

# True Devotion

Narada is one of the greatest devotees of the Lord. Veena in hand he roams all the three worlds, singing the Lord's name. Everyone respects him.

One day he came to Vaikuntha (one of the heavenly abodes of God), singing "Narayana, Narayana". Lord Vishnu greeted him and seated him comfortably. The Lord asked him, "Narada, you have been going around the world. Did you notice anything special?" Narada stood up and said, "Lord! I do not know what to tell you. People everywhere are getting more and more worldly. They are getting absorbed more and more in the pleasures of the senses. Nobody has time to remember you. You must do something about it. Otherwise you

will be completely forgotten. Your very position as the Lord of the universe is in danger".

The Lord smiled. He can see readily what is behind the words and deeds of everyone. He understood that Narada was speaking thus because he thought no one was so great a devotee as he. The Lord loved Narada dearly. So he wanted to remove the poisonous seed of **PRIDE** from Narada's heart. He told him, "Narada, you go about singing my name non stop. Hearing you, are not people inspired? Listening to you, will they also not chant my name?" This argument only increased Narada's ego. He said, "Lord! Devotion is not easy. It is true I am spending 24 hours singing your glory.



But ordinary people cannot do like that.”

The Lord was now sure that Narada must be taught a very good lesson. He said, “Narada, no doubt few can equal you in devotion. That is why I want you to go and meet the peasant Govinda in the village of Salagrama. You may be able to know some thing more about devotion from him”. Narada’s pride was touched. Who was this Govinda whose devotion was greater than his? He must surely meet him.

Narada came down to the earth quickly. He located the village and spotted the residence of Govinda.. This peasant was a poor man living in a hut. Narada watched his actions hiding behind a tree.

Govinda got up in the morning, washed his face and stood in front of the Lord’s picture. He uttered “Narayana, Narayana, Narayana” thrice. He bowed down, then took his plough, put it on his shoulder and

walked to his field. The whole day he ploughed and watered the field. At dusk he returned home. He took his bath and once more stood before the Lord’s picture. He again uttered Narayana thrice. Then he took his food and slept, snoring loudly.

Narada was puzzled. How can this Govinda be a greater devotee than himself? Perhaps the Lord was pulling his leg. Straight away he returned to Vakuntha.

“Narada, did you meet Govinda?” asked the Lord with a smile “yes,” replied Narada, “I found your Govinda. But you could have told me that you were joking. This Govinda utters your name only twice a day. He is completely absorbed in his field. I sing your name all the 24 hours. And you compare Govinda with me!”

The lord continued to smile. “Narada, could you do one thing? Please bring a cup



filled to the brim with oil". Narada brought an oil-filled cup. "Now go around this assembly thrice with the cup in your hand. But see that not one drop of oil is spilt". Narada did as ordered. Holding the cup very carefully, he completed three rounds. Not a drop of oil was spilt. With a proud smile he said to the lord, "I have passed your test. But tell me why you wanted me to do this"

The Lord burst in to laughter. "My son, you could not get time to utter my name even once while attending to the cup of oil for a few minutes. Look at Govinda. He is running a family with all its cares, but he manages to utter my name before he starts his work and again after finishing the work. This means by doing his worldly duties he is always thinking of me."

Narada's pride in his devotion was broken.



The Lord asked him, "Narada, while making the rounds, how many times did you utter my name?" Narada was upset. He said, "Lord, what a question to ask? You wanted me to see that not a drop of oil fell down. Attending to that how can I utter your name?"

It is not the number of times the Lord's name is uttered that matters. It is constantly remembering him under all conditions that is true devotion. Whatever you do, **REMEMBER** the Lord.

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