

Sri Hari:

MADHURAMURALI

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*Spiritual Monthly with the Blessings of
HH Maharanyam Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji*



MADHURASMARANAM

This is a time when the danger of Corona virus is also threatening our country. Medical experts, Central and State Governments are taking all efforts to contain this danger. In order to contain the spread of this disease lockdown has been declared in our country and several other countries of the world. Schools, colleges, shops have all been closed down. Roads are all empty. Fear has taken hold of everyone's mind. From the young ones to adults only two questions have arisen in everyone's mind – be he of any nationality or language.

1. When will this danger of virus stop?
2. When will normalcy be restored?

A young one of our Satsang also posed these very same questions to Sri Swamiji. The following is his response:

While going through the history of the world we find that man has faced several challenges and has also crossed over them successfully. God has never failed us. Man has, through his effort and ideas, faced and crossed over great dangers that have arisen from time to time. Each one of us has experienced the support of the Lord's blessings in the success of man's efforts. At such times it is verily the Lord and Mahans, the hands of the Lord, are our succour.

There is an incident, dating several centuries back, in the life of Govindapuram Sri Bhagavan Nama Bodendra Saraswati Swami. The contagious disease of Plague had struck and was threatening the whole nation. The Nawab of Arcot was also affected by this disease. The people of that kingdom took refuge in the Swami and prayed for the protection of the kingdom and its citizens. It has

been recorded in his life history that the Guru, verily ocean of compassion, at once saved those people through the chant of the Divine Name “Rama” (Rama Nama japa).

There is a similar incident in the life of Shirdi Baba, too. In those days, cholera had struck that place and many had died. Shirdi Baba was deeply touched by the sufferings of the poor and infants and children. Strangely, Shirdi Baba brought some wheat and a grinding stone and began to grind the wheat. The question ‘why is Baba doing this?’ arose in everyone’s mind. But they feared asking him about it. The ladies who were watching him grind the wheat asked Shirdi Baba, “Can we also grind?” Shirdi Baba agreed to the request. The ladies thought ‘Baba is one who begs for his food. What would he do with this much flour? He surely is going to give it to us.’ When the grinding was over they asked Baba, “Can we take the flour?” As soon as Baba heard this his whole countenance changed. Baba said to them, “This is not meant for anyone. Carry it and throw it away beyond the borders of the town.” The fear-struck devotees carried out Baba’s order. Within a few days cholera began to subside. Only then did the people understand the reason behind Shirdi Baba’s action.

Around forty years back Bhagavan Yogi Ramsuratkumar has performed a Lila in Tiruvannamalai. It was a time when he posed as a beggar and wandered about the streets of Tiruannamalai. Cholera-like disease had spread all over the town and people were suffering. In spite of all efforts taken nothing could be done to contain it. Yogi Ramsuratkumar was standing near the ‘thermutti’ in Sannidhi Street close to Tiruvannamalai temple. Unable to bear the sufferings of the people he was talking about it to a devotee. Just then a man passed that way pushing a cart filled with elandam fruits. Yogi Ramsuratkumar ordered the devotee, “Buy all the fruits from him.” Yogi Ramsuratkumar ordered the fruits to be spread on the steps of the ‘thermutti’. He then began to crush

them with his feet even as he kept praying something. From the very next day of this divine Lila played by Yogi Ramsuratkumar miraculously the contagious disease began to disappear!

When devotees prayed to our Guru Sri Sri Anna about this Corona Virus, he has blessed with the words “No one need fear the Corona virus; do not be intimidated by it; Bhakta Kolahalan will protect all.”

God and Mahans never fail us. This is a time when all, irrespective of faith, culture and nationality, come together in prayer. If we all pray in one voice, with deep felt heart, it is sure to reach the Lord. It is certain that by the grace of the Lord the whole world will come out of this danger. Do not lose self-confidence. Let us face this state of affairs valorously and come out victorious.

I am also continuously praying, in solitude, to Sri Premika Varadan for the welfare of all brothers and sisters in the world. Do not feel disheartened. Let there not be any confusion. Let us not spread false news and confuse others. We are indebted to Central and State Governments, all departments, doctors and other para medical staff, sanitation workers, police department, army for their selfless service in order to keep us safe. Let us offer special prayers for their safety. Let us pray for Air India and its pilots who had courageously and selflessly flew to several countries and brought our people home.

Lockdown of this kind is a must for containing the spread of the disease. Even the middle-class people will be able to manage without moving out for earning their bread, but tears fill our eyes when we think of the poor who depend on daily wage. It is verily our responsibility to help such people around us, within the rules and regulations laid down by the Government. God will never fail us.

“लोका समस्ता सुखिनो भवन्तु!”

(May all in the world be happy)

- Dr A Bhagyanathan

(Personal Secretary to Sri Swamiji)

Our Bit of Support

Dr A Bhagyanathan



Our Guru Maharaj Maharanyam Sri Muralidhara Swamiji gave away cheques to a few known auto rickshaw drivers/ flower vendors/ day labourers in our neighbourhood who need the support during this lockdown. Our Guru Maharaj is never one to appreciate publicizing such things. Yet I do it, as I believe it will inspire many of us to follow suit (in compliance with the lockdown norms, of course).

250 packs of lunch is being provided from our Madhurapuri Ashram every day to daily wage labourers nearby and to migrants working at factories.

Sri Sandeepani Gurukula Trust, Chennai, through Sri BhagavanNama Bodendral Oushadalaya fully Charitable Medical Centre, Govindapuram Village, and Mahatma Sri Sri Krishna Premi Swamigal Oushadalaya fully Charitable Medical Centre, Senganoor provided:

- a) Masks, Gloves and Sanitizers to Thiruvidadaimaruthur Police Station for the policemen on duty.
- a) Masks to Sri Vitthal Rukmini Mandir , Govindapuram Village
- b) Masks to Govindapuram BhagavanNama Sri Bodendra Swamigal Mutt
- c) Masks to Govindapuram Sri Gnananandagiri Swamigal Mutt.
- d) Masks to Govindapuram Panchayat staff.
- e) Masks and Gloves to Govindapuram VAO office and Revenue Office staff.
- g) Masks, Gloves and Sanitizers to Thiruvidadaimaruthur Police Station for the policemen on duty.
- h) Masks to Sri Vitthal Rukmini Mandir , Govindapuram Village
- i) Masks to Govindapuram BhagavanNama Sri Bodendra Swamigal Mutt
- j) Masks to Govindapuram Sri Gnananandagiri Swamigal Mutt.
- k) Masks to Govindapuram Panchayat staff.
- l) Masks and Gloves to Govindapuram VAO office and Revenue Office staff.
- m) Masks to Thiruvidadaimaruthur fire station
- n) Masks and gloves to Thirupanadal Police station for the policemen on duty.
- o) Masks and sanitizer to Cholapuram PHC.
- p) Masks and gloves to Block Development Office staff, Kumbakonam
- q) Masks, Soap and COVID 19 awareness pamphlets to residents of Senganur Village

- s) Masks and Gloves to Senganur VAO, Revenue staff and Panchayat staff
- t) Masks to Thiruvidadaimaruthur Thasilthar office
- u) Masks and gloves to Senganur Post Office
- v) COVID 19 awareness pamphlets to residents of Govindapuram Village

Our Premika Varadan Medical Centre at Malaipattu is functioning as a COVID-19 awareness propagation centre.









TIRUPANADAL
கூட்டுறவுப் பங்கு
CITY UNION BANK



Swamiji often says that the number 18 indicates 'Victory'. In Indian languages, every letter of the language has a relation to a number. The number '18' relates to 'Success' or 'Victory'. Sri Swamiji cites several examples for this but they are not elaborated here due to space constraints.

Our 'Stairway to devotion' also has 18 steps!! Sri Swamiji probably indicates that a 'Jiva' who is bogged down in samsara since several births can climb these 18 steps with perseverance and obtain victory over samsara.

The 18th line of the poem specifies this. Shall we now review the complete 'Madhura geetham' with a summary?

When someone says, 'so and so is very devoted' and we ask him how you say that, the answer usually is that this 'so and so' makes frequent pilgrimages, bathes in holy rivers and often visits holy shrines. This is the first step in the stairway to devotion.

Stairway to Devotion

- Sri MK Ramanujam



The next step is to render service in temples and serve others without selfishness. The Lord becomes pleased with this selfless service and gives a great boon in the form of 'Sadhu sangam'.

In 'Sadhu sangam' when we listen to the divine stories and sports of the Lord, the desire to progress spiritually deepens in us and by Lord Krishna's grace we come in contact with a Sadguru. By sincere service, we receive 'upadesa' from the Guru at the appropriate time. We slowly become matured enough to perform 'Haribhakthi' sadhana in the form observing fasts on Ekadasi days, listening to discourses on Sri Hari, doing bhajans, darshan and meditation on Sri Hari and this way we progress on the path.

To avoid any pitfalls, we should cultivate virtues like humility, steadfastness, self-examination and avoid vices like seeing faults in others, lustfulness, anger, self-praise, drowsiness, and lethargy.

To avert slipping and falling from the stairway to devotion, the tendency to enjoy the pleasures of the world has to be totally eradicated. To get rid of the ego in the form "I", 'I', we should not encourage or listen if someone praises us.

By the grace of the Lord the above steps culminate in to continuous 'Nama Smaran' and the mental attitude to observe all the happenings of the world as a witness and as a play of the Lord.

This way, with ceaseless effort, we progress and reach the state of divine love and by Lord Krishna's grace we become one with the infinite bliss. This is the true purpose of our lives and is the biggest gain from this life. Only this is our true victory!

By our Sadguru's blessing and the grace of our Radha and Krishna, this series on 'Stairway to devotion' hereby concludes.

A TALE FOR CHILDREN

SUPREME LOVE

A guru was once walking with his disciples. On the way, some people had formed a crowd and were loudly rebuking and fighting with one another. The guru asked his disciples, "Why do we raise our voices when we are angry?"

One of the disciples answered, "Our voice becomes loud when we lose our patience and peace of mind".

The guru asked, "Why should we raise our voice even when talking to those standing close to us?" The disciples did not know the answer and stayed silent.

The guru said, "When we are angry with someone, the distance between our mind and their mind increases. What we say should transcend this distance and reach them. That is why we raise our voice. As our anger increases, the distance increases. So our voice also rises".

Moreover, "When we talk with love we talk softly. That is because, we are emotionally close then. The more the love, the softer we speak. When love is at its supreme, there is no need for speech at all! Silence becomes the language. Therefore, silence is the indication of supreme love", explained the guru. The disciples now understood with absolute clarity

SANSKRIT WORD OF THE MONTH

मणि

Sri Vishnupriya

mani

मणि(maNi) means a gem. When adjoined with other words, many new words are formed. Let us look into some of these words.

'chUDaMaNi' refers to an ornament that is worn by women on top of the head. chUDaMaNi worn by Sitadevi is well known to all.

'viveka chUDaMaNi ' is one of the works of Adishankarar. It means that one's intellect must be adorned with the chUdAmaNi called discrimination.

'sirOnmaNi' or 'sikhAmaNi' also refers to an ornament worn on the head. However, it is used to point to something that is superior or greater, as in 'Bhagavatha sirOnmaNi ' or 'paNdita sirOnmaNi '.

'cintAmaNi' is a well-known stone. As said in "चिन्तामनिर लोक सुखम्", this stone bestows all that we wish for. In Soundarya Lahiri, Sri Adishankara mentions an island called 'maNidwlpA'.

"sudhAsindhOrmadhyE suravitapivAtl parivritE
maNidwlpE nlpOpavanavathi cintAmaNi grihE".

Right amidst the nectar ocean is the island made of precious gems surrounded by several kalpaka vrukshas. This island houses the place of residence of the Divine Mother, which is made of the precious stone chintAmaNi.

Likewise, 'maNimaNDapa' is where Adisesha resides. All snakes, right from Adisesha possess a gem on their hoods. It is known as phaNamaNi, as 'phaNa' means hood.

There is another word called 'dinamaNi'. 'dina' means day. It refers to the Sun which shines like a jewel during the day.

Sri Jayadevar, in ashtapadi says 'dinamaNi maNdala maNdana' which means, Bhagavan shines like the jewel adorning the Surya Mandala.

'maNipUraka' is one of the eight yoga chakras present near the navel. Activating this chakra increases one's zeal and confidence.

'maNipravALa' is a type of language. It is a combination of Tamil and Sanskrit. It was popular in South India. Many Vaishnava Acharyas have used this language in their commentaries. Here, maNi refers to ruby and pravALa refers to coral. Just like alternatingly interweaving ruby and coral, this language too is beautifully knitted combining the two languages.

A river called 'Manimutharu' is known to us all. It is derived from the Sanskrit word 'maNimukta'.

There is a word called 'maNibandha'. It means wrist. In tamil, we use the word 'manikattu' in the same meaning.

'maNigrIva' is well known to all. He is one of the two sons of Kubera, Nalakubera-maNigrIva. Due to the curse of Sage Narada, they had become trees in Goluka and was later released by Damodara and went back to their world.

'maNipushpaka' is the name of a conch. In Bhagavad Gita, it is mentioned that each one blew their conches at the onset of the Mahabharata war.

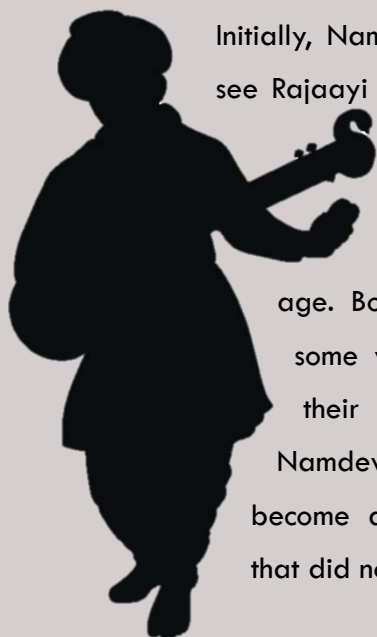
'नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ', that is, Nakula blew his conch sughOsha and Sahadeva blew the conch maNipushpaka.

Sri Namdev Maharaj

Shiv Kanya - Sri Kanya

15

Namdev is now a family man. But that did not bring about any change in his devotion towards Panduranga. His wife Rajaayi was very understanding about his unstinting devotion and never tried to prevent him from doing his daily worship. Every morning, before he set out to the temple, she would keep all the Puja Materials ready for him. She would polish his Tampus and keep it ready for him. There were times when Namdev lost all sense of time while singing the glories of Panduranga. At such times, she would come to the temple with home cooked food. Rajaayi saw to it that there was no hindrance to Namdev while he was immersed in his devotion.



Initially, Namdev's mother konabai was very happy to see Rajaayi helping Namdev and understanding his true nature. But as the days passed by, Konabai was sad to see that Namdev would never be like other boys of his age. Boys of his age were married, engaged in some work and earning money to take care of their families. She had secretly hoped that Namdev would turn a new leaf after marriage and become a normal householder after marriage. But that did not happen.

As days passed by, Namdev started spending more and more time at the temple. He rarely came home. Konabai thought things were getting out of hand and decided to go to the temple and counsel her son and bring him home. When she reached the temple, she saw Namdev standing in front of the lord and singing an abhang happily.

She addressed him and said, “Namdev, Do you think what you are doing is right? You have a family to take care of. Who will look after them if you are here at the temple always? Don’t you know that lord Panduranga himself is standing here at the behest of Pundalika who was taking care of his aged parents? Do you think Lord Panduranga would be happy seeing you neglecting your family? I have seen so many ardent devotees of the lord. They have all looked after their families and still remained devoted. Why aren’t you doing your work? There are fully stitched clothes waiting to be taken to the market to be sold. Why don’t you take them to the market and try and sell them? We need the money to buy food for the family. I see many boys of your age married, working and taking good care of their families. Enough of this! You come home now and do some work!!.

As Namdev listened to the anguished outpouring of his mother, he understood her feelings. But he could not do anything about it. In Srimad Bhagavatham, Prahlada says” Yatha, Braahmyatyayo brahman swayam aakarsha sannidhau, Tatha me Bhidyate chetaha Chakrapaner yadruchaya|| The meaning of the verse is “ Just as a piece of iron gets drawn to a piece of magnet, so does my mind; it is invariably drawn towards the chakra wielding Supreme being,”. Similarly Namdev could not bring himself to lead the mundane life of a householder. His thoughts were constantly filled with Panduranga. Infact devotion came so natural to him, as his own breathing!. He told his mother Konabai, “ Mother, my happiness is in singing about HIS glories. I forget myself when I am in the company of his devotees singing and dancing his names. I can’t relate to a normal life anymore. Let me stay here itself”.

Namdev continued. Lord Panduranga is taking care of each one of us. He never leaves the side of devotees who have surrendered unto him. So why should I worry about my family? It is said even if a person commits many sins through out his life, but later repents and surrenders unto Him, he is taken care of. Lord Panduranga is my mother, friend and kin. He is always with me and I see him always. So please don’t try to separate me from him”.

The Real Indicator of Spiritual Progress

- Dr A Bhagyanathan

Few years back, one evening in Madhurapuri ashram, an elderly couple had come to have darshan of Sri Swamiji. Sri Swamiji's face was delighted on seeing them. "Why were you not seen on last Ekadashi?", On hearing this question posed by Sri Swamiji, the couple felt so blessed that Sri Swamiji had precisely noticed their absence in the midst of hundreds of devotees.

Devotee – We had been to our native place. That is why we could not come.

Sri Swamiji – What was the occasion in your native place?

Devotee – We had to attend a wedding and something exciting happened there.

Sri Swamiji – With the curiosity of a child, Sri Swamiji asked, "Is it? What was so exciting?"

Devotee – A foreteller had come to our place. He knew all our past, present and future. To everyone who had come to see him, he accurately told so many things that completely baffled them.

Sri Swamiji – Did you see him too?

Devotee — Yes Swamiji! On seeing me and my wife, he told something amazing. He said that we are actually incarnations of a particular God and that we ourselves are not aware of this. From the moment we heard it, we felt so elated. So, can we take this as an indication that we are advanced in the path of spirituality?

Sri Swamiji — Do you know what is the real progress in spirituality? True meaning of being close to divinity is to be humane. To progress in the path towards God is, to be good, loving, truthful, humble and to serve more and more. In short, every single aspect of us would have become FINER. God broadly pervades everywhere. When we go towards that which is so broad, we too must become broad-minded. Being in a narrow circle of jealousy, anger, selfishness, conceit, arrogance, one cannot attain that vast, all pervading Supreme God. Is it clear?

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