

The Lord accepts only a Pure Heart

*Oh Krishna! You don't eat what I give You,
You don't eat our home-food,
You go to the houses of the cowherds,
And eat butter stealthily,
You spoil Your good name, my dear!*

(Telugu poem)

Thus, mother Yashoda expressed her anguish one day, having been vexed by the complaints of the neighbours. She chided Him saying, "Oh Krishna! I have to face a lot of trouble on account of Your mischievous pranks. You don't have taste for the food prepared in our house. You always like the items prepared in the neighbouring houses. How shall I manage with You?" True, people develop a taste for food in the neighbouring houses. A sweetmeat shop owner sitting in his own shop, all the while enjoying the sweet smell of the laddus, develops a taste for puffed rice from another shop.

Kashyapa, a great devotee of the Lord had completely surrendered himself at the Lotus Feet and was totally lost in divine bliss. One day, his wife, Aditi, approached him and advised him, "My dear! We do not have children. You have surrendered everything of yours to the Lord. Why don't you pray to Him to bless us with a child?"

Emperor Bali, in Krita Yuga, performed many Yajnas. After completion of one hundred and seven Yajnas, he made arrangements for performing the one hundred and eighth Yajna known as Viswajit. As he was performing this Yajna, Lord Vishnu appeared before him as Vamana in the guise of a dwarfish Brahmin. Vamana asked for three paces of land in charity from Bali, which he was about to give. In the meanwhile, Emperor Bali's preceptor Sukracharya came there and tried to dissuade Bali from giving this gift of charity. He advised Bali, "Please do not give

anything in charity to this short Brahmin, much less the three paces of land. Do not underestimate Him. He is not an ordinary Brahmin. He is an Avatar of Vishnu. He is born to Sage Kashyapa, in fulfillment of the boon granted by Lord Vishnu to him." But Emperor Bali did not pay heed to the advice of his preceptor. He asked Lord Vamana, "Sir, What can I do for you?" Vamana replied, "Oh King! I do not need anything. Just give Me three paces of land." Sukracharya again pleaded with Bali, "Oh King! You consider this person as an ordinary Brahmin. No. No. He is capable of filling the entire universe. It is not wise on your part to grant his request." But, Emperor Bali turned down his advice saying that he could not go back on his promise, as it was a great sin not to stand by one's word.

In those days, people considered death preferable to going back on one's word. But today in Kali Yuga, people make promises and break them at will. Emperor Bali was of pure heart. Once a promise was made, he fulfilled it, come what may!

He said, "I gave a word to this Brahmin boy. I am prepared to face any eventuality in fulfilling my promise. I will offer the fruits of all the Yajnas I have performed, including the one I am now performing to this Brahmin boy. So saying, he put the garland of the fruits of 108 Yajnas performed by him round the neck of Vamana and prostrated before Him. (As He said this, Swami created a necklace of 108 gold coins.)

Vamana covered the entire land given in charity by Bali under one foot. He grew in size and filled the entire universe with His second foot. There was no further space to put His third foot. Then Sukracharya said, "Oh emperor! You did not pay heed to my advice. You underestimated this Brahmin boy and got yourself tricked by His innocent looks."

Vamana received the offering of Emperor Bali and

praised his large-heartedness and blessed him. Vamana was short in stature, but he could fill the entire universe. Being an Avatar, He was Aprameya (beyond all limitations, indescribable and immeasurable). Human beings have limitations, but not an Avatar.

The sunrise and sunset happen according to a predetermined Divine command. It happens regularly, uninterrupted. The sun, the moon and the stars follow a definite pattern of schedule. All the five elements in the universe discharge their duties regularly as ordained by the Lord. Even God Himself observes the rules that He lays down for all. Everything in God's creation goes on according to a predetermined order and Divine command. Nothing in the universe, including the five elements, has an independent existence. But, unfortunately, man is unable to recognise this divine force that regulates the functioning of the universe. Scientists are making unstinted efforts to discover this divine force. The stars shining brightly in the sky at night are, however, not visible during daytime.

The sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening with utmost regularity everyday. The stars glitter beautifully in the sky at night and hide themselves during the day. The wind blows incessantly and sustains the living beings without taking rest even for a moment. The rivers make gurgling sounds as they flow perennially.

(Telugu poem)

What could be the reason for this phenomenon? Scientists probed into this aspect and concluded that the stars were not visible during daytime because the sun was shining brilliantly in the sky during that period. Similarly, they tried to explain the divine force in ever so many ways.

The moment the umbilical cord is cut and the child is separated from the mother, it cries. Why? Nobody could explain and explore this secret. The moment a

drop of milk or honey is put on the tongue of the newborn child, it sleeps happily. This means ever since a human being comes out of his mother's womb, he struggles to satiate his hunger.

Oh man! You struggle hard to acquire various types of knowledge in order to fill your stomach. In spite of all your hard work and acquisition of knowledge, you are unable to experience everlasting happiness. Instead, why don't you contemplate on the Lord and seek refuge in Him? He will certainly show you a way to overcome your misery.

(Telugu poem)

Every human being thinks that he is born merely for filling his belly. He constantly struggles to acquire food.

There is another interesting phenomenon in nature. The branches of a tree rub against each other due to the wind and fire is born out of that friction between two pieces of wood. How does it happen? Though there is fire in the wood of a tree, it is not burnt away. Why? No scientist could ever discover this secret so far. There are several such inexplicable phenomena in nature. With a view to recognise and understand such phenomena, man is constantly engaged in the quest for Divinity. However, one need not search for God, who is omnipresent.

Oh man! You struggle hard in life merely for the sake of filling your belly. You acquire myriad types of knowledge from various fields. Examine and enquire for yourself what great happiness you have achieved by spending all the time from dawn to dusk in acquiring worldly knowledge and earning wealth, while forgetting God.

(Telugu poem)

Everything in this universe moves strictly according to the Divine Will and force. Man, of his own accord cannot achieve anything. The Divine force manifests itself in several ways in this universe, in the form of various types of energy. People think they are created by somebody. Strictly speaking, nobody has created

them. They are natural phenomena that manifest out of Divine will. For example, when two pieces of stone are struck against each other, fire is born. It means, there is fire latent in the stone, but does not manifest outside. Thus, all the powers are latent in nature.

A few minutes ago, one boy spoke about Nanda and Yashoda, the foster parents of Lord Krishna. In those days, there was no electricity. People in the village used to go to the house of Nanda (since he was the chief of the village) and lighted their oil lamps from the lamp lit up in Nanda's house. People were of the belief that they would attain plenty and prosperity if they lighted their oil lamps from the lamps lit in the houses of well-to-do-people. A newly married daughter-in-law by name Suguna arrived in that village. Her mother-in-law told her to go to the house of Nanda and get her lamp lighted from theirs. When Suguna went to the house of Nanda and lighted the lamp, she could visualise Krishna in that flame. On having this Divine vision, she lost her body consciousness. She fixed her gaze on that beautiful form of Lord Krishna and was lost in bliss. She could not even realise that her fingers were being burnt, having come into contact with the flame. She was in total bliss. In the meanwhile, other ladies from the neighbouring houses also came there to light their own lamps. They were wonderstruck on witnessing this scene. They could notice that Suguna was not moving away from the flame even though her fingers were being burnt. They then realised that she had the vision of Krishna in that flame. They sang a song describing this incident. (Swami sang a Telugu song, the meaning of the first few lines is as follows ...)

It seems Suguna had a vision

Of Gopala in the house of Nanda

She saw Krishna in the flame!

On hearing this song, Yashoda came there literally

running. She saw Suguna's fingers getting burnt in the flame. While all the Gopis were dancing in ecstasy, Yashoda went near Suguna and pulled her hand away from the flame. She chided her saying "Oh! Suguna ! Did you not notice your fingers being burnt on coming into contact with the flame? Do you wish to bring a bad name to us that if anyone goes to Nanda's house, their fingers will be burnt?" Suguna's mother-in-law was by nature a short-tempered woman. On hearing about this incident, she came running to the house of Yashoda and made a big issue of this incident. She ordered her daughter-in-law not to go to the house of Nanda again in future, for getting the lamp lighted.

Several miracles happened in the house of Yashoda. After Krishna left for Mathura, the Gopis could not bear His separation and were pining for His Darshan. In such a moment of yearning, Krishna appeared in Gokul. However, neither Nanda nor Yashoda could see Him. All the Gopis gathered at the house of Nanda and prayed that they may be allowed to have Krishna's darshan. They started complaining, "Nanda and Yashoda! you have kept Krishna away from us. Please tell us where he is." But, Krishna did not make his appearance in public. He appeared to some Gopis individually in answer to their prayers.

A few minutes ago, a student of our University narrated an incident wherein Swami had appeared before him in answer to his prayers. No one else could see Swami. Then, the boy prayed again, "Swami! What is the use of giving Darshan to me alone? Please give Darshan to all the students; otherwise, they will not believe my words and make fun of me." I replied, "Does not matter. Let people think whatever they wish to. This is your prapti (deservedness), only you deserve to see Me". So saying, I disappeared.

Once, Yashoda reprimanded child Krishna saying,

“Oh! My dear Krishna! You don't eat the food I prepared for you. You go to the houses of the milkmaids and stealthily eat the butter stored in their houses. You are creating problems for me. Is it that the butter suffused with mother's love does not taste good for you?” So saying, she tied Krishna to a mortar with a rope. It is everybody's experience in the world that we do not like the food cooked in our own house. The items cooked in others' houses will appear to be tasty. This is quite natural. However, Krishna did not steal the butter from others' houses for its taste. There is an underlying message in this leela. Here, butter symbolises a pure heart. Wherever such a pure heart is available, Krishna takes it. Such a pure heart will be soft and sweet. The hearts of Gopis were ripened with devotion. They were pure, soft and sweet. Hence, Krishna had gone to their houses to steal their hearts.

Krishna is referred to as “chora” (thief). What does He steal? He steals the butter-like hearts of the Gopis, hearts which are pure, soft and sweet. If you address someone as chora (thief), he will be annoyed. But if you call Krishna as “chiththa chora” (stealer of the heart), He will enjoy this appellation. That is why, devotees sing in praise of the Lord most endearingly “Chiththa chora Yashoda Ke Bal! Navaneetha chora Gopal! Gopal, Gopal, Gopal! Govardhanadhara Gopal!” (“Oh! Yashoda's little Krishna! Oh! Gopala! Stealer of butter! Oh! Gopala! Lifter of the Govardhana mountain!”). The song thus sung melodiously with bhava, raga and thala will be liked by everyone. Great Singer-saints like Thyagaraja made sweet offerings to God in the form of Kirtanas suffused with Bhava (feeling), Raga (tune) and Thala (beat) and won His grace. There is so much sweetness in such devotional songs. God's grace can surely be obtained by such devotional singing. You cannot win

the grace of God by empty rhetoric. It is only through devotional singing suffused with Bhava, Raga and Thala, that Divinity can be attained. God will be moved by such Sankirtan. Even the Vedas have extolled the efficacy of devotional singing. Even by chanting the Vedas, God cannot be attained. There are several hymns in praise of God in the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharvana Veda. But, not even a single individual chanting those hymns could obtain Divine Darshan. However, when these hymns are set to tune and sung with devotion, they could experience Divine Love. That is why God is extolled as 'ganalola' and 'ganapriya'. Therefore, you pray to God with devotional singing. You can easily win the grace of God. Some people may have a doubt, “We cannot sing well; we have not learnt the art of singing. How can we please God?” Do not worry. You may not have knowledge of music or a mellifluous voice. It does not matter. Sing the glory of God with intense love, in some tune which you know. That is enough to move the heart of God. What is music? It is not necessary to make a special effort to learn music. A simple song with intense love and yearning will move God. For example, you recite a poem, “Rama! Nannu Kaapadu” (Oh! Rama! Please protect me). There will be no sweetness in the poem. It is simply a literary rendering of your feelings. Similarly, if you make an appeal to God saying “Rama! Nannu Kaapadu”, it becomes an empty repetition of words. The same feeling, if it is expressed in a song set to a beautiful tune, “Rama ...! Nannu Kaapadu...”, it will be so sweet and endearing to Divinity. There is so much sweetness in music. Therefore, if you want to attain God, you have to do it only with devotional singing. You need not be disappointed if you have not learnt music. Why disappointment? If there is an appointment, there will be disappointment.

Therefore, do not make an appointment, in the beginning itself. You sing the glory of God in your own way. That is the easiest way to attain God. The Divine bliss enjoyed by the gopis in Krishnavatar in Dwapara Yuga is unparalleled. Therefore, remember that Divine bliss and try to please God with your love and devotion.

In no Avatar devotees have merged in the Divine Love to such a great extent as in Krishna Avatar. Thousands of devotees have merged in Sri Krishna during His Avatar. Hence, if you want to merge in divinity, devotional singing is the only means. God is said to be ganapriya (pleased by devotional singing). Krishnavatar is the best example for this statement. One simple name 'Krishna' sung by a devotee is enough to move Him. The leelas, mahimas and the miraculous deeds performed by Lord Krishna during His Avatar are unparalleled.

Dear students! You are singing several bhajans. All of you are participating in the bhajans. But, each one is

singing in his own way. This is not proper. If all of you sing in one voice and one tune with divine feeling, God will surely install Himself in your loving heart. Krishnavatar is the only Avatar that had granted darshan to different people in different ways, clarified their doubts about His divinity and merged them in His own Self. Krishnavatar is the only Avatar that made everyone happy and blissful by His sweet and loving words.

Embodiments of Love!

There is nothing superior to devotional singing. What a great joy and happiness you derive by singing the song "Nanduni Yinta Gopaludanta Deepaana Kanipinchenanta" (It seems Gopala has appeared in the flame in the house of Nanda). Therefore, sing such soulful songs with bhava, raga and thala to please God and obtain His grace. You may sing any number of bhajans and songs, but it is only when they are suffused with intense love, devotion and sweet and soft feeling (bhava) you will derive immense happiness and joy.