

# GOD Toronto - Feb 2020

## Newsletter

### Bhaktha Charitra - Panduranga Bhaktha Series 04 - Gorakumbhar

Pandharpur is known for many great devotees of Lord Panduranga. One such exceptional devotee was Gorakumbhar. He was a potter by profession, and yet he was always engrossed only in chanting Lord Vittal's (Panduranga's) name. Once a tragic incident happened in his life. He unknowingly crushed his own child with his feet, when he was kneading clay with his feet while he was lost in the highest degree of bhakti and unaware of his surroundings. Although Gorakumbhar regretted what had happened, he accepted it as the Lord's will and did not give up his love for Lord Vittal. Later, in other chaotic circumstances, he also chopped off both his own hands, as he had broken a vow that he had taken on Vittal. Then Panduranga and Rakhumai themselves came as a young couple Ranga and Rukmini to serve Gorakumbhar. Such are the incredible incidents that happened in Gora's life, out of his great, incomprehensible devotion to Panduranga.

Years later, on realizing that it was Panduranga and Rakhumai who had showered Their grace on him by taking care of him, Gora was extremely moved and rushed to Panduranga's temple along with Bhagavatas who had come to his home. When the bhajan started, Gora, filled with enthusiasm and bhakti, inadvertently moved to 'raise' his missing hands to clap to the tune of the Lord's Name. To everyone's wonder, Gora's hands emerged from his broken arms and he started clapping. By seeing this astonishing miracle, people around were amazed, applauded and hailed, "Vittal, Vittal" out of ecstasy. On seeing this, Gora's wife advanced rapidly to Panduranga and holding His cheek, she cried, "Hey Panduranga, did You not protect Prahlada, Draupadi, the elephant Gajendra by Your boundless grace and prove Your existence? You have even given back my husband's arms today! I now beg you to give back my child to me! I plead You for mercy!" In that tearful state, she started banging her head on the deity. Suddenly, she heard a voice calling, "Amma!" Yes! Panduranga, the sweetest Lord had blessed her and given back her child whom He had only taken away. The child's body had been burnt to ashes! Yet Panduranga showered His inexplicable blessings and brought back her child. The devotees gathered there were dumbfounded. They could not tell which was a greater miracle – Gora's hands that had grown back or the child that had come alive after years!

Though the happenings are said to be miracles, actually it is all the nectarine leelas of Panduranga. Although being in a deity form, Panduranga proves His real live existence through the lives of His loving devotees. Through all the unfavorable situations happened in Gora's life, the most admiring part in him was that he continued to chant Vittal's Name all along without

questioning the Lord 'why' for any of the happenings. But the glorious Lord blessed him with all that had he lost and also proved his pure bhakti to the world.

Like Gorakumbhar, let us also keep chanting the Lord's Name, the Mahamantra, constantly with unshakeable faith and true devotion, leaving the rest at the Lotus Feet of Panduranga.

"Nama Sankirtanam is the only way to attain the highest truth" – Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji

Jai Jai Vittala! Jai Hari Vittala !!

*By A. Ieswarya, Bengaluru, India*

*Based the discourse of HH Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji*

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## Madhurageetham - Bharata Pradakshina - 2

His Holiness Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji has composed several hundreds of kirtans glorifying various deities and depicting different bhavas of a devotee, from praise and enjoyment, friendship and motherhood, to love and intense prayer. These kirtans are all being compiled by his devotees under the title—Madhura Geetam.

Sri Swamiji has also composed many kirtans on various kshetras or places of pilgrimage around India.

In this new series, we will go on a pradakshina of Bharata desha as we present, each month, a kirtan composed by Sri Swamiji on a particular kshetra.

### **Thirukkudanthai Sri Aaraavamudhan**

Kumbakonam is a famous temple town in Tamil Nadu, and is also known as Bhaskara kshetram. Among all the numerous beautiful temples in the area, the temple of Sri Aravamudhan & Komalavalli thayar is famous and significant. The sanctum of the temple is



in the shape of a chariot. This temple is also significant from perspective of Nalayira Divya Prabandam (verses sung by Azhwars). The 3990 pasurams (verses) of the Prabandham were retrieved by Sri Nadhamuni after singing the first 10 verses from this Perumal.

In our Guru Maharaj's heart, the deity of this temple – Aravamudhan, also known as Sarangapani, holds a special place. This kirtan by Sri Swamiji on this deity has been composed in madhurya bhavam (mood of love for the Beloved).

The song is sung by the nayaki in yearning for the nayaka, who is none other than Aravamudhan Himself. The woman here speaks to her friend and relates a wonderful dream she saw. In the dream, the dashing Aravamudhan comes in a chariot (an allusion also to the chariot shape of the sanctum) and expresses His intent to wed her. As she stands, filled with happiness yet shy like a young bride, He leads her with Him to Vaikunta. The kirtan fittingly ends with a mention of all the Azhwars (Nityasuris)

### **Arpudha Kanavu Ondru**

Raga: Simhendra Madhyamam

Tala: Adi

### **Pallavi**

arpudha kanavu ondru kaNDen thozhi

ArAvamudhanai adhil kaNDen

### **Anupallavi**

bhAskara kshetrathin puNNiya mUrtiyAm

rathathil vandhu en agaththil pugunthAn (arpudha)

## **Charanam**

sArangapANi yennai jADaiyile azhaitthAn  
enai maNandhiDave vandhadhAga uraitthAn  
veTkaththinAl nAnum thalai kuniya nindren  
kai piDithennai azhaitthu sendrAn  
purushotthamanuDan nAn vaikuNDathil  
nithiyasUrigaLin naDuve nirkka (arpudha)

## **Meaning**

### **Pallavi**

O friend, I saw this wonderful dream  
In it I saw my beloved Aravamudhan

### **Anupallavi**

He who is the holy deity of Bhaskara kshetram  
Came in a chariot and entered my heart

## **Charanam**

Sarangapani called me with His glance  
And said that He had come to wed me  
Shy, I stood with my head bent  
He held my hand and led me away  
Now, in Vaikunta, along with that Purushothaman, the Best among men  
Do I stand, amidst all the Nityasuris.

*Originally published in Godivinity.org*

# Madhuramana Mahaneeyar 04

This series chronicles interesting experiences recounted by the devotees of HH Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji. These articles are translations from the series, “Madhuramaana Mahaneeyar” that is published every month in Madhuramurali Tamil monthly magazine. The original article was written by Dr. Bhagyanathanji, Personal Secretary of Sri Swamiji.

Sri Swamiji on Vaikunta Ekadasi

Vaikunta Ekadasi was on 8th January this year. This day always brings to our mind Lord Sri Ranganatha and Srirangam. On this day, several people from many places come to Srirangam for the opening of the holy doorway of “Parama Padam.”



**HH Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji**

Around the time of Vaikunta Ekadasi, Sri Swamiji also gets immersed in deep thoughts of Srirangam. This year, at ashram, in the early hours of the day, along with the Dhanur month pooja (performed early morning at that time of the year), *thirumanjanam* (sacred bath) for Premika Varadan was performed. At about 8 AM, Sri Premika Varadan was taken around in procession in Garuda vahana. With all devotees doing Nama kirtan during procession, Premika Varadan went around blissfully enjoying all the proceedings, gently moving along with his consort, Sri Madhuri Sakhi.

From the night before Vaikunta Ekadasi itself, Sri Swamiji had been consumed with thoughts of Vaikunta Vinnagaram divya desam (one of the 108 holy places sung by the Azhwars). It is only in this divya desam in Thirunangur, situated near Seergazhi in Tamil Nadu, that Perumal – both *moolavar* (the immovable main deity) and *utsavar* (the deity who is taken in procession) – are

exactly in the same form as “Para Vasudevan” in Sri Vaikuntam. Bhagavan resides here with Sridevi, Bhoodevi and Neeladevi.

(Saints never have any desires. But if a desire does arise in a saint’s heart, it is always divine and they remain restless until it is fulfilled.) As Sri Swamiji desired to have darshan of this Perumal on Vaikunta Ekadasi day, he left the ashram after the procession of Sri Premika Varadan. In the evening around 7 pm, Sri Swamiji reached the Thirunangur *agama veda patasala* (a center established by Sri Swamiji to train students in temple scriptures and the *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*, the 4000 verses sung by the Azhwars). From there he went to Vaikunta Vinnagaram and had darshan of Perumal. Sri Swamiji’s happiness knew no bounds! He wanted to have a dip in the holy waters of the *thatakam* of the divya desam, known as Viraja Theertha. However, there was no water in the thatakam.

From there, Sri Swamiji went to Semponsey temple and had darshan of the Perumal there. Before even Sri Swamiji arrived, many devotees there were doing the Mahamantra kirtan! After the darshan there, that night, he went to Govindapuram and then to Senganoor the next day for the divine star, Rohini.

*Original article by Dr. Bhagayanathan, Madhuramurali March 2017 issue  
Translated by Nisha Giri, Houston TX and published in Godivinity.org*

## Balagargaluku Oru Kadai

Keertana’s only daughter, Smruthi was 8 years old. Keertana will always make sure to advise her every now and then to bring her up in a good way. Smruthi was a very good girl! She will always listen to her mother’s advice and put them into practice as well. Once, they were returning back in a flight after visiting her father who was working in a different city.

Smruthi was very fond of apple juice. The air hostess in the flight was returning back to her place, after serving first round of refreshments to the passengers. Smruthi asked the air hostess, ‘Excuse me! Could you please give me more apple juice?’ The air hostess thought, ‘just now I have served food and juices, what is the need for another one now?’ So, she was little annoyed and replied back to Smruthi, “I will go and check in the back, if we have more juice and if I find time, I will bring it for you.” Keertana was losing her patience and was getting mad. Smruthi told her mother, “Mom! You please stay here. I will just come back” and saying this, she went behind the air hostess. After few minutes, she returned back to her seat with a gift bag in one hand, juice on the other hand and a big smile on her face.

Keertana looked at Smruthi and said, “She should not have talked so rudely to you! What did you do?”

Smruthi looked at her mother and said, "I just did what you have taught me! You have told me before! Some times when people talk little harshly, or act annoyingly, that means, they have some thing stressing them from inside. It's because of that pain, they behave differently. We should get angry at them. We should show compassion to them. You only told this, mother. Have you forgotten it?" Keertana replied, "I did not forget, Smruthi. So, what did you do?" Smruthi happily said, "Oh, the air hostess was even annoyed to see me go behind her. But, I told her, 'I did not come to get the juice. I felt you were getting stressed because of your work load. So, I came to help you in any way possible.' Hearing this, she gave me a big hug. She said, "Your words itself are good for me. What is your name? Here is your juice. Here, please accept this also as my gift to you." Saying this, she gave me this gift bag and juice in my hand."

Keertana got so happy. She thought, "I taught Smruthi about showing empathy to others, but, I myself forgot and got angry. But, my little daughter Smruthi practiced what she learnt." The proverb "Child is the father of man" echoed in her heart that time.

## Quiz Time: Panduranga Bhaktha Series 04 - Gora Kumbhar

We will continue our journey of learning about the Panduranga bakthas. This month's quiz is based on the Bhaktha charitram published in this month's article.

1. What is the profession of Narahari?
  1. Weaver
  2. Potter
  3. Fisherman
2. What was the first tragic incident that happened in Gora Kumbhar's life?
  1. He unknowingly crushed his child
  2. He lost all his money
  3. His cart capsized
3. Gora Kumbhar chopped off his hand because.....
  1. He broke a vow he took on Vittal.
  2. He was not able to help devotees
  3. He lost a bet
4. What was his mind after these incidents?
  1. He accepted this as Vittal's will
  2. He regretted for what has happened
  3. All of the above
5. Who helped Gora Kumbhar in his daily work after he lost his arms?
  1. His sons helped him
  2. Lord Vittal and Rakhumai came as young couple and helped him.
  3. His friends helped him

6. What did Gora kumbhar do after he realised it was lord himself who came to help him?
  1. He was very pleased.
  2. He ran to Panduranga's temple and chanted Vital nama.
  3. He felt sad that he did not realise this when the divine couple was helping him.
7. What miracle happened in the temple?
  1. Gora Kumbhar got his arms back and Panduranga brought back his son.
  2. Panduranga came in his dreams and told him everything will be ok.
  3. The divine couple gave dharshan to Gora Kumbhar and all other devotees.

Prepared by Karthik Sundaresan, Toronto , Canada

Answers:

1 – 2, 2 – 1, 3 –1, 4 – 3, 5 –2, 6 – 2, 7 – 1,

## Sathsangam

Transcript of Sri Swamiji's upanyasam organized by Muscat sathsang members in Chennai  
Adi Shankarar in Bhagavindam, explains the greatness of sathsang in the lines,

“sathsangathvE nissangathvam, nissangathvE nirmOhathvam |  
nirmOhathvE nishchalatathvam, nishchalatathvE jeevanmuktihi ||”

(One can attain the great state of jeevan mukti by being in sathsangam)

In tamil, one of the Agastia muni's song goes like this – “sadhukkal sangathaye manameE,  
thanjam adainthiduvai. Sadhukkal sangam allal manadhil shanthi varathu arivai” – meaning,  
only sathsang can give the peace of mind.

There is an abhang that has this beautiful line, “sant sang sarva kaala;” – the prayer is here is to  
have sadhus' sang always. Many slokas in Srimad Bhagawatham also explains the greatness of  
sathsangam.

A question may arise, “why we need sathsangam?” No one in this world can live alone. We are  
here because of our parents. How can we live alone without anyone? When we were infants,  
our mother took care of feeding us and keeping us clean. It's because of her love and affection  
and care we have grown. It's because of our father we have got proper education and we are  
able to lead a comfortable life now. That being the case, how can one lead a life without the  
help of others? Its nature's law that we need each other to survive. We might think that we can  
survive alone when we are young. But, that is not possible. The nature of all the living beings is  
to depend on each other for survival. God has created us to live in harmony with each other.  
When we look at the birds returning to their nests, in the evening, we see that they fly together.  
Likewise, the ants also move in groups. Even in forests, elephants, monkeys, deer and all other  
animals will always in groups. Human beings are also like that.



All that happens in one's life can be categorized into 2 – good or bad; If one is not in sathsangam, he is definitely in bad sangam. Bad sangam does not mean wrong sangam. Whichever sangam is not divine, and is unnecessary sangam – they are all bad sangam. Even a person who gambles is in a group. A person who is drinking is also not alone, he is in the midst of 10 or 20 people. When we go to temple or yatra, we are in a group. So, being among a group of people is our nature.

Only because of Bhagawan's grace, one can get sathsangam. One might have a question, "what are we going to get, being in sathsangam?"

When we are in sathsangam, at least for that time when we are there in sathsangam, our mind does not think about other matters. This is the first benefit of a sathsangam.

When we are not attending sathsangam, what will we do? We might be sitting in front of the Television, or might be checking Whatsapp or Facebook in our phone or we might be watching movies. When we are in sathsangam, we are not doing any sins and we are staying away from worldly matters.

What is sathsangam? What will we get being in sathsangam? Is sathsangam a place where we can learn lot of things? Is the benefit of being in a sathsangam, the feeling that we will get whatever we want? The meaning of the words, Sath, sadhu, saathvik is goodness/greatness. Harinaamakeertanam, katha shraavanam, Bhagawan's procession, uthsavam and kinkaryam to Bhagawan and Bhagawathas are sathsangams.

When we do all this for the happiness of Bhagawan, and not for fame or money or any other benefit, it is sathsangam. If we don't do all this for Bhagawan's happiness, then however, we might sing and dance, we are not different from a snake that dances to music. We are no different from a parrot which repeats "Rama" naama when taught or a snake that dances to snake charmer's music.

Our goal has to be only Bhagwan. Even if we utter the names of Bhagawan incorrectly, but when we do it to make Bhagawan happy, Bhagawan will accept that. This is sathsangam. Many puranas say that Bhagawan Himself comes to sathsangams. So, does Bhagawan come to all the sathsangs that are happening? Whiever sathsangam has only Bhagawan as the goal, Bhagawan presents Himself there. Bhagawan came to Namadevar's santhasang. Why? He came because Namadevar sang bhajans with utmost devotion to Bhagawan. People without competition and jealousy are eligible to be in sathsangam. Wherever, people gather together and sing the glories of the Lord happily, that is sathsangam. Absolutely no worldly matters should be discussed in the sathsangams.

Where Bhagawan's kinkaryam is performed without competition and only for Bhagawan's happiness, that is sathsangam. Sadhus will prostrate to one another. There will be no ego between people. When we are in such a sathsangam, we will not be disturbed with other worldly matters.

It is not necessary that a person should be able to sing well or tell the leelas of the Lord very well. Even if two people can chant "Rama, Rama" together, that itself is a sathsangam.

What changes we might feel, being in such a satsangam? We get so many thoughts in our mind. These thoughts materialize into actions through our sense organs. We see with our eyes; we listen to some things with our ears; we taste with our tongue; so, worldly things do have an impact on us. For example, if we have watched a horror movie at a theatre, we will feel scared even if we are inside our own house. Even though we know it is just a movie, those scenes create a fear in us. So, we cannot deny the fact that, the things that we see with our eyes do create an impact on us. On the other hand, if we see a Pooja room with a glowing lamp and altar decorated with flowers, we feel at peace. If we listen to a sad music or music that we don't like, we feel an impact. In a satsangam, when we do naama japam, the benefit we get is pure bliss. Those divine naamams give us peace.

Even though we are not proficient in Sanskrit, when we listen to slokas from Srimad Bhagawatham or Srimad Ramayanam, we feel peaceful. That's because, these slokas composed by great sages, have the capability to calm the mind and give peace. The fragrance of a lotus flower or an agarbathi's fragrance from Pooja room will calm the mind.

How much ever sathvik qualities in us grow, rajasa and tamasa qualities will be destroyed. Satsangam is the only way to destroy rajasa and tamasa qualities within us.

In Ramayana, Indrajit represents rajasa guna; Kumbhakarna represents tamasa guna; Vibesshana represents saathvika guna. Ravana's 10 heads represent our 5 sense organs and 5 organs of action. Seetha represents jeevatma, Sri Rama is Bhagawan. The celestial wedding of Sri Rama and Seetha represents the state of jeevan mukti. Sri Rama, to kill Ravana (destroy the sense organs and organs of action), combined forces with Vibeeshana (saathvika guna), and killed Indrajit (rajasa guna) and Kumbhakarna (tamasa guna). Ramayana shows us that only with the help of saathvika guna, we can get rid of rajasa and tamasa gunas.

Saathvika is nothing but, naama, katha shraavanam and sadhus' sangam. We will feel the transformation within us, when we are near a person who thinks only about Bhagawan and no other worldly things. When we are near a Mahatma, no exchange of words is necessary between us, the mere presence of the Mahatma will bring transformation within us. Like how a lotus blooms as soon as the Sun rises, the presence of a Mahatma will remove all our karma vasanas.

When we enter a satsangam, the process starts. First, our sins get destroyed, after that the vasanas that push us towards making these sinful acts will be destroyed. After the vasanas are destroyed, we will grow dispassion towards worldly matters and saathvika guna starts to grow. As the saathvika grows and grows, we will be able to reach such a state that we will get Bhagwan's darshan, moksham (liberation) will become easy. Only satsangam can grant us all this.

# News - Toronto

By the immense grace of our beloved Guru Maharaj, and divine couple Sri Madhunisakhi Sametha Premikavaradha Thakurji, GOD Toronto was blessed with a month full of amazing satsangs, and new beginnings.

GOD Toronto kicked off the new year with akhanda nama on the night of Dec 31, 2019, at Siva Satyanarayana temple in Mississauga, to welcome the new year. The first Saturday of the new year, around 10 families gathered at the house of Ganga ji and Ganesh ji, to participate in the Nama Relay.

With the beginning of the new year, we also started learning and chanting the Pancha Stutis. We started off with Kunti Stuti. Along with that, there is also a pravachan by Akkshay Karthikeyan and Aaditya Karthik, on the stutis, explaining them in detail, sloka by sloka.

We had Nama Bhiksha on the third weekend of the month at the house of Veeralakshmi ji and Ravi ji.

During the last weekend of the month, we celebrated Shraavanam by relishing Vamana Avatharam, and singing Purandaradasa kirtans.

We pray to our beloved Guru Maharaj for more such satsangs, and celebrations.