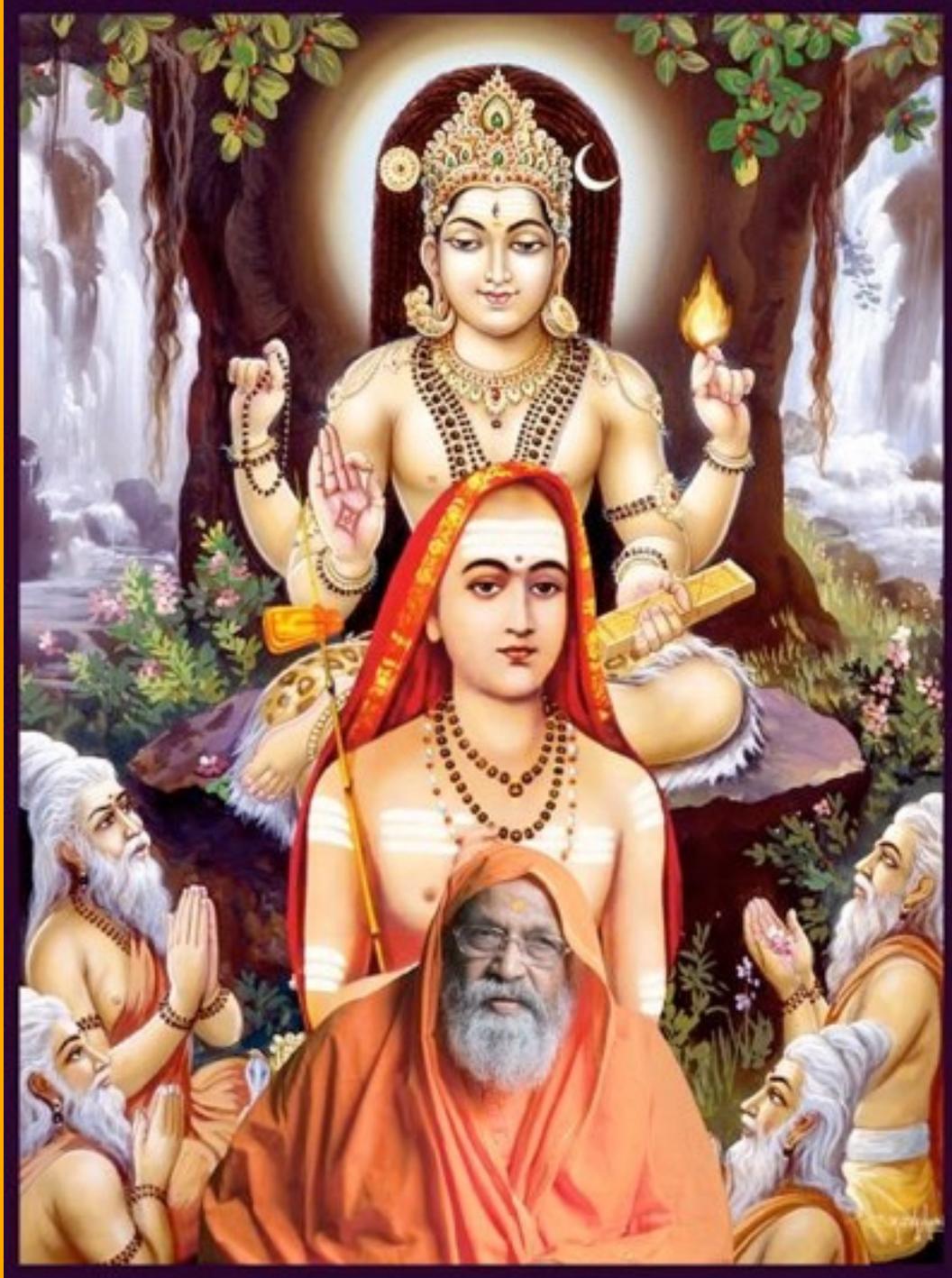




# *Arsha Vidya Newsletter*

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TamiNewYear and Vishukani

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*Newsletter*

In fearless voice may  
we proclaim

The Rishi's message  
from all house-tops

And bring the men  
of different claim

To a fold of Love  
where oneness lasts!

## Mundaka

### Mantra 2.2.10

Now, the same Brahman is shown as the very svarūpa of the ātman in this mantra, so that one does not think that Brahman is an object of sight, dṛśya. It is dṛk svarūpa, the nature of the seer, the ātman.

हिरण्मये परे कोशे विरजं ब्रह्म निष्कलम् ।  
तच्छुभ्रं ज्योतिषां ज्योतिः तद्यदात्मविदो विदुः ॥ २ ॥ २ ॥ १० ॥

hiraṇmaye pare koṣe virajaṁ brahma niṣkalam.  
tacchubhraṁ jyotiṣāṁ jyotiḥ  
tadyadātmavido viduḥ. (2. 2. 10)

*virajaṁ* -- free from all impurities; *niṣkalam* -- partless;  
*brahma* -- Brahman; *pare* --- in the most interior;  
*hiraṇmaye* -- shining; *koṣe* -- in the kośa;  
*tad* -- it is; *śubhram* -- pure; *jyotiṣāṁ* -- of all lights;  
*jyotiḥ* -- it is the light; *ātmavidaḥ* -- those who know the ātman;  
*viduḥ* -- they understand; *tad* -- that;  
*yad* -- which Brahman

Those who know *ātman* understand that Brahman which is free from all impurities, is partless, pure and the light of all lights, obtaining in the most interior shining layer.

*Hiraṇmaye pare koṣe*: in the most interior shining 'sheath'. *Hiraṇmaye* is an expression in Vedic language which means similar to gold, the similarity being in the shine. *Para-kośa ānandamaya* which is the most interior.<sup>112</sup> The *annamaya-kośa* is most exterior; more interior to that is *prāṇamaya*; still more interior is *manomaya* and so on. The *bhokṛ*, experiencer of the results of action, is called *ānandamaya*. The *ānandamaya* undergoes changes in the form of mental modifications known as *vṛttis* representing different degrees of happiness like joy and ecstasy.

Whenever an individual experiences happiness, he is very close to the *ātman* because the nature of *ātman* is happiness. When one experiences unhappiness, one has to identify with the activity of the mind. Only then does one become sorrowful. In *ānandamaya* there is no activity of the mind and the *vṛtti*, thought mode, is *śānta-vṛttis* or *sāttvika-vṛttis*. Therefore, the *ānandamaya* is used in the śāstra to point out the nature of ātman. It becomes a *kośa* because the ātman is as though found there, somewhat like a sword in a scabbard. <sup>113</sup> Brahman is recognised as the basis of *ānandamaya*. Further, the *bhokṛ*, the *ahaṅkāra* identified with the *ānandamaya*, is there as though covering the ātman, as a scabbard covers a sword.

In *ānandamaya* there is no activity of the mind and the *vṛtti*, thought mode, is *śānta-vṛttis* or *sāttvika-vṛttis*. Therefore, the *ānandamaya* is used in the śāstra to point out the nature of ātman.

**Virajam brahma niṣkalam:** Brahman is pure and does not have parts. The *ahankāra* takes itself to be subject to impurities like *puṇya* and *pāpa*, but in reality it is, *virajam brahma*, Brahman free from any kind of impurity. *Rajas* here means impurities like ignorance, the sense of individuality, doership, enjoyership and so on. Brahman is free from all of these.<sup>114</sup> It is partless, and therefore, does not undergo any change like *ānandamaya* does.

Brahman is pure and does not have parts. It is partless, and therefore, does not undergo any change like *ānandamaya* does.

It is **jyotiṣām jyotiḥ:** the light of all lights. *Jyoti* means light, that which is effulgent. The sun, moon, stars and so on are lights. But this is 'the light' because of which all lights come to light. That light is *caitanya*, consciousness.<sup>115</sup> *Jyoti* is again an expression used in the *śāstra* to point out the nature of the *ātman* as consciousness from the standpoint of the perception of light and objects. Here, it becomes the *laṣaṇa* for pointing out the self-revealing consciousness.

**Viduḥ:** those who know the *ātman* understand (that which is Brahman). They recognise *jyotiṣām jyotiḥ* as 'I am that and that indeed is Brahman.' The *śruti* has already elaborately talked about Brahman in which the heaven, the earth and everything else have their being. When the *śruti* says '*jyotiṣām jyotiḥ*' it means that one has to appreciate it as because one sees everything else<sup>116</sup> by this *caitanya-jyoti*; there is no other source of *jyoti*. Brahman in the form of consciousness alone is the cause of everything. There is no *Īśvara* other than Brahman, so the *jagat* is Brahman. There is also no *jīva* other than Brahman. Therefore, all that is here is one Brahman.

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112 परं तत्सर्वाभ्यन्तरत्वात् ।( मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

113 कोश इव असेः आत्म-स्वरूपोपलब्धि-स्थानत्वात् । ।( मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

114 विरजम् अविद्याद्यशेष- देश-रजो-मल-वर्जितम् । ( मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

115 अग्न्यादीनामपि ज्योतिष्ट्वम् अन्तर्गत-ब्रह्मात्म-चैतन्य-ज्योतिर्निमित्तमित्यर्थः । तद्धि परं ज्योतिः यदन्यानवभास्यम् आत्म-ज्योतिः । ( मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

116 आत्मानं स्वं शब्दादि-विषय- बुद्धि-प्रत्यय-साक्षिणम् ।( मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

-----  
...to be continued

## God Centered Life

### Swami Paramarthananda Saraswati's Talk Sivaratri - 2017

*sadāśiva-samārambhāṃ śaṅkarācārya-madhyamām asmadācārya-paryantāṃ vande guru-paramparām*

In our tradition we have a very vast scriptural literature. The primary scriptures being the *vedās*; and based on the *vedās*, we have got several secondary streams of literature. And we believe that the *vedās* have been given by the Lord Himself, for the benefit of the humanity. In the *vedā* itself it is said, [śvetāśvataropaniṣad] -

*yo brahmāṇaṃ vidadhāti pūrvaṃ yo vai vedāṃśca prahiṇoti tasmai*

*taṃ ha devaṃ ātmabuddhiprakāśaṃ mumukṣurvai śaraṇamaham prapadye*

After creating the universe, the Lord gave the *vedās* to *brahmā*; and from *brahmā*, the Vedic teaching tradition has been coming down. This Vedic literature offers to help the humanity in leading a smooth and successful life. This scriptural guidance is available free of cost. The only required condition is, we should have trust in the efficacy and the validity and the utility of the *vedās*. If we have got that basic *śraddhā*, and we are willing to take the guidelines, it is available.

Whoever is willing to follow the *vedā*, is called a *vaidikaḥ*. In modern times, they are called as Hindus. Hindu is a modern name; but, our real name is *vaidikaḥ* - the one who accepts *vedā* as the guide in one's life. When we look at these vast scriptures, the *vedā* prescribes a life-style for us. And that life-style is a God-centered life, meaning, our life is going-around or centered-around God only. It is indicated by the *pradakṣiṇa* & *namaskāra* we do at the end of a *pūjā*. *Pradakṣiṇam* is a process in which God is kept in the centre and we go around God; indicating that, 'my life will be centred around God only'.

For this purpose, the scriptures bring God in to almost every activity of human life. It is not a one-day-a-week affair; but, throughout the day, throughout the life, we are not supposed to get our vision or mind away from the Lord. Therefore, in Hindu culture, God is involved in every activity of life. The day starts with remembrance of God.

*brāhme muhūrte utthāya cintayet ātmano hutam namaskṛtya gurum viṣṇum mātaram pitaram ca*

Therefore, the day starts with the four-fold *namaskāra* of *guru*, *viṣṇu*, *mātā*, and *pitā* (*Mātā pitā guru daivam*). Not only the day just begins with God, in every activity God is involved. Before eating we are supposed to remember God and offer to God; and then only eat. During *snānam* also we are supposed to visualise God to be in our heart and our *snānam* is an *abhiṣekam* done to the Lord. Not only the daily chores are connected with God, all other aspects of Hindu life - whether it is dance or whether it is music or whether it is art or whether it is architecture - anything you take, they are all centered on God.

Thus, scriptures give us instructions to maintain this God-centric lifestyle. The scriptures are not merely the prescriptions for God-centered life; but, there is a teaching to support this lifestyle. Why this God-centred life is prescribed? For that, there is an explanatory teaching. This teaching was also coming in the Hindu tradition.

Therefore, not only we lead a God-centered life, we also knew the purpose behind leading such a life. But, unfortunately, over the period, gradually the backup teaching has gone away; because, nobody is studying the scriptures. And without the backup teaching, when we are only mechanically going through that lifestyle, it becomes an empty shell - often appearing 'a meaningless ritual'. Rituals are not meaningless; the problem is that, one has not learnt the purpose and principle behind it. Though, this God-centered tradition had been maintained, but not the backup teaching. It is a well developed backup teaching. Even though it is a very, very vast subject, today I would like to share a few salient features of the backup teaching that we have, in order to support the God-centered lifestyle.

The first and foremost lesson of this backup teaching is - What is the very definition of God? We are just mechanically using the word 'God'. What is the definition of God? The scriptures give a provisional definition. That provisional definition is, that God is the 'creator of the world' - *srṣṭi kartā*. Of course that is only a provisional definition, to begin with.

But, when we are really ready to think well, the scriptures refine that definition. The refinement is required; because, *vedā* really does not believe in a 'creation' at all. The reason being, nothing can be created or destroyed. According to the modern scientific principle of 'law of conservation of matter and energy' matter can never be created, matter can never be destroyed, which means, everything is always there. As it is said, when a candle burns, nothing is lost. One form of matter is getting converted into another form! There is only transformation taking place; nothing is created nothing is destroyed. Therefore, we cannot talk about the 'creation of a world'. Even modern science does not accept the creation of this world. Before the world emerges, it was already existent in potential form. What is potentially there in an unmanifest form, alone comes to manifestation.

This manifestation or emergence or evolution of this universe we are calling 'creation'. But, it is only *abhivyaktiḥ*, not *srṣṭiḥ*. *Abhivyaktiḥ* means, the manifestation of the entire universe - which was there in potential form - which we call as the 'seed' of the universe. *Vedā* defines God as the very seed of this entire universe, whose existence you can never question; because, without the seed, you cannot have a universe. Just as, without a seed, a tree cannot come. Without the seed, the universe cannot appear. This 'seed', which existed before the emergence of the universe, is called *īśvaraḥ*.

*bījasyāntarivāñkuro jagadidaṃ prāñnirvikalpaṃ punaḥ māyākalpita deśakālakalanā vaicitrya citrīkṛtam ... [dakṣiṇāmūrti stotraṃ]*

And in bhagavad gītā, kṛṣṇā says, *bījaṃ māṃ sarvabhūtānāṃ viddhi pārtha sanātanam* [7.10]

- Arjunā!, may you understand me, the Lord, to be the very cause or the seed of the entire universe.

From that 'seed' - which is called God - alone, the entire universe, consisting of all the galaxies [in modern language] and planets and all living beings, everything emerges.

Then, the scriptures point out that, you can divide the entire universe broadly into two categories. One is, the emergence of the inert material universe - called *acetana tattvam*; and the second is, emergence of the living being - which is called the *cetana tattvam*. Not only the universe consists of the inert material part, the universe consists of the sentient living beings also, called *cetana tattvam*. Thus, *cetana-acetana rūpa prapañcaḥ*, which is *vyakta prapañcaḥ* (*vyaktaḥ* means manifest universe), consisting of *cetana-acetana aṃśa dvayam*, evolved out of that one 'seed', called God.

Then, the scriptures point out, if the universe is a mixture of these two, [*cetana and acetana*], both *cetana and acetana*, must have also existed in the seed, in potential form. Because, what is not in the potential form cannot emerge. From the coconut seed only coconut tree emerges, not mango tree; because, it is not there. Mango tree emerges out of mango seed. So, whatever emerges out, must be already existing in the 'seed'. If the universe is a mixture of *cetana* and *acetana tattvam*, then, God the 'seed' - also must be a composite entity, consisting of *cetana-acetana dvayam*. *Vedā* believes in the law conservation of matter also; *vedā* believes in the law of conservation of the life principle also. Therefore, both - life as well as matter - must be there in the beginning.

Thus, according to Vedic scriptures, God is a composite entity, consisting of *cetana acetana aṃśa dvayam*. Different names are given in the scriptures. In the bhagavad gītā, *kṛṣṇā* names them as *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. *puruṣa* referring to the sentient component and *prakṛti* referring to the insentient component.

*prakṛtiṃ puruṣaṃ caiva viddhyanādī ubhāvapi*

*vikāraṃśca guṇāṃścaiva viddhi prakṛtisambhavān [gītā 13.19]*

*kāryakāraṇakartṛtve hetuḥ prakṛtirucyate*

*puruṣaḥ sukhaduḥkhānām bhokṛtve heturucyate [gītā 13.20]*

*puruṣa* evolves in the form of living beings. *Prakṛti* evolves in the form of the inert principle. This *puruṣa- prakṛti* mixture is called *īśvaraḥ*. Otherwise called, *brahman-māyā*; *māyā sahitam brahman* is *īśvara*. Symbolically, it is represented as *ardhanārīśvaraḥ*. *Ardhanārīśvara* represents *puruṣa-prakṛti tattvam*. Not separately, but together.

So, the first lesson of the backup teaching is – life should be God-centric. And that God, which is the centre of our life, is none other than the 'seed' of the universe, which is *cetana-acetana tattva dvayam*. This is lesson number one.

The next lesson that these scriptures give - now that we know 'God is the seed' or 'cause'; and the world - the *prapañca*, is the 'product', the evolute, the *kāryam*. Or, God is *kāraṇam*; world is *kāryam*. God is *avyaktam*; world is *vyaktam*. So, *kāraṇa īśvaraḥ* and *kārya prapañca*. *kāraṇa īśvaraḥ* – meaning God, the cause. *kārya prapañca* means – world, the product.

Then, the scriptures point out, when you study the cause and effect, we can recognise certain features belonging to both. 'Causal features' and 'effectual features', these are very important to know in the backup teaching.

To understand the features of the cause and effect, our scriptures generally take certain examples. In *chāndogya upaniṣad*, several examples are given in *ṣaṣṭho'dhyāyaḥ* (sixth chapter) *yathā soṃyaikena mṛtṣpiṇḍena sarvaṃ mṛnmayam vijñātam syād vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttiketyeva satyam*

*yathā soṃyaikena lohamāṇinā sarvaṃ lohamayam vijñātam syād vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam lohamityeva satyam ...*

The example is to, understand. Let us imagine a piece of gold out of which the gold smith brings out varieties of ornaments. In fact, goldsmith does not 'create' ornaments, according to our revised understanding. He does not 'create' ornaments, he has shaped the gold into varieties of ornaments. We have got so many.

Now, if you study the features of gold and ornaments, we can note four features in the 'cause' and four features in the 'effect'. What are the four features of the cause? Gold is one lump - *ekaḥ*. Gold is the content or the substance behind all the ornaments. Therefore, gold is the essence or *sārah* (*ekaḥ* and *sārah*). And, gold is *nityaḥ*. Before the emergence of ornament, gold 'was'. After emergence of the ornament, gold 'is'. So, even after the emergence of ornaments gold is. Even after melting of ornaments, gold 'will be'. Therefore, *kāraṇam trikāle api tiṣṭhati* (*trikālam* means, past, present and future). Finally, gold is independently existent by itself, even without the support of ornaments. Therefore, it is called *satyam* (*satyam* means, independently existent).

Thus, *kāraṇam* is *eka sāra nitya satyam*. We will take the first letter of each one. E-*eka*, S-*sāra*, N-*nitya*, S-*satyam*. 'ESNS'. *Kāraṇam* is ESNS. Remember, *kāraṇam* is the essence.

What about ornaments? They are diagonally opposite. *Aneka* (*aneke* means countless products). And *asāra*, ornaments do not have substantiality of their own. Ornaments do not have any weight of their own, weight of ornaments really belong to gold only. Therefore, ornament is pith less, it is non-substantial, *asārah*. Then, the ornament is *anityaḥ*. And finally, *asatyaḥ* (*asatyaḥ* meaning - It does not have its own original existence. It has only borrowed existence).

Our scriptures say, you have to extrapolate this to God and the world also. God being the *kāraṇam* God has to be *ekam*.

That is why, in modern science also, before the big bang happened, even before the manifestation of time & space itself, the condition, they name it singularity. 'Single', means, *ekam* only. They are not able to understand what is that singularity. They know this much - 'that condition is singular'. Thus, God is one.

Not only that. God is the *sāra* - the only substantial entity. Then, what is the third one? God alone is *nityam*. What about the world? It is *anityam*. Finally, God alone is *satyam*. The only reality that is existing independently. Whereas, the world is *anekeḥ*, *asārah*, *anityaḥ* and *asatyaḥ*. This is a very important corollary, derived from the second lesson.

So, why are these things told? Because, the next step is very important. Since the world by its very nature is *aneke*, *asāra*, *anitya*, *asatya*, it has got certain advantages or plus points, and also certain negative points. An intelligent person, who is living in this world and making a life in this world, must be aware of these plus points and negative points.

The world is full of variety, in *śabda sparśa rūpa rasa gandha*. Each sense organ has got its own area and in each one, there are infinite varieties. Therefore, the world has got beauty, world has got variety, world has got novelty (they are all the glories of this universe and wonderful, so enjoy them thoroughly). But, even though the world has got all these things, it is *anityam*, *asatya* and *asāram*. *Asāram* means, it is empty or hollow. Superficially, it is attractive; but, it is empty on enquiry. Not only it is hollow, it is also fleeting and temporary. Therefore, nothing in life is stable. Everything is beautiful but nothing is stable. Whether it is material object or the people or our own relationships or our own body, everything is *kṣaṇa bhaṅguraṃ* - unstable, perishable. Therefore, we can never rely upon anything in the world for our security.

One of the fundamental human problems is, we are all born with a sense of insecurity. Our scriptures call this, the problem of *saṃsāra*. Among many definitions of *saṃsāra*, one of the definitions is, the sense of insecurity.

Right from birth as a baby we felt insecure clinging on to the mother's sari and that clinging continues later to varieties of objects etc. All the human struggles are, according to our scriptures, driven by the sense of insecurity. It is because of the sense of insecurity and to get out of this problem of insecurity, we are holding on to things, without knowing that those very things are insecure. I acquire things to solve the problem of insecurity; and later, I am worried about *their* security. Therefore, world can never give security. World can never solve the fundamental problem of insecurity, called *saṃsāra*.

Freedom from this problem is called *mokṣaḥ*. If you want to solve this insecurity problem, we should never hold on to the *anitya vastu*. We should have '*nitya anitya vastu vivekaḥ*'. We should not hold on to *anitya vastu*. We have to hold on to only *nitya vastu*. What is that *nitya vastu*? *kāraṇa īśvaraḥ* alone is *śāśvatam*.

Therefore, every human being, if he/she has to resolve this fundamental problem, he/she should not seek the worldly things but, has to seek God, and God alone. Until then, there will be continuous problem of insecurity. Either one is affected by fear or affected by grief, as *Arjunā* does in the first chapter of the *gītā*.

*sīdanti mama gātrāṇi mukham ca pariśuṣyati vepathuḥ ca śarīre me roma-harṣaḥ ca jāyate  
gāṇḍīvaṃ sraṃsate hastāttvakcaiva paridahyate na ca śaknomyavasthātum bhramatīva ca me  
manaḥ ...*

Even the very thought of losing his near & dear ones, even the imaginary loss, *Arjunā* is unable to withstand. "When I cannot withstand even the imaginary loss, how am I going to withstand the actual loss?"

Therefore, if we are far-sighted ones, we cannot use the world for security. If the world cannot give security, it cannot give peace of mind also. How can an insecure person enjoy peace? If there is no peace and security, where is the question of happiness?

All the sense pleasures that people are after, are not for solving the problem, but only for forgetting the fundamental problem that is constantly disturbing. We are only trying to forget the problems, by pursuing sense pleasures. We are only escaping from the problems, we are not solving them. The escapist methods cannot help us for long.

Therefore, scriptures guide us. If you want to solve the fundamental problem, then seek God for security. When, God becomes my goal to solve the problem of insecurity, I have turned to spirituality. Spirituality begins when I have recognised the problem of insecurity and when I turn towards God.

Then, the scriptures go to the next lesson. How to find God? Where to find God? Because, world cannot help me. It is beautiful like the example of cardboard chair. A cardboard chair has been beautifully made and well decorated with varieties of papers, various colours, stickers, etc. Beautiful chair, made out of cardboard. You can use it for everything except for sitting over that. Similarly, according to the scriptures, the entire world is like a cardboard chair. Emotionally leaning on anything in the creation, is like sitting on a cardboard chair. So, our scriptures say, 'leaning on the world for emotional health is a risky affair. Learn to find God and lean on God and God alone'.

*ananyāścintayanto māṃ ye janāḥ paryupāsate teṣāṃ nityābhīyuktānāṃ yogakṣemaṃ vahāmyaham*

How to find God and find security? That is the final part of the teaching. Scriptures present it in two stages. The first stage is, preparation of the mind to find God. Because, God is the principle, which is the ultimate seed and cause; and which being the extremely subtle principle, beyond even time and space.

Because, before singularity,(the word '*before*' itself is meaningless) time and space existed. It must be an extremely subtle principle. So, we have to prepare the mind. And therefore the initial stage is, make use of the world for preparing the mind, Never use the world for security, the world which includes even people and relationships (it could be a disturbing news but it is a fact).

Therefore, never use the world for peace, security and happiness because world simply cannot give these. World is not useless, use it as a field of service - by serving the world in different areas, by contributing to the world. That is elaborately discussed in the scriptures in the form of *pañca mahā yajñāḥ*. Contribute to your family, to the society, to the culture, to the animals, to the plants - all these are wonderful infrastructure required for the spiritual *sādhana*. Therefore, use the world for, preparing the mind.

Once the mind is prepared, seek God by taking the help of a guru. And with the help of the guru and scriptural teaching, you will find God.

Where to find God? The scriptures ask - where to find the *kāraṇam*? Where have you got the gold in all the ornaments? Wherever the ornaments are, there itself the gold 'is'. Behind the temporary ornaments, the permanent gold is hidden. Similarly, behind the temporary universe, the infinite *nitya īśvara* is hidden.

*aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo madhya ātmani tiṣṭhati*

*īśānaṃ bhūtabhavyasya na tato vijugupsate*

*etadvai tat [kāthopaniṣad mantrā 2.1.12]*

In this very world itself, in every object, in every living being, which means, in the very 'me', in the perishable part of 'me', behind the perishable part of 'me', the imperishable God is available.

May you seek that God, find that god and discover security in that very eternal truth in 'you'. Thereafter, life becomes not a struggle for security; but, an expression of the security, that 'I already have found in God'.

Thus, first part of life is to serve the world for preparing the mind. After finding God, life is to serve the world, to declare the glory of the Lord. First, the preparation; next is declaration. First step is preparation by serving. Next step is service again, declaring the glory of the Lord. I do not need anything for my peace security and happiness as I have found them within me myself.

*ādi śaṅkarācāryā* - among the many *ślokās* he wrote, there is a very beautiful work called *śivāparādha kṣamāpaṇa stotram*, a beautiful set of *ślokās*. There he says, 'I did not know that you alone are the ultimate security. Therefore, I was running after various things of the world. In boyhood stage, I was interested in toys. In youth, I was interested in friends. In old age, I am worried about something else. In each stage, I just spent my life in search of one thing or other. I did not seek you'.

'*kṣantavyo me aparādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bho śrī-mahādeva śambho*'. I did not recognise your presence and value. Therefore, after getting many battering life experiences, now only I know, 'I cannot rely on any blessed thing, except God'.

*kiṃ vā anena dhanena vājīkaribhiḥ prāptena rājyena kiṃ kiṃ vā putra-kalatra-mitra-paśubhir dehena gehena kim*

*jñātvaitat kṣaṇa-bhaṅguraṃ sapadi re tyājyaṃ mano dūrataḥ svātmārthaṃ guruvākyato bhaja mana śrīpārvatīvallabham*

*kiṃ vā anena dhanena* - what is the use of money? Money cannot avoid old age; money cannot help me escape from diseases or death.

Therefore, *dhanena vājīkaribhiḥ prāptena rājyena kiṃ* - kingdom you get, what is the use?

*kiṃ vā putra kalatra mitra paśubhir* - What is the use of *kalatra* (spouse), *mitra* (friend), *paśubhir* (cattle, pet)

*jñātvā etat kṣaṇa bhaṅguraṃ* - Already they are in the process of dying. Indications are already there.

*tyājyaṃ mano dūrataḥ* - stop depending on all these perishable things, hey *manaḥ* (mind)

Śaṅkarācāryā is advising his own mind. Hey *manaḥ*, *dūrataḥ tyājyaṃ* - drop all the dependences on the world. Emotional dependence on the world is called, attachment. Give up all the attachments. Serve them; but, never get attached to them. *jñātvā etat kṣaṇa bhaṅguraṃ sapadi re* - God can take away anything at any time. Therefore, from world dependence, may you switch over to God dependence. *svātmārthaṃ guruvākyataḥ* - with the help of guru's teaching, *bhaja mana śrīpārvatī vallabham* - may you seek *pārvatī paramēśvara*

*Māyā sahitam brahma - īśvara*, who is everywhere, may you seek. And once you seek that Lord, ultimately you will find, that God is *ekaḥ sāraḥ nityaḥ* and *satyaḥ*. God is there in my very heart. In fact, it is nothing but my real and higher nature. When I claim that God as my real nature, that is called '*aham brahma asmi*'. That God - discovered as 'self' - is the real 'I'. Therefore, God dependence becomes self-dependence. Life's mission is accomplished. Thereafter, the whole life is a joy. All the *upaniṣads* talk about the joy of that person who has found security in himself. Life becomes a *līlā* for him.

*aṅoraṅīyān aham eva tadvad mahān ahaṃ viśvam ahaṃ vicitram*

*purātano'haṃ puruṣo'ham īśaḥ hiraṇmayo'haṃ śivarūpam asmi* [kaivalyopaniṣad 20]

'I am' that self, which is the real nature behind the entire universe. Thus, life itself will become successful and meaningful; because, we would have solved our fundamental problem of saṃsāra. But, all these are possible only if we take the guidance of the scriptures and lead a life which is God-centric.

And in Hinduism, we have got so many rituals and functions. People ask the question, 'why do we have so many functions?' We think it is a burden and expenditure. They are not meant for expenditure; but, they are meant to regularly remind us, 'do not get lost in worldly pursuit and forget the real goal of discovering security in that ultimate God which is myself'. And, *śivarātri pūjā* is also only to remind us of this truth.

Our life has to be God-centric. Our mission has to be discovery of that God in ourselves. With these words, I will conclude my talk.

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Transcribed and edited by Swamiji's devotee students

## Satsang with Sri Swami Veditatmananda PRATAḤ SMARAṆAM

*...continued from previous issue*

The first verse describes the Self as sat cit ānanda, while the second verse describes It as self-effulgent. In the third verse, the Self is described as the Self of all.

प्रातर्नमामि तमसः परमर्कवर्णं पणूर् सनातनपदं पुरुषोत्तमाख्यम् ।  
यस्मिन्निदं जगदशेषमशेषमूर्त्तौ रज्ज्वां भुज्जम इव प्रतिभासितं वै ॥

prātarnamāmi tamaṣaḥ paramarkavarṇam pūrṇam sanātanapadam  
puruṣottamākhyam, yasminnidam jagadaśeṣamaśeṣamūrtau rajjvām  
bhujāṅgama iva pratibhāsitam vai.

Early in the morning, I bow to the limitless, that which is beyond darkness, which has the lustre of the sun, which is the changeless support known as the supreme being, in whose limitless form the entire universe has appeared like a snake upon a rope.

Prātarnamāmi, early in the morning, I bow down to you, I salute you. We bow down to one who is worthy of worship and reverence. When I stand erect, I have a long shadow, and when I bow down, my shadow becomes shorter and shorter; when I fall flat, and there is no shadow at all. Bowing down is a symbol of falling flat at the feet of the Lord, the revered one. Falling flat means that I am not there, only the Lord is there. The ultimate limit of salutation is that I, who am saluting, am not there; only you, whom I salute, are there. The ultimate meaning of namaskāra is non-duality. I completely erase my ego and become one with you. It is like a river merging into the ocean. The river bows down to the ocean. That is, the name and form of the river is given up. The river is no more a river. One may think that the river is completely destroyed when it merges with the ocean. Yet, in doing that, the river only gives up its limitation of 'riverless'. It is now a limitless ocean, boundless. By giving up its boundaries, it becomes boundless. It is not that the river has become the ocean; the river does not have to physically merge into an ocean to realize its true nature. What is a river? It is only water. It becomes a river by identifying with a name and form. An ocean is also water. When the river recognizes that it is water, it is liberated. The river's merging into the ocean means that it loses its 'riveness' and 'becomes' the ocean.

Prātarnamāmi, early in the morning I bow down, I salute the Lord, the Self. Even the ego doesn't remain; there is only the Self. The duality is completely dropped and that is what is meant by namāmi.

Tamaṣaḥ paramarkavarṇam. Tamas means darkness. Param is beyond. Tamaṣaḥ param is that which is beyond the darkness. Arkavarṇam means of the luster of the sun, the self-shining sun. It is another way of enabling us to see the nature of ourselves. Darkness, here, stands for ignorance.

The Self is beyond the darkness of ignorance, meaning that which even illumines ignorance. The Self or Consciousness illumines ignorance. Both ignorance and knowledge are states of the mind. Therefore, we are also aware of our ignorance. For example, you know that you do not know the Chinese language. Your awareness of your own ignorance is also illumined by the Self; then alone can you know it. That which illumines ignorance is beyond ignorance. Ignorance is also mithyā. The Self is like the sun in that it is self-shining, self-illumining, or self-effulgent. It is thus beyond the darkness of ignorance, and even illumines ignorance.

Pūrṇam sanātanapadam puruṣottamākhyam. Pūrṇam is that which is limitless; it is filled from all sides like an ocean. Pru is to fill, fill completely. Sanātanapadam. Sanātana means that which is beyond the limits of time; it is all- inclusive, beyond the limitations of space. Puruṣottamākhyam is 'known as the supreme being'. Puruṣottama is the most exalted person or important being. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita [15-16] that there are two kinds of puruṣas: kṣara, changing, or the effect and akṣara, changeless, or the cause. Puruṣottama is beyond cause and effect.

द्वविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।  
क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि काटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते.

dvāvimau puruṣau loke kṣaraścākṣara eva ca,  
kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūtastho'kṣara ucyate.

These two persons (exist) in the world, the perishable and the imperishable. All beings and elements are called the perishable, the changeless (is called) the imperishable.

Now, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya says a very interesting thing in the last line, yasminnidaṁ jagadaśeṣa-maśeṣamūrtau rajjvām bhujāṅgama iva pratibhāsitaṁ vai. Yasmin, in whom; idam jagat, this entire universe; aśeṣamūrtau, in the limitless form, rajjvām in a rope; bhujāṅgam, like a snake; pratibhāsitaṁ vai, has appeared indeed.

### Creation is indescribable

What does Vedanta say about creation? Vedanta accepts the creation to be like the creation of a snake on a rope. A rope is mistaken to be a snake because of the ignorance of the rope. This ignorance gives rise to the delusion that it is a snake, or causes the projection of a snake where there is a rope. So is there a snake or not? If there is no snake, how do you see it? The person who suffers from the delusion of the snake does indeed see a snake. He has palpitations and high blood pressure, and is frightened by the snake. A non-existent snake cannot create all these effects in a person. If there is no snake, it will not be perceived. On the other hand, if there were a snake, it would not disappear when you throw light upon it. A Vedāntin would neither say that the snake is, nor that the snake is not. It is anirvacaniyam, indescribable. There are only two categories: is and is not; there cannot be a third category. The snake does not fall into any category. This is the nature of the creation. Just as a snake is created out of a rope, so also is the universe created from brahman. It is mithyā, unreal. Can you tell me where the snake is? Is it in the mind? If it were in my mind, the snake should be wherever my mind is. But it is not so. If the snake is not in my mind, is it in the rope? If the snake were in the rope, the snake should be wherever the rope is. Even upon shining light on the rope, the snake should be there; but, it is not. Thus, the snake cannot be said to be either in the rope or my mind. It is anirvacaniyam.

### **Every object in the world has asti, bhāti, priyam, nāma, and rūpa**

Bhuja means arm; a snake moves on its arms, not on its feet, and that is why it is called bhuja. Just as a snake appears on the rope, so also, the whole universe appears in brahman, the Self. What is this universe? It is all the names and forms. For example, what is a clock? A clock has a name, nāma, and a corresponding form, rūpa; it is, asti; it shines, bhāti, and it is useful, priyam, dear. Thus, a clock has all five aspects in it: asti, bhāti, priyam, nāma, and rūpa. I speak of a clock because I am aware of it. It shines in my awareness, and it is dear to me because it is useful to me. Every object in the world has asti, bhāti, priyam, nāma, and rūpa. What separates one object from another is the name and form. Asti bhāti priyam is the most common denomination. For example, both a bangle and an earring have the common denominator of gold. We can say that gold appears as various ornaments: a bangle, an earring, a chain etc. Similarly, asti bhāti priyam, which is the real content, appears as the different names and forms. An ornament is gold plus a name and form. Similarly, an object is asti bhāti priyam plus a name and form. Just as gold appears as various ornaments, so also, asti bhāti priyam, sat cit ānanda, the Self, or brahman appears as this whole universe of names and forms. Just as a rope shines as a snake, so also, brahman, asti bhāti priyam, or sat cit ānanda appears or shines as the entire universe of names and forms.

### **We should change our focus from nāma and rūpa to the fact of asti bhāti priyam**

Yasmin, in whom, aśeṣam jagat, this entire universe, has appeared. The entire universe can be reduced to names and forms. This universe of names and forms is nothing but the manifestation of asti bhāti priyam or sat cit ānanda. In the Īśvāsyopaniṣad, the first vākya is īśā vāsyamidaṁ sarvaṁ yatkiñca jagatyāṁ jagat, whatever is moving or changing, every name and form should be known as īśvara. This is the Lord, brahman, asti bhāti priyam, or sat cit ānanda. That is all that counts! What counts in an ornament? It is the gold. An earring, bangle, chain, or any ornament is but gold. All we need to do is change the focus of attention from the name and form to the gold. Similarly, all we have to do in this world is to change our focus from the name and form to the fact of asti bhāti priyam. Asti bhāti priyam is not out there; it is one's own Self. The whole universe of names and forms is superimposed upon the 'I'. It is the 'I', the Self, sat cit ānanda, which shines in the varied multitude of names and forms in this universe.

I bow down early in the morning to that Lord who is pūrṇam, Whole and Complete, sanātanapadam, the eternal abode, and puruṣottamākhyam, known as puruṣottama in the scriptures. Prātassmarāmi, I remember, prātarbhajāmi, I worship, and prātarnamāmi, I bow down, I salute<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Transcribed by Richa Choudhry and edited by Krishnakumar (KK) S. Davey and Jayshree Ramakrishnan.

## A new paradigm for the social enterprise

-Relatively an old article but still relevant

I had always thought of AIM for Seva as one among thousands of similar social projects, with the underprivileged of India being the beneficiaries of the generosity of well intentioned, or skill-rich benefactors with cash or time to donate. But here, these girls, who were so-called under-privileged, who most likely would have missed out on childhood and basic education, were giving the 'privileged' visitors a gift that is rare anywhere in the world: a taste of love, of open-heartedness, of generosity – a touch of ananda. The beneficiary-benefactor terms of the equation had momentarily flipped sides. And in the hospital and farm too, what was it about the doctors and Ramanji that allowed them to exude the care they did?

This answer came in one document in the pack of reading material I was given: Elizabeth Thornton's 'A Social Entrepreneurship Framework'<sup>1</sup>. Reading it changed my view totally. It brought out the massive scale and uniqueness of the vision behind AIM for Seva. It showed that the movement is more than just another Indian fundraising project for building schools and hospitals. It is an audaciously ambitious project aimed at nothing short of transforming India – on par with the Grameen Bank movement. The penny dropped! I suddenly saw that AIM for Seva isn't one in a thousand. It is a one-off. It may be about material upliftment, but it is much more beside.

The vision of AIM for Seva is to uplift Indian society by inspiring a culture of compassion. This unique movement gives people the opportunity to change from simply being consumers to being contributors to the wellbeing of fellow citizens in greatest need. Individuals with resources and skills are invited to express compassion by contributing funds or expertise to support a range of education and health programmes across India created for those in greatest need. The people delivering the programmes are not simply doing a job: they are chosen because of their commitment to the larger social vision of compassionate contribution. And the people who benefit from the programmes are taught the value of compassion and are raised to a position from which they too can be future contributors to society.

Everyone wins. A nation of contributors is a mature nation. The best way to understand the true import of AIM for Seva, is to go straight to Pujya Swamiji's description of his vision:

"Competition means you have to follow norms. Without rules there is no competition. Whether it is a game or business, you need to follow rules. The rules have to grow upon you. The competition we see today has been thrown upon us. Therefore people are insecure, and the symptoms of insecurity are seen in terms of grabbing and hoarding and taking advantage of each situation. This is a society that was once unknown in India, but now it is seen to be rampant.

"Therefore, I thought we should create a new chemistry. In our culture there is such a thing as *dānam*, sharing, caring. We are caring people. We do not throw our elders into old age homes. We have homes and we keep our elders with us and we respect them. Therefore, we have to emphasize

some of these very important values in our own being and allow these values to surface. For this, a movement is necessary. I, therefore, started the All India Movement (AIM) for Seva.

"Any movement needs to reach a critical point and from that point alone it will take off. I think we are somewhere around that point. The new chemistry has to come from caring. Why? Because there is no other way a person can really mature. The whole process of maturing implies the transformation from being a consumer to a contributor, even though one continues to be a consumer. The one who contributes more than he or she consumes is a grown up person. Otherwise, the person is still a child. Therefore one has to discover oneself as a contributor and inner transformation has to take place.

"That is India. Giving is India. We have to emphasize this caring through programmes of caring. We should get people involved because the problems are so enormous. Even people who see the problems cannot do anything because they are emotionally paralyzed. They cannot think of doing anything. Therefore we have to create an avenue for people to pitch in. It may be small help, but when there are a lot of people pitching in, then that becomes a movement. So that's the whole vision. All our sadhus are also engaged in this work. There are also a lot of people who are quietly doing small things individually. But all of them have to be brought together in a movement. This is the movement."

#### **A new paradigm for giving**

The implications for benefactors from this vision are far-reaching. AIM for Seva is asking more of them than mere disposable income and social consciousness. No doubt, the building of hospitals, schools and hostels is essential to lift people out of social deprivation. And there's no denying that disposable income and a social consciousness are essential to fund the building of hospitals, schools and hostels. But to transform society for the better requires more: a conscious commitment to becoming a contributor instead of just being a consumer. AIM for Seva asks benefactors and volunteers to add this attitude to their donations and social consciousness.

Contribution is an attitude, not just an activity. When the contributor is in place, social giving can become transformative. The contributor is the one who is aware there is an ethical and spiritual dimension to life, and the contributor-benefactor gives with this attitude in mind. The contributor-benefactor is as interested in his or her own transformation as in the transformation of the lives of those who are less privileged. Is it essential to have disposable income to be a contributor? The straight answer is: "No", one can contribute expertise and time as well. But is money necessary to initiate the sort of programmes that AIM for Seva is initiating? The straight answer is: "Yes", but with the caveat that it is not sufficient to bring about a fundamental uplift in Indian society without the attitude of *dānam* behind it.

So here are three key questions for donors and volunteers:

- > Will my spiritual maturity be furthered by my contribution? If so, how?
- > Is the project I support instilling a 'contributor-mindset' in its beneficiaries? If so, how?
- > Do I subscribe to Swami Dayananda's vision for transforming India?

When the answer to all three is 'Yes', then the full vision of AIM for Seva will be advanced. And India will be the beneficiary.

**-By Peter Bonnici**

## ODHUVARS AT ANAIKATTI

Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati revived the Odhuvar tradition in Tamil Nadu. Odhuvars sing hymns in praise of Lord Siva during all kala pujas in traditional Siva temples. It is a part of various upacharas during puja in Siva temples. They were supported by Kings earlier with honorariums which over a period stopped. Pujya Swamiji took initiative in appointing 35 Odhuvars in ancient Siva temples and brought back the Panniru Thirumurai tradition. These are considered as 'Tamil Marai', equivalent to Veda.

On March 18, 2017 well trained and traditional Oduvars from different parts of TamilNadu rendered Thirumurai at AVG in the august presence of Acaryas, students and special invitites.

Introducing the Odhuvars, Sri Srinivasan Co-ordinator of Odhuvar project,said that Sri Hariharan Odhuvar teaches Panniru Thirumurai every Sunday to 2,000 students at Nasiyanur near Erode, Tamil Nadu.



**Swaminathan with Acaryas**

Thirumurai Seva Maiyam, New Jersey, USA is a significant contributor to the Oduvar project financially and Sri Swaminathan has done tremendous work in organizing the same. The fund raising for the project is done with local Indian support at New Jersey, whose services were appreciated by Pujya Swamiji.

The Odhuvars honoured Sri Swaminathan with Ponnadai. They also honoured the Acharyas at AVG, Anaikatti.



**Oduvar**

Sri Swaminathan said that when Pujya Swamiji knew that there was no Odhuvar at Thanjavur Big temple and Tiruvarur temple, he decided to take up the Odhuvar project. In Tarasuram temple wall the name of 108 Odhuvars are written. Pujya Swamiji was happy to note that three of them were from Kodavasal temple, which is an adjacent village to Manjakkudi.

Once Oduvars visited Saylorburg Ashram and rendered traditional Thirumurai before Pujya Swamiji. Pujya Swamiji was ecstatic when he saw the Indian children were quick to learn the same and also reproduced melodiously the same.



**Swaminathan being honoured**

Pujya Swamiji wished that the silver kavacham to be replaced for Lord Ekanatha, the procession deity (urcava murti) in Tiruvidaimarudur temple. He had deferred the work until the completion of building five temple chariots. Now Thirumurai Seva Maiyam has taken up this project. Thanks to the vision of Pujya Swamiji, this ancient Odhuvar tradition has been revived.

**Photos by Uga/ Tomoka**

**Report by N. Avinashilingam**



*Arsha Vidya  
Newsletter*

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**Editor**

## HAPPENNINGS AT AVG DURING MARCH-APRIL 2017

**GROUP OF VISITORS FROM JAPAN:** Mukti and a group of visitors from Japan visited the Gurukulam on March 25, 2017. They stayed at the Gurukulam for a week.



**Japanese Visitors**

**SRI RAMA NAVAMI:** On April 5, 2017, Rama Navami was celebrated at AVG with the invocation of Lord Rama in the picture and sodasa upacara puja was performed to get His blessings.



**Panguni Uttiram Puja**

**PANGUNI UTTIRAM:** Tradition says on this day -when moon transit from star utara-phalguni in the last month of Tamil calendar Panguni- celestial weddings take place, in specific marriage of Lord Subramanya . As an annual event all temples take their utsava murthis to the kalyana mandapam of the temple and perform the marriage of the presiding God and Goddess there.



**Rama Navami Puja**

On April 9, 2017, at AVG Sri Kalyana Subramania temple, situated at hill top, Lord Muruga , Goddess Valli and Goddess Deivanai puja, ekadasa rudra abhisheka and sahasra nama archana were done.

**TAMIL NEW YEAR:** On April 14, 2017, at Sri Medha Dakshinamurthy temple, Ganapathy Homa and ekadasa drvya abhisheka were performed. Special puja was done at Sri Kalyana Subramania temple. At Guru Tirtha -Swami Dayananda Memorial - an altar of Chittirai kani or Vishu kani was setup. Swami Sadatmananda, Chief Acharya and Swami Shankarananda blessed the students and visitors in the morning with vishu-kai-neettam, a tradion followed in Kerala on this day.

**Rangoli** (or kolam in Tamil) is an art bringing out the creativity of traditional ladies of the house and is usually put at the entrance of the house as well as in front of the altar of Ishvara. It is significant the foreign students at AVG have become expert in this art, as shown in the picture drawn by Brni. Sumukee. Even the Greetings in Tamil 'Tamil Puthandu Valthugal' was written by her. The Japanese and Chinese students in the long term course, do excel in the art of kolam.

As usual Large number of devotees visited the Gurukulam on this day and got the blessings from Lord and Acaryas, culminating in grant biksha.



**Blessings from Acarya**



**Rangoli by Brni. Sumukee**

#### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS:**

**RESIDENTIAL MUSICAL CAMP BY M.S.DARSHANA:** Camp dates April 21, 2017 to April 27, 2017.

**SHANKARA JAYANTHI:** April 30, 2017.

**SWAMI PARAMARTHANANDA'S YAGNA AT BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, R S PURAM, COIMBATORE:** From April 30, 2017 to May 6, 2017 in the evenings Uddava Gita. From May 1, 2017 to May 6, 2017 in the mornings Vedanta Dindima.

**Report by N. Avinashilingam**

## SADHANA CAMP

*Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh April 5 to April 11, 2017*

Swami Omkaranandaji from the Swami Chidbhananda Ashram, Theni conducted a 7-day Sadhana Camp at Swami Dayananda Ashram in Rishikesh. The text taught in Tamil by Swamiji was the second chapter of Taittiriya Upanishad – Bramhananda Valli. About 175 students primarily from various parts of Tamilnadu were in attendance.



The camp started with an orientation session on the 4th evening with details regarding the camp and the ashram.

The days were packed with classes and other activities from 5:00 am to 9:30 pm. The daily routine began at 5 o'clock in the morning with abhishekam and puja at the Gangadhariswarar Temple. The accompanying vedic chants of Sri Rudram, Chamakam, and Sukthams on the banks of the Ganga and Himalayan foothills were an exhilarating experience.

That was followed by 30 minutes of meditation conducted by Swamiji, followed by breakfast.

The sequence of programs, thereafter were three Upanishad Classes by Swamiji, interspersed with chanting of Lalitha Sahasranaman, Vishnu Sahasranaman, and Bhagavad Gita. There were daily evening pujas at the temple and in the Adhistanam of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswatiji. The day's activities came to a close after dinner with a Satsang session consisting of Bhajans and a Q&A session with Swamiji.

A highlight at this camp was on the 7th when Swamiji performed an elaborate Rudrabhishekam starting with Mahanyasam followed by Ekadasi Rudram at the Adhistanam.



There were several other significant events. On the occasion of Sri Rama Navami on the 5th, Swamiji performed a special puja in the prayer hall.

A dip in the sacred Ganga is a major objective and attraction for all devotees. At this camp it was made even more special when Swami Brahmavidayanandaji administered an elaborate mass Sankalpam on the 8th prior to the first Ganga Snanam of this trip for most of the students.

Bhandara is a traditional event of Annadhanam or offering of Biksha to the many Sadhus who live and move about the area. Interestingly, there were four such Bhandaras in the short of span of seven days of the camp, which must have been a record of sorts. One such Bhandara, on the 9th, was organized by Swamiji's students.



Another popular event on the banks of the Ganga from Rishikesh to Varanasi is the Ganga Aarathi. A special Ganga Puja and Aarathi was performed on the 10th by Swamiji and Shri Parasuramji on behalf of all the students.



Meals at the Ashram - Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner consisted of simple and nutritional items. Several of these Bikshas were sponsored by students.

Also impressive for this student who is visiting Rishikesh after several years are the additional features and improvements in the environment. One could spot a WiFi antenna; and the traditional chanting of Gita's 15th chapter prior to lunch and dinner is now led by an amplified recorded version!

Just outside the rear gate of the Ashram flows the Ganga. This area was frequently eroded and damaged during floods. The local municipal administration has done a wonderful job of building fenced retaining walls, and has converted the whole stretch into a promenade. One can walk along this area for quite a distance with the beautiful river and mountains on one side and a series of Ashrams on the other.

A wonderful and invigorating 7-day Vedanta camp came to an end of the 11th with Guru Vandanam. Many thanks are due to the administration and staff of Swami Dayananda Ashram for making this a memorable experience.

We also thank Shri Parasuramji and his team at the Theni Ashram for all their assistance and arrangements.

**Hari Om.**

**Vijay Raghavan, Chennai**

**April 15, 2017**

## Sri C. Sounder Raj

27-Nov-1936 to 07-Mar-2017

Sri C. Sounder Raj, one of the founding Trustees of the Sruti Seva Trust, a great contributor and philanthropist left his physical frame on 07-March 2017.

Sri Sounder Raj and Smt Prema Sounder Raj were introduced to Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati in 1960s and the relationship grew over time. Sri Sounder Raj was a quiet and unassuming person. He was a man of few words and listened more and spoke very little. Pujya Swamiji was looking for a place to start a Gurukulam, a place which was not far from the airport, featured hills and a stream or rivulet. Sri Sounder Raj said he knew a place nearby which may meet Swamiji's approval and if found acceptable details could be worked out. Swamiji agreed and Sri Sounder Raj brought Swamiji and others to Anaikatti Village one afternoon – there was just barren land and the drive was through a dirt road. After seeing



a couple of possible sites in the vicinity, Pujya Swamiji selected this site in Anaikatti where the Gurukulam is presently located. Thus Sri Sounder Raj was instrumental in finding the right place of the Gurukulam. He made many significant contributions in the early stages of the life of the Gurukulam.

Smt Prema and Sri Sounder Raj used to invite Pujya Swamijis for Bhiksa often. He liked being alone with Pujya Swamiji. On one occasion Pujya Swamiji invited Sri Sounder Raj to travel with him to Vizag. Sri Sounder Raj agreed and later recalled that in the few days he spent with Pujya Swamiji on this trip so many important things were discussed, he had learned so much. He cherished this period as one of the most cherished and valuable times of his life.

Professionally he was one of the leaders in the Textile industry. He was President of The Textile Association (India), President of The South India Cotton Association , Member, Research Advisory Committee, SITRA .

He was also Trustee in various religious organization

He treated his staff with respect and kindness. He helped people quietly and few people knew of his work. In one instance, he found out that one of the children of his staff was a brilliant student and wanted to study medicine but that was not affordable for the family. Sri Sounder Raj supported his education and the person is now a well qualified Physician working overseas. He helped needy temples which approached him. He was also a pillar of support behind the Ramakrishna Hospital in Coimbatore. Sri Sounder Raj helped many Brahmacharis and Swamis to get treated at the Hospital including the treatment of Swami Tarananda, one of the Gurus of Pujya Swamiji. He donated some equipment and sent a Dentist weekly to the AIM for Seva hospital at Anaikatti to help people with needs for Dental care.

We place on record our thanks to Sri Sounder Raj for his valuable contributions and pray Isvara for the best gati for his soul.

# ARSHA VIDYA PITHAM

Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh

is pleased to announce 6 days Camp by

Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati, (Chief Acharya) Disciple of

**Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh

On

## DHYANA YOGA MEDITATION

2<sup>nd</sup> July to 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2017

Those who are interested in attending the camp are requested to apply

On or before 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2016.

Kindly find the online application form at our website

[www.dayananda.org](http://www.dayananda.org)

For further enquiries please send an email to [dayanandacamps2014@gmail.com](mailto:dayanandacamps2014@gmail.com)

or call us at +91-135-2430769 between 08:00 to 12:00 & 15:00 -19:00 Hrs only.

**Instructions to fill the online form:**

- Go to [www.dayananda.org](http://www.dayananda.org)
- Click on the link Online Application 2016/Registration
- Fill all Mandatory fields
- Click on Submit and goto your mail and activate the registration  
(Note that the activation mail could be delivered at your spam folder)
- Goto [www.dayananda.org](http://www.dayananda.org) and Click on the link Online Application 2016/Login
- Login and select the course as per your choice.

Acharya

Swami Santatmananda

## Composition Of Dayananda Saraswathi

Composition of Swami Dayananda Saraswati

रागम्-दुर्गा ॥ रामः ॥ तालम्-आदि

पञ्चमी  
रामं भजे श्यामं मनसा  
रामं भजे श्यामं कचसा गमं भजे

अनुपञ्चमी  
सर्वं वेद-सार-भूतम्  
सर्वं भूत-हेतु-नाशम् गमं भजे

विभीषणहानेय-पूजित-चरणाम्

चरणाम्-१  
वासिष्ठदि-मुनिगण-वेदित-हृदयम्

करीकृत-माया-कारित-वेषम्

एतं पुरेशं सर्वेशम् गमं भजे

चरणाम्-२  
विद्व-मेध-श्यामलं नित्य-धर्म-चारिणम्

दण्डिनं क्रोद्धण्डिनं दुराचार-खण्डनम्

चरणाम्-३  
पान-मृत्यु-पार-व्याधि

दुःख-दोष-भाव-हरम् गमं भजे

On the occasion of RamaNavami, Pujya Swamiji's composition on Lord Rama is reproduced here. Every sanskrit word is filled with 'rama' in devanagiri text.



**Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti**  
is pleased to announce a Vedanta retreat

from **2<sup>nd</sup> Oct 2017** to **8<sup>th</sup> Oct 2017**

by

**Swami Sadatmananda Saraswati**

&

**Swami Shankarananda Saraswati**

**Topic: THE ESSENCE OF THE UPANISHADS**

(in English)

Interested applicants may download the registration form from [www.arshavidya.in/camp-register](http://www.arshavidya.in/camp-register) and send the filled-up form to [camps@arshavidya.in](mailto:camps@arshavidya.in) by **01-Aug-2017**.

**For further enquiries please inquire at**

**[camps@arshavidya.in](mailto:camps@arshavidya.in)**

**or call us at**

**+91-9442646712, +91-9442646701, +91-422-2657001**

## Focus on Plus can overcome Minus

Come to think of it, we have lots of blessings to count. It doesn't take much to realize and recognize that the world around us in all its ramifications is simply given to us—the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the rivers, the oceans, the vegetation, the forests, animals, birds, -- the list goes on and on. We had absolutely no hand in creating any of these.

In a sense, these are all God-given gifts to us. If we accept this premise, we can see the hand of the Lord in myriad other ways. This should remind us to recognize and acknowledge in all humility and reverence the invisible hand of the Creator and marvel at His intelligence.

**We start with this big God-given plus.**

And then there are a host of other plusses that are concurrently paired with minuses that we have to deal with—sort of opposites. These create a challenge in life. Plus signifies positive and minus negative. Plus implies adding and minus subtracting. For instance, we talk of Power of Positive Thinking/sign of optimism versus Negative thinking /sign of a pessimist. We all want to build assets and get rid of liabilities.

Then there are other sets of opposites. We associate virtue as Plus and vice as Minus. We live in a world of particles and anti-particles--which unlike other things in life have exactly equal and opposite characteristics. The world presents us with all sorts of duality which can be understood in terms of plus and minus. While having all plusses is the desired and eventual goal, we realize this is impossible. Plus and minus have variable connotations. For instance, for a ski-resort, minus temperatures are a plus. For someone trying to become healthy, putting on (plussing) weight can be an undesirable, negative thing (minus). When it comes to charity, isn't better to be a giver than a receiver?

We talk of having good Days and bad days; of battle of good versus evil, of beautiful and the ugly. And then there is happiness and sorrow, success and failure/ups and downs.

Traditionally, the universe has been analyzed in terms of matter and energy. An alternative approach is described in Bhagvad Gita (Chapter 14) where human behavior is discussed and is to be understood in terms of three attributes (mental states), namely:

**State of purity (Satvic)**

**State of ambition, drive and passion (Rajasic)**

**State of lethargy, inertia and indolence (Tamasic)**

All of us are made up of a mixture of these three attributes. The goal of spiritual advancement is attain state of purity (satvic). Mind can be our best friend or worst enemy (Gita, Chapter 6). The secret is to make mind our best friend and steer our thoughts and energy and thereby our attitude towards self-upliftment. It is ironic, by giving up (sacrifice); one expands one's spiritual horizon.

Another classification Bhagvad Gita mentions in Chapter 16 is in terms of divine and demoniac qualities we all possess and the goal to rise above the demoniac. We sense the divine component in daily dialog where people refer to God under many circumstances (Oh My God, Thank God, God forbid, God-forsaken place, etc.). Further, whenever ethics (dharma) and morality are in danger of decline and the opposite (adharma) is on the ascendancy, the Lord intervenes in human form to restore moral law and order. This is referred to as Avataar (Gita-Chapter 4) and can be understood best as a sort of divine feedback mechanism.

Let us not forget that we are gifted with free will, the ability to make the right decisions, to distinguish what is right versus what we would like to do. We can exercise this to stay where we are; to go higher or; to go lower.

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\*Melkote Ramaswamy is a physicist, speaker, writer, author of *An Immigrant celebrates America* (University of Indianapolis Press, 2007) and *Vedanta through Drushtaanta* (Adhyatma Press, Ahmedabad, India , 2013). He has attended several Vedanta camps at Arshavidya Gurukulam. He an active member of Hindu Temple of Central Indiana and writes a regular column for Faith + Values section of the Indianapolis Star.

*Arsha Vidya Newsletter*

Annual Subscription: Rs.180/-

*Published by V. Sivaprasad*

Trustee, Sruti Seva Trust, Anaikatti, Coimbatore 641108

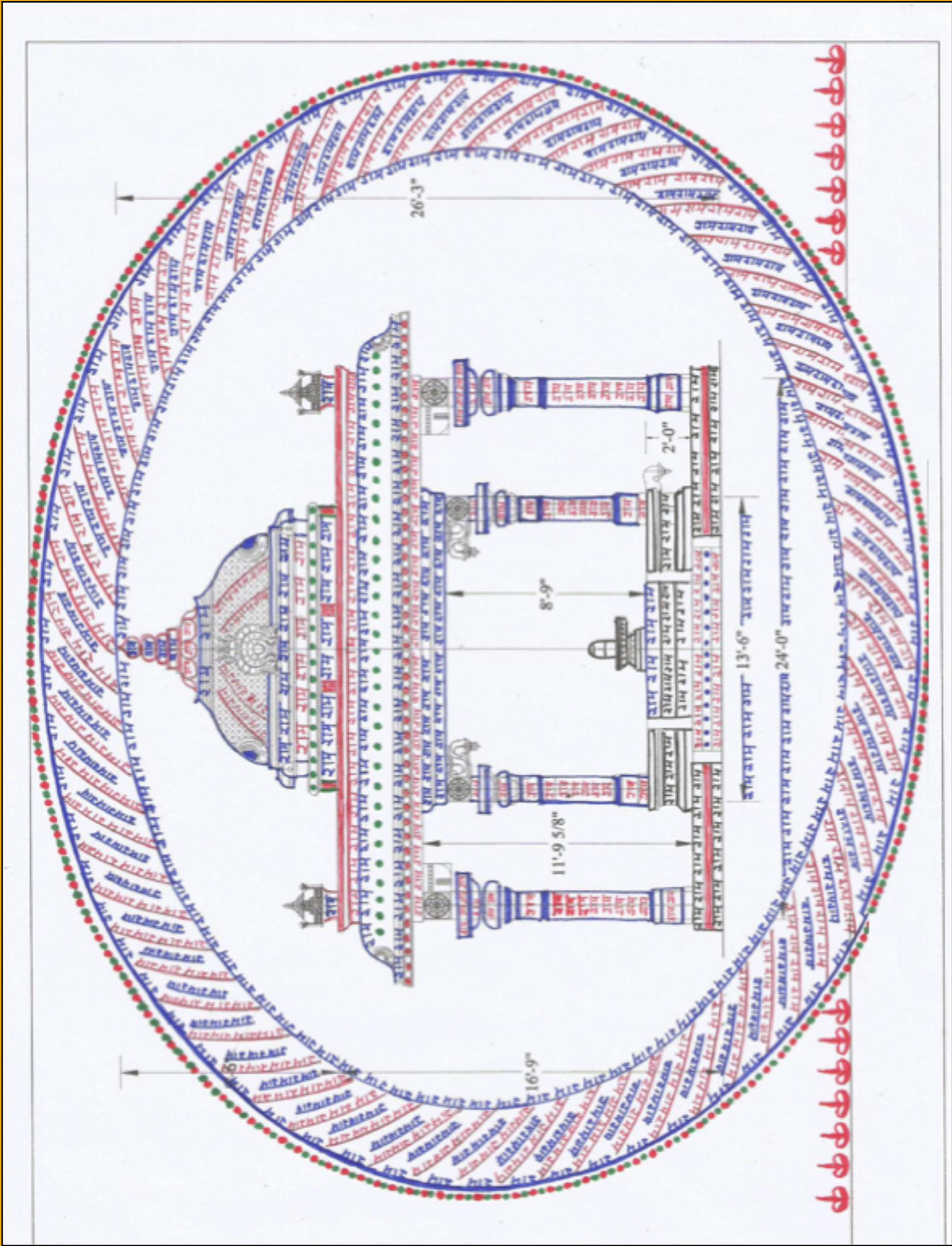
*Edited by*

**S. Srinivasan - 0422-2657001**

*Printed by B. Rajkumar,*

**Rasi Graphics Pvt. Ltd.,**

40 Peters Road, Madras 600014. Ph. 28132790, 28131232



The adhishtanam structure is written with 'rama' in devanagari by Meena Hariharan, a staunch devotee of Pujya Swamiji and Lord Rama



**Rama Navami Puja at AVG**