

SAMARDHA SADGURU

Spiritual Magazine

Srikaligardens Ashram-522 508 Guntur Dist.
 Ph : (0863) 2293280, 2293564, 2293206
 email: sadguru_english@rediffmail.com
 web site: mathaji-babuji.org

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	MAY BABUJI'S AND MATAJI'S	
	BLESSINGS BE SHOWERED	
	ON YOU ALL	
	ON THE OCCASIONS OF	
	UGADI AND SRIRAMANAVAMI	

Sri Mataji's Benediction

SELF-REALISATION

Burning desire, ardent approach, undivided attention and relentless effort will certainly help the spiritual seeker to reach the goal of self-realisation, but what is really missing can be known only after a careful examination of the following story.

Once, there lived a frog in a well. The frog was born in the well and brought up in it and yet it was little and small frog. But it cleaned the water of all the worms that lived in it, and that way gained energy and became sleek and fat.

One day another frog that lived in a nearby lake fell into the well. On seeing the new creature, the frog in the well questioned "Where are you from?" The migrant frog replied: "I am from a nearby lake."

"Oh from a lake, how big is that? Is it as big as my well?" it asked after taking a leap from one side of the well to the other.

"My friend," said the frog from the lake, "you cannot compare the lake with your little well."

"Well then," said the frog of the well, "nothing can be bigger than my well. You are a liar and you don't have a place here. Go out of this well at once," said the frog of the well .

What is the essence of the story? Intolerance, uncompromising attitude and tenacious tendency are certainly indicative of ego: a manifestation of mind. Such a person cannot achieve anything spiritually in spite of meditation for long spells. Ego is nothing but an unhappy wedlock of real and unreal or self and non-self. Ego has no form but assumes a form attaching itself to any form enjoying the sense objects.

Uncertainties, doubts and fears are ramifications of ego haunting us till the self is realised. Brahman is absolute reality indicated in the Upanishads as sat-chit-anand.



Self-realisation cannot be achieved through bookish knowledge and is only feasible through the guidance of a Guru. Brahman cannot be defined since it is beyond the reach of mind and speech. It pervades the universe and no one can penetrate into it. Self-realisation is the aim and objective of all human endeavour; for, it is a sort of quest for peace.

The first and foremost thought in the mind of every man is the thought of 'I', and it is only after that any other thought can arise in him. Therefore, the spiritual seeker should mentally follow inwards until the thought 'I' vanishes. He will then attain that consciousness which is immortal. There are no stages of realisation and also no degrees of liberation. Self-realisation is the state of mind in the Primal, Pure, Natural state when the mind has lost its identity like a river joining the ocean losing its identity. Such a person has no worry, no anxiety; and ego has no place in him as nothing is in his possession.*

APPEAL

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Editorial

LET'S STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH IN GURU (GOD)

Om Gururam namaste!

The editorial wing of this spiritual quarterly wishes its readers a happy and prosperous Ugadi, which has just been ushered in. With the grace of Samardha Sadguru Sri Sri Sri Hanumat Kali Vara Prassada Babuji Maharaj and the blessings of Yogini Sri Chandra Kali Prasada Mataji, may Hemalambi Nama Samvatsaram enable us to face the challenges ahead in the next twelve months and fulfill our earnest desires!

Human beings face many challenges during their life time. They are able to overcome some challenges by their hard work and determination. But there are challenges that are formidable and pose a great hurdle to their progress. On those occasions they get confused and trapped. Some seek advice from their elders who tell them to do their duty and leave the result to God. People who believe in God obey this advice and get relief. But non-believers, who have infinite faith in their personal greatness to face any challenge, are reluctant to heed the command of elders, and suffer the consequences.

'How can an invisible entity called God come to our rescue in times of distress?' question non-believers. The problem with them is that they do not accept anything which is not seen by them. In other words, they want God to appear before them to confirm His existence. What a ridiculous demand is this! That means God has to appear before every non-believer whenever he or she gets the doubt about Him, in which case God will have no other job than making His appearance before these doubting Thomases. Even if God concedes their request and makes His appearance, what is the guarantee that He will be accepted by them? They will find some excuse to dismiss the idea of God, the Almighty.

This piquant situation is ably explained by a 1977 Hollywood movie, 'Oh God!', based on Avery Corman's novel and directed by Carl Reiner. In this film, God appears before a department stores' manager Jerry Landers and convinces him about His veracity



by subjecting Himself to all tests conducted by Jerry. God, who takes the form of Jerry's father, then makes him His messenger and asks him to persuade his near and dear to listen to His message of Love and act accordingly, besides spreading the divine message. People, whom Jerry contacted, after initial doubts, ultimately veer round to the message of harmony. This enrages the local pastor who finds a threat to his position as the purveyor of God's message. The pastor drags Jerry to the court on charges of cheating innocent people by his so-called link-up with God. Jerry tells the court that only God can corroborate his experiences. The court then asks him to produce God as his witness. And God appears on the witness box and confirms every word of Jerry's! When asked by court to display His miracles, God readily condescends to do what all the court wants Him to do. Despite such a display, the judge would not agree that He is God. God then tells the court: "Well, you seem to have no faith in Me, but I have faith in people. One day they will realise the Truth." After this, God disappears. The film thus depicts the human tendency of not accepting the Reality.

'How to bring round non-believers to the fact of God's existence?' a devotee once asked Guru Maharaj who replied: "You need not waste your time and energy on this futile effort. Faith is based on one's own attitude and experience. Instead, you strengthen your own faith in God which may get disturbed by chatting with non-believers, notwithstanding the fact that they are also God's children. God certainly does not need your advocacy to prove His existence."

Sri Mataji would often define GOD as the acronym of the words, Generator, Organiser and Destroyer, since He precisely plays these three supreme roles. "The cosmic sound, namely 'AUM', represents God, the Supreme Energy. The three letters respectively denote the functions of the Trimurtis, namely creation or generation, organisation or preservation and destruction or dissolution. 'AUM' is thus a symbol to describe that Supreme Power ruling the entire universe," says Sri Mataji.

The 'Guru Gita' asserts that "There is no greater Truth than Guru; there is no greater Penance than Guru; there is no greater Knowledge than Guru. Hence let us bow to that Guru". Our Gurudev once said, "Guru, within brackets God, is your benefactor and redeemer. Hence strengthen your faith in Him."
Jai Gurudev!*

Thus Spake Babuji 'GURU BINA ISO, KAUN KARE'

(Continued from the previous issue)

Sushumna Prasada

In the long span of life, Suradas never experienced such peerless touch of Lord Syama Sundar which transported him to the heaven of eternal bliss. Suradas who was reputed to be a great poet. No poet can give a shape to the inexpressible peaceful joy he experienced by the glorious touch of the Lord. He felt as if thousand flutes produced marvellous melodies at a time. But he thought even that expression could not bring out the elation he felt by the touch of Lord Syama Sundar. He was brought back to normalcy with that touch. The changed scene filled him with inexpressible joy. The heart-throb of milkmaids or Gopikas, the source and essence of Beauty and the moonlight for the entire universe that took the shape of Baby Krishna plunged



Suradas in an everlasting pool of Peaceful Bliss. Baby Krishna's looks, smile, voice, tender rosy cheeks and lips, lovely locks of hair, delicate dancing steps - the unforgettable marvellous dancing steps - all clubbed together to give him a divine glow and made Suradas revel in a lake of unique glee which gushed in the form of a poetic spring which released the sweetness and joy of Krishna Tatwa. Thus Suradas became totally unaware of the Time factor in a state of trance, skipping the nectarine honey of Krishna essence.

When Suradas was thus enjoying in a state of trance, much above the entanglements of the world, Lord Syama Sundar tried to awaken him from that state. He had risen above the state of personal identity and lost sense of Time. In other words Suradas was Selfless and Timeless.

Baby Krishna tried to awaken him by saying, "My dear Suradas, I have come to hug you. I have given you the power of sight." Suradas replied: "Yes, Syama Sundara - You are the source of my sight. You plunge me externally and internally in Divine Light. This is not darkness for me."

Lord Krishna patting on his back remarked “I will drive out your blindness and make you see everything. Take it with pleasure.”

Immediately Suradas replied: “O my Lord, You have given me a boon which none else has enjoyed. Neither the Yogis nor Saints nor Seers enjoyed and experienced the divine vision which You offered me as a priceless boon. It is the fruit of good acts of a series of births. Having seen the marvellous and matchless beauty and attraction of my Divine Lord, I don’t want to pollute my sight by seeing anything else. I only entreat You to keep this glorious divine vision on my mental screen forever. Oh my Lord, let me preserve this divine vision forever. Everything else is useless before it.”

Out of infinite love for Suradas, Lord Murali Mohan granted his request immediately. Baby Krishna bound by the shackles of devotion of Suradas to such an extent that He became totally unmindful of the love of cowboys and milkmaids, butter and cream, the fountain of love of Mother Yasoda when she hugs Him. Lord Shyama Sundar took upon His shoulders the entire responsibility of Suradas and attended to all his needs as an exemplary, ideal attendant. Suradas enjoyed the inestimable fortune of being cared by the Lord who would bathe him, feed him and take for a walk holding his hand in His. Lord Shyama Sundar in the shape of Baby Krishna with lovely looks of concentration like an innocent boy used to listen to the song of Suradas in absolute silence. Ordinary parents also take special care of their deformed children. In such a case imagine the loving care of the Divine Father for the sake of his peerless blind devotee.

Unless the devotion is pure, true and everlasting, one cannot receive the blissful love of God. When the devotee totally surrenders himself to the lotus feet of God with undivided concentration and meditation, the Divine Father takes upon himself the entire responsibility of such devotees. Bhakta Suradas is a matchless example of supreme Krishna Prema.

That’s why Suradas could confidently sing, “Guru Bina Iso Kaun Kare?”*

TRUE TRANSFORMATION

Kali Prasad, USA

Once upon a time there was sage living in his ashram. One morning, while he was offering his prayers to the Sun god, a small mouse fell in his hands from the sky. It was being carried by an eagle and badly wounded. The sage felt pity on the mouse and transformed it into a girl to protect it from the eagle. He took the girl to his ashram and nurtured her as his own daughter. The daughter grew up in the ashram and attained ripe age for marriage.

The sage wanted to marry off his daughter to the most powerful person in the world. When the sage thought about the potential bridegrooms, he realized that the Sun is the most powerful in the whole visible world around us. So, he asked his daughter, “Dear, I want you to marry the most powerful person in the world. And I see that the Sun is the most powerful in the whole world. Are you willing to marry the Sun god?” The daughter replied, “You are right father, but a small cloud could obstruct the power of the mighty Sun. Isn’t the cloud more powerful?” The sage replied, “OK, so will you marry the cloud god?” “But father, when the wind blows it could easily scatter away the thickest of the clouds. Isn’t the wind more powerful than the clouds?”

The sage asked again, “so, you want to marry the wind god?” “No father. Please think about it. Even the most powerful winds are blocked by a mountain. Isn’t the mountain mightier than the wind?” reasoned the daughter. “So, how about you marry the mountain god?” “Don’t rush father! I agree a mountain is mighty. But a small mouse can easily dig a tunnel through the mountain. Isn’t the mouse the most powerful creature in the whole world?” The disappointed sage said, “My child, I transformed your body from that of a mouse to a human and raised you for so many years in my ashram, but I couldn’t transform your mind. You better be a mouse and live your own life,” and transformed her back into a mouse.

Similarly a Guru offers protection to the disciples in distress and raises them as his own children. A Guru’s one and only desire is to liberate the disciples from the shackles of illusion and make them attain the ultimate peace and bliss that he constantly experiences.

(Continued to page no.35)

Divine Mother Speaks REAL LISTENING

Japamala Prasada

The only never changing Truth in this world is the experience given by our Guru. To experience such Truth, we need to listen to the Guru's words, expelling all other thoughts aside, contemplate upon his teachings and put them to practice. The Vedanta says 'Sanyasasya Sravanam Kuryaat' which means you must denounce everything and then listen to the Guru's words.

How do we know that someone has really listened to what is said? I will give you an example. Suppose, I call one of you and say that I am feeling thirsty and ask you to bring me a glass of water. What will you do? You will run and get me a glass of water. That means you have really listened to what I had said, and obeyed. That is the proof of proper listening. Instead, if you stay where you are without getting me water, it means you had just heard what I had said but did not do what I asked you. Of what use such hearing?



If the mind is immersed in worldly matters always, it can never take in the divine teachings of the Guru. People will be very alert and active when they have to do any work but feel sleepy and lazy when they sit to hear a divine lecture or meditation. Or else, they will complain of all sorts of aches and pains and say their minds keep wandering everywhere. Why does this happen? This happens when one has no interest in what is being said.

We must listen to the Guru's words with utmost concentration and store them in our mind and contemplate upon at leisure. This will come to our help when we are troubled. When our mind wanders during meditation, if we recall the lecture of our Gurudev, the mind will be stabilised. A steady mind brings peace.

We must be very careful with what we hear and what we see, as ears and eyes are the most powerful sense organs in our body.

The Shanti Mantra says,
"Bhadram Karnebhi Srunuyama Devah,
Bhadram Pasye-ma kshabhiryajatrah"

It means - Hear that which is safe and good with your ears and see only that which is safe and good to your eyes. Eyes and ears are the most powerful gateways to the external world. If we are not careful with what we see and hear, our mind gets polluted. We are all aware of what a polluted mind does. For that matter we have to be careful not only with what we see and hear but also what we talk, eat and do.

Sri Sankara Bhagavadpadacharya Swami says in one of the verses of his 'Bhaja Govindam' thus: "Oh, foolish man! Why are you reciting those grammar lessons all the time? They will not help you or protect you at the time of death. Instead, if you chant the name of the Lord, it will protect you from the never ending cycle of birth and death."

Therefore, listening to the Guru will help us transform ourselves and lead us to the ultimate Truth.*

OBITUARY

Smt. Kunaparaju Rajeswaramma, aged 95 years (w/o Narayanaraju) ardent devotee of Sri Babuji and resident of Srikaligardens attained Guru Sayujyam on 13-01-2017.

She is survived by two sons and two daughters.

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

OBITUARY

Smt. Penumaka Subbamma, aged 91 years ardent devotee of Sri Babuji attained Guru Sayujyam on 30-01-2017.

She is survived by a son and a daughter.

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

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

April 2017

- 05 Wed - Srirama Navami - 05.30 a.m. Sri Sadguru Pada Puja,
11.00 a.m. Samuhika Sita Ramula Kalyanams, Bhakta
Samaradhana
- 11 Tue - Poornima - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 21 Fri - Sri Guru Dasami- Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 25 Tue - Maasa Sivaratri - Ekaham at Pa
- 26 Wed- Amavasya
- 29 Sat - Akshaya Trutiya, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja,
Bhakta Samaradhana
- 30 Sun - Sri Sankara Jayanthi - 22nd Anniversary of Sri Babuji
Idol Prathista Mahotsavam – Sri Sadguru Pada Puja,
Satsangam, Bhakta Samaradhana

May 2017

- 10 Wed- Vysakha Poornima - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Satsangam,
Bhakta Samaradhana
- 16 Tue - Bahula Panchami, Pratishtha Mahotsavam of Sri Maha
Kalika Parameswari and Sri Ramalingeswara Swamy,
Leela Kalyanam
- 21 Sun - Sri Guru Dasami, Hanumath Jayanthi - Satsangam,
Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 24 Wed -Maasa Sivaratri - Ekaham at Pavuluru Branch
- 25 Thu - Amavasya

June 2017

- 03 Sat - Jyeshtha Suddha Navami - Tenth Aaradhana of
Sri Suguna Prasada Mathaji
- 09 Fri - Poornima - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 19 Mon - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 22 Thu - Maasa Sivaratri, Ekaham at Pavuluru Branch
- 24 Sat - Amavasya (Continued to page No.15)

Children's Section

Tales of Sri Ramakrishna

LIFE IS BUT A DREAM!

Ramana Prasad

A person lost his job. His wife was pressurising him to seek another employment. One day his son became sick. Doctors examined the boy and said that the boy would not survive whatever be the treatment given to him. But at that time his father was away in search of a job. As feared, the boy died the same day. They tried to contact his father but could not do so.



Next day the boy's father returned home. His wife rebuked him: "Your son was seriously ill. Instead of staying at home you went somewhere else. Now he is dead. You are a stone-hearted person."

There was a smile in his face. He replied, "Last night I dreamt that I became a king and had seven sons and that I was living in riches. I got whatever I wanted. Suddenly when I woke up I saw none. Now tell me whether I should weep for the seven sons of the dream or the one who died of illness?"

One who realises that life is a mere dream never worries over the pains and pleasures of samsara.*

DIVINE STORIES

Ramana Prasad

Sri Sri Sri Vidya Prakanandagiri Swamiji of Srikalahasti has compiled a number of stories, incidents and anecdotes narrated by many Mahatmas to bring home the subtle aspects of spirituality, in the form of a book, titled 'Paramarthika Kathalu'. We are serialising these stories from this issue onwards, for the benefit of our readers.—Editor

TARAKA VIDYA

A scholar, well versed in all scriptures, was proceeding to a place for delivering a lecture. On the way he had to cross a river. Water in the river was brimming and flowing very fast. The pundit sighted a boatman on the banks of the river and sought his help to



cross the river. The boatman agreed and asked the pundit to step into his boat, and soon both were sailing.

The pundit was contemplating seriously for some time, and suddenly he asked the boatman “Do you have any knowledge of *Tarka sastra* (logic)?” The boatman replied in the negative.

Pundit : I consider that a person, who does not have knowledge of *Tarka sastra*, has wasted twenty-five percent of his life. Wake up! Start learning *Tarka sastra* at least from now on from scholars like me. Now tell me whether you have learnt *Mimamsa sastra*?

Boatman: I don't know anything of *Mimamsa*. All I know is only '*mamsa*' (meat).

Pundit: Stupid fellow! Without the knowledge of *Mimamsa*, another twenty-five percent of your life has gone waste. By the by, have you learnt *Jyotisha sastra* (astrology)?

Boatman: I don't know even a bit of it, sir.

Pundit: My God! Another twenty-five percent of your life has been wasted. As you don't have any knowledge of *Tarka*, *Mimamsa*, *Jyotisha sastras*, three-fourth of your life has gone waste.

As the two were conversing like this, the boat reached the middle of the river. The water current was getting more and more intense. High speed winds were also blowing, and soon they developed into a storm. The boat started rocking, and to their misery, water started entering it through a hole. The boat was on the verge of sinking.

The panicky boatman asked the pundit "Sir, do you know how to swim?" The pundit got worried and said, "No."

"What a pity, sir! Just now you told me that for the lack of knowledge of *Tarka*, *Mimamsa* and *Jyotisha sastras* three-fourth



of my life has been wasted. But with your lack of knowledge of swimming, I am afraid, your life is hundred per cent waste now.” So saying, the boatman jumped into the river and swam ashore. The pundit got drowned.

Which knowledge is required to save your life while you are crossing the river? It is the knowledge of swimming. At that time no knowledge, be it history, logic, astrology or *Mimamsa*, will save you.

Similarly, man is tossing hopelessly in the ocean of samsara. Only the knowledge of Brahman will save him. This is also known as *Akshara Paramatma tatwa* or *Taraka vidya*. One must learn this vidya to cross the Bhava sagara.

Moral: As knowledge of swimming is essential to cross the river, knowledge of Brahma vidya is necessary to cross the river of samsara. So, one should approach Spiritual Masters and acquire the knowledge of *Brahma vidya*.*

CURRENT PROGRAMMES
IMPORTANT PUJAS AND SATSANGS
AT SRI KALI GARDENS

(Continued from page No.11)

July 2017

- 04 Tue - Toli Ekadasi - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja,
Bhakta Samaradhana
- 09 Sun - Ashada Guru Poornima - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada
Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana,
Starting of Chaturmasa Deeksha
- 16 Sun - Starting of Dakshinayanam
- 18 Tue - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 22 Sat - Maasa Sivaratri - Ekaham at Pavuluru Branch
- 23 Sun - Amavasya
- 26 Wed - Sravana Suddha Tadiya - Satsangam,
Sri Sadguru Pada Puja

Devotional Stories

IMPORTANCE OF TRUTH

My dear Chiranjeevulaara:

We hear often that ‘Truth is God’. That is to emphasise the importance and necessity of being truthful all the time. The story of Raja Harishchandra, who sacrificed his kingdom, queen and son to uphold Truth and came to be known as Satya Harishchandra, is also known to us. In fact, one of the important instructions we receive from our elders is ‘Satyam vada’ (Speak the Truth). People who utter lies are treated with contempt by society. Let me narrate a story involving truth and untruth.

Once, untruth challenged Truth for a race in swimming. The condition was that they should swim across from one bank of the river to the other and return. Whoever completes the race first would be the winner.

Truth agreed, and both disrobed themselves and plunged into the river. While Truth faithfully obeyed the rules of the game, untruth slipped midway and returned to the starting point and claimed victory donning the white clothes of Truth.

After fulfilling its part of the contract, Truth returned to the original bank only to notice the foul-play of untruth. Truth refused to wear the clothes left by untruth and preferred to remain naked.

From then on, phrases like ‘naked truth’ and ‘white lie’ came into vogue. Truth will be transparent unlike untruth which has to be decorated with attractive frills.

Sadguru Maharaj once jocularly remarked: “It is always safe to speak the Truth, because the matter ends with it. If you utter a lie, you have to maintain it, for which you may have to utter several more lies. Further, you must have a perfect memory about the lies you have spoken, lest you would be caught by contradicting yourself. Don’t you agree that speaking the Truth is easier and more beneficial than uttering untruth?” What more one can say about the need to be truthful.

Children, hope you liked the tale of the tussle between Truth and untruth. Realising the importance of Truth, let us all take a pledge to be truthful in all our dealings.

Yours affectionately,
Maathula*

Babuji's Fables

TRUE DEVOTION

When Lord Krishna went to Hastinapuram as an envoy of Dharmaputra to bring about reconciliation between Kauravas and Pandavas and stall the impending war, Duryodhana invited the Lord for the luncheon in his palace. But the Lord declined the offer, saying that He would not eat the food given by the enemies of His devotees, the Pandavas.

Thus said, the Lord went to Vidura's house for lunch. Vidura was a staunch devotee of Krishna. Vidura's wife was also an ardent devotee of the Lord. When Vidura received Lord Krishna at his cottage, his wife was having an oil bath. Vidura called out for her, saying that the Lord had come to their house.

On hearing the Lord's name, Vidura's wife came out running from the bathroom, unaware of the fact that she was scantily clad. She bowed to the Lord and started feeding Him with banana peels throwing the fruit away. Such was the great devotion of Vidura's wife, that she was unaware of her own self and with what she was feeding God.

Lord Krishna happily ate the banana peels, while Vidura was looking amazed!

Moral: God sees only true love and devotion and not the way we are or what we offer Him. He takes anything we offer with true devotion.

—Retold by Dr. Swanamukhi Prasada

Down Memory Lane

GLORY OF LORD SANKARACHARYA

Sushumna Prasada

Every year we celebrate Sri Sankara Jayanthi on Vaisakha Suddha Panchami as per Telugu calendar, to mark the glorious advent of Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavadpadacharya, who resuscitated the decaying Sanatana Dharma. On one such occasion, Lord Babuji delivered a discourse on the life and mission of the great founder of Advaita philosophy, which resulted in spiritual regeneration in our country. Sri Gurudev lectured thus....

It is mentioned in the 'Bhagavadgita'

“Yada Yadahi Dharmasya Glanirbhavati Bharata
Abhyuddhana madharmasya Thadatmanam Srujamyaham.”
(Ch.IV-Sl.7).

It means whenever there is a threat to Dharma, resulting in corresponding increase of Adharma in this Universe, the Bhagavan assumes a shape to save the Universe. Similarly, whenever there is crisis, submerging humanity in ignorance and illusion, the Divine Lord assumes a form to suit the occasion for the sake of spiritual revival. Adi Sankara was one such incarnation.

There are differences of opinion regarding the date of his birth. The great seer was supposed to have been born in 509 B.C.E., according to the spiritual seats established at Puri, Dwaraka and Kanchi. According to historians, however, he was supposed to have lived from 788 C.E. to 820 C.E. But all agree to the fact that Adi Sankara lived a short span of life of 32 years. It is also agreed that he was born after Mahakavi Kalidasa and before Vachaspati.

Sivaguru and Aryamba were his chosen blessed parents. The couple belonged to a Namboodiri Brahmin family of Kaladi village in Kerala. Having no children for a long time, the pious couple went to the sacred Siva Kshetram and performed penance in a Siva temple on the hill of Vrushachalam. Lord Parameswara, who was impressed by the undiluted devotion of the Sivaguru couple, appeared before them in a dream as an old man and questioned

them whether they wished to have a foolish son who would live for a long time or one who would only live for a short span of life but would do a great service to humanity by his spiritual effulgence. The pious couple left the choice to the Lord Himself who had appeared in the shape of an old man. Pleased with their spotless devotion, Lord Siva blessed them saying, "I Myself will be born as your child. Now you can go back to your village."

Happily returning to Kaladi, the pious couple performed a series of 'vratas', continuing their practice of the principle : 'Athithi Devo Bhavaa': to take food only after offering it to guests. After some time, Aryamba became pregnant.

The entire nature danced with ecstasy, when the child was born on 'Suddha Panchami' in Punarvasu Nakshatram in the month of Vaisakha of the Nandana year. On seeing the child everybody in Kaladi believed that he was the incarnation of Lord Siva. Looking at his Jatakachakra, astrologers predicted that he was going to be a Purna Purusha. Sivaguru christened the child as Sankara. According to numerology, the very name indicates his date of birth, fortnight (paksha) and month. The letter 'San' is a symbol of five (Panchami). 'Ka' is indicative of Shukla Paksha and 'Ra' denotes the second month Vaisakha. Though Sivaguru was not aware of these numerological details, the name became absolutely suitable to the divine child who was to work wonders as Adi Sankara Bhagavadpadacharya.

Sivaguru passed away even without performing the 'Upanayanam' to his only son. Aryamba arranged the ceremony when he was five years of age, and sent him to Gurukulam to learn the Vedas and Shastras. Sankara was indeed a miraculous boy who exhibited intellectual wonders even at that tender age. He attained mastery over the languages of Prakrit and Sanskrit, besides becoming a scholar in all branches of knowledge like Tarkasastram, Sankhyam, Patanjali Yogam and Mimamsa by the time he was eight. He had absorbed the essence of all the Vedas and became a matchless Vedic scholar. At the age of 12, he was well versed in all the Shastras, so that he could write commentaries on them.

During his stay at Gurukulam, as per tradition, Sankara was sent for 'Bhikshatanam' (collecting alms of foodgrains). One day, the boy went to the house of a Brahmin for alms. The head of the

family was not there. The housewife was in a pathetic and deplorable condition of poverty and there was nothing in the house to give alms. She searched the entire house and found a pickle jar which was almost empty. With great difficulty she searched the jar and found a small dry citrus fruit ('amlakam'). With tears rolling down her cheeks, she bent down her head with a sense of shame and dropped that citrus fruit into the bowl of Sankara. The boy's heart melted with sympathy and compassion. Instantly he prayed to the Goddess of Wealth, Lakshmi Devi, to bless that family by reciting the 'Kanakadhara stotra'. When the recitation was over, a miracle occurred with a continuous flow of gold citrus fruits. The householder and his wife performed puja to boy Sankara. From that time onwards, Namboodri Brahmin houses in Kaladi came to be known as 'swarnattamana', which means houses of gold.

After studies, Sankara returned from Gurukulam to stay with his mother. She used to go to River Poorna daily to bring fresh water in a pot. One day Aryamba was suddenly taken ill while returning from the river and fainted on the way. Moved by that pathetic scene, Sankara created a miracle by making the river flow in front of their house.

Once, a number of sanyasis came to the house of Aryamba and blessed the boy saying that though he was destined to live a short span of life, he would shine as a sanyasi. Aryamba felt sad at the very thought.

-to be continued

OBITUARY

Smt. Divvela Sri Lakshmi (Vakkapodi Lakshmi) aged 80 years (w/o Shankararao) ardent devotee of Sri Babuji and resident of Srikaligardens attained Guru Sayujyam on 07-02-2017.

She is survived by three daughters.

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

LET US IMPRINT THOSE FOOTPRINTS

(Continued from the previous issue)

Dr. Raghavendra

Once, a man who had great faith in God dreamt that he was walking along a beach with the Lord. Many scenes from his life flashed across the sky and in each scene he had noticed footprints on the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints: one pair of them was, of course, his and the other set was of the Lord's. He was confident that God was with him at all times in his life and the two sets of footprints on the sand just proved that. However, at some other spots there were only one set of footprints. This bothered him and observing more prudently on time scale he realised the absence of one set of footprints was during the times when he needed the God most, i.e. when he was suffering from anguish, sorrow, or defeat. He was perplexed and thought, 'Why has the Lord abandoned me at times when I needed His presence more? Why is it so?' Then God who is omnipresent and omniscient asked the man with tenderly love, 'Is something bothering you, my child?' The man replied, 'yes' and said to the Lord, 'You promised me, Lord, that if I followed You, You would walk with me always. But I noticed that during the most trying periods there have only been one set of footprints on the sand. Why, when I needed You most You have not been there for me?' The Lord replied smilingly, 'My dear child, whenever you had seen only one set of footprints, please note those were times when I carried you in My arms.'

Wow! What love the great Lord has for His children! God carries us in His arms across our troubled times. His boundless love has no match. I personally feel, our own God, the Lord of Lords, Sri Babuji Maharaj, carries us all in His arms all the time, just not only in the troubled times.

Sri Gurudev's lotus feet are divine. They are so tender and serene. They are cool, cooler than ice, but do not give us any shivering. The coolness of His divine and serene feet calms down our ever increasing desires and wishes. In the presence of those blissful and luminescent feet, we will be left with no thoughts, and be blessed with divine experiences. Creation of this universe and the entire matter and energy started from those lotus feet. All oceans,

rivers and rivulets and the entire mass of water spring from those feet. So sacred are they, it is said in the scriptures that prostrating unto Gurudev's lotus feet is equivalent to or more than having a holy dip in the seven seas and all sacred rivers. Even hard stones eagerly wait for the touch of His holy feet. Nobody except He, the God, knows the stories behind each and every stone or even behind every speck or particle in this universe. It is a well known fact that the touch of the divine feet of Sri Ramachandra Prabhu brought back Ahalya's previous human form from a hard stone.

Imprint of such holy lotus feet on one's heart and mind is what one should long for. It requires great practice (Sadhana) with unswerving faith in Him. Once such imprints are made they are not erasable and indestructible. Those imprints keep the heart pure and fragrant and such a person is the blessed one. He is liked and loved by all. He not only uplifts himself, but uplifts others too. I pray unto such lotus feet of Sri Babuji Maharaj that let us all be blessed with those holy imprints on our hearts.*

OBITUARY

Sri. Garikapati Sriramachandra Murty (Assam Murty) aged 91 years ardent devotee of Sri Babuji and resident of Srikaligardens attained Guru Sayujyam on 23-02-2017.

He is survived by a son and two daughters.

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

OBITUARY

Sri. Ramatarka Parabrahma Prasad, (Sannidhanam Rama Taraka Parabrahma Sastry) aged 87 years ardent devotee of Sri Babuji and resident of Srikaligardens attained Guru Sayujyam on 24-03-2017.

He is survived by three daughters.

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

WAITING FOR SRI RAMA—XIII

(Continued from the previous issue)

Ramaswami Sampath

Now begins the Sundara Kandam of the Valmiki Ramayana. In this 'kandam', Hanuman, who is also called Sundara, is the main character, since Sri Rama appears only towards the close of this part of the epic. Hence, we can call this the 'kandam' of Sundara. Of the seven parts of the 'Ramayana' only this is christened 'Sundara Kandam', while the names of others are based on places or events. Let us analyse why should this part alone be called 'Sundara' meaning beauty. The following 'sloka' will explain the purpose of naming this Sundara Kandam:

Sundare sundaro Ramah
Sundare sundari katha
Sundare sundari Sita
Sundare sundaram vanam
Sundare sundaram kavayam
Sundare sundaro kapih
Sundare sundaram mantram
Sundare kim na sundaram?

This 'sloka' highlights the beauty of the Sundara Kandam by describing the mesmerising attraction of the island city of Lanka built by Viswakarma (for Kubera) and the fragrant plants and creepers sporting eye-filling flowers of the Asokavanam. The courteous and beautiful manner with which the good looking Hanuman introduces himself to Sita; his soul-elevating portrayal of the handsomeness of Sri Rama to Avanita who is the 'soundarya devata' (goddess of beauty) herself; and extolling her steadfast chastity amidst trying circumstances to his master after successfully accomplishing the mission – all these add up to the overall beauty of this part which by itself is a beautiful story. Further, this 'kandam' is full of beautiful verses each of which is hailed as a 'mantra' to alleviate the distress of humanity. Hence, is it not appropriate that it is called the Sundara Kandam?

Reminded of his prowess by Jambavan, the mighty son of Vaayu raised himself to a colossus and took off from the top of Mahendragiri and zoomed into the sky to cross the one hundred

yojanas. Seeing the Garuda-like flight of Hanuman, Mainaaka, a hillock that was hitherto hiding in the sea, surfaced, stood in his flight path and said, “O Hanuman, I am not your enemy to cause hindrance to your mission. Let me narrate my story and the purpose of my standing before you. Once, Devendra cut the wings of mountains, with which they were changing their locations, thereby immobilising them from causing misery to people. As I was afraid of the wrath of the Lord of Heavens, your father Vaayu took care of me and placed me underneath the sea. For this kindness of his, I have been waiting to repay my debt all along. I would like to express my gratitude by seeking your grace of taking rest on me for a while”. Thanking the hillock for the offer, Hanuman said: “Right now I am busy in my mission of Rama kaaryam. Don’t compel me and delay my effort. After succeeding in the mission, on my return I shall fulfill your desire.” So saying Hanuman gently pushed down the hillock back into the sea.

The celestials who watched this wanted to test Hanuman’s strength and intelligence. For this purpose, they deputed Surasa, the Naga goddess, who took the form of a devil and halted Hanuman. “You monkey, I am very hungry now and hence you yourself enter my mouth and be my food,” she shouted and opened her huge mouth. Unfazed, Hanuman enlarged his body. Surasa further widened her large mouth. In a trice, Hanuman reduced his size and entered her mouth and quickly got out of it. “I have fulfilled your desire of entering your mouth. Now let me proceed,” he said with a beaming face. Surasa appreciated his quick-wittedness and blessed him thus: “There is nothing that you cannot achieve. May you succeed in your effort!”

After getting over the hurdles created by ‘anukoola shatrus’ (so-called benefactors), Hanuman soared further in the sky, when he suddenly felt that some force was dragging him down. It was Simhika, a she-demon, who was able to catch the shadow of Hanuman and pull him down into her mouth. “You are the right one to satiate my hunger,” she shouted at him menacingly. The mighty Hanuman ripped through her intestines and ended her life in no time. The Charanas who were hovering in the sky witnessed this feat of Hanuman and hailed him thus:

*“Yasya twetaani chatvaari vanarendra yata tava
Smrutir matir dhrutir daakshyam na karmasu na seedhati”*

[O mighty vanara, you are endowed with excellent memory, sharp intellect, relentless effort and supreme efficiency! So, whoever has these characteristics will never swerve from their mission and get tired.]

Ignoring their accolades, Hanuman swiftly darted further and at last landed on the shore of Lanka. To protect himself against being caught by the rakshasas, he reduced his size to that of a small monkey and jumped onto a huge wall and was slowly moving on it, looking amazed at the beauty of the headquarters of Ravana. Suddenly Hanuman felt that someone was dragging him by his tail. When he turned his eyes, he found a tall giant of a woman guard of the island looking at him fiercely. “Who are you? How dare you try to enter the city ignoring me?” she thundered. Hanuman politely replied, “Mother, I do not know who you are, but I have been longing to visit this beautiful city for a considerable time. Please permit me to get in.” Roaring like a wild tiger, she said: “Is that so? Okay come here.” She then slapped the unsuspecting Hanuman on his face, and the mighty force felled him on the ground. An enraged Hanuman took his original shape and returned the compliment by kicking her on the face. Unable to bear the agony, she dropped on the floor and suddenly remembered the prophecy of Lord Brahma that when a monkey struck and threw her down that day would mark the beginning of the end of Ravana.

With folded hands she addressed Hanuman thus: “O mighty monkey, I am thankful to you for relieving me of this unpleasant service to Ravana. My name is Lankini and I belong to Satya Loka. When this beautiful island city was built by Kubera, he entrusted me with the task of guarding it. Ravana, after defeating Kubera, grabbed the city and his Pushpaka Vimana. Unwilling to serve the usurper, I rushed back to Satya Loka. But Lord Brahma commanded me to be the guardian of Lanka for some more time. When I asked Him when I would be relieved of this unpleasant task, He said: ‘One day you would be struck by a monkey and fall down. That would be the start for the end of Ravana’s tyranny. Then you can return to Satya Loka.’ I thank you once again for this

favour done to me. In fact, I have been waiting for you all these years. Now, happily enter the city and you will succeed in your mission.” She then proceeded to Satya Loka.

Hanuman felt happy that he was starting his search mission with a good omen of Lankini’s soothing words. He was wonderstruck by the pleasant sight of the island lined with rows of palaces with towering domes, gardens blossoming with fragrant flowers and a number of ponds frequented by birds of multifarious hues. ‘Perhaps, what they call Paradise must be like this island only,’ he thought admiring the bounteous beauty of Lanka. Hanuman then started his search by entering the various palaces in which he saw the piteous state of a number Deva, Yaksha, Kinnera and Vidhyadhara maidens held captive by Ravana serving the rakshasa residents. He then moved to the palaces of Kumbhakarna and Vibheeshana, brothers of Ravana and his sons Indrajit and Akshakumara and found that except for Vibheeshana, the others were enjoying their siesta. The worried face of Vibheeshana indicated his sorrow about the impending disaster to Lanka consequent to the abduction of Mother Sita by Ravana.

Then he entered the palace of the Lanka ruler, where he saw in the harem of Ravana a beautiful lady reclining on her bed. For a split second Hanuman wondered whether she could be Sita. On reaching the window near her bed, he realised his mistake. ‘How could the most virtuous Mother Sita be in the harem of Ravana?’ he said to himself and felt sorry for his wrong conclusion. Unable to get a clue about the captivity of Sita after searching almost the entire island, Hanuman was saddened and started shedding tears. ‘How could Sampati’s description of Sita’s captivity be false?’ he muttered. Soon he regained composure when his conscience advised him not to lose enthusiasm:

*Anirvedas shriyo moolam anirvedah param sukham
Anirvedohi sathatham sarvaartheshu pravartakah*

[Enthusiasm alone is the foundation-stone of all riches; enthusiasm alone is supreme bliss; it alone goads man to take all efforts to achieve his goal; enthusiasm is the sole key for success in any mission]. :

Hanuman steeled his mind by praying thus:

*Namosthu Raamaaya sa Lakshmanaaya Devyai cha tasyai
Janakaatmajaayai
Namosthu Rudrendra Yamaanilebyah namosthu Chandraarka
marutganebyah*

[I pay obeisance to Rama, Lakshmana and Mother Sita –my visible gods – then I shall pay obeisance to Rudra, Indra, Yama, Anila, Chandra, Surya and the Maruts].

As if answering his prayer the full moon rose on the eastern horizon. In that bright light, Asokavana was noticed by him. “How I missed this part of the island city!” Hanuman wondered and jumped onto that huge grove of lovely trees and flower plants. Hiding himself behind the thick foliage of a tree branch Hanuman saw to his horror how Sita was being harassed by the female demons with ugly and frightful facial and bodily features. Furious over their behaviour towards Mother Sita, he felt like smashing them with his powerful fist, but withdrew himself because Ravana had just then entered the arena.

Attired in royal robe, Ravana went near the tree under which Sita was sitting and started pleading with her thus: “Oh sweet lady who has captivated my heart! Why are you slighting this love-lorn person who has been yearning for your glance and grace for the last ten months? Despite my physical prowess and military strength with which I had conquered the three worlds, I am ready to place humbly my ten crowns at your feet. Having pleased Lord Siva with my flawless Sama-gana recitation, I have secured Chandrahasam, an unfailling sword, from Him because of which none can even approach me, let alone fight with me. You are pining away for your husband who has been banished from Ayodhya. Bereft of any appreciable armed support, Rama cannot even reach this well fortified island city, let alone fight with me. Forget that human insect and accept this slave of yours. I shall make you the queen of the three worlds..” So saying, Ravana literally prostrated at her feet.

Turning her face away from him, Sita placed a blade of grass between them and said: “You claim that you have got the boon of a powerful sword from Lord Siva by pleasing Him with your Sama ganam. Will a person well versed in the Sama Veda behave like you before another man’s wife? Is there none to give you a proper advice

in this Lanka? My lord is like Lord Vishnu who can finish jackals like you in a trice. Having learnt that, you disguised yourself like an ascetic and abducted me in a treacherous manner. Are you not ashamed? Are you not aware that my lord single-handedly smashed to smithereens fourteen thousand demons, including your cousins Khara, Dhushana and Trisiras, in Janasthanam? All the boons you have secured from Lord Brahma and Lord Siva will be of no avail before the arrows ready to be shot from the bow of my lord. Can darkness exist before light? Your days on earth are numbered now. If you want to save yourself and your clan of rakshasas, surrender to my lord after apologising for your heinous act of abducting me. My lord being a 'saranaagatha vatsala' will gladly accept your supplication and give you a new lease of life." After upbraiding Ravana thus with quivering lips and sobbing countenance, Sita hid her face.

On hearing this admonition, the ten faces of Ravana turned red with anger. "After all you are a prisoner of mine. Yet you have insulted me profusely despite the fact of my being a terror to the three worlds. If at all I had abducted you in Rama's absence, it was not because of the fear of facing him. If I had engaged in a battle with him at that time and killed him, you would have also died. Fearing that prospect, I held you captive in his absence. Who can face me in battle? Let by-gones be by-gones. I am giving you two months time to make up your mind: either you enter my harem at the end of the deadline or your body will be the feast on my dining table," so saying in his full throated voice, Ravana turned to the rakshasis and shouted at them: "You people are not doing your assigned job effectively. Try all the means at your disposal to change her mind". He then left Asokavanam in a huff.

After the exit of the Lanka ruler, the she-demons abused Sita in choicest words and said in unison: "You must be a fool to reject our king's appeal. You do not realise that you are discarding the fortune he is ready to offer you. If you do not accept him forthwith, we shall devour you ourselves." Seeing their threatening posture, Vibheeshana's daughter Trijata, who had just come there, warned them thus: "O heartless creatures! Shut your mouths. In another two months, the Lanka would be a different place. I had a dream yesterday in the 'Brahma muhurtam' which is bound to become a

reality. In that dream, I saw Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Indrajit, wearing tattered sack clothes and smearing their body with ash, marching in the southern direction, accompanied by their soldiers. I also saw Rama coming in an aircraft and flying away with Sita. The significance of this dream is that the victory of Rama and the fall of Ravana have been confirmed. Imagine your state then.” The she-demons got scared and went to sleep, stopping their harassment of Sita. Trijata then consoled the grief-stricken Mythili and left for her father’s palace.

Left alone, Sita brooded over her distress. ‘What shall I do now? Ravana has set a time-limit of two months. Will my beloved be able to come here crossing the ocean and finish the demon king? Even if he comes and slays this enemy of ours, will he accept me after having been held captive in another country? In any case, why should I wait for two months to be cooked as the meat of Ravana? Why shan’t I end my life now itself?’ Thinking on these lines, Sita made up her mind to put an end to her agony by making the nearby creeper as a noose around her neck.

Watching this act of Sita, Hanuman felt perturbed. ‘O God! What is happening here? If my mother ends her life like this, would not all, including Rama, Lakshmana and Sugriva, follow suit? This distress decision of Mother Sita should be stopped immediately’ he thought and with his sweet voice slowly uttered thus, “Raja Dasaratho naama ratha kunjara vaajimaan...”

“What is this? I am hearing the name of my late father-in-law in this faraway island. Isn’t this unusual?” she muttered and halted for a while. Satisfying himself that Mother Sita is listening to his voice, Hanuman continued the narration: “Endowed with the strength of chariots, elephants, horses and innumerable soldiers, the mighty Dasaratha was ruling the Ayodhya kingdom. His most beloved eldest son Rama, in order to fulfill the promise of his father, abdicated the throne and was spending his exile along with his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana in Panchavati. Just a year ago, the demon king Ravana stealthily abducted Sita and imprisoned her in this Asokavana. Learning about the abduction from the brave eagle Jataayu, with the blessings of Sabari, the disciple of Matanga Muni, Rama made friendship with the Vanara prince of Kishkinda, Sugriva who was also in similar predicament of his wife Ruma having been taken

away by his elder brother Vaali. After slaying Vaali, Rama crowned Sugriva the king of Kishkinda and reunited him with Ruma. As per the command of Sugriva the brave Vanara warriors are searching for Mother Sita in all directions. For the search mission in the south, me, prince Angada and veteran bear Jambhavan have been chosen. Thanks to the farsightedness of Sampaati, the elder brother of Jataayu, we came to know about Sita being imprisoned in Asokavana of Lanka. By the grace of Rama, I could cross the sea and have the darshan of Mother Sita.”

This sweet tale about Rama made Sita experience ‘roma harshanam’ (goose bumps) and she looked around to ascertain who the narrator was. Her eyes fell on Hanuman on the tree. ‘Is this dream or reality?’ she thought and worried about seeing a monkey in dream as a bad omen. ‘No, this cannot be a dream because I have not been sleeping and the monkey is climbing down the tree’ she thought and wondered whether this could be a trick of the rakshasas.

After getting down, Hanuman fell prostrate at the feet of Sita and said: “Mother, I am Hanuman, son of Vaayu. Trust me I have been deputed by Rama to locate you in Lanka. Let me narrate some incidents that took place during your exile and known only to you two, to prove my bonafides.” Hanuman then described the incident of the crow which tried to harm her when Rama was taking a nap resting his head on her thighs, and how it was saved from Rama’s wrath by its surrender at his feet. Then he narrated the episode of Sita tying Rama to a tree. [This episode is described by Periyalwar in one of his ‘Tirumozhi paasurams’. Once, Rama and Sita had a minor tiff. It was agreed whoever won the contest should tie the other to a tree. Sita being the victor had to tie Rama to a tree. Would she hurt him by using a rough rope? She made a long string of jasmine flowers and with that cool and pleasant rope tied her lord to a tree.]

After narrating some such intimate incidents, Hanuman presented the signet ring of Rama to Sita, who was transported to the height of bliss, enabling her to forget the misery she was undergoing in Asokavanam. “O Hanuman, you have brought me back from the precipice of death by your fantastic deed. May you live long by the grace of my lord!” she blessed him. Hanuman is hailed as ‘Janaki

soka naasanah' by devotees. How nice would it be, if every man on earth behaves like Hanuman and comes to the rescue of helpless women!

When Sita asked him how he could cross the long distance between the mainland and the island, Hanuman revealed his colossal form and brought cheer on her face. Sita then took out her 'choodamani' – a jewel presented to her by Janaka - from her hairdo and gave it to him to be handed over to her lord as evidence of his meeting her. Then she said: "Tell my lord that I will wait only for a month from now on, for his arrival here to get me released."

"Mother, why wait for one month. You can reach Rishyamukha and rejoin your lord in a short while if you can make me your vehicle. Please sit on my back."

"My dear son, that is not proper. It will be a blot on my lord's valour. He should come here, conquer Ravana and retrieve me from this prison. That alone would befit his stature."

Hanuman wondered at Mother Sita's brave words and said: "As you please mother, abandon all your worries. In the vanara sena of Sugriva, there are more powerful warriors than me. We will all come along with Rama and Lakshmana and kill the demon king and right royally release you." Hanuman then made a prophetic statement, which has been nicely stated in the Valmiki Ramayana thus:

*'Nivruththa vanavasam tham thwaya saardham arindhamam
Abhishiktham ayodhyaayam kshipram drakshayai raghavam'*

[O, the greatest among women! Your lord is mighty enough to destroy all enemies. He will be victorious. Thou shall be reunited with him. After completing the exile when he returns to Ayodhya as the great conqueror, both of you would be crowned, seated on the throne.]

With his foresight, Hanuman, the Sundara, has thus announced in advance the coronation of Rama before Mother Sita. Is this not enough to prove that this is indeed 'Sundarakanda'! Bowing to Sita once again, Hanuman decided to enter the capital city to gather information about Ravana's armed strength.

(to be continued)

GLORIOUS DEVOTEES

KABIR DAS

C.V. Ramana Babu

(Translation of Telugu original by Jagam)

(Continued from the previous issue)

Kabir was blessed with a son and named him 'Kamal'. At childhood itself, Kamal became a devotee of Rama. At the age of 12 years, he took his father's permission and went on a pilgrimage to Dwaraka. On the way, the people who saw him were very much pleased with his hymns and compared him to 'Suka Brahma'. In Dwaraka he served the Lord. After a few days, he started back to Kasi. On the way back, he met a rich devotee Vishnu Das in



a village Chitrakutam. He invited Kamal to his house and honoured him. He would not accept any gifts from the devotees and so told Vishnu Das, "As charity we have to give money to Brahmins, gems to kings, food to the poor and cloth to the sadhus". Then, Vishnu Das brought a new cloth and without Kamal's knowledge, he placed a gem in it and presented it to Kamal.

After returning home, he explained the details of his pilgrimage to his parents. While emptying his bag, the gem from the cloth, given by Vishnu Das, fell down. On seeing it, Kabir was very angry and ordered Kamal to immediately go to Chitrakutam and return the gem to Vishnu Das. Kamal obeyed his order.

With Kabir's advice, a rich man in Kasi practically tested his family members and realised that their love was not at all true and that they were interested in wealth only but not in his health. He became Kabir's disciple.

One day, Jnanadev and Namadev came to Kasi with their disciples. At night, they went to Kabir's house as guests. He arranged for their comfortable stay. There were no commodities in the house to prepare food for the guests, the next day. It was midnight. He thought of stealing the groceries from a shop, though he knew that it is sin to steal. Like his wife, he too thought that honouring the guests is more important and the sin of stealing is very negligible.

He and Kamal went to a shop with a crow-bar and knife. They made a hole in the wall. Kamal was ordered to go in through the hole and bring only the items, required for the food. Kamal did so and made a bundle of the items. He did not touch the money and gold. He passed on the bundle to his father through the hole. He thought that after their departure, some thief may enter the shop through the hole and steal all the valuables. So, to avoid such a prospect, he roused the shop-owner, explained their intention of stealing and cautioned him of the hole. He immediately tried to go out through the hole. He inserted his head and was crawling out.

The shocked merchant came, held his legs and cried for help. Kamal realised that he could not get out, that people would come to know of their theft and that Jnanadev and Namadev would not accept their hospitality. So, he decided to sacrifice his life. He told his father, “Cut off my head and go away with the head and groceries”. Kabir obeyed Kamal’s advice and left the place with Kamal’s head and booty leaving behind his torso. He went home and explained to Loyee what had happened. Brave mother! She felt happy of her son’s pious thought and sacrifice, as Kabir would say, “Love is more important than life.” She concealed Kamal’s head. The next day, she prepared food for the guests. The guests enjoyed their hospitality and left in the evening.

The villagers could not identify the torso, lying in the shop. They tied it to a pole in the street, so that the parents of the dead person could identify it. Jnanadev, Namadev and their disciples were coming that way. When they neared the torso, the hands of the torso offered salutations to them. They were astonished. Jnanadev asked Kabir if he knew the secret of the torso. Kabir could not control his sorrow and started weeping. Jnanadev, with his intellectual vision, understood what had happened. He praised Kamal as a great child devotee like Prahlada. He ordered Kabir to bring Kamal’s head. Jnanadev placed the head on the torso. Kamal was restored, and he prostrated at the feet of Jnanadev, Namadev and their disciples.

One day while Kabir was eating a cake of rice, a dog came, picked up the cake from his hand and ran away. He saw Sri Rama in the dog. He ran after it over thorns and caught it. He applied ghee to the cake and offered it to the dog.

Ramadas, also a great devotee of Rama, had constructed a temple for Sri Rama in Bhadrachalam using the money collected from the public towards taxes. Kabir met Ramadas and wishing to test his devotion offered to save him from the imminent punishment by the Nawab Tanisha, if he converted the temple into a ‘madarsa’ (Muslim school). But, Ramadas did not budge. Kabir was pleased with his determination and taught him ‘Taraka Mantra’.

A prostitute, living opposite to Kabir’s house, was angry with him as her clients, attracted by his singing and preaching were going to his house instead of coming to her. So, she got his house set on fire. As usual God saved the devotee. Nothing had happened to Kabir and his disciples. Instead, the prostitute’s house caught fire and turned to ashes. She repented for her act and became his disciple.

A pious Brahmin by name Padmanabha in Kasi met Kabir, took initiation and was leading a peaceful life. A rich merchant was suffering with leprosy since a long time. Medicines and treatment did not work. He got vexed and requested his son to throw him away in the Ganga. The son was ready to do so. Just then Padmanabha saw them. He made the merchant to chant ‘Rama Namam’ thrice. Wonder! There were no traces of leprosy on his body. Kabir came to learn of it. He met Padmanabha and said to him, “If any one utters ‘Sri Rama’ once, all the sins accumulated over countless births, will be vanished. Why did you make him utter such a pious ‘namam’ thrice?” Padmanabha replied, “There were three reasons. One, for the merchant not meeting you for your blessings; the second, for the vanishing of the disease and to attain salvation and the third, for the well being of the people around him.” Kabir appreciated him. Many were benefitted by following his teachings.

Kabir was against the age-old bad customs, idol worship, pilgrimages, fastings, etc., He would teach, “Shall you go to temples or masjids to worship the Lord? Is the God staying there only? Is He not out of the temples? God is omnipresent. Why do you practice fasting only on certain days? Do not the remaining days belong to the God? There is no use of an ill-intentioned person going on pilgrimage to any number of places. No one is a Hindu or Muslim by birth. Search for the God in yourself.”

It was believed that those who die in Kasi would reach Vaikunta and those who die in the ill-fated town Magahar would get rebirth as an ass. But, Kabir would not agree. He would say, "If you are not sacred in yourself, you will have to go to hell only, though you die in Kasi. But, a real devotee, though he dies in Magahar will definitely go to heaven and attain Moksha. He expressed his wish to die in Magahar as he is confident that he would attain Moksha. Kabir lived for 120 years and his soul merged in 'Paramatma' in the year 1518.

The Hindus wanted to cremate his body and the Muslims wanted to bury it as per their own customs. They could not solve the issue even after long argument. Somebody inadvertently removed the cloth, covering Kabir's body. They found a heap of flowers in the place of the body. Both the groups felt ashamed of their narrow-mindedness.

Kabir would preach, "Whatever you want to do tomorrow, do it today and what you want to do today, do it now itself, as you cannot predict what is in store the next moment. You can call God by any name. But, He is one. You have to practise meditating on His name or form, internally." His 'Dohas' were so popular that more than 500 of them were adopted in 'Guru Granthsahib', the religious scripture of Sikhs.*

TRUE TRANSFORMATION

(Continued from page No.8)

But we, the disciples fail to follow his directions and instead desire and seek the most mundane pleasures. We pester the Gurus for things like promotions, marriages, children, wealth, health etc. while they seek to liberate us from this whole cycle of birth, death and rebirth. It doesn't matter if we live in an ashram, dress like devotees and perform all the religious rituals. As long as our mind does not transform and progress on the path shown by the Guru, there is no use of the bodily transformations.*

BHAJA GOVINDAM!

Ramana Prasad



SLOKA 5

*Yaadvittoparjana saktah
Tavannijaparivaro raktah
Paschaajeevati jarjara dehe
Vaartaam kopi na pruchhati gehe*

As long as one earns enough money to support his family, all the family members and his relatives take interest in him. But when he becomes old and stops earning, none would care for him.

Man is extremely selfish. He will not do anything without expecting any return. Even the respect shown by his kith and kin will be proportionate to his possessions. But he does not realise that money cannot purchase happiness. When he becomes old and disease takes over him, none will come even to enquire about his welfare. one will come to enquire his welfare.

Sri Sankaracharya warns human beings that one should be content with whatever he has and cling to the feet of Govinda in pursuit of the Supreme Truth.*

-to be continued

HE TAUGHT 'GURU TATWA' TO YATIRAJA

-Ramaswami S

The great Vaishnava Acharya, Yaamuna Muni, had five intimate disciples. They were: Kanchipoorna, Mahapoorna, Ghoshtipoorna, Vararanga and Maalaadhara. These five disciples later became the preceptors of Ramanuja, as ordained by Yaamuna Muni.

An ailing Yaamunaacharya was keen on anointing young Ramanuja, who was under the tutelage of Yadava Prakasa, an Advaitic scholar, as successor to the Peetham he was heading in Srirangam. With this intention, he had deputed Mahapoorna to fetch Ramanuja from Kanchi.

Meanwhile, Ramanuja, who had to leave the school of Yadava Prakasa due to differences in the interpretation of scriptural texts, was doing 'teertha kainkaryam' (fetching water) to Sri Varadaraja, at the instance of Kanchipoorna whom he considered as his master.

On reaching Kanchi, Mahapoorna contacted Kanchipoorna who introduced him to Ramanuja. When Mahapoorna revealed that Yaamunacharya was keen on taking Ramanuja in his fold, the latter's joy knew no bounds. Both immediately proceeded to Srirangam, but as ill-luck would have it Yaamuna Muni had attained liberation, before the two could reach Srirangam. Sad and frustrated, Ramanuja returned to Kanchi.

After Yaamunacharya's passing away, Vararanga was made in-charge of the math. Having known his guru's desire to elevate Ramanuja as successor, Vararanga, who was also known as Sriranga Perumal Araiyaar, was keen on fulfilling the master's desire. He sent Mahapoorna to Kanchi and asked him to teach the inner meaning and significance of Divya Prabandham to Ramanuja. "Even if it takes a year or so you persevere with your effort to bring Ramanuja here," he told Mahapoorna.

Araiyaar used to perform 'abhinaya' for the Divya Prabanda paasurams recited before Lord Ranganatha daily. Pleased with his service, the Lord offered a boon to him. Vararanga immediately asked the Lord to somehow bring Ramanuja to Srirangam. "Ramanuja who is doing service to Lord Varadaraja would not leave Kanchi without that Lord's permission. So, you proceed to Kanchi and perform this 'abhinaya seva' to Lord Varadaraja. When

He is pleased with your performance, you seek the boon of Ramanuja,” Lord Ranganatha advised Vararanga.

As commanded by Lord Ranganatha, Vararanga went to Kanchi and performed the ‘abhinaya seva’ before Lord Varadaraja, who was extremely delighted and offered a boon. Immediately, Vararanga sought that Ramanuja be sent to Srirangam to take over the reins of the math. Ramanuja, who had by then taken to ‘sanyas’ and christened ‘Yatiraja’ (king of ascetics) by Lord Varadaraja Himself, obeying the Lord’s order, went to Srirangam along with Vararanga.

After worshipping Lord Ranganatha, Ramanuja occupied the ‘simhaasana’ of Yaamunacharya and organised the math’s activities, streamlining the rituals in the temple. Captivated by the charm of Araiyaar’s ‘abhinaya seva’, Ramanuja wanted to learn the secrets (sookshmas) of Dharma from him. So, he would do ‘paada seva’ to Vararanga at night to relieve him of his tiresomeness. He would also prepare condensed milk and present it to Araiyaar, before he retired to bed. Expressing happiness over Ramanuja’s service to him, Vararanga one day said: “My child, I am highly pleased with your humility in serving me despite being the head of the math. The only way I can repay my debt to you is to enlighten you on ‘Dharma sookshmas’. Please remember always

“It is Guru himself who is the supreme Brahman;
Guru is the greatest treasure.
Guru is the highest among all desirable things.
He is the most secure refuge.
Guru is the embodiment of the knowledge of Brahman.
It is he who is the supreme goal.
He being your teacher, there is none greater than he.
Know that he is the means to realise God, and
God Himself too is he.”

Yatiraja, who thus understood the esoteric significance of ‘Guru Tatwa’, no wonder became the greatest Acharya himself.*

FORM - IV
(See Rule 8)

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CLEAR YOUR DOUBTS

Devotee: Amma, recently my Mother and I had an argument. During the cradle ceremony of our child, when we were asked to bless the baby, I put akshatalu on the baby's head and blessed. But my mother said, 'Since they say infants and God are equal, one should not put akshatalu on their heads but offer them at their feet as we do to God' and she put the akshatalu on the baby's feet. Amma, please tell me which is right?



Sri Mataji: 'Yad bhavam Tadbhavati'. You can do what you want according to your thoughts. If you want to think that God and baby are the same, you can do as your mother has done. If you think that the baby is your child and want to bless him/her, you can do so by blessing the child by putting the akshatalu on its head. What matters is your thought.

- Compiled by Dr.Swarnamukhi Prasada

SUMMER CAMP FOR KIDS!

Summer Camp will be conducted, in Sri Kali Gardens, for children **from 01-5-2017 to 31-5-2017.**

Training in Prarthana, Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads etc. will be imparted. The parents are requested to kindly note & encourage their children.

For details contact: Dr.V.Aruna, Mobile No.9346382563

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