

SAMARDHA SADGURU

Spiritual Magazine

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Sri Mataji's Benediction

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is a cry in distress or a demand for help or a hymn of love but not a mere recitation of words without knowing the meaning of it. Prayer is of no use without a steady mind and coordination of thought, word and deed. Mere utterance of words without the involvement of mind is only a mock prayer. As Yogi Vemana aptly says, "Worship of Lord Siva is no worship unless it is accompanied by mental purification."

Offering material possessions for personal gains without fixing the mind on the lotus feet of the Lord is self-deception. Prayer gives us the strength to put up with anxiety and hope to remain steadfast in the midst of catastrophes. The ship of life sails smoothly if your mind, like the compass needle, remains unchanged without oscillation.

When mind and utterance unite earnestly your request for help is readily answered. One who loves all is undoubtedly very close to the Almighty. "Sarve Janah Sukhino Bhavathu" is a prayer which is sublime and unquestionable.

That an idle man's brain is the devil's workshop is known to everybody. So the mind should never be kept idle. It is always advisable to yoke the mind to the lotus feet of the Lord; thereby one is sure of getting rid of worries.

Although prayer is a word which is very familiar, one cannot help but blink, if he is questioned to give the meaning of prayer. It is not merely an action involving the closure of eyes and repeating the name of God. The genuine prayer is that where mind and speech unite earnestly. The effect then is naturally positive.

A person who loves the entire creation of God offers the best form of prayer. In other words, the best prayer one can offer is one's service to humanity. The world then ceases to be cruel and unjust, and everything in and around becomes friendly. Let the mind learn to think of the Lord in every object; then evil qualities will vanish.

Ultimately, the essence of prayer to the Almighty lies in loving all creatures alike and being loved by all.*



Editorial

LET THE MIND TREAD THE RIGHT PATH

Om Gururam Namaste!

Human beings are able to conquer a number of hurdles to their progress, but in one respect they are invariably defeated. That is in their effort to control the mind. That is because the mind is fickle and like a monkey which jumps from one tree branch to another and it has the tendency to wander constantly. Even great seers and sages had difficulty in controlling their mind.

Sri Sankara Bhagavad Paadacharya, in one of his slokas, earnestly pleads with Lord Siva to give relief from his restless mind by accepting it as his offering: “Oh, Adi Bhikshu! You are going round the universe seeking alms from people, but to no avail. Mere begging will not yield the desired result. You must have some attractive appendage. Suppose you have a monkey which can entertain onlookers with its pranks, your bowl would overflow with their contributions. Please accept my mind, which is capable of doing much more pranks than a simple simian creature. By that You will be enriched and I would also be relieved of my meandering mind.” Such is the negative aspect of the mind which even the great Adi Sankara was keen on getting rid of.

Saint composer Thyagaraja Swami, whose 250th birth anniversary falls in this year, in most of his songs, goads his mind to stop chasing material things and concentrate on the most handsome face of Sri Rama. In the ‘kriti’ –“Chakkani raajamargamulundaga” –he pleads thus: “Oh mind! While a good, royal road is available, why take to by-lanes? When good milk with cream is available, why should one go in for toddy? When devotion to Sri Ramachandra of Ayodhya, whose bewitching beauty is a feast for the eyes, whose blessed name is on the lips of Lord Siva and who has taken His abode in the house of Thyagaraja, is the royal road to salvation, why get into by-lanes?”



In another 'keertana', "Manasaa etulortune", Tyagaraja Swami advises his mind in the 'charanam' thus:

"Kalilo raajasa thaamasa gunamulu galavari chelimi
Kalasimelasithiruguchu mari kaalamu gadapaka nela
Sulabhamugaa kadatheranu soochanalunu theliya jeyu
Ilanu Thyagaraju maata vinavathela? Gunaviheena."

[In this Kali yuga, instead of wasting time in associating with people swayed by Raajasic and Thaamasic tendencies, you should follow the easy and profitable method (of worshipping the ornament of Dinakara kula) to salvation, which I (Thyagaraja) have been urging on you.]

Thyagaraja's famous 'kriti', "Nidhi Chaala sukhamaa", which he sang when king Sarfoji of Thanjavur offered the saint gold, gems, pearls and many valuables, to agree to be the court singer, asks the mind "Mamata bandhana yuta nara stuthi sukhamaa? Sumathi Thyagarajanuthuni keertana sukhamaa?" (Which gives more happiness – flattery of mere men bound up in their own conceit, or the singing of the Lord by the wise Thyagaraja?).

Thus Thyagaraja Swami was always in constant monologue with his mind whenever he was disturbed by material pleasures. When this is the case with evolved souls like him, what can lesser fries like us do?

"Don't be scared," Yogini Sri Chandra Kali Prasada Mataaji assures us. "Mind, no doubt, is a bad master, but it can be turned into a good servant. If you buckle under mind by making it your master, you would land yourself in a mess, going by its diktats. On the contrary, if you make the mind your servant, you are sure to achieve your desired goal. For that, the mind has to be cajoled and given a taste of the benefit of meditating on the 'lakshyartha' (initiation) given by our Sadguru Maharaj. Once the mind is convinced about greater things, it would come round. Mind is the main switch to all our senses and if you practise to control it everything becomes easy. For this, you must look at things like a blind man and hear sounds like a deaf man. As long as your mind is not attached to them, eyes and ears act only as organs that register things. But once the feeling of 'I' and 'mine' creeps in, whatever you see becomes yours and whatever you hear you think it is about you. (Ear denotes 'I' and eye pertains to attachment or 'mine').

You may live in this world but the world should not enter your mind. It is like a ship remaining on water; once water enters the ship, the result will be catastrophic,” cautions our Divine Mother.

Our Gurudev, Sri Sri Sri Samardha Sadguru Hanumat Kali Vara Prasada Babuji Maharaj, once declared in a discourse: “Human mind is infested with selfishness, greed, lust, anger, pride and jealousy. It is like a house haunted by snakes, scorpions and evil spirits. Such a mind inevitably leads man to misery. The only way out is to purify it by subjecting it to the intense heat of ‘dhyanaagni’ which is hotter than fire and can burn away all the evil qualities and sins lurking in the mind as seeds of rebirth.”

Jai Gurudev!*

Morning is the best time for worship, spiritual practices and meditation. Don't control the mind negatively; do it positively, by having good thoughts. It is necessary to have a central thought always.

What is the immediate goal? To get in touch with the Reality. Whatever we call real draws our whole being. So it is most essential for us to have a clear conception of what reality is. The goal and the path must be real. Even our imaginations must be about the Real.

Control subconscious thinking and minimize it. We must know the laws of thought, and think and act consciously.

Reasoning is necessary. Through it we must go beyond it to the Truth which transcends it.

Concentration is achieved through practice. After meditation, atleast a little of the mood is to be continued. A small light should be kept burning in the inner temple always.

- Swami Yatiswarananda

Thus Spake Babuji

IMPORTANCE OF ASHADA PURNIMA

Sushumna Prasada

Expatiating on our ‘Guru Sampradayam’ (spiritual tradition) on the sacred Ashada Purnima day once, Lord Babuji said: “Four Full Moon nights are considered as ‘Guru Purnimas’. According to this tradition, these Full Moon nights, popularly termed as ‘Aa, Ka, Ma, Vai’, are highly sacred and ideal for begetting the spiritual offspring (Adhyatmika Santathi). As per our Telugu Calendar, ‘Aa’ stands for Ashada Masa, ‘Ka’ stands for Kartika Masa, ‘Ma’ stands for Magha Masa and ‘Vai’ sands for Vaisakha Masa. As per serial order, Vaisakha stands first. But in the spiritual order, Ashada Purnima comes in the beginning.”



Lord Babuji, who always gives a great importance to Full Moon nights that convey the spiritual essence, continued further thus:

Full Moon is symbolic of silvery light, coolness and bliss. Full Moon light is the most favourite topic for poets and highly adorable for lovers, and lunatics lose control completely over their minds. Full Moon is indication of fullness of life.

Desires are the root cause of sorrow. For human beings, desires are endless. When you fulfil one desire, it does not stop there. It leads to another desire. When it is not fulfilled, the desire leads to discontentment. Sorrow is the offspring of discontentment and it makes a person restless. Like the waves in the ocean, desires also are numerous. As it is mentioned in Bhagavadgita (II Chapter 63 rd Sloka)

Krodhat bhavathi Sammohah
Sammohat Smruthi Vibhramah
Smruti Bhramasat, Buddhi Naaso
Buddhi Naasaat Pranasyati

It means “Desire leads to anger. (In the previous sloka, the Lord had pointed out ‘kaamaat krodhobi jaayate’). Anger leads to loss of discrimination. Loss of discrimination leads to loss of memory and it leads to loss of sense. Loss of sense leads to the decay of man.”

How is it possible to get rid of desires? There is only one solution for that. Only the guidance of the Spiritual Master (Gurudev) can save man from the whirlpool of desires. Sadgurudev alone has the capacity to make the disciple get rid of desires or transform the desires towards Godhead. Desire is innate in man. To lead a smooth and happy life desires, no doubt, are necessary. But they should be kept within limits. Limitless desires are always a source of sorrow and make life meaningless.

A Sadhaka (spiritual trainee) has to keep desires under control. When the disciple entrusts himself to the care of the Master with utmost faith, Kama gets transformed into Moksha Kama (desire for liberation). The person who proves himself or herself as ‘Moksha Kami’ entertains no other desire. Desirelessness gives full-fledged personality (Purnatvam) to the spiritual trainee. Dedicated service to the Guru makes the disciple devoid of desires.

Ashada Purnima is symbolic of the Divine Desire (Moksha Kama) and enable the spiritual trainees to be devoid of desires. Ashada Purnima is the Full Moon night which makes the life of the disciple full-fledged without any want or desire. The more the desire one entertains, the greater is the scope for despair and dissolution. A full-fledged life like the Full Moon night is indicative of complete contentment. Cool silvery rays of the Full Moon are symbolic of the cool, pleasant temper and silvery rays of the light of knowledge, which effulgently emanates from a full-fledged personality (Poorna Purusha), can be gained by a Truth seeker, when he loves one and all without any discrimination or partiality like the Full Moon which distributes its cool, silvery light to one and all without any discrimination. Fullness can be attained when a person is devoid of selfish desires.

Incessant smarana of the sacred name of Gurudev (divine name) sweeps out the trash of unwanted desires and keeps the mind cool and breezy. The heart which is thus pure and sacred becomes the coveted home of divinity (Gurutatwa).

The following Santhi Mantra of Esavasyopanishat explains in nutshell the essence of fullness and fulfilment (Purnatvam) of life.

Om Purnamadah, Purna Midam, Purnat Purnamudayathe,
Purnasya Purnamadaya, Purnamevasishyathe.
Om Santhi, Santhi, Santhihi.

‘Om Purnamadah’ means Brahman (Purnam). Brahman is Sarvavyapaka (Brahman is all pervasive, Purnamidam). There is also Purnam which refers to Jeevatma which is also all pervasive. From that full entity, Jeeva gets produced. This Jeeva attains full stature by getting educated. It remains as fullness of Paramatma.

Nothing can be added or subtracted from Purnatvam (fullness). It can neither be divided nor multiplied. It is Paramatma who knows no change. Attainment of Purnatvam (Brahman) must be the goal of every spiritual seeker.

Lord Babuji concluded his discourse by saying that celebration of Ashada Purnima consists in attaining that full stature (Purnatvam or Brahmatvam) by dispelling the unwanted desires and concentrating the mind on ‘Moksha Kama’ alone which results in salvation.*

A certain *Brahmachari* (aspirant) named Ramachandra one day visited Sri Ramakrishna at the temple of Dakshineswara. The aspirant had allowed his hair to grow into long matted tresses after the way of sanyasins. Having taken his seat, he began to exclaim from time to time: "Sivoham! Sivoham! (I am the Lord Siva!)" but was dumb otherwise. Sri Ramakrishna observed him silently for some time and then remarked: "What is the good of merely repeating the word 'Sivoham'? It is only when one, by perfect meditation on the Lord in the temple of one's heart, has lost all idea of self and realised the Lord Siva within, that one is entitled to utter this sacred word. What good can mere repetition of the formula do without the realisation? So long as the stage of realisation is not reached, it is better to regard the Lord as the Master and oneself as His humble servant." The aspirant came to see his mistake and became wiser by this advice and other similar teachings. Before he left the place, he wrote down on the wall of Sri Ramakrishna's room: "Taught by the swami, from this day onwards Ramachandra Brahmachari regards the Lord as his Master and himself as an humble servant."

-Swami Brahmananda

THE SECRET TO PEACE OF MIND

Kali Prasad Paluri

We all want peace of mind, but don't know how to get it. Let's first see what's causing restlessness to the mind. There are two things that rob us of our peace. The constant desire to get something that we don't possess and the constant fear of losing the things that we already possess.

I'm sure most of us do impulse buying the moment we see something new and attractive on a shopping site or a store. And if we can't afford it, we start saving for it and always keep thinking about it. This causes restlessness and we lose the peace of mind. We also have the constant fear and tension of losing our jobs, relationships and other pricey possessions. This builds stress and then there's no scope for peace.

Our Vedanta philosophy prescribed four tools to attain Moksha. These are called Sadhana Chatustayam. Of these, the first two are 'Nityanitya Vastu Vivekam' - the wisdom to differentiate between the permanent and the temporary and always to seek the permanent - and 'Ihamutrardha Phala Bhoga Viragam' - renunciation of the desire towards both the earthly and the heavenly outcomes of one's deeds.

Our Gurudev Sri Babuji Maharaj used to say, "Always remember that every breath could be your last breath." I used to wonder, "Wouldn't that cause more tension and constant fear?" But to the contrary I recently found that this is the secret key to peace of mind.

We came to know about 5-6 months ago that we are moving back from the USA to our Ashram. Suddenly we lost interest in buying anything that's not absolutely needed for our remaining stay there. Even if we went to a shop or a mall, we mostly returned without buying anything. The same things that once used to attract us now evoked mere indifference. We bought only things that were essential for our stay there. Isn't that the first tool of sadhana mentioned above? We came to know about 5-6 months back that we are moving back from USA to our Ashram. Suddenly we lost interest in buying anything that's not absolutely needed in our remaining stay in USA. Even if we went to a shop or a mall, we

mostly return without buying anything. The same things that once used to attract us now evoke a mere indifference. We now buy only things that are essential for our temporary stay here. Isn't that the first tool of sadhana mentioned above?

And the fear and tension about losing the job or not satisfying the bosses evaporated into thin air. There was this sense of fulfilment that nothing needed to be protected against. I was still doing my work to the full potential but now there was nothing to fear. There was nothing I could get by doing more work and nothing to lose by not satisfying others. Isn't that the second tool of sadhana?

This lack of desire and protection from fear is what leads us to the ultimate peace of mind. Even though those few months of stay were daunting both physically and mentally, the peace of mind we were experiencing was immeasurable.

We all know that our stay in this world is temporary and that it would end one day. But we keep forgetting that fact and constantly indulge in desires and are haunted by the fear of losing our possessions.

If knowledge of the departure from a foreign country back to the native place can lead to such a peace of mind, imagine what ultimate bliss we can achieve by knowing our departure from this world to the abode of our Creator! If we practise to remember the ultimate truth of our lives, we stop desiring and only work for what is absolutely necessary. And since we know that we can't take anything with us, the fear of losing things also vanishes. But this is possible only when we are assured that we are going back to the lotus feet of our Creator and not going to have another birth in a different form. And only the Samardha Sadguru can give that assurance.*

OBITUARY

Sri Varanasi Subrahmanyam (Archaka of Sri Ramalayam), aged 68 years, ardent devotee of Sri Babuji and resident of Srikaligardens attained Guru Sayujyam on Friday, 16-06-2017.

He is survived by wife, a son and two daughters.

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

Divine Mother Speaks

CAN YOU CATCH YOUR MIND?

Japamala Prasada

What is mind? Can you see mind? Will you be able to catch it? We cannot answer any of these questions properly. Yet, we all are always saying things like – ‘My mind is bothering me’; ‘my mind is full of thoughts that I am unable to sleep’; ‘my mind is disturbed’; ‘Oh God, give me mental peace’, etc. When we had a good undisturbed sleep we say, “Oh! I feel so refreshed now. I had sound sleep last night!”



Let us analyse these things. We cannot see the mind. Mind is nothing but a collection of thoughts. That is why it is called the ‘subtle body’. We are disturbed when our mind is full of thoughts. A deep sleep is refreshing because the mind is subdued totally and there is no thought process going on. That is why when we wake up we say ‘Oh! I slept like a log. I feel so refreshed!’

In patients with some psychic disorders, the thoughts keep running helter-skelter and they act in a weird manner. The doctors give them medicines to calm down and put them to sleep. This is only a temporary solution. The medicine has to be repeated.

We can see our reflection in a pond only when the water is absolutely still. If we throw a stone into it, the pond is disturbed and radiates ripples; we can no longer see our reflection in it. Similarly, we can see our true Self if our mind is still. But how to make it still? Meditation as told by your spiritual Guru is the only way to still your mind. ‘Catching your thoughts (mind) is as difficult as catching air,’ says Lord Gitacharya in the Bhagavadgita. But an Acharya never discourages his disciples and devotees.

That’s why Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that the mind can be controlled by constant practice and strong detachment. Detachment does not mean that you must renounce your family, friends and society and go to a forest or a high mountain to practise meditation. Our Gurudev used to tell us that detachment is nothing

but a strong determination. We must have a strong determination and attach ourselves to our ideal and detach our mind from worldly pleasures.

Treat worldly pleasures the same way as you would treat your own vomited food, say the scriptures. Guru Maharaj says, “If you can make even an egg stand on its own by constant practice, why can’t you stop your mind from wavering and make it still? Do not give up. Practise constantly and diligently with single-point determination. You will achieve it. Like falling water can make a dent in hard rock, you can also achieve your goal. You need not catch your mind but you can always WATCH your mind. You are the watcher. Watch your

- Words
- Actions
- Thoughts
- Character
- Heart.”

If we keep a constant watch on them, children will not dare to do any mischief. In the same way by constantly watching our minds we can bring it under our control. May Lord Gurudev grant us all immense devotion, knowledge and determination to achieve our goal!

Om Tat Sat*

In the Hindu almanac it is recorded that the rainfall will reach twenty *adas* (*ada* is a measure of capacity used in Bengal). Wring the almanac, so full of rain-predictions, but not a drop of water can be got out of it. So, also, many good sayings are to be found in the sacred books, but the mere reading of them will not make one spiritual. One must go through the practices enjoined in them.

-Swami Brahmananda

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

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

August 2017

- 04 Fri - Varalakshmi Vratam
05 Sat - Sani Trayodasi
07 Mon-Rakhi Poornima-Sri Sadguru Pada Puja (Partial Chandra Grahanam at night)
14 Mon-Sri Krishna Janmashtami - Morning-Kalasa Stapanam, Sahasra Namarchana of Sri Radha Krishna, Bhakta Samaradhana, 07.00 P.M.-Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
15 Tue - 11.00 A.M. Samoohika Pujas of Sri Radha Krishna, Bhakta Samaradhana
16 Wed -11.00 A.M.Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana,07.00 P.M. Utti Kottuta
17 Thu - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
18 to 24 - Mouna Dhyana Saptaham
19 Sat - Sani Trayodasi
20 Sun - Maasa Sivaratri, Ekaham at Pavuluru Branch
21 Mon - Amavasya
25 Fri - Vinayaka Chavithi - 5.30 A.M.-Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, 11.00 A.M.-Samoohika Vinayaka Pujas, Bhakta Samaradhana

September 2017

- 05 Tue - Teachers'day- Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Cultural programmes by Gurukula students
06 Wed- Poornima- Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
15 Fri - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
18 Mon -Masa Sivaratri- Ekaham at Pavuluru Branch
20 Wed- Amavasya

(Continued to page No.17)

Children's Section

Tales of Sri Ramakrishna

YOUNG MENDICANT GOES FOR ALMS

Ramana Prasad

A young sanyasin stood in front of a house for alms and uttered loudly, 'Bhavati bhiksham dehi.'

On hearing this plea for alms, the young housewife came out to give him the alms.

The ascetic had taken sanyasa diksha at a very early age, and so he lacked the knowledge of worldly matters. In fact, he had never seen a grown-up woman so far. So when he saw the housewife, he innocently asked her "What are those two big outgrowths on your chest?"

The housewife was aghast at this question. Before she could say anything, her mother came out and said, "No, nothing of that sort. Soon she is going to give birth to a child. God has provided them to feed the newly born with milk."



The young mendicant thought thus: "Why I am unnecessarily begging alms to appease my hunger? He who planted the saplings will also provide water for their growth. So from now onwards, I will not beg for alms. I am His creation. So He will surely take care of me."

Moral: If one develops such firm faith in God, the Almighty Lord will bear the responsibility of all his needs.*

DIVINE STORIES

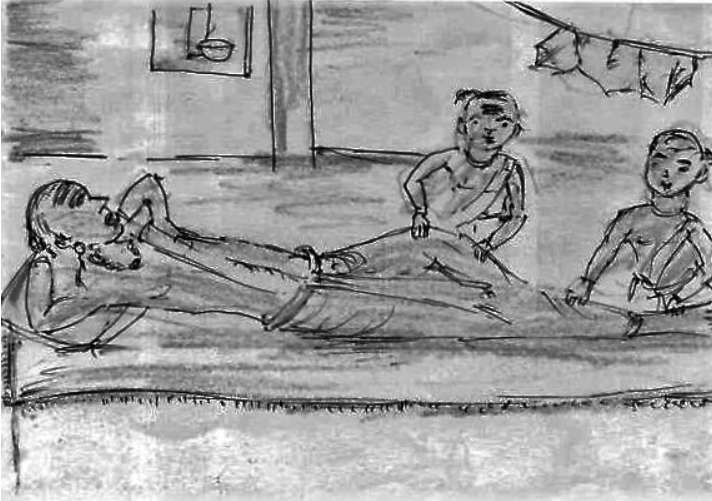
GOD IS EVERY WHERE

Ramana Prasad

A spiritual master (Guru) set up an ashram, with a single disciple. After some time, another disciple joined the ashram and both of them were serving their Guru with great devotion.

One day the Guru, after visiting a distant place, returned to the ashram, tired. He called the first disciple and said, “My son, because of the long trip my legs are aching. Please press my legs gently for some time, so that pain will subside.”

While the disciple was about to obey the command of the Guru, the second disciple raised a point of order. He said, “Revered Sir! This disciple has been serving you since long time. He must have earned already a lot of *Punyam* (merit) to his credit. I had not got a chance to earn any *Punyam* so far. So, both of us should share it. It is not fair for only one person to garner all the *Punyam*



for himself. So, kindly give me a chance now to serve you,” requested the second disciple.

The first disciple got angry and said, “Gurudev, please don’t listen to him. He does not know how to press the feet properly and you will not get any relief if you heed his request. One gets

excellence in a job after putting a lot of effort. This is the loka dharma (law of the land). You are the best judge.” Thus both the disciples created a scene.

The Guru thought, “I can easily conquer Maya (delusion) and have a glimpse of God rather than make these disciples to see the reason.” So he wanted to follow the middle path. He called



them and said, “Don’t quarrel. God has given me two legs. You share one each and serve me.”

The Paramananda Sishyas (disciples of Paramananda Swami) readily agreed and started pressing the feet of their Guru. After a while, the leg one disciple was massaging touched the other leg which the second one was serving. The latter became angry and shouted: “Be in your limits. How can that leg touch mine?” So saying he lifted the leg and dumped it on the other leg which the first one was serving. At this the first one lost his temper. “How dare you harm this leg. See what I will do?” So saying the first one took the Kamandalam and hit very hard on the other leg. The second one retaliated by hitting the other leg with the Yoga Dandam.

The Guru got disturbed, and shouted, “What is going on? Don’t you realise that you have hurt my legs?”

“Guruji, please take rest. This is our internal matter. We will decide which leg is superior, his or mine,” said both the disciples.

The Guru was annoyed and admonished them, “How foolish you are! How do you claim that ‘this is your leg’ and ‘my leg’? Don’t you know that both are my legs? Get lost.” So saying he drove out both of them.

All living beings appear as different entities of the Lord (*Paramatman*). God is the only reality. In the instant case, how absurd it was for the disciples to fight like this. In like manner, how people are justified in quarrelling with one another, least realising that they are one entity of God.

Moral: Realise that this Universe is the creation of God and love every one. One should not develop hatred towards the fellow beings.*

CURRENT PROGRAMMES

(Continued from page No.13)

From 21-09-2017 Thursday to 01-10-2017 Monday- Sarannavaratra Mahotsavamulu (DASARA)

- 21 Thu - Deeksha Sweekaram, lighting of akhanda jyothi
- 27 Wed - Mula Nakshatram, Sri Saraswathi Puja
- 28 Thu - Sri Durgashtami
- 29 Fri - Maharnavami, Samoohika Kumkum Pujas
- 30 Sat - Vijaya Dasami- Samoohika Kumkum Pujas, Namakaranalu, Annaprasanas, and Aksharabhyasamulu

October 2017

- 01 Sun - Ekadasi - Ekaham, Deeksha Viramana, Aseervachanam
by Sri Mathaji with Deeksha Akshatalu-
07.00 P.M. Nagarotsavam of Sri Jaganmatha,
08.00 P.M. Sri Sadguru Pada Puja Mahotsavam
- 05 Thu- Aswayuja Poornima-Birth Day of Sri Mathaji, Sri Sadguru
Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana
- 14 Sat -Sri Guru Dasami- Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 18 Wed-Naraka Chaturdasi, Masa Sivaratri-Sri Sadguru Pada Puja,
Satsangam - Ekaham at Pavuluru Branch
- 19 Thu- Deepavali - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana,
08.00 P.M. Firing of crackers
- 23 Mon-Nagula Chavithi-From Kartika Suddha Tadiya to Nov
01 Wednesday-Daily Morning- Ekadasa Rudra Abhishekams
with Pancharutalu, Nava Rasalu, Laksha Bilwarchana

Devotional Stories

LEARN TO SEE GOOD IN OTHERS

My dear Chiranjeevulaara:

In our Ashram prayer we seek the blessings of Sadguru Maharaj to do good to others and grasp only what is good in others. An incident in the Ramanashramam in Tiruvannamalai highlights this point.

It was the practice in Sri Ramanashramam for devotees to assemble in the courtyard after morning prayer and partaking of 'Tirtha Prasadam' from the hands of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. They would discuss some issue or other of interest to them. Sometimes the Maharshi would also be there with closed eyes, listening to what the devotees talked.

One day, they were discussing about the death of a local rowdy who was a terror to all people in the town. Recalling how that rowdy ransacked the ashramam once and even assaulted the Maharshi, they unanimously came to the conclusion that the rogue's death was a good riddance. After some time, they became tired and stopped talking further.

At that time, Sri Ramana Maharshi opened his eyes and asked them about whose death they were talking. Thinking that the Maharshi had heard only a part of their discussion, they said: "We were talking about the rowdy who even physically harmed Your Holiness. By God's grace, he is dead now."

Expressing his sorrow over the rowdy's death, the Maharshi said: "Do you know that man would take bath thrice every day? How clean he was! May his soul rest in peace!"

The devotees were perplexed to hear such a remark from the Maharshi, and remarked that his sympathy was misplaced.

The Maharshi admonished them for their comment and said: "This shows that you have not grown up spiritually. Has God given us the right to judge others' behaviour? We should never talk ill of anybody, let alone the dead. If at all we have to talk about that person, we should highlight his plus points only. We are here to achieve self-realisation, and if we harbour ill-feelings about anybody it would be a hindrance to our spiritual progress."

The devotees felt ashamed.

Children, hope you liked this narration. Our Sadgurudev would often tell disciples never to pass judgment on others, but instead see the good in them. "Remember, when you pinpoint the so-called mistakes of the other person with your index finger, your middle, ring and little fingers are aiming at you. Criticising others would only show you in bad light," Sri Babuji would emphasise.

Yours affectionately,
Maathula*

Babuji's Fables

'YOU DO YOUR PART, I WILL DO MINE'

Once there was a great devotee of Lord Hanuman. Whenever he was in trouble, he used to pray to Hanuman and the Lord, pleased with his prayers, would come personally and help the man. As days went by, the man got accustomed to the Lord's helping hand and started taking things for granted.

One day, the man was going from his village to another town to sell paddy. He was carrying the bags of paddy in a bullock-cart. It being rainy season, the mud road was in a very bad shape and his cart wheels got stuck in a pit. As was his wont, he started calling Lord Hanuman for help. Even after an hour of calling, the Lord did not come. The man became even more stubborn and started calling the Lord without moving even an inch from his place in the cart.

Hearing his prolonged cry, Hanuman appeared before the man who started blaming God and asked why He did not come earlier. Then the Lord said, "You did not try to pull the cart out of the mud. Instead, you are calling me to do things for you. Don't ever forget that I help only those people who do their duty properly."

Moral: If God shows His miracles, people become complacent and don't do their duty. Their sadhana (spiritual practice) also doesn't progress. So, God helps only those who do their part well.

—Retold by Dr. Swanamukhi Prasada

Down Memory Lane

GLORY OF LORD SANKARACHARYA

(Continued from the previous issue)

Sushumna Prasada

One cannot choose the life of a sanyasi without mother's permission. Sankara thought of a plan to get his mother's permission. One day the boy took a dip in the river and went deep into the water. He cried from the depths of the water that he was caught in the clutches of a crocodile, and that it would not leave him unless he secured the permission of his mother to become a sanyasi. Aryamba who found the situation critical, had no other alternative except to save him from the crocodile.

Sankara then came out of the river and sought the permission of his mother to renounce family life in search of Truth. He told her that hereafter every woman would be his mother and the entire world his home. In order to give solace to his mother, he gave the assurance that he would appear before her whenever she wanted and promised that he would perform her last rites.

Wearing saffron robes and holding a stick in his hand, the boy went in the northern direction in search of his Guru. He soon reached a cave on the banks of River Narmada. He saw Sri Govinda Padacharya doing penance in the cave. On seeing the boy, Sri Govinda Padacharya questioned "Who are you?" Sankara answered the question in the form of a 'Dasa Sloki, which forms the foundation of the entire Advaitic philosophy. It runs like this: "I am neither Earth nor Water nor Light nor Wind nor Space nor Indirayas (limbs) nor a collection of Indriyas which are not eternal. I am the Ever Living Soul (Atma) which knows no duality. I am 'Siva', the incarnation of Bliss."

Immediately Sri Govinda Padacharya, with his power of penance, realised that the boy was an incarnation of Lord Siva, and deemed it his fortune to initiate him in the traditional way. Renunciation was given to him with the four Maha Vaakyas: 'Pragnanam Brahma', 'Aham Brahmasmi', 'Tatwaamasi and 'Ayamatma Brahma'. Sankara became Sankara Bhagavadpadacharya.

While he was in the service of his Guru, he performed a miracle. There were sudden floods in the Narmada when his Master was in

a state of trance, and the neighbouring villages were getting inundated. Immediately, like Sage Agastya in the past, with Jalakarshana Mantra, he contained the entire flood water his kamandalam. He thus saved the people.

Vyasa Maharshi had predicted that whoever could control the swollen Narmada would write the commentary (Bhashyam) for the Brahmasutras. Remembering this Sri Govinda Paxacharya immediately came out of his trance and observed the miracle performed by his disciple, whom he blessed thus: “You have now attained full-fledged perfection in Yoga Sastram. Go to Kasi at once where the Brahmasutras are waiting for your commentary. You should also compose there the ‘Prasthan Trayam’, which consists of the Upanishads, the Brahmasutras and the Bhagavadgita, to save the world.”

From time immemorial Varanasi stands as the centre of sacred spiritual education. There he took Vishnu Sarma as his first disciple whom he named Sananda. Thereafter a number of people had the fortune of becoming his disciples. Padma Padacharya, Thotakacharya, Hastamalakachrya and Sureshwaracharya were among the foremost disciples of Adi Sankara.

A number of memorable, outstanding incidents took place while Adi Sankaracharya was in Varanasi. One day while the saint was going for bath in River Ganga, along with his disciples, he was confronted by a Chandala (an outcaste), holding four ferocious dogs in leash. In fact, Lord Siva had come to test Sankara Bhagavadpachacharya in that form.. His disciples asked the Chandala to give way to their master. This led to a heated spiritual discussion between Adi Sankara and the Chandala, during which the saint recognised the Chandala as Lord Parameswara Himself and the four dogs as the four Vedas. This incident led to the composition of the ‘Manisha Panchakam’ by Sri Sankaracharya, whereupon Lord Siva disappeared directing him to compose the commentary on the Brahmasutras.

Another prominent episode took place while he was in Varanasi. Out of compassion and love for an old Brahmin who was reciting a principle of grammar (Vyakarana sutra) for the sake of money, Adi Sankara composed the inimitable ‘Bhaja Govindam’ which contained all spiritual truths in a nut shell.

A sort of spiritual invasion was done by Adi Sankara in those days. Kumarilabhattu, an authority on the 'Purva Mimamsa shastra', who was about to perform 'Atmaahuti', surrendered at the sacred feet of Sankara Bhagavadpadacharya, and requested him to challenge Karma Yogi Mandanamisra and gain spiritual conquest over him. Accordingly, Adi Sankara went to Mahishmatipuram where spiritual discussion took place between him and Mandanamisra. Ultimately spiritual victory wooed Adi Sankara. Mandanamisra humbly surrendered to his opponent and took initiation for sanyasam. Since then he was known as Sureshwaracharya.

Thereafter, Adi Sankara reached Badarika Kshetram where he composed a commentary on the Brahmasutras. He went round the entire country from Kedaranath to Kanyakumari without the aid of any vehicle. He thus covered the entire Bharat on foot at least thrice in his life.

In Kashmir, Abhinava Gupta, a champion of Shakti Tatwa, was defeated by Adi Sankara with his Advaitic philosophy. Similarly he defeated all the top exponents of various sects of philosophy by his spiritual eminence in Kashmir, where the famous Saradalayam with four entrances is located. Ordinary people cannot gain entry into that Mandapam. Divine Mother Sarada Devi Herself opened the doors of the Mandapam and invited Sankara Bhagavadpadacharya to occupy the spiritual throne. gavatpadacharya to occupy the spiritual throne.

With a view to establishing the spiritual eminence of the Sanatana Dharma, he established mutts throughout the country to propagate his philosophy. Prominent among them are the four spiritual centres at Badari, Puri, Dwaraka and Sringeri. They are intended to spread the gospel of Advaita for the welfare of humanity.....

“Thus Sri Sankara Bhagavadpadacharya in the short span of life he lived sowed the seeds of Advaita philosophy throughout the country to regenerate and revitalise the humanity forever,” said Lord Babuji concluding his discourse, and exhorted devotees to follow the principles of Advaita taught by Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya and reach the pinnacle of Truth, Peace and Bliss.*

IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING

Dr. Raghavendra

Hearing is the most powerful of all the perceptions man has. If one doesn't want to see something he can close his eyes. Even after closing the ears with both the hands one can feel some decibel of sound is still heard. It's commonly known that sound can penetrate walls, too. However, hearing sounds alone is not listening.

Listening is a perception that needs a person to hear sounds, and take these sounds to the brain, understand and contemplate over them through mind. The listening process requires concentration, interest in the subject and understanding the need of the objective of listening. If one knows the purpose of listening to a particular topic, he can concentrate with single mind. Here, listening with single mind means that the person puts all his energy and thinking through a single channel, and thus shutting off all other thoughts, bad or good. An interesting story once narrated by Sri Babuji Maharaj during a spiritual discourse drives home this point.

One day, a demon suddenly appeared in the court of a king with thundering sound and accompanying tremors. He had three skulls in his hands. He had challenged the king with his boisterous laughter (vikata attahasam) to explain the significance behind the skulls. Everybody in the court was stunned and frightened when the demon threatened the audience and the king that he would eat them all if a satisfactory answer was not given. The king was perturbed and looked thoughtfully at his minister, who was wise, knowledgeable, intellectual and faithful.

The minister stood up and looking at the demon without any fear addressed him boldly. He told the demon to be calm and that he would answer him satisfactorily. Then the minister ordered his men to procure a thin iron rod, and asked them to pierce the rod through one ear of the first skull. The rod came out of the other ear of the skull. Immediately the minister got up and said, "This skull belonged to the worst type of man."

Similarly when the iron rod was pierced through one ear of the second skull it came out of the mouth, upon which that skull was declared to be that of an ordinary man. Likewise when the rod was

pierced through one ear of the third and the last skull it was stuck at the heart and the skull was declared to be that of the best of men. The demon was satisfied with the wise answers and showering praises on the minister, he left the court..

Thereupon, the perplexed king asked the minister to explain his answers. The minister said: “Your royal highness, the Asked by the king and the noble men in the court, the minister explained his answers: first skull was that of a man who never knew the purpose of listening. Such a person only hears the sound by one ear and lets it out of the other ear. That was the reason why the iron rod pierced from one ear came out from the other. Men of this calibre are useless since they can’t retain what they hear and as such they do not pay attention to good and wise words of elders and scriptures.

The second skull was that of a man who could retain for some time what he heard by one ear and finally speak out through his mouth. Such a person understands the words of wise men he has heard but cannot retain them for long and so he cannot practise them. Thus his listening becomes futile.

The last skull was that of the best of men, since he could hear with both the ears and take them to heart. Such a person contemplates over and over what he has heard, retains them for long in his memory, recollects often and thus sharpens his mind and intellect. That is, he listens to scriptures, devotional discourses rendered by learned persons and mahatmas with both the ears, contemplates over them and put these pieces of advice into practice. He is the person who not only uplifts himself, but can help others, too.”

The above story explains the importance of listening, that one should listen with both the ears, filter the good from the bad, retain the good in one’s heart and throw out the bad. Whatever is retained in the heart can be often recollected and put into practice. This is the essence of listening to spiritual discourses.

In our eternal religion (Sanatana Dharma), it is emphasised to listen to elders and mahatmas with utmost attention and put their wise counsel into practice. Spiritual discourses purify thoughts, whereby one’s faculty of speech also gets purified. Thus a person, who does good deeds always with pure mind and speaks always pure words, is liked by all. Hence for spiritual aspirants, listening is essential, and by constant listening to spiritual discourses a change

can be brought into their lives. In fact, Sri Babuji Maharaj would often emphasise that listening to discourses changes the aspirant to be a universal friend and thus helps developing universal brotherhood and good.

For listening single-mindedly with great devotion, we have King Parikshit, son of Abhimanyu and Uttara, as a great example. King Parikshit listened to the entire epic of Mahabhagavatam in seven days rendered by Sage Suka with such devotion and unswerving mind that at the end of which he attained liberation from the life-death cycle.

When one wants to listen to a speaker, be it in a classroom or a public meeting, one should sit always in the front rows in the audience. Then the intensity of sound reaches the listener clearly and effectively without any distraction. The voice of the speaker will be energetic and captivates the attention of the listener effectively. In the class where I teach, I ask my students to come and occupy the front benches. This will help the student to have direct eye contact with his teacher, and he receives good amount of intensity of sound. Thus he can concentrate more, warding off all other thoughts. If it is so important to come and sit in front rows in an ordinary class itself, how a spiritual aspirant should conduct himself being in the audience in a spiritual discourse! It is important to sit as close as possible (if not in the front rows) to the speaker in any discourse and this will benefit the listener (aspirant) very much.

I had the good fortune to participate and listen to Sri Babuji's spiritual discourses during Dasara festivals between 1984 and 1988 only on three occasions. On my first ever participation in the spiritual congregation in 1984 in the Ramalayam, I sat near the door on the eastern side which was almost the end row of the congregation. Sri Babuji's discourse was so powerful and profound on me that I switched to middle rows during the second occasion and to first few rows during the last occasion. This happened without any of my own effort and knowledge; this is all the effect of showing interest in listening. It is simply by His Grace only.*

WAITING FOR SRI RAMA—XIV

(Continued from the previous issue)

Ramaswami Sampath

Hanuman felt hungry since he had not eaten anything since he began his mission from Mahendragiri. He immediately shook the nearby date tree which crumbled under his powerful blow. Hanuman then put some dates into his mouth, and as he was munching the fruit, two guards appeared there hearing the thud of the tree fall. Seeing the vanara, they attacked him. Hanuman hit one of them with his fist, and it resulted in the death of that guard. The other one ran and within minutes brought a hundred demons. When the horde tried to overpower Hanuman, he uprooted the tree and used it as a weapon against them. All but a few of them died on the spot.

This valourous act of a monkey reached the ears of the furious Ravana, who ordered Jambumali, son of one of his ministers, to take a battalion with him and finish the simian intruder. But Hanuman easily defeated the rakshasas, culminating in the death of Jambumali. Enraged over this, the Lanka ruler deputed one of his own sons, Aksha Kumara, with a large force of soldiers. Though Aksha Kumara fought valiantly, he was no match to Hanuman, who slew him in the battle. On hearing the fate of Aksha, fear struck Ravana for the first time. He called his eldest son Indrajit and commanded that the monkey be brought before him alive or dead. “Meghanatha, this should not be a difficult task for you as you have conquered the great Indra,” he said encouragingly.

Indrajit fought fiercely with Hanuman who was relentless in decimating the former’s cohorts. The ratham of Indrajit was broken into pieces by a blow from the fist of Hanuman. The Lanka prince then strode the sky with his magical powers. Realising that it would be difficult to overwhelm the monkey with ordinary weapons, Indrajit took recourse to Brahmastra which bound Hanuman and made him immobile. (It may be recalled that on the request of Lord Brahma, Hanuman had agreed to be bound by it for a ‘muhurtam’ i.e. one and half hours). The demons of Indrajit tied Hanuman with ropes and dragged him on the ground. Though the ‘muhurtam’ was over, Hanuman remained in that state in order to see Ravana face to face.

Ravana who saw Hanuman shouted in anger: “Who are you? Are you the chakra-wielding Vishnu or Indra holding vajrayudha or ‘trisuladhari’ Siva or Brahma who is seated on lotus or Adisesha who is carrying earth on his head? Reveal your identity. Have you made up your mind to end your life here?”

Hanuman was amazed for a while, looking at the fabulously decorated Ravana durbar and his face exuding the serenity, even in anger, of having pleased Lord Siva with his recital of ‘Sama ganam’. Instantly Hanuman felt sad and wondered how such a great person could covet another man’s wife. Introducing himself as Hanuman, son of Vayudeva and an emissary of Rama, he said: “O mighty king of Lanka, I have come here only to tender a piece of advice to you. Perhaps, you are not aware that my Lord slew Vali who had bound you in his tail and bathed in the seven seas. Learn further that my master had subdued the pride of Parasurama who had killed Karthaveeryarjuna, your tormentor. You have committed the heinous crime of abducting the consort of such a powerful warrior in his absence. Please heed my advice and surrender to my Lord by handing back his wife Sita. Rama, being a ‘saranagata vatsala’, will not hesitate to forgive you. Otherwise, you and your entire rakshasa clan would surely be destroyed by him.”

With fire raging in his twenty eyes, Ravana ordered his guards in a thunderous voice: “Cut into pieces this vainglorious monkey.” When the guards were about to execute this order, Vibheeshana, the youngest brother of Ravana, pleaded with folded hands thus: “Brother, since he claims to be a messenger of Rama, let us not kill him and violate raja dharma.” Accepting the suggestion, Ravana said: “In that case, let the monkey’s tail be clothed and set afire. That is the apt punishment because for a monkey its tail is the greatest possession.”

When the she-demons of Asokavana heard the order of Ravana, they went to Sita and told her: “Though we were at a distance we did notice that monkey talking to you. The burning of the tail of that aggressor is the right punishment for him.”

Shocked to hear the punishment meted out to Hanuman, Sita offered prayer to Lord Agni thus:

***Yadyasti patisushrusha yadaysti charitam tapah
Yadi vaasthyekapatnitvam sheetho bhava Hanumatah.***

[If I have been truly maintaining my chastity; if my devotion to my Lord is steadfast; if I am His only wife all along, O Lord Agni, please provide coolness to Hanuman instead of heat.]

The effect of Mother Sita's prayer was such that Hanuman started wondering, "What is this, fire is not burning me? Yes, this must be the grace of Mother Sita." The next moment he freed himself from the clutches of ropes and ran around the capital setting fire to all palaces and groves. The whole of Lanka appeared to be ablaze.

"Alas, what a grave mistake I have committed! I am afraid fire rages Asokavana, too, injuring Mother," he muttered and cursed himself for his folly. But that was only for a moment. He felt relieved when he heard the charanas who were hovering over the sky uttering thus: "What a great strategist Hanuman is! He has set afire the island, sparing Asokavana." Hanuman then extinguished the fire on his tail in the sea and reached Asokavana and prostrated at the feet of Sita. "Mother, your Lord and my boss Sugriva would soon land here to release you from this prison. Kindly wait for the arrival of Sri Rama and do not act in haste," he appealed to her and took leave. An emotionally surcharged Sita blessed Hanuman and bade adieu to him.

Hanuman then reached the shore and climbed a hillock called Arishtam and from there hurtled into the western sky. From now on it was going to be a wait for Hanuman for all the vanaras, Angada and Jambavan at Mahendragiri and even Rama in Kishkinda. Mainaaka, which was waiting for Hanuman on his return trip, rose from the sea again as Hanuman had promised the hillock that he would rest on him after successfully accomplishing Rama karyam. Hanuman gently caressed Mainaaka and quickly landed on the Mahendragiri coast and shouted, "Drishtaa Sita" (I have seen Mother Sita), much to the glee of those waiting with bated breath. Jambavan, Angada and other vanaras hugged Hanuman and hailed their hero for achieving what was in the realm of impossibility. Hanuman gave them a vivid portrayal of his mission and told them: "By the grace of Lord Rama I could bring cheer to Sita. Let us not waste further time, and proceed to Kishkinda where Sri Rama and Sugriva are waiting for this good news from us."

Very soon they all reached Kishkinda, with full-throated shouts of joy. Hanuman prostrated at the lotus feet of Rama and gave a

graphic account of his activities in Lanka and said: “O Lord, by your grace I could have the darshan of the virtuous Mother Sita and was even able to prevent her from committing suicide, agitated as she was with the threat of Ravana. I could see you in her eyes; I could perceive you in her thoughts. An embodiment of unsullied virtue, she constantly chants your sweet name which has made her dust covered body glow like raging fire. She was delighted to the brim when I narrated, as commanded by you, some of the incidents which are known only to you two. Mother rejected my offer to carry her back here, saying that only your personal victory over the wicked Ravana resulting in her release from captivity would be appropriate. She was firm that she would wait for you only for a month after which she would end her life. My Lord, without any further delay we should proceed to Lanka to liberate Mother Sita by destroying Ravana and his hordes.”

Hanuman then handed over the ‘choodamani’ of Sita to Rama who was transported into ecstasy by its touch. “Maruti, if at all Sita and I are still alive it is because of your great act of bringing solace to us. How can I reward you for this?” Rama asked with gratitude and embraced Hanuman. What a soothing embrace it was! It could more than match the hug of ‘moksha’ itself.

One of the ‘dhyana slokas’ of the Kamba Ramayanam pertains to Hanuman. In effect it says: “May the one who was born to one of the five elements (Vaayu), who crossed one of the five (water) mingling with one of the five (space), who saw Sita who was born to one of the five (earth) and who set one of the five elements, namely fire, to Lanka island; may that Hanuman protect us in all respects!”

That was Sundara, the hero of Sundara kanda. Let us also pray to that great personality who achieved the impossible task to shower his grace on us to achieve our noble goals.

***Asaadhya saadhaka swamin asaadhyam tava kin vada
Ramadhoota kripa sindho mat kaaryam saadhaya prabho!***

-to be continued

GLORIOUS DEVOTEES

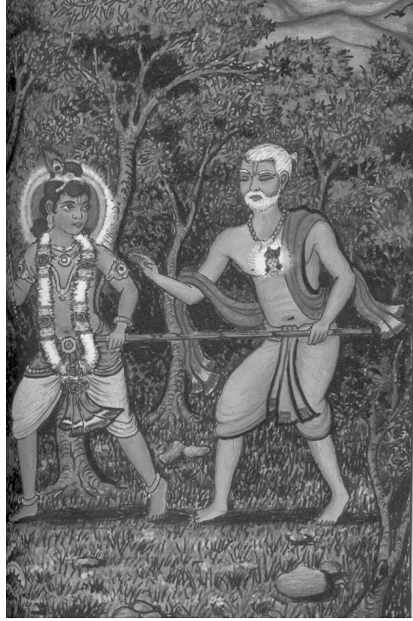
SURADAS

C.V. Ramana Babu
(Translation of Telugu original by Jagam)

Suradas was born in Mathura in 1478. He was blind by birth and so the colours and beauties of the world and nature cannot be seen by him. Yet he could see the Almighty with his intellectual vision. Devotion was born along with him. But, his family members lacked sanctity to understand his devotion. They used to ridicule and belittle him. Vexed with their mentalities, Suradas, at the tender age of just six years, left the house without informing anybody.

He was confident that he was not alone and blind since God is within him to guide throughout his life. He started going to Gokuldhama. On the way, he stopped at the border of a village. An elderly person saw Suradas. During discussion, Suradas told him that the aim of his journey was to reach the God's abode. The host understood the spirituality of Suradas. His mind readily accepted Suradas as his 'Guru' and so requested Suradas to stay in their village and guide them in the path of spirituality. Suradas acceded to his request and went to the village. His mind always wanted to see the God.

At that time, Sri Vallabhacharya, the principal person of 'Suddha Advaita Vaishnava Philosophy', who was on pilgrimage, happened to visit that village. Suradas met him and prostrated at his feet. With the touch of the pious feet of Sri Vallabhacharya, the



devotion of Suradas improved manifold. Sri Vallabhacharya, understanding the devotion and sincerity of Suradas, explained the intricate spiritual details of the love of Radha and Krishna to him. He also gave initiation ('deeksha') and blessed Suradas. Since then, there was a tremendous change in Suradas. Poetry flowed in him like a torrent. He sang the glories of Radha and Krishna. Those songs became very famous by the name 'Sura Sagar'. He sang nearly one lakh hymns, but, only eight thousand of them are available. In 'Sura Sagar', he describes the devotion and spiritual secrecies of the 'Bhagavatam'. He described every incident very beautifully as if he had seen it with his eyes wide open.

In an excellent hymn he describes, through the love between Krishna and Radha, a devotee's anguish for God and the anguish would be got rid of by the mere appearance of God. In that hymn, he says that one day Radha disappeared for a few moments while playing with Her friends. They searched for Her. She was found motionless under a tree. They thought that Radha was bitten by a snake. They immediately ran to Radha's mother Sunayana Devi and told her that Radha was bitten by 'krishna snake' (nalla paamu). An old man suggested that only Krishna could treat Radha, as she was bitten by 'krishna snake'. As per his suggestion, a boy immediately went to Yasoda and told her about the incident. She asked Krishna to go and save Radha. The news of Krishna's arrival touched Radha's ears. Sunayana Devi requested Krishna to save Radha. Krishna uttered something in Radha's ears and touched Her. Wonder! She immediately rose and saw Krishna. Her agony had vanished and she was the normal Radha.

Through his intellectual eye Suradas envisioned the various stages of Krishna's childhood and His glories and described them in many poems, beautifully. The scholars would wonder as to how it was possible for a blind person to describe like that. Those poems are being sung as lullabies nowadays also. Such hymns made his heart a happy and peaceful 'Brindavan'.

He always prayed for the 'darshan' of Sri Krishna. In a beautiful song, Suradas describes a naughty incident of Sri Krishna's childhood: "One day Yasoda saw Krishna eating butter stealthily. Krishna understood that Yasoda had seen him eating butter. She

questioned Him if He had eaten butter. He replied in the negative seriously and also put forth the proofs before her. (Mein nahi makhan khayo: I have not eaten butter). She accepted His reasoning and said, ‘Yes! You have not eaten butter’ and took Him in her lap. Convinced that she was cool, He, being the veracious, opened up the truth: ‘I only ate the butter’. (Mein ne hi makhan Khayo). The innocent Yasoda accepted that reasoning, too.”

Suradas asserts in a song, ‘Guru bina Iso kaun kare?’, that none can see God without the guidance of ‘Guru’ and that only ‘Guru’ helps us to cross the ocean of life, even during the times of agony.

On a dark night, Suradas was going, singing a hymn about the love of Radha and Krishna. It was midnight and raining heavily. He was walking with the help of a stick. Thorny bushes and heaps of stones, on the side of the path, were troubling him. Even a minor slip of the feet will surely take him down to the deep valley. Suddenly the stick fell down and he was about to slip. But, a lovely pair of tiny hands held his hand firmly and took him to his destination. Then, Suradas questioned himself, ‘Who is this boy? His talking is very sweet. His touch gave me immense happiness and peace. How could he come over here, a deserted place, in pitch dark and while it is pouring too? Where did he come from? Is he not my loving Krishna?’ He then asked the boy about his details. Being identified, the boy left his hand and ran away with the pleasing sound of his anklets lingering in Suradas’s ears. Suradas then learnt that it was none other than his Krishna. He wept out of joy and sorrow. Joy because he spent a few moments with his Lord, enjoyed His touch, talk and was saved by Him. Sorrow because he could not see Him for which he was longing for a long period. Yet, he was bold enough to say in a song. ‘Krishna, You left my hand because I was physically weak. But, can You leave my heart? You can’t! I challenge”.

Krishna started serving Suradas. Daily He would wash Suradas’s face, help him in his bath, feed him, etc. He would also sincerely sit in front of Suradas while he sings and enjoy the sweetness of his singing.

One day Suradas was singing, describing Krishna playing His flute, his holding the hair of wicked Kamsa before slaying him, and Suradas holding Krishna’s tender feet all the time. Suddenly, he

observed that Krishna was looking at him, he being in Brindavan. Krishna was in the middle of singing and playing ‘Gopas’ and ‘Gopikas’. He developed energy in his limbs. He saw that he too was dancing with them. There was black and thick hair on his bald head! There was also a feather of peacock in his hair. He wondered, “Where am I?” Then little Krishna answered, “Grandpa, I am your Shyam Sundar. I had given sight to your eyes. You are seeing Me and the whole surroundings. Now onwards, you can see and enjoy the whole world.”

But, Suradas replied, “Oh my Lord! I don’t want to see the world with the eyes which has enjoyed Your presence. Take away the sight from my eyes. Bless me that I always see You with my intellectual eyes”. Krishna happily accepted his request.

Once, on the request of the king of Avantika, he went to the palace and sang in the court. The king enjoyed very well. The queen also wanted to hear him singing. The queen and her entourage sat in front of him without covering their faces since he was blind. He was singing melodiously seeing his beloved Krishna with his intellectual eyes. A servantmaid brought milk in a bowl and placed it in front of him. Suradas saw Krishna in her and said, ‘My loving Krishna! You brought milk for me! You would sleep in the ocean of milk. Where is the necessity of milk for me, while I am enjoying Your presence?’

All the women present there were aghast and troubled. “Is he not blind? We are deceived,” they were murmuring. Suradas said, “Krishna! There is no light in the world and no darkness in You. Whoever sees you is not blind. Those who forget You are blind. You are omnipresent and so there is no ignorance and darkness.” He then collapsed, indicating that the spirit of Suradas had merged with Krishna. It is believed that this happened in 1581.

Besides ‘Sura Sagar’ his other writings, ‘Sur Saravali’ and ‘Sahithya Lahari’, were very famous. He was a gem among the devotees.*

BHAJA GOVINDAM!

Ramana Prasad



SLOKA 6

*Yavatpavano Nivasati Dehe
Taavaiprichati Kusalam Gehe
Gatavati Vayuhu Dehapaaye
Bhaaryaa Bibhyati Tasminkaaye'*

[‘As long as there is life (breath) in this body, all your near and dear ones enquire about your welfare. But when breath leaves your body, even your wife will dread to come near your dead body].

In this sloka Sri Sankarachaarya says that one should develop detachment from the worldly matters through constant contemplation of God. You exist as long as you breathe. But once you die none will come near you. Even your wife avoids you. She is afraid of coming near your dead body. Therefore, one should realise that none knows when death will come to him and try to contemplate on the lotus feet of Lord.*

-to be continued

HE PLEASED LORD BY THROWING STONES!

-Ramaswami S

Once there was a seeker of Truth in Tiruchangamangai village in Tamil Nadu. Though he belonged to the farming community, he was keen on finding the Truth by which one can get out of the cycle of births and deaths. With this objective, he toured all over the region studying the scriptures of various faiths and discussing with experts in those religions.

In his ceaseless journey in quest of Truth, he reached Kanchipuram, where he met some Buddhist monks who helped him by giving a lot of palm leaves expatiating on the Buddhist principles. Attracted by those principles, he decided to embrace that faith and named himself Saakya.

But soon he was disillusioned with that religion because he could not get the answer for his desire to end the cycle of births and deaths.

Saakya left Buddha Kanchi and moved to Siva Kanchi where the high priests of the followers of Lord Siva taught him Saiva Siddhantha and asserted that attachment to the Lord was the only way to secure 'Moksha' (Liberation). Convinced by the tenets of Saiva Siddhantha, Saakya became a Saivite, but continued to retain the name 'Saakya'. "What is in a name? All a devotee needs is unshakeable faith in Lord Siva, and form and name do not matter," he would tell fellow devotees.

One day as he was walking in a forest chanting prayers to the Lord, Saakya saw a Sivalingam under a tree. On seeing that Lingam, his devotion overflowed and he wanted to perform 'archana' (worship) to that image. But he could not find flowers or 'Bilva' leaves to offer to the Lord. All he could find was a heap of small pebbles. He then decided to perform 'archana' with the pebbles, chanting the names of the Lord.

Saakya made this 'archana' to the Lord his daily routine, and he would not take food without this ritual. This practice went on merrily, and Saakya found immense satisfaction in this form of worship. One morning, when he was proceeding to the spot for worship, the local panchayat chief called him for getting some clarification. Saakya went with the village head to discuss the matter.

They had a prolonged conversation, at the end of which he returned home to take food as he was hungry.

As he was about to take the first morsel of food, he heard a celestial voice addressing him thus: “Saakya, have you forgotten Me today? I am missing your true devotion.” Immediately he realised his mistake of not performing the worship to the Lord. Hurriedly, he took bath and rushed to the spot where he used to perform the ‘archana’ to the Lingam.



Shedding tears for his lapse, Saakya sought the Lord’s pardon and thanked Him for reminding him of his duty. At the end of the ‘archana’, he had the vision of the Lord, seated along with His consort on Nandikeswara. “Though you have been hitting me with stones in the name of worship, I am delighted by your devotion, and duty-bound to grant your quest for Liberation,” the Lord declared and drew Saakya’s soul into Him.’

One should realise that the Lord does not see how one worships Him, but will be satisfied if the devotion is sincere and emanates from the bottom of the devotee’s heart. Saakya Nayanar thus became one of the sixty-three great devotees of Lord Siva.*

SRI TARAKA PARABRAHMA PRASAD

Sri Sannidhanam Rama Taraka Para Brahma Sastry Garu, christened as 'Sri Taraka Parabrahma Prasad' by Sri Mataji and fondly called as 'Tarakam Garu' by all devotees, was born in 1931. He was the second son of theologian couple Sri Sita Rama Sastry and Mahalakshamma garu of Gundugolanu village. While he was



working as teacher in the Railway High School, Hyderabad, his spiritual mentor was Sri Sadhu Srinivasa Sastry.

The proof of his supreme devotion to his Guru becomes evident from an incident- When his Guru fell sick, Sri Tarakam Garu who came to know that Sri Babu was camping in Gundugolanu, rushed there and requested Sri Babu to restore his Guru's health. Sri Babu said, "Do not worry! It is purely the choice of Guru. He will leave the mortal coil at his own will. You will soon be under my guidance." In 1975 Sri Tarakam garu went along with Sri Babu on pilgrimage to Kedarnath, where Sri Babu gave him '*Diksha*'.

The second proof of his *Guru Bhakti* comes out of this incident- When Sri Babu was ill in 1982, Tarakam garu undertook severe penance to restore His health. Then Sri Babu gave one *mantra* and said, “You chant this mantra. This will bring good to you both in materialistic and spiritual aspects. He strictly followed His instructions.

Sri Tarakam garu vested his wealth of knowledge to emancipate the seekers of divine knowledge to achieve their goal. In other words he used to clear their doubts and thus make them move forward in their spiritual pursuits.

In the Navaratri celebrations of 1988, Sri Babu made both Sri Venkata Ramana Prasad garu and Sri Tarakam garu to give the underlying deep meaning of “*Jnanagni dagdha karmani*” stanza from the chapter ‘*Jnana yoga*’ of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Sri Babu elaborated on this and thus made its meaning planted in the hearts of the devotees.

Sri Taraka Parabrahma Prasad garu who rendered yeoman service to Sri Kali Gardens Ashram, attained *Guru sayujyam* after a brief illness on 24.03.2017, keeping his mind firmly fixed on Sri Babu.

Speaking on this occasion, his daughter Kum. Kalimatha said, “My father believed more in *Guru Tatwa* than *Guru Bhakti*. We have seen the immense devotion shown by him to his *Guru*. In fact, *Guru Bhakti* and *Guru Tatwa* are nothing but two sides of the same coin. My father was a self made man. It is but natural to feel the fragrance where fresh roses are kept. But my father was like a wood apple fruit (velagapandu) which though has a hard shell outside throws its sweet fragrance to the surroundings.”

Sri Taraka Parabrahma Prasad would emphasise that chanting the name of God always is the easiest path to win the compassion of *Guru*.

“Sri Guru Dev granted me solace and peace even in turbulent situations,” he once declared with firm conviction.

Let us sincerely pray Sri Babuji Maharaj to provide courage and peace to all his family members.*

CLEAR YOUR DOUBTS

Devotee: Amma, you always stress upon eating ‘Satvika Ahaara’. Do you mean to say that non-vegetarians are sinning and that they all should stop eating such stuff?

Sri Mataji: Not only me but all the scriptures too stress upon ‘Satvika Ahaara’, which means eating anything in moderation and taking what is available in nature without hurting or harming another living creature. This keeps you in good health, and good health is necessary to do anything in life whether it is spiritual practice or any worldly project or profession.



Let me ask you a few questions. If you have hyper acidity problem what does your doctor tell you? Won't he ask you to cut down on beverages like coffee and tea, alcoholic drinks and stop eating spicy and junk foods? Yes, once you stop listening to the warning signals your body is giving, the body (here, the stomach) puts a brake. Unless you stop all those foods which produce acidity in your stomach, you will not be relieved of your problem. So, from then on, you go on a strict bland diet and eat meals at regular intervals.

Similarly, if you are a diabetic, you have to give up sugar; if you have high blood pressure, you will be asked to cut down on your salt intake; if you have high cholesterol levels in your blood, you will be asked to cut down on animal fats and meat.

Instead of having to be dictated by someone else, had we practised a moderation in our food habits, we would not be in a sorry state today. Take any animal for an example. The animals take only what they want and are classified as herbivorous or carnivorous. But, look at man! He eats anything and everything. No animal adds salt, sugar, spices or oil and cooks food! It is only man, who is endowed with intellect is becoming a slave to his tongue and ruining his health. No wonder, modern doctors advise their patients to make life style changes!

And coming to eating non-vegetarian food: Our Gurudev Sri Babuji Maharaj never insisted on anybody from giving up non-veg. If it is your dharma - go ahead. But some day realisation would

dawn upon you and you will give it up yourself. Never do anything under duress. You must do anything on your own will and experience. Once you realise that you are killing another being for your gratification, you will stop. It should come voluntarily. Whether you are committing a sin or not, you must decide yourself. Nobody else needs to tell you. Guru Maharaj used to say, "If you try to suppress any of your desires forcefully, they will hit back at you with a spring action. You must take your own decision with careful thinking. If you sit for meditation after eating a sumptuous meal full of spicy food, will you be able to practise meditation?"

Before doctors tell us to stop certain foods that are inimical to our health why don't we put a stop to them ourselves and be happy? We can also save a lot of money on medical bills!*

APPEAL

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