

The Kalpataru Day Story

Kalpataru refers to the mythological wishfulfilling tree, meaning that on this day in 1886, Sri Ramakrishna fulfilled the spiritual aspirations of the devotees. Swami Saradananda, who wrote the comprehensive biography of Sri Ramakrishna and was a direct disciple of his, adds that the monastic disciples thought of this more as the day that Sri Ramakrishna blessed the devotees with an irrevocable freedom from fear and doubt. We can further say that this meant freedom from the fear of death, since the Soul is Eternal, and he blessed them with confirmation of this fact; and with regard to doubt, removed all doubt about Himself as the Divine Incarnation, their worthiness before God, and the eternal union between God and the devotees.

Sri Ramakrishna was undergoing treatment for throat cancer in 1886. His body was severely weakened. However, on January 1 he was feeling strong enough to take a walk in the garden. Since it was a holiday, many householder devotees were present.



Swami Saradananda writes:

Among the householder devotees, Girish [Chandra Ghosh] had the most intense love for God. Once the Master highly praised his overwhelming faith and told the other devotees: "Girish has one hundred and twenty-five percent faith! Hereafter, people will be amazed by seeing his transformation..."

The Master, accompanied by devotees, walked along the broad garden path and then slowly moved towards the gate. When he was halfway along the path, he noticed Ram and Girish sitting in the shade of the mango tree.

Addressing Girish, the Master said, *"Girish, what have you found (in me) that makes you say all these things (I am an avatar, and so on) to everyone, wherever you go?"*

Girish's faith remained unshaken although he had been asked this question so abruptly. Hurriedly he got up, went to the path, and knelt down at the feet of the Master. Saluting him with folded hands, Girish responded in a voice choking with emotion: "What more can I say of Him? Even the sages Vyasa and Valmiki could find no words to measure His glory!"

As the Master listened to those wonderful words of faith, the hairs on his body stood on end, his mind ascended to a higher plane, and he went into samadhi.

Seeing the Master's face radiant with divine ecstasy, Girish joyfully shouted, *"Jai Ramakrishna! Jai Ramakrishna!"* [Victory to Ramakrishna!] and took the dust of his feet again and again.

Meanwhile, the Master came down to a semi-ecstatic state, looked at the assembled devotees with a smile, and said: *"What more need I tell you? May you all be illumined!"*

When they heard that benediction, the devotees were possessed with an overwhelming fervour and they cried repeatedly, *"Jai Ramakrishna!"* Then some bowed down to him, some showered him with flowers, and some touched his feet. As soon as the first person stood up after touching his feet, the Master, still in that semi-ecstatic state, touched the devotee's chest and passing his hand upward, said, *"Be illumined!"* When the second person bowed down and stood up, he did the same thing, and so he did to the third and the fourth. Thus, he touched nearly all the assembled devotees one after another.

The Master's wonderful divine touch generated an incredible spiritual mood in the mind of each devotee. Some began to laugh, some to weep, some to meditate, and some out of overflowing joy began to loudly call for others to come and receive the unbounded grace of the merciful Master....

Some of the householder devotees were later interviewed about their experiences at that time. One person ... had a vivid vision: When he closed his eyes, he saw the divine form upon which he had previously meditated daily, but that he had never been able to visualize. Yet another devotee felt a mysterious substance



or force creeping upward within his body, filling him with bliss. When another person closed his eyes, he saw a light that he had never seen before and felt tremendous bliss. It was evident that each person's vision or experience was different, but the feeling of being flooded with an extraordinary divine bliss was common to all. Moreover, each of them believed that the Master's superhuman power, transmitted through touch, had caused that wonderful realization and transformation.

Saradananda, Swami. *Sri Ramakrishna and His Divine Play* (p. 453). Vedanta Society of St. Louis.

