



# Divine Ambrosia

*A Drink For All*

*Dear Readers,*

Have you ever reflected on the highly intricate and efficient hardwiring system that exists in our brain and mind? It would not be an exaggeration to say that we have trillions of Megabytes of memory, an extremely fast processing speed of the order of Yottahertz ( $10^{24}$  Hz) and the computation power of several tens of thousands of Super Computers put together. Yes, we are the most creative, innovative, complex and efficiently hard-wired species of all beings. Yet, it is saddening that we use lesser than 1% of our mind-power and other intellectual faculties that we have in abundance. Even that 1% is used mainly for pursuing our various materialistic ambitions and other worldly activities. Our current wiring system is laden with many defects, as there are several leaks in our mental energy which is the result of continuous contact of senses with sense objects. Through months and years of accumulation of impressions, fears, desires, attachments, and many other feelings by contact with the material world, we have in the process become materialistically wired. And this is preventing us from looking within and beholding the Inner Divine, the Antaryamin, the Light that shines in All and the Source of true Happiness and Peace.

Many sages and saints since the days of yore have proclaimed this: *the highest responsibility and ultimate goal in life is to realize the Divine within*. To achieve this, we should re-wire ourselves spiritually. There are two most indispensable tools that any spiritual seeker has to equip himself/herself with in this process of re-wiring: *Japa* and *Dhyana*, commonly known as "Chanting of Divine Name" and "Meditation". By slowly and regularly performing these two activities, we will succeed in preventing mental energy dissipation and in channeling it towards our spiritual evolution. There is no better good we can do to ourselves, our families and our societies than to make an effort to re-wire ourselves spiritually.

The Name of the Divine (*Naama*) has been said to be non-different from God. The *Naama* is said to be the destroyer of all negative tendencies and the various impressions accumulated in the mind. It acts as a potent purgatory of our mental system and also unties the various knots of anger, lust, greed, hatred, jealousy and many more. Chanting of the *Naama* slowly, silently, loudly or in a whisper constitutes *Japa*, of different kinds. Everyday, regularly at a fixed time and place, we should exert in *Japa*, just like we allocate time to brush our teeth, drink, eat, watch TV etc. Many saints have instructed us that by regular repetition of the Divine Name, several positive grooves are formed in our mind and without our knowledge, several impressions are cleared. In short, without the least effort from our side, we will be re-wired to a sublime state. Great Masters also instruct us in daily Meditation or *Dhyana* to discard our superficial identity with the outward mass of flesh and bones, and dive deeper into the realm of our innate being.

In this current issue of Divine Ambrosia, titled "*Re-wiring Ourselves Spiritually*", many enlightening articles by Saints like Swami Sivananda, Ramakrishna Paramahansa are presented which will help us in our efforts to make progress in our spiritual path. The sacred hill Arunachala is covered in our Yatra section. Several festive moments we celebrated like Guru Purnima, Krishnashtami and Ganesha Chaturdhi and their spiritual significance are highlighted. A brief life sketch of HH Swami Chidananda Saraswati, who is our Divine Celebrity for this issue is covered. Many other spiritually interesting and elevating features are included in this issue.

We hope that this issue of "*Divine Ambrosia*" gives each and every one of us new motivation, encouragement and enthusiasm to engage in *Japa* and *Dhyana* and successfully re-wire ourselves to soar in the sublime heights of the Divine. *Happy Autumn! Happy Reading!*

*Om Peace!*

*At HIS Lotus Feet,*

*The Editor*



## Re-wiring Ourselves Spiritually

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## The Movement of Impressions in Spiritual Evolution *by Sri Swami Sivananda*

*In the book "Sadhana", Swami Sivananda writes several articles each addressing a significant phenomenon in spiritual evolution that spiritual aspirants experience in the course of their spiritual journey, and gives tips and techniques to overcome the obstacles. Below is one such article that throws light on a very important process that may bewilder many spiritual seekers:*

The aspirant is struggling amidst the rough and tumble of the materialistic world. Troubles and difficulties crop up at every step. Temptations, trials and tests assail him ever. He strives and fights manfully against the heavy odds and at last thinks it high time that he segregated and tried to pursue his *Sadhana* away from these upsetting factors. He retires from the bustle of worldly activity and goes into comparative seclusion of some spiritual institution where he spends some time in selfless service and does spiritual practice systematically. But he is horrified to find that after a time instead of feeling a gradual and progressive purification, moral, mental and spiritual, he experiences more impurity, evil and undesirable emotions and thoughts. What is this strange phenomenon? Is he slipping backwards? What is this queer stage he is passing through? Is he indeed moving towards Light or getting more and more into darkness? These considerations begin to seriously trouble his mind. His natural anxiety and grave concern over his inexplicable state is quite understandable. If he reflects a little and patiently tries to introspect and analyze his condition and the change that is going on within him, he will soon know the actual truth and will at once be reassured. His mind will be at rest.

This is not a degenerating process but actually a purifying process. The course of spiritual development at times appears as the contrary of what it really is. This has a reason for it. Extreme things that are diametrically opposite and contradictory tend to seem identical at times. Very low rates of vibration the ear cannot catch and even so extremely high rates the ear cannot hear. A static object appears motionless. The same object set rotating at a tremendous velocity appears to the eye to be perfectly still. Thus when during a stage in spiritual practice, the extreme reverse process of purification and the getting rid of 'Mental Impurity' takes place, it seems alarming akin to that of the obverse positive process of acquiring *Asubhasana* (impure impression).

It is here that an important note of caution has to be vividly borne in mind. When these inner impressions begin to cast out themselves then the Seeker should with great alertness and vigilance see that they are not afforded any scope to have active physical manifestation. There must be only an abortive rush and dissolution. Like the excess water in the dam that is released out of the barrage by the periodical opening of a few sluice gates these impressions must harmlessly flow out. Then the

seeker is all right and he will soon proceed with his spiritual practice as before. Else these out flowing impressions will get translated into actions and forge further bonds in the Karmic cording that holds the individual in thralldom here. Instead of becoming a release process it will be the reverse of it.

There are two processes in this connection that will be of great help and reassurance to the spiritual seeker if he remembers and makes proper timely use of them with wise reflection and discrimination. Namely, it is not always necessary or even desirable that all such 'spending-out' forces should indeed be allowed to flow out abortively or that they should issue forth at all. Where they are imbedded in the *Chitta* or the subconscious mind, these can be directly sublimated and nullified. Just as the heat of the sun shining upon the barrage waters reduces them by direct evaporation, thus too regular meditation by the aspirant directly sublimates a portion of the Impression-store day by day as the practice proceeds. Then with those forces that actually sally out there is a very profitable alternative the seeker can and really should employ, namely sublimating upon the external physical plane and transforming them into some profitable spiritual activity. This latter can be employed either subjectively with beneficial repercussions upon himself or also objectively to the advantage of others. Subjectively for instance should the subtle lust-impulsion endeavor to manifest itself, then the seeker, if he is alert, must transform it at once into a dozen Sun-Salutations or a vigorous round of his favorite *Pranayama*, a course of *Asanas* or a full-throated chant of the sublime hymns glorifying the Divine. Thus sublimation also gets profitably turned into precious life-transforming spiritual practice.

Should the impression of anger commence this spending-out process then repair to a quiet room and have a good loud hearty laugh and make it effervesce into pure upsurge of good cheer and laughter. Or sit still and send out wave after wave of love, blessing and goodwill to the entire universe from the bottom of your heart. Repeat again and again the sublime verses of the world-peace of the Upanishads. You will simply be filled with overflowing cosmic love. All anger impressions will vanish *in toto*, leaving in their stead a continuous thrill of motiveless love. This feeling is indeed indescribable. This spiritual practice will give you a positive asset of *Sattva* and love. You will find yourself a tangibly different being after even a single genuine attempt at this process of deliberate sublimation. This subjective method is preferable and is to be adopted particularly with regard to such impressions of *Rajas* and *Tamas* that become activated through external contact and by association, such as for instance, anger, lust etc.

Then there are such tendencies as one's suppressed social nature, *Rajasic* urge to aimless activity, the erotic sentiment to manifest affection – an effusion that becomes manifest in acute form in very many inebriates as also seekers that have elements of the



***"When the inner impressions of Anger, Lust and the like arise in the mind-lake, adopt the methods of sublimation and transformation to overcome them wisely and gain a profit of precious life-transforming spiritual practice."***

effeminate in their nature. It will be well if these are sublimated through the objective way. When a fit of social nature assails you, do not allow yourself to be driven out into the market for gossiping or into the nearest reading-room, tea-shop or post-office to dissipate your diligently conserved energy in sundry politics, topical news or table-chat. Go among the poor and the afflicted instead and see if you can serve them in any way. Go to the road among the pilgrims and the wayfarers and seek to relieve them of their loads and lessen their burdens with pleasant and elevating conversation. Thus in the very process of giving, enrich yourself too.

So when these inner impressions "break ice" as it were and strike the surface, do not be dismayed. Understand what is happening and deal with them calmly. Adopt the methods outlined above to suit the particular situations and temperaments. Overcome them wisely and be a gainer. This experience will enrich you and you will be more firmly established in *Sadhana*.

The individual consciousness is made to pass through varying strata of mental and emotional states, pure, neutral, as also impure as the muddy water is made to pass through a tray of sand, charcoal and some germicidal medium, for the task of filtration and purification. For the filtering away of gross Impurity the grains of the sands of worldly materialistic experiences suit and suffice admirably. But for the subtler impurities a medium like black charcoal is required. This is the recrudescence of disturbingly unspiritual thoughts and tendencies that dismay and upset the seekers in the onward course of their spiritual development. This process takes place almost entirely upon the mental and emotional planes.

Victory is to the vigilant and success surely attends upon the sincere spiritual seeker firm in his/her faith in the Guru's feet!





## Safe-guard Yourself in the Path of Work *by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa*

*In the book "Tales and Parables of Sri Ramakrishna", several interesting, instructive and spiritually elevating short stories as told by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa are presented. These are wonderful truths that can be imbibed in our day-to-day life, and one such parable is taken and presented here.*

**K**arma Yoga or The Yoga of Action is communion with God by means of work. Any work done without attachment becomes *Karma Yoga*. The Eight-Limbed Yoga or Raja Yoga is also known as Karma Yoga if practiced without attachment. It leads to communion through meditation and concentration. The performance of the duties of householders—self-regarding as well as altruistic work, social and political—doing them without attachment and to the end that God may be glorified, is *Karma Yoga*. Again, worship according to the scriptures, silent repetition of the name of God and other pious duties of this kind, are Karma Yoga if done without attachment and for the glorification of God. The end of Karma Yoga is same as of other Yogas, namely the realization of God, impersonal or personal or both.

Work without attachment, however is exceedingly difficult, especially in this age. Hence communion by Prayer, Devotion and Love has been enjoined as better adapted to this age than communion by Work or Knowledge and Philosophy. No one, however can avoid work. Every mental operation is work. The consciousness, 'I feel' or 'I think' involves work. What is meant by the path of devotion in its relation to work is that work is simplified by devotion to, or love of, God. In the first place this love of God reduces the quantity of one's work by fixing one's mind upon one's own ideal, that is, God. Secondly it helps one to work unattached. One cannot love God and at the same time love riches, pleasure, fame, or power. He who has once tasted the drink prepared with the Ola sugar candy does not care for that made with molasses.

In this age Work without devotion to God has no legs to stand upon. It is like a foundation on sand. First cultivate devotion. All the other things—schools, dispensaries, etc.—will, if you like, be added to you. First devotion, then work. Work, apart from devotion or love of God, is helpless and cannot stand.

Addressing a group of enthusiastic social reformers, Sri Ramakrishna once said, "You talk glibly of doing good to the world. The world to which you desire to do good—is it so small a thing? In the next place, pray, who are you to do good to the world? First go through devotional practices and see God. Then it is that inspiration and power will come to you, and you may talk of doing good. Not till then". When a devotee in reply asked, "Sir, do you mean to say that we are to give up all work until we have seen God?", the Master replied, "No, my dear sir. Why should you give up all work? Meditation, chanting of hymns, repetition of His holy names, and other devotional exercises—these you must go through".

The devotee further asked, "I mean work connected with the world, should we give up all worldly affairs?". The Master replied, "You may attend to them too, just as much as you cannot do without, in order to live in this world. But you should, at the same time, pray to the Lord with tears in your eyes for His grace, and for strength to do your duties without the expectation of any reward or fear of punishment in this world or the next."

Referring to a devotee of his, the Master once said, "Sambhu Mallick once talked of founding hospitals and dispensaries, schools and colleges—of laying roads, sinking wells and digging tanks for the good of all. I said to him, "Yes, but you must be unattached while doing good to others, and you must be careful to take up only such works as come in your way—such works, again, as appear to be of a pressing need. Do not seek them—do not seek more work than you can well manage. If you do, you will lose sight of the Lord".

Another episode in the life of Sri Ramakrishna throws light on the attitude that a Karma Yogi must have while doing work. Sri Ramakrishna was one day expounding the gist of Sri Gauranga's cult in the following words: "This faith insists that man should at all times try to cultivate three things—delight in the name of the Lord, loving sympathy to all living beings, and service to devotees. God and His name are identical. Knowing this, one should take the name of the Lord with great love and fervor. The devotees of God should be respected and adored in the conviction that there is no difference between the Lord and His worshippers, between Krishna and the *Vaishnava*. With the knowledge that the whole universe is the household of the Lord, one should show pity to all creatures..." Uttering the last words 'pity to all creatures' in a rather abrupt fashion, the Master went into Samadhi. Sometime after, returning to a semi-conscious state, the Master exclaimed, "Pity to creatures! Pity to creatures! *Sirrah!* You who are lower than even a worm, how dare you speak of showing pity to creatures! Who are you to show pity to them? No, no, it is not pity to creatures but service to them in the consciousness that they are verily God Himself."

The means must not be confused with the end. Work is a means, if done unattached; but the end of life is to see God. Let me repeat that the means must not be confused with the end—the first stage on a road should not be taken for the goal. No, do not regard work as the be-all and end-all, the ideal of human existence. Pray for devotion to God. Suppose you are fortunate enough to see God. Then what would you pray for? Would you pray for dispensaries and hospitals, tanks and wells, roads and alms-houses? No, these are realities to us so long as we do not see God. But once brought face to face with Divine vision, we see them as they are—transitory things no better than dreams. And then we would pray for more light—more knowledge in the highest sense, more Divine love—the love that lifts us up from man to God, the love which makes us realize that we are really children of the Supreme



*"In this age Work without devotion to God has no legs to stand upon. It is like a foundation on sand. First devotion, then work. Work, apart from devotion or love of God, is helpless and cannot stand."*

Being of Whom all that can be said is that He exists, that He is Knowledge itself in the highest sense, and that He is the eternal fountain of love and bliss.

When the pure Sattva rises in a man, he only meditates on God, and does not find pleasure in any other work. Some are born with this pure Sattva on account of their past actions. But one can develop this pure quality if one continues to perform unselfish work in a spirit of devotion and dedication to God. If there be Sattva with an admixture of Rajas, the mind slowly gets distracted in several directions and brings in its wake the egoistic feeling, "I shall do good to the world." It is highly hazardous for ordinary Jivas to attempt to do good to the world. But it is good if a man works, without motive, for the benefit of others; there is no danger in it. It is quite desirable to do such works. But all cannot do it for it is very difficult!

In the case of a person endowed with the quality of Sattva (purity of being), action naturally falls off. Even if he tries, he cannot engage himself in action. God would not allow him to act. For example, the daughter-in-law who is with child is gradually relieved of her household work, and when the child is actually born, she is given nothing to do and is left exclusively to attend to the child. Renunciation of work comes of itself when intense love of God wells up in the heart. Let them work who are made to do so by God. When the time is ripe, one must renounce everything and say, "Come O my mind, let us watch together the Divinity installed in the heart."

Those who are not endowed with the quality of Sattva have to attend to all worldly duties. With complete dedication to the Lord, they should behave like the servants in the house of a rich man. This is what is called Karma Yoga. Its secret consists in repeating the name of the Lord and meditating on Him as much as one can, and at the same time attending to one's duties in the spirit of dedication described above.





## Transience of Human Life *by Didiji Siddheshvari Devi*

*Didiji Siddheshvari Deviji is a disciple of Jagadguru Sri Kripalu ji Maharaj. His book, "Radha Govinda Geet" consists of 11,111 couplets revealing the highest vedantic truths in simple and understandable dialect of Hindi, which act as a powerful tonic for our spiritual lives. Didiji enlightens us on one such couplet.*

**Ek to na bhulo Hari Govind Radhe |  
Dujō tanu chana bhāngur na bhula de ||**

I shall explain the meaning of this verse in brief. You must be careful in keeping two points in mind at all times. One of these you know already. You hear about it, you read about it, you are aware of its importance. It is remembrance of God. Constant remembrance of God!

In Bhagavatam, the great sage Suta ji is answering the question of Sage Shaunaka and other Paramhansas by saying –

**sa vai punsam paro dharmo  
yato bhaktiradhoksaje |  
ahaitukyapratihata  
yayatama samprasidati || (1.2.6)**

There is only one thing for a human to know; there is only one duty for a human to fulfill. There is only one thing to know; one decision to take; one action to perform. What is that? Practicing devotion to God; remembering God. To practice devotion means to remember God. You know this already; now my Guru Sri Kripalu is going to tell you something even more important. What is that? The human body, which is the means of practicing devotion, is temporary. In other words, it may be snatched away at any time. A baby is born. It is a healthy baby. It lets out a cry and then becomes quiet. What happened? He died. Another one survives one day and then dies. A young man writes his I.A.S. exams, he meets with an accident on the way home and dies. A couple is getting married. The young man and woman are circling around the fire for the seventh and the last time. The bridegroom feels faint, he falls down. He dies. How strange this is! Death does not look at what is going on in life; it comes at whatever time. And it does not care whether it is a king or a pauper. It does not discriminate between a scholar and an illiterate man. It visits both the beautiful and the ugly. There is no concession for anyone. Everyone's time is fixed. The exact amount of seconds you have been granted in the human body, is already fixed. Death is certain. People say, "It is as sure as death." We tend to forget this. *Oh, I am only ten years old; I am only 25 years old; I am only fifty; Kripalu is only 85 years of age.* This is how we think. We never think that we may or may not live to see the next moment. What if this body is snatched away from us? You know that after death you will attain the result according to the thoughts in your mind in the final moments of your life.

Hence, both the points must be kept in mind simultaneously and very carefully. God must be

remembered at all times, without procrastination. You must not wait for even the next moment to remember God. If we constantly reflect upon the transitory nature of human life, we will cease to be careless. We will always be careful. After all, you are always careful to keep your clothes on; you do not take them off and throw them away. You are careful at all times. You are driving on the road. While driving you are always mindful of the traffic in front of you, behind you and on your side. You are careful all the time, otherwise you will meet with an accident and die. Just as we are careful in wearing clothes properly and in driving carefully, we must be very careful in life at all times. In other words, we must keep death in mind at all times. Who knows when Death may come! Everyone is powerless before death. No yogi, no ascetic, no meditator, no God-realized saint can avoid it. Everyone has to leave at the right time.

The illustrious Adi Jagadguru Sankara left his body at the age of 32. He passed away at such a young age. Saints do not interfere with God's rules. They leave their body when they are meant to leave. The one who had Lord Rama as his son, i.e. King Dasaratha died, but Rama did not save him. He saved millions of monkeys from dying, but the Almighty Lord Rama did not save his own father. Abhimanyu died. The Kauravas killed him by trick. He was the son of the mighty Arjuna, one of the greatest saints, and the knower of the Gita. He was the nephew of Bhagvan Sri Krishna. And his marriage to Uttara was performed by Veda-Vyas, a descension of God. Three divine personalities could not save Abhimanyu; his wife Uttara was widowed at the age of sixteen.

So, death is very powerful. God does not interfere when it comes to death, and His Saints also do not interfere. Ram stayed on earth for 11,000 years. At the end of His designated time on earth, the Lord of Death approached Him. He cannot take God by force; he merely comes as a reminder. *O Lord! Your time on earth is finished. I have come to merely remind You.* The Lord of Death approaches Saints as well. He sits down before them, and then the Saint places his lotus feet on his head. Then the Saint sits down in the celestial vehicle. The Lord of Death merely fulfills his duty. When he pays a visit to the sinners, they who are controlled by Maya, he drags them away by force to punish them. And when he pays a visit to the God-realized souls, he seats them respectfully on the aerial vehicle and takes them away. One thing is for certain; all will have to go.

People want to conquer death by merely reciting some mantras. An ordinary person, whom people call a 'pundit' sits down and recites mantras and assures the family that the ailing family member will not die. Imagine! God is not saving His own worldly father from death, and these people will do the impossible by simply passing their fingers over the beads. What a joke this is!

Thus, no one has any control over death. For this reason we must be cautious at all times. Think:



***"God must be remembered at all times without procrastination. If we constantly reflect upon the transitory nature of human life, we will cease to be careless. We will always be careful."***

**What if I die the next moment? What will happen then?** Be prepared; be ever prepared. Always remain in the remembrance of God so that you may think of Him in the final moments of life and reach His abode after death. Let us say that you are remembering God all the time but forget about Him for a couple of minutes and start thinking about your mother, father, child, wife or husband instead. Let's say that you die while thinking of your family members. What will happen to you after death?

**Yam yam vaapi smaranbhavam  
tyajatyante kalevaram |  
Tam tamevaiti Kaunteya  
sada tadbhava bhavitah ||**

After death, you will attain the one about whom you were thinking. Sage Jada Bharata was a Paramhansa. His final thoughts before death were concentrated on a deer as he was very attached to it. As a result, he had to become a deer in his next life. I am speaking about a Paramhansa, an enlightened one. What to speak of someone ordinary!

This is why you must reflect on both points simultaneously. The only clever one, the only wise one, the only intelligent one is the person who succeeds in doing this. The rest are all crazy. They are completely crazy. They understand the philosophy, they have met with a genuine saint who has explained the true knowledge to them; they have understood the philosophy, and yet they are careless. They chant 'Hare Rama Hare Rama' for half an hour or an hour in the evening, but that is all. That's it. The rest of the time they are entertaining wrong thoughts. They are thinking of the world.

So, you must keep both points in mind at all times—  
**Remember Death, Remember God.**





# Yaatra: The Pilgrimage

## Arunachala — Ancient Beacon of Spiritual Enlightenment

*-Lawrence & Linda Berger,  
Menomonie, Wisconsin*

In India there are countless holy places (kshetras) that are sacred to Lord Shiva or to some other name and form of God, and many of them are more well-known and popular than Arunachala. Yet there is a verse in the Arunachala Mahatmyam, which has been selected and translated into Tamil by Sri Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi, that says:



***It is said that 'Only those whom Shiva calls can come here to Arunachala'.***

***"The greatness of Arunachala cannot be exaggerated. As soon as you approach, its presence can be felt; outside worldly interest becomes dimmed and those things that were worrying you before seem to lose their power to concern you."***

"Arunachala is truly the holy place. Of all holy places it is the most sacred! Know that it is the heart of the world. It is truly Shiva Himself! It is His heart-abode, a secret kshetra. In that place the Lord ever abides as the hill of light named Arunachala."

In the north east section of south India stands an ancient hill, thought to be older than the massive Himalayas to the north. This rocky mass of granite may date back to the earliest epoch of the history of our planet's crust, that epoch which long preceded the vast sedimentary formation in which fossil records of plants and animals have been preserved. It existed long before the gigantic dinosaurs of the pre-historic world moved their ungainly forms through the primeval forests. It is indeed a remnant of the vanished continent (Kumarikandam) of Eunken Lemuria, of which the indigenous legends still keep a few memories.

In the origin story of Arunachala, the old Puranic narrative tells of Brahma and Vishnu having a disagreement over who of the two was the highest divinity. Amidst the quarrel, a vast beam of fiery light sprang forth, a pillar of splendor penetrating the cosmic extremes. Both humbled before the insurmountable challenge, they concluded this cosmic splendor, the presence of Shiva, to be the highest reality. This light materialized as the mountain Arunachala.

In March of 2008 during Shivratri (night of Shiva), we commenced our climb up the sacred mountain at dawn. A lone cloud appeared in the clear sky, rising vertically from the summit and lit by the rising sun. Standing in awe, I still had the presence of mind to snap this picture (below right).



***We were immensely blessed to have Holy Darshan in the inner sanctums on Shivaratri.***

Tiruvannamalai is one of the panchabhootasthalas representing the fire element along with Chidambaram, Sri Kalahasti, Thiruvanaikoil and Kanchipuram representing sky, air, water and earth respectively.

The area has long been associated with many yogis and siddhars and they are thought to still reside here but on a plane not visible to mere humans. More recently the 20th century guru Ramana Maharshi was drawn to the mountain in which He spent most of His life.

Vedanta guru Ramana Maharshi lived in Tiruvannamalai for fifty three years until his mahasamadhi in 1950. Sri Ramana maintained that the purest form of His teachings was the powerful silence which radiated from His presence and quieted the minds of those attuned to it. He gave verbal teachings only for the benefit of those who could not understand His silence. His verbal teachings were said to flow from His direct experience of Consciousness as the only existing



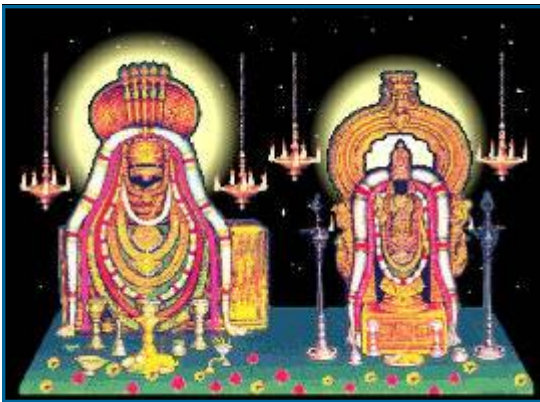
***A pillar of cosmic splendor***

***(continued next page)***

When Ramana Maharshi was asked for advice, He recommended self-enquiry as the fastest path to moksha. His presence can still be felt in this tranquil oasis and thousands of pilgrims flock yearly from all parts of the world.

The Lingam form of Shiva is what is held in reverence in temples all over the sub continent. The Lingam is a symbol. It is a symbol of that which is invisible yet omnipresent. It is hence a visible symbol of the Ultimate Reality which is present in us (and in all objects of creation ). 'Jyotirlinga' is a pillar of light. To us normal mortals, the lingas appear as the normal stone lingas in any temple of Shiva. But it is believed that at the 12 Jyotirlingas a person who has attained a higher level of spirituality can see the lingas as columns of fire piercing through the earth.

Arunachaleswara is the largest temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, located at the base of Arunachala hill. It is the home of Annamalaiyar or Arunachaleswarar (Lord Shiva worshipped as a Shiva Lingam) and Unnamulaiyaal (Apatakuchambaal - Parvati)



**Lord Arunachaleswara & Ambaal**



**Holy Mountain of Arunachala**



**Virupaksha Cave**

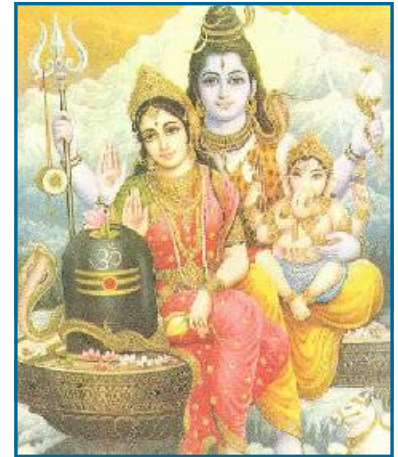
The earliest known record of the temple is in the works of the poet Nakkirar of the third Tamil Sangam period. This dates the temple's origins back at least 2000 years. At that time, the temple might have been a simple wooden structure. The present masonry structure and gopurams (temple towers) date back approximately 1200 years.

The Holy Mountain of Arunachala rises up with an elevation of 2669 feet (800 m). The Road encircling the mountain where devotees circumnambulate is 8 1/2 miles which is 14 kms long. On Full Moon days and festival days (like Karthigai, first day of the Tamil month, Tamil New Year day) hundreds of thousands of devotees circumnambulate (GIRIVALAM) the mountain and get the blessings of the Lord Arunachala. A huge fire is lit at the top of the mountain and can be seen for miles.

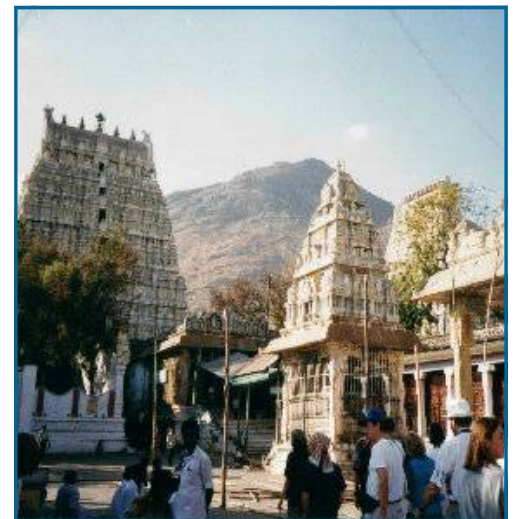
Further up the hill we came upon Virupaksha Cave where Ramana spent 17 years of His divine life. A tremendous presence of spiritual power can be felt there and meditation becomes one's natural state.

For us, going to Tiruvannamalai was the culmination of a life-long dream. Our lives are now complete! We feel truly blessed to have been there and in Truth, our Consciousness never really left!

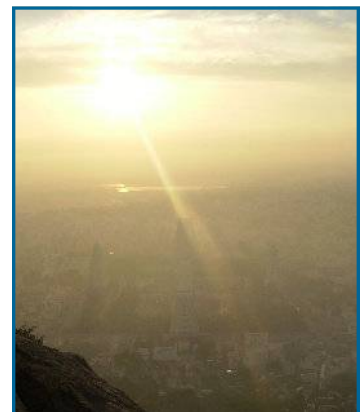
**"O Arunachala, ocean of grace in the form of a Hill, bestow grace upon me!"**



**Lord Siva & Parvati, along with Ganesha**



**A View of the Temple precincts**

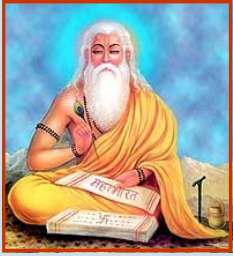


**View of the Temple at sunrise.**



# FESTIVE MOMENTS

## Guru Purnima (July 18, 2008)



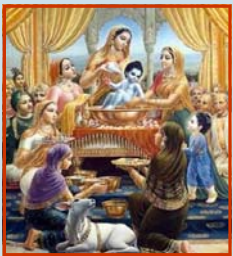
Sage Veda Vyasa

The holy Guru Purnima has an ancient traditional association with the worship of Brahmadevidya Gurus, the teachers of the Science of God, the Masters who were known as Srotriyas and Brahmanishthas. A Guru is defined as a sage of perfection endowed with the two great qualifications of Srotriyatva and Brahmanishthatva—learned and also spiritually exalted. A mere scholar would not be an appropriate person to teach the science of spirit. The force of conviction cannot be conveyed merely by learning, whatever be the expanse or vastness of that education. Only a spiritually enlightened Guru can give such knowledge.

One of the greatest Gurus our country has known and adores even now, is the great Sage Veda Vyasa, known as Krishna Dvaipayana. He is reputed not only as the author of the Mahabharata, the Brahma Sutras and the Puranas, but also as the most exemplary sage of the greatest perfection one could imagine. This auspicious day, which is the appearance day of Sage Veda Vyasa is dedicated to all the Gurus because of the fact that Vyasa is considered as the Guru of all Gurus.

While we enter the path of Spirituality, we as aspirants undergo many obstacles and hurdles. These problems can be overcome only by the grace of Guru. Service of Guru and having his blessings are quintessential for reaching the goal of Self-realization. This is a time when we should tune ourselves with our Guru and act according to his instructions and advice, and progress upwards in spirituality. The impure mind can be burnished, can be purified only through the service to Guru and Upasana of God. So, it is only fitting that on this auspicious day, we worship our Guru and surrender to Him completely.

## Sri Krishna Janmashtami (August 23, 2008)



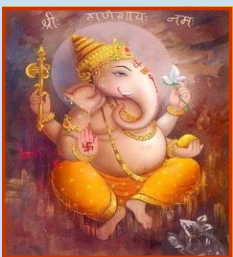
The Appearance of Lord Krishna

The Appearance of Lord Sri Krishna, known as Sri Krishna Janmashtami, falls on the eighth day in the dark fortnight of the month of Sravana. The observance of this holy day and the performance of sacred worship to this great Incarnation is a symbol of an intensification of our soul's yearning to come nearer to God as much as possible. Lord Sri Krishna is regarded as Purna-Avatara, which means the full incarnation, a complete manifestation of God, not a partial expression of the power and the glory of God.

To speak from the point of view of the historical life which Lord Sri Krishna is said to have lived thousands of years ago, let alone the spiritual or the mystical, we see a wholeness manifest in Him. His life was a fullness right from childhood upto the maturity of life. He was completeness in every respect even in his childhood, a completeness in his adolescence, a completeness in his youth and maturity; He was a fullness of bodily perfection, a fullness of understanding, a fullness of social relationship and political statesmanship and a fullness in His own Being. This has been revealed even in His outward physical personality, a beauty and a charm that mankind has never seen.

Mahabharata and Srimad Bhagavata are the monumental records of His life, His activities and His achievements. The Bhagavad Gita may be regarded as the great gospel that He gave to mankind. It is as difficult to understand His teaching as it is to understand His own life, because He did not think as we are thinking. His thinking does not comply with the sentimental demands of our human feelings, ethical sense, the usual social morality, and so on and so forth, which we will be entertaining in our own hearts. A total transformation, a transfiguration of all values is brought about in His activity and life, and also in His teachings, so that His life and teachings are a sort of a superhuman presentation before us. And you know how difficult it is for a human being to confront a superhuman presentation of any kind. But, this is the ideal before us and this is our goal. The Bhagavad Gita also conveys to us that things are not what they seem to our senses. This is what we learn from His life also. There is something quite different from what we sense, feel, think and understand as valuable. This is the Truth behind things. This is the message for us today, which we should try to imbibe into our lives by invoking His grace and putting forth honest efforts.

## Ganesha Chaturdhi (September 3, 2008)



Lord Ganesha

Lord Ganesha or Ganapati is the great Remover of obstacles and is the son of Lord Siva and Mother Parvati, with a proboscis of an elephant and a protuberant belly, with weapons of various types and a benign gesture of goodwill, grace and blessing with His right hand. There are many interesting stories about the life and capacity of Lord Ganesha.

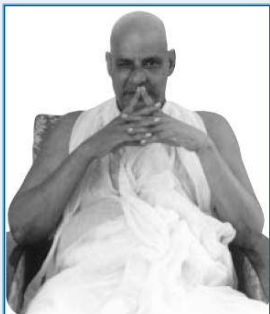
Then question comes, why He only can remove obstacles and none else? That is the secret of His Whole being itself. We see Him with big belly, long trunk, wide ears, very small eyes. All these have symbolic meaning and teach important lesson that help us, free us from obstacles and elevate us. The very purpose of big belly is swallowing everything, which comes in front of us. It doesn't mean that we eat a lot. But the matter, the situation, the problem, the dialogue, the conversation, whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, doesn't matter, just swallow it. Hear everything with open wide ears. Do not react to it. Let us keep quiet. Just swallow the words! Look in to any matter very minutely with small eyes. Smell it again and again with big trunk like an elephant. Then what ever may be of any use keep it and rest throw it away.

In this world nothing is totally good or bad. It is all just a mixture of good and bad, likes and dislikes. It is all up to us for what to keep and what not. Whether to react or not? It is all in the mind. Worship of Ganesha is the science of minding the mind with the help of mind only. It is an art of going from gross to subtle and try to become even more subtler, which can refine our feelings, sentiments and make us strong to uplift us from the binding of duality of he or she, it or they, far or near, good or bad. Then we understand the root cause of any problem or obstacle. The cause is not in the external but it is all internal initially and eternal finally. To worship Lord Ganesha is to confine in concentration, contemplation, and finally abide in the supreme or the blessedness or the absolute, by minding mind initially upon individual level and then from individual to cosmic level.



# MAY I ANSWER THAT ?

Q & A With SIVA



*Swami Sivananda was a Self-realized spiritual giant in the modern world. He was born in the lineage of Appayya Diskhitar in Pattamadai in Tamil Nadu, in the year 1887. From an young age, he exhibited divine qualities. He completed his studies in Medicine in India, went to Malaya to practice his profession and soon became a successful, rich and a very kind doctor. At the age of 35, by Divine Dispensation, he renounced everything, went to Rishikesh and performed severe penance. He established Divine Life Society and disseminated Spiritual Knowledge to one and all, inspiring many seekers through his Life and Teachings to realize the Immortal Self within us.*



**Q1: I am doing spiritual practice for the last three years. I do not find any improvement. Why ?**

**A:** There is improvement. Your mental images are strong and steady now. Remember that there is no barometer or thermometer to read your progress in the spiritual realm. You are now giving only half of your mind to God. Collect the dissipated rays and give the full mind to God. I assure you, "You will realise Him this very moment."

**Q2: What are the advantages of Mouna or the vow of silence ? Should I also observe ?**

**A:** Observe Mouna or Silence for a couple of hours daily at any time that suits you. Try to speak little at other times. Avoid unnecessary conversations. Don't talk harsh words and obscene language. Talk sweetly and gently. You must have perfect control over speech. Control over speech means control of mind. The organ of speech, Vak Indriya, is a great distractor of the mind. Silence gives you peace. It removes anxieties and quarrels. It develops your will power. It conserves energy. It reduces the force of Sankalpa or the thought-current.

**Q3: How to get rid of desires ?**

**A:** Develop Viveka or the power of discrimination. Brahman is real. The world is unreal. There is no vasana or desire in Brahman. The desire is in the mind. Make Vichara (introspection). All desires will dwindle into nothing. Mark the doshas in the objects. The objects are Asat (Non-real), Jada (Sentient), Dukha (Sorrowful) and impure. Develop burning longing for liberation. This strong desire for Self-realization will destroy other worldly desires. Control the senses also. Develop Vairagya or dispassion. Give up objects. This is Tyaga. All desires will melt away.

**Q4: How to put a permanent end to all doubts and questions ?**

**A:** As one advances in spiritual sadhana and attains a greater degree of evolution day by day, by regular unremitting practice of the Yoga of Synthesis, the clouds of doubts, delusion and interrogation disperse by themselves. As the sun rises, the mist disappears. Even so, as you progress in the spiritual path by the grace of Guru and God, all the intricate problems of life and death dissolve themselves into the ever-abiding Truth of existence. The only duty of man is to intensify the inner purity by graded integral sadhana. Whenever doubts, troubles and the like arise, repeat any one of the following Mantras: Om Sri Rama Saranam Mama or Om Sri Krishna Charanu Saranam Prapadye or your Guru Mantra. There is no room for doubts to crop up on the attainment of God-realization, as the seeker is no longer the seeker, but God himself.

**Q5: Why does God not speak to me ? What is the obstacle ?**

**A:** The Self-surrender is not complete. There is still subtle Moha (ignorance), subtle desires and egoism. The Indriyas are still powerful and outgoing. These are the obstacles. When these are removed, you can hear the shrill, sweet, inner voice of God. Impure souls mistake the voice of the impure mind for the voice of God.

**Q6: How can I find out if I have got Chitta Suddhi (Purity of mind) or not ?**

**A:** Sexual thoughts, worldly desires, unholy ideas, sexual Vasanas, anger, vanity, hypocrisy, egoism, greed, jealousy etc will not arise in your mind if you have *Chitta Suddhi*. You will have no attraction for sensual objects. You will have sustained and lasting vairagya. Even in dreams, you will not entertain evil thoughts. You will possess all the virtuous divine qualities such as mercy, cosmic love, forgiveness, harmony and balance of mind. These are the signs to indicate that you have attained Chitta Suddhi.

**Q7: The mind is fickle in me and the flesh is weak. Attempts at concentration are sometimes successful, but often end in disappointment. Kindly help me.**

**A:** First of all, take care of your health. Become strong by proper food and mild exercises of Asana and Pranayama. Observe brahmacharya (celibacy). Then destroy desires, worries, anxieties, building castles and vicious qualities. Lead a contented life. Reduce your Vyavahara. Live in a spiritual atmosphere like in Haridwar, Rishikesh, Uttarakashi, etc. Observe silence for full three months. You can easily control the mind.

**Q8: Will not one be violating one's Dharma by embracing Sannyas and by not discharging his duties to his parents and dependants ? Are one's relatives really dependent on him ?**

**A:** The notion that others depend on you is due to sheer delusion. God alone takes care of everyone. Being deluded, you think that you are supporting your kith and kin and undergo endless troubles, miseries and vexations. Even if you turn a hermit, God will arrange everything and maintain your family. And no sin will accrue to you, provided you have intense dispassion. Swami Ram Tirth had burning vairagya; so he resigned his job, leaving behind his wife and two young sons, and took to Sannyas. Similarly, Lord Buddha renounced his kingdom and turned a recluse.



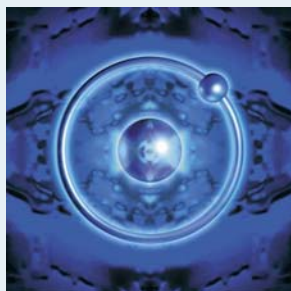
Source:  
May I Answer That  
by Swami Sivananda



### Unity of Consciousness *by Swami Sivananda*



Milky Way Galaxy



Hydrogen Atom



Amoeba, The Unicellular Organism

If you imagine that there is nothing but protoplasm in this universe, then all the forms will vanish. All forms are constructed out of one kind of matter only. A tree or a man, a dog or a bug or a mosquito, are made up of the same kind of matter or protoplasm. The protoplasm is a mould of matter in which all life is placed. It is a homogeneous, structureless substance, forming the physical basis of life, endowed with contractility, with a chemical composition allied to that of albumen. The thread of matter that connects all forms is one and the same. You can also imagine that there is nothing but energy or mind in this universe. The student on the path of Jnana Yoga thinks that there is only one thread of pure consciousness.

Behind the names and forms, there is the universal life or hidden Brahman or immanent God. Try to feel the reality behind the forms. Scorn not at the tiny creatures or the undeveloped beings. The same life that throbs or pulsates in you is also throbbing in ants, dogs, elephants and all creatures. Realise your identity and intimate relationship with all creatures. There is only a difference in the degree of manifestation or expression. All forms belong to God or Saguna Brahman. Look at a tree or a shrub, a dog or a cat, and endeavor to behold the real hidden life or Consciousness behind and under the veil or form. If you practice like this for some time you will derive inexpressible joy. All hatred will cease. You will eventually develop cosmic love and unity of Consciousness. This will be a very rare and magnanimous experience. It will result in the Vedantic realization of oneness.

Life is common in trees, ants, birds, animals and human beings. What is common in the sun, moon, stars, chairs, walls, stones, animals, birds and human beings? It is existence. A table exists; a tree exists. Existence is the Sat aspect of the Satchidananda Brahman.

There is only an apparent, fictitious difference in bodies and minds. There are differences in color and opinion. But the Atman is the same in all. A thief, a prostitute, a scavenger, a king, a rogue, a saint, a dog, a cat and a rat—all these have the same common Atman. Ignore the false appearances and differences. Recognize the Essence or Reality only.

The one Atman appears to be many, just as the one sun appears to be many in various pots of water. Many suns are false. They are merely reflections only. So also, many jivas are illusory. The one Brahman alone is real.

The divine life that throbs in every atom of the universe dwells also in the hearts of human beings. The soul of an ant is the soul of a man. The soul of a sinner is the soul of a saint. The soul of a beggar is the soul of a mighty king. The ultimate Truth in Nature is the ultimate Reality in man.

Whatever you see is God. Whatever you hear is God. Whatever you taste is God. Whatever you smell is God. Whatever you feel is God. These are the manifest aspects of God. The physical body belongs to Virat. The astral body belongs to Hiranyagarbha. The causal body belongs to Iswara. Where is the little 'I' now? Have an integral cosmic vision. Behold unity in

diversity. Break the barriers or dividing walls through discrimination, enquiry and wisdom. Acquire the spiritual vision of oneness or unity. Soar high in the realm of eternal bliss. Happy is he who has realized the oneness of the Self and who is endowed with the sublime vision of the marvelous Atman.

Realize that the whole human race is one. Break up ruthlessly all illusory barriers that separate man from man. Understand that the fundamental principles underlying all religions are the same.

Feel your oneness with all. Feel your oneness with the sun, the sky, the wind, flowers, trees, birds, animals, stones, rivers and oceans. Realize the oneness of life, the unity of Consciousness. Behold the one homogenous Self everywhere—in all beings, in all animals, in all plants.

Realize your unity with all. Mix with all. The Parsis, the Americans, the Italians, the Japanese, the Russians all belong to you. You also belong to them. Unite with all.

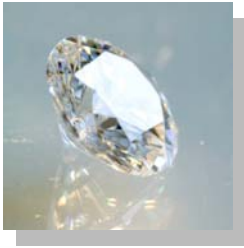
Realize first your unity with all the members of your family, then with all the members of your community, then with all the members of your district, then with all the members of your state, then with all the members of the whole nation, then with all the members of the whole world. If you succeed in this attempt, then only can you realize your unity or oneness with God.

Feel the Divine Presence in all creation. Learn to discriminate between the permanent and the impermanent. Behold the Self in all beings, in all objects. Names and forms are illusory. Therefore, sublimate them. Feel that there is nothing but the Self. Share what you have—physical, mental, moral and spiritual—with all. Serve the Self in all. Feel, when you serve others, that you are serving your own Self only. Love thy neighbour as thyself. Melt all illusory differences. Remove all barriers that separate man from man. Mix with all. Embrace all. Destroy the sex-idea and body-idea by constantly thinking of the Self or the sexless and bodiless Atman. Fix the mind on the Self while you work. This is practical Vedanta. This is the essence of the teachings of the Upanishads and the sages of yore. This is real, eternal life in the Atman. Put these teachings into practice in the daily battle of life. You will then shine as a dynamic Yogi or liberated sage. There is no doubt of this.

I reiterate again in order to produce in your mind a deep impression. There is no world. You are not the body, you are the all-pervading Atman. You are the silent witness. The senses perform their functions. There is only the Atman everywhere. Feel the indwelling Intelligence. When you see a fruit, say, "This is the one Atman." See the essence in all forms. Reject the outer sheaths and illusory appearances. This will lead to beholding all names and forms as the one Atman. There is no necessity of closing the eyes. For this kind of Sadhana no posture and no closed room are needed. This Sadhana is suitable for men of the world who are intelligent. This is work combined with Jnana. The Self-delight of the Supreme Brahman appears as the mind and the universe. The world is nothing but the mind. The world is a long dream.

Source: **Kingly Science & Kingly Secret by Swami Sivananda**





## GEMS from Upanishads

*A wonderful spiritual retreat was held at the Vivekananda Monastery at Ganges, Michigan on the topic of “Gems from Upanishads”, conducted by Swami Brahmarupanandaji of Vedanta Society of Greater Washington and Swami Chidanandaji of Vivekananda Vedanta Society Chicago. Important passages from various Upanishads were selected for deeper study. Following are some key take-aways from this retreat:*

- ◆ **Multiplicity is a misconception:** Bhagavad Gita Chapter 13, verse 16 says, “*Avibhaktam Cha Bhuteshu, Vibhaktam Iva Cha Stitham*”. Multiplicity is caused by the power of Brahman known as Maya. Here is an example to illustrate this. Take different empty containers - one a 5 cc small one, another a half liter bigger container, another round flask, yet another container of different color glass. Space is present in all of these containers as well as around them. As the containers are empty, they only contain space. Space seems to have different shapes, sizes and colors, but in truth it is one. Same thing applies to Consciousness.
- ◆ **All entities in universe are made up of two parts:** Bhagavad Gita Chapter 13, verse 26 says “*Yaavat Sanjaayate Kinchit Satvam Sthavara Jangamam, Kshetra Kshetrajna Samyogaat Tadviddhi Bharatarshabha*”. Whatever entity there is in the world is made up of a Consciousness part and a Physical part. Kshetra is the Physical part and Kshetrajna is the Consciousness part. In Mahavakyas, when there are references to “*Tvam*” (as in “*Tat Tvam Asi*”) the reference is to the Kshetrajna part.
- ◆ **The Self is incomprehensible:** Kena Upanishad 1.3 says, “*There the eye goes not, speech goes not, nor the mind; we understand not, and we do not know how to teach this*”. The means to know It is to do Tapas – “*Tapasaa Brahnavijijnasavaa*”. When we see somebody we generally see the outer aspects of personality like appearance, form, etc but we don’t see the inner aspects. Only people with realization (panditas) see the inner divinity in everyone. Bhagavad Gita 5.18 says, “*Vidya vinaya Sampanne Brahmane Gavi Hastini, Sunichaivashwapaake cha Panditah Samadarsinaha*”.
- ◆ **Why we do not see the Self:** Katha Upanishad 2.1.1 says, “*The Self-Existent Lord rendered defective the outgoing senses. Therefore one sees the outer things and not the Inner Self. A rare discriminating person, desiring immortality, turns his/her eyes away from outside world (to see inside) and then sees the indwelling Self*”.
- ◆ **The Self is the ultimate source of all power:** This famous sloka appears in atleast three Upanishads – Katha 2.2.15, Svetasvatara 6.14 and Mundaka 2.2.10 – “*Na Tatra Suryo Bhaanti na Chandra Tarakam Nema Vidyuto Bhaanti Kutoyam Agnihi, Tamevabhaantamanubhaati Sarvam, Tasya bhasaa Sarvavidam Vibhaati*” – “*There the sun does not shine, nor the moon, nor the stars; nor do these flashes of lightning shine. How can this fire (have the power to burn)? He shining, all this shines in His light. By His effulgence, all this is illumined.*”
- ◆ **The Self is to be known:** Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.5 says, “*Know that Self alone, that is one without a second, on which are strung heaven, the earth, and the inter space, the mind and the vital forces together with all the other organs. Give up all other talks. This is the bridge to immortality.*”
- ◆ **Two birds on a Tree:** Mundaka Upanishad 3.1.1-2 says, “*Two birds are ever associated and have similar names (plumages) cling to the same tree. One of them eats fruits (some sweet and some bitter). The other (at the top) does not eat any fruit, but merely witnesses. The individual soul (the lower bird) remains drowned in its own limitations. When it sees the other adorable bird and its glory, then it becomes liberated from sorrow.*”
- ◆ **Grace and Self-effort needed for Realization:** Mundaka Upanishad 3.2.3 as well as Katha Upanishad 1.2.23 say, “*This Self is not attained through study, nor through intellect, nor through much hearing. It becomes attainable to him whom It chooses to reveal itself; to him the Self reveals its true nature.*” Swamiji gave the following example to illustrate this: Two sailboats are on a sea. One has its sails open so it catches breeze and the boat moves forward. The other sailboat does not open its sails, doesn’t catch breeze and so doesn’t move forward. The act of opening sails is our self-effort and the breeze is Divine Grace. Both are essential to attain Realization.

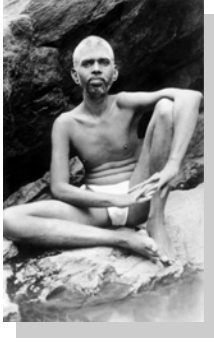
### CLOSING REMARKS BY SWAMI CHIDANANDAJI:

**Importance of Shraddha:** The spiritual ideas presented in the retreat as Gems from the Upanishads are very important for serious spiritual seekers. Shraddha is very important in spiritual pursuit. There are different paths provided by God to suit different temperaments. The key is to march on the path you have chosen without changing paths. Once a Guru is chosen, follow that guru’s instructions. Don’t change Gurus – it will cause lack of faith and confidence in ourselves. Even at times if the path does not appear clear, God will make it clear if you have Shraddha.

You might ask why do we need Shraddha. We need Shraddha because we cannot rely on our mental processes or intellect. There are lot of limitations in the senses and mind and hence they cannot be depended upon. For example, the nose cannot do its function of smelling if it catches cold. To a certain extent intellect is useful, but beyond that, we should leave intellect even in Vedanta. For example, in meditation we leave our intellect. Spiritual masters help others; believing in them is not blind faith. Shraddha is important.

Please visit <http://www.vedanta-dc.org> to know more about Vedanta Society of Greater Washington. Please visit <http://www.vedantasociety-chicago.org> to know more about Vivekananda Vedanta Society, Chicago.





## The Essence of Sri Ramana's Teaching

*Of all the great works of Sri Ramana Maharshi, Upadesa Saaram is considered to be the most exemplary legacy as it is a summary of all the teachings of this Great Sage. Sri Ramana has written this text not only in Sanskrit, but in Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam. This Supreme Teaching covers the traditional four paths of Sadhana—Karma, Bhakti, Raja and Jnana Yogas or those of Action, Devotion, Mind Control and Knowledge. In the previous issue we have presented Sloka 1 to Sloka 12. We continue our Swadhyaya in this issue.*

लय विनाशने उभयरोधने ।  
लयगतं पुनर्भवति नो मृतं ॥  
laya vināśine ubhaya-rodhane  
laya-gatam punar bhavati no mṛtam

Absorption or laya, and destruction or nasa are the two kinds of mind control. When merely absorbed, it emerges again, but not when it is destroyed. (13)

प्राणबन्धनात् लीनमानसं ।  
एकचिन्तनात् नाशमेत्यदः ॥  
prāṇabandhanāt līna-mānasam  
eka-cintanāt nāsametyadaḥ

When the mind has been suspended by breath-restraint, it may then be annihilated by single-minded attention to the Self. (14)

नष्टमानसोत्कृष्ट योगिनः ।  
कृत्यमस्ति किं स्वस्थितिं यतः ॥  
naṣṭa-mānasot-kṛṣṭa yoginaḥ  
kṛtyam asti kiṁ svasthitim yataḥ

What action remains to be done by that great *yogi* whose mind has been extinguished, and who rests in his own true and transcendent state of Being? (15)

दृश्यवारितं चित्तमात्मनः ।  
चित्त्वदर्शनं तत्त्व दर्शनं ॥  
dr̥śya-vāritam citta-mātmanah  
citva-darśanam tattva darśanam

If one's attention is turned away from external objects of sense and focused on the light of the Self, that is the true vision of Reality. (16)

मानसं तु किं मार्गणे कृते ।  
नैव मानसं मार्ग आर्जवत् ॥  
mānasam tu kiṁ mārgaṇe kṛte  
naiva mānasam mārga ārjavat

Again, if one persists in asking, "What is this mind of mine?" it will be found that there is really no such thing as 'mind'. This is the Direct Path. (17)

वृत्तयस्त्वहं वृत्तिमाश्रिताः ।  
वृत्तयो मनो विद्धयहं मनः ॥  
vṛttayastvahaṁ vṛtti-māśritaḥ  
vṛttayo mano viddhayahaṁ manaḥ

What one has thought of as his mind is merely a bundle of thoughts. All these thoughts depend upon the one thought of "I", the ego. Therefore, the so-called mind is the "I" thought. (18)

अहमयं कुतो भवति चिन्वतः ।  
अयि पतत्यहं निजविचारणं ॥  
ahamayam kuto bhavati cinvataḥ  
ayi patatyahaṁ nijavicāraṇam

If one asks himself, "Where does this I come from?" it will vanish. This is Self-enquiry, or *atma-vichara*. (19)

अहमि नाशभाज्यहमहंतया ।  
स्फुरति ह्रत्स्वयं परमपूर्णसत् ॥  
ahami nāsa-bhājya ahama-hantayā  
sphurati hṛt-svayam parama-pūrṇa-sat

Where this 'I' vanished and merged in its Source there appears spontaneously and continuously an "I-I". This is the Heart, the infinite Supreme Being. (20)

इदमहं पदाभिख्यमन्वहं ।  
अहमिलीनकेऽप्यलय सत्तया ॥  
idamahaṁ padābhikya-manvahaṁ  
aham-ilīnake'pyalaya sattayā

And this uninterrupted "I-I" is the true meaning of the term "I" because when the waking 'ego I' daily disappears in deep sleep, the real 'I' remains. (21)

विग्रहेन्द्रिय प्राणधीतमः ।  
नाहमेकसत्तज्जडं ह्यसत् ॥  
vighrahendriya prāṇadhītamah  
nāhameka-sat tajjaḍam hyasat

This true 'I', the one Reality, is not the body, or the senses, or mind, or breath, or ignorance. These are all inert and insentient. (22)





# DIVINE CELEBRITY

HH Swami Chidananda

*Divine Celebrity for this month's issue is HH Swami Chidananda Saraswati, disciple of Swami Sivananda Saraswati and former President of Divine Life Society, Rishikesh Head-Quarters, India. Swamiji is one of the rarest of gems of saints Holy Mother India gave birth to. A Spiritual successor of Gurudev Swami Sivananda, he tirelessly spreaded the message of Vedanta both in the East and in the West through countless spiritual tours and numerous books. Though a Spiritual Giant, yet he is humble than a blade of grass, equanimous in all situations and child-like in love for all God's creation. Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Satchidananda, Swami Krishnanananda and such great personalities were his Gurus. Swamiji Maharaj attained Mahasamadhi and merged in the Absolute on 28th August, 2008 at the age of 94 years. Below is just a small glimpse of the exemplary life of this great saint, who has permeated the entire universe with his Divinity.*



Sridhar Rao, as Swami Chidananda was known before taking Sannyasa was born to Sri Srinivasa Rao and Smt Sarojini, on the 24th September, 1916, the second of five children and the eldest son. At the age of eight, Sridhar Rao's life was influenced by one Sri Anantayya, a friend of his grandfather, who used to relate to him stories from the epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata. Doing Tapas (austerities), becoming a Rishi (sage), and having a vision of the Lord became ideals which he cherished. His uncle, Krishna Rao, shielded him against the evil influences of the materialistic world around him, and sowed in him the seeds of the life of renunciation which he joyously nurtured until, as latter events proved, it blossomed into sainthood.

His elementary education began at Mangalore. In 1932, he joined the Muthiah Chetty School in Madras where he distinguished himself as a brilliant and cheerful personality. In 1936, he was admitted to Loyola College, and In 1938, he emerged with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. This period of studentship at a predominantly Christian College was significant. The glorious ideals of Lord Jesus, the Apostles and the other Christian saints had found in his heart a synthesis of all that is best and noble in the Hindu culture. To him, study of the Bible was no mere routine; it was the living word of God, just as living and real as the words of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita. His innate breadth of vision enabled him to see Jesus in Krishna, not Jesus instead of Krishna.

The family was noted for its high code of conduct and this was infused into his life. Charity and service were the glorious ingrained virtues of the members of the family. These virtues found an embodiment in Sridhar Rao. He discovered ways and means of manifesting them. None who sought his help was sent away without it. He gave freely to the needy. Service to lepers became his ideal. His deep and abiding interest in the welfare of lepers had earned for him the confidence and admiration of the Government authorities when he was elected to the Leper Welfare Association, constituted by the state - at first as Vice-Chairman and later as Chairman of The Muni-ki-reti Notified Area Committee. Birds and animals also claimed his attention as much as, if not more than, human beings.

Quite early in life, although born in a wealthy family, he shunned the pleasures of the world to devote himself to seclusion and contemplation. In the matter of study it was the spiritual books which had the most appeal to him, more than college books. The works of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Gurudev took precedence over all others. He is a great believer in Japa of Rama-Nama. While still in his twenties he began initiating youngsters into this great Rama Taraka Mantra. He was an ardent admirer of Sri Ramakrishna Math at Madras and regularly participated in the Satsangs there. In June 1936, he disappeared from home. After a vigorous search by his parents, he was found in the secluded Ashram of a holy sage some miles from the sacred mountain shrine Tirupati. He returned home after some persuasion. The seven years at home following his return from Tirupati were marked by seclusion, service, intense study of spiritual literature, self-restraint, control of the senses, simplicity in food and dress, abandonment of all comforts and practice of austerities which augmented his inner spiritual power. The final decision came in 1943. He was already in correspondence with Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj of Rishikesh. He obtained Swamiji's permission to join the Ashram.

On arriving at the Ashram, he naturally took charge of the dispensary. He became the man with the healing hand. Very soon after joining the Ashram, he gave ample evidence of the brilliance of his intellect. He delivered lectures, wrote articles for magazines and gave spiritual instructions to the visitors. When the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University (now known as the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy) was established in 1948, he was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Raja Yoga. Towards the end of 1948, Gurudev nominated him as the General Secretary of The Divine Life Society. The great responsibility of the organization fell on his shoulders. From that very moment he spiritualized all his activities by his presence, counsel and wise leadership. On Guru Purnima day, the 10th of July, 1949, he was initiated into the holy order of Sannyasa by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. He now became known as Swami Chidananda, a name which connotes : "one who is in the highest consciousness and bliss".

In November 1959 Swami Chidanandaji embarked on an extensive tour of America, being sent by Gurudev as his personal representative to broadcast the message of Divine Life. He returned in March 1962. In August 1963, after the Mahasamadhi of the Master, he was elected as President of the Divine Life Society. He strove to hold aloft the banner of renunciation, dedicated service, love and spiritual idealism, not only within the set-up of the widespread organization of the Society, but in the hearts of countless seekers throughout the world, who were all too eager to seek his advice, help and guidance. Swamiji Maharaj has attained MahaSamadhi and merged in the Absolute on 28th August, 2008.

*"Life is meant for God-realization. The goal of life is God-realization. If you die without attaining God-realization, your life is in vain. You have wasted this precious gift of human birth given by God."*

— Swami Chidananda

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Dear All, Meet our Teacher and Friend Appu, who is ready to share wonderful, humorous and life-enriching stories with us. In these stories we find courage, wisdom, goodness, compassion and many other valuable treasures that make our life worth living for. Along with Appu's pals, come and join the fun while Appu narrates the world's stories that drive away fear, greed and narrow-mindedness and fill our heart with Love and Friendliness towards one and all.



Appu was busy organizing his hut, sorting out the piles of books and papers on his writing desk, removing pens, clothes and some other trinkets on his piano. He was making room for the upcoming band practice of the team "Junglee Rock !" which included all of his kiddo pals - Tutu, Kwirl, Poppy, Rani, Samba, Jimbo, Buddy and all others, in his living room. Apparently the class teacher thought that only Appu can get these "mischievous" kids to learn some music and perform for their 105th school anniversary that is about to happen next week. And everyone in Forest Kadamba knew that Appu has a sweet melodious voice and is an expert in playing piano, flute, violin. So, every saturday morning, the *Junglee Rock* band decided to meet in Appu's house, while he gave them music lessons combined with fun and humor.



On this particular day, when Appu was so engrossed in tidying up his living room, he saw from his window the band arrive. And surprisingly, the entire group wore a look of sadness and gloom. They all came in and just sat here and there on the couch, the window-sill and on the hanging chandelier, drooping their heads low and shoving away their musical instruments. Silence hung in the room like a dark cloud, and no one spoke. Usually all of them would start talking at the same time, eager to give all the news to their beloved Appu. Seeing this unusual condition, Appu went into the kitchen, made warm soup, and gave each one of them a bowl-full along with some yummy snacks. When they were partaking it, Appu asked in a very kind voice, "My dears ! If you consider me a good friend of yours, can you please tell me what it is that is bothering you so much on such a joyful day ?"

Samba, with his deep sad voice, was the first to break the silence, "Appu, we just cannot sing well or play any instrument well. Our performance is going to be pathetic, as we are so out of synchrony with each other, and all the other groups are doing so well. Whenever and wherever we practice, everyone comes out with displeasing looks and makes so many remarks that our band is going to be a failure and we should withdraw from the program as soon as possible, and that we are more suited to eat and play". Poppy and Buddy chimed in, and said with tears streaming from eyes, "Appu, we just don't want to give this performance and make fun of ourselves in front of the whole school." Everyone, except Appu, nodded in agreement and returned to their previous mode of silence and de-spiritedness.

Appu observed the deep discouragement and loss of spirits the band is experiencing and wondered what he could do to help them regain confidence and be optimistic and enthusiastic. He stood up, put his hands in his pocket, walked to and fro, and then with a broad smile and overflowing enthusiasm shouted loudly, "Yes, Yes ! Ofcourse ! *Kick the Shell, Close your Eyes, Spread your Wings....*' That is it !" And it had the desired effect on Appu's buddies. In unison, they all said eagerly, "What does THAT mean Appu ?"

Appu replied, "When I was in Kesi Forest near Himalayas, I had a very wise friend called Chinmaya, who was love, wisdom and kindness personified. He used to tell me many stories when we were together taking long walks through the forest for contemplation and meditation. I suddenly remembered this wonderful story that he narrated to me about the '*Space Birds and their ready-to-be-hatched eggs*':"

"Space Birds !?" everyone exclaimed, "We never heard of such a bird, What are they and where do they live ?" Everyone spoke simultaneously with wide eyes and voice full of enthusiasm. "Appu, please tell us, please, we want to know what happened to their eggs." Appu started to tell them about the space birds and their little ready-to-be hatched eggs.

### **kick the shell. close your eyes. spread your wings .....**

"Ten thousand miles below the sun, in what is called *Space*, there lived a Father Bird and Mother Bird, who would move in circles with joy, flapping their wings. They would never come down to the warmer regions of atmosphere because they cannot survive there. Soon, the Mother Bird laid many eggs, not just one or two, in Space because they are *Space Birds*. These eggs were heavy so they slowly started coming down. When nine months had passed, these eggs were just out of Space and ten thousand miles above the surface of the earth.



Now, the shells of the eggs slowly started to crack, and each chick popped out its tiny head from the cracked shell. The Mother Bird was very happy, and encircling her young ones, she cried out to them :

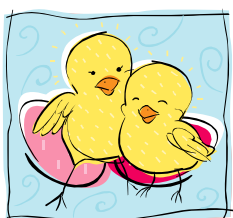
*Children, Children, Children,*

*Listen to me.*

*Kick the Shell*

*Close your Eyes and Spread Your Wings !!*

Among them, one chick said "Dear brother chicks, Do not believe what she says. Our necks are already cold since we put them out from our warm cozy shells. If we kick our shells, and put our whole body out, we will die of cold." Another one said, "Yes, I don't think I believe her either, because how can she know we have wings at all. What are these wings, anyway ?" So, all the chicks started saying that "We cannot do whatever the Mother Bird is telling. We just cannot, because we are afraid of failure to survive and dying in this cold". But there were two chicks among this lot, who were wise, and who trusted the note of sincerity in the Mother Bird's voice. They thought, "Why not give it a try. We may not completely understand what the Mother Bird is saying, but if we succeed, we will be able to survive, and if we sink to our doom, the others will know not to do the same thing."



So, they decided to listen to the Mother Bird. With very great courage and faith, they kicked their shells out, closed their eyes tight and spread their wings. And behold ! Slowly and gradually, with grace and beauty, the wise bird chicks floated in the air, and were welcomed by their Father Bird, who then took them to the higher realms. The Mother Bird repeated her call to other chicks, but since the other chicks did not heed to what Mather Bird was instructing them, they started to sink faster into the atmospheric region, were sucked in the air and there was no escape. Well, all these chicks, except the two which went to the higher realms, started sinking and finally disappeared in the blue sky."

Appu finished telling story and said, "Because the two chicks trusted the Mother Bird's words and also trusted each other, they could soar to the higher realms of space along with their Mother and Father Birds, whereas the other chicks gave in way to despair and loss of trust, discouraged each other and hence eventually they sunk more and more into the atmosphere and completely got sucked in the air. Likewise, dears, to achieve any goal in life—be it small or big, you should have trust in yourself, in your wise teacher and should not yield to discouragement."



"Now, tell me, how many of you want to be like the two chicks who were wise, who just ignored all the discouraging talk of others and who kicked their shells of limitedness, closed their eyes with courage and spread their wings of freedom ?"

All of Appu's pals shouted with utmost cheerfulness and enthusiasm, "Me, Me, Me !"

Appu continued, "If you believe in yourself, and not let others discourage you, and if you consider me your good friend for life, then I request you to give up this despondency and practice for the upcoming musical concert with redoubled enthusiasm, and I promise that success is going to be yours."

The whole band of "Junglee Rock !" were so cheered up hearing this wonderful story of the two wise birds, that in the coming week, they practiced harder, smarter and put all their heart and soul into it. They were careful not to miss any detail in the musical notes, in the role they have to play as a Pianist, Vocalist, Violinist etc and weaved a wonderful synchrony with each other bringing out their best. They deeply memorized their mantra "*Kick the Shell, Close your Eyes and Spread your Wings.*"

The Junglee Rock band's performance with the theme music "Kick the Shell..." was the biggest hit in the history of the Jungle's School Anniversary. Forest Kadamba has not seen such a finely executed ensemble of violin and other musical instruments, along with the beautiful melodious voice of Tutu and others, in a very, very long time. It was a phenomenal success. Appu was filled with joy and pride beholding his dear little friends and they all had a wonderful party celebrating their success on the Tree House.



The story was taken from  
© Chinmaya Balavihar Book  
tales and retold with  
illustration by Appu, The  
Wise





## My Disciples

Swamiji was glorifying his disciples to one of the devotees, who was sitting there in front of him.

"This is Swami A. Tamil Chronicler, writer, poet, artist, accountant, and what not."

"This is Swami S. Chronicler, poet, kirtanist, Typist."

"This is Swami H. Eye-surgeon, poet, author of four books. All kinds of varieties are here."

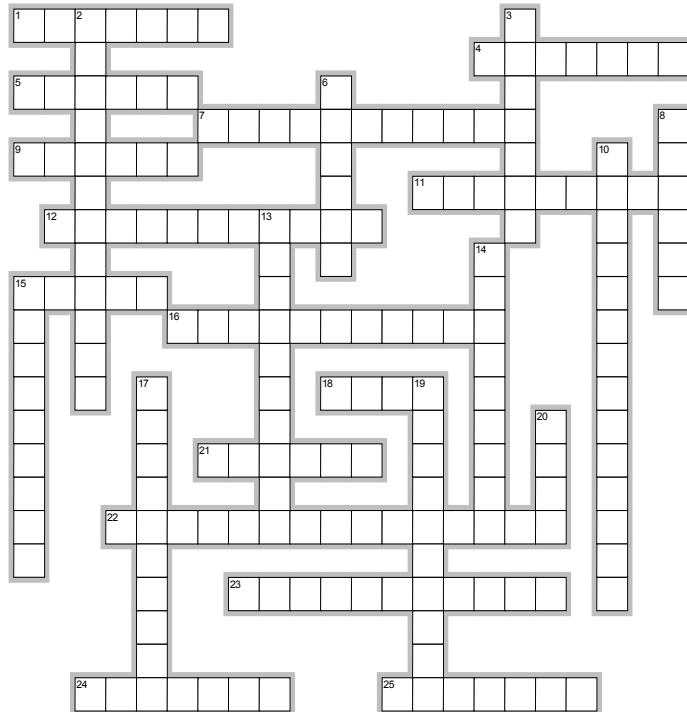
Just at this time Swamiji saw the face of those persons whom he glorified. Perhaps he would have noted that "Sriman Egoism" was peeping through their eyes. And suddenly he turned to the devotee. "Bhuvaji, do you want thieves also here. Within one second, they will even take my head away. Such persons also are here."

All burst into laughter. This is Swamiji's SB.40 injection to weaken the power of "Sriman Egoism". Doctors may wonder, "What is this SB-40 injection? We never heard." But very sorry I cannot say what it is, because it is a secret. Swamiji alone has got the Trade Right for that medicine. He alone knows when to use that medicine, because he is the doctor of the doctors.

Do you want to know what is SB-40? It is a secret. Keep it with you. SB-40 means "Shoe Beating-40". :)



Source: Day-to-Day with  
Sivananda by  
Swami Santananda



### Across:

- The temple of Brahma is situated in this place in Rajasthan (7)
- Childhood friend of Lord Krishna who offers Krishna a morsel of beaten rice and receives abundant prosperity in return (7)
- The child devotee who obtained the highest planet named after him, after undergoing severe penance (6)
- In the Gita, Lord Krishna says that he is \_\_\_\_ month among all months (Sanskrit, 11)
- Raja Rishi who is referred to in the Gita as an ideal Karma Yogi (hint: ruler of Mithila) (6)
- The technique of meditation taught by Buddha [literally meaning: to look inside] (9)
- "Vivekananda Rock Memorial" is situated in this place (5,6)
- Comfortable and steady physical posture is called - (Sthira Sukham) (5)
- The name of the 10th chapter in the Gita that lists some divine attributes of God (7, 4)
- Equanimity is called this (4) [Ref Gita "Samatvam \_\_\_\_ Uchyate"]
- Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu hailed from this state (6)
- This Vedantic work of Sri Sankara is termed as the Crest Jewel of Discrimination (15)
- The place in today's Haryana state which was the site of Mahabharata war more than 3000 years ago (11)
- Upanishads refer to God in His impersonal aspect as this (7)
- System of philosophy that was propounded by Sage Kapila (7)

### Down:

- Surrender to the Divine (Sanskrit term, 12)
- Great devotee saint of Maharashtra who appeared in the 1600s and composed numerous Abhangas glorifying Lord Panduranga Vithala (7)
- That which protects one who constantly repeats it ("Mananaat Trayate Iti \_\_\_\_") (6)
- This place of pilgrimage is considered as "Tirtha Raj" [Ref: Ramcharit Manas] (6)
- Name of the Guru of emperor Shivaji (9,6)
- The yogi who burnt Kala-Yavana to ashes by his looks upon being woken up from deep sleep, as part of Krishna's plan [Ref: Bhagavatam; hint: Krishna intended to both vanquish Kala-Yavana as well as bless this devotee, on this pretext] (10)
- The teachings of Sage Uddhalaka to his son Swethaketu appear in this Upanishad (9)
- The great devotee who was protected from the wrath of Muni Durvasa by Lord Vishnu's Sudarshana Chakra (discuss) [Ref: Bhagavatam; hint: he undertook the "Dwadasi Vrata"] (9)
- The popular bhajan "Vaishnav Janato" was written by (5,5)
- The holy hill where Sri Ramana Ashram is situated (10)
- The demon king who was pushed into Patala by Lord Vishnu in his incarnation as Vamana (4)





# Asana + Ahara



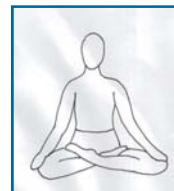
## SUITABLE ASANAS (POSTURES) FOR JAPA AND DHYANA

Sage Patanjali describes in his Yoga Sutras that the Posture should be **Steady** and **Comfortable**. Many of us do not consciously practice comfortable sitting, with the result that our posture is untrained, unsteady and disturbing. More so, when we sit for doing Chanting, Japa and Meditation, the lack of a steady and firm pose will slowly throw us into physical inconvenience, undesirable movements, irritation, itching, idleness, lack of interest and ultimately sleep. The whole purpose of Meditation is defeated when we fall asleep. That is why we must get control and mastery over our Asana in order to progress in our meditation. Such a controlled and trained posture is good for our physical and mental health. If we are able to sit in any Asana or posture for a length of three to four hours, it will make our mind one-pointed and facilitate an easy flow of meditation.

The following are three important asanas one can use for Japa (Mantra-recitation) and Dhyana (Meditation). These are:

### 1. Padma Asana – The Lotus Pose

This asana is the most ideal one for contemplation, Japa and Dhyana. Ladies, men, old and young can all sit in this Asana. First, sit on the ground by spreading the legs forward. Slowly bring the right foot onto the left thigh and then the left foot on the right thigh. Make a finger lock and keep the locked hands over the left ankle. Or both hands can be placed on the corresponding knee-joints with palms facing up, with thumb and index finger touching each other in a Chinmudra position.



### 2. Siddha Asana – The Perfect Pose

Siddha asana comes second to the Padma asana. Mastery of this posture will grant certain siddhis or supernatural powers, hence this asana is named “Siddha Asana”. This asana is not suitable and convenient to ladies. This Asana will greatly aid for maintaining celibacy. Place one heel at anus. Keep the other heel on the root of generative organ. The feet or legs should be so nicely arranged that the ankle-joints should touch each other. Hands can be placed as in the lotus pose.



### 3. Sukha Asana – The Comfortable Pose

This pose is very commonly used for its comfort and convenience during Japa and Meditation. The head, trunk and the neck should all be in straight line in this Asana without any curve. If the head tends to droop down or fall back, be vigilant to bring it back in line, otherwise sleep will overpower.



Practise these asanas regularly and slowly, by increasing length of time in which you can hold the asana gradually. Practicing these Asanas will make us *Sthira* (Steady) and *Sukha* (Comfortable) in the postures, which will greatly enhance concentration.

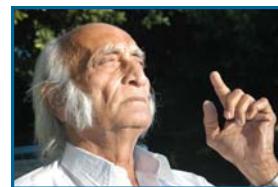
Reference:

<http://www.yoga-age.com/modern/asanas.html>  
Pictures from <http://sattva.blogcu.com>



## SUN-GAZING FOR CHARGING OUR FOOD STORES

Sun is the source of Light, Heat, Energy and nourishment. His powerful rays feed millions of species on this earth. Without Sun, we would be in the world of darkness. Hence Sun is verily the Divine Being Himself and is worshipped in many religions. Externally, we try to take hormonally-induced Vitamin D milk, Vitamin D tablets, but do not care to derive immensely more potential benefits from Sun. We recently came across a write-up about a unique personality, Sri Hira Ratan Manek, (HRM), 71 years of age, who has been solely dependent on Sun for his nourishment for the past 13 years and is in excellent health and dynamism. After reading the article and going through his website, we wanted to share with you this wonderful technique, which can be incorporated into our lives. We need not give up any food, but we just need to take a few minutes off in our morning and evening hours to gaze at the beautiful Sun.



<http://www.solarhealing.com>

Here is how, in the words of Sri HRM :

- ◆ Sun-Gazing is a one-time practice of your lifetime usually for a period of 9 months. You can break up the practice in three phases. 0 to 3months, 3-6months and 6-9months. You have to walk barefoot for 45 minutes for the rest of your life.
- ◆ The practice entails looking at the rising or setting sun one time per day only during the safe hours. No harm will come to your eyes during the morning and evening safe hours. The safe hours are anytime within 1-hour window after sunrise or anytime within the 1-hr window before sunset.

### 0 - 3 Months

- ◆ First day, during the safe hours, look for a maximum of 10 seconds. Second day look for 20 seconds at the rising sun adding ten seconds every succeeding day, increasing to a period of 1 minute and 40 seconds. Stand on bare earth with bare foot. Eyes can blink and/or flicker. Stillness or Steadiness of the eyes is not required. Do not wear any lenses or glasses while sun-gazing.
- ◆ Have a belief that the sunrays or lights that you are getting into your eyes are of immense benefit and will not harm you. You need not restrict any of your normal daily routines. There are no restrictions. You can enjoy your food while applying this practice. Hunger will disappear eventually by itself.
- ◆ You may consider gazing from the same place at the same time daily. If you pray, you can have any prayer of your choice.

### 3 - 6 Months

- ◆ Physical diseases will start being cured, as all colors in the sun through the eye reach the brain. Sun energy storage increases in the body

### 6 - 9 Months

- ◆ You will start to have the original form of micro food, which is our sun. This can avoid the toxic waste that you take into your body while you eat regular food

### After 9 Months

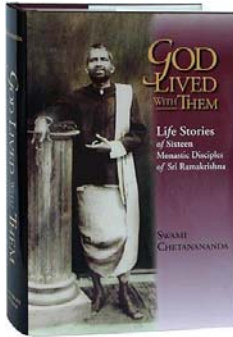
- ◆ After nine months or when you reach to a 44 minutes level, you should give up sun gazing since solar science prohibits further gazing for the sake of eye care. Now you have to start walking on bare foot on bare earth for 45 minutes daily for a total of 6 days. No need to walk briskly, jog or run.



# special features of the month



## Book of the Month



Can be ordered from:

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

\$19.95

Rs.120/- if ordered in India

## GOD LIVED WITH THEM BY SRI SWAMI CHETANANANDA

One of the exemplary books written by Sri Swami Chetananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order and Head of the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, "God Lived with Them" recounts the lives of the sixteen monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, how they came in contact with this great spiritual teacher, and how their lives were spiritually molded and guided towards the goal of Self-realization. Swami Vivekananda is widely known among the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. The spiritual caliber and depth of His other disciples is equally astonishing and inspiring. Each disciple of Sri Ramakrishna was uniquely trained by the Master in becoming the torch-bearer of the Mission, and also were made instrumental to spread His message of Vedanta and Oneness to the four corners of the world.

While reading through this book, a spiritual seeker gets wonderful insight into their spiritual practices and also some of the tips and techniques that seekers must employ in their *sadhana* for success in meditation and japa. Every line in this book has a potential for stirring the soul and one cannot but greatly admire the simplistic and smooth style that Sri Swami Chetananda has adopted in this book. "God Lived With Them" shows clearly how association with a saint can transform our lives from mundane to the most sublime, and how happiness and bliss can be found only in spiritual pursuit irrespective of many obstacles, rather than in materialistic path. Each of the sixteen monastic disciples can be taken as one's ideal in cultivating devotion, performing penance, doing selfless service, and surrendering to the Divine.



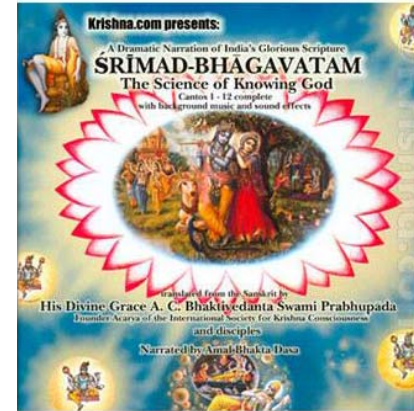
## Audio of the Month

### SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM AUDIO-BOOK BY SRI AMAL BHAKTA DASA

Among the holy scriptures of India, Srimad Bhagavatam holds a very unique position. It was composed by none other than Sri Veda Vyasa, the reorganizer of the Vedas, author of BrahmaSutras, Puranas and MahaBharata. This scripture is at once a lofty Vedantic as well as a highly devotional work written as a culmination of the wisdom sharing by the author. Sri Veda Vyasa authored this on the suggestion of the Divine Sage Narada as a remedy for the gloom that had affected Veda Vyasa. No service is greater than extolling the glory of God and sharing the narrations of His incarnations with His devotees.

Srimad Bhagavatam is narrated as the answer to the questions posed by King Parikshit thousands of years ago which is relevant even today. One of the questions asked by the king was what a person who was on the threshold of death should do in order to achieve the ultimate good. The answer is relevant to everyone as we are all to meet with death some day.

Srimad Bhagavatam is composed in the Sanskrit language. It is available in original with translations in different languages by publishers like Gita Press Gorakhpur and ISKCON. Sri Amal Bhakti Dasa has done an invaluable service to mankind by narrating the entire text and recording it in audio format thereby making this divine scripture easily accessible to everyone. The audio-book is made very attractive and lively with special effects, background music to suit the situations, different tones for different characters, etc. all the while retaining the devotional tempo. I have benefited greatly by listening to this audio-book for the last few months during lunchtime daily. I highly recommend it to first time acquaintances to the Bhagavatam as well as for constant meditation.



Can be ordered from:

[www.thekrishnastore.com](http://www.thekrishnastore.com)

MP3 CD, \$24.95

### SONG OF IMMORTALITY BY SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

**R**am Ram Ram Ram, Jaya Sita Ram, Jaya Jaya Radhe Shyam.

Turn the gaze, draw the Indriyas, Still the mind, sharpen the intellect;  
Chant OM with feeling, meditate on Atma,  
Chant Ram with feeling, meditate on SitaRam,  
Chant Shyam with feeling, meditate on Radhe Shyam  
O Children of Light, will you drink not,  
Won't you drink not, the nectar of immortality? (Ram Ram..)

All Karmas are burnt now, You have become a Jivanmukta,  
The blessed state of Turiyatita, No words can describe.  
O Children of Light, will you drink not,  
Won't you drink not, the nectar of immortality? (Ram Ram..)

The grass is green, the rose is red, And the sky is blue,  
But the Atman is colorless, Formless and Gunless too,  
O Children of Light, will you drink not,  
Won't you drink not, the nectar of immortality? (Ram Ram..)

Life is short, Time is fleeting, The world is full of miseries,  
Cut the knot of Avidya, And drink the Nirvanic bliss,  
O Children of Light, will you drink not,  
Won't you drink not, the nectar of immortality? (Ram Ram..)

Feel the divine presence everywhere, See the divine glory all-round,  
Then dive deep into the divine source,  
Realise the Infinite bliss,  
O Children of Light, will you drink not,  
Won't you drink not, the nectar of immortality? (Ram Ram..)

Do Asana, Kumbaka, Mudra, Shake the Kundalini,  
Then take it to Sahasrara,  
Through the Chakras in the Sushumna,  
O Children of Light, will you drink not,  
Won't you drink not, the nectar of immortality? (Ram Ram..)



## Melody of the Month



# Anubhava: The Experience



*“Anubhava” focuses on the insights of our contributing spiritual seekers. These are the experiences gained either through a spiritual course they have attended, or in an Ashram, or in the presence and satsang of a saint, or in a tour to any temple or pilgrimage. These insights are meant to intensify our commitment to spiritual pursuit, cultivate sublime thoughts and truly enjoy our divine journey. In this issue, Sri Anil Kumar, Trivandrum will share with us a wonderful experience of the Divine Mother’s blessings.*

## DEVI MOOKAMBIKA

*Sri Anil Kumar V,  
Trivandrum, India*

A few months back my mother needed to consult an astrologer about something. We decided to go to JG, and fixed up an appointment with him. Now, JG is one of the better known astro-palmists in our city. He has his own half-hour weekly show on TV, and his advertisement appears regularly in all the astrological magazines. Usually you need to wait for a couple of weeks to be able to see him.

On the appointed day I accompanied my mother, when she went for the consultation. After reading her palm and doing an astrological prasna (question), he gave us his interpretation about the problem that my mother was facing. Afterwards, since the main business was over, we relaxed and indulged in some personal chitchat, of a spiritual nature. On an impulse JG began to tell us something about his past.

JG had had a very stern and unloving father, and this made him very attached to his gentle and loving mother. But because of this it was a great shock to him when she died of a heart attack, comparatively early, at the age of 50. He was very young at the time and could not cope with his grief. Since he had no relationship with his father, and his mother was gone, JG left home and started to wander, like a madman, seeking some relief from the heaviness of his heart.

He wandered from temple to temple, across the length and breadth of the state. But his tortured soul found no relief. One day he found himself walking into the Mookambika temple, near Mangalore. The shrine was closed at the time, and he waited with the large number of people who had assembled there to get the first glimpse of the Devi when the shrine opened. Finally the shrine opened, and there JG saw his mother seated on the pedestal, wearing her usual dress, the traditional mundu (hair-style) and neriyathu (nose-stud). JG was so shocked that he fell down unconscious. The people there gathered around him and revived him. When JG regained consciousness, he looked eagerly towards the shrine, but there, instead of his mother, he saw the vighraha of Devi Mookambika. Suddenly he realized that he was no longer feeling the searing agony of his mother’s death. His heart had become peaceful.

Today he makes frequent trips to Mookambika. He often carries many presents for the Devi. But there is one present that he finds great joy in giving Her — a set of the traditional mundu and neriyathu, something that he would have given his human mother, had she been alive.



**Devi Mookambika’s idol  
in the inner sactorum**



**Entrance to the Temple**



**Swagatha (Welcome)  
Gopura**



**Souparnika River**



# Likhita Japa

**Likhita Japa** constitutes an important part of Spiritual Sadhana. The groove of our Guru Mantra which we obtained through initiation from our Guru, is etched more deeply in our minds with repetition and one-pointed concentration. The benefits of **Mantra-writing** or **Likhita Japa** cannot be adequately described. Besides bringing about purity of heart and concentration of mind, mantra-writing gives you control of Asana, control of senses, particularly the sight and the tongue, and fills you with the power of endurance. You attain peace of mind quickly. By prolonged and constant practice the inherent power of the Mantra (**Mantra-Sakti**) will be awakened, which will fill your very existence with the Divinity of the Mantra. In Mantra-Writing, there is no restriction to language. One can write the Divine Name in any language.



*“Write down daily in a notebook your Ishta Mantra or Guru Mantra for half an hour. When you write the Mantra, observe Mouna or Silence. Write the Mantra clearly in ink. On Sundays and Holidays, write this for one hour. This is Likhita Japa. It brings about purity of heart, concentration of Mind, control of Asana, control of Senses and power of endurance.”*

**-Swami Sivananda**

# UNIVERSAL PRAYER

O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love !  
Salutations and Prostrations Unto Thee !  
Thou Art Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient !  
Thou Art Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss) !  
Thou Art the Indweller of All Beings !

Grant us an understanding heart,  
Equal vision, balanced mind,  
Faith, Devotion and Wisdom !  
Grant us Inner Spiritual strength,  
To resist temptations and to control the mind !  
Free us from egoism, lust, greed, anger, jealousy and hatred !  
Fill our hearts with Divine Virtues !

Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms !  
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms !  
Let us ever remember Thee !  
Let us ever sing Thy glories !  
Let Thy Name be ever on our lips !  
Let us Abide in Thee forever and ever

*-Swami Sivananda*

ॐ सर्वेषां स्वस्तिर्भवतु सर्वेषां शान्तिर्भवतु  
सर्वेषां पूर्णं भवतु सर्वेषां मङ्गलं भवतु ॥  
सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः  
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चित् दुःख भाग्भवेत् ॥

**Prosperity be unto all, Perfect peace be unto all**  
**Fullness be unto all, Auspiciousness be unto all.**  
**Happiness be unto all, Perfect health be unto all**  
**May all see good in everyone, May all be free from suffering.**



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Om Peace.  
Yours, In Service,  
The Divine Ambrosia Team,  
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