



SAMASTHA LOKA SUKHINO BHAVANTU

venugaanam

Sai Krishna Charitable
Trust Newsletter

July, 2013

IN THIS ISSUE

From Team venugaanam

We are delighted to bring you the 24th edition of Venugaanam this July. With Swami's grace and your contribution, this marks the completion of two years of this newsletter. This edition begins with Swami's Divine counsel to all to undertake love of God and service to society. Read this discourse of Swami and know His message in His own words.

In Atmajyothi, we continue with a new series of discussion on Narada Bhakthi Sutras. These Sutras or aphorisms contain the secret of true devotion and highlight its glory.

In the article- "Giving in Kind(ness)", Lalita shares a beautiful incident where Swami teaches us to give generously in kind and with kindness.

Recapitulation re-assessment and repetition are necessary for any type of learning says Sowmya Roopa in her article- "Golden Moments".

There have been some significant developments last month. By Swami's grace the construction and building work for Phase 1 of Sai Krishna Mandir is complete and the children's home is now operational with two children. Two more will be joining in the first week of this month. Read more and see some recent photos in the construction update.

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We also invite applications for a cook and watchman for the children's home once it starts functioning from June.

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 invite our Lord to grace the occasion on 3rd June and 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
Sai Krishna Charitable Trust

Undertake Love of God and Service to Society

A Divine Discourse by BHagawan Shri Sathya Sai Baba

You may be aware of the way a soldier in the army has to take training in all aspects before he can be fit to take part in inactive service at the front. Anyone joining the armed forces, whether a dhobi, cook, or sepoy, has to qualify compulsorily in two things. One is handling a rifle and the other is marching drill. Whatever may be one's avocation in the army, one should have to undergo these two parts of the training.

Similarly, in the spiritual field, one should compulsorily undertake two things, namely, love of God and service to society. These are the two prime components of divine life. They help in the realisation of the Divine. You have to take up the practice at an early age so that you can have the realisation before you leave the world. You do not know when the end will come. You should be prepared for it at all times.

The photographer asks you to be ready when he snaps your picture, and he gives you time to ready yourself. But the divine cameraman will not give you any notice. You should always be ready to meet the situation. If you engage yourself in bhajan and daivachintanam — keerthanam and smaranam — you will not be caught unawares. Suppose you have a master who has an Alsatian dog at the gate and he himself is at the first floor. There are two ways of reaching him.

One way is to befriend the dog and enter the house; the other way is to call out to the master from the ground in a loud voice so that he will come out and allow you to come in by controlling the dog. Maya (illusion) is the dog. God is the master. You either control the maya or chant His name and sing His glory so that He will come down. You have to treasure Him in our heart, since the heart is His altar.

God is Hridayanivasa. Draupadi prayed to Krishna when she was humiliated in Duryodhana's court. She said, "Oh, Dwaraka Vasa, Brindavan Sanchara, help me!" She could not get a response and she became tired. Finally, she pleaded in a faint voice, "Oh Hridayanivasa (Resident of my heart)! Will you not come to my rescue?" Immediately, Krishna saved her from trouble. On a later occasion, she asked Krishna why He took such a long time to respond

when she was in distress and prayed to Him sincerely. Krishna responded, "You said, Dwaraka Vasa, Brindavan Sanchara, etc. I had to respect your words, so I had to go from your heart all the way to Dwaraka and Brindavan, which are so far away, and I don't have a plane to go fast. When you said, Hridayanivasa, where I am actually residing, I came to your help instantaneously. So, everyone should install the Divine in the heart in full faith. It is not correct to think that He is only in a mosque, church, or temple. The seat of God is the devotee's heart.

That is why the Gita says, "Pasyanapicha na pasyathi (though he sees, yet he is not conscious of God in the heart). Everything you see outside is a reflection of the inner being. "Sarvathah Panipadam thath Sarvathokshi Siromukham." All feet, hands, eyes, heads are all His. What does this mean? It means that He is in every being. God manifests according to your feeling. One devotee was asking God, "You say You are in me, above me, below me. How is it that You are not protecting me?" God answers, "I am always in you, around you. Don't look for Me externally." The devotee asked, "Are You behind me really?" Replied the Lord, "My shadow is your body." When the devotee turned around to see whether God was behind, he could not see Him. He asked, "Are You speaking the truth? I don't find You." God replied, "When you turn back, I too have to turn back, so, you could not see Me. You have not understood the Truth. Suppose you stand before a chair; the chair is in front of you. If you turn around, the chair is at your back.

God manifests according to your bhava (feeling). When you pray, "Can't you hear my prayers?", you visualise Him hearing with His ears. When you pray, "Can't You see my suffering?" you see only His eyes. When you pray, "Why don't you stay with me?", you hear His footsteps. You have to maintain perfect silence. Listen to the sound of "Om" from within. The ancient seers spent their time in listening to the voice of God, which is Pranava. Even now, you can experience this. Close your ears gently. You will hear the sound Om from within. God proclaims, "Oh devotee, you are seeing with physical eyes and listening with physical ears. Be in utter silence. You can listen to the footsteps of God." Such holy paths have been shown by

Atmajyothi

by Shri Lakshminarayan Aithal

Lakshminarayan Aithal has served for over 3 decades in Swami's institution and is the former Principal of the Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Institutions at Muddenahalli. Inspired by Swami's direct message to study the Upanishads, he first learnt Sanskrit and then studied the direct works of Adi Shankaracharya and Swami. Sincere perseverance led him to the reality of Aham Brahmasmi and He realized and experienced Swami's words: "I am God and so are you". He shares the import of the Upanishadic teachings with us in this series of articles.

great devotees. One who doesn't understand this is in ignorance.

Surdas, a great devotee of Krishna, once went after a woman and followed her to her home. Her husband chastised him, saying, "Why have you been given eyes? Is it for this un-holy pursuit of another man's wife? Why don't you concentrate on God?" Immediately, Surdas got enlightened and pierced his eyes with thorns of a lime tree close by. He proceeded to Dwaraka to Krishna's temple. On his way, he was about to fall into a well. Krishna came in the form of a cowherd boy and caught hold of his hand and asked him, "Where are you going?". Surdas said, "I am going to Dwarka." Krishna said, "I will show you the way and lead you." Next day, they rested in a wayside hut. Krishna wanted to go, but Surdas wouldn't leave him. Surdas put his hand over the boy while sleeping and asked the boy to put his hand on him. Sparshanam papanasam. Because of this divine touch, he was released from all his sins. Then Krishna told Surdas, "I am Krishna, to whom you always pray. I played this drama to show you My form." He touched Surdas's eyes, and Surdas got back his

MEANING OF THE WORD अतः

2.The word अतः(therefore) is employed to indicate the application of the scripture. In this world, everyone is naturally having 'egotism'(अहंकार) which is an obstacle to obtain the Supreme Felicity for people. This egotism swells by worldly conducts and receives different forms like : violence, arrogance, lust, anger, etc. There is no other means than devotion to limit this egotism. For the worldly conduct desire is the cause and for the desire egotism is the one. The one who has devotion develops dispassion towards worldly objects and that prevents the growth of egotism.

भक्तिः परेषानुभवो विरक्तिरन्यत्र चैषत्रिक एककालः ।
प्रपद्यमानस्य यथाश्नतः स्युस्तुष्टिः क्षुदपायोऽनुघासम् ॥
(भा. 11. 3. 43)

sight, beheld the divine form, and got into blissful ecstasy. When Krishna asked him to retain his vision, Surdas said, "I have seen You; I don't want to see anything else with these eyes. I don't want my sight. Many people have eyes. Have they seen you? Many have ears; they are not fortunate to hear your melodious music. I want only jnanachaksus (eyes of knowledge). Krishna kept His hand on the head of Surdas, and Surdas merged with the Divine. No one can know when God will bless!

Whatever God does is for the good of the devotees. He is selfless. When you have the wish-fulfilling tree in your back-yard, why do you go in search of fruits? Pure thoughts of love should flow from you to God. Then, love of God will flow to you. When you post a registered letter to another person, the proof of this letter having reached the addressee is the acknowledgement slip you get. The proof of sincerity of your love will be the flow of God's grace to you. With intense longing for God's grace, you must wait patiently, chanting His name ceaselessly. You will surely perceive God's form manifesting before you.

According to this, the one who has surrendered to God obtains devotion, experience of God, and dispassion – all the three; therefore, egotism is subdued; and, the Supreme Felicity is obtained without any obstacle. Therefore, this scripture is for the use of worldly people so that they may obtain the summa cum laude of life (परमपुरुषार्थ). This is the meaning of the verse.

3.The Supreme Felicity is itself is really the desired use for everyone; still, people without knowing the Form of Bliss have bewildered that they obtain happiness only by enjoying the sensual objects. But, the reality is this: The Bliss is equal to the Brahman which is the Supreme Reality. God, Himself, is the real Reality. Nothing, exists other than Him.

आनन्दो ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् । आनन्दाद्येव खल्विमानि
भूतानि जायन्ते । आनन्देन जातानि जीवन्ति ।

आनन्दं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्तीति ॥ (तै. 3.6)

भृगु went to his father and requested him to instruct about the real Reality of the Brahman. His father वरुण said : From which Cause all living beings are born; from which Cause they are living; and, in to which Cause these are merged – that is the Brahman. भृगु contemplated within himself and finally concluded : The Bliss itself is the Self of this world; all the living beings are born from the Bliss; they are living in the Bliss; and, at last, they merge in It. Therefore, if It is seen really, we need not obtain the Bliss newly. From time immemorial, we have ignorantly put on the veil of egotism; if we discard the veil, the Reality that God is our own Form may flash in the mind. For this, attachment towards sensual objects should vanish; and, love towards God should appear. If we remove the egotism through devotion, then our meanness (अल्पत्व) is revealed; and, we understand that the mean happiness that appear in the trifling (तुच्छ) sensual objects is not at all the Real Happiness and God's Own Form itself is the Real Bliss.

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यत्र नान्यत् पश्यति नान्यत् शृणोति
नान्यद्विजानाति स भूमा अथ यत्रान्यत् पश्यति अन्यत्
शृणोति

अन्यद्विजानाति तदल्पं यो वै भूमा तदमृतं अथ
यदल्पं तन्मर्त्यम् ॥ छा. 7-24-1.

Where nothing is seen, nothing is heard and nothing is understood that Itself is भूमा; then, the one sees something, he hears something, and knows something; and that is mean (अल्प). Which is भूमा that itself is Immortality; then, which is mean, that is mortal. (Cha. 7-24-1).

According to this sentence of the उपनिषद्, really the भूमा named God Himself exists every-where; in spite of this, worldly people, due to their weak-mindedness, see the trifling sensual objects; by enjoying them they obtain the mean reflecting happiness; and they suffer in the worldly life. When they find out God of the Form of Supreme Bliss, they understand : सकलमिदमहं च वासुदेवः 'I am वासुदेव and all these too'. Now, egotism is the obstacle to know the Reality; and its removal itself is the greatest help of the devotion. By the word अतः the devotional guide (भक्त्याचार्यः) has pointed out that itself.

The Making of Sai Krushna Mandir

Construction Update

With the Divine Blessings and grace of our Beloved Swami, the Phase 1 of the children's home – Sai Krushna Mandir – is now operational. **The "Gruhapravesam" (House Warming Ceremony) of the children's home was held on 3rd June and the first four children that were identified attended the function.**

On June 23rd, two of the children joined the children's home. Another two will be joining in the first week of July. These children are being given free education in the Sharavathi Kannada Higher Primary School being managed by Sai Krushna Charitable trust. These children are in Class 1 with the medium of instruction being English.

We have found some volunteers to live with and take care of the children. We also invite applications for suitable caretakers. The caretakers would also be paid suitably as per their experience and ability. We are open to families coming and joining who feel the inclination to participate and involve in Swami's project. Volunteer families would be provided with suitable accommodation and their children would be given appropriate educational facilities also.

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We are also looking out for a cook and watchman for the children's home. Interested people may contact us on +91 9663222362 or by email.

By Swami's grace the Phase 1 of Sai Krushna Mandir is now complete. The next few weeks will involve the installation of solar street lights in front of the building. Solar hot water facility is also being considered subject to availability of funds. The members of the SKM construction team are also making frequent site visits to monitor the quality and quantum of progress.

We thank Swami for arranging for the funding for the construction of the boundary wall through His instruments. This has been successfully constructed. This was an essential requirement from the perspective of safety and security for the children and inmates and we thank the sincere devotees who have enabled this activity.



Sai Krushna Mandir after completion



1.The completed Phase 1 of Sai Krushna Mandir. 2. The two children who joined the children's home on 23 June. 3. Children being a part of the grihapravesham pooja. 4. Decorating Lord Ganesha's idol. 5. Prasadam 6. Distribution of prasadam and ice creams to the school children.

We look forward to all your active involvement and participation in this God given opportunity. We also welcome you to come and visit the site and witness the making of Sai Krushna Mandir. From our side, we will keep you updated through Venugaanam and the website. You are free to contact us directly for any further information. We are confident that, just as Swami's bounteous blessings is ensuring the completion of Phase 1 of construction, Swami's grace will crown our genuine intentions and He will continue to guide and bless the children and residents to live in a happy home and grow to His ideals.

Giving in Kind(ness)

by Lalita Rao

Lalita Rao studied, worked and lived in Boston, USA for more than two decades. After moving back to Bangalore two years ago, she has been working at the Public Affairs Foundation, Bangalore. While in Boston, she served as a youth adviser for the Northeast Region (Region 1) of the USA Sathya Sai Organization, and was a Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) teacher and coordinator at the Boston Sai Center for many years. Currently, she is also closely associated with the development of the Sharavathi Kannada Higher Primary School in Hosadoddi village. She lends her enthusiasm, professionalism, time management and sincerity to every activity she takes up.

There is an oft-quoted incident where Swami, in an interview, questioned a lady devotee on the type of rice that she gives away in charity. The lady had started narrating to Swami how she puts aside a fistful of rice

every day to give away to people looking for food. *Is the rice that you give away of the same variety/quality as the one consumed at your home?** Swami wanted to know. Yes Swami, the lady apparently replied and, maintained her

answer even after repeated questioning. Foolish. To insist on anything with the Avatar. Even more foolish to think that one can get away with it. Swami, the story goes, walked into the inside room and brought out a little bundle in a red cloth and, feigning anger, thrust it towards the lady – *Is this not the rice that you gave away?** The rice was of an inferior quality and full of stones. The same little cloth bundle. Definitely one of those *chulloo bhar paani mein doobna* moments! – If there was a puddle of water in the interview room, surely the lady would want to disappear into it. [*written from memory of the story I read – not a verbatim or verified quote].

As I researched the different type of receipts a Charitable Trust has to track, record and report, one of the categories I came across was 'in kind' receipts of items that we had to track. This set off a long chain of thoughts that finally rested on the above incident.

Cute as the story is in demonstrating Swami's omnipresence, it is not so cute when we think of the lady's discomfiture. It is even less so when we delve into our own memory and check if we ever did anything like this – in however small a magnitude. When I give away clothes, do I give away only those that I have discarded because of wear and tear? Is my intent only to clear my closet during spring cleaning? Or, do I give away clothes that are in fairly good condition, that are still good enough for *me* to wear? Do I ensure that the clothes I give away are neatly washed and pressed? Or, do they look like they can only be used as dusters or mop clothes? Even better, would I take out from my closet something that I *really* like and give it away to someone? How about that expensive silk saree that I have worn only once in the last ten years? Would I give it to someone that probably couldn't afford such a saree, and would definitely appreciate it and use it more than I do?

I am reminded of another story: Swami brought out two expensive and richly brocaded silk sarees and presented them to a gardener/service worker at the Brindavan Campus. The worker's daughter was getting married and so, Swami asked him to take the two sarees home and have the ladies choose one of them for the bride. One of Swami's aides (I forget who it was – maybe Shri

Ramabrahmam garu) whispered to Swami that, maybe the sarees were a little too rich and expensive for the family in question. Well meaning I am sure, that the sarees should be something that the family would be comfortable with. Swami's response, however, was precious. *When would the family ever be able to afford and enjoy such a saree?* It was a happy occasion, and Swami wanted the bride to enjoy wearing such an expensive and lovely saree that the family otherwise couldn't afford. Such loving kindness and compassion! And, no judgement on their social or economic status, or whether they 'deserved' such a saree. Surely, they deserved to be happy and joyous? And that is all Swami cared about.

I remember an incident from an SSE (Sai Spiritual Education) class at our Center. Every Christmas or thereabouts, the Boston Center does a toy drive – we ask children and their families to bring one toy and put it in a box at the Center. The toys are distributed in the community as Christmas gifts to children in needy families. We usually ask them to bring a new, unopened toy. Sometimes, we say that if a toy is clean and in a *good and working condition* (no missing and broken parts), it can be deposited in the box even if it is a used one. If not at Christmas, the used toys can be given away at another time. When I announced the initiative in the class, the younger children were very excited. Certainly they would bring a toy and deposit it in the box, they chorused. Of course, all of them had plenty of toys, and giving one away was not an issue. I decided to push the envelope one little bit more! *Would you bring a toy that you still love and play with? A favorite toy maybe? Would you share the joy of this wonderful toy with another child?* Not a broken toy, or a discarded toy, or a toy that you want to get rid of, to make place for a new one. *A toy that you still love and want.* Silence. They all looked at each other, and at me. Little pairs of unblinking eyes. Had I grown two heads? Slowly, one child piped up, *'yes, I can bring one toy that I still like'*. All of them nodded, with varying degrees of certainty. Still thinking....doubtful....but thinking. I forget the outcome; I am sure some of them did bring toys that they loved and still wanted to play with. The thought had been shared and registered – Giving in Kind means Giving in Kindness; sharing a toy (or any other item) that you love means sharing Love itself.

Golden Moments

by Sowmya Roopa

Sowmya Roopa completed her B.A in 1987 and B.Ed in 1988. She received her gold medal for distinction in B.Ed from the Sri Sathya Sai University. She taught at the Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar Ootacamund from 1989 till 1991. From 1991 till 2000, she taught at the Sai Sathya Sai Primary school, Puttaparthi. Sowmya Roopa was invited to the Sai Sathya Sai Schools, Rishikesh and Kathmandu in 2000 and 2001. There she shared her knowledge about value-oriented education with the teachers and students through talks, poems, songs, charts and demonstration. Currently, she writes value-based skits and paints quotation boards. In this series, she shares her experiences and learning as a student and staff in Swami's educational institutions.

A few months had passed as a teacher at Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar, Ooty. On June 1989, Bhagwan called us, a small group of "Ooty teachers" for an interview. It was my first interview as a teacher.

Bhagwan said, "Fish is better than a selfish person. A fish cleans the water it lives in. Whereas, a selfish person does not contribute to anything in society."

Our Jagat Guru said, "Teachers and parents should not be like Dhritarashtra and Gandhari. Do not be blind to the faults of the children. A good mother controls her child with one look. The vision of the mother is beneficial for her children. Since the Kauravas did not get Gandhari's motherly vision upon them, they were unlucky. Since Gandhari blindfolded herself, she did not do her Putra Dharma, the Dharma of a mother towards her children. Look at what the children do. Correct them when they make mistakes and instantly appreciate them for the good that they do.

As an inexperienced teacher, I was attempting to find the balance between Love and Law. Teaching history to 12-13 year-old boys was easy but dealing with a cheeky boy who wrote about cricket in a history test was a daunting task. To ensure discipline without curbing natural boyish boisterousness is as much an art as pruning a rose bush! So, I asked Bhagwan, "Bhagwan, how should we control children? They don't pay heed to us!" Bhagwan kindly answered me, "Tell them again and again." Today, I realize that is exactly what Bhagwan, our teacher has been doing with us, His naughty students. He has repeated with immense patience and love, the same lessons for years and years the lessons of Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema,

Ahimsa and Kshama. He has taught by personal example, stories, jokes and songs with untiring zeal.

A brick knows only its own arduous journey from clay to foundation brick. Does it know the toil of the brick maker who makes thousands of bricks for the edifice?

A couplet by Kabir says, "Karat Karat Abhyas te, Jadmati hot sujan, Rasri avat Jat le, sil par parat nishan." Meaning – By practice a dullard can become knowledgeable just like a mark can be made on even a stone by repeatedly rubbing a rope on it.

Recapitulation re-assessment and repetition are necessary for any type of learning. As we recollect the abundance we all received from Bhagwan...the gifts, teachings, encouragement, guidance, care, protection...lovingly showered upon us...each of us bow at His lotus feet and ask, "Oh sweet Mother, what can I do for you?"

This reminds me of a little conversation in the darshan grounds. Bhagwan had just given sarees to all the teachers and the Warden of the Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Mrs Prem Behl asked Bhagwan, "Swami, You give us all so much, what can we give you?" It was a gratitude-filled yearning echoing in the hearts of many devotees. Bhagwan smiled and said, "Pure heart! I want only a pure heart and you have it." Bhagwan gave each of us the gift of a pure heart...keeping it pure by His grace needs constant effort, recapitulating lessons until it becomes a part of us.

Thank you Bhagwan for patiently repeating the lessons You want us to learn. Hope we learn them soon.