

Sri Hari:

Madhura Murali

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HH Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji*

Madhura Smrithi

M.K.Ramanujam

Sri Swamiji was narrating some incidents in the lives of Mahans to a handful of us who were seated near him. Just then Sri Sanatkumar joined us. He was then visiting Ramanathapuram frequently and conducting satsang. Sri Swamiji enquired of Sanatkumar, “Had you been to Ramanathapuram? Where was satsang conducted in Ramanathapuram? How many Bhaktas participated? Do the Bhaktas feel happy to participate in the satsang? What did they say?”

Sanat Hkumar narrated the details of the satsang conducted in Ramanathapuram and then added, “They are suffering without rain and prayed for rain. All of us performed Mahamantra kirtan for the rains. But it drizzles a few drops and there is no heavy downpour.”

There was a picture of Mahaperiyava in the place where we were all sitting. Even as he kept looking at that picture, Sri Swamiji said to me, “There is a pond in that picture, do you see it? It is filled with water, are you able to see it?”

I looked at the picture well and said, “Yes, I see the pond filled with water.”

At once Sri Swamiji said, "This picture was taken when Mahaperiyava was in another State. When Mahaperiyava had camped in that Town an auspicious time (puNya kAlam) whence Mahaperiyava would bathe only in a River or a pond was about to come up. However, the pond in that Town was totally dry. There was not a single drop of water in it. Mahaperiyava's attendants suggested shifting to another place where the pond had water. Mahaperiyava did not respond to their pleadings. Next day was the auspicious day and those who were with him wondered what Mahaperiyava would do. At midnight there was heavy downpour and the pond got filled! Just overnight the totally dry pond was filled with water! It was a great wonder, for, it had not rained in that Town for a very long time. People of the Town were delighted."

After the narration Sri Swamiji looked at me and said, "Ramu! If you pray it will bear fruit. Sanatkumar is very concerned about Ramanathapuram not getting rain. Go close to that Mahaperiyava's picture and pray that it should rain in Ramanathapuram." I did as bid by Sri Swamiji. I went close to that picture and prayed, not for hours, but for just a minute. That's all. Next day Sri Swamiji asked Sanatkumar to call Ramanathapuram and find out about the situation there. The Bhaktas there informed with great joy that there has been continuous heavy downpour.

Answers and Beyond

Q: Swamiji, I have wondered at some people. They have all comforts and do not have any shortcomings; yet they are not happy. They live without even enjoying all that they have. Why is this so?

A: You have asked a wonderful and profound question. Listen to me patiently. The same question is asked by Parvati Devi to Parameshwara, in the Mahabharata. I will tell you the same answer that Kailasapathi Shiva Himself gave to Devi.

In their earlier births, the people you speak about did not perform charitable acts on their own accord and out of their desire, but did it on the insistence of others. There would not have been even an ounce of shraddha (dedication) in the charitable acts that they performed. Hence in this birth, they got all material comforts because they performed the charitable activities, but since they did not do it out of their own desire, they do not enjoy the benefit of having all the comforts.

Now you may have another fair question. Why are some people happy and contented even though they do not have wealth or physical comforts? This too has an answer in the Mahabharata. Such people, in their previous births, are those who lived in poverty and yet desired to do charity always. Since they did not perform charity, they do not have wealth in this birth, but since they had a genuine desire to do charity, they still lead a happy, contented life in this birth.

Q: Aha! Now I understand this well, Swamiji. How deep is our Sanatana Dharma!...

A: This itself gives us such wonderment, doesn't it? This conversation happens in the Anushasana Parva of Mahabharata. Some people attain position and wealth without taking any big effort at all. Some others are able to get all that only after much hard work and effort. Yet others, even after putting in humongous effort, still struggle as they are unable to enjoy even a tiny bit of achievements such as name, fame and wealth. Why this difference?

In this world, those who - place primary importance on charity and righteousness, find those who are truly worthy of charity, go on their own accord to such people and give to them in all humility without any show, and make those who receive the charity happy - such people, in their next birth, attain the fruits of these easily without any apparent effort.

The second kind of people are those who give only to those who come and request them for help. They will give only during those times when there are people who ask. In their next birth, such people labor hard and after much effort attain the fruits of their actions.

However, those who do not give anything to even those who ask, or worse, get angry or disrespect them, do not attain the fruits in their next birth even after much effort. Only he who sows the seed, reaps the fruit.

Some people gain wealth and physical comforts only when they are old and have reached an age when they cannot really enjoy worldly pleasures; yet others have material pleasures at their disposal but are unable to enjoy them because of disease or sickness. The reason for this is that, in their previous births, despite being wealthy, these people started to be charitable only in their old age, or they became terminally ill and began to give away their wealth only when they realized that they would not survive.

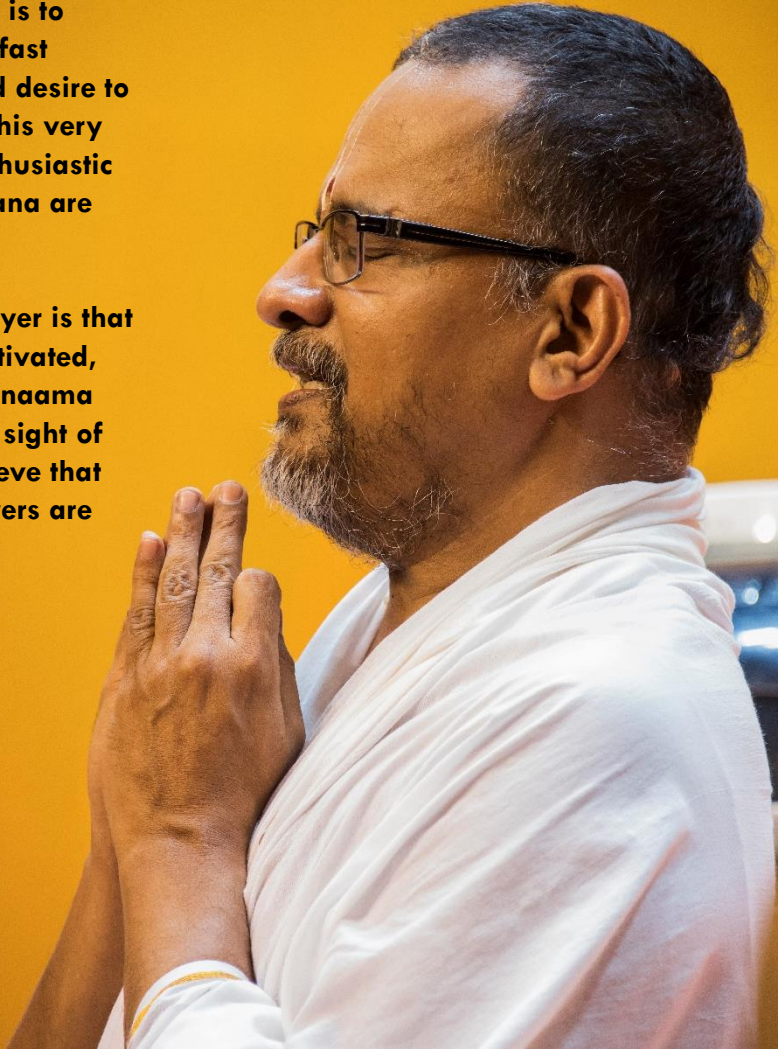
Prayer

- Sri Swamiji

I was thinking about what I can pray to God for. I have to make my life worthwhile, and I should attain God in this birth, escaping the endless cycle of rebirths. Two prayers arose in my mind.

My first prayer is to have the steadfast motivation and desire to attain God in this very birth, as unenthusiastic Japa and Dhyana are ineffective.

My second prayer is that when I am motivated, I should chant naama without losing sight of the goal. I believe that these two prayers are the right ones.



Kali Yuga

- Gadadharan

Kali yuga, the age of Kali is an age which produces sinful people. Kali yuga will be full of evil. All shastras repeatedly state that in kali yuga, no dharma can be followed without flaws. Let us see how that is so.

For us, who live in kali, mental strength is very low. That too it is not made of good samskaras. As there is no mental strength, the mind will be wavering more. Mind will easily get influenced. The elders who can show us the right path have also reduced in the family. Population of people is high. Opportunities are low. Due to this situation, everywhere and in everything there is competition. This is our state today.

If one opens the internet, even though there are useful information available on one side, there is more of disturbing news, photos available both in the internet and also in the TV. In social media, books, cinemas, more than good things in the story, we can see these more & more of disturbing things. The situation in the world is such that one cannot live without committing mistakes in life.

As there is no mental strength, naturally one falls into these things and commit sins. Hence, in today's situation, everything is arranged in such a way that it kindles us to commit sins.

So, isn't this the age that produces sinful people?

MIND MATTERS

- Kapila Vasudevan

Mind is a collection of our tendencies or vasanas accumulated over successive births . These have been classified into Satva,Rajas and Tamas. Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Madha and Matsarya (Desire, Anger, Greed, Attachment, Pride and Jealousy) are said to be the six enemies of man. Most of us don't even try to reduce these vasanas or tendencies, instead we accumulate more vasanas over the course of our life. For example surfing internet, addiction to smart phones are new tendencies that have caught on to us. These could not have been carried forward from our previous births as these were not invented then. What it actually means is we accumulate vasanas in each birth we take.

The most dominant vasana or tendency in each of us is the identification of self with the body or the feeling of "I". This is the strongest of all tendencies as this identification of self as the body or "I" has started right from our first birth and has gone from strength to strength in successive births, be it as a worm, animal or human. Let us all pray for GURU's grace to get rid of this Vasana by chanting HIS name incessantly.

To progress in devotion, one should realise one's faults and chant the divine Name with a fervent prayer to the Lord to cleanse oneself of these faults. It is also important that one does not pay attention to other's faults. Once we cultivate the attitude that everything is the play of Lord Hari, can we not easily walk on the path of devotion?!

**We'll see the next steps:
ulagathai Hariyin lllayAi pArthiduvAi
akanda nAma smaranam seidhiduvAi
urakkam sOmbal thavirthiduvAi"**

Stairway to Devotion

- M.K. Ramanujam

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Not seeing the shortcomings in others, seeing all mundane happenings as the play of Lord Hari, etc. are preparatory steps. As an example, to clean a cup we pour some cleaning compound on the cup and rub with it; we then wash it with water. But the purpose of the activity is not just to clean the cup. We wish to fill the cup with milk and drink it. Likewise, seeing defects only in oneself and not in others, seeing everything as the play of Lord Hari are all preparatory steps for the mind to indulge in uninterrupted chanting of the divine Name.

Hence the next step follows as 'akanda nAma smaranam seidhiduvAi'. To think of the divine Name without interruption is 'akanda nAma smaranam'. Due to the discipline acquired by the mind by not seeing other's faults, the mind does not waver, and acquires the ability to remember the divine Name without a break.

When we keep looking into our own defects it will remind us of the need for Namasmaran and we will be able perform it with enthusiasm.

“kAm na chOdA, krodh na chOdA
tunE nAma japan kyUn chOd diyA”

--- runs a famous bhajan song. In this bhajan the devotee asks, “when you have not left desire or anger, why have you left the chanting of the Name?”

Since it is certain that the simplest way to rid oneself of these defects is the continuous chanting of the divine Name, when we look in to our defects, this uninterrupted Namasmaran becomes easily possible.

In the discourses on 'Thirumalai' we have heard that during Namasmaran, two ear-demons will keep tormenting us. (ear-demon is that which comes by itself and keeps telling us something in our ears). What are these two ear-demons? One ear-demon will keep telling in our right ear, 'enough-enough' and the other one on the left ear, 'what is the hurry? We'll see tomorrow'. These are the thoughts which are obstacles in Namasmaran, and ignoring them, we should progress.

Sri Swamiji sings, “urakkam-sOmbal thavirthiduvAi”. These happen due to ‘tamO guna’. Uthukkadu Venkatakavi also sings,

“kOL solvadhendrAI nAkku konda mattum thuLLum gOvindA endru sonnAI kondu urakkam thaLLum”

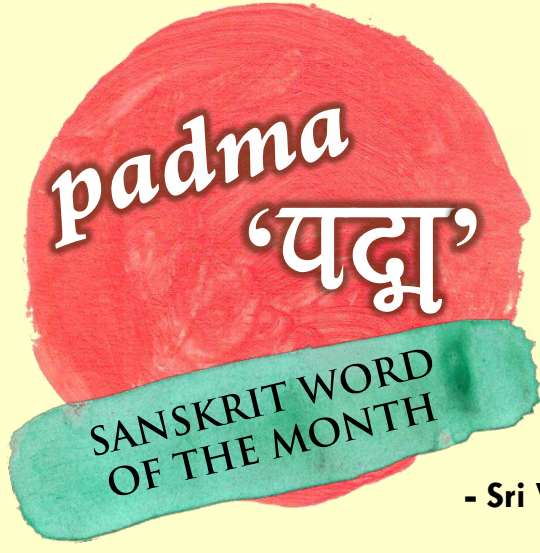
We should overcome our ‘tAmasa’ attitude, avoid sleep and lethargy, and indulge in continuous Nama chanting whenever possible.

It is not sufficient to only overcome ‘tAmasam’. It is also required to overcome the ‘rAjasic’ attitudes which arise next. How does one identify ‘rAjasm’? To thump one’s chest with an ‘I – I’ attitude, self-praise and expecting others’ praise are all rAjasic attitudes.

How to overcome this ‘rAjasm’? The next step in the ladder covers this...

(...to be contd)





The most widely known meaning of the word 'Padma' is lotus. There are other meanings too.

There are several words that can be derived from the word 'Padma' with its meaning as lotus. 'Padmaa' refers to the divine mother Lakshmi Devi. She is born out of lotus and is seated on it too and hence known as 'Padmajaa', 'Padmaa', 'Padmini' and so on. Lakshmi Devi is very fond of lotus. She holds one in Her hands and also wears a lotus garland. That is the reason, we find the names Padmapriyaa, Padmahastaa, Padmasundari, Padmodhbhavaa, Padmamukhi, Padmagandhini, Padmamalaadharaa in Lakshmi Ashtotram.

Likewise, Bhagavan has the divine name 'Padmee' in Vishnu Sahasranamam, as He sports a lotus in His hands and navel. Since Bhagavan has a lotus in His navel, He is known as Padmanabhan. As Brahma appeared from Bhagavan's lotus navel, he is known by the names, "Padmasambhava:", "Padmayoni:", "Padmabhu:"

‘Padmaakara’ means a pond filled with lotuses. In Srimad Bhagavatam, Sri Shuka says in VenuGitam, “इत्थं शरत्त्वच्छजलं पद्माकरसुगन्धिना”, that is, the fragrance(सुगन्धिना) from the lotus pond filled the entire forest of Brindavan.

‘Padma’ also refers to one of the nine treasures of Kubera. Kubera is the Lord of wealth with nine kinds of treasures. They are called by the names, Mahapadma, padma, shankha, makara, Kachapa, Mukunda, Kunda, Neela, Kharva. That is what Oothukadu Venkata Kavi sings in his kirtan “Paarvai ondre podhume”,

“sanga paduma nidhi irandum valiya thanthaal enna?”

These nine treasures are a mere dust before Krishna’s one loving glance.

Next, “Padma” is a name of a Vyuha. ‘Padma Vyuha’ refers to a type of formation in the war field. The enemies are attacked by creating such a formation. In ‘Padma Vyuha’ the armies take the form of a bloomed lotus. In Mahabharatha war, Abimanyu was surrounded by the Kauravas through this Padma Vyuha and was killed against all rules of war.

There is a precious stone called “Padmaraaga”, known as ruby in English. It is one of the nine precious stones. Srimad Bhagavatam says, it is this stone, known as the Kaustuba gem, that appeared during the Amritamathan.

“कौस्तुभाख्यमभूद्रत्नं पद्मारागो महोदधे”

Lastly, “Padmasana” is quite a popular word. In Yogasana, the sitting posture, that appears like a lotus, with the feet crossed over the thighs, is known as ‘Padmasana’. It is said that this posture is very conducive to dhyana and has health benefits too.

LASER

Raghav aspired to become a scientist. He wished to join as a Laser scientist in the most prestigious Space Research Institute in India. He started studying many scientific books apart from his high school texts. But he had a complaint. He felt all his endeavors are not yielding the desired results. He struggled not knowing what is to be corrected. He sought help from his science professor.

“Sir! You are aware that I aspire to join laser technology and serve our country’s Space Research. But my efforts do not seem to be satisfactory. Please guide me”, he pleaded.

Professor Dr. Kannan said, “ Alright! You may come home this Saturday and study. Let me see”

The day arrived. He observed Raghav’s efforts. Within few moments, there was a smile in the Professor’s face. But still, he continued to observe.

During their lunch, the Professor started the conversation, “Raghav! You wish to do a research in the field of Laser, am I correct?”

“Yes”

“What is the greatness of Laser power?”

“ It is the tremendous power that is acquired when the light is focused without letting it scatter”

“Raghav! Your mind is similar to that light. When it is held one-pointed without scattering, it can reach greater heights.

“You cannot achieve great things, if you are distracted by small things”

These words pierced like a laser and touched Raghav’s heart. All that has been distracting him, checking messages frequently in his mobile phone, reading the news tidbits and everything else flashed right before his inner eye.

Raghav understood.

Dr. Kannan was confident that Raghav will certainly achieve greater heights as a Laser Scientist with his steadfast efforts. His handshake spoke volumes to Raghav

Sri Namdev Maharaj

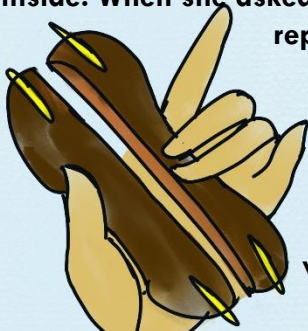
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Shiv Kanya - Shri Kanya

Damuset decided to go to the temple, as both Namadev and Bhagawan Panduranga have not come back home yet. There, at the temple, Panduranga was making Namadev stand on the altar in place of Him and was getting ready to get back to Namadev's house. Damuset met Panduranga on the way, got hold of His hand and got back to their home.

saNa tivaLeesa aalaa | naama raauLaasee kEla | |
haatee taruni devaasee | chalaa aamuchyaa karaasee | |
deva karaasee aaNiE | chandana paatee baisaviE | |
kONaabhayinE udanE kele | daamshEteenE mhaNiE | |
badhara kaatila maadhyaachaa | paaLa puShilaa nandaachaa | |
haati kEuni pancharatee | chakrapaaNika OvaaliteE | |
deva jEunee druptha jaalE | daasee janeenE vite tilE | |

As soon as they reached home, KoNabhai who was waiting for them, was very happy to see Panduranga and she took Him inside. When she asked Panduranga where Namadev was, He replied that Namadev has taken His place on the altar at the temple.



KoNabhai made Panduranga sit on a wooden plank and applied chandan and other fragrant oils on Him. From whose feet, holy Ganga has originated, Damuset bathed that Bhagawan with Ganga water. Then, KoNabhai wiped Panduranga with the pallu of her own saree and did sambrani for Him. Then, they gave new clothes to Bhagawan.

Once Panduranga got ready with new clothes, KoNabhai got everything ready for Damuset and Bhagawan to eat. Since, it was a festival day, she had prepared so many different varieties of food and she also gave different kinds of fruits. Panduranga ate very happily, talking and chatting with Damuset and KoNabhai. Then, Bhagawan settled down to rest for some time.

After some time, KoNabhai got worried because Namadev who had gone to the temple in the morning has not returned back home. Panduranga also remembered about leaving Namadev at the altar that morning. So, Panduranga took Damuset and KoNabhai and started back to the temple.

There, at the temple, people thought Namadev was Panduranga Himself and they had come in huge crowds to have darshan. The priests were singing Prabodhanam and performing Dhooa and Dheepa aarti. Then, they offered butter, milk and sugar to Namadev.

As they do every day, the priests were showing butter and sugar in front of Bhagawan and taking them away. But, the sweet smell of the butter and sugar, made Namadev forget about the warning that Bhagawan had given him in the morning and started tasting the butter and sugar kept in front of him. On seeing this, the priests were very surprised. Lots of bhakthas wanted to see this closer and they started coming close to the altar. When they came near, they found out that, it was Namadev who was standing in the place of Panduranga on the altar. The immediately got hold of the feet of Namadev and were extremely happy to have the darshan of the great Bhaagawatha.

By that time, Panduranga had reached the temple along with Damuset and KoNabhai. Bhagawan was very happy to see Namadev standing there with beautiful alankaram. Bhagawan showed Damuset and KoNabhai, Namadev's leela with other bhaktas there at the temple. Namadev's parents were surprised to see the Pooja and prasadam that were being offered to Namadev there.

Bhagawan Panduranga not only did leelas with Namadev alone, but, He did more and more leelas with the whole family of Namadev.

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