



VENUGAANAM

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From Team Venugaanam

We are delighted to bring you the 66th edition of Venugaanam this June.

In this edition, we bring excerpts from Swami's Divine Discourses compiled in Prema Vahini where Swami talks about desires and Namasmarana.

In Atmajyothi, We move on to the next section about devotion and its categories.

After a brief update on SKM activities, Renganathan talks about the importance of perseverance and action as we move on our spiritual journey.

We conclude with a Chinna Katha that focuses on experiencing Ananda and overcoming Karma.

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

Sath-Sankalpa Is The path for attaining The Presence

Source: Prema Vahini

For Maya-constituted beings, there are two Maya gates: the appetite for sex and the appetite of the tongue. These two have to be conquered by every man; so long as they persist, they cause sorrow. All worldly desires are comprehended by these two. So, only those who have mastered these two can be said to have successfully waded through the world. These are the causes of all sins; and sin is the manure on which Maya thrives. Really speaking, this Maya-prapancha or world has to serve only the purpose of just sustaining the body. Those aspiring for Liberation have to subdue the senses. "Food for guarding the body, dress to ward off the cold," says the Uttara Gita. If Man, however, gets immersed in these pursuits, he will forget the purpose for which he has come and the goal of all activity and holy endeavour. Instead, whatever activity a person may be engaged in, he must, as automatically as he takes in breath, be contemplating on these lines and should always be aware

of this: "I am born to serve God and to realise my true Self." All acts—wearing, eating, walking, studying, serving, moving—should be performed in the belief that they take one into the Presence. Everything should be done in a spirit of dedication to the Lord.

A farmer clears and levels the land, removes the stones and thorns, ploughs and prepares the field, manures and strengthens the soil, waters and fertilizes it, and sowing, transplanting, weeding, spraying and waiting, he reaps the crop, and after winnowing and threshing, he stacks the corn. All these various processes are for the sake of the stomach. So too, one must feel that all the hunger, thirst, joy and sorrow, grief and loss, suffering and anger, food and appetite are but impulses helping us towards attaining the Presence of the Lord. When one has this attitude, sin will never tarnish these activities. The appetites too will vanish, without a vestige of name or form.

The taste of food cannot be grasped if the person is ill or if the mind is elsewhere. So also, even if one is engaged in Namasmarana, Bhajana, Japa or Dhyaanam, if the heart is full of Thamas or if it is wayward, no joy can be experienced. The tongue will be sweet, so long as there is sugar upon the tongue. If there is the pillar of light, Bhakthi, in the corridor of the heart, there will be no darkness. The heart will be illumined in Bliss. A bitter thing on the tongue makes the whole tongue bitter. When qualities like greed and anger enter the heart, the brightness disappears and darkness dominates and Man becomes the target of countless griefs and losses. Therefore, those who aspire to attain the holy Presence of the Lord must acquire certain habits, disciplines and qualities. The usual ways of life will not lead to God. They have to be modified by means of sadhana. Look at the crane, it walks about pretty fast in water. But during the walk, it cannot catch any fish. It must, become slow, quiet and stand motionless. So also if one proceeds with greed, anger and similar qualities, one cannot secure the fish of

Sathya, Dharma and Shanthi. A person must practice Namasmarana. Then only can he master the attributes of greed, anger, etc. All Sastras teach this one lesson: since the Lord is the universal Goal and Life has Him as the destination, keep Him constantly in view and subdue the mind which makes you wander from the path. All the good qualities automatically gather around those who practise control of speech and constant contemplation of the Lord. In Dwapara Yuga, the Kauravas, even while experiencing the fruits of their previous Punya (meritorious acts), were engaged in Papakarma (evil activity). The Pandavas, even while suffering due to previous Papakarma, were thinking and doing only Punya! This is the difference between the wise and unwise. The Kauravas were slaves of hunger and sex and Pandavas did every act for sake of the Lord, having Sathya and Dharma as their Charioteer. Those who are in grief can never feel interest in either a feast or a fight. The real aspirant immersed in thoughts of God can never taste or even think of worldly objects of enjoyment.

Atmajyothi

-by Shri Lakshminarayan Aithal

THE SECONDARY DEVOTION

गौणी त्रिधा गुणभेदादार्तादिभेदाद्वा ॥
56 ॥

56. There are three types in the secondary devotion. The three types are due to either the difference of qualities, or the difference in devotion due to affliction, etc.

गुणभेदाद्

108. Now, a deliberation on the secondary devotion is commenced. Amongst two views, each one has three divisions in the secondary devotion. A detailed account of good (सत्त्व), passion (रजस्) and ignorance (तमस्)- qualities is given in the 14th, 17th and 18th chapters of the **भगवद्गीता**. In the 14th chapter, it is told how the qualities bind a living being; then, the deliberation of a Supreme Devotee who transgresses all the qualities – is taken up. Therefore, though the Supreme Devotion is chief topic, aiming at the marks of the Supreme Devotee, the devotion of the practitioner may be a good one (सात्त्विक). While explaining the कर्मयोग, the Lord tells as follows :-

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन
॥ गी. 2-45.

According to this verse, the actions conducted by the people of worldly illusion (संसारि) according to their respective desires may be called as that of passion (रजस्). Therefore, the devotion with the desire of the performer of such actions may be called as the passionate one. In the 17th chapter, among sacrifice, donation and penance – each one is classified in to good, passion and ignorance – groups. An ignorant devotee who faithfully worships God may be having the ignorant devotion (तामस भक्ति). All these three belong to the category of the Secondary Devotion and not the Chief One. For, these devotions don't have the Supreme Love in God. These secondary devotions towards God are formed according to the chief quality in the inner – instrument (अन्तःकरण) of an individual devotee.

आर्तादि गुणभेदाद् वा

109. Or, it may be told that the secondary devotion has three kinds due to difference of affliction. In the 7th chapter of भगवद्गीता, he tells as follows:

चतुर्विध भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनो र्जुन
। आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ
॥

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त
एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ॥ गी. 7-16, 17.

A devotee, aiming at a certain use, exercises devotion; according to that the devotion is also divided in four classifications. A devotion depends upon the quality of love in God; similar to the divisions like good, etc. these four classifications are also depend upon the Quality of the Supreme Devotion; therefore, these four are secondary devotions.

A distressed-devotee (आर्तभक्त) takes refuge in God in order to get rid of affliction when he suffers from either thieves, or cruel animals like tiger, etc; or diseases. A devotee-investigator (जिज्ञासु भक्त) devotedly desires to know the Principle of God. A devotee who desires wealth (अर्थार्थी) takes refuge in God in

order to have a plenty of wealth, grain, etc – thus, श्री शंकराचार्य has defined different devotions. But, this Spiritual Guide of Devotion has a totally different opinion regarding the Distressed – Devotee. According to him, a devotee tries to have Devotion for the Supreme; he worships God in order to have only Love in God. The मुकुन्दमाला tells :-

नास्था धर्मे न वसुनिचये नैव
कामोपभोगे यद्यद्भव्यं भवतु भगवन्
पूर्वकर्मानुरूपम् ।
एतत्प्रार्थ्यं मम बहुमतं
जन्मजन्मान्तरेऽपि
त्वत्पादाम्बुरुहयुगगता निश्चला
भक्तिरस्तु ॥ मु.मा.7.

'I don't have either hope in the righteousness, or desire to accumulate wealth. O Lord, according to previous action whatever comes, let it come. But, I want only one thing more than anything else, that is, may I have the Bliss of Devotion at your Lotus Feet in every future birth of mine' Here, the Distressed – Devotee prays that he doesn't have the desire of either righteousness, or wealth or happy living; he desires to have the Bliss of

Devotion at the Lotus Feet of the Lord. He doesn't also have the fear of birth and death in the worldly illusion; he needs only Devotion in God. The main difference between this secondary devotion and the Supreme One is mentioned : An Imperceptible – Wise (परोक्षज्ञानी) has the Distressed – Devotion that he continuously listens to

the qualities and stories of the Lord devotedly; he doesn't taste anything other than the Bliss of Love in God; and, this is the Distressed – Devotion (आर्तभक्ति). The Supreme Devotion is to perceive directly God's Own Form; and, the Devotee absorbs in the investigation of the Reality.



Updates from SKM

Its been a quiet month of May with the children away from their SKM home.

While we await the return of the children, the SKM team has been working on the boundary wall for phase 2 and towards ideas to make the trust activities more self sustaining.

We have also been exploring ways to provide high quality drinking water to all the villagers in the nearby villages.

Wood work is in progress to ensure better organization of the children's home.



The Importance of Action and Perseverance

-by Renganathan K

The other articles in this issue talk deeply about devotion, the importance of good company and the need to focus on God and not on worldly desires. Inspiring as those words are, I dare say that many of us have found it frustrating at one point of time or the other to continue steadfastly on this journey. The desire for a particular object, food or even person has strayed even the most devout of persons and the most wise of us as well.

In such a situation, it is very easy to give up totally on this path and allow life to take its course in whatever manner it may choose. However, this does not serve any purpose. If we consider life as a game, we are in a situation where the game has started and leaving mid-way is not an option. The referees and spectators are always there encouraging us. But ultimately, it is We who have to play the game.

When playing the game, slowing down or even stumbling is natural. Once Lord Vishnu was questioned about his “quick response” to Dhruva’s devotion and prayers while other sages and saints did not get that fortune despite more years of penance with similar devotion. The Lord then showed this person a place where there were mountains made of bones. He indicated that these mountains were made out of bones of Dhruva’s previous births. In each of these births, he was devoted and continued on his journey. In his last birth before becoming Dhruva, he had glimpsed a prince passing by. At this time, there was a fleeting desire that he also be a prince. Despite such devotion and practice over multiple births, the desires had not left him completely. It was to fulfil this desire that he was born as a prince and ultimately sought the lord again.

There are two points to be noted here. One, is the number of births that one takes before merging in the Divine. In game parlance, we are talking about a long marathon and not a 100 metre sprint. It is only natural that this journey be peppered by challenges at some points and bonuses at others. The focus then is on perseverance and persistence. The second point is about stumbling and slipping. Irrespective of the distance we have covered in our journey, slipping and stumbling can happen at any time. It is even OK to slip and stumble. In Rocky Balboa's words, *"it ain't about how hard ya hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done!"*

The point is to be loving on ourselves, forgive ourselves when we slip and keep moving forward. Quitting is not an option. Only Winning is.

**DON'T
QUIT!**

EVERY DIFFICULTY IS AN OPPORTUNITY IN DISGUISE!

Overcoming Karma and Experiencing Ananda

Once when the sage Narada was proceeding to Vaikuntha, the heavenly abode of the Lord, he espied a yogi (renunciant) who was engaged in severe ascetic practices. The yogi prayed to Narada to bring back from Vaikuntha information about the date of his becoming entitled to enter into the Lord's abode. Narada promised to do so.

When Narada stood in the presence of God, he pleaded on behalf of the yogi and asked that he may be informed of the date. The Lord replied, "Tell him that he will be coming here after as many more births as there are leaves on the tree under which he is currently doing penance." Narada felt sad and dispirited when he thought of the grief into which the yogi would be thrown into on hearing this disheartening verdict of the Lord. But he mustered courage to announce it nevertheless, for, the yogi insisted on learning the news that he had assured to bring.

When Narada at last broke the demoralizing decision of the Lord, contrary to his expectations, the yogi was transported into a realm of joy; he was not dispirited in the least. He jumped and danced in glee. He was lost in the thrill of his dream being so near actual fulfillment. He became oblivious to the world around and was filled with ecstasy thinking of the Lord and offering Him his profound gratitude. The Lord was so pleased with the joy of the yogi that He himself appeared before him and offered him Vaikuntha immediately. But, the yogi said, he would bide his time, for, he did not like the Lord's word, which Narada had brought, to be falsified!

Chinna Katha

The Lord now had to convince him that good deeds, noble thoughts and sacred feelings can wipe out the tracings of bad; therefore, by his enthusiastic acceptance of the Lord's will he has actually overcome the consequences of past actions. The Law of Karma is not an iron law; by dedication and purification, which invites Divine benediction, its effects can be modified, and its rigour mitigated. Do not despair; do not lose heart. When vices hold sway over your heart it becomes foul and sooty; the flames of kaama, krodha and lobha (desire, anger and greed) char the heart. What quenches these flames is the Grace of the Lord. Grace confers bliss (anandam), which the evil tendencies (kama, krodha and lobha) can never confer.

