

# SAMARDHA SADGURU

## Spiritual Magazine

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	<b>MAY BABUJI'S AND MATAJI'S</b>	
	<b>BLESSINGS BE SHOWERED</b>	
	<b>ON YOU ALL</b>	
	<b>ON THE OCCASIONS OF</b>	
	<b>SRI KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI</b>	
	<b>VINAYAKA CHAVITHI</b>	

## Sri Mataji's Benediction

### WHAT IS REAL KNOWLEDGE?

Purer the mind and fewer the agitations, the greater is the consciousness that beams out through such an individual, and he is a prophet, a saint, or a sage, or a Mahatma, who gathers unto himself the world of beings in the compelling embrace of love. With the magic of his love and with the strength and sharpness of his wisdom, he tries to chase away the animal in man and lifts the entire generation to a higher pedestal of peaceful coexistence in the crucible of mutual love and understanding.



If consciousness or awareness is our real goal, what is the way out to regain its lost status of Bliss? How we have fallen to be men limited, ignorant, sad mortals! We must know how their seeming fall has taken place to return to our divine home. Neither Vedanta nor any Upanishad accepts any real fall of man from the Reality. Upanishads assert "Thou art That". Yet every individual in the universe is conscious of his separate existence and duality.

Vedanta asserts that this seeming world of sense objects is not real and it can end any time. The world is seemingly real to us like the mirage in a desert or a rope looking like a snake to the deluded. Thus the eternal Sat-Chit-Anand alone is real, while world and ego-centric ideas are only a superimposition upon the Truth. The plurality is a sad delusion. The cause of ignorance or Avidya is attributed to Maya in Vedanta.

Maya is the inexplicable power of the Supreme and is inseparable. Can heat be separated from fire? Similarly Maya is inherent in the Supreme. Maya is neither tricky nor mysterious but it stands for that which is not there. Let our doubts and suspicious mind need not have any play at all. Vedanta is not a pessimistic philosophy leaving us with a theory of fall; it shows a way to wake up and realise our true eternal nature.

Avidya can not be overcome by mere suppression of Indriyas. Desires lie deep in us. So long as traces of delusion are with us, Avidya will not disappear. The ignorance can be ended with knowledge alone. Real knowledge is our swarupa which is not created.

Nescience is effectively removed by listening (Sravana), reflection (Manana) and meditation (Nidhidhyasa), only with the guidance of the Sadguru. The sadhaka realises the progress of his journey through the control of sense organs. The mind remains peaceful, although his sense organs come in contact with the world. Divinity manifests in sadhaka by passage of time.\*

# Editorial

## KNOW THY SELF

Om Gururam namaste!

What does a Sadguru do to his disciple? The Master enables the latter to understand the Self within. In other words, the Sadguru introduces the disciple to himself! Confusing? Samardha Sadguru Sri Sri Sri Hanumat Kali Vara Prasada Babuji Maharaj, founder of the Sri Kali Vanaashrama Peetham, in one of His discourses, narrated the tale of an infant lion which somehow got into in a herd of lambs, to drive home this point. Living with the lambs since then, the cub developed their timid qualities and was eating grass and behaving as if it was a lamb. One day, a lion popped up before the herd and was about to attack them. Just then, it saw the cub in their midst and wondered what it was doing in that herd. Seeing the lion, the lambs ran helter-skelter and the cub also tried to follow them. But the lion caught hold of the shivering cub.

“Sir, do not harm me. I am an innocent lamb,” the cub pleaded with the lion.

“Who told you that you are a lamb? You belong to my family. Why do you behave in such a timid manner?”

“No sir, I am a lamb only.”

“You fool, do not behave like the one which you are not.”

The cub asserted again and again that it was a lamb. Thereupon, the lion assured the cub, “No harm would befall you if you follow me. I will show you who you are really.” Still shivering, the helpless cub accompanied the lion.

Soon both reached a well, and the lion lifted the cub and asked it to see the reflection in the water. “Now tell me whether you are a lamb or a cub.”

The cub was confused by the reflected image of his and realised that it did not look like a lamb. “Then who am I?” it innocently asked.

“Does not your image in the water look like mine?” thundered the lion. “All along, without knowing yourself you were thinking that you were a lamb because of the company you were keeping.

You belong to the royal family of the jungle, and aggressiveness should be your quality and not timidity. Now roar like me.” So saying the lion gave a big roar. The cub imitated the lion and started roaring. “Now that you have understood who you are, abandon this herd and live like me,” said the lion.

After narrating the tale, Sadguru Maharaj said: “Most of us are like the cub that had strayed into the herd of lambs and do not realise who we are really. Just as the lion removed the veil of ignorance enveloping the cub, the grace of the True Master enables you to know thy self, thereby indicating ‘Thou art that’ (‘Tatvamasi’). In the absence of such enlightenment, you will continue to wallow in worldly attractions, thereby wasting the God-given opportunity of human birth.”

Our inability to understand our real nature is born out of our confusing the body with the soul. Mahatmas are aware of the fact of the soul’s independence from the body. Hence they are able to withstand any pain that is inflicted on their person. Guru Maharaj gave the example of the great saint Sri Sadasiva Brahmendra who was always in a state of bliss, because he never attached any value to his body. Once, the sage was walking through the military camp of the Arcot Nawab, singing ‘Bruhi Mukundeti’. In that ecstatic mood, he entered the private tent of the Nawab. An infuriated Nawab immediately severed the right hand of the sage, who did not get perturbed by the snapping of the hand and blood gushing out from that part of the body, and continued singing the singing of the glory of Mukunda. The Nawab, who realised his mistake, ran after the sage holding the severed hand and prostrated at his feet. Sri Sadasiva Brahmendra looked at the Nawab and asked him “My child, why are you upset?” The Nawab then cried, “Oh, great soul, I am a sinner. In my arrogance, I severed your right hand. Please forgive me.” With a beaming smile, the sage asked him to place the severed arm at the right spot. The Nawab obeyed and, to his joy, found everything normal. Because Sri Sadasiva Brahmendra knew that the soul was independent of the body, he did not experience the agony of the severed hand.  
Jai Gurudev!\*

**GODAVARI MAHA PUSHKARAM  
PROGRAMMES AT RAJAHMUNDRY BRANCH  
INVITATION**

The following are the programmes, arranged at the Rajahmundry Branch of Sri Kali Gardens (recently inaugurated on 08.06.2015), during Godavari Maha Pushkarams from 14.07.2015 to 25.07.2015. All are requested to visit the Ashramam and participate in the programmes.

Address: H.No. 17-24-7/1, Vangaveeti vari Street  
Street beside Ratna Children Hospital, Sitampet  
Rajahmundry, East Godavari District

**PROGRAMMES:**

- 03.00-04.00 A.M - Holi Pushkara dip in Godavari
- 04.00-04.30 A.M - Melukolupu, Suprabhatam
- 04.30-06.00 A.M - Meditation, Prayer
- 08.00-10.00 A.M - Homam
- 10.00-11.00 A.M - Purana Pravachanam (epic recitation) by  
Sri.Srinivasa Ramanuja Das
- 11.00 A.M-12.30 P.M - Spiritual Discourses by Sri Mataji  
and Mahatmas
- 12.30-2.30 P.M - Maha Prasadam
- 05.00-6.30 P.M - Purana Pravachanam (epic recitation) by  
Sri.Srinivasa Ramanuja Das
- 6.30-7.30 P.M - Spiritual Discourses by Sri Mataji and  
Mahatmas
- 07.30-8.30 P.M - Maha Mangala Harathi and Darbar

**SPECIAL PROGRAMMES:**

- 17.07.2015 Fri - Samoohika Kumkuma Pujas
  - 19.07.2015 Sun -Sri Sadguru Pushkara Holy Dips with Maha  
Sankalpam
  - 21.07.2015 Tue -Samoohika Sri Anjaneya swamy Pujas
  - 24.07.2015 Fri -Samoohika Kumkuma Pujas
  - 25.07.2015 Sat - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Maha Mangala Harathi
- Free Medical Camp will organised on all the 12 days by  
S.H.K.V.P.Babu Trust Hospital, Sri Kali Gardens

**NOTE:** There is no provision to stay in the Ashramam. The Devotees are requested to make their own arrangements. The inconvenience is regretted. There may be additions or deletions in the programmes as per requirement.

For details contact:9346535357

Sri Babu Bhakta Samaj  
Rajahmundry

## Thus Spake Babuji DIVINE PLAN

Sushumna Prasada

Lord Babuji, in one of his discourses, asserted that a true devotee with triple purification of body, mind and wealth offers everything to God. Then God takes the total responsibility of such a devotee on His shoulders. “This truth has been practically proved in the case of many devotees. Divine Love is infinite and it showers on one and all without any discrimination of caste, creed or religion. Time and space cannot stand as hindrance to the Divine Grace and Love,” Gurudev said and cited the example of Ramadas in this connection. The discourse continued thus:



The life of the supreme devotee Ramadas is an inimitable example of infinite grace, mercy and love of God.

The original name of Ramadas was Gopanna and he was born in a middle class family near Bhadrachalam. His spiritual master (Gurudev) Kabir Das was a resident of Kasi (Benaras). Benaras is several hundreds of kilometres away from Bhadrachalam. There were neither trains nor buses nor any means of air travel between Banaras and Bhadrachalam in those days. Those who were rich enough used to travel on horses or palanquins. Kabir Das could not afford to travel by such means. It was indeed a miracle how Kabir Das came on foot from Benaras to Bhadrachalam. It is the Divine Power of the name of Rama that made impossibility a possibility.

Bhadrachalam is situated in hard rocky soil, and the inanimate rocks of that place were elated by the pure Divine touch of the feet of Kabir. It was only the rocky minded human beings who could not tolerate to see a Muslim singing the glory of Lord Rama in the shape of songs. The so-called devotees with their narrow mindedness could not swallow the fact of a Muslim becoming a devotee of Rama. Muslims were furious towards Kabir as he became a ‘kafir’ by his devotion to Lord Rama. But Kabir Das was an ideal and genuine devotee who took abuse and flattery with the same cheerful smile, and remained unperturbed by their intolerant and offensive treatment.

Hunger and thirst remained strangers to him as he was sumptuously fed by the nectarine sweetness of the healthy food of 'Ramanama'. Not only he, but those who had darshan of Kabir became totally unmindful of hunger and thirst. Lord Rama Himself had taken the total responsibility of sending Kabir from Kasi to offer spiritual enlightenment to Ramadas. The Lord alone could provide all the comforts needed for such a distant travel of Kabir Das. But the residents of Bhadrachalam proved themselves to be more rocky-hearted in their treatment towards Kabir Das than the rocky soil of Bhadrachalam. Both Hindus and Muslims showed a despicable attitude towards Kabir Das by pelting stones at him. But Kabir Das who took shelter at the graceful, victorious, rosy feet of Lord Rama did not receive injuries or even the least pain from the stones pelted at him. Kabir felt that his acquired 'karma' would be reduced by such ill-treatment. His implicit faith in Lord Rama did not get reduced in the least by their harsh treatment.

Gopanna, who had acquired the most suitable name Ramadas for his matchless devotion towards Lord Rama, felt excited and elated to have the darshan of and association with Kabir Das whom the former considered as his Spiritual Master. The very sight of Kabir Das made him feel that all the good deeds he had done in previous births had offered him the golden opportunity of meeting his Gurudev in the shape of Kabir Das. He firmly believed that he would attain salvation with the initiation of Kabir Das.

In those days people were very fastidious and particular about caste and religion and would discriminate between people on that basis. But Ramadas, though a Brahmin by birth, without any discrimination of caste and religion, prostrated at the feet of Kabir Das, knowing full well that he was a Muslim. Ramadas was a deserving devotee because he was able to discriminate between the real and the tentative, even before he met Kabir Das. The wife of Ramadas was in no way inferior to her husband in the matter of devotion, and she prostrated at the feet of Kabir Das along with her husband. Ramadas had only one son. His son was the replica of his father in the matter of devotion and quality of sacrifice. He followed the footsteps of his father in seeking the blessings of Gurudev Kabir Das. The entire family with its total self-surrender acquired the diamond of the sacred name of Sri Rama and their wealth became inestimable.

Gopanna was very hospitable by nature. His charity knew no bounds. Daily a number of guests from distant places used to come to his house and they were sumptuously fed by Gopanna's wife Kamala, using large vessels for cooking. Near the fire place, there was a pit to store the waste water. One day Gopanna's son running fast near the kitchen slipped and fell into the pit of steaming waste water. The tender young boy met instantaneous death.

Meanwhile, the guests were seated to take their lunch. Gopanna and his wife were steeped in deep sorrow for the loss of their son. They faced the critical situation of swallowing their sorrow and pretending as if nothing had happened, while extending the hospitality to the guests. The couple behaved in such a way that nobody could guess the calamity in the form of the loss of their only son.

When the guests left their house after partaking the lunch, Gopanna took the body of his son and placed it before the feet of Gurudev Kabirdas and explained to him what had happened, with implicit faith in him.

Kabir Das blessed his disciple with a cheerful smile and remarked that his son would be immortal (Chiranjeevi). He said: "Ramadas, don't worry your son is just sleeping, feeling tired after serving the guests. Just as the gold placed in the fire comes out with more brightness, your son would also shine with greater devotion towards Lord Rama and greater dedicated service. So let us all pray Lord Rama who is sure to protect your son with infinite grace. Then Kabir Das, with his melodious voice, started singing the glory of Lord Rama. Ramadas and his wife joined him in praying Lord Rama whole-heartedly. After a few minutes, they could hear another voice joining them in singing. To their pleasant surprise, they found that it was the voice of their son, who had woken up as if from sleep. The child was sitting straight and sang with absorbed devotion and attention

Just as Lord Krishna gave assurance in the 'Bhagavadgita' in the sloka 'Ananya schinthayantomam ye janah paryupasathe, thesham Nityabhiyuktanam Yogkshemam vahamyaham' (Chapter IX-Sloka 22), Lord Ramachandra protected the life of the young son of Ramadas with infinite grace. This incident proves in abundance of the boundless love of Lord Rama towards his devotees. This is a matchless example of Sadguru krupa..  
-to be continued

## **Divine Mother Speaks "TAKE STOCK OF YOURSELF"**

Japamala Prasada

A true spiritual seeker needs to keep track of his own progress in his journey towards Truth. Time is running fast and does not stop for any one. With time even our body is undergoing changes constantly. This body is unique and the most precious gift given by God to realise our real self. No other creature in His creation has that ability. Only man, who is endowed with intellect, can discriminate between truth and untruth, real and unreal, permanent and transient.

Human birth, aspiring for liberation and company of great self-realised souls are the three most difficult things to obtain for a human being, says Sri Adi Sankara Bhagawad Padacharya. We are so lucky to have all the three. We have got the human birth; we are in search of Truth and liberation; and above all, we are blessed to have the Samardha Sadguru to guide us. Our Gurudev has given us a 'lakshyartha' or goal and told us how to reach it. He is guiding us at every point and we are travelling in that path to reach the goal of self-realisation. To assist us in this path, Sri Gurudev has given us various means and methods like Puja (worship), Sankeertan (singing holy hymns), Satsang (holy company), Dhyanam (meditation) and Vicharana (analysis). Sri Gurudev is trying to control our wavering minds and bring them to focus on a single point. He wants us to realise the ultimate Truth, so that the entire universe can live in harmony and peace. It is one single force, which we call God for want of a better name, that is filling, controlling and running the entire universe. This is the ultimate Truth that He wants us to realise. That Supreme Power is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. It is present in every being - animate or inanimate. It is filling the entire universe. In order to realise this ultimate Truth, the Guru gives an aspiring seeker a divine mantra to chant. By constantly chanting that mantra we can cleanse ourselves of our unwanted traits and



blemishes. By contemplating upon the meaning of the mantra and recapitulating the teachings of Sri Gurudev, we can control the waywardness of our mind.

If we continue to practise diligently what Sri Gurudev tells us, He will take full responsibility. He will open the eye of knowledge and will free us from bondage. Thus we will experience the ultimate Truth, Peace, Knowledge and Bliss.

In our spiritual journey, we must constantly take stock of our progress. “Have I improved in my Sadhana (practice) during the past one year? Where have I gone wrong? What obstacles did I face? How to overcome them? How to improve? Have I succumbed to lethargy? Have I given in to anger, jealousy, lust, greed and other such qualities? Am I following what my Gurudev has told me?” — These are the questions we must put to ourselves.

If you are agitated and not having peace of mind, don't blame someone else for that; your own mind's vacillation is the cause of your unhappiness and lack of peace. To the query “Who is peaceful?” the Amrita Bindu Upanishad answers thus: “See the world like a blind man; hear sounds like a deaf man; look at the body like a wooden pole.” These are the traits of a ‘Prasanthā’ or Peaceful man. This will steady your wavering mind.

Upanishads are saying we are all ‘Amritasya Putrah’ - we are immortal. We are not the body which is taking birth and dying. We are the ‘Atman’ or the Supreme Power. Realise this, and you will have no more sadness or suffering. Sri Gurudev is telling us to realise our True Self. He is showing us and guiding us constantly through our spiritual journey.

Trust your Gurudev and follow His teachings implicitly. He wants all of us to experience the Bliss which He is in always. Drink the nectarine name of the Lord. It has no side effects or bad effects. The more you drink, the more you will experience Peace and Bliss. The happiness you are seeking is within you. Hurry up! Go for it! Arise! Awake! Stop not until the goal is reached!

May Lord Gurudev's blessings shower on all of us aplenty!  
Om Tat Sat!\*

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

**JULY 2015**

- 02 Thu - Adhika Aashada Purnima-Sri Sadguru Pada Puja  
11 Sat - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja  
14 Tue - Masa Sivaratri, Beginning of Godavari Pushkarams  
16 Thu - Amavasya  
17 Fri - Beginning of Dakshinayanam  
27 Mon- Nija Toli Ekadasi - Sri Sadguru Pada Pooja,  
Bhakta Samaradhana  
31 Fri - Nija Aashada Poornima - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru  
Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana, Beginning of  
Chaturmasa Deeksha

**AUGUST 2015**

- 09 Sun - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja  
12 Wed- Masa Sivaratri, Ekaham at Pavuluru Branch  
14 Fri - Amavasya  
28 Fri - Sravana Sukravaram - Varalakshmi Vratam  
29 Sat - Rakhi Poornima - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta  
Samaradhana

**SEPTEMBER 2015**

- 05 Sat - Teachers' day, Sri Krishnashtami - Morning: Kalasa  
Sthapana, Sahasra Namarchana to Sri Radha Krishna,  
Bhakta Samaradhana,  
07.00 P.M. Sri Sadguru Pada Puja  
06 Sun - 11.00 a.m. Samuhika Sri Radha Krishna Pujas,  
Bhakta Samaradhana  
07 Mon - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada  
Pooja, Bhakta Samaradhana,  
08.00 p.m Utti Kottuta  
11 Fri - Masa Sivaratri

- 13 Sun - Amavasya  
 17 Thu - Sri Vinayaka Chavithi - 05.00 a.m Sri Sadguru Pada  
 Puja, 11.00 a.m Samoohika Vinayaka Chavithi Pujas,  
 Bhakta Samaradhana  
 28 Mon - Poornima - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja

## OCTOBER 2015

- 07 Wed - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja  
 10 Sat - Sani Trayodasi  
 11 Sun - Masa Sivaratri  
 12 Mon - Amavasya  
 13 Tue - 24 Sat - Sri Devi Navaratri Mahotsavams  
 19 Mon - Mula Nakshatram - Sri Saraswathi Puja  
 20 Tue - Durgashtami - Samoohika Kumkuma Pujas  
 21 Wed - Maharnavami  
 22 Thu - Vijaya Dasami - Samoohika Kumkuma Pujas,  
 Annaprasanal, Aksharabhyasamulu, Namakaranams  
 23 Fri - Ekaham  
 24 Sat - Deeksha Viramana, 07.00 p.m Nagarotsavam,  
 08.00 p.m Sri Sadguru Pada Puja  
 27 Tue - Aswayuja Poornima- Birth Day of Sri Mathaji-  
 Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana

Ten ignorant men forded a stream and on reaching the other shore counted themselves and founded only nine. They grew anxious and grieved at the loss of the tenth unknown man. A wayfarer, ascertaining the cause of their grief, found that each had left himself out in the count, so gave each a blow and asked them to count. They counted ten and were satisfied. The tenth man was not got anew. He was all along there and only ignorance had caused their grief. Similarly also with a man and the Self. There is nothing to be gained anew. The Self is ever here and now. Because the limitations have been wrongly assumed, there is the need to transcend them. Moreover, if it were anything to be gained anew, it would imply its previous absence. What was absent once, may vanish again also in which case there would be no permanence in salvation. -Sri Ramana Maharshi

# Children's Section Tales of Sri Ramakrishna GOPIKAS AND VEDA VYASA

Ramana Prasad

If you want self-realisation, you must do sadhana. If you do the sadhana with implicit faith, even little sadhana will help you to reach the goal of life.

Once, saint Vyasa reached the banks of the Yamuna and he was about to cross the river. At that juncture, some Gopikas came there. But no boat was available there to take them across the river. As they were to reach the other side urgently they did



not know what to do. Then they saw the sage Vyasa coming that way; they immediately approached him for help.

Vyasa said, “Don’t worry! I will ensure that you all will safely cross the river. But I am now very hungry. So please give me something to eat.” Gopikas served him with milk and butter

which they were carrying with them. He finished them all at once. But before taking, he offered them to God. Gopikas then asked, “Sir! We have to urgently cross the river. Please help us.” Then Vyasa prayed to the river thus, “O Yamuna! If it is true that I have not taken any food today, please give way to us so that we can cross the river.” No sooner he finished his prayer than the river gave way to them.

The Gopikas were astonished beyond limits. They thought “How is it that after taking the food served by us, he says, ‘Had I not eaten anything today, please give way’?” They were not convinced how Yamuna also readily accepted his prayer and gave way.

The reason why Gopikas could not realise the logic behind this was that Vyasa first offered the food to the Lord before consuming it. As he offered with full faith it was the Parameswara who took the food but not Vyasa.

That was the reason Yamuna gave way thus allowing them to cross the river.\*

Sri.Indukuri Satyanarayana Raju, aged 92 years, resident of Ashramam and an ardent devotee of Sri Babuji Maharaj, attained Guru Sayujyam on Tuesday 31.03.2015.

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

Smt. Gade Sita Devi w/o Satyanarayana aged 56 years, a resident of Ashramam and an ardent devotee of Sri Babuji Maharaj, attained Guru Sayujyam on Monday 20.04.2015.

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

## STORIES OF DEVOTEES SOUBHARI

Ramana Prasad

Once upon a time, Mandhata was ruling the Ayodhya kingdom. He married Indumati who was the daughter of Sasibindu. Mandhata and Indumati begot many daughters.

At that time a Rishi by name Soubhari used to do penance in a forest. He did penance for many years and he was also a great scholar in the Vedas. Once he happened to see Sumantra, king of whales. He was of very big in size and was living happily with his children and grandchildren in the sea.

Soubhari observed this and a peculiar thought occurred to him: “Why should not I get married and derive family pleasure and live happily with my wife and children?”

He immediately left the hermitage and stepped into the outside world. Having come to know that emperor Mandhata had several marriageable daughters, he went to his kingdom and met him. Mandhata received the sage with great reverence and asked him the purpose of his visit. The sage replied thus,



“Raja! So long I spent my life in penance. Now I want to marry and lead family life.

Please give one of your daughters in marriage to me. Don't reject my request. You belong to a dynasty of Ikshvaaku kings who were known to keep their promise given to people at all costs and never send the people empty handed. You being the member of that great 'vamsa', I am sure you also will definitely agree to my proposal and live up to the high standards set by your predecessors."

Mandhata heard him quietly. He observed that the sage was very old and so much so he could not force any of his daughters to marry him and at the same time if he rejected his proposal he might curse him. He did not know what to do. He kept silent and did not give any reply.

Soubhari understood his predicament and said, "Raja! Surely you cannot keep your daughters with you forever. You have the responsibility to find suitable grooms for your daughters and send them with their husbands. So please give one of your daughters to me and thus reduce your burden to some extent."

But Mandhata was not willing to give any one of his daughters to this old man and at the same time he was apprehending severe curse from the sage in the event of rejecting his proposal. In order to save himself from his wrath, he said, "Mahatma! We follow the practice of giving full freedom to the girls to make the choice of their own and then we perform the marriage with the person whom the girls select. If any of my daughters is willing to marry you, I will happily give her hand to you."

Soubhari understood the king's intention. He thought like this, "Contrary to the practice of his Vamsajas, he wants to escape with such excuses. In this manner he wants to reject my proposal as he is sure that none of his daughters will accept me as their husband!"

Looking at the king, Soubhari said, "What you say is quite reasonable. Please take me to your daughters. Let them also see me and decide and if anyone is willing to marry me, then you offer her hand to me."

-to be continued

## Devotional Stories

### STRONG WILLED CHILD DEVOTEES - I

My dear Chiranjeevulaara:

Our Puraanaas have recorded the tales of some strong willed child devotees. These children meditated on the 'lakshyaartha' given by their Sadgurus and achieved name and fame. I shall narrate three such stories for your benefit.

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Dhruva was the eldest child of king Uttaanapaada and his queen Suneethi. One day the child wanted to meet his father who was at that time in the palace of his second wife Suruchi. Dhruva went there and saw his half-brother (son of step-mother) Uttama sitting in the lap of Uttaanapaada. Dhruva, too, wanted to share his father's lap, but he was prevented by Suruchi who declared, "You can sit in the lap of the king only if you were born of me." Dhruva looked at his father who strangely kept quiet.

Deeply hurt by the insulting remark of his step-mother and father's silence, Dhruva ran to his mother, crying. Suneethi caressed her son's head and told him, "You take refuge in Lord Narayana, who alone can solve your problem." Dhruva innocently asked "How can I do that, mother?" She then told him to do penance invoking the Lord. Not knowing what penance was, Dhruva was wandering in the palace garden where, to his fortune, he saw the Divine Sage Narada walking towards the king's apartment.

Dhruva prostrated at the feet of Narada Muni and sought his guidance on how to do penance to have the darshan of Lord Narayana. "You are a seven-year-old boy and it will be extremely difficult for you to take such a rigorous course. Come with me to the palace and I shall persuade Uttaanapaada," said the sage, fondling the child. But Dhruva was adamant in his determination to have the vision of Lord Narayana. All efforts of the sage to dissuade Dhruva from this task failed. Appreciating the will power of the child, Narada gave him initiation by uttering the 'mantra' - Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya - in his right ear, and blessed the child.

After bowing to Narada, Dhruva went into a nearby forest, sat under a tree and started chanting the 'mantra'. Initially, he could not concentrate on the Lord, as his mind was still thinking of his step-mother's insult and father's helplessness. Soon he felt that this was not the way to have the darshan of the Lord, and pleaded with the mind not to think of the past but strive to achieve the noble goal. Gradually, his mind came round and the boy started enjoying the bliss of chanting the 'mantra'. When he began the penance Dhruva was having fruits plucked from trees as food. Later, he stopped that practice and lived only on fruits that had fallen from trees. After some days, he ate only the tree leaves. Then he thrived on water only. Soon he abandoned that habit also, because the 'lakshyaartha' was more tasty than any food or water. Dhruva was thus totally engrossed in his penance unmindful of thirst and hunger.

One day Narada came that way. He tried to talk to Dhruva, who did not respond. The sage was pleased to see divinity in the child who was in total absorption of the thought of Lord Narayana, and not disturbed by what was happening around him. Narada felt that the child would achieve his goal. He then went to Uttaanapaada and admonished him for his lapse of ignoring his eldest child.

Days passed by, with Dhruva not swerving from his determination to have the vision of the Lord. Soon the heat of Dhruva's penance reached Vaikuntam, compelling Lord Narayana to appear before the child. The Lord touched the head of the child who opened his eyes to see the Lord in all His glory. Immensely pleased at having Vasudeva darshan, Dhruva fell at the lotus feet of the Lord.

"My child, why have you taken up this arduous task at this tender age, when it should all be play and joy?" asked the Lord.

Dhruva replied: "Deprived of my father's pampering, I wept before my mother. She only told me to do this penance. I had the good fortune of being initiated by Narada Muni to achieve this goal. I am deeply indebted to them."

"Now that you achieved what you had desired, tell Me what boon you seek from Me."

“O Lord, I have had Your darshan. What more do I need? I do not seek any boon except the one of liberation from worldly desires. Now take me into Your fold, so that I shall remain always with You.”

Lord Narayana was overwhelmed by the little one’s lack of desire for worldly things, and said: “You will definitely reach Me ultimately. Before that happens, you have to do a lot of good things to people on earth. After your fulfilling this as the ruler of this world, I intend giving you a special slot in the universe. You wanted a place in the lap of your father. I will place you in such a position that you shall be the guiding star for people on earth.”

Dhruva happily returned to the royal palace where Uttaanapaada hugged him and sought his pardon for not pulling up Suruchi for her insulting remark. But Dhruva said: “Father, do not blame mother. But for her, I would not have had the vision of the Lord.” Suruchi also expressed her regret.

In due course, Dhruva was crowned by Uttaanapaada, who retired to forest along with Suneethi and Suruchi to lead the life of an ascetic. Dhruva became the beloved king of his subjects thanks to his welfare schemes for their benefit.

As promised, Lord Narayana, at the end of Dhruva’s reign, made him a star just above the North Pole, giving him the highest place to dwell and shine for all time to come. Dhruva Nakshatram is the only star that is constant in the universe, whereas all other stars are moving in the vast space. Also called the Pole Star, it indicates the direction of North to sailors at night time.

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Children, hope you liked the story of Dhruva who, by his sheer determination, achieved the highest place in the universe. He could do that because of his deep faith in the ‘lakshyaartha’ given by sage Narada. Like him, you should also develop a deep faith in Sadguru Maharaj who is ever ready to give you the highest honour. In the next part of this series, I shall tell you the tale of another child devotee, Prahalada.

Yours affectionately,  
Maathula\*

## Babuji's Fables

### GOD-THE WISH-FULFILLING TREE

In olden days, as there were no trains, cars or other means of transport, people used to go from one place to another on foot. Once, a man was travelling in a forest. It was a hot summer afternoon and the man was feeling very thirsty as he did not have any water with him.

On the way, he saw a nice big tree and sat under its shade to rest, as he was extremely tired. Then he thought ‘Thank God! I could find at least some shade to stretch my weary limbs. I am so thirsty. How I wish I could get some water.’ Lo! There appeared a vessel full of water before him! He was astonished beyond words. He drank the water but was still feeling very hungry and wished he had some food to eat. Immediately, there materialised a plate full of nice eatables. The traveller was even more wonder-struck. After eating all that food, he felt like having a nice soft bed to sleep, and even before he wished, the bed was there! The man lay down on the bed and wished he had a beautiful maiden to massage his tired feet and that very second a beautiful damsel was massaging his feet!

Looking at all these happenings, the man was perplexed and started to wonder what was happening. Suddenly a thought flashed over his mind “Oh, how is it that whatever I am wishing is being fulfilled in no time! Hope some tiger wouldn’t come now and swallow me!” Right then, a tiger came, caught hold of his throat and dragged him away!

The man did not know that the tree he was resting under was Kalpa Vriksham, the celestial tree which fulfills all wishes of those under it.

**MORAL: God is the Kalpa Vriksham or the wish-fulfilling tree, and He grants all our desires. He gives whatever we ask but we must be careful; at some point the tiger of Maya would be waiting to eat us up. So, if you wish for transient, worldly things you will get them but you must also be wary of Maya devouring you. If you wish for deliverance or Moksha, even that will be granted by God!**

-Retold by Dr.Swarnamukhi Prasada

## **Down Memory Lane**

### **HOW TO ATTAIN SALVATION?**

Sushumna Prasada

One evening Lord Babuji, addressing the devotees who came to seek His blessings, remarked that a genuine devotee should be heroic and valorous like Arjuna and not timid with mere wordy valour like Uttarakumara. Such people have to bow down to the viles of Maya (illusion). But there is no scope for Maya to display its vagaries in the presence of the Spiritual Master (Gurudev). The discourse continued thus:

Some of you may argue that Maya fails to have impact on them, as they are in the presence of Gurudev. But what is the use of staying in the company of Gurudev, when your mind is absorbed in looking after the family problems relating to your wife and children? Illusion cannot have its impact on those whose minds are absorbed in meditation of their Lord Gurudev. When you forget the smarana (meditation on the Divine name), Maya chases you. Illusion cannot influence those who receive the grace of the Divine Lord by staying in the presence of the Divine Lord or Gurudev and those who spend their time in the company of pious people (Satsangatya). There is no scope for illusion in such cases.

We find some people make irrelevant and useless banter which only furthers the qualities like passion, anger, jealousy and intolerance, and mean and cheap ideas and outlook become dominant in such people. Some people though devoid of such qualities may become a slave to some bad habits. Some people become slaves to undesirable qualities in the external world. That shows lack of culture. How can such a person undertake spiritual practice? Some devotees come to me asking for initiation. I ask them to practise meditation and change their behaviour first and become fit to receive initiation. Then only they become eligible to receive initiation. But they fail to understand the implication embedded in my suggestion.

Suppose we sow a seed in an infertile soil. Does it come up as a plant? For the seed to sprout up as a plant, we have to water the soil and add manure to it. Mere initiation does not

offer salvation to a person unless he undergoes rigorous spiritual training. If a person forgets the fact that he has taken initiation, where is the chance of his getting up in Brahma muhurta (wee hours of the morning) to do meditation? Such persons become victims to illusion easily and find it difficult to face the ebb and tide of family life (samsara).

Think for yourselves how far I am responsible for their spiritual stagnation. Suppose a sadhaka, who has to do regular and methodical meditation and spiritual training, starts defending himself saying that his wife and children stand as obstacles for his meditation. Actually it is his mind - i.e. the power of illusion - that hinders him in his way of realisation of the initiation given by Gurudev. That's why Yogi Vemana pointed out the impact of illusion in his poem. The concluding line of the poem is "Intiloni poru intinta kadaya Viswadhabhirama, Vinura Vema". Here 'Intiloni Poru' means the hell of confusion in the mind. But however infertile the soil is, the spiritual seeds sown by Gurudev will sprout up sooner or later. Certainly such a sadhaka will attain salvation at least in the next birth, if not in this life.

At this stage, a devotee expressed the doubt whether self-realisation would be possible without getting rid of the fruit of the actions of previous births (Prarabdha karma). Lord Babuji cleared his doubt by saying that the flame which sprouts up from meditation burns to ashes all types of karma. "There is no doubt about it. I can tell you the method by which you can get rid of 'Prarabdha karma' if you can scrupulously follow it. If you fail to do it, you have to face the consequences of wavering and disobeying the instructions of the Spiritual Master. What is it that stands in the way of doing meditation, when the spiritual trainee resolves to do meditation? If you ruminate over it, you can realise the reason. If you fail to know, you can get the doubt cleared by asking your Gurudev. You have to strictly follow the path suggested by your master. Otherwise you have to face the consequences."

-to be continued

## WAITING FOR SRI RAMA—VI

(Continued from the previous issue)

Ramaswami Sampath

As soon as Dasaratha reached Queen Kausalya's palace, he hugged and sought her pardon for the unpleasant happenings. "Oh, Kausalya, infatuated by Kaikeyi's charm, I ignored you and Sumitra. The net result is my present plight of banishing my dearest son," he lamented. Kausalya consoled him by saying, "Let us hope that our Kulaguru Vasishta would somehow prevent the exit of Rama from Ayodhya."

"It will not happen, Kausalya, because I am cursed to die like this. Years ago, I earned the wrath of an aged and blind hermit couple whose only son was killed by my arrow," Dasaratha said and narrated that episode.....

....In those days I used to boast myself as the best archer. One day I went on a hunting spree in the nearby forest killing a number of wild animals. Suddenly I heard the gurgling sound of an elephant drinking water in a distant pond. I immediately shot a 'sabdabhedhi' arrow in the direction from which the sound was heard. That 'astram' was capable of hitting the target without the archer seeing and aiming at it. In a trice, I heard the cry, "O God! Why an innocent person like me is punished for no fault of his!" I rushed to the spot and was shocked to see a young hermit lying in a pool of blood struck by my arrow and writhing in pain. When I tried to lift him in order to save his life, he said: "Forget about saving me. The arrow has gone deep into my heart. I will not survive. Please do me a favour. My blind parents are awaiting my arrival at the hermitage nearby, to quench their thirst. Quickly go there with this water and quench their thirst, lest they would also die. Then you can tell them what happened to me." So saying he handed over the pitcher to me and breathed his last. As commanded by the youth, I reached the hermitage and satiated the thirst of the elderly blind couple. "Thank you our dear son. Why are you silent? Have you to trek a long distance to fetch water? Sorry we gave this trouble" said the sage. With tears bursting from my eyes I sobbed and told him, "Sir, I am not your son. I am Dasaratha, the king of Ayodhya. While on a hunting expedition, unintentionally I killed your son,

who was filling this pitcher with water in a pond, with my 'sabdabhedhi' arrow. Forgive me for my lapse." The moment they heard that their son was no more, they wailed uncontrollably: "O Sravanakumara, how could you leave us in lurch like this? You were the only light in our dark existence. Without you what shall we do? Let us also join you by ending our lives." I told them not to take such an extreme step, promising that I would take care of them in the royal palace. The sage derisively responded thus: "You who killed our son are going to protect us! What a cruel joke!" I pleaded with them to treat me as their son and come along with me to the palace. They declined my offer and decided to end their lives. Before that, the sage cursed me thus, "Just as we are suffering the loss of our son in the last phase of our lives, you shall also suffer the pain of separation from your children in your final hours." ....

Narrating this old incident, Dasaratha said: "Kausalya, though that curse did benefit this issueless person by way of begetting our four noble children, it would ensure my permanent separation from my dear Rama who would not come back to Ayodhya for the next fourteen years."

As both Dasaratha and Kausalya cried over the inevitability of that fatal curse, Sumantra came there and informed the king of the exiling of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana in Chitrakoota. On hearing this, the agony of Dasaratha intensified and he fell into a swoon. After a couple of days, the king passed away unable to control his grief.

The death of Dasaratha caused a political vacuum in the capital city, without the successor being anointed. Sumantra and his colleagues consulted Vasishta and other rishis. On the advice of the maharshis, Bharata and Satrugna were summoned urgently to rush back to Ayodhya. When Bharata heard the news of Rama being exiled because of his mother Kaikeyi's initiative to coronate her son, Bharata was furious. He reached his palace and violently upbraided his mother for bringing about this 'araachakam' and declared that he was disowning her as mother. Patiently bearing Bharata's abuses, Kaikeyi felt happy about her son's noble heart.

Bharata then went to Kausalya's palace. On seeing him, Kausalya broke into a wail and told him: "You and your mother had successfully conspired to grab the throne. I am happy that you would become the king because that was the promise your father had made to your uncle. But, should my dear son Rama be banished for this?"

"Mother, you brought me up all along with all affection better than my own mother. Can such a noble person utter these harsh words like I plotted to ascend the throne? The purpose of my coming to you, mother, is only to seek your blessings to succeed in my mission to bring back Rama to Ayodhya so that he can be the king," cried Bharata. So saying he swore in the name of God thus: "If as you say I had conspired to grab the throne from Rama, let me be consigned to the hell, which is the abode of ignoble persons. Further, if Rama does not return to Ayodhya, I shall also keep myself out of the capital."

Kausalya was touched by the declaration of his innocence and extreme step of not setting foot again on Ayodhya. She hugged him and said: "My son, forgive me for suspecting you, and forget the words I have uttered because of my love for Rama." Queen Sumitra who was beside her also blessed Bharata, "May you succeed in your effort to bring back Rama!"

Funeral rites of Dasaratha were over. Kulaguru Vasishta requested Bharata to ascend the throne as per his father's commitment. Bharata repudiated the proposal and said that he was proceeding to Chitrakoota to persuade Rama to change his mind. "If necessary, I shall spend fourteen years in forest in his place, to atone for the sin of my mother," he declared unequivocally. Vasishta and other sages, ministers like Sumantra and elders of Ayodhya felt extremely delighted over Bharata's resolve. All of them decided to accompany Bharata to Chitrakoota in his mission. The next day, Bharata, wearing the ascetic robe and accompanied by Satrugna, the three queens, Vasishta, Sumantra and others, proceeded to Chitrakoota.

As Bharata and his retinue approached the banks of the Ganga, Guha, who was the chieftain of that area, saw this as a threat to Rama, now in exile. 'Are these people bent on further harming my Lord, not satisfied with denying him his due?' he thought for a while and ordered his army to get ready to stop

the ‘aggressors’. But as they came near, Guha could see Bharata, attired like a hermit, accompanied by Sumantra. Immediately, he realised his mistake and dropped the bow in his hands. Sumantra introduced Guha to Bharata as “your Lord’s dear friend”. Bharata bowed to Guha and explained his mission to enthrone Rama, by all means. Touched by Bharata’s sincerity, Guha told him (these are the translated words of the Tamil poet Kamban): “Though your father yielded to the pressure of your mother and offered you the crown of Ayodhya, you have spurned it as a bad deal. That shows the inner spiritual strength of your character. When I see this blemishless act of yours, I feel that even one thousand Ramas would not be able to match your magnanimity.”

[A brief explanation: Guha has seen Rama’s determination to keep the plighted word of his father and renounced the crown that was his legitimate heirloom. Such a sacrifice raised Rama in Guha’s esteem. When he saw Bharata who was ready to abandon the gratuitous boon secured by his mother, Guha felt that Bharata was definitely on a greater pedestal. Guha’s yard stick was Rama and he measured Bharata with that yard stick].

Bharata then asked Guha how Rama, Sita and Lakshmana, accustomed to royal luxuries, were undergoing the rigours of forest life. Guha said: “The three have adjusted themselves to forest life as duck takes to water. Lakshmana is keeping guard for prince and princess.” Both Bharata and Satrugna cried with tears welling up in their eyes. After some rest, with the help of Guha, the entire retinue crossed the river and reached Chitrakoota.

Lakshmana, who saw the huge concourse of people, headed by Bharata, coming towards their hermitage, shouted thus: “Brother, look at the temerity of avaricious Bharata. He wants to annihilate us totally so that he can rule Ayodhya without fear. Will I allow that? Give me your nod. I shall pulverize them all in a single stroke.”

Hurt by the remarks of Lakshmana, Rama chided him: “Bharata is also a dear brother to me like you. He will not entertain such negative thoughts. I presume he is coming here only to take me back to Ayodhya.”

“No brother, you are too soft towards Bharata. I know his ulterior motive,” said Lakshmana.

“Is that so? Let Bharata come. I will tell him, ‘Look brother, the fourteen-year exile I am undergoing as per our father’s command is strictly for me only. If you do not want the kingdom, you take Lakshmana with you and crown him.’ Bharata will gladly obey my order,” said Rama. Lakshmana felt ashamed at his misjudgment.

As they approached Rama’s place Bharata and Satrugna rushed fast and fell at the feet of their eldest brother. With tears overflowing on their cheeks, they informed him about the demise of Dasaratha unable to bear the pangs of separation from Rama. The moment Rama heard that his father was no more, he fell like a tree uprooted by a storm. “Should I be the cause of my father’s end?” Rama lamented.

Under the guidance of Kulaguru Vasishta, the four brothers performed the obsequies to the departed soul. Thereafter, Bharata expressed his conviction that as per the tradition of the Ikshwaku race, the eldest son alone should rule the kingdom and requested Rama to return to the capital. But Rama declined, saying that it was the duty of a son to obey the command of his father. “If I return to Ayodhya without fulfilling the exile condition, I will be violating the moral code of our great race, and will be blamed for disobeying our father. Hence, my dear Bharata, please get back to Ayodhya and rule the kingdom befitting the greatness of our noble race.”

Bharata was not convinced and said that because of his mother’s greed that this unsavoury development had taken place. “As atonement for this ugly turn of events, dear brother, let me undergo the exile for fourteen years, and you rule the kingdom,” said an uncontrollably sobbing Bharata.

Rama embraced Bharata and said, “I am really proud of having a brother like you. But if we exchange the commands of our father this way, it will be an insult to his plighted word. Listen to my advice and be the ruler of Ayodhya.”

The brothers’ arguments went on like this before their Kulaguru. The sage wiped off the tears on the cheeks of Bharata and proudly remarked: “By your blemishless behaviour, Bharata you have done proud to the Ikshwaku race. Rama is the embodiment of Dharma. He will not swerve from his Dharma. Hence, you have to obey your elder brother, who is like your father now.”

Meanwhile, the Devas, who had assembled on the sky above watching the conversation between the two brothers, feared whether the purpose for which Rama Avatar had taken place would be defeated, and declared in one voice: “Rama is duty-bound to obey his father’s command and so he would go deep into the forest. Bharata, too, should respect his father’s wish and rule Ayodhya for fourteen years.”

“Look Bharata, even the celestials have underlined the need for us to fulfill the command of our father. We should not ignore their sound advice. This is my command that you shall rule Ayodhya for fourteen years,” said Rama firmly.

Bharata reluctantly agreed to return to Ayodhya on condition that at the expiry of the exile term, Rama should take over the reins. He then sought the pair of footwear of Rama and keeping them on his head declared: “Until your return, this footwear will rule the kingdom, and I shall only function like a regent, residing in Nandigramam on the outskirts of Ayodhya. If you do not return at the end of the exile and take over the kingdom, I will cease to be the regent also, and consign myself to flames.”

Rama hugged Bharata and blessed him thus: “May your name and fame spread all over for all time to come!”

Mother Kaikeyi, who was watching the scene with her heart filled with pride for having given birth to such a son, heaved a sigh of relief. “Thank God. I was worried whether Bharata would crown himself, unable to disobey his brother. Happily, my son has also been saved. Apart from losing the most beloved husband, I had to take the abuses of one and all for my action. So what? For the sake of my dearest Rama, I am ready to take the blame. As a reward for this, my son Bharata has been hailed as the blemishless one,” she said to herself.

After returning to Ayodhya, Bharata installed the ‘Sri Rama Paadukalu’ on a makeshift throne in Nandigramam. He and Satrugna donned the hermit’s attire and ruled the kingdom as representatives of Rama, with the able guidance of Kulaguru Vasishtha and wise Sumantra.

-to be continued

## MEDITATION - STATE OF BEING

(Continued from the previous issue)

Rekha

The need for 'sravanam' (listening), 'mananam' (recapitulating) and 'nididhyasa' (constant contemplation) of the teachings of Mahatmas is essential. They help us to turn inward, research and introspect. Thus cleansing our mind, we get a sense of awareness, which helps us to recognise every movement of every atom in the entire creation. When that happens, we will be able to serve the society better, while helping ourselves.

Listening in itself becomes meditation, when our mind is devoid of every thought and just focuses on the topic we are listening to. This practice helps us immensely when we actually sit down to the process of meditation with a thought-free mind. Intent listening leads to an absolute silence where we can hear the Truth and experience It. King Janaka, Yagnavalkya Maharshi, our Gurudev and His foster father Sri Kandarpa Parasuraamayya garu were constantly involved in spiritual discussions; so much so, they lost track of time. It is said that once the servants told Janaka that his kingdom was on fire. But he was not worried or anxious at all, but continued with his spiritual discussion, as he had appointed people to take care of his kingdom in his absence. Anxiety is not conducive to acquire knowledge. Calm and one-pointed mind are essential for good listening. When King Pareekshit was accursed, he did not lament over the curse or misfortune, but instead searched for a path to redeem himself and be saved from the vicious cycle of birth and death. So, Suka Maharshi came to him as if he was in search of such a disciple and vanquish his appetite for True Knowledge.

Exercising self-discipline and self-control in every aspect of life is important, and they are the fundamental tools for concentration, which is very vital for meditation. That state is beyond any worldly state of affairs – 'Godly state'. God, the Supreme Power, takes a form and quality and incarnates on this earth as a Mahatma (Great Soul or Guru) to redeem humankind. The righteousness of devotees like Akrura and knowledgeable people like Lord Rama should be the bedrock on which we should construct the building of our life. We should have the

determination to be in their presence. We should have the same enthusiasm of King Pareekshit and other saints had in the presence of Suka Maharshi to listen to Mahatmas' teachings. That enthusiasm and endeavour constitute meditation.

With a calm mind, withdraw all the senses like the tortoise retracting all its organs inside its shell when it senses a predator or danger. Take a deep breath, starting from the navel, chant the 'Om karam' to achieve the aim of meditation.

Every seeker needs a Sadguru. A disciple should be in the company of Mahatmas to understand what happens in their presence. No matter what we are doing, if we recognise that our Guru resides in us and He is guiding us, then we will reach our destination without getting lost. We should change the way we think. Encourage good thoughts. Everyone has the Guru's grace. We should be observant and obedient, when we live in the company of a Guru. In the presence of Mahatmas, we should question ourselves: are we able to recognise and experience the joy that they are experiencing? There is lot of knowledge to acquire from scriptures and other books. Our time is limited. We do not know how much time is left with us on this earth. All we need is the essence of the knowledge to realise the Truth which is to achieve the ultimate goal of meditation. Mahatmas (Gurus) can show us the appropriate path to Self-realisation. The Guru gives us the 'mantra' which we have to meditate. Guru's mantra is brief, but His teachings are enormous. The 'mantra' may be small, but the restrictions to be followed on this path are many. Unless we follow the conditions set forth in the Guru's teachings, we cannot see the effect of the Guru's initiation ('mantropadesam') on our lives.

We have to do what the Guru instructs and not emulate Him and try to do what He does. The great teacher, Dakshinamurthy, through Silence and Meditation, imparted that knowledge to the sages around Him. Guru Dattatreya, through his seemingly strange actions of having women, wine and meat around Him, imparted knowledge to the spiritual seekers. Goddess Sita had the power to kill Her abductor, the demon King Ravana. But knowing that the Lord had incarnated as Rama only to destroy Ravana, and reveal the Truth to Ravana, She did not take the liberty to use Her power, but surrendered to

the Lord's will. Chanting of Rama's name made Hanuman victorious even over Rama, when Hanuman had to fight his Lord in a battle to save king Yayathi who had to face Rama's might and wrath. Hanuman had promised to protect Yayathi, when the latter sought Hanuman's shelter. Such is the power of 'mantra'.

If we have self-control and live within our limits nothing binds us – even worldly attachments. Once we taste the nectar of chanting the 'mantra', our mind and heart will be transformed to the form of the 'mantra'. The chanter and the chanting assume one form.

One should have absolute yearning to acquire True Knowledge. The secret of life is very esoteric. Only if we delve into the depths of life, we can unfold the secret of life and experience the real Bliss.

At this point, Sri Mataji recited the poem of the great Kulasekhara Alwar – 'Krishna twadeeya pada pankaja....' In this poem, the king pleads with the Lord to fix his mind on the Lord's lotus feet, and said, "This ever changing world is ephemeral. There is one everlasting and eternal power, and that is the Supreme Power. That is Universal Love. That is the Blissful One. That is the Sanctum. Though we are in the world, our mind and our heart should be in our home, the innermost Sanctum Sanctorum. We cannot accumulate worldly stuff there. It means we have to be in the world, fulfill our responsibilities and perform our duties righteously. Our mind and heart have to be free of any kind of attachment to the worldly things, be it material possessions or relationships."

Sri Mataji concluded the week-long satsangs with the following verse from the Bhagavadgita:

...Pasyan srunvan sparsan jigrahan  
Asnan gacchan svapan svaasan  
Pralapan visrajan grahnan  
Unmisann nimissan api... (Ch.5-Sl.8,9)

"In other words, we have to recognise the essence of it all, put into practice all our learning. There is no good or bad in that. That state is Godly state - the state of Being (Madhava Sthithi). That is meditation. That is you. That is filled with concentration, and that is our existence," averred Sri Mataji\*

## GLORIOUS DEVOTEES

### TULASIDAS

C.V. Ramana Babu

(Translation of Telugu original by Jagam)

The great sage Valmiki, author of the eternal epic Ramayanam, was born as Tulasidas after 28 Tretha yugas, to a Brahmin couple Aatmaram and Ratnabai in Hastinapuram, being ruled by emperor Akbar. Aatmaram was the minister of Akbar. Under the guidance of his father, Tulasidas became an expert in all the Vedas and puranas by the tender age of 16 years. He married his maternal uncle's beautiful and virtuous daughter Mamatha



Devi. Aatmaram used to take Tulasidas to the king's court and taught him about administration and duties of a minister. Tulasidas was asked to act in his father's position, when Aatmaram went on a pilgrimage. But soon, due to bad company Tulasidas became immoral. He would not heed the parents' advice. Vexed, Aatmaram retired to the forest Naimisa to do penance.

Tulasidas became so infatuated with his wife that he neglected all his duties and even the king's orders. One day, the king himself went to his home to see him. Even then, he did not like to meet the king. But, when Mamatha Devi threatened self-immolation, he went out. Akbar took him to Delhi. As per the orders of Ratnabhai, Mamatha Devi went to her parents' house.

Unable to bear the separation from his wife, he took permission of the king and left to meet her. It was raining heavily. He had to cross the Yamuna in pitch darkness. No boat was available. He caught hold of a floating corpse thinking it to be a log, crossed over to the other bank and reached the in-laws' home. The doors were closed and no one was able to hear his tapping on the door. So, he caught hold of a serpent that was hanging from the roof, under the illusion that it was a rope, and went up to his wife's room. He met his wife. She lit a lamp and was shocked on seeing him and learning about the way he

reached her. She controlled his desires and counselled him that it would be much better if such a strong desire for wife was diverted towards Sri Rama so as to get eternity. Her advice worked on his mind and he felt very sorry that he had wasted much of his valuable time. He circumambulated her, offered salutations sincerely and left the place.

He reached Kasi with a strong desire to see Lord Rama. Feeling very sorry that Tulasidas left her, Mamatha Devi wanted to meet him. Her relatives found him in Kasi and requested him to come back. But he refused. Ratnabai and Mamatha Devi went to Kasi. Even their request fell on his deaf ears. Aatmaram learnt about his son through Ratnabai. He went to Kasi and felt very happy to see much change in his son's attitude. He blessed him and died. Unable to bear her husband's demise, Ratnabai jumped into Ganga and died. Mamatha Devi constructed a monastery there and started serving her husband and other sages.

Tulasidas used to wash his feet daily, standing on a rock. Twelve years passed by, and the rock turned into a ghost. The ghost told him that due to the touch of his 'Padateertham' (holy water from feet), he was relieved of a curse and regained his original form of ghost. Out of gratitude, he wanted to help Tulasidas. But Tulasidas declined any help from the ghost. But, the ghost knew the mind of Tulasidas that he was keen on having Lord Rama's darshan. So, he took him to his king Bhetal. Bhetal told the ghost that he could help Tulasidas to meet Hanuman and with His grace, he could have Sri Rama's darshan. With Bhetal's help, Tulasidas identified an old Brahmin, coming daily to the Aasi ghat in Kasi to hear the epic recitation of the Ramayana. With the indications given by the Bhetal, Tulasidas came to know that the old Brahmin was none other than Hanuman. Many times Hanuman avoided meeting Tulasidas. But, due to the sincere persistence of Tulasidas, Hanuman yielded and was pleased to give him a boon. Tulasidas told Him that his only wish was to see Rama. Hanuman told him that it was not possible to see Sri Rama after such a long period of 28 cycles of yugas

But, Tulasidas replied firmly, "With Your grace and help it is not impossible to see Sri Rama. Otherwise, I will sacrifice my

life.” Hanuman was pleased with his determination and said that he could have Lord Rama’s darshan the next day. The next day, Hanuman had the darshan of Lord Srimannarayana and Lakshmi Devi, but he insisted that He had to appear as Rama only. Sri Narayana obliged. Still the Lord wanted to test Tulasidas’s mind. So, the Lord, along with Sita Devi, Laxmana, Bharata and Shatrughna, came in the guise of Muslims and stood before Tulasidas. But, he could not recognise them. He met Hanuman and protested. Hanuman explained to him what had happened. But, Tulasidas told Him that it was not his mistake of being unable to identify Sri Rama as he (Tulasidas) was not omniscient. Hanuman consoled him and said that he could have Lord Rama’s darshan the next day, in his own choultry.

Hanuman again requested Sri Narayana to give darshan as Rama to Tulasidas. But, the Lord declined, as Hanuman had promised to Tulasidas without taking His permission. Then Hanuman firmly told the Lord that He could not take back the promise made to Tulasidas and if the Lord still refused to appear to Tulasidas, “I will shift the entire Vaikunta to Kasi”. Narayana Murthy was not perturbed. Hanuman circumambulated Narayana Murthy and Lakshmi Devi in reverence. He enlarged His body into a gigantic size, tied the whole Vaikunta to His tail and started shifting the Lord’s abode. All the gods were shocked at that situation and requested Srimannarayana to convince Hanuman to withdraw His aggressiveness. Narayana Murthy agreed and promised Hanuman to appear to Tulasidas in Kasi itself. After coming to know that Rama was to come to Kasi the next day, the king felt very happy and ordered that the whole town should be decorated wonderfully to welcome Sri Rama.

The next day, Narayana Murthy and Lakshmi Devi assumed the forms Sri Rama and Sita Devi respectively. Sankha and Chakra (conch and wheel) and Adishesha assumed the forms of Bharata, Shatrughna and Lakshmana respectively. All of them went to Kasi in a celestial car. Hanuman was very happy. He was dancing and leading them to the monastery of Tulasidas. All the citizens watched them with much wonder.

Sri Rama met Tulasidas and embraced him with a lot of affection and love. Rama touched the whole body of Tulasidas

with his hand. Tulasidas praised Sri Rama in several ways and danced happily. Rama gave him boons and asked him to express his wishes. Tulasidas requested that whenever he thought of Them, Rama and Sita should appear before him. He also requested to grace him with the ultimate Bliss. Rama agreed and blessed him so. Rama also told Tulasidas the details of his earlier birth as Valmiki. The Lord bade him to write the Ramayana in Hindi and teach it to the illiterate so that they too would attain eternity. Then Rama and His entourage disappeared.

Tulasidas started writing 'Sri Rama Charitha Manas'. One day two thieves tried to steal the gold and silver articles from his choultry. But due to the vigilance of two armed youth, they were caught red-handed. They begged the pardon of Tulasidas, bade adieu to dacoity and became disciples to Tulasidas who, however, understood that the armed youth were Rama and Lakshmana themselves. He told the thieves, "You are very lucky to have Rama's darshan, which is not possible even to the great sages." Tulasidas had allowed even a murderer to have lunch along with the others. But, when others objected to it, he took them to the nearby Siva temple. He offered the food items to Nandi and declared, "If what I did is not a mistake, then Nandi should eat the food." He prayed to Sri Rama. Soon Nandi came alive in the presence of all of them and ate the food. All of them prostrated at his feet.

One day a woman came weeping to Tulasidas. He blessed her 'Deergha Sumangali Bhava' (May you live long with your husband). Her weeping intensified and she cried. "Sir, my husband died just now. Unable to bear it, I came to you." Tulasidas said, "Oh mother, I do not know about the demise of your husband. But, Rama only made me to speak like that, without my intention. His word shall not go waste. You now go home and chant 'Rama naamam' in your husband's ear. Trust me." She followed his advice. Soon her husband woke up. When Akbar came to know of this, he ordered Tulasidas to exhibit his glories. Tulasidas told him, "I do not have any glories. Rama only made such act through me." Akbar became very angry. Tulasidas was about to be lashed as punishment. Then an army

of huge monkeys came from nowhere and occupied the king's court. Akbar realised his mistake and apologised to Tulasidas.

Often Hanuman appeared to Tulasidas who praised Him by singing hymns. Those hymns became famous by the name 'Hanuman Chalisa'. He proclaimed that even Yama would not dare to touch those who placed their trust in Sri Rama.

Tulasidas lived for 125 years. He authored works like 'Dohavali', 'Vinaya Patrika', 'Janaki Mangal', 'Geethavali', etc. Tulasidas's maxim was "Love all, see Sri Rama in all".\*

To realize Him in us is the first step: Then we realize Him in others also. Then comes a new outlook, a new sympathy. After the training of our faculties the will power becomes stronger. Feeling, willing and knowing must be co-ordinated, must be transcended through prayer, meditation, discharge of our duties, and self control. Great energy is needed for spiritual life.

Men are of different types, but the goal is the same for all: to realize the soul's connection with the Divine, ending in the realization of their unity.

Selfless activity is a step towards the attainment of Divinity. If faith is added, it becomes easier. Noble sentiments have a great spiritual value. They take us nearer to God. In some, devotion is the dominant factor. But along with feeling there must be discrimination and right activity. Co-ordinate the different faculties. Rise above the faculties and know the Truth. May the Self inspire and guide us.

Our aim is to be free while living to attain freedom before we die. We must do our best in this very life, as human birth is a rare privilege. Aspire to realize the Divine before death. Strive, proceed towards the goal. As long as we have our ego, the responsibility is ours. We must act and get nearer to perfection.

-Swami Yatiswarananda

## **BLINDNESS DID NOT DETER HIM FROM SERVICE TO LORD**

-Ramaswami S.

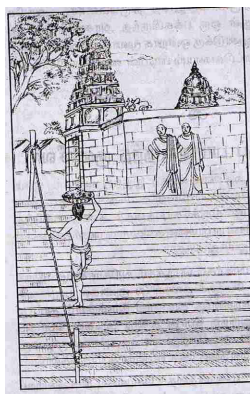
Tiruvarur, one of the foremost Sivakshetrams in Tamil Nadu, is revered as the 'Dakshina Kailasam'. Lord Tyagaraja Swami is the presiding deity of this sacred temple. In the sixth century A.D., there lived an ardent Siva devotee by name Dandi. He was born blind, but was all the time enjoying the darshan of the Lord with his inner vision. It was his practice to chant the Panchakshari non-stop.

Those were the days when the Jain faith had spread all over the region, and there was a huge settlement of Jains in Tiruvarur also. Their dwellings were abutting Kamalalayam, the sacred tank of the Tyagaraja Temple. Because of this encroachment, the tank got shrunk in size and was slowly drying up.

Dandi felt that something should be done to stabilise the tank, so that the water needed for temple rituals could be secured permanently. Being blind, he understood his limitation and requested fellow devotees to undertake the task. But they excused themselves, saying that only the king had the resources and manpower to renovate the huge tank.

Undaunted, Dandi wanted to renovate the tank with his own effort. Being blind, he wondered How to de-silt the tank, an uphill task. Thanks to his determination, an idea struck his brain. He fixed a pole in the tank and another on the bank and tied a rope connecting the two poles. He then dug the tank, removed the mud, carried it on his head, and holding the rope with his left hand climbed the tank steps and deposited the dirt elsewhere. This way, he was carrying out his effort for days together.

Some of the Jains saw this and questioned Dandi, "Why are you doing like this? Don't you know that because of your action, the creatures living in the tank would die? Stop this act immediately."



Dandi told them, “Look sirs, I am performing a divine task and not a sinful act. God will take care of those creatures. You better mind your business.”

Enraged by his reply, the Jains tried their best to stop Dandi, but he would not relent. One day, the Jains became angry and shouted at him thus: “Why do you persist with this job? Don’t you hear what we say? Are you deaf, besides being blind?” Their derision hurt Dandi. However, he told them bluntly, “Why do you make fun of my disability? Of course, I am blind but I do not see anything except God. If He wills, I can get back my sight and all of you could become blind. Then what would you do?”

Laughing boisterously, the Jains threw a challenge that if such a thing were to happen, they would vacate Tiruvarur. That evening, Dandi went to the Lord’s shrine and cried before Him: “Oh Lord! These Jains heckle me for doing service to You. How can You keep quiet?” With a deeply injured mind, he returned to his abode and fell asleep without taking food.

Moved by his supplication, Lord Tyagaraja appeared in his dream and assured him: “My child, do not worry. I shall give you sight and blind those detractors.” Around the same time, the Lord appeared in the dream of the king and commanded him thus: “The Jains have insulted my devotee who is doing a noble service to Me. Go to Tiruvarur and find out from him what happened and alleviate his distress.”

The king woke up and rushed to Dandi’s house and enquired about his predicament. Dandi gave details of his tank renovation work and the insults heaped on him by the Jains and also their challenge to quit Tiruvarur if he could get sight. Both then went to the temple and prayed for the Lord’s intervention.

The merciful Lord gave the sight to Dandi and punished the Jains by blinding them. Thereupon, the king ordered the Jains to leave the place as their challenge had been met. He then decreed the removal of the tank encroachments and renovation of the tank at government’s expense.

Having gained the sight, a happy Dandi totally dedicated himself in the service of the Lord and His devotees, and finally reached His lotus feet. People hailed him as one of the sixty-three Nayanaars.\*

## CLEAR YOUR DOUBTS

**Devotee:** Amma, you stress so much on the chanting of the holy name of God. Is 'Namam' or name so powerful?

**Sri Mataji:** When you give a name to something or someone, the name is not different from the object or person. When you say pencil - the name denotes the object. Similar is the case with people. When you say 'pencil', the image of pencil only will flash before you and not that of a book or eraser. In Sanskrit we call name as 'Namam' and the person or object bearing that name as 'Naamni'. 'Namam' is not different from 'Naamni' as they are one.

Gurudev is giving us a mantra. A mantram is a holy name with which the Guru initiates us. It may contain the holy name of God - Shiva, Krishna, Rama, Divine Mother or Narayana. This is called 'Taraka Mantram'.

'Tarakam' means deliverance. 'Mantram' means that by chanting which it will constantly protect us. Mantram is a code word that unveils the mysteries of the universe. Mantram is the sacred word that shows us the path to reach our goal. Constantly chanting the mantra, contemplating upon its meaning and getting merged in it makes us forget the body. We will lose the body consciousness and we get merged in the eternal Bliss.

Lord Krishna says in the 'Bhagavadgita' (Chapter IV Jnana Yoga) "Jnanagni dagdha karmanam" which means the fire of knowledge burns all our actions. Gurudev Sri Babuji Maharaj has brought us a step down and said "Dhyagnagni dagdha karmanam". If we think knowledge or Jnana is great and difficult to attain, how can we attain Jnana or knowledge? We can attain it by constantly meditating (or contemplating) upon it. So, 'dhyanam' or meditation leads us to Jnana or knowledge.

Now, what is the basis of dhyana or meditation? It is Namam or the divine name of the Lord - 'Taraka Namam' isn't it? So, we can say - "Naamagni dagdha karmanam" now. If meditation is the basis of knowledge, Holy name is the basis of meditation. So, Holy Name= Meditation=Knowledge. This is the equation. Do you understand?



Sant Jnanadev said in one of his abhangs – “Mere chanting of Lord’s divine name burns all the sins we have committed”. Saint Andal said the chanting of God’s name burns away our past, present and future karmas (actions) just like a spark of fire burns away even a huge mound of cotton.

Lord Gurudev is giving you the mantram with all His power embedded in it. This is like a power-packed missile. With it you can destroy all the evil and inimical qualities and traits like, lust, greed, anger, envy, miserliness, illusion, etc. In one word we can call it ‘Maya’. The chanting of mantram or the divine name of God destroys ‘Maya’ and merges us in the Divine Bliss.\*

## **APPEAL**

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