



Navaneetham

Monthly Newsletter of
Guruvayoor Devotees

February 2008

ജാഗ്ര 1183



നവനീതം.
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Inside the Guruvayoor Temple



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Guruvayoor Devotees



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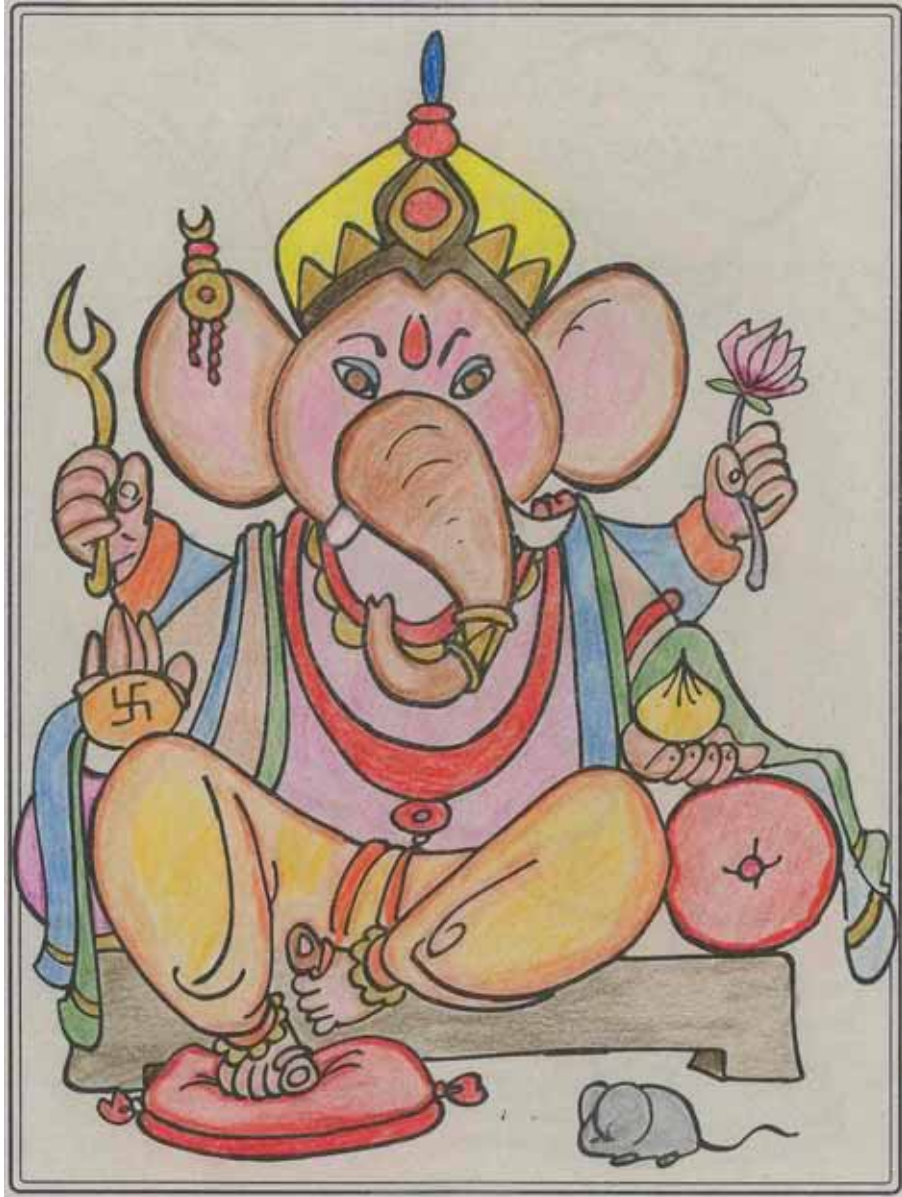
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Navaneetham

<http://guruvayoor.com/navaneetham>

*Ekadantam Mahakayam
Tapta-kanchana-Sannibham
Lambodharam Vishalaksham
Vandeham Gananayakam...*



Sri Ganesha

Colored by master Niranjana 7, Son of Sri. Pravin Balan

നവനീതം

February 2008 കുംഭം 1183

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Navaneetham - Monthly Newsletter of Guruvayoor Devotees

കൃഷ്ണ ഗുരുവായൂരപ്പ!



Inside the Guruvayoor temple (Photo by Sukumar)

Hari OM!
Salutations to all.
Om Namo Bhagavathe Vasudevaaya

Navaneetham (freshly churned butter) is a humble attempt by Guruvayur Devotees Forum to create a monthly news letter for our group. We feel privileged to be able to submit this batch of freshly churned butter to our Kannan. We have a lot of material this time, as we took liberty with borrowing materials from various sources (of course with acknowledgements) and we have a number of original contributions as well. *Just imagine the mysterious smile **He** would have seeing this.*

As you may observe, the articles are published as received and no active editing has been done by the coordinators. All opinions/ideas in the articles are owned by the authors. Please send your comments, suggestions and any materials that you wish to publish to editor@guruvayoor.com.

Navaneetham Coordinators:

Veena Nair
Sukumar Cananda

Vinod PS
Sunil Menon

Guruvayoor Utsavam (Temple festival)

Guruvayoor Utsava kodiyyettam (flag hoisting) is on Feb 18th Monday and lasts for ten days. Aarattu is on Feb 27th. Utsavam is in effect the restoration of divine chaithanya every year. It is aimed at the purification and energisation of the deity. (see an article in Malayalam on page-66 in this issue on the relevance of temple rituals)



Utsavam is a great time to be in Guruvayoor. There will be various processions, annual elephant race, fire-works (no crackers/explosives are used in Guruvayoor as baby Krishna does not like loud noise) and the temple and surroundings will be illuminated nicely. All ten days, the place looks very festive, streets dressed up with arches, festoons, houses freshly thatched and painted. Every shrine and building is tastefully decorated with lights, plantain trunks, bunches of coconut and arecanuts. The lamps, deepasthambams and vilakku are all lightened all the days.



Guruvayoor Ulsavam is conducted in the month of Kumbha (February this year) and lasts for 10 days. The hoisting of the temple flag atop the flagstaff (Dwajastambham) about 70 feet high heralds the festival. On the 1st day, an elephant race is held. On the next 6 days, there are elephant processions in the morning, afternoon and night. In the morning, there is the Sribhuta Bali (Offering of oblation at various altar). There are various cultural programs like dance, music, religious discusses are held at Melpathur Auditorium (outside the temple) on all these days. On the 8th day, 'Utsavabali' (from 10 am to 4 pm) or oblations are offered to the Lord's lieutenants. A sumptuous feast then awaits the devotees. Pallivetta or the hunting expedition of the Lord takes place on the 9th day. This hunt is symbolic of the destruction of Kama (desire), Krodha (anger) and other such evils that plague us in our life. After that the Lord's Thidambu is taken to the Rudratheertha (temple pond) for Aarattu, amidst the chanting of mantras. Thousands of devotees also take the dip, chanting the Lord's name to purge them of their sins. Then ucha Pooja (i.e, noon worship –this takes place at night only on this day) is held at the Bhagavati shrine. Finally, the Lord returns to the sanctum sanctorum after 11 circumambulations. The temple flag is then lowered signifying the end of the festival.



Maha Shivarathri - 6 March

Maha Shivarathri is on March 5th Vratam shall be observed on Shivarathri and many will not sleep all night but spend their time in naama sankeerthanam of “Om Nama Shivaya”.

Wishing you all a very happy Shivarathri.



പഞ്ചഭൂതങ്ങൾ

എ. പി. സുകുമാർ

പഞ്ചഭൂതങ്ങളിൽ പഞ്ചലിംഗങ്ങൾ
സഞ്ചിത കർമ്മത്തിനു പഞ്ചേന്ദ്രിയം
പഞ്ചാക്ഷരീമന്ത്രപ്പെരുളായൊളിയായ്
പഞ്ചബാണാരിയാം പരമേശ്വരൻ

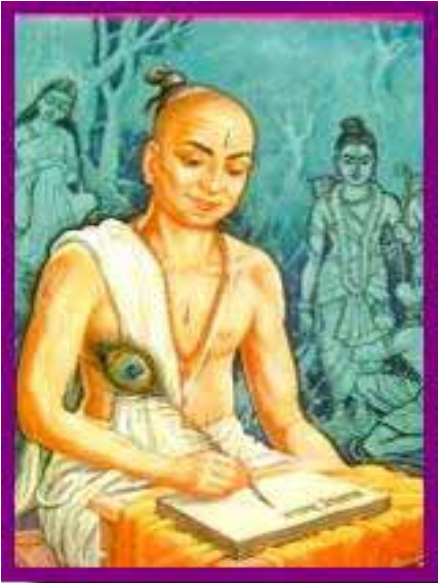
കാഞ്ചീപുരത്തിൽ ഭൂമിലിംഗം
കാളഹസ്തിയിലോ വായുലിംഗം
അഗ്നിലിംഗത്തിനാൽ അതിവിശുദ്ധം
തിരുവണ്ണാമല ശിവലോകം
തിരുവാനിക്കരയിൽ തീർത്ഥജലലിംഗം
ചിദംബരമാകാശലിംഗം
ആകാശമത്സ്യതമദ്വൈതലിംഗം

അഞ്ചിതശ്ചപ്പുവുപോലന്തരംഗത്തിൽ
ദേവ മഹാദേവ നിൻ ദർശനം
പഞ്ചപ്രാണനും ചേർന്നാണവിടുത്തെ
തുംഗ തുടി താള മേളം
ഡമരവിൽ തുംഗ തുടിതാളമേളം

!! Sri Rama Jayam !! - 'Vinaya Patrika'

Vinod P.S.

Sant Tulasidas



'**Vinaya Patrika**' of Sri Tulasidas in it's simplistic sense is a humble petition filed in the court of Rama-Rajyam. A devotional poem with a feel of extreme humility waiting for the final verdict from King Sri Sita-Ramachandra.

Background of the composition: Once a murderer came on pilgrimage to Varanasi and cried: "For the love of Rama, give alms to me, a murderer." Hearing the name of his beloved Rama, Tulasidas called the man to his house and gave him consecrated food, and declared him purified. The orthodox Brahmins of the place asked him how the murderer's sin was absolved.

Tulasidas replied: "Read your own scriptures and learn about the power of the Divine Name." The brahmins were not satisfied; they asked for a further proof. They all agreed that if the sacred bull (Nandi) of the Vishwanatha temple would eat from the hands of the murderer, they would accept Tulasidas's words. The man was taken to the temple and the bull did eat from his hands. Tulasidas proved that the sincere repentance made by the devotee was accepted by the Lord. A new trouble, however, arose: Kali - the embodiment of evil - threatened to devour Tulasidas. Tulasidas prayed to Sri Hanuman who appeared to him in a dream and advised him to file a petition to Sri Rama - the Lord of the Universe - to remedy the evil, and that was the origin of the **Vinaya-Patrika**.

GENESIS OF THE PLAINTIFF

(a note of sorrow-filled concern) In the divine court of Mahayuga before the bench of Love and devotion headed by their grace Sri Sita-Ramachandra swami this is the mercy petition no.1 in Kaliyuga filed by Saint Tulasidas.



The Bench of principal Judges

- Lord Rama Presiding Judge
- Divine Mother Sita : Co-opted Expert Advisor
- Lord Lakshmana : Associate Judge
- Lord Bharat : Associate Judge
- Lord Shatrughan : Associate Judge

Goswami Tulsidas, disciple of Sri Narharyanand, aged about eighty five years, resident of Ayodhya, erstwhile capital of Rama-Rajya, and of Kashi, Abode of Lord Vishwanatha Sivashankara.

The Six Passions together with Nine Manifestations of Vice, collectively known as the Fifteen Adversaries of Virtue, named herein under as Defendants & Co-defendants

DEFENDANTS: The Six Passions:

(1) Lust; (2) Wrath; (3) Greed; (4) Inebriation; (5) Attachments; (6) Ego,

Co-DEFENDANTS: The Nine Manifestations of Vice: (1) Violence (2) Falsehood; (3) Pride; (4) Envy; (5) Strife; (6) Suspicion; (7) Jealousy; (8) Rivalry; (9) Covetousness,

Counsel for the Palintiff: Hanuman (Messenger of Lord Rama)

Counsel for the Defendants: Kaliyuga (The Age of predominance of vice over virtue)

SUBMISSION

The Plaintiff respectfully submits that:: Because he, the Plaintiff, having resolved to pursue the path of Devotion in his beloved Lord Rama, and in consequence thereof Because he, the Plaintiff, proclaimed the Divine Message of the Lord's Compassionate Mercy and Bounteous Grace being readily available to the ignorant, the evil doers, and sinners; and because the Defendant abetted by the Co-Defendants, seeking to establish pre-eminence of Vice over Virtue in kali yuga, challenged the Plaintiff in his resolve and launched an unprovoked attack on him, employing formidable weapons of Sense Pleasures; and because the Plaintiff has surrendered himself completely, unconditionally and unswervingly, in steadfast devotion to his Beloved Lord.

Wherefore the Plaintiff submits this 'Mercy Petition' in three parts, comprising: The Invocation, the Preamble of the Plaint, and the (Letter of) Plaint, which contains his Indictment, confession of guilt, arguments, cases in precedence as evidence of Divine Bounty, together with his humble Petition for Compassionate mercy, as set forth in the Articles of the Plaint annexed hereto; and Prayer respectfully prays, implores and beseeches the Divine Court of Love to:

1. Grant the Palintiff Compassionate Mercy out of the Lord's Bounteous Grace; and
2. Restrain the Defendants and Co-Defendants, named in this Plaint as the 'Fifteen adversaries if Virtue' , from the further persecution of the Plaintiff, to enable him to pursue his solemn resolve of proclaiming the fame and glory of his beloved Lord, freely, faithfully and fearlessly as ordained by the established divine law.

*Mukam karoti vachalam, pangum langhayate girim
Yatkrupa tamaham vande, paramananda Madhavam*

"I offer obeisances to the One who grants bliss Ultimate--By His grace,
the mute can speak, and the lame are able climb mountains"

Dear Devotee members, Sukumarji has once again made an offering at the lotus feet of our dear Guruvayurappan. He has sung and recorded the Bhagavatham Killippaatt (by Sri. Ezhutthassan), so as to complete the whole reading in 7 days - you can hear the Bhagavatham in Sapthaham format from the link below.

<http://ramayanam.guruvayoor.com/Bhagavatham%20Kilippaatt.htm>

The last section, file # 63 in the page, is a song "Vaatalayeshande vathikal nilkumbol bhava-dureedam marakkum...." composed by Sukumarji and sung by Shri Anil Kumar. You would have read it in a previous Navaneetham issue.

Please note - you can click on each unit and hear directly using Quicktime player linked to your web browser; you can also download each unit to your computer and then open it in Windows Media or Real Player. If you have any questions about accessing the site pl. email Sukumarji at sukumarcanda@yahoo.com. – Veena Nair

Bhagavatham - Make it your favourite 'link'



**Thunchathu Ramanujan
Ezhutthassan's
Bhagavtham Kilippaatt**
(mp3 audio in Malayalam- 40 hours)
an audio book By Dr. A. P. Sukumar
sukumarcanda@yahoo.com

ഭാഗവതം കിളിപ്പാട്ട്

Click on the file name to listen
You may need to install
quick time player
Or right click and download and use
your favorite player
the book has been divided
into 7 sections
in Sapthaham format
These are large mp3 files.
It may take a few minutes to download
using a dial up connection



മണികണ്ഠസ്വാമിതൻ മണിമന്ദിരം

ഡോ. എ.പി. സുകുമാർ

മണികണ്ഠസ്വാമിതൻ മണിമന്ദിരം കണ്ടു
മതി വന്നു മമ മനസ്സും അമൃതോപമം
അകതാരിൽ അയ്യന്റെ ചിന്തുദ്ര നിറയുന്നു
അറിയുന്നു മമ ജന്മ പുണ്യോദയം

ഇഹപര സുകൃതം, ദുഷ്കൃതമെല്ലാം
ഇരുമുടിയിൽ നിറച്ചെത്തുമ്പോൾ
പതിനെട്ടു പടികളിൽ ഓരോന്നിലും
നിൻ മഹിമാദീപ്തി പ്രകാശിപ്പു
പത്തു പടികളിൽ കാണിക്കയിട്ടു
പത്തിന്ദ്രിയങ്ങളെ 'ഞാൻ' തന്നെ
പഞ്ചഭൂതങ്ങൾ പുഞ്ചിരിച്ചു പിന്നെ
സഞ്ചിത മാർഗ്ഗം കാണിച്ചു

കന്നിയയ്യപ്പനായ് ചിത്തവും ബുദ്ധിയും
ശ്രീഭൂതനാഥനിൽ അർപ്പിക്കാൻ

പിന്നെയും ബാക്കിയാം എന്നിലെ 'ഞാനു' മാ
തിരുനട തന്നിലുടച്ചുവാർക്കാൻ
മറ്റില്ലൊരാശ്രയം കണ്ഠോ വിറകൊണ്ടു
സദ്രുരുസ്വാമി മന്ത്രം ശരണ മന്ത്രം
പ്രണവാധാരമാം സച്ചിദാനന്ദത്തിൻ
പ്രത്യക്ഷരൂപമാം പരമപദം

കാനനവാസന്റെ കാരുണ്യപൂരം
കർപ്പൂരാഴിയിൽ ഞാൻ കണ്ടു
തത്താമസീ മന്ത്രമെഴുതിയ കോവിലിൽ
തത്താസ്വരൂപനെ ദർശിച്ചു
ആത്മസ്വരൂപം അമൃതസ്വരൂപത്തിൽ
സ്വാത്മനി ചേർന്നു വിളങ്ങുമ്പോൾ
മമ മനസ്സേകമാം സച്ചിദാനന്ദത്തിൻ
പൊൻ കണി കണ്ടു ലയിക്കുന്നു

Great Bhaktas – Santh Eknath

Veena Nair

[Translated from Shri Pandurang Shastri Athavale's 'Shraadh' in Hindi, a homage to the great people who have graced our land. I had previously posted the following piece as a 3-part series to the Guruvayoor group in Sept/Oct 2005. Older members, I hope you will enjoy re-reading this as much as I have. – Veena]

Sant Eknath was born about 600 years ago in Paithan in Maharashtra. His great-grandfather Bhanudas had always prayed to God that he should have a descendant who through faith and devotion would have the power even to call God to his side; Bhanudas led a very pious life, and so did his son Chakrapani and grandson Suryapani. Their life of devotion was to be answered with the birth of Suryapani's son 'Eknath'. But strange are the ways of Fate; when Eknath was only 11/2 years old, Eknath's mother died. Suryapani was devastated; he thought how is this boy going to be of any significance? soon after his birth, his mother has died? But he resigned himself to God's will and continued with life.

When Eknath was 6 yrs old, Suryapani came down with severe fever; little Eknath was in his grandma's lap listening to his grandad's story and his father lying in a cot seriously ill. Soon grandad's story-telling stopped; Eknath sat up to see both grandparents crying and neighbors coming in to the house and standing around silently. He asked his grandad why they were crying? Chakrapani told him that his father was dead, everyone would have to die one day and go where his father had gone; so

Eknath replied by saying that if everyone goes there, then I will also go there when I die and then I will meet dad; so then why cry? Both grandparents devoted their energies in imparting spiritual education to Eknath; when taught Matru-devo bhava, Pitru-devo bhava, he would say but I don't have a mother or father? So whom should I treat as God? and they said, God is the all-knowing father of all of us; look up to Him and bow to Him; do His work and live a life dedicated to Him.

Eknath was then assigned to learn at the feet of a learned Brahmin; but by age 14 he had learnt everything that the learned teacher could teach him. He absorbed everything like a blotting paper. Sometimes the teacher would hear Eknath's responses and wonder if he is teaching him the same thing twice? Sometimes he would be at a loss to answer Eknath's questions! Then one day he told Chakrapani that he had taught the boy everything he knew. Eknath became worried--his teacher would not teach him anymore; he himself was not yet ready to teach. What should he do? He would go and pray everyday for guidance in the Shiv temple near his house. One day he heard a voice asking him to go to Devgiri and become a disciple of Shri Janardan Swami.

Eknath was delighted. God had answered his prayer and directed him to a Guru. But then he thought of his grandparents-- how could he leave them? would they let him go? He so badly wanted to learn more and devote himself to God realization. So he decided to take off in the middle of the night.

He travels on foot to Devgiri; meanwhile, early morning his grandparents wake up to find him missing; the old folks cry and search for Eknath; then they realize that his old teacher is also not to be found and console themselves thinking that teacher and student have gone off somewhere. It is just a coincidence that the teacher had taken off on a teerth-yatra around the same time that Eknath is found missing; but that is sufficient for the grandparents; they decide to await the teacher's return, sure that Eknath would come home with him. Eknath reaches Devgiri fort and is accepted by Janardan swami as a long-awaited disciple. Janardan swami was an epitome of Knowledge and Karma; he was spiritually evolved and worked at the same time as a Senapati, a commander in the Mughal army; Janardan swami was a mixture of Brahminic as well as Kshatriya qualities.

Eknath takes up his new role with his usual zeal; total commitment, total enthusiasm and energies devoted to his Guru. He gets trained in every aspect of running the place, including horse-riding, warfare, and daily administration. There is a story of how his Guru puts him in charge of the accounts of the place and one day tells him that there

would be an inspection of the account books; Eknath sits down to check his books to make sure that everything is fine and discovers that there is a difference of eight annas. He is anxious and gets to work going over all the transactions of the previous weeks; evening turns to night and he is still sitting with it and late in the night he discovers the problem and is delighted and shouts--I got it, I got it! His guru hears him, and comes out to see him with his books in the middle of the night. Guru tells him "you are so happy because you fixed the 8 anna problem; if you showed the same diligence and devotion to realizing God, what would be your happiness?" It is one year since you came to me. I am happy with your work. I bless you that you may realize God soon. This increases Eknath's joy. He doubles his efforts at serving his Guru. One Thursday, the Guru, as was his habit goes up into a nearby hill to meditate, leaving Eknath in charge of affairs at the fort. The fort is soon attacked by enemies; but Eknath, not wishing to disturb his Guru, dons his Guru's dress and headgear and sword, mounts a horse and leads the men to fight the enemies. They soon flee, unable to withstand Eknath's response. Eknath then goes back to his usual role. When the Guru returns, he is surprised to see messengers of the Emperor come with gifts for his victory. Eknath explains about the battle that he was involved in, saying that he was the mere instrument-- all the strength and bravery were the Guru's. The Guru is speechless and impressed by Eknath's devotion. Eknath thus spend 6 years with the Guru becoming more and more adept just like his Guru--brave and wise, devoted and

balanced in his outlook towards life. Eventually he is also able to go deep into meditation and have a vision of God; at that point the Guru says that Eknath can no longer continue with him; he suggests that Eknath go to a far-off mountain where there is a Markandeya temple and to engage in constant meditation and service to God. Eknath doesn't want to leave, but the Guru insists and finally says that he can comeback when something surprising happens there. Eknath takes off to the mountain and gets into a regular routine of bath,meditation, prayers and other austerities.He eats frutis and sleeps on a stone slab. One day a cowherd passing by sees him and then comes everyday with a bowl of milk for him (God takes care of his devotees).One day the cowherd comes early and is terrified to see a cobra sitting over the meditating Eknath with his hood spread above his head thus protecting him from the sun's rays. The cowherd screams and drops the milk bowl, thus arousing Eknath; but in the meantime, the cobra slides away; the cowherd explains what had happened. Eknath realizes that was the reason why he had not felt the sun's harshness all these days; the cobra must have been providing shade all the time. He then thinks this is a sufficiently surprising incident and now he can go back to his Guru.

His Guru is pleased to hear about the incident and says that the time has come for you to take leave; you can now head out on your own and teach people about God and impart spiritual values to people. Eknath refuses to leave his Guru; finally the Guru also joins him and together they set Out; when they reach

the banks of the Godavari, they pay homage at the Samadhi of Sant Nivrittunath (Sant Dnyaneshwar's brother); there the Guru persuades Eknath to narrate the Bhagavatham; by Guru's grace, Eknath is inspired to speak; soon crowds gather around them and the listeners are transported to a different state. The Guru then instructs Eknath to write a 'Bhasya' on the Bhagvath and departs to Devgiri (Eknaathi Bhagvath is a very popular work in Maharashtra). Eknath then travels far and wide with his lectures, everywhere he goes, he inspires people with his faith and knowledge. Back home his old old grandparents, Chakrapani and wife, are still waiting...waiting when they will see their dear child before they close their eyes for good. Around this time the old teacher of Eknath also comes back from his teerth-yatra. Chakrapani rushes to him for news of Eknath but that kind soul is as much in the dark as them. But the teacher remembers Eknath's longing to learn and that he had enquired about Janardan swami and so he heads out to Devgiri; there Janardan swami explains all that happened in recent years and then hands him a letter for Eknath saying that he should be soon reaching home after his travels. Accordingly when the teacher comes back home, he finds Eknath has reached home; but Eknath has different plans. He is now reunited with his dear grandparents and for them life has come a full circle; their grandson has come home and that too as no ordinary person but as a learned and respected devotee eager to share his wealth of knowledge. But now he again wishes to go back to his Guru; at this point the teacher hands him the letter from the Guru which says "for twelve

years your grandparents have waited for you; this is the end of your journey; serving them in their old age is now your teerth-yatra. You need not go anywhere!" Thus as per Guru's instructions Eknath starts his life in Paithan, Maharashtra. He had a regular routine. After his early morning rituals he would read the Geeta, the Bhagavatham, and then the Puranas in the afternoon; evenings would be occupied by bhajans and discussions. People started attending these sessions in large numbers and soon a wave of spirituality and knowledge was spreading through Paithan. It was Janmashtami and Eknath arranged a lot of festivities. His Guru also attended the function alongwith the Emperor; the Guru approached the entrance to Eknath's house and saw God himself in disguise at the gate welcoming people; both Guru and Bhagawan looked at each other and smiled and Bhagawan made a sign to the Guru to be quiet about His presence. Inside the atmosphere was charged with devotion. The Emperor pleased with Eknath's devotion awarded him land and gold coins. Lot of people donated wealth; all this was more than sufficient to meet Eknath's needs. Chakrapani, Eknath's grandfather could not contain his happiness and now only requested the Guru that he instruct Eknath to get married. The Guru replied that he can do that but they should find an eligible girl. Among the people attending the festivities, there was a merchant who overheard the conversation; this merchant had one daughter Girija and he requested to the Guru that he would like his daughter to be married to Eknath; the Guru inquired in more detail about the family and

having satisfied himself that this would be a good match for Eknath consented to the marriage. At the wedding, among the guests was a man called Uddhav who was very impressed with Eknath. He wanted to devote his entire life in Eknath's service. Eknath handed over the running of the property etc. to him. Girija turned out to be an ideal partner; now with Girija and Uddhav, Eknath's home became a paradise. People called his home Nath-mandir(Nath's temple) and looked upon them as Lakshmi-Narayan. Because of Girija and Uddhav, Eknath could now devote all his time to God's work.

He started a group called "Vasudev"-- young and old adults well-versed in the scriptures would go out with a headband with peacock feathers and anklets and through song and dance convey stories and teachings from the scriptures. This movement became very popular in Karnataka and Maharashtra because the people found the medium very appealing-entertaining but also educative. further the language used was Prakrit, the dialect of the people and this added to its popularity. Eknath thus started the trend of interpreting the Vedas and Upanishads in Prakrit so that the common man could also benefit. Soon the learned pandits started finding fault with this method; their monopoly over the scriptures was being attacked; they complained that Eknath was spoiling the sanctity of the shastras by presenting them in impure Prakrit language. Eknath, however, was too busy with his work; there are several notable incidents from his life: 1) One day he was returning from a dip in the Godavari when he saw a small

infant crying on the banks; he picked up the child and took him to the river and bathed and dried him and then went to the nearby locality where untouchables lived and asked around if they knew whom the child belonged to. Soon a woman rushed to him crying that it was her child; the child's father recognized Eknath and bowed to him; he was familiar with Eknath's reputation and his Vasudevs. This man asked Eknath "your Vasudev's always go far, even to Kashi and Rameshwar speaking about God, but they never come here" Eknath replied that is because you are not eligible to listen to the Vedas; but then that man said if God resides everywhere and in everyone then why can't we also hear about him? if you don't teach us about him, then who will? Eknath realized his mistake and from then went every evening to give discourses to those people.

2) The Pundits soon raised objection to that too; but Eknath continued with his work; one day a kid in the area asked Eknath if he would not eat with them? Eknath could not say 'no' and agreed to lunch with them the next day. This irked the pandits even more and they decided that if he carried out his plan then he should be punished. Accordingly the next day two of the Pandits followed Eknath on the sly to see him eat with the untouchables. The people there had cleaned and decorated their house in honor of Eknath's eating with them; all were dressed in their best; all had taken special pains with their houses. Meanwhile two other Pundits were at Eknath's house and were surprised to see him there giving his usual Bhagavad pravachan. They came

to the untouchables' area to tell the other two spies that Eknath had dropped his idea of eating with those people. But there they saw Eknath eating and the people all enjoying his company. The pandits could not believe their eyes. They realized God had made it possible for Eknath to be seen in both places at the same time and were ashamed of themselves.

3) One day a Brahmin from Saurashtra came and told Eknath that he had lost all his relatives and I want to devote whatever I have in your service and wish to work for you. Eknath asked his wife what work they could give him; they could do with help with the cooking because Eknath's house was always good for anyone hungry and wanting to eat. The Brahmin, 'Sreekhandya' agreed to do all the cooking but said that he had two conditions: one that they should always refer to him as 'tu' ('you' in Marathi or 'nee' in Malayalam!) and second, because he was a Brahmin he was very particular about cleanliness and so he would close the kitchen door and cook; nobody should come in at that time. Eknath and wife agreed and Sreekhandya soon became an integral part of the household; he would cook and clean, collect flowers for Eknath's pooja and draw water from the well, preparing sandalwood paste etc. It is said that many years later a pious Brahmin in Dwaraka inspite of repeated efforts could not get God's darshan. God appeared to him in a dream and told him that He was working in Eknath's house as Sreekhandya and he could therefore go and meet him there; when the Brahmin reached Paithan, he passed Sreekhandya on the way going to the

Godavari for getting water. The Brahmin asked Sreekhandya the way to Eknath's house and was directed there. Little did the Brahmin realize that he had just spoken to God Himself. When he reached Eknath's home, he told Eknath that he was there to see Shreekhandya. Eknath asked him what work he had with Shreekhandya? The Brahmin told him that Shreekhandya was God himself. But, said Eknath, God is everywhere; so why did you come all the way here?! The Brahmin said that when God himself has left his abode to be with you, I also left home to come here! Soon they all started looking for Shreekhandya; but after serving his beloved son for almost 12 years, Shreekhandya was now not to be found. Eknath's heart filled with love for his dearest God; Girija started weeping. Both were overwhelmed by God's service to them. With His presence there, and blessing Eknath's attempts to imbibe spirituality in every man, Paithan had become Vaikunth.

4) Another incident speaks about Eknath's patience and peaceful disposition. Once he went to take a dip in the Godavari; there he met a youth who was well-known for being troublesome. When Eknath returned from his bath, the youth spit on him. Eknath went back into the water and took another dip. Again the youth spit on him; again he went back to take a dip. This continued for a long time; some people around got quite angry and wanted to beat up the young man. But Eknath asked them to be quiet. When Eknath had taken about 108 dips without even once complaining to the youth, the youth was finally ashamed of himself and fell at Eknath's feet. Eknath told him

that he was forgiven the minute he had regretted his doing and in fact because of him Eknath could bathe in the Godavari 108 times! Since then the youth became a staunch devotee of Eknath.

Many people would come from far and wide to listen to Eknath's discourses on the Bhagavad. Amongst them was a beautiful lady dressed in white. She would come in at the same time everyday, sit in the same place, listen with concentration, and then leave; soon some mischievous persons started taking note of her and one day followed her when she left the discourse. They were curious as to who she was and where she came from? They followed her to the Godavari and then were surprised to see her continue walking into the water and then lose herself in the river. Actually Mother Godavari herself was coming everyday to listen to Eknath; next day Eknath asked her if she was in any trouble? and she replied not at all! I think those people realized their mistake. After the discourse that day they came and fell at Eknath's feet and said by your grace we were able to see Mother Godavari. She tells Eknath that people come all the time to bathe in me and clean themselves off their sins. I come here, listen to the Ganga of spirituality flowing from your mouth and clean myself. Eknath bows to her and says you keep coming in disguise. Let no one know the truth; people have a weakness for miracles and if they find out, then I will be faced with a new problem. Such was Eknath -unfazed by any kind of recognition and not falling into its traps.

Meanwhile Eknath continued with his efforts to spread the Geeta and the Vedas

in Marathi and Prakrit. His own son 'Hari-Pandit' now opposed him and joined with the other Pandits claiming Sanskrit to be the language of the Gods. They all combined to write a letter to the then Shankaracharya at Kashi complaining that Eknath was misguiding people with his Bhagavad in Prakrit. Because Eknath's son had also signed the complaint, the Shankaracharya took note and called Eknath to Kashi to investigate. Eknath dutifully went to Kashi accompanied by his family; Eknath was told that until the matter was resolved he could not take darshan of Kashi Visweshwarnath. At Kashi, in a hall filled with learned scholars from all over, he was told that the Vedas and Upanishads could only be taught in the language of the Gods which is Sanskrit. Eknath defended himself saying that true, Sanskrit is a divine language, but it is not that Prakrit was developed by thieves!! if 'amrut' nectar is distributed in a gold pot or an earthen pot it is still nectar-- it doesn't lose its power! Is there any scriptural evidence that Vedas and Upanishads should not be translated into Prakrit? Nobody had an answer to that! He said, "learned people, I felt that God seemed to be suffocated, locked into a box of Sanskrit and I thought He would very much like to come out and breathe the fresh air. God himself has inspired me to do this. I know the consequences of conveying the wrong meaning of the scriptures. Please put your misgivings aside and hear from me the Bhagavad in Prakrit". And there amongst all the learned persons, Eknath recited his translation of the Bhagavad, inspired by God, with God in his head and heart; people were moved and filled with ecstasy to hear him speak; it was as

though Goddess Saraswati herself had appeared in Kashi. When he had finished everyone wanted to carry him in a procession around Kashi. He said "if you have to, then carry the Bhagavad around in a procession because it contains the leelas of God". So they took out a procession carrying the Bhagavad around the city and finally placed it at Lord Kashi-Vishwanath's feet. Since then it has been a custom- when the 7-day Bhagavada paraayan is over, we carry the Bhagavatham around the temple in a pradakshina and only then the saptaaham is concluded.

One more incident before we finish: It was the time for 'Shraddh' in Eknath's house, time to pay obeisance to his ancestors. Girija, his wife, and Shreekhandya the cook (God in disguise) had finished all cooking and were ready for the ceremony; at this time some beggars were standing outside and talking about the good smells and wishing if only they could also eat! Eknath saw them; he was troubled; the Brahmins he had called for the Shraaddh bhojan had not yet come; they would be mad at him if he started before feeding them; but he could not let these people go away hungry, so he called all of them in and along with Girija and Shreekhandya served them the food; now the Brahmins who came in were angry. Girija and Shreekhandya again bathed and prepared fresh food for them. But they refused to be appeased. Eknath said that those beggars are also God's children. How could I let them go hungry? The Brahmins-- so God will also send your ancestors to eat your food! Now even Shreekhandya was angry; he told Eknath to forget the

Brahmins; he should go inside and call his pitrus- ancestors; they will definitely come. Eknath was unhappy; he went inside and prayed "God please, if I have done something wrong forgive me" Shreekhanda said 'you haven't done anything wrong; call your ancestors and start the meal'. Soon Eknath prayed to his ancestors and opened his eyes to see his great-great grandfather Bhanudas sitting alongwith Chakrapani and Suryapani and other ancestors! When these people finished eating and left the house, the other Brahmins saw their pitrus too in the group; they had also partaken of Eknath's meal and were

satisfied. The Brahmins were ashamed. Because of Eknath, they were able to see their ancestors too. Such was Sant Eknath; so devoted to God and God's work that God Himself served in his house for several years. That is the way God supports his dear devotees; by working with them. Finally in 1521, Eknath realized that his time on earth was over; with instructions to the people to keep alive the Vedic principles and not to succumb to superstitious beliefs he walked into the Godavari.

Om Namō Narayanaya!

"The syllable 'gu' of the word 'Guru' means darkness & the syllable 'ru' means light. Thus, Guru is the great one who takes a disciple from darkness (ignorance) to enlightenment (True Knowledge)." –

Lord Shiva in Shri Guru Gita

Mukundamala

Dr. Saroja Ramanujam, M.A., Ph.D, Siromani in sanskrit.

Continued from the December2007 Issue:

**27.sreemannaama prochyaa naaraayaNaakhyam
ke na praapuh vaanChitham paapino api
haa nah poorvam vaakpravrtthaa na thasmin
thena praaptham garbha vaasaadhi dukkham**

By saying the name Sriman Narayana, who has not attained their heart's desire even if they were sinners. But we never uttered it in earlier births and hence suffered the misery of entering the womb.

Here Azvar extols the name of the Lord, srimannarayana, and says that even sinners will attain their heart's desire by utterance of it. It is **naaraayNaakhyam sriman naama**, the name of Narayana accompanied with Lakshmi. So this may refer to the dhvayamanthra , **srimannaraayaNa charaNou Saranam aham prapadhye, srimathe naaraayaNaaya namah**. The allusion here is to the story of Ajamila, who was a sinner, swerved from his austere life, but got salvation on facing death through uttering the name of NaaraayaNa, unconsciously by calling his son named Narayana. The story has deeper significance though, and should not be misconstrued as meaning that a sinner merely by uttering the name of the Lord will be absolved from his sins. Ajamila was a pious man and fell from the righteous path and by the grace of the Lord due to his previous good karma, was found uttering the name Narayana by which he saw that he was visited by the attendants of the Lord and turned a new leaf . The death faced by him by seeing the servants of yama was only a maya of the Lord to redeem him.

This means , to say His name you need poorvajanma puNyam. Hence Azvar says he very fact that we have undergone the suffering of birth and got this janma proves that we have not chanted His name in our previous birth.

**28. majjanmanah phalamidham madhukaitabhaare
mathpraarThaneeya madhanugraham esha eva
thvadhbrthya bhrthya paricharakabhrthya bhrthya
bhrthyasaya bhrthya ithi maam smara lokanaaTha**

Oh Lord of the universe, the slayer of the demons Madhu and Kaitabha, The only thing for which I yearn your grace is this, which alone is the fruit of my being born. Remember me as the servant of your servant of your servant down to the seventh level of servants.

The seven levels of servants down could either mean for seven times seven births as Andal said '*EzEzu piravikkum unthannodu uttrOmE aavOm unakkeE naam*

aatseivOm,’ which means “we will be close to you for seven times seven lives an will serve you.” Or it could also mean that one is engaged in the service of the Lord in all levels of existence. The contact with the outer world, the acts of the body, mind ,intellect, and the consciousness of oneself(ego) and as the individual self and finally the Self of the self ,that is the Lord. On all these levels the devotee functions as the sesha or dasa of the Lord.

ഓം നാരായണായ നമഃ

ചന്ദ്രശേഖര മേനോൻ

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നാമങ്ങൾ ചൊല്ലുവാൻ ഏറെയുണ്ടെങ്കിലും
രാമനാമം അതിൽ അഗ്രജനാകിലും
യമദൂതൻ വന്നിടുമാദിവ്യ വേളയിലീ
ണമായ് ഈ നാമമോർക്കുമാറാകണം
നവദ്വാര ഗോപുരമായൊരീ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ
മറയാതിരിക്കണേ ഈനാമമെപ്പോഴും

നാരായണ നാരായണ നാരായണ നാരായണ
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Avatars – Corporate-Functional & Contemporary Organizational Management

The general purpose of all avatars is conflict resolution and upholding Dharma. These are done either by reorganising, introducing new order or by total annihilation of the old. Different situations are associated with different problems each of which demand a different solution. Shree Dr. Devdutt Pattanaik's article in ET had carried the following piece which makes these 'avatars' more functional and contemporary.

Enjoy the reading – Balagopal.

The article may not be about 'pure bhakthi', but I enjoyed it as true applied Vedanta.
Sukumar

Many Avatars

Corporate Dossier, Economic Times, 25 Jan 2008

Dr. Devdutt Pattanaik *

Vishnu is amongst the most popular manifestations of God in the Hindu pantheon. But curiously, there are very few Vishnu temples across India, the most popular, where he holds his four symbols, the conch-shell, the lotus, the mace and the disc, is that of Tirupati Balaji in Andhra Pradesh and Badrinath in Uttaranchal. Fewer still are temples of Narayan, the sleeping form of Vishnu, the most popular one being that of Padmanabhaswami in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. People mostly worship Vishnu in the form of Ram, the king and Krishna, the cowherd-charioteer. These are Vishnu's forms when he walked the earth to reinstate order. Since Vishnu is the God responsible for sustaining the world and keep things running, one wonders if these different forms are indicative of the different roles a leader has to play as he leads a team or an organization.

The sleeping Vishnu or Narayan is associated with a time when creation has not begun or is just about to begin. Vishnu sleeps on an ocean of milk that is still. No waves, no currents, no movement. He sleeps in the coils of a serpent with many hoods. Only when a Cobra is still can it coil itself and spread its hood. By showing Vishnu sleeping in the coils of a hooded serpent, the artist is clearly representing absence of movement. The name of the serpent, Adi Sesa or Ananta Sesa, alludes to time because Adi means what exists before the beginning, Sesa means what remains after the end and Ananta means endless. Thus the sleeping Vishnu represents that moment before creation when all is still. It is the time of dreamless slumber, Yoganidra, when Vishnu is not even aware of

himself, let alone his surroundings. Only when he wakes up will creation begin – time will start to roll, space will unfold, the ocean will be churned.



The sleeping Vishnu alludes to latent leader within all people that has not yet expressed itself. This latent leader is awaiting self-discovery. Or the leader is preparing to lead. Before starting any project, a leader is Narayan – still, contemplating, making plans, thinking, observing, analyzing, preparing but not acting. Some leaders do not believe in planning at all – they just take the plunge and handle problems as they come along. Others plan too much and remain Narayan, sleeping, never waking up. The best method is to visualize the entire project through with the team – making notes of predictable problems and making contingency plans for the same and having done so, going ahead with the execution. Unpredictable problems being

unpredictable cannot be anticipated.

When Narayan wakes up, he becomes Vishnu and sits alert on the hooded serpent at first and then when creation begins and plans start to get operationalized and resources start getting mobilized, he leaps on the back of his eagle, Garuda, that flaps its wings and travels above the skies and beneath the seas. Garuda holds a serpent (time) firmly in his talons – indicating the sense of urgency that every project demands. This is a leader supervising the execution of plans using his conch-shell to communicate his vision. His disc which rotates around his finger is a reminder to all that review is critical to ensure everyone is focused on the outcome. The mace and lotus are symbols of rewards and punishment that keeps everything on track. When all is well with the world, Vishnu returns to sit on hooded serpent and watch things unfold. But when trouble erupts he rides the eagle, to do battle against disruptive forces.

But even this is not enough. Different situations are associated with different problems each of which demand a different solution. Hence, the avatars.

Matsya

When the project is about rescuing an organization that is in the brink of collapse, He becomes the sensitive fish, Matsya, who navigates the boat full of life and wisdom to safety.

Kurma

When the project needs brainstorming and cooperation between opposing even hostile factions He becomes the stabilizing turtle, Kurma, which holds aloft the spindle that can be used to churn the ocean of life.

Varaha

When there are many ideas floating around but no base on which they can be applied or implemented, He becomes the boar, Varaha, plunging into the depths of the sea, getting his hands dirty, and bringing up the foundation (land or venture capital or regulatory changes), which can nurture all ideas.

Nara-simha

When rules are established but there are many finding ways to slip between the rules, He becomes the dreaded Nara-simha, part man, part lion, outsmarting the smart troublemakers and preventing any disruption within the organization.

Vaman

When people refuse to respect their respective roles in society, when Asuras choose to occupy even the earth and the sky, more than the space allotted to them, He becomes Vaman, the dwarf who transforms into a giant and shoves

the king of Asuras back to the nether regions where they belong.

Parashuram

When people break the rules, He rises up in righteous outrage as Parashuram, abandoning the peaceful ways of a priest who raises the axe and hacks the law breakers to death.

Rama

When rules continue to be broken, He as Ram, tries to become the model king, and by upholding the law even at the cost of personal happiness, inspires people to do the same.

Balarama /Buddha

When intervention is pointless and the best way is to provoke self-realization in the organization, He becomes the ascetic Buddha (according to some scriptures) and Balarama (in other scriptures), who though mighty refused to fight in the Mahabharat war.

Krishna

When the rules are upheld only ceremonially and not in spirit, He becomes Krishna, bending and breaking and redefining rules, choosing to be kingmaker rather than king.

Kalki

Finally, when the situation is beyond repair, then as Kalki, riding a white horse and brandishing a sword, He systematically breaks down the existing system and prepares for a new cycle – a new organization.

Thus there is no one way to be Vishnu. It all depends on the context. Underlying this theme is the notion that everything is cyclical and impermanent. Organizations have to change because the world around them is changing. And with change, leaders have to

change their way. They have to decide whether they are expected to be Narayan or Vishnu or Ram or Krishna or Kalki and act accordingly. Parashuram was successful in his time, Ram was successful in his time. Sometimes the same situation can have two different forms of intervention depending on what one aspires to achieve. Thus while Krishna provokes the Mahabharata war at Kurukshetra, his elder brother, also Vishnu, albeit not as famous, chooses not to fight.

The lesson: when you are going to office today, ask what avatar does today's situation demand. And while doing that be a Narayan for tomorrow.

Source: <http://devdutt.com/web/160>

Dr. Devdutt Pattanaik (b.1970) is a medical doctor by education but a mythologist by passion with over 12 books to his credit. He topped the Mumbai University course in Comparative Mythology and lectures extensively on the relevance of sacred symbols, rituals and stories in modern times. His articles appear regularly in First City Magazine (Delhi) and Times of India (Mumbai). He lives in Mumbai. He works as a manager in Business Advisory Services with Ernst & Young



A Few Things that Stole My Heart

Dr. Lakshmanan, Vancouver, Canada



There are few parallels to the life history of Sri Sankara BhagatpAda, who in a short life span of 32 years, brought about a revival of sanAtana vaidika dharma, effected a reform at social, cultural, religious, and philosophical levels, and singlehandedly rescued Amar BhArat from moral recession. Indeed, in the previous yugas, whenever adherents of Dharma were threatened and persecuted by evil forces in the form of demons, the Lord took an appropriate avatar to annul those evil forces and restore peace and order for the good majority. This is often referred to as *dushTa nigrham tathA SishTa paripAlanam*. In kaliyuga, when the dark forces were not demons in material form but instead

manifested themselves in the form demonic thoughts, convictions, practices, misunderstandings, beliefs, and intolerance, the Lord again had to get involved and inject a corrective force at the system. Such was the occasion when Lord DakshiNAMurty, a form of Lord Siva in meditative form, teaching, *through silence*, transcendental wisdom to His disciples such as sanaka Maharshi, out of His compassion for the confused and lost millions, decided to take an avatar. When the Sarvajna, the Knower of all, decides to break His silence, what can you expect? It was no surprise then, that Sri Adi Sankara managed to dispel the dark forces from the hearts of men by expounding Vedanta deeply rooted in Vedic and Upanishadic teachings. He was a universal preceptor and a true Jagadguru, or teacher of the universe. Normal teachers address students at a particular level of learning – be it pre-K, grade level, college, post-secondary, doctoral, or post-doctoral. Sri Sankara, whose very avatar happened out of the Lord's compassion, catered to people at different levels of intellectual development, maturity, learning,

and tendencies. Thus, His works encompass the mind boggling range of sUtras or commentaries on the lofty prastAna traya, namely SrimadbhagavadgIta, Upanidhads, and BrahmasUtra at one extreme, to the simple, catchy poetry such as ganESapancaratanam and saptapadI stOtram at the other. But the beauty and genius of Sri Sankara's works lies in the fact that even in the most elementary SIOkas, He has packed the essence of Vedanta. Thus, unlike other SIOkas, His are no ordinary praise of the Lord.

I am far from qualified to comment on *any* of the myriad of accomplishments of Sri Sankara. Scholars, Mahatmas, and Jivanmuktas alike have written plenty of treatises on the greatness of Sri Sankara. Nevertheless, I'd like to share a few aspects of Sri Sankara's writings that I have immensely enjoyed over time. In some cases, the particular interpretations that I am sharing in these pages are those that have occurred to me and are not necessarily based on any authoritative commentaries. I shall, however, identify as such instances where the interpretations are my own. I can only hope for the reader's understanding and ask for their forgiveness should they find my interpretations at odds with that which is standard.

Let's take ganESapancaratanam. Most people learn this as a young child. Verse 4 contains the term *prapancaASabhIshaNam*. Literally put, it says Lord GanESa is powerful enough to destroy the entire world. A careful reflection reveals the *possibly* intended deeper purport of this term. We learn in Vedanta that duality is an illusion born out of ignorance, which ascribes reality to *anAtma*, i.e., to all things that are different from the Self. In other words, other than the sAkshi, or the witness, the objects and phenomena being witnessed, are not real in the sense of having constancy over space and time. Sri Sankara Himself reinforces this with his famous declaration *drig brahma driSyam mAyA*. The objects and phenomena are in a constant flux and are thus said to be unreal. To me, the purported meaning of *prapancaASabhIshaNam* is that Sri Sankara is describing Lord GanEsa's greatness in that He is capable of breaking asunder the world appearance born out of dualistic illusion (in a seeker, and consequently leading the seeker to mOkham or liberation).

Take the example of SrIrAmabhujangaprayAta stOtram. In this beautiful stOtram, Sri Sankara sides with a devout rAmabhakta. To such a person, why is there a need to curry the favor of anyone or anything other than Lord Rama? Says Sri Sankara:

*avIrAsanasthai: acinmudrikAdhyai:
abhaktAnjanEyAdi tattvaprakASai: |
amandAramUlai: amandAramAlai:
arAmAbhiDhEyai alam dEvatairna: ||*

What need do I have for all those deities who are not named Rama, who do not assume a vIrAsana, do not impart their devotees such as Sri Anjaneya the Ultimate Truth through the *cinmudra* symbol whereby the right thumb and index finger touch each other, conveying oneness of Jiva and Brahman, who are not seated under a mandara tree, and who do not wear a garland of mandara flowers? Taken literally, this can be misunderstood to mean Sri Sankara is advocating an attitude of not accepting other people's notion of God and of practicing intolerance toward followers of other faith. This is where Sri Sankara's keen intellect and understanding of human psychology shine through. He is reassuring a rAmabhakta that he is doing just fine when he focuses his entire devotion on a particular manifestation of the Absolute Reality, namely Sri Rama. On the other hand, to someone whose favorite deity is Sri DakshiNAmUrty, as just one other example, Sri Sankara has this beautiful verse in DakshiNAmUrty stOtram:

*agauragAtrai: alalATanEtrai:
aSantavEshai: abhujangabhUshai: |
abOdhamudrai: anapAstanidrai:
apUrNakAmai: alam dEvatairna: ||*

What need do I have for those deities whose body is not white in color, who do not have an eye (of wisdom) in their forehead, who do not have a peaceful meditative form, who do not wear serpents as ornaments around their neck, who do not assume the *cinmudra* that teaches immortal Knowledge, who do not have their eyes half-open (the classic meditative stance where eyes are half-open and are focused on one's nose tip), whose desires aren't already fulfilled (meaning, they have no desire). In fact, if we go through Sri Sankara's compositions, it is clear that He sides with followers of *every* faith, rhetorically asking what need there is for other deities. Sri Sankara had a keen understanding of human nature and had something to offer everyone.

Another noteworthy distinction of Sri Sankara's compositions is the extent to which He dares take the JIva-Brahma Aikyam, oneness of the individual Self and the Universal Self. He does this in simple SIOkas

meant for the common man. The last verse of SrIrAmabhujangam illustrates this point:

*bhujangaprayAtam param vEdasAram
muDarAmacandrasya bhaktyA ca nityam /
paThan santatam cintayan svAntarangE
sa Eva svayam rAmacandrassa dhanya: ||*

Whoever recites SrIrAmabhujangam, which pleases Sri Rama, daily with complete devotion, meditates and contemplates on it, he is fortunate, for he becomes verily Sri Rama Himself!

When I read this verse for the first time, I was struck by its message and the boldness of Sri Sankara's vision. Which religion or school of thought but Advaita Vedanta, dare make statements like this?

There can be no doubt that Sri Sankara was resorting to this technique in order to appeal to people of every faith as He tried to reach out the helpless masses for most of whom Vedanta was far beyond reach. The following verse from gOvindAshTakam leaves no room for speculation in the matter of where Sri Sankara himself was coming from when He wrote these compositions.

*satyam jnAnam anantam nityam anAkASam paramAkASam
gOshThaprANAngaNarinkhaNalOlam anAyAsam paramAyAsam /
mAyAkalpitanAnAkAram anAkAram bhuvanAkAram
kshmAmanAtham anAtham praNamata gOvindam paramAnandam ||*

In particular, in praising Lord Govinda or Sri Krishna, Sri Sankara clearly says the Lord is without any form and it is due to mAyA or illusion born out of ignorance that people, even devotees, see numerous forms in Him. This is enough to explain what level Sri Sankara was operating from when He composed Slokas to appeal to the hearts of devotees of different faiths and disposition. By proclaiming "what need do I have for other forms when a particular form is what fills my heart with love and joy", you are not negating other faiths. To the contrary, you are equating them all, for you know the absolute truth is formless and attributeless.

What can we say about the devotion of an Advaiti? It is tempting to conclude, especially if one were given to natural dvaitic or dualistic disposition, that an Advaiti is perhaps being blasphemous in daring to



declare that He is God. When I thought about this and pondered on this question some years ago, I suddenly realized that it is actually one who declares he has an existence independent of and aside from God that is probably being less than faithful to God. I was astonished when some years later, I found exactly this view echoed by Sri JnAnAnandabhArati Swamiji, a renowned practitioner of Advaita, who learned Vedanta from none other than Sri CandraSEkharabhArati Mahaswamiji, the 34th SankarAcArya of Sringeri SARadA PeeTham, a well-known Jivankukta. It was a pleasant feeling that I was fortunate enough to somehow stumble upon a truth that had been declared by Mahatmas.

When an Advaiti equates himself to God, what can we say about the attitude with which he does so? The answer can be found in a beautiful verse in Sri Sankara's saptapadI stOtram. Scriptures give various analogies for illustrating the oneness of the individual Self with the Universal Self. One of them likens the individual Self to the waves in an ocean and the Universal Self to the ocean. The waves have no existence apart from, and indeed, are no different from, the ocean itself. When referring to it, Sri Sankara says, when I say waves and ocean are one and the same I know full well that the waves belong to the ocean, not the other way around:

*satyapi bhEdApagamE nAtha tavAham na mAmakInastvam
sAmudrO hi taranga: kvacana samudrO na tAranga: ||*

This year Sankara Jayanti falls on May 9. Let Sri Sankara BhagavatpAda bless us all with undivided attention to the Absolute, a vision of unity in all of life, universal love, and discrimination between the real and the unreal.

Charity and Generosity: Road to Vaikuntham ... Vinod P.S

At the foot of Gandhamadana mountain there lived an old woman. She was the worst of all misers in the country. She lived alone because in the company of others she would have to share some of her possessions. Charity was unknown to her. She did not part with even a grain of rice or wheat during her lifetime.

Lord Vishnu watched with interest the life and actions of this old lady. He found that she was to die soon. She had only three more days of life on earth.

The Lord therefore called Kaka Bhushundi (the crow-devotee of Sri Ramachandra who advised Rama-Tatwam to the celestial bird-king Garuda at Kailasa-Manasa sarovaram) to His side and said, "O my dear Bhushundi! Look at this old lady. She has not done even a little of charity. She has been miserly all throughout her life. You go and try to snatch something from her at least today, because tomorrow she has to die. When she dies, she will have some merit to her credit".

Kaka Bhushundi nodded assent. He took the form of a crow and sat on a tree near the house of Kanjani. It was the time when she was washing a handful of black gram soaked in water for

cooking her food. Bhushundi decided to snatch away a beakful of gram.

Suddenly, at one leap he flew near the vessel and took a beakful of grain with lightning speed. The alert Kanjani grabbed him with greater speed. She wrung his neck and kept it twisted lest the grain slip down into his stomach. Meanwhile, with her other hand, she parted the beak and took out the gram to the last grain from the throat of the struggling crow.

Kaka Bhushundi struggled for his life. At last he was let free. He flew to Lord Vishnu and fell at His feet. Lord Vishnu questioned him as to what had happened after he left Him. Bhushundi gasped out the whole story and said, "O Lord! I was almost strangled to death. I could not succeed in my mission. I could not gain even a grain of food from that wretched old lady".

Then the Lord said, "O Bhushundi! Do not say so. Come, let me examine your mouth".

Bhushundi opened his mouth. Lord Vishnu noticed a small bit of gram husk sticking to his palate, and said, "Look Bhushundi! There is a small bit

of husk sticking to your palate. I am satisfied. The old lady has earned something. When she goes back to the world after death, let her be fed on the husk of the particular gram which is found sticking to your palate".

Great and marvellous are the benefits of charity. Infinite and overwhelming is the love and compassion of the Lord. Such is the mysterious potency of even the least act of charity, that the fruit of it will cling and save you in your life beyond. The Lord Himself, in his great love, creates opportunities for the redemption of the sinning man. When the old

woman, who did no meritorious act, was ordained to get bread made of husk, what will be the result of your hundreds of meritorious acts of poor-feeding, clothing the naked, relieving the distress of others, and comforting the sorrowful? One bit of husk will multiply itself a thousand fold and feed the old lady in her next life. Such is the glory of charity!

Therefore, share what you have with all. May you all become embodiments of charity and generosity! May you all attain blessedness through charity!



നീലക്കല്ല്

ഭക്തശിരോമണി വാഴക്കുന്നം എഴുതിയത്
സമ്പാദക: ഗീതാ ചന്ദ്രൻ



കല്ലുവേണോ നീലനിറം കോലും നല്ലകല്ലുവേണോ?
മല്ലവെരിപ്പേരോലുന്ന കല്ലുവേണോ? 1

ദേവകിതൻജന്മമാകരത്തിൽ നിന്നുദിച്ചാ-
ദ്ദേവകൾക്കുംമോഹമേറ്റും കല്ലുവേണമോ? 2

ഇന്ദ്രനീലമണിവർണ്ണം പുണ്ടു ലക്ഷീ വക്ഷസ്സിലായ്
സാന്ദ്രമോദംവിളങ്ങുമകല്ലുവേണമോ? 3

പശുക്കളെപ്പാലിക്കുന്ന നന്ദഗോപൻശൗരിയോടു
പിശുക്കന്യൈവാങ്ങിയതാം കല്ലുവേണമോ? 4

ദുർഗ്ഗാഭഗവതിയെത്താൻ പകരമായ് കൊടുക്കായ്കിൽ
ദുർഗ്ഗമാക്കുമെന്നായിരുന്ന കല്ലുവേണമോ? 5

ഗോപബാലന്മാരാം മുത്തുമാലയുടെ നടുക്കാടി-
ഗ്ലോപതിയായിന്നും കൃഷ്ണകല്ലുവേണമോ? 6

വല്ലവസ്ത്രീനികരത്തിൽ കുചകണ്ഠകോരത്തിൽ
നല്ലവണ്ണം ലസിച്ചതാം കല്ലുവേണമോ? 7

ഹൃദയത്തിൽധരിപ്പോരെ മായാബന്ധം മുറിച്ചുടൻ
മുദാബ്ധിയിലാഴ്ത്തിടുന്ന കല്ലുവേണമോ? 8

ധരിക്കുകിൽ വേണ്ടെന്നായി ത്തോന്നീടിലും തൃജിക്കുവാൻ
ഞരക്കമുണ്ടാക്കിത്തീർക്കും കല്ലുവേണമോ? 9

ഇഹപരസുഖങ്ങളിൽ മുഴുകിടാൻ കെൽപേറ്റുമീ
മഹാജനം ചൂട്ടും നല്ല കല്ലുവേണമോ? 10

ഏവംപരരക്ഷക്കായികല്ലുവിൽക്കും ജോലിക്കെന്നെ
ബ്ദവേസുനോ! ദേശംതോറും ചുറ്റിപ്പിക്കുമോ? 11



മായക്കണ്ണാ

സിന്ധു



തിരുമെയ് മറച്ചു നിൽക്കുന്ന കണ്ണാ നിന്നെ
 ഒരു നോക്കു കാണുവാൻ ഈ ഇന്ദ്രത്തിലാകുമോ
 നാമജപത്തിലൂടെ കാണുന്നു കണ്ണാ നിന്നെ
 ഒരു ചെറുപുഞ്ചിരി തുകി നീ വരില്ലേ
 പാദസേവചെയ്തു നിത്യം കണ്ണാ നിന്നെ
 ഒരു കിങ്കിണിയൊച്ച കേൾപ്പിച്ചു നീ വരില്ലേ
 വെണ്ണ വെച്ചു കാത്തിരിപ്പു നിന്നെ
 ഒരു നുള്ള് കവർന്നെടുക്കാൻ നീ വരില്ലേ
 മായയായ് കാത്തിടുന്ന രക്ഷകാ
 നിൻ ചരണം മമ ശരണം

//Om Shree Ganeshaya Namah//

Malliyoor Thirumeni

A Great Devotee of Sree Guruvayoorappan.

Praveen Balan

We are going to talk about none other than Brahmashree Malliyoor Sankaran Namboothiri. We had recently heard about this Great Devotee of Guruvayoorappan during the Deva Prasanam that was conducted in Guruvayoor. When the point related to providing shelters the Old and Orphans was discussed, Bhagawan had reiterated his desire to have a proper shelter constructed by the Devasom Board for those Baktas. It was at this opportune time that Malliyoor Sankaran Namboothiri entered the Dais where the Deva Prasanam was conducted. This was considered as a very Divine omen by the Jothishis present.



He has been considered as the legendary Baktha of Guruvayoorappan and in this regard He was selected for the Poothanam Puraskaram instituted by the Akhila Bharatha Sree Guruvayoorappan Bhaktha Samithi. The judging committee, considering his devotional contribution in promoting Bhaghavatham, Narayaneeyam and Bhagavatha Sapthahams for more than fifty years, selected Malliyoor Sankaran Namboothiri for the award.

Shankaran Namboothiri was born in the year 1096 as per Kerala Calendar in Makaram masam Moolam Nakshathram corresponding to Feb 2, 1921, his father Parameshwaran Namboothiri and Mother Aarya andarjanam. The financial circumstance at home was not very good during those days, even though they did have good times when his Forefathers and Grand father had a good time due to their closeness with the ruling family during those times. His Grandfather had a special place in the Royal Court. This only indicates the good time the family enjoyed earlier.

When he was 8 years old his Upanayanam was completed and at 14 his Samaavarthanam. He went to the Valyedathumoosathinte Kurumaappuram Narasimha Kshethram (Temple) to learn and to do Pooja etc. His initially gurus were Shri Kaatambakil Parameshwaran Nair and Poochedi Krishnapilla. His father Parameshwaran Namboothiri did not like to send this son to the normal school during those days since he suspected his son would lose his Brahmanya and fall into bad company. Thereafter he started learning Sanskrit from Guru Pattaman Vasudevan Namboothiri. Later on his father friend advised him to send this son to Calicut to learn Shanthi and related work at the Niramkaithakotta Temple as well arranged to let him learn Sanskrit too.

Basically Guruvayoorappan had already started making arrangement to ensure the young lad would be one of this dear Baktas who would sing his glories though the Bhagwatha recitals. As Sri Narayana Bhattatiri as stated, Sickness cannot be regarded as our enemies if they are going to lead us to Guruvayoorappan. During his days in Calicut he stated getting sick often. The work at the temple and then walking about 2 kms in the hot sun to learn Sanskrit and then return back to work in the temple. He used to go to sleep at 10PM in the Night and then wakeup at 4AM for temple puja activities. This rigours routine had taken its toll on his body and he started getting sick too often. He started getting stomach and digestive problem very often, he somehow managed to complete 12 months stay in Calicut, thereafter he returned to his home town for treatment. He took treatment from various Ayurvedic Doctors and this included Taikattu Moosa too, but those treatments did not have any effect on him. During this time Kuzhiyadi Raman Namboothiri advised him to do Soorya Namaskaaram along with the medication. This too did not yield any appreciable improvement in his illness. It is then that with the blessing of Guruvayoorappan his mother told him to serve Guruvayoorappan. All she had was just a one rupee coin which she gave him and told that Guruvayoorappan will take care of the rest. He later collected some money from his friends and relatives and reach Guruvayoor in the month of Tulam (Oct-Nov). Initially he spent 12 days in the company of Othikanmar (Pujaris) and then later he got a friend with who decided to go for the 41 days Bhajanam.

Brahmashree Padappan Namboothiri used to stay in Guruvayoor during those days and he had a special liking for Shankaran Namboothiri. Padappan Namboothiri used to eat only the Naivedayam (Offering) at the Guruvayoorambalam that too after giving part of it to all those present as prasadam. As Shankaran Namboothiri had a special liking for Sanskrit recitation and Padappan Namboothiri too liked him very much therefore he decided to make Shankaran Namboothiri as his disciple. All Shankaran Namboothiri had was a Quarter Anna which he offered as Dakshina to the Guru. While studying Bhagwatha it is essential that the student has to read Bhagwatha every day, but Shankaran Namboothiri did not have enough money to buy one, again Guruvayoorappan had to help him in this respect too. One Thootam Namboothiri told him to meet Amayyar she was a staunch devotee of Guruvayoorappan and she would give Bhagwatham. He got the Bhagwatham from her for free. He completed learning Bhagwatham and wanted to

recite the same in front of Guruvayoorappan. This wish too was granted by Guruvayoorappan and he did in such a way that those listening too shed tears of joy.

He returned home to meet his mother who was eagerly awaiting her son's return. He started learning Sanskrit under Mamanna Swamiyar but then his Mother got sick and some person had to be near her full time. He had to decide if he is going to stay with his mother or go for his studies. It did not take long for him to decide; he stayed back with his mother and attended to all her needs day and night. He told her stories Bhagwatha and other religious text. On 18 of the month of Medam she left for the heavenly abode of Vishu.

During this time Mamanar Swamiyar who used to stay at Thirvapu, he invited Shankaran Namboothiri to continue his studies at the Swamiyar Madom. Two years passed by and he was happy that he could continue his studies which included Nishdham, Tharkam, Kavyam, Kaumudi, Vyakaranam etc. Krishna Shasthrikal was his Guru then.

He felt like doing Bhajanam at Aditaypuram, here he had a good following due to his in depth knowledge of the Bhagwatha. He received invitation from the Ilanjhithanam Illam for Bhagwatham recital for about six months. Thereafter it was Kandamaruku Illam for two year. During this period he got Typhoid and was treated by Vaidhyar (Ayurvedic physician) Madom Shreedharan Namboothiri, medicines did not help much but Bhagwatha uppasan saved him from death and the fever vanished. There after he did Bhajanam at Kumaranellur Bhagavathi Temple. And had valiya payasam as Medicine. He used to apply Manjal (Turmeric) from the temple all over his body and took his bath thereafter; this is supposed to be a good medicine. For nearly 2 yrs he continued to teach and study at the Olassayil Chirattaman Illam based on their invitation.

His illness was always a worry for him, one day when the mental strain was very high due to the fear of sickness, he had a Swapanadarshanam (Dream) it was a Tejomurthi saying he not worry anymore since he was doing the Surya Namaskaaram. This dream gave him lot of relief from his sufferings. During this period he became the Guru of Chirattaman Narayana Moos.

In the year 1959 he got married to the daughter of Melathoor Arappanaattu Patter, Subadhra andarjanam. They have 4 children two boys and two girls. Parameshwaran and Divakaran Namboothiri are following their fathers' path and serving Lord Ganesha and working for the upliftment of the Malliyoor temple. Even today he is regularly invited to various Bhagavatha Sapthahams conducted in Kerala and his presence itself is considered very auspicious.

Two interesting events from his life

After doing Bhajanam at the Thirusannidhi of Guruvayoorappan he had a great wish; that is to go there every year and read Bhaghavatham. But money was a big criteria. Moreover there's a speciality in his reading too. There should be one person as listener (Shrodhaavu). Plus he would give Dakshina to this Listener. The cost of the Sapthahams

too has to be met by him. The Embranthiri of Guruvayoor used to help him but He felt it difficult to bother him always. When he used to go to Guruvayoor he used to carry only enough money for one way trip, rest of the expenses were supposed to be taken care by Lord Guruvayoorappan, this used to be in his mind always. He reached Guruvayoor and informed Lord Guruvayoorappan of his wish. The decision came immediately, one person called him saying he had a wish; he wanted Shankaran Namboothiri to read the Shrimad Bhaghavatham, he was willing to pay for all the expenses. Malliyoor understood this was one of Bhagawan's Lila, the fact that Bhagawan is waiting for this Baktas to express their desires and he is ever willing to give those with in seconds was very clear from this incident. Later he did confirm in another vedi (Program) that it was none other than Kasi Thamburan who paid for the Sapthaham then.

Another incident was connected with this family life. After their marriage they didn't have children. He felt very sad and Prayed to the lord and vowed Krishnanaattam as Offerings. A child was born, now he had to make the Offering. He did not have the means to get this done, again Guruvayoorappan had to help. Yogakshemam Vahaamyaham. Malliyoor reached Guruvayoor and prayed. He thought the lord gave him a child so the offering is also a must that should be done. Just then an Unni (small boy) came up to him and asked what the problem was. He said he had vowed to conduct Krishnanaattam but did not have enough money. The boy silently went away. By the time Malliyoor reached the Nada there stood the boy with a bag of money, he just handed over the bag and left without saying anything.

The offering sincerely vowed for Guruvayoorappan was completed by Guruvayoorappan himself. There is no difference between Bhaktha and Bhagawan, therefore Bhakta's vow is Bhagwan's vow too and in this case Bhagawan got it done for himself.

We pray to Bhagawan Guruvayoorappan to give Brahmashree Malliyoor Sankaran Namboothiri long life with Ayur Aroghya Soukhyam.

Om Namō Narayanaya
Om Namō Narayanaya
Om Namō Narayanaya

This is a sincere offering to the lotus feet of Lord Guruvayoorappan. I have been helped by many members of the Guruvayoor yahoo forum. Sriramji of sending the links to the Malliyoor temple site, KV Gopalakrishanji by informing about the Kerala Namboothiri sites and most of all Induji and Ravichettan for getting most the information from the book Ravichettan had. Thank you to one and all for your help and blessing.

I have also collected some information from the Malliyoor Maha Ganapathi Web site.

<http://www.malliyoortemple.com/docs/Main.asp?ID=About>
<http://www.malliyoortemple.com/docs/Main.asp?ID=Biography>

Three mistakes!



Jagadguru Sri Adi Sankaracharya

roopam roopa vivarjjithasya bhavathO
dhyaanEna yath kalpitham
sthuthyaa nirvvachaniiyaathaakhilagurO
dooriikr^thaa yanmayaa
vyaapthithvam cha niraakr^tham
bhagavathO
yath thiiirththha yaathraadinaa
kshanthavyam jagadiiSa thad vikalathaam
dOshathrayam mathkr^tham

Adi Sankaraachaarya swamikaL

Oh! Lord, I meditated assuming a form for you, fully knowing that you are formless. Oh! Supreme preceptor, I extolled your virtues knowing fully that you cannot be expounded by words. I took many a pilgrimage discounting the eternal truth that you are all-pervading. Kindly forgive me for committing these three mistakes.

രൂപം രൂപ വിവർജ്ജിതസ്യ ഭവതോ
ധ്യാനേന യത് കൽപിതം
സ്തുത്യോ നിർവ്വചനീയാതാഖിലഗുരോ
ദൂരീകൃതാ യന്മയാ
വ്യാപ്തിതം ച നിരാകൃതം ഭഗവതോ
യത് തീർത്ഥ യാത്രാദിനാ
ക്ഷന്തവ്യം ജഗദീശ തദ് വികലതാം
ദോഷത്രയം മത്കൃതം

---ആദി ശങ്കരാചാര്യ സ്വാമികൾ

ഹേ ഭഗവൻ, രൂപവർജ്ജിതനായ അങ്ങയെ രൂപം കൽപ്പിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ഞാൻ ധ്യാനിച്ചു. ഹേ ലോകഗുരോ അനിവ്വചനീയനായ അങ്ങയെ ഞാൻ വാക്കുകൾകൊണ്ട് സ്തുതിച്ചു. തീർത്ഥയാത്രകളും മറ്റും ചെയ്തുകൊണ്ട് നിന്തിരുവടിയുടെ സർവ്വവ്യാപിത്വത്തെ ഞാൻ നിരാകരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. ഞാൻ ചെയ്തപോയ ഈ മൂന്നപരാധങ്ങളും ജഗദീശ്വരാ ക്ഷമിക്കണേ

ആമുഖം.

മലയാളം വിദ്യാനും ഭക്തകവിയുമായിരുന്ന വട്ടോളി കൊച്ചുകൃഷ്ണൻ നായർ(1912-1968) അറുപതറുപത്തഞ്ച് വർഷങ്ങൾക്കുമുമ്പ് എഴുതിയ ഒരു സ്തോത്രകാവ്യമാണ് താഴെകൊടുത്തിരിയ്ക്കുന്നത്. പെരുമ്പാവൂർ കോതമംഗലം റൂട്ടിൽ പെരുമ്പാവൂരിൽ നിന്ന് എതാണ്ട് രണ്ട് കിലോമീറ്റർ അകലെ സ്ഥിതിചെയ്യുന്ന ഒരു തറവാടാണ് വട്ടോളി. അതിനടുത്തുള്ള ഒരു ദേവീയാണ് തഴെക്കാണുന്ന കൃതിയിൽ പരാമർശിക്കപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുള്ള പാലക്കോട്ടംബിക എന്നാണ് എനിയ്ക്കറിയാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ളത്. നമ്മുടെ എല്ലാ ഭക്തരുടെയും ആസ്വാദനത്തിനുവേണ്ടിയാണിത് ഇവിടെ പകർത്തുന്നത്. അൽപസ്വൽപം അക്ഷര പിശകുകൾ അങ്ങിങ്ങായി സംഭവിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടാകാം. എന്തുകൊണ്ടെന്നാൽ, വളരെ പഴക്കം ചെന്ന് ചിതലരിച്ചുതുടങ്ങിയ കയ്യെഴുത്തുപ്രതിയിൽ നിന്നാണ് ഞാൻ പ്രസ്തുത കൃതി പകർത്തിയത്. സദയം ക്ഷമിയ്ക്കുക.

സമ്പാദകൻ: രാജു. (രാജേന്ദ്രൻ പിള്ള, മുംബൈ)

പാലക്കോട്ടംബികസ്തോത്രം:
(വിദ്വാൻ വട്ടോളി കൊച്ചുകൃഷ്ണൻ നായർ).

പാലനപരേ, പാലക്കോട്ടംബികേ
പാലയമഹാകാളി, കൃപാലയേ
നീലത്താമര,ത്താർദളലോചനേ
കാളമോലനിറമെഴുമംബികേ
കാലരൂപിണീ,കൈവല്ലഭാധിനി
കാലദോഷവിനാശിനി,കല്ലാണി
കാലകാലതനയേ,ഭവൽപദ
പേലവമെന്നും മാലോകർക്കാശ്രയം
മാലേയമഹനീയമരണെന്നു
മാലപിക്കുന്നു താവകകീർത്തനം
നീലനീരഭവേണിവിയത്തിലെ-
ക്കാലവും തവനാമസംകീർത്തനം,
ചേലൈഴും പടിപാടിപ്പതത്രികൾ.
ചാലവേസഞ്ചരിക്കുന്നിതംബികേ
മാലൊഴിഞ്ഞീടാൻ,ഭൃതഹങ്ങൾപത്രം
മൂലമായമ്മേ, താവകലീലകൾ.
ആലോല,മാടി, മർമ്മരമാക്കുന്ന

ലോലനാദത്തിൽ മന്ത്രിപ്പുസർവദാ
ഇല്ലമർത്തുനെന്നിട്ടുമംബികേ,
തെല്ലുപോലുമേ താവകസംസ്കൃതി.
വല്ലമട്ടിലു,മുണ്ടുമുറങ്ങിയു-
മുല്ലസിച്ഛം കഴിക്കുന്നനാളുകൾ
കല്ലും, പുൽ, കൃഷി, കാക്ക,
കഴുതയെന്നല്ല,
ഏതെല്ലാമെത്രയോജ്ഞങ്ങൾ
അല്ലൽ പെട്ടു കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുജീവനീ-
നല്ലമാനുഷ ജന്മം ലഭിക്കുന്നു.
മല്ലലോചനേ, ദേവിഭവൽപദ
പല്ലവത്തെബ്ഭജിക്കാതിരിക്കില്ലാ-
കില്ലെന്നിക്കില്ല, മുക്തികവാടത്തിൽ
ചെല്ലുകില്ല, ഹാ! ജന്മംവിഹലമാം
പാലനപരേ, പാലക്കോട്ടംബികേ
പാലയ മഹാകാളീ കൃപാലയേ!

കല്ലറയ്ക്കൽ മഹാദേവ-മഹാവിഷ്ണു ക്ഷേത്രം - ഒരു വീക്ഷണം. രാജു വിളാവത്ത്, മുംബൈ.



ഒരിയ്ക്കലൈക്കിലും മലനാട് സന്ദർശിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളവർ, ആ ദൃശ്യ സൗന്ദര്യം ആസ്വദിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളവർ, പറയുന്ന ഒരു കാര്യമുണ്ട്. അതെന്താണെന്നുവെച്ചാൽ ദൈവം കനിഞ്ഞു നൽകിയ വരദാനം തന്നെ. അതായത് “പ്രകൃതിഭംഗി” തന്നെ. അല്ലാതെന്ത്! വിദേശികളുടെ കാര്യമാണെങ്കിൽ പറയുകയും വേണ്ട.! എല്ലാവരാരും ഒരേപോലെ പുകഴ്ത്തുന്ന കേരളത്തിന്റെ ഒരുഭാഗത്ത് ശാന്തസുന്ദരമായ ഒരുഗ്രാമമുണ്ട്. കൂവപ്പടി. എറണാകുളം ജില്ലയിൽ പെരുമ്പാവൂരിനും കാലടിക്കും എതാണ്ട് മദ്ധ്യ ഭാഗത്തായി കിടക്കുന്ന ഒരുഗ്രാമമാണിത്. ഈ നാട്ടുകാർക്ക് ഒരാശ്രയമായി, സകലപാപസങ്കട നിവാരണാർത്ഥം നിലകൊള്ളുന്ന ഒരു പുണ്യ ക്ഷേത്രമാണ് കല്ലറക്കൽ മഹാദേവ-മഹാവിഷ്ണു ക്ഷേത്രം.

ഐതീഹ്യം: വാമൊഴി പ്രകാരം ഈ ക്ഷേത്രം ശങ്കരാചാര്യരുടെ കാലത്തിനു മുമ്പോ അക്കാലം തൊട്ടോ നിലനിന്നിരുന്നതായി കാണുന്നു. ശങ്കരാചാര്യരുടെ കാലം

എട്ടാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ അവസാനവും ഒമ്പതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ ആദ്യവും ആണെന്നിരിയ്ക്കെ (788-820) പ്രസ്തുത ക്ഷേത്രത്തിന് ആയിരത്തി ഇരുനൂറു കൊല്ലത്തെ പഴക്കം ഉണ്ടെന്നുമാനിയ്ക്കാം. വേറൊരെ തീഹ്യമുള്ളത് ഇങ്ങിനെയാണ്. ടിപ്പു സുൽതാന്റെ കാലത്ത്, അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ പടയോട്ടക്കാലത്ത്, ഈ ക്ഷേത്രവും അക്രമിച്ച് കേടുവരുത്തിയതായി പറയുന്നുണ്ട്. ഏതായാലും ക്ഷേത്രം പത്തുനാൽപതുവർഷം മുൻപ് കിടന്നിരുന്ന സ്ഥിതി കണ്ടിട്ടുള്ളവർക്ക് പ്രസ്തുത ഐതീഹ്യം വാസ്തവമല്ലേ എന്നു തോന്നുന്നതിൽ അത്ഭുതമില്ല. പണ്ടു കാലത്ത് ഇവിടം കേരള ബ്രാഹ്മണരെന്ന്റിയപ്പെട്ടിരുന്ന നമ്പൂതിരിമാരുടെ അഗ്രഹാരമായിരുന്നു എന്നാണ് അറിയാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ളത്.

വെട്ടുകല്ലു(അഥവാ ചെങ്കല്ല്)കൊണ്ടു നാലുവശവും ചതുരാകൃതിയിൽ മേൽകൂരയില്ലാതെയായിരുന്നു ശ്രീകോവിൽ പണിതിരുന്നത്. പ്രസ്തുതശ്രീകോവിൽ പൊട്ടിപ്പൊളിഞ്ഞ നിലയിൽ എന്റെ കുട്ടിക്കാലത്ത് കാണാനിടവന്നിട്ടുണ്ട്. കല്ലറയ്ക്കൽ എന്ന നാമവും ഇങ്ങിനെ കല്ലുകൊണ്ടുണ്ടാക്കിയതായതുകൊണ്ടാണെന്നുഹിക്കാം.

ഈ ഗ്രാമ നിവാസിയായ ഒരു ബ്രാഹ്മണ ദമ്പതിമാർക്ക് വിവാഹശേഷം വർഷങ്ങൾ കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടും സന്താനഭാഗ്യം ഉണ്ടായില്ല. ത്രിശിവപേരൂർ വടക്കുംനാമന്റെ ഒരുത്തമ ഭക്തയായ ആ അന്തർജനത്തിന്റെ നിർബന്ധം നിമിത്തം അവർ വടക്കുംനാമന്റെ നടയിൽ 41-ന് ദിവസ്സം ഭജനമിരിക്കാൻ നിശ്ചയിച്ചു. ആതുപ്രകാരം 41-ന് ദിവസ്സത്തെ ഭജനം കഴിഞ്ഞ് സ്വഗൃഹത്തിലേക്കു മടങ്ങി. അധികം താമസ്സയാതെ അന്തർജനം ഗർഭം ധരിക്കുകയും ഒരാൺകുഞ്ഞിന് ഇന്ദ്രം നൽകുകയും ചെയ്തു. ഭഗവാനോടുള്ള അമിതമായ ഭക്തി നിമിത്തം ആ കുടുംബക്കാരും നാട്ടുകാരും ചേർന്ന് ഒരമ്പലം പണിത് അതിൽ ശിവപ്രതിഷ്ഠ നടത്തി, കൂടാതെ മറ്റൊരു ശ്രീകോവിലിൽ ശ്രീകൃഷ്ണനേയും ഇരുത്തി നിത്യപൂജ, ഉത്സവം മുതലായവ മുടങ്ങാതെ നടത്തിവന്നു. ക്ഷേത്രത്തിന്റെ വടക്കുകിഴക്കായി ഒരു ദേവിചൈതന്യം കാണുന്നതായും അവിടെ ആദ്യകാലത്ത് ഒരു ക്ഷേത്രം നിലനിന്നിരുന്നതായും ദേവപ്രശ്നത്തിൽ കാണുകയുണ്ടായി.

കരിമ്പനയ്ക്കൽ ഭഗവതിയെന്നപേരിൽ അറിയപ്പെടുന്ന ദേവി ഇവിടെകൂടികൊള്ളാനുണ്ടായ ഐതീഹ്യവും രസകരമാണ്. പെരുമ്പാവൂരനടുത്ത് ഏകദേശം എട്ടുപത്ത് കിലോമീറ്റർ അകലെ മേത്തലയിൽ കല്ലിൽ എന്നൊരു പ്രദേശത്തെ പുരാതനവും പ്രസ്ഥിദ്ധവുമായ ഒരു ക്ഷേത്രമാണ് കല്ലിൽ ഭഗവതിയുടേത്. കല്ലറക്കൽ ദേവന്മാരുടെ സാഹോദര്യം വഹിക്കുന്ന ദേവി ഇടയ്ക്കിടയ്ക്ക് കല്ലറക്കൽ വന്നുപോകാറുണ്ട്. കരിമ്പനക്കൽ ദേവിയുടെ ഒരുത്തമ ഭക്ത ഈ പ്രദേശത്തുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. അവർ കല്ലിൽ ക്ഷേത്രം സന്ദർശിച്ചിട്ടില്ലെങ്കിലും ഭഗവതിയോടുള്ള ഭക്തിവാത്സല്യം അപാരമായിരുന്നു. കല്ലറക്കൽ നിന്ന് കല്ലിൽ വരെ പോകുക വളരെ ബുദ്ധി മുട്ടുള്ള കാര്യമായിരുന്നു അക്കാലത്ത്. എന്നിരുന്നാലും അഗ്രഹം ഉള്ളിലൊതുക്കി അവർ പതിവായി ദേവിയെ വിളിക്കുമായിരുന്നു. ഒരുദിവസം ദേവി സഹോദരങ്ങളെ കാണാൻ അവിടെ വന്നിട്ടുണ്ടെന്നും, എന്റെ ഭക്തർക്കായി അംബലത്തിന്റെ വടക്കുകിഴക്കു ഭാഗത്തായി എന്റെ ചൈതന്യം അനുഭവപ്പെടുമെന്നും അവിടെ ഒരു ചെറിയ ക്ഷേത്രം പണിത് കുടിയിരുത്താനും അവർക്കരുൾപ്പാടുണ്ടായി. അന്നവിടെ ക്ഷേത്രം പണിതതായിട്ട് തീർപ്പ് പറയാൻ പറ്റിയ തെളിവൊന്നുമില്ലെങ്കിലും, ദേവിയെ ആരാധിച്ചിരുന്നതായി കേട്ടറിവുണ്ട്. മാത്രമല്ല മുടിയേറ്റ്, തൂക്കം മുതലായ ക്ഷേത്രകലകൾ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളിച്ചു കൊണ്ടുള്ള ഉത്സവങ്ങളും ഇവിടെ നടന്നിരുന്നതായി കേട്ടുകേൾവിയുണ്ട്. ഏഴെട്ടുകൊല്ലം മുൻ ക്ഷേത്രം പണിത് പ്രതിഷ്ഠ നടത്തുകയുണ്ടായി. ആദ്യകാലത്ത് മറ്റുക്ഷേത്രങ്ങളേപ്പോലെ ഇവിടേയും സർപ്പങ്ങളുടെ വിഹാരംഗമായി തന്നെ മാത്രമല്ല സർപ്പപ്രതിഷ്ഠയും പൂജാദികളും മുറയ്ക്കു നടത്തിയിരുന്നതായി കാണുന്നു.

തീർത്ഥക്കുളം: ഈ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിന്റെ വടക്കുകിഴക്കായി ഉണ്ടായിരുന്ന കുളം മുടിപ്പോയിരിക്കുന്നതായി അറിവായിട്ടുണ്ട്. പ്രസ്തുത ജലാശയം വീണ്ടെടുത്ത് പുനർനിർമ്മിക്കേണ്ടുന്ന ഒരു ഭാരിച്ച ചുമതല കൂടി ഉള്ളതായി കാണാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞു. പ്രതിഷ്ഠ: ലക്ഷ്മീനരസിംഹ മുർത്തിഭാവമാണ് മഹാവിഷ്ണുവിൽ കുടികൊള്ളുന്നത്. ശാന്തനും കാരുണ്യസമേതനുമായി സർവാലങ്കാരഭൂഷിതനായി ലക്ഷ്മീദേവിസമേതനായി കുടികൊള്ളുന്നു. അതുപോലെ പാർവതീ സമേതനായി ശിവനും കന്നിമൂലത്തിൽ വിരാജിക്കുന്നു. എന്നാൽ ഗണപതി പ്രതിഷ്ഠ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നതായി കാണുന്നില്ല.

പുനരുദ്ധാരണത്തിനുള്ള ആലോചന നാട്ടുകാർക്കിടയിൽ തുടങ്ങിയത് കഴിഞ്ഞ നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ ഉത്തരാർദ്ധത്തിലാണ്. നാട്ടിലെപ്രമാണിമാരായ ചിലർ ഒത്തുകൂടി ഒരു കമ്മിറ്റി രൂപീകരിച്ച് പ്രവർത്തനം തുടങ്ങുകയും താമസ്സിയത്തെ ഇന്നുകാണുന്ന തരത്തിലുള്ള ശ്രീകോവിൽ പടുത്തുയർത്തി പ്രതിഷ്ഠ കലശം എന്നിവ നിർവഹിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. അന്നത്തെ പ്രശ്നത്തിലും ദേവിചൈതന്യം ഉള്ളതായി കണ്ടിരുന്നെങ്കിലും പരിമിതമായ ധനസ്ഥിതി ശ്രീകോവിൽ പണിത് ദേവിയെ പ്രതിഷ്ഠിക്കുന്നതിനനുവദിച്ചില്ല.

ക്ഷേത്രപുനരുദ്ധാരണം:
കൊല്ലവർഷം അയിരത്തി ഒരുനൂറ്റി എഴുപത്തിനാല് മകരത്തിൽ നടത്തിയ അഷ്ടമാംഗല്യ പ്രശ്നപ്രകാരം ക്ഷേത്രം പുനരുദ്ധരിച്ച് പുനപ്രതിഷ്ഠ, കലശം, ഉത്സവം മുതലായവ ആഘോഷ പൂർവ്വം കൊണ്ടാടുകയും, ഭാവി നടപടികൾ നിശ്ചയിയ്ക്കുകയും അതിലേയ്ക്കു വേണ്ടുന്ന പ്രവർത്തക സമിതി രൂപീകരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. കൊ.വ. എഴുപത്തൊന്നാം മാണ്ടാടുകൂടി സർവതും പ്രവർത്തനയോഗ്യമായി.

വഴുപാടുവിവരം: ക്ഷേത്രത്തിലേക്ക് പൊതുവായും, പ്രത്യേകം ഓരോരോ ദേവീദേവന്മാർക്കും നടത്തപ്പെടേണ്ടതായ വഴുപാടു വിവരങ്ങൾ സന്നിധിയിൽ പരസ്യം ചെയ്തിട്ടുള്ളതുകൊണ്ട് ഭക്ത ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് ഉപകാരപ്രദമാണ്.

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കല്ലറയ്ക്കൽ മുർത്തീസ്തോത്രം:
(രാജു-വിളാവത്ത്).

(1):

അല്ലൽകൂടാതെ നിത്യേന വാഴുവാൻ
ഇല്ലെനിയ്ക്കു മനോബലമീശ്വരാ!
കല്ലറയ്ക്കൽ വസിക്കും ഇഗദീശാ-
തെല്ലുകാരുണമേകുയെനിയ്ക്കു നീ.

(2):

ശബ്ദചക്രഗദാപദ്മധാരിയായ്-
നിൽക്കുംതാവകരൂപം മനോഹരം
ആർക്കുവർണിപ്പാനൊക്കുമിപ്പാരിലെ-
ന്നുൾക്കാമ്പിൽപ്പോലും ചിന്തിയ്ക്കാനാവില്ല!

(3):

ലിംഗരൂപം പൂണ്ടുവസിക്കുന്നു തെ-
ല്ലുകലെയീക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ താവക-
സോദരസ്ഥാനിയായിട്ടു ശങ്കരൻ
നിത്യദുഖനിവാരണാർത്ഥം ഭവാൻ!

(4):

ക്ലേശം മേൽക്കുമേൽ വന്നങ്ങനുദിനം
നാശനഷ്ടത്തിലുഴലും ഇനങ്ങളെ
ലേശം കാരുണ്യം കാട്ടിയീനാടിന്റെ
ഐശ്വര്യം കാത്തുരക്ഷിയ്ക്കണം, ഭവാൻ.

(5):

നല്ലമാനുഷ ഇന്ദ്രം ലഭിയ്ക്കുവാൻ
വല്ലഭാതവ ലീലാവിലാസങ്ങൾ
തെല്ലുമില്ലാതെ സാധ്യമല്ലെന്നുതാ-
ന്നുള്ളിലെപ്പോഴും മാമകചിന്തനം.

(6):

ത്രൈലോക്യപൂജിത നാഥാ മഹാവിഷ്ണു-
ത്രൈലോക്യപൂജിത നാഥാ മഹേശ്വര!
തിങ്ങുംഭക്തിയാൽ നിത്യം ഭജിയ്ക്കുമീ-
ഞങ്ങൾക്കുവരം നൽകുമാറാകണേ!

:ശുഭം:

സ്വാമിതൻ പാദങ്ങളിൽ...

രാജൻ കിണറ്റിങ്കര



കാലമേറെയായ്, തഴുതിട്ടു വെച്ചൊരു മനസ്സിന്റെ വാതായനമിന്നു ഞാൻ തുറക്കുന്നു യാത്ര തുടങ്ങട്ടെ ഞാൻ, ശബരീ തീരത്തിലേയ്ക്ക് തെറ്റുകളൊക്കെ പൊറുത്തിടണം, ഞാനൊരു പാമരൻ അറിവിൻ ആദ്യാക്ഷരം തേടി വരുന്നു ഞാൻ നിൻ പൂങ്കാവനത്തിൽ, ശരണമന്ത്രവുമായ് ഭക്തിയിൽ ആറാടും നിന്റെ തപോവനം കണ്ണിനു കുളിരായ്, മനസ്സിന്നു നിറവായ് തങ്കസൂര്യൻ ജ്വലിക്കും നിൻ പുണ്യമലയിൽ ഉരുകിയൊലിക്കുന്നു, പാപത്തിൻ മാറാപ്പുകൾ നിന്നെ വാഴ്ത്തുവാനില്ല ഇനിയുമൊരു പദം പോലും ഈ പതിതന്റെ മനസ്സിന്റെ പുസ്തകതാളിൽ മിന്നിമറയുന്നു, നിന്റെ പല പല രൂപങ്ങൾ മണികണ്ഠനായും, പിന്നെ ധർമ്മശാസ്താവായും രാവിലെ കുളിച്ചീരുന്നടുത്തു നിൻ തിരുമുമ്പിൽ നിന്നു ഞാൻ, പ്രാർഥനാ മന്ത്രവുമായ് ഒരായിരംവട്ടം ഉരുവിട്ടു മനസ്സിൽ ഞാൻ സ്വാമിയേ, ശരണമയ്യപ്പ, ശരണം നീ തന്നെയല്ലോ ഒരു പതിറ്റാണ്ടായ്, കാത്തുവെച്ചു ഞാൻ മനസ്സിൽ നീറും തേങ്ങലായ്, നിന്റെ പുണ്യദർശനം എന്തു ഞാൻ വൈകി, നിൻ തീരത്തണയാൻ അറിയില്ലെനിക്ക്, ലോകം ചലിക്കുന്നു നിൻ വിരൽ തുമ്പിൽ ഇന്നലെ ഞാൻ കണ്ട സ്വപ്നത്തിലൊക്കെയും നീയായിരുന്നു, നിൻ തിരു കടാക്ഷമായിരുന്നു കർപ്പൂര ദീപങ്ങൾ കാറ്റിലാടി, നെയ്യീപങ്ങളലങ്കാരമായി ശരണമന്ത്രധനികൾ കാറ്റിൽ അലകളായ് മനസ്സും ശരീരവും ഒന്നായ്, എല്ലാവരും ഒന്നായ് ഉരുവിടുണൊരേ നാമമന്ത്രം, സ്വാമിയേ ശരണമയ്യപ്പാ ഒരു പാൽ പുഞ്ചിരിയായ്, നീ മംഗളം നേരുന്നു, പിന്നെ പറയുന്നു, തത്വമസി... അത് ഞാനാകുന്നു സ്വാമിയേ ശരണമയ്യപ്പ, ശരണം നീതന്നെയല്ലോ...

Super-speciality of Lord's/Guru's feet

Forwarded by Vinod



H.H Swami Chinmayananda's Holy feet

Have you ever imagined why Hindus in particular revere the feet (specially) of Lord/Guru/Atithi/ elders etc.? Run through our Mahakavyas/Puranas & we will find a number of illustrations which glorifies 'feet' as a special mention.

For instance, Srimad Ramayanam contains so many events such as Ahalya moksham; Boatsman washing the feet of Rama before crossing ganges; Bharata carrying the sandals from Chitrakoot; Rama-Lakshmana' s pada sevanam of Vishwamitra/ Vasishtha; Hanuman's dasya-bhavam towards Rama's feet; Sita taking shelter of only the feet of Rama (during her stay in Lanka); Vibhishana sharanagathi etc.

On the other hand one could visualize Srimad Bhagavattam establishing the prowess of lord's feet while Vamanavataram; Kaliya-mardanam as a manifestation of blessings by Krishna's feet; Agra-puja of Krishna's feet by Pandavas etc.

Though it is unchallenged that the Lord's/Guru' s feet bestows unlimited grace to the devotees, but let us try to understand why the 'feet' is so important from other perspectives.

Guru's [Lord's] feet

The Guru's feet are worshipped or revered because all the Guru's shakti dwells in the feet. If you did research into this, you would find that the vibrations of the inner self constantly flow out through the feet. The nerves that come from the Sahasrara reach right down to the feet. The feet serve as the support for the whole body. This is the reason the

feet are given so much importance. More shakti flows from the feet than any other part of the body, the glory of the Guru's feet for the Guru's sandals is great. Kularnava Tantra says: "Remember the Guru's sandals ... They provide protection against great diseases, great disturbances, great evils, great fears, great calamities, and great sins,"

According to Chinese medicine, the body contains many acupuncture meridian or channels which will congregate around the feet. By treating the feet, the Chinese physicians adjust the flow of energy to different parts and organs of the body. Additionally, there is a particular acupuncture point in the sole of the foot called yongquan, which means gushing spring. When a person needs energy, he is taught to focus his mind on this point. Sooner or later there is energy charge that goes from the mind to this point in the sole of the foot, and from there energy shoots up to the crown of the head. It is the major point for meditation and acupuncture.

The foot of Guru is no ordinary foot. "**Gurupaddangre paadodakam ganga**". All holy waters, including Mother Ganga, live in the Guru's feet. This is what you should think in your heart when worshipping the Guru. All holy waters, all Devatas, or angels, and all sacred hills abide in the Guru's feet. One should have firm sankalpa (intention, determination) to behold all gods in guru's feet. The trimurthis – Brahma, Vishnu, Siva – live in Guru's feet. These three Divine Forms symbolize the removal of the three qualities of nature that keeps the soul in bondage. The three qualities are tamas (sense of ego), rajas (passion, desire) and sattva (goodness and purity) when these three qualities are removed, then the soul becomes free or sanyaasi. In this state, one renounces desire and becomes like a stone – not senseless, but chinmaya (full of light). So, after Guru Pada Puja, it is to surrender the three qualities to the Divine Trinity. This is the significance of self surrender to the Guru's feet.

For the sake of His disciples, the formless Guru takes the form in Padukas. Guru lives in Padukas. A devotee should pray "O my Guru, wherever my mind goes, may your form be there. Wherever my head bows in salutation, may your feet be there." The Guru continuously tests the devotees. It is very dangerous for the devotees to look on the Guru as an ordinary man. The devotee must think that the Guru is higher than Shiva, Vishnu or Brahma. If one thinks that the Guru is the physical form and activities, then it becomes very easy for doubts to infiltrate the citadel of devotion, and after a while, to completely overcome it. Nothing the Guru says or does is ordinary, there is always a higher reason. Manduka Upanishad says: "The Guru's feet are like the foundation on which a building stands.... The Guru's feet are the two elements in the mantra **So'Ham** which means 'I am that.' The statement 'I am that' (SoHam) is packed with richness and significant meaning. The two syllables, **Ham** and **Sa**, have a number of esoteric meanings. **Ham** is Shiva, the all pervading supreme reality, the absolute Being. He is the Lord or God, the support and the foundation of all things, sentient and insentient. In the form of pure consciousness, He permeates all creatures and dwells in them as their own innermost self. The Scriptures call this experience as Purusha, the eternal witness. **Sa** is shakti, the energy of Shiva. She is the divine Cosmic power that creates and maintains the countless

galaxies and worlds. She is the consort of Shiva, the active aspect of the formless, the attributeless Absolute. She is the joyous divine energy that unfolds the universe, assuming the billions of shapes and forms that we see around. Shiva is the experiencer and Shakti is the experienced – objective universe. She is referred also as Prakriti or the force of nature. She is the energy that powers our mind and that enables us to walk, talk, eat meals, and perform our work. While experiencing the primordial sound SoHam in meditation, a seeker can also experience the sound or vibrations of the different seed letters and their surrounding mantras. The sounds of these Bija mantras lead us to the Bindu, on Blue Pearl, which is the ultimate goal. Sound is the path that takes us to the final destination. Just as a bee gathers honey from blossoming flowers, in the same way, the seeker savors the honey of various lotuses, or chakras. The ultimate goal of every sadhaka is to attain the liberation in the thousand – petaled lotus of the Sahasrara at the crown of the head.

The Guru Geeta also says that the Guru's feet have two different lusters – one is white and other is red – representing Shiva and Shakti. Shiva is associated with the white color, and Shakti, the divine energy with the red color. In these feet of Guru, Shiva and Shakti live as one and through them the disciple realizes the unity. He sees Shiva and Shakti as red and white lights shining through the Guru's feet. The Guru's feet should be worshiped everyday, for by their means one easily realizes the immanent and transcendent aspect of Shiva (form and formlessness aspects). Their luster radiates in the upper spaces of Sahasrara Chakra.

The Paduka Panchaka speaks of two lotuses or spiritual centers:

- 1) Sahasrara, the brilliant white lotus of a thousand petals that is located at the crown of the head.
- 2) A smaller twelve petaled lotus that is situated within the center of the Sahasrara.

The Sahasrara is the larger upper lotus which is downward – turned, and the smaller twelve petaled lotus is beneath it and upward - turned. In the center where these two lotuses meet, there is a triangle with its apex pointing downward. The lines of this triangle are actually composed of all the letters of the Sanskrit alphabets; so it might be said that the Guru's feet which are located within this triangle, sit inside the source of all language and sounds. This triangle is called a- ka- tha, after the letters that stand at the beginning of its three lines. A and the thirteen Sanskrit vowels that follow it start at the downward-point apex of this triangle and extend up the right side. The first sixteen consonants starting with **ka** form the second line, extending across the top of the triangle from right to left. Each letter has its own place on a certain petal in certain chakras in our system. The second sixteen consonants beginning with **tha** form the third line, extending down the left side of the triangle back to the apex. The remaining three letters, Ha, La and Ksha are located inside the triangle.

It is said that A is the father or all letters. Ka is the seed of the Shakti principle, which has the quality of a mother. Tha refers to the element of ether (sky) which enables a seeker to soar like a bird in the inner space of Consciousness. A seeker attains this triangle of letters when he reaches the sahasrara. At the very center of the a- ka- tha triangle is the supreme Bindu Pearl. It is small, brilliant blue dot the size of sesame seed, yet it is the source of everything. Bindu is the first form to emerge out of mahasunya (great void). Bindu is the state of the gathered – up power of Consciousness that is about to create the universe. Therefore it is called “primordial seed of the universe” or “cosmic creative drop.” In fact, the bindu germinates and sprouts into three other pearls or bindus which mark the angles of the **a- ka- tha** triangle. This primordial triangle is also known as the COSMIC WOMB that gives birth to all the sounds represented by the letters of alphabet. The Paduka Panchaka speaks of this triangle, saying “ In the round space of the thousand petaled lotus, there is a triangular lotus, which is formed by the three lines beginning with **a, ka, tha**, and which has Ham and Sa on two sides. One should remember the Guru, who is seated in its center.” In fact the a- ka- tha triangle has the character of a mandala (a diagram ritualistically created as an act of worship of a particular deity) which is naturally formed – that is self created – and in it are set the feet of the Guru. When we meditate on the Guru’s feet, it is here that they are envisioned.

The **Paduka Panchaka** tells us that as we visualize the place of Guru within the triangle at the crown of the head, we are to meditate on the primordial hamsa, the all – powerful great light in which the universe is absorbed. So when we meditate on hamsa here, it is with the awareness, ‘I am that’, the awareness of merging into the great light that is the Supreme Guru. The Paduka Panchaka continues: “The mind there contemplates the two lotuses which are the feet of the Guru, and of which the ruby colored like nectar of the moon, and are the place of all auspiciousness. We have seen that the a- ka- tha triangle is situated in the center where two lotuses meet – the sahasrara and the smaller twelve petaled lotus. Now, this image is enriched by an additional image – another natural self formed mandala, The FULL MOON, inside which the a- ka- tha triangle and the feet of the Guru reside.

Within this mandala of moon in the sahasrara, we find ‘ pots of nectar’ also referred to as ‘nectar of the Moon.’ This pot of the nectar has the shape of a delicate crescent moon and is downward turned. From here the nectar flows down through the sushumna nadi. This nectar is more intoxicating than honey could ever be. The sound (inner nada heard in meditation) will make you taste a divine elixir. It is sweeter than the sweetest. Every drop is worth millions. By taking it you get rid of all sickness. There will be no more suffering, no more want, no more feeling of ‘I and mine.’

The Lalita Sahasranama says: “Salutations to Her (Shakti) who sends stream of nectar from the transcendent moon in the Sahasrara.” The Shiva Samhita says: “The Sahasrara is the thousand petaled lotus in the Brahmananda. In its center is the region of the moon and a triangle which continuously showers nectar. This moon nectar, which grants immortality, flows in continuous stream...”

The Paduka Panchaka also mentions that the Guru's feet are cool like the nectar of the moon. In other words, just as the moonbeams cool us of after the heat of the day, in the same way devotion to the feet of the Guru extinguishes the fire of sorrow and suffering and gives us peace.

Verse 6 of the Paduka Panchaka says: "I adore the two lotus feet of the Guru in my head. The jeweled foot stool on which they rest removes all sin. The Guru's feet are pinkish-red like young leaves. The toe nails resemble the full moon shining in all its glory. The Guru's feet are radiant with the beautiful luster of lotuses in a lake of nectar." When the Guru Gita speaks of the water of the Guru's feet, it is referring to this lake of nectar. There are number of verses that explore this image. For example, verse 13 of the Guru Gita says: "the water of the Guru's feet has the power to dry up the mire of one's sins, to ignite the light of knowledge, and to take one smoothly across the ocean of this world." Verse 14: "To obtain knowledge and detachment, sip the water of Guru's feet, which destroys ignorance and ends karmas, the cause of rebirth. Muktananda says it is not the water of Guru's physical feet that will make you immortal; it is only the nectar flowing in the Guru's abode situated in the Sahasrara that will make you immortal, and that nectar can be received by the grace of the Guru.

In the course of meditation, when the mind becomes stabilized in the Sahasrara, this nectar begins to flow. Only after drinking this nectar can you be said to have drunk the water of the Guru's feet. It is not the water of the Guru's physical feet that matters. The true feet of the Guru lie in the sahasrara; it is the nectar flowing from them that gives immortality. In the words of the Maharashtrian poet-saint, Eknath. " By the dust of my Guru's feet all the work was accomplished. Eknath has emerged his mind in shri Guru's feet... By holding the feet of the Guru, all ignorance disappeared. I have not performed cruel austerities, offered sacrifices, or wandered to sacred places. The means of all means is the feet of the Sadguru."

Source: http://www.dattapeetham.com/india/tours/2003/nada_prasara_2003/usa_np/sanjose/rao_speech.html



|| Om Namō Narayanaya ||
Bhagavad Gita
Veena Nair

[A brief recap of the previous units before I move on to Chapter 3. My main references are –i) the Geeta chapters in English, by Swami Chinmayananda and ii) the English translation of the Geeta bhashya of Adi Shankaracharya, by Dr. A. G. Krishna Warriar, published by Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Chennai.]

Swami Chinmayananda explains the symbolic meaning of the Mahabharata war and the Geeta thus: A constant war is being waged in each one of us in all the critical moments of our lives. The negative tendencies within us are strong and raise their head time and again and are more effective than the diviner forces. Hence often times, each one of us feel the desperation and confusion that Arjuna felt. In the *Kathopanishad*, there is an analogy to the chariot—the body is the chariot and it is pulled forward by the five horses in the form of the five senses; the ideal charioteer is “the intellect” that can discriminate amongst the senses and drives the chariot and it’s Lord, the ego, to the proper destination, i.e. unity with God, a state of sat-chit-ananda.

The Geeta starts with the word “Dharma” and ends with the word “Mama” meaning “mine”. The subject of the Geeta is therefore “My Dharma”. The root of the word “Dharma” is ‘Dhar’ meaning to support—Dharma therefore means “that which binds the different aspects and qualities of an object to form a whole”, in other words, “that which makes a thing what it is”. For example, it is the Dharma of fire to burn, of the Sun to give heat and light. The Geeta is the divine song or the guide by means of which, each one of us can realize our Dharma.

In the first chapter of the BhagavadGeeta, Arjuna, the warrior is facing a massive army that includes his dear and near relatives, including cousins and uncles as well as Guru Drona and Pitamaha Bheeshma. True to his human nature, Arjuna is in a dilemma – to fight or not to fight? On one hand are the unfair and wicked practices of his cousin Duryodhana supported by his brothers and his father, the blind King of Hastinapur, Dhritarashtra. On the other hand, at stake is ‘Dharma’ – everything that is right and just in the world. At the beginning of chapter 2, a despondent and dismayed Arjuna surrenders to his charioteer and divine friend Krishna –

kaarpanya doshopa hata svabhaavaha
prucchaami tvaam dharma sammudha chetaha
yacchreyah syaan nischitam bruhi tan me
shishyaste ham shaadi maam tvaam prapannam || 2.7 ||

“My heart is overcome by the taint of pity and my mind is confused as to duty. I ask You, tell me decisively, what is good for me. I am thy disciple. Instruct me, for I have taken refuge in Thee”.

Krishna begins by explaining to Arjuna, the concept of soul or the eternal spirit in Man that goes from one birth to the next:

dehino asmin yatha dehe kaumaarin yauvanam jaraa
tathaa dehantara-praaptir dheeras tatra na muhyanti // 2.13 //

Just as human beings pass through childhood, youth, and old age, so also does the soul pass into another body; the firm (dheer) man (one of stable mind) does not grieve at all.

As I grow into a teen, I remember my childhood. As an adult I remember my teen years. As an old person I will remember my youth. So through all these changes there is a ‘something’ in me that can observe and remember and have memories of the past. Same is the case with the different births that the soul has been through in which the soul takes on different roles. Here Krishna explains that the wise do not worry when they leave the body for the purposes of taking on another one. We do not cry when we leave our childhood behind and become a youth. We do not agonize about growing older. It is the law of nature - each one of us has to pass through these stages. So too at the time of death, the soul leaves behind the physical structure and depending on the impressions or *vasanas* gained in this birth takes on a physical equipment in the next birth.

Because change in life is the only constant one should not run away from life’s duties; one should act (2.11 to 2.37). As a Kshatriya, Arjuna’s chief responsibility was protecting Dharma. So Krishna says:

hato-va praapsyasi swargam jitwa va bhokysyase maheem
tasmaad utishta Kaunteya yuddhyaya krutanisichayaha // 2.37 //

Slain, you will attain heaven, victorious-you will enjoy the earth; therefore stand up O son of Kunti resolved to fight. Furthermore, while doing your duties, maintain a mindset that is not shaken by failures nor moved to ecstasy by successes. Slokas 2.38 - 2.54 outline the attitude with which one should act –

sukha dukhe samey krutwa laabha laabho jayaa jayo
tatho yudhyaaya yujyasva naivam paapam avaapsyasee // 2.38 //

Looking with an equal eye on pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, strive to fight; thus you will incur no sin; and also –

yogastha kuru karmani, sangam tyaktwa Dhananjaya
siddhay-asiddhaya samo bhutwa samatwam yoga uchyate // 2.48 //

Giving up attachment and established in Yoga, with evenness of mind in success and failure, perform works, O Arjuna. This evenness is Yoga.

Very clearly, Swami Chinmayananda explains this verse- one should always work in a spirit of de-attachment with evenness of temper even under stress. What is it that we need to detach from? Answer is – “wrong imaginations, false expectations, daydreams about the fruits of our actions, anxieties about the results of our actions, and fears for things that have not yet happened” (p. 239). So the message is to live in the *present* – not in the unborn *tomorrow* or in the dead *past*.

At Arjuna’s request, Krishna then explains the qualities of the wise man who has achieved equipoise and steady wisdom:

dukheshva anu dvigna manaha, sukhesu vigata spruha
vita raaga bhaya krodha, sthita dhira munir uchyate || 2.56 ||

He, whose mind is not shaken by adversity, who does not hanker after pleasures, who is free from attachment, fear, and anger, is called a sage of steady wisdom. The emphasis is on being free from attachment (raga), fear (bhaya), and anger (krodha). Because the three are inter-related - the desire to possess something leads to action to acquire that thing; once acquired there is the fear of losing it. Then there is the anger towards those who come between the individual and the object of attachment.

Although Arjuna has surrendered himself totally to Krishna, by the end of chapter 2 Arjuna is confused: On one hand Krishna asks him to stand up and fight; and on the other He extols the virtues of being non-attached and equipoised. So at the beginning of chapter 3, Arjuna once again raises a question:

Arjuna uvaacha –

jyaayasi cheta-karmanaste, mata buddhir Janardana
tatkim karmani ghore maam, niyojayasi keshava || 3.1 ||

If you think that ‘knowledge’ is superior to ‘action’ O Janardana, then Keshava, why do you ask me to engage in this terrible action? Using words of endearment such as Janardana, Keshava etc. Arjuna is as though saying – O my dear friend, whatever you are saying confuses me; if you say that renunciation and non-attachment are superior virtues, then why do you ask me to engage in this terrible war that involves the killing of all my near and dear relatives?

vyaa-mi-shreneva vakyena, buddhim mohayaseev mein,
tad-ekam vada nischitya, yena shreyo-ham apnuyam || 3.2 ||

With these apparently confusing words, you have further confused me; tell me that one way by which I can with certainty attain the highest good....

|| Hari Om ||

To be continued.....

Part 1

Krishnarjunavijayam (Ottan Tullal)

Balagopal



(In Malayalam, there are at least two poems in the Tullal style dealing with Gayopakhyanam. Tullal poems are used for the performing art Tullal, refined and popularized by the poet Kunchan Nambiar in 18th century. Tullal is mainly associated with temple festivals in Kerala. Summary follows.)

As Krishna was performing his morning rituals, a Gandharva called Gaya was travelling on his horse in the sky. The froth from the horse's mouth fell in the water in the hands of Krishna. Krishna discarded the water and looked up. He saw Gaya in the sky and understood the situation. Krishna became angry and he vowed to kill Gaya. Hearing the vow, Gaya panicked. Indra asked Gaya the cause of his worry. Indra advised Gaya to pray Brahma to save him. Brahma asked Gaya to approach Siva. Siva indicated his helplessness.

Certain about his death, Gaya started crying.

Narada was passing by. Hearing Gaya's plight, Narada thought of setting up a fight between Krishna and Arjuna. Narada asked Gaya to meet Arjuna and appeal to him to vow to save his life. Gaya fell on Arjuna's feet and pleaded to him to save his life. Dharma's son asked Vijaya to help Gaya. Gaya asked Arjuna to pledge that he will save his life. Arjuna vowed to do so. Gaya disclosed that Krishna has taken a vow to kill him for disturbing his morning rituals. Pandavas were worried to hear this. Bhima opined that Gaya should be handed over to Krishna. Dharma's son declined saying that Vijaya has vowed to save Gaya's life. Death by Madhava's hands is welcome.

Narada arrived, Dharma's son apprised Narada about the developments. Narada comforted him saying that Arjuna will never die by Krishna's hands. Long ago, the daitya, Sahasrakavaca (one with thousand shield) was confronted by Nara and Narayana. To destroy one shield, twelve years penance was required. Nara and Narayana fought with Sahasrakavaca taking turns alternately of fight and penance. In this manner ninehundred and ninety-nine shields were destroyed and one shield remained. Then Pralaya occurred. The daitya took shelter in the sun. He is now born as Karna with one shield (kavaca). Now it is Arjuna's turn to spend twelve years in forest as penance. Both Krishna and Arjuna together are destined to kill the daitya(Karna). There is nothing to

worry at all. Narada then proceeded to Hastinapura and met Duryodhana. He appraised Duryodhana about the developments and asked him to help his cousins, Pandavas. Duryodhana agreed. Krishna summoned Garuda. Then Narada arrived and told Krishna that Gaya is with Pandavas.

Krishna asked Subhadra to request Arjuna to surrender Gaya. Arjuna refused. All Yadavas proceeded to Dwaitavana to fight with Pandavas. A fierce war broke out between Yadavas and Pandavas. Kauravas also fought against Yadavas. In the end Krishna sent his Sudarshana Chakra. In response, Arjuna shot Pasupata Astra. Brahma requested both to recall their weapons. Both agreed. Brahma asked Arjuna to hand over Gaya to him. Then Brahma asked Arjuna to close his eyes. Brahma handed over Gaya to Krishna. Krishna cut off Gaya's head. Brahma joined the head to the body and revived Gaya.

Pandavas praised Krishna. All of them had food together. Kauravas were unhappy. Hali (Balarama) and Hari returned to Dwaraka.

Part Two

Krishnarjunayuddham (Parayan Tullal)

(This tullal is assumed to be composed about 100 years before Kuncan Nambiar (A.D.1700 to 1770))

Krishna was performing morning rituals standing in a river. He took water in his hands. Sweat from a horse's face fell in the water. Krishna became angry. Ganga informed Krishna that a Gandharva called Gaya was proceeding on his horse to meet Brahma. Without his knowledge, the sweat from the horse's face fell into the water in Krishna's hands. Krishna vowed to kill Gaya for disrupting his morning rituals.

Gaya came to know about this. He prayed Brahma to save him. Brahma told Gaya that he is helpless in this case. Gaya prayed Siva. Siva also indicated his helplessness.

Knowing that his death is certain, Gaya fell down on the way. On the way, Narada met Gaya and heard his plight. Narada asked Gaya to go to Dwaitavana and meet Arjuna. Narada advised him to disclose the matter only after Arjuna vows to save him. Accordingly Gaya met Arjuna. Arjuna gave his word to save him. Gaya disclosed that Krishna has vowed to kill him. Arjuna informed the matter to son of Dharma. The son of Dharma was worried.

Yadavas found out that Gaya was in Dwaitavana with Pandavas. Krishna asked Uddhava to meet the son of Dharma and ask him to surrender Gaya. The son of Dharma refused. Then Krishna asked his sister Subhadra to request her husband Arjuna to surrender Gaya to Krishna. Arjuna refused to do so. Krishna proceeded to attack Pandavas. Narada

informed Duryodhana about the impending war. The Kauravas also proceeded to Dwaitavana to watch the war.

War broke out in which Krishna and Arjuna shot many divine arrows at each other. Many men lost their lives. At last, Krishna took out his (Sudarshana). Chakra and asked Arjuna to surrender Gaya. Arjuna, ready to meet Krishna's challenge with the Pasupata Astra given to him by Siva, refused. Seeing the grave situation, Brahma requested Siva to intervene. Siva asked Arjuna to hand over Gaya to him. Siva asked Krishna to put his Chakra on Gaya's neck and consider that as equal to killing him. Krishna did so and the situation was saved. Dharma's son asked Krishna to revive all the dead men.

(courtesy: Ezhupattanchu Tullalkathakal, Edited by Dr.V.S. Sarma, D.C.Books, Kottayam, Kerala (1976))



Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi

Sunder Rajan. V, Vancouver, Canada



I begin this article in all humility prostrating before the Lord of Arunachala and talk in awe and respect about the Great Master Sri Ramana Maharshi. There have been many saints, philosophers, and teachers in the history of Bharathavarsha, each one unique in their own way. Sri Ramana Maharshi was a Jeevanmuktha who amongst us six decades ago directing us towards Self Realization through the most simple, yet most effective method called 'Vichara' (Self enquiry.)

Sri Ramana Maharshi (called Venkataraman at birth) was born on December 30, 1879 in a small village called Tiruchuli, which is located south of Madurai.

When he was about 16 years he had an experience that changed the future of the boy, and the rest of the world. In the year 1896, Venkataraman experienced a sudden and unmistakable fear of death. In his state of fear, the teenager closed his eyes 'enacted' death. He soon realized that even after death Consciousness (or 'I') remained unaffected. This led to the realization of the 'I' Consciousness and soon thereafter left his home and went to Thiru Annamalai. The rest is history.

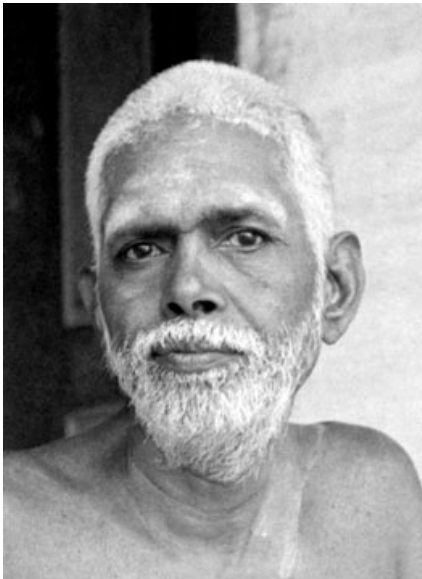
Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings are known for their simplicity and effectiveness. Any earnest saadhaka (aspirant) who wishes to enquire about the Self has to do nothing but understand the message given by Ramana Maharshi in his most famous work 'Naan Yaar' (literally, 'who am I'.)

Unlike many other sages and teachers in India, Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings does not limit itself to any section of the society nor does it differentiate between the illiterate and the learned. Literally anyone, – whether born in India or elsewhere; whether belonging to Sanathana Dharma or otherwise; whether proficient in the shastras or unaware of it – can follow the teachings of the Great Master. The beauty of these teachings is that it is not dry theory but practical and direct pointers that can be followed right away by an aspirant to realize the Self without delay.

One of my favorite conversations Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi had with a devotee is as follows:

Question: People talk of Vaikuntha, Kailasa, Indraloka, Chandraloka etc. Do they really exist?

Sri Ramana Maharshi: Certainly. You can rest assured that they all exist. There also a swami like me will be found seated on a couch and disciples will also be seated around him. They will ask something and he will say something in reply. Everything will be more or less like this. What of that? If one sees Chandraloka, one will ask for Indraloka, and after Indraloka, Vaikuntha and after Vaikuntha, Kailasa and so on, and the mind goes on wandering. Where is shanthi (peace)? If shanthi is required, the only correct method of securing it is by self-enquiry. Through self-enquiry Self-realization is possible. If one realizes the Self, one can see all these worlds within one's Self. The source of everything is one's own Self, and if one realizes the Self, one will not find anything different from the Self. Then these questions will not arise. There may or may not be a Vaikuntha or a Kailasa but it is a fact that you are here, isn't it? How are you here? Where are you? After you know about these things, you can think of all those worlds.



In this brief conversation Bhagavan drives home the (often forgotten) point that as long as the mind is active, there is a world of duality. When duality exists, the world – that is created by the mind – is assumed to be real. When the body is shed, the same mind will create many other worlds that are then assumed to be as real as this one. Thus Atma Vichaara (Self enquiry) is the only way to dispel the fallacy that there is a Self waiting to be “Realized” and that we should realize the Self. Atma Vichaara leads to the conclusion that the seeker who was vainly searching for the Self was indeed the Self from the very beginning. This Realization can never come from book learning, nor can it come through any other rigorous ritual as long as the mind is active and agitated. Self Realization comes only when all other thoughts fade away and the

thought that ‘I AM’ remains.

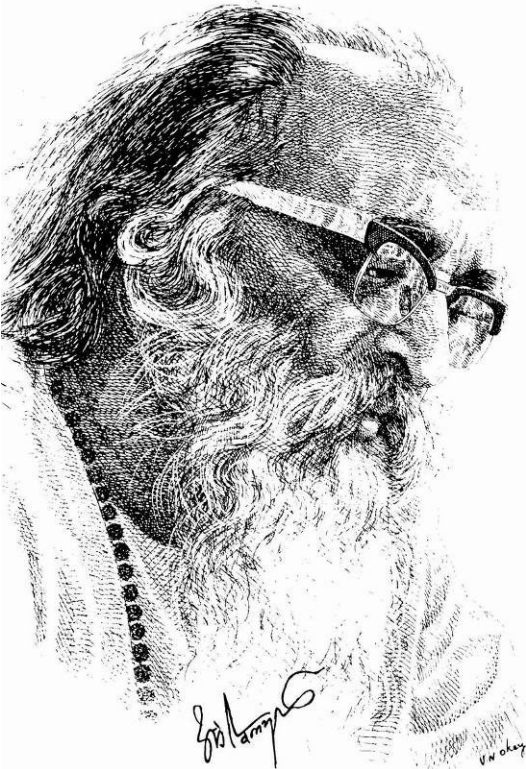
The best way to show our appreciation and gratitude to Bhagavan is by following, practicing, and benefiting from His teachings.

YOU, ME & GOD

POOJYA GURUDEV SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA

"Swamiji, I don't believe in God".

Source: <http://www.chinmaya-chicago.org/god.htm>



It was a young man, modern, tight pants, tobacco pipe stuck at waist, trim thin moustache. He spoke Emglish with an Americanized drawl, and was evidently one of our university products, with higher education abroad. Sophisticated, to the points of his pointed toes.

Swamiji beamed. "Excellent!" With a broad welcoming smile, nodding his head slowly, Swamiji

continued: "That's fine. I like you. You are the man I have been wanting to meet. I like your outspokenness. You are intelligent and you think independently. You have the courage to speak out your conviction, straight from the shoulder, as they say. Now come, WHAT KIND of GOD is it, that you don't believe in?"

The young man, who had made his statement about his non-believing, with a little hesitation, probably at his own audacity at denying GOD before a God-man, was pleasantly surprised at Swamiji's cordial tone and benign smile, and, feeling encouraged, went on:

"This God, who sits above the clouds, and judges men, and dispenses favours and punishments by remote-control, at his own sweet will, don't you think Swamiji, it is all hocus pocus?"

Swamiji laughed. "Shake hands, young man. I am entirely with you. Now, we are two, together. I

too, don't believe in THAT KIND OF GOD. But.....hmm, did you have breakfast before coming?"

"Yes, Swamiji."

"Well, What did you have for breakfast?"

"The usual things, porridge, toast, scrambled eggs, coffee...."

"Eggs. That's nice. Eggs! Now, where did the eggs come from Ram, that's your name isn't it?"

Ram, with his brows raised, feeling that Swamiji was leading upto something, said: " I don't exactly know, probably one of those new poultry farms near Poona".

Swamiji: "I don't mean that. How are eggs made? Do they grow in fields, or are they made in factories?"

"Simple. I think you are trying to pull my legs, but all the same I'll answer you. Hens, of course. Hens lay eggs, you know!" Ram said with an air of flippancy. Nodding his head, up and down, thoughtfully, Swamiji Continued: "I see, I see, so the eggs come from hens. Now where do the hens come from?"

Ram, an intelligent man, could see the trap he was being led into. He started saying: "Ofcourse from.....". Then wide eyed, looked at Swamiji silently. Swamiji

smiled: "So, eggs come from hens, hens come from eggs, which again come from other hens, and so on, ad-infinitum. Can you, Ram, say with any certainty, which was the first cause? Egg or hen? How and why?"

Swamiji, now addressing all the devotees present, went on: "You see, God is not just a person or individual, sitting in a palace above the clouds, dispensing favours. It stands to reason that every effect must have had a cause prior to it. The watch that you are wearing did not make itself. Your breakfast did not cook itself. There was a cause, in each case. The cause must have emerged from a previous cause. GOD is now the first cause. The sole cause. The UNCAUSED CAUSE. There was no cause before Him. He is the oldest, the most ancient, He was before TIME. The Sanaatanah, the Puraanah. This 'Causation hunting' is the favourite pastime of the evolving human intellect -- trying to trace everything to its ultimate origin. That which is beyond the point at which the intellect gets stalled, is G-O-D. The intellect cannot come to a conclusion as to the ultimate cause as in the age - old example of the hen and the egg. 'Thus far -- not farther' is the limitation of the capacity of the human intellect."

Ram was flushed with excitement. He was thrilled. In a faltering voice he asked " There does seem to be something in what you say, Swamiji. Am I to understand that THAT is God?"

"That, which you now speak of as GOD, my boy, the muslim calls Allah; the christian refers to as "My father in Heaven"; the Parsee as Ahura Mazda. These are a few of the different ways in which HE or IT is referred to, but all are referring to the SAME SUPREME PRINCIPLE. The cause behind all causes. The source of all that was, now is, and ever will be. The Vedas refer to it as BRAHMAN, the Absolute, the infinite. THE TRUTH IS ONE. THE WISE SPEAK OF IT VARIOUSLY."

"But, Swamiji, the description does not seem to be complete. Is that all that God is? How can one come to know Him?"

"Now, you are really getting somewhere. I have not `described' God. He cannot be described. To define is Him is to defile Him. What I pointed out only constitutes one way, one manner, of approaching the Truth. It is just one aspect. Now, Your second question asks `How can one come to know Him?'

`Know him!' He cannot be `known' as you know this table or this chair or your wife or your pipe. He is not an object of the

intellect. He is the VERY SUBJECT. Have you heard of the great disciple of the Kenopanishad who approached the Master and enquired : "Revered Sir, What is IT, directed by which the mind cognizes objects, the eyes see, the ears hear and so on?" The master cryptically answered : "It is the eye of the eye; the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind'. In fact It is the VERY Subject that enables the eyes to see, the ear to hear etc. It is not an object of the senses or the Mind or the Intellect. Hence, to answer your question, I have to tell you that you cannot make God an object of Knowledge. An example will elucidate the idea. You are walking along a dark country road at night, occasionally illuminating.

your path with the aid of a battery torch; you want to know how the torch gives light; you unscrew the torch, you will not be able to see the battery cells, as the bulb will not emit light unless powered by the battery of cells. Similarly, the eyes, the ears, the mind and the intellect, all of which get their own power to function from the LIFE PRINCIPLE, cannot understand IT as an object. God is thus conceived of as the life principle, in every one."

The audience sat spell bound listening to Swamiji, exposition of

a difficult vedantic truth in easy lucid style. "Then Swamiji, you say that God or Truth is something abstract, that cannot be seen or heard or touched -- or even thought of. Am I right?"

"You are very much right. In fact, God is all this and much more. The Bhagawad Geeta says: 'Weapons cleave It not; fire burns It not; water wets It not; wind dries It not. This self cannot be cut, nor burnt nor wetted nor dried.' It is not material; It is not matter, understand."

"Why did you 'Self'?"

"The Supreme, Life Principle, is also the SELF in you, in me and in everybody. It is the innermost core of your personality. The popular misconception is that 'man is a body, with a soul'. That it is not correct. The Truth is that 'Man is THE SOUL, in a body'. He is eternal. The role of the body is likened to a worn out garment that is discarded by the wearer at his will." Now, the other members of the audience who had been listening with awe and reverence, took the opportunity to clear their doubts.

"Swamiji, if God cannot be seen or thought of, is an abstraction, is there any significance to idol worship?"

"Of course there is a lot. When your dear son is in America, and

you cannot see him whenever you want, do you or do you not get solace by looking at his photograph? You do know that the photo IS NOT YOUR SON, but only a piece of paper with various tones of grey, but it reminds you of your beloved boy and his great love for you. So also the idols in temples are to remind the devotees of the ideal, the Supreme. Since the human mind cannot conceive of a formless Supreme, God is conceived of in the form as represented by an idol. To the earnest devotee, the idol appears as a living embodiment of his Lord, and he goes into ecstasy at its sight. It is, however, necessary to remember that the idol is NOT God, but represents God."

" Why is it, Swamiji, that as in Christianity or Islam, a particular day of the week is not earmarked in Hinduism for temple worship?" At this question, Swamiji drew himself up, straightened and roared at the top of His voice; " HINDUISM IS NOT A PART TIME RELIGION." He then explained at length that aspiration to associate with divinity cannot be restricted to any particular time." Have you heard of the school boy who said that 'the earth is round on Sundays and flat on other days'? So also, a man cannot be made to be divine on Sundays and devilish on all other days. (Maybe, most of us are that way!)

So constant practice, frequent association with the good etc., are needed. The temple visits and worship should elevate the mind of the seeker and help him to keep his mind in a higher plane. He should also take other steps to continue the purification of the mind at all times of the day, at home, in the office, at the market place."

"What is a pure mind, Swamiji?"
"A pure mind is one which is calm, free from agitations. Agitations are caused mainly by our likes and dislikes and desires. Desires spell disaster, fulfilled or frustrated. Mahatma Gnadhi was very fond of the 'Sthitha Pragna' portion of the second chapter of the Bhagawad Geeta, in which the causes and consequences of desire are most graphically described. It is the ladder of fall:

"When a man thinks of objects, attachments for them arises; from attachment, desire is born; from desire (unfulfilled) arises anger; from anger comes delusion; from delusion loss of memory, the destruction of discrimination; from destruction of discrimination he perishes."

Swamiji added: " The Lord also points out then the three great entrances to hell are lust, anger and greed."

One in the audience asked: "I have read a good deal Swamiji, I also have convictions. Yet, to put these values in practice is my problem."

Swamiji "This was exactly Arjuna's problem. The Lord advised him, Recognise your real enemies. They are desire and anger, born of passionate nature, all devouring and sinful'. Knowing your enemies will enable you to destroy them. Knowing your weaknesses, you will make efforts to discard them. Once you locate a dead rat in your wardrobe, that was emitting foul odour, you will promptly pick it up by the tail and throw it as far away as possible."

"Our sastras have laid down a clearcut procedure. The three - fold practice consists of Sravana, Manana and Nidhidhyasana - Hearing is not in one-ear-out- the other, 'It is attentive listening to discourses on our great scriptures (including reading them), contemplating on the ideas contained therein, and lastly meditation. Many people come and tell me that they have gone through the Geeta many times. I tell them 'Let the Geeta go through you once atleast. It will do you more good.' Not just hearing or reading but absorption of the great ideas contained therein, assimilating them, and living those values will alone produce a radiance in the

life of an individual. Proper understanding, and correct attitudes are important. For example, we often meet the allegation that Hinduism is an 'out-of-the world religion' meant only for the recluse. The spirit of Hinduism is not understood by those who say this. Wealth is not taboo for the seeker, but the constant craving for wealth IS. Property is not prohibited, but one is enjoined to use it in the service of society.

The vedantic concept of renunciation has nothing to do with have or have-not, in a physical sense; it means the attitude of non-attachment. The classical example of our ancient lore is that of Emperor Janaka, living in the luxury of a palace, but still considered such a great saint and sage that great aspirants went to him for guidance.

If you ask me 'how to start', my answer is 'Just start'. when?

Now...

Today is the best day. A better day will not come.

The greatest master who lived and worked for the cause of religion in India, Adi Sankara, has laid down the prescription:

"Bhagawad Geeta and Vishnu Sahasranama are to be chanted; always the form of the Lord of Lakshmi is to be meditated upon. The mind is to be led towards the company of the good. wealth is to be shared with the needy.

Now, many people wait for retirement to take to religion. They will never take to it, because they will have new problems in the way.

"There goes the lunch time bell. All of you please have prasad at the annakshetra before you go."
Hari om! Hari Om!! Hari Om!!!



ക്ഷേത്രോൽസവങ്ങളുടെ തത്യാശാസ്ത്രം

പി. എൻ. ഗോപാലകൃഷ്ണൻ

ഉപാധ്യക്ഷൻ, കേരള ക്ഷേത്രസംരക്ഷണ സമിതി
(മനോരമ പത്രത്തോട് കൂടപ്പാട്)



ക്ഷേത്രോൽസവങ്ങളുടെ തത്യാശാസ്ത്രത്തെ കുറിച്ചു ചിന്തിക്കുമ്പോൾ ക്ഷേത്ര സങ്കല്പത്തെക്കുറിച്ച് ഒരു ഏകദേശ ധാരണ ആവശ്യമാണ്. ക്ഷേത്രം കേവലം ഒരു പ്രാർഥനാ കേന്ദ്രം മാത്രമല്ല, പ്രാപഞ്ചിക ശക്തികളുടെ തരംഗരൂപിയായ ചൈതന്യത്തെ ഒരു പ്രത്യേക സങ്കേതത്തിൽ തത്യാശാസ്ത്രത്തിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ സംഭരിച്ചുവെച്ച നിഗ്രഹാനുഗ്രഹ ശേഷിയുള്ള ഊർജ്ജകേന്ദ്രങ്ങളാണ്. മനുഷ്യദേഹത്തിനു സമാനമായ സമഷ്ടിദേഹമായിട്ടാണ് ക്ഷേത്രത്തെ കണക്കാക്കിയിട്ടുള്ളത്.

ഗോപുരം മുതൽ ശ്രീകോവിലുവരെയുള്ള ക്ഷേത്രത്തിന്റെ പഞ്ചപ്രാകാരങ്ങൾ

മനുഷ്യശരീരത്തിലെ പഞ്ചകോശങ്ങളായും കരുതാം. അതിനുള്ളിലെ ആത്മസ്വരൂപമത്രേ വിഗ്രഹങ്ങൾ. ദേഹോ ദേവാലയ പ്രോക്താ, ജീവോ ദേവ സദാശിവ എന്ന തത്യാമനുസരിച്ച് മനുഷ്യന്റെ സ്ഥൂലശരീരമാകുന്ന ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ കുടികൊള്ളുന്ന ജീവൻ അഥവാ ആത്മാവ് ആണ് ഈശ്വരൻ. ഇതിൽ നിന്നു ക്ഷേത്രവും മനുഷ്യശരീരവുമായി പ്രതീകാത്മക ബന്ധമുണ്ടെന്നും ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ സ്ഥിതിചെയ്യുന്ന ഈശ്വരചൈതന്യം തന്നെയാണു വ്യക്തിശരീരത്തിൽ കുടികൊള്ളുന്ന പ്രാണൻ (ഊർജ്ജം) എന്നും മനസ്സിലാക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. അതുകൊണ്ടു ക്ഷേത്രദർശനം നടത്തുന്ന ഭക്തന്റെ വ്യഷ്ടിചൈതന്യവും ക്ഷേത്രത്തിലെ സമഷ്ടി ചൈതന്യവും സന്ധിക്കുമ്പോൾ ഇവ തമ്മിൽ ഒരു അനുരണനം (sympathetic vibration) നടക്കുകയും മനുഷ്യന്റെ പ്രാർഥന ഫലിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.

തന്ത്രിയുടെ തപശ്ചര്യ, ശാന്തിക്കാരന്റെ നിഷ്ഠ, പൂർണ്ണമായ പുണ്യകൾ, മന്ത്രജപം, ഉത്സവാദി ആട്ടവിശേഷങ്ങൾ വിശക്കുന്നവന് അന്നദാനം എന്നിവയാണു ക്ഷേത്രാഭി വൃദ്ധിക്കു വിധിക്കപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുള്ള കാര്യങ്ങൾ. ചൈതന്യവത്തായ ക്ഷേത്രവും പരസ്പര സ്പ്രോഹവിശ്വാസങ്ങളോടെ സഹകരിച്ചു ജീവിക്കുന്ന സമൂഹവും ഒരു നാടിന്റെ ഐശ്വര്യത്തിനും അഭിവൃദ്ധിക്കും നിദാനമാണ്. ക്ഷേത്രദർശനത്തിനു പോകുന്ന ഒരു ഭക്തൻ, കഠിനമായ തപസ്സു ചെയ്യുന്ന ഒരു യോഗീശ്വര സന്നിധി യിലേക്കാണ് പോകുന്നത് എന്ന ബോധത്തോടെ അതിന് അനുസൃതമായ ആചാരാനുഷ്ഠാനങ്ങൾ പാലിക്കേണ്ടതാണ്.

ക്ഷേത്രകർമ്മങ്ങൾ ഓരോന്നും പരിശോധിച്ചാൽ മിക്കതിലും ശാസ്ത്രീ യമായ അടിത്തറയുണ്ടെന്നു മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ സാധിക്കും. ക്ഷേത്ര പ്രതിഷ്ഠ നടത്തുമ്പോൾ ആചാര്യൻ വിഗ്രഹത്തിലേക്കു പകർന്ന മന്ത്രചൈതന്യത്തെ യഥാവിധി നിലനിർത്തി കൊണ്ടു വരുന്നതിനാണ് നിത്യപൂജയും വാർഷികോത്സവങ്ങളും ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ നടത്തുന്നത്. കൊടിയേറ്റുമുതൽ ആറാട്ടും കൊടിയിറക്കും വരെയുള്ള ഉത്സവത്തിന്റെ പൊരുളെന്താണെന്നു നമുക്കു നോക്കാം.

ക്ഷേത്രത്തിലെ ഉത്സവം നന്നായി എന്നു പൊതുവേ വിലയിരുത്തുന്നത് സാമാന്യേന ഉത്സവത്തിൽ ഉദ്ദേശിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന കലാപരിപാടികളുടെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിലാണ്. ഉത്സവം എന്നാൽ ഇതൊക്കെത്തന്നെയാണ് എന്നു ധരിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളവരും ഉണ്ട്. കലകൾ ഉടലെടുത്തതും വികാസം പ്രാപിച്ചതും ക്ഷേത്രങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നാണ്. കല ആഭാസമായി മാറുമ്പോൾ ഭക്തമനസ്സുകൾ സാതികചിന്തയിൽ നിന്നു ആസൂരിക ചിന്തയിലേക്കായിരിക്കും ചലിക്കുക. ക്ഷേത്രോത്സവത്തിൽ താന്ത്രിക ചടങ്ങുകൾക്കാണ് കൂടുതൽ പ്രാധാന്യം കൊടുക്കേണ്ടത്. ഉത്സവം എന്ന പദത്തിന് മുകൾഭാഗത്തേയ്ക്കുള്ള പ്രവാഹം എന്നാണ് അർത്ഥമാക്കേണ്ടത്. ഈ പ്രവാഹം ദേവചൈതന്യത്തിന്റേതാണ്. ഈ ചൈതന്യം കവിഞ്ഞൊഴുകുന്ന ദിവസങ്ങളാണ് കൊടിയേറ്റുമുതൽ ആറാട്ടോടുകൂടി സമാപിക്കുന്നത്. യഥായോഗ്യം പ്രതിഷ്ഠ നടത്തി പൂജാദികൾക്കൊണ്ട് സമ്പുഷ്ടമാക്കിയ ക്ഷേത്രങ്ങളിൽ മന്ത്രചൈതന്യത്തിലൂടെ ദേവതാ ചൈതന്യം നിറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുമെന്നു നമുക്ക് അനുമാനിക്കാം.

എങ്കിലും പൂജാദികർമ്മങ്ങളിലുണ്ടാകുന്ന അപര്യാപ്തതകൾ കൊണ്ടും പാകപ്പിഴകൾ കൊണ്ടും ഭക്തജനങ്ങൾ ആചാരവിരുദ്ധമായും അവിധി പൂർവ്വമായും ക്ഷേത്രാരാധന നടത്തുന്നതിനാലും അവിചാരിതമായുണ്ടാകാവുന്ന ബഹുവിധ അശുദ്ധികൾ കൊണ്ടും ക്ഷേത്രത്തിലെ ദേവചൈതന്യത്തിനുണ്ടാവുന്ന ലോപം പരിഹരിക്കുന്നതിനു വേണ്ടിയാണ് ഉത്സവം നടത്തുന്നത്. അതുകൊണ്ട് വിധിയാം വണ്ണമുള്ള താന്ത്രിക കാര്യങ്ങൾക്കാണ് ഉത്സവകാലത്ത് പ്രാമുഖ്യം കൊടുക്കേണ്ടത്. അതിനു ദേവതയുടെ ഗുരുസ്ഥാനത്ത് സങ്കല്പിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന തന്ത്രിയുടെ കർമ്മികത്വവും അനിവാര്യമാണ്. ക്ഷേത്രകലകളുടെ അവതരണം, ക്ഷേത്രവാദ്യങ്ങളുടെ വാദനം, അണുനാശത്തിനും അന്തരീക്ഷ ശുദ്ധിക്കും ഉപകരിക്കുന്ന അപകടരഹിതമായ കരിമരുന്നു പ്രയോഗം എന്നിവയും ക്ഷേത്രോത്സവത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗം തന്നെയാണ്.

പള്ളിവേട്ട

ഉത്സവ സ്ഥലങ്ങളിൽ വിശേഷാൽ പൂജകൾക്കൊപ്പം എല്ലാ ദിവസവും പൂജിച്ച കലശങ്ങൾ ചൈതന്യാഭിവൃദ്ധിക്കായി ആടാറുണ്ട്. 25 കലശമോ നവകലശ മെങ്കിലുമോ ആടണമെന്നാണ് വിധി. സ്വന്തം തപശ്ചര്യയിലൂടെ തന്ത്രീയിൽ നിന്നു ബഹിർഗമിക്കുന്ന ചൈതന്യമാണ് അഭിഷേക അവസരത്തിൽ ദേവനിൽ വന്നു ഭവിക്കുന്നത്. ഇങ്ങനെയുള്ള അഭിഷേക പൂജാദികളോടെ ദേവങ്കൽ ഉണ്ടാകുന്ന ചൈതന്യം ക്ഷേത്രമാകുന്ന കുടത്തിൽ നിറഞ്ഞുകവിഞ്ഞൊഴുകുന്ന ചൈതന്യ പ്രസാരമാണ് പള്ളിവേട്ട. അന്നേദിവസം മൂലബിംബത്തിൽനിന്നു ദേവചൈതന്യത്തെ ഉത്സവബിംബത്തിലേക്ക് ആവാഹിച്ച് ക്ഷേത്രമതിൽക്കെട്ടിനു പുറത്തേക്കു കൊണ്ടു വരുമ്പോൾ ഗ്രാമം മുഴുവൻ ദേവനെ സ്വീകരിക്കാൻ തയ്യാറായി നിൽക്കുന്നു. പ്രതീകാത്മകമായി ദേവന്റെ പ്രതിപുരുഷനായ അവകാശി അമ്പും വില്ലും

ഉപയോഗിച്ച് വേട്ടവിളിയോടെ മൃഗങ്ങളുടെ പ്രതീകങ്ങളെ വേട്ടയാടുന്നതും ഒരു ചടങ്ങാണ്. ഗ്രാമചൈതന്യമാകുന്ന ദേവത ആ പ്രദേശത്തെ എല്ലാ ആസൂരിക ശക്തികളെയും വേട്ടയാടി നശിപ്പിക്കുന്നു എന്നതാണ് ഇതിന്റെ തത്വം. ക്ഷേത്രവും സമൂഹവും തമ്മിലുള്ള ബന്ധത്തെയും ഇത് ഓർമ്മിപ്പിക്കുന്നു.

കൊടിമരവും കൊടിയേറ്റും

മനുഷ്യശരീരത്തിലെ നട്ടെല്ലിനു സമാനമാണ് ക്ഷേത്രമാകുന്ന ദേവശരീരത്തിലെ കൊടിമരം. ഉപരിയുപരിയായി ഇറക്കിയിരിക്കുന്ന അനേകം പാറകൾക്ക് അടുക്കടുക്കായി നിർമ്മിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന നട്ടെല്ലിന്റെ അസ്ഥിവലയങ്ങളായ കശേരുകളോടു സാമ്യമുണ്ട്. വാസ്തവത്തിൽ ഇതു കിടക്കേണ്ടത് വലിയ ബലിക്കല്ലിന്റെ പുറത്തുനിന്നു തുടങ്ങി മൂലവിഗ്രഹം വരെയാണ്. എന്നാൽ എല്ലാവർക്കും കാണുന്നതിനു വേണ്ടിയാണ് അതു ലംബമായി സ്ഥാപിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്. കൊടിമരത്തിനു മുകളിൽ സ്ഥാപിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന വാഹനം ദേവതയുടെ ജീവാത്മാവിനെ യാണു സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. ഒരു കമുകൂമരത്തിൽ കൊടിയേറ്റു നടത്തിയാലും പുജാവിധികളോടെയാണെങ്കിൽ വിധി നിഷേധമല്ല. സ്വർണം പൂശുകയും മറ്റു ചെയ്യുന്നതു മോടി കൂട്ടുന്നതിനും ക്ഷേത്രത്തിന്റെ പ്രൗഢിക്കും വേണ്ടിയാണ്. കൊടിക്കൂറയെ ശക്തികൊണ്ടു പൂജിക്കുമ്പോൾ നാദം കൊണ്ടു പൂജിച്ച ഒരു മണിയും കൂട്ടിക്കെട്ടിയാണ് കൊടിയേറ്റു നടത്തുന്നത്. സോമയാഗാദികൾ നടത്തുന്ന യാഗശാലയ്ക്കു സമാനമാണു ക്ഷേത്രങ്ങളുടെ നിർമ്മിതി. അരുണവർണാഭ മായ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിലെ കൊടിക്കൂറ രണ്ടു ത്രികോണങ്ങൾ ചേർന്നുള്ളതാണ്. മനോഹാര്യതയ്ക്കുവേണ്ടി പല വർണങ്ങളും ചിത്രപ്പണികളും ഇതിൽ ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഈ ത്രികോണങ്ങൾ ഊർധ്വമുഖമായി ഉയരുന്ന യാഗാഗ്നിയെയാണു സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. ആ യാഗാഗ്നി ഉയരുമ്പോൾ ഉത്സവമാകുന്ന യജ്ഞം സമാരംഭിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു എന്നു കരുതാം. യോഗശാസ്ത്രം അനുസരിച്ചു ചിന്തിച്ചാൽ കൊടിയേറ്റ് എന്ന പ്രക്രിയ ഉത്തമ സാധകനായ ദേവനിൽ ഗുരുനാഥനായ തന്ത്രി ചെയ്യുന്നത് കുണ്ഡലിനി പ്രബോധനം തന്നെയാണ്. ഉത്സവത്തിന്റെ എല്ലാ കർമ്മങ്ങൾക്കും കാർമ്മികത്വം നൽകേണ്ടതു തന്ത്രിയാണ്.

ശ്രീഭൂതബലിയും ഉത്സവബലിയും

ക്ഷേത്രത്തിലെ നാലമ്പലത്തിനുള്ളിൽ കാണുന്ന ബലിക്കല്ലുകൾ ഇന്ദ്രൻ തുടങ്ങിയ അഷ്ടദിക്പാലകന്മാരെയും സപ്തമാതൃക്കളെയും മറ്റു പരിവാര ദേവതകളെയും പ്രതിഷ്ഠിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള ബലിപീഠങ്ങളാണ്. ഇതുകൂടാതെ നാലമ്പലത്തിനു വെളിയിലും പാർഷദന്മാരെ പ്രതിഷ്ഠിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടാവും. ശരിക്കുമൊരു പുജ ചെയ്യണമെങ്കിൽ എല്ലാ ബലിപീഠസ്ഥ ദേവതകൾക്കും അർപ്പിച്ചേ മതിയാകൂ. ഈ ക്രിയയാണു ബലിദാനക്രിയകൾ. ഹവിസ്സാണ് ഈ ദേവതകൾക്ക് പ്രധാനമായും അർപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. സാധാരണവലിയ പുജ മുഴുമിപ്പിക്കണമെങ്കിൽ ശ്രീഭൂതബലിയുടെ ക്രിയാദികൾ പൂർത്തീകരിക്കേണ്ടതായുണ്ട്.

ശ്രീഭൂതബലിയുടെ ഒരു വലിയ പതിപ്പാണ് ഉത്സവബലി. എല്ലാ പീഠദേവതകൾക്കും അതതിന്റേതായ മൂലമന്ത്രജപത്തോടെയുള്ള പുജയും ബലിദാന ക്രിയകളുമാണ് ഉത്സവബലിയിൽ പ്രധാനമായും നടക്കുന്നത്. ഉത്സവബലിയുടെ അവസാനഭാഗത്ത് സപ്തമാതൃക്കൾക്ക് ബലി തുവുന്ന സമയം മുതൽ ഉത്സവബലിയുടെ അവസാനം

നടക്കുന്ന ദീപാരാധന വരെയുള്ള സമയത്താണ് ഉത്സവബലിദർശനം പ്രധാനമായും നടത്തേണ്ടത്. ഒരു ഉത്സവബലി ദർശിച്ചാൽ ഒരു വർഷത്തെ സകല ദോഷങ്ങൾക്കും പരിഹാരമായെന്നതാണ് വിശ്വാസം.



SRI KRISHNA LEELA---THE GOVARDHANA EPISODE

K.V. Gopalakrishnan



Part I - BLOCKING OF SACRIFICE TO INDRA

The Lord's lifting of the Govardhana mountain and holding it high sportively on the tender palm of His left hand giving protection to the inhabitants of Gokulam from the havoc of torrential rains unleashed by Indra, forms one of the major super-human exploits in the Krishna incarnation. Every act of the Lord has a purpose behind it. In this case, the purpose was to curb the arrogance of Indra. He curbed it by stopping the sacrifice which was about to be offered to him and thereby infuriating him.

One day, Sri Krishna observed Nanda and other Gopas engaged in collecting articles required for conducting the annual yajna, the worship of the rain-god, Indra. Krishna, the omniscient one, was only too well aware of the reason for such preparations! However, feigning ignorance, and intending to destroy Indra's pride, He asked his father Nandagopa in all humility and politeness, in the presence of other Gopas: 'O Father! What for are you all engaged in these busy preparations?'

The Lord had only intended to subdue Indra's pride. He had no intention to hinder the course of Karma, the rituals. Therefore, these words, though seemingly opposed to the tenets of the scriptures, should not be taken literally.

Nandagopa replied to the omniscient Lord thus: "O son! All necessities of life (vegetables, etc.,) for men depend on rain for their sustenance -especially so for us. For, our cows-- our entire wealth-- depend for their very lives on grass and water. It is thus clear that rain is indispensable for us and the cows, which are our source of livelihood. This rain, which brings happiness to all in the world, occurs in time, year after year, thanks to Indra's grace. It is, therefore, necessary that every year, we conduct gratefully and humbly, a sacrifice for Indra who is unrivalled in power. The time for this year's sacrifice has arrived. It is the preparation for that Yajna, that we are now happily engaged in. *Men should propitiate God by offerings of oblations in Yajnas. And Gods should bless men by timely rain, etc. By such exchanges, they become mutually supportive and considerate. If men become indifferent to Yajnas and the like, they will become sinners or thieves. He who enjoys all the gifts bestowed on him without giving gifts in return, is surely a thief. So, everyone should perform the Yajna and suchlike rites as enjoined in the scriptures.*"

On hearing father Nanda's reply, The Lord, refuting his statement, did say with reasoning, but in a pleasing manner, 'Alas! What a blind belief is this? I do not accept it. It is not true that Indra

causes rain to fall. Rain falls or fails to fall, depending upon the good and bad deeds of living beings.

For the past actions, the latent effects of which are referred to as *Apurva* or *adrishta*, which make themselves evident only in course of time, although one cannot attribute a causation to them, they are related to the Atman as precursors in determining the next transmigratory cycle of the Jiva and the nature of the being it is to be born as. These latent effects are, indeed, directly responsible for the pleasure and pain, the being experiences. Thus, *a being is born by force of Karma (past actions), by force of Karma alone, it dies, and by force of Karma alone, it experiences pleasure and pain, is subject to fear, and enjoys security.* Therefore, to accept the theory that there is a deity called 'Indra' as the giver of rain is just a delusion. Or, even if such a theory is accepted, such a deity can never do anything to us. Just to keep you happy, let us assume the presence of such a deity. But how did he attain such a place of superiority and splendour? It can only be said that this particular Jiva, the incumbent of that position, has attained that state by virtue of its past actions. If so, it follows that Indra, too, is subject to Karma. Even if such a Jiva, subject to Karma, attains divinity, how can it be capable of blessing and inflicting punishment based on its own whims and fancies? If such great powers can be vested in a Jiva, is it not quite possible that we, too, by observance of such karmic austerities, attain the state of Indra and freely exercise these powers to realize our desires? To think of it, it is wrong to say that 'if Indra pleases, it rains;

otherwise, no.’ The trees of the great forest do not offer sacrifices to Indra, but still enjoy the benefits of good rain! Therefore, to say that ‘it will rain only if sacrifice to Indra is performed and if he is propitiated’, is the height of ignorance. Therefore, O dear Father, well-versed in worldly affairs! It is useless to spend all our hard-earned resources, the fruits of our life’s efforts, for this sacrifice to Indra. I request you and the other Gopas to understand this and desist from such an activity.”

The propriety of the Lord’s action in dissuading the Gopas from performing the sacrifice to Indra, who has been acclaimed as the presiding deity for rain in all the scriptures including the Srutis, deserves much more elaboration.

“O Father! Your statement that cows are our clan’s wealth is certainly true. Hence, it is our responsibility to protect them. However, this offering or sacrifice meant for securing plentiful supplies of grass and water, so necessary for the cows, would be more appropriate, if made to the Govardhana mountain, which is the real source of those necessities. Moreover, Brahmanas propitiate Devas by offering to the sacred fire oblations of ‘havis’ (cooked rice) sanctified by chanting of Mantras (Vedic hymns) which have the power to turn the oblations into Amritam (nectar)! Those Brahmanas are verily greater than the Devas themselves!

‘The whole universe is under the control of God; Godhead is dependent on Mantras; those mantras are under the control of Brahmanas; Brahmanas are my Gods.’ In accordance with these

words of the Lord, the Brahmanas who are worthy of worship even by God are verily greater than all. Hence we should worship them also. ‘Adrishtam’ or the unseen results of our own actions is the cause for the good and bad that befall us. That fate or outcome arises out of ordained duties. Therefore, it is essential that we perform Yagas and other rites. However, according to the axiom ‘the pigeon we have today is better than the peacock we may get tomorrow’. it is inappropriate to perform these rites for the invisible Indra, the object of mere beliefs, ignoring the visible God, the Govardhana mountain and the revered Brahmanas.” Thus did The Lord tell His kinsmen and Nanda.

Listening to the logical exposition which, though not approved by sastraic doctrines, was convincing to the Gopas, and they commenced a Yaga to the Govardhana mountain with greater attention, making use of the articles collected for the Indra Yaga. To begin with, they offered sweets and gifts to the great Brahmanas who then commenced the rites. Then many great sacrificial articles were offered as food to the Govardhanamountain. Circumambulating (going round and performing Pradakshinam) to the mountain and the Brahmanas respectfully, the Gopas prostrated before them. *With a view to making the Gopas happy and their belief firm, the Lord Himself assumed the form of the deity of the mountain, accepted, and ate all the articles of offering in their very presence.*

‘Indra is of no consequence. It is this Govardhana mountain that is protecting

us and our cattle. Is it not true, therefore, that this mountain, as I said, is our clan's God ? Did not all of you see the mountain consuming in person, all the articles offered to it as sacrificial oblation ? *Discarding the food available at hand, the fool goes a-begging.* Following this dictum, why should one serve the invisible Indra disregarding the mountain, our visible God? Even if Indra, angered by the stoppage of his worship, were to come to harass us, this mountain is capable of protecting us. That it is consuming all our offerings is proof enough to dispel all our doubts in the matter.' Hearing these words of The Lord, the Gopas became very happy; and thus reassured, they attained a sense of fulfilment which was much more than what they used to get in previous years by performance of the Yajna to Indra."

The Gopas performed the Yajna properly according to Krishna's instructions. Led by Krishna, they happily returned to Gokulam. Meanwhile, Indra came to know that the sacrifice due to him had been stopped at Krishna's bidding and that the sacrificial oblation had been offered to the Govardhana mountain. Though aware that he owed his exalted position to Krishna's limitless grace alone, and that Krishna was really Lord Narayana who had incarnated on Earth to destroy Asuras like Kamsa and protect the three worlds, he was blinded by his anger due to the stoppage of the offering that was his due. He lost his head and dared to confront the Lord and succeed, and thereby establish for all time, his power of protection and destruction. Alas! Who

will not wonder at the inability of the thousand eyed God to see reason ?"

Indra thought, 'Even Vishnu, destroyer of demons, generates disrespect towards the Devas when he assumes human form. What, then, will be the position of the Devas? It is risky not to adopt appropriate punitive measures now itself. Therefore, I shall destroy all the wealth of that lowly cowherd and make him taste the fruit of his lack of respect for me.' It appears that with this arrogant determination, Indra set out with the (false) hope of subduing the Lord! Alas! Indra's prowess before the Lord's splendour is but like the insolent twinkling of the firefly before the midday sun!"

With a view to destroying the Lord's dwelling place (Gokulam) without leaving a trace, Indra deployed the well-known clouds, 'Pushkala-vartakas' (name of the clouds producing copious rain) which are active during the time of Pralaya, the Great Deluge, enveloping the world in a vast ocean of water.

Thereafter, he mounted his vehicle Airavata, the four-tusked white-coloured elephant, armed with his weapon, the Vajrayudha (the thunderbolt), and set out arrogantly. Seeing this, other Gods like Agni, Vayu and Varuna laughed inwardly with derision. 'Alas! The false hope of Indra! O Krishna! Master of the three worlds! Who do not fall prey to Your all-conquering Maya which makes them blind with ignorance and lack of wisdom and leads them to rash actions ?', they thought.

The above-mentioned steps taken by Indra with a view to destroy the Gopas in Gokulam, who were being protected by Lord Narayana Himself, reveal his intolerance of others' prosperity and his own arrogance. The rashness and ridiculousness of Indra's attempt were clear to other Gods like Agni and Vayu, since they had not fallen prey to Maya. However, they could not muster the courage to stop their master. They could only laugh inwardly at the impending destruction of Indra's arrogance. *"My divine power of Maya, constituted of the three gunas, is difficult to overcome. Whoever takes refuge in Me in utter devotion, they alone overcome it.* Is this not what the Lord has said in the Bhagavad-gita ? *If one wishes to overcome the all-conquering Maya of the Lord, one must seek refuge in the Lord Himself.* In the present instance, Indra does not only not seek refuge in the Lord, he does reproach the Lord because of the immaturity of his intellect. Will Indra escape the consequences of his action ?

Hearing the thunder-claps of the gathering dark clouds, the Gopas in Gokulam thought that it was all the work of Indra who was desirous of revenge. They sought refuge in the Lord saying, 'Krishna! What is to be done now?' The Lord replied, 'O Inhabitants of Gokulam! It does not matter even if all this is due to Indra's anger. We have done our duty by offering gifts to Brahmanas and oblations to our protector, the Govardhana mountain. Since we have the blessings of the Brahmanas who are satisfied by our worship and the compassion of the mountain which is very happy having

accepted our oblations, we have nothing to fear. This is for certain.' The Lord repeatedly pacified the Gopas thus.

And The Lord did think within himself, 'Why is it that Indra has not turned up as yet ?', focusing His mind on destroying Indra's conceit.

PART II--LIFTING OF THE GOVARDHANA MOUNTAIN

Indra's retaliation by effecting a continuous downpour of rain resembling Pralaya, and how the Lord protected those who sought refuge in Him by lifting the Govardhana mountain and holding it as an umbrella, curbing, at the same time, the pride and arrogance of Indra are described here.

When the Lord was thinking as to why Indra, set on avenging the stoppage of the sacrifice that was his due, had not arrived yet (as The Lord thought he would), the sky above Gokulam, at that very time, shook the quarters and reverberated with increasing and continuous peals of thunder and lightning. With the massive dark clouds that had gathered, resembling Krishna's body in their brilliant blue hue, it looked as though the time of the Maha-pralaya, the Great Deluge had arrived. Krishna did verily look at the clouds with His blue eyes! He was not, in the least, perturbed in mind even at that moment when nature was revealing its fearsome fury.

It began to rain in torrents. And big hailstones fell with the rain. The sky was dark and enveloped all directions in

darkness. Thunderbolts shook all quarters and beings everywhere. The Gopas (and cows), distressed at this, cried out, 'Krishna! Protect us from this deluge (rain) of the angry Indra.' The Lord, of invincible glory, casting glances, suffused with compassion at them said, 'You need not fear!'

Off season rains are usually accompanied by hail. When that is so, how is one to describe the fearsome fury of deluge-like clouds raining in torrents?

'You have nothing to fear!' Thus did the Lord tell the Gopas and add with a gentle smile, 'It is the Govardhana mountain that is our clan's deity. It will arrest and stop the trouble caused by Indra and will certainly protect us. Why are you so doubtful about this?' Thereafter, Krishna the protector of Gopas, speedily uprooted the Govardhana mountain with His tender hands. That display of the Lord's strength, was indeed a wonder to the entire world.

Sri Krishna was smiling all this while to show that He had no difficulty in protecting his frightened clansmen from the danger posed by Indra and that Indra's conceit and arrogance were of no consequence to Him.

It is a well known story that mountains had wings in the Treta-yuga and they used to fly about indiscriminately, posing great danger to living beings while they landed. Indra had clipped those wings as a safety measure. Hence there was a standing enmity between Indra and the mountains!

Thus did the Lord uproot the Govardhana mountain and hold it aloft like an umbrella and in a place on the ground beneath it, unaffected by rain, He did gather the Gopas and their cows and their belongings such that they continued to be comfortable as before. They thought, 'O Lord! What a big load did Your divine hand, soft and beautiful like a lotus flower, lift and hold up, like a play-ball for the sake of protection of those who sought refuge in You! Is there any doubt whether the arrogance and pride of Indra, the enemy of mountains, can ever stand in front of the prowess of Your hand which had extracted along with its very roots and held aloft for full seven days, the mountain of Govardhana?'

The torrential rains that were generated by Indra would just fall on the mountain, but would not be able to affect, in the least, the Gopas and the cows that had been gathered and well-protected by the Lord in a safe place beneath the mountain.

Thus did the Lord hold aloft, with His left hand, the Govardhana mountain as an umbrella, at the same time engaging and entertaining the Gopa boys and the Gopikas by His witty remarks and pleasing gestures, and making happy the cows, the objects of His affection, that were standing beside His tender body, by gently stroking them with His right hand! Seeing Krishna, the protector of those who seek refuge, cheerfully engaged thus, the Gopas, rid of their fear, experienced immense happiness.

Even if the Gopas had entertained the slightest doubt whether the mountain

that had been raised aloft by Sri Krishna, the son of Nandagopa, would fall down after a while, that doubt completely vanished on seeing the Lord, engaged in exchanging pleasantries with the Gopikas and Gopas and stroking and caressing the cows and calves with His free hand. All these actions of the Lord go to show that He had not the slightest difficulty in holding aloft, the Govardhana mountain.

Seeing the Lord, who performs as a sport, the creation, preservation and dissolution of the world, in the form of a cowherd boy, holding aloft, for a long time, the Govardhana mountain on his left hand, the Gopa boys, who had not fully understood Krishna's divinity, said to themselves with wonder and joy, 'This mountain is so huge that it allows us to live beneath it without the least discomfort. Even so, Krishna is holding it up for such a long time on his tender left hand! What a wonder! Could it be that this mountain, satisfied with our sacrificial offering, had the power to raise itself to the sky, though it has no wings?'

Indra thought, 'This cowherd boy's impudence is, indeed, surprising. I want to know how long he will be able to stand holding the mountain. No doubt, he will put it down when his hand gets exhausted. These stupid ones, disrespectful of me, will then experience the consequences. Anyhow, I will rest contented only after teaching a good lesson to this group of cowherds who had listened to this impudent boy's words.' Belittling the Lord thus, Indra caused heavy rainfall for seven days and nights without a break."

Indra ought to have realised by this time, that this cowherd boy was no ordinary human being and was endowed with superhuman power even when he had occasion to see that He (Krishna) had the cleverness to make the Gopas led by the aged Nanda and others, who were ripe in wisdom by their observance of the scriptural injunctions on the path of action laid down by Mimamsa-sastra, divert their attention and make them agree to His way of thinking and perform worship to Brahmanas and sacrifice to the deity of the Govardhana mountain.

Let that pass. Surely, he (Indra) should have realised Krishna's power at least when, with His tender hands, He uprooted the mountain and held it aloft, which could never have been accomplished by an ordinary human being! Even that was not to be. It follows, then, that Indra had so much arrogance and contempt towards Krishna.

The Lord did not stir even a step from where He stood. The clouds were scattered away in all directions by the wind when they had exhausted their load of rain-water. When these things happened, Indra became very apprehensive about The Lord.

It is not possible to state what was going on in Indra's mind at this juncture—was it shame or fear of Krishna—since, he (Indra) had realised by then, that Krishna was none but the embodiment of Supreme Bliss—Mahavishnu, the supporter of the entire universe who had manifested as the son of Devaki and

Vasudeva in order to remove the distress of Goddess Earth by slaying Kamsa, Chanura and others, who were harassing the Earth; who, growing up in Gokulam, due to the immense fortune of Yasoda and Nandagopa, was making the residents of Gokulam experience the joy of fondling and caressing him; who had rendered impotent, even as a child, the deceitful minions deputed by Kamsa, the deadly poisonous serpent, Kaliya, thus revealing, wondrously, His great power to all the world; and who had, by the uprooting and uplifting of the Govardhana mountain, destroyed his (Indra's) pride.

The dark clouds that were his arrogance having been removed, and the sun that was his wisdom having dawned shinningly, Indra, without wasting any time, sought refuge in The Lord, who grant protection to all.”

Thus the downpour cleared completely. As for Indra, even as the clouds were rid of their load of water, his arrogance, too, vanished without trace. He approached Krishna running, with a pure mind. The clouds, emptied of their loads, became lighter and they were scattered in all

directions by the wind. Seeing that there was no need to apprehend further danger, the Gopas and the cows came out into the open. Krishna, too, set down slowly the Govardhana mountain on the ground and were fondly embraced by the happy and grateful Gopas. What is it that is not possible for the Lord?”

“Once, long ago, in the incarnation as ‘Varaha’, the divine boar, The Lord had lifted the whole earth. What, then, is the exertion for The Lord in lifting a mere mountain? Let not anyone, under the overpowering influence of Maya, attempt rash deeds that are doomed to failure, forgetting Krishna’s wondrous greatness. These demi-gods (Devas) have no recourse but the nectar of Krishna’s compassion.’ So did the Gods praise the Lord.

Let us all join the residents of Gokulam in praying to the Lord, ‘O Lord of Guruvayoor! May You be pleased to remove the ailments of all who seek sole refuge in You and bestow on them, Your divine Grace!’

Next issue: Indra with Kamadhenu coronate Krishna as “GOVINDA”





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