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Santhigiri

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S p i r i t u a l M a g a z i n e



NAVA OLI JYOTIRDINAM
THE RADIANT AGE OF THE NEW LIGHT

The Aims & Tenets of Santhigiri Ashram

- Facilitate and sustain blossoming of spiritual illumination in children and adults alike, guiding and leading them in the Right Path of Salvation.
- Nurture and sustain Divine Grace in people, diffusing the radiance for the benefit of the entire world. Among these love plays the most dominant role. Cultivate compassion for all beings - humans, animals and all others alike—fostering divine virtues: selflessness, generosity, fellow feeling, tolerance and serenity. Thus you love yourselves and God as well.
- Strive for absolute purity of mind, word and deed. Thus you become both a lover and a beloved of the Almighty.
- Beware of uncontrolled jubilation or jealousy; both will keep you away from God.
- Treat the entire world as your own home; be un-swayed in glory or humiliation, friendship or enmity, praise or contempt.
- Dedicate yourself to compassionate service, care and charity.
- Always regard and give value to the World Teachers and their words.
- Hold on to all these in your everyday life. These revelations made here are as destined by the Almighty that always there will be a realized Guru in this lineage.

Gurucharanam Saranam

Aum Sri Karunakara Guru
Parabrahmane Namah

Aum Sri Karunakara Guru
Satyapradaya Namah

Aum Sri Karunakara Guru
Ateeva Satyaprakashaya Namah

Aum Sri Karunakara Guru
Ateeva Satyaprakashaya Namah

Aum Sri Karunakara Guru
Ateeva Satyaprakashaya Namah

WORD IS TRUTH
TRUTH IS GURU
GURU IS GOD

Santhigiri

MONTHLY

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NAVA OLI JYOTIRDINAM

THE RADIANT AGE OF THE NEW LIGHT

The universe was born from the Mind of God before the beginning of time. All the things seen on earth are only the projection of God. With the creation of man, the universe attained meaning and perfection. Life in the world is established on the foundation of self-sacrifice, mutual dependence and love.

The changing cycles of the ages are like the changing seasons. There are the different cosmic ages such as Satya Yuga (the Golden Age), Treta Yuga (the Silver Age), Dwapaara Yuga (the Bronze Age) and Kali Yuga (the Iron Age). Each of these ages has a unique nature of worship and way of action.

The difficulties in this age are the results of distortions in life. Man has been alienated from dharma – the righteous

way of life. For the restoration of the righteous way of life, the Supreme Light of God came down to earth. Sri Aurobindo Maharshi, the great Indian sage, saw the coming of that Supramental Light to earth accompanied by Sri Krishna. Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru was born on 1 September 1927, at Chandrioor in the Alappuzha district in Kerala after nine months of this vision of Maharshi Aravind.

Sri Krishna protected and guided the Guru until the age of nine existing in the form of a luminance inside him. This experience remained a mystery to Guru for long.

At the age of 13, Guru went to live in the Advaita Ashram of Sri Narayana Guru at Aluva. He served in the different branch ashrams of Sivagiri Mutt. When he was 25,

He met Qureshia Fakir, a Sufi saint near Thiruvananthapuram. Qureshia Fakir initiated Guru into the secret of mystical experiences and clarified his doubts, which many other sages could not explain to him earlier.

Guru was pained to see the superstitions and spiritual distortions in the society. He strongly disapproved the caste system, which caused social disunity. Guru wanted to evolve a new spiritual order based on human equality and the belief in one Supreme Godhead. He wanted to rebuild the society integrating the universal spiritual values of ancient Indian sage tradition. Through a life of self-sacrifice and spiritual wanderings, Guru realized the mission of His life and established Santhigiri Ashram at Pothencode in the year 1964.

The basic activities of the Ashram are Annadanam (providing free food), Aturasevanam (healthcare for the ailing) and Atmabodhanam (spiritual mentoring). Guru provided free food to the devotees and visitors who came to see Him. Everyday, about 10,000 people are given free food including at all branch ashrams.

The ordinary methods of treatment cannot cure the diseases originating from karmic and spiritual problems. Therefore, prayers and other rituals have an important place in the treatment method of Santhigiri. Guru has shown the practical way for purifying the karmic deficiencies through a life of spiritual discipline, unique to Santhigiri Ashram.

The spiritual mentoring in Santhigiri Ashram transforms the mind and body of man through a righteous way of life. Guru guides the father, mother, son, daughter and other members of the family making them aware of proper dharma, the right-

eous course of life. Through this method, the human society can be transformed for better.

‘The religion I believe is of friendship, fraternity and truth’, Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru said. The meaningful words of Guru and His modest way of life inspired several world leaders to visit Santhigiri Ashram. On 6th May 1999, the great Guru merged with the Supreme Light. That day is celebrated as Nava Oli Jyotir Dinam - the Radiant Age of the New Light in the form of Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru.

The Parnasala of Guru, where the physical body of Guru has been put to rest, has been rebuilt in the form of a beautiful lotus, embossed with white marble. The Supreme Guru of great prophecies resides here in the form of Light providing succour and spiritual nourishment to all people who flow to the Ashram transcending all barriers of caste, religion, class, colour and gender.

Our life today is the accumulation of the sins and virtues that the soul is saddled with through innumerable births and deaths. The vices accumulated in the soul manifest as diseases and hardships in life.

The work of Santhigiri Ashram is to purify these deficiencies through prayers and karma under the guidance of Guru. The Guru’s words that ‘The very ideology, the path and method of Santhigiri Ashram is to enable all people reach the Absolute Truth of God,’ explains this.

Santhigiri Ashram is celebrating Nava Oli Jyotir Dinam on May 6, 2014, Tuesday. Let us pray on this auspicious occasion and strive for the building of a new peaceful society, liberated from all conflicts and tensions.

- Editorial Board



Guruvani

OUR TRADITION, UNBEARABLE BURDEN

You might have some aspects of faith. However, it should be handled only after knowing the cause-effects of faith. I am talking about the subject in my experience. In the style of somebody who suddenly makes haste to display some miracle, if everything is dispensed with blessing and punishment, nothing is going to come and nothing is going to happen here. There are some dirty tricks like siddhi (miracles), magic and blessings in the possession of people. If (one is) blessed and sent away with those dirty feats the prosperity of the house will be lost. Not only that, when the children grow up, they would completely grow up into bad ways.

What is our necessity today? There is a karma (a path of life), which we have followed until this moment today. There is purity, a truth and everything for that karma; do it knowing it once. Do not go (on) believing what is said by somebody as it is; that is not correct. It is God who is giving us the knowledge and experience to actualize this. We should not forsake what is being given by God. Whatever God gives it would be beneficial for all of you.

Whoever you are, you have lived based on a faith. It is not said about a particular religion or caste. When that faith was faulted in some way, all sorts of religious doctrines appeared which were then again distorted by recitals and interpre-

tations. Thus the karmagati (the course of karma) of that concept was unable to be known. Each one of us is the balance of such a decadent karma. No one should think that everything would be alright all of a sudden. The hardship of some people in accordance with their readiness to undergo sufferings, its measure lessening by and by, suddenly it would subside. Then in place of a big harm, just a finger might be cut. That should not be considered as a serious matter. For example, in place of a severe attack of typhoid there would be a fever that would make us bedridden for four days. Then you should not say 'all trouble has come and I suffered quite a lot'. This is not what we should say. All this would have to come and that will go in its way too.

Our subject is this – how our olden karmagati would be exhausted? How should it be exhausted? If somebody says this karmagati, which my ancestors and I have followed, observed and made to observe, does not exist, it would not be exhausted. If it is said that it would be exhausted just like that, that is stupidity. If we go wherever and bring whatever, it would not be exhausted all of a sudden. However, we have the favour of God. A permanent solution for that olden karma that we have practiced until now knowingly or unknowingly, the solution which God has shown to

us! It would not come unless the men and women, small and big, in the family strive together. If it is said that God is living more with a particular person, what can be done for that family? I would only say that he should go with that God who has come with him more. The educated and the uneducated, the ignoramus and the wise, as well as the one who is able and not able, when they see that the glory of God is the same - if someone is arrogant because he is more intelligent, we can only think that let him go in that manner. Nothing is going to be gained with such bigheadedness. If (one is) arrogant because of education and wealth, let (him or her) be arrogant. Each one of us is the remnant of the ignorance that says that God is sitting in my caste; God is sitting in my religion. That means we are wrongly established in the aspect of knowledge. If it is thought some mahatma has taken away all my mistakes and the deficiencies arisen thereof and now it is enough that I sit idle, things will not work. This mistake is not a matter that can be washed away by any mahatma.

As far as we are concerned, let us first come to the understanding that the karmadosha (the result of erroneous karma) that has originated by birth or the quality of karma is to be experienced. Experience it with awareness. The sufferings that are destined let them come. Even so, it should be exhausted. That should be our aim. 'O' I went there! Everything is just the same'; to speak thus is not awareness. If you work with that type of understanding, unimaginable ruination will be upon you. We should manage to make it fruitful undergoing whatever pain and hardships.

How do we know what our ancestors had done? If said that wealth and lordship should be available equally for all, it is not going to happen anywhere in the world. A

long time back, as part of the distribution of wealth among all, it was once decided that land measuring thirteen-and-a-half cents would be given to a person. In the previous times, a person got thirteen-and-a-half cents. Today how many people are there? How many will be there at a future occasion? It is a job that cheats the poor people. Another group would say that I am (working) undergoing hardships (for others). What work is it? Whose job is it and for what? (Good idea) if (one) worked for the people's welfare. What people's welfare is it? Each one of you (should) think! Ruination would come to the household of one who (thus) struggles; that is all. Some cunning ones would say, 'A lot I struggled, but could not know what is love'. So, all this is not to be mentioned like this and equalized.

We would get whatever we should only from the karma that we accomplish struggling through love, reverence and humility. If it is said that without love, without guidance, everything could be jump-offed now, saying something and all, it would only jump; nothing would be got from there. Whatever is the nature of jeeva (soul), it would happen only according to that. We have everything, but a drop of water cannot go inside; if it is so, is it not the helplessness of the jeeva? There is something and all in the hands of others to do for our sake. However, nobody is doing anything. What can be done? Would it be enough if somebody gives us for one day or ten days? Shouldn't our children grow up? What we have to understand is that all this is not the karma of (having) the sense of justice. It is just that several things like this can be said attractively about the sense of justice. We can also pass judgment; but the judgment of his jeeva is not that. Women and men are alike with

regard to this judgement. If somebody says that it is not so, that is the guidance which would completely push us down to servility.

We see many types of politicians and many types of religious ideologists. What is happening here, is it something that is said by them? Is it necessary that somebody should say about the world? It is not the mistake of those who said this or of those who said after listening to others and knowing. Nothing is going to happen if somebody jumps up and says without understanding the sorrows that are past and yet to come as well as the knowledge and experience and its depth. It has not happened so far. When there exists this much evidence before us why do we say and do all these unnecessary things? What somebody is informing you like this are futile things.

All of you know that I am a person who had struggled as much like you. However, I do not think about that struggle. If I think like that, can I live? It is true that I underwent hardships, but its nature is that. God has given recognition for that struggle. If God gives us, we should be ready to share it with all others. That is the sacrifice. For that, wealth, money and competence, everything will be required. What is the cause of our suffering? It is the unbearable burden of our tradition. What is that burden? The emptiness of dharma in our jeeva; its emptiness of luck and punya (blessedness)! Is it possible to dump and discard this one day somewhere and come back? Do not say like that to anybody. It is not right to say that. All these are the beguiling feats of religious doctrines and the justification of siddhi and miraculous performances. Nobody should believe in all this.

As far as we are concerned, we have the grace of God. What is said here is truth.

However, for the grace of God, one should undergo pain. We may not have the awareness about this type of matters. But one thing, when we exhaust doing good and bad, we are going again and doing karma according to the principles of the respective religions and then leap in the logic of one who has no faith! Whoever leaps (in) whatever way, what is there for you? I am not saying that. We should not think that we could improve by working in different way. It is the mistake of father, the mistake of mother, the mistake of the birthplace, the mistake of the country - what is all this? There is a lack of luck for the birthplace. What is the reason we are born in that place? Is it not enough to perceive that we are luckless people than that.

Yes, we are the worst than all else. Our ancestors are those who have never known what are the processes of the jeeva; and who have grabbed the big bottom of loveless action and performed the dance of ruination, taking it as love. When God is giving us an opportunity to change from this, you, father and mother, husband and wife should never behave forsaking that. Then only you can escape. If you forsake it, you can never become alright. All this is a karma that happens when we are born. If we go forsaking all this, we cannot complete our dharma or karma. Only if you toil with struggle, tying with it a mind of detachment, love and respect, you can discard with awareness the sin and virtue that have come through the ignorance of our ancestors. Otherwise, you will never forsake it. After some time you will go abandoning the faith also. This is my experience.

Let our former doctrine be false or correct. Let us not try to improve it mentioning the right and wrong of it. We are born now. What can we do now for all



Devotees in the Ashram during Nava Oli Jyotirdinam

this? We can think about the time God has gracefully given us as an opportunity for that. It is a karmagati for us to know each other, share and do and make others to do. That should be the love that would reach to dharma. It should not be the love that drains punya; ruination would happen there. You should work with detachment and tenacity in this matter. If God gives us an opportunity to do it gradually and make others do, we should actualize it. That tenacity, that love and reverence, should be caught hold of without losing it. In case there is no love, humbleness and respect, everything would go after that lacking. Most of our ancestors are people who have gone like that. Therefore, we should not leap seeing that. If some miraculous feats are shown; if the full nature of siddhi (miracles) is shown; none of it would be beneficial to us. We should not believe in any such thing. Our love would be lost. Understanding a little in this manner you should strive hard without wasting time. Otherwise, time will be lost. How many people we encounter who have thus wasted away time and opportunity!

Some people unable to bear the love would act out several things. After some time, all their love would be gone. Has a thief taken it away? I have only this to say. I cannot draw you closer saying other things. You can take it to the extent of your knowledge and love.

Regarding knowledge, I do not think that any big knowledge can be carried and stuck upon you. You have less awareness, less experience and familiarity. You do not also know what is the sin and virtue of our ancestors. Let it be whatever. I am born and grown up, or in this birth something all will happen. Whatever be let it happen. I want the release from this. That release should lead to mukti (liberation). That should be our thought. There is no use leaping loose listening to the things that others say. Several people have fallen down since they could not do knowing it. Therefore, I am telling you that fact straight away. In my experience, what has been seen is that way. If you possess an awareness in that manner, no inconvenience it is going to cause us. We can do all that we can to lift through our love, respect and humility.

You will have experiences in several ways in the form of disease, difficulty, sorrow, poverty etc. This exists for all people. Some disease is not cured if treated. For some, another disease will come up, if treated. Another disease would be incurable. Even though we might say several things as the cause, it is the lack of punya in our jeeva. Doing what, can we change the lack of punya in the jeeva? A situation would come up in this, which cannot be grasped in any way. Even if it is asked to big faithful (ones) and those who come as farsighted people, there is no remedy. It is difficult to get such a person.

This difficulty is the same among the Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Jains and all because the tradition we followed would be celebrated for some time and when we familiarize ourselves in such a sankalpam (conception/ideology), this karma is transformed like a disease or pain in course of time. It happens to several persons. Nobody is telling the reason for its occurrence. The habit of most of the people is to believe in some deities worshipped by any of our ancestors and offer prayers going there occasionally. But do not think that all this would be equal to God worship. We can do God worship in all ways. The sankalpam is that there is God in everything. It is not so. With regard to the concept of God, this sankalpam has come after many errors as we had not understood and followed it according to the times. It has not come due to any other shortcomings.

Several people who had lived in a big way, that too who lived doing many good things, are trapped in this type of sankalpam. If it is said that the reason behind all this is the emptiness of punya in the jeeva; is it possible that wealth and competence would be attained by somebody who has

no punya? But how that punya should be made use of, in what way if we do, it would be maintained, and through our life it should be transformed into what - we have not learned all this. If a little wealth and ability come (into our life), then living grandly and seeing others with a small mind, we should become great underplaying them - this is what has been learned. We who have this way of thinking what punya is there in the jeeva? We have an ingrained habit whereby we lived in this way billions of time. How can it be changed? Some people remain very far away in the matter of purity of character. Those who have some accomplishments, ability and esteem, they carry it as a big status and would destroy whatever punya is there. This is the artificiality among us.

We will live, grow up and die. What quality is there for our jeeva? We carry this stinking body wiping and bathing. If there is no jeeva in this body what can be done? What can be done if such a jeeva becomes like a diseased tree? Nobody is coming forward to tell how it should be redeemed. When we suffer the most hardships, where would we go? To some astrologer, mantravadi or some temple or a swami in case he is sitting somewhere. Nobody should think that we could get punya from these places. That thought does not have any merit. What is the deficiency in our jeeva? That is the aim - how could the deficiency of the jeeva be removed? We do not know this at all.

What we have heard is the Trimurti tradition or the Prophetical tradition or Gurumargam. Let it be whatever. We can go only in the path of receiving God's words. If we go through this path, after four or five thousand years, what can we know about our ancestors? If we go by the calculations of yugas, billions of things

come in the estimation of yugas. Can we go ahead after knowing all this? We have not been taught at all in a tradition respecting Yugadharma. This is the reason behind the shortcomings in all people. Can we live according to this Yugadharma all of a sudden? No, but this is the time ordained for it.

Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra – Varna dharma is said for these. This Varna dharma has been said for whom all and it is the yuga dharma of which age, this has not been said. There are people who have conceived that all this is not to be done because it has been taught that Kaliyuga dharma is bad. It is not that way. If it has been said that this Kali is perfectly with the Sudra, this Sudra has the authority. That means the Kali age is the authorised time for Sudra for Brahma jnana (God realization). It is only in Kali he can earn it. The awareness that through the dharma of Kali the Sudra can earn the right for Brahma jnana should be firmly established in us. Instead, whatever politics is said, whatever caste is said, whatever religion is said, our sorrow will not be removed. The shortcomings in the observance and God worship of the ancestors, let them exist in whatever mandalas, all the households who have the antiquated tradition have this. To think that there is no (such) antiqueness is also our ignorance.

There are some people who live in forests or on seashores etc. worshipping in the fashion that ‘for small, small castes small, small gods’. They would not have any knowledge about the concept of God. When they come along doing it listening to something and all or by watching, everything would be in trouble. Later this man will die, go away and stand somewhere. Do not think that after death that jeeva is saved. It would go and stand (in

those mandalas) wherever life caught by absolute nescience exists.

All people know that there is an atmosphere for this earth. There are three planes after the earth’s atmosphere – the Sun and the Moon. In between this, some planets move where the eyes cannot reach. They are called as nava joythi (nava = new (or nine), jyothi = radiance) or it can be said as an akasha or bhumika (an astral dimension). There is such a calculation. Can we work knowing all these calculations? It is not necessary that you know all that. All this exists. The meaning is that you need not wait to know all this and then proceed. You cannot proceed knowing that way. I can tell you some things that you can do. When we start doing something, the mind will go downwards. This is some shortcoming in the jeeva. When growing up, we will work in different ways. If some sickness comes at that time - that is the lack of punya in the jeeva. This jeeva is unable to earn punya too. This is a deficiency of ours, the humanity. The astrologer after looking at his chart would say to do that and this. It would not be ‘heard’, if it is done so.

Our ancestors who had lived here have been elevated to (the status of) Deva, Devi, Rishi, Sanyasi or Jnani. Where do all these exist after death? Coming as their progeny and dying away, several billions of jeevas are thus reaching evil rashis (constellations) and standing there. Then the children born (under these rashis) become sick when they grow up, do not get what is required for their growth or would not have the ability to do any work and fulfil. This is ordinarily known as family failings. But this is not only family failings but the deficiency in the jeeva too. It should be rectified through our life.

Sri Krishna came as the greatest person.

In what way have we seen what Krishna said? Krishna had come as a Jnani (knower of Truth) by birth itself. Nobody came as a Jnani by birth. After taking birth, they evolved to become jnanis. Not only that, by birth and origin itself, Krishna was born transcending the Deva stage. That is how Krishna's colour happened to be dusky. Sri Krishna's colour was the sky colour. Does the sky have any colour really? No. After attaining the avastha (spiritual accomplishment), he came as the Guru. That was the reason why he crushed the uncles and predecessors like Drona and Bhishma in archery. Why did he kill? The pitrus (ancestral souls) they have killed are standing there separately. If these pitrus still stand like this, and if these people live, this war cannot be won. Therefore, just killed them; killed them through Arjuna. We should understand it in this way.

What we have learned is that Sri Krishna is the greatest. It is not learned; it is experienced. Sri Krishna is known as a jnani. Jnani means there is no relationship with anything – father, mother, husband or children. There is a relationship, however, to Truth. That is Sri Krishna. Didn't he kill the offspring? That is the quality of Sri Krishna. Without understanding Krishna in that way, we have been taught the story of 16008 women. In the same place where we worshipped Deva and Devi, we are

worshipping Sri Krishna also. This is our mistake. Sri Krishna is not a person like that.

The gopikas are those who accepted only Krishna as the Guru for several lives. What is said as 16008? It is a spectacle in the eighth stage. Sri Krishna's soul, if it departs from the body, can exist with a form or without a form; it can divide itself as a molecule. That is Sri Krishna. Since we have not got the awareness to see Sri Krishna in this way, what have we done? Our ancestors worshipped Krishna as part of the worship of Deva and Devi. Even after Krishna came liberated in this manner, the uncles could not see that greatness. Because of that how much sorrow that family had to undergo even before the birth of Sri Krishna.

When it is said a mother, that mother would get happiness as well as sorrow through her children. If they get involved in such a karma, that mother should get evolved to perfection through that birth. It is not by denying husband, wife, children or anything, but by abiding by that (dharma) as necessary. We should not do anything forsaking children, forsaking father, forsaking mother or forsaking husband. Through our life, we are fulfilling a life.

(Translated from the original Malayalam)



Article

TOWARDS A CASTELESS SOCIETY - PART II

Swami Gururetnam Jnana Thapaswi



'Deepapradakshinam' during Nava Oli Jyotirdinam

It is an irony that despite its immense size, the bounty of nature, a salubrious climate and its vast natural and human resources the Indian society has remained backward for the past several centuries. It is true that India has a few billionaires and a sizable urban and rural middle class. However, according to some statistics, about fifty percent of its population remains below the poverty line in the ghettos of social and spiritual isolation and backwardness. One cannot negate the fact that the backwardness of India stems mainly from a religious ideology that di-

vides its people socially and spiritually in the name of caste. Many mahatmas in the past tried to root out this social evil. However, the problem of caste continues to plague India.

The caste system has been misunderstood as an inviolable system of Hindu religion. Counter spiritual movements such as Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and the bhakti movement in the medieval period appeared as an alternative, casteless spiritual path. As we have seen, many other socio-spiritual and political movements against the caste system surfaced in the

twentieth century also. A good percentage of Indians has converted and continues to convert to Christianity, Buddhism and Islam in order to escape the stigma of caste. However, despite all these socio-political and spiritual movements, the social disunity the caste system inflicted upon the Indian society continues to hinder its social and spiritual integration, which is a prerequisite if India is to emerge as a global power and regain its status as a true spiritual guide in the world.

Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru disapproved the hierarchical caste system and opened the path of spiritual redemption for all people, especially the downtrodden and women. The spiritual movement of Guru is all-inclusive. His followers belonged to all castes and religions, the backward castes, scheduled castes and forward communities such as Nairs, forming the majority. By distilling a spiritual thought beyond religious dogma, Guru united the people in the thread of pure spiritual love. Guru demonstrated that it was possible to demolish the walls of caste and religion, for which He performed the marriages of his followers among unequal caste groups. The unification of dissimilar caste groups by marriage has been effective in removing the social distance that existed between different caste groups. However, this was possible only when all caste groups were united under an egalitarian and universal spiritual ideology and rituals discarding whatever were to be discarded in the old tradition. However, inter-caste marriages without such a uniting and enlightening spiritual ideology can only lead to a different dimension of social and spiritual anarchy.

Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru did not establish a new religion. He established a new secular and evolving spiritual

movement reinterpreting the cosmology and foundational principles of Sanatana Dharma remaining within the age-old spiritual and cultural inheritance of the country shared by the rishi tradition. Guru realized that only by guiding the people to such a spiritual path unfettered by tradition, India can overcome the problem of caste and the consequent disunity among people. In order to evolve into such a spiritual vision liberated of the caste system, first the people should know what the true basis of Indian spirituality is. Is it based on the Trimurti tradition (devi-deva worship) or is it based on the Rishi tradition, asked Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru.

As we know, the Trimurti tradition is based on the ritualistic worship of Devi-Devas in temples through mantra and tantra, whose authorities are the priests who have been trained in the rituals. One of the justifications for the caste system was the ritualistic purity, which was the privilege of only the priests. Here the medium between the devotee and God is the priest. On the other hand, the Rishi or the sage tradition (Gurumargam) is founded on the transfer of transcendental knowledge and experience through the relationship between Guru and disciple. Here, the disciple is directly elevated to the spiritual level of the Guru in an experiential way. For the disciple, the only scripture he or she has to follow is the words and instructions of Guru. The utterance of Guru is the revealed scripture or the Veda.

Such a Guru would be a channel of transcendental knowledge, expressed through visions and revelations. He would be a trikala jnani, i.e. one who possesses the knowledge of the past, present and future times. He would be the spiritual guide of an age with a profound spiritual insight into the history of the human universe

from its origin going back to millions of years in the scheme of cyclical ages. In the Rishi tradition or Gurumargam, the medium between the devotee and God is such a realized Guru, who has transcended the concept of angelic beings or devi-devas as the medium for spiritual realization. There is no place for priests, caste discrimination or such loathsome customs and practices in the true Guru tradition or Jnana path. However, almost all the Guru traditions under the umbrella of Hinduism are found to be deferential to the Trimurti system, which rests on the concept of the caste system and the worship of devi-devas as the way for salvation supported by the Vedic rituals. Hence, there is no possibility of escaping from the caste trappings through such Guru traditions under the Trimurti system.

The Trimurti tradition is an outdated and stagnant spiritual culture which allows the worship of innumerable spiritual entities ranging from evil spirits and ancestral spirits to deities, gods and goddesses supported by superstitious myths and tantric rituals. The Vedic precept 'Ekam Sat, Vipraah Bahudhaa Vadanthi' (there is only One Truth, but the scholars mention it differently) has been wrongly interpreted to mean that any type of worship is fruitful to attain God and ultimate liberation, which is in conflict with the teachings of the Bhagavat Gita that to whatever spiritual entities one is attached, to them goes the soul after death. The famous verse in Bhagavat Gita 'deva vrataan devaan yanthi...' means that whoever worships the devi-devas or other spiritual entities their soul would go to them after death.

The Trimurti tradition has created innumerable spiritual divisions under the three main creeds of Hinduism, i.e. Saiva,

Vaishnava and Sakteya that promote allegiance respectively to Siva, Vishnu and Devi as the path of liberation and attainment of Brahma Jnana. However, there was no place for Brahman, the Supreme Universal God, and for the Brahma Jnani Guru, the Knower of Brahman, as everything had been brought under Siva, Vishnu and Brahma. In place of the eternal and universal spiritual principles, which form the basis of Sanatana Dharma, a divisive spiritual culture, supported by Puranic tales, was allowed to grow, which gives prominence to deity worship and caste system and in which the main player can only be the priest, not the Brahma Jnani Guru. This disintegrative spiritual culture has grown like a weed in the vast spiritual complex of Sanatana Dharma. The caste system is the by-product of this spiritual culture. This spiritual deviation has occurred due to the mistake of not evaluating the evolving nature of yugas or ages that bring about changes in the modes of worship relevant to each age. Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru said:

'The two earlier yugas - Treta and Dwapara - were the periods of devas. In these yugas worship could only be channelled through the medium of devas. In the scheme of deva worship the Brahmin elite kept the Sudras away. But the fourth yuga is the hub of authority for all this. If we believe that the earlier three yugas have run their course according to the respective Yugadharma, is it not certain that the fourth yuga would have a dharma of its own to be followed? According to the dharma of the fourth yuga, so the Puranas enjoin, the devas lose their authority. The Vedas and Upanishads reflect this idea. If so, should it not come to pass?'

The caste system not only degraded the lives of the downtrodden but arrested

their spiritual growth too. Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru mentions:

‘It is said that in Kali the Sudra has the right to rule. Further, if the Sudra is said to have the right even over the Vedas, we will have to concede it. Apart from the denial by the king and the Brahmins there is yet another reason for the backwardness of the Sudras. Take Kerala for example. The Brahmin elite, apart from preventing the Sudras from gaining knowledge or holding authority, also had liaisons – sambandham - with Sudra women, disregarding the injurious repercussions this had on the pitrus. There might be much to say in this regard. Is it not clear that the Brahmins thus tampered with progeny, and destroyed the role of the child in striving for the spiritual redemption of his ancestors, since the ancestor himself became illegitimate? The Brahmins refused to share vital knowledge, and degraded the people so denied into subject status.’

We know that the protest movements against the caste system took the form of new religions. However, they represent only a partial or imperfect aspect of the Sanatana Dharma principles. There is a rational and scientific basis to the concepts of Sanatana Dharma, which cannot be rejected by science as the advances in the fields of physics and astronomy prove. Sanatana Dharma is rooted in the belief in the One Supreme Intelligence, called as Brahman (not Brahma, one among the Trimurti gods). It has a system of age calculation with relation to the purpose and evolution of the universe and a tradition of Guru-disciple learning and dissemination of knowledge related to the process of spiritual evolution. These are the key aspects of Sanatana Dharma, which are in disagreement with the spiritual concepts of the Trimurti tradition, which is mainly

based on mythology in the Puranas.

In the Sanatana Dharma, the deva-devi or the celestial stage is a stage of trigunas, i.e. the three qualities in motion bound to the phenomena, which have to be transcended in order to attain final release from births and deaths. By worshipping the spiritual entities in the deva-deva plane, which includes all angelic beings, a devotee limits his spiritual evolution, as true peace and experience of the Absolute can be realized transcending the field of trigunas. This has been mentioned by the sages in their teachings. For example, in the Bhagavat Gita Krishna advises Arjuna to become unfettered by the three gunas (Nistairgunyo Bhava Arjuna). Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru said that the birth of Krishna heralded a change in the spiritual scenario of the country. Guru explains how the protagonists of caste appropriate such sages who stood for the eradication of ignoble spiritual practices including the caste system thus:

‘Krishna came at the end of one yuga and at the beginning of another. He was a Sudra Guru whom the Brahmins tried to reclaim for the Trimurti. Likewise, we have the story of Mahabali, the Sudra King of Kerala who was destroyed by Brahmanism. We are told of this exemplary king who was just and was loved by all his subjects. A god, in the guise of a Brahmin was supposed to have stomped him down into the nether world. Krishna belonged to a low caste family though his mother’s brother Kamsa was a king. The Brahmins appropriate the spiritually endowed evolutions in due course. However low or vulgar the persons are, the Brahmins can get close and own them. This tendency is reflected in extra-religious activities too... The Sudra origins of the ‘twelve sons of the pariah woman’ were played down by the

Brahmins when these wise men were no more. This was done by making them acceptable through suitable writings. While these gurus were still living, the Brahmins were too hesitant to mingle with them or to recognize their work and vision’.

The spiritual movement established by Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru is the re-establishment of the true concept of Sanatana Dharma. It is the fulfilment of the true vision of the sages and rishis down the ages. There is no place in it for spiritual disunity and other harmful practices such as the caste system. Guru said that ‘everyone should get everything’. The ideology of Guru is the spiritual expression of all democratic and socialistic principles synchronizing spiritualism and secularism. Democracy, socialism, secularism and all such egalitarian concepts can develop only on the foundation of such a spiritual base. This philosophy and spiritual movement has the power for a civilizational change, an ascent to a new world-order.

Guru gave the following exhortation for a total spiritual re-organization of our society:

‘A reorganization of our society, of our country is required. All of us, believers, should free ourselves from the destructive effects of the caste system. We should overcome ethnic and religious differences. All children of this land should come together in humility and in devotion to God. That is the way to reorganize. This will give us strength of mind and power. The

community that could contribute greatly towards this reorganization is the Brahmin community. In them intelligence, skill, ability and shrewdness blend as it were. They should give up their Varnasrama caste trappings completely and lay the foundation of a composite—samkara—culture, the culture that is meant for Kali, indicated by the author of the Bhagavad Gita. They should unite with others to build a complete society, totally free from caste or class. They should not be distracted by the differences seen today. The pattern of having one mode of worship for themselves and other modes for the rest should change first’.

Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru said that the degradation of the times is due to the refusal to modify the customs that required a change according to the age and the falsification of the ideology that the abode of God Almighty should at all times be with the celestials (deva) and Brahmins. The divisions in society have been deliberately created. In this distorted state Sudras were denied the right to study the Vedas. They imbibed a decadent culture and their life slid into abjectness.

Therefore, only by changing the present mode of worship and caste concept, India can resurrect itself spiritually from decadent religious practices. The eradication of the caste system calls for a re-interpretation of Sanatana Dharma. The significance of the spiritual movement of Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru lies here.



Article

DO IT WITH DEVOTION, ACUMEN AND SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

Swami Chandradeepthan Jnana Thapaswi

‘**W**hat happened to you? Are you out of your mind?’ This was the first question I asked my parents when they were going to the Ashram for the first time. There was anger, contempt and scorn in that question. The reason for this: The awareness derived from several life-situations. I was born in a family that believed in the traditional temple worship. My father and mother loved the traditional rituals and had faith in them. I had not given attention to all this in my childhood. When I grew up, I began to lose faith in these rituals. I had not felt that there was the corresponding auspiciousness in the life of the people both at home and in the society who lived based on these traditional beliefs. Except an exhibition of devotion, none had the knowledge or experience to live a splendid life holding on to good values, I felt.

I had friends belonging to different faiths in my childhood and learning days. I had seen some of them observing religious rituals on certain occasions. For example, I had closely watched the observances of vritam by some for the pilgrimage to Sabarimala and the fast of those belonging to prophetic religions. If we talked to them

rudely during that period they would say, ‘Now I don’t tell anything. Let this vritam be over, I will make you alright then’. When I heard this, I would laugh. In short, after the vritam they would be worse than what they were before the vritam! That was the situation.

In our homes, father has one belief, mother has another one and the children would have a different belief or they would have no faith at all. All people are in the forefront of faith and rituals. However, we do not know how to live as a good father, mother, children and family. There are clashes between father and mother, between parents and children. There is a lack of peace and tranquility and sickness and distress everywhere. Problems are more in the families that are deep into rituals and worship than the others. These experiences in the family and the society distanced me from the traditional faith.

I had no clear answer to the question - what is the basis of all this and why are these rituals being followed? Nevertheless, a definition is given that whatever our ancestors have done we are protecting that glorious tradition. To say it precisely, there was no clarification to my doubts.

That was the reason behind my scorn and ridicule towards these rituals.

I was about eighteen years old when my father and mother first went to visit the Ashram. The meaning of my question to my parents was, 'The rituals and prayers of all these years, weren't they enough? Is a visit to the Ashram also required now?'

They did not reply. What happened after that was contrary to what I expected. The atmosphere of our home was totally changed. A disciplined life, mutual love, peace and tranquility - these experiences were surprising. Nevertheless, I did not involve in all that. I thought to myself, 'How did they change in this manner?'

Atmabandhus, the devotees of the Ashram, used to come to our house. They conducted prayers occasionally. We had subscribed to the publications of the Ashram. Since I had the habit of reading, I used to read the Spiritual Monthly of Santhigiri. Some of the things that I understood from my reading were thus. The people who now believe in Guru were believers in the traditional faith earlier. They began to follow the Guru's path after getting spiritual experiences through Guru. Today, they have no caste or religious differentiation and try to live as a good father, a good mother, a good family and as a good human being. This realization generated in me love towards the Ashram and Guru.

During those days a prayer meeting was held at my house. Although I did not sit for the prayer, I made acquaintance with a few people who had come. Among them, there was a lad who had been leading the cultural activities of the Ashram. He began to talk about the Ashram ideology. Since I had not yet come out of my negative mindset, I did not allow him to talk much. I just said, 'Guru is experience. I would believe when I have experience'. The conversation

ended there.

When I write this, I remember the words of a Mahatma: 'Religion means our belief in the experience of others. Spirituality is the belief through self-experience'. Therefore, I was not ready to believe without my experience.

It was after this incident I visited the Ashram for the first time in the year 2000, after the Guru's merger in the Adisankalpam. That time I had no awareness about the relevance of Guru, the Ashram and the position of Sishyapoojitha. However, what attracted me on the very first visit to the Ashram was the Ashram atmosphere and Guruvanis. One of the Guruvanis was like this:

'Whatever dharma you have observed until now is true and perfect to the level of your awareness. I agree to all that, however, what I say is this: If you do something now, do it only after being aware of it. Otherwise, like it happened to your ancestors, blunders will happen to you also'.

This attracted me very much because these words were close to my thoughts. I was a person who described all traditional beliefs as superstition. It was correct too because all of them did it without any awareness. Lord Sri Krishna himself said: 'Act with intelligence, acumen and spiritual strength' (budhya, yukthya, yogabalena). That means, whenever an occasion comes for performance of an action, do it using your acumen and intelligence.

Believing a Guru is also like that. Buddha said to his disciples: 'Believe not because others have said it. Believe only when you experience it through your intelligence and reasoning.'

The love developed through Guruvanis and the Revered Sishyapoojitha helped me to know more. I began to realize Guru through experience. Since then, I could say

that Guru is experience. Subsequently, I began to follow the path of Guru. Because, knowing through experience is greater than what is known through history and reading books. It is that experience that I received through the Revered Sishyapoojitha, who is the Guru Apparent. It is an experience of Guru's protection that never allows us to fall. Guru remains with us as our support and shelter at every moment of life.

Now, there is another Guruvani, which is filling my mind. In the matter of faith, there is no other way except blind belief. This blind belief is not the blind belief mentioned earlier, i.e. blindly following the rituals of the ancestors without any discrimination. The blind faith that Guru is talking about is the faith coming from experiential knowledge through one's intelligence and discriminatory knowledge that Guru is God and Guru's words

are God's words. What Guru says for it is 'Do with bhaktya, yuktya yogabalena (devotion, acumen and spiritual strength)'. That means once you get Guru, then what should work there is not our intelligence but devotion. Without trying to evaluate things through our small intelligence live obeying the words of Guru in letter and spirit, understanding that Guru is the physical projection of the Universal Power and nothing happens without the awareness of Guru in this universe. That is what Guru reminds us: 'When I say a thing, do not poke your intelligence into it. If you do like that again blunder will happen to you'.

I pray that every family should be able to live absorbing the words of Guru fully and devotedly and they should be able to develop a human society without the discriminatory walls of caste, creed, class and colour differences.



Article

GURU TRANSFORMS CHARCOAL INTO GOLD

Swami Janasnehajan Jnana Thapaswi

Mahatmas say that a man is born with eightfold bindings such as timidity, fear, doubt, uncertainty, egoism, enmity, hatred and caste identification. Liberation indeed would come when these knots are cut. Jnanapana (a devotional text popular in Kerala) also mentions that it is difficult to transcend the karmic bindings. Guru called this as 'karmagati' in a single word. This karmagati traps a man. How can we unwind this trap? Who will loosen it?

Once, when Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was making his bed he saw a cockroach beneath it. He took it in his hand and handed it over to a disciple standing nearby. 'Take it outside and kill it,' he said to the disciple. The disciple took the cockroach outside the room and thought, 'I am a devotee, a great sadhu who does the worship of God always. Kill a cockroach! Killing of any living being, is it not a sin?' He let the cockroach fly off. When the disciple came back, Sri Ramakrishna asked him:

'What did you do?'

'I let it escape,' the disciple said.

'What did I tell you?'

'You asked me to kill it'

'Then why did you let it off?'

The disciple told him what he felt about it. The Guru scolded him. What the

disciple followed was his intelligence and logic. He did not take the words of Guru seriously. In short, as far as the disciple is concerned, the Guru who asked him to kill the cockroach is a sinner and he a divine. The mentality of many a disciple is like this. If the words of the guru are not matching to his intelligence and reason, it would be difficult for him to obey. Now if the guru had said this to a different disciple, he would have done a different thing. He would not only kill but also fry the cockroach and bring it in front of guru. He would come and stand in front of guru in the style of asking how good his ability is. Some other disciple would kill the cockroach, fry and eat it himself. Yet another disciple would free the cockroach without killing it and tell the guru that he had killed it.

These four disciples belong to four categories. The first one refused to obey guru with his own intelligence. The second one obeyed but he added his extra intelligence; he fried the cockroach to show his smartness. The third one obeyed but he utilized it for his selfish end. The fourth one not only disobeyed the guru but also told an untruth in front of guru. How can a guru handle these four types of disciples? Sure-



Guru's Vehicle

ly all these four persons cannot be handled in the same manner. All the four are four different types. They possess four different characteristics and their mental states are different.

Guru handles each person looking into their mental composition or karmagati. The one who has to be thrashed is thrashed; who has to be scolded is scolded and who has to be made free is made free. The aim of guru is only this - the person who has come to him for refuge, he should be saved. For the sake of a person who has surrendered to guru, the guru will go to whatever extent. That is the guru's dharma. Similarly, the sishya's dharma is to be ready to go to whatever extent for the sake of guru. This dharma that the guru and sishya share together, when it becomes suitable and beneficial for the world as well as the relevant age, that becomes the Godly path or the divine dharma. On the contrary, if the sishya wrongs the guru, the opposite would happen.

The important thing is to obey Guru. One should be submissive to Guru. We should become humble. We should accept Guru unconditionally. Guru accepts the disciple unconditionally. Then the sishya too should accept the Guru unconditionally; then only the Guru-sishya relationship becomes meaningful. Mostly, this awareness is difficult to be located in the disciples. Even without their awareness, some conditions surface. For the same reason, when something comes from the Guru that is not likeable to them, their mind is distanced from the Guru. Eventually it becomes perilous for the disciple. When something unfavourable comes from the Guru the disciple could ask Guru with humility and with the eagerness to know the reason behind it, then Guru would explain it to him with its cause-effect background. He would make him convinced about it experientially.

Without doing so, if the disciple behaves with Guru allowing the inner disa-

greement to grow, the disciple would get distanced from Guru. The words spoken by Sri Krishna are relevant here: 'Forsake all other dharma and take refuge in me alone' (sarva dharmaan parityajya mamekam saranam vrijah). Forsaking all your dharma take refuge in Me. Whatever we consider as dharma or adharma, good or bad, right or wrong, forsaking all this, obey Guru and His words wholeheartedly. This is the meaning of it. If it is not done, how can a disciple go ahead? How can a parampara that follows him go forward? Instead of understanding it in this manner the great pundits and the Vedic leadership in different ages defined it in a different way focusing on the four-fold Varnashrama dharma. They have defined and detailed the difference of four ashrams – namely, brahmacharyam, gaarhasthyam, vaanaprastham and sanyaasam. Vaanaprastham has come to mean forsaking one's home, dying somewhere suffering hunger and thirst and becoming transformed as a demon that would then catch hold of the coming generation. How many people will comprehend this? This has been done by those who desired the destruction of the human race, especially of the sudra class. Any person with common sense would understand this. This is not the path suitable for attaining moksha or liberation. The only way is to obey Guru and follow Guru Margam.

I shall conclude this by narrating an experience shared by a person recently. He once came to see Guru along with his family and one of his colleagues. Guru talked to them for a long time. They were convinced of Guru and they began to pray to Guru. One day this person told Guru:

'O, Guru! I have some liability. If I continue to work in the native place, I would not be able to repay it. If I work overseas

for about five years, not only the debt would be cleared but my life would also become better. Guru should give me permission'.

Then Guru said: 'Your wife and you have jobs. You live off the income of one person, bearing a little bit difficulties. With the income of the other person, pay off the debt slowly. That would be the good course of action for you'.

Although he accepted the Guru's advice at that time, whenever he came to the Ashram he would repeat his desire to Guru in different ways. From his words it would appear that he was not able to improve his life because of Guru not giving permission to go abroad. Then on one such occasion Guru said: 'You do whatever is appealing to your mind'.

He went abroad and got a good job with a good salary. He then abandoned his job in the native place. There was no other way because the law did not permit that. After a year, he came to the native place on a holiday and went back happily. The next year too he came on leave and returned. After a few months he came back again but this time he was suffering from throat cancer. He came to Guru and told about his affliction. Then Guru said: 'What I can say now? I had told you not to go but you went according to your wish. Now you pray'.

Then this person said: 'My present problem is the throat cancer. I cannot take in any food except water'. At that time Guru was drinking kanji (rice porridge) in the morning. Guru used to consume kanji with the leaf of a jackfruit tree in the traditional style. Then Guru said to a person standing nearby to pick up a jackfruit leaf. He took a leaf and gave it Guru folding and sewing it in the form of a spoon. Guru took a leaf-full of kanji from His plate and gave

it to him. 'O, Guru! I cannot consume anything except water', he said. 'You drink', Guru said in his usual way. 'Guro, nothing except water would go inside'. 'Dear fellow, you drink,' Guru said scolding him and along with that He poured kanji into his mouth. 'Gulp down,' Guru said.

Even without his knowledge, the porridge went down his stomach. Within the next four or five minutes, Guru poured six or seven spoons of porridge into his mouth. 'Everything went inside,' Guru asked him. 'Yes, went inside', he said. 'Take him and give him lunch,' Guru instructed a disciple. The disciple took him out and arranged lunch for him. From that day, he was able to eat all food.

He told this to all people and began to praise Guru. 'Guru is Ishwar, Guru is God, Brahman and Parabrahman'. He began to praise Guru in this manner. When Guru came to know about this, He stopped him from doing that. Guru said: 'Do not say like this. This is the grace God has granted you, think only like that. If you tell this to the people, they would not understand it. They would think in some other way'.

After six months when he underwent medical examination in the R.C.C, he was found completely cured of cancer. He went to the Gulf again. He had lost his old job there. The new job he got had no position or status that he desired. Therefore, he resigned that job and returned to his native place.

There was no work in the native place

and there was no income. Living on his wife's income became unpleasant for him. With that, he began to ridicule Guru. He complained that he went to the Gulf only on the Guru's advice. After some time, he became the victim of many diseases. No medicine was working for him. He lives still the life of a dead person.

We should not forget that the anger of God is as great as His love. Like that, do not forget that His cruelty is as deep as His compassion. The greater the height of the peak, the deeper is its depth too. If you believe; if Guru is accepted wholeheartedly; if you obey the words of Guru, then everything will be received. Guru is the one who transforms charcoal into a piece of gold. If you deny or ridicule Guru or cheat Him, we are unable to say what would happen. If you believe, you will get everything. That is the experience. There are examples for all this in the history of Santhigiri.

One example is the Revered Sishyapoojitha who is the Guru Apparent now. When she loved Guru, put her faith in Guru, obeyed the words of Guru and surrendered her soul to Guru, she became the Sishyapoojitha, who adorns the chair of Guru. Guru transformed her like that. Pity the condition of those who wrong Guru! I do not want to go into that. Excuse me for that. I pray that all people might be able to love Guru alike and surrender to Him.

(Translated by Mukundan P.R.)



Article

THE EVERLASTING SPRING OF SACRED LOVE

Dr. T. S. Somanathan

I am narrating some incidents that occurred 23 years ago. At that time, except my wife, nobody else from her family prayed to Guru. Once, my wife's father left home at a young age to accept Christianity. On the way, he happened to listen to the speech of Ramaswami Naicker. He sat there and listened to the whole speech. Thus, he became attracted to the ideology of E. V Ramaswami Naicker, who is also fondly known as Periyar. Later, he learned the Siddha-Marma treatment system following a Guru-disciple tradition and began to practice as a vaidyan. He became an adept who could formulate wonderful medicines using nine types of poisons (navapashanams). My father was a devotee of God. However, owing to the tremendous hardships he faced in life, he turned to rationalism. He would become disturbed if someone even mentioned the subject of God.

I reached the abode of Guru along with my wife in 1979. After some months of performing Gurupooja, fate showed its unpleasant face thanks to the provocations of some well-wishers. My wife turned very hostile and tried to prevent me with all her might from going to the Ashram. Our peaceful life was shattered. The people in my wife's family caught the news of

all this. They also thought that I was forcing my daughter to do things that she disliked. Nevertheless, they never displayed their anger and objections to me. I was an extremist in my manner in those days. I used to explode if people talked negatively about the Ashram.

Once I brought Dr. Selvakumar, the younger brother of my wife, to the Ashram for some reason. I handed over to him a few plantains to be given as an offering to Guru. Guru was then sitting in the Kettidam (the dwelling of Guru). We entered the Guru's room. Oh, God! What I can say? Guru was loudly shouting at a person then. His face was red with anger. When He saw us, His anger came down a little. Somehow, we wielded enough courage and submitted the wrap of bananas in the Guru's hands. I prostrated before Guru. Dr. Selvakumar hesitated and just stood there. Guru talked to us affectionately and we went back after eating at the Ashram.

A few years went by. This doctor settled at Kaliyakkavila along with his family after opening a clinic there. There, he became friendly with an Ashram devotee by the name of Rajasenan, who owned an electric shop at Kaliyakkavila and was living near the shop. Dr. Selvakumar now began to love and respect the Ashram. He

saw the love and affection Rajasenan had towards me and the selfless help and cooperation that he always extended to him also. Just because of that, he came to see Guru in the Ashram once again along with Rajasenan. He began to pray to Guru along with his family. Today they are metamorphosing into strong devotees through several experiences.

When Dr. Selvakumar saw Guru scolding the person very angrily on the first visit to the Ashram, he wondered: 'Should a Mahatma become angry like this? That is not correct.' He had this faulty thought that some other logical people might also entertain. The result was a mental block that prevented him from knowing Guru. After several years, because of the sincere love of Rajasenan, that block was removed. Let us stop this story here.

Guro! You blessed us that there would be immediate result if we pray to you! You comforted us that we would be cured of all diseases through prayers to you. You consoled us the ignoramus by your words that if we possessed the devotion of Kanapan we would be saved.

I am mentioning another family story here. My wife's sister served in the RBI at Chennai. They were not devotees of Guru. Her engagement was fixed for November 1990 and the marriage date was fixed for December. She was living in a hostel at Chennai. In the meantime, she began to suffer from an itch in her body. This was followed by thick spots and swelling all over her body. Normally, we might call it as allergy. She consulted a doctor and began to take medicines. However, she did not have even temporary relief. She was unable to stand or sit down; such was her uneasiness and restlessness. Her father was a Siddha doctor with a good hand, as mentioned earlier, and her brother too

was an allopathic doctor. Yet, her disease could not be healed. She reached her father's house at Nagarcovil. When we came to know about her problem, we suggested that she come to our house at Sreekaryam and we would take her for treatment to Santhigiri. There were only a few weeks left for the marriage and the treatments were not giving any results. There was the fear that the marriage would not take place. So they agreed for whatever reasons. I went to Nagarcovil and brought her to my house. Her lips were all swollen and wilted. There were blood spots here and there under the skin of her feet. She was unable to put her feet down, sit or lie down. All the people remained awake throughout the night. The next morning we proceeded to the Ashram.

When we reached Pothencode, there were no vehicles as there was an auto and taxi strike. The girl was unable to put her feet down; her pain was so acute. We were in distress and standing there without knowing what to do. Then we saw a fellow devotee Sasiprabha coming towards us. At that time, an auto-rickshaw came there from somewhere. This mother (Sasiprabha) requested the auto driver very humbly to take the girl to Santhigiri Hospital. The man felt compassion and agreed to take us to the hospital on the condition that if somebody stopped us on the way, we would have to get down. From the hospital, we took her to the Ashram on a scooter.

All of us reached in front of Guru. Guru explained everything in detail. That was the time when the production of Siddha medicines had just commenced at Santhigiri. Ranjan Sir was in charge of it. Guru called for Ranjan Sir. When he came, Guru enquired about certain medicines and gave some instructions to him. The production

unit was in the hospital complex, which was half a kilometre away. He walked down the distance and brought the medicines quickly as instructed by Guru. Guru gave us four bottles of kashayams (herbal concoctions) and some powders (sindoram) along with vibhuti filled with His sankalpam and compassion.

The medicines were administered punctually to my sister-in-law at our house. We noticed a relief in the severity of her condition. When the medicines were finished, we again went to Guru. Guru gave us another dose of medicines. With that dose, she was completely healed. She used the vibhuti given by Guru for some more time. After that, once or twice she felt the symptoms slightly but the problem disappeared totally after that.

Her marriage took place after a month in a good way. However, she had no children from the marriage. They did all types of treatment but there was no result. They went on a pilgrimage throughout India and the husband and wife sat for prayers

at the Guruvayur temple. Nevertheless, she was praying to Guru in her mind. After 15 years, they took her for treatment to a well-known doctor in Chennai and she was blessed with a child. This happened in 2005. Before this, they came to the Ashram for my daughter's marriage. By then Guru had merged with the Supreme Light and become Nava Oli (the New Light of humanity).

When they informed the joyful news of childbirth to Sishyapoojitha, she said thus: 'bring the child and show me when it is able to travel'. My eyes became moist thinking about the grace of Guru, God. There is a saying 'Why go before a God who does not care to look'. My Guru protects even those who do not bow before him. They brought the child before Guru in 2007 when it was one-and-a-half years. Sishyapoojitha caressed the child's cheek with a graceful smile. O Guru, O God! You are the everlasting stream of love flowing incessantly on this earth as a solace to the burning human souls.



Article

FOOTSTEPS OF GRACE

Biographical Accounts from Guru's Life
Chapter 5



Lamp procession entering the Ashram

The struggle was long, Santhi thought, for finding the right kind of spiritual guidance. His heart was welling with love for the suffering humanity. He wanted to share with the people a wholesome truth as a panacea for all their suffering, but the truth he was searching for eluded him all these years. His heart ached with the desire to unravel the spiritual secrets, but he did not know in which way to go in search of truth. The birth and childhood days of Santhi were full of strange and otherworldly experiences. The meaning

of those experiences remained obscure to him despite his years of struggle.

September 1, 1927: It was the auspicious Malayalam month of Chingam. A new era was commencing. Countless bright stars twinkled in the moonlit sky. Occasionally, below the luminous sky, patches of silvery clouds hastened towards the horizon far beyond. It was past midnight. Karthyayani, Santhi's mother, was restless and groaning in the cramped room of her thatched hut. She was going through her first labour pains. Sitting be-

side was her mother who tried to comfort her. Her father was walking up and down in the courtyard prayerfully. Now and then, his gaze went beyond. The son-in-law Govindan had gone in search of the midwife when the pain started. He had not returned even after a long time. It was not enough that any midwife be called for the namesake. It was the first birth and an experienced midwife was required. Inside the room the groaning and the hushed utterances continued. As time passed by, their anxiety too increased in proportion.

Santhi's mother was in severe pain and cried aloud when it became unbearable. At that time, two persons entered the courtyard in the moon light. In the front was Govindan and behind him was the midwife. She was an experienced midwife in that locality. She straight away went into the room.

One could hear the occasional moans and suppressed voices from the room. The night was in its last leg. The birth had not yet taken place. Karthyayani's father approached the pond in their house yard. Performing ablutions in the water, he prayed to the family deity with a heavy heart: 'O God! Do not give much suffering'.

Govindan, Santhi's father, was a good natured person with faith in God. He prayed: 'O God! Let your grace be with her'. God heard their prayers and soon the delivery happened. When they heard the cries of the child, all were surprised. That was not the cry of a newborn baby; it sounded like the voice of a grown up person. It did not continue long and everything became normal after sometime. The midwife announced with visible joy that it was a boy. The fears were over and a wave of divine calm and happiness began to flow through the sleepy village and beyond.

The grandfather noted the time and the

birth star of the newborn baby. The star was choti (swati) and the time was the early hours of dawn. 'Going by the star, the child is going to be a great person,' was the first prophesy about the child, that too by the grandfather. Listening to that, Govindan smiled. 'Choti is the asterism seen in the sky like a disk of gold. Those who are born under this star progress by the dint of their hard work. They would be loving, righteous, humble and blessed with intelligence and farsightedness. These are the general characteristics of those born under this asterism.' Govindan listened silently.

Chandiroor is bordered in the east by the backwaters and in the west by the Arabian Sea. The region in and around Chandiroor was carpeted by lustrous white sand. The endless stretch of coconut groves and the green paddy fields in between gave it an ethereal beauty. In the midst of all this beauty stood Chittekkatt, the small, thatched house of Santhi. In a small room of this house, a kerosene lamp flickered spreading its faint light around. The child came into the world from the mother's womb looking at the flicker of this lamp. The mother and grandmother looked at him curiously. Karthyayani felt that there was an aura of light around her son. Perhaps she might have imagined so in those blissful moments. But who knows?

The night was slowly shedding its dark gown. In the eastern horizon, the bright rays of the new morn appeared. The birds began to chirp and sing. The sun held the umbrella of light over the human universe as though to welcome Karthyayani's son. The people in the house felt the air of a new beginning. Nature began to throb with a new dynamism and expectation. Everyone felt happy and enthusiastic in the Chittekkatt house.

However, this happiness continued

only for two days. On the third day, the child's condition changed suddenly. Its temperature came down and it stopped drinking milk from the mother. Round blisters appeared everywhere on its skin. All felt anguished at this. They tried the treatments they knew for newborn babies. However, there was no relief. The midwife was called again. She also tried her best but there was no use. Day by day, the child's condition was deteriorating. The first child for whom they had waited for so long, and now feared that it would be lost untimely. The mother was unable to control herself. Nevertheless, some signs and experiences that she had encountered during the pregnancy gave her hope and peace. She had seen the visions of devas, devis and sages appearing in front of her every day and bowing to her. Multitude of angelic beings came and blessed her in those visions. The child in her womb was blessed by God, she had thought. She believed that all of them would try to save the child and prayed with all her heart. Was her prayer going to be futile? The child's condition was getting worse. A week passed by with uncertainty and there was worry and sadness in the faces of all.

They had a family temple. The grandmother was continuously praying before the deities there. On the eighth day, an unexpected incident occurred. A pregnant cow came into the courtyard from somewhere. It fell down and died after flailing its limbs for sometime. People in the house became numb seeing this. Several thoughts passed through their minds. Was it a forewarning? Was it an omen of some impending danger? Their mind became sorrowful with this thought. They did not talk and avoided looking at each other and were left alone in an island of sorrowful thoughts. However, the prayers continued that no

danger come to the child.

On the ninth day, the grandfather bathed in the pond and prayed standing in waist-deep water. 'Please save the child if it is destined to live'. When his fervent prayer continued, the cries of the child echoed in the air suddenly. Everybody tasted the ambrosia of peace when the child showed signs of improvement. The child began to drink milk a little by little. Its stiffness was gone and the blisters began to disappear. Along with the change in the child's condition, the minds of the household members too brightened. Child Santhi recovered completely from the clutches of death. Within one-and-a-half month, fresh skin began to appear.

The child was bright and beautiful. Govindan was already a sick person. Although he took recourse to some natural medicines, his sickness remained more or less constant. Presently it appeared to be reaching a critical stage. Because of his ailment, he was not able to take and fondle the child. He would look at the child from a distance and find satisfaction. Karthyayani was sad about his condition. 'Why don't you take him to your bosom?' she asked him. 'No, it is enough watching him like this'. She liked her husband's vigilance and precaution. She looked at him affectionately. She became sad when she saw tears moistening his eyes.

The baby played lying on its stomach. Slowly, it began to crawl pushing the chest forward. Normally, Govindan did not go out. The severity of the ailment had drained out all his stamina. He lay on the cot most of the time and would entertain himself watching the plays of his son. One day, Karthyayani spread a mat near his cot and laying the child on it said to him: 'Take care of the child. I will be back right now after a bath'.

There were only the father and son in the room now. Govindan got up and sat on the cot. He put his feet down and looked at his son. All his affection was visible in the eyes. The child lay there sucking its finger and watched his father for several minutes. Then suddenly withdrawing his eyes he turned upside down to lie on his stomach and looked at the father with a triumphant smile as if to say, 'See how smart I am!' 'You are smart', the father said, praising him. The child slowly began to crawl towards the father. He was excited to reach the shore of fatherly love and affection. He swam ahead and reaching near the father caught hold of his toe. Then he pressed his face on those feet. The child was bowing at the feet of his father. How deep and profound is the soul relationship! Govindan lost self-control. He lifted the child and pressed him to his chest. 'O my son, my dear!' He held the child tightly with a sudden surge of fatherly affection.

After some moments, he put the child on the mat. Afterwards he could not hold the child. Not because somebody prevented him from doing so, but because he had become completely bed ridden. When the child was six months old, the naming and feeding ceremony took place. The child was named Karunakaran, which means the personification of compassion. He was fondly called as Karunan Kunju (child Karunan) by the family members and neighbours.

The child's father died when it was nine months old. Widowhood shattered Karthyayani. The son was her only solace. Karthyayani's brother Sankaran took care of them. Karthyayani did not continue the relationship with her husband's family. Karunan Kunju lived at Chittekatt, the mother's house, along with the grandfather, grandmother and his uncle.

Karunan Kunju was still crawling and walking on the knees. He moved very fast inside the house. Once while he was playing he passed urine in the main hall. Seeing that, his mother gave him a mild slap on his buttocks and said, 'You should go out and urinate'. For a few moments, the child sat there looking at the mother's face. The mother forgot the incident. But after that day, whenever he wanted to urinate, the child would reach for the doorstep and slowly crawl down the three steps and pass urine outside the house and come back. The mother was stunned to see that. Bathing in the morning and evening was compulsory for little Karunan Kunju. He would weep and compel others to give him a bath. Otherwise, he would pour water on his head from the water kept for household purposes.

Karunan Kunju was two years now. He was a bright, good looking child and was liked by all in the neighbourhood. He was friendly with all people and smiled affectionately. However, he kept a distance from those who were dirty or smelly. His attention to cleanliness increased as he grew up. When he was four years old, after bathing he would insist on a fresh dress. Even though all things were fine with him, people noticed one thing amiss. Karunan Kunju was not speaking like the other children of his age. Whatever others said he would acknowledge or accept it. He would limit his replies to a smile or a nod. If it was not possible, he would use a single word like 'no', 'yes', 'enough' etc. His silence and moderation in talk continued as time passed. This made the family members and others doubt that he had some speaking disability.

Karunan Kunju exhibited a sagely discipline in his daily routine. He would go to the pond and bathe both in the morn-

ing and evening and would change clothes at both times. After bathing, he would do prayers. He would not even drink water without doing the morning prayers. Nobody knew to whom he was praying or what he was praying. Nobody bothered to find out as the child was engaged in a good custom. If somebody asked him, he would just smile.

His continued verbal silence troubled every one. When he was four years, the grandmother began to take him to the family temple. The child also liked it. Once at the temple, Karunan Kunju would become absorbed in prayers. The grandmother prayed for the grandson with a sorrowful mind. However, Karunan Kunju did not speak. He was always joyful and pleasant. Then why this eloquent silence, they wondered. They gave him medicines, chanted mantras and did prayers at different places. They took him to various temples and performed rituals unique to that place like circumambulation, carrying a torch fire etc. They also took him to the Kanichikulangara temple and observed the rituals there.

There were many peculiar qualities in Karunan Kunju, which made him different from the children of his age. They all noticed a sage in the child's character. From the time he gained memory, Karunan Kunju saw a divine and radiant figure in-

side him. He thought that it was so in all the people. The radiant figure inside him restricted his verbal expression. He could utter only essential things in a single word or gesture.

Whenever he entered the family temple, the inner figure would glow and Karunan Kunju would become immersed in devotion. He would get lost in some blissful experience and would not know what was happening around him. He desired to remain inside the temple itself and had to be compelled to come out. One day, Karunan Kunju went to the family temple as usual with the grandmother. He sat there in a vacant spot. That day also, the inner luminance became stronger and he was lost in devotion. The wish to remain inside the temple intensified and he decided not to go back home. Even after the grandmother called him, Karunan Kunju did not obey. When she insisted, the child was about to say, 'I am not coming. I want to remain here. I like that'. However, the words did not come out as at the next moment a voice fell on his ears: 'These people are rogues and barbarians and will not understand all this'. (to be continued)

(Based on the Biographical Novel 'Karunyatinte Kalpadukal' by Sri G. Phalgunan; published in Santhigiri Adhyatmika Masika; translated and edited by Sri Mukundan P. R.)

