

THE GIFT OF WATER

Sanila

Ranathi De:va was one of the greatest rulers of *Bha:ratha De:sa*. During his rule, the country was not lacking in wealth, health, prosperity and *Dharma*.

Following the foot steps of his great ancestors like *Bharatha*, this King tirelessly gave all that his subjects needed, without a second thought about his own future needs. He lived happily and peacefully by giving all which he had. His mind was always focussed on Lord *Sri: Hari*. Through his unique quality and single mindedness on the Lord, he saw the Lord in each and everyone, and felt joyous and blessed in his ability to serve the world. And since he used it for the good of the society, wealth came to him effortlessly.

However, after continuously donating his possessions for several years, he eventually lost all the great wealth. The once great king was so poor that he and his family had to subsist without food or water for 48 days. On the 49th day, by some miracle he received milk porridge, wheat soup, and enough water to feed his family. He offered this gift to *Sri: Hari* and was about to enjoy this food along with his family when there

was a sudden knock on the door of the litte cottage in which they now lived.

At the door was a man who was seeking a little food and water. *Ranathi De:va* was very happy to receive a guest, and welcomed him warmly. After offering him water to wash his hands and feet, he served him with a part of the food, seeing God in the guest. After a few minutes, a labourer, who had spent his days working hard, arrived at the doorstep with the same request. *Ranathi De:va* greeted him by offering him water to wash his hands and feet, and serving him a share of the family meal. Once the laborer left, there came a hunter with a pack of dogs. *Ranathi De:va* did not treat him any differently and was glad to share food and water with him and the dogs.

By now, all that remained was a few drops of water, not even enough to quench one's thirst. But, once again a knock was heard on *Ranathi De:va's* door. This time, it was an untouchable, who obviously was in a state of total starvation and dehydration. *Ranathi De:va's* heart melted with compassion. But, after making him comfortable, the once



great king and his family realized that there was no food left. *Ranathi De:va* lamented, and started meditating on the Holy Feet of Lord **Sri: Hari**. He cried out, “ O, Lord! I have never asked You to restore my wealth, nor did I ever ask for any great things like Yogic powers or even liberation. But, all I ask now is to be able to alleviate the pain and suffering of the one whom I welcomed as a guest into my home. I can only give these remaining few drops of water to him, with the hope that You will somehow make it help him reduce his suffering.” *Ranathi De:va* then apologized to the untouchable for what little he could offer, and then with great faith gave the last few drops of water to the starving man.

It was at this point that the man revealed His True Identity as being none other than Lord **Sri: Hari** Himself. He told *Ranathi De:va* that the guests who had arrived were *Bramha*, *Siva* and *Indra*, who had come to show *Ranathi De:va* that his material wealth did not matter. It was his goodness and generosity that were the true treasures that he had been, and was continuing to share, with the world.

At this point *Ranathi De:va* did not ask for anything, but with his mind

and thoughts focussed solely on the Holy feet of **Sri: Hari**, he and his family attained his heart’s Desire.

In *Thiruppa:vai*, Mother **A:nda:I** says ‘*ambaram:; thanni:re:; so:re:; aram seyyum Emperuma:n Nandago:pa:la: yezhundira:i*, wake up O’ generous and charitable *Nandago:pa:la:././* our Master and giver of clothes, water and food to all without any expectation from the recipient and praises the generosity of *Nandago:pa*, the father of *Krishna*, since the gift of giving is the greatest of all *Dharmas*.

But, one wonders how many people would be like *Ranathi De:va* who would selflessly give up even the last few drops of water simply for the sake of caring for someone else. The only thing that we can learn is when a person is in real need or a guest comes to our home unexpectedly, we should think of *Ranathi De:va* and treat them in the best way we can!

Let us remember a sloka that *Ranathi de:va* said before **Sri Hari**
“ na thwaha m ka:maya: ra: jya m
na swarga m na pu na rba hu va m
ka:maya: du kha tha ptha: na: m
pra: ni na: m a: rthi na: sa na m “

Jai Sriman Narayana !

