



VENUGAANAM

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From Team Venugaanam

We are delighted to bring you the 63rd edition of Venugaanam this March.

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. A special story of Hanuman's experience proves to be enlightening.

We invite all of you on Sunday, 12th March 2017 for the inauguration of Sai Krushna Arogya Dham- Free Dispensary. The doctors of the SSSIHMS, Whitefield campus will be sparking off the proceedings with a medical camp and Sai Satyanarayana Puja. This and more in the SKM updates .

Later in the issue, Prakash shares his thoughts on going the herbal way. This is followed by the second and concluding part of Bhargav's narrations of his trip to Badrinath.

We conclude with a Chinna Katha highlighting the futility of judging others.

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

After being a householder and experiencing the sorrow, happiness and joy and learning the true significance of all these, man has to retire into the forest, when he reaches the age of 45 or 50, leaving the house he has built and the place where he lived. If his wife is alive then, he has to take her consent and entrust her to the care of the son or her parents or take her also with him and treat her like a brother, himself being immersed in Brahmacharya. There is a great change even in diet. He has to eat roots and fruits and drink only milk. Things should not be baked full but only up to a third. Rice should not be used much. If it is not possible to arrange diet for oneself on these lines, he can visit the village near by and collect food by begging. But he has to bring the food into the forest and eat it there, in his own habitation. He has to give to his dependants the same food that he takes, for they cannot prepare food they prefer, or get it supplied. If they do not relish it, they have to be content with milk

and fruits only, for he must not change his routine for satisfying others. However troublesome it may be, the discipline should not be modified, or given up. This is to be specially noted. He cannot have any worship, or alms giving or any such duties. Even if he gives food or articles to others, it cannot be regarded as alms or Dana. He cannot also receive as Dana anything from others. He must have the same pure Love towards all in equal measure. Discarding old clothes once a year, he must don new clothes, in the Aswija month. Chandrayanavrath is the most important of the Vanaprastha vrathas (vows). During that month, he must eat for the first fifteen days, every day a morsel less and for the remaining fifteen, a morsel more every day. He has to take only conjee on the New and Full Moon days. In the rainy season, he must do Thapas standing in the rain. In winter, he must wear wet clothes while engaged in Thapas. Performing such asceticism systematically, he has to bathe three times a day

Swami's Discourse

The various Upanishadic statements are to be studied, their meanings understood and experienced. If such a Vanaprastha falls victim to any disease, the diet routine has to be cancelled and he has to live on air and water. He shall walk on and on, in the north-eastern direction until he dies. On the other hand, if he has no bodily disease and if he is hale and hearty, he will

experience, after he has adopted the above disciplines, the spontaneous Dawn of True Knowledge. By means of this Knowledge, he will attain Moksha (liberation). How does this lead to self realization? Arent these merely bodily limitations? These questions are answered in the second part of the discourse which will be published in the next edition.



Atmajyothi

-by Shri Lakshminarayan Aithal

This ocean of worldly illusion is so terrible, still, only a fortunate ones only cross :-

दैवी दृश्या गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया
। मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति
ते ॥ गी. 7-14.

According to the expression of the Lord, this Illusion made of three qualities is very difficult to ford, still those who surrender only to God cross the Illusion; or why one should tell that they cross ? As people holding each an umbrella walk without care of heat of the sun, so the devotees without care of the Illusion conduct properly themselves. For them, the illusion itself has disappeared.

स तरति स तरति स लोकांस्तारयति ॥
50 ॥

50. He crosses (the illusion); he crosses; and, he alone crosses the people.

97. या मा सा माया. According to this statement, the Illusion is that which is not the real one. It is very difficult to ford the Illusion for the ignorant ones. But,

त्यय्यम्बुजाक्षाखिलसत्त्वधाम्नि
समाधिनावेशित चेतसैके ।

त्वत्पादपोतेन महत्कृतेन कुर्वन्ति
गोवत्सपदं भवाब्धिम् ॥ भाग. 10-2-
30.

According to this praising of श्री कृष्ण conducted by ब्रह्म and others, the devotees keep their mind only in God; for them, His Holy Feet have become a ship to cross the ocean of the worldly illusion which has become smaller than the hoof – impression of a little calf.

स्वयं समुत्तीर्य सुदुस्तरं द्युमन्
भवार्णवं भीममदभ्रसौहृदाः ।

भवत्पादाम्बोरुहनावमत्र ते निधाय
याताः सदनुग्रहो भवान् ॥ भाग. 10-2-
31.

Such praise worthy people, themselves, have crossed the ocean of worldly illusion and they have left the Boat of the Lotus Feet of God, here itself, for others to cross it over. Therefore, with the help of that Boat, even common people can cross the ocean.

12. THE GLORY OF LOVE
अनिर्वचनीयं प्रेमस्वरूपम् ॥ 51 ॥

51. Love's Own Form is inexplicable one.

98. Is it not told that the

crosses the Illusion ? What is the Principle of that Love ? Anyone can ask this question . That is in-susceptible of description. As soon as this Love is born the Illusion is disillusioned; and, only this much of answer can be given.

In order to apprehend this, a story can be illustrated : After destroying रावण and others at लङ्का, श्री रामचन्द्र along with सीता was returning back to अयोध्या in the पुष्पक – air craft; विभीषण and monkey – retinue also accompanied him; while returning, मारुति, the best among the devotees started to ruminate about his exploits : 'Crossing the hundred योजनाs (about 900 miles) of the ocean, the message of seeing सीता was brought to श्री राम by me alone. While constructing the bridge, I have carried many big mountains and I have dropped them down in site of construction; when लक्ष्मण- god fell un-conscious, have I not brought the सञ्जीवन- Mountain ? Killing innumerable राक्षसाs and helping श्री राम to give the kingdom to विभीषण, have not accomplished the work ? Behold, I am ever ready to do the work of श्री राम !'

As हनुमान् was contemplating his exploits of heroism, the omniscient श्री रामचन्द्र said : 'मारुति, I am thirsty; do you bring a little water ?' The active leader मारुति, soon accepted the order of his Lord and jumped out of the flying air – craft. He searched for water here and there. Water was nowhere to be found. That was a very vast scorched land. The air craft was heading towards अयोध्या in the speed of air. If he would not fetch water immediately purpose of searching of would be futile. At a great distance, he saw a reservoir. But, by that time, मारुति was tired more than enough. Therefore, he thought of taking rest for a while and then to take water. 'My speed is certainly more than that of the air – craft ! Look, here !' He came near the lake which was filled with the cold water; many lotus flowers were blossomed; and, the cool breeze from the lake side was agreeable to him. That site was really an attractive one. He plucked a lotus – leaf, prepared a cup out of it. He was about to fill water

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in it. Suddenly, there appeared a guard shouting at him : 'Without a permission of our mistress, why have you plucked the stalk of the lotus ?'

मारुति politely said : 'O sir, I'm the passenger of श्री राम; you might have heard of हनुमान् . श्री राम is thirsty; there is no time to talk; I take water and go.' Then, the guard told roughly : 'I don't know the messenger of either राम or काम! Come, to the court!' He simply dragged मारुति towards a cave. When the later saw the opening of the cave, he remembered स्वयं प्रभा whom he had met early. Then, मारुति, thought : 'Well, she is very kind lady. If I tell about my purpose of coming, she will certainly help me. I, know her.' He entered the cave. There, was large palace. The guard, took him a corner hall. By that time, a person with a chain came near मारुति to tie him up. Enraged मारुति, in order to retaliate, raised his fisted hand. And, lo ! He could not move his hand. That person, laughed at him : 'Alas, O monkey ! you, don't know your fate!' Then, he tied the monkey to a pillar. मारुति desperately looked around

and saw ninety nine other tied monkeys similar to his form to the different pillars. Then, the bewildered and frightened मारुति asked the nearby monkey : 'O sir, what is this ? Why are you all tied up here ?' Then, that monkey replied : 'Sir, I'm हनुमान् , who went to लङ्का in the mission of श्री राम. I came here in order to fetch water and, somehow, I'm caught by the illusion of the राक्षसाs. All these tied monkeys call themselves 'हनुमान्'. Look, here, the monkey that was tied to your pillar was taken to chop to prepare curry !' Then, a beautiful lady came towards to मारुति and selected him. A black servant dragged him to the kitchen. The head - cook came with a sharp knife. What happened to the prowess of who had killed millions of demons ? Now, the helpless मारुति closed his eyes and started to pray his Lord, श्री राम. Was he dreaming ? When he opened his eyes, he was sitting at the same corner of the air - craft. Within fifteen minutes many incidents happened in front of him. हनुमान् understood that his power was श्री राम alone. That was the Glory of Love!

Updates from SKM

We are happy to invite all of you on 12th March 2017 for the inauguration of Sai Krushna Arogya Dham. The free dispensary will be started along with a Sai Sathyanarayana Puja and a medical camp to be conducted by the doctors from the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Whitefield campus.

The dispensary is also a tribute to Balu Sir, who cherished the dream of free medical service for all villagers. We sincerely hope that all of you will be able to grace the occasion with your presence and involvement.

In this edition of SKM updates, we have the latest updates from the SSS Vidya Vahini sessions in school, Shivarathri bhajans in school, special sessions for the school children being conducted by IAME volunteers, and the SKM children at play.

We are also planning to implement the No More Boring Walls concept at school wherein the school corridors will be lit up by inspiring and insightful material to enhance the learning environment.

More of this through pictures in this section.



SKM children at play



Distribution of chocolates to all students before Shivaratri





PhotoCollage

Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vahini sessions in progress for the teachers



Volunteers from IAME college helping students to learn



PhotoCollage



Visit by
Whitefield
doctors :
Dr Krishna
Rao and
others to
the school
and
dispensary



Prayers
and
bhajans
for
Shivarathri



Going the Herbal Way

-by Prakash Srinivasan

Mother Nature has nurtured man through the ages and in the ancient times, man survived by only depending on nature for food and his subsistence. God has endowed nature with almost everything we need and if not for nature, sooner or later we will perish too.

Another almost infinite thing is that nature has a solution and cure for almost anything and the food we eat, fruits and vegetables have a healing effect on us. They provide us with all the nourishment we need be it vitamins, minerals and all other essential nutrients. The ancient science of Ayurveda is primarily based on how the entire family of plants/herbs have curative properties that can cure almost any kind of disease. Many of our home remedies for the common ailments are based on readily available plants like Tulsi, Neem, Methi etc.

As time passed, we started forgetting the natural and herbal way and allopathy emerged as a powerful alternative. Again, we are at a time when herbal remedies and cures are gaining popularity as (in most cases) they are devoid of any side-effects. Of course, allopathy remains very relevant for advanced emergencies like surgeries etc but for all other ailments which are not emergencies the Ayurvedic solutions are worth trying. Apart from Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Naturopathy, Acupuncture, Reiki have also become popular and in many cases they have yielded excellent results as they remove the root cause of the ailment.

My personal opinion is that Allopathy can be used when it is most needed but in all other cases we can go back to Mother Nature and embrace these solutions. There are so many reputed companies who have become pioneers in this field like Himalaya, Dabur etc. Even for preventive wellness, we have so many options like juice therapy which can go a long way in even preventing the common disorders that affect us. Many people have started growing these medicinal plants at home and are reaping the benefits of healthy living.

Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati – Part II

-by Bhargav KVRK

(continued from previous edition)

My brother, sitting next to me prodded me in asking help from Swami. So in a way which would remind anyone of the 'Stunt Devotion' which Bhagawan always refers to, I raised both my arms to the skies and called upon Swami. "Swami we both are stuck here, please take us to Badrinath." Lo and behold, from behind the blind curve, a vehicle sped towards us and came to a screeching halt. It was neither an A/C Volvo bus nor a luxury sedan, it was an antique black Maruti van which looked less like an automobile more like an overloaded bullock cart whose old bullocks were struggling to pull the load. The driver of this god sent car smiled at me but the owner, I presume, who was sitting next to him had a grumpy face. The posterior portion of the van had loads and loads of bags packed with some material. For some divine indications, I quickly looked at the soiled number plate where the registration number was peeping out of the thick veneer of dust. The number didn't add up to nine but one number out of the figure was 9. Probably part time faith will get part time help from God.

I approached the so called owner with a request to give us both a lift. He replied with an air of irritability, "Where is the place you see, we can't take anyone. Our spirits sank but surprisingly the driver interceded for us and said, "Sir, they look very tired, there won't be any other vehicle at this hour, let us take them to Badrinath, or they have to spend their night here in the cold." I was surprised by this gesture of this well-meaning driver. The owner (sure he was) stared at both of us and said, "if you find a place then adjust." He added with a peevish grin, "Before getting in please help us in starting the vehicle." Both of us gathered whatever little energy we had and pushed this beast of burden and it started immediately to our relief. We opened the rear door and were greeted by one more boy in his late teens sitting among the many bags dumped inside. "Where is the place?" I cried out. "Don't worry sir, we will create place for you, just come in." We somehow got into the van and I sat with my head facing the east, my legs the south and both my

hands towards the west. That day I took pride in my yoga induced flexibility. I enquired, "Kya lekar ja rahe ho- What are you transporting?" The boy's face lit up and with lot of reverence he said, "Are sir, this van is full of agarbathis, photos, lamp stands, pendants and key chains." "You know what is common in all of them?" He asked with his eyes full of devotion. He replied quickly with gushing enthusiasm, "Badri Vishal (A popular name of Lord Badri Narayana!) You know, the key chains, pendants and photos are all of Badri Vishal, even the agarbathis, camphor and sandal powder are for his worship. Our good fortune sir, we are going with Badri Vishal to his abode, isn't it?" He sounded a caution, "Please be careful, don't step on them." I tried to find a place to put my feet without touching any of these white plastic bags and felt a joy welling up within me thinking about travelling with god.

The vehicle stopped near a tiny hamlet by the side of the road overlooking a deep gorge and the swiftly flowing Alakananda. There was a small temple with many bells hanging from it. I enquired, "What is this place?" "Sir this is Hanuman Chatti, how can you not see Hanuman before having darshan of his master Badri Narayana? It is all the more so as we are travelling in his vehicle you see-the Maruti." said this lanky teenager with a smile.

We swiftly gained height and in the next one hour, we reached the ridge on which is nestled this city of gods. The sun had taken refuge in the mighty lap of Himalayas. The pure white mountains of Nara and Narayana sat in deep meditation on either side of this city, glowing in the residual light of the twilight. Alakananda was flowing with joyous abandon thinking about its good fortune to eternally wash the feet of these celestial sages. Its water glistened in the light falling from the sodium vapours perched on the temple facade. The gongs of the mammoth temple bell rent the air sending this town into a deep meditative state. The ochre flag with a streak of white on this majestic edifice of faith was fluttering in the chill evening breeze suggesting to the devout to inculcate sacrifice and purity. The temple, a collage of red, yellow and blue was receiving all with open arms and was keeping a protective gaze on all in this abode. Neelkanth parvat with its conical snow clad peak as a backdrop of the Badrinarayana temple filled the

evening sky with awe and wonder.

We were lost in the spectacle in front of us when a sudden halt of the 'Maruti' brought us back. The driver said, "Bhaisaheb, Badri Vishal has come." We alighted from it and thanked the group for this special lift. The sight of this divine abode refreshed us. As the vehicle trundled past, my gaze fell on the caption on the posterior wind shield written in a flowing handwriting in Hindi- Rab Rakha meaning god will take care.

This short trip had a divine flavour and an indelible stamp of His invisible hand. Bhagawan showed that even if your prayers are halfhearted, He takes care... With Bhagawan – Little Bhavam lot of Good Bhavati...

(Concluded)



The “Judging other” Jeopardy

There is a widely prevalent habit now of judging others and labeling them as devotees or Nasthikas (Atheists). What do you know? What can you know of the inner working of another's mind? There was once a queen who was a great devotee of Lord Rama. She felt so sad that her husband, the Raja, never even uttered the name of Rama and had no devotion. She had vowed that the first occasion on which she got evidence of his devotion or at least respect for the name of Lord Rama, she would conduct Puja (worship) in all the temples and feed the poor on a lavish scale.

A few days later, one night, while fast asleep, the Raja uttered the name of Rama thrice plaintively and prayerfully. She heard the Namasmara (chanting of the Divine name) and was happy at the discovery of her husband's devotion to Rama. She ordered general rejoicing throughout the kingdom and the feeding of the poor. The Raja did not know the reason for the celebration for he was only told that it was an order from the Queen, which the officers carried out.

Similarly, a husband may not be aware of the excellence of a wife's spiritual attainments. There is the case of a couple who were proceeding through a thick jungle on pilgrimage to an inaccessible shrine. The husband saw on the footpath a precious stone, shining brilliantly when the sun's rays fell upon it from between the leaves. He hastily threw some sand over it with a movement of his foot so that his wife would not be tempted to pick it up and become a slave to the tinsel. The wife saw the gesture and chided the husband for still retaining in his mind a distinction between sand and diamond. For her, both were the same.