

With the Blessings of HH Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji



MADHURA MURALI

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Spiritual Monthly



MADHURA SMARANAM

My Guru As I See Him

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January 1, the beginning of New Year as per English calendar, is the day when Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, like the celestial cow Kamadhenu, rained boons sought by his devotees. On such an auspicious day we also conduct a Mass Prayer and chant the Mahamantra kirtan.

January 1, 2016. Until the last moment the town and venue of the annual mass prayer had not been decided. At first we thought of conducting it at Salem. After his visits to Virudhunagar, Sivakasi, Periyakulam and Udumalaipettai for satsang events, Sri Swamiji decided to conduct the mass prayer in Madurai. There was not much time left. Further, the city of Chennai was hit by never-before-seen downpour and floods, twice. Therefore, it was doubtful if we would be able to conduct the mass prayer in Madurai. Later, when the whole of Tamil Nadu was affected by floods, it was decided to definitely conduct the mass prayer this year. Work in this connection was taken up hurriedly.



No posters or any kind of propaganda was done in this connection. No one from outside was specially invited for the occasion. Yet 10,000 devotees assembled in SDH School complex on the evening of January 1, 2016! Sri Swamiji gave his benedictory address for about 10 minutes.

Sri Swamiji began with the glorious history of Madurai, the temples around Madurai, great souls (mahans) who had taken birth in Madurai and then spoke of the efficacy and power of the Lord's Divine Name and the Mass prayer. Only the voice of Sri Swamiji was heard and the 10000 devotees assembled there listened with rapt attention. All the assembled devotees heard Sri Swamiji with great enthusiasm and elation. Finally, Sri Swamiji asked everyone to close their eyes for a while and pray. The whole of Madurai seemed to be in *dhyana* when all the devotees closed their eyes and offered silent prayer! Then it was sheer joy to see and listen to all the 10000 devotees chant the Lord's Divine Name with arms lifted and clapping, along with Sri Swamiji. All the devotees left for home peacefully with deep faith, a great divine feeling and Mahamantra kirtan. This mass prayer was relayed live through webcast. Devotees all around the world participated in the mass prayer from their homes and benefited. This year, by the Lord's grace, the mass prayer was successfully conducted in the historical town of Madurai.

ANSWERS & BEYOND

Sri Swamiji's Answers to Questions from Devotees

You advocate chanting of 'Hare Rama Mahamantra'. Someone else propagates chanting of 'Rama Rama', another 'Ramakrishnahari' while yet another advocates chanting of 'Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram'.

You approach a doctor for relief for your ailment. He tells you, "Haemoglobin count has gone down in your body. Therefore, add carrot or red radish or beetroot or apple or tomato to your diet." Why didn't the doctor advice taking just one of these? In the world, tastes of people differ. Follow what has been advocated to you by your Guru. That would suffice. There is no need for any kind of study.

Why do eyes shed tears when devotion (Bhakti) reaches its pinnacle?

Does not Srimad Bhagavatam itself permit flawed reading of the Bhagavatam?

Let us say that a person deeply yearns to read the Bhagavatam but does not know to read it correctly. In that case it is not wrong to read it even incorrectly. The import behind this is that one can read the Bhagavatam even incorrectly but never should it be read without 'bhava' (to bring to mind the picture of what is being read - the Lord's form as described, His qualities, etc. - and enjoy it).

Have not Mahapurushas attracted people only through their several acts of miracles? Why then it is said that miracles are not signs of spirituality?

Mahapurushas have attracted the world only through their selfless, pure divine love and compassion and not through mere miracles.

Changes in the mental state is certainly reflected in the body. When the mind is gripped with fear the body trembles and sweats. Sorrow brings tears to the eyes. When someone throws insults at us or our ego is hit in some way, our eyes fill with tears. In this way any change in the frame of mind certainly does affect the body and the eyes immediately reflect it.

A friend of mine says that it is a blemish for God to incarnate as a human being. He is a devotee of Lord Siva.

Let us take up all the religions in the world. Whether God, as depicted in that religion, has form or not, or whether He took an avatar or not, all this is known only through the great soul (Mahapurusha) who appeared in *human form* to establish that religion!

While this is the case, it only makes sense that the Lord Himself takes an avatar so that all people (and not just Mahapurushas) get to understand Him in the right manner, at least to a certain extent. This certainly is not a defect. If the Lord does not incarnate no one can understand Him at all.

Bhagavath Darshan

Nalla Hari

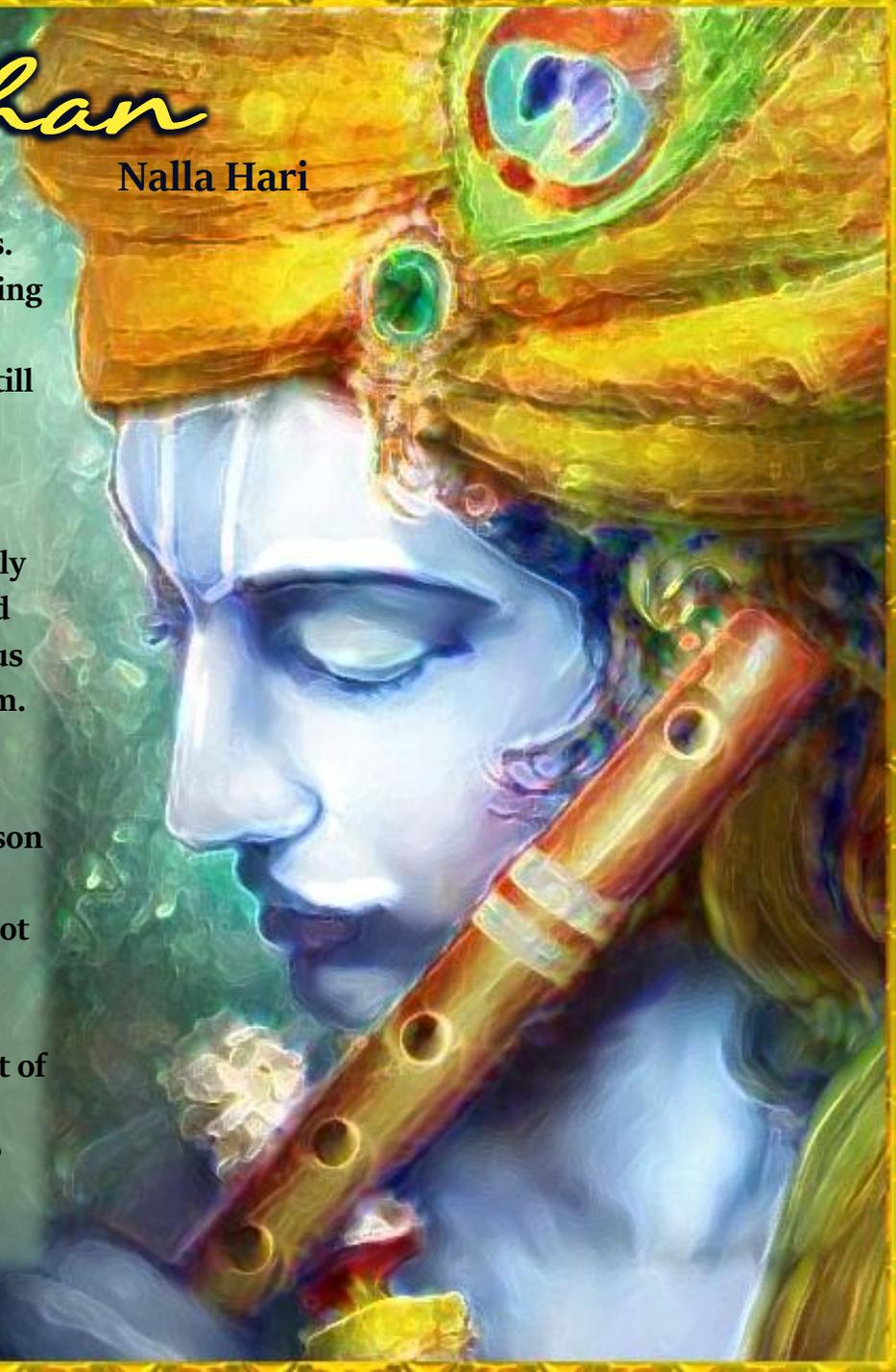
Sights of varied names and forms are seen by us through our open eyes. We see such sights not only now in the present time, but have been seeing them right from the day of our birth; and we are certainly going to see them all through our lives. All the names and forms that we have seen till date is the gross world i.e. material world.

All the names and forms that we have perceived till date get deeply imprinted in our mind. How do we know this? When we sit down quietly for a while, recent happenings, events long past, those that had affected us deeply both sorrowfully and joyfully, rise up as thoughts and affect us variedly. Thoughts deeply imprinted in the mind are reflected as dream.

With closed eyes we can think of all the matters that we have seen or heard till date. For example, we can bring up in our mind's eye the person whom we have seen and think only of him for a while. Right now that person may not be present in front of me in this gross world. He may not even be alive now.

Please be attentive to what I have to say now.

In which part of our body did the form of that person whom we thought of arise? Is it in the heart or liver or lungs? Can we pinpoint it? No, we cannot. Similarly, should there not be a space where the form appears? Where is that space in our body? This, of course, cannot be pinpointed.

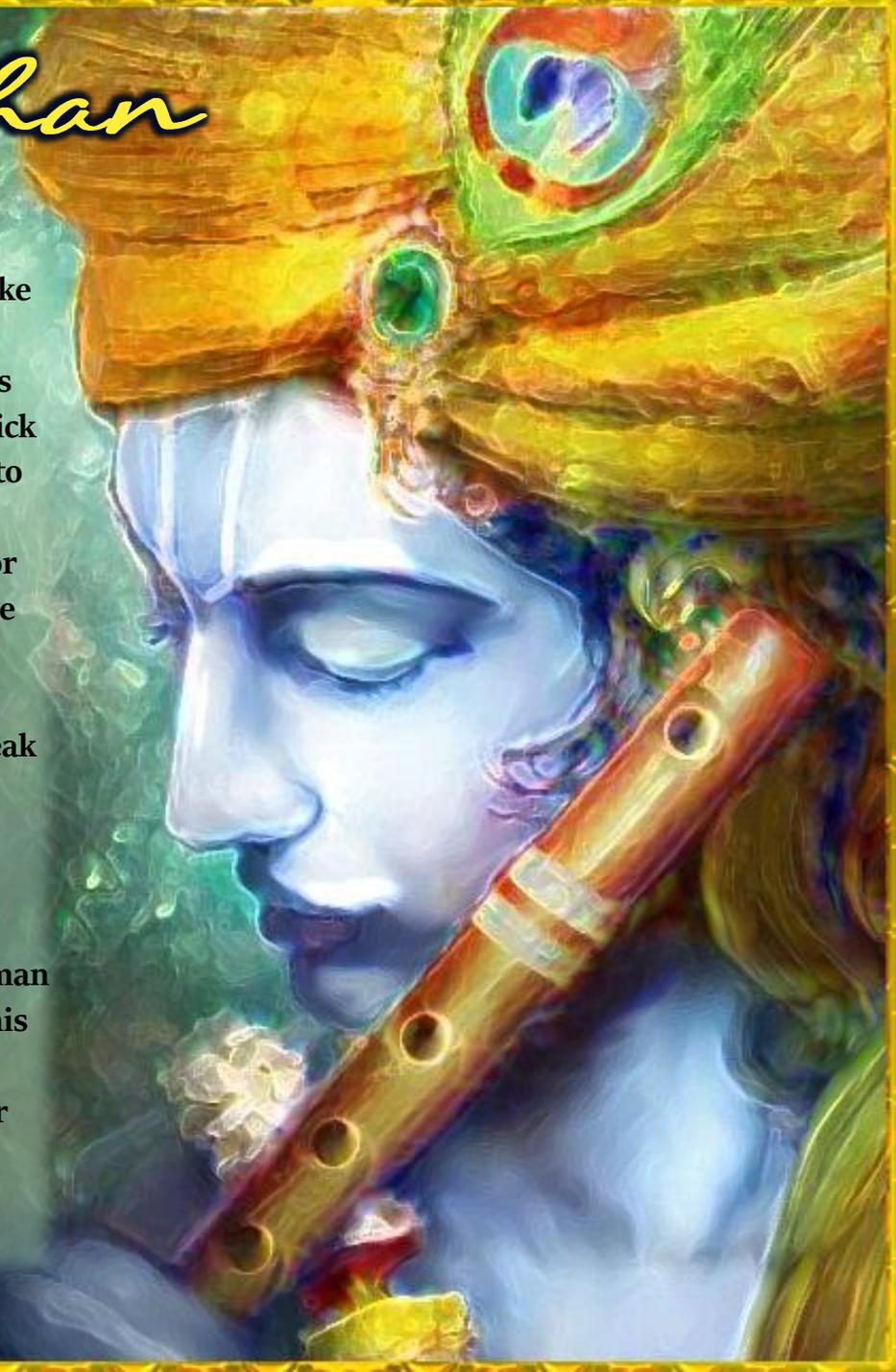


Bhagavath Darshan

Let us look into this further. Is it possible for us to even think of (imagine) something that we have neither seen nor heard of? Let us take up a ghost. We have never seen a ghost till date. It is black; wears blue clothes; has two horns on its head; has scary teeth; its legs are huge; its eyes are empty of compassion; it has a big stomach; its hands hold a stick with iron spikes... when a description of this kind is given we are able to bring up a form of this kind in our mind. It is possible for us to rise up such a form in our thought. We have never before seen such a form; nor have we heard about such a form. But when someone begins to describe in this manner we do bring up such a form in our mind, don't we?

Further, when its characteristics, i.e. that it is very cruel, that if we speak ill of it, it will destroy us, etc. are described, we imagine a form and imagine its character and begin to experience fear. All these arise in us only because we hear about it.

Therefore, we cannot question the power of speech. A man entices woman through his attractive words. Those who think of cheating another of his wealth do so through their talk. Leaders trying to occupy office draw people through their speech. A worker earns the affection of his master through his sweet talk. Words become the main cause of friendship, enmity, affection, deception, anger, and love between people.

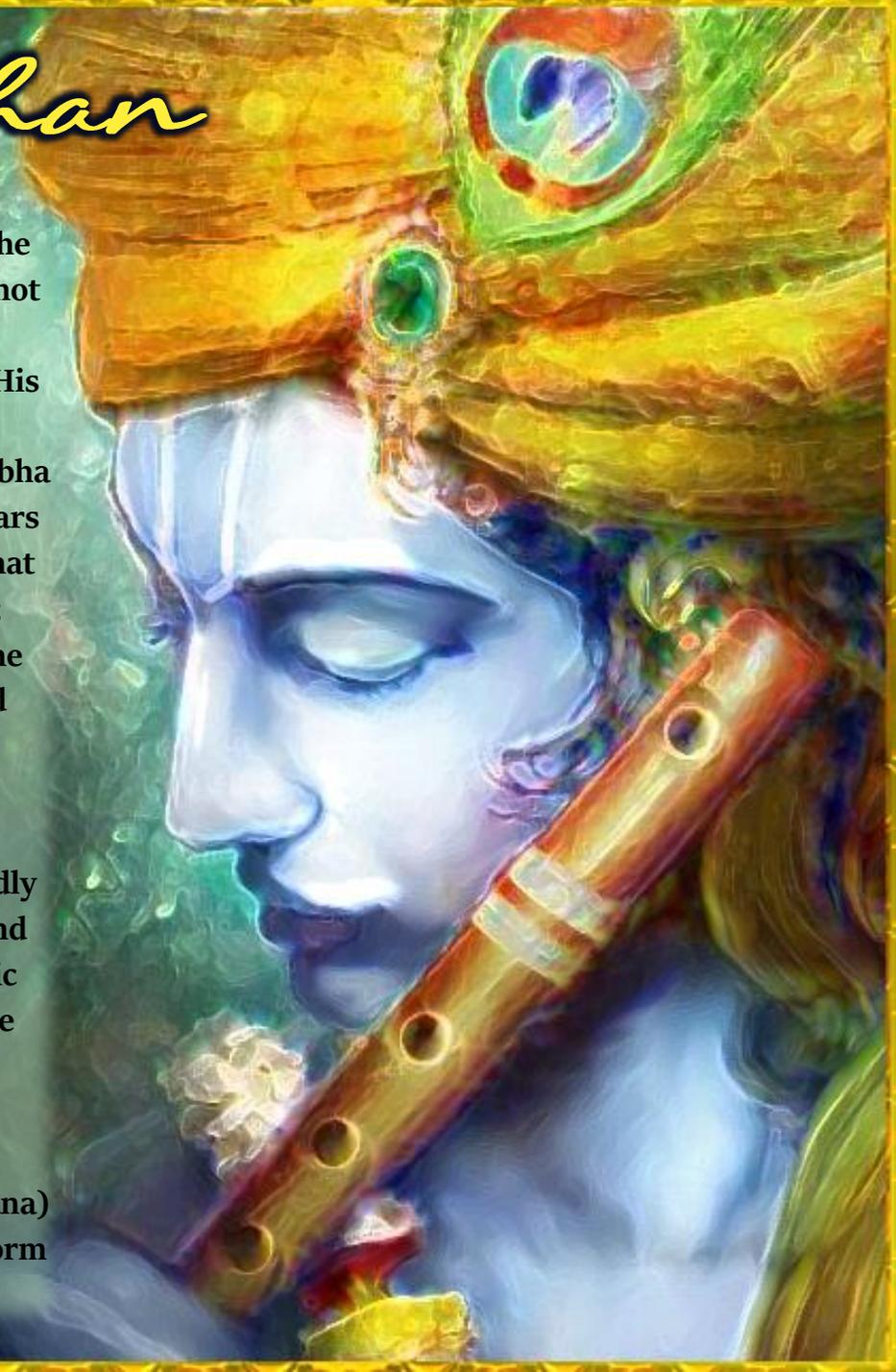


Bhagavath Darshan

You may question, 'Why do you write all these now?' Let me come to the point. The Guru speaks to us about the form of the Deity that we have not seen, but he has seen. He also describes the form and qualities of that Deity - that the Lord he speaks of holds the conch, discus and mace in His hands, has four arms, wears yellow clothes, adorns a garland made of several kinds of flowers, is blue-hued in complexion, wears the Kaustubha gem, has lotus-like eyes, wears sandal paste mark on His forehead, wears a crown on His head, dangling earrings, anklets on His Feet. He says that the Lord is compassion personified; that He is ever ready to protect us; that He saves the surrendered, etc. We should bring up in our minds the Lord's form as described by the Guru as also His qualities: this is called 'Bhaavam'.

To think of these often deeply with one-pointed mind is called 'Bhaavabalam'. Due to this power (Bhaavabalam) the imprints of worldly names and forms that have occupied our mind gets erased gradually and the form of this Lord alone begins to appear in our heart. When tamasic and rajasic vaasanaas (latent impressions) get erased and only the pure sattvic vaasanaas are uppermost, the Lord glitters in the space of the heart (hrudayaakaasha) as a blue light (neela jyoti).

Then the Lord's darshan (sight) and complete wisdom (paripoorna jnana) is attained by that devotee. May we always think of the Lord's divine form and His auspicious qualities!





Narayanaswami Bhagavata



Vatthalagundu is a village near Madurai. A person by name Narayanaswami Bhagavata lived there. He used to stay in Govindapuram Mutt quite often and perform bhajan. Once, while staying in Govindapuram Mutt he lay down outside at the entrance to the Mutt and slept. He then heard the sound of someone walk with a wooden sandal. 'Wherefrom is this sound coming? Who is walking with such a Paduka (sandals)?' with such questions taking hold of him he looked towards the direction the sound came from.

He then saw an ascetic come from the banks of the Cauvery and enter the Mutt. 'An ascetic seems to have come here. I must have his darshan in the morning' - thinking thus he went back to sleep. In the morning he rushed to see that ascetic. But however much he searched he could not find him. It was then that he realized that Sri Bhagavan Nama Bodendra swami himself had given him his darshan!

Yet another time when he was staying in Govindapuram Mutt he kept hearing the sound of Rama Nama chant. When he tried to find out wherefrom it came he found that it came from the Samadhi of Sri Bodendra swami. After this incident he stayed in Govindapuram itself and serving the Guru flet highly blessed.

A devotee of Sri Swamiji who had retired from AGS office lived in Tiruvananthapuram. Sri Swamiji would always address him (Mr. Subramanian) as 'Ambika kaapi'! (Because after his retirement he was running a coffee powder shop). He has now attained the Lord's holy feet. A few years back Sri Swamiji conducted a Bhagavata Saptaham in Guruvayur. One evening as Sri Swamiji sat talking with the devotees he said to Mr. Subramanian, "Keep reading the Bhagavatam incessantly. You will not have another birth." Hearing this, Mr. Subramanian became sad and began to shed tears. Sri Swamiji could not understand this kind of reaction and asked him, "Why have you become so sorrowful?" The devotee said, "Swamiji! Why did you say that I will not have another birth? I do desire another birth! In this birth I have not been fortunate to enjoy your physical association for long. In my next birth I should always remain with you right from my birth." Saying this he prostrated to Sri Swamiji even as he shed tears. Sri Swamiji felt greatly touched with his devotion.

cherished memoirs

SRI GOPALAKRISHNA BHAGAVATA

EPISODE - 3

Many people would come to Bhagavata who is now known as 'Abhinava Tyagaraja' and complain about lack of rain, water, non-availability of wood and other items required to erect shamiyana (pandhal). Bhagavata would tell them that the Lord would somehow provide them. He would prostrate to Lord Sri Lakshmi Narasimha prior to commencing any utsav. From then on, the Lord, true to his words, 'Yoga kshemam vahaamyaham' would take complete ownership of the utsav.

The way the utsavs used to happen would be quite astonishing. He would appear in the dreams of people erecting shamiyanas for other causes and would direct them to do it at the place of utsav. How would the rice received from the vunchavriti be sufficient to feed thousands of devotees? Hence, the Lord himself would order a devotee to supply rice bags, salt, tamarind, vegetables, banana leaves and to do the samaaraadhana.

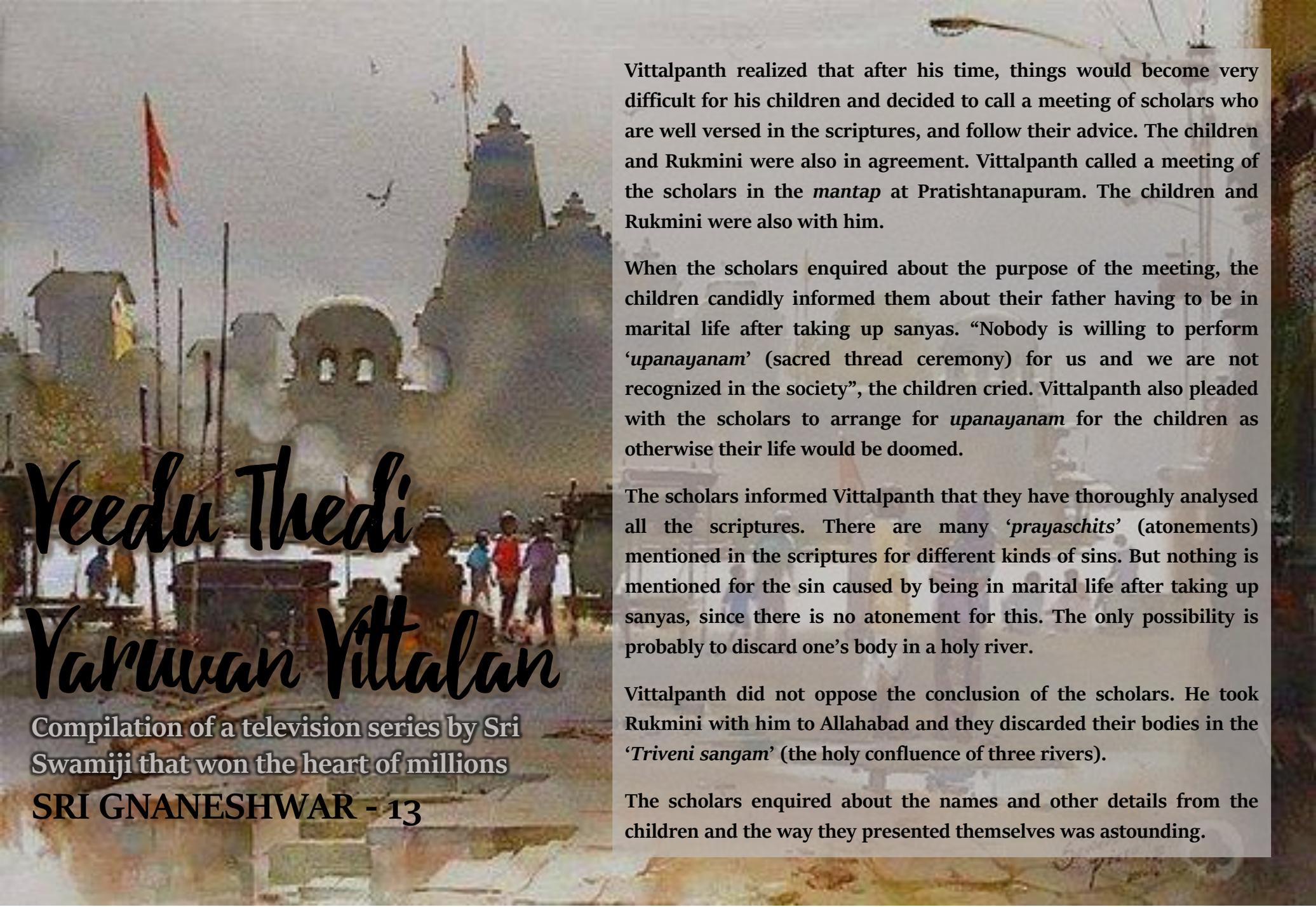
In Bhakta vijayam, even we would have read about such leelas of the Lord. These incidents are evidentiary (pramana) that the Lord plays in the lives of devotees who revel in their love for the Lord. After samaaraadhana, the Bhagavata would do anga pradakshina (circumbulation by rolling over the body) on the leaves left behind after the food is partaken by devotees and would go and have a bath in the temple pond. This would resemble the avabrudha snanam done by those who do yagnas.

Once, it so happened that he had to undergo a surgery on his nose. He refused to undertake any anaesthesia during the surgery. Instead, he contemplated totally on Lord and surrendered his mind and speech to the Lord. When the surgery was finished, the Doctor was stunned when Bhagavata asked him, 'Is your work done? In awe, the Doctor prostrated to him and said that he was a great saint and left without taking any fees for the treatment.

Once, Bhagavata's form appeared in the dream of a person who was in severe stomach pain. Out of pure grace, that person saw Bhagavata in Mayavaram in the same vunchavriti form. His pain disappeared miraculously before even he reached the place and was able to participate in the bhajans.

Several similar astounding incidents have happened in his life. Aside all this, Bhagavata was the embodiment of all good virtues and values. He was a pious man who would never speak harsh words to anyone. He was always enthusiastic and would go to do bhajans wherever invited. He used to encourage young Bhagavatas and would also correct them, where necessary. Even if he had high fever or very unwell, he would go to bhajans, whenever requested.

Remembering this great Bhagavata who lived a life of devotion, ever immersed in bhajans and traditions, our lives would be sanctified.



Veedu Thedi Varuvan Vittalan

Compilation of a television series by Sri
Swamiji that won the heart of millions

SRI GNANESHWAR - 13

Vittalpanth realized that after his time, things would become very difficult for his children and decided to call a meeting of scholars who are well versed in the scriptures, and follow their advice. The children and Rukmini were also in agreement. Vittalpanth called a meeting of the scholars in the *mantap* at Pratishtanapuram. The children and Rukmini were also with him.

When the scholars enquired about the purpose of the meeting, the children candidly informed them about their father having to be in marital life after taking up sanyas. “Nobody is willing to perform ‘*upanayanam*’ (sacred thread ceremony) for us and we are not recognized in the society”, the children cried. Vittalpanth also pleaded with the scholars to arrange for *upanayanam* for the children as otherwise their life would be doomed.

The scholars informed Vittalpanth that they have thoroughly analysed all the scriptures. There are many ‘*prayaschits*’ (atonements) mentioned in the scriptures for different kinds of sins. But nothing is mentioned for the sin caused by being in marital life after taking up sanyas, since there is no atonement for this. The only possibility is probably to discard one’s body in a holy river.

Vittalpanth did not oppose the conclusion of the scholars. He took Rukmini with him to Allahabad and they discarded their bodies in the ‘*Triveni sangam*’ (the holy confluence of three rivers).

The scholars enquired about the names and other details from the children and the way they presented themselves was astounding.



SANATANA GOSWAMI

Sanatana came with Madanmohan to the banks of the Yamuna. He set up a small hut near Suryaghat and started worshipping Madanmohan there. He used to beg for wheat flour from nearby houses and without adding even salt, made ‘rotis’ (chapattis) and offered them to Madanmohan.

One day, Madanmohan told Sanatana, “Sadhu baba, I am not able to eat this roti which does not have even salt. Please get some salt also.” Sanatana told Madanmohan sternly, “Don’t start these things with me. If you can eat these rotis without salt, stay here, or else go to your home”. Madanmohan implored Sanatana, “Nobody will refuse a little salt. You ask someone and bring some salt also”. From the next day, Sanatana also brought some salt in alms, along with wheat flour.

After a few days, Madanmohan felt like eating sugarcandy with butter. He pleaded with Sanatana in a meek voice, “Sadhu baba, this dry roti does not go easily in my throat. If you can get some ghee also ...” Even before Madanmohan could complete, Sanatana became angry and told Madanmohan sharply, “Look here, I will tell you the situation here. You can get just this dry roti from me. If you want things like butter and sugar, you should go to a rich man’s house. From a beggar, you will get only this. Just because the dry roti does not go down your throat, do you expect me to ask for ghee and sugar from some rich man? You can probably push the roti down your throat with some water from the Yamuna. After all, you ate mud also, once upon a time!” Madanmohan’s face fell and he became silent. What also could he expect from a sanyasi dressed in rags?

- Janani

To hold the thought ‘Only if my mind is calm and clean would Krishna like it’ is more delightful than to hold the thought ‘Only if my mind is calm and clean will I enjoy peace.’

Various kinds of plants and creepers are found in the world. In the case of some, the leaves play an important role; in some the fruits are important; while in others it is their unripe fruits. However, in the case of sweet potato, its root is the only important part of the plant. Similarly, to the plant of this world it is the root of Atmaswaroopa alone that is important. The rest are needless.

When one who does not know how to swim jumps into the water to save a drowning man, he not only fails to save the drowning man but also gets drowned himself. Similar is the case of a ‘Guru’ who has himself not reached ashore, trying to draw out those drowned in the ocean of life.

Blissful Blossoms

A STORY FOR CHILDREN

A bamboo and a forest plant had been planted side by side. The gardener raised them both with great care. The rays of the sun fell on both. For the first two days both did not sprout. After a few more days, the bamboo first did not sprout. However, the shoot of the forest plant appeared from the ground. For the first year, it was small. But it grew a little. The second year, it grew well. It's green colour was beautiful to look at. Until then, nothing appeared from where the bamboo was planted. However, the gardener continued to water both. He had the patience and the confidence that the bamboo will somehow sprout one day.

But, the forest plant kept growing. In three, four years each year it was visibly growing taller. But the bamboo did not even peep out of the ground. The gardener did not lose hope because of this. His confidence did not ebb either. He continued to steadfastly protect and tend that place with belief. An amazing thing happened. The bamboo, which hadn't sprouted at all in four years, became a small shoot in the fifth year. But, after sprouting, it did not grow little by little. There was no need to wait even for a year, within six months it rapidly grew and grew tall towards the sky!

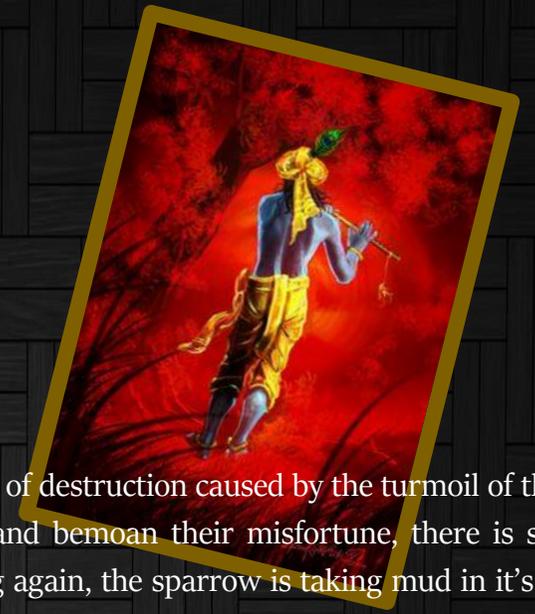
What was the reason? It's roots must be very strong. The bamboo, for the first four years had been strengthening it's roots. Isn't that what is important. If the root is strong, everything will be strong. If the root is watered, it is equivalent to watering the entire tree. That is why, Gurujii says: Watering the root is watering the tree; The Mahamantra is similar to watering the roots. The bamboo, after strengthening it's roots, begins to grow strong in a short span. But, the forest plant which did not strengthen it's roots, although it grows rapidly at first, cannot grow beyond four, five feet, and does not stay strong like the bamboo. One thing can be easily said based on this. A person who is a grown adult, who has learned, gained experience, earned fame and is leading a good life should be ever grateful towards his parents, good friend, teacher, Guru who were the reason for it. Similar to how the bamboo remains strong because of it's connection to it's roots and the growth of the roots, so also each one should never forget the path to their growth. An ungrateful person who has forgotten the people instrumental to his growth may possibly grow fast like the forest plant. But, he may struggle to rise high, just like the forest plant which appears weak because of it's weak roots.

A person who is ever grateful will be a very strong valued gentleman. Isn't it obvious that a person who never forgets and is ever grateful, and stands steadfastly in the right path, will keep getting enriched more and more, like the bamboo and be stronger than before!

Brindavan and Nandakumara

Sri Hari Babaji

- Janani



It is not possible to measure the number of lives drawn by the sea into it from the shore, or the amount of destruction caused by the turmoil of the sea during a huge cyclone. While the bereaved relatives left behind, keep their hands on their heads and bemoan their misfortune, there is seen a sparrow! It's eggs had also been washed away by the sea apparently! To prevent this from happening again, the sparrow is taking mud in its small beak and trying to block the sea! Hari Baba got into a similar attempt. It is impossible to describe the damage caused and the sufferings borne by the 700 villages within the 45 mile stretch of the Bulandh Nagar Jilla by the floods in the Ganges every year. Therefore, Haribaba decided that a dam 20 miles long, 75 feet wide and in some places 12 feet high, had to be constructed from the village of Jeevpur up to Rajkat. Once the decision was made, he got into action. Noting the measurements of the dam, he started taking sand in a container and using his hands himself he started piling sand. That sparrow which wanted to block the ocean was a small brainless being. But, Haribaba who sowed the seed for the construction of this dam was a genius incarnation. He was efficient in handling worldly affairs too. The people's amazement at the involvement of Baba in this unimaginable task was limitless. They started giving suggestions to Baba. "Baba! What happened to you? Why are you taking up such a huge task on your shoulders?" However, Baba would not budge. That was because, he did not rely on his strength, He had ventured into this task relying on his faith in the unimaginable and limitless nature of Hari Naam. The manner in which the construction of this dam started will by itself reveal the *nishtai* (fixedness of mind) and conviction of Baba. In 1922, in the "*thai maasam*" (mid January to mid February), Baba did *nama kirtan* with a few devotees at Silaraa. Then after prostrating to Mother Ganga, doing pooja for Vigneswar, *svasthi vaachan* (prayers for well-being), *mangal geeth*, the sand piling work started. Baba told his devotees who were his well-wishers, "I have undertaken a vow. The sand piling work should be complete by *chiththirai month* (mid January to mid February) *shukla ashtami* day (8th tithi—lunar day). If that does not happen, I will give up my life. Whichever of you thinks of helping me, whatever work in the construction of dam you do, Hari Naam alone should come out of your mouth constantly. The Nama Bhagavan will certainly fulfil our *sankalpa* (vow). I don't have an iota of doubt about it", said Baba. When Baba spoke thus, The people found no time for arguments –counter arguments. Hadn't Baba placed his life at stake! His countless devotees had no other option but to get involved in the dam construction work. Therefore, they all, together with Baba started piling the sand.

SRI SWAMIJI'S KIRTAN

Raga: Shanmugapriya

Tala: Adi

bhagavannAmame bhagavAn aruLai
peTru thandhiduvAy neeye
(bhagavan...)

annai thanthai AsAn uravinar
thOzhan ellAm enakku neeye
(bhagavan...)

pakkuvam illAdha endhanai
pakkuvapaduthi akkarai udan
thakka tharuNathil yamunai thuraivanai
endhan pakkatthil niruthiduvAye

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