

Sri Mataji's Benediction **SELF IS SUBTLER THAN THE SUBTLEST**

What is Self-realisation? It is an experience of realising everything in the cosmos, including one's own Self, as consciousness. The experience is like putting a drop of water in the mighty ocean. Therefore, it is the experience of Self-consciousness in one's own Self in the unlimited ocean of cosmic consciousness.

When once that is realised, there is nothing but consciousness without either inward cognition or outward cognition. The consciousness is One and alone and it includes gross or subtle or abstract or concrete, good or bad. It has nothing to acquire or store. It is subtler than subtlest and being non-matter it cannot be seen with naked eye or through any instrument.

The aspirant once realises the Self will be in a state of 'Thuriya' or Samadhi or Bliss. At the material level the abstract experience cannot be explained. Therefore, is it possible to explain Self-realisation in words? It cannot be dealt with like a business commodity. Therefore, it is 'avyavaharam'. Further, consciousness has neither form nor quality nor distinctive characterisation. Therefore, it is 'alakshanam'. It is unimaginable and does not manifest.

Cessation of manifestation is the indication of Self-realisation. The entire universe in sounds and actions suddenly disappears as an illusory object. It results in peace or Bliss or quietude.

The basic impediment for Self-realisation is superimposition of the unreal on the real like the false perception of a snake in the rope. The apparent consciousness of the phenomenal objects is in reality the reflected consciousness of Brahman like the Sun reflected in different pots of water. It is called 'Adyaropa' i.e. nothing but reflected consciousness of Brahman on mind.

De-superimposition, otherwise called 'Apavada', is possible only through the guidance of Gurudev who imparts the knowledge of Brahman, which is consciousness, Bliss and Real that does not undergo any modification or change at any time.*



Editorial

A TASK FOR MANMADHA

Om Gururam Namaste!

We often hear the comment, “He is a God-fearing man”. Is God such a terrific entity as to be afraid of Him? Not at all!

In the ‘Vishnu Sahasranaamam’, there are two names: ‘Bhaya kruth’ and ‘Bhaya naasanah’. These mean ‘One who creates terror’ and ‘One who destroys terror’ respectively. God creates fear in the minds of the ignoble people and destroys the fear in the minds of the noble ones. The Gitacharya asserts, “To deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish Dharma, I Myself appear from Time to Time” (Ch. IV: Sl.8). For the evil-minded people, He is a terror and for the good ones, He is the guardian. When He plays this benevolent role, should He be feared?

Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, who was Free India’s last Governor-General, would object if anybody used the expression, ‘God-fearing’. He would say, “God is Love and Love is God. He need not be feared but must be loved, as the Almighty is the embodiment of Love. On the contrary, we should fear sin.” ‘Paapa bheethi’ rather than fear of God should be the guiding force for human beings.

God loves one and all. He loved even His detractors like Hiranyakasipu, Hiranyaaksha, Ravana, Kumbhakarna, Sisupala and Dantavakra, and released them from bondage, though it meant their slaying (‘samhaara’) in the normal sense. One may ask “Why should He kill the ‘asuraas’ instead of reforming them?” Here too, God administers the extreme punishment only as a last resort after giving them a lot of opportunities to mend their wicked ways. When this is His avowed principle, should God be feared?

Ordinarily, people treat love as infatuation and filial attraction between genders. While the love between man and wife borders on physical intimacy, parental and fraternal love is born out of affinity for the progeny and brotherly affection. Whether marital or filial, love is indeed a sacred feeling. The love between the Guru and his disciple is spiritual and results

in the elevation of the latter to the higher realms of Divine Love. The Guru is keen on extending the concept of love towards all creatures – humans, animals, reptiles, birds and even towards plants. That is Universal Love. Samardha Sadguru Sri Sri Sri Hanumat Kali Vara Prasada Babuji Maharaj would emphasise that love should transcend passion and reach Divinity. “Just as God extends his benign love towards all His creations, human beings also should emulate that example and love all beings since God is Omnipresent – that is He is dwelling in all hearts.” In other words, one should perceive the presence of the Almighty in both animate and inanimate objects. That will be the height of spirituality wherein there is no discrimination of any kind and no place for hatred.

The finest examples of practising Divine Love are Meerabai and Goda Devi. Their love for Lord Krishna was such that both felt that He was the only Purusha (male) and all humans were female. Both took the Gopikas of Vrepalle as their role model, and yearned for the constant companionship of the Lord. Poojya Sri Yogini Chandra Kali Prasada Mataji, in one of Her discourses, narrated this incident in the life of Meerabai: While on a pilgrimage to sacred places associated with Lord Krishna, Meera saw a group of devotees awaiting the ‘darshan’ of their Master. She, too, wanted to pay her obeisance to that saint. But the disciples told her that their Guru would not look at women and so she could not meet him. Meera at once exclaimed: “Oh, I thought that Krishna alone is the Purusha and all others are women. I never knew that that there is another man!” When this was conveyed to the Guru, he rushed to Meera and fell at her feet for destroying his ego born out of ignorance.

The steadfast devotion of Meera and Goda Devi towards Krishna ultimately succeeded in their union with Him. In her ‘Naachiar Tirumozhi’, a string of 143 verses forming part of the ‘Divya Prabandham’, Goda Devi expresses her deep love for Krishna and in ten of them, she implores Manmadha, who is the angel in charge of coupling men and women in marital bond, to bring about the partnership between her and the Lord. In one of the verses she asks Manmadha, “Do you not know

that I have taken a vow not to live, if there is any move to marry me off to a human?" Such was Goda Devi's longing for Krishna.

Dear readers, we have just entered the 'Manmadhanaama Samvatsaram'. Instead of extending the usual greetings for a happy and prosperous New Year, let us pray to Manmadha to abandon his routine task of facilitating infatuation between men and women, and instead enable the consummation of our love towards God, who is none but our Sadguru Maharaj.
Jai Gurudev!*

CHILDREN'S SUMMER CAMP

A Summer camp exclusively for kids and school going children is going to be conducted in Sri Kali Gardens Ashramam from 01-05-2015 to 31-05-2015. Training in Prayer, Bhagawadgeeta, Upanishads etc., will be imparted. In the end, tests will be held and prizes will be distributed by Sri Mathaji. The interested children are welcome to utilise this opportunity during their summer vacation.

APPEAL

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Manager, Samardha Sadguru (0863-2293206)

Thus Spake Babuji

LIFE IS A JOURNEY

Sushumna Prasada

“It is an undisputed fact that the human being is the noblest of all the living beings in the Universe,” remarked Lord Babuji in one of His discourses. “Life indeed is a journey from the known to the unknown experience of any living being that is measured from birth to death. ‘Where were you before birth and where will you be after death?’ is merely a question of conjecture and nobody can give you the exact and accurate information about it.”

Explaining the phenomenon of life, Lord Babuji continued the discourse thus:

We are all travellers. While we travel, whether it is by flight or train or bus, we should never forget our destination and the ticket has to be purchased to reach that destination. If you travel without a ticket, you will be forced to get down from the train or bus and liable for punishment. You have to be vigilant till you reach your destination.

Similarly, if you have no goal in life, it will be an aimless and useless life. God has endowed man with intellect and power of discrimination to realise his destination and differentiate him from animal-type existence. So man has to cultivate the four-fold principles, popularly known as (Sadhana Chatustaya Sampathi) in Vedantic terminology to attain the ultimate goal of life. They are: knowledge to discriminate between real and unreal; detachment towards tentative worldly things; cultivation of six-fold precious qualities like Samam, Danam, etc. (Sama Danadi Shatka Sampathi); and desire for salvation (Mumukshatvam).

To attain the ultimate goal of life, man needs the guidance of the Spiritual Master or Gurudev. For instance, if a person wants to go to Chennai, he has to get into the Chennai-bound



train and not the Delhi-bound train. It is the guide who leads the uneducated person to get into the proper train. Unless you seek the guidance of Gurudev, life will be an aimless travel. To have a smooth and comfortable journey of life, the mind should be steady.

Mind is the external garb of illusion. They are one and the same. Mind is likened to a monkey. Just as monkey hops from one branch of the tree to another, mind also jumps from one material attraction to another. For, its journey is aimless. The mind fails to identify the real goal of life. Only one who has reached the goal of his own life can lead others. Otherwise it will be like a travel following the instructions of a blind man which ultimately leads you into a ditch of darkness. The guidance of Gurudev alone can make the travel smooth and soft and enable you to reach the goal of Godhead. If the mind is allowed to have its own way, it will be a motiveless random travel without any fruitful result. If there is no goal, life will be an endless travel from one birth to another birth.

In the 'Bhagavadgita', Gitacharya also compares life to travel. In the second sloka of its Chapter VIII, Arjuna questions Lord Krishna how He will be known and realised in their final travel:

Adhi Yagnah Katham Kotra
Dehesmin Madhusudana
Prayana kalecha kadham
Jneyosi Niyatatmabhi

In the same chapter in the 10th sloka, life is compared to a journey:

Prayana kale Manasachalena
Bhaktvyaya yuktho yoga balena chaiva
Bhruvormadhye Pranamavesya Samyak
Satam Param Purusha mupaithi divyam

It means that a staunch devotee with the strength of Yoga keeps the life force in between the eye-brows. He meditates on God with a steady mind at the time of final travel and attains Eternity (Parama Purushatwam). Thus Arjuna is particular of knowing from Lord Krishna how steady minded people can

attain Divinity in their last and final travel (last stage of life). Arjuna as our representative reminds us how we should not forget about death even while we are healthy and active. For, death is ever imminent.

It is a warning and reminder to all human beings. But people are generally prone to forget about death, the unavoidable and compulsory travel destination of every human being. People getting immersed in the worldly attractions totally forget the preparations to be made for the final journey and entertain the erroneous outlook that death is at a distant shore.

A spiritually enlightened person (Gnani) will always be alert and never forget his goal. He thinks in advance about the final and ultimate end of life and makes preparations in the form of spiritual pursuit to get rid of material obstacles and suffering.

Lord Krishna assures Arjuna that those who concentrate their minds in the last moments of their lives will attain Eternity. The mind is like a mirror. A transparent and clear mirror reflects the image in front of it. Similarly when your mind is fixed on something or some person, it gets clearly imprinted on the mental screen and it transforms into a seed for the next birth.

Time is priceless. What is lost cannot be regained. The foremost quality of a spiritual seeker should be to realise the value of time and consider every moment as the last moment of life. Then the journey of life will be fruitful and meaningful.

Let me give the example of a student who utilises the time properly throughout the year by making regular and methodical preparation for the annual examination. He is sure to attain success. Similarly, a spiritual trainee who makes prompt preparation systematically with noble heritage (noble samskara) can have a smooth sail in the journey of life. Unfortunately, people make prior preparations in a detailed fashion for a train journey or bus journey making reservation two or three months in advance. But there is no scope to make any such reservation for the final journey of life; for, death comes without any notice. So, one should be wary and cautious of every moment of life as it is threateningly tentative.

For tentative journeys of life, sufficient luggage is needed. But, for the ultimate journey of life, all baggage (karmas)

has to be discarded, and only the smarana of the Lord or only absorption of the mind in the Divinity is the necessary accompaniment of a traveller seeking spiritual solace. Unless the spiritual training is practised from the morning of life, you cannot attain its fruit late in the evening of life. That's why Lord Krishna instructs Arjuna that constant practice is the only means to attain Eternity or Divinity (Chapter VIII-sloka 8):

Abhyasa Yoga yuktena chetasa Nanyagamina
Paramam Purusham divyam yaathi Partha anu Chintayan.

Lord Babuji concluded his discourse by exhorting the devotees to make their final travel fruitful by constant spiritual practice.*

A kite with a fish in its beak was followed by a host of crows and other kites, which were pecking at it and trying to snatch the fish away. In whatever direction it went, its tormentors followed it cawing, till at last they made it let go the fish in vexation. Another kite instantly caught the fish and was in its turn followed by the whole lot. The first kite was left unmolested and sat calmly on the branch of a tree. Seeing this quiet and tranquil state of the bird the *Avadhoota* saluting him, said, "Thou art my *Guru*, for thou hast taught me that peace of mind is possible in this world, only when one has given up one's adjuncts (upadhi); otherwise there is danger at every step."

-from 'Words of the Master'
(selected precepts of Sri Ramakrishna)

Divine Mother Speaks **BEFRIEND YOUR MIND**

Japamala Prasada

The mercurial nature of the mind can be stilled by fixing it on the divine Lord. Whatever form of God or divine energy you worship is all pervading and omnipotent and hence present in every atom of the universe. Meditation is nothing but experiencing this fact practically.

Even when we do mundane things like cooking, serving, working on a computer, etc., we keep all the necessary things near us and do not like to be disturbed. Likewise, when we sit for meditation, we should sit with a steadfast determination and keep all the other thoughts except our 'lakshyartha' at bay. When we have complete, undeterred faith in our Gurudev, stillness of mind becomes a cakewalk to us.



All great saints like Mira Bai, Kabirdas, Sakkubai and Ramdas had encountered immeasurable difficulties in their quest for God, but they were unmoved. The devotees faced those obstacles with equanimity.

If we want our mind to be fixed on God, it should be pure. That means, it should be free from inimical qualities like lust, anger, jealousy, etc. Cultivate truth, peace, compassion and divine love. You must make your mind itself search and remove its own faults. That way your mind gets purified. The Amrita Bindu Upanishad describes a mind full of desires as impure and a mind devoid of desires as pure.

Manohi dwividham proktam
Shuddhamcha Ashuddhamevacha
Ashuddham kama sankalpam
Shuddham kama vivarjitham

Mind itself is the cause of our bondage and freedom. A mind filled with worldly pleasures and desires is the cause of our bondage while a mind that is devoid of them is the cause of our freedom or emancipation.

Lord Krishna says in the ‘Bhagavadgita’ that one must deliver himself with the help of his mind and should never degrade himself. The mind is the friend of the soul as well as its enemy.

Uddharet Aatmaatmaanam
Na atmanam avasadayet
Aatmaivahi atmano bandhuh
Aatmaiva ripuh atmanah. (Ch.VI-Sl.5)

We must befriend our mind in order to gain the benefit. If a child does something wrong and we admonish, he will rebel. Instead, if we talk nicely and point out his mistake, he will listen and will not repeat the mistake. But the perseverance and power of ‘Maya’ is great. It will incite us to commit the same mistake again and again. We must diligently pursue and stop it from committing the error. We must keep a watchful eye on the mind constantly. Then it will not dare to go astray - just as a child will not do any mischief if we keep watching it.*

As children in the world of the spirit, we are idolators to a degree. We cannot help worshipping a divine form. We have to pass through this stage when we take forms to be real, but we must outgrow it. When our own forms are real to us, the holy forms are also real, but we must outgrow both and try to see the Spirit at the back of all forms. We should try to see the same ocean at the back of all bubbles and waves, to see the One in the many. At the beginning of our spiritual life we may meditate on holy forms, but we must pass to the formless, the principle behind the personality.

- Swami Yatiswarananda

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

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, Ekaham at Pavuluru Branch
- 18 Sat - Amavasya
- 21 Tue - Akshaya Trutiya - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 23 Thu - Sri Sankara Jayanthi - 20th Anniversary of Sadguru Murthi pratishta, Sadguru Pada Puja, Satsangam, Bhakta Samaradhana

MAY 2015

- 04 Mon - Vyshaka Poornima - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana
- 09 Sat - Sri Kalika Parameswari Sahita Sri Ramalingeswara Swamivari Prathista Mahotsavam, Leela Kalyanam
- 13 Wed - Hanumat Jayanthi - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Chanting of Hanuman Chalisa
- 16 Sat - Maasa Sivaratri - Sani Trayodasi, Annual Punya Aaradhana of Sri Avadhutendra Saraswathi Swamiji at Pavuluru
- 18 Mon - Amavasya
- 27 Wed - 8th Annual Aaradhana of Sri Suguna Prasada Mathaji

JUNE 2015

- 02 Tue - Jyeshtha Pournami, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 11 Thu - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 15 Mon - Masa Sivaratri, Ekaaham in Pavuluru Branch
- 16 Tue - Amavasya

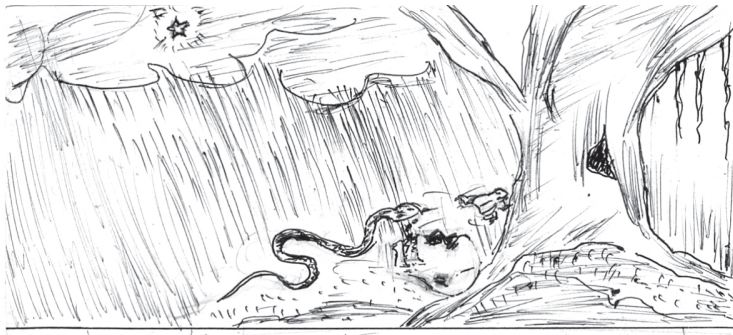
JULY 2015

- 02 Thu - Adhika Aashada Pournami, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 11 Sat - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 14 Tue - Masa Sivaratri, Beginning of Godavari Pushkaram
- 16 Thu - Amavasya
- 17 Fri - Beginning of Dakshinayanam
- 27 Mon - Toli Ekadasi, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana
- 31 Fri - Nija Ashada Pournami, Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana, Beginning of Chaturmasya Deeksha.

Children's Section Tales of Sri Ramakrishna GOD'S WILL

Ramana Prasad

It so happened that once a boy became seriously ill. Many tried to save him but all in vain. At that juncture one mendicant came and said, "There is one way to save him. If anyone could get the venom of cobra drenched in Swati rain drops in a human skull, his life will be saved.

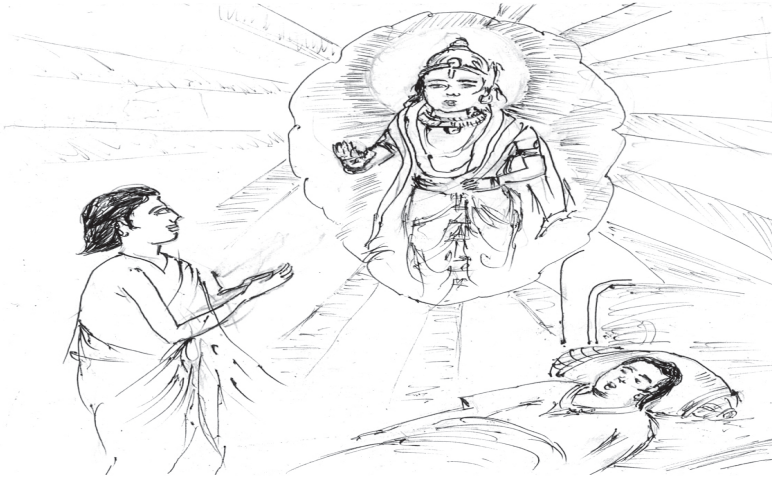


The boy's father studied the almanac (Panchangam) and came to know that on the very next day Swati Nakshtram would be in the ascending position, and he prayed thus: "O God! Please see that everything does happen in the boy's favour to save his life." He prayed with deep agony and with full faith. The compassionate Lord heard his prayer.

On the following day, the father found a skull. Suddenly there was a rain and some Swati rain drops fell into the skull. The boy's father was very happy. He then prayed, "O Lord! Please see that rest of the things also happen in his favour."

As per God's will, just then a cobra while chasing a frog jumped over the skull, and in the process some of its poison fell into the skull. The excited father praised the Lord for the mercy showered by Him and said, "As per your command, all impossible things have happened. My son will surely be saved.

I have no doubt in my mind. I have no words to express my



gratitude to You!”

If one has implicit faith and deep yearning for Lord, even the impossible things will be accomplished with His grace.*

You say that this is the 'age of reason' and that the teaching must be in accordance with reason. I ask: Whose is the intellect? You must answer 'My intellect'. So the intellect is your tool. You use it for measuring variety. It is not yourself, nor is it something independent of yourself. You are the abiding reality, while the intellect is just a phenomenon. You must find and get hold of yourself. There is no intellect in dreamless sleep. There is none in a child. The intellect develops with age. But how could there be any development or manifestation of the intellect without the seed of it in sleep or childhood? Why go to history to discover this fundamental fact? The degree of truth in history is the same as the degree of truth in the historian.

-Ramana Maharshi

STORIES OF DEVOTEES LORD KRISHNA, THE OCEAN OF MERCY

Ramana Prasad

Once, Sri Krishna asked Garuda to bring Sowgandhika lotus flowers (lotus flowers with mesmerising fragrance) from the garden of Kubera, the king of Yakshas.

Garuda immediately started. As he was flying in the high skies, he was bloating with ego. He thought thus: “Undoubtedly, there will be no one who can equal me in strength and valour.



Certainly no one can beat me in the speed with which I can fly.” He then spread his big wings and flew with great speed and with this impact, all the surroundings shook severely. Soon, he reached the Gandhamaadhana Parvata and started plucking the lotus flowers.

Incidentally, Hanuman, the great devotee of Lord Rama, happened to be there sitting and chanting Ramanaamam incessantly. Seeing Garuda collecting lotus flowers in great hurry causing disturbance, Hanuman asked him, “O Pakshi Raja! For whom are you taking these flowers? It is not fair to take the flowers in this manner without taking the permission of Kubera, the owner of this Udyanavana.”

The haughty Garuda said arrogantly, “I am taking these flowers as per the orders of Lord Krishna. So there is no need to take anybody’s permission.”

Hanuman became very angry with this audacious reply. He immediately jumped towards Garuda and caught hold of him and held him tightly in his armpit and started for Dwaraka. With Hanuman’s fury the entire universe shook and the people of Dwaraka became panicky. Lord Krishna’s Sudarsana Chakra stood on his way to stop him. Hanuman caught hold of the Sudarsana Chakra and kept it in his other armpit.

The Lord was watching Hanuman’s acts with a bewitching smile on His face. He is ‘Natana Sutradhari’, and all this is happening with His Maya Shakti.

Pointing at Hanuman, Madhava told His consorts, “Hanuman is in great fury. He can be pacified only with the darshan of Sri Rama with his consort Sita here. Otherwise, he will lift the entire Dwaraka and immerse it in the ocean.” So saying He assumed the form of Lord Rama and asked His consorts “Now quickly one of you should assume the form of Sita.” They tried but none of them could assume the form of Sita. Then all of them went and brought Radha and asked her to assume the form of Sita. She immediately took the form of Sita and took Her seat beside Sri Krishna, who had already turned into Rama.

By then Hanuman arrived. His joy knew no bounds on seeing Rama and Sita before him. He immediately prostrated at Their feet, even as he was holding Garuda and Sudarsana Chakra securely.

Madhusudana in the form of Rama blessed him and asked “My son! I find you have kept some things in armpits. What are they?”

Hanuman humbly said, “Oh! These are not such relevant things. When I was doing Rama Nama Japa in a secluded place, a tiny bird came there and disturbed me. I caught hold of it. One tiny Chakra tried to hurt me while I was coming here. I kept it under my arms. My Lord, if You wanted Saugandhika flowers, You should have ordered me. Does this weakling have that capacity to bring flowers from the garden of such a powerful Yaksha Raja Kubera?”

Then Parandhama said, “My son! Leave these poor things. I am very happy you brought them here. Now you can go and resume your japa.”

As bade by Rama, he released them and leapt in the sky loudly uttering, ‘Jaya Jaya Ram, Sita Ram’ and proceeded towards Gandhamaadhana Parvata.

Garutmanta was thinking he was very powerful. Sudarsana Chakra thought that it was invincible. The consorts of Sri Krishna thought that they were very beautiful. Lord Sri Krishna taught them a lesson in one stroke with his Divine plan.*

Devotional Stories

BENEFIT OF RAMANAMA JAPAM

My dear Chiranjeevulaara:

The name of Lord Rama is very sweet to chant. You all know how Hanuman crossed the ocean easily by chanting Ramanama, while Rama Himself had to take the help of Guha to cross the Ganga. Our Gurudev used to emphasise that the Lord's name is more powerful than the Lord Himself. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation, would be constantly doing Ramanama Japam, and tell his disciples that practice was his tower of strength. Now let me tell you a tale to highlight the efficacy of Ramanama Japam.

The Moghul emperor Akbar once went to a forest, accompanied by his favourite court singer Tansen. As Akbar was indulging in hunting wild animals, Tansen sat under a tree, chanting Ramanama. After some time, both felt hungry. Since the food they had brought with them was grabbed by a monkey, they were in search of some fruits in the forest. But, the trees in the forest were bereft of fruits.

Unable to control his hunger, Akbar told Tansen, "Let us rush out of the forest and look out for some house where we can get food." But Tansen said: "Shahanshah, I am very tired and I cannot ride the horse in this condition. Hence I will sit here and continue the chanting of Ramanama till you return here. That will make me forget my hunger."

Akbar laughed and said: "You are indeed a fool. Is this the way to satiate hunger? Okay, you do what you like; let me go in search of food."

After much difficulty, Akbar found a hut, and the householder was happy to feed the emperor. Akbar took out his gold chain and gave it to his host by way of gratitude. At the same time, he felt that he should do something for the starving Tansen. He requested the householder to pack some food. Collecting the parcel Akbar went back to the forest.

On reaching the spot where Tansen was chanting Ramanama, Akbar told him: “Look, you are starving because of your lack of effort. Could Ramanama satiate your hunger? Because I took some effort, I could not only eat some food, but bring some food for you also. Of what use is the mere repetition of Ramanama? Now have your fill; then, we can get back to Agra.”

Tansen politely replied thus: “Shahanshah, for securing food, you had to take a lot of effort. But in my case, the chanting of Ramanama not only secured the food for me without any strain, but also served by an emperor! This is the greatness of Ramanama.”

Akbar was pleased by this reply and embraced Tansen.

Children, hope you liked this story. So chant ‘Om Gururam’ all the time. You shall not only get what you desire, but also enjoy the peace of mind.

Yours affectionately,

Maathula*

The trouble is that our mind is too outgoing, we are too selfish, too self-centred. So we should try to do some service to others, physical and mental. We should sacrifice something for others, in some form or other. Look at a mother's sacrifice! No one should be allowed to lead a self-centred life without making any sacrifices for others whatever form they may take. Life is a sacrifice and can find its fulfillment only in sacrifice. Out-and-out self-centred people have no place in spiritual life.

-Swami Yatiswarananda

Babuji's Fables

"HAPPINESS IS WITHIN US"

Dr. Swarnamukhi Prasada

Once, a bird was sitting on the mast of a ship that was docked in a harbour. After the ship was loaded, it was to sail into the sea. All the while, the bird was sitting perched on the mast.

Soon the ship reached the middle of the sea, and the bird now saw all around. It saw nothing but the vast sheet of water spread on all sides.

The bird wanted to go to dry sand, so that it could get some food. It started flying towards south; it flew and flew and saw nothing but sheets and sheets of water. The bird got tired; came back and sat on the mast, refreshed itself and flew towards north this time. Seeing nothing but water, it returned to the pole; rested and flew again towards east and then west. Wherever it flew, it saw nothing but water. It could not spot even the shadow of a piece of earth.

Finally, the bird gave up its futile efforts and settled down on the ship restfully. The bird was then free from anxiety and unhappiness.

MORAL: Man keeps searching for happiness and peace in the external world and will not find it. After running hither and thither for them in the mundane world, he gets tired and become unhappy and agitated. Ultimately he realises that the happiness he is searching for is within him.

Reality is at once Being and Consciousness. To know That is to be That in the Heart, transcending thought. Absolute surrender to the Supreme Lord, whereby the 'I' and 'mine' are destroyed, is the one means to realise Immortality. The Supreme Being, the one ultimate cause of the Universe, manifests Himself as many which do not exist apart from Him. To destroy the ego and Be as the self, is the Supreme method of attainment

-Ramana Maharshi

Down Memory Lane

MULTIPLICITY OF GOD'S CREATION

Sushumna Prasada

On one occasion a devotee expressed a doubt to Lord Babuji as to why God, the creator, was making so much discrimination among people. He questioned why some were dark, some fair, some intelligent and some dull.

Giving reply to the doubt expressed by the devotee, Lord Babuji asserted that God is the incarnation of Love. He has no partiality towards anybody. Narayanopanishad teaches us that Lord Narayana creates the entire Universe. Research was done by several scholars on the source or origin of the creation. Is there any scholar who can answer the question whether the tree is the origin of the seed or the seed is the origin of the tree?

Lord Babuji, in the course of His conversation, further mentioned that God had created man and gave him sensory organs and organs of action. God also had given the internal limbs - the mind, intellect, will power and ego.

“God expects man to cultivate good qualities and not to develop bad qualities. Not satisfied with that, God, the incarnation of Love, takes human shape to lead man in the right path, so that he could attain salvation. Mahatmas have produced a number of books on philosophy for the benefit of man. Man by becoming a slave to illusion has lost his power of discrimination, and gained evil by his foolish behaviour. This is all due to the effects of ‘Vasanas’.

“Man has to experience the accumulated result of the actions of his previous births. The effect of the actions of the previous birth leads to next birth. It is the cause for the various discriminations found in man. There is no use of blaming God for the result of one’s own evil actions. In spite of it, God, the embodiment of Love, takes the shape of Sadguru (Spiritual Master) to save the disciples, who surrender to Him with triple purification of body, mind and speech.

“But how many people are making use of such golden opportunities? Those who do not make use of the rare opportunity given by Gurudev will reap the result of their own actions. What is the use of blaming God for this? For instance, in the field some plants grow strong and some remain weak. Of course, the fertility of the soil is the same for strong and weak plants. The same water irrigates both plants alike. Why is there difference in the growth of plants? You are all educated. Can’t you guess some of the seeds sown in the field are strong and some are weak? That’s why there is variation in the plants.

“Two disciples took initiation on the same day. But what is the reason for the difference in their practice and behaviour? Do you find fault with Gurudev or with initiation? No, there is difference in the spiritual pursuit and it is the cause for the variation in their behaviour.

“A person approached me for initiation. He is a great devotee also. So I agreed to give initiation to him. Those who receive the initiation should stay in the company of the Spiritual Master (Sadguru) for three Mandalas (one Mandala represents 41 days) to do spiritual practice.

“I gave him exemption as he is an employee and asked him to do sadhana in the presence of Gurudev at least for three days, and he agreed. Surprisingly soon after receiving initiation, he sought permission to go away. In the case of such devotees, to what extent is the responsibility of the Spiritual Master (Gurudev)?”

One of the devotees asked Lord Babuji how long the spiritual practice should be done. “In fact, it is to be done as long as he is alive,” Gurudev replied, saying, “This human body is a machine given by God for spiritual practice. But it is not an instrument to be misused with objectionable behaviour. Man has to make use of his physical body to realise the goal of life, but not to lead a carefree life, wasting his divine energy. The aim of the spiritual practice and service done by man is to get his mind fixed on God during the last moments of life. But is there anybody who can say when that last moment comes? Every breath man exhales has to be considered as the last breath. Who knows that the next moment may be the last moment of life.

Instead of wasting time till the last moment comes, if you concentrate your mind incessantly on God, it will be an ideal spiritual training and you can be fearless.

“Is your mind steady? Are you able to control all types of thoughts and remain above the dualities like happiness and sorrow, cold and heat, love and hatred? Can you fix your mind steadily on the lotus feet of God and meditate on Pranavanada (Om)? Can you give up actions of selfish interest for the sake of Divine action? As long as your mind is subjected to duality i.e. feeling happy when you receive glad tidings and feeling sad while in sorrow, your spiritual practice (Sadhana) should be continued. When your mind turns inward, getting merged in Paramatma, there is no need to do spiritual practice. To attain that state, you have to totally surrender at the feet of Spiritual Master and seek His guidance.”*

A certain Sadhu (holy man) lived for some time in the room above the *nahabhat khana* (concert room) of the temple of Dakshineswar. He did not speak with anybody and spent his whole time in meditation of God. One day, all of a sudden, a cloud darkened the sky and shortly afterwards a high wind blew away the cloud. The holy man now came out of his room and began to laugh and dance in the verandah in front of the concert room. Upon this Sri Ramakrishna asked him: "How is it that you who spend your days so quietly in your room, are dancing in joy and feel so jolly to day?" The holy man replied "Such is the *maya* that envelops this life!" At first there is the clear sky, all of a sudden a cloud darkens it and presently everything is as before once more.

- from 'Words of the Master'
(selected precepts of Sri Ramakrishna)

WAITING FOR SRI RAMA—V

(Continued from the previous issue)

Ramaswami Sampath

The next morning Dasaratha invited Kulaguru Vashishta to his chamber and requested the sage to make preparations for the coronation of Rama on the following day. The maharshi, who was a ‘trikaala gnani’, said: “As you command, Oh King!”

[It is commonly believed that Vashishta fixed the ‘muhurtam’ for Rama’s coronation. But actually, it was Dasaratha, who was in a hurry to enthrone Rama, literally ordered the sage to start the preparations. In the normal course, the fixing of the ‘muhurtam’ should be done by the Kulaguru, but in this case, the king took the initiative himself.]

Dasaratha then sent word for Rama and told him: “My dear child, I am going to crown you as the king of Ayodhya tomorrow. Hence you, along with Mythili, go to Maharshi Vashishta and observe the required rituals as directed by our Guru.”

Meanwhile, the news of the imminent coronation of Rama spread like wild fire in the capital city, immersing the people in a sea of joy. As Ayodhya started wearing a festive look, Manthara, the dear servantmaid of Queen Kaikeyi, who was watching the preparations, asked the palace servants what for these arrangements were being made. When informed that Rama was to be anointed as the new king the next day, she rushed to Kaikeyi and angrily told her: “Oh Queen! Haven’t you heard the ominous news?”

“What is it?” Kaikeyi asked.

When Manthara gave her the news, Kaikeyi, pretending to be happy and with a view to provoking her, remarked, “That’s nice, and you deserve a present for this information”, and gifted a costly necklace.

Curtly throwing the ornament, the maid shouted: “Wretched lady! Don’t you realise that once Rama becomes king, you would be a slave to Pattappurrani Kausalya?”

“Is that so? Then, suggest a way out to stop Rama’s coronation?” Kaikeyi asked innocently.

“You can definitely stop it. Listen to me carefully and do accordingly. Will you please recall the two boons given to you

by the king, when you helped him by driving his chariot during the battle with Sambarasura? Make use of those boons now by asking the king to crown Bharata and exiling Rama for a long duration.”

Kaikeyi, who had practically forgotten the boons, was happy to be reminded about them. ‘What an intelligent person this Manthara is, though a mere servant maid!’ she thought to herself and embraced Manthara for the suggestion. ‘Can there be a better way to save Rama?’ she thought, but she was a bit worried about Bharata’s life if he ascended the throne. She then consoled herself by thinking, ‘I am sure Bharata would not accept the offer of crown.’

By evening, Dasaratha entered Kaikeyi’s palace to share personally the good news. But to his horror, he did not find her in the inner chamber but in the underground dungeon (‘kopagruham’). The king lifted his favourite queen and with all empathy asked her: “What is bothering you?”

After rejecting his advances, she said: “I will tell you my problem only if you promise to give me the two boons you had granted after your battle with Sambarasura.” Dasaratha gladly agreed to her demand and said: “Now tell me what you want as boons from me.”

“O king, you should not go back on your promise after listening to me.”

“My beloved lady, don’t you know that the descendents of Ikshwaku would not break the promise, even if it meant giving up life?”

“That is right. Now, hear my demands. I want our son Bharata to be crowned immediately and Kausalya’s son Rama to be exiled for fourteen years from Ayodhya.”

The moment Dasaratha heard her demands, he swooned unable to bear the agony. After recovering from that shock, he literally touched her feet and begged her: “Coronation of Bharata is okay with me, as I had already made this promise to your father Kekaya at the time of our wedding. But spare me the pain of banishing my dearest son Rama. I cannot be cruel to him.”

All the king’s pathetic appeals fell on her deaf ears, as she was determined to save Rama’s life. Dasaratha swooned again and remained thus for hours.

In the pre-dawn hours, Sumantra came to Kaikeyi's palace to fetch the king for conducting the coronation ceremonies. The Minister was aghast to see the king lying on the floor and was confused as to what had gone wrong. Kaikeyi ordered Sumantra to bring Rama immediately.

Soon Rama arrived and was shocked to see his father's condition. When he asked his stepmother what was the matter, she replied: "Your father gave me two boons long ago. Last night I asked him to fulfil his promise, as per which Bharata should be made the king and you should go to forest for fourteen years. Because of the affection he has for you he is unable to give you the order of exile, and so he is in this condition."

To the surprise of Kaikeyi, Rama, without any rancour in his face, told her: "Mother why should father be shy of asking me to go to forest? Isn't it my duty to fulfil the promise he has made to you? Without wasting even a minute, let me go to forest immediately. Kindly convey my compliance to father." So saying Rama bowed to Kaikeyi and left her palace.

As Rama was on his way to take leave of mother Kausalya, he saw his brother Lakshmana letting his fury and shouting at a high pitch, "The old man has gone crazy. Crown for Bharata and forest for Rama? Will I allow this to happen? With all my might, I shall destroy the king, evil queen Kaikeyi and Bharata, and enthrone Rama myself."

Rama rushed towards Lakshmana and caught hold of his bow. He then said: "My dear brother, stop this non-sense, if you have any respect for me. Do not blame our father, stepmother or brother Bharata for this situation. It is the fate that has to be blamed. I have made up my mind to go to forest. If you do not want to stay in Ayodhya, you can come along with me." Rama's soft and firm words silenced Lakshmana. Sobbing, he prostrated at brother's feet and said: "Rama, I shall go anywhere with you."

On reaching Kausalya's palace, Rama was moved by his mother's grief-stricken words, "My son, I am happy that Bharata will rule this kingdom, but should you be banished for this?" He consoled her by declaring, "Mother, don't you know that it is the duty of a son to fulfil the promise of his father? Please bless me to do that. Fourteen years will pass by like fourteen days,

and I will be back to serve you and father.” Kausalya was proud of her son’s duty consciousness, and remarked, “My child, you have made it your life’s mission to protect Dharma. May the same Dharma shield you from all dangers!”

Rama then went to his abode and informed Sita about the developments and said: “My darling, time has come to bid adieu to you. Let me fulfil my father’s command and return after fourteen years. Until then, you take care of my father and mother.” Sita insisted that she would also accompany him to forest and said “Just as you are performing the duty towards your father, as a ‘sahadharmini’, it is my duty to be with you through thick and thin.” Rama then told her how difficult would forest life be for a princess like her. “Infested with wild animals, you will find life miserable in forest. So do not come with me,” he said. Sita burst into laughter and said: “When you are there, why should I be afraid of wild animals? The excuse you are giving makes me wonder whether my father has married me off to a woman in the garb of a man.” Stung by this remark, Rama agreed to take her along with him.

Ready for forest life, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana reached Sumitra’s palace. The wise mother blessed them and specifically told her son, “Go my child with the happy feeling that Rama is Dasaratha, Janaka’s daughter is me and the forest is Ayodhya.”

With the noble minister Sumantra driving the chariot, the trio left the capital city. The agitated residents of Ayodhya unanimously declared that they would also accompany them to forest, despite Rama’s efforts to persuade them. All of them reached the banks of the Ganga and stayed overnight there.

Next morning, the accompanying people saw the wheel track of the chariot going towards Ayodhya, and thought that Rama had changed his mind and returned to their city.

Actually, it was a ruse played by Rama to give them such an impression. Overnight, the threesome and Sumantra had, with the help of Guha, the chieftain of Ganga boatmen, crossed to the other bank of the river and reached Chitrakoota.

(to be continued)

MEDITATION - STATE OF BEING

Rekha

Dhyana moolam Gurormoorthi
Pooja moolam Gurohpadam
Mantra moolam Guror vaakyam
Mukthi moolam Guroh krupa

—Guru Gita Ch.1- Verse 86.

Poojya Sri Mataji conducted Satsangs in Sils, Spain, during the second week of April 2014. The topic of the discourse was ‘Meditation’. Sri Mataji started the discourse with the above verse, and continued thus:

The ‘sloka’ means the basis for meditation is the Guru’s form. The seat of worship is the Guru’s feet or the Guru’s abode. The foundation for chanting mantra is the Guru’s word; and finally, the ground for redemption or salvation is the Guru’s grace. It emphasises that the ultimate goal of meditation is the state of Being (Guru or God).

Necessity and the prominence of a Guru and meditation need no great emphasis. The real purpose of having a Guru, who is a Satya Guru (True Master); how a disciple should be in the presence of the Guru as exemplified by great devotees and Mahatmas; what is meditation; the purpose of meditation and how one’s life should be geared towards achieving the goal of meditation — these are vital issues.

Meditation is a means to realise one’s natural state and know one’s true form. One who has a responsibility on his shoulders or a duty to perform does not forget that, but is always conscious of it. Similarly, being constantly aware of one’s true nature is meditation. Spiritual approach to life is essential to realise and be in that state. We have to question ourselves how much we are trying to approach our lives spiritually. We struggle constantly to achieve fame, wealth and other worldly ambitions. Spirituality includes matters that are sacred, moral, religious, devotional and righteous. So if our actions reflect righteousness and if we lead a life in the real sense of spirituality, then,

meditation is natural to us. It is not separate or different from us. Removing obstacles obstructing our original, peaceful state is meditation. Perform any action in the name of God. That power called God is the reason behind all our righteous actions. We and anything else in this creation are not separate from God; the whole Universe is created by Him. Concentration and discipline in daily life are important tools in meditation and the mind can be controlled with them. So, when we actually sit for meditation, the mind and body become still. Inner beauty (a beautiful mind) matters and not the outer physical beauty. This inner beauty gives peace even in the midst of chaos in the world. That peace and beauty are radiated in our life through our mind and discriminatory power. This body is needed to carry on the day-to-day activities of life in the world we live and as well experience the Absolute Bliss. Reminiscing and contemplating on the teachings of Mahatmas is meditation. Thus meditating, we can gauge the limitations of the physical body as well as the supremacy of the inconceivable Supreme Power. At any given time, when interacting with the world, we have to ask ourselves if a certain matter is relevant to us and needs our attention or not and then act accordingly. So this way the mind can be free and not be a storehouse of wasteful, unnecessary stuff, as we carry on with our lives.

To lead this meditative life we need to first identify and eradicate the bad qualities of anger, desire, lust, arrogance, envy and jealousy. Only then do we find real joy and contentment and be able to realise the worth of this invaluable God-given gift, life. Anything contrary to this, life becomes absolutely useless to us.

There is an invisible, eternal Power, beyond all sensory elements, that is to be perceived and experienced. That is meditation. With a meditative mind, observe the world, get an ambience of it, understand, contemplate and find your answers. Happiness, comfort and tears pertain to the mind. Joy, Bliss and Peace pertain to the Soul or Spirit. Not having peace is not who we really are. Embodiment of peace, meditation and contentment is who we truly are. There is nothing in this ever-changing world that gives us lasting joy, peace or contentment,

much less help us in recognising our true state (true Self) or sets us free ('Moksham').

When we eat tasty, sumptuous meal, we say the food is good; we don't say it has given us joy or contentment. Salvation is to be relieved or freed from all sorrow and difficulties like great devotees and Mahatmas. Prahlada followed the words of his Guru, the great Narada Maharshi, and did not forget the 'mantra' he was given by the sage. He was constantly thinking about and chanting Lord Narayana's name and reached the invincible state of valour. Hence, he did not worry about his physical body. As a result, none of his father's attempts to kill him had any effect on Prahlada's indomitable spirit. We also have the valour and bravery of Prahlada. We are at the Guru's lotus feet and we are under the cover of His ever assuring hand of protection. That is why we are able to do whatever we are doing, even come to far off countries like this (Spain) and carry on Satsangs. Salvation is not something that is achieved after death; it is to be obtained while still living.

Lord Rama is a great person. Unless we follow the path trodden by Him as a normal human being, we will not realise His greatness or be able to enjoy the real beauty of life. Only when we realise that the good qualities of Mahatmas have a great influence on our lives, we will be able to experience the beauty of life. Lord Rama's qualities of righteousness and truthfulness are to be imbibed and followed. Gurudev used to feed our mind, heart and stomach according to our needs. Similarly, we have to observe the lives of Mahatmas, see for ourselves how they influence us and follow the path shown by them. Mahatmas, despite their own burdens and hardships, sacrificed their lives to alleviate the sorrow of people around them and helped them, through their selfless service. Qualities of sacrifice and service are thus exemplified by the actions of Mahatmas. Real beauty is revealed when the inner you (the mind and heart) is adorned with good qualities; that is what is essential and not the physical decoration.

-to be continued

GLORIOUS DEVOTEES

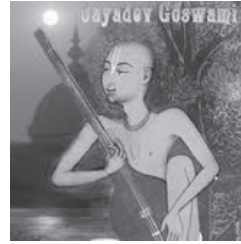
JAYADEV

C.V. Ramana Babu

(Translation of Telugu original by Jagam)

Sri Jayadev was born to Bhojadev and Rama Devi in Bilwagam, a village near Puri, in Orissa. He became an expert in many domains of education even at a very young age. He authored a beautiful poetry 'Geeta Govindam'. Each hymn of this contained eight lines. So, these became famous by the name 'Ashtapadis' (eight-lined).

Satyaki, king of that state, penned a book in praise of Lord Jagannadh. The scholars belittled his work, comparing it to Jaya Dev's 'Geeta Govindam'. Not satisfied with their comments, the king told them, "Let us keep both the works at the Lord's feet and let Him judge." The works were placed at the Lord's feet and the doors were locked.



Next day, when the doors were opened, wonder of wonders, Jayadev's 'Ashtapadi' was intact at the Lord's lotus feet and the king's book was found outside the sanctum. The king felt ashamed and was ready to sacrifice his life at the Lord's feet. But, in his dream, the Lord Jagannadh consoled him by saying, "Oh king! Don't worry. I have picked up 24 slokas from your book and included them in Jayadev's. So, you too will be in the minds of the people." The king felt very happy.

A Brahmin couple in Puri wanted to marry off their beautiful daughter Padmavathi with none other than the Lord. But as per the Lord's command in their dream, they performed Padmavathi's wedding with Jayadev.

A good natured trader requested Jayadev to come to his village and stay in his home. Jayadev accepted and began delivering discourses. After some time, Jayadev wished to go back to Puri. The trader arranged a chariot and kept some money, diamonds, jewellery, etc., in it without Jayadev's knowledge, as he would refuse them. He told his servants to hand over the property to Jayadev's wife.

On the way, they cut off his legs and arms, threw him in a well, stole the wealth and left. Unmindful of their act, Jayadev was in deep meditation. One day the king of Vindhya was passing by that way and saw great brightness emanating from that well. He saw Jayadev and brought him out of the well. The king asked Jayadev about the reason for his pathetic condition. Jayadev, not finding fault with the trader's servants, told the king that as he was physically handicapped by birth, he fell into the well on a dark night. The king took him to his palace in a palanquin. All the required nursing was given and soon Jayadev recovered well. The king followed Jayadev's discourses and ruled his people in a kind way and honoured the sages, as it is the easy way to get Eternity.

One day, the traders' servants, who had harmed Jayadev, came to the king in the guise of sages to receive honours. There, they saw Jayadev and were frightened, lest Jayadev might reveal the facts to the king. But Jayadev welcomed and embraced them with love. He told his servants, "These are good devotees. Take them to the king to receive full honours." The king honoured them and requested them to stay in his palace for some time. They obliged. But, due to the fear that Jayadev might reveal the fact and the king would punish them, they gradually became very weak. Noticing their plight, Jayadev told the king that they were not habituated to stay at any particular place and that it was due to the king's mere luck that they stayed there for such a long period and so they might be allowed to go. The king arranged two chariots. He also gave much wealth and sent some soldiers as escort.

Wondering at the way Jayadev respected them, the soldiers asked the cunning sages about the reason behind it. The cheats cooked up a story that "Jayadev had committed a great blunder while he was the prime minister to the king of Anantha. The king became angry and ordered us to kill him. We pitied him and instead of killing, we cut off his limbs and threw him in a ruined well. Fearing that the king might punish us if he knows the fact, we became disgusted and started wandering all over the state and reached your state. Jayadev saw us. Out of gratitude that we saved his life, he is respecting us thus."

Unable to bear such blatant lie, Mother Earth split apart and the cheats along with the chariots were thrown into the cracks.

After coming to know about it, the king and Jayadev went there. Jayadev prayed to God to forgive and save them. Then the cheats came out of the earth and left for Vaikunta in a celestial car, praising Jayadev.

At the request of the king, Jayadev revealed the whole story. The king requested him that his wife Padmavathi, too, be brought to his kingdom, “so that I will serve you both, the pious couple”. Jayadev agreed, and Padmavathi was taken to the kingdom with full honours. The king asked the queen to worship and serve Padmavathi.

One day, the queen’s brother died, and his wife opted to be cremated along with her husband. When the queen was worried at this development, Padmavathi consoled the queen by saying, “It is natural that death occurs to a virtuous wife immediately when her husband dies and so it is not a wonder that your sister-in-law wantonly entered the funeral pyre.” The queen decided to test the sincerity of Padmavathi’s reasoning.

As planned, when the queen and Padmavathi were together, a servant came and told Padmavathi that when the king and Jayadev were hunting in a forest, a tiger killed Jayadev. He also exhibited a cloth wetted with blood as proof. The queen pretended weeping and the virtuous wife Padmavathi remembered her husband and died on the spot. The queen was shocked.

When the king and Jayadev returned from the forest, they learnt of Padmavathi’s death. The king felt very sorry over the incident. Treating that he was the prime culprit in the incident, the king was prepared to die. But, Jayadev stopped him. He sang twenty-four ‘Ashtapadis’ in praise of Lord Jagannadh. The Lord was pleased, appeared before Jayadev and embraced him. The Lord declared: “I, along with Laxmi Devi, would stay with any devotee who reads your ‘Ashtapadis’ with devotion. Blessing Jayadev, the Lord restored the life of Padmavathi and limbs of Jayadev, and disappeared. Padmavathi offered salutations to Jayadev. Flowers were rained by the gods.

In ‘Geeta Govindam’, Jayadev describes the celestial love of Radha and Krishna excellently. These ‘Ashtapadis’ are musically very pleasant to anybody’s ears.*

BHAKTI - THE PATH OF LOVE

Gurudas

Why Love?

The first and foremost means of God-realisation is love – unsurpassed love of the Lord. Even for the dullest it is not incomprehensible, inaccessible or impracticable. To have as much love of God as an ordinary man entertains for his wife and children is one’s highest duty.

Love purifies the mind and easily leads to mental concentration. When meditation deepens, the mind gets detached from all worldly trammels. It becomes easy for that mind to realise God, and gain divine experience thereby enjoying the highest state of Bliss and finally securing Liberation.

It is vain to waste one’s time, contemplating on which God to worship. Worship Him in any form. It is the sincerity of devotion that matters. Whomsoever you worship with devotion, the result is all the same. It is in the degree of devotion that the all-seeing, all-knowing Lord delights. The dull ones are never satisfied with even life-long testing the superiority and inferiority of the different manifestations of God.

The Religion of Love

All those who have worshipped the Lord in any form - as Vishnu, Krishna, Ramachandra, Siva, etc. - have attained liberation. Not only Sanatana Dharma followers, but even those who belong to other faiths like Christianity, Islam, etc., have reached the state of liberation by worshipping their own conception of God. So it is all meaningless to quarrel arguing “My God alone is the True God. All other gods are naught”. Realise that God is present in all beings and that all the gods of all the peoples are one.

“My religion is the best and noblest, all other religions are false and ignoble” - how much blood has been shed over this narrow thought! Even ambitious imperialism has not been guilty of so much bloodshed. Only fools will seek to attain that one religion is eternal and that all others are evanescent or transitory. This reprehensible attitude of mind is the result of wicked samskaras and it should be discarded altogether.

All religions thrive on faith and devoutness, not on visual verification. So relinquish all such extreme thoughts.

All religions are eternal; otherwise all are ephemeral. In all religions there is a substratum of truth. Similarly in all religions there are certain things which appear to be false and therefore militate against relief and therefore all religions are transitory. What is the use of thinking on these lines? All religions have been founded to ameliorate man, to raise him higher and still higher. No teacher of religion has ever dreamt of leading man to perdition. So it is better to put an end to all quarrels in the name of religion and at the same time try to follow the truths of religion.

Pleased with man's sincere love and devotion, God lets him comprehend the divine principle which is beyond name and form, beyond the perception of word and mind, which is self-luminous and of the nature of everlasting peace - peace that passeth the understanding.

So worship your chosen ideal with constant thought, repetition of holy names, and meditation. The best way for man is to serve the Lord with love and devotion as His servant. Don't get worried if during meditation your mind wanders far from the object of meditation. Don't give way to despair. The mind, after running hither and thither, will at last come back to the object. Patience and perseverance hold the key to success.

The zenith of love is the conviction that everything in the world, from the highest to the lowest, is a form of the chosen deity. Love of God is not physical but mental. Love without faith and sincerity is naught.*

The feelings of a person who bites a chillie can be easily read on his face. Similarly the bliss enjoyed by a devotee can be gauged to some extent by the peace, tranquility and divine glow in his face.

-Sri Babuji

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(See Rule 8)

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HE SAVED HIS GURU, RISKING HIS OWN LIFE

-Ramaswami S.

Kuresa Poorna was the favourite disciple of Bhagavad Ramanuja. Born in 1010 C.E. in a rich family of Kuram, a village near Kanchipuram, he was well versed in all 'shastras'. Andalamma was his wife, who was also an accomplished scholar. Both were benevolent by nature and lived in Kanchi serving the poor.

Realising that wealth alone would not bring about the ultimate Bliss, Kuresa went to Kuram and gifted away all his property to the needy. After this, he proceeded to Kanchi along with his wife. On the way, Andalamma saw a dacoit approaching them, and started shivering. When Kuresa asked her why she should be afraid when they had given away all their possessions, she said, "I am retaining the gold vessel with which I used to feed you." Thereupon, Kuresa grabbed that vessel and threw it away.

On reaching Kanchi, Kuresa went to Ramanuja and surrendered to him. Magnetised by his scholarship, Ramanuja was happy to have Kuresa as his disciple. Since he looked like Nammalwar in appearance, Ramanuja used to address him as 'Kurathaalwan'.

Meanwhile, Yamunacharya, who was propagating Srivaishnavism from Srirangam, was in search of a successor. Having heard about Ramanuja, he sent the latter's maternal uncle Srisaila Poorna to Kanchi to bring Ramanuja, who was also yearning for the company of Yamunacharya. Kuresa, too, opted to shift to Srirangam, but the Guru dissuaded him. Reluctantly Kuresa agreed. By the time, Sri Ramanuja reached Srirangam, Yamuna Muni had attained 'mukti'. Saddened by this, Ramanuja returned to Kanchi, and Kuresa was happy.

It was the will of Lord Ranganatha that Ramanuja should take over the mission of spreading Srivaishnavism. So He sent Sriranga Perumal Arayar, son of Yamunacharya, to Kanchi. The Arayar was famous for performing 'abhinaya' (interpretation by dancing) for the Divya Prabandha 'paasurams'. When he

performed this before Lord Varadaraja, He was pleased and offered Arayar a boon. Immediately, he sought of the Lord that Ramanuja be sent along with him to Srirangam. Bound by His own word, Lord Varadaraja agreed to part with Ramanuja. Kuresa, who had by now renounced family life, accompanied his Guru this time. Soon Kuresa was put in charge of maintaining the Srirangam shrine.

Kuresa assisted his Guru in drafting ‘Sri Bhashya’ to the Brahmasutras. For this, Ramanuja wanted to refer to the ‘Bodhayana Vritti’, the text of which was available only in the royal library of Kashmir. Along with his disciple, Ramanuja trekked to Kashmir where, pleased by his erudition, the king permitted him to browse the ‘Bodhayana Vritti’. But the Kashmiri pandits, who were famous scholars in Vedic scriptures, were envious of Ramanuja getting royal patronage. They did not allow him to take down notes from that text. Ramanuja was disappointed, but Kuresa, who had the uncanny skill to remember anything he had read once, got the entire ‘Vritti’ by heart and thus helped his Guru to complete ‘Sri Bhashya’.

During this period there was a Chola chieftain who was furious over the spread of Srivaishnavism, and wanted to do away with Ramanuja who was propagating that faith. With this nefarious motive, the chieftain called Ramanuja to his court. Kuresa got scent of this plot, and requested his Guru to move to Melkote in Hoysala (Kannada) Desa and remain there till security of Vaishnavites was ensured in the Chola kingdom. In order to save his Master, Kuresa donned the ochre robe, holding the ‘tridhand’ of Ramanuja, and, accompanied by Mahapoorna, went to the court. Mistaking him to be Ramanuja, the chieftain asked him and Mahapoorna to declare the supremacy of Saivism. When both refused to take such an oath, the chieftain ordered the gouging out of their eyes. While Mahapoorna allowed this horrendous act, Kuresa declared: “O, petty ruler, for the sin of having seen you, let me pluck out my eyes myself.” Then both returned to Srirangam, but on the way, Mahapoorna died.

When Ramanuja heard this, he was horrified and sent word to Kuresa to go to Kanchi and pray to Lord Varadaraja to restore

his eye sight. Kuresa did go to Kanchi and prayed to the Lord not for restoring his eye sight, but for the welfare of one and all, including Nalooraan, a disciple of Ramanuja, who betrayed his Master for money. Such was Kuresa's selflessness.

After his return from Melkote, Ramanuja took upon himself the task of looking after the 'poorvashram' family of Kuresa. The Guru was attached to Parasara Bhatta, the son of Kuresa, for his vast knowledge and wisdom, and encouraged him to write a commentary on 'Vishnu Sahasranamam'. This commentary is rated as excellent as the one done by Sri Sankara Bhagavad Paadaacharya.

As Kuresa reached the age of 105, he expressed his desire to shed the mortal frame. Ramanuja felt sad and asked "How can you think of leaving me and your wellwishers? Did you not blind yourself to save my life?" Kuresa replied with a smile on his face, "Sir, the purpose of my going to Vaikuntam ahead of you is to enable me to receive you as and when you choose to come there." Such was Kurathalwaan's Guru Bhakti.*

Sri Ramakrishna accompanied Mathoor Babu on his pilgrimage to Banares. While stopping at that city Sri Ramakrishna paid a visit to Trilinga Swamy, to whom he put the question, "How is it that people speak of so many Gods though there is But one God?" The swamy was observing a vow of silence; so he merely raised one of his fingers and threw himself into a sort of trance, hinting thereby that by meditation one comes to know that there is only one God, but by philosophical discussion the sense of unity is displaced by a sense of diversity.

- from 'Words of the Master'
(selected precepts of Sri Ramakrishna)

CLEAR YOUR DOUBTS

(Continued from the previous issue)

Sri Mataji: Jagadguru Sri Adi Sankara Bhagawad Paadacharya has given us another kind of worship called 'Atma Pooja'. This is also manasa pooja. He states:

Atma Tvam; Girija Mathih;
Shacharea Praanah; Sareeram Griham;
Poojate Vishayopa bhoga rachana;
Nidra Samaadhi Stithih;
Sancharah padayou pradakshina vidhih
Stotrani Sarva girah;
Yadyat karma karomi tat tat akhilam
Sambho tava aaraadhanam.



Sri Sankara is saying in this stotram. "Oh Lord Siva, You are my Soul or Atman. Your consort Girija is my intellect. The fine pranaas are my friends; this body of mine is Your abode; my acts to please my senses are Your worship; my sleep is the deep trance of Thy meditation; Every step I take is Your circumambulation; Every word I utter is Your prayer; whatever I do, Oh Shiva, it is Your worship."

This is the ultimate pooja or worship. Don't for a moment misunderstand lines 5 and 6. A person in such an exalted state will never engage himself in any mundane, worldly matters nor will he give in to mere slumber. Such a person is constantly aware of the Supreme power - in every act of his, every thought and even in sleep.

This Atma Pooja is the highest form of worship.

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Devotee: Amma, can I take voluntary retirement and come and stay in the Ashram? I am fed up with samsara.

Sri Mataji: You have many responsibilities still, and you have many more years of service. Never shirk from your responsibilities. Even if you leave everything and come to Ashram, your mind will all the time be thinking about your commitments. Finish your duty as a householder. Keep coming

to Ashram and spend your time in prayers, meditation, satsang and seva (service). That way you will be recharging your mind. Build up faith in Sri Gurudev.

What you are going through now is only temporary detachment (Taatkalika Vairagyam). You can never run away from your wife and children. That is not the right thing to do. Do your duties as a grihasta, have firm faith in God and Guru. Trust your Guru implicitly. Follow the path set by Him.*

OBITUARY

Smt. Nelabhotla Venkata Subba Lakshmi (wife of Kutti) aged 61years, resident of Hyderabad and an ardent devotee of Sri Babuji Maharaj, attained Guru Sayujyam on Wednesday, 11-3-2015.

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

OBITUARY

Sri Varanasi Bhanu Prasad, aged 49years, resident of Hyderabad and an ardent devotee of Sri Babuji Maharaj, attained Guru Sayujyam on Wednesday, 23-2-2015.

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

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