



VENUGAANAM

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From Team Venugaanam

We are delighted to bring you the **57th edition of Venugaanam this August. The theme of this edition is to be attentive, energetic and seize every opportunity**

In this edition, we bring excerpts from Swami's Divine Discourses compiled in Prema Vahini where he urges us to use every moment to move towards Siva-darsana rather than Yama-darsana.

In Atmajyothi, we learn how desires and emotions pull us away. The article stresses on the importance to be attentive of such illusions and to move away from them.

In the SKM updates we bring you pictures from the Sai Annalaxmi kitchen which was inaugurated on Guru Poornima and shall serve vegetable to all 340 school children and teachers everyday. We also share some pictures of the dispensary under construction and the SKM children enjoying in the lap of nature.

In the article on Random Musings, we have an insightful book review on the biography of a great hero of our days: Mr E Sreedharan. He exemplifies our theme of energy and enthusiasm.

In The Climb, Sriharsha beautifully portrays the energy and intensity of a youth who intends to climb a mountain. He seems to echo that life's assiduous moments are scaled through indomitable will power.

We conclude with a Chinna Katha highlighting how God loves those individuals who seize every opportunity to improve their spiritual status.

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

Bhagavan's Discourse: For a Saadhaka, Today is His: but Tomorrow

Source: Prema Vahini

Yama (God of death) is as Omnipresent as Siva! Yama is associated with the deha, or body. He cannot affect the Jiva. Siva is associated with Jivi; but He will not allow the body to subsist for any length of time. The body is the essential vehicle for the Jivi to understand its real nature. Still, who knows when it becomes the target for the attention of Yama, the Master of the Deha? Who knows when this body will get entrapped in the coils of Yama's ropes? The Jivi, burdened with this easily-destructible body, must grasp the above-mentioned caution and be all eager to merge in Siva, whatever the moment, that very moment! No single moment that is passed by can be turned back. People usually delay doing some things, today's till tomorrow, and yesterday's till today. But the tasks of sadhana are not of such a nature, for them, there is no yesterday and no tomorrow. This very moment is the moment! The

minute that has elapsed is beyond your grasp; so too, the minute that is approaching is not yours! It is only that Jivi which has engraved this understanding on its heart that can merge in Siva. Without assimilating this truth in the heart, the Jivi is immersed in aims of today and tomorrow, based on the assumption that the body is all important. It thus lays the foundations for worldly attachment; and so, it is born again and again with body and continues to have the Darsan of Yama! It is the right of the Saadhaka to have Siva-darshana and not Yama-darsan! He will not wish for it, nor even contemplate it. Only those who have this relationship of the Deha and the Jiva are Men. Those who have realised this principle will not flag, even to the slightest extent, in their sadhana. These days, man is content with visualising and experiencing evanescent worldly joys. He has no rest. Spending the nights in sleep

and the days in eating and drinking, he grows and grows, until, in his old age, Death pursues him. Then, he cannot decide where to go or what to do. All his senses have weakened. No one, nothing can rescue him; so he ends as obedient meat to the jaws of Death!

How sad it is that this human life, precious as an invaluable diamond that cannot be priced at all, has been cheapened to the standard of a worn-out worthless coin! There is no use repenting, after wasting time without profit, without meditating on God, or practising any sadhana to realise Him. What is the use in planning a well, when the house has caught fire? When is it to be dug? When will water become available? When is the fire to be extinguished? It is an impossible task! If at the very start, there was a well ready, how helpful it would be on such critical occasions! Beginning to contemplate on God during the last moments

is like beginning to dig the well. So, if from now on, one equips himself by the contemplation of God off and on, it will stand him in good stead when the end approaches. Start today the sadhana that has to be done tomorrow! Start now the sadhana that has to be done today! One does not know what is in store the next moment. Therefore, there should be no delay in engaging oneself in the sadhana that has to be done. Physical stamina is also necessary for this sadhana, and so, the body has to be tended, though overtending causes damage. To the degree that is essential, it should be looked after with great care.

Atmajyothi

-by Shri Lakshminarayan Aithal

तरङ्गयिता अपीमे सङ्गात्
समुद्रायन्ति ॥ 45 ॥

Though these are similar to waves become like a sea due to association.

Desire, anger, etc. are like waves of a sea; and, these waves rise and fall continuously. Common people don't understand coming and going of these conditions. They consider that these conditions naturally occur to them. This being the case, prudent ones knowing the nature of the conditions may try to subside them; not only that, those who observe attentively the rising of conditions like lust, anger, etc. can easily escape from their trouble. But, the one who has the association of the wicked ones never understands the disadvantage due to these conditions. Nevertheless, he, too, comes under the subjection of lust, etc. The भागवत tells a story of सौभरि sage. Once, the sage saw in the water a

fish having sex with the other one; by mere seeing only he came under the subjection of lust and he married to fifty wives; at last, he freed himself from the passion; and the sage told :-

अहो इमं पश्यत मे विनाशं तपस्विनः
सच्चरितव्रतस्य ।

अन्तर्जले वारिचरप्रसङ्गात् प्रच्यावितं
ब्रह्म चिरं धृतं यत् ॥

सङ्गं त्यजेत् मिथुनव्रतीनां मुमुक्षुः
सर्वात्मना न विसृजेत् बहिरिन्द्रियाणि ।

एकश्चरन् रहसि चित्तमनन्त ईशे
युञ्जीत तद्व्रतिषु साधुषु चेत् प्रसङ्गः
॥

भाग. 9-6-50, 51.

' Alas, see my plight ! How have I ruined myself ? I was an ascetic, I had a very good behavior; by merely seeing the sex of fish in water, have I not fallen down from the contemplation of the Brahman ! The one who is desirous of Liberation should give up the association of those people who are licentious; and, who somehow, let loose their organs externally. Even, when he is alone in a lonely place, he should fix his mind in the Infinite Lord.

If he obtains the association of the devotees who are interested only in the contemplation of God – he should necessarily have it.'

If there is an association of reflecting upon the sensual objects, the waves of lust, anger, etc. rise one after the other to form a sea of such conditions.

In the aphorism, an association means that of the wicked one; and, the association of sensual objects is formed from the former one. The latter association creates conditions like lust, etc. to form the association of conditions. This much should be grasped : When these waves are joined together become an unfordable ocean itself. Therefore, it is essence of this section that the one who is desirous of Liberation, by all means, should give the association of the wicked ones.

11. HOW ONE HAS TO CROSS THE ILLUSION ?

कस्तरति कस्तरति मायाम् ?

यस्सङ्गास्त्यजति यो महानुभावं
सेवते यो निर्ममो भवति ॥ 46 ॥

46. Who does cross an Illusion ? Who does cross it ? The one who gives up associations, who serves the glorious one, and, who regards nothing as his own (crosses the Illusion).

85. What is an Illusion ? As mentioned in the previous aphorism, the ocean of false appearing visible world which is the cause for lust, anger, etc. itself is the Illusion (माया). A few ones have defined the word माया as या मा सा माया. According to this definition : An Illusion doesn't have a real existence but, it appears to exist.

ऋतेऽर्थं यत् प्रतीयेत न प्रतीयेत
चात्मनि । तद्विद्यादात्मनो मायां
यथा स स भासो यथा तमः ॥ भाग. 2-
10-33.

According to this expression of the भागवत, the one thing which doesn't remain in its appearing form and that doesn't exist in the Self for the one who has seen the Reality; and, the wise call that is Illusion (माया). In the ब्रह्माण्डपुराण, the Illusion is

explained as follows :-

एषा चतुर्विंशति भेदभिन्ना मायाऽपरा
प्रकृतिस्तत्समुत्था ।

कामक्रोधौ लोभमोहौ भयं च
विषादशोकौ च विकल्पजालम् ॥

धर्माधर्मौ सुखदुःखे च सृष्टि-
विनाशपातौ नरके गतिश्च ।

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वासः स्वर्गे जातयश्चाश्रमाश्च
रागद्वेषौ विविधा व्याधयश्च ॥

कौमारतारुण्यजराधियोग-भोगा
विरागानशनव्रतानि ॥

A few have confused as follows : Makers of scriptures opine that this Illusion is not at all the Reality and it is a mere mis-conception that it really exists; and, it is not so according to the knowers of the साङ्ख्य system of philosophy; they have decided that this is real (in the view of conduct); for, this illusion, by taking twenty four forms, dances in front of people. A verse of the गीता tells concisely :-

महाभूतान्यहङ्कारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव
च । इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च
चेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥ गी. 13-5.

The subtle Elements (5); the Ego, the cause of the Elements (1); the Intelligence, the cause of

the Ego (1); the Imperceptible Principle, the cause of the Intelligence (1); the organs (10); the Mind (1); the Gross Elements that are objects of organs (5) – these are the forms of the Illusion; still, in the general use, the Imperceptible Principle (अव्यक्त) itself is called as the Illusion (माया). This is called the Inferior Nature (अपरा प्रकृति) of the Great Lord (परमेश्वर). The followings are the forms of the Ocean of Illusion : lust, anger, greed, ignorance, fear, dejection, sorrow, errors; righteousness and un-righteousness; happiness and un-happiness; creation and existence; falling in to hell, ascent and descent; living in heaven, castes, four religious orders, love and hatred; diseases, states like childhood, etc; mental agony, union and disunion; and, enjoyment and abandonment of sensual objects !

Are these an illusion? To be continued....

Updates from SKM



The Sai Annalaxmi Kitchen was inaugurated on Guru Poornima 2016



Children offer their prayers and gratitude to Swami. First day of cooking under progress.





Vegetables offered to Swami and then distributed to all the 340 school children and teachers in Sharavathi school



Mr V R Ranganathan from Sai Annalaxmi Foundation testing the vegetables even as the teachers serve the students.



Above: The Sai Krushna Charitable Trust village Dispensary under construction. Scheduled opening in November 2016.

Below: The dispensary Front View as projected by Architects



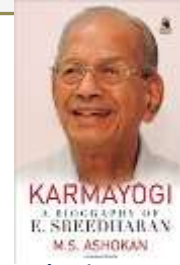
The SKM
Children
Enjoy a
Dance in
the Rain



The SKM
Students
amidst
Nature's
Flora

KarmaYogi Book Review

-by Prakash Srinivasan



Karmayogi is the biography of E.Sreedharan who is known as the “Metro Man” of India. It is a translation from the Malayalam original but it has been done so well that it feels like an original English book. All of us know Sreedharan only as the Metro Man but after reading this book, you will realize that he is the Rail Man of India and one of the best engineers this country has ever produced. He is compared alongside the likes of Visweswaraya and that in itself shows his genius. The book covers his life’s journey and its milestones and there are hundreds of them in his illustrious career. The following are the key highlights in the life of this veteran.

1. The underlying thread all through the book is Sreedharan’s no-compromise attitude. Whenever Sreedharan took a stand (and the correct stand) he never gave up on it under any circumstances. He was even prepared to resign rather than to submit to others’ whims and fancies.

2. Sreedharan’s unwavering focus on Honesty and Integrity is a huge lesson for anyone tested in this in our daily lives. His conviction in doing the right thing was so strong that it gave him the confidence to go ahead despite stiff opposition. In many instances, the people who disagreed with him later realized how right he was and they sided with him eventually. Sreedharan never involved himself in any project where he felt there might be kickbacks or corruption involved, he HATED corruption. Corruption is a cancer that is destroying nations and it must be eliminated so that the services and benefits reach the common man.

3. If it was to choose between a cumbersome process and “getting things done”, he would follow the latter using common sense as many times the process was mired in red tape and bureaucracy.

4. He always believed in fixing the whole system rather than dealing with individual people one by one.

5. The metro chapter is just one of the monumental achievements of Sreedharan, an equally brilliant fact is that he is the one who resurrected the Pamban Bridge after it was destroyed owing to a devastating storm. He employed the concept of Jugaad, decades ago when the word was never even used in business parlance.

6. He is the architect of the breathtaking and challenging Konkan Railway network. Until Sreedharan started the project it was always believed that the Konkan region could not have a Railway system owing to its treacherous terrain but Sreedharan made the impossible, possible.

7. Sreedharan built the Kolkata Metro much before the Delhi one but he is renowned for the Delhi one because it was completed on-time. The Kolkata got delayed for more than a decade for reasons much beyond his control.

8. Sreedharan has never worked for more than 8 hrs per day, it shows his efficiency. In an age where people brag about the double digit hours they work everyday, Sreedharan shows us that it's all about quality and not just quantity.

9. Simplicity is the hallmark of his life and he never clamoured for any awards or accolades but they just kept flowing one after the other because of the impact of his work. The number of awards he has received go into many hundreds and still counting. Such were his achievements that many corporations (public and private) were vying to hire him by offering massive salaries but never did he get tempted by money.

10. Many projects were completed before-time by Sreedharan and this is a miracle in itself (especially Government projects) in an age when projects get delayed by several years!

This book cannot be classified as just a biography, it's an inspirational book which gives hope that even in India things can be done on time if it's done by adhering to the deadlines and by having undying commitment to the larger cause of public good. No wonder, the author makes a valid case that Sreedharan must be awarded the nation's greatest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna and by the time you finish the book, you will surely agree with him.

The Climb

-by Sriharsha

Published in January 2016 edition of Nava Sarathi

Since the time he was a toddler, he had beheld the gigantic mountain in his back yard. It was white, with some brush strokes of black and brown on it. He was almost certain that the mountain was a hefty sage with an enormous tummy sitting in a lotus posture and meditating, his head far above the cloud line for its peak was always covered with clouds. As he grew up this conviction about the mountain being a sage grew less and less though he looked at the mountain with the same awe.

"How far is the base of the mountain," he asked his father once. "Oh that's around some 9 kilometers, or may be more. But why do you ask," his father replied. "Hmm just like that." His father understood the reason. But remained silent.

Many many people had tried climbing the mountain and nobody knew what happened to them. None of them came back except one. He was seen descending the mountain by a shepherd and was brought to the village. But he kept stubbornly silent when asked about lay on the unseen top. The villagers respected the man for sometime and then gave him up as a madman and before they could chase him out of the village, he himself left one day quietly. No body knew where he went.

The Climb

He was a good student. He studied hard, got good marks and made his parents happy. His desire to climb the mountain seemed to diminish. But every now and then he would stand on his backyard span the height of the mountain with his eyes from bottom to top till his neck arched back and a silly smile played on his lips.

He was soon 25. While asleep one day he dreamt that he was climbing the mountain. He had gone all the way up to the clouds, feeling cold, tired yet satisfied. Another 100 meters would have had him on the summit. His dream broke.

He got up, it was still dark. Went out to his backyard where the mountain bathed in full moon greeted him. It was magical. He just kept gazing at the sight the whole night. He saw the mountain even with his eyes closed.

Alarm bells started ringing when his parents did not find him in his bed. They found him on the backyard all cold and disoriented. The warmth of the home brought back sense in him. But the sight of the snow bathed mountain refused to go away. With eyes closed and open he just beheld the mountain.

Then one day the decision was made.

"I will climb up the mountain," he said. His declaration was greeted by wails of his mother and stoic silence of his father. He however remained adamant. "I will climb the mountain," he repeated.

The Climb

His mother set about tying a small bundle. She put a few things for him to eat, warm clothing and an unending stream of tears. His father remained serene. Inwardly proud outwardly silent. After all his son was trying what he and his wife had almost achieved.

"Before you go there are a few things for you to know," his father told him. The climb is going to be extremely difficult. In the beginning the ascent will be gradual, but after a while it steepens swiftly.

There will be crows, big crows laying in wait for you and will pounce upon you the moment you cross their territory. The trick is to completely ignore them. If you fight back their numbers will increase. Take a few bruises and walk on. As you go up the climb will become more arduous. Just remember eyes on the goal and one step at a time and a mountain load of patience." The son was surprised. "Father how do you know so much?" "You have heard about one person who returned after being at the top, right? Your mother and me are two more who had almost reached the summit. Just around 100 meters away from the summit our patience ran out. We never realised that it was many many kilometers down but just around 100 metres up.

We had always longed for a child who would fulfill our dream. We are fortunate to have you as our child," the father said. "Your mother is not crying because she fears for your safety but because she feels that it may be a while before you come back to the village.

The Climb

His energy doubled and the burning zeal flowed in his veins like lava. "I will do it," he said. "We wish the same his father said. Even your mother wishes the same only that she does not say it.

"In his parting embrace to his mother he said, "I promise you mother, I will return, before it is long."

The initial climb was gradual and without risks. It was more like a walk. But then the mountain steeped rapidly. Snow made the footholds slippery and dangerous. He slipped several times and his shins were bruised. And then suddenly it started snowing. As the wind howled the snow flakes rushed at him menacingly. Crouched under a rock ledge he waited the snow storm to pass. It finally did, but not before shrouding the entire mountain in a carpet of white.

His speed greatly reduced he trudged cautiously. Ahead of him he saw a huge white boulder. It stood right in his path. "I will have my first morsel after I cross this," he told himself. He tried, and slipped again and again. Finally the words of his mother came to him. "Before taking up any job, make sure your tummy is full," he smiled and opened the bundle. Had his food and drank the water dripping from a frozen icicle and tried once again. By this time the sun had come out and had melted some snow. Foot holds were better visible now. He crossed the boulder with a bruise or two to his elbows.

As he stood to catch his breath, he felt something sharp whacking into his head. As he turned around another huge black crow dug its beak into his scalp. He felt his wound with his fingers and found them smeared with blood. So I am in the land of crows, he thought. He put his bundle on his head and moved ahead slowly. One after the other they came cawing at him to attack from all sides. The attack became incessant and then suddenly stopped. He had crossed the land of crows. Though they still cawed wickedly yet they could not touch him.

The Climb

Night fell and he stayed in a small cave and covered himself with the blanket his mother had given him. In the morning he had some bread, had a drink from a mountain stream and walked on. He walked an entire day but the clouds did not look any closer than they were when he started. His father's words came back to him. One step at a time, one step at a time and a mountain load of patience. He walked on climbing almost vertical stone cliffs, bare rocks, slippery stones crossing icy mountain streams which ran helter-skelter across the mountain face. Finally the clouds started dipping owing to his extreme perseverance. At the end of the third day he had reached where his parents' patience had waned thin. Exhausted he rested.

He woke up in the morning and had taken his first step when he was greeted by a din of enormous boulders sliding past him. A rock as big as his palm slammed into his chest, he lost his balance and fell. He lay almost 300 meters down with a bleeding head a broken rib and a badly sprained right hand. His eyes, however, still kept gazing at the clouds beyond which lay his goal.

An entire day went before he could be on his feet again. Cold, injured and exhausted, he made the final attempt to reach the summit with extreme caution. He was surprised that he was able to walk. Half a day had passed when he had reached from where he was thrown down by the sliding boulders. He could not give it up from there.

He looked up and kept on moving without looking up or back. At night he rested wrapping himself in a blanket. The thought of reaching the top burned his entire being. At dawn he cautiously resumed his journey. He jumped across crevices, which were almost 8 feet

The Climb

across and lay prostrate across the mountain to save himself from being hurtled down. He trudged one step at a time. After a long while he felt that his head had gone extremely cold. He looked up but could not see anything. It was all misty and magical. He had reached the cloud line, one more boundary, which he had to cross. He kept his head down and kept climbing. Finally there was nothing left to climb. He looked down for the first time after a long time but could see nothing but a white carpet, which extended in all directions. His feet were still in the clouds. Overcome by jubilation he just flopped on the summit and cried, "I did it, I did it, before exhaustion put him to sleep.



The Climb

When he came to himself, he felt like a new man. Strangely the pain in the chest and hand had disappeared... and who was this man standing next to him in all ochre.

"Welcome, so finally you have come", the man said.

"Who are you he shot back?

"Don't tell me you don't know me", the man said.

"No", he answered rather puzzled.

"But then why did you climb all the way up from your village to here?"

"To climb the mountain what else," he said.

That you have done pretty well. But a lot remains to be done, said the man.

"What?"

"Yes."

With that the man tapped on his head and with that his head reeled and he saw himself as a boy again gazing at the mountain and the night when he had that dream and to the farewell to his parents and the moment here. When he came to himself. He again saw the ochre man standing in front of him smiling. He smiled back.

"Come get up I need to show you something." The man took his hand and walked him a few paces. Look there, he said. He looked up. There was a lovely mountain. All golden and much much higher than the mountain he had just climbed. You have come all the way up here. But your journey does not end here. You have to climb the golden mountain now," the man said. He felt some new energy pumped into him. "Don't worry you will not climb the golden mountain alone, I will be there to guide you and as for your promise to your mother, I promise that your promise will be kept.



SELF-CONFIDENCE, SUCCESS & 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.

Chinna Katha

Now, Kali manifested before Ramakrishna. She asked him what he would like to receive from Her! She was pleased with his Sadhana (spiritual 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.