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



GURUVANI

VRITAM AND PRAYER

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

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VRITAM AND PRAYER

We have the tradition of not knowing the purpose of pournami vritam and prayer (full moon day vow). The sun, moon and the earth - these three spheres are related to pournami. It is owing to the process of the jeeva (soul), which gets transformed with the power of the sun, that it (the jeeva) comes to the karma bhumika (the plane of action, the earth) that exhausts karma. You should be familiarized with the knowledge that reveals what we should do in this karma bhumika and what should not be done. Contrary to it, you should not go to the karma that ruins you, saying and winning with the fragments of Vedantic aphorisms. You should not dishonour these truthful words that are being said for your awareness.

The result of pournami prayer is greatly virtuous and cannot be constrained by any other thing. It is on pournami the purity of the purpose of many lives is able to be actualized and fulfilled with awareness. The pournami vritam will bestow the benefit of all other vritams together. One can become guru, observing the beneficence of all these vritams. It is on pournami that Guru gets mukti (liberation). It is the spiritual aspect of it. Likewise, pournami helps to accomplish perfection in the worldly life too.

The uniqueness of the full moon is that not even a little darkness permeates (on that day). On one side is happiness and coolness (freshness) and on the other is the quality that can absorb anything. In coolness, the seeds achieve more quality. That quality is capable to give birth and nourish it.

There is perfection to the samadhi (the total absorption of consciousness in the Supreme Truth) attained through the bless-

edness of several births. During pournami the earth's atmosphere is tranquil. There is no gap between sunrise and sunset: when one rises, the other sets; when one sets, the other rises. Wherever the rays of the sun and moon fall in all those places the previously mentioned qualities also permeate. Pournami helps Guru to reach the perfect stage of God or Brahman. Whether you think about the benefits of pournami prayer or not you should do the sankalpam that all our flaws (dosham) should be eliminated, discriminating between the good and bad in a way that all sentient and insentient beings are benefitted, and that this prayer of ours should become beneficial for world peace. (Then) the planets would have a state of equilibrium and because of that, there will be a unique vitality beneficial for the world's welfare.

Pournami is the best day for procreating and merging (absorption). That procreation would be beneficial to the whole world. Just as this state is imagined in a mango flower it works in the human too. Although spirituality and materialism are fulfilling each other, for whatever we give prominence that would be on the rise. The mother who gives birth to a child on pournami should be mindful. She should know that this (birth) is for the world and it has been given so by God's Will.

We have proceeded respecting whatever exists now. When we came through the path of ancestors, some impediments came up. After that, a change was brought. One may ask, even after proceeding respecting that which exists now (the present tradition), how it was accomplished? It is difficult to

give an answer to that. In what way the predecessors were, we do not think about it. However, we accepted a path like this (Guru Margam). It is a matter for contemplation as to how did it happen? (Swami) Sivananda described hatayoga as rajayoga. Rajayoga, nevertheless, is not all this. One falls into true Rajayoga unknowingly through the blessedness of former births.

For example, there is Krishna. Krishna has not rejected anything. Cementing whatever existed until then he showed that he was not (limited to) all this. Krishna desired that the karma according to the age should come and he performed it and went away. There is value for all that has been made to be observed until now. However, I am (Krishna) standing stamping the feet on it. Krishna is a perfect jnani (seer). Karl Marx asked to harvest human heads after reading the Gita. However, he missed the spiritual essence. The intellectual gymnasium of ordinary people should not work in the things done by the farsighted seers.

One thing could be learnt from the mahatmas who have come and gone. Most of them have negated the old path. If we want to see what is the old we should come only through the old. As far as we are concerned, we do not require the old because we got a new path. We have got it through asareeri (revelation). (Its nature was that) it would only be revealed to do such and such matters at the particular moment. Nobody could come knowing everything in the beginning itself. God is guiding it at the appropriate moments. Guidance is coming by way of intimations (revelations from the Light).

It is in Kaliyuga the errors should be corrected. Then it would be taken ahead to Satyayuga. What system could we assign to this correction? Whatever (has been) done until now is in a small way. It is in the coming time things are to be done more. Never-

theless, I have been seen as a negator. The character of it has come from that ordinance itself. 'What I desired for aeons that has been fulfilled today.' From this revelation it would be understood that it is the correct one and pre-ordained.

Now the point is how to take it forward. The tradition of worship - the people who created every worship method have done it asking and knowing how it should be done. We also do the same. We have a special distinctiveness. This way of worship has been given to us without our asking. Nevertheless, it (this way of worship) should not be effected through my mediation. There is a duty for those (the disciples of Guru who receive these intimations) who ask, do and make others do (according to these divine intimations). It is for this reason I said that the grihasthashramis (the householders) cannot do this. However, the grihasthashramis who live like rishis can do it. Such a grihasthashrami should have the tenacity that he would step aside only after taking it to a certain stage.

How and who should implement this ideology? It is not I who has to implement it. Even if somebody seeks and a few think after several people become aware of it, this can be implemented only according to the karmaseshi (the ability of action) of the one who is going to implement it. It cannot be implemented only by faith. What all things should be there in what is said as faith? There is the need for discernment about faith. We utter a word when it arises in the mind (of Guru). That word should be carried out.

Faith - one who can transform the eight-fold self-conceits (ashtaahankar) into eight-fold blessedness (ashtaashwarya) can only implement it. The love and affection of the One who is purified thus (the Guru) should be shared with us. You can work unifying with His karmaseshi. It is possible only by

the person who after earning the ashtaishwarya (eight-fold fortunes) turns back to ask what should be done thinking painfully and acting asking the way. Whatever it is, the karmagati should be pure for this. Although one might earn eight-fold siddhis (ashtasiddhis), one should be able to maintain truthfulness and should exist as satyakaman (the desirer of truth), unmindful of praise and insult.

It was noted before that a prayer like this is being done here according to the (divine) intimation. At the time of doing this prayer, you should remember that even if a slight scratch of ignorance comes in this it would spread in many ways. We are doing the prayer for the sake of removing the drawbacks that have come in all the karmas of grihashthashramis as well as brahmacharis. This is not a matter coming under the competence of your mind; therefore, there might come some lack of awareness and errors. There is nothing else to say about it except that it is the Will of God that makes us do a matter which exists beyond anybody's reach to be able to even mention about it.

We should always think that this Guru and the Guruparampara that are ordained for us by God should be able to share the goodness in double measure removing the shortcomings of my ancestors and mine as well as the whole humanity occurring during the course of ages. The children whom you bring up and are being brought up as well as the children who live here accepting sanyasa are equally participants in this noble karma. If a path of redemption should come through the karma that all of you do together, you should also think in what way it should be done. You should always think whenever you do any work that in whatever aspects shortcomings have come through

sanyasis and their lineages, and likewise in what all ways shortcomings have come in the world, all that should be eliminated and the goodness willed by Brahman should come in that place. When those children who study do not obtain any awareness internally, you should pray like this: not only the children in this parampara, wherever there are children who have been distracted, all of them should have blessedness through this path.

This is the Word revealed to us by God. You should give particular attention to the boys and girls and should pray for them. I am a woman and the karma coming from me should rectify the mistakes of the women in this world. Man also should think in this way. That should be your merit. This merit of man and woman is streaming ahead here together. That time, our mind should not become bad, nor should we fall into a situation that would spoil our mind. Especially the men and women growing up here are the people who should determine the fate of the world. It is with this awareness of dharma we should become great. Remaining in this dharma, our continuous prayer is that - all the mistakes that have traditionally come should be removed not only in this sourayudha (solar system) but also even in other sourayudhas, and (God) should give the knowledge, experience and ability to do the things that we require at the appropriate moment.

When we have gained this awareness and are made to act through the revelation of God, we should be ready to do that. On the contrary, you should not allow to enter inside you thoughts that are like rubbish lying on the wayside. If you are doing this prayer on the pournami day it would have complete fulfilment.



THE DIVINE LIGHT THAT REVIVED INDIAN MEDICINE

Swami Gurudharma Jnana Thapaswi

I heard about Guru for the first time from the family of Smt. Maniamma, a devotee of Santhigiri Ashram. I was practising at Kottarakara then. Thus, on 26 April 1986, I came to the Ashram along with Smt. Maniamma and her daughter. I felt internally charged after seeing Guru and began to frequent the Ashram for the refreshing experience of meeting with Guru.

With that, my attitude towards people began to change. I realized that love is the important principle. During one of my initial meetings with Guru, Guru asked me about the meaning of karmam (actions in life). With my pre-conceived ideas about karmam, I said that one should do nishkama karma, that is, action without desiring results, as mentioned in the Bhagavat Gita. On hearing my reply, Guru took a glass tumbler from His table. 'If I drop it down, will it not be broken? Then where is the desire-less karma if I can't do any action without its consequences? Actions are unavoidable but conceive Guru or God as the doer. We are like a machine obeying the dictates of karma. When we perform karma, attachment to the results appears. However, we should perform karma without attachment, remaining just as the medium of God's Will.'

I began to understand the essence of the Guru's words gradually and started visiting the Ashram frequently. Once, Guru asked me to be always present in His room. Guru would meet hundreds of people daily, listen to their woes and give them peace, solace and divine protec-

tion. Occasionally, He would talk to groups of people for hours into the night. Sometimes, I would doze off sitting at the back.

As time flowed, I felt the deep love of Guru. That love began to expand in me and that awareness started to express outwardly. When one-and-a-half years passed like this, I decided that my goal in life was to live with Guru. It was the fifth year of my marriage. I discussed this with my wife and she agreed to my suggestion. Then both of us went and informed Guru about our desire to live with Guru in the Ashram. I repeated my desire two or three times to Guru. However, Guru did not say anything. Then one day I told Guru with a sorrowful heart that I had no other desire in life except this. Then Guru agreed and asked me to come along with my wife.

I was given the responsibility of the Ashram Hospital and continued my practice there. Guru had a great spiritual vision about Ayurveda and Siddha. The whole science of Ayurveda and Siddha is based on a spiritual foundation. I began to realize this truth in its fullness after living with Guru.

Some people become physically and mentally sick because of the disturbed vayu (prana) in the body. This vayu is the vital breath, the life breath in the human body, like the air inside a football. If the air becomes too much or too less it would not be possible for the ball to remain in shape. Its proportion should be accurate. Vayu is centered in different parts of the body. There would be problems if its flow

becomes less or more. The disturbed vayu affects three parts in the body – namely the chest, stomach and head.

Once, when Guru was at Varkala Santhigiri, a weaver went to Thenkashi to sell his cloth. He sold the cloth and got a good amount of money, which he wanted to use for his daughter's marriage. He had sweated for many months to earn the required money. Unfortunately, on the way back, he lost all his money. The shock was so much that he lost his mental balance. He became completely blank without any sense of time and place. He would be seen standing on the road without any awareness of the surroundings. Guru had known this man. One day Guru saw him standing on the roadside in this condition. Guru picked up a stick and suddenly hit him on his head. The man blinked with the shock. With that, he came back to his normal awareness. The aggravated vayu was centered in his head. When Guru struck, it came down to normalcy and the man recovered his health.

'Aadhi becomes vyadhi.' Worries and tensions lead to disturbances in the flow of the vayu or prana, which affects the head, the digestive system and the heart. The different treatments suggested in Ayurveda like snehapanam, vamanam, virejanam etc. seek to lessen the stiffness of vayu. When the prana affects the points in consciousness (brain), the patient might be subject to the influence of other supernatural spirits such as pitrus (ancestral souls), deities, curse of preceptors etc., for which the physicians would not be able to provide a cure. When the problem becomes acute, then it would be difficult to cure that person. The physician who cures such cases should have atmabalam (spiritual strength).

When I took charge of the Ashram Hospital, Guru said that when a person tries to do good things he would face many problems. I said to Guru that I was prepared to undergo those difficulties. For a disciple, the love and

spiritual bond with Guru cannot be weakened by any turmoil in life. Guru merged with the Supreme Light on 6th May 1999. On the completion of 1001 days of this, I was among the Guru's disciples who received sanyasa deeksha, i.e., the opportunity to become a monk.

As an Ayurvedic physician, I would like to highlight the spiritual basis of the Indian treatment systems. The divinely inspired role played by Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru for the revival of Ayurveda and Siddha remains unknown to the practitioners of the Indian systems of medicine and to the world at large. These systems had become nearly extinct in the face of modern medicine. It was as if a curse had fallen on the science of Ayurveda and Siddha because of the errors that had crept into its practice and application in the Guru-sishya tradition.

In the 1970s, on divine promptings, Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru initiated the spiritual revival of Ayurveda and Siddha by preparing a few of these medicines in the Ashram. Guru restored these systems to their original purity and thus removed the gloom of the curse that had fallen on them. On that occasion, Guru prophesied that the Indian systems of medicine would flourish in the coming years as modern medicine did now. One can notice the phenomenal popularity and growth of Ayurveda and Siddha since then.

Guru propounded a new healthcare doctrine known as Nava Arogya Dharma Sidhantham, which calls for the integration of spiritual and physical aspects of health incorporating treatment methods from all health sciences, both modern and traditional. Guru also recognized the karmic and spiritual aberrations of an individual as the basis of incurable diseases and other genetic problems. I remain fully indebted to my Guru for kindling in me a new vision of health and experiential knowledge.



THE JOY AND PAIN OF SPIRITUAL REALIZATIONS

Ramani Amma, Kottarakara

I came to the Ashram for the first time in 1983. Immediately on seeing Guru, my brother Vikraman desired to get the Gurupooja (the spiritual cleansing of family) done. He made the request to Guru without any awareness of the significance of Gurupooja. Guru then asked him whether his father would agree for the performance of Gurupooja. My brother said he would make him agree. My brother had been searching for sadhus from a young age. When he met Guru, he said that 'I met the Authority of my life, whom I was searching since several births.'

This brother of mine used to experience a vision since childhood. That was before meeting with Guru. In the vision, he along with the whole family was stranded in the middle of the ocean. This painful vision was always haunting him. However, after meeting with Guru that vision stopped. If we had not met Guru, probably that vision would have become a reality. My daughter (now Nischita Janani) saw Guru when she was three-and-a-half years old. On seeing Guru, she said immediately that 'I see this person (Guru) always and play with him'. Guru said what she said was true. Another experience of this daughter was that whenever any person came in front of her, she was able to presage everything about

that person. She knew their tastes, their favourite food, the day of their arrival etc.

When it was informed to Guru, Guru asked Sishyapoojitha to see about it (in vision). We came to know that she was under the influence of a Yogishwaran who had come to earn through my daughter, who was a child in the Guru Parampara, the blessedness that was not available elsewhere. Anyway, just because we informed Guru at the right time, she escaped from a great danger.

Although Guru had told us about his desire to visit our house, we had not extended an invitation to Guru. We did not invite Guru because our house was small and we thought that we would call Guru after building a good house. However, Guru said to us one day, 'I do not want permission from you all to come to my house. I would definitely come there', and in 1993 it happened.

'When I come to the house do not make any arrangements for me. The water from the well and the flowers in the house compound are sufficient,' Guru had specifically told us. However, we made warm water, prepared a garland of jasmine, and waited for Guru. When Guru arrived, we forgot all this. We fetched cold water from the well and washed Guru's feet and

plucked red flowers from the house yard and offered these at the Guru's holy feet. Through that, the words of Guru that we should not keep anything for Him became true.

Later talking to us, Guru informed that by offering the red flowers, we were saved from a big quarrel. After that Guru said that through this prayer and sankalpam (of the Guru Parampara) there would be a change within a radius of three kilometers from the house. Our grandmother had a habit of lighting a lamp in the evening and offering to Sridevi. That time the children would go and sit there and recite the Akhanda Namam of Guru. The grandmother, knowingly or unknowingly, began to repeat that in a slightly different way, 'Aum Sri Karunakara Guru, Bramhane, Parabrahmane.'

My sister Maniamma once suffered from fever and went into coma. The Revered Sishyapoojitha asked us to take vibhuti with the forefinger and pray touching Maniamma's forefinger. Maniamma regained her consciousness to everyone's surprise. When she was lying in coma, she had seen the whole parampara of Buddha in vision.

Santhosh, another brother of ours, had been involved in a murder case and was saved by the grace of Guru. The husband of another sister Valsala had once pelted stones at Sree Narayana Guru with his left hand when the Guru came to Kollam. At that time, Sree Narayana Guru turned and said thus: 'This is equal to throwing stones at your father.' After a few years, he saw a vision in which Sree Narayana Guru showed him Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru. He begged pardon for the mistake he committed to Guru. When he died, we did Gurupooja. After a gap of twelve years, one of his sisters gave birth to a son. His left hand had no strength. Guru told us that this child had the soul of the uncle who had thrown stones at Sree Narayana Guru. Through this Guru was making us aware of the importance of Gurupooja.

Guru had told us that my sister Tara and the daughter of Maniamma had no luck of getting children. However, through the rituals and continuous prayers as instructed by Guru both of them were blessed with children. Every moment that we spent with Guru was full of joy as well as the pain of spiritual realizations.



HEALER OF JEEVA'S AFFLICTIONS

Dr. Divya Chandran, Kavalam

Parmacharya Padaapraptam, Paramaatma Swaruupakam
Karunakara Gurum Vandae, Bhavaroga Bhishagwaran

(My obeisance to Karunakara Guru, who has attained the seat of the Supreme Guru, who is the embodiment of the Supreme Being and is the healer of the affliction that is worldly life.)

The term Bhavaroga stands for 'the disease of the jeeva'. The body, mind and soul constitute a human being. The body forms the temporary physical casing of the soul or jeeva. All bodily glory ends once the body is left by the residing jeeva. For the disease manifesting in the body, man can resort to any one of the following systems of medicine - Ayurveda, Siddha, Homeopathy, Modern medicine or Naturopathy. Furthermore, we now have a new approach of blending the merits of these systems under one roof. All these systems focus primarily or solely on the body.

As the body is just an envelope for the jeeva and does get diseased, there arises an important question: Can the jeeva get diseased? If it does, how does that happen? The soul determines the character and nature of the individual. The quality of the soul is based on three gunas - Satva, Rejo and Tamo. These gunas decide the karma done by the jeeva. The evolution or the deterioration of a jeeva is based on its karma. Someone asked Sri

Buddha: What is poison? "Everything excess in life is poison," was the Lord's answer. The imbalance in the trigunas together with the temptations channeled by the five senses - the panchendriya - under the influence of the subtle, lead to impure thoughts and deeds, eventually transforming the individual from bad to worse.

Performance of karma in tune with the dharma of the ongoing yuga bestows the jeeva with virtue or punya. The wrong deeds of the previous and current life accumulate as karmadosham or vices. It is good to remember the words of the wise, 'Wrong actions of the previous births surface as maladies.' The diseased jeeva gets baffled by the materialistic delights portrayed by the five senses, losing the ability to discriminate right and wrong and deviating from the path of the Supreme, leading to further wrongdoings. No branch of science has evolved any technique to identify and diagnose the disease of the jeeva. When the infirmities of the jeeva - the karma-

dosham – are not diagnosed and in the course of life the person succumbs, the impure jeeva in the subsequent birth is forced to take a body which will manifest the same symptoms and sufferings. It continues as a cycle till the actual root cause is identified and tackled.

The only place where the science of ultimate evolution and transformation of the jeeva is taking place is Santhigiri. Despite the healer of bhavarogam being physically present at just an arm's length, the common man is ignorant about Guru, Sishyapoojitha and the science of extra-sensory perception. The ignorant jeeva fails to recognize that and, bound by the strings of the negative influences of the subtle and the trigunas, is a mere puppet in a puppet show.

The purification of the jeeva is possible by the complete atmasamarpanam (surrendering of oneself) at the lotus feet of Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru, the Poorna Guru, who is the embodiment of the Divine Light. By taking refuge in Guru, the jeeva is hand-led from darkness to light. Here embarks a new beginning – a journey of social and spiritual progress. The afflictions of the jeeva require an integrated therapy of spiritual

guidance and medical aid. Recovery is possible by absolutely following the Guru's words. The medical team becomes an instrument in the divine hands of Guru.

It has been revealed by Guru that the virtue attained in thousands of births can be achieved by a single birth in the Kaliyuga, by abiding the Divine Will, in accordance with the yuga dharma. This is the process of evolving a purified human race. It is no easy task. Textual knowledge is irrelevant here. The seeker should have the courage to walk through the perilous path of truth. The strength for this is to be drawn by absolute surrender and selfless sacrifice. On this journey, the jeeva should utilize the opportunity to correct the karmadosham by performing righteous deeds as an offering to Guru.

Let us pray in unison to the Supreme Consciousness, the guardian of the entire universe, the most merciful father Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru to guard the Santhigiri Parampara and to enable us to offer to the world the Navajeevitha Margam, a new path enlightened by the Holy words of the Bhavaroga Bhishagwaran – Our Guru.



A GURU FOR ALL

Janaab Ali Kunju Sasthri, Ex. M.L.A.

A few months ago a group of six devotees from Santhigiri Ashram went to Prayag in Uttar Pradesh. They have come back now after spreading the sacred message from Kerala in different states. I am happy to participate in this function organized to accord a warm welcome to them. Because of my great luck I am able to participate in all the functions organized by Santhigiri Ashram, despite my busy schedule or any other inconvenience. Many people might not know its meaning clearly. I do not know whether it is because of the Guru-sishya relationship with the Ashram founder or my relationship with him in former births.

I remember even today the marvel, the joy and the freshness I felt when years ago I stepped into the Parnasala in the Ashram. My Muslim brothers would suspect why a Muslim like me visits an Ashram, which they believe is a place of Hindu worship. I have only one thing to tell those people who have this question. The Swami at Santhigiri Ashram views all the people only as human beings without the differentiating thought of Hindu, Christian or Muslim. This Swami does not consider the man-made forts of caste and does not see people as high and low, black and white and other differences. His is not such a mind. I am asking how many people have known the largeness of that heart.

When I came to the Ashram for the first time, he called me near and talked to

me with a joyous and smiling face. There is a saying that 'the face is the mirror of the heart'. Swami's face was that. I spent many hours with him that day. I realized that the time I spent that day is very valuable. From a very young age, I was working in the political and other social fields. During this period, I had the opportunity to visit mosques, churches and Bishop Houses as well as many famous temples not only in Kerala but also in several other states in India. I had not got the mental satisfaction which I desired to get from such places. However, in the first meeting with Karunakara Guruji, I got that mental happiness and freshness in the soul. It is that inspiration which I received from the Guru that makes me come again in front of Him.

This has not begun today or yesterday; it was a time when the Guru's activities were not as extensive as today. I went there when the devotees were less. However, even at that time it was a shelter for the downtrodden in the society; for those who had lost hope in life with diseases and dementia and had been forsaken by their relatives. In whatever way they suffered, Karunakara Guruji was the embodiment of love and accepted all of them without any discrimination. He sought to know their problems and suggested remedies with a smiling face. I want to tell the local people openly the good experiences I got whenever I visited this place. Those days

the medicine he gave was only vibhuti and water (teertham). It was a solution to any type of disease when received from his hands with devotion and used according to his instructions. I know many people who have thus recovered from incurable diseases like leprosy and dementia. I have spoken to those people. How many of you will believe all this if I tell those experiences standing here now?

Today, the founder Guru of this Ashram has become like a banyan tree with devotees and disciples not only from Kerala but from all over the country. There are many people who have found refuge under this banyan tree and are enjoying peace and tranquility in life. Earlier, diseases were cured through water and vibhuti. But today there is a medicine manufacturing unit here which produces divine medicines that are being distributed to the poor free of charge and to others at a reasonable price. The sales depots of this unit have been opened at several places in Kerala.

The children of the devotees, who are unable to educate their wards, are accommodated in the Ashram and given education. Whoever comes to the Ashram is given free food. There are many wealthy people in our society. How many of them will be ready to give food to a hungry person? How many of them give alms to the beggars who approach them? Do not get upset by hearing this. Nobody would like to hear the truth openly. Let me ask you one thing. The distance from Pothencode Junction to the Ashram is only two-and-a-half kilometers. How many among you have gone to the Ashram within this time? How many of you have conversed with that Embodiment of pure love? How many of you could experience that great luck that has been received by the people

here? Several people could not have that. Even those who have gone there could not properly understand the greatness of that place. That is my opinion.

How many people come daily to see this Ashram from all parts of Kerala, especially from Kollam region! I feel pride when I perceive the developments in different areas each time I visit the Ashram. Years ago, a branch Ashram was opened at Kallar Pattam Colony. There is another one at Kumali. Some months ago an Ashram was opened at Palarivattam in the heart of Ernakulam city. I had participated in the inaugural function. The city mayor and the labour minister had also participated in it. There is a branch Ashram at Sultan Bathery and other places. The Ashram is establishing branches at all places in Kerala with the effort of the devotees. Knowing about the greatness of Guru, devotees from Tamil Nadu to Kashmir are visiting the Ashram. They meet with Guru and accept his guidance spending many days in the Ashram. All such people come with emptiness of mind and go back full of wisdom. How many people here understand this?

Six people from this Ashram went to Prayag and have returned after attending a big religious meeting. How many ashrams are there in Kerala and how many people have gone on such a journey undergoing sacrifices and difficulties, suffering rain and hot sun, covering all the states in South India on foot? From where did this inspiration come to them? Is it not a proof that by keeping Guru in the mind with total devotion they could realize their aim! When each one of us does good deeds, there is no doubt that there would be the grace of God or Guru's grace for that.

*(Reproduced from
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THE TRUE RELIGION OF INDIA

Mukundan P.R.

In the present age, we see that the whole humanity is in disharmony owing to religious differences. This means that the present day religious theologies and practices have outlived their spiritual efficacy to bring about peace and spiritual evolution to humanity. It is for India to take up a leadership role in the spiritual renewal of humanity. Although it may be unconvincing to many, the reality is that India is the mother of spirituality, the inheritor of an ancient most spiritual culture.

Mark Twain (1835-1910) wrote that India is the “Land of religions, cradle of human race, birthplace of human speech, grandmother of legend, great grandmother of tradition... India had the start of the whole world in the beginning of things. She had the first civilization; she had the first accumulation of material wealth; she was populous with deep thinkers and subtle intellect; she had mines, and woods, and a fruitful soul.”

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), the famous American Philosopher, said that ‘The Hindoos are most serenely and thoughtfully religious than the Hebrews. They have perhaps a purer, more independent and impersonal knowledge of God. Their religious books describe the first inquisitive and contemplative access to God... The calmness and gentleness with which the Hindoo philosophers approach and discourse on forbidden themes is admirable.’

Annie Wood Besant (1847-1933) once said about Hinduism: “After a study of some forty years and more of the great religions of the world, I find none so perfect, none so scientific, none so philosophical and none so spiritual than the great religion known by the name of Hinduism. Make no mistake, without Hinduism, India has no future. Hinduism is the soil in to which India’s roots are stuck and torn out of that she will inevitably wither as a tree torn out from its place. And if Hindus do not maintain Hinduism who shall save it? If India’s own children do not cling to her faith, who shall guard it? India alone can save India and India and Hinduism are one.”

What is the base of India’s great spiritual culture that deserves such eulogy from these great teachers, thinkers and philosophers? They were obviously not referring to the superstitious beliefs and practices of the vast sections of ignorant Hindu population, about the snake charmers, about the relentless feuds between hostile castes, clans and regional states, or about the culture of animal and human sacrifices, bride burning etc. that attract the condemnation of Hindus and their religion.

These famous thinkers found inspiration from the great metaphysical teachings of the rishis and sages of India that form the true Sanatana principles, which have hardly anything to do with the priest mediated temple oriented Hindu religion,

often referred by scholars as Brahmanical Hinduism. Very few people, scholarly and otherwise, including the Hindus, seem to realize a great flip-flop occurred in understanding the true basis of Indian spirituality, which can be categorized into two broad heads based on their ideological and ritualistic differences, most importantly on the difference between their cosmologies.

The first one is the ancient Rishi or Guru-Disciple Ashram tradition and the other is the Trimurti or the Devi-Deva Temple tradition. The temple tradition thrives on the premises of mythology found in the puranas that promote the worship of the Trimurti gods - Brahma, Vishnu and Siva - and their vast family of gods and goddesses, as the ultimate spiritual authorities. In the Rishi tradition, the authority of creation is Manu, known to be the first projection of God. In the Rishi tradition, the medium between man and God is the Preceptors or Gurus who come in every yuga for the spiritual uplift of humanity, reveals Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru.

As Swami Vivekananda said, Guru is the mask worn by the formless God to come near man. Every human universe (solar system) is born out of the sankalpam or conception of Manu, the Primordial Father of humanity and that is why the age of the universe is calculated in terms of Manvantara after the name of Manu. In a cosmic age known as Kalpa, fourteen Manus appear and project the solar systems with the help of saptarshis, (the seven primal sages or the planetary spirits controlling the solar system). The time of six Manus has already passed and the present age belongs to the seventh Vaivaswata Manu. The sages of India have even mentioned the names of these seven Manus who are going to appear in this Kalpa. The spiritual

cataclysm of India is that this universal cosmology based on Manu has been altered subsequently to accommodate and project the Trimurti gods as the authorities of creation.

The Trimurti tradition is based on Purana Samhita, the mythological treatise known to have been composed by Veda Vyasa (Krishna Dwaipayana) at the end of the Dwapara Yuga. The present puranas are the subsequent redactions by his disciples such as Romaharsha and others during the beginning of Kali Yuga. There are evidences to suggest that the present day puranas and epics were composed during the Buddhist or post-Buddhist period about 2500 years ago or a little later. The puranas and epics, which contain important chronicles of the past cosmic ages, are said to be perennial and existed in every yuga in different forms and were orally handed down age after age. Thus, the myths and legends about Brahma, Vishnu and Siva might be speaking to us the spiritual history of an unimaginable distant past.

The puranic authors have incorporated the metaphysical teachings of the rishis in their compositions in such a way that one would be unable to distinguish between the very divergent schools of thought in them. In reality, the philosophy of the rishis envisioned God independent of the mythical tradition and even the polytheism of the Vedas.

In the Upanishadic, Sankhyan, Vedantic and Yoga philosophies, the Creation is not attributed to the Trimurti but to Brahman, the Absolute Principle, from which emerges the creation through the medium of Manu, the astral projection of Brahman. The reference to Brahma, Vishnu and Siva as the authorities of creation appeared at a later stage through the mythology in the puranas. The Upanishadic rishis under the

Manu Parampara pay obeisance only to the Supreme Brahman, the Absolute Truth. For them the gods and demigods are only the denizens of the vast universe like the humans. Also, the caste, class and gender differences did not stand in the way of the sublime teachings of the Upanishadic rishis. The transcendental knowledge and experience (jnana) is transferred to any truthful disciple through a Guru-Disciple relationship. We can find that the backbone of India's spiritual culture is in the Upanishads, Bhagavat Gita, Guru Gita and other philosophical sciences (sastras) such as Sankhya sastra, Yoga sastra, Nyaya sastra, Vedanta etc. that speak about the Absolute Truth and Creation differently in a metaphysical perspective. It is this path of knowledge or jnana marga of the ancient Indian rishis that has inspired and continues to inspire great philosophers and thinkers around the world and earns India the Guru status.

Thoreau once said that "One sentence of the Gita, is worth the State of Massachusetts many times over... In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavat Gita, since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial..."

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), the German philosopher and writer, was one of the greatest philosophers of the 19th century. Sigmund Freud adopted a large part of his psychological theory from the writings of Schopenhauer. Nietzsche and Wittgenstein are counted among his disciples. Schopenhauer spoke about the Upanishads in the following words:

"From every sentence (of the Upanishads) deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high

and holy and earnest spirit....In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. They are destined sooner or later to become the faith of the people'.

Similarly several other Western thinkers and philosophers have been inspired by the spiritual lore of India. Emerson (1803-1882) paid homage to Indian spirituality thus: "It is sublime as night and a breathless ocean. It contains every religious sentiment, all the grand ethics which visit in turn each noble poetic mind...." In 1859 he wrote: "When India was explored and the wonderful riches of Indian theological literature found, that dispelled once and for all the dream about Christianity being the sole revelation."

Wilhelm Humboldt (1767- 1835), Prussian minister of education, said about the Bhagavad Gita that it was "The most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song existing in any known tongue perhaps the deepest and loftiest thing the world has to show."

Such a glorious spiritual tradition was lost to India when the jnana path was shadowed by the ritualistic devi-deva tradition, which promotes the veneration of sectarian gods and demigods as well as other innumerable natural and supernatural forces including animals, birds and trees as the manifestation of the Supreme Being. Many obnoxious customs and superstitious beliefs such as human and animal sacrifices, sati and devadasi tradition, description of caste Brahmin as equal to god (brahmana devo bhava) and practices such as the performance of miracles (siddhi) and exorcism through mantric and tantric rituals also came to be identified with Hinduism.

V. Venkatachalla Iyer once remarked about the spiritual malignancy of India

through the interpolated puranic literature: "Some of the major Puranas appear to have been re-written with the set purpose of promoting ignorance and superstition; of enslaving the minds of the people; of preventing them from thinking for themselves; and of giving currency to a religion which, while pretending in theory to maintain within itself the principles of emancipation, is calculated in practice to sink one deeper and deeper in the quagmire..." (V. Venkatachalla Iyer, *The Puranas*, QJMS 13, 1922-23).

Late Professor Theodore Goldstücker held similar views on the Puranas:

"When by priest craft and ignorance, a nation has lost itself so far as to look upon writings like these as divinely inspired, there is but one conclusion to be drawn; it has arrived at the turning point of its destinies. Hinduism stands at this point, and we anxiously pause to see which way it will direct its steps. For several centuries, it is true, its position has seemed stationery; but the power of present circumstances, social and political is such that it can no longer continue so...All barriers to religious imposition having broken down since the modern Puranas were received by the masses as the source of their faith, sects have sprung up, which not merely endanger religion, but society itself, tenets have been propounded which are an insult to the human mind; practices have been introduced which must fill every true Hindu with confusion and shame.. There is no necessity for examining them in detail. It requires no evidence of the gulf which separates the present state from its past..." (Literary Remains, 2 Vols., London, Allen, 1879) Theodore believed that the real faith of the Hindus is neither founded on the Brahmana portion of the Vedas nor on the Puranas, but on the esoteric teachings

found in the Vedas and Upanishads.

Maharshi Devendranath Tagore said the Puranas were divisive and advised Hindus to turn away from it toward the Upanishads, in order to unite Hindus into one religion:

"Idolatry with all its pomp and circumstance was to be found chiefly in the tantras and Puranas and had no place in the Vedanta. If every one were to turn from the Tantras and Puranas to the Upanishads, if they sought to acquire the knowledge of Brahman as taught in the Upanishads and devoted themselves to His worship, then it would result in the utmost good of India..."(The Autobiography of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, Macmillan, London, 1914).

While most of the Puranas generally describe Brahma as the god of creation, the different sects have different views about the Creator. The Puranas according to the sects to which they belonged have tried to show their deity, such as Vishnu, Siva or Devi as the Supreme Lord or Creator, sometimes relegating Brahma to the background.

In Saivism, Siva is described as the Supreme. According to Lingapuram, 'Siva is the inner ruler of all beings. He is called Supreme for He is superior to all. Siva, Sambhu and Sankara are different names of the great Ruler, the Universal Soul. .. The sages know that there exists no other God than Siva.'

In Vaishnavism one can find the description of Vishnu as the Supreme. Vishnupuram mentions thus: 'May Lord Vishnu be pleased with us, from whom matter and soul emanate, who has created this universe consisting of moving and stationery things, and who is the prime cause of all this. Vishnu is that Brahman, from which this creation has emanated, with

which it stays identified, in which it ever remains, and in which it eventually merges’.

In Shakteyism, the Devi is described as the Supreme. According to Markandeya Puranam, ‘Devi has created this universe by Her power. She includes in Herself potencies of all deities. With devotion, we bow to her, the Mother, who is adored by the gods and the sages alike. May She work out what is good for us!’

In Brahmapurana one can also find the description of Ganesha as the Supreme: ‘Sri Ganesa is the source of this creation and the subsequent development thereof. Beyond the ken of all humanity is His form, which is primal in existence, foremost to be worshipped, adored by all, and full of auspicious qualities. He is both nirguna and saguna by His own sweet will...though Lord Ganesh is eternal, yet He appears and disappears at will by dint of His power.’

Similarly, Brahmapurana describes that ‘Surya (Divakara) is the cause of all beings. It is by His desire that the universe consisting of all objects whether moving or stationary came into existence. Surya is the source of the three worlds. He is the great deity. The cosmos springs out of Him and again goes back to Him.’

The blending of mythology, rituals and practices thereon clashes with the esoteric

teachings of the Upanishadic seers, who believed in the One Supreme Being, which they defined as ‘Satyam Jnanamanantham Brahm – i.e., the Supreme Being is Truth, Knowledge and Infinity. It would be evident from the puranic literature that the concept of Swayambhuva Manu, from whom originated the creation in the beginning in association with the saptarshis, been altered in course of long ages giving prominence to Brahma, Vishnu, Siva etc.

The Trimurti worship tradition existed as an authentic path for spiritual realization in the previous yuga cycles. However, its spiritual incumbency in the present age is questionable going by the evolving nature of dharma according to the yuga cycles. The Trimurti tradition promoted the cult of devi-deva worship according to the tastes of different sects. In this process, the inner teachings of Sanatana Dharma were lost to humanity. India needs the guidance of an all-knowing Sage to evaluate its true spiritual path. This is important. The Hindus can be united only under such a great Guru Parampara, which can lead them to spiritual enlightenment as well as social unity. The life mission of Navajyothisree Karunakara Guru was to reinvigorate this lost jnana path and after Adi Sankaracharya, this is the time for another great spiritual renaissance of India.

FOOTSTEPS OF GRACE

Biographical Accounts from Guru's Life

Chapter 6

Karunan kunju attentively watched the nature around him - the plants, flowers, birds, trees and everything, and their varieties amazed him. He looked at the birds perched on the branches of the trees around the house. He noticed the differences in their colours and voices while they darted across. Karunan kunju was affectionate even to the crow, which is considered as a villain. He would stand there watching its angled look and the wariness with which it beaked eatables and flipped off at the approach of people. Children from the neighbourhood came to play with Karunan kunju. Although he would give them company, he would not stick too close to them. He kept himself away from their fights and pranks. He loved to follow the butterflies and beetles that droned around the flowers. When his friends tried to hurt them, he would stop them. If they did not listen, he would walk off and would not remain in their company that day.

Another habit of Karunan kunju was that he sat forgetting himself looking at the endless sky. He never talked too much and used words sparingly. He was moderate in his food habits too. He would be satisfied with whatever he got. There was one condition, that the food should be clean and tasty. He liked white rice and pure coconut chutney. He did not demand anything from anybody and had no undue desires. If somebody gave him something,

he would smile and shy away if it was distasteful to him. Karunan kunju's mother liked this habit of his. She was happy that the fatherless child had no unreasonable desires, but there was an inexpressible pain in that happiness. However, her son showed no irritation. Whenever he got some eatables, he would share it with others. Seeing the silent and solemn habits of her son, the mind of the mother was pained. She would ask him affectionately, 'Dear son! Why do you sit quietly like this, like an acetic? Why don't you go and play with the other children?'

Karunan kunju would look at his mother and give a warm smile. He would then get up and walk away towards the flowers and butterflies, who were his companions. Although he did not join in their games, his friends liked to have his presence. During their free time, they would come to Karunan kunju's house. Even when they played in his house, he only liked to watch them play.

Along with the vacation time, there came the season of mangoes too. The children in the neighbourhood would come to Karunan kunju's house compound, where there were many types of mango trees. Among these, they liked the honey mango standing near the pond. There were plenty of branches on it and the thick bunch of mangoes dangled among the leaves. There were no other mango trees in the locality that gave so many mangoes. The fruits

of that tree had a special fragrance and sweetness and that was why all people felt a special affection for it. With a slight breeze, or on the perching of a crow, or on the crisscross of squirrels, the mangoes would fall down like rain and the children would vie with one another to pick them up. They would take all the mangoes in front of Karunan kunju. It was Karunan kunju's duty to distribute them. He would distribute them to all the children equally without any room for complaint. The decision of Karunan kunju was acceptable to all.

That day the children were assembled at the bottom of the mango tree and they started to sing as usual:

'Oh, squirrel, please come and give us good mangoes.'

After waiting for some time, they again sang:

'Oh, wind, oh crow! Come on the mango tree and give us a basket of mangoes.'

The wind and squirrel came but not a single mango fell. The children were upset and began to play making clay houses. They prepared rice and curry with flowers and sands. Karunan kunju was sitting below the mango tree. Although he was enjoying the fun of his companions, a question remained in his mind, why didn't any mango fall today? Time was passing by. His companions were engrossed in their plays. That time a mango fell just in front of Karunan kunju. The children looked there hearing the sound.

Karunan kunju extended his hand and picked up the mango. The children's gaze fell on the mango. Their mouth watered for the taste of the fruit. However, there was only one mango, they realized. 'Let Karunan kunju take it,' the elder child in the group said and all others agreed. Karunan kunju stroked the mango keeping

it in his palm. After a few minutes he got up. When his friends saw that he was not going into the house with it, they followed him. He walked a little distance and stood at one spot. Then he dug a pit there. Keeping the mango in his hand, he stood there contemplating for some time. Then stroking the mango affectionately with both his hands he placed it into the pit and covered it with mud. He straightened up and then smiled looking at his companions.

'This seed will sprout and grow and give mangoes to all.'

The children watched Karunan kunju in utter amazement. He stepped into the pond and washed his hands without taking note of it. He made a leaf-vessel to draw water and irrigate the spot where he had planted the mango. His companions were still standing there and watching him. A child in the group shouted suddenly:

'Karunan kunju began to speak.'

As far as they were concerned, it was wonderful news. Karunan kunju was abnormally silent at all times. He hardly spoke two or three words in a day. The family had undertaken vows and offerings to remove this supposed disability in him. The children had understood this from the elders' explanations. They were stunned to listen to Karunan kunju's fluent speech. Karthyayani repeatedly asked the children whether it was true. The children then explained to her the incident. Karunan kunju approached them slowly. There was no change in his expression. The mother wanted to know whether the news given by the children was true or not. She went near her son and bent on her knees holding him in front.

'What is it, dear son? Say and repeat it to me once.' The child replied without any hesitation. 'I planted a mango tree. That would sprout and grow and would give

mangoes to all every day.'

'O, God!' She kissed her son repeatedly with joy. She believed that it was due to the offerings and vows the child spoke thus. Her faith became stronger. But what was the reality? She did not know anything about the vibrant 'Light' present inside Karunan kunju and the restriction it exercised on his speech. When he spoke after planting the mango seed, the 'Light' did not restrict his speech; therefore, he could speak fluently. After that, the love of his family and friends towards him increased. His friends thought that now Karunan kunju would be motivated to play and do other things. They came and called him for playing but, as was his wont, Karunan kunju stood aloof from their summons.

The mango season was gone and the rains came. The mango which Karunan kunju had planted sprouted and leaves came out in clusters. It was a holiday. Four or five children from the neighbourhood came to Karunan kunju to invite him to play. However, he did not pay heed even after their strong persuasion. The grandmother who was witnessing this said to him:

'You also go along with them, my dear son! Are they not your friends? They are calling you out of their love towards you. So, go and play.' His mother also came from behind and asked him to go. Still Karunan kunju hesitated.

Raphael was the stronger and elder in that group. He was very fond of Karunan kunju. He lifted Karunan kunju physically on his shoulders and walked away. The other children followed. Raphael placed him down at the playground. Karunan kunju did not know the games they played. He could only obey their instructions. Presently they did not want any running and jumping. 'We can play cutting the ba-

nana stem.'

All the children agreed to Raphael's suggestion. One of them went and brought a banana stem. Another one brought a sickle. Raphael stuck the stem on the ground and said to Karunan kunju, 'You should hold it tight at the top.'

Karanan kunju obeyed. Another child came running and struck the banana stem with the sickle. His aim missed and Karunan kunju's hand was cut and blood began to flow from the wound. The children were shocked and they all ran away frightened. Raphael also left the place, feeling guilty. Now Karunan kunju was left alone. He started crying unable to bear the pain. After some time, Raphael's mother came there. She bandaged the wound with a white cloth and tried to comfort him.

'Karanan kunju can go home now. I am going to thrash them very badly.' Then he said suppressing the pain, 'No, you should not thrash them.' Raphael was unable to look at his face. He felt very sorry as he was the one who compelled Karunan kunju to play. After that incident, the children did not compel Karunan kunju to play with them.

One day, Raphael said: 'I shall show Karunan kunju one thing.' He walked taking him along. The other children followed excitedly wanting to know what it was. They all went and stood below a jackfruit tree. Raphael pointed to a hole in it. 'See how a banyan tree is growing inside the belly of a jackfruit tree!' Yes! True, a tree inside another tree! Raphael plucked the banyan sapling. He then dug a hole near the mango sapling of Karunan kunju and planted the banyan sapling and a sapling of jackfruit tree adjacent to it.

There was little progress in Karunan kunju's ability to speak. It was the Vijaya Dasami day of 1113, Kanni 22, in the Malay-

alam almanac(October, 1937). He was ten years old. What would happen if he were not taught writing and reading? There was an 'asan kalari', a tiny village school near by. It was run by a person named Maaliyakal Kumaran Asan. In the first meeting itself, he liked Karunan kunju. Thus, Karunan kunju was initiated into the world of letters. He could learn quickly whatever was taught. He would answer correctly when tested subsequently. Nevertheless, he did not show much interest in the matter of writing. The teacher thought that it would improve gradually. But the opposite happened. How can a child who did not know writing read and learn! Two

years went like that. He could learn some lessons and writing during this period.

In the meanwhile, a goat ate the banyan and jackfruit saplings. Nevertheless, the mango tree grew and flourished. Karunan kunju heartily smiled when the mango tree bloomed for the first time. 'It will still grow and would be full of blooms and fruits,' he assured himself. He stopped the study in the asan kalari and felt no regret about it.

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

