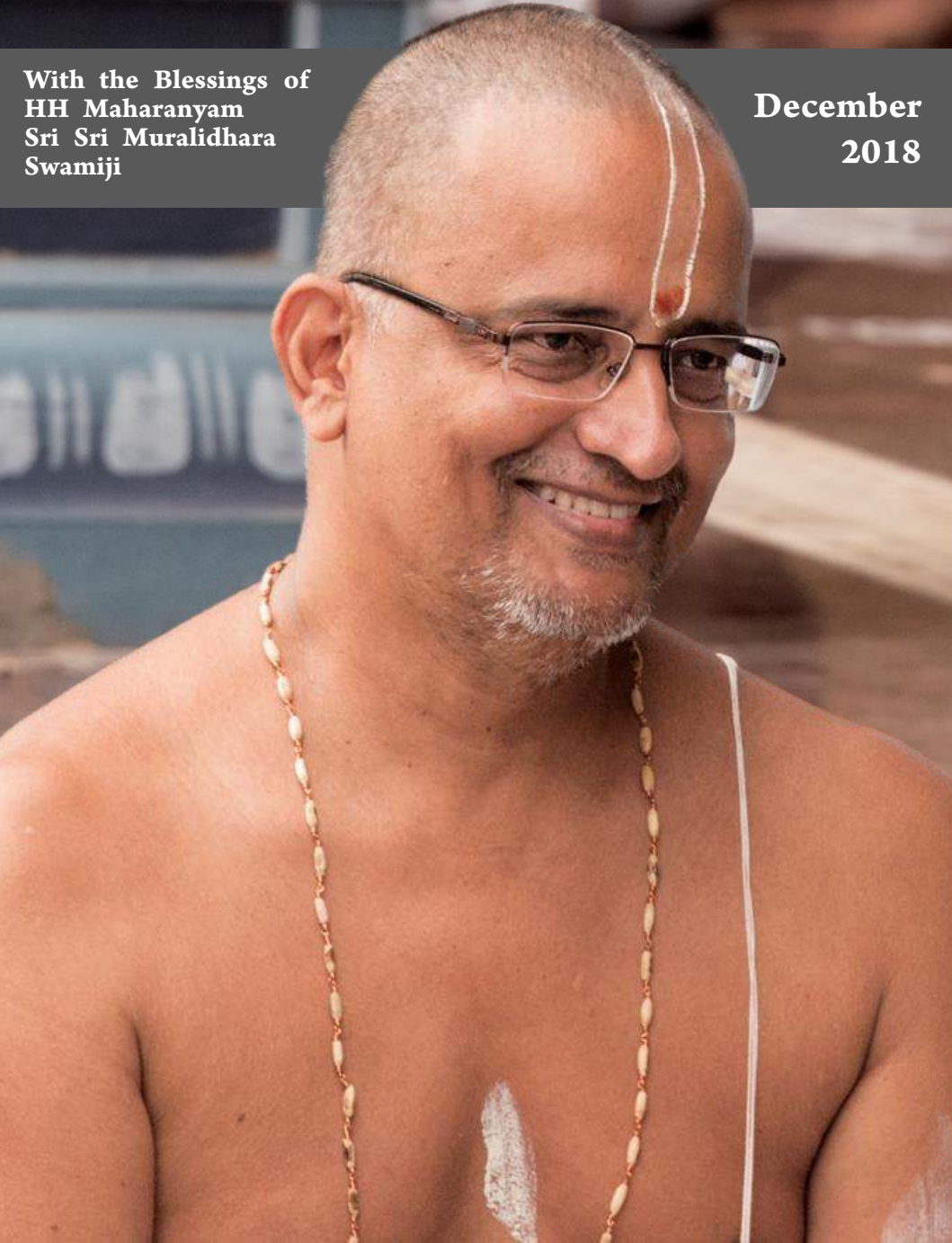


Sri Hari:

MADHURAMURALI

With the Blessings of
HH Maharanyam
Sri Sri Muralidhara
Swamiji

December
2018



MADHURASMARANAM

Dr A Bhagyanathan

Personal Secretary to Sri Sri Swamiji

Sri Swamiji has penned a letter to
Namadwaar family members.

It reads as follows:

“Life is but chain of events. We have taken countless births before this. And, if we do not attain the Lord in this birth, we shall continue to face further births. Those births may not be a human birth. We have taken several kinds of births viz. a reptile, bird, animal, aqua creature, man or deva. Here in the world many good-hearted people ask me ‘what should be done for the welfare of the country and my own?’ And then question back ‘How can we and the country be happy by gathering people in a place and chanting the Divine Names?’

A lady had conceived a child. The doctor who checks her health (with relevant modern equipment) may inform her that the child inside the womb was not healthy. Or, say the child within has been inflicted with some disease. If asked 'what has to be done to set it right?' the doctor would advice good, healthy food and prescribe some medicines. For whom are these meant? It is verily intended for the health of the child inside the womb! But who should eat the suggested healthy food and medicines? Verily the mother. One who questions 'how would it reach the child if the mother takes them' would be labelled a fool. In the same way, we and the country and this whole cosmos is contained within the Lord. When we chant the Name of that Lord here on this earth, God's glory and His divine Presence would be exhibited within our heart, our place and in this cosmos. All good will come about in the world. There will be peace in the world and people will live happily. Therefore, without despairing let us all chant the Mahamantra continuously with great enthusiasm and also assist others to chant thus making them happy and enjoying happiness ourselves!

**Affectionately,
Muralidhara Swamiji"**

ANSWERS AND BEYOND

You keep emphasizing and saying again and again the Nama japam alone is enough. Why is that?

Yes it is true. If what I am saying is wrong, you yourself tell me what [other practice] can be done? Our ability to do other spiritual practices has reduced because of the nature of the present time and circumstances. Hence no one can refute that Nama chanting is the only practice that we can do in today's world. Like a diamond lying in the trash, even in today's wretched and rotten world, Bhagavan Nama shines as a refuge for all of us. What a relief that saints did not specify any eligibility or any rules or conditions for chanting the Divine Name. It is because of this that we are saved!

Can you please give me advice in one word?

'Be aware' is my advice and recommendation to you. Before doing any act, be aware. Be aware of what situation you are in. Be aware of what you are speaking. Be aware of who you are speaking to. Like this, while listening, seeing, eating, dressing... while doing each and every action we have to be aware. While this is applicable to everyone, it applies more importantly for those who chant the Divine Name. Instead of trying to have someone be with you as a support in everything that you do, try to spend at least a few minutes every day chanting Nama in solitude.

Urge The Mind To Control The Mind

Sri Swamiji

(The external world is strange and interesting. It has numerous colors, shapes, fragrances, sounds, tastes, etc. No two people are alike. Each and every second is different. When we fail to comprehend all these minute differences in the world that we perceive with our senses, what to say about the internal world in each one of us? Mind, wisdom, thoughts are the forerunners in this internal world.

Happiness, sorrow, rivalry, mercy, kindness, friendship, enmity, fear are the colors, fragrances, sounds of this internal world. We are offering Sri Swamiji's thoughts that gives us a few pointers to observe and understand the workings of the inner world. Can we deep dive and experience the inner world? Let us open our mind curtain to peer inside.....)

JAPAM AND JAALAM

When we chant a mantra intensely and if the mind is absorbed in it, we feel a subtle feeling spreading through our body creating positive vibes. The body feels charged. Japam - the repetition of a divine mantra by the mind fills our entire body with positive vibrations.

The thoughts of rivalry, envy, grudge, fear, anger, irritation, hate, greed, failure, etc in our minds also influences our body. Entangled in a net (jaalam), these negative feelings circulate in our body. Just as chanting (japam) a divine mantra causes positive vibes in our body, having negative thoughts impacts our body negatively causing tiredness and illness.

Drawing an inference, encouraging rivalry, envy, irritation, hate etc in our minds, is like consuming poison ourselves and wishing for the death of someone else.

PATIENCE RULES THE MIND

We understand the acts of our mind and ways to control it using our experiences. 'Special kids' with mental disabilities do not have that understanding. They express their minds freely disregarding social norms.

A 'special kid' visits a cultural event with its parents. Many people are gathered for the cultural event. The kid suddenly starts running towards the gathered crowd. The father is embarrassed and yells at the child to come back. The child senses the dad's anger and starts running even more.

The people gathered ignore the child's behaviour assuming that the child is bound to act that way. The kid knocks down a few things and breaks it.

What does the mother do? She is neither angry nor mad. She runs behind the child and tries to pacify the child patiently, "Sweetheart, don't run like that. You are a good kid. Don't trouble mom so much." Finally with patience, she is able to bring the child under control.

Similarly, our mind wanders around without control. Like the dad in our example above, if we were to feel bad about it, "Oh! why is this happening to me?" or threaten, "Stop wandering right now!" or feel angry, "How can you do this?" - the mind does not come under control. If we were to ignore the mind like the bystanders, it will not stop wandering. But following the tactic of the mother, if we were to patiently harness it, the mind will slowly come under control.

Lord Krishna tells Uddhava in Srimad Bhagavatam (11:20:20-21), "Mind should not be left alone to wander on its own. It has to be patiently brought under control by wisdom. For example, to tame a wild horse, one should give it some freedom to gain trust and then patiently bring it under control. Similarly, mind has to be tackled patiently to be finally brought under control."

Premika Jagannatha Prasaadha Koodam

Sri Venkatesan

Govindapuram, which is on the banks of Cauvery river has the jeeva Samadhi of Bhagawan Naama Bodhendhral and even today, people can feel the saannidhyam there and Sri Bodhendral showers his blessings on bhakthas who visit the adishtanam. With the orders of our Gurunathar, "Chaitanya Kuteeram" has been established in Govindapuram and Mahamantram chanting happens every single day. Sri Sri Anna has done the prathishtai of Balaramar, Premika Jagannathar and Subadhra, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Nithyanandhar in Chaitanya Kuteeram on 26/9/2007. Jaganathar prathishta day and Jaganatha ratha yatra are two important utsavams that are celebrated here, every year. Thousands of bhakthas participate in Rathotsavam and in the midst of them, our Sadhgurunathar and Sri Sri Anna will be singing Mahamantra keertanam with such bhava that, it is a sight to watch.

'Badhari" is a kshetram where one has to do tapas. SriRangam is a kshetram for having darshan of various utsavams. Guruvayoor is known for feeding small babies. Pandari is known for Naamasankeertanam. Pooori Jagannatha kshetram is anna kshetram. Pooori prasadhham itself is brahma swaroopam. Elders say that we can even take the Pooori Jagannatha prasadhham that has fallen out of a cat's mouth and eat it. Even though Chaitanya kuteeram has been existing for 11 years now, there has not been a Prasadha koodam, to make food for bhagawathas who are visiting Chaitanya kuteeram. Knowing this, Sri. Seetharaman, along with their family members have constructed the beautiful "Premika Jaganatha Prasadha Koodam", in memory of his mother 'Naamagiri Sankaranarayanan', whose birth place was Govindapuram. Sri. Seetharaman is a generous and dharmic person, who has been doing lot of kainkaryams without boasting about himself in any way. This Sri Premika Jaganatha Prasadha Koodam was offered by Sri Sri Anna on 29/09/2018 for Premika Jaganathar's kainkaryam.

Punniya nadhigaLil nlrAdiduvAi
Shri Hari kshEtrangaLukku sendriduVai

By taking a dip in the holy rivers, one gets an opportunity to visit the holy shrines of Sri Hari. It is only said 'Shri Hari kshEtrangaLukku sendriduvAi'. Since the place itself is filled with the divinity of Sri Hari (divyadesam) , one does not even need to have darshan of the Lord in the temple. The divinity of that holy place itself elevates us in our devotional journey.

Stairway to Devotion

- M.K. Ramanujam

In Srimad Bhagavatam, we notice that there are places which are naturally endowed with the divinity of Sri Hari. In Dhruva charitra, Sage Narada asks Dhruva to do penance in Madhuvanam since it is filled with divinity of Sri Hari.

तत्तात गच्छ भद्रं ते यमुनायास्तटं शुचि ।
पुण्यं मधुवनं यत्र सानिध्यं नित्यदा हरेः ॥

An interesting aspect to be noted here is that just as our Guru maharaj first mentions the holy rivers before talking about the shrines, Sage Narada also advises, "Go to the banks of river Yamuna, where Madhuvan (Vrindavan) is situated and is glowing with the sanctity of Sri Hari everyday." The 10th canto of Shrimad Bhagavatham also mentions that Mathura is filled with the sanctity of Sri Hari. "yatra nityam sannihitO hari:"

There are various categories of holy places of Sri Hari. There are places where the incarnation of the Lord (Vamana, Nrisimha, Rama, Krishna etc) took place, where the Lord stayed and where He blessed the devotees and performed leelas (divine plays). Holy shrines like Ayodhya, Dwaraka, Pandharpur, and Kurukshetram come under this category. In a few places, sages did penance and had darshan of Sri Hari and hence temples for Sri Hari came to be constructed there. This can be seen from the temple history of many vaishnava holy shrines (divyadesams). The places where the sages Agastya, Markandeya, Brigu did penance became holy and are a boon to humankind. In some places, Sri Hari himself manifested in idol form and made the place divine. Tirumala, Vanamamalai, Thirumogur etc are holy places of this kind.

In some places, spiritual preceptors and saints (mahans) install the deities for worship and make the places holy. Udupi, Nathadwara, and our Madhurapuri are a few such holy places. One incurs great fortune by visiting such holy places. For instance, we come across in the history of Bhadrachala, the holy shrine of Sri Rama, that a big sinner who stayed in that shrine escaped from the punishment of hell just by the grace of Sri Hanuman. It goes without saying that If one obtains a great fortune simply by going to a holy place, then what blessing would he not get if he also does kirtan, reads holy books, and thinks of Sri Hari in those shrines! By visiting such holy shrines, one makes rapid strides in the journey of devotion towards God.

Here, it is noteworthy that Sri Swamiji sings, 'Sri Hari kshetra' and not 'Hari kshetra', thus referring also to Goddess Sridevi who resides in the chest of Sri Hari permanently, "Agalugilen iraiyum'. Hence Sri Swamiji sings, 'Shri Hari kshEtangaLukku sendriduvai.'

Isn't Goddess Sridevi the mother of the universe! Even if we do not know how to prostrate but unknowingly join our two hands together in salutation, the mother immediately with compassion looks at Lord Hari and says, "See! Our child has come to our shrine even though he is in great difficulty! Moreover he has offered his salutation. Please bless him at once." Thus she recommends to the Lord on our behalf.

प्रणिपात प्रसन्नाय मैथिली जनकात्मजा ।
अलमेषा परित्रातुं राक्षस्यो मतो भयात् ॥

In Ramayana, Thrijada talks about the compassion of Sri Sita. " Mother Sita with a heart which melts in compassion, protects someone who simply folds his hand in salutation, from great danger." Hence Sri Swamiji instructs us, 'Shri Hari kshetangalukku sendriduvai.' There will be saints and bhagavathas in the holy shrines. Having their darshan itself would be a great blessing.

Sant Namdev sings, 'Muklm sadA nAma, santAnchE darshana.' Having the darshan of saints alone is enough. We will certainly get that opportunity by visiting holy shrines. Real devotion and spiritual longing blossoms only if the dust of the holy feet of saints touches us. Why? Our scriptures even say that we attain unimaginable great spiritual knowledge just by the dust of the holy feet of saints. That opportunity is certainly available in the holy shrines of Shri Hari. So Sri Swamiji sings, "Shri Hari kshEtrangaLukku sendriduvA!"

(...to be contd)

Ganesan was a clerk in a Government job. He had a child and a wife, named Meena. His family life was going smoothly and they were leading a simple and happy life. An incident happened at work which made them happier. The Minister of the Government department arranged for a big dinner for all higher officials. He agreed for a clerk also to be invited for the dinner through a lottery process. Ganesan was selected out of 200 clerks. Ganesan received the happy news that the invitees could go to the dinner with their families. He came home excitedly and informed Meena. Meena was initially very happy but the next second, her face became dull.

A Tale for Children

Ganesan asked her, 'Why are you sad? I thought you would jump up and down hearing this news'. Meena told him, 'I am happy. But how can I come to the dinner like this? I need to wear some good jewellery. I can wear the wedding saree. But we do not have any jewellery. I should wear at least a diamond necklace. If not, what will people at the dinner think of us?'. Ganesan did not know what to say but kept quiet to avoid any quarrels. However, Meena kept asking him what to do. Finally, Ganesan told her, 'you have a few rich friends. Why don't you borrow a necklace from one of them?'

Ganesan suggested to wear it for one day and to return it the next day. Meena also felt that was a good idea. She went to her friend Visalam's house and asked her if she could borrow any of her jewellery for the dinner. Visalam thought about it and said, 'Come tomorrow. I will tell you'. Next day morning, Meena went to Visalam's house. Visalam had a jewellery box with a shining diamond necklace. She asked Meena if she would wear it carefully and return it properly. Meena replied to Visalam and said, 'Oh for sure Visalam'.

Next day, Meena wore the necklace to the dinner and everyone there noticed it. Meena was ecstatic and ran around here and there and spoke to a lot of people. It turned out to be a day that she would never forget. Yes literally....

Meena came home and was talking to Ganesan happily. Ganesan reminded her about returning the diamond necklace and told her that he could return it to Visalam then itself. Meena also agreed and put her hands on her neck to remove the necklace. She nearly froze as the necklace was not in her neck. It may have fallen off somewhere, as the screw was possibly not good. Ganesan, Meena and their child ran around and searched for the necklace every where including the place where they had dinner. Meena started to cry as she did not know how to face Visalam and was deeply worried about her integrity. Ganesan appeased her and told her not to worry and to think what to do next. Meena immediately told him to tell Visalam that they would return the necklace in two days after doing a small repair. When Ganesan told Visalam that they would return in two days, Visalam told him in a sharp tone to return it soon. Ganesan and Meena did not know what to do. The necklace box had the name of a jewellery shop. So, they went there but they were told that though the box had the name of that shop, that particular jewellery they described was not sold by that shop. Ganesan and Meena went around with the photo of Meena wearing the necklace that they took proudly at the dinner to various jewellery places. One popular shop said that the cost of the necklace would be around 4 lakhs rupees.

Ganesan and Meena did not know what to do. They only had a savings of two lakhs rupees. Using the two lakhs and taking a loan of two lakhs, they bought a necklace

and returned it to Visalam. Both of them lost the glow in their eyes and became very weak. The sudden financial loss affected them deeply and they felt depressed and sold their house. They lived in an even more modest house and worked day and night for ten years and made up the loss. After ten years, one day, Meena saw Visalam near the place where they had the dinner. Visalam was looking good.

Meena wished Visalam but she could not recognise Meena. Visalam asked her, 'how did you know by name?'. Meena said who she was and Visalam said, 'oh yes. But you have changed so much. You appear older and weak and sad now. What happened to you? Are you not well'. Meena then told Visalam that in a way it was all due to her.

Visalam was surprised at what Meena said. Meena said, 'you gave me a diamond necklace, remember. I had lost it. The cost was nearly 4 lakhs?'. Visalam said 'but you returned it to me though'. Meena said, 'No Visalam. I lost it. So I bought you a new necklace and it cost us 4 lakh rupees'. Visalam had tears in her eyes and hugged Meena. Meena was perplexed and asked her why she was hugging her. Visalam replied, 'the necklace I gave you was not a diamond necklace. It was only an imitation necklace. It would have been maximum 4000 rupees only. But you spent 4 lakhs rupees and bought me a new necklace?'. Meena did not know what to say. Ganesan thought, 'we should not change ourselves even if our life changes. For one day dinner, for show off, what we did brought us to this state'. Visalam took Meena's hand and said, 'Come Meena. Let us eat something' and took her away.

The ten years of their life still was lost, is it not?

Sanskrit Word Of The Month

” thulaa “

Sri Vishnupriya

The Tamil month of 'Ashwina' or 'Ayyasi' is also known as 'Thula'. It is so called because during this month, the sun is present in the Zodiac sign of 'Thula' (Libra).

The Sanskrit meaning of Thula is 'weighing scale'. The word तोलनं means to weigh and see.

सत्यलोके तुलां बद्ध्वा अतोलयत साधनानी अजः

The above verse is from Srimad Bhagavatha Mahatmyam (Padma Puran). Once Lord Brahma kept Srimad Bhagavatam on one side of a weighing scale and many other things on the other side. But the side on which Srimad Bhagavatam was kept remained down. This brought out the unparalleled and greatness of Srimad Bhagavatam.

The word Thula used in 'Thulabharam' ritual carried out in temples also refers to this particular meaning of the word. (i.e. weigh). In this ritual, offerings like fruits, rice, sugar etc. are weighed to equal the body weight of the devotee, usually indicates offering oneself to GOD. Normally this is done for children.

'Thula' also means 'Equal'. In Tamil also we use the word 'Thulyam' In Srimad Bhagavatam, Saunaka and other Rishis address Suta Pauranika:

तुलयाम लवेनापी न स्वर्गं नापुनरभवं
भागवत संघीसंघडय मरतयानाम किमुताशीष

Which means we do not consider Heaven or even attaining moksha equal to the company of Sadhus. Infact heaven and moksha do not even measure the size of a sesame seeds.

The same thought is echoed by Lord Shiva in 'Rudra Geeta ' of Srimad Bhagavatam'.

क्षणार्द्धं नापि तूलये न स्वर्गं नपुनर्भावम।
भगवंतं संघीसंगस्य मर्थयानां किमुताशीष।।

Which means even a momentary association with a Sadhu is more valuable than heaven or moksha.

Just as 'Thula' means equal, 'Athula' means unequal. In Srimad Bhagavatam, while describing the king Ambarish:

अम्बरीषो महाभागः सप्तद्वीपवतीम महीम।
अव्ययायं च श्रियं लब्ध्वा विभवं चतुलं भुवि।।

Ambarish, the emperor of seven lokas had unimaginable and unparalleled wealth, says Sri Suka. Similarly in Nala kubarā Stuthi, they praise Krishna:

तैस्तेशतुल्यतिषायैः विर्यर्देहिश्वसङ्गतेः

'There is no one equal to you or more than you in your glory and deeds'. To emphasise this, they use the word Atulya + Athishaya. Thus the word Tula has so many meanings."

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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



ശ്രീമാദ് ഭഗവത സ്മരണാ യജ്ഞം

