



# *The Vision*

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DEDICATED TO UNIVERSAL LOVE AND SERVICE

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ANANDASHRAM, PO ANANDASHRAMA 671531, INDIA



**Beloved Papa Swami Ramdas (1884-1963)**

*Om Sri Ram jai Ram jai jai Ram*

ॐ श्री राम जय राम जय जय राम

*Om Sri Ram jai Ram jai jai Ram*

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## **DRAW HIM BY SIMPLE FAITH**

**B**y simple faith and devotion

You make the Supreme Beloved your own.

With longing heart call Him

And He comes to you.

He is your teacher, wise and potent.

Give the strings of your life

In His skilled and loving hands,

And you gain immortality and peace.

**– Swami Ramdas**



**Vol. 89****May 2022****No. 08****CONTENTS**

From The Editor	-	5
Acme Of Bhakti	- Swami Ramdas	7
Beloved Papa Answers	-	10
With The Divine Mother	- Swami Shuddhananda	13
Discipline Of Devotion	- Swami Satchidananda	15
Bhakti	- Swami Rama Tirth	18
Emulate The Qualities		
Bhaktotammas Epitomised	- Swami Chidananda	20
The Foundation Of Bhakti	- Mata Amritanandamayi	22
Mira's Bhakti	- Swami Ramdas	23
What Is Bhakti?	- Swami Shantananda Puri	24
Gopi Bhakti — The Highest Type	- Swami Ramdas	26
Lives Of Saints Are Examples		
To Inspire And Guide Us	- Swami Ramdas	28
The Essence Of Bhakti	- Swami Chinmayananda	34
Dear Children	-	35
Epistles Of Swami Ramdas	-	36
In Memoriam	-	37
Anandashram News	-	38

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## FROM THE EDITOR

he path of devotion or Bhakti is considered to be the safest for aspirants because it stands for expansion of the love-circle and not abdicating anything. The question of renunciation does not figure there with the tone of rigidity as is normally understood.

Bhakti or devotion is of two kinds. The more common is ceremonial and ritualistic method of expressing our devotion through elaborate external worship. This type of Bhakti has always a tinge of self-seeking through the meticulous following of the injunctions of the scriptures regarding Puja.

But the Bhakti that crowns us with liberation is Nishkama, which seeks nothing but the great privilege of loving the Lord. Here, even if something is offered by the Lord, it will not be accepted because what the devotee wants is nothing but God. He realises that all created things are temporary, transitory, subject to decay and dissolution. They are perishable and imperfect. Though they are useful for that moment, they can become a diversion, a bondage, a net, a nuisance and a prolific sense of sorrow.

Devotion to God does not consist merely in talking and discoursing about Him. It is an experience

of intimate contact and union with Him. Beloved Papa says: “If you want to enjoy real bliss and peace, you should cultivate devotion for God. Let God be your all-in-all. Your one and only aim or ambition in life should be to realise Him. God wants you to be His simple, trusting and loving child. Worldly attainments like wealth, learning and position do not count at all. God looks at your heart. If He finds you sincere, guileless and pure, He becomes yours. If you are sympathetic to the distressed, kind towards all creatures, forgiving in your nature, patient and self-sacrificing, God bathes you in the radiance of His grace. In all humility approach Him in your heart, for, there He dwells — the Master and Mother of your soul and life.”

When we love Him, our whole mind will be filled with Him and there will be no other thought intruding. There is dispassion towards everything else. Gradually this attitude will also pave the way to experience everything as a form of God. Thus, the love-circle keeps on expanding with the God-dimension behind it.

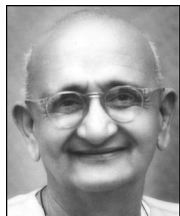
This month’s issue of THE VISION brings out the various approaches to Bhakti through the words of great Masters. □

— **Editor**

## ACME OF BHAKTI

By Swami Ramdas

**B**hakti is the adoration of the Supreme Lord of the Universe beyond everything else in the world. This one-pointed adoration makes the devotee keep his mind ever



engaged in the remembrance and contemplation of the Lord. The Divine idea seizes the mind of the devotee to such an extent that the most attractive objects of life cease to fascinate him. He talks, laughs and often weeps in his madness for the Lord. As he progresses on the path of devotion he is weaned away from the petty and transient pleasures of the senses and remains, as it were, dead to them. His one passion is to see God, know God, and be entirely merged in God.

So, as a result of this devotion, in the first place, the devotee is possessed with an intense Vairagya, i.e., a steady and fixed dispassion towards the evanescent objects in the world. The intensity of his Vairagya depends upon the intensity of his devotion to his Lord. A devotion which is weak and interrupted cannot entirely turn the mind away from the external world. Devotion must, therefore, be a dedication of

all the powers of the mind and heart for the exclusive meditation and love of the Lord.

Devotion as rightly divided is of two kinds — the lower and the higher. In the lower form of devotion, the devotee looks for guidance and concentration from outside, and primarily attaches himself to the society of saints who have realised fully the greatness and glory of the Lord. To keep himself pure in thought, word and deed, he controls all the forces that are working in his psychical and physical being, and adjusts the conduct of his life so as to free himself from all desires of his mind. Mainly, he will have recourse to three kinds of Sadhana, viz. Satsang, solitude and Sattwic diet.

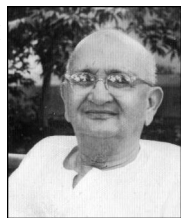
How does the devotee now try to tune his mind in a continuous symphony with the Lord? It must be admitted that every remembrance signifies bringing into the mind the name and qualities of the person or object remembered. A prolonged remembrance means a sustained fixity of the thought on the name and attributes of the person or object. For the devotee, the Lord becomes the one great object of ceaseless remembrance, which is attained by an unbroken repetition of His sweet and all-powerful Name and bringing at the same time into the mind His sublime glories and attributes.



As the devotee advances on this spiritual path, he transcends the Tamo and Rajo Gunas of nature and gets firmly seated in Sattwa Guna. The lower form of Bhakti leads the devotee to this most necessary step. Now commences the higher aspect of devotion. Sattwa Guna entitles the devotee to the Grace of the Lord or a saint, and through this grace he is lifted beyond all Gunas and comes, so to say, face-to-face with the immortal and all-blissful Atman whom he realises as his Real Being and Existence. This is called Jnana or Moksha. The knowledge of the Atman grants him unchanging and eternal bliss and peace. It is then the higher Bhakti which is termed Para-Bhakti dawns in him. This is the summit of God-realisation. With Jnana as the background, the devotee beholds the entire manifested universe as the supreme image of his beloved Lord. All creatures, beings and things in the universe are looked upon by him as the very forms of his Lord. He feels and sees the Lord's presence everywhere. Oneness of life, oneness of all existence becomes now the keynote of his vision. There is no limit to his ecstasies born of his consciousness of unity and oneness with the Lord. He veritably rolls, swims and gambols in the infinite ocean of joy. Blessed, a million times blessed, is the devotee who reaches this highest peak of God-realisation. □

## BELOVED PAPA SWAMI RAMDAS ANSWERS

**Papa:** Let us speak of the highest type of Bhakti today. It is called Ananya-Bhakti. Here you have no higher object to love than God. He is the supreme object of your love, adoration, devotion and remembrance. Remembrance of Him as such is Ananya-Chintan.



“To those who always remain absorbed in My meditation, to those ever harmonious, I bring full peace and security.” Such a Bhakta is very dear to God. He finds joy in remembering Him, taking His Name and glorifying Him. He looks upon God as everything and all-in-all. He remembers God for all the twenty-four hours without break, because he finds that the remembrance gives him the highest happiness. Prahalad, Dhruva, Narada, Ambarisha and several other saints were Bhaktas of this highest order. Even if such Bhaktas live in different situations, conditions and circumstances their heart remains continuously in tune with God.

Let your heart continuously pine for God just as a miser does for gold. The miser’s love for gold is greater than for all else in the world. Mother, father,

wife, children, brothers are all nothing to him. What a man loves most, that he thinks of. A true devotee looks upon God as his all-in-all. His devotion to God is complete, thorough, integral, all-comprehensive. A devotee's love and devotion enable him to remember God constantly. He has no need to struggle. Automatically his mind dwells on God.

Narada says in his Bhakti Sutra that you should have Param Prem — the highest love for God. Many persons are struggling to remember God and they find it difficult because they have greater love for things of the world than for God.

To remember Him for two or three hours a day is not Bhakti. Bhakti means unceasing remembrance of God. That can come only through Divine grace. What should you do to get that intense love or Ananya-Bhakti? You must pray to Him for grace so that you may remember Him constantly. By your will you cannot do it. Before Ramdas' spiritual quest began, non-remembrance of God did not cause any pain to him. After God's grace came, he felt that forgetfulness was misery. He felt as if he was put on fire if he forgot Him for a single moment.

The question is whether you should have any preparation necessary for becoming fit for His grace.

If God says you must do Sadhana to receive grace, it means you are like a labourer earning wages. There is no question of such earning here. His grace alone must purify you. Pray to Him, cry out to Him, then He will come. He will not say, “You have not done Sadhana. You have not purified yourself.”

The story goes: A humble servant, living in a small hut with his family, once went to the king and prayed to him to visit his humble cottage. The king agreed. But the cottage was very small. It was not clean and it was in no way fit for the king's reception. The king ordered his minister to get the house thoroughly cleaned, properly equipped and decorated. After getting everything ready, the king paid his visit. So, you invite God to reveal Himself in your heart. He makes it pure and then reveals Himself. All that you have to do is to call Him just as a child calls its mother. You must entirely forget everything else when you call Him. Many ardent devotees have in this way got the Darshan of God. The only thing needed is to cry to God to come and save you, i.e., to absorb you in His Being. □



## WITH THE DIVINE MOTHER

By Swami Shuddhananda

**P**onnu is singing Abhangs from Beloved Papa's Prem Sudha outside in the Bhajan Hall. In Papa's Room, Mataji is listening to the renderings. Mataji: "How beautiful are Papa's compositions! They deal with both Nirguna and Saguna Swarup. That is why, perhaps, they are not always so easy to understand. I had always wondered why the songs composed by other saints like Tukaram, Namdev, Eknath and others are so easy and simple in expression and can be easily understood, whereas Papa's compositions are not so simple. We have to hear them several times before we can imbibe their true meaning."



Sashikala: "It may be because there is more than one meaning in every line composed by Papa."

Mataji: "Yes, that is because Papa's vision encompassed the universe. And, in his compositions, Papa has looked at the whole Saguna Swarup as one entity and also covered Nirguna Swarup. He has sung of the Truth which cannot be understood at first reading.

Sriram: "Isn't it possible, Mataji, that many

of the popular compositions of various saints were composed by them during their Sadhana period, whereas Papa's compositions were mainly after he had attained Sakshatkar.

Mataji: "Yes, that is also possible. Yet, the Abhangs of Tukaram and others carry such a wealth of love and devotion that they must have attained at least the first of the Sakshatkars. Now, you are familiar with Papa's compositions because they are being sung here practically every day, and each one has got a nice tune." □



***B****haktas are a class by themselves. They can be easily identified — not by appearance but by their behaviour, by their attitude. Bhaktas are very loving to others. They are perfectly peaceful. They serve others selflessly. Their life is dedicated to God. They try to see God in everything and therefore their life will be a great blessing to humanity. They keep chanting God's Name constantly and thus remember Him. Because of that they are always happy.*

— Swami Ramdas

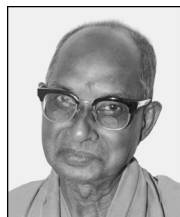
## DISCIPLINE OF DEVOTION

By Swami Satchidananda

(Excerpt From Srimad Bhagavata)



Lord Kapila said, “The discipline of devotion is recognised as manifold according to the ways of approach, and attitude of mind towards it. Men’s attitude of mind varies according to the diversity of their natural characteristics. A man who is given to anger and views Me as distinct from himself and who practises devotion to Me with a mind full of violence, hypocrisy and jealousy, is a devotee of Tamasic type. He who worships Me through an image etc., as distinct from himself with a view to acquiring objects of senses, fame and power is a devotee of Rajasic type. He who adores Me as distinct from himself, aiming at the eradication of his sins or with the intention of offering his actions to the Supreme, or again with the feeling that it is his duty to worship Me, is a devotee of Sattwic type. The distinguishing character of unqualified Bhakti Yoga is spoken of as the uninterrupted flow of mind-stream towards Me at the mere mention of my virtues, like that of the



waters of the Ganga towards the ocean. This should be combined with motiveless and unremitting love to Me, the Supreme Person, dwelling in the hearts of all. My devotees accept not in exchange for My service even the five forms of final beatitude, namely, residence in My divine realm, enjoying My powers, living in My presence, possessing a form similar to Mine, and absorption into My Being, even when they are offered to them by Me. This Bhakti Yoga has been declared as the highest goal. The devotees thereby transcend the three Gunas and become qualified for My state without any effort.

“By devoutly performing one’s duties in a disinterested spirit; by following every day a course of regular worship involving no destruction of life and actuated by no worldly desire; by beholding, touching, adoring, extolling and bowing to My images etc., by regarding all living beings as My own manifestations; by resorting to patience and dispassion; by showing great respect to exalted souls, commiserating with the afflicted and behaving in a friendly manner with one’s equals; by practising non-violence, truthfulness, non-thieving, continence, possessing things not exceeding the bare necessities of life, external and internal purity, contentment, undergoing penance, study



of sacred texts and meditation on God; by hearing spiritual discourses and chanting the Divine Names; and by unity of mind, speech and body, fellowship with holy men and absence of egotism, one's mind thus engaged in activities intended to please Me gets thoroughly purified. He conceives a liking for Me, without any effort, the moment he hears somebody talking about My virtues." □



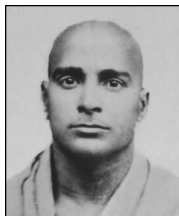
***The path of devotion or Bhakti is simple, easy and harmless. You turn to God within you like a child to its mother. You offer yourself to Him and pray to Him to guide you. Once you surrender yourself to God, He takes charge of you and you are ever safe. God holds you as a mother holds her child. You are no longer separate from God and there is no fear of a fall for you. All of us know very well that it is natural to love our mother, father and other relations. It is this same love that has to be directed to God.***

**— Swami Ramdas**

## BHAKTI

By Swami Rama Tirth

How beloved is the word love. Everybody must have a lover, as the saying goes. In some instances love (Bhakti) is the only desideratum. There are some noble souls who gladly sacrifice anything and everything for the sake of Divine Love. Let us try to discover the fountain head of Love.



The ideal Bhaktas like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu or Bunyan are distinguished for their unusual trance or raptures of prayers; and it goes without saying that Divine Love raised in intensity to such a pitch means transcending all ideas of shame, conformity, or the world and exemption from the bondage of little self. Even those who have been blessed with an experience of love directed towards lower objects, will testify to the apparent paradox that highest love transcends the idea of beloved and lover. Thus, undeniably is love identical with religion in the above sense.



A man, on reading Nizami's Laila and Majnoon, cut out the picture of Laila from the book and

was hugging it to his breast and kissing it ever so fondly. Why? “I have fallen in love with Laila,” he replies. Fool! It is not worthwhile to take away poor Majnoon’s sweetheart! You may have Majnoon’s burning love, but as to lady lore, have a living one of your own.

Bhaktas of India! You are all very ready to take up the sweetheart of Gopis and Chaitanya, but how many of you have the pure flaming passion of Gopikas and Gauranga? You will be the darling dear of that sweet Cowherd when you see Him with Divine Love in the Chandala, in the thief, in the sinner, in the stranger and in all, and not confine Him to mere stone images.

Bhakti (love) is not crying, begging or a negative condition. It is an indescribable sense of equality, beaming sweetness and Divine recklessness. It is the seeing of the All in all we see. It is seeing your own Self in where your eyes fall. It is to realise that All is Beauty and I am that. Tat Tvam Asi or That Thou Art. □

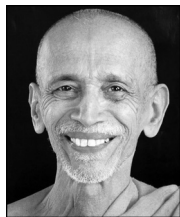
*Source: In Woods of God-Realization, Vol 2*



## EMULATE THE QUALITIES BHAKTOTAMMAS EPITOMISED

By Swami Chidananda

**T**he human individual soul should rise to the ultimate height it is capable of. Try to be as much like God as it is possible for you to be within the limits of your own capacity.



Each one has a ceiling limit. And God only expects each one of us to do our ultimate best — and leave it in His hands. But if we do not try to do our ultimate best — if we fail to do our Ultimate best — then we fail. God does not expect us to become a Ramakrishna Paramahamsadeva. God does not expect us to become a Chaitanya Gauranga Mahaprabhu, a Mirabai, a Prahalad, a Dhruva, a Markandeya or a Bhagiratha. Having lived before us, they have left footprints on the sands of time. Therefore, try to emulate! We may not be able to duplicate them in scale and quality, but we can try to emulate. That is the very meaning of idealism. We keep a lofty ideal and try to emulate that ideal. Try to be as non-violent as Mahatma Gandhi. Try to be as abstemious as Vinoba Bhave. Try to be as brave as Mira. Trying to be like an ideal we set

before us is the hallmark of a Sadhaka.

Never lower your ideal. Even if you cannot approximate it in every way. Say: "I shall try my best." Do not compromise; do not dilute your spirituality. Aim for the stars. Swami Krishnanandaji used to say: "It is better to aim at a lion and miss it than to aim at a jackal and hit it," Try to become like God.

Overnight one does not become a God. Growing into God-nature is not a miracle; it is not a revolution. In rare, exceptional cases — one in million — it may be; otherwise, it is an evolutionary process, slow, steady, by day and by night, even as the petals of a flower-bud gradually unfold in the silence of the night, unfelt, unobserved, unseen by man. One grows into Divinity over a period of time through patient effort, unremitting, persevering effort, through sincerity and earnestness, through longing, through deep yearning for it, through much prayer and supplication at the feet of God. Vigilant among the heedless, wakeful among the slumbering, diligent among the indolent, ever actively striving, climbing up step-by-step among the lethargic and the lazy who rest by the wayside, the Yogi, the Sadhaka and the devotee of God make their life fruitful in attainment. That is called Sadhana. That is called spiritual life. ▣

## THE FOUNDATION OF BHAKTI

Mata Amritanandamayi Explains



Once a 4 years old boy came to Amma and told her that he wanted Bhakti. Amma said: “Aha — do you want Bhakti? What is Bhakti?” The boy looked at Amma with a lost expression. She added, “Is it a chocolate?”


“Yes,” the boy answered quickly. “It’s a chocolate.” Then, Amma compassionately explained the true meaning of Bhakti to the boy: “Perform all your actions with grace, with the blessings of the Guru. Every day, when you get up in the morning, prostrate to Mother Earth, prostrate to your parents and elders, prostrate to the teachers in the school, and seek their blessings. When you take a book or a pen for your studies, do Pranam to it, only then should you use them. Whenever someone comes to your house, you should get up and give them a seat; ask them if they have had anything to eat. Don’t fight with anyone, don’t beat anyone. This is the foundation of Bhakti.”

Amma further explained how one should perform daily actions in life: “Play while you play, study while you study, pray while you pray. When you pray, pray like this: ‘Oh Lord, please shine in and through all my actions.’” □

Source: [www.amritapuri.org](http://www.amritapuri.org)

## MIRA'S BHAKTI

By Swami Ramdas

ira had transcended all Dharmas. She looked upon God as everything. Her mind was completely concentrated upon God. One day her husband came to her and said, "I am your wedded husband. You must have some consideration for me. Give me at least a portion of your love." She replied. "Krishna has robbed my entire heart. There is nothing left for you. Even if I want to love you, wherefrom can I get that love?" That was her condition.

Mira had to suffer so much from her own relations. They wanted to kill her in so many ways. All sorts of indignities were heaped upon her.

Mira was day and night intoxicated with the idea of God. That is the preparation for dedication. Then they (the aspirants) won't care for or seek anybody's advice. They go headlong. But God must bring about such dedication; it must be by His will and grace; not by our effort. What can we puny creatures do?

This is the kind of dedication we should have. It is not merely saying by word of mouth. Devotees who have dedicated their lives to God are really stark mad of Him. Ramdas was called a mad man when he was after God with all his heart. □

## WHAT IS BHAKTI?

By Swami Shantananda Puri

**B**hakti is the music of the soul. Bhakti is the ecstatic state of intense Divine Love. What is meant by intense or transcendental Love (Param-Prem)? It is a Love where



the division between the lover and the beloved has dwindled into nothing. It is a state where there is no duality but one unified field of an elevating and intoxicating Love alone exists.

I have heard of a story. Once Lord Vishnu was persuaded by Lord Siva to sing before him, with no other audience to be present. They loved each other dearly. When Lord Vishnu began to sing, he soon melted into a running pool of water. Siva was also not seen, and in his place too there was a pool of water which mixed up with the other pool. The Divine music, however, was going on as though there was neither Vishnu nor Siva.

Sant Kabir has sung, “The lane of love is so narrow that two people (lovers) cannot walk on it.” Devotion or intense love is the art of losing oneself



in the beloved Lord. Everybody's ego is such that we want to be loved, adored and adulated by others. We give or make a show of giving that much love as to attract other's love. This is not intense love but it is "selfish love". Bhakti is a selfless love where we tell the Lord, "Lord, let me die but let You live forever". Bhakti is the art of dying. Here one does not want a reciprocal love from the Lord. A reciprocal love is a commercial deal. It is a business with an eye on profit. In Bhakti the devotee wants that the Lord must be pleased and he is prepared to stake his life, if need be, for this purpose. He has no desire of his own to be fulfilled.


So long as one entertains any desires for attaining objects relating to this world or to the other world, his love for the Lord can at best be only lukewarm. All our desires have to be concentrated on Him only. In fact, even in the Jnana Marg (the path of knowledge) relinquishing of all desires alone entitles one to God realisation. It is said in the Upanishads that such a person attains immortality and Self-realisation here and now. □

*Source: The Ecstasy Of Love-Divine*



## GOPI BHAKTI — THE HIGHEST TYPE

By Swami Ramdas

eally, there is no comparison to Gopi's love. Gopi's love stands alone, above every other kind of devotion. When Krishna left Brindavan and went to Mathura, the agony of the Gopis was very great. Krishna, coming to know of it, sent Uddhava, his friend, to console them. When the Gopis saw Uddhava, they crowded round him and asked: 'How is our Krishna? Where is He? Is He coming?'

Uddhava said: "Krishna has sent me to give you some advice as to how you can realise the Atman, who is pervading everywhere, and thereby know that you and Krishna, who is Atman, are one and that you have no reason to feel his separation. Krishna is within you. He is not merely a form, — He is your own Atman."

Listening to these words, the Gopis replied: "We do not want your philosophy. We are not at all interested in it. We want Krishna, the beautiful Being, whom we adore, love and worship. Without Him we are utterly miserable. Knowledge of the Atman, you can keep for yourself. We will have

nothing to do with it. We will have Him alone, our adored One.”

Their hearts were aflame, their eyes were filled with tears and they were silent. Uddhava departed. Thereafter, whenever the Gopis saw the clouds, they were reminded of Krishna, who was of blue colour, and they would go into trances. So, it happened with them when they found themselves in the midst of groves of trees, or on the banks of the Jumna. The very thought of Krishna drove them crazy and they were immersed in grief and joy at once. That was the nature of the love which they bore for Krishna. Sometimes they would see Him in His beautiful form everywhere.

We can feel His presence, we can see Him in our hearts, we can behold Him with our eyes, provided we give our hearts to Him, in the same way as the Gopis did. Remember what they told Uddhava: ‘We do not want Jnana — or the knowledge of the Self — all we want is Krishna, the Supreme Person, boy Krishna who charms us, plays with us and enchants us by the sweet music of His flute and thrills us by His very presence.’ □



## **LIVES OF SAINTS ARE EXAMPLES TO INSPIRE AND GUIDE US**

By Swami Ramdas



A man who thinks that he can attain God without contacting a saint; cannot have his wish fulfilled. This is very clear from the lives of all saints and sages. What the saints and sages, whose names Ramdas is going to mention, did in the first place was that they contacted saints and received from them initiation of the name of God and they started chanting that name looking upon the person who initiated them as their spiritual master and guide. In the ancient days, according to the Puranas, we had great devotees like Prahalad, Narada and Draupadi; later on, Namdev, Tulsidas, Tukaram, Gauranga, Kabir and Nandanar. All these saints held God's name as the chief means for the concentration, purification and elevation of the mind and for the ultimate realisation of God.

### **Draupadi**

Draupadi was an ardent devotee of Krishna. First of all, it is absolutely necessary, as Draupadi and all others have done, that we should give our heart to God and then take His name. Then it is that we

are completely entitled to the protection of God in all situations.

We are repeating His name with our mind engaged in worldly thoughts and desires, and do not depend entirely upon God or love Him above everything else in the world. As a result of this, we do not get as much help and support from Him as we expect. You know that when Draupadi was in great trouble, she called on Krishna to come to her rescue, but Krishna did not come as she was trying to protect herself also. But when she gave up her own effort to defend herself and entirely depended upon Krishna and called on Him, He at once saved her.

### **Lord Gauranga**

Then again, we find Gauranga and Tukaram, who were votaries of the Divine Name. They were ceaselessly repeating God's name and they had visions and Divine experiences. Gauranga was simply mad of the Divine Name. He was dancing in ecstasy. He electrified the hearts of those who came in contact with him, and made them also chant God's name. When he was going from village to village, people from those places joined him in the chorus of the Divine Name. Really, when we repeat God's

name and get the joy resulting from it, we cannot sometimes contain ourselves. We stand up and dance in ecstasy. When a child gets a new toy, what does it do? It dances in joy. When joy runs in your veins and takes possession of every part of your body, you dance in ecstasy.

### **Saint Kabir**

Kabir was another votary of God's name. How did he get God's name? He was a Muslim by birth. He wanted to repeat God's name, but nobody would give him initiation. He went to Swami Ramanand, a famous saint of Banaras, and prayed to him to give him the name of God, but the Swami said he could not be initiated because he was a Muslim.

It was usual for Swami Ramanand to go to the Ganges for his bath early in the morning, even when there was no sufficient light, and he had to step down the ghat. Kabir went and laid himself on one of the steps of the ghat, at the very place where Swami Ramanand used to take his bath. The Swami did not see Kabir lying down. So, he placed his foot on the back of Kabir and suddenly felt that somebody was lying down there and said, "Ram, Ram". As soon as Kabir heard this Name, he got up and said his work

was over, because he felt he had got the initiation. From that time, he started repeating the Name and got the highest spiritual experiences. He had the vision of Divinity in all forms, in all respects, and all ways. That means he had the all-comprehensive and all-inclusive realisation of God.

### **Maharshi Valmiki**

You know, Valmiki was a robber. By the grace of Narada who gave him the Ram Mantra, he was not only saved from doing evil but was also raised to the status of a Maharishi. He was venerated all over the world. Ajamila repeated God's name once at the time of death. The result was that by the power of the Name he was taken to heaven. Tulsidas is never tired of praising the power of the Name in Ramayana. If you read here and there the great praises he gives to the power of the Name, you will be simply charmed.

### **Saint Namdev**

Namdev and another great Yogi of the time went together on a pilgrimage. On the way both felt thirsty. They found a well which was very deep and had only a small quantity of water at the bottom. They could not get at the water. The Yogi converted himself into a small sparrow, went inside the well, drank water

and came out. But Namdev had no such powers. But he had unshakable faith in God, and His name was always on his lips. He turned towards Pandharpur, where his Ishta was residing in the temple and cried out, “Oh Vithal, I am thirsty. I want water. Then a miracle happened and the water at the bottom of the well came up and overflowed. He not only drank the water, but could also take a bath in it. He did not have to become a sparrow.

### **Saint Nandanar**

Nandanar was a Pariah by caste. He repeated the name of Nataraja before seeing or knowing anything about Him. Repeating His name, he was dancing in ecstasy. Ultimately God took him to Chidambaram and there he disappeared in the flash of light that came from God in the temple. This status was achieved by the Pariah saint by his simple chanting of the name of God. You know, of course, about Narada. Day and night he is singing God’s name, and is immersed in continuous joy and ecstasy.

### **God Is At Once Master And Servant**

Ramdas can multiply instances like this, because in our Puranas we have the lives of many saints. Therein we find that the Divine Name saved people




not only from worldly difficulties and dangers, but also raised them to the highest spiritual eminence, by which they realised their oneness with God not only in the personal form but also in the impersonal all-pervading form.

Even after realising God in all these aspects, they were able to feel constantly the fellowship of God with them. God used to look after them tenderly in so many ways. A devotee is under the protection and care of God. He is relied upon by the devotee as his Master, but He virtually, becomes the servant of His devotees. He looks after them like the mother looks after her child. This is Ramdas experience all these years. God has been after him and attending on him like a mother. This is all due to Ramdas' repeating His name. His name is wonderful in its potency, wonderful in its power. It can transform a mortal into an immortal and raise him to the highest spiritual eminence. It can convert him entirely into an image of God. So, you should all make it a point to remember God everyday by chanting His holy name and keep your mind perfectly serene and calm and feel His presence in your hearts. □



## THE ESSENCE OF BHAKTI

By Swami Chinmayananda

he term “Bhakti” is not to be understood in its cheap connotation, which it has come to gather in its direct translation as ‘devotion.’ Selfless love, seeking a fulfilment in itself, when directed towards the Divine with firm faith and an all-out belief, is called Bhakti. Love itself means identifying with the object of love in such a way that the joys and sorrows of the beloved become equally poignant joys and sorrows of the lover. In short, the lovers become one with their beloveds, both in their physical and emotional lives. Therefore, Shankara describes Bhakti as “the identification of the ego with its Real Nature.”



Regarding devotion Shankara says: “No doubt, of the means available for liberating ourselves, the most substantial hardware is Bhakti; and identifying ourselves with the Self is called Bhakti.” Identification is the truest measure of Love. The devotee, forgetting his own individual existence and, in his love, identifying to become one with his beloved Lord, is the culmination of Divine Love. The Vedantic

student who is the seeker of the Self, is spiritually obliged to renounce all his abject identification with his matter vestures and discover his true nature to be the Self. Only those who are thus capable of identifying themselves with the One unifying Truth that holds together, in its web-of-love, the plurality, can experience, “ME IN THIS FASHION” — in my Cosmic Form.



The ‘Path-of-Devotion’ is not a mere sentimental explosion, or an excessive emotional display. It is not a mere frivolous hysteria. It is the blossoming of the human personality through the surrender of our limitations and by acquiring new vitality during the inspired moments of deep contemplation. □

*Source: Holy Geeta*



## DEAR CHILDREN

### *The Shop-keeper And The Boy*



Once, a poor little boy who could not get even a morsel of food to appease his hunger, stole a banana from a nearby fruit shop. Being a devotee of Lord Guruvayurappan, he dropped half

the banana into the 'Hundi' and he ate the other half. The shop-keeper caught hold of the boy and accused him of theft. The boy admitted his mistake. However, the shop-keeper did not have the heart to punish him, but to teach him a lesson, he asked him to walk around the temple a certain number of times. The shop-keeper was aghast when he saw Lord Guruvayurappan follow the little boy around the temple. That night the Lord came to the shop-keeper in a dream and explained, "Since I have also had a share in the stolen banana I am bound to share the punishment, too. So I followed the boy around the temple." □

Source: <https://www.templepurohit.com>



## EPISTLES OF SWAMI RAMDAS

**B**eloved Ram,  
...What is Bhakti? Bhakti is intense love and longing to attain God. Bhakti is like a steady flame which burns in our hearts and continues burning until God is reached. The desire possesses us in such a manner that there would be for us no other ambition in life than to realise God. This longing consumes us like a fire, day after day — nay,

a veritable madness for God seizes our mind, and all our mental and physical energy is utilised exclusively for taking possession of God. When this Bhakti has brought us face-to-face with the dearest object of our struggle and of the quest of our life, we shall have found peace once for all. We shall then have realised a condition in which we have no desire of any kind left to be fulfilled. We are one with the Supreme Truth — an existence which is Eternal Joy.

What is Prem? Oh, what words can describe the sublimity of Prem? God is Prem — Prem is God. He is a pure, dazzling, blissful Reality.

Love and Namaskars to yourself, etc. □



*Ramadas*  
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## IN MEMORIAM

- Smt Parvathy Ramachandran (aged 92), an ardent devotee of the Ashram from Bangalore, was called by Beloved Papa on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April, 2022.
- Sri PS Ramakrishnan (aged 83), an inmate of the Ashram, was also called by Beloved Papa on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April, 2022. Kannan Mama, as

he was known to all, moved to the Ashram in the late 90s. His love for Ram Nam made him take the lead in inspiring innumerable devotees to participate in the Nama Yagna for Vishwa Shanti. In the course of trying to involve more and more devotees in this Yagna, he along with Pujya Swami Muktanandaji visited several places all around India. Thereafter, every month, Kannan Mama diligently called the devotees and motivated them to increase their chanting.

We pray for Beloved Papa's blessings on the dear departed souls for eternal rest and peace at His holy feet. □



## **ANANDASHRAM NEWS**

**15,500-CRORE NAMA JAPA YAGNA FOR WORLD PEACE:** The total Japa received in the third round of the 15500-Crore Nama Japa Yagna For World Peace in the month of March is 200 crores. The grand total of the Japa done so far in this round now stands at 12636 crores.



## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS IN ENGLISH

Sr.	Book Title	Price (Rs.)
1	Ashram Seva	30
2	At the Feet of God	85
3	Call of the Devotee	130
4	Dive Deep and Soar High	120
5	Gita Sandesh	110
6	Glimpses of Divine Vision	60
7	God Experience, Vols. 1 & 2 (Set)	240
8	Gospel Of Swami Ramdas, Vols. 1 to 3 (Set)	750
9	Guru's Grace	150
10	Hints to Aspirants	100
11	In Quest of God	150
12	In the Vision of God	285
13	Krishnabai	80
14	Lectures of Swami Ramdas, Vols. 1 to 5 (Set)	1100
15	Letters of Swami Ramdas, Vols. 1 & 2 (Set)	240
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17	Passage to Divinity	120
18	Pathless Path	50
19	Poems	100
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28	Talks of Swami Ramdas	130
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30	The Mother of All	60
31	The Silent Sage	60
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35	Viswamata Krishnabai	70
36	With My Master	90
37	With the Divine Mother, Vols. 1 to 3 (Set)	540
38	World is God	210

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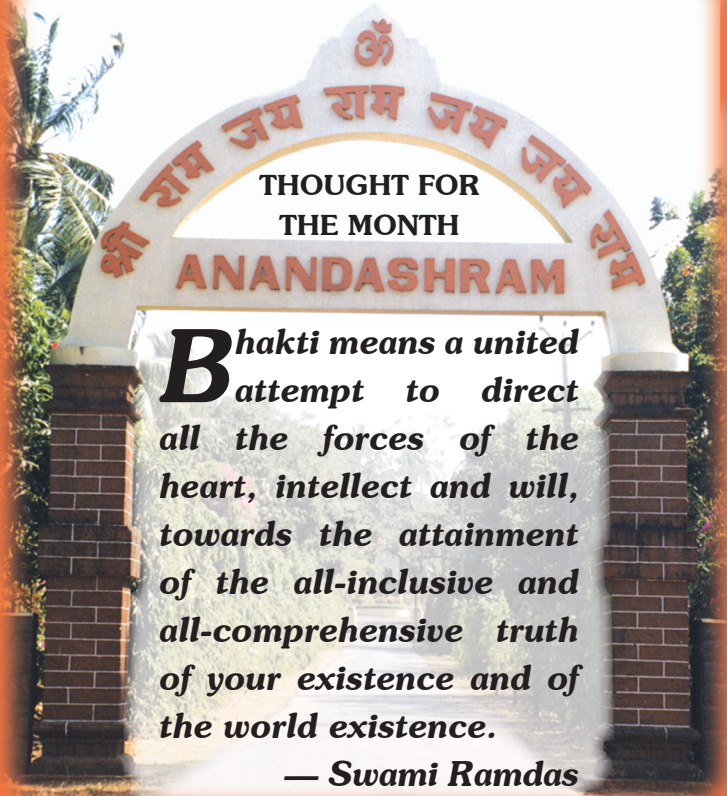
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