

Sri Mataji's Benediction

PURE MIND

Quite often people question the very existence of God. 'A person who sits above the clouds and judges men and dispenses favours and punishments by remote control at his own sweet will: is it not hocus-pocus to call him God?', they ask.

Can these people answer where do hens come from? Eggs no doubt come from hens and hens from eggs. Every effect must have a cause. The food we eat is cooked by somebody; the wrist-watch we wear is made by somebody; and so on. Thus God is the sole cause of the entire universe. He is, therefore, 'Sanatana purushah'. God is the ultimate at which the intellect is stalled. The Vedas hail Him as Brahman, Absolute and Infinite. He cannot be described. To define God is to defile Him. He cannot be known as an object since He is the subject. Brahman is not an object of the senses or the mind or the intellect.



The 'Bhagavadgita' says, "Weapons cleave it not, fire burns it not, water wets it not, wind dries it not" since the Self or Soul is not a matter or a material. The supreme life principle or Self or Brahman is everywhere. Man is the Soul in a body. The body is likened to a worn-out garment that can be discarded at his will. One can realise this only with pure mind or the mind at a higher plane. A pure mind is one which is calm, free from agitation. Agitations are caused mainly by our likes, dislikes and desires. But the problem lies in achieving a pure mind.

Desires, fulfilled or frustrated, spell disaster. Desire is the ladder of a fall. Unfulfilled desire results in anger leading to delusion followed by loss of discrimination ultimately resulting in destruction. It is very clear that desire

and anger are born of passion that is devouring and sinful. Once this weakness is realised it is easier to discard it. For example, if you locate a dead rat in your house emitting bad odour you can easily pick it up and throw it away as far as possible.

Our scriptures have fortunately laid down a procedure to develop a pure mind. It is a three-fold procedure, consisting of Sravana, Manana and Nidhidhyasa. Attentive listening (Sravana) to discourses of great men and contemplating (Manana) on the ideas contained therein make the mind free from unethical thoughts and desires. Just listening or reading may not yield fruitful results but absorption of those great ideas and assimilation (Nidhidhyasa) will do more good and produce radiance in one's life.

Wealth is never a taboo for a spiritual seeker but constant craving for wealth is a hindrance. Similarly, renunciation has nothing to do with haves or have-nots in the physical sense, but it means non-attachment. Emperor Janaka is revered as a great saint or sage, although he lived in the luxury of a royal palace. A spiritual seeker can lead such a life with a pure mind only.*

APPEAL

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Editorial

A SPIRITUAL REVOLUTIONARY

Om Gururam namaste!

The editorial team of ‘Samardha Sadguru’ wishes you, dear readers, a happy and prosperous 2017. By the grace of Samardha Sadguru Sri Sri Sri Hanumat Kali Vara Prasada Babuji Maharaj and the blessings of our beloved Amma, Yogini Sri Chandra Kali Prasada Mataji, people everywhere should be blessed with all good things of life in the months ahead.



Year of the Lord 2017 is significant in the spiritual history of the world, because it marks the millennium birth anniversary of Bhagavad Ramanujacharya, founder of the Visishtadvaita (qualified Monism) school of philosophy. Yatiraja (king of ascetics), as he was affectionately addressed by one and all, was very dear to the heart of our Gurudev because Sri Ramanuja was a votary of equal opportunity for each and every Jivatma, irrespective of the barrier of the caste based on birth, to attain Moksha (liberation). Sri Babuji, in many of his discourses, would fondly mention how Yatiraja risked his own going to hell by sharing the ‘lakshyartha’ (initiating mantra given by his guru Sri Ghoshtipoorna) to all assembled at the temple yard of Lord Soumya Narayana in Tirughoshtiyur, so that they could gain liberation. The master had warned Sri Ramanuja that if he revealed the ‘Astakshari mantra’ (‘Om Namo Narayanaya’) to anyone else that would condemn him to hell. Sri Ramanuja thought otherwise: “What if I am condemned to hell, when so many Jivas could attain Moksha?”

With such a noble feeling and concern for humanity, he decided to defy his master who was initially angry at his

disciple's behaviour. Later, realising his zest for liberation of all Jivas, Sri Ghoshtipoorna embraced his disciple and, with tears in his eyes, shouted, 'Emberumaanaarey!' (O, my Lord!). From then on, Sri Ramanuja came to be known as 'Emberumaanaar'. This incident was indeed a revolution, considering the rigidity of the caste system prevailing a thousand years ago. No wonder, Guru Maharaj hailed Sri Ramanuja as a spiritual revolutionary. Sri Babuji would also cite how Yatiraja took spiritual guidance from Sri Kanchipoorna, who belonged to a low caste.

Sri Ramanuja's philosophy emphasises that by servitude to the Lord with total surrender, the Jivatma will be liberated to serve Him eternally in Vaikuntam. This is in essence Vishistaadvaita, also called 'Saranagati Tatva'. This philosophy slightly differs from Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavadpaadacharya's Advaita which declares every Jivatma is potential Paramatman. While the Advaitin (follower of Monism) utters 'Soham' (I am That), the Vishistaadvaitin (votary of qualified Monism) would say 'Dasoham' (I am the Servant of That). Both great philosophers concurred that 'sareera' (the physical body) should not be mistaken for the in-dwelling Atma (Divine Soul).

When Sri Babuji was asked about the difference between the two schools of philosophy, Guru Maharaj said: "Both are right, if you consider the advent of the great Jagadgurus. In his era, Sri Adi Sankara had to fight the philosophy of nihilism ('soonyavaadam') of Buddhists and Jains who did not accept the existence of God as the Supreme Being and repudiated the Vedas. He convincingly proved the presence of Paramatman in every Jiva, by propounding the theory of 'Maya' that conceals the fact of the inherent Paramatman, and laying stress on the tenets of the Vedas. Yatiraja, to suit the prevailing circumstances in his time, modified the Advaita philosophy by introducing the Saranaagati concept, since he felt that by total surrender to the Almighty Lord

salvation would be easy for all Jivas. While Advaita avers that the Jivatma will ultimately merge in Paramatman, Vishishtadvaita says that the Jivatma reaches the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Where is the big difference in this? While Adi Sankara fought for the Vedic religion on the intellectual plane, Sri Ramanuja took it to the level of the common man. Both Masters were the chosen messengers of the Lord to guide humanity on right lines.”

Sri Ramanuja has been hailed as one of the greatest reformers of Sanatana Dharma, because he broke the tradition of caste differentiation. His principle of inclusivity of all ‘varnas’ in religious and spiritual matters made him a path-finder in the cause of uplifting the downtrodden. To exemplify this principle, Yatiraja would lean on the shoulders of Dasarathi, a Brahmin, every day while proceeding to the Cauvery for his morning bath, and while returning to his ashram would take the help of Danurdas, a low caste man.

In his overflowing love for the downtrodden masses, Sri Ramanuja christened them as ‘Tirukulaththaar’ (children of Sri). Inspired by this, Narsi Mehta, Gujarati poet and a Krishna Premi, called them ‘Harijan’ (children of Hari). Mahatma Gandhi had no hesitation in adopting the word as title for his journal espousing their cause. Unfortunately the word ‘Harijan’ has been downgraded by substituting it with ‘Dalit’.

Jai Gurudev!*

"Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare"

This shodasakshari mantra is recommended by the vedas. It is not enough if merely beads are counted while the mantra is chanted. The mind must assume the form of that mantra; you will then realise the Lord. That is what your heart should pine for.

- Sri Babuji

Thus Spake Babuji 'GURU BINA ISO, KAUN KARE'

Sushumna Prasada

Lord Babuji, once addressing a gathering of devotees, gave an impressive and beautiful exposition of the exemplary devotion of the great Krishna Bhakta Suradas. Guru Maharaj expounded the devotion of Suradas thus:

The first sentence of his famous song, "Guru Bina Iso Kaun Kare" (Hindi), speaks volumes of the devotion of Suradas. The sentence means "Is there anybody who can offer salvation to us in a split second - except the graceful Gurudev (Spiritual Master)?" Contemplating on the matchless grace of Gurudev, the mind of Suradas got melted in the lake of Lord Krishna's love and sang it reaching the heights of inspiration.



Guru Bina Iso Kaun Kare
Sur Syam Guru Iso Samarth
Kshaname lai Udhare
Guru Bina Iso Kaun Kare

Second line - It means there is no other competent Gurudev except the Syama Sundar of Suradas.

Third line - He alone can save us from the mire of ignorance by offering salvation in a split second.

Unless the Master (Guru) is proficient and efficient in that field of knowledge, he cannot teach the disciples. Whether it is in material education or spiritual education, the Master (worldly or spiritual) cannot be a guide to disciples without gaining authority on that particular subject. The Guru should have attained salvation before he teaches the means of salvation to any disciple.

The devotion and the methods of salvation adopted by Suardas are highly commendable. Though he was blind by birth, he could vividly visualise the matchless beauty of Brindavan with his mental

eye, whenever he wanted. He could see the dark velvet carpet like grassland and the cluster of cows that grace on the meadows, the calves which dance and jump on the meadows along with the smart cowboys - every speck of this scene is dominated by the loving rays of the eternal blue boy who spreads His love by playing on the inimitable flute in the form of sweet songs which contain the nectarine honey of his lips. Every bit of this scene was clearly seen by Suradas with his vision of imagination. Having been inspired by the matchless beauty and glory of the glowing blue boy, he composed the songs which took the shape of peerless devotional literature. Blindness never stood in the way of Suradas visualising such divine scenes. Only the eyes which can visualise the scenes of divine glory are the real eyes. All the other eyes are no better than mere glass bulbs.

One day, Suradas had the fortune of visualising a scene of divine glory. Lord Syama Sundar (beautiful blue boy) was surrounded by the lovely damsels of Gokulam and He danced to the loving tunes of the damsels in an admirable fashion. Every tiny speck of Nature there assumed His bluish cloudy colour. There is nothing but the sweet smile of the enchanting blue boy. The cowboys, milkmaids, trees, cows, River Yamuna lost their identity completely and became a part and parcel of the loving Lord Syama Sundara. Suradas keenly looked on all sides and searched every nook and corner. But to the pleasant and shocking surprise of Suradas, nothing was visible except Lord Krishna and Krishna alone. That was the peak of his devotion. There was absolute silence and peace. Even the divine flute too released songs of peace, shining with absolute silence.

In the heights of such spiritual glory, Suradas revelling in spiritual bliss began to wonder saying, “What has happened to me? Where am I? Is it a dream? Am I awake or asleep?” Questioning himself thus, he pinched his hand and got assured that he was awake and he was none else but Suradas.

But he was pleasantly shocked to find thick lovely locks of hair, instead of his half shaven bald head. He again touched his head and was surprised to find a feather of peacock on the lovely locks of his hair. Suradas at that time was fairly old with wrinkles on his face. His limbs had become weak and the skin lost its tightness. But he was surprised to see that there were no signs of old age. He began to jump and dance like a cute young boy with blooming

lovely cheeks. Sweet Krishna fragrance was emerging from his skin. Instead of the faded soiled cloth which wrapped his body, there were pretty yellow silk clothes around his body. He could feel that he was no longer the weak, old, blind body. In the mirror of imagination he could see the ever shining and never fading beauty of the eternal blue boy. In short, he got merged with the Divine Lord totally losing his identity. In other words, Suradas broke his material shackles, rose above the worldly hurdles and became one with the Divine Lord. Can any devotee claim a better fortune than that? Then he began to search for his supporting stick. In the place of the stick, he found Krishna's flute. With the mere touch of his fingers, it produced divine melodies which he had never heard in his life. That melodious music transported him into a sphere of Supreme Bliss in which he lost sight of everything else.

While the great devotee Suradas was producing inimitable melodious tunes on the flute of Lord Krishna, he saw sweet Baby Krishna squatting on the floor, looking at Suradas with His wide lovely eyes, keeping a flute in His right hand and placing His left hand on the cheek. It was an unforgettable sight for Suradas. Lord Krishna was keenly listening to the melodies produced on the flute by Suradas with looks of appreciation. Finally, Lord Syama Sundar patted on the shoulder of His beloved devotee Suradas.

-to be continued

There is good and bad, and sometimes we catch a glimpse of the true Reality that is neither good nor bad. Good is what is helpful to spiritual life, bad is what is harmful to it. In us there are good elements and bad ones. Eliminate the bad ones and take the good ones, and then go beyond both good and bad. We can at least approach this ideal, and work our way towards perfection.

Do not get attached. Do not get upset. Try to see the Reality behind the phenomenon. We should be kind but not blind. Have infinite sympathy. Pain and sorrow are a kind of education; bear them. Turn to God even through suffering. Also hunger for Truth makes us turn to God.

- Swamy Yatiswarananda

THE POWER OF ORGANS

Kali Prasad, USA

Our mind and the sensory organs are very powerful and when not properly controlled, they pose a great threat to our spiritual progress. Our Guruji Sri Babuji Maharaj used to explain this through a story.

Once sage Jaimini, a disciple of sage Veda Vyasa, was browsing through a book, still in the works, by his guru, when he found a verse denoting the power of the organs – “*Balavaan indriyagramo, vidwansamapi karshati*”, meaning “the organs are so powerful that they even attract the well learned scholars”.

Jaimini, who was so proud of his intellect and renunciation, thought the guru must have written it by mistake and wanted to correct it. He changed the verse to “*Balavaan indriyagramo vindwansam naapi karshati*”, meaning “even though the organs are so powerful, they cannot attract a well learned scholar”. When sage Vyasa returned to his hut and noticed the changed verse, he just smiled and left.

One night when Vyasa was out of the ashram, Jaimini was alone in the hut. It was raining heavily with gusty winds. He heard a knock on the door and answered it to find a very beautiful woman wearing a wafer-thin sari completely wet in the rain. He welcomed her inside out of compassion. Her beauty in the dim light was making him mad. Her sweet voice and the natural aroma made him lose his control over the senses. He couldn't hold back any more and tightly embraced her, rubbing his face all over her cheeks. He closed his eyes in ecstasy and suddenly felt a beard against his face. The shocked Jaimini opened his eyes to find the guru in his tight embrace. Sage Vyasa just smiled and left. Overcome with shame, Jaimini corrected the verse back to its original form.

Lord Krishna suggests two tools to control the powerful organs and mind in the Bhagavadgita. The first one is practice. Suppose we suddenly decide to meditate for an hour every day. The first day it will be hard to sit and control our thoughts and we get pains all over the body. The second day will be ten times worse. But if we continue our practice, it slowly gets better over time and we will be able to sit comfortably and contemplate upon the universal truth.

The second tool is detachment. Why do we get attached to things or people? Because, we don't know their true nature. Suppose you get attached to a person because of his or her beauty. When you realise that the beauty is only skin-deep and the body is actually made up of bones, flesh, blood and all the slimy substances; that

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Divine Mother Speaks

SPIRITUAL INTROSPECTION

Japamala Prasada

The dictionary defines meditation as a continued or extended thought; reflection; contemplation; devout religious contemplation; spiritual introspection. We can meditate on anything but here we will talk about the last one - spiritual introspection.

Why should one do spiritual introspection? What do we gain by it? How to do it? These are the questions which most people ask.

In this ever and fast changing world, man is often becoming a victim of unhappiness, chaos and confusion. He is searching everywhere for peace and happiness but is unable to find it because he is searching for them in the external world which is constantly changing. We should go to the root of the problem and only then we can find a solution.

What is the cause of our unhappiness? The cause may come from some external source. But, it will bother you only if you accept it. When someone knocks on your door or rings the door bell, they will go away if you do not answer them. They will enter your house only if you open the door for them. Similar is the case with your problems or troubles. If your mind does not accept them, they cannot enter your thoughts. When your mind is troubled, sit quietly and try to contemplate what is bothering you. You can remove a thorn which has pricked you with the help of another sharp instrument like a needle. In the same way, you can recognise and pinpoint your mind's weaknesses or problems only with your mind. You must train your mind to recognise its own faults. This way, you can rid the mind of its problems. By fixing your mind on a higher ideal like the "Lakshyartha or Mantra" given by your Guru, your mind will be lightened and you will experience peace.

In our day-to-day life our every act is mingled with meditation. We talk, we eat, we work in the kitchen or office or anywhere, we drive.... every act needs concentration. Thus meditation is a part and parcel of our lives. To do anything we need single-pointedness.



That is meditation. But when our mind is troubled and craving for peace, we have to divert the mind from the things that are bothering it and fix it on something which brings peace. That higher thing may be a mantra, or 'Omkaara' or the God you believe in. Sit erect in a place and try to concentrate on the higher ideal. At first your mind refuses to listen to you. All the thoughts will try to envelop you. Out of frustration, you will want to get up and go away. Never do that. Do not lose faith in your ideal. Meditate with faith and perseverance. Only with constant practice you can win your mind.

Our Gurudev Sri Babuji Maharaj has given a very good example for this. When a baby is crying constantly the mother tries her best to pacify it somehow or the other. The mother takes the baby in her arms and rocks the baby. If the baby is still crying, the mother starts to sing a lullaby softly. But, when the baby continues to cry, the mother raises her voice over and above the baby's and continues her singing, gently patting the baby. The child will slowly give up wailing and join its mother's song and gradually passes into slumber, and peace reigns!

Is it not a wonderful example? Our mind is that crying child, craving for peace. To put our mind to rest, we should start chanting "Omkaara" or the divine mantra given by our Gurudev. At first the mind will not listen. But don't give up. Keep trying. Slowly the wavering mind calms down. It will start repeating the mantra, your Gurudev gave. The very meaning of 'Mantra' is that it protects you as you chant. So, by constant chanting, your mind will join your chant and go to sleep and attain peace like the child.

The boat can stay in water. But if the water enters the boat, it will sink. You can stay in the world; as a matter of fact, you have to stay in the world. But let not the world enter your mind.

May Lord bless everybody with infinite devotion, knowledge and detachment to pursue one's true goal in life.*

For one who has realized that State of Perfect Being which is really the inherent undescrivable Bliss of the Absolute Self, nothing else remains yet to accomplish. The Self is one; and Self-knowledge is unique in that the knowing Self is itself the known Self. It can never become a known or unknown object.

- Sri Ramana Maharshi

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

January 2017

- 01 Sun - New Year - Sadguru Padapuja, Bhakta Samaradhana
- 08 Sun - Mukkoti Ekadasi - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana
- 12 Thu - Poornima - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 13 Fri - Bhogi - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana,
08.00 P.M. Bhogipallu to Sri Sadguru Devulu
- 14 Sat - Makara Sankranthi - Starting of Uttarayanam, Sri Sadguru Pada
Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana
- 15 Sun - Kanuma
- 22 Sun - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 26 Thu - Masa Sivaratri - Ekaham at our Pavuluru Branch
- 27 Fri - Amavasya

February 2017

- 03 Fri - Radha Saptami
- 07 Tue - Bheeshma Ekadasi - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 10 Fri - Magha Poornima - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta
Samaradhana
- 21 Tue - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 24 Fri - Maha Sivaratri - 03.00 A.M. Maha Abhishekam to Sri Sadguru
Devulu at Brindavanam, 05.30 A.M. Sri Sadguru Pada Puja; later
Samoothika Ekadasa Rudra Abhishekams at Sri Ramalingeswara
Swamy Temple. 11.00 A.M. Sahasra Ghatabhishekam, Laksha
Bilwarchana to Sri Ramalingeswara Swamy, Bhakta Samaradhana
06.30 P.M. Samuhika Kalyanams to Sri Kalika Parameswari
Ramalingeswara Swamy; later nagarotsavam,
Ekaham at our Pavuluru Branch
- 26 Sun - Amavasya

March 2017

- 12 Sun - Phalguna Poornima, Holi - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 23 Thu - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 26 Sun - Masa Sivaratri - Ekaham at our Pavuluru Branch
- 28 Tue - Amavasya
- 29 Wed - Sri Hemalambi Nama Ugadi - 11.00 A.M. Panchanga Sravanam,
Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana,

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Children's Section Tales of Sri Ramakrishna

TRANSFORMATION OF A THIEF

Ramana Prasad

Once, a thief entered a royal palace. He overheard the conversation between the king and his queen. The king said, "I will give the hand of my daughter to one of the sadhus sitting on the river bank tomorrow."

The thief thought thus: "Aha! I am lucky to hear this. Tomorrow I will sit on the river bank in the garb of a sadhu along with other sadhus. Who knows? I may stand a fair chance of being selected by king's officials as a suitor to the princess."

Next day he sat there on the river bank along with other sadhus. The king's officials came and no sadhu agreed to the proposal to marry the princess. Lastly they came to the thief sitting in the guise of a sadhu. The bogus sadhu kept silent. The officials went back and told the king about the sadhu who maintained silence, and expressed the view that if persuaded he might agree to marry the princess. Then the king himself went to the river and requested the thief to marry his daughter.

By this time there was transformation in the heart of the thief. He thought, "I just donned the garb of a sadhu. Miraculously the king himself had to come down to request me. Such is the power of a sadhu. Instead of marrying I should become a real sadhu."

Turning a new leaf, the thief transformed himself into a sadhu. Soon he became an ascetic of a very high order.*



STORIES OF DEVOTEES WHO IS A BRAHMIN?

Ramana Prasad

People from nearby places were thronging the Srirangam temple to witness the celebrations in Sri Ranganatha's shrine. That day happened to be Garuda Vahana Seva, a very important event of the temple. Sri Ranganatha Swami seated majestically on Garuda was moving in the streets of the temple town. People lined up on both sides of the Utsavamurti and were watching the procession of devotees with great curiosity. Worshippers were offering coconuts, fruits, burning camphor and incense sticks, etc., to the Lord in great devotion. Mentally they were doing prostrations to the Lord.

Suddenly there was a commotion. In contrast to the happy and delightful atmosphere, there was a rare sight. A strong person with big biceps attracted those who assembled there. He was carrying a big umbrella with him. But this was not for him. He was holding it with his right hand over a beautiful woman walking beside



him, so as to avoid the sun's rays falling on her face. He was slowly weaving a hand fan with his left hand, for her comfort.

He was completely oblivious to the surroundings as his entire focus was on her. People who saw this were heckling the man and

the woman. He was least bothered about the comments people were making at his peculiar behaviour. Just as a bee immersed in drinking the nectar from a lotus flower would be unmindful of the surroundings, that young man was drinking the beauty of that young woman with his eyes.

Perhaps, the Lord intended to shower His grace on that person who in fact had come there to witness Garuda Utsavam. Bhagavad Ramanujacharya, who was just then returning to his Ashram after taking bath in the Cauvery leaning over his disciple Dasarathi, happened to see this. He stood there and called one of his disciples and said, "Please bring that person attending on that woman without any shame, to me." The disciple went there and called him several times. After repeated attempts, that young man turned to him and said, "Sir, did you call me? What can I do for you?" The disciple replied, "Look, the Yatiraja standing over there wants to talk to you."

Though he was in no mood to leave her company, he followed the disciple unwillingly after taking leave from her. He came and prostrated before Sri Ramanuja who asked him "What attraction is there in her with whom you are so infatuated? Have you not seen how people around are jeering at you?" He replied thus: "Hey Yatiraja! True, there are so many attractive things in the world. But I am attracted by her doe-like eyes. Her beautiful eyes drag me towards her. I am unable to turn my eyes away from her. A sort of wild attraction makes me mad."

Sri Ramanuja: Is she your wife?

Young man: She is not my wife. But I would not choose anyone else in her place.

Sri Ramanuja: What is your name?

Young man: Dhanurdas. I am a resident of nearby Nisula town. I am a wrestler by profession. My beloved's name is Herambha.

Sri Ramanuja: Dhanurdasa! If I show you a pair of eyes far more attractive and beautiful, then will you give up this foolish behaviour?

Young man: If those eyes are more attractive than hers, I am ready to offer myself.

Sri Ramanuja: Then you meet me in the evening at my Ashram.

As agreed to Dhanurdas met Sri Ramanuja. Immediately the Acharya took him to the temple of Sri Ranganatha. They both stood in front of the idol of Sri Ranganatha. With the blessings of Sri Ramanuja, Dhanurdas could see the lotus eyed Ranganatha in the light of the harati that was being offered to the Lord. He was filled with inexplicable bliss. Just as one who having tasted ambrosia would not show any interest to taste the sugar, the infatuation Dhanurdas had on Herambha melted away like a thin mist at the very moment he saw the lotus eyes of the Lord.

Immediately he fell at the feet of Sri Ramanuja and said, "Sir, with your kind grace, I had the glimpse of the Lord. My ignorance is shattered. So long I was unaware of the vastness of the sea. I lived in a small well thinking that was the entire world and in this process I wasted my valuable time. You have opened my jnananetra (eye of knowledge). Kindly allow me to spend the rest of my life at your divine feet under your guidance.

Herambha, who also belonged to a lower caste like the young man, married him. She felt very happy on hearing that Dhanurdas had darsan of Lord Ranganatha. She also left her thirst for riches and came under the fold of Sri Ramanuja. Thus both of them conquered the Arishadvargas (kama, krodha, etc.,) and became ardent devotees of the Lord. They shifted their residence to Srirangam to be in divine association with their Gurudev. People were now looking at them with great respect.

Sri Ramanuja used to have a dip in the Cauvery every morning. He would take the Brahmin disciple Dasarathi as support. While going to the river and on return, he would lean on Dhanurdas who belonged to a lower caste. All the other Brahmin disciples were not pleased with this and criticised their Acharya openly for this act.

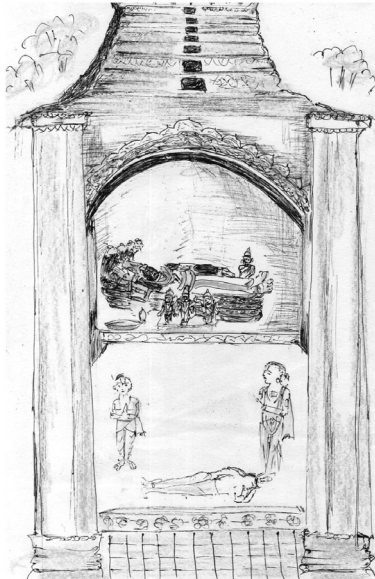
On learning of this criticism, Sri Ramanuja decided to make his disciples realise the divinity of Dhanurdas and Herambha. One night the Yatiraja stealthily tore the dhotis of the disciples. The clothes were just enough to cover the waist. Next morning there was a furore among the disciples when they saw their dhotis torn and started scolding those who could have done this act.

Sri Ramanuja intervened and appeased them. He then called his disciples that night and said, "Listen! Dhanurdas would now come here and would be staying with me for a long time. Meanwhile

you go to his house and steal all the jewellery from his wife while she was asleep. Let us see how they react when they come to know of the theft of their ornaments. As instructed, the disciples entered the house of Dhanurdas. Herambha had kept the doors unlocked awaiting her husband to return home. The disciples took this opportunity and removed the jewels from her. Herambha observed this, but did not move, pretending to be asleep and fearing that if she moved, they might run away. When they completed taking the jewels from one side, she turned to the other side thus giving them a chance to take those jewels also. But the intruders thought that she had woken up and left the place in a huff. They went to Sri Ramanuja and narrated what all happened.

The Swami, who had left Dhanurdas in his room to listen to the Brahmin disciples, returned and told him: “You have been with me for a long time. It is late night. Please go home.” Dhanurdas nodded and left.

Sri Ramanuja now called the devotees and told them to follow Dhanurdas without being noticed by him and carefully listen to the conversation of the couple, and report back to him. As soon as Dhanurdas entered the house, he observed that his wife was without



ornaments on one side of her person. When asked to explain what had happened to those ornaments, Herambha replied, “Some Brahmin disciples of our Gurudev, who entered the house at night, must be very poor. Otherwise I see no reason for them to turn robbers. After they took my jewels from one side, I turned to the other side to facilitate their taking the ornaments from the other side also. But as ill-luck would have it, they thought that I had woken up and fled away.”

Dhanurdas felt very sad. He scolded her saying that she committed a grave mistake by turning to the other side which would mean that she still had the feeling of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ thinking that those were her jewellery which she was offering to them. “These ornaments were a ‘bandhana’ (binding) on us. You have lost the golden opportunity to get rid of them. Had you put the responsibility on Lord Ranganatha and pretended to be asleep without moving, then they would have taken the entire ornaments. Now we have learnt a lesson that we should get rid of the feeling of ego.” Herambha realised her mistake. She fell at his feet and asked him to pardon her. The disciples who witnessed all this through the window were dumb-struck. Then they went back and narrated the conversation to the Yatiraja who kept silent.

Next day all the Brahmin disciples assembled before Sri Ramanuja. He looked at them and said, “You have all learnt the scriptures very well. But you have nourished the ego that you belonged to the high caste Brahmin community. Yesterday when your dhotis were found torn you reacted wildly. Now you have seen the reaction of Herambha and Dhanurdas when they found their ornaments stolen. Now please tell me who is a real Brahmin.”

The Brahmin disciples felt ashamed of their behaviour. Sri Ramanuja said further, “None can become Brahmin by birth. It is by the way of thinking and by the manner in which he leads his life, one can say he is a Brahmin or not. Now at least do leave the ego that you are Brahmins and adopt good virtues and lead your lives. There is no deadly enemy than ego to a devotee. Whosoever leads you to the right path please accept him as your real friend.”*

Devotional Stories

GOD’S MERCY TOWARDS HIS DEVOTEE

My dear Chiranjeevulaara:

God is always merciful to all – devotees or not. In respect of devotees He goes to the extent of even sharing their punishment. The story I am going to narrate here is ample proof of His readiness to be with His devotees.

Guruvayoor is a pilgrim centre in Kerala, with a famous temple for Sri Krishna. According to the temple history, the idol was a present to humanity by Lord Krishna at the time of ending His avataram in the Dwapara Yuga. After His departure, that Yuga also came to an end, ushering in the present Kali Yuga. Soon after the Lord’s exit, there was a sudden deluge submerging entire Dwaraka island. The divine couple, Parvati-Parameswara, who saw the floating idol that had been carried by tidal waves from Dwaraka to the coast near Guruvayoor, took the idol and consecrated it. Later, some devotees built a temple. Since then, Sri Krishna, also known as Guruvayoorappan, is blessing all those coming to worship Him at the temple.

One day, a poor orphan boy, who was hungry, came to the temple to receive ‘prasadam’. Unfortunately, by that time all the ‘prasadam’ had been distributed. He prayed to the Lord to somehow satiate his hunger. As if his prayer was answered, he saw two bananas kept on a plate before the sanctum sanctorum (‘sannidhi’). He rushed there immediately, threw one banana before the Lord and started eating the other.

A devotee, who had kept the bananas for offering to Sri Krishna after circumambulating (‘pradakshinam’) the sannidhi’, noticed the boy eating banana. He caught hold of the boy and asked him angrily why he was eating the fruit before its being offered to the Lord. The boy started crying. “Sorry sir. I was very hungry and so ate one banana,” he said.

“What you have done is wrong. By your action, you have denied me the ‘punyam’. Since you are a child, I do not want to give you a harsh punishment. Instead, go round the ‘sannidhi’ one

hundred and eight times, so that you will also earn ‘punyam’,” the devotee said.

The boy was happy that he was let off with a mild punishment, and started doing his ‘pradakshinam’. The devotee was keeping an eye on the boy whether he was obeying his order. As he was watching the boy completing the first round, he saw the second round was being done by Bala Krishna Himself! Taken aback, he rubbed his eyes. Then he saw the boy doing his next round after completion of which the Lord was seen once again doing the ‘pradakshinam’.

Moved by this sight, the devotee rushed to the boy and hugged him. “Forgive me, my child. In my anger to punish you I have punished the Lord Himself,” he said with tears in his eyes. Then they heard a celestial voice which proclaimed: “Since the child has offered me a banana, I am equally guilty of the crime committed by him. So I wanted to share his punishment this way. Now take the boy to your house and feed him.”

The devotee and the child then bowed to the Lord and left the temple.

Children, hope you liked the story. This is an example of how God cares for His devotees. That is why our Gurudev would often say that we should not eat anything without offering to God. That way everything we eat becomes a ‘prasadam’.*

Yours affectionately,

Maathula*

OBITUARY

Smt. Garikapati Kamalamma (Assam Kamalamma), aged 82 years, w/o Sri. G.S.R.Murty (Rly.Murty), ardent devotee of Sri Babuji and resident of Srikaligardens attained Guru Sayujyam on Monday 21-11-2016.

She is survived by her husband, a son and two daughters.
May Sri Sadgurudev bestow peace to her soul and courage to the family members.

Babuji's Fables

LORD KRISHNA AND UDHAVA

Udhava was a great devotee and also a cousin of Lord Krishna. He used to look just like Krishna. He was not only a devotee but a great Jnani - who believed in 'Nirguna Tatvam' and worshipped Brahman that is without attributes.

Once, Krishna and Udhava were walking along the banks of river Yamuna. Udhava sat down on the sand and requested the Lord to lie down in his lap. The Lord rested His head on Udhava's lap and slowly fell asleep. Udhava was in Bliss. He was lost in a trance.

The Lord woke up after some time to go home. Udhava was amazed to see some burnt seeds on his thigh where the Lord's head rested! Udhava asked the Lord what those roasted seeds were. Krishna said with a sweet smile on His face that those were the seeds of his past karmas or deeds which were roasted by the fire of knowledge generated by His head!

Moral: The fire of knowledge (Jnana Agni) burns away all our seeds of action (karma beejas). A burnt seed will not sprout again. Likewise, once all our seeds of action are burnt by the fire of knowledge, we will not fall into the cycle of birth and death.

—Retold by Dr. Swanamukhi Prasada

THE POWER OF ORGANS

(Continued from page No.10)

realisation automatically leads to detachment. Similarly, if you are attached to your smart phone thinking you have a great tool to help you, when you realise that it's the phone that has made you its servant and not the other way round, and that the phone is constantly leading you to stress and servitude, you automatically get detached to it.

Thus, even though the organs and mind are so powerful in deceiving us, practice and detachment through realisation can be of great use in overcoming them. But, for such realisation you need constant reminders from the guru as we have seen in case of Jaimini.*

Down Memory Lane

KRISHNA PUSHKARAM AND KRISHNATATWA

(Continued from the previous issue)

Sushumna Prasada

Lord Siva always shines in eight forms of His glory. The names of the eight forms (Ashta Murthulu) are: Kamkala Murthy, Bhikshatana Murthy, Pushkara Murthy or Gangadhara Murthy, Kalyana Sundara Murthy, Veenadhara Murthy, Arthanariswara Murthy, Hari Hara Murthy and Vrishabha Rudra Murthy.. The Lord illumines with eight Siddhis (Power).

Thundila beseched the Lord to bless him with Jalatwa Siddhi (Power of Purifying Water) in order to eradicate the impurities from the rivers so that people get purified by taking bath in the rivers. Lord Siva was pleased to offer the boon for the benefit of humanity. Immediately Thundila was transformed into Pushkara. Pushkara in the shape of sacred water can make entry into any river, and with the association of Pushkara, the river gets sanctified and the people who take bath in the river when Pushkaa is there get purified automatically. Pushkara turned into sacred water.

Lord Brahma came to Parameswara and requested Him to give Pushkaraa to him as he needs him for the purpose of creation. Lord Brahma filled the container which be brought with him with Pushkara in the shape of water. After fulfilling the request of Brahma Lord Siva went to Kailasa. Lord Brahma went to Brahma Loka after filling the container (Kamandalam) with Pushkara. Brihaspathi, the Devaguru, did penance and pleased Lord Brahma. He approached Lord Brahma and requested him to offer Pushkara to him. Lord Brahma conceded his request. But Pushkara was not prepared to go with Brihaspathi and wanted to stay with Lord Brahma only. Finally, they came to an agreement.

As per the agrement, when Brihaspati enters a new rasi, the zodiacal sign, Pushkara agreed to stay with him in the river for the first 12 days and the last 12 days during that year. At that time, all the angels and Lord Brahma also stay in the rivers along with him. So the rivers will be highly powerful and pious at that time. These days are considered as highly sacred for the rivers. Those 12 days are considered as the period of Pushakaram for that particular river. There are 12 living rivers and 12 rasis. By the time Guru rotates to the same river there will be a gap of 12 years. That sacred period is considered as Pushkaralu to that particular river. The river absorbs Divine Power.

According to another Pauranic story, Devendra, the king of angels who was enamoured by the beauty of Ahalya, tried to deceive her husband Sage Gautama by clandestinely coming to the cottage in the absence of the sage who had gone to the river for bath. Gautama punished Devendra for his deceitful act by cursing him to be transformed into an ugliest person. Devendra went to the Devaguru and requested him to find a solution to his problem. Brihaspathi took him to Lord Brahma who, in order to save Devendra, created a lake by name Mandakini and released Pushkara water into it. Devendra was asked to take bath in the lake. The magnificent power and piety of Pushkara restored Divine glow and illumination to Devendra by removing his ugliness.

Brihaspathi, who saw this miraculous transformation of Devendra, prayed Lord Brahma to offer Pushkaratwam to him also. He also prayed to sublimate all the rivers with sacred water of Pushkara. Lord Brahma convinced Pushkara to enter a particular river when Brihaspati enters a rasi. It takes 12 years for Brihaspati to re-enter that rasi. As a result each of the 12 rivers gets Pushkaram once in 12 years and at that time, the water of that river has the efficacy to purify and ennoble human beings who take bath in the river with deep faith.

River Krishna is the offspring of Lord Krihsna as well as Lord Eswara. It is a twin river (Krishna or Krishnaveni) that has its birth in Mahabaleswara in Maharashtra. The four states Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh have the fortune of attaining piety and fertility during Pushkaram. The river reveals her Easwara Tatwa by flowing through the sacred Parameswara Kshetras like Srisailam, (the sacred abode of Lord Mallikarjuna), Amaravathi (the sacred abode of Lord Amareswara) and Vijayawada (the sacred abode of Sri Durga Malleswara Swami).

River Krishna has Krishnatatwa embedded in it. The amazing quality of Krishnatatwa makes no discrimination of sex, status, caste, creed or nationality. Like the rain which showers on one and all without any discrimination the universal love of Lord Krishna and the Krishna River are given in abundance to one and all....

Concluding his discourse, Lord Babuji exhorted the devotees to mould themselves into pious vessels with pure thoughts to be the recipients of the spotless and selfless love of Lord Krishna and Krishna Pushkaram. When the mind gets purified by the pious waves (thoughts) of Krishna Love and Krishnatatwa it leads to eternal Pushkarams in our lives.*

LET US IMPRINT THOSE FOOTPRINTS

Dr. Raghavendra

I have always chosen the path of devotion towards liberation. It takes us ultimately to the Truth that every step we put forward in that direction brings us close to that Blissful Light. That Light engulfs us with such abundant love that in every minute interval of time in our walks of life we feel God's presence. His care for us is unbelievably instant, as He is at our side even before we blink our eyes.

When you are weary and down He is with you, when you are happy and joyful He is with you and He is always with you. God is never separate from you, because He is within you and you are within Him. Sri Babuji Maharaj always used to tell us: "Keep His Lotus Feet in your heart or keep your heart and mind at His lotus feet. What else do you require? He is with you always. He takes care of all your needs; but you should have faith in Him. God has given us two hands so that with one hand we can always hold His feet firmly and with the other we do our daily routine work for livelihood. After completing the routine works we can keep the other hand also at His feet. This will keep you constantly communicating with the God."

Once, while I was doing my Ph.D. in IIT-Bombay, I went for a trek along with my friends and faculty members of our physics department. We went into a reserve forest area just after a few rains in the monsoon. Along the way we have crossed the streams, forest paths and finally went up a hill. We were advised not to stay for long in the midst of streams, because even though water was sparse at that time, there would be flash floods due to rains elsewhere up-stream. Usually flash floods would sustain for about two hours and the force of water would be such that it would be difficult for us to survive such an onslaught, had we stayed put in the stream.

After reaching the top of the hill and worshipping at a temple there, we all had lunch. After that I went round the temple 11 times. I was in the midst of Nature, and my joy found no bounds. Tall trees, water streams, big boulders and huge rocks, gentle breeze,

cloudy skies and much more of the Nature surrounded me. I was so excited that I felt I could do anything: jump deep into valleys, climb huge rocks, sing and dance and what not!

In that frenzied mood, my friends and I crossed a stream, and hip-hopping the rocks along the stream we saw a waterfall. The stream of water was flowing over a big boulder, very wide and huge, and falling about 30 feet deep into a ditch of about two metres in radius. The ditch must have been formed in a big rock due to constant fall of water and the water from the ditch would fall into a deep valley 100 feet below. As the water flowed over the boulder, there was a gap between the stream and the rock. One of my friends went between the stream and the rock, thoroughly enjoying the cascade of water. Some of us followed him, and we too enjoyed the stream showers. I saw a big crack in the rock over which water was falling, but just next to the stream.

In my excitement I started climbing the rock holding the rough edges in the crack. I was not trained in rock climbing. After climbing a few feet up, suddenly I realised that I can not further go up, as the crevice which was quite wide at the bottom gradually became very narrow. My friends were shouting and asking me to come back. They were also cautioning me not to look down into the valley, lest I would faint and fall down. This is one of the principles of rock climbing: never look down. But in my anxiety and urge to come back quickly, I ignored this principle and looked down. I was frightened, and suddenly I lost my grip on the rocks. I slipped and started falling down. As I was falling down, I cried aloud 'Babu', and a flash of thoughts ran through my head: 'What's happening to me? How could this happen to me so early in my life?', etc. I could do nothing to save myself and I didn't even try to do anything. I left everything to Babu. As I was falling fast, there was a plant protruding from the rocks which I must have hit. It slowed down my pace and I fell directly into the ditch filled with water with my legs down. I quickly got up on my feet but still in water (water was up to my waist only) and looked for help.

My friends helped me out, and I was still excited, because of my fall into the ditch and miraculous escape without even a scratch, while falling into deep valley. My mind was full of Sri Babuji, and I have been shouting, 'I know who saved me, I know it is Babu

only who saved me and so on'. My friends looked at me amusingly because they did not know who Babuji is and in what connection I was shouting His name. However, they probably thought that I was still in shock and mumbling something. But in my mind and in my heart, I knew who saved me. I knew it was Sri Babuji's grace. Just one big call I made while falling down, and lo! He was there! He is the same who saved Bhakta Prahlada when he was thrown off the cliffs. Such is His compassion.

Looking at the faces of my friends, I realised that they did not understand what I was talking and they must probably have considered me mad had I continued to talk like that. When one eats sugar and goes on shouting, 'I know the taste of it and it is sweet', how could anyone know the taste of it unless he himself tastes it.

Many such incidents in my life gave me ample evidence that God (Gurudev) is always with me, in my joys and sorrows. It is eternal truth that God is always with us; only thing is that we don't recognise this truth. Whenever things go well man thinks all that is due to his effort and if anything goes wrong he immediately blames destiny. Actual truth is that whether one likes it or not everything happens according to the Divine Will. That is, everything is pre-determined. If one changes his mind accordingly and rests content with what is given to him, he would derive happiness and if he doesn't change his mind according to the pre-determined happenings, he would derive sorrow. Happiness and sorrow lie side by side and it all depends on how one's mind interprets events. In fact in everyday's prayer one should include: 'Oh my Lord! Always Let Thy will prevail. Let my mind and heart attune to or be content with whatever is happening to me according to Your Will'.

-to be continued

The world is nothing but the five sensations, namely, sound and the rest of its kind; thus the world consists of the objects of the five sense-organs, the one mind becomes aware of these five sensations through the five senses. That being the case, how can the world be other than the mind?

- Sri Ramana Maharshi

WAITING FOR SRI RAMA—XII

(Continued from the previous issue)

Ramaswami Sampath

Lakshmana, obeying the command of his brother, crowned Sugriva as the king of Kishkinda and Angada as the Yuvaraja. Extremely delighted, Sugriva spent the just started rainy season by indulging in liquor in the company of his wife Ruma and other women. Rama and Lakshmana resided in a cave. As the winter was about to set in, Rama became impatient over Sugriva's indifference towards fulfilling his promise to help in the search for Sita. He then told Lakshmana, "Brother, I am afraid that due to too much intoxication, Sugriva seems to have forgotten his promise. Go now to his palace and warn him that the arrow that fell Vali is ready to punish the ungrateful."

An enraged Lakshmana rushed to the Kishkinda palace holding aloft his bow. On seeing his face quivering with anger and sensing the impending danger, Tara, the widow of Vali, stood before him and pacified him saying that all would be well soon. Then she went into the harem of Sugriva and admonished him for his reprehensible behaviour. Awakened from his stupor Sugriva felt ashamed and ran towards the cave where Rama was living and fell at his feet seeking pardon. "O, my friend and benefactor! Forgive this wretched monkey who has committed the sin of breaking the solemn promise. I shall instantly parade the entire vanara army before you. These soldiers will take orders from you to search for Mother Sita in all the four directions. After locating her, we will chalk out our strategy to wage war against Ravana," he said in a sobbing voice.

An embodiment of mercy, Rama lifted the monkey king and hugged him. Then the two discussed the modalities of the search for Sita. It was decided that batches of monkeys should be sent in different directions on a time-bound search. But all of them returned empty-handed within a few days. Rama impulsively felt that Sita must have been held captive in Lanka only, and asked Sugriva to send a special task force of capable monkey leaders in the southern direction. Sugriva then summoned Hanuman and Jambavan and ordered them to go south, along with Angada and a strong contingent of monkeys. Describing the geographical features of the southern

terrain, Sugriva told Hanuman and Jambavan: “I will give you a month’s time to complete your mission and return with a positive message. You first reach Mahendragiri on the south-eastern coast. I am sure that it will not be difficult for you to swim across from there to Lanka to locate Mother Sita.”

By virtue of his understanding of the capabilities of Hanuman, Rama called him in private and handed his ring to him. “I have full faith in your determination to succeed in any mission. I am giving this ring to you to convince Sita, if you find her alive, that you are my genuine messenger. I shall also tell you some episodes in our life narrating which you will gain her complete confidence. Go and bring glad tidings,” Rama said fondling Hanuman’s head. Then Hanuman, Jambavan and Angada bowed to Rama seeking his blessings for their success, and proceeded towards south, with a huge squad of monkeys. Scouring many forests and mountains on the way and finding no trace of Sita, they were tired, thirsty and hungry. When they felt that they could not move further without these basic requirements, they laid themselves under the shade of a big banyan tree. Suddenly there was a cool breeze indicating some waterbody nearby. They moved along further enjoying the fresh air and noticed a cave. On entry into it, they found a desolate and beautiful village with a pond of fresh water and a lot of fruit-bearing trees. As they were thinking of plucking some fruits, they heard an angry shout: “Who are you monkeys? How could you come inside this forbidden territory. Don’t you know that once in you cannot leave this place?” It was from a maiden of Devaloka who seemed to be lonely and doing penance under a tree.

All the vanaras were scared to their bones. Only Hanuman could approach her. “O Devamata, why do you fret and fume over these helpless creatures? We have not come here to disturb your penance. Since we were thirsty, we entered this cave hoping to find some water. We will quench our thirst and leave quietly,” he said to her in a low tone.

“Tell me first who you are.”

“We are all from Kishkinda. As per our king Sugriva’s command, we are on a mission to search for Sita, the consort of the Ayodhya prince Rama. She was abducted by the demon king Ravana of Lanka a few months ago. Since Sugriva and Rama are thick friends, we have been ordered to search in the southern direction.”

The moment, the celestial woman heard ‘Rama’, her countenance brightened. With a beaming smile, she said: “O vanaras, how nice it is to hear the name of Rama! I have been waiting for you only all these years. I shall tell you my story now, but before that you satiate your hunger and quench your thirst.” Once the happy monkeys finished eating, she started her narration.....

.....My name is Swayamprabha. I belong to Indraloka. Once my dearest friend Hema loved a rakshasa architect by name Maya and wanted to marry him, but Indra vehemently opposed the marriage. Disregarding his objection, Hema and Maya got married and started living in this cave called Bila. I was requested by them to be their guard. Learning of this surreptitious marriage, Indra was wild and started searching for them. When he came to this cave and spotted me he asked what I was doing here. I told him about Hema-Maya marriage and their living in this cave. He forcibly took away Hema and Maya as captives, and cursed me to remain in Bila in solitary confinement. When I pleaded for mercy and redemption, Indra said: “Some day, vanaras from Kishkinda will get into this cave with a view to helping in ‘Rama Karyam’, and would not know how to get out of the cave. After your landing them safely on the seashore of Mahendragiri, you can return to our loka.” Since then, I have been awaiting your arrival. My penance all these days bore fruit today.....

After telling them her story, Swayamprabha with her celestial power ensured that all of them were safely landed on the eastern shore and bade adieu to them. Looking at the vast sea, the vanara soldiers were aghast, wondering how to cross this sea and reach Lanka. Angada openly expressed his disbelief in fulfilling the mission. “I do not think we can succeed in our effort. The deadline set by our king is about to expire. If we return without any information on the whereabouts of Mother Sita, my uncle would kill me. Hence I have decided to go on a fast unto death here instead of getting slain by Sugriva,” so saying he spread the ‘darbha’ (grass) and sat facing north. The other monkeys also followed suit. Watching the happenings on the shore, a massive and old vulture, perched on the nearby hillock, felt happy and muttered: “At last I am assured of food for quite some time, if these monkey hordes commit suicide like this.”

Meanwhile, Hanuman and Jambavan, who had gone for a sea bath, returned to the shore and saw Angada and other monkeys in a suicidal mood. Hanuman upbraided Angada for his cowardly behaviour and said: “Being the prince of Kishkinda, how could you lose courage? If we have not been successful in tracing Mother Sita so far, what is there to lose hope? Have you not heard the brave saga of Jatayu, an old vulture, single-handedly fighting with Ravana to save Sita and losing its life in the process? Likewise, let us also somehow reach Lanka and fight with that wretched demon to retrieve our Mother.”

When the old vulture on the mountain heard the fate of Jatayu, it shouted: “What is this I am hearing? Has my dear younger brother Jatayu died? O monkeys, I want to talk to you. Bring me down from the hill, as I cannot do so because of the loss of my wings.” Hanuman went up the hill, lifted the vulture and slowly brought it down. “My name is Sampaaathi. Jatayu and I are sons of Aruna. Has Ravana killed my brother? Tell me in detail,” it said. Then Jambavan described the fight between Jatayu and Ravana. “To prevent the abduction of Mother Sita, Jatayu fiercely attacked the demon king with his sharp beak and powerful wings. Enraged by this interference, Ravana too attacked the bird with his weapons. Still Jatayu would not give up and continued his fight. Finally with the sword, ‘Chandahasam’, gifted to him by Lord Siva, Ravana cut the wings and downed the bird inflicting fatal injuries on it, and flew away in his Pushpaka ‘vimana’. When Rama and Lakshmana came in search of Sita, they noticed the injured Jatayu who gave them the information of Sita’s abduction by Ravana, the ruler of Lanka. Jatayu could not be saved because of the hit by the unfailing Chandahasam. But Jatayu had the privilege of his last rites performed by Rama,” Jambavan said.

Sampaathi was wonder-struck at the narration of his brother’s bravery of trying to save a helpless woman. “I remember seeing a demon threatening a woman in his flying vehicle, which was south-bound. That must be Ravana only,” he said. Thereupon, Hanuman pleaded with the vulture to help them in locating Sita, utilising the power of far-sightedness with which eagles are endowed. Sampaathi requested Hanuman to place him on the hilltop, from where he was able to see the imprisoned Sita. He vividly described her suffering

from the harassment of demonesses under a tree in Asokavana in Lanka. As he was narrating this, everybody present was astonished to see the wingless Sampaathi gradually regaining his wings. “O, Lord Surya had promised me that when I extend my help to ‘Rama Karyam’, my wings would re-grow. Thank you Lord Rama for enabling me to help you!” exclaimed the vulture. To the perplexed vanaras, he recalled the episode of how he lost his wings.....

.....In our youthful days, me and Jatayu used to compete as to who could fly higher and higher. In this competition, we almost reached the Suryamandalam. Unable to bear the solar heat, Jatayu shouted, “Brother, save me...Brother save me.” Instantly I flew over him and shielded him with my wings. In the process my wings were burnt and I fell down here. Not knowing my fall Jatayu flew back home. Looking at my plight, Lord Surya with all compassion assured me: “Grieve not Sampaathi! Bereft of wings too, you will be able to remain here preying on rats and snakes. Some day, vanaras from Kishkinda would come to this place in search of Sita, the wife of Rama. If you help them in their mission you will get back your wings.” Since then, I have been waiting here to help in ‘Rama Karyam’. I am blessed now....

Sampaathi then got down and performed ablutions for his deceased brother, after which he told the monkeys: “Lanka is too far from here, that is about one hundred yojanas. It will be difficult for all of you to reach Lanka. Hence entrust the task of searching for Sita to the mightiest among you.” Thereafter he took leave of them and flew away.

Under the presidentship of Jambavan, the assembly of monkeys discussed how to go about the difficult task of crossing one hundred yojanas. Most monkeys said that they could not swim beyond fifty to sixty yojanas. Veteran Jambavan felt that he could manage up to ninety yojanas. Angada said that he would definitely cross the hundred and reach the other shore, but would not have the stamina to traverse the return trip. At this stage, Jambavan declared that only Hanuman could achieve this formidable task, as he was the son of Vaayu and capable of flying. All the monkeys then approached Hanuman to undertake the mission. But Hanuman doubted his ability and said: “You are overestimating my prowess. Only our Lord Rama should enable us to finish the job. Let us pray for his grace.” Suddenly Jambavan remembered the curse of some sages on Hanuman.....

.....Thanks to the powers acquired by the blessings of gods, headed by Lord Brahma, Hanuman became strong and invincible. Proud of this prowess, young Hanuman started harassing hermits living near his place by throwing away their belongings like barks, faggots, milk, curd and ghee into the 'homa kundam' and earned their wrath. Since they knew that he derived his strength from the boons of gods, they felt that they could not punish him. So they cursed Hanuman that he would forget his strength and power. Realising his mistakes Hanuman prostrated before them, pleading they should not be harsh on a little monkey for its pranks. He also assured them that he would serve the sages in all manners. "The curse once pronounced cannot be taken back. Taking pity on you, we partially modify it. You will realise your strength, when someone reminds of your powers," they said.....

Recalling this, Jambavan praised Hanuman's capabilities in hyperbolic terms, and convinced him that he alone could achieve the impossible. Thus reminded, Hanuman realised his strength and assured the monkeys, "By Lord Rama's grace, I shall set out on this mission and return with a positive message." Hanuman, who is also called 'Sundara', then readied himself for soaring into the sky to reach Lanka.

-to be continued

CURRENT PROGRAMMES

(Continued from page no.13)

Starting of Dhyana Saptaham

April 2017

- 05 Wed - Sri Ramanavami - 05.30 A.M. Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, 11.00 A.M. Samuhika Sri Sitarama Kalyanams, Bhakta Samaradhana
- 11 Tue - Poornima - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 21 Fri - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 25 Tue - Masa Sivaratri - Ekaham at our Pavuluru Branch
- 26 Wed - Amavasya
- 29 Sat - Akshaya Trutiya - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 30 Sun - Sri Sankara Jayanthi - 22nd anniversary of pratistha of idol of Sri Sadguru at Brindavanam, Satsangam, Bhakta Samaradhana

GLORIOUS DEVOTEES

KABIR DAS

C. V. Ramana Babu

(Translation of Telugu original by Jagam)

Once Goddess Lakshmi Devi said to Sri Vishnu, “I am pained that all My devotees are money-minded. Is there at least one, seeking salvation, among Your devotees”? Lord Vishnu answered, “Yes. Your devotees are many in number, like crows. But, Mine are a few, like swans, and they are the saviours of the universe. Saint Ramananda Swami, staying in Kasi, is one such.”

Lakshmi Devi wanted to test Ramananda. She created a beautiful rose garden. While going to the Ganga for bath, Ramananda saw the garden and plucked a rose to offer it to God. Lakshmi Devi, in the disguise of a common woman, scolded him for not taking her permission to pluck the flower. He begged pardon and left the rose there. She took it to Vishnu and told Him that Ramananda was a thief. But Vishnu, smilingly, told her, “Did You understand the glory of his devotion? He wanted to place the rose at my statue in the temple. But, You had restricted him. His selfless devotion made You to carry it all the way and offer to Me directly here”. Lakshmi Devi felt happy and wanted to help the devotee.



Vishnu then told her, “I will give life to this rose and make him as Ramananda’s foremost disciple.” Thus saying, He dropped the rose in the Ganga. It travelled for some distance and took the form of a handsome boy. It is believed that this had happened in the year 1398. Neeru, a Muslim weaver, saw the boy and took him to his home, as a God’s gift. He christened him as ‘Kabir’. The infant Kabir used to utter ‘Rama’ all the time. He was sent to teachers, but no use. Yet, he became well educated. He wrote many poems, hymns and also sang them. Soon, he became dispassionate.

One day Kabir saw a woman grinding sorghum in a hand-mill (‘tirugurallu’) and felt sad, as he compared it thus: “The woman of ‘death’ is grinding sorghum of ‘living beings’ in the hand-mill of ‘family’.” A saint Nipata Niranjan came that way and consoled Kabir by saying, “All those falling in the family of hand-mill are bound to die. But, those who cling to the central shaft, i.e. the feet of God, do

not die.” Kabir was enlightened. He used to spend all the time in meditation. He was not interested in food and sleep. Neeru understood Kabir’s devotion and so would not order him to do any work.

With the passing of time, Neeru died. Left with no alternative, Kabir, though reluctantly, took to weaving to maintain the family. He worried a lot about the people due to the fact that though everyone is a ‘God’ in himself, he, busily engaged in worldly affairs, forgets the fact. He advised such people, “Follow what the Guru says. Don’t doubt him. Don’t treat the Guru to be a common human being.”

One day he took a new cloth to the bazaar for selling, but gave it to a Brahmin and a Muslim fakir, who wanted it, half piece each. He told the fakir, “Though God is formless, He comes in a form to help the devotees.” Then instead of going home, he went to a nearby hut and started meditation. Sri Rama, in the guise of a Brahmin, went to Kabir’s house and reported the whole matter to Kabir’s mother. Her anger knew no bounds and she went to the hut, along with the Brahmin. She questioned Kabir about the cloth. No reply! She thrashed him with a stick. Kabir did not feel the pain. But, lo! The beatings were suffered by the Lord who was in the disguise of Brahmin. Sri Rama felt sorry for His act. Then, He along with Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman gave ‘darshan’ to Kabir and his mother. She said to Kabir, “Thanks to you, I could see Sri Rama. I am very happy and lucky to be your mother”. He told her that Sri Rama Himself came to him in the guise of a Brahmin and Muslim and received the cloth from him.

Though he was not interested in marriage, he had to marry a girl, Loyee, due to his mother’s pressure. Even after marriage, he did not forget to meditate. Neither Hindu scholars nor Muslim moulvis accepted him as their disciple. He was in dire need of a ‘Guru’ to help him lead a peaceful life. One day, due to weakness, he fell on the steps of the Ganga ghat. At the time of ‘Brahmi Muhurtham’, Sri Ramananda Swami was going to the river for bath. In the darkness, he could not see Kabir, lying on the steps and so his feet touched Kabir’s head. With the feeling of sinning as he had stamped on a man’s head, he uttered ‘Ram’. Hearing his favourite name ‘Ram’, Kabir felt very happy. He prostrated at Ramananda’s feet and requested him to accept him as his disciple. Ramananda agreed.

With the Guru's grace, Kabir's ego vanished completely. Then onwards, he used to be called as 'Kabir Das'. He realised that the path of love was so narrow that ego and God could not travel together. "Only one will exist on the path of love. One can reach God only if the ego dies," he felt.

One evening, Some sadhus came to his house. Kabir was very happy. He cleansed their feet with water and sprinkled that sacred water on his head and his wife's. He told Loyee to prepare food for them. But, there were no groceries in the house. Also, there was no money to buy. She did not like to disturb Kabir, who was singing 'Rama Namam' in the presence of the sadhus. She went to the shop, introduced herself to the shopowner, Tulasi Seth, and requested groceries on credit. He was attracted to her beauty and said, "I will give you the items and you need not pay for them. Instead, you please spend a night with me." She was shocked. What to do? "Shall I lose my chastity or shall I send back the guests?" She decided that 'honouring the guests' was utmost important and told him, "I will satisfy you. But, I should not honour the guests after losing chastity. After hosting them I will return to you." He agreed and gave the groceries.

She prepared food and hosted the sadhus. They blessed the couple and left. Kabir felt very much satisfied. But, Loyee was weeping uncontrollably. He asked her for the reason. She detailed everything to him. He consoled her and said, "What you have done is not a sin. Tulasi Seth also is a pure person, because with his help only, we could host the sadhus. He is God for us. Honour your promise to him. It is already night and raining also. So, I will drop you there. Let us go."

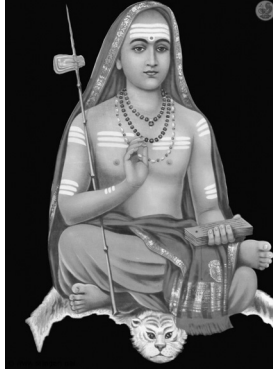
He took her to Tulasi Seth's house. She went inside and met Tulasi Seth. Kabir waited in the verandah. Tulasi Seth was astonished at her honesty. He asked her how she could come there in pitch dark and in heavy rain. She told him about Kabir. He came out and saw Kabir, meditating peacefully. Tulasi Seth felt very much ashamed of himself and prostrated at the pious couple's feet and begged pardon for his great sin. With the touch of their feet, there was a magical change in his thinking. Infatuation had vanished from his mind.

Kabir embraced him with love and advised him, "Trust Sri Rama. Feel the existence of God in your heart. Light the lamp in your dark heart. You will see the Lord there."

-to be continued

BHAJA GOVINDAM!

Ramana Prasad



SLOKA 4

*Nalinedala gata jala matitaralam
Tadvajjivita matisaya chapalam
Vidhi vyaadhyabhimaana grastam
Lokam soka hatam cha samastam*

The water drop on the lotus leaf is very unsteady, so also the life. Understand that the world is equally unstable and will be devoured by disease or conceit.

After giving warning in strongest terms in the first three slokas against scriptural knowledge, lure for wealth and lust for sex, Sri Sankaracharya now deals with the nature of life in this sloka.

Man tries to possess more money as he feels insecure about his future requirements. But he does not know when death knocks at his door. One should be therefore be content with what he has and turn his mind to God.

-to be continued

A GREAT HOST, DESPITE HAVING NOTHING

-Ramaswami S

Once, a devotee of Lord Siva by name Maaranaar lived in Ilayaangudi village of Ramanathapuram district (Tamil Nadu). He was a rich farmer and known for his hard work and compassion towards the poor. He and his wife were fond of Siva Bhaktas and whenever any Siva devotee visited the village they would invite him to their house and feed him to their heart's content, besides presenting some sum for his onward journey.

Their munificent hospitality towards devotees spread far and wide, and many Siva devotees would visit their house. Because of this good nature, he was respectably called 'Ilayangudi Maaraanar'.

Lord Siva, who was pleased with the couple's love towards His devotees, was keen on taking them in His fold. Before that He wanted to give them a test. As per His will, the village was soon stalked by a severe drought. Braving the loss of income from land, Maaranaar utilised all his resources towards serving the poor and devotees. Gradually he was impoverished. But still, he borrowed and continued his services, and reached the end of the tether.

One day, Maaranaar had not even a grain in his house, and the couple was forced to fast, chanting the name of the Lord. It was raining that day. Though he was happy over the welcome showers, he could not go out of the village to procure some food for them. So they continued their chanting during night and fell into deep sleep.

Suddenly, Maaranaar heard a knock on his door and opened it to find a Siva Bhakta in rags and shivering in the damp weather. Maaranaar was thrilled when the devotee uttered "Om Namassivaaya". Falling at the feet of the devotee, Maaranaar requested him to come in and change his drenched clothes, by offering a dry dhoti and an upper cloth. Seating him comfortably on a mat, Maaranaar said: "It is my great 'punyam' that you have graced my house even at midnight, despite heavy rain. You seem to be hungry. Please rest for some time on this mat, until we will get ready the meal."

The devotee thanked him and said: "I am coming from Madurai. Because of the sudden rain, I feel like resting in this village. Yes, I am very hungry since I had not eaten anything since day break. I

am also tired. Please permit me to sleep in that room.” Maaranaar then spread the mat in the room and asked the guest to stretch himself, until the food is ready for serving.

He then woke up his wife and told him about the guest. She said: “My lord, how can we entertain that guest when we do not have even a grain in the house?” Maaranaar realised the piquant situation they were in. All of a sudden he remembered the seed corns he had planted in the nursery the previous day and rushed out to gather those seedlings despite the downpour. Fortunately, the seedlings were not washed away. He collected them and asked his wife to prepare the food.

“But then, there is no firewood at home, my lord!” she said with tears in her eyes. Maaranaar told her not to worry and went to the backyard. He cut the wooden ceiling and axed the raft into pieces for use in the fire place. Food was ready in a short while. His wife then went to the nearby garden and plucked some greens for preparing curry. The couple was happy that they could somehow manage that difficult situation.

He then went into the room where the Siva devotee was resting and woke him up. He rose at once, and in a trice disappeared. There was only a glow (‘Jyothi’) in that room. Addressing the perplexed Maaranaar, a celestial voice declared: “Maaran, you have proved your greatness as a good host. The Lord is extremely delighted with your unstinted effort to feed the hungry devotee even amidst trying circumstances. Now the Lord wants the permanent company of you and your wife in Kailasam, and you two will be served by none other than Kubera.” The couple prostrated before the ‘Jyothi’ and entered it chanting ‘Om Namassivaaya’.

Ilayangudi Maaranaar thus became one of the sixty-three Nayanars (eminent Siva devotees).*

A disciple who remembers the Guru's teachings thus and puts them in practice will surely reach the goal. The Guru will be happy to have such disciple. Nothing gives greater pleasure to a Satya Guru than to see his disciple deriving and enjoying the full benefits of his teachings. A Satya Guru never wants money or services from his disciples.

- Sri Babuji

CLEAR YOUR DOUBTS

Devotee: Amma, for the last three or four years I am facing so many difficulties and problems both on my professional and home fronts. I am encountering one loss after another. It looks like never ending and I am totally depressed. This is affecting my spiritual sadhana very badly. What should I do?

Sri Mataji: Please do not get depressed, my son. You must have heard of the story of a king being given a small note by his mother which read “This too shall pass”. You also write on a paper “This too shall pass” in big letters and stick it in your room. Have belief in your Guru and God. Lord said, “Why fear? I am here!” - Have faith in those words.

In the ‘Bhagavadgita’ the Lord has said:

Maatra sparsasthu Kaunteya!
Seetoshna Sukha dukhadah
Agamaapayino nityah
Tamstrikshva Bharatha!



It means the contact between the senses and their objects, like heat and cold, joy and sorrow are transient and you must endure them bravely with patience.

Keep reading the stories of great devotees and saints like Bhakta Ramadas, Kabirdas, Meera Bai, Sakku Bai and others. Our difficulties are nothing when compared to the hardships, those great souls faced. They faced them with total faith in God. They never looked at those difficulties as hardships. They only thought that God was testing them thus in order to remove their ‘prarabdha karma’. Their absolute trust in the Almighty saw them through those testing times.

I know it is difficult to fix your mind on God at such times. But, please do not lose your faith. Every cloud has a silverlining. The day will definitely dawn after night.*

- Compiled by Dr.Swarnamukhi Prasada

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