

Madhuramurali

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Spiritual Monthly

With the Blessings of HH Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji

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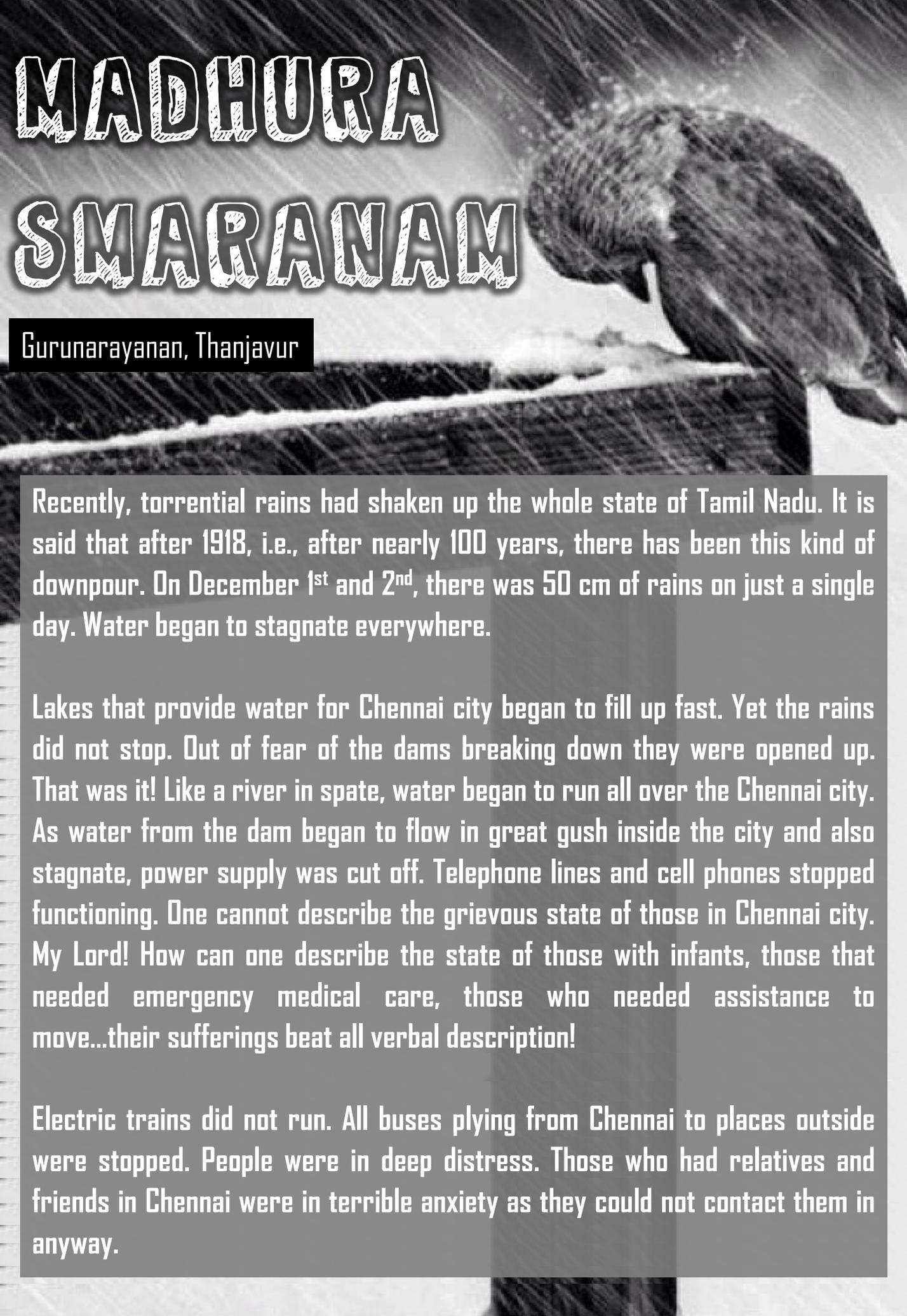
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MADHURA SMARANAM



Gurunarayanan, Thanjavur

Recently, torrential rains had shaken up the whole state of Tamil Nadu. It is said that after 1918, i.e., after nearly 100 years, there has been this kind of downpour. On December 1st and 2nd, there was 50 cm of rains on just a single day. Water began to stagnate everywhere.

Lakes that provide water for Chennai city began to fill up fast. Yet the rains did not stop. Out of fear of the dams breaking down they were opened up. That was it! Like a river in spate, water began to run all over the Chennai city. As water from the dam began to flow in great gush inside the city and also stagnate, power supply was cut off. Telephone lines and cell phones stopped functioning. One cannot describe the grievous state of those in Chennai city. My Lord! How can one describe the state of those with infants, those that needed emergency medical care, those who needed assistance to move...their sufferings beat all verbal description!

Electric trains did not run. All buses plying from Chennai to places outside were stopped. People were in deep distress. Those who had relatives and friends in Chennai were in terrible anxiety as they could not contact them in anyway.

My own daughter lives in Saligramam area in Chennai city. Water had flowed into her house and they suffered for a week. There was no way of contacting her. I was deeply worried and became very restless. I did not know what to do. At 8 pm one night I sat down and began to pray to Sri Swamiji. Until 1 am I continued to pray to Sri Swamiji while chanting Nama (The Divine Name). It was then that suddenly Sri Swamiji appeared before me, just like I was seeing him in person. Sri Swamiji said to me, "Do not worry! Your daughter is safe." His words were very clear. My mind began to calm down and I felt greatly relieved. The next day around 2 pm there was a call from my daughter. She informed me, through her cell phone, that she and her family were safe. I felt deeply touched by Sri Swamiji's grace and his reassuring words. I shared this experience of mine with all devotees in the next satsang at Thanjavur.

SRI SWAMIJI'S KIRTAN

Raga: Maandu

Tala: Adi

krishNa kripALO krishNa kripALO; vrushni kulapathe krishNa
kripALO

(krishNa)

shankachakradhara krishNa kripALO shankasoodadhara krishNa
kripALO

(krishNa)

madhurAvathAra krishNa kripALO madhuramuraIldhara krishNa
kripALO

(krishNa)

brindhAvanapathE krishNa kripALO brindhAsEvitha krishNa
kripALO

(krishNa)

sarvAnga sundara krishNa kripALO sarva saraNya krishNa
kripALO

(krishNa)

ANSWERS & BEYOND



Q: "Hiranyakashipu is seen to have received his boon only after practising severe spiritual austerities directed towards Brahma. While it is so how does the Bhagavatam call him an atheist?"

A: "Yes, that's true, indeed; as he had earned the boon that he should not meet with death in any manner - through poison, from man, animals, inside or outside, during daytime or night, in the hands of any creation of Brahma, he deems that he will never meet with death. That is, he imagines that the Lord has LIMITATIONS!! One who thinks that the Lord has LIMITATIONS is a theistic atheist!"

Q: "How is it that knowingly I permitted myself to be cheated in a matter? I knew that it would only lead to serious repercussions."

A: "Every time we stand cheated the deception is, at first, only from our mind. Then we get ready to be cheated by others. This indeed, is the truth."

Sri Swamiji replies to
Questions from
Devotees



Everyone who has taken human birth should have a goal in life. Life without a goal would be akin to the lives of animals – taking birth, eating, sleeping, begetting little ones and finally dying. There should be a goal. Well! What should be the life's goal? Some have attainment of wealth as their goal; some have attainment of a high office as their goal while some have attainment of fame as their goal. Thus each one has a different goal in life.

To attain any of the above man has to strive hard. One is even pushed to committing sins in order to attain it. After attainment one is anxious to retain it. One is worried over losing it. The disgrace and sorrow faced on losing it is unbearable. Those who had earlier showered praises would begin to speak ill. People would move away. Sway over others would simply vanish. The list is endless. Even if all these do not leave us, is it not true that we have to leave them someday?

How does news such as man reaching the Mars, finding water on the Mars, finding new galaxy, etc. help a dying man? One should not forget that we have to face death someday. So, what goal should one have? One can hold attainment of God as his goal.

All that we do viz. meditation (*dhyana*), chanting the Divine Name (*namajapa*), Yoga, Self-enquiry (*atma vichara*) for attaining God will never go in vain. One has to attain the Lord: if not in this birth God has to be attained in some birth. One has to do *sadhana* (spiritual practice) in that birth, is it not? Better late than never. When one is afflicted with a disease all that we can do is to admit him in a hospital for treatment. It is the doctor who has to discharge and send him back home. Similarly, until we attain the state of liberation we have to be born again and again, and meet with death. Further, this human birth has been given by the Lord only to erase out the sins earned over several births; this is truly a boon given by the Lord.

We may bathe in holy rivers, worship deities, perform charitable deeds, practice spiritual austerities, listen to divine stories and do *namakirtan*. But along with these if we also commit sins what can the Lord do?

WHAT IS THE GOAL?

Nalla Hari



Out of sheer mercy, God would bestow on us the birth of a creature with limited faculty viz. those possessing one to five senses, as, in these births while one enjoys the results of merits and demerits one does not add to his list of sins. This is because new karmas do not accrue but only the effects of already done karmas get erased out.

Anything done for attaining the Lord is pleasurable. And that too Bhagavata dharma is very enjoyable. Listening to stories, reading (*parayana*), worship (*puja*), singing hymns (*kirtans*), celebrating festivals (*utsav*), are all simply blissful. If one performs these in the prescribed manner, incessantly, one will experience bliss now and here. This is called '*yoga ananda*'.

We lose nothing even if human birth comes to an end before we attain God, i.e. even before we complete our spiritual austerities (*sadhana*). Latent imprints (*vasanas*) reduce to the extent of our *sadhana*. Subsequently the number of births accruing also reduces. Is this not good? It is indeed blissful if we complete our *sadhana* in this birth itself and attain God. Can anything be more blissful? We will attain the purpose of our birth. Therefore, let us have only attainment of God as verily our goal.

Let us follow the easy path of Bhagavata Dharma from amidst several paths to attain God. Let us be clear and have no confusion whatsoever. Even if, at times, we tire out let us hang on to the Lord and remove the fatigue. It does not matter how many times we fall but let us rise up with new vigour and passion. If kept idle the mind wanders about; let us let the mind wander in the Divine Name (*Nama*). Let us give up lethargy. Let us, gradually, give up desires and attachments. Giving up self-praise let us praise Krishna. Let us, as far as possible, move with discrimination and be practical.

Let us take the oath 'I will not live and die like an ordinary worm; I shall certainly attain the Lord with His Grace'. Let us always depend on Krishna's compassion. Would the Lord who fulfils even the worldly prayers of people look askance at this prayer of ours? Has He not created us only to attain Him?

We shall never fall if we constantly chant *Hari Nama* (the Divine Name 'Hari'). This is certain.





GOPALAKRISHNA BHAGAVATA

...contd

Bhagavata's relatives wondered what would happen to his life if he kept wandering from place to place like Narada! They, therefore, got him married to a girl from a good and respectable family and turned him into a householder.

Deeming this too, as the Lord's will, the Bhagavata became a householder. He received initiation into *mantras* (divine chants) of several Gods through a Guru and doing several lakhs *japa* (chanting) of them, he attained their *siddhi* (fruit). Therefore, he used to bless people who were harassed by evil spirits and ghosts and those who suffered from diseases with *vibhuti* (holy ash) made sacred by his *mantra* chanting and thus cured them. Even people from other faiths sought him with reverence and got freed from their sufferings.

After marriage, the responsibility of looking after his family came upon him. The Lord made the Bhagavata, who is ever immersed in divine thoughts, to now think about his family also. To earn a living, he returned again to Pudhukottai. In line with the saying, '*vidwaan sarvathra poojayathe*', the well-regarded and scholarly Bhagavata got employment as the music teacher for children in the Government College.

People also supported him for performing daily bhajans. Apart from teaching the students of Pudhukottai, the Lord sent him to many places to teach music and to impart devotion.

Although he was thus managing his worldly life, he deeply yearned for a life similar to that of Sri Purandaradasa and Saint Thyagaraja. Like them, he wanted to lead a life dedicated to singing devotional songs in praise of the Lord, doing *uncchavrutthi* (seeking alms from householders), worshipping and offering food to the Lord from the earnings and partaking of only sanctified *prasada* (sanctified food).

As though a rejoinder to his deep desire, he heard the blessed words, 'Do not fear. Your desire will soon be fulfilled'. It was spoken by Sri Bodhendra, the founder of Bhagavata tradition. This made him very happy. The next day, he wore a traditional *parivattam* (holy headband) printed with the Lord's names, carried a small metal pot for seeking alms, a holy book, the musical instrument *thambur* and cymbals and took *uncchavrutthi*, looking radiant and glowing. From then on throughout his life, he took *uncchavrutthi* and offered the alms to the Lord and ate only the sanctified food.

Once, a devotee requested him to come to Pandaripur as that would make Lord Vittal very happy. The Bhagavata agreed to go to Pandaripur as long as his daily *bhajans* and *uncchavrutthi* were not compromised. He went on a pilgrimage to Pandaripur. On his return journey he had the divine *darshan* of Sri Raghavendra Swami in his dream. He, therefore, visited Mantralaya (samadhi sthala of Sri Raghavendra) also.

Then, as requested by many devotees, he went to many places within Thirunelveli district. However, he would always return before the birth anniversary of Lord Sri Lakshmi Narasimha. He used to celebrate and conduct the *utsavs* (festivities) in a very grand manner, much to the amazement of wealthy people and village heads. Needless to say, he used to feed many people during the celebrations.

Although the Bhagavata conducted the festivities for the Lord, he did not have an idol of Lakshmi Narasimha and he longed to have one. It is a miracle how he received the idol due to the compassion of the Lord. Once, a few children went to play in the pond near the temple of Sri Shantananda, which had been cleaned and re-filled with water. One of the children felt his foot touching something and he bent down to pick it. 'What a surprise!!' He found an idol of Lord Sri Lakshmi Narasimha! It was a divine blessing that this innocent boy felt that this idol should be given to the Bhagavata.

In the same way in which Saint Thyagaraja sang ecstatically upon finding the idol of Lord Rama, this Bhagavata also became extremely happy upon receiving the idol of Lord Lakshmi Narasimha. From then on, he was called as 'Abhinaya Thyagaraja'

...to be contd.



VITTALA WILL COME KNOCKING AT YOUR DOOR

Compilation of a series of television discourses by sri swamiji that stole the hearts of thousands of viewers

SRIGNANESHWAR - 12 (PRADISHTANAPURAM)

In olden days, there were many people in India who were well-versed in *Vedas* and *Puranas*. Each province had certain localities where such people lived. Kasi was one such place. It maintains this legacy till today. Kasi had a university wherein all arts, *vedas*, *sastras*, epics and *puranas* were taught. Every single scholar in Kasi would be proficient in 4 *vedas*, 6 *sastras* and 18 *puranas*, and many such scholars existed. Even in Tamil Nadu, many such scholars burgeoned in villages like Thiruvissainallur, Rajamannargudi and so on around Kumbakonam. A king's council which had such scholars was well respected. Chidambaram was one such place in Tamil Nadu and it was customary to release a new literary work before the scholars who lived there. The place Baitak also known as Pradishtanapuram in Maharashtra was also one such place.

The *mantap* at Srirangam where Kambar released his work *Kambaramayanam* still exists. Lord Narasimha who is consecrated there is known as 'Mettu Azhagiya Singar'. In Valmiki Ramayan, there is no reference to Lord Narasimha. However when Kambar's Ramayan was being released, this deity of Narasimha had nodded his head in approval. Hence, Kambar sang about the avatar of Narasimha in his work. Just as Kambar took the approval of scholars before

releasing his work, it used to be the custom those days to perform any activity with the approval of the *pandits*. Nobody would venture to do anything new by themselves. Since the *pandits* of those days were well-learned, they were able to take good decisions.

The *sastras* dictate that a person can only ascend the 4 *ashramas* from *Brahmacharya*, *Grihastha*, *Vanaprastha* to *Sanyasa*. Descent is prohibited. It is not allowed for a sanyasi to become a grihastha. But since Vittalpanth had to take this step, he and his family were ostracized from the society. To seek a way out of this, Vittalpanth took refuge in the *sastras* and from the scholars who were well versed on the sastras.

No one agreed to teach Vittalpanth's children. *Upanayana* (sacred thread ceremony) is a pre-requisite for learning *sastras* and *Vedas*. But no priest agreed to perform *upanayana* for these children as it is not prescribed in the *sastras* to perform the ceremony to the off-spring of a *sanyasi*. No house-hold admitted these children or provided them alms. Many house-holders mocked at them for having been born to a *sanyasi*. At some places they were also man-handled and sent without any food. Nobody wished to help them. The children were getting old. They tried moving to Triyambaka to see if things would be better there but in vain. Vittalpanth realised that after his time, the child would find it very difficult. He decided to seek the advice of *pandits* who are well-versed in the sastras and follow the instructions given by them.



Nama is nourishment

Nama is water

Nama is cure

Nama is life

Nama is wealth

Nama is family

Nama is friend

Nama is Guru

Nama is God

Nama is ALL

May each day begin with Nama

May our heads ever bow down to Nama.

Blissful Blossoms

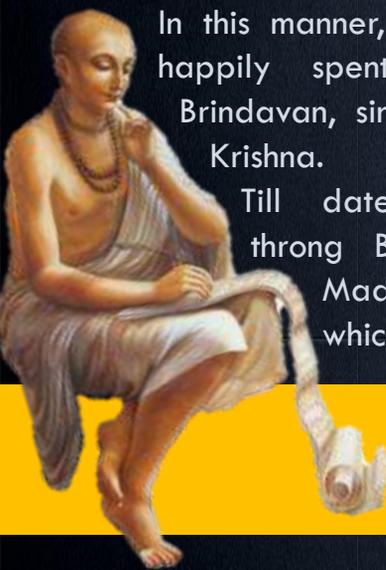
Many Gaudiya devotees like Advaita and Nidhayi came with their families to the Ratha Yatra festival. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu introduced Sanatana Goswami to them. The devotees prostrated to each other. After four months of *satsang* during monsoon, they returned to their homes. However Sanatana Goswami continued to live there for another year. Then, at Prabhu's command, he moved to Brindavan. During his travel, Sanatana visited the places associated with lilas performed by Mahaprabhu during Mahaprabhu's travel to Brindavan and contemplated on those *lilas*. After a few days, Roopar also came there. Sanatana lived in the shade of trees at Brindavan.

In this manner, the two brothers happily spent their time in Brindavan, singing the glory of Krishna.

Till date, devotees who throng Brindavan visit the Madanmohan temple which has an interesting

anecdote which explains how Madanmohan came to Sanatana. In Mathura, Sanatana used to visit a particular house for alms. The lady of the house used to worship Madanmohan. Madanmohan used to play in their house in the form of a normal human child. Sanatana was captivated by the beauty of Madanmohan. Sanatana used to come to their house only to see Madanmohan in the pretext of seeking bhiksha. The lady of the house had a child who used to be very friendly with Madanmohan. He used to eat from the same plate as Madanmohan, and Sanatana used to be astonished on seeing this. One day, Sanatana beseeched the lady for the *ucchishtam* (remnants of the food leftover after eating) of Madanmohan and the lady complied. From then onwards, Sanatana used to visit their house only for this *ucchishtam*.

One day, Madanmohan appeared in Sanatana's dream and said, "I can't bear the congestion of this city. Please take me away from the lady and leave me in a



SANATANA GOSWAMI - Janani

forest." On the same day, he also appeared in the lady's dream and said, "You give me to Sanatan Baba". Next day, Sanatana visited their house and asked the lady, "Mother! Madanmohan wishes to live in the forest. What do you say?"

In a tone mixed with anger and love and with tears in her eyes, the lady replied, "Baba! I have known the naughtiness of this child earlier also. He doesn't like to live in one place. He even left Yashoda who poured her love on him as though he was leaving a pestle. He keeps saying that he wants to leave. If he wants to leave me, why should I also bother about him? You take him with you". Though she spoke such words, her mind was deeply anguished at the separation.

Sanatana came with Madanmohan to the banks of Yamuna. He set up a small hut near Suryaghat and was worshipping Madanmohan there.

An old lady was sitting in a children's park. It was a gentle winter morning. Butterflies and dragonflies were fluttering around the fully bloomed flowers in the park. Birds were chirping on the trees. That lady was sitting in that lovely, peaceful surrounding and admiring nature. Her face was aglow watching the vision before her. In her enjoyment, she lost track of time and soon felt hungry as it was past breakfast time. She did not know what to do. The sun had slowly started rising in the sky. As time went by, the heat of the sun added to hunger, and she felt hunger pangs gripping her stomach.

At that time, a young lad came there. He had a shoulder bag with him. He took out small packets from the bag—it was breakfast. He held a couple of packets in his tiny hands and sat near the lady and lovingly said, "Mother! I can make out from your face that you are very hungry. My mother gave me these packets. I came here to play. Eat this and appease your hunger". Hearing this, that lady sitting there, was overwhelmed by the lad's love. She lost herself in his innocent talk, and drinking in the light of love emanating from his small eyes, she accepted the food packets. She ate without tasting, just looking at him. Still, it felt

**HUMANITY AND
DIVINITY ARE
INSEPARABLE**

A Story for Children



very tasty to her. The lad held out a glass of water for her to drink. At that time, the lad's loving face blocked all her thoughts. After she finished, the lad himself held out water for her to wash her hands. Wiping her wet hands, the lady put out her aged hands and patted the lad's cheeks. She was at a loss for words. The small lad was playing there for a short while. Again, before leaving, he gave the lady a hot drink he had brought and made her drink. "It's getting late for me. My mother will search for me. I'll leave", he told the lady. She also lovingly bid him goodbye.

Although her heart felt full (she was feeling content), it then struck the lady, after the lad left, "Oh! I forgot to ask the lad his name or address". She then went home. At the entrance to her home, her son worriedly asked her, "Mother! I got delayed because of some repair to my vehicle. What did you do for breakfast"? The old lady, contrary to usual, smilingly said, "God took care" and without any complaint walked inside. Her son found this very surprising.

The small boy ran home to his mother and gave her his bag. She opened it and asked, "Hey! Did you give everything to your friends"? At once, he replied, "Mother! God was hungry. I gave it off". His mother asked him how God was. In his childish voice, he said "God is older than you". His mother, hearing the conviction in his reply, put her finger on her nose, in surprise.

Aren't we reminded of Valluvar's Thirukural which says:

"ANBIN VAZHIYADHU UYIR NILAI AKTHILAARKU
ENBU THOL PORTHTHA UDAMBU."

(With love enshrined in the heart, one truly lives.. Void of it, the body is but bones encased in skin)

SHRI MADANA MOHANDAS BABAJI—2

Sri Madana Mohandas Baba never had *satsang* with anyone other than Pandit Baba. He never had any possession other than a *kamandal* (water pot with a handle and spout) and a stick. His eyes were always downcast. His face was always aglow with the unworldly/divine experience that was happening inside him. After 14 years of doing bhajans like this in Brindavan, Baba went to Chathravan. He attained the Lord's Feet at the age of 96 years.

BHAKTHIMATHI GOPIMA

Bakthimathi Gopima was a native of Ayodhya. She was working as a sewing teacher in the Paadithwar Girls School at Lahore. She led a very simple and straight-forward life. Gopima took only a small portion of her income for her living and the rest she spent in the service of the poor and needy. Except for her office hours, she spent her entire time in doing *bhajans*.

In a few years, Gopima voluntarily retired from her job and went off to Ayodhya. She was an ardent devotee of Lord Rama. Hence, she spent her entire time in doing *seva* and *bhajan* of Lord Rama. At such a time, the *jaara chora shikamani* (the crest gem of liars and thieves), our Lord Kanna, somehow stole Gopima's heart!

*Brindavan and
Nandakumara*

JANANI



Her ears quivered to hear the sweeter-than-honey sound of Lord Krishna's flute. Her eyes yearned to see His beautiful form. So, she was unable to stay in Ayodhya. Gopima fell at Lord Rama's feet, begged forgiveness and came to Brindavan.

In Brindavan, Gopima rented a room at Gopinath Bazaar, for eight annas a month, and staying there itself, she worshipped Shyama Sundara. Gopima once fell sick with high fever. Although she suffered for many days, the treatment did not work and the fever continued to grip her. As a result, Gopima became very weak. She was unable to get up or sit by herself. There was no one to help her either. In this world, isn't Lord Krishna the sole naatha (Lord) of all anaadhs (orphans)! Gopima ranted to Him, "I left my family, home, a sacred *janma-bhoomi* like Ayodhya. Why! Even the Holy Feet of my favourite deity, Sri Rama and came here thinking you are my sole refuge. If I had stayed there itself, my family would have taken care of me. I have come here solely trusting you, and you have not shown any *kataaksha* (grace) on me. You don't even turn and spare me a glance". So mumbling, Gopima slept off.

Lord Krishna appeared in her dream. He fed Gopima milk and cream with His own hands. Suddenly the dream vanished. Gopima woke up. She was surprised to see a little cream in her mouth. She was astonished to see a pot of curd near her.

After this incident, Bakthimathi Gopima lived for a short period and attained the Supreme Abode.

(to continue)

Brindavan and Nandakumara

JANANI



FROM

READERS

AND

THE

CLOSE

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HANUMAN FROM A SEEKER'S PERSPECTIVE

- Sridhar Subramaniam, Melbourne

On deep ponder, we realise, *Hanuman Jayanthi* is not just the birth of Hanuman, but the birth of devotion to the Lord. Hanuman epitomises loyalty, strength and faith. It is only appropriate, that each year on this day, we yearn to evolve into a devout *bhagavata* like Hanuman.

We all concede that the purpose of this human life is to attain self-realization. Attaining *moksha* (liberation) can happen only through devotion to God and Guru. It is said, "If the student is ready, the teacher arrives!" Hence, when one steadfastly seeks moksha, he is led to a Guru.

By practising *Bhagavatha Dharma* (the yoga of service, love, and devotion to the Lord), under a Guru's guidance, realization will happen, on its own accord.

This whole journey begins by being humble. One must understand and acknowledge that whatever one knows, is little. Humility, they say, is the hallmark of the truly great. It is also the basic prerequisite for this process of self-realization. The knowledge that leads one to God realization is possible only when one has staunch *dhridavishwas* (faith) in the Guru, has the Guru's *Anugraha* (blessing) and has been enwrapped by the Guru's Grace.

The mind is always fidgety and easily distracted. However, when *shraddha* (dedication) in an aspirant is touched by the Guru's Grace, *bhakti* (devotion) begins to grow like a mystic tree. Faith leads to *veerya* (spiritual strength), which in turn promotes *smriti* (spiritual memory). Instead of *vishaya chintana*, (moving outward into the world of multiplicity and distraction), the mind turns to *ishwar chintana* moving towards God in a progressive manner. This controls the mind and turns it inward.

Hanuman is the epitome of faith, which can move mountains and cross oceans. The signature trait of Hanuman is his utter humility and his unshaken faith in *Bhagavat Sankalpa* (Divine Will). He always takes the backseat and sees himself as The Lord's instrument!

Sundarakanda begins with an absolutely clueless search, undertaken with daunting challenges and traversing through time, terrain and travails of consternation and bewilderment and culminates in a successful mission.

Ayana means journey; Ramayana is Rama's journey. He is at the hub of action in all the *kandas* (chapters) of the Ramayana except Sundarakanda. It may appear strange that a *kanda* devoid of Rama's presence is designated as Sundarakanda (*sundara* meaning beautiful). There are many reasons for this nomenclature. At a mundane level, the hero of this *kanda* is Hanuman who had been named Sundara by his mother Anjana and hence the name. From a spiritual standpoint, the absolute Brahman has three attributes *sathyam*, *shivam* and *sundaram*. *Sathyam* is Rama, *shivam* is Sita and *sundaram* is Hanuman who pervades the entire *kanda* and has justifiably lent his attribute to this *kanda*.

Sundarakanda has enormous significance to a spiritual aspirant. The group led by Jambavan came to the seashore and did not know what to do. They were at land's end. A sense of abject helplessness pervaded. This is when, the Guru's Grace plays the most pivotal part. Jambavan told Hanuman that if there is one person in the group who can do it and rise up to occasion and come out with flying colours. Hanuman took the blessings of Jambavan, prayed to Sri Rama and took the leap of faith, as it were and planned to cross the ocean. There is an important message here. It is at the Guru's behest that you will take that leap of faith and smoothly cross the ocean of samsara.

Hanuman, as he is headed towards Lanka, encountered Mynaka parvata. Mynaka surfaced on to the top from the depths of the ocean and pleaded Hanuman to take a small sojourn saying that he has a long way to go and he can rest and go fully refreshed. Hanuman thanked Mynaka for his graciousness and politely declined his offer saying that he cannot rest until he completes the Lord's mission successfully and continued his way. Mynaka (crudely translated means my nose; pun intended!) Even in our spiritual journey we encounter several mynakas who come in the guise of well-wishers who poke their nose and typically say that we should strike a harmonious balance between spirituality and worldly enjoyment. Exhort us to have a zest for life, as we have only one life and so on. They could derail our progress and sabotage our plans. We should be wary of them. Be diplomatic and tactful but should not hurt them. Hanuman handles this challenge by being polite and gracious. Also shows how we should subordinate our desires and goals to the overarching purpose. *Swami karya* (Lord's mission) always takes precedence over *swaya karya* (our mission)!

Next he encountered the wily Surasa who taunted him and dared him to pass through her wide open jaws. She knew for sure, that once he passes through, she will gobble him alive. She had a boon from Brahma. Literally, Hanuman was now between the devil and the deep blue sea. Thinking on his feet, he used his *buddhi* (for which he is renowned). He kept increasing his size and grows gigantically, through powers of Siddhi, and Surasa also widened her jaws. He kept increasing in size and she kept widening her jaws. Suddenly using the power of anima

(*siddha shakti*) he reduced himself into a diminutive form, entered her mouth and came out unscathed, whizzing past, her still wide open jaws. Surasa, true to her promise, blessed him and allowed him to proceed, even while admiring his intelligence. The take away here for the *sadhak* is, be it in the spiritual realm or even in the transactional world, by cutting our bloated ego to size or even dwarfing it we can achieve many more things ! Literally, we should stoop, to conquer (our minds)

The first two challenges, he had not used his *bala* (for which he is equally renowned). He had used his humility which was his *prakrita swabhava* (inherent nature) with Mynaka and *buddhi* (intelligence) with Surasa.

As he kept flying over the ocean, Hanuman, realized that he is being dragged down and his speed was being retarded by some force. He realized he is being dragged down by Simhika, the ogres, who could pull her prey towards herself by attacking their shadow, a unique boon she had. Hanuman gets into her body and tears her open. He had used force for the first time.

The seeker has to overcome ignorance, ego, attachment and hatred. These create lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy, which will pull him down. He has to conquer all of them and continue his onward march to enlightenment.

Hanuman thus crosses the ocean and eventually finds Sita in Ashoka Vana. Then on, it is happy tidings for the Rama camp.

Hence, people pray to Hanuman to grant *bala* (strength to face obstacles), *buddhi* (insight to remove the obstacles) and *vidya* (two types of knowledge - theoretical and intuitional).

Hanuman is standing testimony to all that we can achieve if we have humility, and devotion to God and Guru.

यत्र यत्र रघुनाथकीर्तनं तत्र तत्र कृतमस्तकांजलिम्
वाष्पवारिपरिपूर्णालोचनं मारुतिं नमत राक्षसान्तकम् ॥

Wherever, the glories of Raghunatha are sung, there with hands held over his bowed head in salutation and eyes filled with tears, Maruthi is present! I salute Maruthi, who puts an end to the Rakshas

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**Translation of original
articles to English
done by**

Smt Nirmala Giri
Smt Jayanthi Sundararaman
Smt Jeyashree Ramakrishnan
Smt Nisha Giri
Smt Sujatha Manikandaan

**To convey your prayers to
Sri Sri Swamiji, mail to**

Dr A Bhagyanathan, Personal Secretary to
HH Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji
New No 51, Old No 24, 7th Avenue
Ashok Nagar, Chennai – 600083
Tel: +91-44-24895875
Email: contact@namadwaar.org

sollunndhanayum thozhumin vizhumudambu
sellundhanayum thirumAlai – nallidhazh
thAmatthAl vELviyAl thandhiratthAl
mandhiratthAl nAmatthAlEthuthirEl nanru

- Poigaiazhwar

First Thiruvanthathi, 69th Pasuram

When you have the physical strength, narrate the Lord's stories to everyone and worship Him. As long as this mortal body exists, worship Him by offering flower garlands, or sacrifices or by performing Nama Kirtan.

Sri Swamiji's Schedule

Ekadasi

4 February

18 February

**Vasanta Panchami/ Sri
Kalyana Srinivasa Perumal
Pradishta Dhinam**

12 February

Thiruvannamalai

13 February