

Sri Hari:

MADHURA MURALI

MAY 2018

Spiritual Monthly
With the Blessings of
HH Maharanyam
Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji





Madhura Geetham

Thaam tham perumai

Ragam: Asaveri

Talam: Adi

Pallavi

thAm tham perumai ariyAdu ninDraNayO
kEshavA! jagatrakshaka!

Charanam

viNNulagam viTTu maNNulagam vandu
manidarukkAga paDAdanapaTTu (thAm)

hiraNyAkshan hiraNyakasipu iruvariDamum
peTra avamAnangaL sollithAn mALumO (thAm)

chakravarti maganAga pirandum
akkarai aDaindu avadi paTTanayO
kaNNanAga anDru pANDavarukkAga
tUdum senDru ninDranayO (thAm)

archAvatAramAi vandu angangu kOvil kONdu
Ayiram Ayiram pizhaigaL porutu
Ayiram Ayiram thAyirkumEl
Ayiram ANDugaLAgA kAtu ninDranayO (thAm)



MADHURASMARANAM

My Guru As I See Him

- Dr A Bhagyanathan

Personal Secretary to Sri Sri Swamiji

On March 15, 2018, several school correspondents, principals and teachers led by Mr. Meenakshi Sundaram, from the Vivekananda Educational Trust schools gathered at Madhurapuri ashram to have darshan of Sri Swamiji. Sri Swamiji's conversation and answers to the questions raised by them hold valuable insights for the teacher-student community.

Q: Our education system teaches the students about our sanathana dharma, culture, traditions and values. After graduation, we see that the students tend to forget about these values that were seemingly ingrained in them. It is disheartening that they do not exhibit even a trace of what they have learnt at school in their lives. Why does this happen after all the emphasis that is laid in the school years?

A: The beauty of sanathana dharma is that it has the entire spectrum of instructions starting from the trivial everyday life tasks to highest goal of attaining God. Every principle of sanathana dharma has a profound meaning to it. It has been codified after carefully considering our

individual well-being, the community's well-being, and the environment and world's well-being. Every principle reflects an in-depth knowledge of scientific truths, nature of the mind and the appreciative tendency of our ancestors. When a young child asks us a question, we threaten the child saying that 'God with stab your eye!' when we do not know the answer to the question or when we do not have the intention to investigate further on the topic. Instead, if we reveal the underlying truth to the young minds, they will appreciate it.

Bhagavat Gita says,
sreyo hi jnanam abhyasaj jnanad dhyanam visisyate
dhyanat karma-phala-tyagas tyagac chantir anantaram

Knowing the reason behind why we are doing something is important. Arjuna says that doing it selflessly takes precedence over this knowledge. Understanding the reason behind each and every action sows a seed in the intellect of the students. After graduation, you don't have to worry about the intractable ways of the students influenced by the world. As years go by, there will be a time when they get tired of their untoward behaviour. At that moment, the intellectual seeds sown by the teachers such as you will flourish and guide them. The knowledge instilled in the young minds during their school years is never 'wasted'.

Q: Often students raise this question: "You teach us about our duties and responsibilities, ask us to be truthful, and tell us not to cheat anyone. What will we achieve in life holding on to these ideals?" What is your answer to this question?

A: The current trend in the world prompts this question among students. Today, success is defined as money and power, even if these entities are acquired wrongfully via lying, cheating, or avoiding responsibilities.

However, there is much more that we do not see. Many people at top of the social ladder, successfully feign an

external facade of happiness while leading an internal struggle of agitation and distress. Mental peace eludes them. The inner clarity and excellence found in an honest, unselfish man is foreign to some of these “successful” people. Money, fame or education alone seldom provide the means for mental peace. As teachers, you should impart that the measure of success is internal peace and clarity and not simply riches and fame. Internalizing this at a young age will guide him/her at the right moment in their lives.

Q: What can we do to make sure that the younger generation remembers and follows the ideals taught to them in their school years?

A: We tend to take for granted the things that come to us easily, compared to the things we make sacrifices to attain. For the younger generation to live by the ideals taught to them, they must understand its worth. Today, we receive many things without our own effort, and hence, we do not appreciate them. For example, we automatically go about the mundane chore of washing and drying out clothes in the sun. Do we pause to think even for a moment, which galaxy the sun belongs to, how big it is, what is it comprised of, and how its heat and light energy have sustained us for ages on the Earth? No. Instead we leave our clothes out to dry, simply because the sun is out. Another example is the freedom we enjoy, a result of the efforts and countless sacrifices of our predecessors. When India was under the rule of the British Empire, many gave up their lives in the prisons of the Andaman Islands, Jallianwalabagh, and other locations to provide the freedom we enjoy today. Soldiers who protect our country’s borders work day and night, sacrificing their comforts to protect our freedom. We need to remind the younger generation of these sacrifices, so the lessons they learn have a greater impact on their lives. This will help them appreciate what they have and also follow what is taught to them.

Q: In today's fast-paced, uncertain world, how can a lesson in a small remote classroom bring about change?

A: Teachers can reform the world. Do not underestimate the impact the teachers can make in the lives of their students. A community is made up of a leader and a number of followers. The leader can influence others to bring about change in the world. Mahatma Gandhi was instrumental in India's independence. He achieved this by following the path of dharma – without the support of an army, the wealthy or the powerful. Modern world leaders continue to follow his philosophy. How is this possible? What he learned in a remote classroom paved the way to reform our country, and consequently, the world. Every teacher is an architect of the future for the world. The spark that they ignite in the student makes him/her a leader. That leader creates a turning point in world history.



RKvel

One feels like hitting one's head and shedding profuse tears while looking at or thinking of the dilapidated state of temples, sprouting of trees in temple towers, and temples bereft of scripture-based puja. One is unable to control the sorrow arising and the tears shed. Who is to be blamed? Can one who calls himself a Hari Bhakta remain in peace after seeing these? (O, Lord!) either you set right all these yourself or take me unto yourself.

- Sri Sri Swamiji

ANSWERS AND BEYOND

SOME DEVOTEES REVEAL THE EXPERIENCES THEY HAVE WITH GOD. IS THIS RIGHT? CAN SUCH EXPERIENCES BE DISCLOSED?

Two people work for a wealthy master. The master does a lot for their benefit and to help them. The first man speaks a lot, to many others, about all the help and favors that the master has done for him. He does this with the good intention that the landlord's virtues should be known to everybody. Like that, some devotees share about all the blessings that God has showered on them with the intention that by listening to this everyone should feel the presence of God's grace and feel that if they too do bhakti, then God will bless them too. The intention of such people is only to tell everyone, "Don't worry!" This is not wrong.

In the case of the second man, when he speaks to others about the help that the master has done for him, the feeling of "I" stands out. He would imply that he was the only one truly eligible for the master's favors; or that it was the master's duty to do those favors; and in fact, he will even say that what the master did was not enough for him. In this there will always be self-centeredness and conceit. Like this, some devotees, while pretending to speak about the grace of God, will instead only showcase their own ego. This is not acceptable and should not be done.

WORLD'S WELFARE!

Sri Swamiji

“Worship of the Lord would ensure the well-being of the world. All in the world would do well. If the Lord is content all in the world would enjoy contentment,” many were attentively listening to these words of the speaker. But the face of one man alone reflected doubt and cynicism. Why? ‘how can the whole world become contented through the worship of a small idol of God? How would it make all in the world happy?’ was the reason for his cynicism.

I will explain this through an illustration. Those who practice evil Mantras harm others through various kinds of evil rituals. There is a technique to do it. They would make a tiny little doll resembling the person they wish to harm. They would do Mantra and Tantra to that doll. As a result, all harm done to the doll and the way they direct or operate the doll would affect the real person concerned. A wicked magician is able to perform this act using just a doll.

Now let us take up the puja of the Lord. When we do puja to Lord Krishna we begin with the word 'visvasmai namah' which means one who is omnipresent. One who fills the world. While showing the cosmic form to Arjuna the Lord showed him that all the fourteen worlds was contained within Him. When the Lord sought three paces of earth of King Blai and measured the world He showed that everything rests in Him.

Krishna is TOTALITY! When we do puja to Him with that feeling the whole world would become joyous. If the world does not, it only goes to show that we have not done the puja properly: the truth is that God is not pleased, content with our Puja.

Yogi Ramsuratkumar was staying in a house in Sannidhi Street in Tiruvannamalai. At that time he thought of a small part of the house as verily the world. He would draw some lines and pictures in that part. If he made any small change in that small part of the house it would bring great changes in world level. That is the truth.

God is whole: omnipresent: controller of the fourteen worlds. Despite being so lofty He is pleased and contented with Namakirtan. Let us also do Namakirtan and please the Lord and thus the world.

Slave to Habit

- DR A BHAGYANATHAN

Mind is a slave to habits. We can tune our mind to traverse the right path. One tries to meditate at 5 am every day. It would be difficult to meditate for several days; even several weeks. If he persistently continues to make an attempt every day, his mind gets conditioned to it in a few months.

Our Swamiji would give a simple and beautiful analogy to this. One returns to India after living in the United States of America for a few years. He dozes away in the day and is wide awake in the night even after he returns. It takes at least ten days for him to get out of this sleep cycle. He wakes up after the sun sets and is up through the night. He sleeps in broad daylight. His mind is the reason for this. In about ten days' time, his mind gets accustomed to the new sleep pattern. Doesn't this explain that his mind is not tuned to day and night, but is tuned to habit and routine?

Sri Sri Swamiji continues his beautiful conversation with devotees from Bengal. He narrates the power of the grace bestowed by Mahatmas and the power of chanting the divine name. The divine dialogue continues...

When we chant the Divine Name incessantly, the power of the divine name thus accumulated will work miracles. Even when we pray for others' wellbeing, the Power of Nama chanted by us, works wonders and answers our prayers for us. But one should have unflinching faith in the power of NAMA. When we chant with unflinching faith, miracles happen easily. One should never ever undermine the power of NAMA. Chant the NAMA incessantly.

A Divine Dialogue

- Sri MK Ramanujam

The relationship one should ideally have with GOD can be likened to that of the one between a Monkey and its child. Just as the baby monkey clings tightly to its mother's belly, we should cling to the Divine Name and chant with utmost faith. Here let me narrate to you the astonishing power of NAMA chanted with unflinching devotion...

Once a foreigner lady came to have Yogi Ram SuratKumar's darshan. Visibly upset, her eyes brimmed with tears. She narrated her plight to Yogi. She said her fiancé to whom she was engaged to be married shortly was arrested by the police and lodged in jail. She said she would not marry anyone else and was now living a miserable life.

Yogi Ramsuratkumar Maharaj saw her plight and advised, “Chant the Divine Name incessantly”. The lady looked unconvinced. But she did not have any other option. She thought to herself, “ I have nothing to lose”. She went back home, locked herself in a room and started chanting NAMA day and night. She limited her food and sleep and chanted Nama most of the day.

Sri Sri Swamiji continued, “I believe it was either Sweden or Spain where the lady’s fiancé was lodged in the jail. One day, there was a celebration in the jail on the auspices of a National day. A prominent leader was invited as the Guest of Honour for the celebration. While delivering his speech, he proclaimed, “ Nothing can be more valuable than freedom for a person lodged here. On this occasion, I would like to give the gift of freedom to one among you. Let’s have a lottery to decide that lucky person”. This was totally unprecedented and unheard of. “ He asked the names of all prisoners to be written on a piece of paper and ordered a lucky draw”. Sri Sri Swamiji [paused here and said., “ Guess what happened, The name of the prisoner drawn in the lucky draw was the fiancé for whom this lady was praying fervently by chanting NAMA incessantly. How does one explain such incidents rationally??” Sri Sri Swamiji wondered.

Sri Sri Swamiji continued, “ You know, why I am telling you all this”? NAMA should not be uttered in a Casual or Haphazard manner. The Divine name should be chanted with utmost fervor, devotion and discipline. If we do so, all our wishes will be fulfilled and prayers will be answered. If it does not happen, then that surely means, there is something lacking in the way we chanted the NAMA. That is the truth. Incessant chanting of Divine Name ,If chanted with complete faith and devotion, becomes a Sadhana, Yoga, Dhyana (Meditation) and even Tapas (Penance). Thousands of miracles of happen. If you ask , “ Is there no benefit if we don’t chant properly”?. There is always benefit of chanting NAMA. Not one NAMA chanted will never go waste. Every NAMA chanted by you gives its own benefits.

Sri Sri Swamiji assured his devotees. “Now, to speak of the extent of benefits NAMA chanting bestows on us, let me cite an example,” Sri Sri Swamiji continued”. Suppose, a child puts in five hours of studies every day before his exams, we know that his result would depend on his hard work, dedication and concentration. Merely putting in 5 hours every day is not enough. The focus and concentration with which he studies will also impact the result. Is it not?” Chanting NAMA for many hours is also beneficial. But having complete faith, devotion and focus while chanting NAMA will yield great results.

“Therefore, Sri Sri Swamiji concluded,” the benefit of NAMA will depend on how long we chant and how much we chant with faith”. The devotee prostrated in front of Sri Sri Swamiji.

Now, another devotee asked a question: “Radhe Radhe Swamiji. In the name of alternative therapy, people practice healing through Reiki, Pranic healing etc. They also heal others. Is this admissible? Does it not mean playing with other people’s Karma”? Please clarify”.



A Tale for Children

Avoid carrying baggage

Once, a Guru was giving a discourse to a group of his devotees. During the discourse, he handed a small cup of water to everyone. The devotees kept the cups in front of them. The Guru asked them all to lift the cup and asked them how heavy the cup was.

Everyone started to respond. Some said it was 100 grams, others said 150 grams and a few devotees said it was not heavy at all. The Guru said, 'you are saying this based on the cup's weight right now. In truth, do you know when the weight will be felt? Although this cup of water is not heavy, if you keep the cup above your head for half an hour or an hour, the heaviness will feel greater. Is it not?'

All devotees nodded their heads in agreement. The Guru then said, 'any challenges we face in life are also similar to that. If we confront the challenge and resolve the issue then and there, we can manage any obstacles in life. On the other hand, if we keep thinking and worrying about a small issue over a long period of time, it will become a major burden and hindrance to our normal life. So, we need to face the challenges as and when they arise with our efforts and prayers, to happily progress in our life.

He ended saying, 'if we follow this advice, our life won't become a burden. Our life challenges also won't appear as burdensome to us'.

The devotees were surprised by the learning from a small cup of water and determined to keep this lesson in their mind for ever.

SANSKRIT WORD
OF THE MONTH

SRI VISHNUPRIYA

चारु

chAru

'Charu' refers to something beautiful and graceful. 'Charulochana' means one with beautiful eyes, 'Charudarshana' refers to something which is beautiful to behold, and 'Charuvaktra' means one with a beautiful face. 'Charu' is usually used to denote divine beauty. Likewise, 'Charusheela' means one with good character and pleasant demeanour. That is why, in the 19th ashtapathi of Jayadeva's Geetha govinda kavya, during her pranaya kalaha, Krishna addressess Radha, the pinnacle of qualities, as "Priye! Charusheeley! Priye! Charusheeley!" The Lord reveals how much He loves Radha in just that one word, isn't it?

In many contexts in Srimad Bhagavatha, the word 'Charu' is used to describe the divine appearance of Lord Krishna. 'Charuhasa', 'Charukundala', and 'Charugeetha' are some of them. Especially in the

context where Akrura gets the darshan of the Lord in the pond, Shri Suka uses the word 'Charu' several times. He says –

Charuprasannavadhanam charuhaasa nireekshanam
suprunnasam charukarnam sukapolaarunaaadharam
charujanuyugam charu jankayugala samyutham

Also, one of the ten children of Krishna's pattamahishi Rukmini is 'Charu'. Pradyumn is the eldest son. The nine children born after were all given names beginning with 'Charu'.

Charudheshna: sudheshnashcha charudhehashcha
veeryavaan

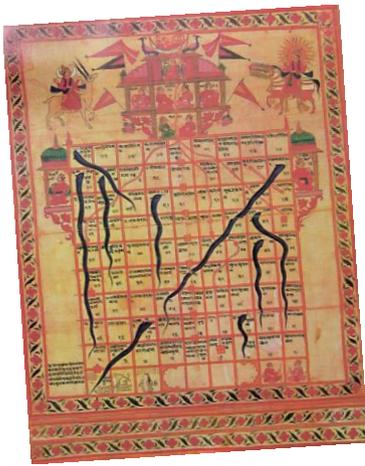
sucharu: charugupthashcha bhadracharushcha
bhadracharusthathaapara:

charuchandro vicharushcha charushcha dhashamo hare:
pradhyumna pramukaa jaathaa rukminyaam naavamaah
pithu:

Of the many philosophies in our religion, there is one known as 'Charvaakam'. It is referred to as a 'worldly' philosophy. Charu + Vaak = Charvaakam – that is, those with an ability to speak smartly and gracefully were referred to by this name. Hence, the name came to be known thus. They don't accept the Vedas. According to them, life has to be enjoyed with enthusiasm, even if it would require one to borrow ghee from others for having food. They would give several repertoires to justify that their religion alone is correct. Therefore, this religion which emphasizes on worldliness came to be known as 'Charvaakam'.

Brihaspathi, the Guru of the Devas is also known by the name 'Charu'. Saffron has the name 'Charupuda'. Thus, there are many meanings for this word.

Traditional Treasures Mokshapath



The game of Snakes and Ladders, popular amongst today's children, has its origin in India. This is the game that has been played by Indians since ages and is known by the names 'Paramapath', 'Mokshapath' 'Moksha padam'! It is not an exaggeration to say that this game has been used as a tool by the elders to impart the Hindu Dharma and its greatness to children. It was later renamed as Snakes and Ladders by the Britishers.

It was introduced by a poet saint named Gyandev in the 13th Century. The ladders represent the virtues while the snakes symbolize sins. This game is played with cowrie shells and dices. Many changes were introduced later. However, the basic principle remains the same, which is good deeds take us to heaven while the sins result in the cycle of rebirths! Certain details of this game are available from the 2nd century B.C documents!

In earlier days, the squares represented following attributes - 12 - faith, 51- trustworthiness, 57 - Generosity, 76 - Wisdom, 78 - Renunciation. These squares were marked with ladders. The squares 41 - disobedience, 44 - arrogance, 49 - lack of refinement, 52 - theft, 58 - deception, 62 - alcoholism, 69 - debts, 84 - anger, 92 - greed, 96 - pride, 73 - murder, 99 - desire, were marked with snakes and the 100th square represented Moksha or liberation.

This game, known as Paramapadham, has 100 grid squares. The ladders take the players to the top while the snakes take them to the bottom. Each square depicts a symbolic image with the ladders featuring the forms of Gods or higher worlds (Kailash, Vaikuntam or Brahma loka). Images of good deeds are seen at the bottom part of the ladder. On the other hand, the head of each snake is marked by an image of a demon or vice. The game navigates the players to the top and bottom as a result of the good deeds or misdeeds and Karma. The grids in the middle are depicted by the images of planets, people or animals.

This acts both as a game as well as a teaching tool for the players. It makes us aware of what is to be done and what not to be done, rewards and punishments, righteousness and good qualities. And the final goal, Vaikunta or heaven is shown with picture of Lord Vishnu surrounded by His devotees or Kailasha with images of Lord Shiva along with Parvathi, Ganesha and Karthikeya. Such games are essential for the children of this age.

While the game of 'Paramapada' teaches virtues, the game of 'Pallanguzhi' teaches how to act swiftly! Each player has 7 holes on his side. Each hole is filled with certain number of cowrie shells or seeds. The one with the maximum number of shells at the end of the game is the winner. There are nine different ways in which this game can be played. It was the favorite amongst the womenfolk. Victory for the players depends solely on the memory skills and the ability to act swiftly!

In the year 1892, these games were taken by the British to England and were added as glories of the Victorian Era!

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Translation Team

Smt Nirmala Giri
Smt Latha Kumanan
Smt Jeyashree Ramakrishnan
Smt Jayanthi Sundararaman
Smt Sujatha Manikandan
Smt Ramya Balaji
Smt Nisha Giri
Smt Sujatha Natarajan

To convey your prayers to Sri Sri Swamiji, mail to

Dr A Bhagyanathan, Personal Secretary to
HH Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji
Plot No 11, Door No 4/11, Nethaji Nagar Main Road, Jafferkhanpet,
Chennai - 600083
Tel: +91-44-24895875
Email: contact@namadwaar.org

