

# Voice of Jagadguru

advaitam paramanandam



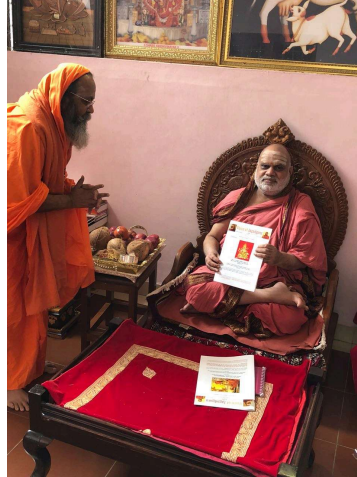
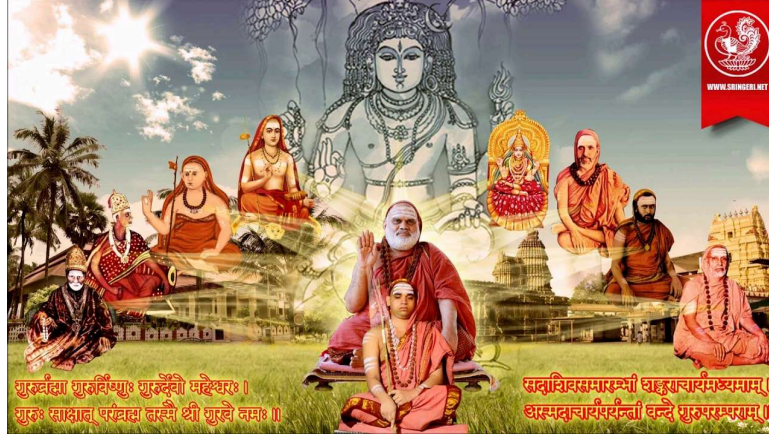
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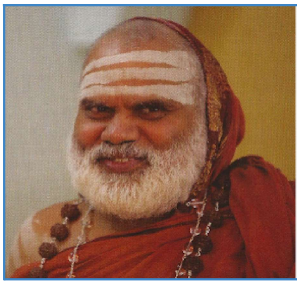
## CHODANAA

(An Unit of the e magazine Voice of Jagadguru)

### Prārthanā



Our humble pranams at the holy lotus feet of Jagadguru Śankaracārya His Holiness Śri Mahāsannidhānam Śri Śri Śri Bhārati Tirtha Mahāswāmiji and Jagadguru Śankaracārya His Holiness Śri Sannidhānam Śri Śri Śri Vidhuśekhara Bhārati Mahāswāmiji. The Voice of Jagadguru e magazine team under the guidance of Pujyasri Swami Omkarananda Saraswati, Founder Acharya, Śri Swami Chidbhavananda Ashram, Vedapuri, Theni (Chief Editor of this e magazine Unit) {Photos taken on Thursday, 19th July 2018 at Sringeri }. This edition coming in honouring our Pujyasri Swami Omkarananda Saraswati, Founder Acharya, Śri Swami Chidbhavananda Ashram, Vedapuri, Theni who attained Vidhekhā Mukti on 10/05/2021.

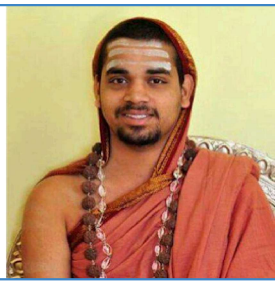


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### Anugraha Bhashanam

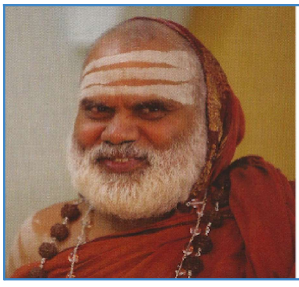
After staying in the city of Madurai for ten days, Jagadguru Shankaracharya Sri Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji arrived at Theni on the evening of May 31. The Jagadguru was offered a reverential Pournakumbha welcome at the entrance of Sri Vedapuri Ashram by Swami Omkarananda. Swami Parmarthananda (Vedanta teacher and Vidyaguru of Swami Omkarananda) from Chennai, Swami Satswarupananda and Swami Nithyananda Giri from Tirukovilur also joined in the welcome. The Jagadguru was taken around the Ashram in a



procession on a special vehicle decorated as a swan.

(The Jagadguru interacts with Swami Omkarananda after performing Puja to Sri Prajna Dakshinamurti at Theni: May 31-June 1, 2012, Vijaya Yatra.)

In his Swagata Bhashanam, Swami Omkarananda said that He had the Darshan of both Sri Sri Mahasannidhanam and Sri Sri Sannidhanam in His Poorvashrama. He remembered that the Jagadguru had graced the fledgling Ashram on 22nd March 1995 and had said that all welfare will come to him and the Ashram, as he was spreading the message of Sri Adi Shankara Bhagavatpada. Swamiji also pointed the truth in the Jagadguru's blessings when he remembered that the Jagadguru had planted a Vata Vriksha (banyan tree) inside the Ashram chanting the Rik, "स्योना पृथिवि भवानृक्षरा निवेशनी । यच्छा नः शर्म सप्रथाः" and had blessed that as the Vata Vriksha grows, the message of Vedanta would spread and the Ashram would grow.



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Recalling the Vedic prayer, “सकृत्ते अग्ने नमः । द्विस्ते नमः । त्रिस्ते नमः । चतुस्ते नमः । पञ्चकृत्वस्ते नमः । दशकृत्वस्ते नमः । शतकृत्वस्ते नमः । आसहस्रकृत्वस्ते नमः । अपरिमितकृत्वस्ते नमः ।” ,the Swamiji offered his innumerable prostrations to the Jagadguru.

In His Anugraha Bhashanam, the Jagadguru said that Lord Paramashiva incarnated in Kalady as Sri Adi Shankara Bhagavatpada, expounded the Advaita Siddhanta to the masses and brought about the welfare of the masses. The Jagadguru clarified that Advaita Siddhanta did not originate from Sri Adi Shankaracharya. It has been stated in the Vedas. Sri Adi Shankaracharya expounded it but did not postulate it. Sri Gaudapada Himself has said – मायामात्रमिदं द्वैतम् अद्वैतं परमार्थतः.



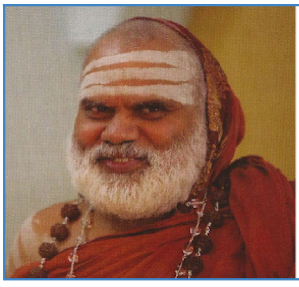
The Vedas declare in many places the Mithyatva of Dvaita. However, Dvaita is accepted from the Vyaavahaarika (empirical) standpoint. We only reject Dvaita from the Paaramaarthika (absolute) standpoint. This is where Dvaitins raise objections against Advaita and ask questions such as, “How do you associate Mithyatva to everything? Are you Mithya? Is what you say Mithya? Are the Vedas Mithya? Am I

Mithya?” The Jagadguru explained that we accept the Vyaavahaarika Satyam (empirical reality) of everything – of you, of the Vedas, of the Karmas enjoined therein and so on. We only state that the Paaramaarthika Satyam (Supreme Absolute Reality) is only one.

(A Puja was performed to the Vata Vriksha (Banyan Tree) that the Jagadguru had planted here 17 years ago, @ Theni, May 31-June!, 2012 Vijaya Yatra.)

As long as Brahma Jnana has not dawned, Karma has to be performed. There can be no second thoughts about this as Sri Bhagavatpada Himself states – वेदो नित्यमधीयताम् तदुदितं कर्म स्वनुष्ठीयताम् । तेनेशस्य विधीयतामपचितिः काम्ये मतिस्स्यज्यताम् ॥ – that the Vedas are to be studied daily and the Vedic Karmas are to be observed with Shraddha. The Lord too states in the Gita that Karmas performed without Shraddha do not yield any result –

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।  
असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥



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The Jagadguru remembered how Aryamba expressed to her husband, Shivaguru, that their worshipping the Lord for the sake of an offspring had to be further intensified with greater Shradha. Ultimately, the Lord Himself incarnated as their son in the form of Sri Adi Shankaracharya.



The Jagadguru emphasized that only for one who has attained Brahma Jnana, the Vedic injunctions do not hold – निस्त्रेगुण्ये पथि विचरतां को विधिः को निषेधः. We are far away from that state. Even the scholarship of scholars and Mahamahopadhyayas and their ability to quote the scriptures and explain the nuances of the Shastras, are for merely their livelihood and not for Mukti –  
वाग्वैखरी शब्दझरी  
शास्त्रव्याख्यानकौशलम् ।

वैदुष्यं विदुषां तद्वत् भुक्तये न तु मुक्तये ॥

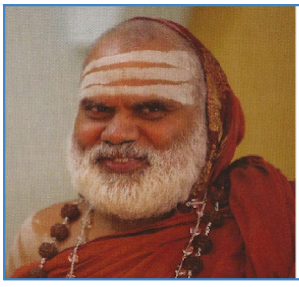
(The Jagadguru after laying the foundation stone for the building, Sri Bharati Tirtha Vidyarthi VilasaH@ Theni May 31-June 1, 2012 Vijaya Yatra)

They have not been able to directly experience the Supreme Blissful state. However they are not to be blamed, for that state can be attained only on the cessation of tendencies (Vasanas) accumulated over a number of lifetimes. The Lord has stated in the Gita – अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् । Hence until we directly experience the Supreme State, the Karmas enjoined in the Shastras have to be performed.

The Jagadguru then explained why Vedanta disagrees that the performance of such Karmas alone results in Mukti. Mukti refers to the state wherein you can have no more births, for one takes birth only to experience the fruits of his Karma. The Karma referred to here has to be either Kaamyam Karma or Nishiddha Karma, for Kaamyam Karma leads one to Svarga while Nishiddha Karma leads one to hell. The Mimamsaka argues that a person desirous of liberation avoid all Kaamyam and Nishiddha Karma, and instead only perform Nitya and Naimittika Karmas, as the avoidance of these two types of Karma leads to sin. Hence the Mimamsaka's standpoint is that when a person can get Mukti by performing only the Nitya and Naimittika Karmas and avoiding Kaamyam and Nishiddha Karmas, why is Jnana necessary for Mukti –

मोक्षार्थं न प्रवर्तेत तत्र काम्यनिषिद्धयोः ।

नित्यनैमित्तिके कुर्यात् प्रत्यवायजिहासया ॥



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Bhagavatpada has pointed out the fallacy in this line of thinking – न हि जन्मप्रायणोरन्तराले काम्यप्रतिषिद्धयोः सर्वात्मना वर्जनं केनचित्प्रतिज्ञातुं शक्यं, सुनिपुणानामपि सूक्ष्मापराधदर्शनात् । It is not possible for anyone to proclaim that he has refrained from all Kaamy Karma and Nishiddha Karma from the time of his birth to the time of his death. This is because it is seen that even the best of men commit subtle mistakes. The Manu Smriti says the observance of Pancha Mahayajnas is necessary for a Grihastha (householder) as he commits 5 types of sins without his knowledge.

पञ्चसूना गृहस्थस्य चुल्ली पेषण्युपस्करः ।  
कण्डनी चोदकुम्भश्च बध्यते यास्तु वाहयन् ॥

A sin remains a sin whether you commit it knowingly or unknowingly. If you touch fire, it is going to burn your hand. It does not matter whether the one who touches fire is a child or an adult, or does it knowingly or unknowingly – अनिच्छयापि संस्पृष्टो दहत्येव हि पावकः. Hence it is impossible to state that one has never sinned.

Moreover, this human body has been acquired because of a portion of all the accumulated Punya and Paapa karmas. There is however a lot more Karma to experience. One cannot dismiss that all the accumulated Karma has resulted in our acquisition of this human body.

Contrastingly, the Karmas of a person who has attained Jnana, are burnt up for the Vedas, the Supreme authority on these matters, clearly state so. The result of the good deeds of a Jnani reach those who revere the Jnani, while the results of his sins go to those who insult him.

Sri Bhagavatpada has stated in His Upadesha Panchakam that such Jnana that can burn one's Karmas, can be had only by approaching a Guru –

“सद्विद्वानुपसृप्यतां प्रतिदिनं तत्पादुके सेव्यतां, ब्रह्मैकाक्षरमर्थ्यताम्”

The Upanishads are filled with illustrations of disciples seeking the Guru – such as the six students approaching Pippalada, Shaunaka seeking Angirasa – for acquiring Brahma Jnana. As a result of the attainment, the Bhashyakara (Sri Adi Shankaracharya) too has said Karmas are burnt up – प्राक्कर्मप्रविलाप्यतां चित्बलान्नाप्युत्तरैः श्लिष्यताम्

Bhagavan Veda Vyasa too has stated in His Brahma Sutras – तदधिगम उत्तरपूर्वाघयोरश्लेषविनाशौ तद्व्यपदेशात् – that on attainment of Jnana, all Karmas are burnt up.

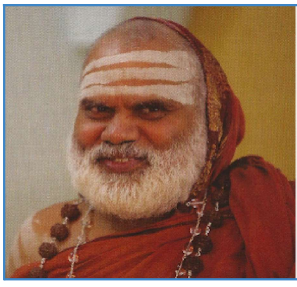
The Lord too has said in the Bhagavad Gita –

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।  
ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ॥

As the blazing fire turns firewood to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge burn to ashes (all reactions to) Karmas

Thus the Vedas, the Brahma Sutras and the Gita make it clear that Jnana alone burns Karma and results in liberation.

The Jagadguru also pointed out many attend lectures on Vedanta but do so only for leisure and not with the desire for Jnana. One must perform Nishkama Karma (actions without desire for results) if one has to get intense “विविदिषा” (desire to know the Truth). Thus Sri Adi

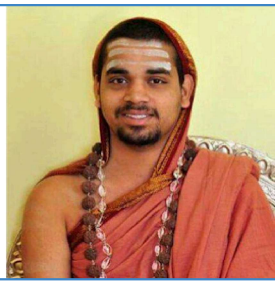


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Shankaracharya has explained that Upasana and Karma have an important role to play in the system of Advaita Siddhanta. Hence must always have reverence and devotion towards Sri Adi Shankaracharya.



Jagadguru stated that such is the sophistication of the Advaita philosophy propounded by Sri Adi Shankaracharya, that even though many objections were raised against it (in the later centuries), personages such as Sri Madhusoodana Saraswati and Sri Brahmananda Saraswati uprooted all such objections by their works –

Swami Omkarananda performing the Dhuli Pada Puja

मधुसूदनसन्मौनीब्रह्मानन्दगुरु भजे ।  
अद्वैतराजमार्गोऽयं याभ्यां निष्कण्टकीकृतः ॥

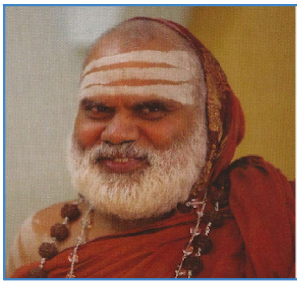
Salutations to Sri Madhusoodana Saraswati and Sri Brahmananda Saraswati who made the regal path of Advaita thorn-free

The Jagadguru ended His Anugraha Bhashanam expressing joy over the work being carried out by Swami Omkarananda in the propagation of the tenets of the Advaita Siddhanta. Swami Omkarananda then received the special blessings of the Jagadguru. The Jagadguru later performed the Sharada Chandramouliswara Puja in the Ashram premises.

At 6:30 AM on 1st June, the Jagadguru performed Puja to Sri Prajna Dakshinamurti. At 10 AM, the Jagadguru visited the now huge Vata Vriksha that He had planted 17 years ago. After a small Puja was offered at the spot, the Jagadguru laid the foundation stone for the building, Sri Bharati Tirtha Vidyarthi VilasaH and visited Sri Rajagopala Mandiram, the Goshala of the Ashram. The Jagadguru then returned to the Prajna Dakshinamurti temple, gave Darshan to the devotees and blessed the members who had undergone a course on Bhagavad Gita. Devotees performed Bhiksha Vandanam and Pada Puja to the Jagadguru and received Mantrakshata.

Video link : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFTvLMF-DWU&t=284s>

--- Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Mahāsannidhānam Śrī Śrī Śrī Bhārati Tirtha Mahāswāmiiji

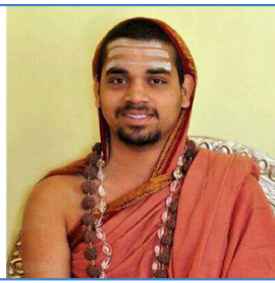


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### The Path of Dharma Śāstra

In this portion we are going to see "The Path of Dharma Śāstra" in Question and Answer form. For our doubts regarding "Dharma Śāstra" Pujyasri Swami Omkarananda Saraswati, Founder Acharya, Śri Swami Chidbhavananda Ashram, Vedapuri, Theni will guide us according to Vedic Scriptures.

**Q :** Swamiji, why is learning Sastram through Guru-Shishya parampara recommended?

**Swamiji:** A guru inspires and empowers his shishya to learn with clarity what he learnt from his guru. Associating with and observing a guru, shishya imbibes several learnings by informal instruction. Many complex queries will be resolved easily by a guru. A guru's blessings bestow several unseen benefits. "Guru is Guru." The syllable 'gu' means darkness, the syllable 'ru' means he who removes. Because of the power to dispel the darkness of ignorance, the guru is thus named. (Advaya Taraka Upanishad, Verse 16).

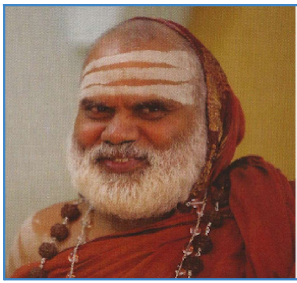


Shishya comes from the word 'shiksha' which means to earn knowledge or to condition. A shishya conditions his senses, serves the guru and becomes the recipient of the knowledge which removes ignorance. Parampara means an unbroken tradition.

#### Guru Mahima:

Sri Adi Sankaracharya talks about guru shishya in Sarva Vedanta Siddhanta Sara Sangraha. A guru knows the meaning of the slokas of the shastras learnt from his guru having after by-hearting the chant, is firm in the Knowledge of Pure consciousness

and keeps the mind calm, is free from the attitude of 'I' and 'mine', is equanimous without likes and dislikes, does not accumulate material wealth, leads a simple life, has no expectation, is internally and externally pure, is capable of doing any task and limitlessly showers His grace. He is rich in all these qualities and is superior amongst the wise. To live a peace-filled happy life by knowing the Ultimate reality, one should take full efforts to worship Him, be associated with Him and serve Him. In several births, if we worship Ishwara with incessant devotion as told in the Vedas, Ishwara accepts such worship and graces us in the form of a guru. The guru teaches us the non-dual Pure Consciousness principle in an understandable manner. Thus, He helps us

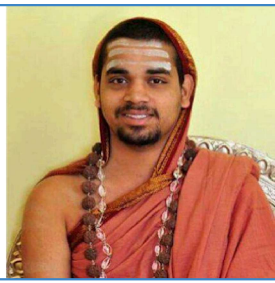


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cross the ocean of sorrowful cyclical births and deaths or bondage. Sri Tayumanavar, a Tamil poet sings that one who has worshipped Ishwara and undertaken pilgrimages would be blessed with a guru.

So, worship of Ishwara earns punya and that punya bears fruit when He comes in the form of a guru. Knowing that, incessant worship and unswerving love for guru, blesses us with His teaching which transcends us from the sorrows of bondage.

What the shastras say about learning by oneself. Mundakopnishad says:

Avidyāyām antare vartamānāḥ svayaṁ dhīrāḥ paṇḍitam manyamānāḥ, janghanyamānāḥ pariyanti mūḍhāḥ, andhenaiva nīyamānā yathāndhāḥ (1.2.8)

Parīkṣya lokān karmacitān brāhmaṇo nirvedam āyān nāsty akṛtah kṛtena, tad vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet samit-pāṇiḥ śrotriyam brahma-niṣṭham (1.2.12)

Learning by oneself without a guru is blind leading the blind and does not yield benefit. Whereas the sadhana marga, the way to Brahman, the path of spirituality is through a Guru or spiritual preceptor.

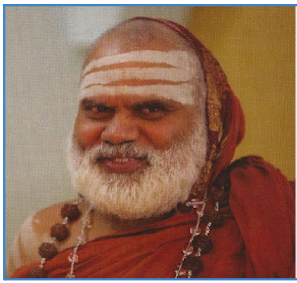


**Q:** Now a days we are seeing many use social media, books and going to some school of thoughts and learning sastram. Is this correct?

**Swamiji:** An eligible spiritual aspirant should learn sastram sincerely and consistently from a qualified living guru. That is most important. While the word Upanishad means to learn being proximate to the guru, in today's world, harnessing the

use of technology is not incorrect. An eligible aspirant with immense and strong guru bhakti, bearing the attitude of the guru being present in person while learning, can study this way, provided the study is consistent at least for three years from the same guru, following the sampradaya. At frequent intervals, the student should also physically visit the guru and take blessings.

Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Sannidhānam Śrī Śrī Śrī Vidhuśekhara Bhārati Mahāswāmi and Pujyasri Swami Omkarananda Saraswati, Founder Acharya, Śrī Swami Chidbhavananda Ashram @ Vedapuri, April 15 - 17,2017 Vijaya Yatra.

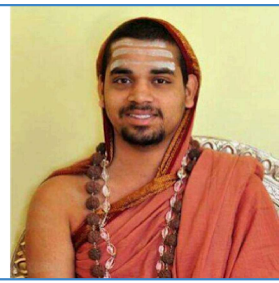


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**Q:** Many are modifying the procedures of Puja, Sraddham etc. for their convenience and doing it. Is this correct?

**Swamiji:** Shraddham has to be done as per the family practice with complete shraddha. The word 'shraddham' itself is said to be born from 'shraddha'. Puja should be done as initiated. In both, the attitude is most important. Modifications based on convenience would not be appropriate but based on capacity may be ok, but it should not be an excuse.



**Q:** What is the importance of Karmanushtanam?

**Swamiji:** Dharma is karma rupa. Our sastras mandate that activities performed by us from morning to night by way of thought, speech and deed should be channelised properly. Doing all our activities properly is Karmanushtanam. Karma should produce dharma, meaning punya which is unseen.

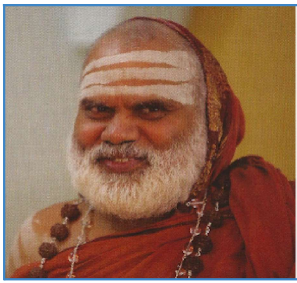
So, Karmanushtanam can be taken to connote rituals. One gets unseen benefits

and powers as fruits of observing rituals. It cannot be logically explained, but it helps lifelong. When we understand this, the value of it increases. Even if one finds it difficult to perform the rituals, we should have a lot of shraddha and observe this.

Following rules conditions the mind and helps sublimate likes and dislikes, develops equanimity between joys and sorrows in efforts taken. In other words, it helps develop vairagyam (discrimination between the permanent and the impermanent) and shama (Thought control), dama (Mastering the senses), uparama (renunciation) and titiksha (endurance of all the physical and psychological disturbances, without lamentation). These are eligibility criteria for a spiritual study. So, karmanushtanam is a path of graduation in achieving the purpose of human life. That is its importance.

**Q:** Many says, as they are reading Vedanta and are very much qualified in that and in Vedanta line, no need for doing daily Puja, Sandhyavandam, Pitru shraddham etc., is this correct?

**Swamiji:** No, it is not 100% correct. For those in brahmacharya (bachelorhood), grihasthashram (householder's life), it is compulsory to do puja, sandhyavandanam, pitru shraddham, etc. Householders should lead the next generation in the proper path of Dharma sastra and so

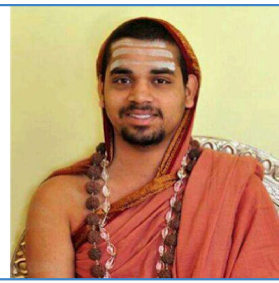


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giving up such rituals would not be within Dharma sastra. Also, it is indeed the fruits of doing these that will improve our understanding of the sastras.

A stage after that is to gradually retire from grihasthashram (family life) towards sanyasa. Their karma can be reduced, but not totally given up. Time given for external puja is gradually substituted by the time given for study of Vedanta sastras, which is jnana yajna.

Thereafter, maintaining thought and sense control, dedicating one's time fully for the study of Vedanta is allowed by the sastra. This is called Sanyasa, renunciation. Vividisha sanyasa also has small rituals, but Vidvat sanyasa does not have. This study is not just an intellectual practice. It needs divine grace.

**Q :** What is Panchangam? What is the purpose of it?

**Swamiji :** Panchangam is our Indian calendar, based on astronomical calculations. Pancha+anga refers to five limbs of time namely tithi, vara, nakshatra, yoga and karana. So, panchanga presents day-wise planetary positions and bases for the festivals, eclipses and other event-based rituals and austerities. Panchangam also gives a forecast of the behaviour of climate and crops in the year ahead.



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We wish success in all our affairs and we believe that time is God, all planets and stars are Gods. Their positions do bear an influence on us as individuals and the environment around us. So, it becomes essential to know auspicious days and times of the day to plan the ideal time to conduct important ceremonies or even other transactions. Similarly, knowing inauspicious days, time and events helps in avoiding them. Panchangam also is a good aid for responding to and handling any unplanned happenings.

**Q :** For what purpose have we been advised to read at least one sloka from Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā daily? Is there any procedure in doing this?

**Swamiji :** Gita mahatmyam in Varaha purana, presented as a dialogue between Sri Parvati and Sri Parameshwara explains the various benefits of study of Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā. He says that one would be blessed with a human body on reciting a Gītā sloka daily.



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Excerpts of Gita mahatmyam are presented below:  
adhyaayam shlokapaadam vaa nityam yah pathate narah  
sa yaati narataam yaavanmanwantaram vasundhare



If one reads a discourse or even a part of a verse daily, he retains a human body on earth till the end of a manvantara (71 mahayugas or 308,448,000 years).

Gitaayaah shlokadashakam sapta pancha chatushtayam  
dwaatrenekam tadardhamvaa shlokaanaam yah pathennarah  
chandalokamavaapnoti varshaanaamayutam dhruvam  
Gitaapaathasamaayukto mrito maanushataam vrajet

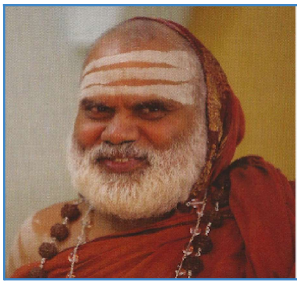
He who repeats ten, seven, five, four, three, two verses or even one or half of it attains the region of the moon and lives there for 10,000 years. Accustomed to the daily study of the Gita, a dying man comes back to life again as a human being.

While we are understanding the benefit of reading even one sloka, we should understand that we should learn the slokas at least one by one. Also, the benefits of chanting one chapter and the whole of the Gītā daily is also said in the Gita mahatmyam.

The ideal way is to chant the whole of the Gita in fifteen-day cycles starting from Amavasya to Purnima and vice versa. Gita Mahatmyam should be recited at the beginning and the end of the cycle, and Gita Dhyana slokas daily before chanting the chapter. The first and the second chapters should be read together preferably (at least up to the 39th sloka of 2nd chapter), as the teaching of the shastras begin from 11th sloka of the second chapter. Gita should be recited with absolute shraddha and bhakti.

**Q :** Daily we are putting kolam/ rangoli in front of our house. Is this just a tradition that we blindly follow or is there any specific reason behind this?

**Swamiji :** The house is decorated with a rangoli at the entrance as a welcome to guests. A grand rangoli indicates a function or a festival. On days that pitru karma is being performed, the absence of rangoli acts as an indicator of a private function including only family members. Also, it cautions the visitor of times of grieving.

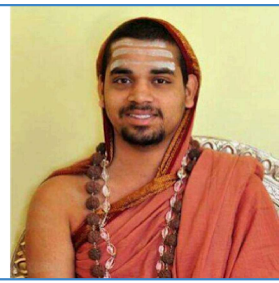


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The rice flour used in rangoli is consumed by ants and small insects. This serves to partly fulfill bhuta yajna, one of the Pancha maha yajnas or the daily do's in life.

Bhuta yajna, offerings to the animal kingdom and manushya yajna, hospitality to known/ unknown atithis or guests are expressions of our thanksgiving to the contributors of the food production cycle.

The few minutes of making the rangoli could have helped warming up the body to work and added Vitamin D on exposure to sunlight for the one laying the rangoli.

Every tradition is believed to have a reason behind it. Following it arouses our curiosity and inspires us to know that reason.

**Q :** Nowadays a plastic sheet with some design stickers are used in the front door as rangoli. Is this acceptable?

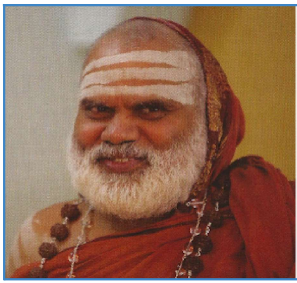
**Swamiji :** Plastic sticker rangolis are not consumable by the small ants and insects. They cannot be removed and re-used at ease, to indicate the household's happenings.



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**Q :** Why is Japa important in our life? **Swamiji :** Bhagavan Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, "Yajnanam japa yajnosmi". Among yajnas, I am japa yajna (Chapter 10 Sloka #25). This shows how much importance Bhagavan gives to Japa yajna and encourages it.

The mind forms an important and integral part of our life but we need to keep it under control. If we let it loose, it will wander. Though we try to keep the mind under control through the intellect, it needs some training and support. Japa plays a crucial role in that. Japa sets a routine and orderliness to the thinking pattern of the mind and helps in bringing the mind under control. In this human birth, the right mind is an important tool to understanding and attaining moksha. Japa yields seen (drishta) and unseen (adrishta) benefits in conditioning the mind. Considering all this, it becomes quite clear that japa has an important role to play in our lives.

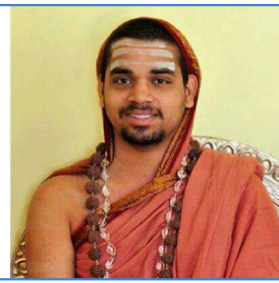


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It is good for both boys and girls to get initiated from childhood itself. Traditionally, when about 8 years of age, a child would have been initiated into the practice of japa by elders in the family. It would get engrained at that young age, that not a day's japa would get skipped. Also, it is very easy to do and does not need paraphernalia.

**Q :** While doing any Mantra Japa, is it a must to get Upadesam from a Guru?

**Swamiji:** Yes. Japa without upadesam (initiation) by a guru will not bear purna phala (complete benefit).



**Q :** If so, please tell us how we should approach a Guru?

**Swamiji :** You can ask any religious guru for mantropadesham.

Approach a guru of the tradition with which you are connected. Your family or friends could help establish the link.

You should participate in their satsangs and be part of their organisation for a while.

You should express your shraddha bhakti to instil the confidence in the guru that you would sincerely perform the japa.

You should do namaskarams to the guru, offer them fruits etc and request for a mantropadesham for performing japa.

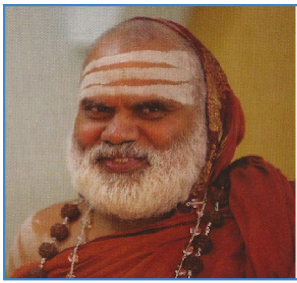
**Q :** Mantra Japas can be chanted any time without counting or is there any procedure?

**Swamiji :** Mantra japa should be chanted as per the count giving quality time at least once a day. It graduates to becoming a natural process by which the japa just keeps running in the mind. This is called mantra siddhi.

Days of asaucham are exceptions for chanting the mantra. One should not chant during those times, though it may just keep running in the mind. Such mental activity is not wrong and need not be stopped.

**Q :** Suppose after doing "Kayena vacha..." if we continue our Mantra Japa, how to conclude it before going to bed. Please explain to us.

**Swamiji :** If we continue the mantra japa, at bedtime one can conclude it by saying "Kayena vacha..." in the mind. The ritual of offering water with it is not mandatory then.

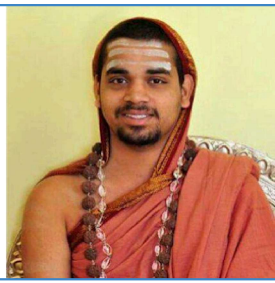


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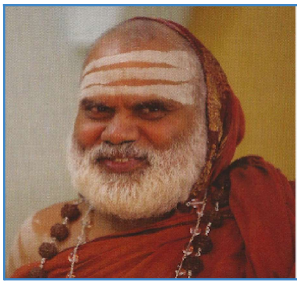


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**Q :** Swamiji in today's situation stress and depression are high among people. Not able to face and handle reality. How to deal with it.

**Swamiji :** As the Bhagavad Gita begins, Arjuna represents people under stress and depression. At the end of the Gita, we say -Where Bhagavan Sri Krishna and Arjuna are present, there is bound to be prosperity, happiness, righteousness, success (over all psychological problems) and liberation from the cycle of births and deaths (Gita 18.78). This shraddha bhakti instill confidence in us.

What causes stress and depression? The common reason is the longing or aversion to sense objects. They are one's enemies. Bhagavan Sri Krishna warns us not to come under their spell. Instead, He commands that our actions should be based on the mandates of the sastras.

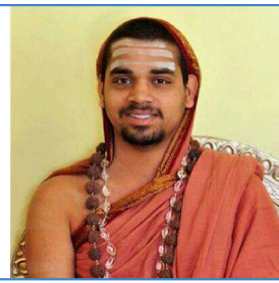


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So, one should act devoid of expectations, anger and frustrations renouncing all actions to Bhagavan (Gita 3.30, 3.34, 16.24).

We also need to know the reality to be able to face and handle it. According to our sastras we are different from the body. We are jivas residing in human bodies temporarily. Jivas are neither born nor die though the gross body changes. Identifying the self with the body causes materialistic attitude and disturbs happiness. Understanding the self as jiva makes us follow the scriptures and be dharmic (righteous). (Gita 2.22)

The scriptures enunciate four purushartas or goals for life- dharma, artha, kama, moksha. Of that, dharma and moksha are the most important. To abide by dharma we reduce desires, adopt discrimination, dispassion and discipline the mind. Developing desire for moksha gradually, we approach a guru who gives the knowledge of moksha. Moksha is nothing but eternal happiness or ananda. Understanding this is the shield against disturbances and equips us to deal with uncertainties.

**Q :** Many people are afraid that they even resist routine. They feel everything is gone and fear of death is ruling high. How our Sastram guides us to overcome such a mentality. Is there a way in our Sastram???

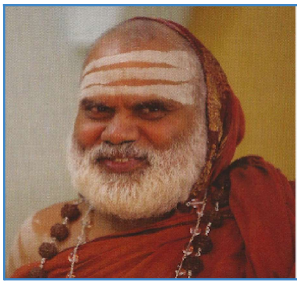


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**Swamiji :** One should meditate upon such circumstances including death.

We are happy to sleep every day and we do not wonder what happens when we sleep. We should compare it with sleep and develop acceptance over leaving this body and take death as a natural, physical event. We should analyse what will happen to the world if that happens. We should meditate upon what causes the fear. This could be anxiety and fear of possible suffering after death. We should understand that death is dissociation with the physical body. It is the association with the body that causes suffering. Dissociation with the body therefore should not be a matter for worry. We cannot on our own leave the body, but it is natural for the body to leave us and it is factual. Death is certain for one who is born.

Verses from the Gita in this context would be useful to learn and meditate upon.  
jatasya hi dhruvo mrtyur dhruvam janma mrtasya ca

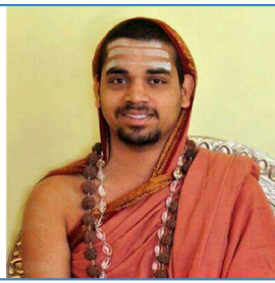


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tasmad apariharye 'rthe na tvam socitum arhasi (Gita II-27)

- Death is certain for one who is born and rebirth certain for the dead.

avyaktadini bhutani vyakta-madhyani bhārata

avyakta-nidhanany eva tatra ka paridevana(Gita II-28)

- Before birth beings are not manifest and after death, they become unmanifest again.

So, it is important for us to understand that we should do good deeds, think good thoughts and speak good words as long as we are alive. If we do that, we will never be afraid of death. We should not desire or dislike life. We should not desire or dislike death. That smoothens both life and death.



**Q :** Many specialists say Yoga is advised for the present situation. When we should do Yoga and for doing Yoga is there any specific timing?

**Swamiji :** Yoga is good for wellness of the body and the mind. It can be practiced in the morning or in the evening preferably.

**Q :** How should one prepare mentally for handling any disaster and to remain calm?

**Swamiji :** If one does not want sorrow, then, one should also not be overwhelmed by joys, and it should be with the clear understanding that neither joy nor sorrow is real.

Sri Thiruvalluvar conveys this in the Thirukkural (#629, 628, 341)-

One who is not excited about the pleasant does not get disturbed by the unpleasant.

One who does not desire enjoyment and considers hindrances as natural will not suffer.

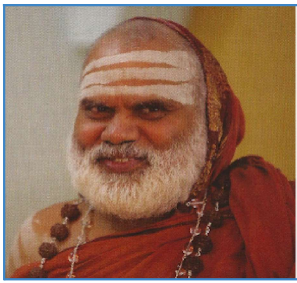
One does not encounter sufferings from objects one has no attachment for.

With this understanding, rest assured, one can handle any situation and remain calm.

**Q :** How to educate the next generation about the values of our traditions?

**Swamiji :** Family is the institution where children need to be taught values and traditions. Parents are responsible and are the first gurus to teach these. They should follow the teachings themselves and lead by model. It is important and useful to inculcate important values in the children when they are young. Parents thus become worthy of worship. The following sloka is suggested for daily chanting.

Maata pitrubhyaam vapusha: janakabhyaamudaanvaham

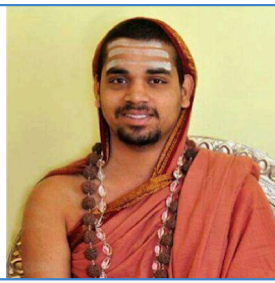


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Namaskaromi vijnana janakabhyaam sivaptaye

- I offer pranams out of gratitude to my parents who have given me this physical body, intelligence and discipline to always be happy.

**Q :** Is traditional dressing code a must for doing pooja or Parayanam etc?

**Swamiji :** It is preferable to adopt a traditional dress code generally and at least for pooja. We are presenting ourselves before the Lord while conducting puja or doing parayanam. Our dress is simple and ensures purity.

Adorning the uniform inspires the police and the military men's courage and patriotism. So,



being appropriately dressed sets the tone and fuels deeper involvement. Several advantages of our traditional dress including medical benefits are also being shared these days- how the nine yards saree protects the spine etc.

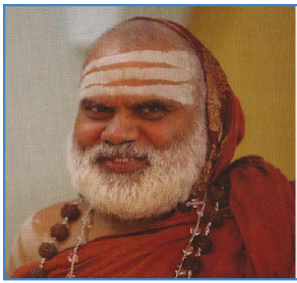
It is important to turn the pages of history to remember that lifestyle and dressing changed with the coming of the British and further changes have come with

the opening of global markets.

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**Q :** When sick and not able to follow the procedures in the dressing code, how to do Pranayama or chanting of mantras? What is to be followed?

**Swamiji :** When it is not feasible to follow the traditional dress code, one may mentally imagine themselves to be adorned in such clothes. Bhavana or attitude is most important. This is not to take away the fact that as far as possible it is good to dress in traditional clothes. Exceptions are under compulsion.

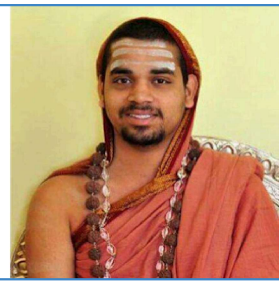


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**Q :** If we suppose we sleep in the morning or in between time, how should we do our evening Parayanam?

**Swamiji :** One should not sleep in Sandhya kaala (sunrise and sunset). One should also not sleep during the day and keep awake in the night.

Purifying oneself by Snanam (having a bath) prior to parayanam should be followed.



**Q :** Many nowadays are avoiding preparing naivedyam in house. They are buying from outside and offering it as naivedyam in pooja. Is this correct? Can it be done?

**Swamiji :** Naivedyam is offered before Bhagavan with gratitude for what we have got by His grace. In our culture, the performance of every action connects us with God. When we prepare naivedyam, we ensure purity of body and mind and carry a prayerful attitude. What is offered to Bhagavan becomes prasadam. Prasadam removes raga-dvesha (likes

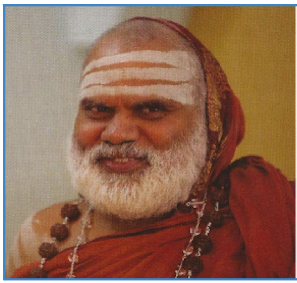
and dislikes) and it comes from Him.

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Preparing neivedyam ourselves gives us quality time with Bhagavan and the attitude gives happiness and peace to the mind. Sourcing it from outside in the event of inability should not become an accepted practice.

**Q :** Due to lack of time many are not doing Daily Pooja. How to do Daily Pooja without any excuse? Kindly help us and teach that procedure Swamiji

**Swamiji :** It needs a deep understanding of the benefits, discipline and practice to maintain a routine. We never lack time to eat every day. Just as food nourishes the body, prayers nourish the mind. One needs to initially invest the time and effort initially. Once it becomes a practice it would not get skipped generally.

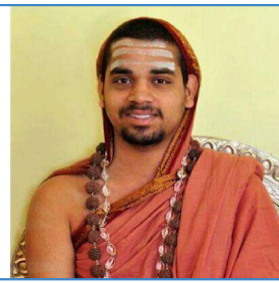


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**Q:** Kindly explain to us what Pitru Paksha (Mahayala Paksham)?



**Swamiji :** Paksha is a period of fifteen days being the lunar cycle. Mahalaya paksha is a waning fortnight from prathamai (the day after Pournima) to Amavasya, generally occurring in September or October every year. It is a period dedicated to the ancestors. Offerings are made to the ancestors generally based on the tithi (the lunar cycle day) of their demise with a view to pay homage out of gratitude. The rules relating to food and other lifestyle matters are mentioned in the sastras.

**Q :** Those who are regularly doing Shraddham to their ancestors, should also do this Mahalaya shraddha? Or can one skip this?

**Swamiji :** No they should not skip Mahalaya shraddha. Even if shraddham to ancestors is done regularly, one should perform mahalaya shraddha.

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**Q :** Some are doing Mahalaya Shraddha alone and skipping the Shraddham? Is this correct?

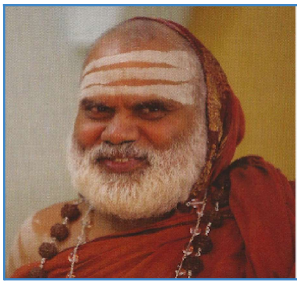
**Swamiji :** Shraddham should be performed both on the tithi of the deceased and during Mahalaya paksha also.

**Q :** Kindly explain what Sannyasa Mahalayam is? Who is eligible for doing this?

**Swamiji :** Sanyasta mahalayam is done for sanyasis on dwadasi tithi. If anybody has attained siddhi in the family (like father, grand father, father's grand-father) one can do mahalayam on dwadasi tithi.

**Q :** In Mahalaya paksha can we do for our ancestors on any Tithi or it should be done on their respective Tithis? Some are doing it for all the 15 days. What should we follow?

**Swamiji :** It is good to do this in the appropriate tithis. But since Mahalaya paksha starts on prathamai and stretches till Amavasya, Pournami tithi does not come at all. Some people perform shraddha for ancestors of three generations and eventually it becomes everyday. One may be guided by family's traditional practices and the family purohit in deciding upon this.

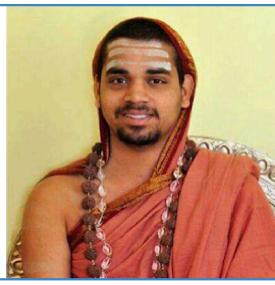


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