



PARABLES FROM THE PAST

O:m Asmad Gurubhyo: Namaha
Sri:mathe: Ra:ma:nuja:ya Namaha



- T. Deepa

Once there lived a highly devout young scholar at **Sri:Rangam**, the residence of Lord **Rangana:ttha** situated at the banks of river **Cauvery**, in **Tamil Na:du**. Apart from his scholarly skills, this scholar's wonderful virtuous qualities made him very popular and a highly revered person in that place. His fame and popularity also sprouted the seeds of envy in some scholars. There were many jealous people around him who wanted to somehow put him down in public and bring ill-fame to him. Thus, there were many who enthroned him as their spiritual preceptor and there were some who could not at all stand his fame. Nevertheless, his humble self was quite unaffected by either of these factors. The greatness of this learned scholar lies in his humility.

He would often sincerely admit his lowliness to Lord **Rangana:ttha**. He would call himself guilty of many sins by reciting the following **slo:kam**, compiled by **Sri:Ya:muna:cha:rya-**

amarya:dah kshudraha

c h a l a m a t h i h i

asu:ya:prasavabhu:hu

kruthaghno: durma:ni

smaraparavaso: vanchanaparaha

nrusamsaha pa:pishttaha

katthamaham itho:

duhkhajaladhe:he

apa:raduththi:rnaha thava

parachare:yam charanayo:ho

It was a regular practice for him to recite this **slo:kam** while going towards the temple of Lord **Rangana:ttha**. 'A repository of all sorts of sins, how can such a great sinner as myself, reach Your Lotus Feet and offer service unto You, O Lord?' – says the above **slo:kam**.

Visiting the temple and his beloved **Rangana:ttha** was the scholar's regular routine. One fine day, he was on the way to the temple with this **slo:kam** on his lips. The moment he uttered the starting phrase of the **slo:kam**, calling himself a discourteous person, back came a lightening reply 'That's right! You are quite impolite and ill-mannered!' He continued unperturbed and further spoke out the successive phrases calling himself a lowly being, and once again the voice from behind said – 'Yes! You are a lowly being!' 'You are a jealous person too!', said the mysterious voice as soon as he described himself as a highly envious person. The scholar called himself a storehouse of sins for which he received a strong support from behind him. This continued till the scholar recited the entire **slo:kam**. He had almost reached the **sanctum sanctorum** of the Lord by then. Right

in the presence of Lord *Rangana:ttha*, the scholar turned back and reverentially prostrated in front of the person who was all the time supporting the scholar's self-accusations while following him. The abuser was taken by surprise. He was expecting an angry reaction from the scholar. Surprisingly, instead of retaliating with a shower of equally abusive words, the scholar bowed to the mischievous person. Now, the abuser did not know how to respond to the scholar's salutations. He became dumb for a moment.

Meanwhile, the scholar ecstatically exclaimed – 'O Lord! *Rangana:ttha*! Whenever I admitted all my faults to You, whenever I assured You of my lowliness, asking You how could such a lowly being reach the shelter of Your Lotus-Feet and render service unto You. You never responded! O Lord! It was as if You never accepted them, and as if You never agreed to them. But today You cannot deny my lowliness. You cannot ignore me as I have a witness with me!' Saying so, he pointed at the person standing behind him. The so-called witness realized his mistake in no time and felt as if he was drowned in shame. Being highly envious of the reputation of the scholar, he had acted in such an unacceptable manner. His intention was to pester the scholar and bring ill-fame upon him. Anyway, he could not in the least disturb the scholar. The scholar honestly felt grateful to this malicious person for having

supported him and was not at all hurt by the person's ill-remarks. The pious behaviour of the scholar reduced the abuser's envy to ashes.

Sri: Para:sara Bhattar, was that young devout scholar, who left an everlasting impression on the mind of that follower. The incident narrated above has been exemplified by *Sri: Thiruna:ra:yana Puruththua:i A:cha:rya* in his commentary on *Sri: Vachana Bhu:shanam*.

Sri: Para:sara Bhattar was the elder of the two sons of *Kuraththa:zhwan*. Being the receiver of the Divine Grace of *Bhagavad Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya* and also the Grace of Divine Mother *Rangana:yaki* in childhood itself, he grew up to adorn the esteemed position of *A:cha:rya*. The magnitude of modesty and humility possessed by this great *A:cha:rya* is beyond measure. In addition to this, the enormity of the wealth of knowledge possessed by this symbol of divinity is inestimable. This great *A:cha:rya*, also popular as the priest of *Sri:Rangam*, is worshipped as one amongst our foremost spiritual preceptors.

sri: para:sara bhatta:ryaha
sri: range:sa puro:hithaha
sri: vathsa:nka suthah sri:ma:n
sre:yase: me:sthu bhu:yase:

Jai Srimannarayana !

