

Terrifying Body, Tender Heart!

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Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana is a "Paramahansa Samhita" as it is a collection of the revelations not only of the Supreme Lord, but also of the devotees of the Lord. The *Purana lakshana* or characteristic of "Poshanam" - the unconditional and limitless compassion the Lord has toward His devotees - is revealed in the heart of Bhagavatam in the sixth canto. It shows that the Lord has no *bheda bhava* (differentiation) when it comes to His devotees, whether it is Dhruva the human child, Prahlada the asura child, Kunti the aged queen, Koobja the bent servant woman, Gajendra the elephant or Vritrasura the demon. All that matters to Him is only the tender loving heart of His devotee.

Vritrasura's story is a beautiful gem hidden within the depths of Bhagavatam. Vritra was a horrific demon created to avenge a wrong done by Indra. He emerged out of the sacred fire in the form of Death himself, fierce and grotesque. He was dark and colossal like the clouds of ill omen. His eyes spit fire, his gaping mouth was lined by pointed frightful teeth and his tongue leapt out of his mouth terrifyingly as if to engulf all three worlds.

But what a surprise then that this terrible demon actually turns out to be a gentle devotee at heart! And not any devotee, but one of the very highest order who seeks nothing but the love and service of the Lord!

When Vritra confronts Indra (he has to after all do his duty and fight Indra, the work for which he was born), he reveals that he knew his death was certain at the hands of Indra. But, in contrast to Indra who always runs to the Lord in fear when his life is in danger, Vritra submits to the Lord's will, saying that that is his will too. He further adds that the Lord thwarts all the efforts of His

devotees to attain the four *purusharthas* of *dharma, artha, kama, moksha*. This Vritra says, is indeed the Grace of God, for the Lord belongs only to those who have nothing to call their own!

As he stood on the battlefield, in the midst of his duel with Indra, Vritra contemplates the Lotus Feet of the Lord and immense love wells up in his heart! At this point, he offers four beautiful verses to the Lord - known as the Vritrasura Chatusloki - which are laden with intense love for Bhagavan.

He prays to the Lord to be born again and again as a servant of the servants of those devotees who have taken refuge in His holy Feet. Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji would say, "If you can serve Rama like Lakshmana, then serve the Lord or the Guru directly. If that is not possible, be like Bharata and do what the Guru says. But if you cannot do even that, be like Shatrughna and serve the devotee of Bhagavan!" Which is what Vritra prays for here.

He further prays to the Lord to constantly give him His remembrance, sing His glories and do His service. Thus he prays for servitude to Bhagavan's devotees which becomes his first *purushartha - Dharma*. Vritra, though an asura, here reflects the attitude of the Gopis, who surrendered to the Lord as His servants!

There is no desire for liberation in a devotee of the Lord, for there is nothing more to achieve than the supreme bliss one experiences in serving Him. Next Vritrasura expresses his disinterest for any worldly pleasures, yogic powers or even Liberation if it takes him away from the Lord even for a moment. Here he implies that his second *purushartha - Artha* or wealth is none than Sri-Pathi, the Lord Himself.

Vritra's third verse shows his yearning to

see Bhagavan. He compares his longing first to that of a fledgling bird who constantly cries to be fed by its mother; next to a calf that can see its mother but since it is tied away from her, is unable to reach her; and finally, like a grief-stricken beloved wife separated from her husband longs to be with Him again! "O Aravindaksha - O lotus-eyed one," Vritra cries, "My mind is keen to behold you!" Vritra proves his unconditional love for Bhagavan yet again in this verse, disclosing that his *Kama* (third *purushartha*) is nothing but to have Bhagavan's *darshan*.

In the end, Vritra proves his *viveka* (discrimination), for he prays fervently that the Lord should not give him any association with the worldly minded, but instead keep him constantly only in *satsang* - constant association with the Lord's devotees/saints who never tire of listening to His glories. This constant remembrance alone constitutes the fourth *purushartha - Moksha*.

A tender loving heart, housed in a grotesque body, with every part of him yearning, chanting, serving and reminiscing the Lord, with his love comparable to the supreme love of the Gopis of Vrindavan! Whose wonderful *lila* could this be other than the *mayaavi* Krishna Kanhaiyya exemplifying His compassion overwhelmingly through the story of Vritra?

Lekshmi Nair, Houston TX

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Cherished Memoirs 6—The Lord's Vacation

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.

Sri Sandeepani Vedapatasala in Madhurapuri Ashram has students hailing from different parts of the country. Just like every other school, the Vedapatasala also has a summer break for the students. This year (2010), the summer vacation began around May 1. The happiness and glee of the children heading home for the vacation could be felt all around the Ashram. But one little boy alone was not happy. It was our Thakurji, Sri Premika Varadan. (Lord Krishna, the main deity at the Sri Swamiji's Madhurapuri Ashram)

On May 1, Sri Swamiji had gone to Bengaluru. He returned to the Ashram the next night. The Ashram was all prepared for Vasantotsavam (the spring festival celebrated every year at this time). But Sri Premika Varadan had something else in mind which was not evident at that time. When Sri Swamiji returned from Bengaluru, Sri Premika Varadan was very dull. He complained that all the kids had

gone home on vacation. He too wanted to travel somewhere for the summer! Sri Swamiji tried to convince Sri Premika Varadan, but he could not be pacified at all. So Sri Swamiji had to relent and agree to Sri Premika Varadan's desire. (Of course, the devotees had no clue at that time about this interaction between Sri Swamiji and Sri Premika Varadan.)

The next evening, Sri Swamiji was quite restless. He sat beside Sri Premika Varadan first, then walked a bit, then looked like he was in deep conversation with Sri Premika Varadan. Then Sri Swamiji said out aloud, "I have planned Vasantotsavam for Premika Varadan here but he wants to go to Thirunaangoor". Thus our Premika Varadan was all set to travel to Thirunaangoor. One of the devotees in Ashram asked Sri Swamiji if he should be considering a place which is cool in summer because Thirunaangoor will be quite hot. Sri Swamiji replied without hesitating that Sri Premika Varadan will cool down any place he visits. On being asked the return date, Sri Swamiji said that the visit to Thirunaangoor itself was Sri Premika Varadan's wish and hence returning date will also be in accordance to his wish.

Thirunaangoor, located near Sirkazhi has nearly 11 dhivya desams. Many of these

are rendering services to the lord under Sri Swamiji's guidance. Apart from this, puja is also taking place every day in these sthalams. All the materials needed for the puja in these sthalams is taken care by Sri Chaitanya Prabhu Nama Bhiksha Kendra. This is where Sri Jayanthi Janakiraman memorial Vaishanava Agama Padashala is being run. Vaishava Aagamam, four thousand Dhivya Prabhandhams and the Vedas are being taught here. When Sri Premika Varadan plans something, there is a reason behind it. So this trip did not go without a reason. Sri Ramkumar is the person who has been managing the naangur Vaishanva Padashala. Just a day before, he had cried that he could not see Premika Varadan and render services to him. So one of the reasons for Sri Premika Varadan's visit was also to bless Sri Ramkumar with his darshan. Just as Sri Swamiji mentioned, the moment Sri Premika Vardhan and Sri Madhuri Sakhi stepped into Sirkazhi, there was a heavy downpour. There was heavy rain in Naangur on 4th night and 5th morning. Sri Premika Varadan stayed there only for those 2 days. Thus ended Sri Premika Vardhan's summer vacation in



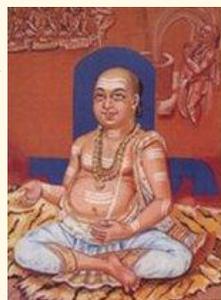
Sri Shridhara Ayyaval

Sri Shridhara Venkatesa, known as Sri Shridhara Ayyaval, was a great saint who gloried the path of devotion through Nama Sankirtan. He was a great Shiva bhakta and always chanted Shiva's name.

Here is an interesting incidents from his life:

Sri Ayyaval, who moved about south India constantly spreading the divine names of the Lord, once happened to visit Tiruchirapalli in Tamil Nadu, India. The king of the area was a devotee of Lord Vishnu. but he had great respect for Sri Ayyaval and his devotion to God.

However, some people who had heard the discourses of Sri Shridhara Ayyaval felt that he had more leaning towards Lord Shiva than Lord Vishnu. They told the king about



this and induced him to test the saint's devotion. The king agreed and ordered the temple priest to dress up Sri Mathrubhuteshwara (Lord Shiva) as Lord Krishna and take him in procession. When the procession passed through Sri Ayyaval's house, he was meditating on Lord Shiva. When the procession passed in front of his house, he came out of his trance, and ran out hurriedly to have darshan of Lord Matrubhuteshwara.

Finding Lord Krishna there instead though, he spontaneously prayed to Lord Krishna, "O Lord Krishna! When will I spend every moment of my life in meditating on your Lotus Feet by reminding myself of the transitory nature of this world; by being humble; by knowing my deficiencies; by turning a blind eye to other's faults; by

being compassionate towards all living beings; by being a servant of the devotees of the Lord and eyeing both joy and sorrow alike?"

He thus composed 12 verses known as 'Krishna Dwadasa Manjari'. In a few verses in this, he did not hesitate to sing that Lord Krishna's vision was not easy for Lord Shiva Himself!

Hearing this, the king was overjoyed at the saint's true devotion and glory. The people who had induced him to test the saint fell at Sri Shridhara Ayyaval's feet and apologized for their ignorance and arrogance. Knowing Sri Shridhara Ayyaval spent every moment of his life striving to uplift the masses by spreading the nectarine Divine Names of the Lord.

Source: www.namadwaar.org

Story Time



Madhura Geetam - Bharata Pradakshina 6

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.

Sri Sundara Anjaneya Swamy, Bangalore

In our pradakshina of Bharata desha with HH Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji's kirtans, we now move out of Kerala heading northward to Karnataka.

In Kalkare, a region in the outskirts of the city of Bangalore is a temple whose tower depicts a unique Odiya temple architecture. This is the temple of Sri Sundara Anjaneya Swamy established by Sri Swamiji. The temple is on two levels. The main temple is on the upper floor with the beautiful, majestic 12-feet tall Sri Sundara Anjaneya Swamy. It is said that Anjaneya Swamy is present where the name of Rama reverberates. When this temple was built, hundreds of devotees wrote the name of "Rama" by hand in each of the 1,25,000 bricks that were used to build the temple.



The lower floor of the temple houses a large 3500 feet hall. One can have darshan of the curled, mighty tail of Sri Sundara Anjaneya Swamy in this lower hall, as also scenes from the Ramayana. Along with beautiful pictures of Sri Swamiji and Lord Sri Rama, a unique idol of Sri Veda Vyasa also presides over this lower hall as the temple is built in the precincts of the Veda Vyasa Purana Patasala Trust.

The outer walls of the temple proclaim that anyone who is suffering from depression and other psychological issues will find relief by visiting this temple and praying there.

During Sri Swamiji's first visit to the site of the temple (before the temple was built) he went into a meditative state and mentioned that he could feel the presence of Anjaneya Swamy in that location. The moment he said that, devotees saw that, out of nowhere, clouds appeared in the sky forming the shape of Sri Hanuman carrying the Sanjeevani mountain. *(Read in detail about this incident here.)*

Sri Swamiji has composed a song in which

he describes this vision of Hanuman flying in the sky - "Gagane Sancharam Vanaram Dhyayami", set in Nattaikurinji Raga and Adi Tala. The lyrics and meaning of the song are below:

Gagane Sancharam

Raga: Nattaikurinji

Tala: Adi

gagane sancharam vAnaram dhyAyAmi

Sanjeevani Parvatha GadhaaDharam
Vaanchitha Phala Prada Chiranjeevinam

Chanchala Pucham Kinkini Bhooshitham
Jangama sarva jaganmangala Vigraham

Jitendriyam Manovegam
Bhaavaromaanchitha Pavana Kumaram

Dushta Shikshakam Kashta Nivaarakam
Shishta Muralidhara Ishta Swaaminam

Meaning:

I see (in my vision) a monkey traveling in the sky

He carries the Sanjeevani Parvatha and the mace!

This Chiranjeevi bestows the desired fruit (to the person praying to him)

He has a tail that is moving constantly and he wears small bells

He travels all around this universe bestowing auspiciousness

He has conquered his senses and is as fast as thought

His hair stands erect when this son of wind

Quiz Time - Sri Ayyaval

1. Sri Shridhara Ayyaval was born in South India, in a town called

- Mysore
- Bangalore
- Kanchipuram

2. Sri Shridhara Ayyaval was a great devotee of this lord

- Lord Rama
- Lord Shiva
- Lord Krishna

3. To which town did Sri Shridhara Ayyaval relocate in Tamil Nadu?

- Tiruvannamalai
- Tiruvisainallur

C. Trichur

4. Which river gushed out of the well in the backyard of Sri Shridhara Ayyaval's home?

- Yamuna
- Godavari
- Ganga

5. Sri Shridhara Ayyaval was a contemporary of this great Mahan

- Sri Bodendra Swamigal
- Sri Yogi Ram Suratkumar
- Sri Ramana Maharishi

6. In which hindu calendar month did the Ganga Karshanam incident take place?

- Kartika
- Shravana

C. Bhadrpada

7. Name the Nama that is sung in Sampradaya Bhajans in remembrance of Sri Shridhara Ayyaval.

- Rama Nama
- Gangadhara
- Krishna Nama

8. On which day did the Ganga Karshanam incident take place?

- Full moon
- New moon
- Ekadasi

Compiled by
Ramya Srinivasan, Bay Area, CA

Answers:

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



SRI SWAMIJI'S JAYANTHI CELEBRATION

News & Events



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CHICAGO



SEATTLE



MINNEAPOLIS



DETROIT



NY & NJ



BOSTON



BAY AREA



VIRGINIA

SRI RAMANUJAM JI'S SCHEDULE

City/State	Date
Seattle, WA	Nov 16- 21
Dallas, TX	Nov 22-Dec 3
Atlanta, GA	Dec 4 - 12
Houston, TX	Dec 13 - 27

Please visit www.godivinity.org for contact information and program flyers.

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.

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