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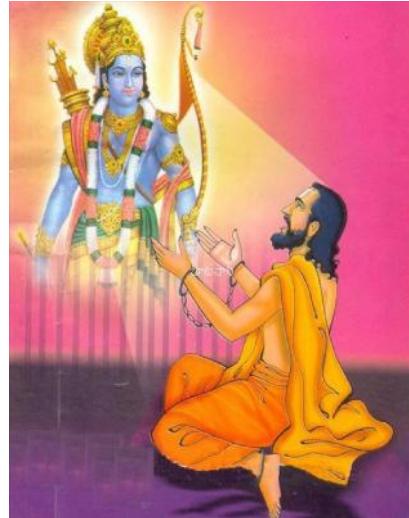
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Srinivasa Bala Bharati

BHAKTA RAMADAS

English Translation

Prof. S. Laxmana Murthy



**Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams
Tirupati**

Srinivasa Bala Bharati - 137

(*Children Series*)

BHAKTA RAMADAS

Telugu Version

Sri. S.B.L. Narasimhacharyulu

English Translation

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FOREWORD

If a beautiful garden is to be raised, one needs to take proper care of tender flower plants. In the same way in order to create a good society, great care needs to be taken of young children who are going to be future citizens of India. All their intellectual attainments will be futile if they fail to learn of their culture and its greatness. They need to be told of great men and women of this country so that they are inspired by their ideals. The essentials of our culture should be given to them in the form of simple and charming stories. They will cherish these ideals and be guided by them. They will promote good and they will love the society they live in. They make their families proud and bring great prestige to their country when they grow up into good citizens.

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams have brought out these booklets for children in Telugu under Srinivasa Bala Bharati Series. Although meant for children, they are useful to the elderly too. They have found place in the book shelves of every family. The stories of legendary men and women are narrated in a simple way. We hope that more and more children will read them and profit by them.

I congratulate Dr. R. Sri Hari, Editor-in-Chief, TTD for his efforts in bringing out the English translations of SRINIVASA BALA BHARATI SERIES so well. We have received co-operation of many learned men and women in our efforts to popularize this series. I am thankful to them.

In the Service of the Lord


Executive Officer,

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams.
Tirupati.

FOREWORD

Today's children are tomorrow's citizens. They need apt acquaintance with the life-histories of celebrated persons at tender so that they get opportunity to lead their lives in an exemplary way. They will come to know that great things such as Indian culture, basic tenets of life and moral teachings are abundantly available in the life-experiences of great men. It is observed that there is no scope to teach such subjects in school curriculum.

Observing such circumstances the Publication Division of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams has published about hundred booklets in Telugu about the lives of famous sages and great men written by various authors under the editorship of Dr.S.B. Raghunathacharya under "Bala Bharati Series". The response to these books is tremendous and it has given impetus to publish them in other languages also. To begin with, some of the books are now brought out in English and Hindi by T.T.D. for the benefit of boys and girls and the interested public.

These booklets, primarily intended to the growing children and also to the elders to study and narrate the stories to their children, will go a long way to sublimate the aspirations of the children to greater heights.

R. SRI HARI

Editor-In-Chief

T.T.D.

Welcome To Srinivasa Bala Bharati Series

The series is the outcome of abundant grace of Lord Sri Venkateswara.

This will be an unfailing source of inspiration to the young.

It enshrines the best of Bharatiya tradition. May this noble endeavour be successful.

India has been known for its culture and civilization, its ethical and dharmic way of life from time immemorial. India has marched ahead with its commitment to dharma, its resistance to adharma, its espousal of life-affirming values and its humane attitude to life as a journey towards God realization. Those who embodied these values in their life have been a beacon of light to us. Their impact is deep on the life we lead. Young boys and girls will find them exemplary and feel proud of their invaluable heritage. They will love their motherland and dedicate themselves to its service.

It is therefore necessary that the young learn about these great men and women so that they will realize their indebtedness to them for their selfless contribution to the enrichment of life. This should indeed be a chief component of true education which ensures the perennial continuity of Indian Culture and Civilization. SRINIVASA BALA BHARATI SERIES has come into existence to acquaint the young boys and girls with right perspective of Indian life and values through a series of booklets written exclusively for this purpose describing in brief the lives of great men and women.

We welcome you to share our joy in launching these booklets.

S.B. Raghunathacharya

Chief Editor

On the banks of Godavari

A massive poor feeding activity was in full swing. There was constant chanting of “Sri Ram”. A large number of people were happily participating in it. The poor people regarded as the very human form of Lord Srimannaaraayana were enjoying the delicious food offered to them with love. A saintly person beaming with happiness was supervising the arrangements made for the event. He looked holiness incarnate.

Just then a piece of news-a bolt from the blue-was blurted out to the crowd assembled there. The only son of the saintly person, a five year old, slipped into the pit of hot rice-gruel and died. An irony of fate! A death while a charitable act was in progress. It was shocking. But he was not upset. He carried the body of the child and placed it at the feet of Sri Ram inside the temple and closed the door. No one could make out what he was doing. He began to appeal to Sri Ram,” Who will take care of us your devotees if you fail? The child is left to your care. Do whatever you can.” Sri Ram heard him and was moved. In a few minutes, the child came out of the temple smiling. He felt exceedingly happy. His life already dedicated to the service of Sri Ram got a new fillip. Who was this remarkable man? He was Kancharla Gopanna known as Bhakta Rama Das.

He was then the Tahasildar of Bhadrachalam. He got a compound wall; tower etc. built for the temple of Sri Ram there, spending money from the government treasury. Sri Ram and Lakshman came to Tanishah on their own to pay back the money spent from the treasury for which the ruler had jailed Rama Das. This reveals the depth of his devotion which made Sri Ram intervene and get him released from prison. Rama Das stands out as an ideal devotee. He is a source of inspiration to us.

Now read the story in full.

Editor-in-Chief

BHAKTA RAMA DAS

Hyderabad, capital of Andhra Pradesh is now a well known city. Nearly three hundred years ago it was not as prominent as Golconda which lies close to it. Golconda was then the capital of a small state ruled by the Nawabs. Although the Nawabs followed Islam, some of them respected all religions equally. They wanted all their subjects to live in peace and as one family. The Nawabs of Golconda were known for nobility and fairness. Tanishah was one of them.

Tanishah was then ruling the kingdom of Golconda. Hindus and Muslims lived in great peace and harmony under his rule because he was impartial and just. He regarded all religions as equal. He was an ideal king. The Muslim king appointed Akkanna and Madanna as ministers in his court. The two were brothers and they were Hindus. They were good administrators. They gave no room for fear or favour in discharging their duty. The kingdom was prosperous and peaceful. There was perfect rapport between the king and the ministers.

The holy place of Bhadrachalam :

Tirupati has become a holy place and great pilgrim centre as it is the abode of Lord Sri Venkateswara. In the same way, Bhadrachalam in the district of Khammam of Andhra Pradesh has become a holy place

as it is the abode of Lord Sri Ram. It was a small village. It became a renowned place of pilgrimage subsequently because of Ram Das. But it is also equally true that Ram Das became famous because of Bhadrachalam. Ram Das lived a saintly life totally dedicated to Sri Ram of Bhadrachalam. He was a great poet-musician. His kirtans are so popular that almost every Telugu speaking man or woman is familiar with one or two of his kirtans.

The birth of Rama Das, his childhood and education :

There is an old village called NELAKONDAPALLI near Bhadrachalam. A pious couple-Linganna and Kamamba of Kancharla family of Atreya gotra-lived in this village. A child was born of them on an auspicious day. They called him Gopanna who came to be known as Ram Das later on. Gopanna was initiated into learning after AKSHARABHYASAM (a religious ritual performed before learning the alphabet) at the age of five. He was a quick learner. Gifted with a sweet voice, he used to recite scores of devotional verses in Sanskrit to the delight of the villagers. He was particularly fond of Bala Ramayana and became a strong devotee of Sri Ram. Even as a child, he was like Prahlada immersed in the devotion of Sri Ram all the time. Listening to the story of Sri Ram attentively, he would regret that he was not born during the time of Sri Ram to enjoy the

holy company of Sugriva and Hanuman. He longed to be in the service of Sri Ram.

Marriage and birth of a son :

Gopanna became a young man and got married. His wife was called Kamalamba. Marriage proved no obstacle to his devotion to Sri Ram which became stronger as the days rolled by. Living the life of an ideal householder, he studied the sacred lore of Sri Vaishnava cult of devotion under the spiritual guidance of Raghunatha Bhattacharya, a great scholar. The loving couple-Gopanna and Kamalamba got a son. They named him Raghuram.

Taraka mantra initiation :

In the meantime, a devotee called Kabir Das came to the village. Gopanna treated him as an honoured guest and extended loving and respectful hospitality to him. Pleased with Gopanna, Kabir Das initiated him into Sri Rama Taaraka Mantra. Gopanna was overjoyed and sang a kirtan in ecstasy celebrating the great event in his life (I have got taaraka mantra and I am extremely fortunate...) He became an ardent practitioner of the mantra japa and believed that it had made his life meaningful.

The parents of Gopanna passed away leaving impressive patrimony for him. He was content to spend his time in chanting the sacred name of Sri Ram and providing generous hospitality to the pilgrims at

Bhadrachalam. One day he decided to do annadan (large-scale feeding of the poor). But he felt sad that he had not got sufficient money to do annadan. His wife Kamalamba gave him all her ornaments and asked him to organize the massive poor feeding with the money got from selling the ornaments. With active participation and co-operation of his wife, Gopanna went on to spend his money for annadan. It did not take him long to lose all his patrimony because of his charitable activities. He lost his ancestral property, and he did not earn anything on his own. He became too poor to take care of the basic needs of his family.

Appointment as Tahasildar :

Akkanna and Madanna who were ministers in the court of Golconda Nawab were closely related to Gopanna. He was their nephew. They came to know that he had been reduced to poverty because of his generosity, and they asked him to visit Golconda so that could help him to tide over the crisis. When he reached there, they prevailed upon Tanishah to employ him in some capacity. Acceding to their request, the king employed him as the Tahasildar of Bhadrachalam region. Gopanna was reluctant to serve under an ordinary king because he was convinced that Sri Ram alone was his master and that he was committed to his service throughout his life. Akkanna and Madanna categorically told him, "You have lost your patrimony by spending it all on pilgrims and temple activities. If

you refuse to take up this employment, how will you provide for your family?" He had no answer. He agreed to serve as the Tahasildar albeit reluctantly. He thanked the king and his benefactors and returned to his village with the good news. His wife felt happy, and so did the people of his village.

He left his native village on an auspicious day for Bhadrachalam accompanied by his family and friends to take up the assignment as the Tahasildar of the region. He was given a warm welcome as the people of Bhadrachalam had already heard of his charitable activities and his steadfast devotion to Sri Ram.

Gopanna was a polite officer. He was free from pride and arrogance. He won love and affection of the people. Therefore he did not feel any difficulty in collecting taxes. He was prompt in crediting the tax money to the treasury of the Nawab. The king was pleased with him and appreciated his honesty and efficiency.

As soon as he felt comfortable with his new position, Gopanna resumed annadan at Bhadrachalam. He was able to get the willing participation of the people in Sri Ram bhajan and in the charitable activities like annadan.

Son lost and restored :

Then there came an unexpected jolt. The ways of providence are indeed inscrutable.

While Gopanna and his wife were busy with annadan, their five year old son fell into the pit which was filled with hot gruel and died. Unfortunately no one noticed it. When they discovered it, it was already too late to save the child. When Kamalamba came to know of it, she could not bear the shock. She ran to her husband to inform him. Gopanna was busy feeding a group of devotees. Controlling her unbearable grief, she waited for her husband to get free and then informed him of the tragedy. Gopanna did not utter a word. He began to sing of Sri Ram in grief. The people were taken aback by this seemingly irrational behavior. Then he gathered the dead body into his arms and started walking briskly. The crowd followed him. He went straight to the temple of Sri Ram. Placing the body at the feet of the deity, he came out and closed the door of the temple. Then he thus addressed Sri Ram, “You are the refuge of the destitute. You provide succor to the afflicted. I have given your name to my son. I have taught him to sing your kirtans. Why did you snatch him away my only son from me? If you do not save him now, who will ever come to the rescue of your devotees?” He began to sing the kirtans in ecstasy. Then the door of the temple opened on its own. The child Raghuram came out smiling and embraced his mother. It was an incredible miracle. The people were astonished. The deep devotion of the pious couple was exemplary.

Resolving to build a huge temple :

Gopanna used to frequent the temple at Bhadrachalam. It was a small shelter which a devotee called Tammala Dammakka had built for Sri Ram a long time ago. The present temple complex did not exist then. Gopanna felt that it was too small and wanted to raise a huge temple in its place with antarala (middle hall), mukha mantapa (front hall), prakara (compound wall) and gopura (temple tower). He wanted to adorn Sri Ram with gold ornaments studded with precious stones. But it was beyond his means. He was as usual busy with his official duties and his service to Sri Ram. He never failed to discharge his duties. And he was steadfast in his devotion. He would collect the tax due to the ruler and also along with it seek small contributions from the peasants for building the temple. They contributed their mite without grudging. But the amount thus collected from the peasants was just enough to level the ground and build steps to make it easy to go to the temple. He knew that peasants were too poor to do more in spite of their deep devotion, as the rains failed causing a severe famine in the region.

Spending tax money Collected :

Gopanna was determined to build the temple at any cost. He did not want to leave the work incomplete. He had no money except the collected tax amounting to six lakh varahas. This was the money to be credited

to the treasury in a day or two. He thought over the problem deeply for hours and came to the conclusion that the only way was to spend the tax money collected for building the temple.



He thought, "The king is rich, and he gets tax money from all other regions. This amount is merely a pittance for him. Moreover, he was spending the money for a cause which people love. The king also will not mind." He decided to spend the amount of six lakh varahas for building a great temple for Sri Ram. The construction progressed at a quick pace. Expert sculptors worked hard and a beautiful temple was ready. Gold ornaments studded with precious stones were made for Sita, Ram, Lakshman, Bharat, Satrighn and Hanuman. The installation rituals were performed under the guidance of agama scholars. The temple was sanctified and idols were installed. Devotees came to Bhadrachalam from far and wide in great joy. A number of celebrations took place at regular intervals as enjoined by sastras. Gopanna started the convention of performing Kalyanotsavam at the temple on Sri Ram Navami day. The convention is followed even now. Bhadrachalam became another Vaikuntha on earth with continuous bhajan of Sri Ram and joyful celebrations round the year. People began to call him Ram Das affectionately. In course of time, Gopanna came to be known as Ram Das of Bhadrachalam.

Complaint against Ram Das :

Ram Das became popular. The people began to love him all the more for his piety and uprightness. As his popularity grew, a few wicked men got jealous of

him. They were waiting for an opportunity to undermine his prestige and make him miserable. Now they found a reason to complain against him to the king and get him dismissed from the king's service. They went all the way to Golconda and submitted to the king that Ram Das being a spendthrift had spent all the tax money on building the temple and wasted it like his patrimony. They also told him that he had become mad doing Ram bhajan all the time neglecting his duties as the Tahasildar of the region. They urged him to punish him and dismiss him from service. The king got this complaint verified with the spies. When they confirmed the malicious report, he got annoyed with Ram Das and ordered his immediate arrest.

Tanishah felt that it was necessary to probe the matter deeply and decide the quantum of punishment for the grave offence committed by Ram Das. A fair trial was required. The ministers including Akkanna and Madanna and many other high officials of the court assembled. After detailed deliberations, it was decided that Ram Das deserved exemplary punishment. They wanted it to serve as a deterrent to other erring officers. Akkanna and Madanna also endorsed the verdict, as it was considered a major offence.

When the king's messengers came to arrest Ram Das, he was busily engaged in the service of Sri Ram in the temple. They found him endowed with extraordinary radiance and lost in deep devotion. They

were reluctant to arrest him, but they could not go against the king's order. They told him that they had come to arrest him as ordered by the king. He calmly heard them and surrendered to be taken by them to Golconda as a prisoner. He was handcuffed and led to the court. Ram Das constantly repeated to himself the prayer of Sri Ram, "I bow to Sri Ram again and again. He delivers his devotees from fear. He gives bountifully. He is the most pleasant one". With this prayer on his lips he went to Golconda as a prisoner.

Tanishah was seated on the throne in the royal hall. The ministers, vassal kings, officers of the court and others were also seated there. Ram Das was brought into the hall bound in heavy fetters. He looked calm and serene dressed in ascetic garb with a string of Tulasi beads, deep in meditation and indifferent to whatever was in store for him.

The king was moved deeply. There was regret in his mind that he had ordered his arrest. His first impulse was to apologize to him. Yet he had to restrain himself. His position as the king restricted his freedom. He gravely surveyed the court. Those who were present at the court were anxious about the punishment the king might decide to give. There were so many thoughts in the mind of the king. He was in fact convinced that Ram Das was innocent. He did not spend money of his personal luxuries. He did what the people had for long wanted, a temple for them there. He felt no anger

whatever for him. Yet he was obliged to fix responsibility and the quantum of punishment as law of the land demanded so that the case of Ram Das would not set a bad precedent. While these thoughts were uppermost in his mind, the officers of the court read out charge sheet with the permission of the king. “Kancharla Gopanna(Ram Das) is accused of misappropriation of government funds which he has recklessly spent on the construction of temples and towers without seeking the king’s permission. He is hauled up before the court for exemplary punishment for the grave offence”, the charge sheet read.

The king then asked Ram Das if he had anything to say in his defense. Ram Das said the following :

“Your Majesty, I bow to you. You are a generous king and you rule the kingdom impartially without any discrimination based on religion. I thought that you would appreciate if I got a temple of Sri Ram built for the people as it was their long cherished desire. It would make them happy and they love you all the more for the kind favour done. It was a small amount for a monarch like you. I am firm in my belief that I have done no wrong. You may punish me if you feel that I have committed a grave offence. I will accept it obediently.” Ram Das remained unruffled meditating on Sri Ram.

The King was all appreciation for Ram Das. Yet he had to uphold law. He said, “You have used the tax

money without permission. It is against law. If you feel that you have done the right thing, let Sri Ram come and repay the money to the treasury and get you released from prison. Till then you will languish in prison cell". The officers of the court arrested him and led him to prison. Calm and serene Ram Das followed them.

Ram Das in prison :

The prison cell where he was lodged was a torture chamber. He was whipped and made to carry heavy loads on his head. Bound in heavy iron chains, he was forced to walk on sharp spikes and thorns. Ram Das remained steadfast in his faith and prayed to Sri Ram all the time. Miraculously he was immediately relieved of his excruciating pain. He was offered rice cooked with equal quantity of salt. But it used to change into delicious food by the grace of Sri Ram. The security guards of prison were amazed that he was in the least worried about the torture he was subjected to. Convinced that Sri Ram had been protecting him in prison, the security guards too began to recite Sri Ram bhajan themselves.

His life in prison was painful. He could bear it because of his devotion to Sri Ram. One day in sheer exasperation he asked Sri Ram the reason for his suffering. "What have I done to deserve all this?" was his cry to Sri Ram. He endured all the pain inflicted on him singing of Sri Ram ecstatically, but he felt keenly

that he was not able to see the deity of Bhadrachalam. He urged upon him to visit him in prison. There is a moving kirtan of his “Sri Ram, a mere word from you has become as precious and rare as a piece of gold.” He enumerated his acts of service to Sri Ram and referred to the expensive ornaments he had gifted to him, Sita and Laxman and asked him angrily why he took it all happily as though it was his father’s property.

One day Tanishah came to visit him in prison. He found Ram Das being subjected to inhuman torture. But Ram Das smiled at him and sang a kirtan to the effect that he had no worry since he was a sincere devotee of Sri Ram who would never abandon his devotees in misery. The king was astonished that Ram Das bore the torture uncomplainingly and with a gentle smile on his lips. He felt that it was the result of his intense devotion to Sri Ram, and decided to seek a way to release him without causing discomfiture to the royal court.

Ram Das composed and sang kirtans taking Sri Ram to task for failing to save him from his misery. Finally, he composed a kirtan appealing to Sita, Sri Ram’s consort to prevail upon Sri Ram to get him released from prison, as he had found Sri Ram’s insensitive indifference to his sorry plight inexplicable. Sita was moved to tears, and she could not ignore his fervent appeal to her. She persuaded Sri Ram to act at once citing a number of instances of his quick response

to the cries of his devotees like Dhruva, Prahlada, Gajendra and even the sinful Ajamila. She was critical of his attitude in regard to an innocent and humble devotee like Ram Das.

Sri Ram discussed a plan with his brother Lakshman to get Ram Das released from prison, and both of them decided to visit Tanishah in the guise of servants carrying with them six lakh varahas which Ram Das had owed to the king's treasury. Meanwhile Ram Das got ready to end his life vexed with Sri Ram's impervious attitude of indifference to his miserable life in prison. He had sung kirtans for hours sometimes criticizing Sri Ram bitterly for letting him down. Tired and despaired, he fell asleep before he could consume poison to end his life.

Ram and Lakshman pay the money :

Tanishah had a dream in which he found two young men approaching him with money and paying it for the release of Sri Ram Das. He told of his dream to his wife. Just then Ram and Lakshman came to meet the king. They introduced themselves as Ramoji and Lakshmoji, servants of Ram Das. They said that they had come with the money from Ram Das to pay the king and get his release from prison. They gave him the money bag and obtained the receipt of payment.

When they reached the prison cell with the receipt, they found that Ram Das was about to consume



poison. He lifted the cup to his lips. Then Sri Ram appeared before him as Tanishah, snatched the cup of poison from him and showed him the receipt of payment assuring him that he could go home as a free man.

Ram Das was beside himself with astonishment. It was incredible that two young men claiming to be his servants had carried six lakh varahas to Tanishah while he was still shut up in a prison cell. The prison guards confirmed the truth of it. Ram Das felt that Sri Ram had done it in his boundless compassion for him. He was sorry that he had wavered in his faith. "Sri Ram will never abandon his devotees", he thought. He prayed to Sri Ram in deep anguish to forgive him. People were grateful to Ram Das for revealing Sri Ram's compassion to them through his devotion.

Tanishah felt remorseful. He was convinced that Ramoji and Lakshmoji were none other than Sri Ram and Lakshman. He regretted his failure to recognize them. He thought. "I should have fallen at their feet and sought their forgiveness at once." He ordered the prison guards and other servants to bring Ram Das to the royal court in a golden palanquin, dressed in the finest silk clothes and adorned with expensive jewellery.

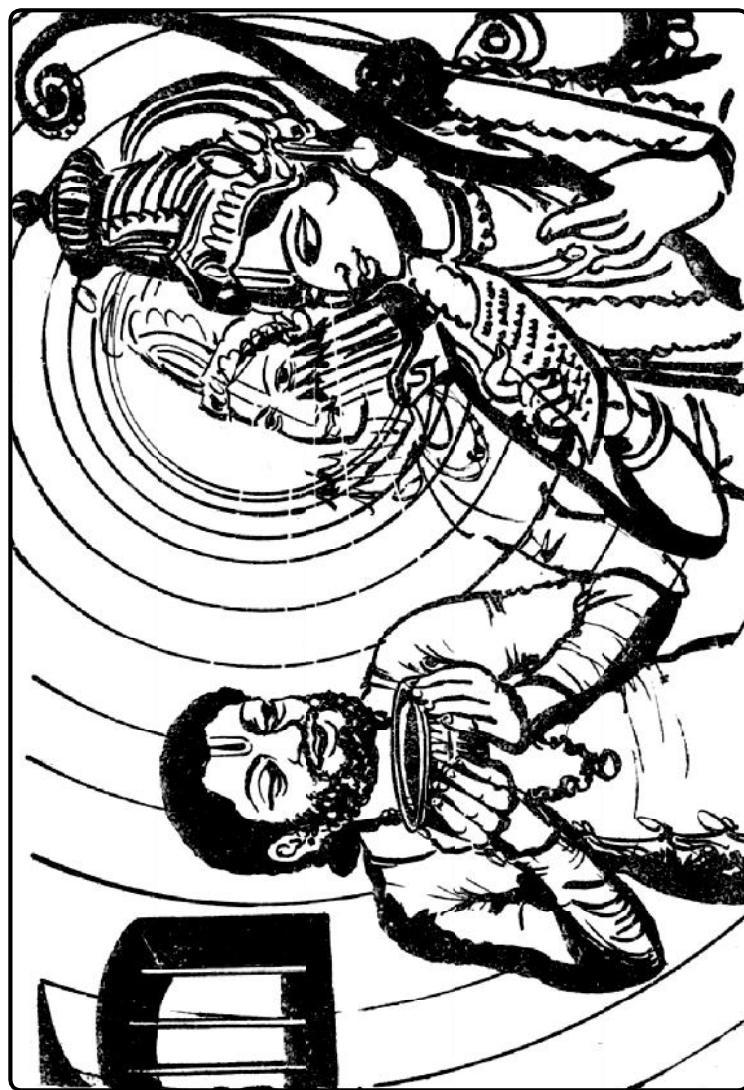
When the palanquin bearing Ram Das reached the royal court, Tanishah himself received him in all humility begging him to forgive him for the tortures he was subjected to in prison, and prayed to him to accept

the money paid to him by Ramoji and Lakshmoji. He wanted the money to be spent for the temple at Bhadrachalam.

Ram Das told the king that he was extremely fortunate because he was able to get darshan of Sri Ram and Lakshman who had met him to deliver the money. Ram Das was honoured with gifts in the royal court. He was reinstated as the Tahasildar of Bhadrachalam region. A royal decree was announced that every year the government would send pearl thalambralu and ornaments to the temple at the time of Kalyanotsavam. The practice is still in vogue. Ram Das took leave of the king and the ministers including Akkanna and Madanna his maternal uncles. He returned to Bhadrachalam covered with glory.

While on his way to Bhadrachalam, a gang of dacoits waylaid him to rob him of the money he was carrying. He was unarmed so were his companions. Though all his companions were worried, Ram Das remained unruffled calling upon Sri Ram to protect him, in a beautiful kirtan “Pahi Rama prabho” which has become most popular ever since. Sri Ram appeared to the wicked gang in a fierce form, and they took to their heels in great fright.

Ram Das took a dip in the cool and refreshing water of Godavari and went to the temple of Sri Ram of Bhadrachalam in great love and delight like an



innocent child. The crowds thronged round him in deep veneration. He was received at the temple with temple honours to the accompaniment of mangaladhwani. He worshipped Sri Ram at the temple with intense devotion.

In a short time he got different ornaments of gold made to adorn Sita, Sri Ram and Lakshman in the temple. He got numerous choultries built for the convenience of the devotees. All this was done with the money which Tanishah had given him at the time of departure from Golconda. Bhadrachalam became as holy and beautiful as Vaikuntham. It was often called Bhooloka Vaikuntham. The experience of Ram Das proved the power of Divine Grace beyond doubt.

There persisted the doubt as to why Tanishah got the darshan of Sri Ram while Ram Das a great devotee did not. Sita asked Sri Ram why this had happened. Sri Ram said, "In his previous birth, Tanishah was a devotee of Lord Siva. He wanted to get the darshan of Lord Siva, and he took a vow that he would perform abhishek of Siva for a year by bringing water from Ganga. But by some error in the calculation of time, he concluded his vow a day in advance. He failed to get the darshan of Lord Siva. Infuriated by this he broke the pitcher of Ganga water on the Siva linga. Siva cursed him that he would be born as one whose birth will deny him the worship of Siva throughout his

life since he had lost his patience and broke the pitcher on Siva linga. He was born as Tanishah whose faith forbade him the worship of Siva. However he was born a king because of his devotion to Siva. He also had the glorious darshan of Sri Ram as Tanishah.

Ram Das in his previous birth caught and caged for sport a parrot for twelve years. Therefore in this birth he had to undergo imprisonment for twelve years. He is a great devotee now. At the end of his life here, he will reach me.” The doubts of Sita were dispelled and she was relieved of her anxiety.

Years rolled by. Ram Das developed pain while walking. He could not walk to the temple for darshan of Sri Ram. Old age and consequent infirmities, made him unhappy. He prayed to Sri Ram to liberate him. During meditation Ram Das felt that he had got intimation from Sri Ram that he would soon depart from this world and reach him. Ram Das became absorbed in the bhajan and meditation of Sri Ram.

One day a celestial chariot descended from the sky to take him to Sri Ram. He bowed to Sri Ram of Bhadrachalam reciting a prayer. While stepping into the chariot, he called out to his wife who had served him so devoutly to join him. She could not join him as she was busy making a garland for Sri Ram’s worship at home. She said that she would go “a little later.” Ram Das left alone as it was destined.

The chariot flew up into the air while the people witnessed the miracle in wonderment. They began to reminisce the glorious events of his life at Bhadrachalam and Golconda-his unflinching devotion, temple building, imprisonment, release from prison, return to Bhadrachalam and final departure. While they were lost in contemplation, they heard from above the kirtans being sung ‘Bhajare Raghuramam, maanasa bhajare Sri Ramam” and “Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare”

In course of time, Kamalamba, wife of Ram Das too joined her husband by the grace of Sri Ram.

Their son Raghuram spent his life in the worship of Sri Ram at Bhadrachalam.

EVERLASTING GLORY BE UNTO LORD SRI RAM

A Few Kirtans of Ram Das :

1) Taraka mantramu korina dorikenu dhanyudanaitini
orannaal

Meerinikaaluni dootalapaaliti mrityuvu ani
nammannaal

(I have got the Taaraka mantra I longed for. O Brother, you should keep the faith secure in your mind



that it gives death to the messengers of the god of Death).

2) Takkuvemi manaku ramundokkaruntu varaku|
 Prakka todugaa bhagavantudu mana chakradhaari
 yai chentane yundaga||

(What do we want as long as Lord Sri Ram alone is by our side bearing the Chakra?)

3) E tiruna nanu dayachoochedavo inavamsottama
 Raamaa|

Naa taramaa bhava saagarameedanu nalinadalekshana
 Raamaa||

(O Sri Ram the best descendent of solar race, I do not know how you take care of me. Can I ever cross the ocean-like worldly life?)

4) O Raama, nee naama memi ruchiraa O Raama
 nee naama mento ruchiraa

Kariraaja prahlaada dharani vibheeshanula gaachina
 nee naama memi ruchiraa

(How exceedingly sweet is your name! How very sweet indeed!

How very sweet is your name that has saved Gajendra, Prahlada, goddess earth and Vibheesha!(

5) Sitaaraamaswaamee ne chesina nerambemee|
 Khyaathiga nee pada kanja yugalamune preethi
 talupaga||

(O Sitaram, what crime have I committed? I have meditated on your lotus-like feet.)

6) paluke bangaaramaaayenaa? Kodandapani paluke bangaaramaaayenaa?

Paluke bangaaramaaaye, pilichina palukavemi?
Kalalo neenaama smarana maruva chakkani tandri)

(A mere word from you has become as precious and rare as a piece of gold. Sri Ram, you bear a long bow. A word from you has become as rare as a piece of gold. It has indeed become as precious as a piece of gold. Why don't you respond when I call? I do not fail to remember your name even in a dream.)

7) Ikshwaaku kula tilaka ikanaina palukave Ramachandraa|

Nannu rakshimpakunna rakshakulevarinka Raamachandraa||

(O Sri Ram, born of Ikshwaaku race, speak at least now. Who will save me if you do not?)

8) Adugudaati kadalaniyyanu naakabhayamivvaka ninnu viduvanu|

Gadiya gadiya tirigi tirigi adigitini vesaraga vacchenu||

(I will not allow you to move till you assure me of your protection. I am now tired of praying and wandering all the time.)

9) Nanubrovamani cheppave sitamma talli nanu
brovamani cheppave|

Nanubrovamani cheppu naareesiromani janakuni
kootura jananee janakamma||

(O Mother Sita, kindly ask Sri Ram to save me.
You are great among women. You are the daughter of
king Janaka. You are like my mother. You ask him to
save me.)

10) Paahi Raamaprabho! Paahi Raamaprabho!

Paahi bhadraadri Vaidehi Raamaprabho!

(O Sri Ram, save me. O Sri Ram, save me. You
reside in Bhadrachala with Sita.)

11) Antarangamuna aatmaaraamudu ananta
ropamuna vintalu salukaga||

(This entire world is full of Sri Ram. This world
entire is full of Sri Ram. This world entire is full of Sri
Ram. Atma Ram does strange things in my inmost
heart)

