

MADHURAMURALI

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Dr A Bhagyanathan

MADHURA

SMARANAM

My Guru as I See Him

When the sun rises, there will be light and heat (veppamum). When the moon comes, there will be coolness and soft, milky light. Similarly when sadhus and avatara purushas rise in the world, the world will see a flowering of spiritual awakening. We know that for more than 20 years, Sri Swamiji has constantly been speaking of the greatness of our Itihasas and of Mahamantra kirtan in numerous places, and through many of his disciples it has reached many countries, and through this thousands of people have benefited in many different ways.

In America, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, Switzerland, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Middle-East countries, England and many other European countries, devotees speak of the greatness of Nama and of Sri Guruji, which pulls many people to become a part of the satsang. Because of this, Premika Varada Govinda's family keeps getting bigger and bigger.

It is in this manner that the couple, Sri Balaji and Smt. Sandhya, came to satsang. This couple who was living in America, first attended our satsang in Atlanta in 2013 through another Atlanta satsang devotee, Sri Narayanan. From then on, Nama kirtan and thoughts of Sri Guruji came together in their life, and their desire to have darshan of Sri Guruji in person continued to grow.

At that time, they had an opportunity to come to India for a function in Sandhya's family. When Sandhya was in Chennai for that event, her desire to somehow have darshan of Sri Guruji was on the top of her mind. As soon as she heard that Sri Swamiji was in Chennai, she came with her parents to Premika Bhavanam and had darshan of Sri Swamiji. At that time, Sandhya's parents shared a worry with Sri Swamiji, which was that although Sandhya had been married for a few years, she did not have any child. Our Guruji, who is an embodiment of compassion, blessed her that a child should be born soon and even gave her a fruit prasad.

Married couples will feel that their family is complete only when they have children. That too, for those in satsang, they will desire an heir to continue the kankaryam (service to God) that they themselves are doing. It is no surprise that Sri Balaji and Smt. Sandhya also desired that way.

But after having darshan of Sri Swamiji, our Guruji's simplicity, majesty, his soothing, keen look, compassionate speech - all of this made her forget her worry, Sandhya would say. After a few days, Balaji also came from America. He, along with his family, participated in the Vasanthotsav that was conducted at Madhurapuri Ashram a few days later. During that Utsav, Premika Varadan's darshan amid the beautiful,

varying flower decorations and the kirtanam that was led daily by Sri Swamiji completely stole their hearts. At Madhurapuri Ashram, in the sanctum sanctorum of Sri Premika Varadan, akhanda (continuous) Nama kirtanam has been happening since 10 years. We see that for those who come and do Nama kirtanam there, in the sanctum of Sri Premika Varadan and Sri Guruji, prayers that have not been fulfilled for years have been amazingly fulfilled. Premika Varadan never sends anyone who comes to His sanctum to go empty-handed; this is not something that is said for motivation's sake, it is indeed Bhagavan's assurance!

During the Vasanthotsav, whenever he was the fortunate recipient of Sri Guruji's gracious look, Balaji would feel, "Our worry will be over. Guruji has blessed us. We don't have to worry." They had Sri Swamiji's darshan often during that time, and because of that, they got the opportunity to perform Nama kirtanam, Bhagavata saptaha parayanam, listen to katha, and above all this, the couple got very attached to Him.

With Sri Guruji's blessing and permission, even after returning to America, they continued to attend satsang regularly in Atlanta too. Daily, without fail, they would worship Sri Guruji's picture and perform prayers with Nama kirtanam. Their faith continued to grow and become strong. Ramuji's Bhagavata saptaham and Krishna Jananam pravachanam, and Poornimaji's Ramayana parayanam and pravachanam happened at their home. In December 2015, when Ramuji came to their house again, Sri Guruji informed the couple once again through Ramuji that they will definitely have a child and strengthened their faith.

This January 2016, when Sandhya had a scan done, it was confirmed that she had conceived. Of course, it was sweet news for the couple as well as their parents.

At Atlanta's Hanuman Mandir, a Madhura Geetham saptaham was conducted recently. Many devotees sang Sri Guruji's kirtans during this event. Sandhya too participated and sang in this program.

When there is Guru's grace, memories will always be sweet – this is something for all of us to understand!

Answers and Beyond

Sri Swamiji answers to questions from Devotees

When we do dhyana (meditation), how do we control the thoughts that keep coming one after another like waves in an ocean?

A doctor tells us not to eat sweets. We immediately look at the doctor and ask, "Why should I not eat sweets?" He then says that the sugar level in your body is high. Then we ask, "So what if the sugar is high?" He will say that our vision, heart, kidney, and other organs will be affected, and list out one by one all the problems that will come up if our sugar is high. Convinced by his explanation, we will start hesitating to eat sweets, then slowly reduce its intake and little by little we will completely stop eating them.

Similarly when we get thoughts one after another in our mind, we should not try to push them away altogether. Instead we should think where did this thought originate from, how and when did this thought get embedded in the mind, what is the use of thinking about this thought, who got this thought, why did this thought come, etc. If we enquire deeply in this manner, the thought will go away. It will also not rise up again in our mind. This is how we have to get rid of the thoughts that arise in our mind, one after the other.

When one gets the deep desire to attain Bhagavan, should one also feel a great fear of the world? Siddhartha (Buddha) got fear after looking at death, old age and sickness. The fear of death arose in Bhagavan Ramana after he saw his father's death. So, in order to attain Mukti (Liberation), is it not necessary to first feel a deep fear of the transient nature of the world (samsara)?

If one has fear of samsara (world), he can make use of that as a way to attain mukti. If one's heart is filled with love for all creatures of the world, we can channelize that love towards God and make use of it as a *sadhana* (spiritual practice) for mukti. If our mind tends to naturally rest in equilibrium, we can take that equilibrium to God and use that as a *sadhana* to attain mukti. In this way, sorrow, hatred, all of these can be used as ways to attain mukti. Hence each of this depends on the tendency and nature of each person.

Damodara, The Greatest Trickster!

Angry with His mother Yashoda for ignoring Him and attending to her chores little Krishna broke the curd pots. Yashoda tied Him to a mortar. There is no Mahan who has not been wonderstruck at this deed of a Gopi (Yashoda) tying up, so casually, Krishna the pure Brahman to a mortar!

Well! Did little Krishna, tied to the mortar, remain quiet?

Nalakubara and Manigreeva, the two sons of Kubera, cursed by Sage Narada, had taken birth in Vrindavan as two Arjuna trees. Sage Narada had said that they would be released from the curse by Krishna's grace. The time had come now. Shouldn't the words of the Sage come true? Little Krishna tied to the mortar moved in-between the two Arjuna trees dragging the mortar along and brought the trees down! The very next moment Kubera's sons were released from the curse. This is the Puranic story. Now let us look into the fascinating words of our Guru Maharaj in this connection.

Why did the Lord pulling the mortar rush towards the trees? The mortar was made of wood. Mortar alone is of no use, for, a pestle is required to pound anything put in it; and, that pestle is also made of wood only. So, is it because He needed a pestle that the Lord brought down the trees?



Being Arjuna's charioteer was one of the important Avatar works of Krishna. Was not that work done driving the two-wheeled chariot? It was done for Arjuna! Here, in this incident, in front of Him were the two Arjuna trees! And what was caught between the two Arjuna trees? – mortar that looked like two wheels! At this instance did He then rush to rehearse for His future Lila of taking up the position of Arjuna's charioteer?

To say that it was out of fear that little Krishna rushed forward pulling the mortar along does not ring true because if it were so would He move in-between the two Arjuna trees? Wouldn't the legs move on a hurdleless path? But He moved in-between the two trees only to bring them down! Therefore, was it just to demonstrate that He knew no fear, that He performed this strange act? That too, while he was still a child, and was also tied to the mortar!

Further, cereals getting pounded in a mortar come out only in their edible form. Don't they? Pounded, the husk and grain get separated. They stand separated as edible and dregs. Here, too, Krishna hit the two trees against His mortar. At once the curse being removed the two trees' true form within stood revealed! Well! Did Krishna come tied to a mortar only to free the tied [bound] ones whose hearts had been purified through Narada's curse?

Generally, we speak of the Peepul and Neem tree as also the darbha grass as being divine. In later days scientists have discovered that every plant life has feelings. Well! Did Lord Krishna hit against the trees bringing out the Yakshas in them only to prove that every plant life has a celestial being (devata) within it? Well! Did Lord Krishna perform this Lila – hitting against the trees and drawing out the Yakshas from within – only to prove that in each and every plant life a devata (celestial being) resides?

Blissful Blossoms

In general, when we sit down to do dhyana, various thoughts will arise in the mind. It is not surprising if we perhaps remember a beautiful scene we may have seen recently or something that affected us in the recent past. But we may notice that sometimes unrelated thoughts or old memories, etc. also arise in our mind. We cannot say that the reason for this is only *vasanas* (latent tendencies). Because when there are millions of *vasanas*, why should only certain thoughts arise? The reason for all this is that there are some pressure points in our mind. Affection, insult, self-pride are some of those. We may suddenly remember a relative's wedding that happened long ago, a sharp reply (nose-cut) that we may have given to someone, harsh words that some people may have used on us, etc., without any reason. These don't need any provocation. The reason is that they remain as pressure points in our mind.

-- Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji

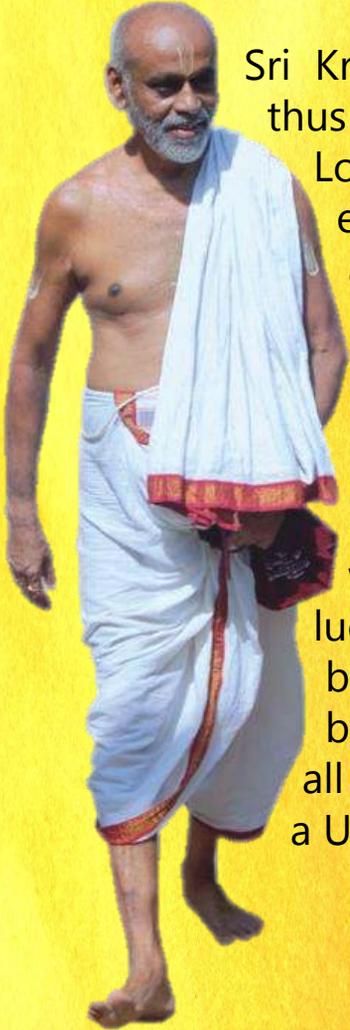
Shuddha Premika Vidya Kendra



April 14 – On Tamil New year's day, the first day of the month of Chaithra, our Sadh Gurunath and Sri Sri Krishna Premi Maharaj inaugurated the 'Shuddha Premika Vidya Kendra' in Senganur, the holy birth place of Sri Premika. The students from Sri Sandeepani Gurukula school were the first students to join this Kendra.

Sri Krishna Premia Maharaj, initiated the studies by asking everyone to recite the devotional hymn (sloka) which has the meaning, 'Prostrations unto that Sadh Guru, in whose happiness, the Lord gives himself wholly as prasad'.

Sri Krishna Premi Maharaj blessed the school and spoke thus – 'In those days, Gurus who had had darshan of the Lord himself used to run these schools with total equanimity and with no discrimination as to whether a student was the son of a King or a demon. This is the uniqueness of our country. Lord Dakshinamoorthy is the Guru for all. This Shuddha Premika Vidya Kendra is not a school for Agama vidya or for Vedhas. In this school, as decided by our Sri Swamiji, only Premika vidya (devotion and love) will be taught. The students from this school will lucidly articulate the glories of the Lord and will become the recipients of the Lord Krishna's love and blessings. Lord Krishna himself will verily take care of all their needs. Any student, be from a school or from a University can come and join this Kendra'.





Sans Bhakti, No Gnaana

Sri Ramanujamji

In Srimad Bhagavatham, when Brahma sings in praise of Bhagavan Krishna, he says, if one strives to attain gnaana without bhakti to Krishna, it is as futile as ponding empty husks in expectation of rice grains.

There are two ways to understand a thing; one by knowledge, and another by experience. One knows that honey is sweet. But unless one tastes it, he will not be able to know how the sweetness exactly feels.

Also, one needs to clearly know how pure honey actually tastes, to be able to discern whether it is without any impurity or adulteration. If one mistakes some other syrup to be honey, and consumes it, it might turn dangerous.

Similarly, if one treads the path of gnaana without practising bhakti, there are more chances that the gnaana thus obtained is very hazardous. Why? The path of gnaana involves triggering one's intellect by continuous questions, and enlightening it. Bhakti involves making one's heart melt with love towards God. By this one destroys the rajas and tamas in them, the wordly satva, and firmly establishes the God-oriented sathvik guna.

In the path of gnaana, when one triggers one's intellect, the characteristics of lethargy, crookedness, crankiness, doubts, etc., that have gotten entangled in our 72,000 naadis over many many births, are the first ones to be triggered. This not only results in failure to attain gnaana, but results in hazardous gnaana. It will be akin to a learned person, performing a crime intelligently,

Whereas, in the path of Bhakti, the dirty, dangerous and hazardous vasanas in our naadis, are destroyed little by little, resulting in a gnaana which is doubtless and of direct experience.

Many people say that during their visit abroad they had seen a park or a building or some event that turned to be an unforgettable matter in their life. Some recall the taste of some food eaten and claim that they are unable to forget that in their life. There are yet others who speak of some wonderful music that they had enjoyed and are unable to forget that. Some speak of a hill station that they had visited and say that the natural surroundings and the climate there had come to stay in their memory.

In this way to each and every one some matter seen, heard, tasted or felt gets engraved in his memory. They feel happy in thinking of it often and also sharing it with others.

Once, Kanchi Mahaperiyava said, "I was passing a village when I saw a little girl hitting her small brother and admonishing him 'will you speak a lie ever again? Can one lie in life? Is not truth important?'" Recalling this incident Mahaperiyava said, "I am unable to forget this incident in my life. I thought that I must earn the steadfast faith this little girl had in truth."

Once, Mahaperiyava had camped near Pallakad. An elderly gentleman who had come for Mahaperiyava's darshan left as it was time for his daily worship. But he returned within a short time. Mahaperiyava asked him, "You went to conduct worship. Why have you come back?"

The elderly gentleman said, "Periyava! My mind was not in the worship. Not desiring to do a puja without mental involvement I have come back here."

Mahaperiyava said, "From this I learnt that one should not do puja without mental involvement. I shall never forget this."

Likewise, I am not willing to forget some incidents that I have seen, heard and experienced in my life.

**FREEDOM
FROM BIRTHS
– ESSENTIAL!**

~ Sri Swamiji



Once, I had gone on a visit to a home in a village. They had made all arrangements for a grand welcome – the entrance had been decorated with mango leaves, huge kolams drawn on the floor and purna kumbam. The members of the house told me, "There is a temple of our family deity where Kumbabhishekam needs to be performed. Right now no puja is being conducted there." They also prayed for a good bride to the young man in the family. They were also very anxious that the married daughter of the family be blessed with a child. They then showed me great hospitality.

I then asked the head of the family, "Do you have your parents?"

He said, "My father is not alive but my mother is."

I was then taken in to see the mother. She was a very old woman. There was no cloth on her body. Flies were swarming all over the body. They had sprinkled phenyol all over the floor.

While on the one hand I felt deeply saddened by and worried over the old woman's plight on the other hand it was really funny to see these people's nature. I was reminded of the words of Kapila Vasudeva to His mother Devahuti in Srimad Bhagavatam: He tells his mother that the old will be treated like a dog at home. I thought that I should never forget this scene ever: because the thought of this scene would help me realize what old age meant and thus deepen my dispassion. This is an incident that I saw.

Once, I visited the Adyar cancer hospital where a man known to me was undergoing treatment for cancer. There I saw a young boy. He had cancer in the ear. I saw many – from children to old people suffering from cancer of the mouth, tongue, etc. – undergoing treatment there. I saw that the chemotherapy, radiation treatment that they were all undergoing is not only very punishing in this age but very painful and harsh. Further, these cancer patients are in the gruesome state of awaiting death with only a short span of life left. All these got imprinted in my mind. I did not wish to forget these scenes. I desire to hold them in my thought always.

Likewise, once, I went to see a young man who was a victim of an accident. I was told that he was in coma state for the past twenty years. I desire to retain this, too, in my memory.

I do not desire to forget my visits to a death house or a crematorium where the body that had all along been running around doing this and enjoying that being burnt. The body that could not bear the pain of the prick of a thorn or the burn of a small incense stick lay without response even when burnt down totally. I do not desire to forget these scenes in order to remember that this verily is the end fate of my body, too.

I also see some people having to perform every act, all through their life, only to come out of some problems they have been caught in. I also

see people doing extremely well in life being pushed to a penniless state and those in ordinary state of life being lifted to a high state. All these only bear testimony to the fact that nothing is lasting in life.

I desire to ever hold only scenes of old age, death, disease, sorrow and accidents in my memory. This is because remembering scenes of happiness is of no use at all. Dispassion is earned only by remembering scenes of this kind.

We may also have to face all these or some of these in our life; or we may not face them. We know not what our state will be tomorrow. Therefore, today, when I am placed in a good state, in every way and every moment, I must work hard to attain the state of Jivan Mukti in which none of these, when faced with, will affect us.

SRI SWAMIJI'S KIRTAN

Raga: Desh

Tala: Adi

PALLAVI

mELE vizhundhu aruL seyyum srInivAsan
mElOr kai thozhum dhEvAdhi dhEvan (...mele)

ANUPALLAVI

aruvi pOl karuNai pozhiyum – oru
uvamai illAdha Orezhutthu dheivam (...mele)

CHARANAM

nAngu purushArthangaLaiyum aruLvAn
nAn angu eppozhudhum avan thiruvadiyil
nAn angu illAmal irundhida
nangu avan aruL seidhidal vENdum (...mele)

VITTALA WOULD COME KNOCKING AT YOUR DOOR

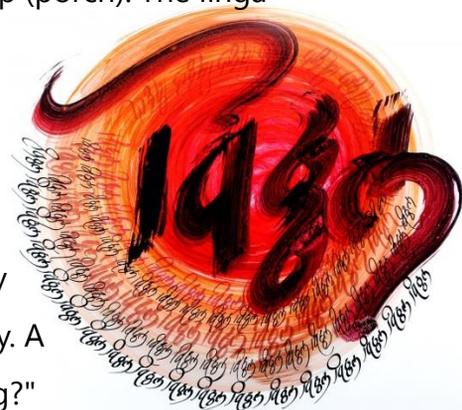
Excerpts from a TV series by Sri Swamiji that conquered the hearts of millions

Sri Gnaneshwar then took leave from there. The buffalo also followed him. The prayers of those who visit the samadhi of this buffalo are fulfilled. Even today, devotees offer their worship in that samadhi. Gnaneshwar used to read his commentary on the Bhagvad Gita to this buffalo. The buffalo would also shake its head in approval. It never left Gnaneshwar till the end. This buffalo interred next to Gnaneshwar's samadhi.

According to Gnanis, 'Don't look at your body. Look at the almighty who dwells inside. On seeing someone as the Self, the tendency to distinguish vanishes and the realisation that only God resides everywhere dawns in a person'. This is what the self realised perceive. But others won't understand this state of truth which they experience. Man who is bestowed with six senses can attain self realisation-after becoming pure by the grace of these gnanis. But most surprisingly, Gnaneshwar, not only did he see *Brahmam* in a *Tamasic* (lazy and sloth) animal, 'buffalo' which is considered very low to a human birth but also demonstrated this truth to others. If he had made a cow to chant the Vedas, it can be justified that a cow is an embodiment of all the Gods. On the other hand, he made a buffalo to chant the Veda. This itself proves the brahmanishtai (depth of realisation) of Gnaneshwar.

GNANESHWARI

Mevasa is a village 200Kms from Pune. There is a Shiva temple here with the deity Kalleshwar. In olden days, this temple had been a humongous one. Many years later, this temple which got ruined was renovated. Now it is like a mandap (porch). The linga (idol) which is present here is Kalleshwar. Abhishekam and Arthi is performed to this deity. There is a big connection between this temple and Gnaneshwar. Gnaneshwar came to this village Mevasa along with the buffalo which chanted Veda. A man named 'Sachchithanand' had passed away the day he went to that village. His wife was wailing badly. A compassionate Gnaneshwar asked the lady, "Why are you crying?"



Sri Rupa Goswami is the younger brother of Sri Sanathana. In spite of being two years younger than Sanathana, he is considered as the senior most among the association of Vaishnavas as he was the first to receive Mahaprabhu's Grace.

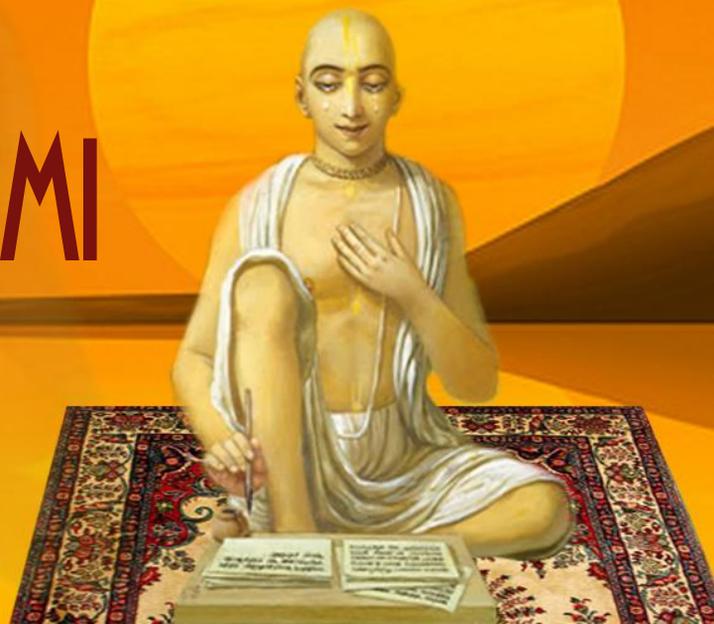
We have already seen how their lives changed after having Mahaprabhu's darshan in Ramkeli. We also saw that he was prisoned after which he got away from there, attained Mahaprabhu's Holy feet and finally reached Vrindavan. Rupa Goswami never went back to Gowda region after having Mahaprabhu's darshan in Ramkeli. He packed all his wealth and belongings in a boat and left for his native place Badehabad. There he gave away half of his wealth to Brahmins and destitutes. Having given some of the wealth to his family, he gave ten thousand rupees to a shop keeper in the Gowda region (with this money only did Sanathana escape from the prison). Even before the news that Sanathana was jailed reached, he had sent two workers in search of Mahaprabhu's place. They informed that Mahaprabhu had started for Vrindavan yatra through the forest route. On hearing this, Rupa Goswami went towards Vrindavan along with his younger brother Anoop in search of Prabhu. At that time he had written a letter to Sanathana secretly. He wrote that he was going towards Vrindavan along with Anoop in search of Prabhu. He was in a state in which he would'nt be able to survive even a second without attaining Prabhu's feet. He also informed him about the money which he had given to the shop keeper in Gowda. That money would be used for breaking out from the prison. Sanathana was to come to Vrindavan after coming out from the jail.

Rupa Goswami then reached Prayag through Kasi along with his younger brother Anoop. He had Mahaprabhu's darshan in Prayag. At that time, Prabhu who was doing kirtan along with devotees in a blissful trance (*prema-vesam*), was proceeding for the darshan of Bindhu Madhava. Prabhu returned after having Bhagwan's darshan. That day, a south Indian Brahmin had invited Prabhu for Bhiksha. As Prabhu entered the Brahmin's house, after the crowd got dispersed, the two brothers followed him.

RUPA GOSWAMI

Janani

...to be contd





Madhavan's house was the biggest house in town; He had built it well. There were many people in that town who wanted to buy that house for a good price. However, Madhavan hadn't the least desire to sell it.

Once, Madhavan had gone abroad on business purposes. When he returned, after a month, a shock was awaiting him. He saw his beautiful house burning away. Refusing the several offers from everyone to buy the house, he did not want to sell it and kept it for himself, because of his extreme fondness for it. Now seeing it burn, his stomach churned in agony. He got breathless, and his eyes filled with tears. Ohhh!! He got even more terrified, when he thought of what could have happened to his family and children.

However, the fire had severely spread when he first saw it itself. As he was seeing his house, which he had taken great efforts to build beautifully, burning right before his eyes, he felt like crying. Nothing was going to remain in that house. Those gathered there looked at him with pity. At that time, his eldest son ran upto him breathlessly and said in his ears, "Daddy! Don't worry. When you had gone abroad, we sold this house for

a good price. This isn't our house now. There is no cause for concern". The tears which Madhavan was shedding when he thought his house was burning, stopped at once.

Because, that was not his house now; Somebody else's house was only burning!! Now, he also started watching it along with the others!

That would have lasted for only a minute. In the meantime, his wife came upto him.

She started lamenting, "Although we have sold the house, we haven't got the full amount. We have received only the advance amount. We don't know if the balance money will be forthcoming or not". That was it!! Immediately,

Madhavan's heart started beating faster. His tension added to the heat from the flames of the fire, caused his body to break out in sweat. In one minute, his mind again started vacillating. He did not know whether to praise the decisions of his family or bemoan his fate. When we think of something as our's, and that thing leaves us, we are full of worry, fear and sadness. When we don't consider a thing ours, it's destruction doesn't affect us.

Madhavan, not knowing what to do, got confused and losing his mental strength, sat on the ground with his hands on his head. His mother then

MINE

**A STORY
FOR CHILDREN**

came there; She said, "Madhava! It's natural for you to feel sad, when you see the house you spent so much money and lovingly built burning. However, I'm sure these people must have told you. The person who has bought the house from us will most certainly pay us the entire amount as promised. Because, we vacated the house and handed it over to him, as soon as he gave the advance. He has also kept a few of his things inside the house". That was it! Madhavan's mind was filled with joy again. The house was not his. The loss did not belong to him!! That's what his mind told him. Same house, isn't it? The house hasn't changed. The fact that it was burning didn't change either. However, even as it was burning, Madhavan's mind was alternating between worry, fear, sorrow and joy! How amazing!!!

It's the affinity for an object that pushes one into sorrow. Nothing affects the *saadhus* (ascetics) who believe the owner of everything is Bhagavan Himself. If we get into their satsang, little by little that selfless nature will be experienced by all of us.





Janani

BRINDAVAN AND NANDAKUMARA

SHRI HARI BABAJI – 4

After three years on the banks of the Ganges, Deevan Singh then left from there. Walking, wandering here and there, he finally returned to Hoshiyarpur. Feeling very embarrassed, he went to see his Guru (Sant Shri Satchidanandha Giri) in the night. His guru, seeing him in the guise of a *sanyasi* (ascetic) was very happy. He said, "You have become a sadhu by yourself and hence I name you "Svadhya:Prakash".

After serving his guru again for a short while, he again started living on the banks of the Ganges in Bhrigukshetra, near Anoopshahar in Bulandshahar district. There his meeting happened with mahaans like Shri Odiya Baba and Shri Achyutha Muni. He learnt the Vedantha granthas from Shri Achyutha Muni. When Shri Achyutha Muni went to Vardha, he took Svadhaprakash with him too. The Vedantha lessons continued there also.

There is a place called Hanumangadi in Vardha. As per Samarththa Ramdasa's tradition, *akhand* (uninterrupted) *namakeerthan*(singing the name of God) of "SHRIRAMA JAYA RAMA JAYA JAYA RAMA" continued to happen there. Shri Paranjpe was the official in charge there. It was only in that place that *namakeerthan* filled with *premarasa* (taste of pure love) fell on his ears. It touched his heart. Many inexplicable, never before experienced new *bhavas* (state of mind) arose in his heart. Because of this change ,his mind started seeking a new direction.

Shri Paranjpe's meditation was drawn towards Babaji, because of the *Sattvik bhavas* (virtuous/ good) that arose in Babaji's mind. Considering Babaji a deserving authority, Shri Paranjpe gave him the book, 'Lord Gauranga'. This was a book written by Mahatma Shishirkumar. After reading that book, he felt he had got a new direction. His mind went in the *bhakti marga* (path of devotion) shown by Mahaprabhu, like a river gushing forth unobstructed.

Until now, he had been in the company of *vedanthis* (one who knows the Vedas) and had been learning the Vedanta granthas. From the time of his birth, he had not got the satsang or books that could instigate his bhakti *samskara* (psychological imprint). Considering *jnana* (knowledge) as the highest goal, he had been practising *dharana-dhyana* (concentrated meditation). However, until then he had not known that rather than merge with the *brahman*(the ultimate reality) and experience *brahmanand* (eternal bliss), *bhaktirasa* was better and superior.

Shishirkumar Ghosh who was a patriot was also a follower of the *jnana marg*. However, the moment he touched the grantha of Chaitanya Charitamrit, he was immersed in bhakti. For one who has experienced bhakti *bhava*, for one who has realised *prema* (love) for Bagavan, the help of *jnana* is unnecessary. There is no possibility of them leaving the bhakti *marg* and going to the *jnana marg*. But, we can see many *janis* (realised souls) forsake the *jnana marg* and embrace bhakti. Doesn't Srimad Bagavatham itself say

Aatmaaramasya Munaya: Nirgranthaa Abyurukramae/

Kurvanyahaithukeem Bakthim Iththam Boothaguno Hari: ||

Even Saints who are immersed in the *Nirguna Brahman* (eternal all-pervading divine consciousness) are attracted by Hari's qualities and do bhakti towards Him, without expecting anything from Him.

Svatha:Prakashji went to Hanumangadi everyday. His passion for keerthan kept growing.

...to be contd



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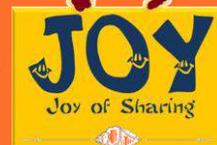
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Only if one has intense dispassion will they attain *jnana* (Self-Knowledge). That dispassion will come for some people from either sufferings in life, or disgust of worldly life, or through fear of death. Without any reason, and without any expectation, if dispassion arises, then that person must be one who has progressed in the spiritual path of *jnana* in his previous lives.

-- Yoga Vaasishtam