

The One Virtue that Encompasses all Others

His Holiness Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji, in his kirtan "Ashtadalapoo", beautifully speaks about the eight-petaled flower with which one has to worship the Lord. Each petal he refers to here is a quality that the worshipper should possess: Forgiveness, Truth, Compassion, Peace, Devotion, Dispassion, Love and Knowledge. Great saints have all shown us that the Lord will bestow us with these qualities if one humbly submits to Him in prayer. Hence the key to unlocking all of God's treasures lies in the single quality: Humility. Sri Swamiji in a discourse years ago focused on this supreme virtue with examples from the lives of numerous great saints, who, despite their greatness and constant communion with God, were themselves epitomes of humility. Let us revisit that timeless treasure in this section.

The quality of *vinaya* (humility) encompasses all good qualities. Similarly pride is comprised of all the negative tendencies. All good qualities that a person possesses will be of no use if he does not possess humility. Yet a person endowed with many bad qualities will be seen as a good person if he just possesses humility.

Sri Adi Sankara starts his *Shadpathi Stotra* with the following verse "*avinayam apavayna vishno*". *Avinayam* refers to pride and here Adi Sankara prays to Bhagavan to remove any pride in him, the reason being that God protects those devotees who have no trace of pride in them and are humble.

When referring to the 100 verses of *Soundarya Lahiri* composed by him on Goddess Durga, Sri Adi Sankara, in all humility, likens the verses to offering worship to the ocean with a drop of water or showing *harathi* with a small lamp to the effulgent sun.

Once Kanchi Mahaperiyava was having a word with his closest devotees and mentioned that a *sanyasi* (ascetic) should not have any desire. "Yet I have a desire," he informed them. When asked what it was, the great saint replied, "The whole world should not know that a *sanyasi* like me

had ever existed."

A weekly magazine was interviewing many famous personalities for an article to be published for Diwali. The question posed to them was, "What have you learnt from the world?" When Mahaperiyava was asked this question, he replied, "The world keeps teaching me new lessons every second. But I do not have the capacity to learn them!"

Lord Sri Krishna in Bhagavad Gita instructs Arjuna:

"*thatviddhi pranipadena pariprashnena sevaya*" – "One should humbly serve a Mahatma and then get all his questions clarified."

When the entire Kuru clan

wished to bestow the honor of chief guest of Yudhishtira's Rajasuya Yaga on Sri Krishna, where was the Lord? He was found at the entrance performing *pada puja* (washing the feet) to the guests.

Sri Ramanujacharya, in the final days of his avatar, climbed the *gopuram* of Srirangam. Seeing this, a huge crowd gathered there. To them Ramanujacharya said, "With the only motive that God's work should be performed in the right way, I may have been severe and harsh on you all, who are God's servants. If I had hurt even one of you *bhAgavatas* with my harsh words, God will not grant me a place in Vaikunta. Hence I request you all to please forgive me." Saying so, he prostrated to all of them!

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu says in his *Sikshashtakam* that a devotee should consider himself lower than a blade of grass - "*trinAd api sunlchEna tarOr api sahishnuNa...*". In many instances, Mahaprabhu himself proved as a worthy example to this verse by prostrating to one and all without any inhibition.

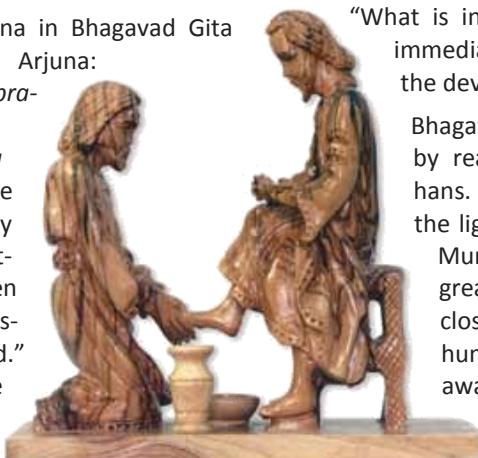
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Sri Ramana Maharishi has stated that he prostrates mentally to everyone who enters the ashram hall to have his darshan.

Sri Swamiji concludes the discourse with another apt example. In the early days of Yogi Ramsuratkumar, some people who came to see him would be hesitant whether to prostrate to him or not. While they stood there mentally pondering this question, Yogi Ramsuratkumar would say, "What is in it? I will do pranams!" and immediately he would prostrate to the devotees.

Bhagavan's heart can be understood by reading the lives of these Mahans. Only in a humble heart does the light of the Lord shine forth. Sri

Muralidhara Swamiji says, "The great secret is that the Lord is closer to us when we are most humble, and He moves further away from us when we lack humility."



The wonderful festival of Onam was celebrated recently, which reminds us of the great occasion when the Lord incarnated as Vamana (the dwarf boy) who became Trivikrama (the gigantic Lord of the three worlds) to subdue the pride of His devotee, King Bali. But once King Bali submitted humbly to the Lord and requested Him to place His foot on his own head, the Lord was overjoyed and immediately bestowed His devotee with the best of worlds with Himself standing guard at his gate!

As Sri Swamiji says, humility brings us the Lord Himself. Let us pray to Lord Sri Hari to fill our hearts with this singular quality of humility, and thus bestow His special grace on us.

Aravind Thathachari, Dallas, TX
Based on the discourses of
HH Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji

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Sri Anandamayi Ma – Bliss Personified

Sri Anandamayi Ma, who is counted among the greatest saints of the 20th century, was born on April 30th 1896 in Kheora, East Bengal. She was named Nirmala Sundari Devi meaning “Goddess of flawless beauty”. Born to pious, spiritually inclined parents, she exhibited spiritual characteristics even when she was born, as she did not cry but instead portrayed a peaceful countenance. In fact, to the surprise of others she later even remembered the names of the people who were present at the time of her birth.

Even as a child, Anandamayi Ma was spiritually very sensitive. She would go into states of ecstasy whenever she heard the chanting of religious mantras. On certain occasions, while playing with her friends, she would suddenly become immobile and then chant the holy names. She used to regularly chant the “Hari” *nama* as learned from her father.

As per the custom of those days, Anandamayi Ma was married at an early age of 13 to Ramani Mohan Chakraborti of Vikramapura. At the age of 18, she went to live with her husband. She performed all the household duties with dedication and took care of her husband very well. But their marriage was never consummated. Later, her husband realized that she was in a higher plane of spiritual awareness and that she was constantly in a state of divine ecstasy. In 1922, without the guidance of an external guru, she went through the process of initiation in accordance with the *shastras*. The guru emerged from within her, imparted instructions to her and then was absorbed back into her. Later, she gave initiation to her husband and named him Bholanath.

In 1924, when Ma moved to Dacca (now



Dhaka), people came to know about her spiritual qualities and began to seek guidance and solace from her. Though she had never been formally educated, she would talk with a perception that would amaze even well-versed scholars. When she went into spiritual ecstasy during kirtans her body would sway to the rhythm of the kirtan. She would enter into a deep trance for long hours after this. It was her husband Bholanath who would try to bring her out of this state by calling to her. When she responded, he would advise the lady devotees to rub her hands and feet and keep talking to her so that it would bring her back to the worldly plane. She would roll on the ground; shed profuse tears. She would sometimes dance for a long period. Sometimes she would talk rapidly. Her smiling countenance earned her the name ‘Kushir Maa’ [Mother of Bliss].

In 1932, she left Bengal and travelled all around the country. Her divine attraction drew a huge group of followers around her. Even political leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, Rajendra Prasad came to have her *darshan*. She was also known for her *siddhis* or yogic powers—she could read her devotee's thoughts at a distance, make her body shrink and expand, and heal the sick. But what truly attracted people to her was the love and happiness she emanated and the peace that they felt in her presence.

Anandamayi Ma attained samadhi on 27 August, 1982 in her ashram in Dehradun. Her body was taken to Kankhal and a Samadhi was built for her there. She had been an embodiment of love and affection, offering comfort to her numerous devotees. Her Divine presence is felt at her samadhi even today.

Anusha Ramesh, San Jose, CA

Here are a couple of interesting incidents from Sri Anandamayi Ma's Life:

Ma's Compassion

Once, Ma along with two attendants of hers went to the railway station in a devotee's car. There she requested that devotee to buy three train tickets to Saranath but the devotee hesitated, for there was no train to Saranath for the next twenty-four hours. But Ma was adamant and the tickets were bought. A train arrived and Ma boarded the train with her two attendants, despite being told that it would not stop at Saranath. After some time the train suddenly stopped as there was no clear signal. At once Ma got down asking her two attendants also to get down. She began to walk away from the station with quick strides. They could not comprehend what was happening. The two attendants soon realized that they were in Saranath!

Ma took them through the path that led to Birla Dharamsala. She entered the Dharamsala and walked straight into a particular room within. Here a female devotee of Ma sat crying out for Ma! This Marathi devotee had come from far to Saranath as she had been [mis] informed that Ma was there. On reaching Saranath she was terribly disappointed on learning that Ma was at Varanasi. The Dharamsala was huge and in a remote area of Saranath. This devotee was unnerved to spend the night all alone there. Further, she was suffering from high fever. She had begun to desperately cry out to Ma for help! Now Ma stood before her and said that everything was fine as she had come. Ma then spent the night talking and joking with her!

Way to Reach God

When Ma was at Madras, a devotee asked about the way to reach God. Ma replied, “Cry for Hari and you will get Him.”

The devotee again responded that he was incapable of crying. She in turn replied, “In that case, keep company of those who can.”

Pindam Out Of Purnam!

Although ‘Hinduism’ is said to have many ‘gods’ and ‘goddesses’, the truth is that all the gods are only different names, forms and attributes of the One Supreme God.

Among the various forms of God, Lord Ganesha is considered as the remover of obstacles. He is also celebrated for possessing both wealth and knowledge, and is acknowledged for his versatile nature. It is a custom in India to pray to Lord Ganesha before commencing an auspicious event or project. If the pooja is to be done in a place where there is no *vigraha* (image) of the god, then a *pindam* (ball) is made out of a handful of rice flour representing the deity, and flowers, *kumkum*, *chandan*, etc. are offered to it.

At the end of the pooja, everything, including the pindam, is offered mentally to God. This denotes that every-

thing (names and forms) that comes out of Brah-

man (*Purnam*, the Complete, Supreme God) finally goes back into That (the Origin of Everything). Here is a story

that carries the same significance. There was once an old lady who lived by herself in a village. One day, as she was sitting in her porch, a saint passed by. She invit-

ed him inside her home and offered him some food and water. The saint was very pleased with her hospitality and learned that she lived alone. He offered her a round white stone and told her that it was Lord Ganesha. He advised her to take care of him as her own son. This lady grew very affectionate towards this stone. She began to



take care of it as she

would her own little baby.

Every day she fed the little stone, bathed it and put it to sleep by singing lullabies to it. Days rolled by and the old lady grew weaker.

One fine morning someone knocked on her door. She opened the door and saw a beautiful blue boy standing there. He had a flute in his hand, a peacock feather on his crown and stood in an attractive, gracefully curved pose. He was very bright and strikingly handsome. The lady could not see him properly because of his radiance.

Squinting her eyes, she asked him, “Who are you?”

He replied, “I am the little son that you have been taking care of everyday!” The old lady was puzzled, and she exclaimed, “But my son is round and white!”

The little blue boy simply smiled and took her to His abode.

Priya Tulasi, Milwaukee, WI

Quiz Time - Vishwakarma Trivia

We often come across the name “Vishwakarma” in many stories from the Puranas and Itihasas. But little do we know about him except perhaps that he is a heavenly architect. In some parts of India, Vishwakarma Puja is celebrated around this time of the year. Let’s use this opportunity to learn a little more about this talented engineer!

1. Who is Lord Vishwakarma?
 - A. God of Strength
 - B. God of Craftsmen and Architects
 - C. God of Knowledge

2. Name the architectural wonder built by Vishwakarma in the Treta Yuga:
 - A. Lanka
 - B. Ayodhya

- C. Mithila

3. Name the magnificent city that was built by Vishwakarma in Dwapara Yuga:
 - A. Mathura
 - B. Puri
 - C. Dwaraka

4. Which city did Lord Krishna request Vishwakarma to build for the Pandavas?
 - A. Indraprastha
 - B. Kurukshetra
 - C. Mathura

5. Name the architectural accomplishment of Vishwakarma in Satya Yuga:
 - A. Swarga
 - B. Naraka
 - C. Kailash

6. In which town in India is Lord Vishwakarma’s temple located?

Compiled by:
Ramya Srinivasan, San Jose, CA

Answers:

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



Janmashtami Satsangs

By the divine grace of Sri Swamiji, Krishna Jayanthi Madhura Utsav was conducted in a grand manner at Houston Namadwaar from Aug 10-19th, 2012. Akhanda Nama was performed for 12 hours from 6 am to 6 pm on all the nine days. A Sangseetha Upanayam was performed during the last three days of the Utsav with rendition of kirtans on Sri Krishna Jananam, Govinda Pattabishekam and Rukmini Kalyanam.

All the Houston families enthusiastically participated during the Utsav. On the poorthi day of the Utsav, it rained heavily immersing all the Houston devotees in great joy!

DALLAS

Dallas GOD chapter celebrated Gokulastami on 11th August 2012 at the residence of Smt Vidya and Sri Ramji. The satsang started with Dhyana sloka followed by Nama Sankirtan. The devotees then joyfully sang kirtans composed by Sri Swamiji and recited Dhruva and Prahalada Stutis from Srimad Bhagavatham. Gopa Kuteeram session was conducted by Viji and Sankarji and Ashaji taught the kids "Madhurashtakam" and a couple of other Kirtans which the kids rendered very beautifully. The Dallas Gopis danced around Krishna and Radha as the Gopas sang the "Krishna Krishna" bhajan. The Satsang ended with "Kaliyayum Bali kollum" kirtan followed by Aarthi and Prasad.



AKANDA NAMA AND SPECIAL SATSANG IN CHICAGO



Janmashtami was celebrated on Sunday, Aug 12th at Sri Suresh and Smt Padma Suresh's residence. Mahamantra kirtan was chanted from 10 am to 4 pm. Around 10 to 15 devotees took part in the Akhanda Nama session.

After this, a set of devotees went to the near by Krishna temple at Grayslake and chanted the Hare Rama Mahamantra for around 20 minutes. About 100 hundred chance visitors to the temple took part in this chanting.

News and Events

HOUSTON NAMADWAAR



UPCOMING EVENTS

HOUSTON NAMADWAAR

Sep 28-30: Srinivasa Vaibhavam Utsav

Sep 29 special program—Procession, Discourse and Divya Namam at **New Life Plaza, 3945 CR 58, Manvel TX**
For more info, call 281-402-6585 or email houston.god@godivinity.org

ATLANTA

Oct 4-6th, 7-9pm—**Essence of Srimad Bhagavatam** (Inner Transformation Series) by **Sri Ramanujamji**
Oct 7th, 4-7pm—**Mass Prayer**
Venue: Montessori Scholars, Milton, GA
Contact: **Kishore, 404-788-7391, raghupathy.rama@gmail.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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