

**Hindu Temple and Cultural Society of USA, Inc.  
Sri Venkateshwara Temple (Balaji Mandir)  
and Community Center**

**Sri Venkateshwara Vidyalaya**

**Vedic Hinduism Classes**

**(Application of Vedic Hinduism to daily life)**

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***Dedicated***  
***To***  
***Lord Sri Venkateswara***

## Preface

This book is a compilation of the notes and handout material that were used in the Vedic Hinduism classes started during the Fall 2000. The classes are conducted bi-weekly with two and half-hours per session. The material is aimed at the level of children in the age group of 7 to 16 years. However, it may be of interest to adults. The purpose of these classes is to provide basic understanding of all aspects of Vedic Hinduism. The program has generated interest in students. The classes include interactive time and special projects. Some of the material has been used in HTCS summer camps. Any suggestion to this program is welcome by the education committee.

The education committee wishes to thank the temple management for its support in this venture. We also would like to take this opportunity to thank the participating students and their parents.

Education committee

February 23, 2001

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

This compilation of notes and handout material is designed to provide a basic understanding of all aspects of Vedic Hinduism. The material is prepared based on the three well-known approaches namely: Knowledge, Devotion and Action. The material includes items such as prayers, verses of wisdom, thoughts to ponder, Bhagavadgita, simple pooja procedure, festivals, concepts in Vedic Hinduism, great personalities and application of Vedic Hinduism to daily life. It is hoped that this humble effort will inspire many youths to become knowledgeable in various aspects of Vedic Hinduism. Some of this material has been successfully used in HTCS summer camps. Any suggestions on the notes and/ or classes are welcome.

I wish to thank Hanumanth Rao Marepalli, Madhubala Suseendran, Prasad Sandepudi, Veena Mohan, Geetha Prasad, Kalyani Ramani and A.R. Srinivasan for their help in preparation of this compilation, organization of classes and teaching.

M.G. Prasad

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## FEATURES OF VEDIC CHANTING

### DESIRABLE FEATURES:

माधुर्यमक्षरव्यक्तिः पदच्छेदस्तु सुस्वरः

धैर्यं लयसमर्थं च षडैते पाठका गुणाः

Madhuryamakṣaravyakthiḥi Padacchedastu Susvaraha  
Dhairyam Layasamartham ca Sadete Pataka Gunaha

॥ 33 ॥

माधुर्यं	Mādhuryam: <u>Melodious sound</u>
अक्षरव्यक्तिः	Akṣaravyakthiḥi: <u>Phonetic quality of letters</u>
पदच्छेद	Padaccheda: <u>Proper breaking of words</u>
सुस्वरः	Susvaraha: <u>Correct intonation</u>
धैर्यं	Dhairyam: <u>Majesty and proper speed</u>
लयसमर्थं	Layasamartham: <u>Proper merger of sounds</u>

### UNDESIRABLE FEATURES:

गीती शीघ्री शिरः कम्पी तथा लिखितपाठकः

अनर्थज्ञः अल्पकण्ठः च षडैते पाठकाधमाः

Giti Sighri Sirahkampi tatha Likhitapathakaha  
Anarthajnolpakantaha ca Sadete Pathakadhamaha

॥ 32 ॥

गीती	Giti: <u>Singing</u>
शीघ्री	Sighri: <u>Quick and Speedy</u>
शिरःकम्पी	Sirahkampi: <u>Nodding of head</u>
लिखितपाठकः	Likhitapathakaha: <u>Reading from written script</u>
अनर्थज्ञः	Anarthajnaha: <u>Not knowing the meaning</u>
अल्पकण्ठः	Alpakanthaha: <u>Feeble voice</u>

Reference: Pāṇinīya Śikṣā ( पाणिनीय शिक्षा ), Phonetics as per Pāṇinī Mahārṣi, Chowkamba series, India.

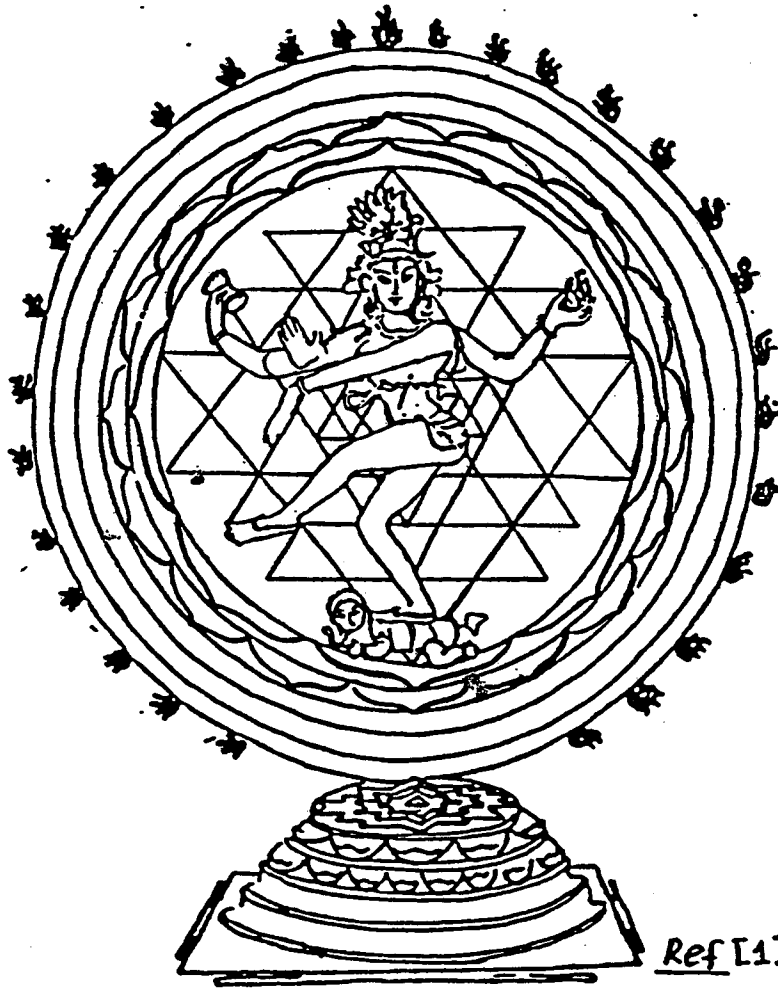
# KEY TO TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION

		<i>Sounds like</i>			<i>Sounds like</i>
अ	a	o in son	इ	d	d
आ	ā	a in master	ड	dh	dh in godhood
इ	i	i in if	ण	n	n in under
ई	ī	ee in feel	त्	t	French t
उ	u	u in full	थ	th	th in thumb
ऊ	ū	oo in boot	द	d	th in them
ऋ	r	somewhat between r and ri	ध	dh	th in breathe here
ए	e	a in evade	न	n	n
ऐ	ai	y in my	प	p	p
ओ	o	o in over	फ	ph	ph in loop-hole
औ	au	ow in now	ब	b	b
क	k	k	भ	bh	bh in abhor
ख	kh	ckh in blockhead	म	m	m
ग	g	g (hard)	य	y	y
घ	gh	gh in log-hut	र	r	r
ङ	ṅ	ng	ल	l	l
च	c	ch (not k)	व	v	v in avert
छ	ch	chh in catch him	श	ś	sh
ज	j	j	ष	ṣ	sh in show
झ	jh	dgeh in hedgehog	स	s	s
ञ	ñ	n (somewhat)	ह	h	h
ट	ṭ	t	म	m	m in hum
ठ	ṭh	th in ant-hill	ः	ḥ	half h in huh!

# ॐ श्री सद्गुरवे नमः

नृत्तावधाने नटराजराजः ननाद द्वां नवपञ्चवारं  
उद्धर्तुं कामधमन्यादि सिदान् इतद्विमर्शो शिवसूत्रजालं

At the end of His dance did the King of dancers  
Strike His hand-drum as many as nine and five times,  
Wishing thereby to lift up fulfilled ones like Sanaka ;  
That web of Shiva's aphorisms do I propose to study.



'अ इ उण् १ । ऋ लृक् २ । ए ओङ् ३ । ऐ औच् ४ ।  
ह य व रट् ५ । लृण् ६ । न म ङ ण नम् ७ । झ मञ् ८ ।  
घ ढ धष् ९ । ज ब ग ङ दश् १० । ख फ छ ठ थ च ट तव् ११ ।  
क पय् १२ । श ष सर् १३ । हल् १४ ।

शिवसूत्राणि



OM SRI SADGURAVE NAMAHA  
4. DAILY PRAYERS

1. When you get up early in the morning in the bed:

KARĀGRE VASATE LAKSHMI KARAMADHYE SARASWATI  
KARAMŪLE STHITĀ GOWRI PRABHĀTE KARADARSHANAM.

कराग्रे वसते लक्ष्मी करमध्ये सरस्वती  
करमूले स्थिता गौरी प्रभाते करदर्शनम्

In the early morning, one should look at both hands (after rubbing and touching eyes) thinking that Goddess Lakshmi, giver of wealth and brilliance, resides at the tip of hands, Goddess Saraswati, giver of knowledge resides in the middle of hands and Goddess Govri, giver of ability resides at the base of hands.

2. After getting up from the bed and after taking bath you can say several prayers of your choice such as given in the list.  
(PAGE 3)

3. Before eating breakfast, lunch and dinner:

ANNAPOORNE SADAPOORNE SHANKARA PRĀNĀVALLABHE  
JNĀNA VAIRĀGYA SIDDHYARTHAM BHIKSHĀM DEHI CHA PĀRVATI

अन्नपूर्णे सदापूर्णे शंकरे प्राणवल्लभे  
ज्ञान वैराग्य सिद्ध्यर्थं भिक्षां देहि च पार्वती

Oh! Parvati consort of Shiva, who is Goddess of food and never lacks to bless through food. Please give food so that Knowledge and detachment (lack of greed) can be achieved.

BRAMHĀRPAṆAM BRAMHAHAVIHI BRAMHAGNOU BRAMHANAHUTAM  
BRAMHAIVA TENAGANTAVYAM BRAMHA KARMA SAMADHINA

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविः ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम्  
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्म समाधिना

In the whole process of offering, the intention of offering the offering, the fire, the act of offering and the consumer of the offering are all encompassed by Bramhan.

4. In the evening after the lamp and light is turned on:

DEEPAMŪLE STHITO BRAMHĀ DEEPAMADHYE JANĀRDANAHA  
DEEPĀGRE SHANKARAHA PROKTAHA SANDHYA DEEPA NAMOSTUTE.

दीपमूले स्थितो ब्रह्मा दीपमध्ये जनार्दनः  
दीपाग्रे शंकरः प्रोक्तः संध्या दीप नमोस्तुते

Prostrations to evening lamp in which Lord Brahma resides at the base of flame, the Lord Janardana (Vishnu) resides in the middle of the flame and the Lord Shankara (Shiva) resides at the tip of the flame.

5. Then you can say many prayers of your choice or such as in the list. (PAGE 3)
6. Before going to bed :

RAMAM SKANDAM HANUMANTHAM VYNATEYAMVRIKODARAM  
SHAYANE YAHAM SMARENITYAM DUH SVAPNASTASYA NASHYATHI

रामं स्कन्दं हनुमन्तं वैभवेयं वृकोदरम्  
शयने यः स्मरेन्नित्यं दुःस्वप्नस्तस्य नश्यति

One who remembers Sri Rama, Sanmukha, Hanumanta, Garuda and Bheema at night before going to sleep will not experience bad dreams.

ॐ नमो नारायणाय

OM NAMO NĀRĀYANĀYA

कार्येण वाचा मनसेन्द्रियैर्वा  
बुद्ध्यात्मना वा प्रकृतैस्त्वभावात्  
करोमि यद्यत् सकलं परस्मै  
श्रीमन्नारायणायैति समर्पयामि

Kāyena Vācā Manasendriyervā  
Buddhyātmnā vā Prakrutessvabhāvāt  
Kāroṃi Yadyat Sakalam Parasmai  
Srimannārāyaṇāyeti Samarpayami

I offer all that I have done through my body, speech, mind, senses, intelligence, nature, behavior and instincts to Lord Srimannārāyaṇa 5

**Vande Mataram**

Vande Mataram

Sujalam Suphalam Malayaja Sheetalam

Sasya Shyamalam Mataram Vande Mataram

Shubra Jyotsna Pulakita Yamineem

Pullakusumita Drumadala Shobineem

Suhasineem Sumadhura Bhashineem

Sukhadam Varadam Mataram

Vande Mataram

**Bankimchandra Chattarjee**

## Thoughts To Ponder

( From the book "108 Thoughts To Ponder" by M. G. Prasad )



The privileges of a  
human being are,  
to wonder, to ponder,  
to practice and realize.



Learning is the  
birth right of a  
human being.





Basically, there are two kinds of  
knowledge, and they are knowledge  
of the things observed and  
knowledge of the observer.



3



True knowledge  
always wins.



4

8



It is the motive  
that determines  
the value of an  
action.



5



God has to be realized in oneself, by  
oneself, for oneself but with the grace  
and guidance of a Guru who has  
realized God.



6

9



At the least, one can  
only purify oneself.



7



There is no competition  
in God-Realization.



8

10

**SANSKRIT VERSES OF WISDOM (SUBHASHITANI)**

**KNOWLEDGE (VIDYA)**

---

**Kshanashaha kanashashchaiva vidyaamartham cha saadhayet  
Kshanae nashtae kuto vidya? kanae nashtae kuto dhanam?**

**Every moment (of time) and every grain (of food) have to be used to gain knowledge and gain money respectively. If moments are wasted, then how knowledge can be gained? If grains are wasted, then how money can be saved?**

---

**Harturna gocharam yaati bhavati vistrta  
Kalpaantaepi na yaa nashyet kimanyadvidyaya samam?**

**Knowledge is not visible to thief, it expands when given away, and it does not decay with time. So, what else can be equal to knowledge ?**

---

**Vidya dadaati vinayam vinadyaati patraam  
Patrvaat dhanamaapnoti dhanaddharmastatah sukham**

**Knowledge leads to humility, humility leads to position. From position, one earns money. From the (rightly earned) money comes frame of mind for discriminating between right and wrong. Then comes happiness (and contentment).**

---

**Vidwatvancha nrpatvancha naiva tulyan kadachana  
Swadeshae poojate raja vidwan sarvatra poojyate**

**Scholarship and kingship are never equal. A king is respected in his kingdom. A scholar is respected everywhere.**

---

**Anna daanam parandaanam vidya daanamatah param  
Annena kshanikaa trptihi yaavajjivancha vidyaya**

**Donation of food is good. Donation of knowledge is better. From food one gets instantaneous satisfaction, but satisfaction throughout life comes from knowledge.**

---

**(translation by M.G. Prasad)**



अर्जुन उवाच

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ॥

Thus ever-steadfast those devotees you worship

ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥ १ ॥

those and also the imperishable unmanifested of them which better versed in Yoga

श्री भगवानुवाच

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ॥

On me fixing mind who Me ever steadfast worship

श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥ २ ॥

with faith supreme endowed Me the best versed in Yoga opinion

ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ॥

who but unchangeable unmanifested worship  
indefinable

सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥ ३ ॥

Omni present Unthinkable and Unchangeable Immovable eternal

संनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ॥

Having controlled all senses everywhere even-minded

ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहितैरताः ॥ ४ ॥

they obtain or reach myself only the welfare of all beings engaged

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तसक्तचेतसाम् ॥

trouble or difficult greater of those Unmanifested mind set on

अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥ ५ ॥

Unmanifested for Goal with hard toil for the embodied is reached.

- ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः ॥  
who but all actions in me resigning regarding me as supreme Goal
- अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्तः उपासते ॥ ६ ॥  
single minded alone with Yoga me meditating worship.
- तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसार सागरात् ॥  
For them I the Saviour death-birth cycle ocean
- भवामि न चिरात् पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥ ७ ॥  
I become not long (immediately) in me whose mind is set
- मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ॥  
on me only mind fix in me intellect place
- निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥ ८ ॥  
shall live in me here after no doubt
- अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम् ॥  
if mind to fix not able on me steadily
- अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनञ्जय ॥ ९ ॥  
by constant practice then to reach me seek winner of wealth
- अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ॥  
in practising also unable are intent on doing actions for my sake become
- मदर्थमापि कर्माणि कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥ १० ॥  
for my sake actions by doing perfection even shall attain.
- अथैतदप्यसक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ॥  
if this even unable are to do refuge in me taking
- सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥ ११ ॥  
the renunciation of the fruit of all action. then do self-controlled
- श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासात् ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विज्ञिष्यते ।  
superior indeed knowledge than practice than knowledge meditation more or better esteemed
- ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥ १२ ॥  
than meditation, renunciation of the fruit of action from renunciation peace immediately

अध्याय १२ भक्तियोग

अद्वेषा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।  
free from all creatures friendly compassionate and  
hatred (living beings) even

निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥१३॥  
free from free from even minded in forbear or  
minecess egoism pain & pleasure forgiving

संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।  
content always steady self controlled possessed of  
contemplation (self disciplined) firm conviction  
(integrated) (steadfast resolve)

मय्यपि तमनी बुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः समै प्रियः ॥१४॥  
in me with mind and devoted he to me is dear  
intellect fixed to me  
(offer) (steeped)

यस्मान्नो द्विजते लोको लोकान्नो द्विजते च यः ।  
from whom is not the world from the world is not agitated and who  
(shrink) (shrink)

हृषमिषभयो द्वैर्गैर्मुक्तो यः स च समै प्रियः ॥१५॥  
joy, envy, fear and who he and to me is dear  
anxiety free from  
(relation, intolerance agitation)

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।  
free from dependence pure prompt unconcerned untroubled  
(not craving for) (alert) (indifferent) (unworried)

सर्वरिम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः समै प्रियः ॥१६॥  
renouncing every who devoted he to me is dear  
undertaking to me

॥ अध्याय १२ ॥

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शीचति न कांक्षति ।  
who neither rejoices nor hates nor grieves nor desires

शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान् यः समे प्रियः ॥१७॥  
good evil renounces full of devotion who he to me is dear.

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।  
the same to foes & friends & also in honor and dishonor

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः संगविवर्जितः ॥१८॥  
cold & heat, in pleasure and pain the same free from attachment

तुल्यनिंदास्तुतिर्मौनी संतुष्टो येन केनचित् ।  
equal criticism, praise, who is silent content with anything

अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥१९॥  
homeless steady minded full of devotion to me dear man.

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।  
who indeed immortal this as declared follow  
(nectar)

श्रद्धाणां मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥२०॥  
full of faith me as the supreme goal devotees they exceedingly dear to me.

॥ अध्याय १२ ॥

Sacred Symbol OM





















RADHA AND KRISHNA





# THE GREAT FESTIVALS OF INDIA

Makara Sankranti- The first period where the nights are longer than days is called Uttaraayana. The first day of Uttaraayana is called Makra Sankranti.

Shivaratri- On this day Lord Shiva loves to receive worship of the Shiva linga with Bilva leaves and keeping awake the whole night.

Holi- A popular and colorful festival. People light huge bonfires and spray colored water on each other.

Janmashtami- Krishna's birthday. It is the eight day of the dark half of the Shravana month.

Ganesh Chaturthi- This is Lord Ganesha's birthday also the 4th day of Bhadrapada. On the last day of this festival all the people carry clay idols of Ganesha and sing and march to a nearby lake. At the lake they immerse Ganesha into the water.

Onam- The festival that is popular in Kerala and the west coast of India, it is the festival of the day that Vamana covered the earth, the sky and Mahaabli's head.

Dassara- This festival is celebrated for 10 days. On these days people decorate their houses with dolls and people worship Devi. On the tenth day Rama killed Ravana which is celebrated as Vijaya Dashami. Also this day was the day that the Pandavas returned to Hastinapura from their exile.

Deepavali- This is the festival of lights. This is the day Krishna said, "May people who have a holy bath on this day every year be saved from all evils." Then in the evening everyone lights oil lamps.



# Makara Sankranti

Lesson



**D**uring six months of the year, the days are longer than the nights. During the other six months, the nights are longer than the days. Have you noticed this? The first period is called Uttaraayana. Uttara means north. Then the sun moves north from the centre of the sky. The second period is Dakshinaayana. Dakshina means south. The sun moves southwards now. The Uttaraayana starts roughly in the period January-February. The day Uttaraayana starts is called Makara Sankranti. That day is very auspicious. We celebrate it as a festival all over the country. People bathe in holy waters. They worship the sun-god and give away gifts. During the six following months, happy events like marriages are celebrated.

The day after Sankranti is Pongal-day. This festival is observed specially in Tamil Nadu.

On that day people bathe the cow, put *tilak* on its forehead, tie beads and ornaments round its horns and neck, and worship it. They feed it with sweet cakes.



The cow is a useful animal. It gives us milk, from which we make curd, butter and butter-milk. It is like a mother to us all. We show our gratitude to her on that day.

The cow was born from God Brahma's mouth. Stories of old days say so. Brahma created the cow by drinking nectar. The first cow was called Surabhi. Hence cow-milk is like nectar to us all.

In ancient times cows were counted as wealth, just as we count rupees now.

King Mandhata was the first to worship the cow. We have continued to worship her from that day.

There is another custom in Tamil Nadu. On the day of the festival women bathe early in the morning and cook new harvested rice in a big fresh earthen pot. When the rice boils and overflows, they shout joyfully "Pongal-o-pong!" That is why it is called Pongal-day. After offering the cooked rice to God, by way of thanks, the family and friends eat it. People exchange greetings on that day. They celebrate it just like a New Year's day.

### MEANINGS

Auspicious	Bringing good luck.
Tilak	A mark of red powder worn at the centre of the forehead.
Gratitude	Thanks.

### EXERCISE

#### Questions

1. What are Uttarayana and Dakshinayana?
2. How is Makara Sankranti celebrated?
3. Why do we worship the cow on Pongal-day?
4. How is the Pongal-day celebrated in Tamil Nadu?
5. How do you celebrate these two days?



A hunter went to a forest in search of game.

He could not catch any game throughout the day. So he had to go without food.

Night fell.

He climbed up a tree to sleep for the night.

He could not sleep.

So he plucked the leaves of the tree one by one. He dropped them down to pass the time.



That day was Sivaratri. The tree was a Bilva tree. Down below was a Siva-Linga. Those leaves fell on it. God Siva loves all these three: keeping awake on Sivaratri, fasting, and worship of Siva-Linga with Bilva leaves.

The hunter did not know this.

Yet God blessed him for these. He made him a great king in his next birth.



The fourteenth day of the dark-half of Magh is Sivaratri.  
This day is sacred to God Siva.  
People spend it in prayer, fast and worship of God Siva.

#### MEANINGS

- Game — Bird or animal which hunters kill.  
Plucked — Pilled out.  
Fast — Go without food.

#### EXERCISES

##### A. Questions :—

1. How did the hunter spend the night?
2. What does God Siva like?
3. What day is Sivaratri?
4. Do people eat on Sivaratri day?
5. How did God bless the hunter?

##### B. Fill in the blanks :—

1. A hunter went in search of game, he did not ..... any.  
He climbed a ..... tree.
2. Below the tree was a .....
3. The fourteenth day of ..... is Sivaratri.
4. People spend it in ..... and .....

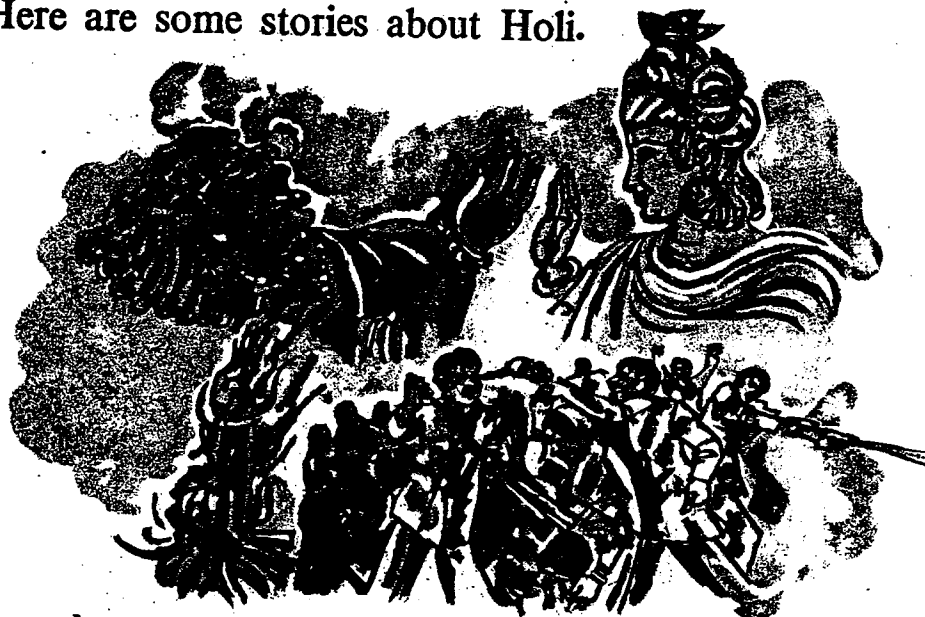


**H**oli is a popular and colourful festival. It is great fun for the boys.

They light huge bonfires. They spray coloured water or throw coloured powder on one another. Some throw coins into the bonfire.

This festival is celebrated on the full-moon day of Phalgun.

Here are some stories about Holi.



Long, long ago, there was a demoness called Holika. She was very wicked. God Krishna killed her. As she was dying, she asked Krishna, "Will you celebrate this day as a festival?"

God is kind even to the wicked when they repent. So Krishna granted her request. This is the day we celebrate as the Holi festival.

On that day, a chunk of a tree is planted before the house. Grass and fuel are heaped round and upon it. At night-fall, the head of the family sets fire to it. When it goes up in flames, people make a strange noise with their tongues and offer worship.



In Bengal, they place the child-god Krishna in a cradle in front of the bonfire and worship him.

Here is another story about Holi.

Once God Siva was doing *tapas*.

Kama or the Love-god annoyed him. Becoming angry, God Siva burnt him to ashes with a single look of his eyes. They say the Holi bonfire is the burning of Kama.

In Delhi and other places people enact the story of Rama on a stage.

They make a figure of the demon Ravana and set fire to it.

Indradyumna, a soldier-saint of old, was the first to celebrate Holi in Brindavan, near Mathura.

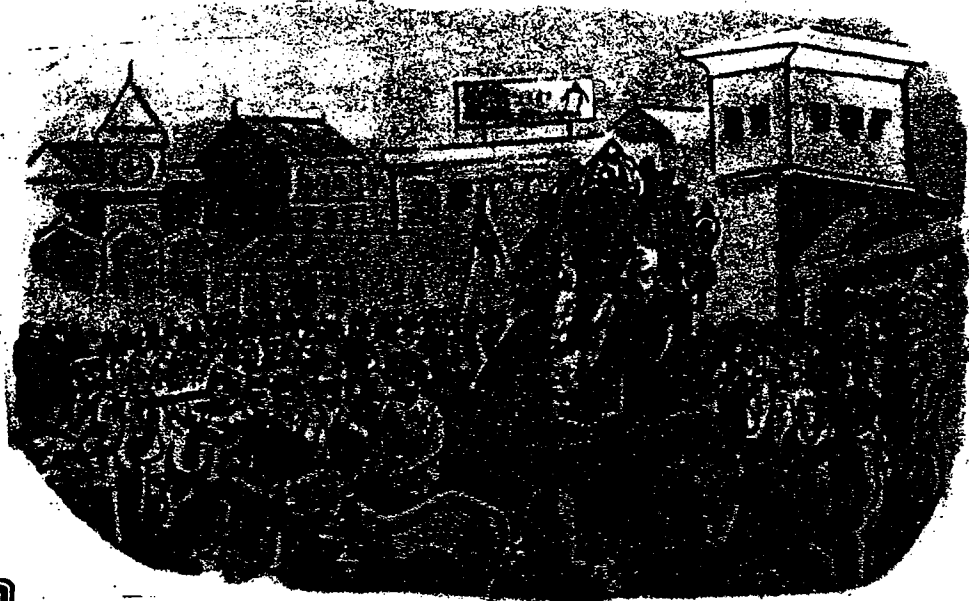
#### MEANINGS

- 1. Bonfire - A large fire in the open air on occasions of religious festivals.
- 2. Worship - To adore or honor.
- 3. Kama - The god of love.
- 4. Enact - To act out or imitate.
- 5. Demon - A class of evil spirits or evil spirits.
- 6. Enacted - Performed or acted out.

#### EXERCISE

##### 1. Write a story about Holi.

2. Why do people light the bonfire on Holi?
3. Why did God Siva burn Kama to ashes?
4. How do they celebrate Holi in Bengal?
5. How do they celebrate Holi in Delhi?
6. What was the first to celebrate Holi and where?
7. How do you celebrate Holi in your place?



**G**od Ganesa is the son of God Siva. He has many other names, Moraya, Vinayaka, Gajanana. He has an elephant face. It shows wisdom. He loves modakas and coconuts. He has a plump body, short legs and a pot-like belly. He rides on a small mouse. All these make a wonderfully pleasing figure. He is the God of gods. He is great among the wise. We worship him first among the gods. We worship him before starting any work. He removes all difficulties. He protects us from evil. The fourth day of Bhadrapada is his birthday. We celebrate this day as Ganesa Chaturthi. On this day people play on musical instruments. They sing bhajans. Boys and girls dress in holiday clothes. There is joy everywhere. This festival lasts for two days with some, five or seven days with others, and with the rest ends on the tenth day.



On the last day people carry all Ganesa idols in a long procession, dancing and singing.

There is a shout all around: "Ganapati bappa Moraya. Pudhchyawarshi laukarya." It means: "Oh, Ganapati Moraya, come soon next year."

People immerse these idols in the sea, river or lake.

#### MEANINGS

- Modaka — Sweet-cake.  
Bhajans — Singing God's name in groups.  
Procession — People moving together slowly.  
Immerse — Put into water.

#### EXERCISES

##### A. Questions :—

1. Who is Ganesa ?
2. What other names has Ganesa ?
3. What does his face show ?
4. What makes Ganesa a pleasing figure ?
5. On what does Ganesa ride ? What does he love to eat ?
6. How do people carry the idols ?
7. What do they shout ?

##### B. Fill in the blanks :—

1. .... is the son of God Siva.
2. He is the God worshipped before other .....
3. The fourth day of ..... is his birthday.
4. He loves Modakas and .....
5. People carry the idols in .....
6. On the last day they carry the idols to .....





**H**ave you heard of the Onam festival? Perhaps some of you have.

We shall tell you something about Onam.

Mahabali was an Asura King. He ruled over the whole world. He was brave and generous.

There was no sickness in his country. There was no theft. People spoke the truth. The country was rich.

All were happy.

But the King had pride. He thought there was no one greater than himself.


God wanted to punish him for his pride.

So he took the form of a young boy.

Because he was short, he was called Vamana. He came to Mahabali and asked him for a gift of land. He said

“Will you give me land, as much as I could cover with three of my steps?”

“Certainly,” said Mahabali.



God suddenly grew very big. People then called him Vikrama or the Powerful.

He covered the whole earth with one step, and the sky with another!

He asked Mahabali, "Where is the land for my third step?"

"Here," said Mahabali, and pointed to his head, and bowed.

He saw that Vamana was God Himself.

God placed His foot on his head and pushed him down to Patala. This was punishment for Mahabali's pride.

Patala is a dark region beneath the earth.

Mahabali's subjects were grieved. They prayed to God, "Oh God, please let us have our good king back."

God said, "All right, he shall come back to you once in a year."

So once in a year Mahabali comes to the Earth.

It is on Onam day.

The day falls in August-September.

People celebrate the day as a festival. They wear new clothes, worship God, feast and run boat-races.

It is popular in Kerala in the west coast of India.

### EXERCISE

#### Questions:-

1. Who was Mahabali?
2. How do you know that he was a very good King?
3. Why did God want to punish him?
4. How did God punish him?
5. Why was God called Vamana and also Vikrama?
6. What happened when he was pushed into Patala?
7. How did God satisfy the subjects of Mahabali?
8. How is Onam celebrated?



You have seen a picture of child Krishna.

He has butter in his hand. He wears a peacock feather on his head.

He loves them.

Child Krishna was full of pranks. Every one in Gokul loved him.

Women gave him curd and butter to eat. They sang and danced with him.

Cows and calves too were his friends and playmates.

He played sweetly on the flute.

Vasudeva was his father and Devaki his mother.

Krishna grew up. He became a hero.

He killed wicked Asuras. He helped the Pandavas in the Bharata war against the Kauravas.

He has given the world the Bhagavadgita.

We celebrate his birthday every year on Janmashtami.

It is the eighth day of the dark half of the Shravana month.





On that day people dance in the streets. They form pyramids to reach earthen pots hung high. They snatch them to eat the curd and butter inside. Young Krishna played that way.

**MEANINGS**

Pranks	Play
Flute	A musical instrument
Hero	One who is very brave
Bhagavadgita	The Lord's song
Pyramid	People standing one over the shoulders of others
Snatch	Pull down

**EXERCISES**

**A. Questions**

1. How does child Krishna appear in the picture?
2. Who were his playmates in Gokul?
3. What did women give him?
4. Whom did Krishna kill when he grew up?
5. How do people celebrate Janmashtami in the streets?

**B. Fill in the blanks**

1. Krishna lived in \_\_\_\_\_.
2. His father was \_\_\_\_\_ and mother was \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Krishna helped the \_\_\_\_\_ in the Bharata war.
4. The book of Krishna is called the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. His birthday is on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of the dark half of \_\_\_\_\_.



**D**assara is one of our most important festivals. There are many stories about it.

Rama killed Ravana on the day of Dassara.

Again, you have read of the Kauravas and Pandavas.

The Kauravas drove the Pandavas into the forest where they stayed for fourteen years. The Pandavas returned to Hastinapura on this day.

Here is yet another story about Dassara.

Long, long ago there lived an Asura called Mahisha.

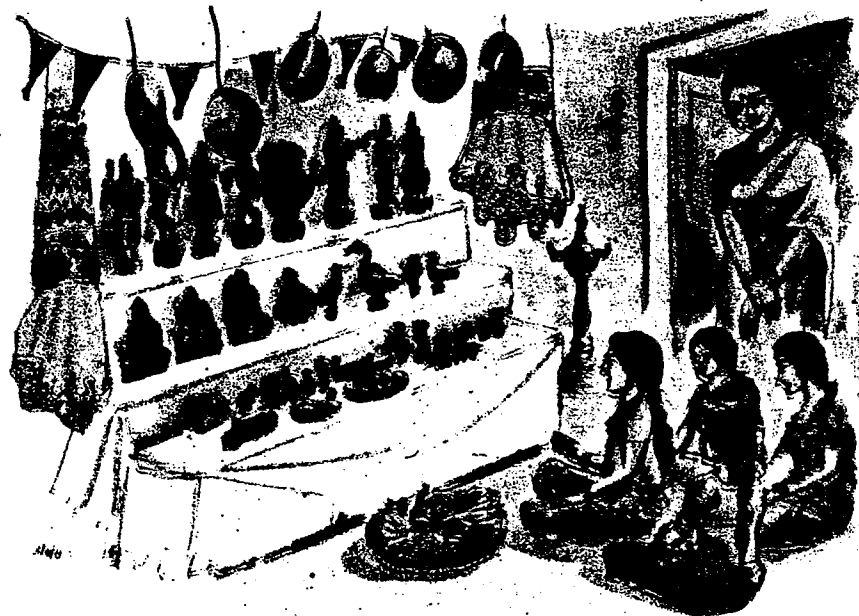
He did *tapas* and God gave him a boon.

As a result of the boon, no man could kill him. So he turned wicked. He troubled rishis, gods and men.

At last Goddess Kaali fought him and killed him. People became happy once more. We celebrate this event during Dassara.

What do these stories point out? Truth and goodness prevail over untruth and evil in the end.

We arrange small images of gods, animals and fruits at





home neatly on wooden tiers and stands. The idea is, God is in everything.

We decorate the room. In the evening, girls sing before the images of gods. On the ninth day children worship their books as Saraswati or the Goddess of learning.

These nine days are called Navaratri.

Dassara is on the tenth day of the Aswin month. That day is also called Vijaya Dasami.

Vijaya means success or victory. Dasami means the tenth day. It is a very auspicious day to begin any good work. Children start their schooling on that day. Workers offer flowers to their machines and tools.

It is a day of good luck for everyone. We seek God's blessing on that day.

### MEANINGS

Tiers                      Steps  
Auspicious                Bringing happy results

### EXERCISE

#### Questions

1. Who killed Mahisha, and why?
2. When does Navaratri come?
3. What do we do on those nine days?
4. How do we celebrate Dassara, and why?
5. What do we do on Vijayadasami day?



**W**hich festival do you enjoy most?

Many people would say Deepavali.

On that day you get up early in the morning, bathe, wear new clothes and let off crackers.

You eat a lot of sweets mother has prepared, don't you?

You will now learn something about Deepavali.

King Naraka ruled over Pragjotisha. He was an Asura. He was Mother Earth's son.

He performed severe **tapas**. He obtained great power from Brahma in return. He became very proud of his strength. He started doing wicked things.


Aditi was the wife of Rishi Kashyapa. Naraka snatched away her ear-rings.

He also put in prison thousands of women from different parts of the country.

The Devas became afraid of him. They came to Lord Krishna. They begged him to punish Naraka. Krishna agreed.

Krishna flew to Pragjotisha on Garuda, the bird-king.





Krishna's wife, Satyabhama, also went with him. A great fight began between Krishna and Naraka. At last Krishna slew Naraka with his Chakrayudha. Before dying, Naraka begged Krishna's forgiveness. He also asked Krishna for a boon: "May people who have a holy bath on this day every year be saved from all evils." Krishna granted the boon. That is why we celebrate Deepavali every year by lighting lamps and decorating our houses. This day is also known as Naraka Chaturdasi.

### MEANINGS

Deepavali	Rows of lights, a Hindu festival.
Snatch	Take away by force.
Slew	Killed.
Chakrayudha	Round looking weapon.
Granted	Gave.

### EXERCISE

#### Questions:-

1. How do you celebrate Deepavali?
2. Who was Naraka, and why did he perform tapas?
3. What did he do when he got extra powers?
4. Who went with Krishna to Pragjotisha?
5. Why do we celebrate Deepavali?



OM SRI SADGURAVE NAMAHA

PRAYERS

शुक्लाम्बरधरं विष्णुं शशिवर्णं चतुर्भुजम्  
प्रसन्नवदनं ध्यायेत् सर्व विघ्नोपशान्तये

- 1) Shuklāmbharadharam Vishṇum Shashivarnam Chaturbhujam  
Prasannavadanam Dhyayet Sarva Vighnopa shantaye

The grace of God has to be prayed for peace and removal of obstacles. God (He) is omnipresent and He has four hands and clad in pure clothes. He has lustre like Moon with benevolent look on His face.

वक्रतुण्ड महाकाय कोटिसूर्य समप्रभा  
निर्विघ्नं कुरु मे देव सर्वकार्येषु सर्वदा

- 2) Vakratuṇḍa Mahākāya Kotisurya Samaprabha  
Nirvighnam Kurume Deva Sarvakāryeshu Sarvadā

Oh! Lord Ganesha, who has curved tusk and strong body with lustre equal to thousands of Suns. I pray for your grace to make all my endeavours succeed without obstacles.

सरस्वती नमस्तुभ्यं वरदे कामरूपिणी  
विद्यारंभं करिष्यामि सिद्धिर्भवति मे सदा

- 3) Sarasvati Namastubhyam Varade Kāmarupīṇe  
Vidyarambham Karishyami Siddhirbhavatu. me sada

Oh, Goddess Sarasvati, my salutations to Thee, who are the fulfiller of all my wishes. I begin my studies with a prayer that let my efforts be always successful (with your grace).

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः  
गुरुश्चात्मा परंब्रह्मा तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः

- 4) Gururbramha Gururviṣṇuhu Gururdevo Maheshvaraha  
Gurssākshāt Parambramha Tasmai Sri Gurave Namaha

Guru is Bramha. Guru is Vishnu. Guru is maheshwara. Guru is the Supreme Bramha. Thus salutations to Guru (who is the dispeller of ignorance)

वागर्थाविव संप्रुक्तौ वागर्थः प्रतिपत्तये  
जगतः पितरौ वन्दे पार्वती परमेश्वरौ

- 5) Vāgarthāviva Sanpruktau Vāgarthapratipattaye  
Jagataha Pitarou Vande Parvatī Parameshwarou.

I offer prostrations to Parvati-Parameshwara who are parents of the world and are harmonious like speech (words) and its meaning I pray for their grace to obtain same harmony in my speech and its meaning.

प्राणापान मनोबुद्धि जीवात्मा परमात्मनाम्  
अन्योन्यस्य भविरोधेन घटते ज्ञानमुत्तमम्

- 6) Prāṇapāna Manobuddhi Jivatma Paramātmane  
Anyonyasya Avirodhena Ghatate Jñānamuttamam

One gains superior spiritual knowlege by acheiving balance or harmony of inhaling and exhaling breath, mind and intelligence, and individual self and God.

आपदामपहृत्तरं दत्तारं सर्वसंपदाम्  
लोकाभिरामं श्रीरामं भूयो भूयो नमाम्यहम्

- 7) Apadanapahartāram Dātāram Sarvasampadām  
Lokābhirāmam Sri Rāmam Bhuyo Bhuyo Namāmyaham.

I prostrate again and again to Sri Rama who pervades the world as joy. It is Sri Rama who removes the difficulties and who gives away the wealth (for common good).

आकाशात् पतितं तौर्यं यथा गच्छति सागरम्  
सर्वदेव नमस्कारः केशव प्रतिगच्छति

- 8) Ākashat Patitam Toyam Yatha Gachhati Sāgaram  
Sarvadeva Namaskāraha Keshavam Pratigachhati.

Like all the drops of rain reaches the Ocean, the prostrations offered to all Gods reaches Lord Keshava(Krishna).

मंगलाशास्त्रपरैः मदाचार्य पुरोगमैः  
सर्वैश्च पूर्वैराचार्यैः सत्कृतायास्तु मंगलम्

- 9) Mangalāshāsanaparaih Madāchārya Purogamahi  
Sarvaishcha Purvairāchāryaih SatkritāyāstuMangalam

Auspiciousness to Lord Srinivasa (Venkateshwara) who is worshipped by my benevolent acharyas and thier early acharyas and all beings.

ॐ सह नावतु सह नौ भुनक्तु सह वीर्यं करवावहै  
तेजस्वीनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

- 10) Om Sahanāvavatu. Sahanaubhunakhtu, Sahavīryam karavavahai  
Tejasvinavadithamastu ma vidvishavahai  
Om Shanthih Shanthih Shanthih.

Om, may He protect us together. May He enable us to prosper together. May we exert our strength together (for noble work). May our study be fruitful and brilliant. May we not quarrel with each other.  
Om! Peace Peace Peace

(M.G.Prasad)

मूषिक वाहन नमो नमो ।

मौदक दृशता नमो नमो

चामर कर्ण नमो नमो

विलम्बित सूत्र नमो नमो ॥

वामन रूप नमो नमो ।

महेश्वर पुत्र नमो नमो

विघ्न विनायक नमो नमो

पाद नमस्ते नमो नमो ॥

नमो नमो ..... नमो नमो

॥ मायुरादिस्तम्भम्

मनोहारिदेहम्

महैदेवदेवम्

महादेवबालम्

महावाक्यकूटम्

महच्चिन्तगोहम्

महावेदभावम्

भजे लोकपालम्

जय जय जय शक्ति  
ॐ श्री जय जय शक्ति  
जय जय जय बौली जय जय जय बौली  
जय बौली शक्ति शक्ति

इधर भी जय बौली उधर भी जय बौली  
जय बौली जय शक्ति

जय जय.... Repeat 1<sup>st</sup> para

शंभो शंकर उमापते श्याम्ब सुंदर पशुपते  
नन्दिवाहन नगभूषण चंद्रशेखर जटाधर  
गंगाधार गौरीमनोहर गिरिजाकांत महाशिव  
(शंभो)  
कैलासवास कनकसनेहा सुंदर गुंजित इटराज  
स्मशानवास घटिदंतरेहा नीलकंठा महादेव  
तेजोरूपा ज्योतिप्रकाश विभूति सुंदर विश्वेश  
वृषभासुद वज्रदेव पार्वतिरमण परमेश  
(शंभो)  
शूलाधार त्रिमूर्तिरूप ठयोमकेश स्वेश  
स्वयंप्रकाश शनगिरिश अरालकेश प्राणेश  
(शंभो)

ब्रह्ममुरारि सुरचित लिंगम्  
निर्मलभासित शोभित लिंगम्  
जन्मजद्दुक्ख विनाशक लिंगम्  
तत् प्रणामामि सदाशिवलिंगम्

रघुपति राघव राजाराम्  
पतित पावन सीताराम्  
ईश्वर अल्ला तेरे नाम्  
स्वकी सन्मति दे भगवान् (2)

राम राम जय राजाराम्  
राम राम जय सीताराम् (2)  
(रघुपति)

राधे जीविंद भजो राधे राधे  
राधे गोपाल भजो राधे राधे  
वेणुविलोक भजो राधे राधे  
विजय गोपाल भजो राधे राधे (2)

॥

अइगिरी नान्दिनी नन्दित मौदिनी  
विश्व विनोदिनी नन्दन्तुते  
गिरिवर विन्ध्य शिरोधि निवासिनि  
विष्णु विलासिनी जिष्णुन्तुते  
भगवति हे शितिकंठ कुटुंबिनी  
भूरि कुटुंबिनी भूरिकृतै  
जय जय हे महिषासुर मर्दिनी  
रम्य कपर्दिनि शैलसुतै ॥

॥

शक्ति सहित गणपतिं (२)  
शंकरादि सेवितं  
विश्वत स्वकल मुनिवर सुरराज  
विन्दुत गुरुगुहम (शक्ति)  
भक्तादि पौषकम् (१)  
भवसुतम् विनायकम् (२)  
(शक्ति)

गजानन पाहि गजानन

मूर्षिक वाहन गजानन

पार्वति तनय गजानन

विद्यन विनायक गजानन

(गजानन पाहि )

गोश्री नन्दन गजानन

मोदक हस्त गजानन

वामन रूप गजानन

विमल चरित गजानन

(गजानन पाहि )



## POOJA : A ritual of worship in Vedic Hinduism

M.G. Prasad

A pooja is a ritual of worship and adoration of the GOD (One Supreme Being) in the tradition of Vedic (Hindu) religion. Hinduism refers to Sanatana or Vaidika Dharma which means eternal principles of life as per the Vedas. One GOD as per the Vedas is the One Supreme Being (Bramhan) ultimately responsible for Generation, Operation and Dissolution of everything. Freedom (Moksha) from bondage and desires is the ultimate aim of Sanatana Dharma. The three paths need to be integrated in Vedic Hindu spiritual approach are devotion, knowledge and action. A pooja even in its simple form is a synthesis of these three paths. A pooja is based on devoted and knowledgeable actions.

A pooja also connects all the senses dealing with sound, touch, sight, taste and smell to sacredness through components such as sculpture or pictures of Gods, chants, prayers, bhajans, flowers, fruits, incense, milk, water etc. A pooja provides a spiritual experience not only to the performer but also to the participants. A pooja also can be seen as a loving act of treating an invited guest to one's home. As one treats his guest with respect and love by various offerings, in a pooja also similar offerings are made to God.

A pooja has two main parts namely internal (mental) and external (ritualistic). The internal (mental) worship is very important after which one begins to perform the external part. In the external worship the various offerings can be classified into 16 Offerings to God, namely, 1) Invoking God into altar through sculpture or picture, 2) a Seat, 3) Washing feet, 4) Washing hands, 5) Water for sipping, 6) Sacred bath, 7) Sacred cloth, 8) Sacred thread, 9) Sandal paste, 10) Flowers, 11) Waving of oil lamp, 12) Food, 13) Betel leaves and coconut, 14) Waving of camphor light, 15) Clockwise circumambulation, 16) Prostration. Each of the above is offered with mantras and prayers in Sanskrit. Also, sounds of bell and conch are used in the pooja. A specific manifestation of the Supreme Being is chosen for the pooja depending on the wish of the congregation or family. Usually a Hindu family maintains an altar or pooja room in the home as sacred space for performing pooja. In Hindu temples, priests perform elaborate poojas.

A pooja at home or temple is a synthesis of devotion, knowledge and action that provides spiritual tranquility by connecting to Omnipresent God. In the words of my Sriranga Sadguru, "the worship of deities and rituals in a home or a temple should be carried out with child-like loving mind by the devotees as little children play with joy using their toys as medium". Also, In Bhagavadgita (9-26) Lord Krishna says that "I will accept from them even a leaf or a flower or a fruit or water, when it is offered with love, devotion and purity of heart"

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## DHYĀNA MANTRA

Lakṣmīm kṣīrasamudrarājanayāṃ śrīraṅgadhāmeśvarīm  
 Dāsībhūta samastā devavanitāṃ lokaikadīpāṅkurām,  
 Śrīmanmandakāṭakṣa labdha vibhava brahmendra gaṅgadharam  
 Tvāṃ trailokyakuṭumbinīm sarasijāṃ vande mukunda priyām.

*I worship that Lakṣmī, the daughter of the king of the milk-ocean, the queen of the abode of Lord Viṣṇu, whose servants are the wives of all the gods, who is the one light and the sprout of the universe, through a side-glance of whose benign grace Brahmā, Indra and Śiva have attained to their high positions, who is the mother of the three worlds, who is called Kamala, and who is the consort of Bhagavan Viṣṇu.*

लक्ष्मीं क्षीरसमुद्रराजतनयां धीरङ्गधामेश्वरीं  
 दाम्प्रीभूतसमस्तदेववनितां लोकैकदीपाङ्कुराम् ।  
 श्रीमन्मन्दकटाक्षलब्धविभवत्रल्लेन्द्रगङ्गाधराम्  
 त्वां त्रैलोक्यकुटुम्बिनीं सरसिजां वन्दे मुकुन्दप्रियाम् ॥

## UPACĀRAS (Offerings)

1. **DHYĀNAM** (Meditation)  
Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Dhyānam samarpayāmi. *Offer folded hands and akṣatas.*
2. **ĀVĀHANAM** (Contemplation)  
Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Āvāhanam samarpayāmi. *Offer folded hands and akṣatas.*
3. **ĀSANAM** (Seat)  
Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Āsanam samarpayāmi. *Offer akṣatas.*
4. **PĀDYAM** (Water to wash feet)  
Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Pādyam samarpayāmi. *Offer water with flower or leaf petal.*
5. **ARGHYAM** (Water to wash hands)  
Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Arghyam samarpayāmi. *Offer water with leaf.*
6. **ĀCAMANĪYAM** (Water for purification)  
Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Ācamanīyam samarpayāmi. *Offer water with leaf.*
7. **MADHUPARKAM** (Milk and Honey drink)  
Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Madhuparkam samarpayāmi. *Offer milk and honey with leaf.*
8. **SNĀNAM** (Bath)  
Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Śuddhodaka snānam samarpayāmi.  
Snānānantaram ācamanīyam samarpayāmi. *Offer water with leaf.*
9. **VĀSTRA** (Clothing - lower cloth or sari)  
Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Vastrārtham akṣatān samarpayāmi. *Offer akṣatas or fresh cloth, if available.*
10. **ĀBHARAṆĀNI** (Jewelry)  
Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Ābharanāṇi akṣatān samarpayāmi. *Offer akṣatas.  
Offer Jewelry (if available).*
11. **GANDHAM - KUMKUMA** (Sandal & Red Turmeric)  
Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ Gandhān dhārayāmi.  
Gandhasyopari haridrākumkumaṃ samarpayāmi. *Offer sandal paste and saffron paste tilak  
on third eye with right ring finger, or dip  
flower in powder and give to Deity.*
12. **AKṢATAS** (Rice grains with yellow turmeric)  
Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Akṣatān samarpayāmi. *Offer akṣatas.*
13. **PUṢPAṆI** (Flowers)  
Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Puṣpaiḥ puṣpayāmi. *Offer flower petals.*





14.

## THE EIGHT GREAT NAMES OF MAHĀLAKṢMĪ

OM KAMALĀYAI NAMAḤ; OM RAMĀYAI NAMAḤ; OM LOKAMĀTRE NAMAḤ;  
OM VIŚVAJANANYAI NAMAḤ; OM MAHĀLAKṢMYAI NAMAḤ; OM KṢĪRĀBDHITANAYĀYAI NAMAḤ  
OM VIŚVASAKṢINĪYAI NAMAḤ; OM CANDRAŚAHODARYAI NAMAḤ

Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Nānāvīdha parimāla patra puspāṅi samarpayāmi.

15. DHŪPAM (Incense)

Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Dhūpam āghrāpayāmi.

Offer incense - 3 waves clockwise.

16. DĪPAM (Light)

Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Dīpam darśayāmi.

Offer 3 waves of ghee lamp clockwise.

17. NAIVEDYAM (Food - prasād)

Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Naivedyam nivedayāmi.

Offer fruits, raisins, etc. Sprinkle water on food  
With "svahas" wave leaf in hand toward Deity  
five times.

Om Prānāya svāhā. Om Apānāya svāhā.  
Om Vyānāya svāhā. Om Udānāya svāhā.  
Om Samānāya svāhā. Om Brahmaṇe svāhā.

Madhye madhye amṛtapānīyam samarpayāmi.  
Amṛtapidhānamasi.  
Naivedyānantaram ācamanīyam samarpayāmi.

18. TĀMBŪLAM (Betel or pān)

Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Karpūratāmbūlam samarpayāmi.

Offer akṣatas.

19. KARPŪRA (Camphor)

Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Karpūra nirājanam darśayāmi.

Offer camphor light. Make 3 circles clockwise.  
Last circle, lower light from head to feet.  
Hold camphor lamp in the left hand and with the  
right hand, wave hand over light and towards the  
Deity.

Hiranya pātram madhoḥ pūrṇam dadāti  
madhavyo sātīti ekadhā brahmaṇanupaharati  
ekadaiva yajamānāyustejo dadāti.

20. OFFER ALL THE ABOVE

Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai Namaḥ  
Mantrapuṣpam samarpayāmi.

Offer akṣatas.

21. PRADAKṢINĀ (Circumambulation - Pilgrimage) and  
NAMASKĀRAM (Prostration)

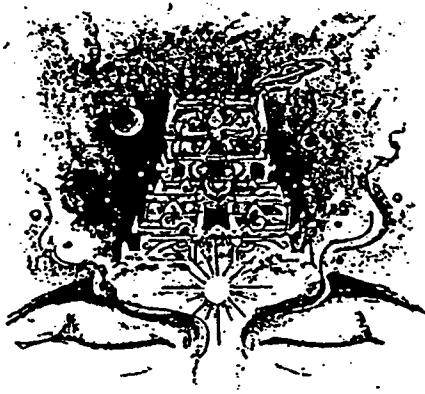
Yāni kāni ca pāpāni janmāntara kṛtāni ca  
Tāni Tāni vinaśyanti pradakṣina pade pade.

Stand and turn in place 3 times clockwise.  
Offer prostration by either kneeling and placing  
face and hands flat on the floor or by full prostration  
the entire body extended on the floor.

Pāpoham pāpa karmāham pāpātma pāpa sambhavaḥ  
Trāhimām kṛpayā devi śaraṇā gata vatsale  
Anyatā śaraṇam nāsti tvameva śaraṇam mama  
Tasmātkāruṇya bhāvena rakṣa rakṣa janardani.

Om Śrī Mahālakṣmyai namaḥ  
Pradakṣina namaskarān samarpayāmi.

Sarvopacāra pūjā samarpayāmi.



## Devaalaya (Temple) and Divya Drishti (Spiritual Insight)

**D**evaalaya or Temple is the house (Alaya) of God (Deva). The question is how God, Who is every where at all times can be held in a Temple? This question needs to be answered for the sake of humans. Sanatana Dharma or Hinduism says that the inherent nature of humans is seeking, as similar to flowing for water, burning for fire and flying for birds. Given that seeking as an essential nature of humans who are also endowed with free will, now the question becomes 'What to seek?' The natural answer for this question, is all humans want happiness (Ananda). However, happiness is usually obtained as a result of seeking and achieving some thing. Thus, if one wants to know the nature of happiness, then one needs to seek and obtain the source of happiness (Ananda). The Sanatana Dharma says that God is the source of happiness. So, if one wants to be happy and joyful at all times, then one has to seek and experience God.

Now the question becomes What is God? and How to seek God? God can be described as One Source responsible for Generation, Operation and Dissolution of everything at all times everywhere. This means that one Independent Source God is in everything and also has manifested as everything. Garbhopanishat says that during eighth month in womb all beings have the vision of God as Divine Light and hear the Divine Sound of OM. Then after the birth, the baby slowly forgets its divine nature as it grows into an adult due to instincts and tendencies acquired

in previous and present lives which is known as Law of Karma. This law of karma which manifests as ignorance in individuals is the cause of one's forgetfulness of one's own inherent divine nature. It is in this sense that shastras say God is in everyone. Thus the question of How to seek God can be asked as How to remember God and be in divine nature all the time? The path to follow for remembering God all the time is referred as Dharma. Thus Dharma can be described as the view and way of life which provides constant remembrance of God, and ability to act according to Divine Nature and hence results in both spiritualistic and materialistic happiness and Joy (Ananda).

Memory is probably the most important characteristic of human life. Remembering good things and forgetting bad things is always a challenge. If conscious effort is not made to forget them, then usually bad things trigger the memory easily. This is because memory is by association with things. This means that events, objects, speech, environment, timing etc. carry the impressions of experiences in an individual. As physical objects come in the way and obstruct the physical sight, the forgetfulness and undesirable memories obstruct the inner sight or spiritual insight and thus results in lack of clarity in thought and lack of spiritual joy. As God is in every one, God is the closest company for every being. Thus seeking God means seeing God in oneself. This seeing God is surely possible through the development of inner eyes which provides spiritual insight. Once the inner light is seen and experienced in

oneself through spiritual insight then it can be recognized easily outside everywhere. However, this development of spiritual insight needs tremendous effort in terms of aspiration, devotion, service, inquiring mind, purity of heart, clarity of thought, ritualistic worship and seeking grace of Guru and God.

So, the question now results into How to develop spiritual insight? The interesting fact is there is no competition in the pursuit of spiritual insight because its path is inward and the destination is inside oneself. Thus, the vehicle of the individual soul is one's body and mind. Although the soul is residing next to God inside the body, it is the mind which blocks the sight of God to the soul in an individual. So, the effort is to achieve the total ability to regulate and make the mind as one's slave. Then, now the question is How to make one's mind as one's slave? For this we need to understand the nature of mind. The intrinsic nature of mind is outward and it cannot be hungry even for a moment. A hungry mind not fed consciously will automatically choose its own food which usually is not good for the spiritual health of the individual. Thus the mind will result as either one's own friend or one's own enemy. Thus what needs to be done is to make one's own mind as a friendly slave to ones own self, using the body as an instrument. Once this is achieved, the blocking mind becomes totally transparent. So that the God is seen and experienced by the individual soul not only inside oneself, but also in the outside World.

The body of an individual is a Temple where in God is the indweller as Pure Divinity. The great Rishis of ancient India who were the seers of Divinity inside themselves developed the physical Temple so that devotees through these Temples can remind themselves the inward process of developing spiritual insight. Thus, Temple not only serves

the purpose of spiritual reminder for seekers but also an expression of joy for devotees at all levels of spiritual development. In the words of my Sri Ranga Sadguru "the worship of deities and rituals in a Temple should be carried out with child like loving mind by the devotees as little children play with joy using their toys as medium".

Temple is a repository of sacred and spiritual vibrations. The time spent by devotees in Temple will become sacred as the space in temple is filled with sounds of prayers, chants of mantras, sights of beautiful deities in yogic postures. In that sacred time in the sacred space of temple, devotees can easily make the mind introvert. Also, when the mind consciously reaches out to the sacred sounds and sights in the temple, then it is much easier for the devotee to divert the mind from outside to inside. As a spiritual Guru will help and enhance the inward journey of the seeker in life, similarly the priest in a temple has a role of helping the devotees by reminding the inward journey of mind towards God who is the destination for devotees. The design and architecture of Temple itself corresponds to the architecture of the human body. The gopuram or spires at the entrance corresponds to the feet, the large worship space (mandapa) refers to the heart and the sanctum (Garbhagriha) where God is installed and consecrated correspond to the top of the head in human body. On the sanctum, there is a special spire referred as vimana (flight vehicle) which reminds and inspires the devotees that mind need to fly towards God, the highest destination. Thus the temple is a catalyst for reminding oneself the inward journey and its destination, indweller God, in addition to being a place and object of worship.

The procedures of ritualistic worship carried out by the priest in a temple is intended to remind the devotee the inward yogic

process of approaching the indweller God. Various steps such as the sacred bath, decoration, offering of food and lighting of incense and lamp for the consecrated deity are intended to spiritually awaken the devotee to worship the indweller within him or her. The priest opens the screen at the door of the sanctum after the decoration of the deity signifies the removal of illusions in mind of the devotee so the sight of deity is not blocked. Then the priest shows the light (with a lamp or camphor) to the face and whole body of the deity at which time the devotee with fully open eyes see the fully decorated face and the body of the deity and then absorb inside to strengthen his or her ability to remember God inside. Then the sacred water and sacred food is taken into body for obtaining purity of body and mind. This sacred water and sacred food got the ability to purify because they were offered with devotion and love to God, Who entered into them through His Divine Vibrations.

Thus in summary, in an individual, the heart is the abode of God where worship should be done through mental faculties. In the home, a prayer room should be specifically

maintained as abode of God so that family members can worship together. In the community, a temple is built and consecrated as an abode of God, so that any devotee can offer prayers and have worship rituals done through priests. Thus these three dimensional efforts with the grace of a Guru and God will enable the devotee to develop spiritual insight. Thus, a temple becomes an important means for any devoted seeker to experience God established inside him or her as well as experience God through His Manifestation. I offer this humble effort at the lotus feet of my Sri Ranga Sadguru, (a Seer-Yogi and founder of Ashtanga Yoga Vijnana Mandiram, Mysore, India) who is ever providing me the spiritual insight. Also, I offer these words to the One God who has manifested with compassion in different forms of deities in Temples and as manifestations in Universe to enable all of us to seek and experience the light within ourselves through spiritual insight.

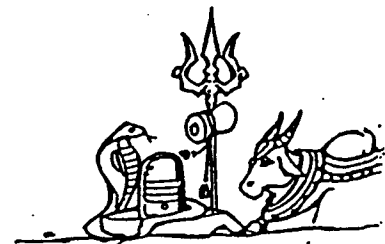
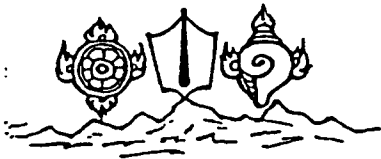
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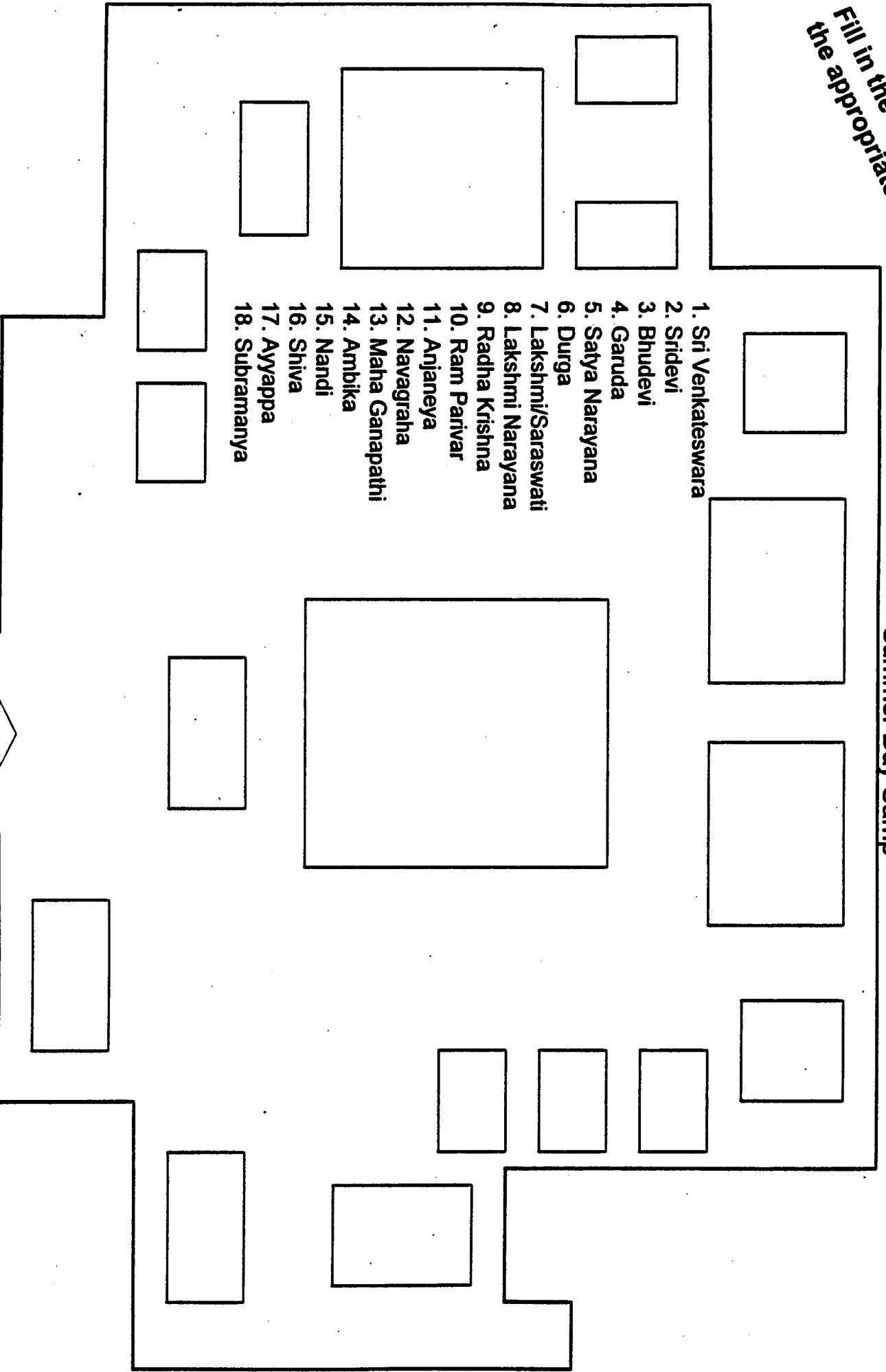
# Sri Venkateswara Temple

## HTCS

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8. Lakshmi Narayana
9. Radha Krishna
10. Ram Parivar
11. Anjaneya
12. Navagraha
13. Maha Ganapathi
14. Ambika
15. Nandi
16. Shiva
17. Ayyappa
18. Subramanya



# BASICS OF SANATANA DHARMA

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## ABSTRACT

Sanatana Dharma as a perennial philosophy refers to the vast yet integrated body of knowledge contained in the Vedas and related literature in Sanskrit language which has perennial and universal relevance to human life. 'Dharma' in life deals with the whole process of activity starting from idea, intentions, thoughts, speech, action, reactions, situations, effects and so on. The word 'Sanatana' refers to the perennial relevance of such a process. Sanatana Dharma provides an aim for life ( both at an individual and collective level ) which is long term happiness or peace with the presence of short term needs at all levels namely physical, mental and spiritual. Sanatana Dharma provides a reference for measuring the values of activities in life.

This article presents some of the basics of Sanatana Dharma.

## FOUR FOLD OBJECTIVES OF LIFE ( PURUSHARTHA )

1. Dharma    2. Artha    3. Kama    4. Moksha

Dharma:    Laws of Life, Nature and Universe

Artha:      Wealth, Possession and Power

Kama:      Desire and Ambition

Moksha:    State of desirelessness and Tranquillity

The above order is very important and should not be interchanged.

As laws of life, Dharma is first and the most important for all and it is based on the purpose and the values underlying actions. Dharma helps us in discrimination and in the choice of actions. Acquisition of Artha and the fulfillment of Kama should never be independent of Dharma, however it is at the least to be remembered that Moksha is the ultimate aim of life.



## FOUR FOLD STAGES IN LIFE (ASHRAMA)

1. Bramhacharya
2. Grihastha
3. Vanaprastha
4. Sanyasa

Bramhacharya deals with the younger years of student life when self control, discipline and learning are the most important aspects to be adhered to. Only that education becomes the foundation for a meaningful future life.

Grihastha deals with married life when the rightful desires and wealth are pursued by proper means and the society achieved and enjoyed. He has also commitments towards his family and the society.

Vanaprastha deals with senior years of life when withdrawal from family pleasures and contemplation on philosophical thoughts are emphasized.

Sanyasa deals with the still later years of life when the only aim is to realize God and one has no other commitments.

## THREE PSYCHOSOMATIC ASPECTS OF LIFE (BHAVA)

1. Bhoutika
2. Bhavuka
3. Adhyatmika

Bhoutika (physical) aspects deal with the gross feelings and reactions at body level

Bhavuka(mental) aspects deal with subtle human feelings and emotions at mental level.

Adhyatmika(spiritual) aspects deal with causal level of sublime and pure thoughts and values.

## THREE MENTAL QUALITIES IN A PERSON (GUNA)

1. Satva
2. Rajas
3. Tamas

Satva quality is indicated by the noble and the sublime thoughts and the balanced actions of a person.

Rajas quality is indicated by the dynamic activities and intention to change things around with sometimes ambiguous goals of mind.

Tamas quality is indicated by the passiveness and the lack of focus at the mental level to carryout thoughts and reflects mental inertia.

## SIX OBSTACLES TO PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Kama
2. Krodha
3. Lobha
4. Moha
5. Mada
6. Matsarya

Kama is unethical and unrightful desire (in contra-distinction to the meaning of this word given previously.)

Krodha is anger and loss of temper usually results from unfulfilled desire.

Lobha is greed resulting from unnecessary and unconstrained increase in wants.

Moha is false attachment resulting in delusion of mind.

Mada is arrogance resulting from self-centered pride.

Matsarya is jealousy and envy about others achievements.

Kama, when it appears first in order as above, becomes an obstacle; but when it appears as third among the fourfold objectives, it becomes an integral part of life.

## TWO PATHS OF YOGA

1. Karma

2. Jnana

In some vedantic literature, Bhakti is also referred as another yoga. However, it can be said that bhakti which is surrender to God is fully and essentially implied in both the Karma Yoga and in the Jnana Yoga.

Karma yoga is that in which the work is the means of progress towards moksha. The work carried out without selfish interest and its fruits offered to God forms the basis of this yoga.

Jnana yoga is that in which the pursuit of moksha is through constant reasoning and contemplation.

## ASHTANGA YOGA (EIGHT LIMBS OF YOGA)

Ashtanga yoga which forms the scientific basis of Hindu spirituality is the program described in eight steps to achieve the spiritual union (yoga) of the individual soul with the cosmic soul. This is also termed as Raja Yoga and the main source of it is Maharshi Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. The eight limbs are:

1. Yama 2. Niyama 3. Asana 4. Pranayama 5. Pratyahara 6. Dharana 7. Dhyana 8. Samadhi

Yama (self control) and Niyama (discipline) deal with physical and mental disciplines and related practices. Asana deals with the practice of postures for the body. Pranayama deals with control and regulation of Prana. Pratyahara deals with the practice of withdrawing the consciousness from the multiplicity of thoughts and directing it towards innerself. Dharana deals with the development of the ability of the mind to focus and contain the object. Dhyana is meditation i.e. continuous concentration on the object. This, in turn, leads one to Samadhi which refers to a state of balance and superconsciousness level. The order mentioned above in Astanga Yoga is important and the Guru who is a yogi, is necessary for this yoga as genuine guidance is required in this scientific and practical approach.

## THREE COMPONENTS OF COSMOS (TATVAS)

1. Jeeva                      2. Jagat                      3. Ishwara

Jeeva refers to an individual soul and it is also referred as chit, a conscious being.

Jagat refers to the material universe composed of the five elements of nature viz. space, air, fire, water and earth. It is also referred to as achit i.e. inert.

Iswara refers to the Cosmic Soul or one God principle as Bramhan or Paratatva.

## THREE LEVELS OF INDIVIDUAL PURITY (SHUDDHI)

1. Body                      2. Speech                      3. Mind

Purity in reference to body includes personal hygiene and environment

Purity in speech refers to the sincere, truthful heartfelt feelings expressed through speech, which are also reflected in actions.

Purity in mind refers to the pure thoughts. This is difficult to achieve but it is possible through practice and support from other two aspects of purity namely speech and body.

## FIVE FOLD SHEATHS OF SELF (PANCH KOSHAS)

1. Gross Body
2. Prana ( vital energy )
3. Mind
4. Intellect
5. Enjoyerhood

All these five sheaths reflect the creative, sustaining and dissolving aspects of self ( Individual and Universal ). The zealous search of a seeker ( sishya ) with the guidance of a Guru ( preceptor ) leads the seeker, to the various sheaths in an ascending order as noted above.

## THREE COMPONENTS OF SELF - REALIZATION

1. Sadguru
2. Shastra
3. Anubhava

Sadguru refers to the spiritual mentor (preceptor, acharya) who is himself a realized soul and who genuinely guides the seeker in the intricate and difficult path of self-realization.

Shastra refers to the Vedas and the other literature which are essentially Vedic experiences and observations of great seers in the past. So Shastras and literature refer to the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Smritis, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata etc. These form the foundation of Sanatana Dharma ( Hinduism )

Anubhava refers to the experience of the seeker obtained in accordance to the shastras after truthful and honest effort in the path as per the advise of the Sadguru.

Thus, one can see that the grace and the guidance of the Sadguru, the sincere effort in the steady practice of the shastras and the purity of the mind should result in the understanding and realization of the self which is the goal of any seeker.

The following two hymns from Vedas provide a Universal view of Spirituality and Philosophy.

**EKAM SAT VIPRAHA BAHUDHA VADANTI**

The realized and wise ones describe the One Truth or the same Reality in many ways.

**AA NO BHADRAH KRATAVO YANTO VISVATAH**

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side.

# Nachiketas

## The Courageous

Lesson



○F all knowledge, that of the Atman or Self is the highest. So say the Upanishads.

Here is a story from *Katha Upanishad*. In this story a young man got this highest knowledge from Yama, the God of Death, by his courage of conviction.

Long, long ago, there lived a poor *brahmin* called Vajasravas. He performed a sacrifice called Visvajit. In that sacrifice one has to give away everything that belongs to him. Nothing is to be kept back.

Accordingly, this *brahmin* gave away all that belonged to him. They were necessarily things of poor value like aged cows and old vessels.

This man had a son named Nachiketas. He was an intelligent boy. He felt unhappy that his father's gifts were of little value.

He thought, by offering himself as a gift, his father could make amends.

So he went to his father and asked: "Father, how about giving me also as a gift?"

Vajasravas did not reply. Nachiketas asked a second time and a third.

Vajasravas became annoyed and said: "I give you away to Yama!"

Yama is the God of Death.

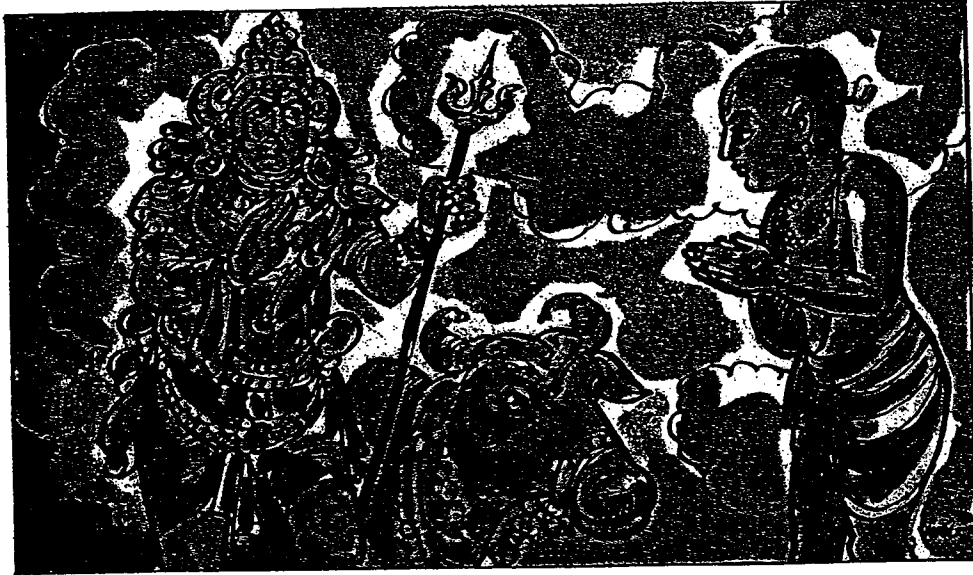
Nachiketas was taken aback. He felt his father was angry with him.

But having heard him say that, he felt he should report himself to Yama. So he went to Yama's kingdom and walked into his house. But Yama was not at home.

It was three days before Yama returned.

When a guest arrives, it is the duty of the host to honour him without delay. Or he will be failing in Dharma.

So when Yama heard that Nachiketas had been waiting for him for three days, he became worried.



He hurried to Nachiketas and apologised to him for making him wait three days and offered to make amends. He said : "I offer you any three boons. Please ask."

Nachiketas asked as the first boon : "May my father's anger subside and may he greet me affectionately when I return home from here!"

Yama said : "Granted."

As his second boon Nachiketas asked : "I understand that there is no death, old age, suffering or sorrow in heaven and one goes to heaven by performing a sacrifice. Will you teach me that sacrifice?"

Yama taught him all about that sacrifice and added : "May this sacrifice be henceforth known by your name. Thus you will become famous."

Nachiketas asked as his third boon : "Teach me what happens to man after death. Some say he continues to live in heaven and others say no. Which is true?"

Yama said : "Even gods do not fully know the truth. It is difficult to understand. Why not choose some other boon? I shall grant you a



number of sons and grandsons instead; lots of money, cattle, pleasure, radiant health and what not. Only don't press me to answer this question."

Nachiketas said: "Sir, from what you have just said I see that the answer to my question is far more valuable than all the things you promised. I insist that you should answer that question only."

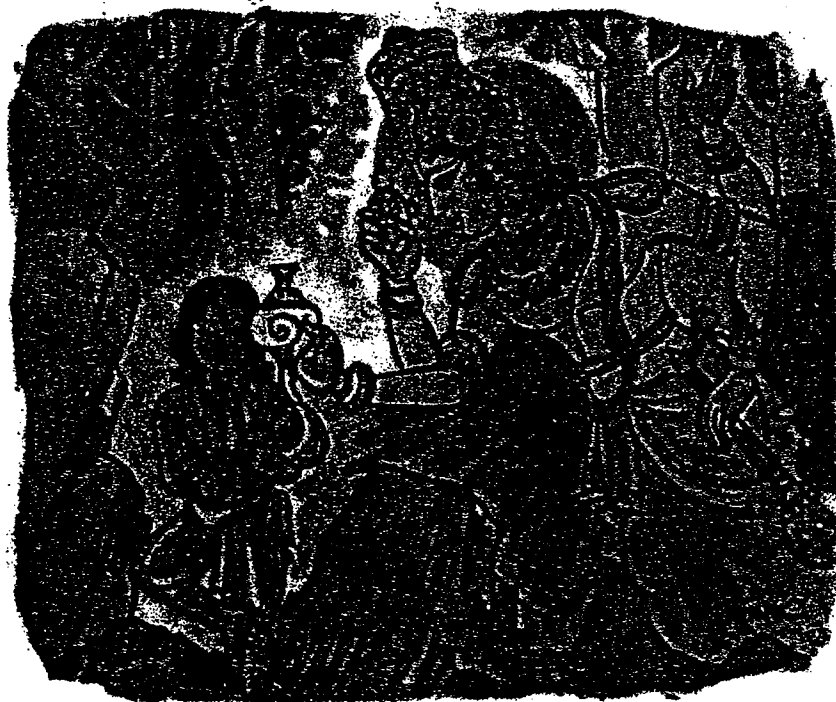
Yama now realised that Nachiketas was earnest in knowing the great truth; he could not be tempted with pleasure and pelf and he was firm of mind.

So he said: "There are two ways open for man, one is the good and the other the pleasant way. The wise man follows the first only. It leads to knowledge of the Atman or Self. That is the greatest knowledge. One attains it through Brahmacharya. AUM is its symbol. Learning or argument cannot teach it. One must keep one's mind in peace. Now, arise, awake and learn that knowledge."

Thus Nachiketas learnt the greatest truth by his courage.

#### Questions

1. What yoga did Yama's wife perform? What do you know about it?
2. What did Nachiketas ask his father to do? Why?
3. What was Yama's reply?
4. For whom did Nachiketas go?
5. Why did Yama offer him three boons?
6. How did Nachiketas learn the great truth?
7. Which is the greatest of all knowledge?
8. Where does this story occur?



**K**ing Uttanapada had two queens — Suneeti, the first, and Suruchi, the second.

The King loved Suruchi very much. He did not care for Suneeti and her son Dhruva. So Dhruva and his mother lived away from the King near a forest.

Dhruva was a good child. He always thought of God. He liked to listen to the stories of gods and goddesses. He loved trees, flowers and animals.

One day young Dhruva came to the palace. Uttanapada was sitting on the throne. Dhruva tried to climb on to the lap of his father.

Suruchi stood near the King. She pushed Dhruva away and said, “You cannot sit there. Only my son can. Go and pray to God to become my son.”

Poor Dhruva left the palace in tears. He went to his mother.

“What is wrong with you, my child?” asked Dhruva’s mother.





Dhruva said, "Mother, I want to see God. You tell me God is just, and He lives in the forest. I shall go there. I shall please God by my prayers."

With these words Dhruva went into the forest. He prayed long to God. He had no food or rest.

God was pleased with Dhruva. He came to him. He asked, "What do you want, my child?"

"Dear God! I want a good place to sit. No one should drive me away from it," said Dhruva.

"Yes, you shall have it, child. You will become a great King. Then you will live for ever as a star in the sky," said God.

You can now see him as a shining star in the northern sky.

God's gift lasts for ever.

Man's gift lasts for a short time only.

#### MEANINGS

Palace	—	A king's home.
Throne	—	A king's chair.
Gift	—	Present.

#### EXERCISES

##### A. Questions :—

1. Who were the queens of King Uttanapada ?
2. Why did Dhruva and his mother live near a forest ?
3. Why did Dhruva come home crying ?
4. What did Dhruva do in the forest ?
5. What happened to him in the forest ?
6. Whose gifts will you love to have ?
7. What will you do to get God's gift ?

##### B. Fill in the blanks :—

1. King Uttanapada had ..... queens, and their names were .....
2. The King loved .....
3. Dhruva's mother told him .....
4. God said to Dhruva, "You will become a ....."
5. God's gift ..... for ever.



**H**iranyakasipu was an Asura King.  
He was a mighty ruler but evil-minded.  
He hated God.  
Prahlada was his young son.  
Hiranyakasipu put him to study.  
His teachers taught him to hate God.  
Prahlada refused to listen to them.



“I shall utter only the name of God”, said he.  
Hiranyakasipu became angry.  
He shouted, “I will kill you, if you repeat God’s name!”  
But Prahlada repeated God’s name and  
would say nothing else.  
Hiranyakasipu gave him poison to drink. He threw him  
into the sea. He rolled him down a mountain.  
Yet no harm came to Prahlada.  
God saved Prahlada.  
So Prahlada kept on repeating God’s name.  
Hiranyakasipu at last asked Prahlada, “Where is your God?”  
Prahlada said, “God is everywhere!”  
Then his father said to him, “Show me your God here if



you dare! If he is in this pillar let him come out," and kicked hard at the pillar. The pillar cracked. Out leapt God from it in a terrible form with the head, claws and teeth of a lion, and the body of a man—Narasimha. God picked up Hiranyakasipu, placed him on his lap, and tore open his belly. Hiranyakasipu died. God blessed Prahlada for his firm faith in Him.

#### MEANINGS

Asura	Demon
Mighty	Strong
Repeat	Say again and again
Cracked	Broke
Leapt	Hurled

#### EXERCISES

##### Questions

1. Who was Hiranyakasipu?
2. What did Prahlada's teachers teach him?
3. What did Prahlada do?
4. How did Hiranyakasipu punish Prahlada?
5. Why did no harm come to Prahlada?
6. What happened when Hiranyakasipu kicked at the pillar?
7. What does this appearance of God from the pillar show?



long time ago a dacoit used to stop travellers in a forest.

He killed them if they did not stop.

One day a rishi passed through the forest.

The dacoit stopped him, and said, "Give me everything you have—even your clothes."

The rishi said, "I shall give them to you. But what will you do with them?"

The dacoit said, "I shall sell them. With that money I shall feed my family."

The rishi asked, "Will your family share the punishment from God for your wicked deeds? Go and ask them."

The dacoit went and asked his family. All the members said "No." He came back sad.

He went and said to the rishi, "Sir, they do not want to share the punishment."

The rishi said, "Don't you think your work is thankless?"

The dacoit then said, "What should I do?"

The rishi said, "Give up your evil ways. Worship God. Only He can help you."

"How should I worship God?" he asked.

The rishi said, "Pray to Rama. Say RAMA, RAMA, RAMA, all the time."

The dacoit could not say the word right. He went on saying "MARA - MARA - MARA" day and night for years.

A great ant-hill grew up around him.

Valmika in Sanskrit means ant-hill.

Even though the dacoit said God's name the wrong way, God came to him and said, "I am pleased with your



prayer: you shall be a great rishi and write the  
RAMAYANA ." And he did.



He came to be known as Valmiki, because he  
was covered by a valmika.

**MEANINGS**

Dacoit — Robber, thief.  
Thankless — Useless.

**EXERCISES**

**A. Questions :—**

1. Who was Valmiki ?
2. What did the dacoit do first ?
3. What did the rishi ask the dacoit to find ?
4. What made him a good man ?
5. What grew on his body ?
6. What did God tell him ?

**B. Fill in the blanks :—**

1. Valmiki wrote the great poem .....
2. The words of a rishi made ..... a good man.
3. .... told the dacoit to repeat the words .....  
..... all the time.
4. An ..... grew around his body.



**P**arasara was a great rishi.

One day he had to cross the Yamuna river.

The river was in flood.

He saw a fisherman on the river bank. He asked him, "Will you row me across in your boat?"

The fisherman said, "I will." He called his young daughter. He said to her, "My child, Matsya-gandhi, row this rishi across the river safely."

The rishi got into the boat.

He liked the girl.

He asked her, "Will you marry me?"

The girl said, "I will." Parasara married her.

A son was born to them on a dwipa or island. So they called the child Dwaipayana. He had dark skin.

Dwaipayana grew to be a very learned rishi.

He wrote the eighteen Puranas.



You have heard of the MAHABHARATA . He wrote that also.  
Dwaipayana put together the Vedas. So he is also known  
as Vedavyasa.

He has taught us many things, great, good and true.

We are thankful to him for his great teachings.

We worship him every year on the Guru-poornima day.

It is the full-moon day of Ashada.

We must remember and respect the great men and  
women of our land.

### MEANINGS

Boat	Keel	Remain across water in a boat
Island		Small piece of land with water all around
Purana		An ancient story poem
Learned		Well-read

### EXERCISES

#### Questions

1. How did Rishi Parasurama cross the river?
2. What did he request the fisherman for?
3. What was the name of the fisherman's daughter?
4. What did the parents call their son? Why?
5. What did Vyasa write?
6. Why is he called Vedavyasa?
7. When is Guru-purnima?
8. Do you know the months of the year? And the days of the week? Name them.

#### Match the items

- |                        |                        |                 |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Rishi Parasurama    | asked the fisherman to | take him across |
| 2. the river           |                        |                 |
| 3. He is worshipped    | every year on          | the day         |
| 4. He is also known as |                        |                 |

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
Write the MAHABHARATA

# Sankara



**S**ankara is one of the greatest religious teachers of our country, and of the world.

He taught us some great truths about God.

He was born about twelve hundred years ago in Kalati, a village in Kerala. His father was Sivaguru and his mother Aryamba. But he lost his father when he was a child. His relatives gave him the sacred thread in his fifth year or so. Sankara learnt all the *Vedas* and *sastras* from his teachers before he was seven years old.



One day he and his mother went for a bath in the river Purna near his village.

While he was bathing, a crocodile in the river, caught hold of Sankara's leg. He shouted for help. No one came to help him. His mother heard him, and started crying. Sankara said, "Mother, they say it is a second birth to become a *sanyasi*. So, if you permit me to become one,





the crocodile may leave me!”

Aryamba, to save the life of her son, said “Yes.”  
Lo! The crocodile released its hold on Sankara. He came ashore safely.

Thus at the tender age of eight, Sankara became a *sanyasi*. Sanyasis should give up everything—mother, father, home property, everything. They must wander from place to place, and pray to God all the time.

So, leaving his mother at home alone, Sankara travelled to Gujarat. There were no trains or buses in those days. He walked all the distance.

On the bank of the river Narmada in Gujarat, there was a rishi called Govindapada. Sankara sat at his feet and learnt religious truths from him.

He then went to Kasi. There he wrote many important books, explaining the *Vedas* and *sastras*. He argued with learned *pandits* there. He taught them the truth about God as he saw it.

He travelled all over the country more than once, on foot, visiting important *kshetras*, and composing songs and prayers to the gods of the places. We have hundreds of these songs which are still being sung. He founded *mathas* for spreading his message, and teaching religious truths. Those *mathas* are doing good work even today. Sankara had four chief disciples: Padmapada, Hastamalaka, Sureshwara and Trotaka.

Sankara lived for only thirty-two years. But within that short time, he did much to spiritualize the Indian way of living.



We honour him on the fifth day of the bright half of Chaitra every year. It is his birthday. We worship him on that day and read his books.

### MEANINGS

Crocodile	—	A big fish-like creature living in water.
Sanyasi	—	Hermit, <i>sadhu</i> .
Mathas	—	Religious centres.
Kshetras	—	Holy places.
Composing	—	Writing.

### EXERCISE

#### Questions:-

1. Who was Sankara? Where was he born?
2. What were the names of his parents and the name of the river near his village?
3. When was he given the sacred thread?
4. What happened to him one day while bathing in the river?
5. What made the crocodile let him go?
6. Who was Sankara's *guru*?
7. What did Sankara do at Kasi?
8. Who are Sankara's chief disciples?
9. Who preach his message today?
10. How do we honour him?
11. Do you know any poem of Sankara's? Can you recite it?



**SANKARA**, Ramanuja and Madhva are the three chief Acharyas or religious teachers of India.

Ramanuja taught us that God Vishnu is Supreme and we are all his devotees.

Ramanuja lived three hundred years after Sankara, i.e., about 900 years ago.

He was born at Sri Perumbadur in Tamil Nadu to a man called Kesava Bhattar. Alavandar, a great religious teacher of Srirangam, was his maternal great-grandfather.

The boy was originally named Lakshmana. The name means the same as Ramanuja which in its turn means the younger brother of Rama.

Ramanuja lost his father in his young age. When the earlier part of his education was over, he was sent along with his cousin Govinda Bhattar to Kanchi to study Vedanta under a teacher by name Yadavaprakasa. Ramanuja learned all his lessons well.

One day his great grandfather, Alavandar, came from Srirangam to see Ramanuja at study. He was satisfied with his progress. So he decided to make him the chief Acharya at Srirangam after him.

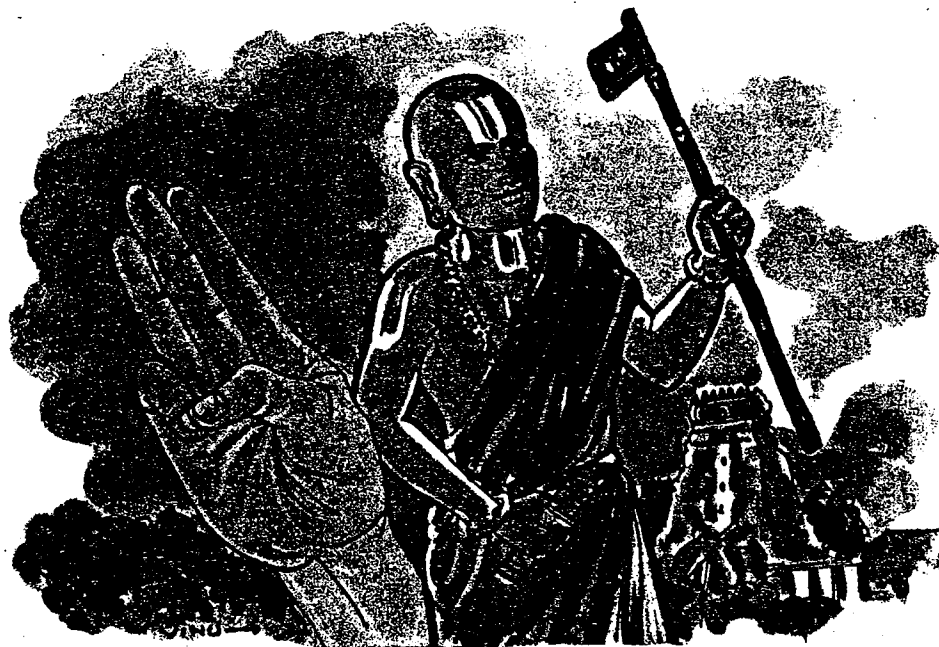
At Kanchi, Ramanuja did not get on well with his teacher. When therefore his teacher went on a pilgrimage to Varanasi, Ramanuja came home and got married.

Later, he returned to Kanchi and took service at the temple of Devaraja.

In the meantime, Alavandar was nearing his end. He sent for Ramanuja, but before Ramanuja could reach him, Alavandar had passed away. Strangely, three of the fingers of the dead man's right hand remained folded.

The learned men seeing the folded fingers said: "Alavandar had three ambitions. One was to explain the *Brahma Sutras* of Vyasa. The other was to explain the *Vishnu Sahasranama* in the *Mahabharata* and the third was to explain the hymns of the Alvars. All of these were intended for the benefit of the common man.

Ramanuja then took a vow then and there that he would have all these three ambitions fulfilled. At once the folded fingers became straight.



To keep his vow, he first studied the *sastras* under another teacher called Periyambadi.

Ramanuja was broad-minded. He did not like the custom whereby some people were looked on as high-born and others as low-born. Once his wife treated his Guru's wife rudely. Enraged at this, Ramanuja sent her to her father's house. And while she was away, he decided to become a Sanyasi.

A sanyasi must give up his house, renounce the world including wife and children. He must put on yellow robes.

His name was changed to Yatiraj.

To complete his studies, Ramanuja went to another Acharya. His name was Tirukkottiyur Nambi. He refused to teach him.



Yatiraj, as he was now called, went to him six times, but every time, he was turned away. When he met him for the seventh time, he agreed. He taught him the sacred *mantra*.

When Yatiraj was about to leave, Nambi warned him: "Don't reveal this sacred *mantra* to others."

Ramanuja asked: "Sir, what is the benefit of chanting this *mantra*?"

The *Guru* replied: "By repeating the *mantra* you can go to God."

Ramanuja then asked: "If I reveal it to others, what will happen?"

The *Guru* answered: "You will go to hell."

At once Ramanuja climbed to the top of a high tower, called all the people in the street together and shouted the sacred *mantra* for all to hear!

The *Guru* called him and asked: "Why did you do that? I told you not to!"

Ramanuja said: "Sir, I did not want to disobey you. I only wanted the whole world to benefit by this *mantra*, and you become the benefactor, even if I had to go to hell for it!

The *Guru* was pleased to hear this and blessed Ramanuja: "May you open a new path in religion!"

Ramanuja now learned all that was necessary to fulfil his promise to Alavandar.

With the help of a disciple called Kurattalwar, Ramanuja wrote three books on Vedanta: *Vedantasara*, *Vedanta Sangraha* and *Vedanta Deepa*. Then he wrote two more books explaining the *Brahmasutras* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. The former is called *Sri Bhashya*. Goddess Saraswati herself is said to have approved of it.

Kurattalwar had a son by name Parasara Bhattar. Ramanuja made him explain the meaning of the various names of the Lord in *Vishnu Sahasranama*. He made his cousin Pillan write on the meaning of the hymns of the Alvars.

All the three of Ramanuja's promises to his *Guru* were thus fulfilled. He became famous and many people came to pay him homage.



He went on a pilgrimage to holy places. Towards the end he named the disciples who were to continue his teachings, and departed from this world in his 120th year.

The school of philosophy taught by him is known as *Visishtadvaita*.

### EXERCISE

#### Questions:

1. Who are the chief Acharyas of South India?
2. Who were Ramanuja's gurus?
3. What was the promise he made to Alavandar?
4. How did he disobey his teacher Tirukkottiyur Nambi and what was the result?
5. What are the important works of Ramanuja?
6. What did Ramanuja teach?



**MADHVACHARYA** lived about seven hundred years ago. He came after Ramanujacharya.

Madhvacharya was born in a village near Udipi in Karnataka. His father was Madhya Geha Bhatta and his mother, Vedavati. They were a devout couple.

They named the child Vasudeva.

He came to be known as Madhvacharya because his teachings, as food for the spirit, were as sweet and nourishing as *madhu*. Madhu in Sanskrit means honey.

As a child, Vasudeva was indifferent to his studies.

After giving him the sacred thread, his parents sent him to learn the Vedas and Sastras under a Vedic teacher. Vasudeva learnt the Vedas with ease.

At the same time he shone in games and physical exercises also. For that reason people called him Bhima.

As he grew to be a youth, Vasudeva became greatly attracted to God.

He wanted to become a *sanyasi*. So he went a Guru. The Guru's name was Achyutapreksha.

Of course, the Guru was also a *sanyasi*. He was attached to the shrine of Ananteshwar at Udipi.

Satisfied with Vasudeva, he gave him sanyasa and the name Purna Pragna.

The parents of Purna Pragna, now became upset because he was their only son.

When a man became a *sanyasi*, he had to leave his home and cut off his worldly relations.

Purna Pragna consoled his parents and told them: "Please do not grieve over me. God will give you another son soon. He will look after you!"

His parents got another son, as was prophesied.

After becoming a *sanyasi* Purna Pragna went on a pilgrimage. First he attended the Maha-makham festival at Kumbha Konam.

This is a festival held once in twelve years at the place.

Achyutapreksha found his pupil very intelligent. His learning and his power of argument astonished him.



So he made Purna Pragna the head of the Mutt over which he presided.

At the same time he gave him the new name Ananda Tirtha. This is the name under which the great Acharya wrote all his books which number over thirty.



Ananda Tirtha's name became famous. Many pupils came to study under him. He taught them the new meaning he found in the *sastras*.

*Tarka* or logic was his strong point. It requires great power of thinking and of debate or argument.

Ananda Tirtha visited many places in the South. At Trivandrum he met Vidya Sankara, who was the head of Sringeri Mutt at that time. They held a grand debate on the meaning of *sastras* before the king of that place.

Although their approach was different, they both spoke about God. God can be spoken of in many ways.

The Acharya then visited Srirangam and later came back to Udipi.





In his tour of North India, the Acharya visited Varanasi, to hold discussions with the Pundits there.

To spread his system of thought, he wrote the *Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya*.

The other important books he wrote are the commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* and the volume on *Vedanta Sstras*.

Shri Madhva installed the idol of Sri Krishna at Udipi. This is an important shrine which all devout people visit.

Shri Ananda Tirtha or Madhvacharya as he came to be called later, spent his last days writing a book in which he gave his own of the *Brahma Sstras* of Vyasa.

The life of Ananda Tirtha is described in a book called *Madhva Vijaya*.

One day, according to this book, he disappeared from the world while teaching and joined Rishi Vyasa on the Himalayas.

Before he went, the Acharya appointed Padmanabha Tirtha to carry on his work.

He also set up eight other disciples to look after the Krishna temple at Udipi. You must go and see this temple at Udipi one day. It is a great centre of pilgrimage.

Those who follow the teachings of this Acharya are called Madhvas. They worship Maha Vishnu. They are Vaishnavas, just as those who worship God Shiva are called Smartas or Shaivas.

The system of thought expounded by him is known as Dvaita philosophy.

#### EXERCISE

##### Questions

1. Who were the parents of Madhvacharya? What was his original name?
2. What did you know about his early education?
3. Who was his first *Guru* and what name did he give him?
4. What name did he take after assuming *sanyasa*?
5. What are the important books he wrote?
6. What did he teach?
7. Why is he called Madhvacharya?



# Vivekananda

**S**WAMI Vivekananda was a great preacher, prophet and patriot.

He was the foremost disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

He spread India's spiritual message of Vedanta throughout the world.

Born in Bengal in 1863, his original name was Narendranath Dutta. His father was Vishwanath Dutta. He was a prosperous lawyer.

He gave young Narendra English education.

Narendra had a keen mind. He wanted to find out the truth of everything he saw and learnt. He had a spiritual bent of mind. He read a large number of books.

When Vishwanath Dutta died, Narendra was only 21 years old. His family income fell. Fortunately, Narendra was not married.

Even in this condition, he himself went without food to feed the poor. He struggled with his poverty and continued his studies.

At that time he heard people praise the greatness of Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

Like all young educated men, Narendra did not at first believe in the spiritual powers of Sri Ramakrishna. He went to meet him and argue.

Narendra had a remarkable face. His large eyes, shapely nose and broad lips attracted every one.

As soon as Sri Ramakrishna saw young Narendra, he said to himself, "Ah, my spiritual son has come!" and smiled.

Vivekananda boldly asked Sri Ramakrishna : "Have you seen God?" "Yes, my son," said Ramakrishna, "as really as I see you!"

Vivekananda felt that he had found his master. He became a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

Very soon Sri Ramakrishna taught him all about the Truth of God.

Narendra became a sanyasin in his 25th year. Afterwards he came to be called Vivekananda.

He travelled throughout India on foot, studying the condition of people in the country.



One day he was meditating on a rock in Kanyakumari. At that time, he got a call from God to preach the greatness of India.

He decided to spread it throughout the world and also make every Indian feel strong as iron and brave as a lion.

In 1893, a Parliament of Religions met in Chicago, in America.

Spiritual leaders from all parts of the world attended it.

Vivekanda also attended it.

At first they had allotted to this Indian monk only a few minutes. But when he started speaking, everyone was fascinated by his discourse.

He spoke for hours; and from that time, he became the most beloved speaker.

He toured America for three years spreading the message of Vedanta.

After visiting England, he returned to India.

“Arise, awake!” was his call to the world.

He said: “The only religion that ought to be taught is the religion of fearlessness.”



Once Vivekananda was travelling by train. As usual with him at such times, he was starving.

Another passenger seated by his side started ridiculing sanyasins. He said: "These people deserve to starve."

The Swami just smiled on hearing those words.

At the very next station a person stepped into that compartment with a parcel of food and a jug of water and coming to Vivekananda said: "My patron deity Rama came in my dream and, pointing you out, ordered me to take some food for you. I quickly prepared the dish and brought it to you. Please take it." Thus God helped and protected him.

On another occasion a man asked Vivekananda: "To see a strong man oppressing a weak one has become our Karma. What is our duty?"

Vivekananda replied: "Why, thrash the strong, of course!"

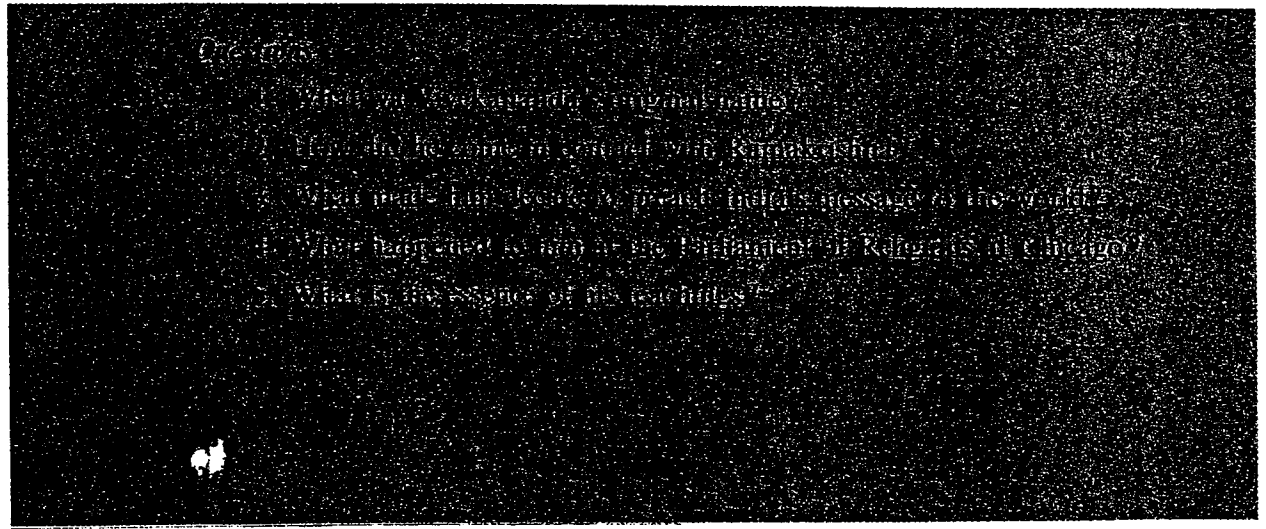
Vivekananda organised the Ramakrishna Mission which today is working admirably in all parts of the world.

He had many disciples of whom Sister Nivedita, an English lady, was the most talented.

Heavy work impaired his health and Vivekananda passed away at Belur in 1902 at the age of 39.

We have now built a beautiful temple for him on the rock at Kanyakumari where he got his first inspiration.

His writings are collected in eight volumes. You must read them.



## **Jana Gana Mana**

**Jana Gana Mana Adhinayaka Jayahe**

**Bharata Bhagya Vidhataa**

**Punjaba Sindhu Gujaratha Maraatha**

**Dravida Uthkala Vanga**

**Vindhya Himachala Yamuna Ganga**

**Uchhala Jaladhi Taranga**

**Tava Shubhaname Jage**

**Tava Shubha Aashisha Mage**

**Gahe Tavajaya Gatha**

**Jana Gana Mangala Dayaka Jayahe**

**Bharata Bhagya Vidhataa**

**Jayahe Jayahe Jayahe**

**Jaya Jaya Jaya Jayahe**

**Rabindranath Tagore**

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पृथिवी शान्ता साग्निना शान्ता सामे शान्ता शुचर्गं शमयतु ।  
अन्तरिक्षं शान्तं तद्वायुना शान्तं तन्मे शान्तं शुचर्गं शमयतु ।

द्यौश्शान्ता सादित्येन शान्ता सा मे शान्ता शुचर्गं शमयतु ।

पृथिवी शान्तिरन्तरिक्षं शान्ति र्द्यौ शान्ति  
दिशश्शान्तिरवान्तरदिशा शान्तिरग्निश्शान्ति र्वायुश्शान्तिरादित्य  
श्शान्ति इन्द्रमाश्शान्ति र्नक्षत्राणि शान्तिरापश्शान्ति  
रोषधयश्शान्ति र्वनस्पतयश्शान्ति गौश्शान्ति रजा शान्तिरश्व  
श्शान्तिः पुरुषश्शान्ति ब्रह्म शान्तिर्ब्राह्मण शान्तिश्शान्तिरेव  
शान्तिश्शान्तिर्मे अस्तु शान्तिः ।

तयाहर्गं शान्त्या सर्वशान्त्या मह्यं द्विपदे चतुष्पदे च शान्तिं  
करोमि शान्तिर्मे अस्तु शान्तिः ॥

### A VEDIC CHANT FOR PEACE

The earth is peaceful by virtue of the fire. Being thus peaceful may it allay my afflictions. This space is full of peace by dint of the wind. Being thus peaceful may it allay my afflictions. The heaven is peaceful by dint of the sun and being thus peaceful, may it allay my afflictions. The earth is peaceful, the space is full of peace, the heaven is peaceful. The quarters of the world are peaceful and the sub-quarters are peaceful. Peaceful is the fire, peaceful is the wind and the sun is peaceful and the moon is full of peace. The stars are peaceful and the waters are peaceful. The medicinal herbs are peaceful and the plant kingdom is peaceful. The cow is peaceful, the sheep and goat are peaceful, the horse is peaceful, the human being is peaceful and the Supreme Being is full of peace. They who know and have realized the Supreme Being are full of peace. Peace alone reigns Supreme as peace. May there be only peace for me. By that all-pervading peace, I bring about peace of the bipeds and quadrupeds towards me. May there be peace and only peace for me.

(Translation by His Holiness Swami Rangapriya, Bangalore, India)

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