lap of his wife? He is Ayodhya king Dasaratha and she is his youngest queen Kaikeyi. Poor king, he wants to crown his eldest son Rama, without knowing that after the next few days whoever sits on the Ayodhya throne would die."

The female bird asked her mate how it could know future happenings. The male bird replied that because it saved a sage from the arrow of a hunter, it was blessed by that muni with this predicting power.

Kaikeyi was shocked to hear that prediction. 'Danger to my dearest Rama's life? This cannot be, and I will not allow it to happen. Oh, Ayodhya throne, wait for the privilege of Rama's ascension for fourteen years,' she commanded the 'simhaasanam'.

She also made up her mind to tell her lord to desist from crowning Rama now. At the same time, she was not sure whether the king would believe a bird's prediction. She then decided to consult her dear servant maid Manthara on this. 'Manthara is intelligent, and she will definitely come up with a correct solution to this problem,' she felt.

Soon Dasaratha woke up from siesta, and said to Kaikeyi, "My dear, I have an important issue to discuss with you." But Kaikeyi overruled him by saying, "My lord, you are tired now and need good rest. We shall discuss the matter leisurely after reaching the palace." She then guided her husband to the chariot and drove it fast to Ayodhya.

- to be continued

LIKE A MINIATURE ROYAL TIGER

-Ramakrishna.G



(In Sarika (Saraswathi) Devi temple, Kashmir on 18.5.2014)

Like a miniature royal tiger
The cat strolled down to
Mathaji, rubbed against Her
As if to get Her Divine touch.

Arching upward its back and
Lowering its head to the ground
The cat touched Her divine feet
Stunning the gathering present.

What did the cat see in Mathaji
That it prostrated at her feet?
What did it see in Her that we the
Human beings failed to notice?



Sadguru's Glory!

OMNISCIENT SRI BABU

Jagam

Unintentionally many people utter lies, sometimes. They may not be aware that they are lying on such occasions. Whatever may be the reason, it is undesirable to lie. That is why Sri Babuji said, “Trio of limitations, trio of friends” (Mitha Thrayam, Mithra Thrayam - ‘limited diet, limited speech, limited sleep’). We should not speak about what we do not know. In the process of speaking the unlimited, lies may roll out of the mouth.

Sometimes, we may forget by the evening what we ate in the morning. Then, is it possible for somebody else, who is far away from us to know what we did and what we ate? Yes it is possible, but only for Mahatmas. That is omniscience.

Such a pastime of Sri Babuji happened in 1975. Sri Konda Sitarama Raju, a staunch devotee of Sri Babu, stayed previously with family at Nambur. Smt. Charumathi Devi is his wife. Raghava Raju and Umamaheswara Raju alias Chinna are their sons.

One day Chinna (aged about 14 years) went to Sri Kali Gardens Ashramam to see Babuji. At that time, Sri Babu was speaking to a devotee in Vasista Ashramam. Chinna stood near the premises, waiting for a chance to go near Sri Babu, who saw him and told the devotee to observe silently what went on.

Babuji yelled at Chinna, “Hey, you donkey, come here.”

‘Is it me whom Babu is calling? No’, Chinna thought. He looked around for confirmation. There was nobody. “Is it me you are calling, Babuji?” he questioned.

“Yes, come here.”

Chinna went near Babu, offered salutations and stood obediently.

Babuji asked him “Have you taken lunch?”

“Yes, Babuji.”

“What is the curry, in today’s lunch?”

“It is meat Babu.”

“What meat?”

“I think it is mutton, Babu.”

“Idiot! You ate the meat of donkey, but you are bluffing.

How dare you utter a lie before me?”

Chinna replied firmly, “No Babu. It was only mutton. I saw my mother cooking it.”

“Shut up. You are repeating the same lie. Get out.” Babuji said.

With a sad face, Chinna went home. He was very unhappy because Babu scolded him for no fault of his.

The devotee, with whom Babu was, then said innocently, “Babu, what is this? He says that he ate mutton curry, which his mother prepared. But, you say it is donkey’s meat. Doesn’t he know what he ate? How can you say that he ate donkey’s meat, unless you see him eating or his mother cooking it?”

“His mother didn’t know what she cooked. How could this fellow know what he ate?” Babuji quipped.

“How is it possible to cook, without knowing what is being cooked?” the devotee asked.

“That is it. My Divine Mother told me so. She cannot be wrong.”

“I am much confused. I can’t understand your words. But it is wonderful!” said the devotee.

“No. It is not my wonder. It is my Mother’s. Kalimatha likes to spend some time with Her children pleasantly. So, now and then she does some pastimes through me and enjoys. I know nothing,” said Babuji.

After going home, Chinna asked his mother angrily, “Mother, is it not mutton what you cooked in the morning?” She replied in the affirmative.

“But Babuji told me that I ate donkey’s meat and scolded me for telling a lie.”

“If Babu said so, there must be some truth behind it. I will find out the fact from Mangamma aunty, who gave us the meat,” she consoled him.

By that time Smt. Mangamma, the house owner’s wife, came there. Charumathi Devi welcomed her and asked “Was it not mutton you gave me in the morning? It was very tasty.”

“No, it was not mutton. It was donkey’s meat. I didn’t tell you so, because you would not take it. Hence I wantonly told you that it was mutton,” Mangamma replied.

“Chinna, did you understand what aunty said? Sister, I cooked it thinking it was mutton. Chinna also thought it to be mutton and ate it. But, when he went to the ashramam, Babuji told him that he ate donkey’s meat and scolded him for telling a lie. So, Chinna is very angry with me.”

Mangamma wondered and said, “You didn’t know what you cooked. Chinna too didn’t know what he ate. Then how could Babu know?”

Chinna asked his mother, “Babu was not here when aunty gave you the meat or when you were cooking or when I was eating. How could he be so emphatic?”

“That is Babuji’s omniscience. He knows everything,” Charumathi Devi said, with folded hands.

Mangamma astonishingly said, “It seems your Babuji is very glorious.”

Charumathi Devi corrected her, “Not ‘seems’. He is really glorious and omniscient.”*

CURRENT PROGRAMMES

-contd. from page No.10

- 21 Sat - Ugadi -Sri Manmadha Nama Samvatsaram festival;
11.00 a.m. Panchanga Sravanam, Sri Sadguru Pada
Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana
21.03.2015 to 27.03.2015 - Mouna Dhyana Saptaham
28 Sat - Sri Rama Navami - 05.30 a.m. Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
11.00 a.m. Samuhika Sri Sita Rama Kalyanams, Bhakta
Samaradhana

APRIL 2015

- 04 Sat - Chaitra Poornima - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja,
Chandra Grahanam
14 Tue - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
17 Fri - Masa Sivaratri
18 Sat - Amavasya
21 Tue - Akshaya Trutiya - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
23 Thu - Sri Sankara Jayanthi - 21st Sadguru Murthi pratishta
Sadguru Pada Puja, Satsangam, Bhakta Samaradhana

GLORIOUS DEVOTEES

PUNDAREEKA

C.V. Ramana Babu

(Translation of Telugu original by Jagam)

Once, a couple - Jahnava and Satyaki - lived in Lohadandapuram village. They were devotees of Srimannarayana. After a long time, they were blessed with a son whom they named Pundareeka. As he grew up, Pundareeka was seduced by bad habits, including womanising. He neglected his parents and used to harass them frequently. Their efforts at making him lead a virtuous life failed. Vexed, they decided to go to a holy place and die there. They met some pilgrims going to Kasi on foot and joined them.

After a few days, Pundareeka and his wife too started for Kasi, riding two horses. On their way, they came across his parents, walking with great difficulty due to old age. Even then, he did not care for them and proceeded towards Kasi. He stopped at the ashramam of sage Kukkutamuni and checked into a choultry, opposite the ashramam.

From there they watched the sage serving his parents. When asked by Pundareeka as to why he was serving the aged people ignoring even ashramam activities, the sage replied: "Parents are more important to me than even God, and so I worship them. I feel happy in serving them."

He then enquired the sage about the distance to Kasi from there. When the sage blinked, Pundareeka ridiculed him, "Don't you know the holy place Kasi which is very near to your ashramam? You seem to be an ignoramus in the guise of a sage. Your life is a waste."

Around midnight that day, Pundareeka noticed three ugly women entering the ashramam. He was frightened because they looked like devils. He saw them cleaning the ashramam so that it looked neat and tidy, and decorated it with attractive 'rangoli' designs. After this service their faces started glowing and they looked like angels. Pundareeka watched this happening almost regularly every night.

Getting bold, one night he asked them who they were. The eldest among them said: “I am Ganga. These are my sisters Yamuna and Saraswathi. Though we are holy rivers, we get polluted by the dip of vicious people. To get ourselves cleansed off the blemishes we suffer every day, we do this service to the ashramam and get relieved of the sins acquired by us.”

Looking at the perplexed Pundareeka, Ganga asked him to get out since he was a sinner. He then prostrated at Her feet and begged that he be relieved of his sins. Ganga Devi then said, “You are a traitor to your parents and have thus committed heinous sins. But, only due to your virtues in the previous birth, you could enter this ashramam of sage Kukkutamuni and even we became visible to you.”

She then explained the greatness of Kukkutamuni: “He treats service to parents is more important than penance, yaga, dip in holy rivers, etc. To the sage mother and father are more pious than earth and sky respectively. So, by the mere sight of his, all our sins get dissolved. So, we are coming daily to his ashramam and do some service to wipe out our sins. So, you too go and serve your parents sincerely. Your sins will vanish and you will be blessed by Lord Srimannarayana.” Advising Pundareeka thus, Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswathi disappeared.

Pundareeka realised his mistake. He went to Kukkutamuni, offered salutations to him and received his blessings. Thereafter, he and his wife searched and found his parents. He took them to Kasi by giving them horse ride, made them take the holy dip in the Ganga and returned home, where he and his wife started doing all the service required by them. This way they turned a new leaf and felt very happy.

Once, Vritha, a demon, was doing penance. Indra, the king of gods, came there and finding it to be the appropriate opportunity to easily get rid of Vritha, he beheaded the demon using his Vajrayudham. With the power of penance, the demon, though beheaded, cursed Indra, “As you killed me while I was in penance, you will become a brick and stay on earth.” A frightened Indra prayed to Sri Hari, who appeared before him and said, “You go to earth, stay as a brick in the ashramam of Pundareeka. Some day, I will come there and stand on you.

Then you will be relieved of the demon's curse.” Indra went to Dindeeravanam on earth, where Pundareeka was staying, turned as brick and was awaiting the arrival of Sri Hari.

One day, while Pundareeka was serving his parents, Sri Hari came there and stood behind him. Pundareeka felt Sri Hari's arrival and had the darshan of Him. But, he wished that there should be no disturbance to his service to the parents. So, he picked up the nearby brick on which the name 'Vithal' was inscribed, threw it before Sri Hari and commanded Him, “Stand



on this brick till I complete my service to parents.” Sri Hari happily obeyed him and stood on Indra, who was in the form of that brick. He rested His hands on the waist and was happily observing the services rendered by Pundareeka to his parents. Indra was thus relieved of the demon's curse.

Pundareeka completed the service and turned towards Sri Hari. He prostrated at His lotus feet and rendered some hymns. Pleased, Sri Hari addressed Pundareeka thus: “You are great in doing service to your parents. You are second to none in your love for parents. I will give you a boon. Tell Me your wish.”

“O Lord! As You stood on the brick on which the name 'Vithal' was inscribed, You kindly stay here and be called 'Vithalnadh'. Give darshan to devotees and remove all their sins. Let this place become famous by the name 'Pundareekapuram' (gradually it changed to Pandaripuram) and may You be addressed as 'Panduranga' by devotees.”

Sri Hari acceded to his wishes and blessed Pundareeka. The Lord also named the river flowing nearby as 'Chandrabhaga' since it resembled moon's crescent. Then onwards sages, devotees and pilgrims have been visiting Pandaripuram and worshipping Vithalnadh.*

THE GLORY OF THE HOLY NAME!

Gurudas

*“The vasanas (blemishes acquired over several births) that hamper spiritual progress are, like oil, sticky. Put into the mind the wick of a name – the name of the Lord - and burn it quick and fast by repeating the name with intense devotion and shraddha. The oil will soon be exhausted. The more intense your effort, the more quickly the vasanas will get exhausted. That is the way to success.
- BABUJI*

People who have never tried the practice of repeating the name of God generally scoff at it. The repetition seems to them so empty and mechanical. They cannot believe that just repeating some word again and again can bring any benefit.

Sadly we fool ourselves that our thinking is logical and our thoughts useful. The fact, however, is that useful thoughts occupy a very small portion of our time. Usually our thoughts centre around disconnected impressions, irrelevant memories, a host of fears, resentments, etc. In short all our thoughts, if we observe, are conditioned by outer circumstances.

Now if we start repeating the name of God, we shall find that we can control our moods in spite of outer interference. We must remember that each word that we use is surrounded by a particular mental climate. If we go on repeating ‘calamity...calamity’, we will get into a panic mood. Similarly, the name of God with its holy climate is bound to change our mood in a positive way.

In the Sikh scriptures we come across the phrase

“NANAK NAM JAHAZ HAI
JO CHADE SO UTAREPAAR”

(The Name of God is the boat that will take you across the ocean of samsara).

The name is enough to give us the results of Sadhana. This is accepted by all the shastras - in fact, by various faiths of the world.

When you repeat the name, the sweetness of your chosen form must come to memory and just as your mouth waters when

you remember a relished dish, so also your mind must water when you contemplate the form. The Lord has said that where His name is sung “tatra tishtami” (there I stand). He establishes Himself there.

On this subject, the story of Hanuman is very inspiring, when he was gifted with a ratnamala. Hanuman placed it on his ear, and then he bit it with his teeth. Sri Rama asked why he was doing this. He answered, “I am finding out whether it has the Rama Nama which alone I want.” Then Rama embraced him and said, “Maruti, what other gift can I give you? I shall give you Myself as the gift. Accept Me.” That is why wherever Hanuman is there Rama is bound to be there.

The common excuse of people is that one has no time for Nama Smaran in the hectic schedule of life. But we must try to make it a continuing basic activity like breathing.

The practice of Nama Smaran is the easiest and the best method of realising God in this era of Kali. Saints like Mirabai, Tulasidas, Surdas, Kabir, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and many others realised God by this sadhana alone. In fact, God is always after such saints. He pampers and listens to them. Prahlada is an example of one who was all the while in the presence of Hari.

Our scriptures speak about the place of the Nama Smaran in the four yugas – Satya yuga, Treta yuga, Dwapara yuga and Kali yuga. The chariot of Dharma has been moving in all the four yugas.

During Satya yuga it was moving on four wheels, namely Truth, Purity, Rituals and Nama.

When Treta yuga dawned, the first wheel of Truth fell off and only the other three remained. People generally gave up listening to rishis and elders.

When Dwapara yuga came, the second wheel of Purity fell off and the chariot of Dharma was moving only on two wheels. Now there was neither Truth nor Purity. Rituals were there but became artificial and devoid of Truth. Superstition became rampant and poojaris became hypocrites. Many different sects came up and divisions arose among people.

With the advent of Kali yuga the third wheel of Rituals like yagnas fell off, leaving the only one wheel of Nama..

The chariot of Dharma could hardly stand on one wheel, so it has become weak and unsteady. So weak is Dharma in Kali yuga that the good is called evil, and the evil is called good! The hypocrite is extolled and the pure is denounced. We have lost the wisdom to know the difference between sweetness and sourness, between amrut and poison. All round there is cheating, selfishness, deceit and cruelty.

Yet it is clear that out of the four wheels of the chariot of Dharma, the strongest is Nama, which has withstood the battles of all the four yugas and is still standing strong today. In every yuga there is a speciality with the Lord ever present in all the four yugas, and it is the good that is upholding Dharma every time it weakens. In the previous yugas many difficult things were prescribed like yagnas, havans, sanyasa, vanavasa, etc. But in Kali yuga the Lord has prescribed the sadhana of Nama only to uplift people and take them on the spiritual path.

If we have the intoxication of Nama and Love for the Lord we do not need shastra vidya, tapasya, pooja and rituals. So let us do kirtan and sit with the saints. The more we recite the Name the more it will grow within us. We must recite the Name either silently or loudly and either alone or with others, but it must come from the heart.*

OBITUARY

Sri Ajjarapu Veerabhadra Rao (A.V.Rao) aged 90 years. a resident of Ashramam and an ardent devotee of Sri Babuji Maharaj, attained Guru Sayujyam on Saturday,18.10.2014.

May Sri Gurudev bestow peace to his soul and courage to the family members.

OBITUARY

Smt Varanasi Padmavathi, wife of Bhanu Prasad, aged 44 years, a resident of Hyderabad and an ardent devotee of Sri Babuji Maharaj, attained Guru Sayujyam on Saturday,18.10.2014.

May Sri Gurudev bestow peace to her soul and courage to the family members.

UDDHAVA'S EGO GETS A BEATING

Dr.Sujatha Rao

Uddhava was a great intellectual, who was educated by Brihaspati, the guru of the Devas. He was the son of Devabhaga, born and brought up in Mathura. According to some traditions, Uddhava grew up with Krishna in Vrindavan.

There were many differences between Krishna and Uddhava. The latter was raised in the city. He was a scholar of the scriptures, whereas Krishna grew up in a village of cowherds. He was charming though looked uneducated. He was mighty enough to overthrow Kamsa. In spite of their differences, Uddhava realised that Krishna was not an ordinary soul. While Krishna saw in Uddhava a seeker.

Uddhava was famous for two major events that took place during his life time. In one event Krishna requested him to go to Vrindavan and convey to the milkmaids there that He would never come back to Vrindavan contrary to the promise He had given to the Gopikas. Krishna wanted to show Uddhava that divine love was above wisdom.

Uddhava was egoistic over his knowledge and thought inferior of the Gopikas as uneducated. He wanted to give them knowledge through his own wisdom! So, he went to the Gopikas and told them not to weep for Krishna and to acquire Brahma Gyan. Udhava tried to teach them yoga and meditation and told them that they should go into deep trance and forget the body and that they should try one of the yogas to reach God. But the Gopikas told him that they were in 'Krishna samadhi' all the time and experiencing all three yogas (Rajyoga, Gyana yoga and Bhakti yoga). Uddhava for the first time understood the true meaning of Bhakti yoga.

Krishna, with a view to teaching Uddhava a lesson, sent him to console the Gopikas. On reaching there, he tried to explain to them with his theoretical knowledge. But the Gopikas made him realise the meaning of pure Bhakti and that it was to surrender to Krishna totally through devotion, love and trust. Then Uddhava realised how egoistic he was with his

bookish knowledge. In fact, the Gopikas became Uddhava's teacher!

In the other incident during the final chapter of Krishna's avatar, a great civil war broke out amongst the Yadavas. Uddhava had earlier watched Krishna shift the Yadavas out of Mathura to Dwaraka in order to protect them from frequent wars with Jarasandha. The same Krishna did not stop his kinsmen from killing each other now. Uddhava had watched Krishna help the Pandavas to win the war against the Kauravas, but was at a loss to know now how a hunter's poisoned arrow could fatally strike Krishna on the sole of his left foot.

Uddhava was speechless when Krishna calmly requested him to convey the message of his demise to the women, children and aged people, his old father included, the news of the great tragic end of the Yadava clan. Uddhava could not understand how calm and cool Krishna could be at this juncture. Krishna understood the dilemma Uddhava was going through and questioned whether he was not detached.

Krishna then revealed to his friend the 'Hamsa Gita', the song of the swan. These teachings of Krishna to Uddhava, spread over 23 chapters - from the 7th to 29th - of the 11th Skandha (canto) of 'Srimad Bhagavatam' came to be known as the 'Uddhava Gita'. These two events in Uddhava's life are associated with pain and separation.*

**INVITATION
HYDERABAD BRANCH PROGRAMME**

22.01.2015 Thu to 26.01.2015 Mon - Panchahnika
Satsangs

25.01.2015 Sun, 10.08 a.m. - Pratishtha Mahotsavam of
Sri Sadguru Dev's Idol

ALL ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

Babu Bhakta Samaj
Hyderabad

HE PLEASED THE LORD WITH HIS SON'S MEAT

-Ramaswami S.

Once, in a village called Tiruchengaattaangudi in the Cauvery delta region there lived a lad by name Paramjyoti. He had a strong physique and was well versed in martial arts. On the advice of village elders, he decided to join the army of the Pallava king Mahendra Varma of Kanchi. When Paramjyoti met the king for the purpose, he was given a rigorous test. The king was impressed with the performance of the lad who was made one of the junior generals of the army. By virtue of his mastery over all aspects of warfare and loyalty to the king, Paramjyoti became a close aide to Narasimha Varma who succeeded Mahendra Varma as the Pallava king.

When Narasimha Varma invaded the Chalukya capital of Vatapi, Paramjyoti was the army chief and ensured the victory over the Chalukyas. After the war, Paramjyoti returned to Kanchi, where he had the 'darshan' of the great Siva devotee Appar, who saw a divine spark in the army chief. The saint told him thus: "Instead of worshipping Lord Siva and serving His devotees, why are you indulging in wars mercilessly killing people?" This comment raised the dormant 'saatvic' nature in Paramjyoti and he instantly became a disciple of Appar. Soon he left the military service of the king and returned to his village and devoted his life in the service of Siva 'bhaktas'. His wife Umayaal was a tower of strength in this mission.

Paramjyoti called himself 'Siruthondar' (little servitor) of Lord Siva and used to host devotees visiting the village, where he had consecrated the temple of 'Vatapi Ganapathi' with the Ganesha idol he had brought from Vatapi as war trophy. He devoted all his riches for this purpose and became popular as a benevolent host of Siva devotees.

Pleased with Siruthondar's services to His devotees, Lord Siva wanted to proclaim to the world His devotee's sincerity of purpose. One day, the Lord disguised Himself as a Kaapaalika and reached Tiruchengaattaangudi. Siruthondar saw the Kaapaalika and immediately fell prostrate at his feet and requested him to dine in his house. But the Kaapaalika turned down the request saying, "You cannot satisfy me with ordinary food. I take food once in six months and the food shall be 'nara maamsam' (meat of a human being) and that meat should be of the only son of a couple who should offer it to me without shedding a tear of sorrow. The child also should willingly agree to be cooked. Can you arrange such a feast for me?"

Siruthondar was at a loss to know what to do. Which mother would part with her only son this way? Seeing her husband's predicament, Umayaal called him aside and said: "Why worry my lord when we can make a meat of our only son Seeraala?" Siruthondar was happy with her readiness to sacrifice their son, and rushed to the Kaapaalika accepting his conditions.

"Okay, let me bathe in the river before coming to your house. In the meantime get ready the meat," said the Kaapaalika.

The devotee couple brought Seeraala from the school and told him about their proposal. The child, with a beam of smile on his face, agreed to satiate the desire of the Kaapaalika. They prepared the meat as ordained by the Kaapaalika, who was ushered into the house with due honours. A leaf was spread on the floor for the guest who, however, said that he would not partake of the food without a Siva devotee as another guest. Siruthondar was confused. Who would eat 'nara maamsam' in the village, he wondered. The Kaapaalika understood Siruthondar's hesitation, and said: "Are you not a Siva devotee? You sit and dine along with me."

Umayaal spread another leaf for Siruthondar. "Wait a minute. I cannot eat this food without your little son also joining us. We should not eat the food without feeding the child first," said the Kaapaalika.

An embarrassed Siruthondar then revealed that the meat that was being served to the guest was that of his only son. "Oh, that is the problem. So what? You go out, pray to Lord Siva and call your son. Let us see what happens," said the Kaapaalika.

Then the couple went out and called "Oh, our dear son, please come immediately, so that our guest will be happy to take food in our house." But there was no response. Umayaal realised the reason for the lack of response, and told her husband, "My Lord, when we have already sacrificed Seerala, how can he be our son?" So saying, she shouted "Seeraala, come and help us to feed the guest." Wonder of wonders, Seeraala arrived from nowhere and hugged his mother!

The happy trio went inside the house to feed the guest, but he was not to be seen. As they were perplexed, Lord Siva appeared, along with His consort Parvati, and blessed them for their intense devotion and unparalleled sacrifice. "Paramjyoti, you, your wife and son have earned your place in My abode. After completing your mission on earth, you shall reach Kailasa and serve Me eternally," declared the Lord.

As word about this episode went round the village, people were all praise for Siruthondar and hailed him as one of the 63 Naayanaars.*

CLEAR YOUR DOUBTS

A woman devotee of Solapur asked Sri Mataji the following questions during Her visit to the town in Maharashtra.

Devotee: Amma, how should we do Pooja every day?

Sri Mataji: Pooja is worship of God. It is of two kinds - ordinary worship (Saamaanya pooja) and extraordinary worship (Visesha Pooja); the former is external worship (Baahya Pooja) while the latter is internal worship (antaranga pooja).

In Baahya Pooja, you place your chosen deity's form in front of you and offer Him sixteen different kinds of services (Shodasa Upacharas). You are personifying that idol or picture as your God, meditate upon His form, offer prayers and then offer the 16 upacharas:

1. Welcoming God (Aavaahanam)
2. Offering God a Throne to sit on (Simhasanam)
3. Offering water to wash the Lord's feet (Paadyam)
4. Offering water to wash His hands (Arghyam)
5. Offering water to drink (aachamaneeyam)
6. Offering the Lord a drink in which honey, ghee (clarified butter) and curds (yogurt) are mixed is called as Madhuparkam.

But commonly people think madhuparkam as a towel given before bath

7. Offering bath (Snanam)
8. Offering clothes (Vastram)
9. Offering the Sacred Thread (Yagnopaveetam)
10. Offering Ornaments (Aabharanam)
11. Offering flowers at His divine feet (Pushpa pooja)
12. Offering incense (Dhoopam)
13. Offering light (Deepam) to see the Lord's form
14. Offering food (Naivedyam)
15. Offering betel leaves (Tamboolam)
16. Offering camphor light (Karpooora Ananda Neeraajanam)

Finally, we offer Mantra Pushpam which is the offering of flowers after chanting mantras extolling the glories of God.

This is external worship, and you need several things physically to worship. This is Saamaanya Pooja or ordinary pooja which people know and do. You may not be able to procure all the things for worship at all times. To carry on this kind of worship, you need to follow certain procedures.



But there is another kind of worship called Maanasa Pooja which any one can do within one's own mind. This internal pooja does not need any external paraphernalia, rules, regulations, chanting the mantras, etc. We can carry on this kind of worship at all times and at all places. "The all pervading Lord is in my heart and I will offer Him not only the sixteen offerings but many more. I offer myself completely to Him," thinks the devotee. This is Vishesha Pooja (extraordinary pooja). Our scriptures tell us to remember and realise God, the Supreme Energy, in every movement and every moment.

"Yat karoshi, Yadasnasi
Yat juhoshi, dadasi yat,
Yat tapasyasi Kaunteya
Tat kurushva madarpanam,"

said Lord Sri Krishna in the Bhagavadgita. "Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer or give away and whatever austerities you perform - do that Oh! Arjuna, as an offering to Me." (Ch 9 Sl. 27)

While cooking and before eating just once think of God thus – "Oh God! You are present as Vaishwanara in all beings and I am cooking food for You and offering it to You. Please accept it." By praying thus, your offering reaches God in all the beings.

Our elders would tell us there is Goddess Lakshmi in broom, buttermilk and churner; Goddess Gowridevi in the doorstep; Goddess Saraswathi in books, akshamala, pen, veena and other instruments, as She is the Goddess of knowledge and fine arts.

If we keep going thus, our every movement becomes worship and yagna (sacrifice). We will talk more about this another time.

-to be continued

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