

The Blessed Will Pray!

New Year 2014 Message from HH Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji

For free distribution only. Not for sale. To receive this newsletter by email, send request to news-

A baby, when born on earth, involuntarily looks for its mother. God has provided 'motherly love' in the parents of all creatures, so that they take care of their young. When we have any needs or wants, we do not hesitate or feel shy to ask our parents. We have the right to ask and they have the love to give us what we want.

In the same way, the Supreme Lord, who is the mother of all beings, is pleased when we ask Him in our own simple but truthful way. There are no rites, rituals or money involved in *prarthana* (prayer). We ask out of our right and He gives out of His mercy and love.

But for a prayer to be fulfilled, there is one important requirement. We need to have the belief that God exists and with that faith, the prayer is fulfilled.

There was a person who had some problem. Every person he met suggested that he should pray to a different deity in a particular manner. His pooja room was soon filled with pictures of all the deities, like Lord Ganesha, Lord Muruga, Lord Venkatesha and Goddess Lakshmi. Finally he brought in Lord Hanuman and somehow his mind was taken up by Him. One day, while doing his daily rites, the man was upset that none of the gods had helped him. He decided that he would pray only to Hanuman and thought, "Okay, no more fragrance of incense for any of the others!" He started to stick tape on all the other gods' noses on the pictures, and to his surprise, he suddenly felt the presence of all of them!

The moment he felt that They were not just pictures but that the god was actually present there and could smell the fragrance – that faith really brought in Their divine presence! It was his faith that brought the divine presence. Faith makes prayer a beautiful poem that pleases the Lord.

Similarly, there was a simpleton who lived on an island. He prayed to the Sun God everyday by talking to Him in simple words, like "You are my sole protector. I don't know anyone else. You please protect me always."



visiting that island noticed this. He told the man that his method of praying was not correct and taught him his own way of meditation. The next day the swamiji was leaving to a different village. This person had innocently started to practice what he had been taught by the swamiji. But he got stuck at a point in his meditation and had to rush to find the swamiji who would leave soon. The swamiji was already on a boat out in the

water. The man, in his earnestness, ran to reach the swamiji; and did not notice that he was walking on water! Seeing this the swamiji was awestruck and told him to not to worry about what he had learnt from him, but instead to just do whatever he had been doing earlier, in his own simple faith-filled, loving way.

Prayer has to come from the heart. The greatness of these kinds of prayers are sometimes not understood even by great sanyasis.

Once Totapuri, a *advaita sadhak* (adherent of Advaita philosophy) who practiced *nirguna upasana* (meditation on the formless Brahman), visited Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa at Dakshineswar near Calcutta. He used to mock at Sri Ramakrishna's way of praying: he would pray to Mother Kali in a simple way by singing Her glories. Totapuri did not believe in the simple prayers and wanted Ramakrishna Paramahansa to learn *nirguna upasana* from him. Sri Ramakrishna, after taking permission from Mother Kali, learnt it from Totapuri and effortlessly attained the high state of *samadhi* that Totapuri had attained only after 40 years of struggle! Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, even after attaining this supreme state, enjoyed singing the divine names of God on the banks of river Ganges.

Totapuri was once affected with severe stomach pain. When nothing would relieve the unbearable pain, he was about to jump into the Ganges to give up his life. Sri Ramakrishna was chanting the divine names of the Lord. By his prayer, he relieved Totapuri from the pain. Totapuri finally understood the greatness of loving prayer by chanting the divine names of the Lord!

Sage Vishwamitra, who was first a valiant king, tried to attain the status of a great sage through severe penance. Each time some obstacle would come up – Trisanku, Menaka, etc. – that would cause him to reduce his tapas through *krodha*, *kama*, etc., and thus he would have to perform even more severe austerities. Sage Vishwamitra finally reached the state of a Brahma Rishi only after a lot of struggle.

On the other hand, Sage Valmiki was earlier a hunter and a robber. He was initiated by Sage Narada into the simple but profound 'RAMA' nama, and became a great sage just by chanting the Rama nama!

It is said that the Lord runs our lives based on our previous *karma* (actions) and that He doesn't interfere when we suffer. But when Uttara's unborn child was attacked by Ashwattama's *brahmastra*, she called out to Lord Krishna and He came to save the child there. When Draupadi was being disrobed, she called out to Krishna and He came to her aid. When the elephant king Gajendra called out to Lord Narayana, He came to save him.

All we have to do is call out the Lord's Name earnestly, and despite our karmas, He will interfere to save us from trouble!

When we keep chanting the Mahamantra all our needs will be automatically taken care of.

Papa Ramadas, while answering a devotee's question on how our past sins can be cleaned by Mahamantra, said, "If we need to bring down a large banyan tree, we need a big bulldozer, machinery, etc., but the Mahamantra is like a bunch of termites that can effortlessly bring down the tree!"

By chanting the Mahamantra all sins are totally vanished and even the tendency to sin is got rid of!

Let us all pray to the Lord for few minutes and chant the Mahamantra in unison to get our prayers answered.

Excerpted from Sri Swamiji's speech at the New Year Mass Prayer held on Jan 1, 2014 at Theni/Periyakulam, Tamil Nadu, India

Inside this Issue

Cherished Memoirs - 8	Pg 2
Quiz - Vaikunta Ekadasi	Pg 2
Madhura Geetam - 8	Pg 3
Story Time - Sensible Dharma	Pg 3
News and Events	Pg 4



Cherished Memoirs 8

This series chronicles sweet experiences recounted by the devotees of HH Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji as well as some divine experiences of Sri Swamiji himself. These articles are translations from the series, "Madhuramaana Mahaneeyar" that is published every month in Madhuramurali Tamil monthly magazine.

The Bhava of a Mahatma

Bhakti (devotion) is indeed only the different *bhavas* that are expressed in a devotee's heart. If one asked, "Where is Bhagavan?", the answer is, "He is in the *bhavas* that arise in a devotee's heart!"

The day after Deepavali is marked as Govardhana pooja in our traditional *panchang*. It was on this day that the Gopas of Brindavan performed Govardhana pooja and our Bhagavan lifted the Govardhana hill. The eighth day (*ashtami*) after this is Gopashtami, when, after keeping the Govardhana hill lifted high above the Gopas for seven straight days, our Krishna was coronated by Indra and was given the name "Govinda".

This year (2013), from Deepavali day itself, Sri Swamiji's thoughts were constantly about this Govardhana leela. [During this time Sri Swamiji was at the Madhurapuri ashram near Chennai] He started living the scene in his mind, and began to speak (to those around him) about how arrangements were being made for Indra's

yagna, in the region around the hills, by Nanda and Upananda (another Gopa).

Sri Swamiji began describing the scenes as though he was witnessing them directly - "Look, Balaram and Krishna have come; Krishna is talking to Nanda; the Indra pooja has stopped; everyone is following Krishna's words and performing pooja to the Govardhana Hill; Krishna has Himself taken a different form and eaten all the food offered to Govardhana hill; Indra is angry; he is pouring rain in torrents; there is thunder, lightning everywhere; water has flooded the whole area; the windows and doors of houses are rattling terribly; the Gopas and Gopis are running out of their houses, they have covered their heads with pieces of cloth; it is so dark, even day looks like night; the Gopas cannot even see each other in the dark; but even in that darkness, they all reach the moon-faced Krishna and surrender to Him!

"Even amid this crisis, Bhagavan is not worried. He is not perturbed but calm. There is no hesitation, no anxiety or nervousness.

"He is sitting on a rock, like Dakshinamurthy, wearing a casually-tied turban on His head and playing His flute. Seeing the bhakti of the Gopas, and being moved intensely (with His hair standing on end), Bhagavan has lifted the Hill!"

"This little seven-year-old child is lifting a great hill for the sake of all of us!" said Sri Swamiji as he shed tears for Krishna.

For the next seven days, Sri Swamiji felt that he was under the Govardhana hill. He would repeatedly say, "How will he eat his food? If he

is thirsty, how will he drink water?" Constantly worrying thus, he would feed Krishna.

The seven-day Nama Saptaham [continuous

chanting of Mahamantra for 12 hours daily for seven days by Namadwaar groups from across the country] that was conducted during that time made Sri Swamiji's *bhava* stronger. He kept feeling that he was chanting the Mahamantra along with all the Gopas and Gopis. He even said, "Now the 'Rama' that we say in the Mahamantra stands for Balarama."

After the seven days, Krishna first threw the hill away; then He moved the hill to its original position. As soon as Krishna had placed the hill down, Sri Swamiji ran upto Him and lifted Him up! He then said, "Krishna lifted the hill. And I have lifted the Krishna who lifted the hill!"

The next day Sri Swamiji kept feeling that winged Devas, Indra, Kamadhenu and Airavata were coming to the Ashram from the skies. That day, a variety of sweets and savories were prepared, children were dressed as Indra, Upendra and Devas and, amid the playing of auspicious instruments and showers of flowers, Sri Swamiji performed Govinda pattabishekam for Sri Premika Varadan (Lord Krishna) with great pomp and glory.

**Published originally in Madhuramurali Tamil monthly magazine, Dec 2013 issue
Translated by Viji Ramakrishnan, Dallas TX**



Quiz Time - Vaikunta Ekadasi

This year Vaikunta Ekadasi, the auspicious day for Lord Mahavishnu, was celebrated on Jan 11 across the world by devotees of the Lord. On this day devotees fast all day and chant His names all day and night. Let's see what else you know about this occasion.

1. Name the Lord whose divine abode is Vaikunta
 - A. Shiva
 - B. Vishnu
 - C. Ganesha



2. What does the term 'Ekadasi' connote in Sanskrit?
 - A. The tenth day of a lunar fortnight
 - B. The eleventh day of a lunar fortnight
 - C. The twelfth day of a lunar fortnight

3. Name the serpent who acts as a coiled bed for Lord Vishnu
 - A. Anantha Padmanabha
 - B. Anantha chari
 - C. Anantha Sesa

4. In which temple in Srirangam is Vaikunta Ekadasi celebrated in a grand manner?
 - A. Lord Ranganatha
 - B. Lord Muruga
 - C. Lord Shiva

5. What is the significance of Vaikunta Ekadasi?
 - A. The main door to Vaikunta closes on the day of Vaikunta Ekadasi
 - B. The main door to Vaikunta opens on the day of Vaikunta Ekadasi

- C. The lord goes to sleep on the day of Vaikunta Ekadasi

6. In which month is Vaikunta Ekadasi generally celebrated?
 - A. Bhadrapada
 - B. Margasirsa
 - C. Sravana
7. One year in Earth is equivalent to how many days in Vaikunta?
 - A. One Day
 - B. Two Days
 - C. Three Days

**Compiled by
Ramya Srinivasan, Bay Area, CA**

Answers:

1-B, 2-B, 3-C, 4-A, 5-B, 6-B, 7-A



Madhura Geetam - Bharata Pradakshina 8

In this series, we will go on a pradakshina of Bharata desha as we present, each month, a kirtan composed by His Holiness Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji on a particular kshetra, starting from south India and then going north.

Dwaraka - Dwarakadheeshan

This month, in our Bharata Pradakshina, we have reached the westernmost tip of India to the city of Dwaraka. We all know that Lord Krishna established a kingdom in the ancient city of Dwaraka and ruled it for several years. It is believed that Vishwakarma, the architect of the gods and demigods himself designed and built this city. It was an important port and the gateway to the Indian mainland. At the end of Dwapara Yuga, when Lord Krishna went back to his abode in Vaikunta, a huge flood submerged the city of Dwaraka under the sea. The lost city of Dwaraka has been the subject of research for several years and evidence has been unearthed by Archeological Survey of India and National Institute of Ocean Technology that suggest the possibility of an ancient city having thrived once in the Gulf of Khambhat region.



(dvArakA)

Anupallavi

svacchanda gatimIshvaram sundara
mUrtim
nischinta bhaktajana Ashrita mUrtim
(dvArakA)

Charanam

shikhaNDAlankRta makuTAlankRtam
kuNDAlAlankRta sukumAra rUpam
(dvArakA)

shankha chakra gadAdhara mUrtim

The modern city of Dwaraka is on the Indian subcontinent and is one of the 108 Divya Desams (temples sung by the Azhwars) and hence an important pilgrim spot. It is here in Dwaraka that Sant Mirabai left her mortal coil to become one with Lord Dwarakadeesh. The deity, Lord Dwarakadeesh, appears as the King of Dwaraka.

Sri Swamiji too has visited Dwaraka and has had the darshan of the Lord. He describes the Lord in a song which is presented here.

Dwarakadeesham

Dhyayami

Raga: Karnaranjani **Tala:** Adi

Pallavi

dvArakAdIsham dhyAyAmi

kumkumAnkita vakShastalam (dvArakA)
nAnAvidha bhUShaN dhara chinmaya
mUrtim
manmatha manohara mangaLa mUrtim
(dvArakA)

shuddhasphaTika nirmala mUrtim
suvarNa muraLI vAdana mUrtim (dvArakA)

Meaning

Pallavi

I meditate upon Lord Dwarakadeesha

Anupallavi

He is the beautiful deity who is entirely Independent!

He is One who is the refuge of devotees who have no mundane worries

Charanam

His head is decorated with a beautiful peacock feather adorning the crown
He has a beautiful form that is adorned with beautiful earrings
He carries the conch, discus and the mace
And his chest is decorated with saffron

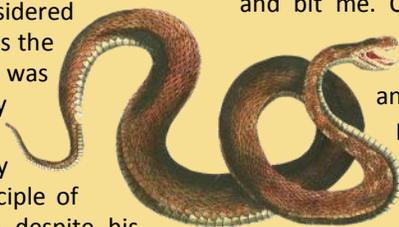
His blemishless and pure form is adorned with numerous beautiful jewels
His auspicious form is more enchanting and mesmerizing than Manmatha
His form is crystal clear and pure like a pure spatika gem
And He is seen playing the golden flute

Sowmya Balasubramanian, Fremont, CA

Sensible Dharma

In a village, there lived a young man whose family was very poor. This youth had vowed to observe *ahimsa* (non-violence) and considered sticking to this principle as the main goal of his life. He was hired to work in a poultry farm. Since this job involved harming poultry and was against his principle of *ahimsa*, he quit the job despite his family situation. Later, he got a job in a butcher's shop. This job also involved harming animals. The man of principle that he was, he quit this job too.

As he was walking down the street thinking about his family's plight and his own decision to quit the job, a stray dog suddenly started chasing him. Keeping in mind his vow of *ahimsa*, he began to flee. But the dog came after him and bit him. At that moment, the butcher passed by that



way. On seeing him, the dog took to flight. Seeing this, the young man wondered, "I have always stuck to my vow of non-violence and considered it to be the objective of my life. But the dog chased me and bit me. On the other hand, the dog feared the butcher whose profession demands killing animals!" and felt miserable. He visited a saint residing in his village and narrated his story to him. The saint replied that his story reminded him of an anecdote told by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and narrated it to the young man.

"Once there lived a snake in a village. A saint happened to visit that village. The snake requested the saint to give it an *upadesa* that it could follow. In reply the saint asked the snake to refrain from biting and harming other living beings.

After several months, the saint returned to the village where the snake lived. He was

shocked to see the pathetic condition of the snake. The snake's body was wounded everywhere and emaciated; it was on the verge of death.

When the saint enquired why the snake was in such a state, it replied, "I have been trying to follow your *upadesa* and not harm anyone. Now as everyone knows that I will not bite, they beat me and trouble me!"

The saint said, "I only advised you not to bite and harm anybody. I never told you that you should not hiss and scare away those who come near you to harm you. You can protect yourself from those who harm you by scaring them away!"

After relating this story to the young man, this saint added, "Abstaining from harming any being is indeed a very high principle. But you should use your discrimination while bringing it into practice."

Source: www.namadwaar.org

Story Time



SRI RAMANUJAM JI'S SATSANG EVENTS

News & Events

HOUSTON - YEAR END G.O.D. MADHUROTSAV



GOPA KUTEERAM



SPECIAL SATSANGS

GRAYSLAKE TEMPLE



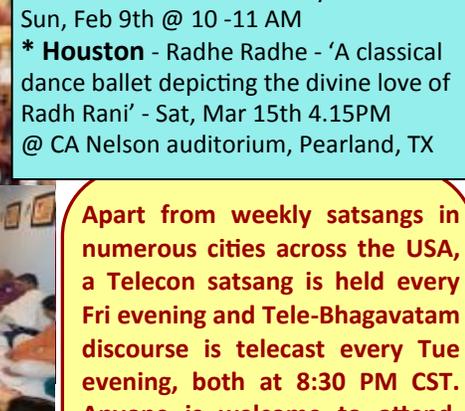
CHICAGO SATSANGS



GOPA KUTEERAM 4TH ANNIVERSARY



ATLANTA- SRIMAD BHAGAVATA SAPTAH



Upcoming Events!

* **Raleigh** - "MadhuraChitra" - coloring contest for kids of age (4-7).

For more info contact before 31st Jan:
gopakuteeram.carync@gmail.com

* **Minneapolis** - 'The Power of Nama Sankirtan' - KFAI Community Radio on Sun, Feb 9th @ 10 -11 AM

* **Houston** - Radhe Radhe - 'A classical dance ballet depicting the divine love of Radh Rani' - Sat, Mar 15th 4.15PM @ CA Nelson auditorium, Pearland, TX

Apart from weekly satsangs in numerous cities across the USA, a Telecon satsang is held every Fri evening and Tele-Bhagavatam discourse is telecast every Tue evening, both at 8:30 PM CST. Anyone is welcome to attend. Ph: 605-475-4000, Passcode: 131581

Gopa Kuteeram (kids' programs) & Srimad Bhagavatam study circles are conducted in various cities.

Email newsletter@godivinity.org

Published by:

Global Organization for Divinity



3363 Bel Mira Way
San Jose, CA 95135

Phone: 1-(830)-4GOD-USA

Feedback email: newsletter@godivinity.org

Visit our websites:

www.namadwaar.org and www.godivinity.org

Newsletter team:

Content—Anusha Ramesh, Aravind TRA, Latha Kumanan, Lekshmi Nair, Narayanan Sathiamoorthy, Nisha Giri, Nithya Rajesh, Priya Tulasi, Ramya Srinivasan, Shalini Kelappan, Sriram Ramanujam, Sowmya Balasubramanian, Yamini Zivan Prakash.

Illustrations—Sripriya Sarathy.