

STHO:THRA:S

Part-2

Some of us might very rarely glorify the Supreme Lord. More often than not, we do so to receive certain favours or to thank Him for the favours received. But some great saints and seers who have realized the greatness of the Supreme Lord always glorify Him and the purpose of their lives is only to glorify Him. They always resort only to the Supreme Lord for everything. They are neither afraid of any hostility by the powerful antagonists nor do they care for worldly pleasures. Such realized souls always contemplate on the Supreme Lord and they are very dear to Him.

The following anecdote in the life of Veda:ntha desikar clearly explains the above mentioned fact. Veda:ntha desikar, one of the exalted Sri Vaishnava A:cha:ryas used to sustain himself and his family by begging. He was a very great scholar, yet, he used to lead a very humble life by his own choice. One of his classmates by name Vidya:ranya was the court

*poet of King Harihara of Vijaynagar dynasty. He knew the greatness of Veda:ntha desikar and wanted to honour Swami Desikar. Hence, Vidya:ranya sent an invitation to Swami Desikar inviting him to the court of the said King. Veda:ntha desikar immediately composed a poem of five verses titled **Vaira:gya panchakam** and sent it as a reply to the invitation of his classmate.*

In that poem Swami Desikar says that he would not glorify the earthly Kings for meager gains, who are puny mortals and are the rulers of a small kingdom in this small planet. He also says that he will glorify only the Supreme Lord because the Lord is the only Supreme Ruler even if He incarnates in the form of a small child (Lord Krishna). He further says that neither he nor his father has earned anything and the only wealth that he possesses is the wealth earned by his grand father (Lord Brahma). He declared his only wealth to be the Lord of *Hasthigiri* i.e. Lord *Varadaraja* of *Ka:nchipuram* and rejected the invitation to receive the

honour in the King's court.

There are few such incidents in which the great saints have rejected the wealth and honours, which were offered by the kings in return for certain favours. In some cases the saints have gone to the extent of defying the orders of the kings and even to the extent of successfully opposing the kings. Such is the greatness of the saints who glorify only the Supreme Lord and rely only on Him.

There are many *stho:thras* in the Vedas in which the Supreme Lord is lauded. King Kulasekhara says *stho:thra Ve:da:ha* in his *Mukunda Ma:la*, which means the one who is glorified by the *Ve:das*. In fact the only purpose of all the Vedic scriptures is to glorify the Supreme Lord. Even the Vedas failed to completely describe the glory of the Lord. The *Ithiha:sas* and *Pura:nas* also contain many *stho:thras* in which the Supreme Lord is extolled in them. The most popular *Sri Vishnu sahasrana:ma stho:thra* of the *Maha:bha:ratha*, *Dhruva sthuthi*, *Prahlada sthuthi*, *Bhishma sthuthi*, *Kunthi sthuthi* etc are very reputed among them. The *Divya prabandhams* of the *A:lwa:rs* also falls in this category.

Our *Pu:rva:cha:ryas* headed by *Ya:muna:cha:rya* have composed many *stho:thras* in the praise of the Lord. The *Lakshmi chathusslo:ki:* and *Sthothra rathna* of *Ya:muna:cha:rya*, *Gadya thrayam* of Ramanuja, *Pancha sthavam* of *Ku:ratha:lwan*, works of *Para:sara Bhattar*, *Daya:Sathakam* of *Veda:nta desika* etc are very popular. Various aspects of the Lord are described in these *stho:thras*. The auspicious qualities of the Lord are unlimited, so are the *stho:thras*, their interpretations and their classifications. The *stho:thras* vividly reveal about the glories of the Lord in an understandable manner. Hence, they are also considered to be the authoritative scriptures.

Of all the *stho:thras*, *Stho:thra Rathna* of *Ya:muna:cha:rya* is regarded as the jewel of *stho:thras* in our tradition and it is also regarded by all the sects. Let us know more about *Stho:thra Rathna* and its interpretations in the coming issues.

