

## Unparalleled Love of the Gopis!

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### Learnings from Bhagavatam

*This is the concluding part of the 10-part series, "Learnings from Srimad Bhagavatam" that was published in this newsletter over the last year.*

Love is the one element in the world that always brings happiness and peace; that always brings people together; that can always melt even the hardest of hearts and the cruelest of minds; and which is the one weapon and remedy against all the evils of the world.

It is no surprise then that the essence of the most beautiful scripture in the world – Srimad Bhagavatam – is nothing but Love.

All through Bhagavatam, in its different stories, we constantly encounter love in its various forms – of a king for his subjects, of the people for their ruler, of a person for his/her clan and family, of a warrior for his nation, of a wife for her husband, of a mother/father for her/his child, the love of a devotee for God and of God for His devotee.

And among all these forms of love spoken of in Bhagavatam, stands the shining crown jewel of the highest love there can ever be – the utterly selfless, desire-free love of the Gopis for Bhagavan Sri Krishna.

Sri Krishna avatar is not only the sweetest and most beautiful of all of Bhagavan's avatars but also the most benevolent, compassionate, generous and softest avatar. It is almost as if His heart melted the moment someone simply went up to Him. Instantly He granted whatever was asked of Him and sometimes, gave even more than what was asked! He gave *moksha* to even His adversaries; He was an emissary and a charioteer of the Pandavas and got them their kingdom; He gave protection, strength and prosperity to the Yadavas; He gave Sudama untold wealth; He even visited Kubja and granted her prayers.



What then to say of the Gopis of Brindavan, who desired nothing from Krishna but desired only Krishna Himself? He did give Himself to them, but in return for their selflessness, He also rewarded them with the best thing that He can ever give – completely pure love for Himself, untainted by any kind of desire.

The Gopis sacrificed their beloved Krishna for the sake of the world; but their love for Him remained forever with them, thus ensuring His constant presence in their hearts.

It must indeed be because of this all-encompassing love of the Gopis, that everything and everyone in Brindavan developed the highest love for Krishna. The cows, animals, birds, trees, creepers, rivers and streams of Brindavan; the mountain Govardhana; the fruit sellers of Brindavan; the Yagna-patnis (wives of priests who were performing sacrifices in the forests near Brindavan); even the wives of the venomous Kaliya!

The Yagna-patnis left their families and duties in an instant to have darshan of Sri Krishna, for whom they were filled with love simply through listening about His appearance and exploits from the Gopis.

The wives of Kaliya revealed their beautiful, hidden devotion to Sri Krishna in their wonderful *stuti* (praise), where they say they do not desire the highest realm, the riches of the world, a position of power, yoga siddhis or even mukti, but they desire only the dust of the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna. How could these poisonous snakes have developed such pure, untainted devotion to Bhagavan except by listening constantly to His glories raining from the sweet, love-filled lips of the great Gopis?

More than the presence of Sri Krishna, it is because of the presence of these exalted Gopis that Brindavan is the holiest of all holy places. Krishna's intimate friend Uddhava – when he visited Brindavan –

**Oct 24, 2014—Aippasi Swati**



**Jayanti Day of HH Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji**

**GOD USA wishes its readers a Happy , Joyful and Auspicious Deepavali! Prayers for a life filled with constant remembrance of the grace of God and Guru.**

was himself moved so intensely by the love of these Gopis for his Lord that he rolled in the dust of the feet – not of Sri Krishna – but of Sri Radha and the Gopis!

The *Rasa panchadhyayi* (five chapters describing Rasa leela) in the heart of Srimad Bhagavatam's 10<sup>th</sup> Canto are the essence of Bhagavan's grace on the Gopis. The great mahatma Kanchi Mahaperiyava shed tears when he heard about somebody's ignorant comment that Bhagavatam would have been a great scripture if only the Rasa leela was not there, and replied that it was only because he himself had done *parayanam* (recited) of the *Rasa panchadhyayi* numerous times in his previous births that he had now obtained the life of a sanyasi!

Such is the greatness of the Gopis! Such is the greatness of Bhagavan Sri Krishna! Such is the greatness of Srimad Bhagavatam! And this great Srimad Bhagavatam has now dropped onto the laps of us, mere ignorant mortals. Such is the greatness of the mahatmas who constantly expound the nectar of this great scripture!

**Nisha Giri, Houston TX**

### Inside this Issue

<b>Cherished Memoirs - 17</b>	Pg 2
<b>Swami Shantanandapuri Maharaj</b>	Pg 2
<b>What Krishna Likes</b>	Pg 2
<b>Madhura Geetam - 17</b>	Pg 3
<b>Kids' Corner—Vijayadasami</b>	Pg 3
<b>Halloween Special Quiz</b>	Pg 4
<b>News and Events</b>	Pg 4



## Cherished Memoirs 17 - A Saint's Love & Sacrifice

*This series chronicles interesting experiences recounted by the devotees of HH Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji. These articles are translations from the series, "Madhuramaana Mahaneeyar" that is published every month in Madhuramurali Tamil monthly magazine.*

### A Saint's Love & Sacrifice

Saints lead a very pure life. They always do *tapas* (penance). Even such *mahans* (saints) suffer out of some disease during their last days. Take the case of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Sri Ramana Maharshi and Yogi Ramsuratkumar. They all suffered from cancer during their last days.

Why is this?

All these saints are avatars of God and so there is no question of deriving sins from their previous births.

There is no need to explain how holy their life has been. People who have been with these saints are standing evidences to how holy their lives were.

So what is the reason for their sufferings?

It is all because of us. They take on our sins to liberate us. Mahans take on and remove the sins from all those that they meet, touch and take food from.

Recently when speaking with Sri Swamiji, in this context, he said, "Can the saints not prevent these sins from coming to them?

Of course, they can. But if they do that, the benefits that others derive from them—spiritual progress, removal of troubles, etc.—will not happen. [So the mahans choose to take the sins on.] A divine relationship is formed between a Guru and the people who come to him. That is the reason this happens."

*by Smt. Jayanthi Janakiraman in Aug 2005 issue of Madhuramurali Tamil monthly magazine  
Translated by Sankar Ganesan, Dallas TX*



HH Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji

## Swami Shantanandapuri Maharaj—An Homage

*Swami Shantanandapuri Maharaj, a great saint, attained mahasamadhi on October 14, 2014. He was a disciple of Swami Purushottamananda Maharaj of Vasishta Guha, who in turn was a disciple of Swami Brahmananda, the great direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.*

*Sri Shantanandapuri Swamiji had great regard for our Guru Maharaj, Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji and our Guru Maharaj for him. They have met each other many times.*

*Shantanandapuri Swamiji spent a lot of time at Sri Ramanasramam in Tiruvannamalai. His mortal frame has been laid to rest not far from Sri Ramanasramam, in the outskirts of Tiruvannamalai.*

*Swamiji has written several books and articles that have been published by his devotees over the years. Here is an extract from the preface to his popular book on Srimad Bhagavatam, where he speaks of his own sadhana and Srimad Bhagavatam's greatness.*

### SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM:

#### Its Message for the Modern Man (An extract from the preface)

I was led to my Gurudev in a Himalayan Cave in 1957 by a stranger who was my travelling companion in a bus. My Gurudev, to my delight, was a grand disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and resembled the latter in many respects. In my very first meeting, I was ordered by my Gurudev to do Bhagavata Saptaham (reading and



Picture & extract courtesy:  
swamishantanandapurimaharaj.org

Bhagavatam, a book unknown to me till then), for seven days at the time of his birthday celebrations in his cave Ashram. Oh! What a legacy of a priceless treasure my Gurudev gave me for my sadhana, in the form of Srimad Bhagavatam!

The Grace of the Lord flows perennially. It was that only which started me on the path in 1950 even though I had remained unaware of either God or His grace earlier. I was on my own. The entire sadhana

was an uphill task, or rather it looked so. There were ups and downs in my sadhana. And even after coming under the refuge of my Guru, for years in between when I was abroad mainly, I forgot prayers, meditation, my Guru and the Lord. But the Lord and my Gurudev never forgot me. Again in surprisingly unexpected ways, they brought me back to active sadhana. The Lord ever remains behind the child who starts walking on this path on its own, but the child is unaware of it. He ever remains alert to catch the stumbling child.

Through all this period, I never parted company with reading Bhagavatam at home. I look upon Bhagavatam as Lord Krishna himself and Krishna is the Supreme formless Brahman, my very Self.

It is Srimad Bhagavatam (given to me by my Guru) that made me grow from a crass donkey to an Arab Stallion. It led me smoothly to the state of formal sanyasa (monkhood). It made me desireless, free

discouraging from attachment and ego and I matured into the mental stage of a Sanyasin long before I donned the ochre robe formally after initiation.

The grace of the Lord is always with us, but it is our own efforts (*purushartha*) under the watchful, encouraging and benign eye of the Lord, that takes us to an advanced spiritual state. In the ultimate state again, it is the gravitational pull of the Lord's grace that catapults us into the final God realization and consequent liberation. The Lord rushes to the rescue of an aspirant at the appropriate time and smoothens the way by relieving him of all worldly burdens.

## What Krishna Likes!

Kunti always kept her bhakti inside and never bowed down to Krishna before telling Kunti Stuti [in Srimad Bhagavatam].

Krishna bows down to Kunti and Kunti knows that Krishna is the all supreme, but raises her hand and says "aishman bavat". Krishna wants Kunti to raise her hand, so Kunti does what he wants. A bhakta loves the Lord, so they do what He wants.

Likewise, there was a Rama bhakta named Vasudeva Parabramam. He had Rama's darshan and Rama wanted to give Vasudeva Parabramam boons. Vasudeva Parabramam said he wanted to say 'Rama' all the time. Rama told him to ask for another boon, so this time Vasudeva Parabramam asked to say 'Sita' all the time. People asked why, and he said "because Rama loves Sita". Such is the love of a bhakta.

*Haritha Ragouramane, 8 yrs, Frisco TX  
From Sri Ramanujamji's lecture on Kunti Stuti*





## Madhura Geetam - Bharata Pradakshina 17 songs on him.

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.

### Thirunindravur - Bhaktavatsala Perumal

About 30 minutes from Tiruvallur is the town of Tirunindravur, another Divyadesam that was built during the Pallava era. The Lord here is known as Bhaktavatsala Perumal. Bhakta Vatsala means "one who is very affectionate to his devotee".

It is believed that Tirumangai Azhwar went on a tour to various kshetras and arrived at Tirunindravur as part of the trip. During his visit to this holy place, he did not compose any song on the Lord. So the Lord followed Tirumangai Azhwar all the way to the next divyadesam Tirukadalmalai, which is present day Mahabalipuram and requested the Azhwar to compose and sing some

Tirunindravur is also the hometown of Poosalar who was one of the 63 Nayanmars (ardent devotees of Lord Shiva) and is home to a famous Shiva temple, Hridayaleeswara temple.

This month, we will look at a beautiful song composed by Sri Swamiji on Bhaktavatsala Perumal in Raga Pantuvarali. The lyrics and the meaning are presented here:

### Bhaktavatsala Parama Dayala

**Ragam: Panthuvrali**

bhaktavatsala parama dayALa  
plAmbaradhara bhavya guNALaya

shankha chakra gadhA dhara  
AjAnu bAho! achyuta charaNam

Adi purusha kalyANA guNasAgara  
adbhuta rupa mama chittAkarshaka  
tava nAma smaraNena tava vAtsalyam  
muraLidharasya mama svAnubhavam

#### Meaning

Bhaktavatsala, the compassionate one,



You are adorned in yellow silk and endowed with humility  
You hold the conch, discus and the mace!  
You possess long (protecting) arms and steadfast Feet!

You are the Primordial One, an infinite ocean of auspicious qualities  
You have an extraordinary form that attracts my mind  
The moment one chants Your name, You pour Your affection on them  
This is my own (Muralidhara's) experience!

*Sowmya Balasubramanian, Fremont CA*

## Vijayadasami – Cherish Victory! Cherish Knowledge!

Navaratri is an important Hindu festival celebrated by Indians all over the world. Over a period of nine nights, the festival marks the celebration of Durga, the Goddess of Power. It usually falls during the months of September or October. During these nine nights and ten days, nine forms of "Durga/Shakti" and other forms of the Mother Goddess, including Lakshmi and Saraswati are worshiped. The tenth day is called "Vijayadasami" (popularly known as Dussehra), literally meaning "The Tenth Day of Victory."

Vijayadasami is the day when the victory of good over the evil is cherished, after nine days of worship. Vijayadasami is celebrated on the tenth day invoking the blessings of the Goddess of Knowledge, Saraswati.

According to the Hindu scriptures and belief, Vijayadasami makes a very auspicious beginning to all forms of learning as it is

dedicated to Goddess Saraswati, the source of



all knowledge. Children begin their new academic year or a fresh term and many people start learning a new art on this day. This is because any new learning commenced on this day is said to grow and bring us excellence in it.

It is also a customary practice to bow before our guru on Vijayadasami for the very same reason. It increases the gratitude or devotion that we have towards our teachers (Gurus).

People also place their books before the picture of Goddess Saraswati for worship. Also, the Hindu epics have it that the tenth day of Navratri is celebrated to mark the victory of Sri Rama over Ravana. This shows us that knowledge and victory are to be revered and cherished.

Let us therefore seek the blessings of the Divine Mother to bless us with knowledge and victory.

*Vignesh Sundararaman, Chennai, India*

### Kids' Corner

## Demons & Spirits from the Puranas

### - Halloween Special Quiz

1. This demon could become a buffalo at will.
2. Sanskrit terms for ghosts.
3. This demoness disguised as a beautiful woman to kill Krishna.
4. The story of this ghost's emancipation by listening to Bhagavatam is told in Srimalad Bhagavata Mahatmyam from Padma Purana.
5. The smart vampire carried by King Vikramaditya.
6. The spirit that rose from Shiva's hair and destroyed Daksha's yagna.
7. Spirit-beings who are subjects of Kubera.
8. Younger brother of Putana and Bakasura.
9. First demon(ess) to be killed by Rama.
10. This God is said to be the Lord of ghosts
11. Donkey-demon killed by Balarama.
12. This god came in the form of a Yaksha and questioned Yudhishtira, during the Pandavas' exile.
13. One name that scares away all malevolent ghosts, spirits and other beings.

View this article on [www.godivinity.org](http://www.godivinity.org) for the answers

Compiled by Ramya Srinivasan, San Jose CA





**RADHASHTAMI CELEBRATIONS!**

## News & Events



**NASHUA, NH**



**SATSANGS WITH SRI RAMANUJAM JI**

**DALLAS, TX**



**RICHMOND, VA**



**LEXINGTON, MA**



**BOSTON, MA**

**CONCORD, MA**



**QUINCY, MA**



### Upcoming Events!

Ramanujamji programs at Detroit, Minneapolis, Atlanta, Orlando, Houston, Bay Area—Godivinity.org

Namadwaar Bhoomi Puja @ Houston, TX—Nov 8

Life & Soul Health Fair @Houston, TX—Nov 15

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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