



# DIVYA SANDESH

2018 HOLI



## Offering Bhog

(Continued from the article in past edition "Idol Worship")

In every temple across the globe, the devotees offer food and other delicacies to the Lord. As per the specific tradition followed at each temple, the *pujari* may place the *bhog thali* in front of the deity, draw the curtain, close his eyes and ring the bell. In other places, the *pujari* may also sing a bhajan while offering food (*bhog*) to the Lord. Once this ritual is completed, the *pujari* takes away the *bhog thali* from in front of the Lord, without any feeling of love or devotion.



The point to ponder here is that when we cook food for our family and serve it to our husband or children and if they do not touch the food, how do we feel? Don't we insist on them to eat something? And if they do not eat, do we feel liking eating? It is our own experience that a mother or a wife does not feel like eating food when her family has not eaten anything. But when we offer food to God, we do not bother to check to see if He has eaten the food or not. Seeing no sign of Him touching the food let alone eating it, we do not feel any disappointment or hurt. There is no feeling of remorse in our mind, no tears of repentance thinking, that I am such a fallen soul that the Lord did not even touch the food offered by me. This clearly indicates that our love for God does not stand anywhere as compared to our love for our family members! We offer *bhog* mechanically, as a ritual, without any devotional sentiment.

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The reason of this heartlessness is our lack of faith in the idol of the deity. In our mind, we are certain that the *moorti* is made of stone and God does not exist in the *moorti* and hence will not eat. This is the reason, why we fail to derive any benefit despite going to the temple and having *prasad* etc.

The word *prasad* means grace. God does not relish the food that is offered to Him. He enjoys the love with which the food was offered. Whoever eats the leftover food offered to God, attains His grace. If the offering is devoid of love, He does not even glance towards the food. Then how would it become *prasad* and how would we benefit from the spiritual grace.

Hence, you would achieve spiritual benefit only if you have faith in the presence of God within the idol. Without faith, you will receive the result of a stone - idol only or in other words receive no grace.



लौही दारुमयी ....स्मृता ॥ भागवत् ११.२७.१२

There are eight kinds of idols made of various inert things viz. iron, gold, wood, stone, sand and drawing etc. If someone establishes firm faith that there is God in the idol, then they will surely realize God.

Sometimes we get impressed by the crowds that a temple draws. But a big crowd is just the outcome of publicity, the outward beauty of the temple structure or the well decorated idols. Sometimes, suddenly some miraculous thing happens on one's visit to the temple and they start propagating that "this *devi* or *devata* has miraculous powers". And some naïve people start flocking there. Seeing them others also follow. Don't be fooled by such malarkey. No idol has miraculous powers.

प्रभु व्यापक सर्वत्र समाना

"God is omnipresent with all His powers". The same God resides in a temple of Vrindaban, Ayodhya, Rameshwaram, Badrinath and your city etc. However, one can derive full benefit only by complete faith and exclusive love for Him.



तुलसीदल मात्रेण जलस्य चुलुकेन वा पत्रं पुष्पं.....प्रयतात्मनः ॥

“He does not need material treasures to please Him.”

Never go to Him with any material desire. Be assured that you will get whatever material opulence is destined for you in this life, with or without asking God for it. Love Him innocently like a child and you will get everything which bestows eternal bliss.



In a nutshell, no idol or temple is as important as your love-sentiment and faith in God. The benefit of visiting a temple is to spend some time in a spiritual atmosphere, listen to the lectures of saints, and increase your devotional sentiments. If you are already doing all of this at home, you do not need to go anywhere else. Just continue to practice devotion and feel the presence of God and Guru all the time. Once your surrender is complete, God will come to you in person and grace you forever.

## The Path to Attainment of Bliss

Every living being in this world wants just one thing i.e. Happiness. That is the only reason why everyone in this world is busy performing diverse activities. Some try to get happiness through accumulation of material wealth, some family, some health etc. While all our scriptures assert unanimously –



आनंदो ब्रह्मति व्यजानात्

God and happiness are synonymous words describing the same supreme entity called God. Hence without knowing God, no one can attain bliss.

तमेव विदित्वाऽतिमयमेति नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ।

As a matter of fact, every living being desires only four things i.e. *dharma*(धर्म), wealth(अर्थ), desires(काम), liberation(मोक्ष). The purpose of *dharm* is attainment of wealth and purpose of attaining wealth is the fulfilment of all material desires. The first three aims are material. The fourth one is liberation where the soul gets eternally released from the miseries of the world of Maya and the pure soul merges into the Supreme Being. Thereafter, the material senses mind, and intellect are annihilated forever. When the soul merges into Bliss, there is no duality, and therefore the soul does not enjoy any bliss.

The only source to attain bliss is Shri Krishna. Hence, it is indispensable to realize Shri Krishna, Shri Krishna can be realized only by His grace. Attainment of His grace is possible only by devotion. Devotion means love. Love means complete surrender of mind unto God.

Thus, devotion is proven to be inevitable for the attainment of bliss. Although scriptures talk of two other paths to attain bliss i.e. Karma and Gyan. But the highest accomplishment of performing Karma is relishing luxuries of heaven for a finite period of time. The result of following the path of Gyan is the removal of ignorance. Neither of these two paths lead to God. Bhakti alone can lead us up to the attainment of the ultimate goal of bliss.

Shri Krishna is the highest source of bliss. That's why only by reaching Shri Krishna can one attain divine bliss. Thus, it is clear that the final goal of life is attainment of Shri Krishna. The only path to reach Shri Krishna is devotion. Reading, chanting, reciting the mantras, visiting sacred places etc. can be named as religiousness but not as devotion. Devotion is the subject of heart alone. Hence,

1. The most essential is to do mental remembrance of Shri Krishna all the time.
2. Be selfless. Selflessness is much deeper than not asking for any material benefit. It means a devotee is not supposed to desire for anything except his love, which enables the devotees to serve Him to please Him.
3. Worship only one *avatar* of God. Although different forms of God in all the *avatars* are one and the same. Yet we have to focus on His divine form to get our mind attached to Him constantly. That's why choosing just one form and constantly focusing on the one form, may increase our practice of remembering God and make it easier.

Such kind of constant practice would cleanse the mind. Then by the grace of Guru, the divine power would enter the heart and make it divine. Then Guru will infuse divine love and God will appear in front of us in His divine form and Maya would leave us forever. Thus an individual being can earn his natural right of serving God constantly and enjoying unlimited, ever increasing divine love bliss.

To progress faster on the path of spiritual progress, it is important to be very humble. It means the devotee must feel, from the bottom of his heart, that he is a fallen soul full of vices and that

his mind is so dirty that it is impossible for it to be purified by any means. The devotee must beg for God's mercy, to be able to accept his eternal relation with God. Such kind of continuous desperate call will purify the heart and compel beloved Shyam Sundar to appear and grace the devotee.

प्रेम वारि बिनु सुनु खगराई । अभि अंतर मल कबहुँ कि जाई ॥

“Without shedding tears of love for the Lord, the material attachments residing in the mind cannot be removed”.

## Kripalu Leelamritam – A Glimpse of Shri Krishna Leelas

Shri Maharaj Ji once did a lecture series in Nagpur. During this time, the devotees organized a *Rath Yatra* where Shri Maharaj Ji sat on a chariot and the procession went through several neighborhoods in the city. After that, Shri Maharaj Ji went to the town of Bharatpur in India. To honor Shri Maharaj Ji and celebrate his visit to the city, the devotees of Bharatpur requested Shri Maharaj Ji's permission to organize a *Rath Yatra* in their city as well. Shri Maharaj Ji agreed, but on the condition that he will chant while on the Rath, unlike the Nagpur yatra, where he sat quietly on the chariot. The devotees readily agreed.

The *Rath Yatra* began and Shri Maharaj Ji started chanting. There were many devotees in the yatra including some senior government officials and distinguished citizens. There was so much divinity and bliss flowing during the *rath yatra* that everyone forgot about their stature in society and their physical build and started dancing merrily. The procession passed in front of a Mosque and some namazis stopped by to watch the procession. Seeing everyone singing and dancing, completely oblivious to everything around them, they commented that, “the Hindu scriptures describe that everyone went crazy in bliss when Shri Krishna descended on the earth. Seeing this procession, we can imagine what that time would have been like”. Some of them joined the rath yatra and started dancing.

Next morning, the devotees narrated this story to Shri Maharaj Ji and everyone had a hearty laugh.

**Moral:** Shri Krishna said in the Bhagavata Mahapurana, “the saint is another form of me”.

आचार्य मां विजानीयात् ।

Additionally,

जानत तुमहिं तुमहिं है जाई ।

“The one who gets to know God becomes one with God”, since after God-realization he immediately attains all the powers of God and God Himself becomes his governor.

Sometimes, the pastimes of saints appear to replicate the pastimes of Shri Krishna himself. The saints are divine. One should not use their material intellect to pass judgments on them. Saints also give us a glimpse into the teachings of the scriptures, thereby reinforcing our faith in the scriptures.

## Kid's Corner

### A Donation Made With a Pure Heart Prospers

There once lived a little boy named Nachiketa. He was the son of Rishi Vājashravasa (वज्रश्रवा). Once Rishi Vājashravasa organized a *yagya* (offering fire sacrifices) to please the Gods and gain heaven. It was a custom in those days to donate cows to Brahmins at the end of the yagna. Rishi Vājashravasa was a miser and he donated old, barren, blind and lame cows who hardly yielded any milk, to the Brahmins. Our scriptures tell us that one must donate only the very best of one's possessions. Hence, Nachiketa was puzzled by his father's action. He thought he should be gifting the things which are dear to him since he intends to gain *swarg*, but he will go to Hell instead through such actions.

He asked his father, "Father, to whom will you give me as charity or a gift?" His father ignored the question but Nachiketa repeated the question, Vājashravasa lost his temper and said, "Get away from here. I will give you to Yama, God of Death". Being an obedient son Nachiketa set out to Yampuri, the abode of Yamraj.

He reached Yama's kingdom but was told by Yama's guards that Yamraj had gone out for three days. Nachiketa decided to wait at his doorstep until he returned. He waited for three days without any food or water. He basically fasted for three days!

Upon his return, Yamraj was sorry to see that a Brahmin guest had been waiting so long without food and water. He told Nachiketa, "You have waited in my house for three days without hospitality, therefore ask three boons from me". Nachiketa first asked for peace for his father and himself. Yamraj agreed. Next, Nachiketa wished to learn the sacred fire sacrifice, which also Yamraj elaborated. For his third boon, Nachiketa wanted to learn the mystery of what comes after death.

Yamraj was reluctant on this question. He said that this had been a mystery even to the gods. He asked Nachiketa to ask for some other boon, and offered many material gains.



But Nachiketa replied that material things will last only till death. He who has encountered death personally, how can he desire wealth? No other boon would do. Yamraj was secretly pleased with this disciple, and elaborated on the nature of the true Self, which persists beyond death. The key of the realization is that this soul is inseparable from Brahm, the supreme spirit, the vital force in the universe. Yamraj's explanation is a succinct explication of Hindu metaphysics, and focuses on the following points:

- The goal of the wise is to know the real self, which is the soul.
  - The soul is like a passenger; the horses are the senses, which he guides through the maze of desires.
  - At the time of death, the body dies but soul is immortal.
  - By mere reading of the scriptures or intellectual learning, one cannot realize the God.
  - One must discriminate the soul from the body, which is the seat of desire.
  - The inability to realize God, results in one being enmeshed in the cycle of rebirths.
- Understanding God leads to *moksha* or liberation

Thus having learned the wisdom of the Brahm from Yamraj, Nachiketa was freed from the cycle of births.

**Moral:** First approach a God-realized saint, with an inquisitive mind, ask him what the goal of life is, then trust his words and finally practice the same principles. Then realization of God would be possible.

