

## Gopashtami and Govinda Nama

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Gopashtami is the celebration of how Lord Krishna protected His beloved Gopas, Gopis, cows and calves from the wrath of proud Indra by holding the Govardhan mountain aloft for seven whole days. It is celebrated on the eighth day in the bright fortnight of the month of Karthik, which fell this year on November 19. It is the auspicious day that Lord Krishna was anointed as "Govinda"!

From Sri Swamiji we learn that the Govardhana episode signifies surrender – absolute surrender to the Lord, and how the Lord will do anything to protect His pure, surrendered devotees.

When Krishna told the Gopas to stop their annual worship of Indra, and they did as He said, Indra's brought down pillars of rain and storm with intent to destroy Brindavan.

Here Sri Swamiji would say, "Not one of them, not for a moment, held even the thought - 'Oh why did we listen to Krishna? It is because of Him that we have been pushed into this crisis!'"

Lord Krishna, moved by the love and surrender of His wonderful devotees then said, "It is My vow to protect and save these cowherds who have taken refuge in Me, looking upon Me as their Master." Saying this, the Lord lifted Govardhana mountain on His little finger as if it were a mere mushroom!

His ego destroyed, Indra then came and fell at Krishna's feet, sought His pardon and with folded palms sang His praises. It was then that Krishna was anointed as "Govinda" – the savior of the cows, the Gopas, the world!

Sri Swamiji always speaks of the glory of 'Govinda' Nama! In 'Govindashtakam', Sri Adi Shankara extolls . In this Govindashtakam, Shankara speaks exclusively of the glory of the Nama Govinda! 'Worship Govinda who is Supreme Bliss, Truth, Knowledge, Infinite and Eternal; who is free from bondages; who is the highest light; who was eager as a child to crawl in the cow-pen; who is truly free from hardships, but who appears to be in difficulties; who appears many due to Maya; who appears as the world; who is the Lord of the earth; and who has no Master to control Him.

In villages when a person without relatives dies, the body is cremated by the villagers. While the body is set on fire people call out 'Govinda! Govinda! Govinda!' This is called 'Govinda kolli', meaning Govinda is the only succor.

Sri Bodendra Swami writes in Bhagavan Nama Rasodayam that in this Kali yuga that is wrought with confusion, misery and sin, singing the name of Govinda is only the solution for all!

Skandha Puranam also says, 'If you hear anyone utter 'Govinda!', smear his tongue with honey!'

Bhadrachala Ramadas, an ardent Rama devotee has sung umpteen kirtans having 'Govinda' Nama, which are sung during Divya Nama Sankirtan.

Thondaripodi Azhwar, who sang the beautiful Tirumalai, shows the greatness of Govinda Nama. Once there lived a king who had committed many sinful acts. He was equal to a hundred Ajamilas! In the case of Ajamila, people would at least refer to him by name. But people dreaded even to utter this king's name. Such was his character. He, therefore, earned the name 'Kshatrabandhu'.

Chased away by his people, this king moved into the forest. As he wandered in the forest, he came across a Mahatma. Due to the Mahatma's divine presence, this sinful king began to repent his sinful life, and wished to atone for it. So he went up to the Mahatma and confessed all his sins. Listening to it the Mahatma felt shaken.

The Mahatma asked him, "What do you do for your living?"

The exiled king said, "I have a cow."

The Mahatma said, "You have been a king; hence you do not know how to graze a cow. How do you graze the cow?"

He said, "I have a keeper for that."

The Mahatma asked, "What name have you given that cow keeper?"

"Govinda!" said the wandering king.

The Mahatma heaved a sigh of relief! "You have found the atonement!"

Govinda Nama made even this vile sinner earn a great fortune! says

Thondarapodi Azhwar

Uttering Govinda! Govinda! Govinda! all at once, cleanses pollution. In satsangs while serving food they would say, "Everyone please utter Govinda! Govinda! while eating." This is because it is said that in our *shastras* that one who eats every mouth uttering 'Govinda' is a *nitya upavaasi*! It is akin to fasting.

Purandara dasa has sung the glory of Govinda Nama – 'Govinda! ninna nAmavE chanda!' "Oh, Govinda! Thy very Name so beautiful!"

There are 30 paasurams in Tiruppavai. In the 30 paasurams, Andal uses the twelve Names of Kesava, Narayana, Madhava, Govinda, Krishna, Madhusudana, Trivikrama, Vamana, Sridhara, Hrishikesha, Padmanabha, Damodara. Of these, she uses 11 names only once but the Name 'Govinda' she uses thrice. Verily the glory of the Nama Govinda!

Sri Swamiji would say we could go on and on about the glory of the name Govinda! It is indeed a special Divine Name of the Lord.

**Excerpted from the discourses of HH Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji**

### Sri Ramanujamji Schedule

**Dec 2-7: Madhura Utsav in Seattle, WA. Call 206.399.1058**



**Dec 10 - 16: Bhagavata Saptaha Mahotsavam at SVCC Temple Fremont, CA. Call 408.431.5688**

**Dec 13, 4-7 PM: 'Krishnanubhavam' - A music/dance ensemble at CET-**

**Soto Theater, San Jose**

**Dec 19 - 27: Madhura Utsav in Houston Namadwaar. Call 281.402.6585**

### Inside this Issue

<b>Cherished Memoirs - 30</b>	Pg 2
<b>Quiz Time - Gopashtami &amp; Brindavana Ekadasi</b>	Pg 2
<b>Madhura Geetam - Prayer Series 4</b>	Pg 3
<b>Kid's contribution - When Premika Varadhan came home</b>	Pg 3
<b>News and Events</b>	Pg 4



## Cherished Memoirs 30



*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.*

### Glances of Divinity

This article was originally written by Smt. Jayanthi Janakiraman in 1996, where she recounts some of her divine experiences with Sri Swamiji. When Sri Swamiji sees a holy river, he would immediately wish to take a dip in it. He has bathed in almost all the sacred rivers in India. After bathing in the river, he would meditate for hours standing in it or sitting on its banks. At night, he would take pleasure in lighting lamps and setting it afloat in the river. Once, when we went on a pilgrimage to Kasi (Varanasi) with him, he asked us to light lamps and set it afloat in the river. We lit many lamps and set them adrift on the Ganges. The lamps floating on the river was a sight to behold! In the case of many devotees, when they



HH Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji

come to meet Sri Swamiji for the first time, they exclaim, "I have seen him before in my dreams and he looks exactly like I saw him in my dream." Similarly, when devotees invite him home, bound by love, he would accept the invitation in spite of his several commitments. Sometimes, he wouldn't be able to make it. But they would have his vision in their dreams as consoling them.

Before Sri Swamiji came to Premika Bhavanam, he spent some time at the house of Madhusri Komala, where one day, when we were singing Bhajans in Sri Swamiji's presence, suddenly, Smt. Komala and I saw a divine halo around Sri Swamiji's head.

More recently, my daughter, Vishnupriya had a dream of Sri Swamiji with holy ash (vibhuthi) on his forehead and rudraksha garland around his neck. In the morning, when she went upstairs to have darshan of Sri Swamiji after excitedly sharing the dream with me, she was dumbstruck! Sri Swamiji had adorned an atypical attire - holy ash and rudraksha.

When we meditate in solitude or perform Nama sankirtan in front of Sri Swamiji's

photo or chant holy names in the sanctum of Lord Srinivasa Perumal in Premika Bhavanam while Sri Swamiji is out of town, many a time one may experience a sweet fragrance, or a divine vibration in the body and inexplicable peace. Such experiences are due to Sri Swamiji's divine presence.

During this year's Brahmotsav (1996) Sri Swamiji, in his discourse, reminisced an incident that happened a while ago.

Once a devotee of Sri Swamiji was being troubled by his enemies. They had threatened to beat him up. The devotee shared the same with Sri Swamiji. Sri Swamiji was deeply concerned and prayed to Sri Srinivasa Perumal for the safety of his devotee. That night, Sri Swamiji saw a divine vision in his meditation, where he saw the devotee sitting in the center, surrounded by glowing letters, "Om Namo Bhagavathe Vasudevaya", that seemed to protect the devotee like a shield.

This shows that Lord Srinivasa Perumal never abandons those who have steadfast faith and are devoted to Sri Swamiji.

**Original Tamil article by  
Smt. Jayanthi Janakiraman,  
Madhuramurali November 1996.**

**Translated by Viji Ramakrishnan, Dallas**

## Quiz - Gopashtami & Brindavana Ekadasi

Govardhana Hill as a

"Thanksgiving" celebration.

*Gopashtami is a celebration of the Lord protecting His beloved Gopas, Gopis and cows. Here's a quiz about this and other special days that occur this time of the year.*

1. What was the name that was conferred on Lord Krishna on the day of Gopashtami?
  - A. Madhava
  - B. Damodhara
  - C. Govinda
2. What does the name "Govinda" refer to
  - A. Savior of cows
  - B. Savior of the crocodile
  - C. Savior of the elephant
3. Gopashtami falls on the eighth day after the \_\_\_\_\_ festival.
  - A. Pongal
  - B. Deepavali
  - C. New Year
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Utsav was performed by Gopas and Gopis to the

- A. Annakoota Utsav
  - B. Indra Utsav
  - C. Madhura Utsav
5. What are the other names of Uttana Ekadasi?
    - A. Brindavana Ekadasi & Kaisika Ekadasi
    - B. Ashada Ekadasi & Vishnu Ekadasi
    - C. Vaikunta Ekadasi & Nirjala Ekadasi
  5. Name the great devotee of the lord who culminated his year long fasting on the day of Brindavana Dwadasi
    - A. Ambarisha
    - B. Rukmangada
    - C. Dhruva
  6. What time of the day does Uttana Ekadasi signify for the Devas?
    - A. Early morning
    - B. Afternoon
    - C. Evening

7. Name the divine wedding that is performed on the auspicious day of Uttana Dwadasi
  - A. Sita Kalyanam
  - B. Radha Kalyanam
  - C. Tulasi Kalyanam
8. The Kartika Ekadasi is celebrated in grandeur for Vittala and Rakumai at
  - A. Tirupathi
  - B. Puri
  - C. Pandharpur
9. The auspicious full moon day in the Karthika month is celebrated as
  - A. Rasa Poornima
  - B. Guru Poornima
  - C. Gaura Poornima

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

**Answers:**

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



## Madhura Geetam - Prayer Series: 4

In this series, we present, each month, a prayer kirtan composed by His Holiness Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji. The Kirtans in this series shall underline the importance of prayers.

### Just a glance is enough, O Krishna!

Singing is a form of worship and critical for nurturing devotion to the Lord. In Srimad Bhagavatam, Prahlada states the nine forms of bhakti, in which he cites singing as the second form of worship.

"Sravanam, Kirtanam, Vishnoho smaranam, Padasevanam, Archanam, Vandanam, Dasyam, Sakhyam, Atma Nivedanam."

Innumerable devotees who treaded the path of bhakti have appealed to the Lord by pouring their life-long yearning into their songs. The songs remind the Lord of His glories and beseech to him to fulfill their

longing. The bhakti *bhaavas* simply ooze out of these compositions. Just hearing them is enough to nurture devotion in our hearts.

This month, we will look at a composition of Sri Swamiji, in which he fervently prays to the Lord to grace him with just a glance from the corner of His eye for him to attain salvation. The song is in Tamil language and is set in Bimplaas raga and Adi tala.

### Kadai Kannal

**Ragam: Bimplaas**

**Language: Tamil**

*kadai kaNNAI pArthAI podume*

*kaNNA nAN karaiyeri viduvEnE*

*dinam dinam kETidum ennidam nee*

*manam irangAdadu enna mAyamo kaNNA*

*kOlakuzhal oodhidum govinda*

*leelaigal pala seiyyum leela vinoda*

*poomalaigal pala aNinduLLa mAdhava*

*alaipAyuden manadu unai ninaindu  
ninaindu*

### Meaning

A look from the corner of your eye is enough,  
Oh Krishna! For me to attain salvation.

Day after day I beseech you (regarding this),  
Yet, isn't it a wonder that you remain unperturbed?

Oh Govinda - playing the flute  
Oh Leela Vinodha - conjurer of diverse pastimes  
Oh Madhava! Adorning an assortment of flower garlands,  
The more I think of you, my heart runs unbound.

**Sowmya Balasubramanian, Fremont CA**

### When Premika Varadan Came Home

The day of the very first Akhanda Nama at our home dawned on August 15, 2015. I was so elated that I couldn't sleep the night before! The next morning, after my family was ready, we started chanting the Mahamantra. Suddenly the doorbell rang and my energetic sister zoomed to the door. Our very first satsang devotee joined us. We chanted continuously until Mayaji, from GOD Dallas, arrived with the deities, Sri Premika Varadan and Sri Madhuri Sakhi. We stepped outside and did arathi to welcome the Lord to our house!

The deities were elegantly dressed in maroon with twinkling ornaments. Mayaji let us choose some accessories for the couple. I chose a red turban with a blue jewel for Krishna and a diamond-studded crown for Radha. I made a few garlands for them. We seated them on a seat with some fluffy pillows. We continued to chant some more. Many more devotees followed to come have the Lord's darshan and chant the powerful Nama. Many flowers were brought and we kept making garlands of vibrantly colored blooms and adorning the deities in the altar along with Sri Guruji. Around 4 pm, after continuous chanting, we had Gopa Kuteeram and had to practice for



Janmashtami, as we were going to dance to 2 kirtans composed by Sri Guruji on Lord Krishna. After we practiced the dance, we kids watched a video on Vishnu Puran, that had a depiction of Vishnu's avatars.

Then around 7 pm we were called down from the media room upstairs to sing bhakti kirtans. Every Akhanda Nama we sing Madura Gitam songs composed by Sri Guruji. When we came down, we noted that Thakurji was seated on a swing along with his consort. The couple were adorned with flowers along with our humble Guruji and Ramanuja Acharya. The swing for Krishna was strung full of colored lights. We took turns singing. I sang "Radhai en Thai".

After the singing we sang "Kaliyayum bali kollum" and "Devaki balaya". We made sure

Premika Varada tasted the food first. After arathi, we had a yummy dinner. I knew Premika Varada liked the food because he was smiling at me when I was eating my food! Alas, the beautiful day had come to an end. I felt very sad when the Lord had to leave as I wanted the Divine Couple to stay longer. I was sad but I knew there were many more Akhanda Namas to follow. Since that day, we have gone to all the other Akhanda Namas in town regardless of distance and time to travel. It is a lot of fun to go to other family homes and see the Lord in various beautiful outfits and flower decorations. Akhanda Nama is unique because it takes place in many different homes every time and myself and kids can play hide and seek, and figure out the mystery of each home!

I am always waiting for Saturday to come because that's the day we will have Akhanda Nama, which is full of fun to me! I hope that more and more people come to Akhanda Namas to chant the glories of the Lord, see the amazing deities, and to enjoy the association of other devotees and share their wonderful experiences. For kids like me, I'd like to meet and play with other devotee kids and form lasting friendships based on how Lord Krishna interacted with all his friends.

**Krishna Priya Venkatraman, 10 yrs, Irving**

**Kid's Contribution**





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Gopa Kuteeram (kids' programs)

#### Published by:



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