

ஸ்ரீ ஹரி:

Madhuranurali

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Rama

With the Blessings of
HH Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji

Madhuramana Mahaneyar

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From Conversations with
Sri Swamiji

It is said in Vedanta, while talking about self-realisation, that the question "Who am I?" has to be asked first and foremost. Generally, all of us tend to think of this body as "I". However, we can easily set aside that the body is not "I". When death occurs, the body does lie on the ground. But that body isn't aware of anything that happens there. Hence, this body is not "I". That being the case, when death occurs, the breath called 'prana'(life) stops..isn't it. So, "I" is not the 'prana' either. How can this be understood? We are in deep sleep. A thief comes then. He steals objects lying close to us and goes. In that state of deep sleep, our breathing continues to happen. If "I" is the breath, we should have been aware of the thief. From this it is clear that this 'prana' is not "I". Okay, then is our mind the "I"? No, it isn't. A surgery is performed. We are given anaesthesia. We lose consciousness fully. Once we gain consciousness, thoughts begin to surface. So, we can live even

when the mind is not functioning. Therefore, this mind is not "I" either. Doing 'vichara' in this manner - we can say "I" is not this- body, breath, mind, intellect- by negating all these, that which cannot be negated- that which remains, that becomes "I". "I" is that blissful 'atma'. This is the way shown by vedanta. While vedanta says so, we have to analyse our state.

Many of us are drawn by our senses, and intensely attracted to see various sights, taste various food items, listen to varied things and enjoying various luxuries. Because of this desire for worldly pleasures we are born again and again in this world. We are all aware that everything in this world including our body is going to perish. It cannot be denied that anything that is born has to die and we are witness to it. However, as Srimad Bhagavatham says , "PASHYANNAPI NA PASHYATHI" - we see all this and pretend not to see them and continue to exist in this world. We continue to desire worldly things again and again and experience sorrows because of it.

In such a state, even a thought to seek darshan of the Lord or to attain self-realisation is impossible. Infact, it is only because of Bhagavan's 'maaya' that our vision is always outward. He has cast the web of 'maaya' over us. Unless he who has cast this 'maaya' over us removes it, there is no way

out. Bhagavan himself has said that it is difficult to cross over this 'maaya' in Bhagavad Gita as 'mama maya duratyaya' . It is impossible for us to escape the clutches of this 'maaya' without Bhagavan's grace. The only way is to surrender to Bhagavan saying' "Lord! Please rescue me from this maaya". However, even such a thought arises only because of the divine grace . The simplest, sweetest way to receive that grace of Bhagavan is only 'nama sankeertanam'. Because, this does not impose any rules. Anyone can do it anywhere at anytime. By chanting the Lord's nama incessantly, we can attain that high state attained by vedantis. Today when 'vedanta vichara'(philosophical inquiry) and yoga shastra is not practical, the name of the lord that bestows his grace on us becomes essential. In kali yuga, there are many things that turn our vision outwards. Our ancestors very well aware of this , have said that this Bhagavata Dharma bestowed by the grace of Bhagavan, this easy path of nama sankeertan as the dharma for this yuga.

Incessant chanting of Bhagavan's name is the simplest way for us to do bakthi. By doing such bakthi , we can be recipients of Bhagavan's grace , cross over 'maaya' and easily attain the Lotus Feet of the Lord.

Why does Lord Shiva have Nandiswara, the bull as his 'vaahana' (vehicle)?

The general explanation given for this is that 'rishaba'(the bull) is the swarupa(of dharma. Lord Parameswara is seated on a bull which has for it's legs 'thava'(penance), 'sathya'(truth), 'dhaya'(mercy) and 'shaucha'(purity). It is generally said that Lord Eswara is seated on 'dharma'. But, there is a tattva(philosophy) behind it.How does Lord Parameswara appear? He forsakes scented perfumes and essences and applies ashes on himself.He prefers to be worshipped with simple flowers ignored by others, like the 'oomatham poo'(thorn apple) and the 'thumbai poo'.He adorns himself with garlands of skulls rather than fragrant flower-garlands. He wears tigers skin and not silk garments. Lord Parameswara is thus the very embodiment of sacrifice. The bull also has this trait of sacrifice and hence it serves as Lord Eswara's 'vaahana'. The cow lives by consuming the husk left after obtaining rice, the hay left after removing the paddy grain, the 'punnaakku(oil residue cake) left after extracting oil, and the water left after washing the rice. After we consume the essence of all good things, it sustains itself on the essence-less residue. The rishabha vaahana -an epitome of sacrifice that befits Lord Thyagaraja.This is the tattva of the bull being the vaahana of Lord Parameswara.



Right where we are!

Sri Swamiji

ज्ञाने प्रयासं उदपास्य नमन्त एव जीवन्ति सन्मुखरितां भवदीयवार्ताम् ।
स्थाने स्थिताः श्रुतिगतां तनुवाङ्मनोभिः ये प्रायशो अजित
जितोप्यसि तैस्त्रिलोक्याम् ॥

Oh Bhagavan! You are unconquerable and hence called 'Ajitha'. Yet, you are easily won over by those who drop the thought of attaining jnAna and choose to live by listening to Sadhus' outpourings of your nectarine stories, enjoying and revering it with their body, speech and mind, simply by remaining where there are!" thus says Lord Brahma while extolling the Lord.

Mother Meera was ever immersed in Bhagavatam. The same sloka is reflected in one of her kirtans. 'hari guN gAvat nAchUngl prabhu guN gAvat nAchUngl- 'I will dance and sing the glories of my Lord Hari' and further adds, 'apanE mandir mE bait bait kar gltA bhAgavat vAchUngl'

What is said as 'sthAnE stithA' in Bhagavatham is shown here as 'I would just sit in my house and read Gita and Bhagavatam'

The reason for saying this is that, we need to be careful when we step out in search of a 'Sanga', for, we might not know the true nature of that association.

‘We approach a Sanga to elevate ourselves and not to lose the little devotion that we already have, is it not? So, rather than searching for an association outside, it is way better to simply stay where we are, reading Bhagavatham or Gita. It is Bhagavan Himself who speaks to us through Gita and through Bhagavatam, we have supreme Bhaktas speaking to us as in ‘Dhruva Uvacha’, ‘Prahlada Uvacha’. Then, what is the need to look out for any other company? ‘, such is the Bhava of Meera.

The above sloka in Bhagavatam opines “let go of all efforts in obtaining wisdom and simply listen to the stories expounded by Sadhus”. Mother Meera reflects the same in the next stanza,

**jnAna dhyAna ki gatarl bhAndhkar harl jana sanga mai
IAghUngi**

Bundling up jnAna and Dhyana, I shall remain in the divine association of Hari Bhaktas. Taking efforts to attain jnAna is to control the mind, meditate and so on. But, in the company of Sadhus, all of these happen so effortlessly. While listening to the stories expounded by them, the mind becomes attentive to the story without wavering. Then it contemplates on it. This is verily meditation. The mind, with no other thoughts, on its own, starts dwelling in God incessantly. That is why Mother Meera says that she would wind up JnAna, DhyAna and simply be in the company of Bhagvatas.

Meera kE prabhu Giridhar nAgar!

SadhA prema rasa chakhUngl

**'I would thus live, relishing the nectar called
Prema', concludes Mother Meera.**

**Giving up the efforts to attain jnAna, if we align
ourselves to this simple way shown by Bhagavatam, this insipid
ocean of samsara can be easily crossed over. We need not
wander here and there! The prancing mind need not be
controlled with strenuous efforts. If we hold onto the path of
Namakirtan, as shown by Srimad Bhagavatam, Meera Maayi
and be in-line with our Gurunatha's words, 'Iruntha idathil
iruntha padiyE', being wherever we are, Bhagavan will be
pleased and will give Himself! What more is needed?!**

அறிவிப்பு

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The various steps in the stairway to devotion will culminate in the attainment of divine love, declares Sri Swamiji as, 'Prema bhakthi siddhikkumam'.

What is devotion? Who else but the father of devotion, Sri Naradha, who wrote the 'Bhakthi sutra' can answer this question? 'sA tvasmin paramaprEmarUpA' – that devotion is nothing but total, overflowing love towards Sri Hari.

How can one explain this total love? It is eternal. It is blissful. It can liberate us from the cycle of birth and death. If our mind is attached to Lord Krishna at all times without a break and like the Ganges flowing towards the ocean it always flows towards Lord Krishna, that is total love. Reaching this state, one gets the darshan of Lord Krishna, gets liberated, becomes contented and attains complete peace.

Stairway to Devotion

- Sri Ramanujam



This love shines beyond the chain of cause and effect; it is such an unconditional love; it sees no obstacles; it is a state where all differences disappear!

'Kama' is desire. This divine devotion is not of the form of desires. With this love, one does not seek favours or joy from Krishna; instead one works for Krishna's sake and seeks to make Him happy.

In this state, there will not be any shred of selfishness; one will not desire anything in this world or next, or even liberation. People in this state will look intoxicated and may behave like lunatics. There is nothing in their hearts other than love. The people of the world can never understand them.

Their greatness can be described in a single phrase. Lord Krishna says,

**'nirapEksham munim shAntam nirvairam samadarshanam
anuvrajAmyaham nityam pUyEyEtyangrirE nubhi:'**

(Srimad Bhagavatham 11.14.16)

I follow the footsteps of that muni who is devoid of any desire, is peaceful and without any rancour since I believe that the dust of his feet can purify Me! What more can be said about this divine love? Its greatness can be understood from the fact that when the whole world is seeking the grace of the Lord, the Lord himself is following this devotee with divine love.

Sri Vishnupriya

SANSKRIT WORD
OF THE MONTH

yuga

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे॥

said Bhagavan Sri Krishna in
Bhagvad Gita.

Here “युगे युगे” means in each and
every Yuga.

The word Yugam denotes a very long period of time running into thousands of years. There are 4 main Yugas known to us; “Krita Yugam, Threta Yugam, Dwapara Yugam and Kali Yugam. Bhagwan has descended (taken avatar) only in the first 3 yuga’s. In Kali Yuga there is no “Avatar” of Bhagavan; He appears on the form of Sadhus and Mahatmas and not as HE himself. So Bhagavan has a name “Triyugan” which means appearing in only three Yugas.

Prahlada in his stuthi to Bhagavan says “You are a Triyugan”.

छन्नः कलौ यदभवस्त्रियुगोऽथ स त्वम्

In this verse Prahalada says to Bhagavan “You descend in every yuga to protect the dharma of that

particular yuga but in Kaliyuga you don't appear and so you are called Triyugan"

The word "Yuga" has another meaning "Double (pair)". "Anghriyugam" means two feet. In Ashtapathi jayadeva swami sings

“स्फुटकमलोदरखेलितखञ्जनयुगमिव शरदि तडागम् ॥”.

“kanchana Yugam means 2 birds or a pair of words”. Jayadeva swami is comparing Bhagavan's beautiful pair of eyes in his lotus face to a pair of birds playing on top of a fully bloomed lotus flower.

The word "Yugma" also has the same meaning (double/ Pair). "Yonityam Achyudambuja Yugma Rukma" In this verse of Sri Bhagavad Ramanuja's Dhyana sloka it is said that engrossed in Achyuta's lotus feet resembling Gold he forsake the world (treating it as lowly as grass).

The word "Yugalam" also means Pair and it reminds us of Radha Krishna Yugalam instantly. The word Yugalam is also used to indicate twin birds.

The word “Samyugam” has a totally different meaning. It means War (Yuddham). Hiranyaksha goes to Lord Varuna and asks for war.” Dehi Adiraja Samyugam” which means” I want war”. Hearing this Varuna tells Hiranyaksha that the right person to wage war with him is Bhagavan himself and directs him to Lord Vishnu. Srimad Bhagavatam says that Bhagavan Vishnu took the form Wild Boar or Varaha to kill Hiranyaksha.

The word “Yugapad” means at the same time or simultaneously. We all know that at the end of Gopika gitam in Srimad Bhagavatam Bhagavan krishna hearing Gopis” lamentation appears in front of them. The moment krishna appears all the Gopis in an expression of pure joy got up simultaneously. The sloka is “Uthasthuh yugapadh sarvaha” says Sri Sukha. Since they all got up simultaneously the word Yugapad is used here.

In Srimad Bhagavtam 10th Canto while describing Bhagavan krishna’s life as a householder (Grihasta). “Chitram Bathaidat ekena vapusha yugapadh pruthak” “What a wonderful sight! The one and only Krishna is living with each of his 16108 wives assuming as many forms!!!

Sri Namdev Maharaj

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Shri Kanya — Shiv Kanya

Lord Panduranga, disguised as Vithoo Seth stayed on in Basav Kalyan village and personally supervised all the wedding arrangements. He had told the bride's father that 33 crore people would attend the wedding. So Rajayi's father Govind Seth had made arrangements in a grand manner.

Panduranga then went to Pandharpur and met Damu Seth and briefed him about all the wedding arrangements. He spoke about the prospective bride Rajayi's qualities and about her distinguished family background. He asked Damu Seth to come to Basavkalyan immediately. Damu Seth and Konabhai were overwhelmed when they heard about the wedding plans. Since they were a family of very modest means they wore the best saree and Dhoti available with them and packed some food for the journey to Basavkalyan. Damu Seth and Konabhai were accompanied by Namdev Maharaj and his sister Avu Bhai and they all set about in a bullock cart.

By the time they reached Basavkalyan village, it was evening and the sun had already set. They got



down from the bullock cart and decided to spend the night in an open field. After refreshing themselves they sat down to partake the food brought with them. They had only dry rotis left with no side dishes. Damu Seth got up and said that he would look around and see whether he can buy any vegetables to be had along with the rotis. After walking for a while he met a person working in the field and introduced himself. "We are coming from Pandharpur and we have decided to take rest and spend the night here. We have a few dry rotis with us. Can we get some vegetables or pickle to eat along with the rotis?".

The farm worker saw Damu Seth's condition and thought that some poor travellers had trespassed into his employers fields and he said, "This is my employer Govind Seth Sadavarte's land. His daughter Rajayi's wedding preparations are going on in a grand manner. We are expecting the grooms side to come in any moment so I am afraid you cannot stay here and rest for the night. You may leave this place". Hearing Govind Seth Sadavarte and Rajayi's names, Damu Seth was very happy. He realised that Lord Pandurang has fixed Namdeo's marriage in this household. He spoke to the farm worker "We are the groom's party. This is my son Namdev and he is the prospective groom of Rajai".

The farm worker was shocked to hear this. From their clothes and their overall appearance he guessed that they were from a very poor family. He knew that his employer Govind Seth Sadavarte was under the impression that the Groom's family were rich land owners. He uttered an excuse to Damu Seth and ran to his employer to brief him about the meeting with Damu Seth. Govind Seth did not believe this. He set out to meet the family who had come to rest and spend the night in his farmland. Mysterious are the ways of Lord Pandurang and his Maya!!!! When Govind Seth saw Damu Seth and his family to his eyes they appeared to be from a wealthy background. Further there were many people coming in introducing themselves as groom's relatives. They all looked wealthy and were dressed in finest clothes and accessories. It was on Lord Panduranga's invitation that the Indra and Devas had come to Basavkalyan village posing as Namdev's relatives. Seeing all this Rajayi's father the rich merchant Govind Sadavarte thought to himself that the farm worker was speaking about somebody else.

Later Govind Seth himself went and invited Damu Seth and all his relatives and made arrangements for their comfortable stay. Govind Seth also gifted new clothes to all the guests who had come for the wedding. Each house was decorated with Thorans and Rangolis and the village wore a festive look.

(...to be contd)

Gratitude is to do the Given Task!

- Dr Bhagyanathan

Personal Secretary to Sri Swamiji

It was during the time of construction of the dining hall in our ashram, many years ago. Sri Swamiji too was staying at Madhurapuri Ashram. One night, at around 8pm, Sri Swamiji after partaking of food, started walking towards the place of construction. Even at that hour, many laborers were working hard carrying stones and sand. Sri Swamiji was really moved by that sight. Looking at the devotees nearby, Sri Swamiji repeatedly said, "Look! How much involved they are in doing this strenuous job at this hour!" Sri Swamiji went near each worker and was speaking comforting words, enquiring about them. On seeing Sri Swamiji's unexpected arrival at that place, their faces bloomed with smile. "Did you all have dinner?" Sri Swamiji asked with so much concern. The workers unanimously replied, "We will eat once the work is done Swami". The moment Sri Swamiji heard these words, He called the supervisor and said, "It is already 8pm. They are yet to have their food. Stop the work now and let them eat. The work can be continued after eating." Saying so, He sent them all for eating.

After they left, Sri Swamiji was muttering something and was walking around the same place and addressed the devotees nearby, "We are all indebted to Bhagavan. We should thank Him for creating us; thank Him for bestowing us with such a wonderful life; thank for every grain of rice He has provided us with, to appease our hunger. How to show our gratitude? Doing the assigned task properly is the gratitude that we show towards every grain that we consume. Did you see them? It is fair that eat food because they are working so hard. It is justified. In fact, they are the ones who are worthy of having the food. God has given only one work for me. That is to keep chanting His names. Only if I keep chanting His names always, I become worthy of eating food. To chant Nama always is the only way I can justify every grain I consume. Saying so, Sri Swamiji started singing the Divine Names aloud.



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