

Acceptance: The Best Repentance

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Srimad Bhagavatam reveals the supreme secret in its very first sloka where it uses the phrase -“*satyam param dhimahi*” (Let us meditate on the Supreme Lord of the nature of Truth).

Bhagavan is the absolute truth and He alone is the truth. Therefore an action based on falsehood will clearly lead one away from Bhagavan. If one earnestly wishes to tread the path of attaining Bhagavan, committing a mistake on purpose is an act one must avoid at all times. But isn't it also true that to err is human? A forsaken moment of loss of self-control is enough to commit a mistake. Then what is the fate of the wrong doer? Does he have a way of moving forward despite the wrong act? Srimad Bhagavatam shows how one should act in case a mistake is committed. This is exemplified in the story of King Parikshith whose heartfelt repentance for his mistake led him, by God's sheer grace, to Bhagavan Himself.

Parikshith was the son of Uttara and Abhimanyu. It was in his mother's womb that he had the first vision of the Lord. The Lord had entered Uttara's womb in order to save Parikshith by annihilating the Brahmastra released by Ashvattama with the intent to destroy the lineage of Pandus. Since the child was saved by the Lord, he was named Vishnuratha at birth and his never ending curiosity to find his savior, earned him the name Parikshith. He was a fine successor in the line of Pandus and a fit ascendant to the throne illuminated by them. Just as the *brahmanas* prophesied at Parikshith's birth he turned out to be: true to his word like Sri Rama, a protector of his subjects like Ikshwaku, kind like King Sibi, gracious like Lord Shiva, and in virtuosity he was a follower of Sri Hari Himself. During his reign as the emperor, Parikshith confronted *Kali purusha*, the demon of Kali Yuga, and subdued him. But like a bee that extracts the best out of everything, Parikshith let Kali stay on earth for primarily its main merit – that simply chanting the Lord's Name will lead one to final beatitude in this Yuga, unlike in the other Yugas where more stringent, difficult paths need to be followed.

However, it must have been because of this brief rendezvous with Kali that Parikshith committed the grave mistake of insulting a great *mahatma*. Once during a hunting trip he was thirsty and entered Sage Sameeka's ashram for water. When Parikshith asked for water, the sage who was in deep meditation on the Lord, neither saw the king nor offered him water or a seat. Oppressed by anger and frustration, Parikshith threw a dead serpent across the shoulders of the sage to test his meditative state, before walking away. The sage remained completely unaware of the incident.

But when Parikshith went back to his palace, he realized the depravity of his act. He cringed with despair for his reproachful conduct against a *mahatma*. His guilty heart throbbed with regret and he could not perform any of his kingly duties as he felt unworthy of his position, having himself acted so dishonorably. Parikshith was sure that he would face a formidable calamity as he had acted against the Lord's interest of protecting the *brahmanas*. He actually prayed that a fire in the form of a curse should instantly destroy everything that he was attached to, so that he would never even think of hurting a *mahatma* again.

Parikshith was an emperor and he could have found numerous ways of getting around the curse but he did not do so! Instead, he boldly accepted the consequences of his action and wished for a punishment that would ensure that he would never commit such a mistake again in his life.

Parikshith's life shows that repentance should be beyond regret and sorrow. It is like a making a U-turn away from the wrong path, towards the path of truth, resolving never to look back. Accepting one's mistake involves overcoming one's enormous ego, which in itself is instantly purifying. Rather than justifying and defending one's error, accepting a mistake is

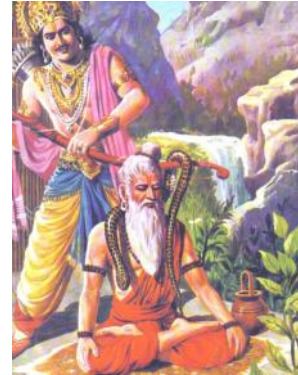
a step in the positive direction. It is a self-resolution never to tread the wrong path again.

King Parikshith briefly fell from his conduct of stately stature, but the moment he accepted the mistake he progressed promptly in his spiritual path. He gladly accepted the curse of Sringi, Sage Sameeka's son, of death by the bite of the serpent king Takshaka in seven days (for which, incidentally, Sringi was remonstrated by his great father as being too harsh a punishment for a small mistake).

But the repentant Parikshith took the curse as a blessing in disguise as it speedily aroused in him dispassion for his kingdom, riches and loved ones. This dispassion and his earnest desire to attain Bhagavan in seven days triggered his meeting with his Guru, Sri Shuka, who bestowed him with the ambrosia of Bhagavatam. Drinking this nectar of immortality, Parikshith finally got what he was always looking for – Lord Sri Hari.

When even a virtuous king like Parikshith fell once from the path of truth, it is needless to say that we ordinary mortals will encounter many a fall in our lives. But acceptance of our mistakes is the first step towards getting back on the right path. This will lead to heartfelt repentance and offering up of our ego to the Feet of Bhagavan, thus ushering in His grace and bestowing the highest good on us.

Lekshmi Nair, Houston, TX



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Cherished Memoirs 3

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.

A Statue's Divinity

Deity images for worship are made using stone, metals, mortar and other materials. Then *bimba shuddhi* and other cleansing rites are then done and *praana prathista* (invoking God in the deity) is performed. Then a grand *samprokshanam* (deity installation) is done. Even after this, only with the continuous performance of prescribed rituals, *poojas*, *utsavams*, *anna dhaanam* and with the presence of



heartfelt worshippers will the *saanidhyam*, i.e. divinity, in the images increase; or remain without decreasing. In many temples there is sometimes a sudden increase or a decrease in the crowds of devotees who visit the temple. The reason for this is a change in the *saanidhyam* of the image in the temple.

However, some images acquire *saanidhyam* as soon as they are made or begun to be made, without any *praana prathishta*. We cannot fathom the reason behind this. The only reason could be that perhaps the Lord Himself decides, of His own accord, to enter these images.

Many years ago, Sri Swamiji had once visited the Parthasarathy temple in Triplicane, Chennai. After having *darshan*, when Sri Swamiji came outside, he saw a number of Krishna *vigrahams* (statues) made of

papier mache displayed for sale outside a shop. Sri Swamiji glanced at those images and left.

That night he had a vision. In that vision, Lord Sri Krishna appeared in one of the images that Sri Swamiji had seen in the shop outside the Parthasarathy temple. He said, "I want to come and be with you. I will wait for you tomorrow," and disappeared. As soon as the next morning dawned, the first thing that Sri Swamiji did was to go to that shop. He waited there till it opened and then brought the Krishna back with him.

Since that time, until now, this Krishna has enjoyed thousands of *Divya Nama sankirtanams*, and continues to do so even today.

It is indeed amazing that *jnanis* and *mahans* can very clearly perceive Bhagavan's *sannidhyam* when it is present in a particular place.

Translated from Madhuramurali, Tamil monthly magazine, Feb 2009 issue

Madhura Geetam - Bharata Pradakshina 3

Pullambhoothankudi

Sri Valvil Ramar

As we continue to explore Sri Swamiji's compositions on various deities and *kshetras*, let us travel about 30 km west of Kumbakonam, to a small village known as Pullambhoothankudi.



The presiding deity here is "Valvil Ramar" (the bow-bearing Lord Rama). The uniqueness of this Rama is that here He is in a reclining posture, like the famous Lord Ranganatha of Srirangam.

The legend of this *kshetra* is that it is here that Rama met the fatally wounded Jatayu, who had fought Ravana valiantly in his effort to save Sita. After conveying the news of Sita's abduction to Rama, Jatayu breathed his last on His lap. Rama, who was unable to perform even his own father's last rites, performed the last rites for Jatayu here. Since Jatayu lived and breathed his last in this place, this place got its name—*pullam* (bird) *bhootham*

Lord Rama is in the reclining posture because He is believed to be taking rest after performing the last rites of Jatayu. Another interesting point to be noted is that Lord Rama here is found without his consort Sita.

Pullambhoothankudi is a *divya desam*, a temple sung by the Azhwars. Thirumangai Azhwar has visited Pullambhoothankudi and sung 10 verses on the presiding deity.

In Sri Swamiji's beautiful song in Tamil on this "Valvil Ramar", he starts the song by describing the Pullambhoothankudi Rama as one who enters and resides in the hearts of the pure and innocent. Then he goes on to praise that He is the Lord of both the learned as well as the illiterate. Finally he concludes by saying that the sole occupation of this Lord, who keeps his word, is to stand by His devotees who are suffering and to protect them always.

Kallamilla Ullam Puguvan

Ragam: Bilahari Talam: Adi
Pallavi

kudi (stays/
lives). And

*kaLLamilla uLLam puguvAn
pullam bhoothankudi rAman*

Anupallavi

*ellorum pottrum valvil rAman ivan
kallArkum kattrOrkum nAthanivan
Charanam*

*sol ondre konda thUyanivan
allal uruvOr pakkam ninru
malaipOl kApadhe thalayaya panyAga
salaikkAmal konda jAnaki rAman*

Meaning:

Pallavi

He enters the heart of the innocent,
Pullam Bhoothankudi Rama

Anupallavi

He is the bow-bearing Rama, who is
praised by all
He is the Lord of both the scholarly and
the illiterate

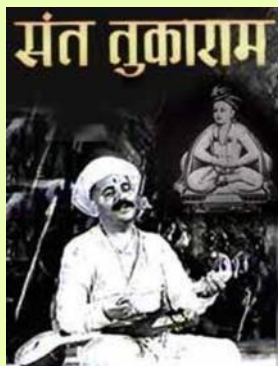
Charanam

He is the pure-hearted who is known to
keep His word
Standing by the side of people who are
suffering,
His sole occupation is to protect them like
a mountain
This job Janaki Rama does tirelessly!

Sowmya Balasubramanian, Fremont, CA

Sant Tukaram 1936

The purpose of watching a movie about a saint is to bring about devotion in our hearts. The mix of emotions, the choice of the saint's kirtans, the screenplay, the dialogues have to be perfectly amalgamated to evoke the right feeling in the viewers. Prabhat Films hit the bulls-eye in this regard when it produced the movie "Sant Tukaram" in the year 1936.



This Marathi language movie, based on the life of the famous 17th century Maharashtrian poet-saint, a devotee of Lord Vittala, was a major force in filmdom that has stood the test of time and is revered even today as one of India's best films. This was the first Indian film to receive international recognition, being adjudged one of the 3 best films of the world at the Venice Film Festival; was also screened at several other film festivals; and in India itself was a major success, breaking box office records, thus proving that true devotion really touches the hearts of people and transcends cultural, geographical and linguistic barriers.

The movie was directed by Vishnupant Govind Damle and Sheikh Fattelal, and featured devotional singer and actor Vishnupant Pagnis in the acclaimed title role. The fact that Vishnupant Pagnis' portrayal of Sant Tukaram was heartfelt

and beyond compare, is evident as, after acting in this movie, Vishnupant was so moved by the saint's life and compositions that he became a life-long devotee and follower of Sant Tukaram.

This movie beautifully delves into the greatness of Sant Tukaram showing his different facets — faith in the Name of the Lord, humility, compassion and one-pointed devotion to Lord Panduranga (Vittala).

The difficult situations he faced through poverty, his children's illnesses, his wife's inability to understand his state of devotion and despite all his so-called troubles, his deep faith that the name of "Panduranga" was the one panacea for all ills are all touchingly portrayed.

Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji says that a saint's life is filled with criticism and abuse from people who are envious of the saint's glory. This movie beautifully depicts such a situation encountered by Sant Tukaram, when his works are plagiarized by a charlatan who also ridicules and scorns at him. The humility of a saint to accept any false accusations as his own wrong doing is wonderfully highlighted in this scene (and in many more in the movie). Believing that he himself has committed a mistake, when Tukaram cries, "Pandurangaaaa, Mavuli, have you forsaken me? You are my

everything!"

we feel as if we are watching the real saint and we cry along with him.

There are other scenes too that are similarly moving — when Tukaram rejects the wealth offered to him by the king, Chatrapathi Shivaji; when enemies attack the kingdom as the king and the saint are in a satsang singing the Lord's Names; when Tukaram happily gives away to other kids the sugarcane he had worked hard to earn for his own children; the manner in which he falls at the feet of a fallen lady and redeems her.

The fact that life, though full of thorns, will become a bed of roses if we have sincere faith in the Lord is beautifully depicted in this movie by interlacing a subtle trace of comedy even in sorrowful situations. The scene where Sant Tukaram drowns his abhangs and waits for 13 days fasting is one that will melt even the stone-hearted.

The special effects in this movie deserve a special mention and so do the beautifully scripted subtitles.

Let us all watch this movie to sing, dance, cry, laugh and drench ourselves in the bliss of devotion, along with the saint of Dehu. We pray that with the Lord's grace, many such devotional movies see light of the day.

Aravind Thathachari, Dallas, TX

Young Reader's Contribution

Tukaram was a great devotee of Lord Panduranga. Read this story about him.

One day, Tukaram was at his shop singing *bhajans* about Panduranga, when three rogues dressed as *sadhus* came up to Tukaram and said, "Tukaram, we are Panduranga *bhaktas*. We are holding a *satsang* at our house and we need lot of food for it. We don't have the money right now, so we will pay you back later."

Tukaram was a great devotee of Panduranga, so he never asked for money if the customer's reason to get anything from his store had something to do with Panduranga. He wouldn't even care to ask when they would pay.

So he did not know that they were fake *sadhus* trying to cheat him. He just gave the food and all the money he had with him.

When he got home that night, his wife saw that he had brought no money with him. The wife was very angry with him. She said,

"Tukaram, you have brought no money. That is the 4th time this week! We will starve at this rate!"

Tukaram replied, "Dear wife, I cannot refuse *bhaktas*, whatever they may ask. It is like refusing Panduranga Himself!"

Such was the *bhakti* of Tukaram!

**by Purushothaman N Ram,
10 yrs, Redding, CA**

**(We welcome stories, articles,
poems and artwork by children
of all ages. Please send your
contributions to news-
letter@godivinity.org)**



News & Events

RICHMOND, VA—MADHURA UTSAV



GOPA KUTEERAM YOUTH CAMPS



GURU POORNIMA CELEBRATIONS



HOUSTON



BAY AREA, CA

UPCOMING EVENTS!

Houston Namadwaar:
Janmashtami Utsav. Aug 28-31.
For details call - 281.303.5828

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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.

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