



DR SHOBHA RAJU

## GUARD AGAINST BACKBITING



**K**aikeyi held a deep affection for Rama, even more so than her own son, Bharata, as revealed in the Ramayana. Her genuine love for Rama, despite being his step-mother, was evident when she received the news of his coronation.

However, it was the poisonous

words of Manthara that led Kaikeyi down a destructive path, altering the course of the otherwise blissful Ramayana.

Many innocent and virtuous individuals suffered the consequences of these rumors and hearsay.

In my own life's mission of spreading Annamacharya's musical gospel, I've encountered numerous instances where baseless rumors, fueled by selfishness and jealousy, hindered my progress. Let me share an example.

Once, a young boy approached

me with a profound interest in Annamayya's literature and expressed a desire to write my biography. Despite my numerous commitments, I dedicated time to educate him in Annamayya's works, fostering creativity and innovation. I extended kindness, providing him with accommodation and sustenance upon his request. I even introduced him to important figures and opportunities. Eventually, he confided in me about his family's dire situation and the urgent need for employment.

Another gentleman, a fervent admirer of my music, had become like a brother to me. He frequently visited us for Bhajans and to invite us for the special occasions of his venture. Seeking help for my cause, I invited him to our home. However, after learning of the boy's situation, I requested assistance in securing a job for him instead. I tirelessly presented the boy to the gentle-

man, to remind him of the job he promised to give the boy.

The gentleman did provide the boy with employment, and my satisfaction in bettering a young life eclipsed any disappointment regarding my project. Yet, I was stunned when individuals who had been respectful and kind turned against me. Upon investigating, I discovered the boy's slander and deceit, driven by his selfish ambitions.

The damage caused by the boy's actions cannot be easily repaired. Regrettably, I lost valuable friend-

ships, especially the affection of the gentleman, whom I regarded as family.

While one may temporarily profit from false accusations and slander, the karmic repercussions are far greater. I implore you not to be swayed by sycophants and hearsay, as it can lead to the loss of cherished friendships. Those who flatter us today may betray us when they see better opportunities.

In the end, we can even find a lesson in Manthara's actions. Though she is cursed for her role in Kaikeyi's misguided decisions, her actions ultimately highlighted Rama's extraordinary qualities and enriched the narrative of the Ramayana.

Of course, that was Treta Tugam!

In Kaliyuga, being righteous may be just to be clean at heart?!

*(Author is a well-known musician, Devotional singer, writer and composer.)* 

