

Acceptance: A Vital Step to Inner Transformation

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Everyone knows what he should be. What someone **is** and what he **should be** are never the same. There is always a gap. When someone is not what he should be, he becomes miserable and angry; and he feels jealous when he sees someone else where he thinks he himself should be.

A vital step in inner transformation is one simple truth: *If we cannot accept ourselves, we cannot accept anybody else.* We have to teach ourselves to accept what we are right now, to start with.

Acceptance, both of ourselves and of our circumstances, quiets the mind. Acceptance is not about becoming a doormat, but accepting that everything comes in twos—joy and sorrow. The moment we understand life as it is, without putting our likes and dislikes into it, we understand that it comes in a beautiful, perfect package.

With acceptance, inner transformation begins. *Stress is the time limit between facing a problem and our acceptance of it; not the time between the problem and finding its solution.* Let's say I am stuck in traffic. As long as I keep thinking "Oh why should this happen exactly when I'm in a hurry!" or "I should have taken the other route. Why didn't I do that!" etc., I am extremely stressed. Until I *accept* that I am stuck in traffic, I can't even ask the question "What next?" But once I realize and accept that I AM stuck in traffic, then the stress is gone! I can now calmly think about what to do next. Maybe I can use the time to make some long-pending phone calls, listen to some music or a lecture, or chant the Divine Names. Perhaps I can take a detour and find a different route to my destination. The minute I "accept" the situation, the mind is clear, stress-free and "what next" becomes the natural next-step.

This is the power of acceptance. Acceptance is not necessarily equal to agreement.

When I first started working in the corporate world, I was given a raise at the end of my first year, even though I did not do anything outstanding. The next year, I

really worked hard. But then they said I was not good at communication and was denied a promotion! The first thought in my head was "Why? Why did they do this to me?" But then I immediately wondered, "Why didn't I ask this question last year?"

Everything comes as a package. There are always ups and downs. Rewards will not come in the same timeline that we think. But it will come when it should. Our mind expects a timeline. But our mental timeline and the universal timeline may not match. It is simpler to accept instead.

What is acceptance? When my manager said he was not promoting me, I didn't question why he did it to me. He had already done it to me! It did not matter WHY he did it. He already did. But instead I asked him what factors I should improve on. I showed him the areas I had performed well in and explained why I thought I deserved a promotion. Finally he admitted that the decision was already made and that he couldn't change it. Then I said okay and that I understood the situation. We ended up becoming good friends.

Acceptance does not mean agreeing, but simply not questioning "why did this happen to me?" Acceptance is simply not brooding on what "could have, should have, would have" happened. Once acceptance comes in, it is easy to understand the choices you have before you.

Acceptance prepares the intelligence to find the solution. When you 'accept', the mind loses a whole lot of its negative power. Any complaining or grumbling is non-acceptance. If we keep complaining about so-called justifiable things, it will become a habit, and habit will find an excuse for complaining.

But if we make a conscious effort to "accept" situations, over time, acceptance too becomes a habit. The time between realizing there is a problem and accepting it narrows, and finally it is immediate. "What next" comes naturally. Great leaders have this sense of acceptance. When we accept, we respect and care for people.

We may not agree with them, but when we cease to even accept people we have a big problem; we cease to be humans ourselves. Acceptance brings in a wonderful flowering of love and care. In the bhakti tradition, it matures as *sharanagati*. What is *sharanagati*? Accepting life second by second.

This is the secret of life. Inner transformation has to start with the realization of how we do not accept situations and instead complain about them. When there is a big pillar in front of me, I should find a way to go around it, but if I instead go on banging against it, is it not simply insanity? Imagine the pillar to be a mental construct. You want a situation to play out in a particular way. But it doesn't happen that way. If you continue to question "Why did it happen like this! Why should this happen to me?" is it not banging your head on reality? A physical wound will at least heal, but a mental wound will not go. It will only become bigger. The sooner we are aware of our mental non-acceptance, the quicker will we be on the path towards inner transformation and towards having a better quality of inner life. With inner life in order, the quality of outer life also improves. If you really want to help or serve someone, it has to start with yourself. A surgeon needs to first sanitize himself, right? Likewise, the first step in the process of reaching out, is for yourself to expand, to transform yourself.

**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. See p2 for his profile.

Inside this Issue

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| The Nectar of Immortality | Pg 2 |
| Story-The Mother's Face and Her Grace | Pg 3 |
| Crossword - Mahatma Gandhi Trivia | Pg 3 |
| News and Events | Pg 4 |

The Nectar of Immortality

Srimad Bhagavatam, the crown jewel among the Puranas, is considered as the essence of the Vedas ("*nigama kalpatharor gaLitham phalam*"). The uniqueness of Srimad Bhagavatam lies in the fact that—unlike other scriptures whose teachings need to be carefully studied and practiced to attain their fruit—merely listening to Bhagavatam can bestow us with salvation. ("*yasya shravana mAtrena mukthi karathale sthitam*")

The story of King Parikshith stands as testimony to this statement.

Parikshith, Arjuna's grandson and Abhimanyu's son, was the last surviving heir of the Pandavas after the Mahabharata war. When he was still in his mother's womb, Aswatthama, the son of Dronacharya, used the most powerful weapon, the *Brahmastra*, against him with the intention of destroying the Pandava lineage. However, his pregnant mother Uttara surrendered herself to Lord Krishna, and the benevolent Lord who never lets down those who surrender to Him, used His Sudarshana Chakra to save her and her unborn baby, Parikshith.

When Parikshith was born, he was given the name Vishnuraatan (one saved by Lord Vishnu). He became the king of Hastinapur after the Pandavas, and ruled the kingdom justly. He managed to reduce the effects of *kali yuga* (the Age of Vice, that had set in after Lord Krishna returned to His divine abode) and established righteousness in his kingdom.

However, in this age of Kali, even the wisest and greatest soul can easily lose sense of what is right or wrong. So did Parikshith! Once when he was out hunting, he became very thirsty. He looked around for water and spotted the hermitage of Sage Sameeka. The sage was lost in meditation and oblivious to the world. Parikshith approached him for water but when the sage did not respond, he felt insulted. So, in order to test his contemplative state, he put a dead snake around the sage's neck.

When the sage's son, Shringi learned about the incident, he became angry and cursed

Parikshith that he would be bitten by a snake and die on the seventh day. Meanwhile, Parikshith, being a *sadhu*, repented deeply for his mistake. So when the news about the curse reached him, he accepted it whole-heartedly as just punishment for his act. And instead of trying to find ways to counter or nullify the curse, he decided to use the time he was given—seven whole days—to find a way to reach the Lotus Feet of the Lord.



He crowned his son as the king, renounced his kingdom, and not knowing how to attain the Lord in just seven days, decided to fast unto death on the banks of river Ganges as he prayed for the grace of Lord Krishna. It was then that, by the Lord's grace, Sri Shuka, the great *jnani* and son of Veda Vyasa, arrived there as Parikshith's Guru, determined to lead him to Liberation in seven days.

From that moment onwards, Sri Shuka poured the nectar of Srimad Bhagavatam—which contains everything right from expositions on karma, jnana, bhakti and raja yogas, description of creation and incarnations to heart-rending stories of great devotees and finally the nectarine *lilas* of Lord Krishna Himself—into Parikshith's ears non-stop. Sri Shuka's narration was so sweet and fulfilling that Parikshith was immersed entirely in his words, without a thought about food, water or sleep.

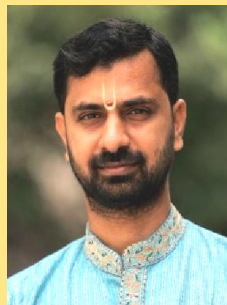
In the mere seven days he had, Parikshith had no time to put into practice all that he had heard about the different paths to reach the Lord. Yet, at the end of the seven days, when Sri Shuka completed his narration, Parikshith attained 'immortality' even before the snake came to bite his mortal frame. He achieved this simply by listening to the glorious Srimad Bhagavatam, and that is the greatness of this wonderful scripture.

This past Purnima day, the Bhadrapada Purnima, is the day that Parikshith attained the Lord, over 2000 years ago. Srimad Bhagavatam is indeed the greatest treasure that the Lord has bestowed on us in this Age.

Sowmya Balasubramanian, Fremont, CA

Sri M K Ramanujam

M K Ramanujam, a former General Manager at Ford Motor (Visteon India), Delhi University Gold Medalist and Six-Sigma Black Belt in Quality Management, gave up his promising corporate career in search of superior quality of a different kind: the quality of inner life.



His search led him to his spiritual master, His Holiness Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji, in India. Under his benign guidance, Ramanujam studied Eastern Philosophy and the lives of great saints for more than 20 years.

Ramanujam has now dedicated his life to inspiring people towards seeking permanent happiness. He conveys the message of his Master, that harmony and peace can prevail everlastingly—both in the world and within oneself—only through Inner Transformation.

Ramanujam's speaking experience spans a wide spectrum of audiences, from internationally acclaimed institutions and Fortune 500 companies such as the UK Parliament, Harvard University, Oxford University, Microsoft, Intel, GE, etc. to economically and socially underprivileged children and societies in rural India. His inspiring talks encompass a wide range of topics right from philosophical and spiritual subjects at faith-based gatherings to secular modules on stress management, transformational leadership, statistical thinking, conflict management and more for corporate entities.

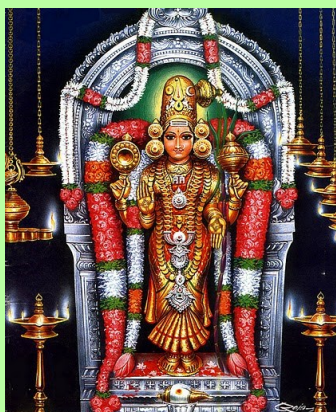
Ramanujam's style of applying profound ancient spiritual truths to practical modern times, and answering life's complicated questions in a crystal clear, unambiguous manner, has made him a much sought-after speaker.

The Mother's Face and Her Grace

Abhirami Bhattar was the name given to Subramaniya Iyer by the Maratha King Saraboji about 300 years ago. Do you know how he earned such a name?

Subramaniya was born to a pious couple in a small village called Thirukadaiyur in southern Indian state of Tamilnadu. Lord Shiva as Amritha Ghateswarar, and his consort goddess Abhirami are the presiding deities of the town's main temple. Even as a child, Subramaniya developed great devotion to goddess Abhirami.

With time, his devotion grew to such an extent that people misunderstood him to be a madman. He was often found meditating for long hours in the temple or lost in his own divine world. While in such a state he showered flowers on the women who came near him, looking upon them as the goddess Herself.



Saraboji, the Maratha king of Thanjayur visited the temple to pay homage to the Lord. He then noticed the

peculiar behavior of Subramaniya and questioned the other temple priests about him. The ones who were jealous of him remarked that he was a madman, while others rejected this categorization and explained to the King that he was an ardent devotee of goddess Abhirami. The King decided to find the truth by himself. He approached Subramaniya and asked him what day of the month it was, i.e. if it was new moon day or full moon day. Subramaniya, who saw only the radiant face of the goddess everywhere, even in the sky, then wrongly answered that it was a full moon day.

The king, who was upset, declared that Subramaniya would be beheaded

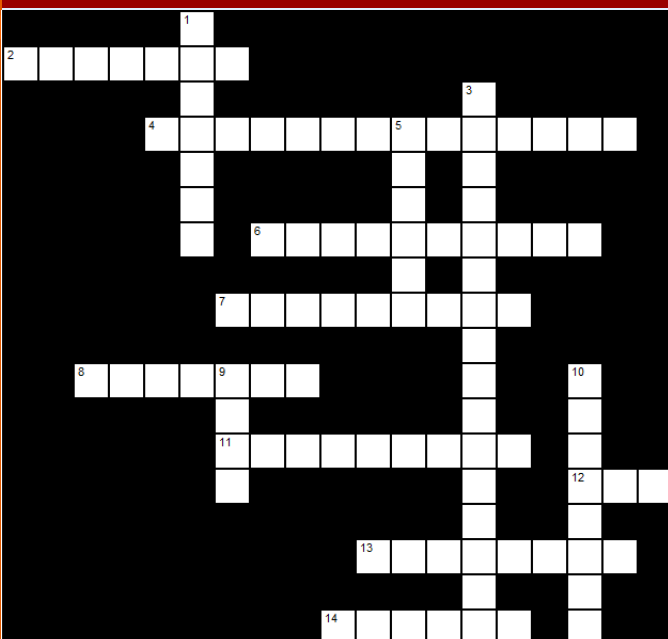
if the moon did not appear by that night.

Subramaniya later realized his mistake. He lit a fire under a wooden plank that was held by 100 ropes and sat on it. He began to compose and sing the *Abhirami Andhadhi* - 101 hymns in praise of Goddess Abhirami. After every hymn he cut one rope. When he sang the 79th hymn, goddess Abhirami was pleased and rushed to save Her *bhaktas*, who always saw Her and only Her in everything around him. The mother who appeared before him, threw one of her earrings in the air which took the form of the full moon and made the night sky radiant. With all ecstasy Subramaniya composed another 22 verses in Her praise.

The king was astonished by the great devotion of Subramaniya and fell at his feet. He then honored him by naming him "Abhirami Bhattar", meaning a staunch devotee of goddess Abhirami.

Yamini Kelappan, Chicago, IL

Crossword - Mohandas K. Gandhi



Across

- 2 Gandhiji used this term to refer to "People of God"
- 4 Gandhiji's birthday is referred to as this day, in India
- 6 Gandhiji's father
- 7 The Sabarmathi ashram is located here
- 8 The birth month of Gandhiji
- 11 Birth place of Gandhiji
- 12 Gandhiji went to London to get trained in this field
- 13 Wife of Gandhiji
- 14 Gandhiji went to school in this town

Down

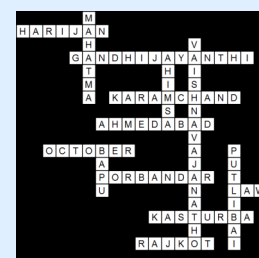
- 1 This title was conferred on Gandhiji

- 3 One of the favorite songs of Gandhiji
- 5 The Sanskrit term of non-violence
- 9 Gandhiji was fondly called by this name
- 10 Mother of Gandhiji

*Compiled by
Ramya Srinivasan, San Jose, CA*



Solution:





News and Events

GANESHA CHATURTHI

HOUSTON

Two different weekly Gopa Kuteeram programs for children aged 4-8 years are being conducted in the Houston



area. One at Namadwaar in Pearland and the second in Cypress. The 2012-13 sessions began in

September at both locations. During the first session, children had a great time learning about Lord Ganesha, learning a sloka and bhajan about Him, listening to His story, making their own umbrellas for Ganesha and doing their own pooja for him by offering sweets and modakams.

CHICAGO

On Sept 23, the Chicago GOD chapter had a wonderful beginning of the Fall semester of Gopa Kuteeram at the residence of Sri Zivan/Smt Yamini. Ganesha

Chaturthi was celebrated with grandeur - the kids learnt a new bhajan, sloka and a story on the birth of Lord Ganesha. They hand crafted their own cute little umbrellas for their own little Ganeshas and performed pooja to their Ganeshas by offering modhakams and singing the bhajan that they learnt.



SEATTLE

Ganesh Chaturthi Satsang was held at Seattle Nama Kendra on Sep 23. The children led Ganesha Pancharatnam shloka. Followed by this, they decorated pictures of Lord Ganesha and placed Him in beautiful frames. They enthusiastically then rolled 'rava laddus' and offered it to Ganesha, Lord Krishna and Sri Swamiji after singing Ganesha Bhajans and chanting Rama Nama.



NEW LIFE PLAZA OPENING & AKHANDA NAMA AT NAMADWAAR

Mayor of Manvel Ms. Delores Martin and Brazoria County Fire Marshal Mr. Martin Vela cut the ribbon to New Life Plaza, the new clinic of Dr. Lekshmi Nair and Jeevan Nair of Houston GOD Chapter, as part of their Grand Opening ceremony on September 29. Later in the evening, a wonderful satsang was held at the same premises, with purappadu, pravachan and divya namam with devotees who were visiting from Boston and California. Earlier on Friday Sep 28, a 12-hour Akhanda Nama was performed at Houston Namadwaar.



RICHMOND

Virginia GOD chapter celebrated Ra-

ghashtami in a very grand manner on Saturday, Sep 22 at the residence of Sri.Murali and Smt.Malathi Murali. Satsang started with Mahamantra chanting, Guru kirtans, Nama Vaibhava kirtans composed by Sri Swamiji and it was then followed by Divyanamam. Kids also actively participated in the satsang. The

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ramanujam ji's Schedule

Oct 11-13: Programs at Richmond, VA
For info, email gbyes@yahoo.com

Oct 13-14 - Programs at NY/NJ
For info email: desikansant@gmail.com

Oct 18-21: Programs at Boston, MA
For info email narayanans@gmail.com

Oct 23-25: Programs at Milwaukee, WI
For info email priyatulasi@yahoo.com

Oct 28-31: Programs at Minnesota, MN
For info email priyasubs@gmail.com

Nov 1-6: Programs at Seattle, WA
For info email mailamuthu@yahoo.com

Nov 9-11: Programs at Chicago, IL
For info email yaaminiz@yahoo.com

Weekly satsangs are held regularly 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; Saskatchewan, 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 circles are conducted in various cities.

Email newsletter@godivinity.org for more info.

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