

## Making a Difference by Being Different

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*Why can't things ever be smooth for me?*

*Why do I always land a cussed deal in everything?*

*Why is the world such a tough place to live in?*

Does this rant sound familiar? We are often dissatisfied or frustrated with our situation and the people around us, and wish that they would change. In fact, almost everyone wishes that others would change.

Parents want children to stop rebelling and do as they say, while children want parents to stop forcing things on them; wives want their husbands to be more attentive, husbands wish wives would be less nagging; employers want employees to work harder, while employees wish their bosses would be less demanding.

There is a simple solution to making the world a better place and actually making a difference in this world, something that all of us inherently wish to do.

### **Make a difference to yourself.**

Any change has to start with "me". In fact, the truth is that the major thing that ever needs changing is "me".

We define the world.

### **We don't see the world as it is; we see it as we are!**

There is an interesting legend which is based on the great Indian epic, *Mahabharata*. Duryodhana, a cruel and arrogant prince, and Yudhishtira, an honest and kind prince, were both sent together, by Lord Krishna, on a tour of their kingdom's capital city.

When they came back, Krishna took Duryodhana aside and asked, "What is the state of the city? How are the people?"

Duryodhana replied, "This city is full of arrogant people and cheats. There is not a shred of goodness anywhere. I don't know how we are going to manage and bring these people under control!"

Krishna let Duryodhana go and called Yudhishtira and asked him the same question.

Yudhishtira said, "This is such a beautiful city, Krishna. Everybody is so loving, caring and helpful."

Vidura, a minister, who stood by Krishna listening to these utterly contradicting reports was confused. When he asked for an explanation, Krishna said, "Yudhishtira saw goodness outside because he had goodness inside him. Duryodhana was arrogant and wicked inside, and hence saw the same wickedness outside."

### **We don't see the world as it is; we see it as we are!**

The moment we truly realize this, transformation happens within us. So to change the world, we first have to look within.

To make this world a better place, it has to start and end with "I". Rather, it has to start with the 'I' and end the ego 'I' – that which taints and distorts the truth.

But one should remember, transformation means going from firm ground to quicksand. To truly transform ourselves we need to step where we have never gone before.

There was once a simpleton who was walking home late one night. He was absent-mindedly playing with a gold ring on his finger and dropped it on the road. He was not too far from his house, and so he ran home and frantically called his wife.

He told her, "I have dropped my ring.

Search under this street light."

When she couldn't find it, he asked her to look under another street light. This went on for a while until finally the wife asked him, "Are you sure you dropped it under a street light?"

The man said, "Oh stupid lady, I don't know where I dropped it, but don't you know that we can search only where there is light?"

This is what many of us have been doing with most of our lives. The problem is in the 'dark' – unknown, yet to be explored. But we are afraid of the dark, so we search for a solution in the light where no solution may exist!

That is why Inner Transformation means letting go of the past and trying to bring in fresh thinking; to work out what we are doing with life and to doing what we are passionate about. This will make us a tremendously different and caring person, and shall inspire people around us. Let's start with us.

*We can make a difference in this world only by our own inner transformation!*

*Excerpts from the lectures of Sri M. K. Ramanujam, disciple of His Holiness Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji*

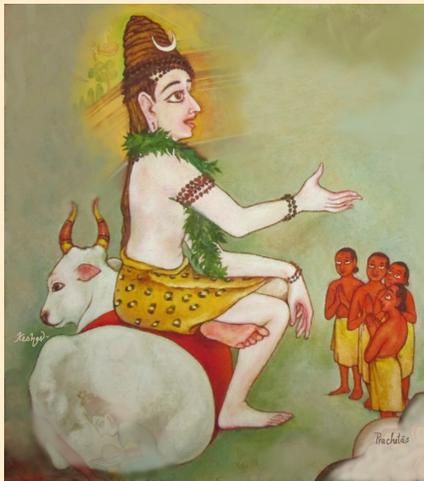
**Sri M. K. Ramanujam is visiting the USA in Fall 2012. He will be speaking at several public locations, universities, and also conduct many youth, adult and corporate workshops. To read his detailed profile, visit [www.godivinity.org](http://www.godivinity.org).**

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## Rudra Gitam: A Hidden Gem

There are five famous “*gitams*” (songs/hymns) in Srimad Bhagavatam that are collectively called the *Pancha Gitam*. They are all words of immense love and longing that emanated from none other than Lord Krishna’s most favorite devotees, the Gopis.

Apart from these five hymns, there is only one other hymn in the entire Srimad Bhagavatam of 18000 *slokas* that has earned the epithet “*gitam*” and which, in fact, precedes the Pancha Gitams in the great Purana. This is the Rudra Gitam, which appears in the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of the 4<sup>th</sup> Canto. As the name implies, it is a song sung by Lord Shiva in praise of Lord Sri



Hari, thus reiterating the Lord Shiva is indeed the foremost of all Vaishnavas.

According to Srimad Bhagavatam, the ancient story behind the Rudra Gitam is as follows: The Prachetas were the 10 sons of Prachinabarhis and Satadruti. The Prachetas were known for their understanding of the path of *dharma*. Prachinabarhis, their father, commanded them to perform *tapas* in order to multiply their species, as that was their duty at the time. The Prachetas set out westward and as they neared the ocean, they came across a beautiful lake (present Rudratheertham, a sacred tank in the famous south Indian temple town of Guruvayoor). As they approached the lake, Lord Shiva (Rudra) emerged out of the waters. He understood their purpose and that they were great devotees of Lord Vishnu. Telling them that the devotees of Lord Hari were as dear to him as the Lord Himself, and that to devotees of the Lord, there was none as dear as himself, Shiva then revealed the Rudra Gitam—a hymn that could take a man to the highest goal of liberation—to them.

Lord Shiva begins this beautiful hymn with praises and obeisance to the Lord, who he

says is verily everything, including even Rudra (himself) and Brahma. Requesting the Lord’s holy vision, Shiva proceeds to describe, from head to toe, the beauty of the Lord whose eyes are like lotus petals, who has extremely attractive eyebrows, face, ears, handsome locks of

hair, and dons a yellow robe. Thus he continues his astounding description of the Lord, ending it at His lotus feet that dispel the darkness surrounding one’s mind.

Lord Shiva then extols the greatness of Lord Hari’s devotees, who have taken shelter at those holy feet. Shiva states at this point what Lord Yama himself is going to say later in Srimad Bhagavatam – that the devotees of Lord Sri Hari are beyond the sway of Yama, the god of death. Shiva then yearns for association with the Lord’s devotees; he says that he does not consider the attainment of heaven or even Liberation, let alone worldly achievements, to be equal to even a moment’s contact with a true devotee of the Lord.

He then prays for the company of such devotees who are always full of love and benevolence and in constant communion with the Lord by listening to His glories, for a life has no meaning if it is not spent in the Lord’s worship. Speaking of the power of the Lord’s Maya and of Time (Kala) that swallows everyone who is steeped in the lust and greed of the materialistic world, Lord Shiva finally emphasizes that it is only those devotees who have caught hold of the Lord’s lotus feet who are free from all fear.

*Anusha Ramesh, San Jose, CA*

### *Answers and beyond... Spiritual questions answered by Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji*

**Q. For over a long period of time many Gurus and Sages have come and gone. There have been innumerable disciples for these Gurus. These disciples were, no doubt, devoted their Gurus, but when they move into the world, become hard-hearted, corrupt and materialistic. Why can the Gurus not change at least 10% of their disciples ?**

A. The ‘Uttama’ Guru (Real / True) will never try to perform any gimmicks or mesmerism to try to bring about a change in the disciple. That is the work of a magician and not of a Uttama Guru! The Adi Guru, Lord Dakshinamurthi Himself had only four disciples worth mentioning. Goodness in any person is an attribute and is oriented towards action. This itself will not result in ‘Mukti’ (Liberation).

In his great work “Viveka Chudamani”, Adisankara Bhagavatpada has said that Mukti does not result from Dhaana ( charity), Sankhya Yoga or through millions of Pranayama. It results solely from Jnana (Wisdom) and this is possible only through the grace of the Guru. Guru’s grace is not an act in isolation but a natural result when he is extremely pleased and happy with the disciple. If that happens, the disciple is transformed spontaneously. For the disciple of a Uttama Guru to be good, all his vasanas (Past conditioning) should be destroyed. This is a silent internal transformation and is done gradually within and not through force. This may not even be noticed by the disciple himself.

If the disciple is truly attached to the Uttama Guru, this internal transformation will happen slowly but surely.

**For more such answers by Sri Swamiji, or to ask a question of your own, please visit the Nama Dwaar website at [www.namadwaar.org](http://www.namadwaar.org).**

## Mahakavi Kalidas

Kalidasa was a renowned classical Sanskrit poet recognized for valuable contributions to Sanskrit literature.

But Kalidas was not always a genius! As a young man Kalidas was so dim-witted, that one time he fell off the tree when he tried to saw off the branch while sitting on the wrong end. This act of foolishness was observed by a smart pundit passing by and he decided to use him to take revenge on an arrogant princess who was very proud of her scriptural learning and who had humiliated him.

Many pundits had tried to win the princess' hand through debates but she was too clever for them. Now when this pundit found Kalidas, all the pundits who had been humiliated by the princess sought reprisal and thought out a plan to get the princess married



to Kalidas, the fool. They prepared Kalidas and advised him not to open his mouth threatening that otherwise he would lose the chance to marry a royal bride.

As arranged at the king's court, the silent debate between the princess and Kalidas began. She pointed one finger implying that only *God is the True Eternal Being*. Poor Kalidas interpreted it quite differently. He thought, "You want to poke one of my eyes... I'll poke two of yours!" and pointed two fingers at her. The princess thought, "Yes, I have to agree that Individual Self's true nature is that of the Supreme Self". Like this the mute argument continued and in the end the princess was impressed by Kalidas' insight and profundity in his gestures. She married him and lived a simple life.

But as truth cannot be kept hidden for long, Kalidas' true nature was revealed and the princess realized that he did not belong to the scholarly caliber. So she drove him away from her life. Kalidas was very dejected by this sudden change of events. He passed by a river where he saw women washing their clothes on the rocks that were smooth compared to the others. He realized in a flash that if a hard rock could be turned smooth by constant pounding his brain could become wise.

By the grace of mother Kali, he took refuge in her and spent many days in devotion, meditation and studying the scriptures. Later on, he wrote great works like *Megadhuta* (poem on the picturesque beauty of India), *Shakuntala* and *Raghuvamsa*, etc.

**Priya Tulasi, Milwaukee, WI**

## Quiz Time - Tulasi Trivia

1. Which type of Tulasi is commonly used for worship?

- A. Shyama
- B. Rama
- C. Vana

2. Name the lord who is most commonly worshipped by offering Tulasi leaves

- A. Lord Shiva
- B. Lord Ganesha
- C. Lord Krishna

3. Tulasi is commonly referred by this name in the west

- A. Curry leaves
- B. Holy Basil
- C. Coriander leaves

4. Who was Tulasi during lord Krishna's

incarnation?

- A. Gopi

- B. Deer
- C. Parrot

5. Worship of Tulasi is considered very sacred in this month of Hindu calendar

- A. Bhadrapada
- B. Shravana
- C. Kartika

6. Shyama Tulasi is also commonly known as

- A. Krishna Tulasi
- B. Vishnu Tulasi
- C. Karpoor Tulasi

7. How tall is a Tulasi plant in general?

- A. Five to six feet
- B. Two to three feet

C. More than eight feet

8. Tulasi Vivah is normally performed during which part of the day?

- A. Morning
- B. Evening
- C. Mid-Night

9. What does the term 'Vrnda' connote

- A. Goddess of education
- B. Goddess of plants
- C. Goddess of earth

**Compiled by**

**Ramya Srinivasan, San Jose, CA**

**Answers:**

1-A, 2-C, 3-B, 4-A, 5-C, 6-A, 7-A, 8-B, 9-B



## News and Events

### MILWAUKEE



### ALTANTA



### MINNEAPOLIS



### RICHMOND



### NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY



### BOSTON



### NEW HAMPSHIRE



### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Sri Ramanujam ji's Schedule

Nov 15-19: Programs at Houston, TX  
For info email nishgiri@yahoo.com

Nov 21-Dec 2: Programs at Dallas, TX  
For info email dallasnamad-  
waar@yahoo.com

Dec 6-11: Programs at San Jose & Redding,  
CA. For info email gbramya@gmail.com

Dec 13-19: Programs at Detroit, MI  
For info contact Sridhar ji at 248.390.6534

Dec 21-27: Programs at Houston Namad-  
waar, Houston, TX  
For info email nishgiri@yahoo.com

Weekly satsangs are held regu-  
larly in the following regions:

*Atlanta, GA; Bay Area, CA; New  
England area; Chicago, IL;  
Cortlandt Manor, NY; Dallas, TX;  
Houston, TX; Milwaukee, WI;  
Orlando, FL; Richmond, VA; San  
Antonio, TX; Seattle, WA; Sas-  
katchewan, Canada*

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 cir-  
cles are conducted in various  
cities.

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