

Sri Hari:

MADHURAMURALI

May 2019

*Spiritual Monthly
With the Blessings of
HH Maharanyam
Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji*





Madhura Smaranam

- Dr A Bhagyanathan

Personal Secretary to
Sri Sri Swamiji

The moment a soul is born on earth, it completely loses its freedom. It is impossible for anyone to live independently without others' support.

A man is a mere puppet in the hands of the society he lives in, time, job, relationships, government, health, finance and the rest. While this being the case, how can an individual claim to be independent?

The undeniable truth is that, the individual soul is said to enjoy total freedom only when it is liberated from the clutches of birth and death. To attain

that, the simplest path, which is free of any constraints, is Bhagavan Nama. Wow! What a wonderful path, shown to us by Mahans, out of their compassion.

Even though the sastras have deliberately shown this to be the only path, there are numerous Mahans who have showered it generously on people. Of these great Mahatmas, Sri Bhagavan Nama Bhodendra Saraswathi Swamigal from Tamil Nadu and Mahaprabhu from the east are quite significant in spreading the divine names all over. Mahaprabhu incarnated on a full moon day. It was also a day of eclipse and Holi festival. Why did he incarnate on an eclipse day? May be, it is a symbolical way of showing us that the eclipse called 'Kali', which was holding people from attaining 'Krishna Chandra', is coming to an end. From that day on, the world was protected; The world was revived; Namakirtan flourished; True sadhus attained peace!!

As true devotees, please visit the nearby Namadwaar every day and chant Nama for at-least few minutes. Every morning, with japamala in hands, chant Mahamantra either with everyone in the house or in solitude. Likewise, do it in the evenings or in the nights. Never skip a day. If at all you have any prayer in mind,(to get a job, promotion, etc.), chant Mahamantra focusing on that specific prayer. It will be fulfilled; No! It is certain to be fulfilled!! Keep the house clean, not just clean, but divine too. For the house to be filled with divine sanctity, chant the divine names more and more. Be friendly with everyone. Be loving. Let us be humble, Gopalan will elevate us.

- Sri Sri Swamiji

1. How is Bhakti considered superior to Dhyana, yoga or tapas?

Today, there are many, who perform rare feats for hours together to get their name on the Guinness Records. It includes performing many activities for a stipulated duration of time, like running, singing, clapping hands, standing, fasting without food and water and the list is endless. But I think, till now, no one has claimed to have cried continuously for so many hours or to have expressed their love in the heart. Why? Activities related to the body can be performed by anyone with good perseverance, courage and will power. Likewise, in spiritual life too, it is possible for anyone, with perseverance to do japa, fasting, be in solitude, do pranayama, remain in an asana for hours, stand on one leg and so on. All these are ways to do tapas by tormenting the body. But Bhakti is all about the melting of the heart. How can that be achieved by grit or being stubborn? That is why Bhakti is superior to Dhyana, Yoga or tapas

And Beyond

2. Do the blessings of Mahans, bestowed upon devotees flow spontaneously as a natural expression of their compassion and Grace or out of their specific resolve to bless certain people?

Mahans who pursue the path of Mantra, tapas or yoga do bestow their grace out of their will to do so, at the cost of losing their japa or tapas to that extent. It has to be earned again. However, in the case of Jnaanīs or Prema Bakthas, the Grace keeps flowing naturally, causing no change to their state.

Thirumangai Azhwar sings the glory of
Thirukkannapuram Perumal. Here is that beautiful
verse from Thirumozhi.

**“matrum oru deivam ulathu endru irupaarodu
Uttrilen, Uttrathum un adiyarkku adimai
Mattrelaam pesinum nin thiruveteshthum
Kattru naan kannapurathu urayammaane”**

Here, Azhwar negates the company of anyone who
says there is another God. Does it mean that He
would not associate with anyone, who worships any
God other than Thirumal?

May be not! As he has seen the depths of
devotion to Thirumal. Then, who is he referring to
by saying, ”matrum oru deivam ulathu endru
irupaarodu? Is he pointing out to other Divya
Desa Perumal?

Not so either!

One thing is clear on seeing the words,”uttrathum
un adiyarukku adimai”. Azhwar does not even pray
for devotion towards Thirukkannapuram Sowriraja
Perumal. He says, “I want the association of your
devotees.” In this pasuram, Azhwar prays to be
devoted to the devotees of Thirumal.

**UTTRADHUM UN
ADIYARUKKU ADIMAI”**

THE ESSENCE OF AN OVERHEARD CONVERSATION

A devotee was conversing with Sri Swamiji. I too was seated beside, listening to the talk. The visitor was discussing several topics with Sri Swamiji. The topic narrowed down to Nama Sankirtan. He asked, “Is chanting the divine name enough in today’s scenario? Can you show evidences from Sastras? Sri Swamiji replied, “I can certainly show you evidences from the sastras but before that answer my questions.” He agreed.

- Kapila Vasudevan

Sri Swamiji: Tell me about your family.

Visitor: I come from a great lineage. Everyone is well versed in Vedas and Sastras. Highly orthodox. I always feel proud that I hail from such a good lineage.

Sri Swamiji: How were you brought up?

Visitor: My parents brought me up with great discipline. My parents are the prime reason for my pious thoughts.

Sri Swamiji: You don’t have any faults in your habits, am I right?

Visitor: Yes, none.

Sri Swamiji: What about your food intake?

Visitor: It is purely sattvic.

Sri Swamiji: Have you been on pilgrimages?

Visitor: I’m not exaggerating. There is no holy place that I have not visited. I have taken a dip in all the holy rivers. In fact, I have been to kshetras like Kasi, Gaya, Badri, Pandarpur, several times.

Sri Swamiji: You would have certainly visited ashrams of many Mahans, correct?

Visitor: Starting from the birthplace of Sri Ramakrishna in Calcutta, I have visited many Mahans, their Samadhi, their birth places. I have even stayed for few days in some ashrams.

Sri Swamiji: Your daily routines of worship must be happening well, isn't it?

Visitor: I do it thrice a day regularly.

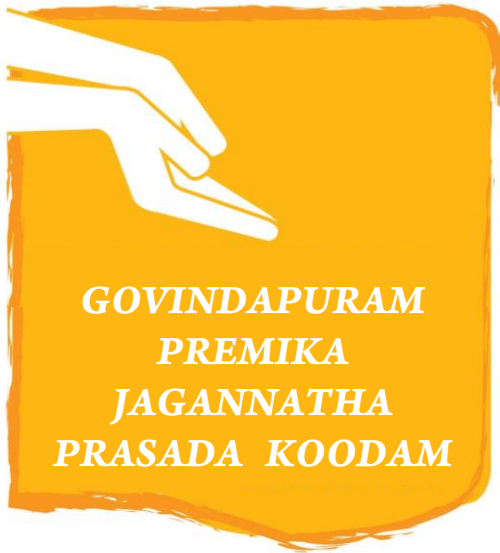
Sri Swamiji asked, “As a result of doing all these, your mind must be cleansed and completely under control, is it not ? “
The visitor did not reply.

(As Sri Swamiji repeated the question, he started to reply)

It is little embarrassing to tell it out, but how can I not tell you? I'm over 70 years now. But the truth is, my mind is still not free of desires, rivalry, jealousy, ego or anger.

Sri Swamiji: The reason I asked this is not to point out your state, but instead, to make you understand the state of the world. While the situation is like this for you, who is living such a life, what to speak of the people who helplessly languish in the material life. Aren't you concerned about them? Wisdom can never dawn even if there is an iota of attachment to the body. Yogic state cannot be attained without strict adherence to Brahmacharya. But Nama kirtan is free of any such conditions . In fact, by chanting the divine names, all virtues are automatically acquired. If a person can assess his true state of being and is really concerned about his welfare and would never intend on cheating himself, then he would chant the divine names.

“For now and forever, here and everywhere, for me, for you and for everyone, the only refuge is Hari Nama”, these were the soul stirring words of Sri Swamiji. The visitor too prostrated and parted with prasad!



GOVINDAPURAM

PREMIKA

JAGANNATHA

PRASADA KOODAM

“Satyam Vadha”, “dharmam chara” are the verses from the Upanishad. What do they mean? It means, speak the truth and walk the path of Dharma. But, in Mahabharatha, Sri Vyasa often says the path of Dharma is very subtle.

There are certain Dharma which is not common to all. There are certain other Dharma common to everyone. The dharma prescribed for a householder is different from that of a Sannyasi. Dharma to be followed by men differs from that of women. A king's dharma is totally different.

But, some Dharma are common to anyone born as a human. Speak the truth, never utter a lie, be honest, treat your parents with respect and love, husband and wife must live together with love and mutual understanding. These are common to everyone irrespective of their time and place of living. And donating to the poor and the noble, is one Dharma (Dhaana). A cow is to be donated only to the one who has the ability to take utmost care of it. The same holds true for donating a land.

There is an exception to this rule. There is one form of Dhaana, which can be done without looking for any criteria. And what is that? It is offering of food (annadhaanam). “annasya kshuthitaham paathram”, that is anyone who is hungry is fit to be served food. In Srimad Bhagavatam, Sri Krishna too says, “May this food be served to one and all, including dogs and other animals.

अन्येभ्यश्चाश्वाचान्दालपतिभ्यो यथार्हतः।
यवसं च गवां दत्त्वा गिरये दीयतां बलिः॥

Hence, 'annadhaanam' is the greatest dharma that can be offered without looking for any eligibility of the receiver.

The Rangoli drawn with rice flour in the month of Margazhi is also considered as annadhaanam, offered with the first harvest of rice, to feed several organisms from ants to other tiny insects.

The fruits of all such dharmic actions differ in the merits based on where it was done (the place), when it was done (time) and to whom it was offered (subject).

Food offered to any hungry person would earn greater merits. That too, food offered to Vedic pundits and great Bhagavathothamas, would result in higher merits. Also, the 'punya' attained by offering food to the one in the path of attaining Moksha (a mumukshu), a Sannyasi, Mahatmas increase accordingly depending on who the recipient is.

Likewise, the fruit acquired by doing annadhaanam at the banks of holy river, or in a holy kshetra, in the presence of Mahatmas, multiply to a great extent than when it is done in a usual place.

This kshetra is Govindapuram, located at the banks of river Cauvery. On top of it, it is the sacred place of Sri Bhodendral's adishtanam, from where He continues to bestow His divine darshan to many Mahans. By His very presence, Govindapuram has the divine sanctity of Kanchi, His birth place, Kasi, the place where He took Sannyasa and Puri Jagannatha Kshetra, the place that inspired Him towards the purpose of His descent, which is Nama Siddhantha. Thus, this great Kshetra has the divine connection of three of the Seven Mokshapuris.

The most divine kshetra called Thiruvudaimarudhur is in proximity to this Kshetra. Once, a devotee, just before visiting Kedarnath, went to have darshan of Sri Kanchi Mahaperiva. Sri Periyava said, “Have you ever had the darshan of Mahalingeshwara in Thiruvudaimarudhur? It is as divine and holy as Kedarnath. Go there and have the darshan of Lord Shiva” Such is the glory of this kshetra.



Sri Baskara Rayar, who has attained siddhi in ‘Srividya upasana’ had lived in this kshetra for some time. Pattinathu adigal too had been here for some time.

Govindapuram, located near such a land with great glories, was named so, in remembrance of an ancestor of Kanchi Mahaperiva, Sri Govinda Dhikshitar. The life history of Sri Govinda Dhikshitar can be seen on the inscriptions in Patteeswaram temple, even today. The idols of that couple is also there in the Patteeswaram temple.

Sri Govinda Dhikshitar undertook the service of renovating the Thiruvannamalai Rajagopuram and completed it effectively. That is the reason, even today it is known as ‘Aiyan’ Gopuram. The temple tank was also constructed by him. It was by him, the Mahamaham pond in kudanthai was renovated.

He was a person who was equipoised in nature. He was the one who donated land to Velankanni Church and Nagur Dharga. In remembrance of this great Mahan, the king named this kshetra as Govindapuram and offered it. Thus, this land of Govindapuram is exceptionally divine.

We just saw how the merits earned on doing annadhaanam differ based on the time when it is performed. The benefits of doing annadhaanam to 'Upavaasis'(the one who fasts) cannot be contained in words. After fasting on Ekadashi, offering food on the day of Dwadashi is indeed special! In our Chaitanya Kuteeram, Lord Jagannatha, who resides in Puri, the 'annakshetra' continues to bless us all. Continuous chanting of Mahamantra happens here on all days. Many Bhagavatas gather here to celebrate festivals like Puri Jagannatha Rathotsav, Jayanthi celebrations of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Bhagavata Saptaham, annual utsav and so on. Thus, this annadhaanam, or rather, 'Bhagavata thadhiyaradhanai' is perfect in all aspects of Kaala (time), desa (place) and vyakthi (the recipient) as it is done in this divine kshetra, to the Bhagavatas who chant the divine names and are adept in Vedas, and to top it all, it is done on auspicious days like Dwadashi.

To facilitate this commendable service, Super Auto Forge Sri Sitaraman and Smt. Kalyani Sitaraman, along with his elder brother Sri. Vasudevan, have built "Premika Jagannatha Prasada Koodam", in remembrance of his mother Smt. Namagiri Sankara Narayanan.

Sri Bhodendra Swamigal have showered 'Nama nidhi'(the treasure of nama) even to those who do not chant the divine names. Bhagavatas sing this as "Nama Mahanidhi Dhaanodhaaram". It is very apt the 'Prasada mandap in this place, where nama has been heaped like mountains, is built in memory of the one with the name 'Namagiri', is it not!

As there is a beauty in starting any task in a smaller way and gradually expanding it, to begin in an auspicious way, it has been decided to offer 'thadhiyaradhanai' on every Dwadashi to 50 Bhagavatas.

Chaitanya Kuteeram(Govindapuram)

6th March 2019

(Devotion is itself a journey that we undertake to reach the abode of God. Since it enhances us, our Guru Maharaj has laid a stairway to ease that journey for us. To climb higher, stairs are the means, right? But, here one important difference is, climbing a normal staircase is tough and bitter. However, the stairway to devotion is simple and sweet. The journey is sweet; the destination is sweet as well. That sweetness commences now...)

“uthama Guruvum thedi varuvaar” Our Guru Maharaj often says, “We should truly search for God. How can the greatness or experience of a Mahatma be comprehended by people like us? How can our efforts in search of a Guru bear fruit. If we wholeheartedly pray to God, Krishna Himself will connect us to a Guru, thus making our divine life complete.

STAIRWAY TO DEVOTION

- M.K. Ramanujam

6



It is to be noted that our Guru Maharaj has used the words “Seivai”, “Seivai”(‘do this’) in the earlier steps, while here, He says that a Supreme Guru will come on His own(“thedi varuvaar”).

While explaining the highest meaning of the lines, “avar padham paninthu sevai seithiduvai”, Sri Swamiji said, “The service done should be forgotten at once, else, there are chances that the thought “I did it” could turn into pride. This pride may even become a hindrance to the causeless mercy the Guru showers to transform us.

06) uchithakaalathil Guru Upadesam Seidhiduvaar
Ekadashi viratham irunthiduvaai neeye

Sri Krishna, in Bhagavad Gita, explains Arjuna, about serving a Guru and how the Guru, pleased with such service, gives Upadesha:

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः॥ |4:34|

“tadviddhi pranipatena pariprashnena sevaya|
Upadekshyanti te jnaanam jnaaninastatvadarshina: ||

“Realize the highest truth by inquiring in humble submission and eagerness, and by serving. The Jnanis, seers of truth, will impart that wisdom to you”

Sowing a seed in some field does not reap on its own. Though the field is ploughed and is prepared well, to obtain the best yield, the seed has to be sown at the right time conducive for the seed to grow well.

Likewise, all the fields are not alike. Some are already in a prepared state. Few other lands can be prepared easily. Some can be prepared over a period of time with intended efforts. Our mind is like that of these fields. It is of different kinds. Only a Guru knows what is to be done, to

whom and also the right time to bestow, isn't it? Doesn't a mother know what the child requires, when and how to take care of its requirements? A 'wise' child ever remains in peace, in obedience, knowing very well that "My mother will take care of me. I don't even have to ask". Just like that, when a disciple remains worry-free, knowing that the Guru will take care of his spiritual needs and continue with his goal of serving the Guru, when the right time comes, the Guru gives His Upadesa to that disciple.

Mathanga Maharishi blessed Sabari with the fortune of taking care of ashram service. Our old Sabari too, without even knowing to ask for an Upadesa", carried on with her kainkarya happily, with her heart ever melting, on reminiscing her Guru's Grace. Mathanga Muni, after deciding to end his mortal role, called Sabari on His own accord and not only gave "Rama Nama" but made Sri Rama come before her eyes!

'uchitha kaalathil Guru upadesam seithiduvaa'

The meaning here is to be understood as, the Guru will bestow the right upadesa at the right time and in the right way.

The nature and the background of each disciple coming to a Guru is totally different. Based on each one's nature, past experience(their karma from earlier births), the upadesa imparted at a suitable time, may differ too.

Hence, it is a blunder to compare oneself with others. To some, the Guru might give one nama as upadesa; for some He might instruct to sing every day, traditionally in various tunes. For certain others, the instruction would be to do Nama japa as meditation. A few might be ordained to propagate Nama, while few others might be instructed to do nothing and simply follow the instructions given every now and then.

Like a fitting medicine for each patient, like a mother serving the appropriate meal by each one's taste preferences, the Supreme Upadesa of the Sathguru varies depending on that particular disciple. The time at which the Upadesa is given will also differ.

For some, a single Upadesa would be sufficient until the goal is reached; for others a gentle instruction would suffice; for some it has to be imparted in a specific way; a slight indication would be enough for some, while an instruction has to be repeated several times for some; also there are some, who would 'get it' only when told in a tough way; for others it has to be explained in detail. Thus, a Sathguru alone knows when and in what way to bestow the upadesa depending on the nature and the background of the disciple. None can escape the Grace of a Sathguru, who is an embodiment of compassion. By His compassionate glances, loving remembrance, divine touch that eradicates the sins, by the divine names, spiritual advice, a Sathguru imparts the Upadesa at the appropriate time. Thereafter, the Grace of the Guru takes care of the disciple.

In the next step, Sri Swamiji sings about the adherence to Ekadashi Vrata.

Man

Gadadharan

I recently happened to attend a public function. There, the organizers of the event were eagerly anticipating someone's arrival. I too was caught in their excitement. A man got down from a latest model car. Everyone raced forward to gather around him and started welcoming him with smiles, talks and self-introductions. On seeing the person who just entered, with utter surprise, I thought, "Such a hubbub for this fellow, sorry, this gentleman?" The reason is, I know him very well. Both of us studied together. Well, what is the reason for all these extravagant reception that he receives today? The money he has accumulated, is the sole reason.

The next day, I came to know of a person, living nearby, who was suffering from deep mental depression. I enquired the reason for his state. It seems he was a person, who held a high post in the Government. It is few years since he retired from the job. Earlier, many visitors used to throng his house. Many used to wait for hours to get his appointment. He was so busy that he was hardly left alone. But now, when he goes out for a walk, even a dog neglects him. What would he do? This present situation is the reason for his mental condition.

I was contemplating over these incidents. Power, wealth, fame are all self-created by the human community. These are not visible entities. Still, somehow, they associate themselves with people and take them for a ride. We too don't see people as humans and instead associate them with these entities.

Next, his religion, caste and creed are added too. Then, we start to associate him through his body and hence identify a person with beauty, race, structure, etc. Next, we start analyzing his character and start judging if he is a good or not, wise or fool, smart or not and so on. Thus, we have completely forgotten to see people as humans. If people start suspecting a stranger or any helpless person for some reason, they simply start beating him black and blue.

We read the life history of Namdev and are in awe on reading how he sees Panduranga even in a dog, Ekanathar sees Panduranga in a donkey and Jnaaneshwar sees a buffalo as Panduranga. But alas! we are unable to see humans as humans. As the ones who chant the divine names all the time, let us start seeing humans as humans. Let us see the divinity residing in humans. Seeing God in a temple alone is the initial phase. The highest state is to see the entire world as Vasudeva. It is only when we start seeing the entire world as the form of Vasudeva, we can realize the Vasudeva residing in our heart. Once we realize Vasudeva internally, then the entire world automatically becomes Vasudeva.

RASIKA AND THE ELEPHANT

M.K.Ramanujam

2

(We are enjoying the wonderful life incidents of Rasika Murari. In the last issue, we saw the devotion of this Mahan towards Bhagavata. In this issue, let us look into his Guru Bakhti, shall we?)

Rasika Murari's Guru is "Dayaarnavar". Dayaarnavar means 'ocean of compassion'. The name is very appropriate because waves of compassion keeps flowing out of a Sathguru's heart. The depth of His heart cannot be measured. Like an ocean, just on having His darshan, all our sins are washed off. True to the words, "Sadaikka priyadarshana", one can never get tired of his darshan!

Sri Dayaarnavar, was religiously performing the Salagram pooja as prescribed in the Sastras. His pooja was in a way that it kindled the devotion in the hearts of the people present. One day, unexpectedly, the king happened to come and was taken by surprise on seeing such a pooja. He said, "I'm fortunate to be present in your pooja. This should continue forever. All Sadhus who participate in this pooja should be well fed. To facilitate all that, let me grant you four villages. I pray you accept them gracefully" Sri Dayaarnavar too, very kindly accepted them. Many months passed on smoothly.

But soon, there came a hindrance to this kainkarya. A lawbreaker, who was collecting taxes against the law in those areas, was trying to direct all the taxes

of the villages that was going to Swami Dayaarnavar, towards him. He completely ignored the King's charter. Sri Dayaarnava's disciples explained his wrong deeds and that no amount of negotiation would work with a person like him. At once, Swami Dayaarnava called for his disciple Rasika Murari, hoping that he could settle this issue.

At the time of receiving the message, Rasika Murari was partaking the Prasad. He read the message with great devotion. It was written, "Start at once". Rasika Murari's abidance to his Guru's order was so remarkable that, even though he was in the middle of eating, he, at once left for the abode of His Guru, unmindful of washing his hands and mouth.

The Guru noticed the manner in which he had come. For other disciples to understand Rasika Murari's Guru bakthi, the Guru asked, "Murari! Why is that you have come here without even washing your hands?" Rasika Murari explained all that happened. On hearing this, there was a joyous uproar of "Sri Hare! Sathgurunatha Maharaj ki jai" from all those gathered around.

Rasika Murari learnt from his Guru, about all that was happening and at once rushed to the place of that troublemaker. People warned him of that culprit's bad deeds and tried stopping him but Murari did not heed to their requests.

Murari's spiritual prowess and intention reached the ears of that offender that he decided to finish this issue even before meeting him. Yes! He decided to kill him! He called out to a mahout and instructed him to bring an elephant that would kill Murari. The elephant was like that of Kuvalayapeedam sent by Kamsa to Bhagavan and the Gaja sent by Hiranyakashipu to kill Prahalad.

Murari along with his disciples, was nearing his place. The elephant was made to drink some liquids so that it can go wild! That's it! The elephant, with fierce eyes and loud cry, trampling everything down, came running towards Murari and his disciples. The disciples feared their lives and was about to run away. Murari stopped them saying, "if you are my disciples and have faith in me, remain wherever you are", but the disciples said, "Swami! More than being your disciple, our life is important to us!"

Murari said, "In that case, before running away, handover the Tulsi mala, I had given to you all" They hastily gave the mala and started running for their lives. Now, with all the Tulasi mala in hands, Hari nama dancing on his lips, without an iota of fear, Murari bravely faced the wild elephant that came charging at him. He looked at the elephant. All that he could see was the elephant-like gait of Krishna. Everything about the elephant, its color, majesty, sounds of the bells brought Krishna before of his eyes.

When the elephant came near Murari, something extraordinary happened. The elephant, that too, a wild elephant which was out of its senses; the elephant which was triggered by the mahout to go wild, on approaching this great Bhagavata, in contrast to its nature, lifted both its feet and bent down to prostrate. Just like how Gajendra cried out "Adhimoolame", the elephant, lifting its trunk high up in the air, hollered. The onlookers were stunned. The disciples who ran away felt ashamed of their lowly act. The culprit shuddered on hearing this. In a flash, he was transformed, out of Rasika Murari's Grace. Murari made a beautiful garland out of all the Tulasi mala he had collected from his disciples and adorned the neck of the elephant, which was still prostrating. In its right ear, he uttered the mantra "Rama Krishna Narayana" and blessed the elephant to be free of its wildness and become a supreme Bhagavata. Thereafter, the elephant's nature totally changed and was transformed into a Bhagavata! What is not possible by a divine glance of a Mahan?

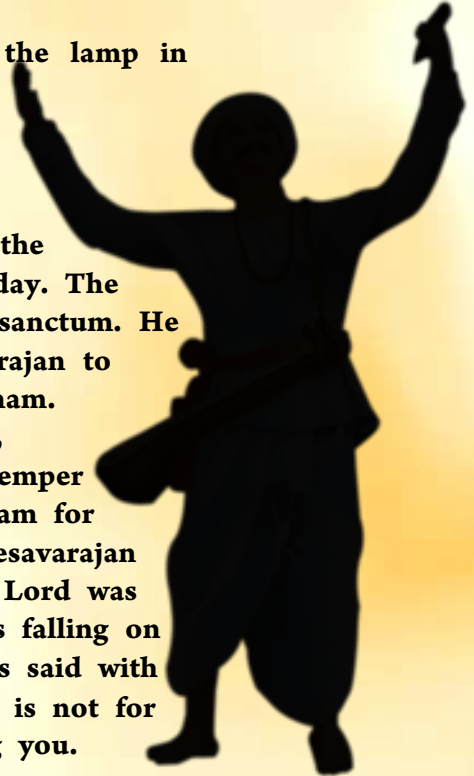
Sri Namdev

Maharaj

Shiv Kanya - Shri Kanya

Little Namdev, along with his mother, stood before the sanctum and felt joyous, as it was the time for which he had been waiting for long and with his tiny hands offered his gratitude to Bhagavan. With the divine names “Jai Jai Rama Krishna Hari” adorning his lips, he opened the doors of the sanctum of Kesavarajan. All these days, Namdev had carefully observed the pooja routines of his father, hence, he was aware of what is to be done, without having anyone to teach him. As he couldn't reach the altar where Kesavarajan was standing, he jumped to reach out to Bhagavan's feet and offered his salutations by placing his head on Lord's feet.

As his mother lit the lamp in the sanctum, Namdev started waking up the Lord by singing Prabhodanam, offered milk and did Deeparadhana. Then, very carefully he cleared the flowers the Lord was wearing the previous day. The mother too cleaned around the sanctum. He changed the clothes of Kesavarajan to the ones suitable for Tirumanjanam. When his mother brought water, Namdev, carefully checked the temperature and started the Tirumanjanam for Kesavarajan. When he bathed Kesavarajan with milk, it appeared as if the Lord was trying to taste the milk that was falling on His face. Namdev, on seeing this said with a smile, “Panduranga! This milk is not for drinking, it is meant for bathing you.



I have kept well boiled milk, especially for you” Just like Sri Lakshmazhwar does everything for Lord Rama, saying, “अहं सर्वं करिष्यामि”, Namdev, too, refused any help from his mother Gonabai, saying, ”let me do everything”.

After Tirumanjanam, Namdev gently dried up Kesavaraja and showed incense to the hair with great care.

Then, he adorned the Lord with new clothes and decorated with variety of fresh flowers. Then, with his tiny hands, he prepared the sandal paste and tenderly applied it on Kesavarajan’s forehead along with bukka powder in the center. Then, he decorated Him with nice necklaces, bracelets on hands, makara kundala for the ears and adored the beauty of the Lord. With immense care, he adorned Him with tinkling anklets, silk peethambara, tulasi mala and enjoyed every bit of decorating Panduranga.

Then, he did Sahasranama archana, “Om Vishwasmai nama:; Om Vishnave Nama:” with freshly gathered flowers. After the archana, just like his father, he offered dhupa and dheepa. As it was time to offer food to God, he asked his mother to step outside the sanctum. His mother asked, ”Why are asking me to step out Namdev?” for which he said,” Mother! I have observed father doing pooja. At the time of feeding Kesavaraja, he asks everyone to step out and offer food in solitude. Likewise, I too wish to offer food in solitude. So mother, please wait outside.” Gonabai enjoyed these words and said, “Namdev! You are little and might get scared being alone in the sanctum. So, let me stay in a corner here”.

But, Namdev, who wished to do it just like his father, was stubborn and asked his mom to wait outside. On seeing such enthusiasm in the child, Gonabai felt happy and went outside. Namdev locked the doors of the sanctum and taking the food given by his mother in a plate, he offered to Panduranga, saying, “Panduranga! Come and eat”.

Once, when Dhamashet offered food to Kesavaraja, Namdev asked his mother, "What is father doing inside the locked doors?" Gonabai explained in a way the child can understand, "Our Kesavaraja feels hungry, right? So, father is feeding Him food" From that day on, Namdev believed that when food is offered to Panduranga, He comes out of the image and accepts the food directly.

But today, Panduranga was standing just as an image. When Panduranga did not come out even after a while, Namdev started to believe that there was some mistake in his pooja and started pleading to Panduranga. "Hey Kesavaraja! Why are you still not coming to eat? Did I make any mistake? Didn't I not do pooja as sincerely as my father? Or, are you not coming because I'm a child? Why are delaying today Panduranga? Are you not hungry? Mother has prepared all your favorite dishes like sweet roti, kheer, milk, curd rice. Come soon to eat them Panduranga" Crying out this way, little Namdev, with his sweet voice, started singing his first abhang resembling a Namavali.

Kesava Madhava Govinda Gopala |
Jevi tu krupala Panduranga ||
Achyutha Vamana Dasaratha Nandana |
Jevi tu ka Krishna Panduranga ||
Krishna Vishnu Hari Madhusudhana Murari|
Jevi tu Narahari Panduranga ||
Aise glani karitha Vittala Bhavala|
Neivadya jevila Namayaca ||

A TALE FOR CHILDREN

LOTUS POND

Rajan is a professional singer. When he sings, the whole audience gets enchanted just like a snake getting charmed on hearing the pungi. Many music academies have conferred several titles on him. Rajan had the ability to enthrall the whole world with his music, but, he had a grievance. That was, he found himself to be less attractive and hence was feeling low every now and then.

Due to this, slowly, he started losing self-confidence. His Guru, who taught him music, noticed this. Once when he visited his house, the Guru clearly understood his state when he saw Rajan, standing before a mirror, feeling gloomy. He compassionately thought "This child needs to realize something" He called out to Rajan, who at once came running, offering his salutations. The Guru said, "There is some more time for the concert. Come, let us go to a nearby pond"

There was a beautiful garden with a small pond. The pond was little muddy covered with leaves and stems. It was a pond visited often by Rajan. Last month, Rajan remembered looking his face in the waters of this pond.

It was the same pond where the first thought sprouted in Rajan's mind, "Just as this pond looks ugly covered with mud and leaves, I too look unpleasant!" Wondering why the Guru has brought him here, he walked closer to the pond. The Guru pointing to the pond with a pleasant smile said, "Look at this pond, Rajan!"

Rajan replied in a sulky tone, “Gurunatha! I have been to this muddy pond several times” The Guru holding his hand and pointed to the center of the pond and said,” Look now!”

In the middle of this muddy pond, there was a beautiful lotus, with its soft, pink petals bathed in the rays of the twilight sun. The evening sun completely changed the ambience of this pond. The lotus in the middle beautified the entire pond. As Rajan wondered on seeing this, the Guru gently approached and whispered in his ears, “Did you notice Rajan! A single lotus has added great beauty to a muddy pond. Nobody will notice the mud on this pond, instead, everyone will admire this lotus, and start commending this pond as a ‘Beautiful Lotus Pond’.

Rajan understood! His eyes were brimming with joy and the welled up tears in the corner of his eyes conveyed his gratitude. Rajan decided to focus on betterment of his strength, which is music. From somewhere, he gained a new strength. His face bloomed like that lotus. He prostrated to his Guru. What is the need for words when the hearts communicate? It is needless to say that the concert was a super hit that day.

Rajan, on returning back home after the concert, looked into the mirror and saw only the face that looked beautiful with a pleasing smile!

**A single flower
makes up for a
pond of sludge!
Focus on the
strengths!!**



SANSKRIT WORD OF THE MONTH

वर

Sri Vishnupriya

vara

Varam means that which is best, the greatest. Sri Shuka, while mentioning to Parikshith, about a Rajarishi called Katvangar, says,

वरं मुहूर्तं विदितं घटेत श्रेयसे यतः

That is, on knowing that his lifespan is left only for a muhurtha, he attained Bhagavan within that short time. So, even a short span of one Muhurtha, if utilized to attain the highest, then it is the best(वरं).

Similarly, In Bhagavatam, the devas, while glorifying human birth on the land of Bharat, they say,

कल्पायुषां स्थानजयात् पुनर्भवात् ।
क्षणायुषां भारतभूजयो वरम् ॥

That is, a short life in the land of Bharat is greater than being in Brahmaloka or devaloka for millions of years. In this context, प्रवर means the highest and अवर means the lowest.

The other popular meaning for 'Varam' is boon. It is well known that God on giving darshan to Bakthas, says, 'वरं वृणीष्व' or 'वरं वरय', which means "Ask for a boon"

That's the reason Prithu Maharaj says to Bhagavan, "वरं वृणीष्वेति गिरं ते जगतां विमोहिनीं मन्ये", that is, "I think, you keep the world enchanted with your words, "ask for a boon".

Nevertheless, the nature of Bhagavan is to grant boons. That is why he is known as वरद (वरं ददाति — one who bestows boon). He is present as Varadaraja in Kanchipuram. In Madhurapuri, as Premika Varada, He bestows all that the devotee prays for. 'Varada hasta' refers to how Tirupati Srinivasa Perumal has His right hand pointing downwards, symbolically saying, 'I can give anything when you surrender to me'.

Next, 'Vara' means bridegroom. Generally we say 'look out for 'Varan', here 'Vara' means 'to choose', that is, to search for the right choice of bridegroom for a girl to get married. In Sanskrit, it is called 'वरण'.

'Swayamvaram' is for a Princess to select her bridegroom on her own. In Swayamvara, amongst all the Princes assembled in the palace, the Princess gets to choose the one she likes. This was quite prevalent. At times, some contest was designed for this purpose and the Princess chose to marry the winner. The swayamvara of Sita and Draupadi were of this type.

'वरवर्ण' means Gold. It is named so because it has the best color or luster. 'वरवर्णिनी' refers to a girl with a golden hue. Thus, there are several meanings for this word.

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Translation Team

Smt Nirmala Giri
Smt Latha Kumanan
Smt Jeyashree Ramakrishnan
Smt Jayanthi Sundararaman
Smt Sujatha Manikandan
Smt Ramya Balaji
Smt Nisha Giri
Smt Sujatha Natarajan
Smt Sharadha Srinivasan

To convey your prayers to Sri Sri Swamiji, mail to

Dr A Bhagyanathan, Personal Secretary to
HH Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji
Plot No 11, Door No 4/11, Nethaji Nagar Main Road, Jafferkhanpet,
Chennai - 600083
Tel: +91-44-24895875
Email: contact@namadwaar.org



Rama