



VENUGAANAM

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From Team Venugaanam

We are delighted to bring you the 64th edition of Venugaanam this April.

In this edition, we bring excerpts from Swami's Divine Discourses compiled in Prema Vahini where he describes the path of Vanaprastha.

In Atmajyothi, the focus is on the Glory of love and the indescribable nature of love and taste.

In the SKM updates we bring to you pictures from the opening of the free healthcare center: Sai Krushna Arogya Dham.

Later in the issue, Prakash reviews a book on an infamous brigand and the contribution of brave souls involved in his capture.

We conclude with a Chinna Katha highlighting the importance of self-confidence and its impact on success and god's grace.

We are happy to have your feedback on how to make 'Venugaanam' a better communication tool. You may kindly mail us at contactus@saikrushnamandir.org . Do feel free to share with us your experiences in following Swami's teachings or on any other theme of your choice.

We pray to Swami to bless all the children and inmates so that they may all come up to His expectations.

May Swami turn our lives into a celebration of His message of love, sharing and caring.

With All our Prema,

Team Venugaanam

Vaanaprastha

Source: Prema Vahini

In the last issue, we read about the discipline to be followed by a person in the Vaanaprastha stage ending with the assertion that it leads to liberation. In this issue, we learn how it happens from Swami's discourse.

Many argue how can this discipline result in the Dawn of Knowledge? Are these not mere bodily limitations, they ask. Knowledge can arise only by the realisation of the Principle. How can something that does not contain the Principle which guarantees self-realisation be called Knowledge, they argue. But this is based on a big mistake.

Through these physical regulations, Vasanas or traits are destroyed and concentration is established. The Upanishadic statements serve to foster and strengthen this onepointedness, step by step, the experience of the Upanishadic vakyas (word) alone will bring about the Dawn of Knowledge.

Are not Upanishads the very Knowledge itself? With that Jnanaswarupa (Embodiment of wisdom) as companion,

realising It in one's own experience, what need is there to search for Knowledge elsewhere? To establish Jnana firmly in the heart, one-pointedness is essential, and this can easily be gained by the above-mentioned bodily disciplines and Thapas. External control helps internal control in many ways. To succeed in external controls is by comparison more difficult than to achieve success in controlling the internal! A turn of the steering wheel in one's hand in any direction makes the wheels of the car, which are not in one's hand, move in the same direction. The wheels will not turn in another direction, when the steering is turned in one. The introspective wheels are based on the extrospective steering itself!

It is the natural basis. Sometimes, when the steering is turned one way, the wheels may drag another way, but this is due to the giving up of the natural characteristic. The internal wheels, if they have no air, which is the true essence, may behave as if there is no

relationship with the steering. But they cannot go beyond the bounds of steering. The steering in the hand is related to the wheels below. If there is no such relation, the journey becomes impossible. The connection is inevitable. Therefore, one who has struggled with external tendencies and conquered them, internal tendencies become easily controllable. External tendencies have name and form and are attracted by becoming objects of experience. So, to overcome them is a matter of some difficulty. But internal tendencies have no form, though they may be endowed with name. They are also experienced as Ananda; and so, they can be overcome more easily. They can be tamed with greater ease. The bother is more for external conduct and behaviour. These are associated with taste, form and heaviness. The internal tendencies have no form, taste or weight. Pure water has no form or taste or heaviness. Impure water is different in all these respects. So, to purify impure water is indeed difficult; but pure water can be given any form required,

with very great ease.

Similarly, the difficulty is all about purifying the mental behaviour, which is spoiled by worldly delusions. There is no need to set right the mental behaviour which is free from such delusions. Delusionless behaviour is pure. It is without any trace of defect and doubt. Why should such be set right? Therefore, if men first control and conquer external delusion, as much as possible, the internal tendencies will easily move in the direction of Atmananda. Yoga and thapas are only other names for the path of the control and conquest of these external tendencies and delusions. The rules of Vaanaprastha are methods to succeed in this Yoga or thapas. When man subdues delusion of all types in this stage, the journey ends in Moksha. But we cannot say that Moksha has only this one path. Through whatever path Grace is obtained, that Path may be chosen. Liberation is achieved by these rules and observances of Vaanaprastha and can be secured by following this Path. It also makes a man delusion-free and gives him one-pointedness.

Atmajyothi

-by Shri Lakshminarayan Aithal

मूकास्वादनवत् ॥ 52 ॥

52. As a dumb experiences a taste (it is inexplicable).

99. How is the Love inexplicable ? This is cleared here with an illustration :

The word अनिर्वचनीय (inexplicable) is employed in different meanings in the scriptures. The followers of शंकर have their opinion about the meaning of this word : Falsely appearing snake on a rope and similarly appearing silver on a conch - shell are inexplicable objects. According to their opinion it is a false - appearance which can't be decided whether it exists or not. The Power of Ignorance (अविद्याशक्ति) is the material cause (उपादानकारण) of this appearance; this power of ignorance remains in the Self from the time immemorial; and, this power of ignorance is inexplicable. According to their opinion this is the meaning of the word अनिर्वचनीय.

According to श्री शंकराचार्य, the explanation is as follows : Name and form, the seeds of the world are imagined

due to ignorance and they appear in the Self; or people wrongly consider the Self, Himself, as the world made of name and form. That name - form - seed itself is the Illusion (माया); it can be told that this Illusion is either Self Himself or an independent object which is different from the Self; and, in this meaning this Illusion is inexplicable.

Here, anyone of the two meanings is not accepted for the word अनिर्वचनीय . For, the Love is only the Bliss which is God's Own Form; the love - condition of the devotees who experience that Love is also called 'love'. That is inexplicable means that is in-susceptible of description; but, that is an object only to the experience. A dumb person can experience the sweetness of the sweet that he eats; he unable to explain his happiness through words; because, he doesn't have the power of speech; similarly, the devotees experience the love but they cannot explain through words. In

this view alone, the compiler of aphorisms has employed this word अनिर्वचनीय. Then, one should not consider the meaning that the love is false. Nothing is so real than that Love.

प्रकाश(श्य)ते क्वापि पात्रे ॥ 53 ॥

53. Somewhere, (it) appears in any one who is a competent one.

100. The Love appears only to the experience of the one and that can't be explained through words; by telling this, one should not imagine that love itself doesn't exist at all. The one should have the competency to experience that Love. In such competent – praise worthy people, that Love essentially appears. Regarding this matter, the Lord tells as follows :-

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद् यतति सिद्धये ।
यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति
तत्त्वतः ॥ गी. 7-3.

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते
। वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः
॥ गी. 7-19.

The Lord's opinion is as follows : “Anyone amongst thousands of people by knowing God tries to become an accomplished one (सिद्ध). Trying so to become an accomplished one itself is an

accomplishment (सिद्धि). Anyone among such accomplished ones understands Me as I am. After getting many births, the obtains the Awareness of My Principle; then, he has perfectly ripened intellect; he experiences that वासुदेव, Himself, is the Inner-most Self of all and He is everything; thus, he obtains the Devotion in Me. He, himself, is the magnanimous one; none is either equal to him, or greater than him. Such a Devotee is very rare one.”

Such magnanimous ones, themselves, are the Supreme Devotees; their Love pervades the whole world; the पुराणाs explain that in the dwelling places of such Devotees, mutually hating animals like rat and cat, leopard and tiger, mongoose and serpent, etc. also live together with love.

गुणरहितं कामनारहितं प्रतिक्षणं
वर्धमानम-विच्छिन्नं
सूक्ष्मतरमनुभवरूपम् ॥ 54 ॥

54. That is bereft of qualities, that doesn't have desires, that grows for every moment, that is undivided, that is so subtle and that is of the form of Experience.

गुणरहितम् , कामनारहितम्

101. The Love regarding God is not similar to the love in the external objects. For, the external objects are changes of the three qualities of the forms of good, passion and ignorance. By reflecting upon an object, if one feels sufficiency, then, he may desire either to sleep or to keep quiet. The love of happiness of sleep and indolence is of the ignorance quality. The love of some objects prompts the one in a work of either supplying them, or protecting, or if he doesn't need in the due course – rejecting them; this is the love of the passion quality. The love of knowing the principle of the external objects and to become one with them is that of the good quality. That love too is changed when the one starts loving other new object or if he feels indifferent towards the old object. In this manner, the qualitative love creates the following associations : the association of happiness and knowledge that are the mixture of passion and ignorance qualities; the association of action and that of carelessness and indolence; and, that love binds the

one with such associations.

But, the Love which is Devotion in God is bereft of the qualities. For, the Devotee doesn't have the anxiety of either knowing a certain object or obtaining certain happiness. He need not perform any action to have devotion; carelessness, indolence and sleep probably, never approach the devotee. The devotion appears in the pure and good mind which is free from passion and ignorance.

The devotee doesn't meddle with any action because his love is bereft of desire. He doesn't desire either to have an external object or to reject it.

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च
मानवः । आत्मन्येव च सन्तुष्टस्तस्य
कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ गी. 3-17.

According to this saying of the Lord, the devotee rejoices only in the Self. There is no necessity for him to have satisfaction from enjoying external objects. He is satisfied only by the Self. Other than that Supreme Self, the devotee doesn't need anything; he is pleased only in the Self. Therefore, for him, no action remains undone.

Updates from SKM

March was an eventful month at Sai Krushna Mandir.

On 12th of March we had the inauguration of Sai Krushna Arogya Dham- free healthcare center. The inauguration was marked by prayers seeking the grace and blessings of our Lord through a Sai Satyanarayana Puja. The medical camp conducted by doctors from the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Whitefield Hospital campus and from Narayana Nethralaya was the highlight of the camp. The areas covered were dental , eye care, general medicine and pediatric care. The camp was a grand success and many villagers benefitted from the camp.

Spectacles were also provided by the doctors for patients requiring the same.

We also celebrated the birthday of one of the SKM children- Chandan. Chandan who is the eldest of the SKM children turns 11 this year.

The school exams were conducted between March 23rd and March 31st. The children have fared quite ok and the teachers are in the process of evaluation and preparing the strategy to further enhance student learning.

More of this through pictures in this section.



Prayers and seeking of blessings at the start of the new healthcare center: Sai Krushna Arogya Dham



Sai Satyanarayana Puja in the dispensary



Registration of patients



Medical camp in the newly opened Sai Krushna Arogya Dham





Students writing Examinations



Birthday celebration of Chandan: one of the SKM children



Veerappan: Chasing The Brigand – Book Review

-by Prakash Srinivasan

I own an Amazon Kindle which was gifted by my cousins a few years ago. It remains one of the best and useful gifts I received as I am able to read multiple books at the same time and it's also extremely easy to carry around (It's a keyboard Kindle weighing barely 100gms). I have also subscribed to Kindle Unlimited and it has a decent catalogue of books which can be borrowed for free. I recently noticed that a newly launched book by IPS officer, K. Vijaykumar on Veerappan titled Chasing the Brigand was available on Kindle Unlimited and I promptly downloaded and started reading it.

The book was so riveting and engaging that I almost finished it in just 2 sittings. The author narrates the entire Veerappan saga in such detail that reading it, is like watching a thriller movie. I am a big fan of nonfiction books and especially true stories (like CBI investigations, the life story of Metro Man Sreedharan etc). I find them very real and inspiring as we see how ordinary people become everyday heroes by doing the impossible. Many of the situations they face are far more challenging and dangerous than what we see in the movies.

Chasing the Brigand is all about how Veerappan started as a forest poacher and became a dreaded sandalwood smuggler and kept two states on tenterhooks for almost 3 decades until the final successful operation which led to his elimination. The narrative style of the author is very simple and clear and you feel you are watching each of the scenes and episodes playing in front of your eyes. The book shows the extraordinary dedication and valour of the police officers and their commitment to the cause as every mission to capture Veerappan was a question of life and death.

We read about the episodes of many Forest and Police officers who bravely entered into his den and how they sacrificed their lives. The officers who go to capture the brigand have to overcome not only their fears but also rough terrain, wild animals, foregoing food and water for many hours, no sleep etc. While reading the book, I realized that we city dwellers lead such cushy and fairly comfortable lives and our jobs are not even half as risky as these officers who battle out in the forest everyday. Some of the episodes in the book are also quite nail biting and scary as some of the operations were carried out in the night when it was pitch dark in the forest and they could not even use a light as it would alert Veerappan's gang! The piece-de-resistance of the book are of course the last two chapters where the author narrates how they trap and finally eliminate Veerappan. By this time, you are so charged up that you read with bated breath how Veerappan finally falls and you will literally clap for the brave officers and you can relate to their elation and joy when they realize they finally did it! It's like those scenes in movies when everybody is finally relieved and happy when the villain is vanquished in the climax.

After completing the book, readers will salute the author and all the officers who worked for decades to capture the brigand and especially the brave ones who sacrificed their lives!

Self-Confidence, Success and God's Grace

Tenali Ramakrishna, the famous poet, humorist and philosopher, from the state of Andhra Pradesh once happened to lose his way while traversing an area of thick jungle. He lived in the reign of the famous Emperor Krishnadeva Raya, of the Vijayanagara Dynasty, about 1500 AD. He was attached to the Court and was honoured as a wise and quick-witted minister. While he was wandering desperately in the jungle, he saw an old sage. Ramakrishna ran forward and fell at his feet, in reverential homage. He asked the sage, how he had become caught in that wild forest. The sage said, "The same Mysterious Force that dragged you here has dragged me too to this spot. The moment when I have to cast away the body which I have occupied so long, has arrived! I shall initiate you, now, into the manthra (sacred hymn) which I have recited all these years as my talisman and treasure." It was the Manthra of Mother Goddess Kali, and he whispered it into the ear of Ramakrishna. Ramakrishna was overjoyed at the great gift. He retired into a temple of the Mother, deep in the recesses of the jungle and was intent on the meditation of the Mother, propitiated by the manthra.

At midnight one day, the aboriginal Koyas of the forest came into the temple with a goat which they sought to offer as sacrifice to please Her and propitiate Her. Ramakrishna hid behind the idol and when the knife was about to fall on the neck of the victim, he exclaimed, "I am the Mother of all living beings, including you. If you kill my child, I will curse you, I cannot bless you!" Believing that it was Kali who spoke, the Koyas desisted and went away. Now, Kali manifested before Ramakrishna. She asked him what he would like to receive from Her! She was pleased with his Sadhana (spiritual

Chinna Katha

practice). “Which do you want?” she queried, holding a plate of curds-rice in one hand and a plate of milk-rice in another. He wanted to know the consequences of eating either plate before deciding which plate to ask for. She explained, “The curds-rice will endow you with riches and economic prosperity; the milk-rice will make you a wise scholar. Now, make your choice.”

Ramakrishna thought within himself, “It is no good being a fool in possession of vast riches; nor, will scholarship fill the stomach, three times a day.” He was a clever person! So, he asked a further question, “I see two plates before me. Before I make the choice, tell me how each will taste.” She laughed and said, “How can I describe the taste and make you understand the difference? You will have to taste them yourself,” and gave him both the plates, for that purpose.

The clever Ramakrishna hastily put them both in his mouth and managed to swallow the curds and the milk, the entire quantity of rice from both plates! Kali was indignant and exclaimed that his impertinence called for dire punishment. Ramakrishna accepted his mistake and invited the punishment she proposed to inflict. But can the Mother's punishment destroy the child, however reprehensible the conduct of the child may be? “My sentence will certainly save you, do not tremble,” said Kali.

Then she pronounced the sentence thus: “Become a Vikatakavi.” That is to say, “Be a clever clown, having great influence at court, accumulating much wealth and guiding all those who approach you with good advice.” God loves those who have self-confidence and the courage of their convictions and who seize every opportunity to improve their spiritual status.