

SAMARDHA SADGURU

Spiritual Magazine

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	MAY BABUJI'S AND MATAJI'S	
	BLESSINGS BE SHOWERED	
	ON YOU ALL	
	ON THE OCCASIONS OF	
	NEW YEAR AND SANKRANTHI	

Sri Mataji's Benediction

ROADBLOCKS TO SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Everybody in the universe is desirous of leading a peaceful life without any problems and some are not satisfied even with that. They want to experience deeper levels of awareness which is impeded by fluctuating thoughts of the mind. What is the root cause of fluctuations and agitations in the mind which means 'klesam' or a means to effect pain or ferment? A mind free from thoughts can alone probe the path to spirituality. Is it possible? Is it within the reach of a human being in his or her life time?



The main obstacle to spiritual path is Avidya or ignorance. Avidya is the cumulative effect of Raga (craving), Dvesha (aversion) and ego. Raga induces acquisition of knowledge, wealth, status, power and anything for one's individual existence without knowing that anything in the world is subject to change and loss at any moment without any guarantee of permanency. Raga and Dvesha make us glue to the objects of external world through our sense organs. The attachment to pleasures and desires makes us swing towards them time and again and if one fails to experience it, the result is agony and sorrow.

These obstacles coming in the way of spiritual life are 'klesams' which arise as waves of water current. They are nothing but the manifestation of ignorance. They act upon the subtle body; remain in fact with it in microform; and sprout in the next incarnation. It is also the cause of rebirth.

The only solution to the problem is to seek the guidance of a Sadguru. He has a device to drive away 'klesam' and make your mind experience the deeper levels of awareness where serenity and calmness are felt. Such a disciple is sure to realise his own Self and enjoy Bliss. He is also free from fear of death.*

Editorial

HOW TO STOP WORRYING

Om Gururam namaste!

The Year of the Lord 2016 has dawned. The editorial board greets all readers a very happy and prosperous New Year. May, by the grace of Sri Sri Sri Hanumat Kali Vara Prasada Babuji Maharaj and the blessings of our Divine Mother Yogini Sri Chandra Kali Prasada Mataji, this New Year be the year of fulfillment of our desired spiritual progress!

Being ordinary human beings, we are always concerned about what is in store for us. We approach astrologers with our horoscopes and seek to know what is going to happen in the coming years. Naturally, astrologers take advantage of this weakness of ours and mint money. What is not understood is the fact that



by knowing what would happen in future, we will not be a shade better than what we are now. If an astrologer predicts that one would become a millionaire after five years, will the current condition of that person of not even having a morsel of food change a bit? If on the contrary, an astrologer predicts a doom for his client after five years, that person would be shocked to such an extent that he would literally kill himself day after day brooding over that possibility. Hence predictions would not solve our problems at all. They will at best be a good or bad dream. This is certainly not to discredit the science of astrology, which is one of the six 'angas' of our Vedas, but only an attempt to get over the tendency to consult astrologers for all and sundry issues.

That is why mahatmas advise their disciples not to worry about the future but learn to live with whatever is destined to come. Our Gurudev would often tell His disciples not to consult astrologers. "Your horoscope is with Me, and so do not worry. Since you have surrendered to Me, I shall take care of your present and the future. You continue to do your good work and practise 'sadhana' on the 'lakshyartha' given to you. You should understand that you are answerable to your past deeds ('prarabda karma'). There is no escape from that. The arrow has been released and it is targeting you. But

by the grace of the True Master, you will be saved from any great harm. What would have been a disaster would be minimised to a minor rupture. Just as Lord Krishna saved Arjuna from the Nagaastram released by Karna during Kurukshetra war, so also the Satya Guru is capable of handling any terrific situation that is confronting you. Have intense faith in Him and you will come out unscathed.”

When such an assurance has come from Guru Maharaj, why should we be despondent and suffer? All we have to do at the start of every New Year is to go through our balance-sheet of the previous year. If it is on the positive side, we should thank the Master and proceed with a similar attitude. If it is on the negative side, we need not worry, since our intense faith in the Sadguru would apply the necessary correctives and set right the situation.

Dale Carnegie, author of the world famous book ‘How to Stop Worrying and Start Living’, asserts that most of our worries are imaginary. The unknown or uncertain future creates hallucinations in our mind about a possible adversity and we get into a depression over it. Instead of worrying about it, he says, “Think of how to face the challenge posed by such a prospect. You prepare a blueprint of action to convert that disadvantage into advantage. By that process you will gain confidence and dissolve your depression. There is also a possibility that adverse situation would not occur at all.”

Sri Mataji’s panacea for depression is to sit in meditation. “Whenever you are in depressive mood, sit in a secluded spot and meditate on the ‘lakshyartha’ bestowed on you by Guru Maharaj. Those with no initiation can meditate on the image of their ‘Ishta Deivam’ (chosen deity). Meditation will rid you of your worries and make your mind serene. A serene mind can calmly think of how to conquer one’s problems, real or imaginary,” She said in Her answer to clear the doubts of devotees.

‘Faith never fails’ is the most important maxim that should be the guiding force for us. We should develop an intense faith in the guarantee given by our Gurudev that He is always there to take care of our needs and problems. Just as the child is carefree on account of its faith that its parents are around to protect it, we must also exude confidence in Guru Maharaj. In fact, this is the daily experience of each devotee of Sri Babuji that His protective umbrella covers one and all, whether there is rain or hot sunshine.

Jai Gurudev!*

Thus Spake Babuji

VALUE OF TIME

Sushumna Prasada

One day, a number of devotees gathered at Dhyana Mandiram seeking the blessings of Lord Babuji. After blessing them, Guru Maharaj asked “What is the most precious and valuable factor in human life?” Those gathered began to ruminate over the question. One of them tried to answer saying that education was the most valuable factor. Another person remarked that character was the most valuable thing. Another one pointed out that wealth was the most important factor.

After listening to their answers, Lord Babuji smilingly remarked: “You may be partially true. If you lose money, there is scope to gain money by sincere effort. Similarly if you fail to reach the goal of education you can gain education by will power and ceaseless effort. In the same way there is scope to reform your character. But there is one thing which cannot be regained, when once it is lost. What is it? That is time.”

Lord Babuji asserted that the spiritual trainee should always be alert and aware of the value of time. The time which is spent in the service of God and meditation (Smarana) of the Lord would become eternal. “That’s why the time which we spend in listening to the exhortations of Gurudev will become a part of Eternity. A genuine seeker of Truth makes a practical application of the essence of the exhortations in his life and such a ‘sadhaka’ (spiritual trainee) will be a coveted disciple of his Master. Time is a subtle thief. Unless you grab the time and utilise it in a fruitful way, you will become the slave of time. There is the saying that time and tide wait for none. Time remains unaffected by our sorrows and happiness. It has always the same galloping speed. It is only our mind which makes us feel that the time flies when we are happy and the time limps slowly when we are in sorrow,” Guru Maharaj said.



“We have to learn a lot from time. Just as time remains unaffected either by heat or coolness, by loss or gain, by day or night, by sorrow or happiness, so also man has to be spiritually trained to face the ordeals of life with patience and remain unaffected by dualities of life," Lord Babuji said and touched about the advent of New Year which was expected to occur within two days.

“Years roll by like waves in the ocean of time which is unlimited, while human life is limited. In this limited span of life, we have to make the best use of time that is available to us. Generally people are full of hopes and await a bright future in the New Year. So people welcome the New Year with jubilation and vivacity. Everybody greets the other wishing a Happy New Year. But the time between new and old is very slender. We say New Year. But we celebrate only on the first day (January 1). In fact, the first day of the New Year represents the entire year. So the next day, what is new becomes old. But there is one who remains always new and never turns old. That is God, the embodiment of Truth, Divinity and Beauty (Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram).

“God or Gurudev is changeless. Hence He is ever new. But human life is bound to change from time to time. Nobody can escape the ravages of time. Lord Krishna says in the ‘Bhagavadgita’, 10th chapter, 33rd sloka, second line that Time is Divinity.

“Ahamevakshayah Kalodhathaham
Viswathomukhah.

(I am Time which is eternal. It is I who give the fruit of all actions)

“What is new gives us happiness. Hence a spiritual seeker has to utilise his time to attain Divinity which keeps him always new and happy. The attainment of Divinity offers a person eternal bliss. To attain such a state, the disciple should receive initiation from the Spiritual Master which offers him eternity. In that state, every day is a New Year. For, you are devoid of old ‘vasanas’ which makes life miserable. So a spiritual trainee should celebrate such a New Year. We have to learn a lot from time; since for

one who realises the value of time, laziness will be a stranger. For, he is always industrious and drives out indolence. Time treats all alike and gives equal opportunity to one and all whether you are a scientist or an economist, whether you are an emperor or a beggar. Time distributes only 24 hours a day for all. A statesman or an educationist or even a mighty monarch cannot demand to have 25 or 26 hours per day. So time is an equaliser. Time is a Special Bank. It credits your account each morning with 24 hours. Every evening, you lose the balance, if you fail to use it during the day. Time is gracious enough to credit 86,400 seconds in your Bank of Time daily. You can gain interest by utilising it. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. So every minute is precious and you have to make use of it to attain eternal bliss. Time is freely available but it is priceless. Time is a great Teacher who tells you that nothing is yours. You can't own time, but you can use it and spend it. Time is a companion for us in the journey of life. A thing that does not change with time is sweet, and such divine memories of the past we have to cherish. For, they make a fine cushion in old age. Time is the best Teacher which teaches us patience. So we have to realise that yesterday is history, tomorrow is mystery and today is a gift. That's why it is called the present."

Lord Babuji concluded by saying, "We have to make the best use of time by dedicating it in the service of the Lord without regretting for the past and waiting for future.*"

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Manager, Samardha Sadguru (0863-2293206)

Divine Mother Speaks "GOLLA - GULLA - GOVINDA"

Japamala Prasada

We are entering another New Year. Let me wish you all a very Happy New Year at the outset. May Lord Gurudev bless all of us with immense devotion, knowledge and detachment to achieve our goal.

Time changes constantly and so does a man's body. In the changing time, with an ever changing body, man is becoming a slave to his senses, running after material pleasures and wasting away the invaluable human birth given to him by God. He is filling his mind and heart with jealousy, envy, intolerance, ego, attachment, anger, lust, miserliness, delusion and other such inimical qualities and burying the God within him. Ultimately he is losing his peace and happiness and perishes.



How to rid your mind of all the above bad qualities? Lord Gurudev told us a very simple Mantra: "Golla - Gulla - Govinda". 'Golla' means ignorance. Man who is a slave to his gunas or traits is enveloped by ignorance. 'Golla' literally means cowherd. But Guru Maharaj used to say 'ajñana' or ignorance is 'Gollatanam'. 'Gulla' in Telugu means a 'shell' or a conch. When the shell is filled with snail, no sound comes through that conch. If the snail is removed from that conch, it gives the sound 'Om'. Similarly our ignorance filled mind is the 'Gulla'. If the snail of ignorance is removed by Lord Govinda, it will emit the sound of 'Om'. If we offer all our qualities both good and bad to Lord Govinda, He will empty our hearts of ignorance and will Himself play the divine tunes of Pranava Nadam.

One must never pray to the Lord with desires. God knows when to give us what we need. We must have that faith in Him. Pray to Him with a guileless heart. Chant His name with love and devotion constantly. All the worldly studies are useful only for our livelihood. These studies will not come to our rescue at the time of our death. It is only the divine name of God that will help us save from the cycle of births and deaths. This is what is

told in the 'Bhaja Govindam' by Sri Adi Sankara Bhagawad Padacharya.

Lord Sankara further says... the body of the woman with which you are enamoured is nothing but a pouch filled with muscles, fat, blood, etc. Please ponder upon this naked truth constantly and save yourself from the clutches of lust. Neither your family, nor your kith and kin can save you from the God of Death - Yama. Only the Lord of Lords can save you and so chant His name with every breath. Seek the company of the Holy – that will take you across the ocean of Samsara...

Drive out bad qualities like lust, anger, miserliness, jealousy, intolerance, etc., and you will realise the God within you. In fact, you will realise that God is the real "I" in you.

To cultivate these divine thoughts you should soak your mind in 'Satsang' or divine company; control your senses and turn them towards Godhead. By so doing, you can detach yourself from worldly thoughts and turn inwards. When I say this, don't think that I am telling you to leave the world, your family and your duty. No. It is not that. You must live in the world but do not let the world enter your mind. Your wavering mind should stand steadfast on the supreme God. This is "Jeevan Mukti". This is true liberation. May Lord Gurudev bless us with infinite devotion and detachment to achieve that goal!*

Know yourself and you shall then know God. What is my ego? Is it my hand or foot or flesh or blood or any other part of my body? Reflect well and you will know that there is no such thing as 'I'. The more you peel off the skin of an onion, the more skin only appears-you cannot get any kernel; so when you analyse the ego, it vanishes away into nothingness. What is ultimately left behind is the 'Atman' (Soul) - the pure 'Chit' (Knowledge absolute). God appears when the ego dies.

- Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

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

January 2016

- 01 Fri - New Year - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana
- 04 Mon - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 08 Fri - Masa Sivaratri- Ekaham at Pavuluru Branch
- 10 Sun - Amavasya
- 14 Thu - Bhogi - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana
08.00 p.m - Bhogi pallu to Sri Sadguru Devulu
- 15 Fri - Sankranti - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana, Starting of
Uttarayana
- 16 Sat - Kanuma - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana
- 24 Sun - Purnima - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja

February 2016

- 03 Wed - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 07 Sun - Masa Sivaratri - Ekaham at Pavuluru Branch
- 08 Mon - Amavasya
- 14 Sun - Radha Saptami
- 18 Thu - Bheeshma Ekadasi - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 22 Mon - Magha Purnima - Guru Purnima, Satsangam, Sri Sadguru
Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana

March 2016

- 04 Fri - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 07 Mon - Maha Sivaratri - 03.00 a.m. -Mahabhisekham to Sri Sadguru
Murty in Brindavanam
5.30 a.m. -Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
7.30 a.m. - Samoohika Abhisekhams to Sri Ramalingeswara
Swamy
11.00 a.m. - Sahasra Ghatabhisekham to Sri Ramalingeswara
Swamy, Laksha Bilwarchana, Bhakta Samaradhana
07.00 p.m. - Samoohika Leela Kalyanam to Sri
Ramalingeswara Swamy with Sri Kalika Parameswari, later
Nagarotsavam
- 09 Wed - Amavasya, Surya Grahanam
- 11 Mon - Aradhana of Sri Lalithananda Saraswathi Swamini - Sri Sadguru
Pada Puja, Satsangam
- 23 Wed - Poornima - Holi, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja

April 2016

- 02 Sat - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 06 Wed - Masa Sivarati
- 07 Thurs - Amavasya
- 08 Fri - Ugadi - Durmukhi nama Samvatsaradi- Panchanga Sraavanam,
Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana
08 Fri to 14 Thurs Mouna Dhyana Saptahams
- 22 Fri - Poornima - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja

Children's Section

Tales of Sri Ramakrishna

'KRISHNA IS YOUR BROTHER'

Ramana Prasad

Sincere yearning is the sure way to find God. One should have child-like faith. See how a child longs for its mother. One should have such sincere and deep desire to see God.

There was a boy whose name was Jatil. He used to go to school alone and on his way he had to cross through a forest. He used to feel panicky while traversing the forest. When he told about this to his



mother, She said, “My son, why should you fear? When fear strikes you, you call Krishna.”

“Mother, who is Krishna?” the son asked.

“Krishna is your brother,” replied his mother.

One day while going through the forest, he got panicky. He immediately called, “Brother Krishna! Where are you? Please come and help me to cross the forest safely.”

His call was so sincere that Krishna could not ignore. The Lord came in the guise of a young lad and appeared before him and said, “Brother, here I am. Come, I will take you to your school.” After reaching the school, Krishna assured the boy, “Don’t worry. Whenever you call me I will come.”

Such is the power of sincere yearning for God.*

STORIES OF DEVOTEES Potency of Ramanama

Ramana Prasad

Hanuman with his supreme devotion to Lord Rama accomplished outstanding deeds. He completely dedicated his bravery and gallantry to Rama. Wherever Ramanama sankeertan is performed, Hanuman will be present there to bless His devotees. At the same time his devotion to his mother was no less than the devotion he had for Rama. There is a nice story about his 'matru bhakti', and in this story he has also proved that the power of Ramanama is greater than Rama Himself.

After slaying Ravana, Rama returned to Ayodhya and was crowned as king. He performed a Yaga for the welfare of people. Many Rishis and Munis participated in that yaga.

Sakunta, a subordinate king, tired after hunting, happened to pass through the site where the yaga was being performed. He thought that it would not be proper for him to go inside and so he paid his reverence to the Rishi Vasishtha and others from outside and went back.

Sage Narada who was also known as quarrel monger (kalaha priya), after seeing this, immediately went to sage Viswamitra and said, "Oh Maharshi! I am unable to bear the great sin committed by Sakunta. He paid his respects to sage Vasishtha, but had ignored you completely. Perhaps, he was not aware of your stature and powers you have acquired by doing severe penance. You are also a Guru to Sri Rama. It is because of your grace only the marriage of Rama with Sita was consummated in such a magnificent manner. Being not aware of this, he did not pay his respects to you." Narada thus sowed the seed of quarrel in the sage's mind.

Viswamitra became furious and said, "I will destroy him."

Narada then said, "Let us wait. Now yagam is in progress. This is not the proper time to punish him. I have got an idea. Sakunta is a subordinate king of Lord Rama. It would be better if you discuss with Rama about the next course of action."

Viswamitra agreed. He then met Rama and said, "You severely punish Sakunta who has insulted me, and bring his head to me." Obeying the orders of the sage, Rama was preparing to wage a war against Sakunta.

Learning this, Sakunta became panicky. Around that time, Narada was coming towards Sakunta. Prostrating at the feet of the Devarishi, he told him: "I am innocent. It was not my intention to insult sage Viswamitra. I cannot fight with Sri Rama. You just take my head and keep it at the feet of Sri Rama." So saying he took a

knife and tried to cut off his head. But Narada caught hold of his hand and said, “When you did not commit any offence, why are you punishing yourself? Please do what I say. You will surely get protection.”

Sakunta felt some relief. He mustered his wits and eagerly waited for the sage’s suggestion. Narada said, “As you cross the borders of your kingdom, there is a forest. Anjanadevi is doing penance there. She is a very kind hearted woman. She is the mother of a mighty warrior and a great devotee of Rama. His name is Anjaneya. She will see that you were protected by her son from Sri Rama’s wrath. Fear not. Go immediately and seek her intervention.”

Sakunta expressed his deep gratitude to Narada and reached the place where Anjanadevi was doing penance. He lit a pyre there and said to Anjanadevi, “I am surrendering at your feet. Please give me your word that you will save my life. Otherwise I am going to jump into this fire and die.”

A perplexed Anjanadevi said, “Who are you? Why are you trying to die like this? Don’t fear. I am giving asylum to you. Now it has become my responsibility to save you. Tell me what happened.” Sakunta then narrated the circumstances that led Rama to declare a war on him to appease the anger of the sage Viswamitra.

She was at first stunned. Then she mentally sought the presence of her son Anjaneya. The next moment, Rama Bhakta Hanuman was there before her uttering ‘Ram! Ram!’ He then asked the reason for her calling him. She narrated the predicament of Sakunta and asked him to protect him from Rama who had vowed to kill him.

Though he was a great devotee of Rama, Hanuman did not get perturbed. He said “Matrudevo Bhava! I will obey your orders.” He then elongated his tail and made a sort of fort and hid Sakunta in it and took the form of a small monkey and sat on the fort. His mind and lips were incessantly chanting Ramanama.

Meanwhile Rama and Lakshmana entered Sakunta’s kingdom with a large force. Rama came to know that Sakunta took asylum of Anjanadevi and was hiding there. Rama got enraged and sent arrows on the mountain ranges where Sakunta was hiding. To Rama’s utter surprise those arrows came back to Rama’s feet without hurting Sakunta.

Narada arrived there and said smilingly, “Rama! The power of your name is superior to you. These arrows cannot harm those who are aware of the power of Ramanama. Stop this war and observe. You will come to know of the great truth yourself.” Rama stopped the war. He heard the words ‘Ram! Ram!’ reverberating the entire forest. Surprised, Rama asked, “Narada, whose beautiful voice is

this? These utterances are pleasing to my ears. Only Anjaneya can utter my name so nicely. Does this mean that Rama Bana suffered defeat? How could this happen? Narada, please explain to me.”

Narada smiled and explained thus, “Sri Rama! Anjaneya gave protection to Sakunta to fulfill the word given by his mother to Sakunta. He faced the onslaught with the power of Ramanama. All



your arrows returned without hurting Sakunta. That proves that your name is more powerful than yourself. Hanuman thus proved it. Rama, please pardon him.”

Rama was pleased but he was worried about his word to Viswamitra. Narada understood his predicament. Sakunta was brought and Narada mesmerised and made Sakunta’s head fall at the feet of Viswamitra, who felt very happy and declared that he was having no enmity towards Sakunta. Rama hugged Hanuman with great affection. Narada by playing this act made known the power of Ramanama to everyone.

As Thyagaraja swamy sang , “Nee nama rupamulaku nitya jaya mangalam”, let us also rejoice in Ramanama mahima!*

As a lamp does not burn without oil, so a man cannot live without God.

-Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

Devotional Stories

STRONG WILLED CHILD DEVOTEES-III

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. In the last issue I narrated the story of Prahalada. This time let me tell you the concluding piece of the serial, the story of Nachiketas.

Vaajasravas, a pious Brahmin, wanted to donate all his possessions to secure a valuable gift from the gods. With that in view, he was gifting to the needy cows that were old, useless, blind or lame. His son Nachiketas, who was a child, was watching this and felt sad that his father was on a wrong path. The child was keen that this father should get the best for this ritual, and asked him "Father, I am also your possession. To whom do you want to gift me?" Vaajasravas was amused and did not reply. When Nachiketas persisted with the question, the father got angry and said: "I give you to Yama (Lord of Death)."

Since Nachiketas was given to Yama, he went straight to Yamaloka, where he was not allowed inside by the gatekeepers as his time of death had not yet come. "I should see Lord Yama because my father has given me to the Lord of Death," the child told the gatekeepers. But they shut the door saying that their Lord was away. Nachiketas waited at the gate for three days without eating food or drinking water. At last Yama came and seeing the child asked "Who are you, my child, and what for you are waiting here?"

When Nachiketas detailed the background of his being there, Yama said: "I am sorry that I kept a child guest waiting like this. For this lapse on my part, I will give you three boons."

Nachiketas first sought that his father be forgiven for causing this extraordinary situation and that he should "take me back in his fold when I return to earth". Yama granted the wish. As the second boon, the child wanted that he be taught how to perform

the ritual of rousing the heavenly fire lying in darkness in every living being, by which one could reach the heavenly abode where there was no hunger and disease, but only happiness. Yama was pleased to grant this boon and told Nachiketas: “That flame is Agni which is totally different from ordinary fire. It is also called Jaatavedas, the one who knows all that is formed or born. I shall tell you the method of rousing that flame from darkness. After listening you should repeat what I told you correctly.” The Lord then taught him the method, which Nachiketas correctly repeated. Yama was pleased and said: “I am delighted, my child. Henceforth this fire will be known as ‘Nachiketasagni’. Whoever performs this ritual will become the controller of the energies of Nature. Now choose your third boon.”

“Thank you, my Master, for your grace. Now I want to learn the mystery of what happens to one who is dead,” said Nachiketas.

The Lord of Death was perplexed by this question from a child, and said: “O Nachiketa, this knowledge is called ‘Atma Vidya’, which is a mystery even to the gods. Leave this boon, and ask for any other boon. I shall bestow you with a long life of prosperity and happiness on earth.”

But Nachiketas replied: “Of what use these material things which last only for a while? Since I have already experienced death, I do not aspire for such things. Now tell me the secret of what happens after death.”

Yama was doubly pleased that Nachiketa was not tempted by earthly pleasures, and immediately accepted the child as his disciple. He then explained the nature of the Self or Soul in each person and declared that it was nothing but Brahman, the supreme spirit. “Brahman or the Soul is formless and all pervading. It is represented by the single syllable, ‘AUM’. The immortal Soul is like a rider; the horses are the senses which the rider guides through the confusing crowd of temptations. The wise one will strive to realise this Soul, which is different from

the body, the seat of all desires. Understanding the Self leads to Liberation ('Moksha'). The lack of such an understanding binds one in the cycle of births and deaths. And this understanding will not come by mere reading of the scriptures or intellectual discussions. This will be possible only when one finds his True Master and surrenders to him, seeking 'Atma Vidya'. The Sadguru alone is capable of removing the body-Soul confusion and imparting the Truth about the nature of the Soul (Brahman)."

Overwhelmed by the teachings of Yama, Nachiketas secured his 'lakshyartha' (initiation) and returned to earth much to the joy of his father Vaajasravas. Meditating on the 'lakshyartha', the strong willed child devotee soon became a realised Soul ('Jeevanmukta').

Children, hope you liked the story of Nachiketas, who persevered to learn the 'Atma Vidya' from none other than Lord Yama Himself. The conversation between the child and the Lord of Death has been compiled as the great 'Katopanishad'. Like Dhruva and Prahalada, Nachiketas also sought the boon of forgiveness of Yama for his father who, in a fit of anger, sent him to Yamaloka. Chiranjeevulaara, like Nachiketas, you too should not be tempted by worldly joys, but develop an intense desire to know the Truth. Your deep faith in Sadguru Maharaj will guide you along the rosy path of knowing that Truth.

Yours affectionately,
Maathula*

Smt. Chunduru Paripoorna aged 84 years w/o late Sri Paradha Saradhi and a resident of Tenali and an ardent devotee of Sri Babuji Maharaj, attained Guru Sayujyam on Wednesday, 23.12.2015.

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

Babuji's Fables

DO NOT FORGET YOUR MISSION

Once, a man sent his son to the market to get a few things. He gave the boy the list of things, telling him where he would get them and also gave him money to buy them. The father warned the boy to be careful and cautioned him against the many unwanted attractions and told him to come back home as early as possible.

The boy took the money and the list and went to the bazaar. There was a fair going on and he was drawn to it immediately. He played on the merry-go-round and other toy games; bought himself some candy and also toys. He had forgotten his father's instructions completely and spent all the money given by him.

In between there was a stampede and the boy was kicked, tossed and trampled upon by people. He was very badly injured, and it had become very dark outside as it was long past sunset. Somehow the boy reached home. His father, who was worried and concerned about the delay in the son's return, took him into his arms, forgetting and forgiving his mistakes.

Moral: God sent us into this world with a mission to seek the Truth. But, we are forgetting the purpose of our life and getting attracted to the pleasures of the world. We are wasting the wonderful and most expensive life of a human being, getting badly hurt in the bargain. Even then, the Divine Father comes in the form of a "Guru" and takes us in His arms, comforts us and once again shows us the path to Truth and happiness.*

—Retold by Dr. Swanamukhi Prasada

Down Memory Lane

IMPORTANCE OF INITIATION

Sushumna Prasada

Lord Babuji once exhorting the devotees asserted that it would be impossible to attain salvation without receiving the initiation ('lakshyartha') from the Spiritual Master. "It is an undisputed fact that Sadguru's initiation should be considered holy and the disciple has to make efforts to reach the goal. Some devotees show great enthusiasm to receive initiation. But they do not show the same enthusiasm in pursuing it. Those who show negligence towards the initiation given by the Spiritual Master can never be saved," Guru Maharaj said during a tete-a-tete with devotees and remarked some people asked for initiation. Since their minds were absorbed in personal and worldly matters, they were advised to receive initiation once they got aversion to worldly matters.

Continuing the discourse, Sri Babuji listed the duties of a 'sadhaka' (spiritual trainee) thus:

The spiritual trainee should carefully and strictly observe what was necessary to attain the ultimate goal. A genuine disciple has to exercise the power of discrimination which enables him to differentiate the real (eternal) from unreal (tentative). I don't mean that you should neglect and give up household duties. The universe is created by God only. So no obstacle should be created. There are some people who do not practise the initiation given by the Master but write it in a notebook and preserve it in a cupboard. The notebook cannot attain salvation; what is the benefit they get by it? Some irresponsible people take initiation, but never come back to their Master again.

In what way the Sadguru is responsible for their behaviour? Those who have taken initiation should concentrate their minds on the progress they have achieved in spiritual pursuit. They can ask me to clarify their doubts.

When you question yourself about the progress, you have achieved something in the practice of initiation. Sometimes you get the reply that you are there where you have started. So the spiritual trainee has to continue his or her spiritual pursuit incessantly. There is no question of break or giving up the spiritual effort. Practice of initiation should become as natural

as the process of inhaling and exhaling breath. The mind gets purified and will be rid of all impure thoughts by constant spiritual pursuit. The progress one achieves in spiritual pursuit depends upon the control of mind. Discipline is highly essential for a disciple who has taken initiation. Those who have taken initiation from the Sadguru have to observe the rules and regulations to attain progress just as a patient who has to follow certain regulations regarding diet while taking medicine. Only when the patient strictly observes the diet restrictions, he will be free from the ailment. The foremost regulation the 'sadhaka' has to follow is the principle of total surrender and humility towards the Master. For example, in a flow of flood, a straight plant or tree falls down. But a plant which bends down will not be subjected to danger.

Those who practise the initiation regularly thrice a day with triple purification of mind, word and action according to the promise given to the Spiritual Master will attain salvation. This is Perfect Truth. Not only that. Those who seek the guidance of the Spiritual Master with implicit faith, attentively listening to the preaching and ruminating over it deeply will attain salvation for they follow the instructions of Sadguru with absolute faith.

To counteract the impact of Maya (illusion) during the span of spiritual practice, the initiation given by Gurudev will act as armour.

"Hamsa Sivasoham" is an 'Ajapa Gayatri Mantra'. It is highly secretive and will not be revealed in public generally. But Babu who is seated in your hearts observes no such restrictions. Sri Ramanujacharya also made a public chanting of the eight lettered mantra (Astakshari Mahamantra) given by his Guru 'Gostipurna', sitting on the peak of the temple of Tirugostiyur.

'Soham' is called 'Suchana Mantra'. It is not to be practised. By 'soham' the master indicates your condition. Hamsa (swan) is a bird which has got the power of discrimination to separate water from milk.

Similarly the spiritual trainee who seeks the guidance of the Sadguru becomes wise by the initiation given by the Spiritual Master and develops the knowledge of discrimination to differentiate the eternal from the tentative ('Nityaanitya Vastu Vivekam'). With the initiation of the 'Mahavaakya', 'Pragnanam Brahma', the trainee realises that there is Pragna (power) which illuminates the limbs of action (karmendriyas), sensory organs

(Gnanendriyas) and internal organs (Antharendriyas). A wise 'sadhaka' realises that he is 'Pragnanam Brahma'. It is the "Suchana Mantra Soham" which makes him realise that he is Brahman. Through spiritual effort, he realises that 'Soham' is the illumination that moves from 'Muladhara' to 'Sahasrara'.

That illumination is the light of the Guru or the power of the Guru (Chaitanya). That is to be grasped by the spiritual trainee. 'Soham' makes you realise that it is an all pervasive spiritual illumination. It is not the egoistic 'I'. It is devoid of name, shape and action. The trainee who is involved in this universe cannot realise the spiritual illumination. If he crosses the universe, he can visualise the illumination. That is only when he overcomes the body, mind and word. In the state of wakefulness, a person realises that his experiences in the state of dream are not real. Similarly, when you realise the futility of worldly life, you will experience self-illumination and self-realisation (recognition of the real 'I').

Concluding his discourse, Lord Babuji said: "When you meditate on the Divine name incessantly by slow and steady inhaling and exhaling, you will realise 'Soham' practically. The power of sight which enables you to see, the capacity to hear through ears, the capacity to smell by the nose, the feeling of touch and the feeling of taste which you receive from the skin and tongue respectively and that intellect which makes you follow the path of Truth are derived from inside and not outside. That should be recognised as 'I' ('Soham') or Spirit. The initiation offered by the grace of the Sadguru alone enables a 'sadhaka' to attain the goal of self-realisation."*

A new-comer to a city should first secure a comfortable room for his rest at night, and after keeping his luggage there, he may freely go about the city sight-seeing. Otherwise he may have to suffer much in the darkness of night to get a place for rest. Similarly, after securing his eternal resting place in God, a new-comer to this world can fearlessly move about doing his daily work. Otherwise, when the dark and dreadful night of death comes over him, he will have to encounter great difficulties and sufferings.

-Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

THE FORM AND THE FORMLESS

Kali Prasad USA

There is a constant debate in this world on the issue: “Is God having a Form? Or is He Formless?”

People ask “Do we have to worship Him in a form like an idol? Or do we worship him as a formless ultimate power?”

But these people, who argue on the form or formlessness of God and those, who even try to enforce their thoughts regarding this on others, are forgetting a few things.

The first thing is, all the religions and theists agree that God is almighty - meaning He is omnipotent, capable of doing anything. So, why can't these people agree that God has the power to be formless and at the same time the power to take any form He wants? Doesn't He have that much freedom? The truth is that there is no difference between the form and the formless. Are not ice, water and steam the different forms of the same substance?

Now, let's come to the different forms of worship. People of all religions believe and agree that God is the creator of the whole universe. That means we are all His children, right? A man has 10 children. One fine day all the ten children decided to serve their father. Now do they make their father happy by sharing the work on different things he needs? Or by every child doing the same kind of service to him? He will be happier if one child cooks food, a second child feeds him with love, another one buys him new clothes and some other child helps him in gardening.

We hardly live for 70-80 years and in this minuscule lifespan itself we crave for variety in our food, clothing, entertainment, work and other day-to-day activities. We easily get bored doing or having the same things again. God has been here even before the beginning of the universe and He will be here forever, even after the whole universe is destroyed. Then why do we expect (and try to restrict) God to be in the same form and to accept the same kind of worship? What can we call such people who try to enforce this restriction?

It is precisely for this reason the ancient Indian philosophy provided for worshiping God in different forms, with different names and rituals, besides affirming His formlessness. No father will be happy seeing his children fighting in his name. At least for his sake, he expects his children to love and respect each other.

Let's make God, our Father, happy by not fighting in His name and loving and respecting each other, no matter what name or form or ritual each uses for addressing/reaching Him.*

A SPECIAL BOON TO HER ‘CHILDREN’

Sushumna Prasada

Shastipurti (completion of sixty years of life) of an individual is an occasion for special celebration by that person’s children. In our culture and tradition that span also indicates the fulfillment of high aspirations and ambitions of that parent, besides being a landmark symbolising the peak of peace and contentment.



That is for ordinary mortals. But the devotees of Sri Sri Sri Hanumat Kali Vara Prasada Babuji Maharaj had an opportunity to celebrate an extraordinary event on October 27, 2015 (Aswayuja Purnima of Manmadhanama Samvatsara), which happened to be the 61st birthday of their Divine Mother, Yogini Sri Chandra Kali Prasada Mataji, who is the incumbent head of the Kali Vana Ashrama Peetham.

It was the most memorable day in their lives, because Pujya Mataji, like Her mentor Sri Babuji Maharaj, has dedicated Her life totally to bring spiritual transformation and contentment in the lives of Her children who are spread in the four corners of the world. The rare and unique event was a special boon given to Her beloved children by the benevolent and gracious Mother, the magnanimity of whose motherhood is seen in Her looks, words and actions which aim at spiritual rebirth to and transformation of all Her children.

‘Lives of great men remind us
To make our lives sublime’

These were the words of the English poet Longfellow. The life of our Divine Mother is itself an open sacred book for all of us to read and follow every word of it scrupulously. Every page in this book contains pearls of wisdom. Every word in it is a Veda Mantram to correct our drawbacks and ennoble our lives. Every chapter of it is to be cherished as the chosen path of piety.

Our marvellous Mother, who is an embodiment of Pure Love and Grace, chose the special year 'Manmadha' to assume a shape and name. 'Manmadha' means to 'churn the mind'. By churning the mind, it is kept under control. Thus Her Holiness Yogini Sri Chandra Kali Prasada Mataji made Her entry into this universe with absolute control over the mind and with ability to control the minds of all those who seek Her guidance. Aswayuja masa is the month which is dedicated to the worship of the Universal Mother. Sri Mataji, as the incarnation of Jagajjanani, chose the sacred month of Aswayuja for Her entry into this universe to save humanity at large. True to Her name, She was born on the Full Moon day in 'Sharad rithu' which is the most impressive and inviting time for the Full Moon to sprinkle his cool, lovely, sweet bright rays on one and all without any discrimination. Likewise our benevolent and beloved Mother sprinkles Her cool, lovely radiant rays of wisdom on one and all and bathes us in the lake of lovely moonlight driving out the darkness of ignorance. The season of Sharad is praised by all poets and scholars, as it radiates the lovely and matchless moon light. Hence our Mother chose Sharad Purnima to make Her appearance in this universe.

The divinely blessed couple, the late Chiranjeevi Raju garu and Smt. Veera Raghavamma garu, was the fortunate recipients of the rarest boon given in the form of a baby girl by His Holiness Sri Hanumat Kali Vara Prasada Babuji. Sri Chiranjeevi Raju garu, true to his name, remains as a 'Chiranjeevi' (long living) in the minds of the devotees of Lord Babuji. As the foremost and topmost devotee of Lord Babuji, he was selected as the fortunate father of His successor, who is sowing the seeds of devotion, detachment and Divinity in His disciples.

Mahatmas await the arrival of their spiritual successors with avidity and enthusiasm. The spiritual seed sown in the sacred soil took the shape of a baby girl. Full Moon is an indication of completeness, contentment and fulfillment, spreading the soothing cool rays of wisdom. Lord Babuji took personal care to nurture the seed with spiritual fervour and devotion. Even as a foetus in the mother's womb, Chandra imbibed Gurutatwa and spiritual essence to the brim. Thus devotion, dedication

and spiritual wisdom took the shape of the Full-Moon-like baby who descended on this universe on October 31, 1955. The sacred soil of Bharat Bhoomi danced with joy at the sight of the sweet baby whose effulgent face spreads the silvery rays of spiritual shine on one and all. Sri Mataji started exuding the essence of Gurutatwam in every atom of Her being right from Her childhood. She was fed with the milk of devotion. Even if She cried, it was like singing the glory of God.

It is an indisputable fact that our sweet and beloved Mother is a replica of Prahalada, in Kaliyuga. She is indeed 'Praladani' who enlightens all with Her smile of perfection. As a child She played with friends the game of Guru Puja. When She spoke, She spoke the glory of Gurudev. She ate nothing unless it was offered as Guru Prasadam; She drank water deeming it as Guru Pada Tirtham. Thus every action of Her childhood was steeped in Gurutatwa.

As a baby, the Universal Mother in Her made Chandra address Bhagawan Babuji as Her eldest son (Peddabbai). Having lost Her 'janaka pitha' at the tender age of eight, Baby Chandra was brought up with the utmost spiritual care and loving attention of Lord Babuji who moulded Her into a model of spiritual sublimity and excellence. As a grown-up girl, She started addressing Him as father (Nannagaru). Bhagawan Babuji with matchless paternal love and care used to fondly address her as 'Ammadu' and 'Chandu'.

Having attained the stature as a full blooming rose wafting spiritual fragrance on one and all, She proved Herself to be the right recipient to hold the spiritual reins given by the supreme Spiritual Master.

The celebration of Shastipurti of our marvellous Mother was not celebrated in the usual, normal procedure. It was a three-day celebration; 25.10.2015 and 26.10.2015 were sanctified by the spiritual discourses of Parama Pujya Sri Dandi Nirmalanandagiri Swamiji, Pujya Sri Vidyanandagiri Swamiji, Pujyasri Sri Jyothirmayananda Bharathi (Shanmukhananda Ashrama Pitadhipathi, Palakole).

Sri Mataji turned the celebrations as an occasion to give rigorous spiritual training to Her devotees and followers. She

proved Herself to be a source of inspiration for all disciples to follow Her footsteps and attain Eternal Bliss. Her Holiness gave rigorous spiritual training to all devotees in the name of 'Guru Deeksha'.

Ours is the most exemplary Mother to all Her children and followers. As the most disciplined mother, the seeds of discipline are injected into the hearts of Her followers. Thanks to Her instructions, not only the Ashramites, but devotees elsewhere in different parts of India and abroad enthusiastically participated in Guru Deeksha with divine fervour to qualify themselves for participation in the grand Shastipurti Mahotsavam. As an incarnation of humility, our beloved Mother sanctified the entire valedictory day (27.10.2015) by dedicating it to the service of Divinity by performing Sadguru Puja and Pujas to Sadhu Mahatmas. It was followed by Bhakta Puja (Puja of co-devotees) and Matru Puja. The devotees had the glorious fortune of receiving the blessings of our Divine Mother. The entire day was spent in an atmosphere of spiritual intensity and devotional exuberance. Our Sacred Mother made her 61st birthday a unique occasion of sanctity to drive out the six potent enemies (Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya) and to install the six noble qualities (Samadi Shatka Sampat- samam, Damam, Uparati, Sraddha, Tithiksha, Samadhanam) in the hearts of devotees. Thus the occasion was made into a blissful exercise to ennoble the lives of Her children by beaming the rays of Spiritualism.

There is growth and decay for the ordinary moon. But Her Holiness Yogini Sri Chandra Kali Prasada Mataji is an ever shining and never waning Full Moon who glows forever on the firmament of spiritual wisdom showering the rays of cool silvery moonlight of spotless Love of Piety, Peace and Plenty on one and all. Language appears to be too insufficient to express my thankfulness and pay homage to our sweet beloved Mother who keeps us cozy in Her embrace of Eternal Love.*

He is born in vain, who having attained the human birth,
so difficult to get, does not attempt to realise God in this very life.

-Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

WAITING FOR SRI RAMA—VIII

(Continued from the previous issue) Ramaswami Sampath

As Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were happily spending the last phase of their exile in Panchavati, one day, Surpanakha, who was Lanka ruler Ravana's sister, happened to see Rama sitting in his cottage. She was fascinated by his handsome appearance and at once decided that she should somehow marry him. With that intention, Surpanakha changed her demon form and made up herself as a most beautiful damsel to attract Rama's attention.

Rare details about Surpanakha are available in the Uttara Kaandam of the Valmiki Ramayanam. This seventh part of the epic is not read by most people, unable to bear the pangs of Sita's separation from Rama. Even the pouraanikaas do not elaborate on the Uttara Kaandam for the same reason. But this final part of the epic offers clarifications for the doubts one gets while reading the other parts. Ravana's might gained by the boons he had secured by his severe penances; the curses he had earned from his atrocities against innocent sages emboldened by those boons; the curse of Vedavathi (an amsa of Mahalakshmi) with whom he misbehaved while she was doing penance; more curses in the same fashion because of his outraging the modesty of Rambha who was his half-brother Kubera's daughter-in-law and due to his abduction of the maidens of Devas, Yakshas, Kinneras and Gandharvas and his end on account of these misdeeds – one gets these details from the Uttara Kaandam. While seeking immortality from Lord Brahma, who was pleased with his penance, Ravana, underestimating the strength of human beings because of his arrogance, did not include death by man in his supplication to the Lord. The secret of Lord Narayana taking advantage of this lapse and choosing to incarnate as man is also found in this kaandam.

Surpanakha's husband Vidrusingha, who belonged to the clan of Kaalageyas with whom Ravana waged a war, was killed by Ravana. Enraged by this, Surpanakha abused her brother. Consoling her Ravana said: "I am sorry I killed your husband,

but in war these things do happen. Probably, he was destined to die like this. To compensate this loss, I allow you to stay in Janasthanam which is under the control of my cousins Khara and Dooshana. With their affectionate care, you can spend the rest of your life comfortably.” However, Surpanakha harboured ill-will against Ravana and was biding her time to take revenge on him.

Surpanakha approached Rama and introduced herself as Kamavalli and sister of Ravana and said: “At the first sight of you, I have fallen in love with you. Since you are handsome and strong, you are the right match for me. Let us marry in Gandharva style and lead a happy life.” But Rama gently declined her proposal saying, “I am already married, and I stick to my ‘one word, one arrow and one wife’ principle.” At that time, Sita came out of the cottage to be with her lord. Seeing Sita, Surpanakha thought like this: ‘If Ravana were to see this most beautiful woman, he would certainly try to abduct her. Rama would then get enraged and kill Ravana easily. My long time wish to take revenge on Ravana would be fulfilled. Have I not been waiting for such an opportunity all along? Then I will forcibly marry this handsome person.’

Pointing at Sita, Surpanakha told Rama, “My sweetheart, I want to warn you about this venomous creature. She is a demon in the guise of your wife. Wait, I will finish her.” So saying, Surpanakha rushed towards Sita with a view to attacking her. Lakshmana, who was watching her from a distance, immediately pounced on her and cut off her nose. (The place where Surpanakha’s severed nose fell is now known as ‘Nashik’).

Humiliated, Surpanakha shouted at the highest pitch of her voice, wailing that a human being had injured her, and called Khara to her rescue. Hearing her loud cry, he immediately sent his brothers Dooshana and Trisiras with a massive army to Panchavati.

Rama saw the advancing army and, without getting perturbed, told Lakshmana: “Brother, do not panic. You guard Sita in the cottage, and I shall come after sending these aggressors to the Lord of Death.” Soon he single-handedly finished the entire contingent. Hearing the valour of this single-man army, Khara himself appeared with a massive force, and Rama pulverised them in no time.

Sita who saw this fantastic feat of Rama rushed towards him and embraced her lord. Rama gently chided her: “At least now you understand my strength. Did you not say in Ayodhya when I told you not to accompany me to forest, ‘You are a woman in the garb of man’?”

Surpanakha, who also witnessed Rama’s heroic battle, felt that he was the right person to destroy Ravana. She then rushed to Lanka to lodge a complaint with her brother. “These two humans, pretending to be ascetics, have insulted me like this. You should avenge this insult by overpowering them and marrying the most beautiful Sita,” she told her brother. She also described the charming personality of Sita in hyperbolic terms. “When I wanted to abduct and bring Sita before you, the younger brother intervened and disfigured me like this. In all respects, Sita is the fittest person to be your queen. So you should fight with them and win Sita, and hand over Rama to me. This is the compensation I seek from you for killing my husband,” Surpanakha told Ravana.

On hearing the words of his sister, Ravana, who was a womaniser, made up his mind to abduct Sita. ‘If I succeed in this effort, it will not be a surprise if Rama himself dies of separation from such a beautiful wife. Then I can marry her. This way I can also avenge the insult to my clan of rakshasas,’ Ravana thought.

Planning his strategy, Ravana went to Maricha, his maternal uncle, who was leading the life of a recluse. “Uncle, two humans, Rama and Lakshmana, who were exiled from Ayodhya, pretending to be ascetics, have disfigured my sister Surpanakha and killed Khara, Dooshana and Trisarasa and their hordes. This is an insult to our race. I want to take the first step of revenge on them by abducting Sita, wife of Rama. I need your help for this,” he detailed his plans to Maricha.

The moment he heard the name Rama, Maricha started shivering and said: “My dear nephew, do not play with fire. Rama is not only an embodiment of Dharma but also a gentle and mighty person. I have personally experienced the powerful shafts of Rama as a lad when I tried to disturb the yaga of

(Continued to page no.40)

GLORIOUS DEVOTEES

JANABAI

C.V. Ramana Babu

(Translation of Telugu original by Jagam)

At the tender age of five years, Janabai was taken to Pandaripuram by her parents on the auspicious Karthika Sudha Ekadasi. After bathing in the Chandrabhaga, they went to Vithalnadh's temple. At the first sight itself, Janabai decided to dedicate her life in Vithal's service. So, she refused to go back home with her parents. When her mother insisted, she replied, "Even if I get married, I have to go to my in-laws' home. That means you have to part with me at certain stage. I have dedicated my mind to Vithal. I will not



leave Pandaripuram. Kindly excuse me." Disappointed, her parents returned home. Janabai, who also composed hymns, prayed to Panduranga to bless her to attain salvation.

One day the staunch devotee Namadev came to the temple. He heard her songs and was much impressed. He wanted to know more about her. When the saint asked who she was, she replied, "I am Janabai. Panduranga is my father and Rukmabai my mother and you are my Gurudev from now on. Kindly guide me in the path of salvation." So saying, she prostrated at his feet. Namadev took her to his house and asked his mother Gunabai to take care of Janabai.

One night when the family of Namadev were asleep, a heavy storm struck and the thatched roof of the house was about to be blown off, but Panduranga came to their rescue by keeping His wheel over the roof like an umbrella and started repairing the damaged roof. At that moment, Janabai came out of the house, saw the great sight of Panduranga repairing the roof and was much pleased to see the love showered by the Lord on Namadev. After completing the repair, Panduranga came down. Janabai fell at Panduranga's lotus feet. She praised Him for His love towards the devotees. She thanked Him for giving Namadev to her as the spiritual guide and for being able to see Him thanks to the companionship of Namadev.

Panduranga said to her, “Namadev is My staunch devotee. Since his childhood, he had been serving Me with sincere devotion. He never forgets My name. He can’t spend the day without seeing Me. He won’t eat anything without offering to Me. How can I be peaceful, when My devotee is in trouble? So, without disturbing his sleep, I Myself repaired the roof of his house.” Janabai was much happy to see the Lord in the service of His devotee. At that time, Namadev woke up. He saw the Lord in all His glory and prostrated at His feet.

Panduranga told him, “I am very hungry and want to eat the food prepared by Janabai. So, ask her to cook.” Was He really hungry? He just wanted to bless the devotees. Namadev asked Janabai to prepare the food. While Panduranga was taking rest, he was in His service. The food was ready. Janabai served the food. Panduranga and all the family members of Namadev started taking the food. But, Janabai went to the kitchen and started weeping for not being lucky enough to take food in the company of Panduranga. Panduranga understood her wish. He told Namadev that He will take some rest and take food later and asked him to store His share of food properly. Panduranga pretended to be asleep, while Namadev and all others slept.

Panduranga got up and asked Janabai to serve His food. She served Him the food. Janabai was sitting before Him, seeing His glorious and sacred form. He tasted some food and told her: “Jana, the food is very tasty. You too eat same food.” He offered some food to her. What a wonderful sight it was! He discussed many spiritual issues with her till Brahmi Muhuratam, then disappeared and went to take His place in the temple.

On an Ashada Suddha Ekadasi, Jnanadev, Nivruthinadh, Sopan, Mukta Bai, Ramananda Swami and Kabirdas came to Namadev’s house. At that time, Namadev was not at home. Janabai was quarrelling verbally with her female neighbour, alleging that she (the neighbour) took away her (Janabai’s) cow dung cakes. Kabirdas intervened and asked her, “Jana, your neighbour too had prepared the cow dung cakes. How can you prove that the dung cakes, with your neighbour, are yours?”

Janabai replied, “Respected Mahatma! While preparing the dung cakes, I would be uttering the name ‘Panduranga’ continuously. You can test it. Keep your ear at the dung cakes, prepared by me. You can realise the fact yourself”. Kabir did so. Wonder of wonders! He heard the name ‘Panduranga,

Panduranga' emanating from the dung cakes, melodiously. All those present were astonished by the glory of her devotion.

Her fame spread all over. All praised her, as a great devotee. Many people, from far and near, would visit her. She would never quote scriptures. Only service was her way of life. She used to claim that she had imprisoned Pandarinadh in her heart.

One day Gunabai asked her to grind some sorghum grains. She sang hymns while grinding the sorghum at night when all were asleep. Much impressed by her devotion. Panduranga appeared before her. He taught her many spiritual secrets. He kept His jewellery on the floor and helped her in grinding the sorghum. She was so involved in His presence that she was unaware of the time. At the Brahmi Muhurat time, she heard the utterings of the devotees, bathing in the Chandrabhaga. She reminded Him that He should go as the devotees were waiting at the temple to see Him. In a hurry, He forgot about the jewellery kept on the floor and instead picked up Janabai's rug and entered the temple.

When at dawn the doors of the temple were opened, the priests noticed that the Lord's jewels were missing and found an old rug with many patches near the idol. A devotee recognised it to be that of Janabai. It was reported to the police. All went to Namadev's home and asked Janabai to tell them the truth. She expressed her ignorance. The house was searched. The jewels were found. They concluded that she stole the jewellery and so she was given death sentence. Namadev pleaded with the authorities that she was innocent, but none paid heed to him.

It was ordered that she be hanged in public view on the banks of the river. She was taken to the execution platform. Some people felt sad that a devotee was being hanged, while others approved of the punishment. Janabai prayed to Panduranga to stop that horror as He knew that she was innocent. At the same time, she was not scared of death.

Just while she was about to be hanged, the execution post disappeared and in its place there appeared creepers with flowers. Thus Janabai was saved by the Lord. Devotees felt happy and the envious people bowed their heads in shame.

One day Jnanadev saw Panduranga writing something. He asked Him what he was writing. Panduranga replied, "I am writing the hymns sung by Janabai. Those who sing them and live accordingly will reach My lotus feet. This is My blessing and order."*

SRI MATAJI'S SHASHTIPOORTHI - A REPORT

Many devotees at home and abroad, who had assembled at Sri Kali Vanashramam for the Devi Sarannavaratri festival during the second half of October, had the bonus of also participating in the 'Shashtipurthi' (60th birthday) celebrations of Poojya



Yogini Sri Chandra Kali Prasada Mataji that were held from 25.10.2015 to 28.10.2015.

On the first two days satsangs were held in which Parama Poojya Sri Vidya Swarupananda Giri Swamiji, Sri Suka Brahma Pithadhipati (Srikalahasti), Parama Poojya Sri Dandi Nirmalanandagiri Swamiji, head of the Ashta Lakshmi Pitham (Tenali), and Parama Poojya Sri Jyotirmayananda Bharati Mataji, Sri Shanumukhananda Ashrama Pithadhipati (Palakollu), attended the celebrations and gave their divine messages.

To mark the celebrations about 350 devotees took 'Guru Diksha' for 21 days and did dhyanam and Parayana as per the directions given by Sri Mataji. Starting from Sri Krishnastami day (5.9.2015) many devotees from different parts of the world did Sri Lalita Sahasranama parayana totalling 125 crores, which was more than double the set target of 60 crores; Mahamrutyunjaya mantra parayana 104 lakhs (target 60 lakhs); and Siva Kavacha parayana 3 lakhs (target 60,000).

On her birthday (27.10.2015) Sri Mataji honoured Gurusodara-sodaramanis by giving new clothes to them. Later, Sri Mataji performed Yati Puja to Mahatmas. Sixty pitchers, filled

with sacred waters collected from different rivers, were kept and the puja was performed from 25.10.2015 onwards to sanctify the kalasas. Devotees poured these waters through a sieve, in which Sri Guru Padukas were kept, on Sri Mataji. Devotees also performed Pada Puja to Sri Mataji. Sri Mataji blessed all the devotees. Thus the Shashtipurthi celebrations ended in a sadhana-oriented serene atmosphere.

In his benediction, Poojya Sri Dandi Nirmalanandagiri Swamiji said, "Amma was born on Ausviyuja Poornima day. She is indeed a Poorna Swarupini to take this incarnation to emancipate all of us. She was born to Sri Chiranjivi Satyanarayana Raju garu and Srimati Raghavamma garu with the divine blessings of Sri Babuji Maharaj. Sri Babuji christened her as Chandra Kali Seshamamba. On the namakaranam day Chandra picked up 'Bhagavadgita' amongst so many other things kept nearby, thus heralding Bhagavadgita pracharam from time to come. Babuji used to call her fondly as 'Chandra' and sometimes as 'Ammadu'. I will call our Mother as 'Bujji Kanna'.



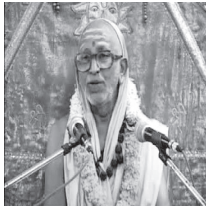
Before giving Poorna Diksha to her, Sri Babuji put her to many tests. "I will get you married to a suitable groom. After all giving birth to offspring is God-given gift to woman," Sri Babuji once told her. Chandra, declining this offer in all humility, told Guru Maharaj, "I will conceive Bhakti and give birth to a Jnana Putra and offer him to you." Sri Babuji patted her in appreciation of her unstinted devotion to Guru. So, the Shashtipoorthi is a wonderful occasion to all of us. I am grateful to Sri Babuji Maharaj and Mataji for giving me this opportunity to participate in this grand occasion. I convey my blessings to all of you.

Poojya Sri Jyotirmayananda Bharati Mataji spoke thus: "Amma is a Bomma (idol) moulded by Her Guru. She faced all the difficult tests put by Sri Babuji and emerged as a great disciple with all the requisites to become his successor. She took the reins of Sri Kali Vanaasrama Peetham after Sri Babuji entered Maha Samadhi. Since then Mataji is spreading the spiritual message of Sri Babuji Maharaj all over the world.

“If you have devotion to the Divine Mother you can accomplish everything. *Nityaklinna nirupamaa nirvana sukhadayeeyanee* - these are the names of Sri Lalita Parameswari. She constantly thinks of us to lead us in the spiritual path; She thinks of us to redeem us from our sorrows; She constantly thinks how to make us experience the Ananda (bliss). Sri Mataji also does exactly the same for her devotees. She will not rest until even a small misery caused to her disciples is alleviated. I have seen her praying for the well being of her disciples. I wish that Mataji should perform the tasks of her Guru with more vigour and bestow permanent sat-chit-ananda to her disciples. May Jagajjanani and Rishis bestow a long life and good health to Sri Mataji.”



Poojya Sri Vidya Swarupanandagiri Swamiji said, “Sri Matatji’s shashtipurti is just a small link in the unending time frame. Why we are celebrating this occasion is because she is the instrument chosen by Sri Babuji to impart divine knowledge to the disciples. She has executed this task in an exemplary and



excellent manner. This occasion is to express our gratitude. I pray that she complete two more shashtipurthis like this so that the divine message is spread more and more in different countries. Just as the ripples reach the edge of the pond when you drop a small stone, Babuji chose a stone to spread the waves of spiritual knowledge everywhere. That chosen one is Mataji. Gurus give such coveted position to only those who possess such capabilities. Babuji, after seeing all such capabilities in her, imparted *Poorna Brahma Vidya* to her and bestowed all divine powers to her. Mataji is carrying the *Guru karya* in the most efficient manner and attracting disciples to tread on the divine path. Let this legacy of devotion (*Bhakti Parampara*) spread in a multifold manner. May Mataji be blessed with more strength and long life! May She be able to spread this *Dharma peetham!* May Mataji provide such power and devotion to all of you!"

In reply Sri Mataji said: “Let us understand that every action of ours, every movement of ours and in fact the air we breathe are because of only *Guru Kripa*. We got human birth because of His grace only. We are very fortunate to get Samardha Sadguru Sri Babuji Maharaj to lead us in the path of liberation.

“There is no happiness in worldly pleasures. Real happiness lies in the *Paramatma tatwa*. If we follow the directives of Gurus we will be able to get the taste of *Guru Kripa*. It is endless and bountiful.

*Bhidyate hridayagrandhihi, Chidyante sarva samsayah
Kheeyante sarva karmani, Guroh, karunaya Sive*

So says Sri Gurugita. All our karmas get nullified by Guru’s grace.

*Sarvasyachaham hrudi sannivistaha,
mattasmrir gyanamapohanam cha
Vedwischasarvwirahameva vedyo,
vedantakritveda videvavhaham*

says the ‘Bhagavadgita’.

“Our Gurudev used to describe Himself as ‘*Mee Hridaya Babu*’. If you have to experience this *guru tatwa*, Your mind, intellect, thought and ego should get transformed as truth, peace, compassion and love. This becomes possible only when you completely surrender to Him and act as per His directions; then the goal is within your reach. Your mind assumes *Madhavarupa*. Such is the greatness of *Guru Kripa*. We have got this *Guru Kripa* abundantly through the Divine messages of these Mahatmas. I bow to their holy feet. May Gurudev bless all of us with shakti, bhakti, jnana and vairagya! Sukhibhava!”*

First gain God, and then gain wealth; but do not try to do the contrary. If, after acquiring spirituality, you lead a worldly life, you will never lose your peace of mind.

-Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

AN AXE-WIELDING DEVOTEE

-Ramaswami S.

Once, there lived a Siva devotee in Karur on the banks of River Cauvery. He was also a great admirer of devotees like him and would not tolerate any harm done to them. For this purpose he was always carrying an axe with which he would attack anybody who tried to hurt any of those devotees. Because of this practice he was called 'Eribhakta' (one who would throw the axe).



In the same town, there was another devotee, Sivakaamiaandaar by name. He would visit all gardens in the town daily, collect a variety of flowers, make garlands with them and present them to the local deity, Pasupatheeswara. He was doing this service to the Lord for years together, despite his advancing age.

One day, he got up very early in the morning and was going towards the temple with a basket full of garlands. It also happened to be a festive occasion in the temple. To enable the king, Keerthi Chola, to worship at the temple, the royal elephant Pattavardhanam was brought to the river for bathing and decorated with silk and ornaments. The elephant then was being taken to the palace to fetch the king. On the way the elephant suddenly became wild and uncontrollable. Fearing its angry mood, people started running helter-skelter.

Sivakaamiaandaar, who was also in the crowd, was immersed totally in Siva 'smarana' chanting Panchaakshari. He did not notice the behaviour of the rogue elephant, which saw him and snatched the garland basket and threw it on the ground and stamped on it. The devotee who tried to hit the animal with the stick in his hand was caught by its trunk and hurled on the ground. He was injured severely and was moaning, "O Lord! Why am I being punished like this? How can I do garland service to You hereafter?"

Eribhakta, who was proceeding to the temple on the Raja Margam, saw the condition of Sivakaamiaandaar and enquired what happened. When the latter detailed the incident, he became furious and rushed, chasing the elephant. On sighting the animal, he threw the axe and cut one of its legs. Writhing in pain the elephant turned

back and tried to grab Eribhakta by its trunk, but he somehow picked up the axe and cut the trunk. Unable to bear the pain, the elephant fell dead. The mahouts and some guards accompanying them caught hold of Eribhakta and tried to belabour him. But Eribhakta overpowered them and they were also killed.

The news that royal elephant Pattavardhanam had been killed reached Keerthi Chola and he immediately ordered his troops to converge at the spot, thinking that the capital was under attack by enemy troops. He himself sped towards the temple riding his horse. On seeing the dead elephant and Eribhakta standing nearby with his axe, the king, who was also a Siva devotee, bowed before him and asked him who killed the royal elephant.

Eribhakta detailed the circumstances that led to the killing of the elephant and admitted that he slew Pattavardhanam for causing injuries to a Siva bhakta. Keerthi Chola, with tears in his eyes, said: “Swami, you have done the right thing by killing the rogue elephant and others who tried to attack you. Since I am the owner of the animal, I should also be punished for the sin of injuring a Siva devotee. Please kill me also. This body is unfit to be killed by your holy axe. Hence take my sword and cut my neck.” So saying, he handed over his sword and fell at the feet of Eribhakta.

With the sword in his hand, Eribhakta thought, “What a noble king! He cannot countenance the insult perpetrated on Sivakaamiaandaar by the elephant, and is ready to atone for the sin by offering his own head. For causing mental agony to the king, should I not kill myself?” He then tried to cut his own head. Seeing the act of Eribhakta, the king cried, “Swami, what are you doing? I will not allow this to happen. I should alone be punished, not you”, and tried to snatch the sword from him.

At this juncture, a celestial voice declared: “O noble devotees! The Lord, who wanted to proclaim your love for His devotees to the world, has enacted this drama of turning Pattavardhanam a rogue and making it snatch the garland basket of Sivakaamiaandaar. After completing your tasks on earth, you three will reach the Lord’s lotus feet and serve Him eternally.” Immediately, the elephant and others killed came back to life. Even the garland basket was restored to its original shape. A shower of flower petals from the sky fell on the king and Eribhakta. Both embraced each other and went back to their respective abodes.

People hailed Eribhakta as one of the sixty-three great Naayanaars.*

CLEAR YOUR DOUBTS

Devotee: Amma, do you believe in rebirth? Is there really rebirth?

Sri Mataji: Definitely there is rebirth. Our Guru Maharaj used to say, “In olden days, the Westerners never believed in rebirth. But now, even they are convinced about rebirth of the individual soul.

We see some children exhibiting great skills in various subjects. In our Ashram, a one- and-half- year-ol girl used to reveal some deep secrets of philosophy. Guru Maharaj used to tell us that that child was a great Rishi (Sage) in her previous life. Now, you have a five-year-old-boy solving very difficult mathematical problems. We see a three-year-old boy telling the names of the ragas and giving notation for any piece of lyrics. We call them child prodigies. How do you explain these phenomena?



All the traits we have now, good or bad, are all acquired from our previous births. Even Lord Krishna has stressed this fact in the ‘Bhagavadgita’. “Bahunime Vyateetani Janmani tava cha Arjuna - Tanyaham Veda Sarvani - Natvam Vetha Parantapa” (Oh Arjuna! You have gone through many births before. I know all about them but you do not have any knowledge about them”).

I think, this ignorance of our previous births is a real bliss. If we were to remember our past births, imagine what chaos we would be facing!

Lord Krishna also said in the ‘Gita’ that our sadhana or spiritual practice will not go waste if we die without reaching our goal. Our good deeds will pave way for a better life in the next birth and we will continue our sadhana (or practice) from where we have left it in our previous birth. For this, Guru Maharaj used to give a very good example: ‘Suppose you have started your journey from Ashram to visit Goddess Kanaka Durga temple in Vijayawada. As it became dark and your vehicle had broken down at Mangalagiri on the way, you are forced to stay there that night. When the day dawns and your vehicle is

repaired, you restart your journey from Mangalagiri and not back from Ashram, since you have already covered 10 km. out of the 15 km. distance. Now you just have 5 km. to reach your destination.’ This is a beautiful example for us to ponder over.*

WAITING FOR SRI RAMA—VIII

(Continued from page no.29)

Viswamitra. Some enemy of our race has put this idea into your head. Drop this suicidal attempt.”

“Uncle, I have not come here to seek counsel from you on my plan. If you do not do what I command, I will kill you here and now.”

“Ravana, don’t do like that. Instead of dying at your hands, I prefer to end my life through a noble enemy. Tell me what I should do.”

“Come to senses like that. All you have to do is this. You should transform yourself into a golden deer and loiter around the cottage of Rama in Panchavati. Seeing the deer, Sita would ask Rama to catch and present it to her. Then Rama would start chasing you, but you should not allow yourself to be caught easily. You should run fast and get deep into the thicket. Disgusted Rama would shoot an arrow. At that time, you should shout aloud ‘Save me Sita....Save me Lakshmana...’, as if Rama himself was seeking help. That’s all. After that I would take over.” Ravana explained his plan.

Maricha felt that the time had come for Ravana to get into the rope of the Lord of Death, and went on his suicidal mission.

-to be continued

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