

The Highest Achievement

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Guru Poornima Message

In Srimad Bhagavatam, Sage Narada, while speaking to Sage Veda Vyasa about his earlier birth, says that he attained bhakti simply through association with sadhus. In fact, he says that the Lord Himself told him (then a little boy) that he (Narada) had found a shortcut to come to Him through *sadhu seva* (service of sadhus).



So which is the greatest path to God? Is it *dhyana* (meditation) or *Raja yoga* or *Vedanta vichara* (self-enquiry) or *sanyasa* (asceticism) or to tightly hold on to the feet of a Mahatma? **Holding on tightly to the feet of a Mahatma is truly the greatest!**

Why? Because in the other paths, you do not know if we will attain God or fall down. You may do *dhyana* for some days but stop after a while. You may be deeply devoted for a while, but permanent devotion cannot be vouchsafed. You may think you have deep *vairagya* (dispassion) for a while but you know not if it will remain forever. You may be pushed to a state where you would say "Oh, Sir! I was so full of bhakti in those days. But now it's all gone!" or "Oh, how deeply I would get into *dhyana* before, but now it's all gone!"

Why does this happen? Because in this case, you are depending on yourself and your efforts. On the contrary, when you hold the feet of a Mahatma tightly, he will pull you along with him to the shore!

While speaking of Guru Bhakti it has been said: There are deep hollows and valleys in the forests. The fly, mosquito, bee, ant... all aspire to cross this deep hollow. But is it possible for such tiny creatures to cross it? But a mighty lion has the strength to jump across in a trice to the other side. Now all that the fly, mosquito, bee and ant have to do is to climb onto the mighty lion. Are they a burden to the mighty lion? Certainly not. So when the mighty lion

jumps over the huge hollow to the other side, thousands of flies, mosquitos, ants and other insects are automatically carried to the other side. In the same way, hold on to a powerful Mahatma: when He jumps across the deep pit of *samsara* you will also jump over and move to the other side.

Who is a Guru? One may earn the desire to attain God. Or the Lord Himself may desire to give Himself to a person! Or, let us put it this way – when Bhagavan feels the desire to show Himself to a person he (the person) gets the desire to attain Bhagavan! When this desire arises, Bhagavan shows him (the person) the one who can show Him (Bhagavan)!

The one who can show Bhagavan to His Bhakta is verily the Guru. So He leads that person to the Guru. Bhagavan thus prepares the *jiva* (soul) slowly and lifts him up gradually only through satsang and Guru's grace (Guru krupa). So some come to a Mahatma early, some later. This is all the will of Bhagavan.

There are so many people whose lives have changed completely simply with Guru krupa. Vijaya Vittala Dasa was a great Mahan who has composed many songs and works, among them the famous song, "Sada enna hrudayadalli vaasa maado Sri Hare." He was born in a very poor family and faced a lot of difficulty in life. Once he went to Kasi, and on the way he had to endure several abuses and insults. At Kasi, he had a vision of Sri Purandara Dasa, who showered His grace on him. After that, he was filled with devotion and began to sing the Lord's glories, and people automatically began to respect and honor him. Vijaya Dasa thought, "While going to Kasi I only received abuses and insults but now on my way back from Kasi I receive honor. What have I earned in between? I have earned Guru krupa! Guru krupa

has

changed everything!"

Even when we look into our own lives don't we realize the state in which we were before earning the grace of the Guru and the state we are now in after having earned the grace of the Guru? We may not be able to actually fathom it but just think of what great understanding Guru krupa has given us over so many matters. Did we know what Moksha is? Did we know what human birth was meant for? Did we know what Bhagavatam is? Did we know about Bhagavan Naama? Did we know who Sadhus are? Did we know who Mahans are? Did we know what Vaikuntam is? Did we know what Jivan mukti is? Did we know what was meant by *papa* or *punya* (sins or merit)? How many things does the Guru incessantly teach us! The transformation that has been wrought by Guru krupa is known to each one of us deep within. This is the rarest thing to attain.

In the world when you ask someone, "What have you achieved in your life?", each person may give a different reply - of having earned much wealth, some high position, having settled all his children, earned the President award, etc. But the highest achievement that one attains in life is verily Guru krupa. That is truly the supreme. Greater than everything. Very special. Though one may understand this it gets obliterated from memory now and then, due to Maya. Only at the time of death when the life leaves the body will one realize what Guru krupa has done to him.

Excerpts from HH Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji's discourse on Guru Poornima Day, July 12, 2014.

Inside this Issue

Cherished Memoirs - 14	Pg 2
Kid's Quiz - Gurus from the scriptures	Pg 2
Madhura Geetam - 14	Pg 3
Story Time - Lilas of Lord Guruvayurappan	Pg 3
News and Events	Pg 4



Cherished Memoirs 14 - The Ghosts of the World

This series chronicles interesting experiences recounted by the devotees of HH Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji. These articles are translations from the series, "Madhuramaana Mahaneyar" by Dr. A Bhagyanathan, personal secretary to Sri Swamiji, that is published every month in Madhuramurali Tamil monthly magazine.

The Ghosts of the World

One day, we were all chanting Nama (the Divine Name) at Bhagavata Bhavanam (the main prayer hall at Sri Swamiji's Madhurapuri Ashram). Sri Swamiji came and sat there. We all sat down around "Namam ketkum Perumal" (the Perumal who stands in the center of the hall listening to the devotees who constantly chant Nama in the hall). Sri Swamiji also began chanting Nama along with us.

Suddenly, Sri Swamiji's facial expression changed.

We all continued to watch Sri Swamiji's face. Sri Swamiji then asked, "Why are all of you staring at me?" We remained silent.

"I look afraid and worried. Wondering what could be the reason for that, you are worried. Isn't that right?" he said. We all

nodded our heads.

"Many ghosts have come and are sitting around me. They are all scaring me in different ways. What shall I do?" said Sri Swamiji, with eyes filled with tears.

We asked, "Have ghosts come here right now, in this place?" Sri Swamiji said, "Yes."

We asked, "Are you seeing them right now?"

"Yes, I am seeing them," he replied.

Immediately, one devotee said, "Sri Premika Varadhan truly lives here. This place constantly reverberates with the sacred sound of the Vedas and of Nama. How can ghosts be here?"

Sri Swamiji said, "It is here that those ghosts will come."

We did not understand anything. "Perhaps a dead person has come here as a ghost in order to attain salvation?" we ventured.

Sri Swamiji said, "No. These ghosts come



HH Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji

often in front of me and scare me." We still did not understand anything.

Sri Swamiji pointed one by one to many spots around him and said, "The name of the ghost that is sitting here is Jara (old age). This ghost is scaring me by saying, 'Old age will descend upon you quickly. See Bhagavan before then.'

"There is another ghost here. That one is called Vyaadhi (disease). That one too is scaring me. Another ghost is called Dhukkam (sorrow). Similarly ghosts called Death, Accident, Hunger, Thirst, Sleep

- all continue to frighten me."

"We have to somehow attain Mukti in this birth. If we don't attain Liberation in this birth, we don't know if we will get a human birth next time. Also we don't know after how many years we will be reborn, or what the situation of the world will be at that time," saying this he walked out of the hall.

Ever since we listened to these words of his, those ghosts frighten us also now and then!

*From May 2014 issue of Madhuramurali
Translated by Viji Ramakrishnan, Dallas TX*

Kid's Quiz - Gurus from the Scriptures

July 12, 2014 was celebrated as Guru Poornima, an auspicious day to celebrate, worship and extol the greatness of the Guru. On this occasion, let's see if you know who were the Gurus of some famous Indian personalities.

1. Who is considered the first guru of Sanatana Dharma?

- A. Sage Veda Vyasa
- B. Lord Brahma
- C. Sage Brihaspati

2. Who was Sri Adi Shankara's guru?

- A. Sri Shankara Bhagavadpada
- B. Sri Govinda Bhagavadpada
- C. Lord Shiva

3. Even the Lord, in His avatars as Rama and Krishna, learned under a Guru to show the importance of a Guru to the world. Who were the gurus of Rama and Krishna?

- A. Sage Brihaspati and Sage Vishwamitra

Sage Sandeepani

- C. Sage Gautama and Sage Kripa

4. Who was King Parikshith's guru, who narrated Srimad Bhagavatam to him?

- A. Sage Shuka
- B. Sage Vyasa
- C. Sage Sameeka

5. Who is considered to be symbolic of the Guru in Ramayana—who brought the Lord to Sugreeva and Sita?

- A. Bharata
- B. Vali
- C. Hanuman

6. Who was the guru of Dhruva & Prahlada?

- A. Sage Durvasa
- B. Sage Narada
- C. Sage Pippalayana

7. Who was Swami Vivekananda's Guru?

- A. Pavhari Baba

- B. Sage Vasishtha and

- B. Swami Ramakrishnananda
- C. Ramakrishna Paramahansa

8. Lord Krishna's intimate friend, Uddhava, studied under this sage:

- A. Sage Sandeepani
- B. Sage Brihaspati
- C. Sage Shukracharya

9. Both these Mahatmas are said to be the gurus of the famous king Chhatrapati Shivaji:

- A. Sri Samartha Ramdas and Sant Tukaram
- B. Sri Bhadrachala Ramdas and Sant Eknath
- C. Sant Jnanadev and Sant Namdev

10. The word "Guru" in Sanskrit means:

- A. One who teaches
- B. One who shows the way
- C. One who dispels darkness and bestows liberation.

**Compiled by
Ramya Srinivasan, San Jose CA**

Answers:

1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-A, 5-C, 6-B, 7-C, 8-B, 9-A, 10-C



Madhura Geetam - Bharata Pradakshina 14

consecrated
Lord

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.

Mattapalli

On the banks of River Krishna is the town of Mattapalli, home to one of the five famous temples in Andhra Pradesh for Lord Nrisimha. Here, Lord Nrisimha is found to be sitting in Padmasana posture and is about one foot tall. He has four hands and he holds the discus and conch in his upper hands and is resting his lower right hand on his knee. His lower left hand is not visible. His consort is RajaLakshmi. Typically, in Lord Hari's temples, Garuda is seen facing the Lord, near the Dwajasthamba. In Mattapalli, Lord Hanuman also stands next to Garuda, facing the Lord.

Lord Nrisimha is self-manifested and is believed to have been worshipped by sages for several ages. He revealed himself in this age of Kali, out of compassion for the masses. He was found by devotee Machireddi in a cave. The devotee built a modest structure near the site and

Nrisimha there and arranged for worship.

Devotees, when afflicted with diseases, pray to Lord Nrisimha of Mattapalli for cure. Sri Muralidhara Swamiji has mentioned this particular power of the Lord in his song on the Lord. The song, set in the beautiful raga Simhendramadhyamam, and its meaning are presented here.

Veera Simha Dheera Simha

Raga: Simhendramadhyamam, Tala: Adi

vIra simha dhlra simha
ugra simha hunkAra simha

aTTahAsa bhakta ullAsa
maTTapaLLi vAsa satya vilAsa

yoga svarUpa shoka vinAsa
roga nivarthaka parama pavitra

mAlola pAlaka bAla
marakatamaNinlla sharaNAgata vatsala

kshipra suprasanna aprameya
vipra muraLidhara parama mitra

Meaning

[O Lord, You are]
The brave Lion, bold Lion



The fierce Lion, the roaring Lion

You are boisterous, the One who gives joy to Your devotees

One who dwells at Mattapalli, the One who is the abode of Truth

You are the very form of Yoga; the destroyer of grief

You are the cure for diseases; the ultimate pure One

You are the unflinching protector of the little boy (Prahlada)

You are One who is dark-hued like the blue emerald; the One who loves the surrendered ones

You are One who is quickly pleased and One who cannot be known

Muralidhara's ultimate friend

Sowmya Balasubramanian, San Jose CA

Lilas of Lord Guruvayurappan

Given below are two true-life incidents that occurred in the lives of two devotees of Lord Guruvayurappan that were narrated by Sri Swamiji during the Guruvayur Saphaha Sathakrathu Mahotsavam in 2008.

An ardent devotee of Lord Guruvayurappan lived in a village close to Guruvayur. This devotee owned a number of coconut farms. Every year he used to offer a share of the yield from these farms to Lord Guruvayurappan. Once as he proceeded towards Guruvayur, carrying the coconuts and singing the praise of the Lord, he was stopped by some thieves. They demanded the coconuts from him. The devotee refused to submit and



said, "These coconuts have to be offered to my Lord Guruvayurappan. Hence, it is not right on your part to demand these coconuts."

The thieves laughed at him and teased, "Oh! are these Guruvayurappan's coconuts so special as to have grown horns?" When they tried to take the coconuts by force they all fell out of the bags. And, lo! what a surprise! the coconuts had indeed grown horns! A few such coconuts that had grown horns can even today be seen displayed inside the temple premises as an indication of the Lord's divine play.

The next incident is as follows:

Once, a poor little boy could not get even a morsel of food to appease his hunger. Caught in severe pangs of hunger he stole a

banana from a nearby fruit shop. Being a devotee of Lord Guruvayurappan he dropped half the banana into the 'hundi' while he ate the other half.

Learning about the theft the shop-keeper caught hold of the boy and demanded him to own up the theft. And the boy pleaded guilty.

Looking at the innocent face of the little boy the shop-keeper did not have the heart to punish him. However, with a view to teach the boy a lesson, he asked him to circumambulate (walk around) the temple a certain number of times. The shop-keeper was aghast to find Lord Guruvayurappan follow the little boy who went around the temple as instructed by him. Later, that night the Lord appeared in his dream and explained, "Since I have also had a share in the stolen banana I am bound to share the punishment, too. So I followed the boy around the temple."

Source: www.madhuramurali.org



News & Events

'RADHE RADHE - A STORY OF LOVE FOR THE SUPREME' DANCE BALLET IN MINNEAPOLIS, MN



VIBRANT INDIA CAMP - HOUSTON, TX



CRAZY KISHKINDA - CYPRESS, TX



MADHURA UTSAV - RICHMOND, VA



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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