



PEARLS FROM THE PU:RVA:CHA:RYAS

After accepting the renounced order of life Sri Na:ttha Muni started to spend His time in devoted contemplation of His dear Lord. His disciples continued to propagate the *Divya Prabandhams* according to the instructions of Sri Na:ttha Muni. He gave instructions about the course of action that had to be followed in future, to his eight trusted disciples namely Uyyakkonda:r (Pundari:ka:ksha), Kurukai Ka:valappan, Nambi Karuna:karadasan, E:ru Thiruvudaiya:r, Thirukkanna Mangaiya:nda:n, Va:nama:malai De:viya:nda:n, Uruppattho:rachchan and So:katthara:lvana.

As per the orders of Sri Na:ttha Muni, Pundari:ka:ksha took the responsibility of teaching the intricacies of the tradition to Ya:muna. In a very early age Ya:muna was put under Maha:bha:shya Bhatta who was also called as Dramida Bha:shya Bhatta and Maha:panditha to study scriptures. Sri Na:ttha Muni was now free from all anxieties and was absorbed in the loving contemplation of the Lord.

One day the ruler of that

province who also happened to be the disciple of Sri Na:ttha Muni came on an hunting expedition to the sylvan surroundings of Sri Na:ttha Muni's village along with his daughters. He had finished his hunting for the day and was about to go to his resting place along with his daughters. Two radiant and handsome looking princes who were carrying bows and arrows, along with a charming lady and a monkey asked them the way to Sri Na:ttha Muni's hermitage. They also entered the abode of Sri Na:ttha Muni after coming to know about it. Everyone who saw them was captivated by their charming looks.

One of the young daughters of the king approached Sri Na:ttha Muni who was in His hermitage and questioned Him thus "worshipful grandpa, two handsome princes who were carrying bows and arrows entered your hermitage along with a lady and a monkey. Are they still here?" The other princess who were with her said "we have not seen such handsome and radiant princes until now". Sri Na:ttha Muni was awestruck by these words of the princes as he realized that the said princes were none other than the

Supreme Lord Rama and His brother Lakshmana, along with mother Sita and Hanuman. Sri Na:ttha Muni could not answer the princess as He was choked up with astonishment. The princess looked in and around the hermitage and left to their camp as they could not find any one.

Sri Na:ttha Muni was dejected as the Lord did not reveal Himself to Him. He developed an intense yearning to see the Lord. He left His hermitage without even informing His disciples or His grandson with a strong determination to see the Lord. He enquired whomever He met on the way about His dearest Lord thus "did you see the hunters going this way?" Many of them mistook to be a mad man. Some of them expressed their ignorance about the hunters and some said "yes! they are going ahead of you." Fortunate was Sri Na:ttha Muni as He was certainly mad with extreme love for the Supreme Lord and with a strong desire to behold Him.

In His desire to see the Lord Sri Na:ttha Muni reached Gangaikkonda Cholapuram. He searched the entire city for His beloved Lord and posed the same question to whomever He met and the answer was the same. The misery that He experienced due to His failure to see

His Lord was inconceivable. He was shattered as He could not see His beloved Lord. He neither ate nor slept. He shed His mortal coils at the outskirts of the city with a strong desire to see the Lord and attained final beatitude.

Sri Na:ttha Muni's contribution to the glorious *Sri Vaishnava* tradition is exceptional. In fact He was the foremost of all the *A:cha:ryas*. He spent His entire life spreading the tenets of *Visista:dvaitha* philosophy. He was instrumental in revivifying the works of the *A:lwars* to this world. He had established the cardinal tenets of *Visista:dvaitha* philosophy in His works *Nya:ya Thathva*, *Yo:ga Rahasya* and *Purusha Nirnaya*. These works formed the basis for the works of Ya:muna:charya and for Bhagavadh Ramanuja to establish the full fledged system of *Visishta:dvaithism* in the later years. All the subsequent *A:charyas* were influenced by Sri Na:ttha Muni and adored Him. Ya:muna:charya was completely fascinated by Sri Na:ttha Muni. One can comprehend Sri Ya:muna:charya's regard towards Sri Na:ttha Muni in his *Stho:thra rathna*.

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