

SAMARDHA SADGURU

Spiritual Magazine

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

Sri Mataji's Benediction PANCHAKOSA VIVEKA

Although the human being is constituted of matter which is inert and insentient, the individual is sentient and conscious, evidently in possession of something other than matter. That is Atman. It is like the magnetic property in a magnet composed of an iron piece. Atman gives capacity to sense organs to perceive, the mind to feel and the intellect to think. Therefore, it is a perceiver, feeler and thinker something other than the gross, subtle and causal bodies. To experience the absolute bliss, one has to discard the matter and apprehend the self. Pure self is often termed as 'Pancha Kosa Viveka'. Pure self or Atman is enveloped by five layers of matter. The five Kosas of matter represent the gross, subtle and causal bodies functioning under the control of self.



The world of objects, happenings and other beings around a human being is not under his control. Several painful events occur and one can control and regulate his reactions and avoid being adversely affected by them. In order to face such challenges one should know something about the Pancha Kosa Viveka. The gross body is Sthula Sareera which is formed of food and vital or air sheaths. The subtle body is Sukshma Sareera that is formed of mental and intellectual sheath. The causal body or Karana Sareera is formed of the sheath of Bliss. When the self expresses with gross body, it functions as one in the wakeful state, and when the self identifies with subtle body, it manifests as a dreamer. On the other hand, when the self expresses itself with the causal body it is like a person in deep sleep. The individual establishes contact with outer world with his gross body and experiences joy and sorrow. The subtle body expresses emotions and feelings. The thoughts and feelings of subtle body function in four ways through mind, intellect, ego and memory.

The non-apprehension of reality is Avidya. Similarly, the intellect is veiled sometimes and called Avarana, and very often the mind is agitated called Vikshepa. Thus the non-apprehension of mind results in plurality of the world. Such a state of mind is superimposition. Avidya and ignorance can be removed and the concept of superimposition and plurality of world can vanish only through the teachings of a Guru. One can realise the Self and the Bliss by following the guidelines of the Master with implicit faith and devotion.

There is no alternative except following the discourses of Guru scrupulously.*



Sri Sri Mataji felicitating Sri Sri Ravi Sankar, founder of 'Art of Living', in Bhimavaram on 9th Dec, 2017



Sri Sri Ravi Sankar, founder of 'Art of Living', felicitating Sri Sri Mataji in Bhimavaram on 9th Dec, 2017

Editorial

CASTE FEELING BLOCKS LIBERATION

Om Gururam Namaste!

In our voyage in the vast ocean of Time, which has no beginning, no middle and no end, we have crossed another landmark, Year of the Lord 2018. As is the custom, we wish our readers a happy, prosperous and purposeful twelve months ahead, invoking the grace of Samardha Sadguru Sri Sri Sri Hanumat Kali Vara Prasada Babuji Maharaj, and the blessings of our Amma, Yogini Sri Chandra Kali Prasada Mataji. How lucky we are! We have Lord Babuji as the lodestar (Dhruva nakshatra), so that our ship does not lose its direction. We are also blessed with a skilful skipper, Sri Mataji, to negotiate safely our vessel, which has the tendency to drift in the turbulent waters of the 'Samsara Sagara', thereby making the cruise pleasant.



During the Sadguru Aradhana Mahotsavam in the 'Kartika maasam' towards the close of the last calendar year, devotees had the benefit of understanding the true import of Gurutatwam, which is inclusive and open to all segments of society. Sri Adi Sankara's 'Maneesha Panchakam', which underlines the unity of humanity, was expatiated by Sri Sri Sri Dandi Nirmalanandagiri Swami, head of the Ashtalakshmi Peetham (Tenali), during the 'saptaham'. Before the Swamiji's daily discourse, Amma would melodiously render the five Sanskrit slokas.

Our Gurudev would drive home the point that none should be discriminated against by virtue of his or her origin, by quoting these slokas. "Birth is an accident. One could be born in any community, race, linguistic group or country, and none can claim superiority and treat others inferior. One has to be grateful to God for the benefits of having been born in a particular segment of society. At the same time one should not decry other less privileged persons. One should always do good to others, see the good in

others and grasp the good in others,” Guru Maharaj would emphasise.

Narrating in one of his discourses the historic incident in Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavad Paadacharya’s life, Sri Babuji said: “This episode is a lesson to all ‘sadhakas’ (spiritual trainees). Once, Adi Sankara was proceeding to Kasi Viswanatha Swami temple after bathing in the Ganga. On the way he saw an outcaste (‘chandaala’), holding four dogs in leash, coming his way. Sri Sankara asked him to move away. The ‘chandaala’ replied by putting a counter question. “Are you asking this body, made of food (organic matter) to move away from another body similarly made of food? Or are you asking the all-pervading Pure Consciousness within you and me and in everything else to move away? Where can it go?” When Adi Sankara heard this retort, he fell at the feet of the ‘chandaala’ for making that profound statement, thereby opening his eyes. ‘I will prostrate before any person whether he is of a high caste or a ‘chandala’ for making me realise this Truth,’ Adi Sankara declared. He was also convinced that the ‘chandaala’ was none other than Lord Siva Himself, who came to remove the last trace of caste feeling in him. Adi Sankara then addressed Him thus “Oh, Lord Siva, the three-eyed one; the knower of the past, present and future! In the form of this physical body, I am your servant and so, of all. In the form of the life within me, I am part of You and so, of all. In the form of the soul, You are within me and every other human being, animal or things that I see. I am of this firm conclusion—after thorough reflection in my intellect—and being thoroughly illuminated by all the scriptures.” The ‘chandaala’ at once disappeared and there stood Lord Sadasiva in all His glory, with the dogs turning into the four Vedas.

An episode from the ‘Mahabharata’ will enlighten us further on the topic. Mahatma Uttanga was unaware of the Kurukshetra war, and when Lord Krishna met him, the sage asked about Pandavas’ and Kauravas’ welfare. On learning about the war, he turned furious. “This tragedy has occurred despite Your presence. I am going to curse You for not preventing the war,” said Uttanga. The Lord pacified the sage by explaining how His peace efforts failed, and then offered two boons to Uttanga who sought, “Oh, Lord! When I feel thirsty while traversing a desert, I must get drinking water and You must also give me ‘darshan’.” Years later,

the sage became thirsty while passing through a desert and remembered Krishna's boons. Suddenly a 'chandaala' appeared before him and offered water from his animal skin bag. Uttanga loathed the sight and declined the offer. The 'chandaala' disappeared and there stood Lord Krishna! When the sage protested, the Lord said: "Mahatma, despite rising to a high level of asceticism, you still entertain caste feelings. I came in that garb to test you, and the bag contained 'amrita' which you have rejected. You have miles to go for Liberation." Uttanga felt ashamed.

Let us also cast aside caste feelings.

Jai Gurudev!*

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**APPEAL TO THE READERS OF
SAMARDHA SADGURU TELUGU
MONTHLY MAGAZINE**

LIFE MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO DONATE RS.1116/- FOR EXTENSION FOR FURTHER 20 YEARS. WE ALSO APPEAL ANNUAL SUBSCRIBERS TO BECOME LIFE MEMBERS BY REMITTING RS.1116/- THIS WILL BE OF GREAT HELP TO MEET THE INCREASE IN COSTS OF VARIOUS INPUTS.

SAMARDHA SADGURU MANAGEMENT

Thus Spake Babuji TRINITY OF GODHEAD

Sushumna Prasada

Lord Babuji on one occasion addressing a gathering of devotees asserted that unity in diversity is the law of life. In this material world, it is only the multiplicity that can be seen with the physical eye. "There is infinite variety of creation in this universe. According to our philosophy, the created beings are divided into eighty-four lakhs. Of all these created beings man occupies the supreme place. Humans alone are endowed with intellect which offers him/her the power of discrimination. It is man alone who can discriminate real from unreal, Truth from falsehood, pure from impure, etc. Man alone has the capacity to overcome duality and attain eternity," His Holiness said and continued thus:



God's creation is indeed miraculous. According to our Advaitic philosophy, there is only 'Brahman' and nothing else. There is no duality at all. But the moment you are born in this world, you are caught in the web of duality - nay multiplicity. Everything is done according to the matchless plan of the supreme Divine architect. No living being or machine has the capacity to alter it even slightly. Is there anybody who can alter the systematic creation even slightly? For example, can you make the sun rise in the West instead of East or make life start with old age and end with childhood? Whatever may be the advancement of science and technology, they cannot change the fundamental laws of life. The process of creation also remains the same. We all know that man is a social being and he is caught in the web of variety. Nobody can feed himself or herself and develop into a full-fledged personality without the protective care of parents. The law gets itself repeated from generation to generation. That means dependence is inevitable.

According to numerology, every number has its own importance. But number three exercises a dominant influence to conceal the supreme Truth of Oneness (Ekadvam). When a baby is born, the Spirit is wrapped in three layers - physical body, subtle

body and causal body (Sthula, Sukshma, Kaarana). Of these three, only the physical body is visible and the other two are invisible, but they exercise their influence over the physical body. The subtle body functions, even after the physical body becomes functionless. Man cannot escape the results of his actions. The fruit of these actions (Karma Phalitam) leads a person from one birth to another and he gets suffocated in the whirlpool of birth and death.

There is a three-fold division of action (Karma). They are known as 'Agami, Sanchita Prarabhda Karmas'. The actions are again three-fold - the results of the actions (karma): Past, Present and Future. The results of the actions not only confine to the present and they lead to the future. Thus the time is also three-fold coupled with Prarabhda (from the previous birth), Sanchita (what we acquire now) and Agami (the result of the action to be experienced in future). Prarabhda is the result of the past experiences in present and future.

There are again three stages of receiving the experiences. The state of wakefulness (Jaagrata), the state of dream (Swapna) and the state of deep sleep (Sushupti). The mind functions in alertness and activity with the physical body in the state of wakefulness. In the state of dream, the mind functions actively unrelated to the body. In the state of deep sleep, the mind takes rest. Hence it is called Gadha Sushupti. These three states have their impact on the physical body. It is a miraculous instrument offered by God as a boon. A boon is always to be treated as a special gift. It is mentioned in Skandopanishad, "Deho Devalayaprokto Jeevo Deva Sanatanah." The physical body is to be treated as a temple where the Jeeva resides as God.

Surprisingly, there is Trinity in Divinity also. We worship God as Trimurthi Swarupa, i.e. Srushti (creation), Stithi (representing growth and expansion) and Laya (merging in the Oneness). They are called Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. Time which has neither beginning nor end is also divided into three types - Past, Present and Future. A disciple who has implicit faith in God cannot be affected by the three-fold aspects of time and keep it under his control. There are also three worlds known as Heaven, Earth and Netherworld (Swarga Loka, Bhooloka and Pathala Loka).

According to the nature of man which he acquires from the action of the previous births, there is three-fold division of qualities

(Gunas). They are known as Satva (pure), Rajas (passionate) and Tamas (mean). The behaviour of the person depends on the qualities (Gunas) he has inherited. In 'Bhagavatgita' an entire chapter is devoted to describe the three Gunas in detail and their impact on man. It is known as 'Guna Traya Vibhaga Yoga'. Similarly there is another chapter known as 'Sraddha Traya Vibhaga Yoga' which deals with three-fold spiritual activity. Bhagavan explains the types of food liked by them.

There are three types of penance to be done. They are: physical penance (Daihika Tapas), penance of speech (Vachika Tapas) and mental penance (Manasika Tapas). Triple purification of mind, speech and body (Mano-Vak- Kaaya Suddhi) is needed to attain spiritual sublimation.

The goal of spiritual pursuit is to attain the Trinity of Godhead - Truth (Satyam), Divinity (Sivam) and Beauty (Sundaram). Lord Sankaracharya asserts that the attainment of Spiritual Trinity is essential to attain Bliss and Eternity. They are: human birth (Manushyatwam), desire to attain Eternity (Mumukshutwam) and the association with Mahatmas (Mahapurusha Samsraya). When all these three are available, it is an easy, smooth path to attain Eternity.

What are the essential qualities to be cultivated in order to attain Eternity? The Sadhaka (spiritual trainee) has to develop the trinity of devotion (Bhakti), wisdom (Gnana) and detachment (Vairagya). They have to be cultivated with incessant spiritual effort (Sadhana). The culmination of these leads to the Spiritual Trinity of Truth (Satya), Wisdom (Gnana) and Bliss (Ananda), namely Sat-Chit-Ananda.

Even in worldly life three exercises dominate influence. There are three important stages of life - childhood, youth and old age. Three knots unite man and woman. While calculating Time, the day has the triple division of Dawn, Afternoon and Evening. Meditation has three aspects - Dhyanam, Dhyata, Dhyeyam. Similarly in wisdom also there is the triple division of 'Jnanam, Jneyam and Jnatha'.

Lord Babuji concluded His discourse by saying that the goal of the Spiritual Trinity is to attain 'Oneness of Brahman'.*

ILLUSION OF BONDAGE

Kali Prasad Paluri

We all have the hidden feeling that we are bound by the material world and crave to be liberated from the vicious cycle of birth-death-rebirth. But is the bondage real? Let's ponder over it. Once upon a time there was a merchant who was travelling to a distant village to bring the goods from there for selling in his village. He took a herd of donkeys along with him to carry the goods back. While he was passing through a jungle, it became dark and he was forced to halt there for the night. So, he started tying the donkeys one by one to a big tree with a rope. When it was the last donkey's turn, the remaining rope was not sufficient to tie it to the tree. He was worried that the donkey might wander into the jungle at night.

A saint also happened to come to the same tree to spend the night. He inquired why the merchant was so worried. When told about the rope not being adequate to tie the last donkey, the saint said, "Child! It's a donkey and it doesn't know. Just pretend to tie that donkey to the tree with the rope and it will stay here the whole night." The merchant couldn't believe it but he followed the advice. The next morning he was happy to see the donkey still there. He started untying each donkey. Patting them on the back, he goaded them for the journey.

As the last donkey was not tied by him, he just patted the donkey on the back to follow the herd, but the animal didn't move. It refused to move even after some thrashing. Meanwhile, the saint woke up, and the merchant pleaded for his help again. The saint said, "Untie the donkey and it will move." Perplexed, the merchant wondered, "But sir! I never tied it in the first place." The saint calmly replied, "It's a donkey and it doesn't know. It is still thinking that you had tied it last night. Just pretend to untie it and see." The merchant followed the advice and the donkey moved.

Now, let's come back to our feeling of bondage. Isn't it the same feeling the donkey had the whole night? We don't understand that the whole world is an illusion and it doesn't have the power to bind us. Our true state is that of a liberated soul. We are only bound by our ignorance and the illusion of bondage.

In Vedanta, an example of illusion is given. It's called Rajju Sarpa Bhranathi. When a rope is lying on the ground and you see it in semi-darkness, you feel as if a serpent was lying there. Once the fear of the serpent seeps into your mind, you start seeing its movements and hearing its hissing. This fear from illusion can only be quashed by someone bringing a light. When the light drives away the darkness, you realise that it's just a rope and not a snake. There has always been the rope and never a snake. But an illusion was created by the semi-darkness. Another example is the illusion of a thief looking at a tree trunk in semi-darkness and experiencing the fear of some deadly thing.

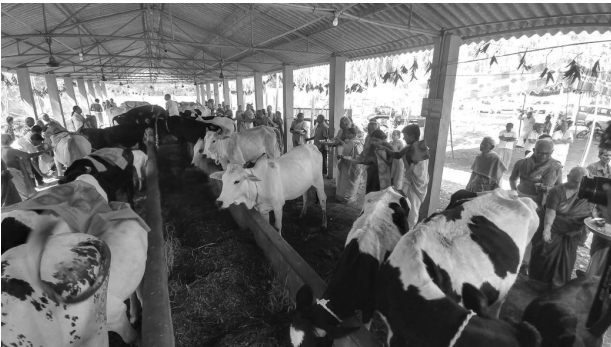
If we think deeper, in both the examples the non-moving thing is mistaken to be a moving object. In the same way there is only God all around, who is omnipresent and thus has no space to move. And in the darkness of ignorance, we mistake Him to be the moving world and feel bound by it. For this illusion to occur there are two prerequisites - darkness and prior knowledge of the moving thing. Since the day of our birth, we have been feeding the knowledge of the moving world in our minds through the five senses. And we are living in the darkness of ignorance.

The knowledge of the world always leads to sorrow only. Imagine you go out in the morning wearing a new shirt and a crow poops on your back. As long as you don't know about it, you go about your daily activities happily. You meet friends and colleagues, eat out and enjoy. In the evening someone notices the bird-poop on your back and points it out. That moment onwards, you constantly think of it and feel ashamed and lose your peace of mind until you go home and change the dress. Similarly, as long as you are not aware of the worldly things you live happily. But once you gain that knowledge, the happiness is lost.

Here is another example. We work and earn money. We feel happy and contented with whatever we are being paid. But, once we come to know that one of our colleagues is being paid more than us for the same work, we feel disturbed. Thus the knowledge of the world and the ignorance of the spiritual knowledge present us the illusion of bondage. Like in the example of rope and snake, when the Guru comes with the light of spiritual knowledge and shows us the real world (God), the illusion of the world disappears and we are in a blissful state forever.

It's hard to believe that there is only God and this world is non-existent. But let's take the example of a dream. As long as we are in the dream state, we never realise that it's not real. We go through all the emotions and experiences that are brought in our way in that state. We feel fear, sorrow, pain and all other emotions as real as they can be. But once we wake up and understand that it was all a dream, all our sorrows and fears go away, and the smile comes to our face. In the same way when we wake up to the true spiritual reality, we realise that this material world is not real and it has no more power to bind us.

In the Vedanta they say “Kevala Mokshapeksha Sankalpo Bandhah”, which means even the desire to be liberated is bondage. Why so? Because as long as you desire to be liberated, you still have the bondage. Spiritual liberation is not something to be achieved. It has only to be realised, because, that is the Ultimate Reality and the bondage is only an illusion.*



Sri Mathaji and devotees in 'Go-puja' in the Ashramam on Dec 03

Divine Mother Speaks **WHAT IS SADHANA?**

(Continued from the previous issue)

Japamala Prasada

We have talked about sadhana or spiritual practice at length. Now, we will discuss the qualities, a spiritual seeker (sadhaka) should develop and the ways to do sadhana.

All the spiritual seekers may not be educated and hence cannot read the books on the subject. But anybody can follow the instructions given by the Guru. A Satya Guru (true master) can transform our lives if we practise what he says. Gurudev will not tell us to follow severe austerities which we may not be able to do, but will tell us only such things which we can do. Our Guru Maharaj used to stress on the following three points mainly:



—One must silently chant the holy name of the Lord constantly - (smooth and constant like the oil flow from a bottle).

—One must develop equality towards all beings.

—The importance of prayer.

Prayer is nothing but an invocation to the Almighty Lord supplicating the well being of all with a sincere heart.

One should treat friends and foes equally. In olden days, in the Ashrams of holy sages (hermitages) tigers and deer, snake and mongoose and other animals with inherent enmity towards one another used to live together in perfect harmony. This indicates that we who are residents of Ashram should leave behind enmity and live in harmony. One should get rid of one's evil thoughts and develop good qualities. This can be achieved by constantly chanting the holy mantra given by our Guru. It is not enough if you chant the mantra speedily or count beads fast looking for the last bead. Such chanting or meditation will not give you any proper results. Why they say you have to chant constantly the holy name like the oil flow from a container is because when the oil flows you do not see any gap in the flow. Similarly when you do japam, the mind should not wander hither and thither in between the chants of the mantra.

Your mind should be fixed on what you are doing. Your thoughts should stand still; the counting of beads stops instantly when your mind gets fixed on your object of meditation.

A spiritual seeker should practise discipline and keep an eye on his senses constantly. All the five sense organs, namely eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin go outward and give us the knowledge of the external world. But meditation gives the inner view where we have to turn inwards to reach our goal. For this we need to gain control over the senses. But Sri Gurudev used to tell us not to do anything under duress as that will hit back with a spring like action. One has to contemplate upon one's actions and the transience of sense pleasures and slowly withdraw from the external world.

By keeping the company of the holy one can progress easily in the spiritual path. Self-analysis or 'Atma Vicharana' is the only way to get over maya or ignorance. Question yourself whether a particular thing is necessary for you or not: "Will my Gurudev approve of such a thought? Is it really what I need?" By constantly questioning yourself like that, you will get the answer. Find the faults of your mind with your mind itself. That way, your mind will be cleansed, and with a clean and pure mind you can achieve your goal of eternal peace and bliss.*



Sri Mathaji with Sri Deepthananda Saraswathi Swamiji, Ucchali, E.G.Dt., in Bhimavaram on 11-12-2017

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

January 2018

- 01 Mon - English New Year Day - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja,
Bhakta Samaradhana
- 02 Tue - Poornima - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 06 Sat - Aaradhana of Sri Tyagaraja Swami
- 11 Thu - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada
Puja
- 14 Sun - Bhogi - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja,
Bhakta Samaradhana,
08-00 P.M. Bhogi Pallu to Sri Sadguru Devulu
- 15 Mon - Sankranthi - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Satsangam,
Bhakta Samaradhana, Starting of Uttarayanam,
Masa Sivaratri - Ekaham at Pavuluru Branch
- 16 Tue - Kanuma - Amavasya
- 24 Wed - Radha Saptami
- 27 Sat - Bheeshma Ekadasi - Satsangam,
Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 31 Wed - Magha Poornima - Satsangam,
Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, Bhakta Samaradhana

February 2018

- 10 Sat - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam,
Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
- 13 Tue - Maha Sivaratri - 03.00 A.M. Maha Abhishekam to
Sri Sadguru Murty at Brindavanam with
Namaka and Chamaka
05.30 A.M. Sri Sadguru Pada Puja, later Samuhika
Ekadasa Rudrabhishekams to Sri Ramalingeswara
Swami,
11.00 A.M. Sahasra Ghatabhishekam, Laksha
Bilwarchana, Bhatka Samaradhana.
06.30 P.M. Samuhika Lela Kalyanam of
Sri Uma Ramalingeswara Swami, later nagarotsavam.

15Thu - Amavasya
18 Sun - Phalguna Suddha Tadiya - Aaradhana of
Sri Lalithananda Saraswathi Swamini,
Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja

March 2018

01 Thu - Holi Poornima - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
12 Mon - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam,
Sri Sadguru Pada Puja
15 Thu - Masa Sivaratri - Ekaham at Pavuluru Branch
17 Sat - Amavasya
18 Sun - Sri Vilambi Nama Ugadi - 11.00 A.M. Panchanga
Sravanam, Sri Sadguru Pada Puja,
Bhakta Samaradhana.
19 to 25 - Mouna Dhyana Saptaham
26 Mon - Srirama Navami - 05.00 A.M. Sri Sadguru
Pada Puja,
11.00 A.M. Samuhika Sri Sita Rama Kalyanams,
later Bhakta Samaradhana
31 Sat - Poornima - Sri Sadguru Pada Puja,
Bhakta Samaradhana

April 2018

10 Tue - Sri Guru Dasami - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru Pada
Pooja
14 Sat - Sani Trayodasi
16 Mon - Amavasya
18 Wed - Akshaya Tadiya - Sri Sadguru Pada Pooja,
Bhakta Samaradhana
20 Fri - Sankara Jayanthi, Pratishta Mahotsavam of Idol of
Sri Sadguru Maharaj - Satsangam,
Bhakta Samaradhana
28 Sat - Sani Trayodasi
29 Sun - Vysakha Guru Poornima - Satsangam, Sri Sadguru
Pada Pooja, Bhakta Samaradhana

Children's Section
Tales of Sri Ramakrishna
RENUNCIATION OF SAMSARA

Ramana Prasad

“How can one renounce family ties?” the wife asked her husband. She further said, “I am worried about my brother. He will be taking *Sanyasa* in about a week. He has started reducing his wants one by one. I don’t know how to stop him.”



The husband replied, “Don’t get worried unnecessarily about him. He will never take *Sanyas*. No one can become a *Sanyasi* in this manner”.

Wife: Then what is the way to become a *Sanyasi*?

“This is the way,” he said and tore the clothes he was wearing and donned a piece of cloth on his loin and walked out of the house.

Before leaving, he declared: “From today onwards all the womenfolk are my mothers.”*

DEVOTIONAL STORIES HOW TO GET SELF-REALISATION?

Ramana Prasad

Once upon a time, there lived a king who believed and practised Sanatana Dharma. He got an idea to get the painting, of Lord Krishna giving Gitopadesam to Arjuna, on the top of his palace. He called renowned painters and selected the best two among them for the purpose.

He called them and said, “I treat Bhagavadgita with great regard. I want to get ‘Gitopadesam’ painted and I want to spend my quiet moments observing the picture. Both of you start painting on two walls. The best painter will get a reward of Rs. 10,000. I am giving you six months time for the purpose.” They agreed and went away.

They started their work the next day. They had kept a veil between them so that there was no chance to copy each other’s



work. The king appointed a panel of expert judges to decide the best painting.

On the allotted day, the judges saw the painting of the first painter. It was so lively and it looked as if Lord Krishna himself had come there to give ‘Gitopadesam’ to Arjuna. The judges felt that it must fetch him the prize. They, however, decided to see the second painting also.

The second painter was eating well and was relaxing. The judges went there and opened the screen and found that he had not done any painting, but only rubbing the wall all those days. The wall was shining and the judges could see their faces clearly. The judges wondered, “Look, without painting anything or using any colours his work is so unique where one can see one’s own image.” The judges gave the reward to him. Beauty lies in making the given object more valuable and precious look instead of bringing a new object. And he did that.

A sadhaka who wants to realise the self need not bring any one, be it God within himself. That God is abiding in you as *Kshetrajna*. “*Ahamaatmaa Gudakesa! Sarva Bhutaasaya sthitaha*”, said Lord Krishna in ‘Bhagavadgita’. But man is not realising it as his mind is covered by the veil of ignorance (*Ajnana*). Owing to constant practice and Guru’s grace, when his mind gets pure he will see the effulgence of Atma like your own image in a clear mirror. That is *Atma sakshatkara*.

Moral: Keeping the mind pure is the only road to *Atma sakshatkara*.*



Sri Mathaji, with devotees performing Pada Puja during Satsang in Dirusumarru, W.G.Dt., on 14-12-2017.

DO GOOD TO EVEN THE WICKED

My dear Chiranjeevulaaraa:

Sri Babuji Maharaj would always advise His disciples not to harm any wicked person, however heinous his act may be. “In fact, you should conquer such people by being good to them. No doubt, evil has to be countered, but it should be done in such a way that the evil-doer would repent his wicked ways,” our Gurudev would emphasise. Let me retell you a fable from the Ramayana, which underlines this aspect.

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Once, a man was chased by a tiger in the forest. He ran for safety and took refuge on the branch of a tree. As he climbed the tree, he was shocked to notice a bear already sitting there. You can imagine his plight.

Unable to attack the man who had climbed the tree, the tiger looked up and saw the bear and the man perched on the same branch. The tiger asked the bear to push down the man, who was the common enemy of wild animals. But the bear refused, saying “It is my duty to protect the man who has taken refuge in my domain.”

After some time, the bear fell asleep. The tiger asked the man to push the bear down so that it could eat it up. “Once my hunger is satiated, I will not harm you and go my way,” the tiger told him.

Worried about his safety, the man pushed the sleeping bear down. Shaken from its sleep, the bear realised the danger but managed to hold on to another branch.

The tiger then shouted at the bear: “Look, how ungrateful he is, despite your giving him refuge. Now you should punish the ingrate by pushing him down.”

“It is true this man lacks gratitude, but I will not behave like him. It would be a greater deed to do a good in turn to those who harm one. For, thereby one would be able to reform the sinner,” said the bear.

Disappointed, the tiger left the place, and the man felt ashamed for his selfishness.

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Children, hope you liked the story. Actually this was narrated by Mother Sita to Hanuman, who came to announce the victory of

Sri Rama over Ravana. After detailing the end of the war, Hanuman sought permission to devour the rakshasis who were torturing her to accede to Ravana's desire. But the most merciful Mother Sita dissuaded Hanuman from such an act, saying "Good people would not be vengeful towards the wicked ones for doing harm. These she-demons were only obeying their master's order."

Yours affectionately,
Maathula*

OBITUARY

Sri Nadimpalli Satya Suryanarayana Raju (M.D.), aged 77 years, an ardent devotee of Sri Babuji and resident of Srikaligardens attained Gurusayujyam on Sunday 29-10-2017.

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

OBITUARY

Sri Kaza Venkata Subrahmanya Janakiram, aged 72 years, an ardent devotee of Sri Babuji attained Gurusayujyam on Saturday 09-12-2017.

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

OBITUARY

Smt Gundu Gayatri (wife of Sri G.Y.Narayana), aged 75 years, an ardent devotee of Sri Babuji and resident of Srikaligardens, attained Gurusayujyam on Monday 18-12-2017.

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

Babuji's Fables

EACH ONE IS DIVINE

Once there was a Chola king in South India who had great respect for sages. One day he invited a sage to his court, did pooja, fed him with a sumptuous meal and honoured him with a very expensive gold embroidered shawl.

The sage, who was always in a state of bliss, did not pay any attention to these things. After all this was over, he started walking back to the forest. The king was following the sage as a matter of respect. Just then a beggar woman came towards them and sought alms. The sage gave away the expensive shawl given to him by the king to that woman without a second thought.

Seeing this, the king felt insulted and angrily asked the sage why he gave such an expensive shawl to that beggar woman. But the sage, with a smiling face, answered, "Oh king! I gave the shawl to the Universal Mother and not a beggar woman."

The king realised the truth and felt ashamed. He profusely apologised to the sage.

Moral: When one sees only the omnipresent God everywhere, he will not notice any differences in colour, caste, creed, status, etc. Such a soul will treat gold and mud alike.

—Retold by Dr. Swarnamukhi Prasada



Sri Mathaji performing abhishekam in Sri Ganga Bhramaramba Sri Ramalingeswara temple, Dirusumarru on 14-12-2017

Down Memory Lane **BHAGAVADGITA**

Sushumna Prasada

Once on the occasion of Sri Gita Jayanthi, Lord Babuji addressed the gathering of devotees on the essence and importance of the Bhagavadgita. Guru Maharaj spoke thus:

Bhagavadgita means the Divine Song. There are numerous books of philosophy belonging to various countries and religions. Among all the books of philosophy, Gita has the unique importance and universal appeal; it contains the essence of all the Upanishads. That's why it is said

“Sarvopanishado Gavō
Dogdha Gopalanandanah
Parthovatsah, Sudheerbhokta
Dugdham Gitamrutammahat’

It means that all the Upanishads are compared to a cow. Gopalanandana milks the cow. Arjuna is compared to a calf, and all the intelligent seekers of Truth are fed by this nectarine milk.

We think generally calm, undisturbed and secluded places as the congenial atmosphere for the teaching of philosophy. But Bhagavadgita was pronounced in a totally different situation. Gitacharya Krishna taught practical philosophy on the fierce battlefield of Kurukshetra where both the armies (Pandavas and Kauravas) were ready to fight. It would indeed be astonishing, how a Guru could teach philosophy to a disciple while the armies on either side were battle-ready and how a disciple could absorb it in the right spirit. It was not meant for the welfare, peace and Bliss of one person but for the welfare, peace and Bliss of the entire humanity.

Figuratively speaking, the life itself is a battlefield in which there is constant clash between good and bad qualities and bad qualities try to dominate. The instinct of inquiry generates from a mood of sorrow. When a person gets steeped in sorrow, he loses his balance of mind and needs the support of a spiritual Master (Guru) to attain peace and perform duty in the right direction. It is deep sorrow that makes a man to have deep insight and courage to face the problems of life with equanimity.

Bhagavadgita is a spiritual classic by itself and remains above all the literary format. It does not come under the class of an epic, a drama, a novel, poetry, biography or autobiography. The Divine Song cannot be classified under any of these heads. Its literary essence is matchless.

We come across only four characters in the Bhagavadgita - Dhritarashtra, Sanjaya, Bhagavan and Arjuna. The name of Krishna never comes into focus. Throughout it is mentioned as 'Bhagavan Uvacha'.

It is indicative of the fact that it is not the preaching of an individual. It is a melodious Divine Song to be heard and benefited by the entire humanity and that it is not meant for a single person or family.

One seeks the advice of a spiritual Master when he is steeped in deep sorrow, unable to take a decision by himself. Only when a person is overwhelmed by tragic feelings, he is at a loss to know what to do and helplessly seeks the guidance of the Master. Arjuna was a representative of the human race in such a state. Hence Bhagavadgita commences with Arjuna Vishada Yoga.

The great book of philosophy begins symbolically with the words of a blind man: 'Dhritarashtra Uvacha'. The phrase represents a man who has deep attachment to the physical body and material world.

The very first sloka of the Gita proves the Truth, 'Dharmayeve Jayathe'; for, the sloka begins with the word 'Dharma' (Dharmakshetre) and ends with the word 'Sanjaya'. Dhritarashtra was one who believed what did not belong to him as his own. Arjuna was the most fortunate man for having Bhagavan Himself as his charioteer who led him in the right path of life. Arjuna requested Lord Krishna to take the chariot in the middle of the two armies to observe keenly the so-called enemies.

Like any other person, he was caught in the web of illusion which overwhelmed him with the feeling of 'I' and 'Mine', steeping him in a sea of sorrow. Total self- surrender at the feet of the Divine Lord was the only means of Salvation. This truth was proved by Arjuna who acted as the representative of the entire human race. He was caught in the web of attachment towards kith and kin and forgot his duty of waging a war with opponents. Unable to know

what to do, he finally surrendered at the lotus feet of Bhagavan to enlighten him of his duty.

Karpanyadoshopahata Swabhavah
Pruchhamitvam Dharmasammudha Chetah
Yachreya ssyannischitam Bruhitanme
Sishyasteham Sadhimam Tvaam Prapannam

(chapter 2, slokam 7)

Having realised that undue attachment made him lose his inherent heroic nature, and unable to decide what was Dharma and Adharma, he sought the guidance of Lord Krishna. Hence with total self-surrender at the lotus feet of Bhagavan, Arjuna requested Him to enlighten and lead him on the right path.

Then Bhagavan took upon His shoulders the responsibility of saving Arjuna, who was getting suffocated in the web of attachment (I and Mine).

Bhagavadgita consists of eighteen chapters which are grouped into three sestets. They are known as Karma shatka, Gnana shatka and Bhakti shatka. Man is endowed with the capacity to attain salvation through the means of Karma, Gnana and Bhakti. Man cannot lead the life without doing Karma (action).

Gitacharya taught humanity through the medium of Arjuna to lead a life of action without anticipating any fruitful result. Action should be done as a part of duty without expecting any benefit. In other words, it is known as 'Nishkama Karma'. This is the right means to attain bliss and salvation. Trigunas, i.e. three qualities of Satva, Raja and Tamas, are responsible for the sort of action a man leads in life. Hence these qualities are to be kept under control to lead a life on the path of Truth. Hence a man cannot escape his duty. Waging a war to uphold Dharma is the right means of action for Arjuna. Hence in this battle of life, you should not try to escape your duty (karma) but act as a brave soldier to fight against Adharma for the establishment of peace and Bliss. Deep-rooted desire (Kama) leads to anger (Krodha) and gains absolute domination over limbs (Indriyas) and mind, the leader of the limbs.

Bhagavan advised Arjuna to gain absolute control over the mind with the aid of intellect and conquer desire. Action done without

expectation of the fruitful result (Nishkama Karma) leads to Gnana (wisdom). The roots of such action sprout as the Tree of Devotion which yields the fruit of Wisdom. It was the initiation of the Lord in the fierce battle of life that made Arjuna a matchless warrior who won victory over the enemies, 'I' and 'Mine', selfishness and attachment, with the weapon of action (Karma), devotion (Bhakti) and wisdom (Gnana).

Action, Devotion and Wisdom are not separate entities. They are inter-related. Devotion is likened to the body, wisdom is likened to the head which moves with the spirit of action. Bhagavadgita does not represent or support a particular religion. It suggests the right path of Bliss and peace and has universal application. The Gita is above class, caste, creed and religion. It contains the essence of practical philosophy which moulds a man into an ideal person who leads a life of selfless action decorated with the diamond of devotion and studded with the jewels of wisdom.

Lord Babuji concluded the discourse thus: "Understanding the essence and following the spirit of Bhagavadgita will make a man an ideal spiritual hero."*



Sri Mathaji with Sri Jyothirmayananda Mathaji, Palakole during Satsang in Dirusumarru on 14-12-2017

WAITING FOR SRI RAMA—XVI

(Continued from the previous issue)

Ramaswami Sampath

What a great war it was! Kalidasa, the eminent Sanskrit poet, who was famous for using similes ('Upamaa Kalidasasya'), unable to find a simile for describing the Rama-Ravana battle in his 'Raghuvamsam', says that it was just like Rama-Ravana battle!

In the fierce conflict, thousands of rakshasas and vanaras were killed. Rama's accurate archery and his skilful fighting tactics were praised even by the commanders of Ravana's army. Enraged by this, Ravana thought of an evil plan: '...Sita is ignoring me because of her deep faith in Rama's valour. If only I can convince her by my magical powers that Rama has been slain, she would certainly change her mind. In that case Rama would die of grief or end the battle abruptly....' Thus building castles in the air, Ravana commanded a wizard, Vidyutjihva by name, to fabricate a severed head looking like Rama's and place it before Sita. When such an illusion was created before her, Sita started crying uncontrollably.

Ravana then came on the scene and addressed her: "O daughter of the noble Janaka, look here the head of your beloved husband whom I have conquered. There is no possibility of redemption for you. At least now, accept me." As the demon king was terrorising Sita, a spy came there and whispered in the ear of Ravana that monkey hordes had entered the Lanka fortress. Immediately Ravana rushed out to curb the invasion. For such wizardry to succeed, the 'kartha' is to be present there. In the absence of Ravana, the illusion dissipated, resulting in the disappearance of the fake head. Sarama, the wife of Vibheeshana and one of the guards at Asokavanam, consoled Sita by explaining the magic of Vidyutjihva.

Indignant over the failure of the illusion created by him, Ravana reached the battlefield and directly faced Rama for the first time. Both were engaged in a terrific stand-off. The arrows of Rama decimated the forces of Ravana. The charioteer of Ravana was felled by one of the arrows, and thereafter the chariot itself was smashed to smithereens. All the weapons of the Lanka ruler could not prove a match to Rama's darts. Finally, Ravana attacked Rama by hurling Chandrahassam, the powerful sword gifted to him by Lord Siva at the time of the demon's attempt to lift Mount Kailas and take it to Lanka. That 'asthra', too, failed miserably.

Looking at Ravana, totally disarmed, with no chariot and no supporting soldier, the all-merciful Rama spoke thus: “O, ruler of Lanka, you are miserably standing alone, tired and having lost all your weapons, chariot and soldiers. My mind revolts at the idea of slaying a helpless but capable warrior like you. You also need some rest. Hence, go now and come tomorrow equipping yourself well.”

Crestfallen and hurt more by the words than by the arrows of Rama, Ravana slowly walked out of the battlefield, brooding over his plight: ‘I have now become the butt of Sita’s ridicule, after all the bragging of my valour before her a few days ago. O Mahadev! Why have You forsaken Your devotee?’ He then retired to his place of worship and cried: “All the extraordinary weapons acquired by virtue of my austerities have turned mere sticks. Even Your gift, Chandrahasam, has been rendered useless. You have fooled me by declaring that the sword would definitely finish anybody who challenges me.” Then Ravana heard a celestial voice: “Lord Siva’s promise would never fail. He had instructed you that it would kill only the first challenger. When you had used the sword against Jatayu, it did kill the noble bird, and had thus lost its power.”

Next morning, the demon king ordered that his younger and mighty brother Kumbhakarna, who was under the spell of a prolonged sleep, be roused. The rakshasas, after straining for hours, woke up the sleeping giant and told him of his elder brother’s command.

Kumbhakarna went to Ravana’s durbar and sought to know the purpose of waking him up, “You seem to be in distress. Tell me the reason for your sadness.”

“Brother, with full faith in your capabilities I have woken you up. The time has come to utilise your valour. You go to the battlefield immediately and liquidate those human insects Rama and Lakshmana and the monkey hordes, who have come to liberate Sita.”

Kumbhakarna replied: “I had already warned you against the cowardly act of abducting Sita in the absence her husband. That treacherous act has become a curse on our rakshasa race.”

“This is not the time to discuss the merits and demerits of how I brought Sita to Lanka. If you are unwilling to help me now, you can have your sumptuous lunch and go to bed,” said Ravana in an angry tone.

“Brother, don’t get annoyed. I only tried to impress on you that you should have defeated Rama and brought Sita as war trophy. You know pretty well that I would be ever ready to give my life for

you. I am proceeding to the battlefield and will see you only after defeating the Ayodhya princes. In case, I become a martyr to the cause, I beseech you to restore Sita to Rama and save our race.”

On seeing the battle-readiness of his elder brother, Vibheeshana came to him and said: “Brother, I know you are aware of Dharma and have even advised our eldest brother to abandon sinful ways. Having known righteousness, is it proper for you to be on the side of ‘adharmā’? Like me you should also fight for justice to Sita. This way you can save yourself.”

Kumbhakarna embraced Vibheeshana and firmly told him: “I am not prepared to orphan our eldest brother. It is my conviction that Dharma would not taste defeat in any circumstances. I appreciate your decision to be on the side of Dharma. I can gauge the outcome of this war. It is good that at least you will be spared to perform the funeral rites for the rakshasa race. Adieu.” Vibheeshana bowed to his brother and walked towards Rama. [This conversation between Vibheeshana and Kumbhakarna is found only in the ‘Kamba Ramayanam’.]

Kumbhakarna devastated the monkey soldiers in large number during his battle with Rama. The giant threw huge boulders on the vanara sena and many monkeys were crushed. Like flies, they fell into the fire of the giant’s anger. With a view to save the monkeys from further damage, Rama shot an arrow that cut off Kumbhakarna’s head.

Meanwhile, Ravana executed a dirty trick to confuse Sita. He dressed up a rakshasa as her father Janaka, who appeared before her and tearfully appealed thus: “My darling child, if you desire that me and our Mithila kingdom should be saved, you should forget Rama and accept Ravana. Otherwise, not only the subjects of Mithila but also Bharata and the people of Ayodhya would perish.” Being aware that her wise father would not talk like that, Sita abused the ‘Maya Janaka’ in choice epithets. At that time, the news of Kumbhakarna’s death reached Ravana and hence he had to leave Asokavanam. After his exit, the ‘Maya Janaka’ was exposed and the impersonating demon took to heels. Sita heaved a sigh of relief and felt sorry for the mean tactics of the demons.

The demise of Kumbhakarna demoralised Ravana who sent more and more demons to the battlefield and all of them took refuge in Lord Yama. ‘Who are these Rama and Lakshmana? From where have they secured such strength?’ Ravana muttered to himself and called his dearest son Indrajit. “My son, now you alone can save my honour now,” he said.

“As long as I am alive you need not worry, father. Bless me and I will return and inform you of my victory over Rama and Lakshmana,” Indrajit assured Ravana. Well versed also in the art of waging war using his power of magic, Indrajit, without being noticed by Rama and Lakshmana, tied them down with ‘Nagasthra’ (serpent dart). He then rushed to his father and boasted: “Father, it is all over. The Ayodhya princes cannot escape death now. You can relax now.”

Looking at Rama and Lakshmana lying motionless on the ground, Vibheeshana and Jambavan were at a loss to know how to save the two princes. An unfazed Hanuman prayed to Garuda, the foe of snakes, and the huge bird appeared on the scene. The moment Garuda came, the snakes embedded in the ‘Nagasthra’ ran helter-skelter, and Rama and Lakshmana regained consciousness.

Like his father, Indrajit also performed a trick to scare the monkey hordes. By his power of creating illusion, he made a dummy image of Sita and severed its head before the monkeys. Shocked by this, the monkeys ran to Rama and informed him about the incident. Rama was rendered speechless, but Vibheeshana assured him: “Sir, this is a trick of Indrajit. Ravana would never allow the killing of Sita.”

Relieved by Vibheeshana’s words, Rama and Lakshmana challenged Indrajit, who was frustrated by the failure of his ‘Nagasthra’ and illusory tactics. The valorous son of Ravana now took out the ‘Brahmasthra’ and hit Lakshmana, who fell unconscious by its power. When Rama saw his brother in that condition, he lamented over Lakshmana’s end and felt like terminating the war. Vibheeshana consoled Rama by saying, “Sir, since the face of your brother is still shining, I am sure he can be revived.”

He then called his personal physician to examine Lakshmana. “There is still life but time is running out. Lakshmana can be saved if we can procure herbs from the Sanjivini hillock of the Himalayas, before dawn tomorrow,” said the physician. When Hanuman heard this, he immediately flew over the sky. On reaching the Sanjivini hill, he could not trace those herbs. Suddenly it struck him to lift the hillock and take it to Lanka. Even as Sanjivini was landing on Lanka, there were indications of Lakshmana reviving. The physician collected the herbs and applied a paste of them on Lakshmana’s face. Everybody was happy, and hailed Hanuman as ‘Lakshmana Praanadhata’ (savior of Lakshmana).

Hearing the revival of Lakshmana, Indrajit decided to conduct a sacrifice in the Nikumbhila temple to please 'kshudra devatas' (demoniac gods). When this information reached Vibheeshana, he was unnerved, because once Indrajit completed the ritual he would become invincible. Instantly Vibheeshana advised Lakshmana to quell Indrajit's efforts. Accompanied by Hanuman, Sugriva and Vibheeshana, Lakshmana extinguished the sacrificial fire. Thus prevented from continuing the sacrifice, Indrajit fiercely attacked Lakshmana. After exhausting all weapons, Lakshmana took up Brhamasthra and snapped the head of the enemy.

Practically left alone and mourning the demise of his dearest son, Ravana wondered for a while whether Rama was Siva, Narayana or Brahma. Convincing himself that none of the Trimurthis could kill him, he readied himself for the last-ditch battle with Rama.

Indra, who happened to see a bare-footed Rama standing on the ground and fighting the mighty demon, sent his charioteer Maatali with his vehicle. Rama thanked Indra for the gesture and waged a bitter battle. When he found Ravana invincible despite severing his heads, Maatali suggested the use of the Brahmasthra. That sealed the fate of the Lanka ruler. The celestials showered flower petals on Rama for fulfilling their wish.

Vibheeshana, though feeling sad for the end of his eldest brother, was reluctant to perform the last rites for his crime of abducting Mother Sita. Rama gently admonished him: "Your brother was a great warrior and with his end my enmity towards him has vanished. The mighty soul deserves to be elevated by your conducting the funeral, as you are the sole surviving kin of Ravana. If you still hesitate, I will conduct the rites myself, because your brother is also my brother."

Mandodari, the queen of Lanka, who came to the battlefield, fell on the remains of her husband and wailed: "My lord, you refused to heed my warning not to harass Sita, the virtuous consort of Rama, and so you have to pay this heavy price."

Rama was touched by the sight, and assisted Vibheeshana in completing the obsequies for Ravana.

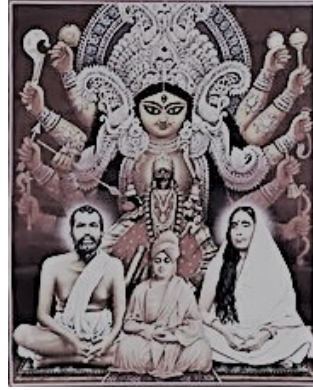
- to be concluded

GLORIOUS DEVOTEES SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

C. V. Ramana Babu

(Translation of Telugu original by Jagam)

Khudiram Chatopadhyaya and Chandramathi Devi, a pious and veracious couple of Kamarpukur village in Bengal, were blessed with a son on February 18, 1836. He was named Gadadhar. During boyhood itself, he acquired leadership qualities. He was a lover of beautiful nature. Imitation, hilarity, drawing, clay idol preparation, street play presentation, singing hymns, meditation were his hobbies. He was more interested in studying mythologies and exposition of various subjects than in routine school education. He even once replied to his brother Ramakumar, “I don’t want this food-earning education. I want to earn only the eternal and virtuous knowledge of Truth.”



Gadadhar was very courageous both physically and mentally. He truly condemned the ‘Ghosha’ system (women staying behind ‘purdah’ or curtain). He was a true reformer of society. During the thread-wearing ceremony (Upanayanam), he received his first alms from a woman blacksmith, as promised to her, without caring the opposition from his near and dear ones. He would feel very happy when he saw sages and monks. He experienced true contemplation on three occasions: First, when he saw a group of white cranes flying in dark, black sky during a monsoon, which looked to him as a garland of pearls; Second, when he played the role of Lord Siva in a drama; and the Third, when he sang in praise of Siva during a pilgrimage.

Knowing about his sincere devotion, Queen Raasmani appointed him as the chief priest of the Kalimatha Temple, constructed by her in 1855 in Dakshineswar, near Calcutta. It helped him a lot to know about God. He used to spend most of the time in meditation and ‘sankirtana’. During nights, he would go to the nearby forest and meditate for a long time, removing all his robes and even

the sacred thread. Not liking it, his friend Hrudiram tried in many ways to stop his way of meditation, but in vain.

Gadadhar never followed the normal customs while worshipping God. He would question himself “Is Kalika Devi a mere idol of rock or really the embodiment of Goddess? If She is a real Goddess, why does not She appear to me?” Disgusted, one day he decided to end his life. At that moment, suddenly, he saw and realised God in the form of vast and vital ocean. His happiness knew no bounds. He wanted to see God everywhere and always. His anguish was so great that he could not even worship the Goddess in the temple.

Madhuranath, the queen’s son-in-law and manager of the temple, understood Gadadhar’s problem and asked him to retire from the temple duty. He made all arrangements, required for the meditation of Gadadhar, who would tell his disciples, “Your anguish to see God must be so serious that you should feel the pain of it.”

Once, he went to his village to see his parents. They thought that if he got married, his mind might be distracted from God-mania. So, he was married to a five-year old girl Saradamani Devi, daughter of Ramachandra Mukhopadhyaya, of the nearby village. But, soon it was proved to be a wrong decision. He went back to Dakshineswar in 1860. His craze towards God grew more and more. As if ordained by God, preceptors would come to Dakshineswar in search of him. A woman monk, by name Bhairavi Brahmani, who was a great scholar in many ‘tantras’, was his first preceptor. He mastered all the ‘tantras’ very easily under her training. With this, a firm conviction entered his mind: “Every woman is a form of the Almighty Goddess.” Bhairavi Brahmani, in his companionship, corrected the flaws in her character and improved her dispassion. At a meeting of scholars, she declared that Gadadhar was an incarnation of God.

In 1864, he came in contact with a great sage Totapuri. As guided by the Lord, Totapuri initiated Gadadhar to asceticism. Under his guidance, Gadadhar learnt ‘nirvikalpa samadhi’, the most difficult and ultimate of all ‘Yogas’ in just three days. Totapuri, who would never and nowhere stay for more than three days, spent a year in the company of Gadadhar, attracted by his genius. Totapuri learnt and practised the feelings of ‘Saguna Brahma’ and ‘Jaganmata’ under the guidance of Gadadhar. He even learnt the intricacies of true devotion from Gadadhar. Much impressed by his devotion and mastery, Totapuri christened Gadadhar as ‘Sri Ramakrishna’.

In 1866, Sri Ramakrishna practised Islam and Christianity and declared that the access of all the religions was one and the same. In 1873, he performed 'Shodasi Puja', viewed the Goddess 'Parameswari' in his wife Saradamani Devi and so performed the worship to her only. She thought that her husband was 'Parameswara' Himself and used to serve Him with that feeling.

Many 'Sadhakas' (trainees), monks and scholars were much impressed by the discussions they had with him. He never delivered long discourses. Everybody realised that Sri Ramakrishna was a celestial person. He would be mentally peaceful in any circumstance - sad or happy. No wealth or woman could divert his mind. He would treat both mud and gold equally and throw them away in the Ganga, as they were not of any help to realise God. All women appear to him like 'Jaganmata'. He was very veracious like Harishchandra.

In 1875, Sri Ramakrishna met Kesab Chandra Sen, a great orator, scholar and leader of the Brahmo Samaj. Through his discourses and writings Sen declared Ramakrishna's greatness to the world. Then onwards a sea of people used to come to Dakshineswar to see Ramakrishna. Pratapchandra Mazumdar, Sivanadha Sastry, Vijayakrishna Gopalaswamy, Debendranath Tagore, Eswara Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Michael Madhusudhana Dutt, Aswini Kumar Dutt and Girish Chandra Bose were a few among the elite who visited Ramakrishna.

Narendranadh Dutt (later known as Vivekananda), for whose arrival Ramakrishna was anxiously waiting for a long time, met Sri Ramakrishna. He was much impressed by Ramakrishna in the first instance itself. He along with some other boys became ascetics in Ramakrishna's Ashram. Vivekananda was the blue-eyed boy of Ramakrishna. Once, Vivekananda wanted to test Ramakrishna. He put a coin under his mattress without his knowledge. Ramakrishna sat on it and immediately jumped from the mattress, as if stung by a scorpion. He sat on it only after the coin was removed, as per his order. Disciples who saw it were astonished at his allergy to precious metals and wealth. He was so close to the disciples that they treated him as their only well-wisher and loving friend. He never felt of himself to be a 'Guru' or scholar. He felt that he was only an implement in the hands of 'Jaganmatha'. He would accept the disciples only when they succeeded in his tough tests. He wanted

that his disciples should be role models to the world. So, he would observe their daily chores carefully.

Sri Ramakrishna would talk to devotees with love, affection and according to their age and the level of their minds. Devotees from various religions used to come to him for hearing his discourses and getting their doubts clarified. He would tell them that only through sincere prayer and meditation one could realise God and reach His abode. He would love each and everyone equally without any discrimination. His discussions were full of humour, jokes, examples and impressive stories. The audience would feel happy in his presence forgetting the time and all their worries and problems. He would even dance while singing in praise of Kalimatha.

He would talk about the forms of God (Saguna and Nirguna), intricacies of 'Vedanta' in a simple and grasping manner and language. During discussions, he would sometimes slip into deep meditation. He would keep the things in the house very neatly and in the fixed places only. His love towards the devotees was so great that he never cared for his food and sleep. So, his health gradually deteriorated. By 1884 his name became very popular among the devotees, throughout the world.

In 1885, a lump developed in his throat. In spite of treatment by eminent doctors in Calcutta, there was no sign of improvement. It started growing in size and paining his body. But, the physical pain never distracted his mind from the divine bliss. The doctors and disciples advised him to take rest. But, he would not heed their advice. He would even say, "What if this body dies? I don't care. I am prepared to take the birth of a dog even thousand times, so as to help at least one living being."

The young disciples, under the leadership of Narendranadh, used to serve him during the treatment. The well-to-do families would bear the expenses for his treatment.

On January 1, 1886, he blessed the devotees who came to him and made them realise God, in themselves. Later, for the welfare of humankind, he presented his celestial powers to his loving and most eligible disciple Narendranadh. By then itself, Narendranadh experienced 'Nirvikalpa Samadhi' (the state of being without any thoughts or feelings in mind) by the grace of the Guru.

On August 16, 1886, Sri Ramakrishna's soul merged in 'Parabrahman', shedding the mortal coils. He never wrote anything and delivered long discourses.

Though he is not physically present among us, Sri Ramakrishna's messages are very popular. Some of his tenets, collected and preserved by his devotees, are as follows:

Brahman is omnipresent and the only pivot for all the beings in the universe. It is the only reason for all birth, existence and death. That is why it is called as 'Jagatpati' and 'Jaganmatha'. God will descend to earth in the form of 'Mahatmas' (great human beings) to teach 'Dharma' and 'Bhakti' to the people. Have faith in God and in yourself. You are strong. Strength is virtue. Weakness is sin. Never feel you are a sinner. It is bad to feel so. With meditation, you can realise yourself. It is a sin to call a man 'sinner' as everyone is God's child. Sacrifice lust for woman and wealth. It leads to dispassion. Dispassion leads to unselfishness. In turn, it leads to morality and principled living. It leads to universal peace and happiness. The life of any person who cannot realise God in himself is useless.

With the number of His disciples growing, he was affectionately called 'Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa'.*



Sri Mathaji with devotees during 'Samoohika Kumkum puja and Sadguru pada puja' in Sri Ganga Bhramaramba Sri Ramalingeswara Temple in Dirusumarru on 14-12-2017.

BHAJA GOVINDAM!

Ramana Prasad



Sloka-8

*Kate kaantaa kaste putrah
Samsaaroyamativa vichitrah
Kasya twam kuta aayatah
Tatvam chintaya tadiha bhratah!!*

Sri Adi Sankaraacharya extorts, "O man! Start thinking of your real state. Who is your wife? Who is your son? From where have you come? When you do this, you will realise that you came alone. When you got married, your wife entered into your life followed by son. You do not know how you came into this world. Strange indeed are the ways of life. The more you think, the more you will realise the transient nature of the world. You will come to know of the Truth."

Says Sarada Mata: "These earthly ties are transitory. Today they seem to be the be-all and end-all of life and tomorrow they vanish. Your real tie is with God."*

-to be continued

CUTS WIFE'S HAND FOR INSULTING DEVOTEE

-Ramaswami S

In Pennagaram village (in modern Dharmapuri district of Tamil Nadu), there lived Kalikkambar, a devotee of Lord Siva. Belonging to the trader community he was rich and munificent. He spent most of his resources in entertaining Siva bhaktas visiting the village. Any devotee knocking at his door would be received by Kalikkambar with due honours. It was his practice to wash the devotee's feet, before ushering him in. His wife would pour the water from a pitcher with which the feet of the visitor would be washed, and the couple would reverentially sprinkle the 'pada tirtham' on their heads. Thereafter,



the visitor would be fed sumptuously and requested to take rest for some time, with Kalikkambar performing the fanning service to the resting devotee. By virtue of being a good host to Siva devotees, his house was sought after by bhaktas coming to the village from far off places.

One day, a Siva bhakta came to Pennagaram, and Kalikkambar received him with usual enthusiasm. As he wanted to do 'pada prakshaalanam' to the visitor, he asked his wife to bring water. When the wife saw the visiting devotee, she was perplexed because he was their household servant some years ago. After a tiff with Kalikkambar he left the job and not to be seen for a long time. Recalling the circumstances that led to his dismissal from service, Kalikkambar's wife hesitated to pour the water from the pitcher.

Kalikkambar, who was sitting at the feet of the visiting devotee and waiting for water to wash them, was annoyed at the delay on the part of his wife. He then looked at his wife and the devotee and immediately realised the reason for her hesitation.

Without uttering a word, he took the pitcher from her hands and kept it on the floor, and told her: "Aren't you ashamed to ill-treat the guest, who is a Siva devotee, like this? No doubt, he was our servant some years ago, but now he is a bhakta wearing the sacred ashes on his forehead. By hesitating to pour the water, you

have insulted Lord Siva Himself. I have to punish you.” So saying Kalikkambar asked his wife to show the hand that did not perform its duty. When she obeyed the order instantly, in a trice, he cut the hand with a knife taken from a nearby window sill.

He then wanted to wash the visitor’s feet pouring the water himself, but the devotee had rushed out, feeling guilty.

Writhing in pain caused by the severed hand, Kalikkambar’s wife went into the ‘puja’ room and cried before the Lord: “O, Merciful One, forgive me for the sin I have committed. Once a person wears the ‘vibhuthi’ he or she becomes Your devotee and is free from blemishes, irrespective of his or her past. For insulting Your devotee I have received the correct punishment from my husband. I beseech Thee to take the life out of this sinner.”

Pleased by her remorseful prayer and Kalikkambar’s steadfast devotion, the Lord made His appearance and told them: “I am delighted by the devotion of both of you. The severed hand of hers will be restored. You both continue to do service to My devotees for some more time after which you can join Me in Kailasam.”

Kalikkambar thus became one of the sixty-three ‘Nayanaars’ (great Siva devotees).*



Sri Mathaji in the house of a devotee Sri Kalidindi Perraju, Dirusumarru, where Sri Babuji camped way back during 1950 and performed Dasara Pujas

CLEAR YOUR DOUBTS

Devotee: Amma, what do you mean by ‘Bhava Samadhi’?

Sri Mataji: ‘Samadhi’ is meditative trance wherein a person’s mind is fixed on the Lakshyartham, losing all contact with the external world, and immersed in Divine Bliss. It is also a state where the intellect turns into equanimity (‘Sama’ = equal, ‘Dhee’ = intellect).



We will take the example of the Gopikas of Brindavan. Their immersion in the thought of Lord Krishna was so complete that their mind and intellect were filled with Sri Krishna and nothing else. If they saw a rose, they saw the Divine feet of the Lord in it. They saw the smiling face of Sri Krishna in each and everything around them and in their own self. That is ‘Bhava Samadhi’.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa would become entranced on seeing a flock of birds flying in the sky. There is a photograph that captured Him lost in a trance as He raised His hand. He was able to move in and out of trance at will. Even the dust at the feet of such Divine Souls is venerable.

There is a difference between ‘Samadhi’ and ‘Nidra’ (sleep). In Samadhi, there is awareness of the Absolute; it leaves one active and vigorous. There is no snoring in ‘Samadhi’, whereas in sleep, there is snoring and lethargy. When one experiences true ‘Samadhi’, even for a few minutes, it will make him or her energetic. Even if that person doesn’t sleep for a month, he or she will not be sleep-deprived. *

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