

Phenomenon of Kaaleeya Mardanam

(Based on the discourse of Sri Ganapathy Sachchidananda Swamiji
on 17th Jan 2017 at Rajamundry, AP)

Dr Vamshi Krishna Ghanapathi

Director - SVAMI, Avadhoota Datta Peetham

Bhaagavata has many episodes, which draw our attention to some peculiar aspects. Kaaleeya Mardanam - Subduing the mighty serpent Kaaleeya by the young lad - Krishna; is one among them. It is hailed as an unnatural act and therefore extolled as a miracle. Let us discuss, the significance of this event.



Young Krishna went alone to a pond called Kaalindi, which in fact is a section of the river Yamuna, which is also called as Kaalindi. The context was the mysterious death of cattle and men who consume the poisonous and polluted water. Krishna visited the place and found out the reason in no time, due to his genius. Since, this was hazardous task, he had not even asked his close cousin Bala Raama to accompany him and ventured alone. Bala Raama came to know about this mission through some cattle herds and he sent a message BRAVO, which reached Krishna, when he was at the peak of completing the task. Bala Raama carries the aspect of Aadi Shesha, which again is the connection to the Serpent Clan. He felt, that he might inadvertently unduly influence Krishna in his endeavour and recused from that mission in view of the possible conflict of interest. This is a lesson for modern society to learn from the episode, the basic fabric of impartiality should never be compromised, irrespective of your moorings and leanings in the execution of a task.

Today, we have pollution control departments which are assigned with the cleansing of water, land and air and to keep the natural resources clean and usable. But, Krishna is the originator for this department, as he took the polluter head on. Similar to what is happening today, Kaaleeya - the mighty serpent wanted to get rid of his pollutant venom. Regardless of its consequences, he just spewed the dangerous venom into the water in place of dwelling, which caused multiple deaths.

Here, we should note Krishna was moved by the death of cattle. In today's society, we tend to give importance to human deaths only and overlook the death of other creatures.

Only the death of larger animals draws our attention and become complacent about the killing of smaller creatures, with a lament. Sometimes, we even treat such violent events with disdain. But, Krishna demonstrated the importance of life, irrespective of the size and form and took up the task suo motu.

Krishna, jumped into the water and fought with the giant and subdued him after a powerful fight. Unable to withstand the onslaught of the tiny powerhouse, the polluting serpent succumbed.



But, Krishna's mission did not end there. He mounted the large hoods of Kaaleeya and started his celestial dance, accompanied by Deva Dundubhi (Drums of the deities). Purpose of this Dance (Nrutya) was to empty the entire source of pollution in the form of venom. As the dance continued, the serpents venom oozed out, depleting the source of polluting potential.



In this melee, four feeble female voices were spotted by Krishna. They emanated from the wives (consorts) of Kaaleeya, seeking clemency. Krishna assured them, that it will not be capital punishment for Kaaleeya, but the effort is to de-contaminate him in order to transform him as a harmless creature. Here again, the poise of victorious Krishna should be understood.

It is all but normal for a victor to vanquish the defeated enemy, without any objectivity. Krishna, the divine personality, transcends the natural urge of exterminating the defeated enemy. He was not subjective in his actions. That is why he did not kill the serpent. Being objective, in clearing the pollution of waters, he danced till the last drop of poison is out of the hoods of the serpent, albeit causing an excruciating pain.

After this dance, he jumped again into the water, to the consternation of his companions, concerned about his safety. His purpose was to assess the extent of pollution, which alone could deal with. Water is endowed such a quality, that it tends to heal itself during the course of time/ flow, once the polluting source is cut off. Thus Krishna tried to rejuvenate the water source for the betterment of the dependent humans and animals.

Surrendering to Krishna, Kaaleeya has borne the foot print of Krishna. Further, he folded his hands assuming a semi human form; bearing the marks of his feet. Since, it has been a custom to keep the marks/ emblem of the worshipped God, on the head. Even though, the marks are easily visible, they become invisible when the hair grows.

Hence, the forehead is decorated with the emblems of the deity such as Oordhwa Pundra (Upward Vertical lines), Tri Pundra (Horizontal Three lines), Chandana (Sandal Paste) and some Trishoola (Trident), Chakra (Discus), Shankha (Conch) and the Charana (Holy Feet). This is symbolic of becoming the carrier of divinity. As a mark of respect towards the divinity, it has become a tradition to smear the forehead such marks.

Sahasraara/ Sahasra Naama:

The hood of the serpent is the upper most part in the body. Serpent is the symbol of Kundalini Shakti. Ultimate destination of that Shakti (referred as Snake power) is the Sahasraara (the central focal point on the top of the head). It is said in the Yoga Scriptures, that during the Samaadhi (Communion), the power of the divinity permeates the Sahasraara. Kaaleeya Mardana symbolises the attainment of pinnacle of Yoga practice. The serpent, in his previous births had made a fine progress and attracted the divine blessing in a different way.

Once, the divinity has reached the pinnacle of Sahasraara, divine names flowed from the mouth of Kaaleeya and his consorts. That has become Sahasra Naama. Whenever, we perform the Sahasra Naama Parayana or Puja, we should aspire to attain the Yoga Samaadhi, with each chant the Kundalini Shakti should inch towards the Sahasraara. (Sahasra = 1000, Ara = Spoke/ petal.) Reciting a Naama should take you to next step towards the zenith of Yoga.

One more important aspect, which is overlooked is that God responds to the voice of the feeble, regardless of the size of the decibel. In the melee of Kaaleeya Mardana, wives of the serpent prayed, seeking the pardon for the blunder committed. God has immediately assured them and blessed the clan, as he was pleased with their sincerity.

This amply proves that the external paraphernalia is not all important to reach the God. He does not care for your exhibition and resources. What is required? It is the underlying devotion and sincerity, which attracts the attention of the God. After all, he is the PratyagAatma, resident in each soul. If the most innate self, cannot be reached by a soul, who else can be accessible?

Jaya Guru Datta Sri Krishna Para Brahmane Namah