

## US Namadwaar Bhoomi Pooja Celebrations — Excerpts from Sri Swamiji's Benedictory Message

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**B**hakti is one of the simplest and most elegant paths to reach the Lord.

*bhaktAyA sulabho bhagavAn*, it is said. The Lord gets easily attracted to bhakti! The innumerable life stories of the Lord's devotees are a solid proof of this fact.

When it comes to bhakti, just faith is sufficient. What is the basic criteria for Krishna *darshan*? Faith in the words of one's Guru.

Bhakti is very simple even to a small child! Bhakti is sweet, simple and is the Lord's favorite!

There are two pillars for bhakti. One is incessant Nama Kirtan (Chanting of the Divine Names). The other is listening to the Lord's Divine Stories, which will elevate our spirits and enthuse us to continue chanting His Divine Names thinking of Him always.

When one does this, all the confusion and negativity in their hearts are washed away.

When it comes to meditation, Yoga or Vedanta (path of enquiry), the scriptures advocate one to practice it alone, and not in a group. But bhakti scriptures ordain us not to stay aloof, but to be together - be in the company of Sadhus - in a satsang. Andal in Tiruppavai refers to bhakti saying, "*Koodi irunthu kulirndheloembavai*."

So, what do you do being together? We should be together and chant the Names of the Lord. Rejoice together. Get together and listen to His stories and revel in bliss.

Thus, bhakti is the means to attain Him and this bhakti has two foundational stones - the Lord's stories and His Divine Names.

So where can this be done? The Divine Names that we chant and the Divine stories that we listen to are indeed a penance. A form of meditative energy that is released from us. When a man punches a column, the column falls down because the force from him is manifested outside. The energy is released.

Likewise, when we continue to perform Nama Kirtan and listen to His divine plays, a divine force emanates from within us. Where does this divine energy go? With one person, the energy is limited, but when



hundreds of people chant, there is a concentration of divine energies.

Just like a mirror that reflects light multifold, the divine energy reflects back multifold from Krishna - Premika Varadan - who is present there. So in the Namadwaar being constructed in Houston, when we all get together and perform Nama

Sankirtan, Katha Sharavanam and rejoice in the virtues of the Lord, the divine energy and the divine force from all of us reaches the supreme effulgence - Premika Varadan - and returns multifold.

A place for this is Namadwaar. It is for all of us to rejoice in the virtues of the Lord.

Even a monumental task can be accomplished easily without much strain by the Divine Name. That is the greatness of Nama. What can the Divine Name provide us with?

When one performs *Navagraha Homa* will that yield him liberation? It will only set right any malefic influences of the planets. A *yaaga* may take one to heaven; but it will not yield liberation. If one does self-inquiry or *Pranava japa*, it may yield liberation. But it will not resolve worldly tribulations. Each one yields a certain result.

But Nama alone can yield both! If you chant the Divine Names and pray for marriage or child-birth, it will happen. If you pray for a job, you will find a job. Prayer for harmony in the family is fulfilled; separated families are united. If a debt needs to be cleared, it happens. If a disease needs to be cured, it will be cured. Nama will give everything! And Nama will also grant liberation.

There are no separate Namas for each of these. Both are granted by the same Nama.

Nama Kirtan is a path shown by great souls. This is a proven path. People who followed this path have reached the Lord, attained *jnana*.

It is the simplest way! Sweetest way! Proven path! It is also approved by our scriptures.

So we have to do only one thing. We need to accumulate the wealth of Nama as much as we can. If we incessantly chant and accrue Nama, then just like how someone who has money can buy jewelry or dress or food or house, we can use it to erase our sufferings.

This Nama is monumental and has great prowess. Papa Ramdas says, "The Name is the light. The Name is the power. This Name is the Name of the Nameless person. The Name is the Samadhi."

Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh would start singing "Hare Rama" at 6 am in the morning and sing continuously throughout the day. He would say, "Start the day with Nama, fill the day with Nama and end the day with Nama."

We should keep chanting it. We should not think of it as a burden or a task or as a duty.

What burden does one experience in chanting the Mahamantra? Our tongue is there. Nama is there. Keep chanting! Let us chant together.

We already do have a Namadwaar in Houston that is functioning in a great manner. I am routinely watching it in my heart of hearts and rejoicing.

What is our wish? It is that everyone chant the Divine Name and everyone be recipients of the Lord's grace. Everyone

be happy and prosperous - that is our wish.

May the Lord be with us in this endeavor by all means and may Madhuri Sakhi sameta Premika Varadan fulfill all our genuine desires.

In this manner, may Namadwaars come up in different places, in each city, not just for our benefit, but also for the benefit of posterity. Such Namadwaars shall function as long as the Sun and the Moon exist in this Universe.

I pray to the Almighty that the Namadwaar stands as a most valuable spiritual center to attain the Lord's grace for all the future generations to come.

[Read a detailed report of the Bhoomi Pooja event here:](#)





## Cherished Memoirs 18 - Aasthikas & Bhaktas

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" that is published every month in **Madhuramurali Tamil monthly** magazine.

### Aasthikas & Bakthas

"We use the words *aasthikas* (believers) and *bhaktas* (devotees) to denote those who are involved in spirituality. Aasthikas are those who get involved in all kinds of good deeds. They participate in a Gokulashtami Utsav; you can see them in a Ati-Rudram or Maha-Rudram event when one is organized; they undertake pilgrimage to Sabari-mala; they go in search of Sadhus and seek their benediction. These people are 'aasthikas'.

Unlike 'aasthikas', 'bhaktas' do not go everywhere. They worship only their *Ishta* - *Deivam* (favorite deity) or possess unswerving devotion unto to their Guru alone. They do not harbor hatred against other gods or Gurus; it is just that their mind doesn't get involved anywhere else or with anything else. Why is this? When the mind gets staunchly involved with someone, one naturally fails to involve himself in other gods or activities. What is the core of bhakti? It is verily involvement

and dedication. Anything done without involvement and dedication is futile, and that is the very reason that they do not get involved in anything else or with any other deity.

"Doesn't he lack broadmindedness?" some of us may think.

If, for a woman, the best form of chastity is in not thinking about any other man than her husband, then this is chastity too. If that is considered as a virtue, then this is also a virtue and not a fault. Thyagaraja Swamigal, Meera, Hanumanji, the Gopikas, the Aazhwars and the Nayanmars - are all such devotees of the highest order and the entire world worships them, even today.

Let us look at this from another perspective. The word '*Naasti*' in Sanskrit means 'does not exist', '*asti*' means 'does exist'. '*Naasthika*' refers to one who refutes the existence of God - an atheist. *Aasthika* is one who believes in the existence of God - a theist.

If you ask the question "Does God exist?", most people will reply "Of course. Undoubtedly, there is some power above us." But very few people live a life in consonance with God's wish or employ themselves in God's work or live a life

yearning and crying for His vision and performing '*sadhanas*'. Irrespective of the deity they

worship and the path they follow in performing *sadhanas*, they are indeed *bhaktas*.

If one strictly adheres to Karma Yoga, since he believes in that, he is a devotee. Similarly, one who routinely practices Yoga is a devotee too; one who does inquiry based on Vedanta is a devotee as well. Thus, it is not enough to be merely an *aasthika*; we need to transform ourselves into a *bhakta*. It is not enough to simply accept our Guru to be a Jnani (an enlightened person) or a Mahatma (great soul); we need to earn his blessings. How is that accomplished? By involving in acts that please him! By thus involving ourselves, we can easily become recipients of his grace."

**Excerpts from Sri Swamiji's discourse, Smt. Jayanthi Janakiraman, Nov 98 issue, Translated by Sankar Ganesan, Dallas TX**



HH Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji

### Kid's Quiz - Thanksgiving Special!

1. To which god is Annabhishekam performed as an appreciation for the grace that He showered for a good harvest?

- A. Vishnu
- B. Shiva
- C. Muruga

2. Under Lord Krishna's direction, the Gopas/Gopis performed Annukuta Utsav as a thanksgiving to \_\_\_\_\_

- A. Lord Indra
- B. Lord Shiva
- C. Mount Govardhana

3. This Lord was so grateful for King Bali's complete selfless surrender that He sent him to a most comfortable and beautiful world and Himself stood guard at King Bali's gate.

- A. Varaha
- B. Vamana
- C. Narasimha

4. How did Lord Rama express his love and gratitude to

Hanuman when he came back triumphantly after locating Sita?

- A. Lord Rama blessed him a ring
- B. Lord Rama embraced Hanuman
- C. Lord Rama blessed him with all goodness

5. How did Lord Krishna show His gratitude to his Guru, Sri Sandeepani?

- A. By bringing back the sage's son from the abode of Yama
- B. By bringing back the sage's daughter from the abode of Nagas
- C. Rescuing the sage's son from a demon

6. Which friend of Lord Krishna brought a handful of love-filled flattened rice for which the Lord showed His gratitude by showering him with untold riches?

- A. Sudama
- B. Subala
- C. Arjuna

7. Who is the devotee who called out

'Govinda' in time of need, and for this act Lord Krishna was so grateful that He not only saved her then, but also promised to stand by her side in every difficulty she and her family encountered.

- A. Kunti
- B. Draupadi
- C. Hidimbha

8. How did Lord Rama show His gratitude when he came to know that Jatayu sacrificed his life in a battle with Ravana to rescue Sita?

- A. By providing him with good food and shelter
- B. By bestowing him with liberation
- C. By being with him and treating his wounds

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

Answers:

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



## Madhura Geetam - Bharata Pradakshina 18

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.

### Tiruvallikeni - Sri Parthasarathy

The next kshetra that we will cover in this Madhura Geetham series is located in the heart of Chennai city. Triplicane or Tiruvallikeni is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Chennai, and lies near the seashore. It is so old that in fact, it has been mentioned by Tirumangai Azhwar in one of his pasurams (divine hymns). He refers to the place as a dense forest.

Although, the modern day Triplicane is in no way close to this description, the neighborhood is still an important pilgrim spot for the devotees of Lord Krishna. Here, the Lord has manifested in the form of Parthasarathy, the charioteer of Partha (Arjuna). Hence, the Lord has a moustache

and holds only the conch in his hand. He is also known as Venkata Krishnan.

Triplicane was also referred to as 'Brindavana of South' because the area was full of Tulsi (Brinda) plants.

This temple is one of the favorites of Sri Swamiji. In fact, the temple was, in the recent past, renovated and Mahasamprokshanam performed with Sri Swamiji's blessings. Below is a beautiful composition of Sri Swamiji on the Perumal here, in Thodi Raga.

### Venkata Krishnam Upasmahe

**Ragam: Thodi**

venkata krishnam upAsmahe  
vedavalli nAyakam upAsmahe

samudra tIra rasikam shveta vastra  
dhAriNam

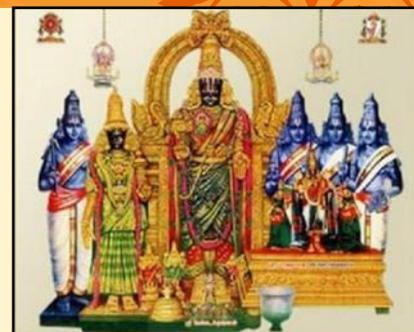
sharaNAgata jana uddhAraNa gotram

bhUmi nILA devI sahitam jalaja vilochanam

janjala jala jala nUpura bhUshitam

pAnchajanyadharam pArthasAratim

bhAvuka muraLI dhara priya deivatham



### Meaning

We worship VenkataKrishna  
We worship Vedavalli's consort

The One who loves the sea shore and wears a white garment

The One who belongs to the lineage that uplifts the souls seeking refuge

He stands with Goddess Earth and Goddess nILA and has lotus eyes

He wears shiny jingling anklets

He sports the conch 'Panchajanya' and is Arjuna's charioteer

He is devoted Muralidhara's favorite Lord!

*Sowmya Balasubramanian, Fremont CA*

## Be Grateful! Be Happy!

Divya's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher had given them an interesting assignment. They had to write about "One thing that I am grateful for and Why."

Divya was happy because she had learned the real meaning of the word during her summer holidays in India. She knew what she would be writing.

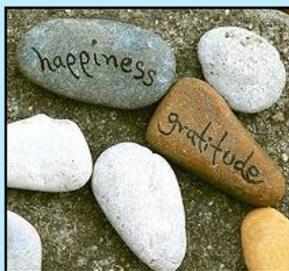
Her mother had always used the word 'grateful' frequently in her instructions to Divya.

"Divya, eat everything on your plate. Do not play with your food. Be grateful for your meals. There are starving children in the world."

"Divya, stop pestering me for another pair of sandals. I will not buy you anymore. You already have two good pairs. Be grateful for all the things you have and stop wanting more and more."

It had been so overused by her mother, Divya did not stop to think about it.

During her summer vacation, in India, she



went on a road-trip with her grandparents and her uncle to a temple. It was a long six hour trip and they stopped at a wayside shop - "Murugan's tea-stall".

There were a few tables and chairs in front of the shop, and the display counter had sodas, colorful candy in glass bottles, bunches of bananas, tender green coconuts, etc. There were not too many customers. They all sat on the tables and uncle ordered some tea, tender

green coconuts and some cookies. A little boy about Divya's age brought them their order with a broad smile. Grandpa talked to him in Tamil and asked Divya to try her language skills with him.

She found out that his name was Seenu. He was not sure of his age though he showed her ten fingers and then seven or eight. He had no parents. He did not go to school and he worked and slept in the shop. All through her questioning, he laughed and giggled as he found her Tamil accent strange. Divya was embarrassed and felt annoyed with this little boy.

But her grandparents seemed taken up by

him. They made him sit with them

and eat. Grandpa also gave him about twenty rupees which he refused to take. Grandpa forcibly put it in his shirt pocket. As their car left the place, the little boy ran beside it and waved to Divya. Grandma kept saying, "Such a sweet kid. He must be our Divya's age. He was so grateful for all the attention we gave him."

Uncle said, "I wonder how he is so happy! He has no home, no family. He did not even have slippers. Did you see he was barefooted? Amazing!"

Grandma said, "A grateful child is a happy child. Hope he somehow gets a better life just because of his happy heart."

Divya could not stop thinking about the barefoot Seenu. Uncle said, "So many children are like that in our vast country."

Divya was grateful for her parents. She had the best parents in the world. They gave her so much. She would be always grateful. She knew that being grateful would make her happy. And that is what she wrote about in her assignment.

*Vijayalaxmi Maddali, Redding CA*

### Kids' Corner



**SATSANGS WITH SRI RAMANUJAM JI**

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**Gopa Kuteeram (kids' programs) & Srimad Bhagavatam study circles are conducted in various cities.**  
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**Published by:**  
**Global Organization for Divinity**  
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