

The Love of a Guru

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February 14th has come to be considered as the day of 'love' across the world.

What is the highest form of love in this world? Love of God? Perhaps. But *mahatmas* say that more than our love of God, it is God who loves us a million times more! So then the highest form of love would be that of God towards us. However, the fact is that these are just words to most of us. Only very few people in this world are capable of truly perceiving even a bit of that immense love that God is said to have for us.

What then is the highest form of love that we, mere humans, can perceive?

It can only be the love of the mahatmas themselves; the love of an *uttama* Guru (a great spiritual Master) for us – which is nothing but God's divine love being showered in a manner that is perceptible to us.

A Guru's love cannot be compared to any other form of earthly love, because it is totally unconditional and completely accepting. A mother's love for her child is said to be quite unconditional. But even the most loving mother, when neglected and uncared for by her son, may feel, "I showered so much love on him and sacrificed so much for him... now he doesn't even care about me."

But never a Guru! When we go to such a saint, he (or she) can see right through us; he can see our innumerable faults and shortcomings; our meanness, pretences, our huge egos. Yet he chooses to overlook all that out of compassion and still showers his genuine love and affection on us. We may slight him, disrespect or insult him, disobey him, forget him, disregard his advice/*upadesa*, continue to be hopelessly immersed in sense gratification... but he still continues to shower his love on us. He still speaks to us lovingly when we visit him; he still patiently hears out our worldly problems and gives us his advice; he still praises our smallest act as if it were the greatest and most perfect work in the world.

In fact, it is this love that he showers on us that is truly his weapon in turning our minds towards him. There is a *namavali* in our Guru *ashtottram* – *premAyudha dharAya* (One who carries the weapon of Love). This is the perfect epithet for a Guru. The Guru brings about a transformation in his disciple, not by mere threats or fear, but through love, the most potent weapon.

How can mahatmas be like this? How can they shower this unconditional love, not just on one or two people, but on all who go to them? It is simply because they are filled to the brim with divine love for God, and they actually see only that same divinity in every person and every thing, and cannot but love "it".

If we read the life stories of all the great spiritual Masters in the world, the one thing that all their disciples speak of is their Master's love.

Swami Vivekananda said of his master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, "Ever since our first meeting, it was the Master alone who always had faith in me – no one else, not even my own mother and brothers. That faith and that love of his have bound me to him forever. The Master was the only one who knew how to love and who really loved."

Every single one of Sri Kanchi Mahaperiyava's disciples regards him as an epitome of love and compassion. Mahaperiyava himself said, "The very purpose of human birth is to show love. The happiness that love gives is not to be found in anything else." What then to speak of his own love towards those who came to him?

In her book *Yogi Ramsuratkumar, the Di-*

vine Beggar, Ma Devaki writes of her master, "His compassion and care lured people into a love-net – a love-net that was no stifling prison but a means to greater freedom – a love-net that would extricate

them from the ensnares of the illusive world!"

Yogi Sri Krishnaprem, a mahatma who lived near Almora in north India in the mid-twentieth century, says of his guru Yasoda Ma, "...my Guru will never leave me whatever I do... I may fall from the Path, return to the flesh-pots and wallow in their filthy slops for five lives or fifty lives; I may blaspheme the Sacred Stone within my heart and die cursing God

and man—all this and more I may do but She will never leave my side... Never, never will she leave my side nor cease to guide my steps until I stand in that eternal Braja where She stands now. God-forsaken and man-forsaken I may be, but Guru-forsaken, never."

A Guru's love – like the nature of the Infinite Being – cannot be described in words. It can only be experienced and enjoyed. And to know that one is the recipient of such a love indeed brings a feeling of joy, happiness, contentment and satisfaction.

It is said that to have never loved, is to have never lived. But the truth is, to have never experienced a Guru's love is to have never lived. Or to put it the other way, only when we become the fortunate recipients of a Guru's love do we truly live.

Nisha Giri, Houston, TX

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Guruvayur Endroru Kshetram Undu...

Srimad Bhagavatham, while describing the birth of Lord Krishna, says:

"tam adbhutam bAlakam ambujEkshaNam, chatur-bhujam shankha gadA-dyudAyudham..."

"The wonderful Lord appeared as a child with lotus eyes, carrying the divine conch, disc, mace and a lotus in each of his four hands, wearing a yellow silk cloth that contrasted against His dark hue, adorned with the Srivatsa mark, the Kaustubha gem, brilliant crown, earrings, belt, armllets, bangles and other ornaments."

Today, devotees wishing to see the Lord in this wonderful form throng to Guruvayur, a town in southern India, to have a glimpse of the presiding deity Lord Guruvayurappan. Ancient scriptures mention that Uddhava, Krishna's great devotee, cousin and minister, had worshipped this image. After Dwaraka's destruction, the image was brought to current location by Brihaspathi (Guru of Uddhava and the Devas) and the wind god Vayu. Hence the name, Guruvayurappan. This *vigraha* is made out of a rare substance – *pAthAlanjanam* (*anjanam* - dye found in *pAthAla*- nether worlds). The legend goes that when Brihaspathi and Vayu were searching for a place to install this image, Lord Shiva came

thirtham, a sacred tank still found in Guruvayur and advised them to consecrate the image in that location itself. The holy place then came to be known as Guruvayur. The Rudra thirtham is also mentioned in Srimad Bhagavatam as the lake where Lord Shiva advised the Prachetas and gave them *Rudra Gitam* - verses extolling the greatness of Sri Hari.

There are innumerable temples in India for Lord Hari. Although there are so many holy places, the manifestation of the Lord is different in each of these places. So is the mode of worship. For example, in Badrinath, the Lord is pleased when a devotee performs penance. In Pandharpur, it is singing the divine names that pleases Him the most. Similarly, in Guruvayur, Lord Krishna is pleased when He hears a devotee reading Srimad Bhagavatam and immediately blesses him/her!

There is an interesting incident in the life of Sri Narayana Bhattathiri's that illustrates this. Narayana Bhattathiri, an ardent devotee of Lord Guruvayurappan was suffering from an incurable ailment. He was in severe pain. To relieve himself from the suffering, he prayed to Lord Guruvayurappan and

out of Rudra started composing Narayaneeyam, which is



a condensed form of Srimad Bhagavatam. It has been composed as *dasakas* (10 slokas in a chapter) and contains 100 dasakas. It is said that as Bhattathiri completed each dasaka, the Lord nodded his head as a sign of accepting Bhattathiri's work. At the end of 99th dasaka, the Lord appeared in front of Bhattathiri and also cured him of the ailment. Bhattathiri

himself mentions the divine vision in Narayaneeyam in the 100th dasaka which begins, "I see The Lord in front of me....". Even today, Srimad Bhagavatam and Narayaneeyam reverberate in every corner of Guruvayur.

Every year, the Guruvayur festival (Utsavam) is conducted during the Malayalam month of Kumbh (Feb-Mar). The festival is a mix of religious and cultural events. It is a 10-day festival that starts with an elephant race. The winning elephant is given the honor of carrying the Lord during His processions in the forthcoming year. After 10 days of celebrations, the festival is concluded with Arattu. The Lord is taken in a procession to Rudra thirtham and a special *abhishekam* (divine bath) is performed. This year the festival will be celebrated from Feb 23-March 3.

Oh, Will You Not Say "Krishna"?

Feb 10, 2013 was Sri Purandara Dasa's Aradhana day. A great saint known for his beautiful compositions oozing with devotion, he was one who exhorted all to sing the Names of the Lord! In a well-known song, he sings, "When you have got this rare human birth and have a tongue, can you not say "Krishna"?"

Let us remember this great saint and say "Krishna" through the day, as he begs us to.

nara-janma bandAga nAligE yiruvAga Krishna yena bAradE?

Krishna yendarE sakala kashtavu parihara Krishna yena bAradE?

Oh, man! When you have been blessed with a human birth and a tongue, can't you utter "Krishna"?

uttering "Krishna!" removes all woes: Oh, can't you utter "Krishna?"

malagiddhu maimurittu yELuttalOmme Krishna yena bAradE?

solidAdutta maneyOlagAdaru ommE Krishna yena bAradE?

As you wake up after sleep and stretch can't you, just once, utter "Krishna"? dancing about, at least within the house, can't you, just once, utter "Krishna"?

snAna pAna japa tapagaLu mAdutta Krishna yena bAradE?

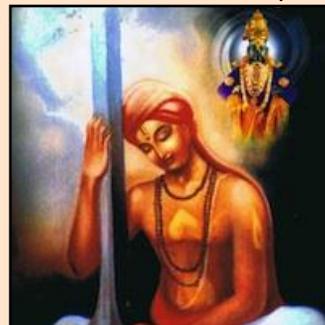
sAlYAnna shatrasa tindu triptavanAgi Krishna yena bAradE?

Even as you bathe or do *japa* or *tapa* can't you utter "Krishna"?

Content eating your fill of food tasting of six *rasas* can't you utter "Krishna"?

kandana bigibigidu appi muddAduttha Krish-

na yena bAradE? mandagAminiyoLu sarasaAdutthalomme Krishna yena bAradE?



While tightly embracing and fondling your child can't you utter "Krishna"?

While demonstrating your affection to your beloved wife can't you utter "Krishna"?

durita rAsigalaNu daridu bisAduva Krishna yena bAradE?

Garuda gamana namma Purandara vittalana Krishna yena bAradE?

Can't you utter "Krishna" that casts away, all at once, the influence of planets and stars? can't you utter "Krishna!" (calling out to that) Purandra Vittala who moves on Garuda?)

Krishna yendarE sakala kashtavu parihara Krishna yena bAradE?

uttering "Krishna!" removes all woes: Oh,

All is Right with the World

Narendra was a naughty five year old. He liked to play all the time and most of his plays ended up in some kind of mischief. The neighbors would come to his mother, complain about him and criticize his behavior.

One day Narendra's mother was sitting on a tall stool and was busy embroidering a beautiful design on a piece of cloth. Narendra as always was playing around and started troubling his mother. She gave him some sweet treats to quiet him and made him sit by her feet. Narendra too sat quietly watching his mother work as he enjoyed his snack. She had her cloth stretched and fitted into an embroidery hoop or ring that helped her hold the cloth in place as she sewed the design on it.

The mother told Narendra that she was embroidering a beautiful bouquet of flowers. Narendra could only see the hoop from the bottom and was bemused for he did not understand how his mother could be making a bouquet. From his angle, the embroidery yarn and cloth

seemed distorted without any coordination. He saw different colored strings hanging down messily. He thought his mother was doing something wrong. He did not realize that since he was looking at her work from the *bottom* he could only see the flipside of her work. His mother asked him to be patient.



Once she finished her artwork, she turned her embroidered cloth over and showed him the other side. Narendra was amazed! There lay a beautiful bouquet of daisies that looked like they had just blossomed.

We are also just like Narendra. We see flaws and imperfections in God's creation. We do not understand many matters in this world, and also call some things foolish. We also think that if things had been a certain way, everything

would be fine with the world. Just like Narendra looked at his mother's work from the bottom, we are also looking at God's work from the bottom.

What does "looking at it from the bottom" mean? It means when we try to examine His infinite creation (which includes happenings around us) with our limited intellect, everything looks like it is all crisscrossed, confused and wrong. So how can we view the world from "above"? The way to do it is to abandon narrow thinking and instead broaden our outlook, and appreciate that not everything in this world is as it appears to be.

God is perfect. Hence everything in this world is perfect. First, let us correct ourselves.

Translated by Priya Tulasi from "Madhuramurali" Tamil monthly magazine

Kids' Quiz - Ratha Saptami Trivia

Ratha saptami is a festival dedicated to the Sun God that is celebrated around Jan-Feb every year. Here's a chance to learn more about this auspicious day.

1. Ratha Saptami marks the beginning of this season.

- A. Summer
- B. Autumn
- C. Spring

2. What does Ratha Saptami symbolize?

- A. Marks the seventh day of Sun's southern direction movement
- B. Marks the seventh day of Sun's northern direction movement

movement

3. Who shed his mortal coil on the day following Ratha Saptami?

- A. Bheesmacharya
- B. Dronacharya
- C. Shukracharya

4. What is this day generally referred as?

- A. Gokulashtami
- B. Drona paksha
- C. Bheeshmashtami

5. Which god is worshipped on the day of Ratha Saptami?

- A. Lord Rama
- B. Lord Surya

C. Marks the seventh day of Sun's eastern direction

C. Lord Shiva

6. In which form is the Sun God worshipped on the day of Ratha Saptami?

- A. Lord Surya riding his chariot with seven horses
- B. Lord Surya riding his chariot with six horses
- C. Lord Surya riding his chariot with two horses

7. What is Saptami?

- A. Sixth day of the fortnight
- B. Seventh day of the fortnight
- C. Ninth day of the fortnight

Compiled by Ramya Srinivasa, San Jose, CA

Answers

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



NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS IN THE US



SEATTLE

On Saturday, January 26, at the residence of Sri Muthuji and Smt Vaishnaviji in Seattle, a 12 hour Akhandanama took



place from 8AM to 8PM. The Akhanda nama was attended by around 60 people. During the course of the Akhanda nama, an abhishekham was performed for Radha and Krishna along with Panduranga and Rakhumai by all

those who were gathered there. The Akhanda nama was followed by a beautifully touching 30 minute pravachan by Sri Bhagyanathanji on humbling the ego and surrendering to Krishna.



GLOBAL NAMA RELAY



UPCOMING EVENTS

- *Weekly chanting of Mahamantra for 30 mins will commence soon at the Hindu temple in Helotes, San Antonio, TX. Contact: Aparna Padmanabhan ydaparna@yahoo.com
- *Feb 15 & 16 - 7am - 7pm: Akhanda Nama Sankirtan at Houston Namadwaar
- *Mar 11 - Traditional Treasures Spring Workshop at Houston in Sugar Land area. Contact: Sriram 832-515-1251
- *Mar 29-31 - Namadwaar Anniversary program, Houston. Stay tuned for more information.

SAN ANTONIO

A special satsang was held in San Antonio on Jan 13th to usher in the New Year and celebrate Pongal at the residence of Smt Aparna/ Sri Vaidy. The satsang started with Mahamantra chanting, followed by Vishnu Sahasranamam and Hanuman Chalisa. Another similar satsang was also held on Feb 10 at the devotees' residence.

AKANDA NAMAKIRTAN AT HOUSTON NAMADWAAR

Mahamantra was chanted continuously from 7 am to 7 pm on Feb 2 and 3 at Houston Namadwaar.

Devotees from far flew in to participate in the chanting.



Weekly satsangs are held regularly in the following regions in North America:

Atlanta, GA; Bay Area, CA; New England area; Chicago, IL; Cortlandt Manor, NY; Dallas, TX; Houston, TX; Milwaukee, WI; Minneapolis, 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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