

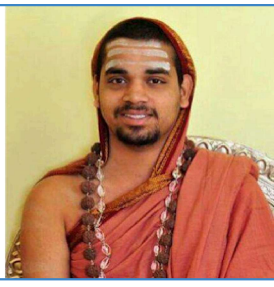


# Voice of Jagadguru

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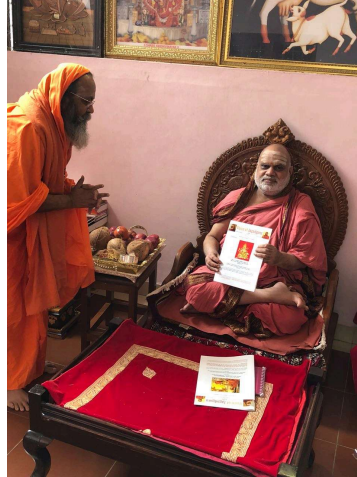
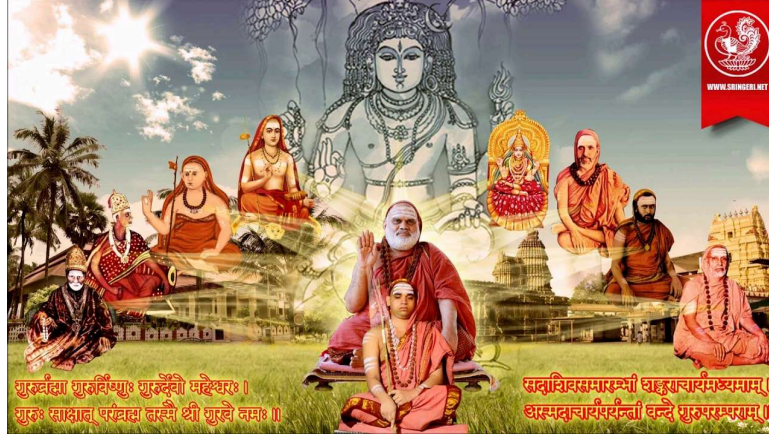
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## CHODANAA

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### 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) entering into the third year of Chodanaa e magazine. {Photos taken on Thursday, 19th July 2018 at Sringeri }. This edition is coming as a special edition on the collection of “The Path of Dharma Sastram” Question and Answers.



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### Anugraha Bhashanam

#### Do your duty with dedication

Attaining Self-knowledge should be man's sole objective. That is what seekers of truth



are striving for. Some

may doubt whether a fully realised jnani will perform karmas or not. Lord Krishna clarifies this point beautifully in the Bhagavad Gita:

न मे पार्थाऽस्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।

नानाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥

na me pārthā'sti kartavyaṃ triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana |

nānāptamavāptavyaṃ varta eva ca karmaṇi ||

Jagadguru Śankarācārya

His Holiness Mahāsannidhānam Śrī Śrī Śrī Bhārati Tirtha Mahāswāmiji lighting lamp at sri Bhuvanewari Temple, Pudukottai and Pujuasri Swami Omkarananda Saraswati, Founder Acharya, Śrī Swami Chidbhananda Ashram @ Pudukottai, May 13-14, 2017 Vijaya Yatra.

As far as Bhagavan is concerned, He need not do any karma, nor has He to achieve anything which He does not possess. He is eternally free. There is nothing for Him to attain. Still He engages in karmas because His objective is to lead people along the right path.

That is why even jnanis continue to perform karma. They act without the sense of doership. However, their karmas (actions) are not like those of others. Their actions are selfless and are always beneficial to others.

Though Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada was the embodiment of Jnana, He composed numerous works, propagated dharma and bestowed knowledge on real seekers. We all must clearly remember this and follow the same path.

We bless all those pursuing the truth to realise this well and perform their duties with dedication to Bhagavan.

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



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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.

1. Namaskaram Swamiji, Please clear our doubts and make us start our journey in the correct path to reach our goal in our life.



Our first question is What does "Dharma Śāstra" mean?

**Swamiji:** The word Dharma has got several meanings. Dharma is one of the four human goals. (Dharma, Artha, Kāmā and Mokśa). Dharma means Punyam, in the context of human pursuits. Dharma is defined as that, which sustains the harmony of the universe. (धारणात् धर्म इत्याहुः) (dhāraṇāt dharma ityāhuḥ). Dharma refers to our duties, rituals, attitudes and values. Dharma is also defined as - that which guides our life, by prescribing the Do's and Don'ts and that which kindles us to do the right

and refrain from the wrong. (चोदना लक्षणार्थो धर्मः) (cōdanā lakṣaṇārthō dharmah)

Śāstra is that, which teaches the best and offers protection to oneself. (हितं शास्ति दुःखात् त्रायते इति शास्त्रम्) (hitam śāsti du:khāt trāyatē iti śāstram). Dharma is broadly classified into Samānya Dharma and Viśeśa Dharma. (General and specific). Dharma Śāstra refers to those scriptures, which address the Jiva living in the human body and leads him in the right path. The primary source of Dharma (Dharma Jñana Sadhana or Dharma Pramāna) is the first portion of the Vedas, known as Karma Kāṇḍā.

The purpose of all the Smritis, Itihāsas and Purānas is to teach Dharma. It is very important for every Jiva living in the human body, to know the essence of Dharma Śāstra and follow that, for gaining real peace and happiness. Dharma channelizes our thoughts, words and deeds. Dhārmic actions produce Puṇya, which is unseen. Even though one knows the Do's and Don'ts through common sense, it is hardly applied. Hence, it is important to follow the words of the scriptures.



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यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृत्य वर्तते कामकारतः।

न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥ (16-23)

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याऽकार्यव्यवस्थितौ।

ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ (16-24)

yaḥ śāstravidhimutsṛtya vartatē kāmakārataḥ ॥

na sa sid'dhimavāpnōti na sukhaṃ na parāṃ gatim ॥

(16-23)

tasmācchāstraṃ pramāṇaṃ tē kāryākāryavyavasthitau |

jñātvā śāstravidhānōktaṃ karma kartumihār'hasi ॥

(16-24)

Bhagavan Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, "Having given up the scriptural injunctions, he who lives according to the impulse of desire attains neither purity, nor happiness. He does not attain the supreme goal also. Therefore, the scriptures are the source of knowledge for you in determining the do's and don'ts. Having known the teaching of the scriptural injunctions, you should do your duty here."

### 2. Who are all eligible to follow this "Śāstra"?

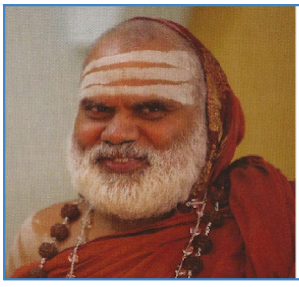
**Swamiji** : All human beings (Jivas living in the human bodies are eligible to follow the Śāstra). Dharma Śāstras prescribe general and specific rules and regulations for people from all backgrounds. Hence, everyone is eligible.

### 3. Is there any age limitation or gender qualification or any specific restrictions to follow this śāstra?

**Swamiji**: Yes. The general Dharma is common for all. For specific Dharma (Viseśa Dharma), there are restrictions. In Vedic tradition, rituals are done, even before the child is born. Once a child is born, several rituals starting from Jātakarma are done. There are specific duties/rituals prescribed for each gender and every stage of life. For example, there are duties prescribed for a Brahmachāri (in studenthood) and there are another set of duties prescribed for a Grihastha (house holder). The lifestyle, (as prescribed by the Śāstras) of a Vānaprastha and Sannyāsi are also entirely different.

### 4. How should we qualify ourselves to follow Dharma Śāstra?

**Swamiji** First, one should have sraddha in scriptures and words of Guru. The words of the scriptures and Jagadgurus can never be false – Such a deep-rooted faith or trust is called



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sraddha. One should not follow his likes and dislikes. That will never do good to oneself and the society.



One should understand the greatness of human birth. Human birth is very rare and the very purpose of being blessed with this human body is to do good to society.

5. To learn śāstra Guru is needed. From whom we should learn this Śāstra. Who is considered as

a Guru?

**Swamiji :** In our tradition, parents are considered to be the first Gurus. Children learn informally from the environment.

श्रोत्रियोऽवृजिनोऽकामहतो यो ब्रह्मवित्तमः।

ब्रह्मण्युपरतश्शान्तो निरिन्धन इवानलः॥

अहेतुकदयासिन्धुर्बन्धुरानमतां सताम्॥

śrōtriyō'vṛjinō'kāmahatō yō br'hmavittamaḥ |

Br'hmaṇyuparataśśāntō nirindhana ivānalaḥ ||

ahētukadayāsindhurbandhurānamatām satām||

The Guru is well versed in the Vedas; he is sinless; he is not smitten by desire; he is a knower of Brahman; he is super-eminent; withdrawing himself into Brahman, he is ever at peace, like the fire unfed by fuel. The Guru is an ocean of spontaneous compassion that asks for no reason. He is a friend to the pure, who makes obeisance to him. These are the qualities mentioned about a Vedanta Guru. It can also be applied for a Dharma Guru. A person, who is

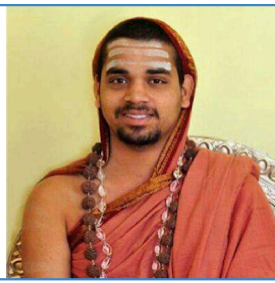


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an authority in the Dharma Śāstras; who follows Dharma and encourages others to follow Dharma is a Dharma Guru.

### 6. How should we start our daily day?

**Swamiji:** Every dawn is equivalent to a new birth. Hence, every day has to be utilized properly, without abusing the life of oneself or others. One should wake up early in the morning with prayers and plan one's day. Even though one has commitments, he or she should predominantly think about the aspect of Dharma and value systems in all the activities throughout the day. "Getting up early; contemplating on God; thinking about one's noble actions that are to be done during the day; worshipping one's parents – this is how one has to start the day" says Peruvayil Mulliyar in Achara Kovai – a tamil scripture.

### 7. Swamiji, what are all the duties that should be done by us daily in our day to day life without any excuses. In this case are there any duties insisted by our sastras separately

for Gents and Ladies? If so please explain to us Swamiji.

**Swamiji :** Pancha Maha Yajnas are to be done everyday, without fail.

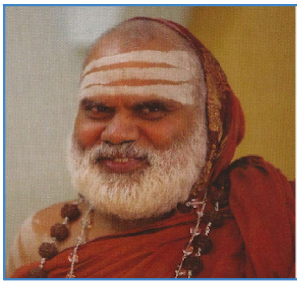
The five fold duties are -

1. Deva Yajna.... Offering prayers to God,
2. Pitru Yajna... offering prayers to forefathers (we can add - taking care of parents also,
3. Manushya Yajna ... offering any form of help to fellow human beings,
4. Bhuta Yajna... taking care of the plants and animals and
5. Brahma Yajna.... learning the



scriptures in a traditional manner.

From early morning, to night, all our actions are to be dedicated to God. There are slokas prescribed in our scriptures for day to day activities - right from waking up. One can learn those slokas and establish a relationship with God. Most importantly, all our actions should be aligned with Dharma. There are several pujas meant for ladies. All vratham like Ganesha Chaturthi vratham, Rishi Panchami vratam are meant for ladies.

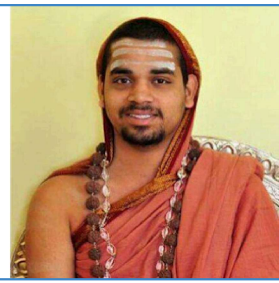


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**8. Nowadays as a fashion we Hindus are not using Sacred ashes, Kumkum, Thilka etc on our forehead. Mostly they used only stickers instead of bindi. Moreover they light lamps without traditional codes such as applying bindi, traditional dresses. Is this correct? What is the use and benefit of keeping Sacred ashes, Kumkum, Sandal in our forehead?**

**Swamiji :** There are certain traditional practices, prescribed by our ancestors. We should not give room for our likes and dislikes. We have to follow the rules. If we compromise, results also will be compromised. Traditional practices have reasons behind them. They were prescribed by our wise ancestors.

Keeping vibhuti and kumkum - as the prasadam, on our forehead blesses us with the unseen grace of God. Not only that, they have the power to ward off evil forces, from attacking us in subtle ways.

The word bhasma means, "That by which our sins are destroyed and the Lord is remembered". The application of bhasma therefore signifies destruction of the evil and remembrance of the divine. Bhasma is called vibhuti (which means "glory") as it gives glory to one who applies it and raksha (which means a source of protection) as it protects the wearer from ill health and evil, by purifying him or her. Most importantly, a culture cannot be kept alive, without people following it.

One should feel proud to be born in this culture and to follow traditional dresses and codes.

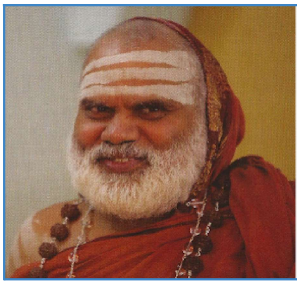
**9. Namaskaram Swamiji, It is said that we should do 'Panchayatana Puja' daily ? In such a case in many houses we are not seeing this. If so, shall a person start anew? What is the procedure for that?**

**Swamiji :** According to my understanding, Panchayatana Puja is a replacement of Agnihotraadi karmas. Therefore, Panchayatana Puja can be included as part of Deva Yajna itself. If done as part of Deva Yajna, panchayatana Puja is nice. One can start newly. There are several books on Panchayatana Puja. One can refer to the book published by Srivatsa Somadeva Sarma

**10. Our next doubt is, It is said that "Mahabharatam" is considered as fifth veda. But many elders of the family in many places are telling that we should not read "Mahabharatam" in our house. Then how we can learn it. Please clear our doubt.**

**Swamiji :** It is a myth that one should not read Mahabharata, at home. This superstitious idea has crept in our thinking. One can read Mahabharata at home, by all means. There is no authentic information in the scriptures, that one should not read Mahabharata at home. They are creating unwanted sentiments.

The two important scriptures - Srimad Bhagavad Gita and Sri Vishnu Sahasranama are part of Mahabharata. Reading Mahabharata will bring auspiciousness to our homes. By learning the meaning of the slokas, one can understand about the mistakes committed by human beings and



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on how to avoid mistakes and refine ourselves. Thus, by reading Mahabharata, one will gain clarity in knowledge.

**11. It is said that ladies are not entitled to chant "Gayatri Japa". In such a case what is suggested for them to chant daily to replace "Chanting of Gayatri Mantra".**

**Swamiji** : Vedic mantras are said to be beneficial – only if chanted with proper Samskaras. Vedic mantras are like weapons – they should not be misused or abused. Mahatmas with compassion have given a sloka, which has the same meaning of the Gayatri Mantra.

**यो देवः सवितास्माकं धियो धर्मादिगोचराः**

**प्रेरयेत् तस्य यद्भर्गः तद्वरेण्यमुपास्महे**

**yō dēvaḥ savitāsmākaṁ dhiyō dharmādigōcarāḥ**

**prērayēt tasya yadbhargāḥ tadvarēṅyamupāsmahē**

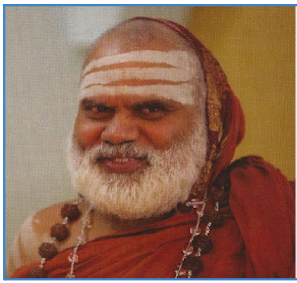
The meaning of this sloka is as follows -May we offer our prayers to the effulgent Sun God, to kindle our intelligence in the right direction.

**12. It is said that Pīpal (ashvattha) and Neem are the royal children of Mother Nature's kingdom of trees. Please explain its significance...**

**Swamiji** : Ashvattha Vriksha and Nimba Vriksha are considered to be very special and auspicious. The Ashvattha Vriksha has been mentioned in Sri Vishnu Sahasranama in the portion, nyagrodha udumbara ashvatta....Bhagavan also mentions that, among the trees, he is the Ashvattha Vriksha in the chapter on Isvara Vibhuti (Glory of God). (अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां Ashvattha: sarvavrikshaanaam (Bhagavad Gita Chapter X Sloka 26) Various parts of Ashvattha tree are capable of curing various types of diseases, according to Ayurveda. Ashvattha Vriksha is a tree with minimum consumption of water and maximum contribution of oxygen. Neem trees are also known for its medicinal properties. It is used in the worship of the Divine Mother.

**13. We are having the traditional ceremony of doing marriage to pīpal and neem trees and doing prathista of Vināyaka and Nāgarāja. What does it indicates.?**

**Swamiji** : We are worshipping Isvara, who is present everywhere. We don't have the concept of one God or the concept of many Gods. All we have is, "There is only God". We worship Ashvattha tree as the representative of the plant kingdom. Ashvattha tree represents the masculine force and Neem tree represents the feminine force. Traditional ceremony of doing marriage to them, brings auspiciousness in the family. Prathishtha of Sri Vinayaka and Sri Nagaraja and worshipping them, blesses the devotees with happy married life and progeny. This is an expression of Sradha of our people, which has been followed for ages. This has been practised in different forms in various parts of the country.

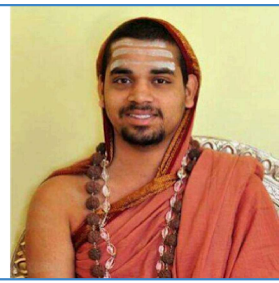


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**14 . In our daily routine dharma, worship of nature and protection is said in pancha maha Yajna. Is this only done by gents, or it can be done by anyone. If so how to perform this Yajna by all.**

**Swamiji** : Worship of God (Deva Yajna), worship of ancestors, parents (Pitru Yajna), taking care of the plant kingdom and animal kingdom (Bhuta Yajna), helping the fellow human beings (Nara Yajna) and learning the prescribed scriptures (Brahma Yajna) are the Pancha Maha Yajnas. This is meant specifically for a Grihastha (a householder), belonging to any Community. Our culture does not look upon a Grihastha as a separate entity. A Grihastha has to do his duties, assisted by his Dharmapatni (wife). That is, the duties of a husband and the duties of a wife are prescribed together, in the form of Panchamaha yajna.

**15 . It also said that doing Pradakshinam of Pīpal (ashvattha) is considered as more auspicious. Is there any specific day or star in doing such a ritual. How to perform this. Any sloka there while performing such Pradakshinam. Please clarify for us.**

**Swamiji** : Yes. Doing Pradakshina of Ashvattha vriksha is considered to be very auspicious and healthy. Every day, early morning, before sunrise is very congenial, according to scriptures and medical science. Generally, Pradakshinam is done in Amavasya days. If Somavara (Monday) falls on Amavasya, it is more auspicious. The following sloka has to be chanted, while doing Pradakshina

मूलतो ब्रह्मरूपाय मध्यतो विष्णुरूपिणे ।

अग्रतः शिवरूपाय वृक्षराजाय ते नमः ॥

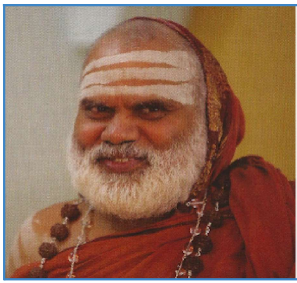
mūlatō brahmarūpāya madhyatō viṣṇurūpiṇē ।

agrata: śivarūpāya vṛkṣarājāya tē nama: ॥

This sloka is given in Ashvatta Stotram - instructed by Brahmadeva to Narada. Ashwatha Vriksha is an embodiment of Trimurtis - Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Doing pradakshina for 108 times, will invoke divine grace and one will be cleansed from all Paapaas. Ashvattha Pradakshina will bless a person with marriage, children, health and longevity.

**16. We notice that many religious leaders gladly accept donations and support from persons known to earn money from sources not legal or right. How to reconcile this?**

**Swamiji** : The answer may appear like a justification. But, it is very important to see this from an important perspective. Money, as it is, is not good or bad. The character of the person who possesses it, is superimposed on money. If we analyze the root or source of donations, most of them happen to be earned illegally. This is not only in the present situation. There were situations parallel to this in the past too, that is why, there is a prayaschitta - a prayer included in the regular Sandhya Vandanam and Madhyanikam for Asat pratigraha - money earned from a wrong source.

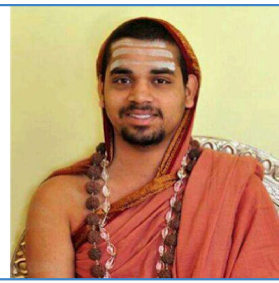


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Many religious leaders are tirelessly involved in doing great service for Sanatana Dharma. To do that, they also need money. It is indeed against their values to accept money from illegal sources. There were circumstances, when they even refused to take such money. But many leaders, taking into consideration the bigger result - welfare of the society, do take money from such illegal persons. If taking money from such sources is going to give them paapam, they will accept that too.

At the end, everyone will have to experience the fruits of their actions, be it noble or bad.

**17. There is certain compulsion in other religions to pursue disciplined worship, such as mandatory prayer times and visit to places of worship. Why are there no such prescriptions in the Hindu system?**

**Swamiji :** Sanatana Dharma prescribes a number of ways of disciplined worship. Vedas and scriptures based on Vedas do talk about a systematic life-style involving the pancha maha yajna - the five-fold worship (Worship of God, parents, human beings, Rishis and the ecosystem

around us) to be done everyday.

We have to understand the strong philosophical background of Sanatana Dharma - which tells that everything is sacred, each and every fraction of a second is sacred.

God is both the maker and material cause of this universe. God has become this Universe. So



everything in this creation, (including time and space) is an altar of worship.

It is because of this fact, that there is no one particular way of worship.

Sanatana Dharma is like a huge university offering hundreds of courses at the same time. Based on our family tradition, taste and faith, we have to follow certain disciplined worship.



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### **18. We come across in the stories from puranas conflicting descriptions of some deity or other being superior to one another. Why is this so and how to reconcile?**

**Swamiji** : Names and forms are many, God is one. The very same water gets various names like wave, ocean, ice etc., Sweets made up of the same flour may have different forms, but sweetness is one. Various names and forms are prescribed for one God, so that people of different levels of maturity can hold on to a particular name and form at the initial level. At the same time, it is very important to understand that God is one.

Puranas do talk about the supremacy of a particular deity. To glorify a particular deity, all other deities are mentioned as inferior to that. Thus in Siva Puranam, Siva is superior and Vishnu, Brahma etc., are all inferior to Siva. In Vishnu Puranam, Vishnu is the most important deity and all other deities are subordinates to him.

We can understand the above situation in terms of Karana Brahman and Karya Brahman. Brahman or the Ultimate Reality is free from all kinds of attributes, including names and forms. According to Advaita Vedanta, even Isvara is superimposed on Brahman. In every specific purana, a particular main deity is chosen as the Karana Brahman and all other deities are said to be products born out of this main deity, thus they are known as Karya Brahman.

This keeps on changing, thus Siva is the Karana Brahman in Siva Puranam, but Karya Brahman in Vishnu Puranam and so on. If one can assimilate the intention of the Puranas to glorify a particular deity, this can easily be understood.

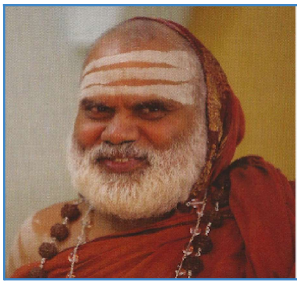
### **19. Are there Svarga, Naraka or Vaikuntha? How real are they?**

**Swamiji** : Svarga, Naraka and Vaikuntha are very much there. Though we do not see them with our physical eyes, Vedas do talk about them. Vedas - the primary scriptures are the source of knowledge, pramaanam for us, with respect to factors which are not recognized by our sense organs. Vedas are considered as the sixth sense organ, through which we get the knowledge of Atma, Brahman, punyam, papam, svarga and naraka etc.,

A person of good deeds, after this life reaches svarga, which is a place with better comforts than this world. Similarly, bad actions lead a person to naraka where he has to suffer as a result of his wrong actions. But one cannot be in svarga or naraka eternally.

Once the currency of punyam is consumed, one has to come back to this world. (Ksheene punye martya lokam visanti) says Krishna in the Gita. It is like going to U.S. for a short time and being there till your Visa permits. Vaikunta, Kailasa are talked about in the Puranas as abodes of Lord Vishnu and Lord Siva.

The word Vaikunta literally means a linear, straight mind without any angularities of likes and dislikes. Such a calm mind is the abode of Lord Vishnu. According to Advaita Vedanta, Svarka, Naraka and Vaikunta are all real in the relative angle. However, from the absolute angle,

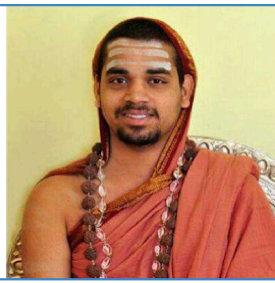


# Voice of Jagadguru

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Brahman or God alone is real and everything else is unreal, including Svarka, Naraka and Vaikunta.

### **20 . Swamiji, Please explain to us the meaning for "Puja". How one should do their daily puja. Are there any specific rules for that?**

**Swamiji** : The word Puja is a Sanskrit word and it means reverence, honour, homage, adoration, and worship. Puja is an act of expression, of our love towards a supreme being.

In Vedic way of life, Puja is very important and should be done everyday. Before any type of Puja is done, Guru Vandanam, Vigneshwara Vandanam, Pranayama and Sankalpa are to be done. Nyasa (an act of purifying one's body and limbs) is also done. It is meant for both external and internal purification. There are different types of Pujas - depending upon the types of Upacharas (offerings) that are mentioned in Tantric scriptures.

The simplest one is Panchopachara Puja with five steps -

Offering of Gandha (sandal paste), Pushpa (flowers), Dhupa (incense), Dipa (lamp), and Naivedya (food).

By this simple Puja, we invoke Bhagavan in all the five elements and worship him.

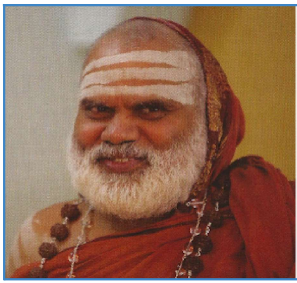
There is Shodasa Upachara Puja with sixteen steps.

1. Asana (Offering seat) 2. Padya (Offering water for washing the feet) 3. Arghya (Offering water for washing hands) 4. Achamanam (Offering water for sipping) 5. Madhuparkam (Offering a mixture of honey, curd and ghee) 6. Snanam (Offering water for bathing) 7. Vastram (Offering garments) 8. Upavitam (Offering sacred thread) 9. Abharanam (Offering ornaments) 10. Gandha: (Offering sandal paste) 11 Dhupa: (Offering incense) 12. Dipa: (Offering lamp) 13. Naivedyam (Offering food) 14. Tambulam (Offering betel leaves and nuts) 15. Neerajanam (Offering camphor light) 16. Pushpanjali (Offering flowers) The Puja ends with Pradakshina (Circumambulation), Namaskara, Stuti and Kshama Prarthana (Asking for forgiveness).

Archana is done with Ashtottarshat namavali (108 names) or Sahasranamavali (1008 names) after Abharanam. There are Chatushashti Upachara Puja with 64 steps also. If time permits, one can do that also. Actually, we must find time for doing Puja.

### **21. It is said that one should not do 'pradakshina namaskaram' in a temple, when the abhishekam is being performed to the deity, or the Grabhagraha is closed or the deity is taken around in a procession. What should be done by us during that time and how we should do our 'pradakshina namaskaram'**

**Swamiji** : We can do Japa, while Abhishekam is performed to the deity or Grabhagraha is closed. While doing Pradakshina, one must observe strict silence and do Japa with folded hands. One can do any odd number of Pradakshinas.

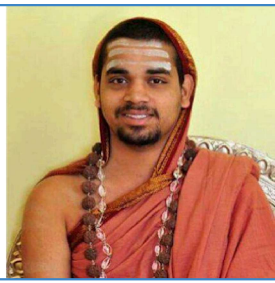


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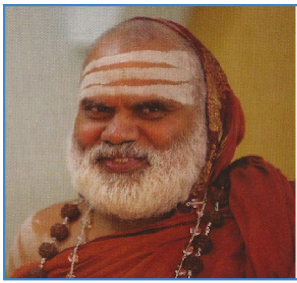
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**22 . In our sastram it is said that while having a holy dip in holy rivers like Ganges, Gothavari, Cauvery et., we should not have our dip right behind the back of another person. Please grace us how we should do our holy dip.**

**Swamiji:** The main intention of any rule, that has been prescribed by our ancestors, is to help us handle and minimize our likes and dislikes. Though such rules have been mentioned regarding the holy dip in the rivers, it may not be applicable, when people take bath in huge numbers during special occasions like Amavasya, Pushkara, Kumbha Mela etc.,

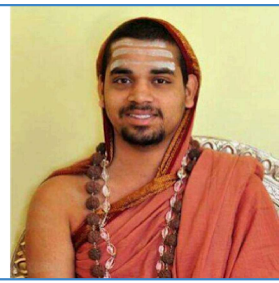


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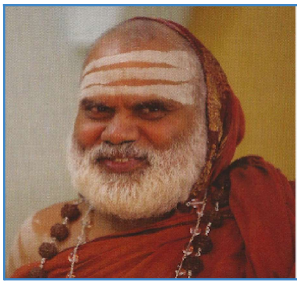
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### 23 . Why are even Gods shown in Puranas as unable to control their anger?

**Swamiji:** Puranas talk about Rishis and Devas getting angry. Anger is also considered as virtue under certain situations. One should get angry, while confronting Adharmic actions. “manyurasi manyum mayi dehi”. O Lord, you are in the form of anger, do bless me with anger - is a Vedic prayer. However, it is very important that anger should be under control. Bhagavan is free from attachment and anger, both are under His control. To depict this fact, many of our God forms have pasham (a noose indicating attachment) and ankusham (a spear like weapon indicating anger). Gods or Devas are also considered as Jivas, who are in the path of attaining refinement. Puranas beautifully describe Devas with all human weaknesses and also show how one can overcome them.

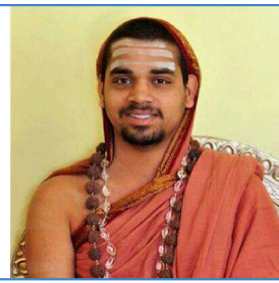


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**24. Namaskaram Swamiji, Some people do not visit temples. When questioned about the reason, they reply that they are like Poosalar Nayanar, and that they worship the Lord in their hearts. The question is: Why should one go to temples?**

**Swamiji :** Only in temples can one contemplate well on the Lord. It is sheer escapism when people say that they worship the Lord in their hearts. Why should we go to a hospital for treatment? Remaining in our homes, can we not simply pray to the Lord within, and tell



ourselves that we have been cured of the disease? No, we don't do such a thing.

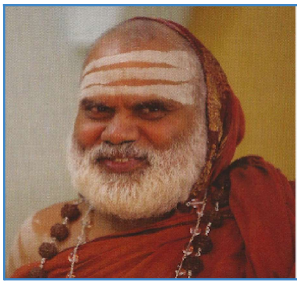
There are so many good things in our going to a temple to pray. Just think about the time that it takes for us to go to a temple to pray, and return home. Will it be possible for us to deeply worship the Lord in our hearts, for such a long duration?

Even before leaving for the temple, remaining in our homes, we should mentally visualise our

temple visit. We should mentally resolve to remain calm and not to talk about anything else to anybody. After reaching the temple, if we happen to meet our friends there, we should not indulge in gossip with them, on things worldly. Temples are holy and sacred. They act like generators. We gain so many special energies from a temple visit, which we cannot obtain by simply remaining at home.

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All forms of worship and rituals in a temple, are performed only for our sake. They are done for the sole purpose, of welfare of all the citizens of the country. All the various forms of worship there, have been so structured, only for that purpose. They are called "Parartha Puja".

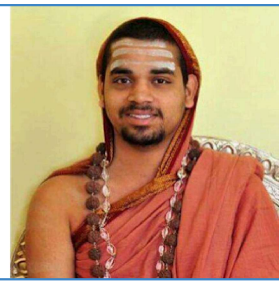


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Prayers of an individual - for one's own welfare - are called "Atmartha Puja". Daily five Kala Pujas are performed in a temple. Residents of a village should attend and offer prayers during at least one Kala Puja daily. Only then will the temple remain lively.

We have total faith that the temples have the divine powers of those who consecrated and sanctified it. Such beliefs are rational ones, that are knowledge based.



Prior to a temple visit, we should first mentally think of the visit. We should visualize in our mind, the different Sannidhis that we plan to see, and the various slokas and the Tamil songs, that we would be reciting there. Our earnest prayer should be - Oh Lord! Please cleanse my mind of all the things that are

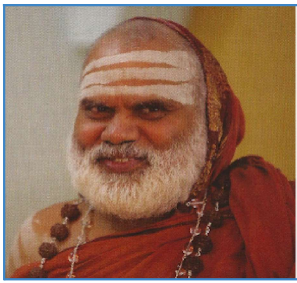
bad. Let it always be filled with noble thoughts alone!

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At the temple, our way of worship should be, as per what is laid down in the Shastras. We should prostrate at the Kodi Maram. After worshipping all the Parivara Devatas, we should worship at the Mulavar Sannidhi.

The ways of worship to be followed at a Shiva temple, and a Vishnu temple, have all been systematically codified and laid out. We should not only follow the ways on how to worship at a temple, but also teach them to the others. Chanting the Namavalis, we should proceed in an orderly queue. We should tell them the different ways of worship that are to be followed, at the different Sannidhis.

After completing the temple worship, we should sit quietly and calmly at a place, without looking at the cell phones, close our eyes, and mentally reflect on the forms of the different Gods, whose Sannidhis we had just been to. We should perform Japa, of the various Namas of the Lord. We can leave the temple, after praying for the welfare of the entire humanity.

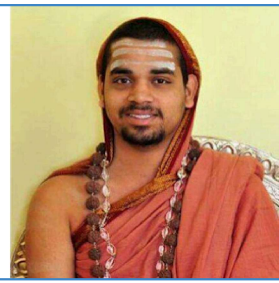


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On reaching our homes, being seated, we should once again recall our visit to the temple. Following all these alone, would help us reap the true benefits of a temple visit. With all these in their mind alone, have our ancestors prescribed, the above said methods of worship. There is even a traditional saying - One should not reside in a village, where there is no temple.

Not only that. Not everyone can afford to have a separate Puja room in their house. But all, can surely visit a temple. In the olden days, the elderly persons would spend most of their time in Japa and meditation at the temples. That would also mean, lesser problems at their homes. At a ripe old age, one might find it difficult even to walk, and at such a stage, visiting a temple will not be possible. It is only for this reason - (that the elderly cannot go to the temples) - does the Lord himself go around the town, right up to their doorsteps, in the Rathas. The temple, symbolised by the Rathas, comes right up to their homes, where they can offer their Namaskaras. If one is bedridden, and unable to even come up to the entrance, then one can mentally rejoice, by recalling all the temple visits, made in the past. By not visiting any temple, one only ends up deceiving oneself. Instead of claiming that they worship mentally, they can be frank, and admit that they do not like going to a temple. So long as we are physically fit, what difficulty can there be, in visiting a temple? We do not lose anything by visiting a temple. On seeing the elders visiting a temple, children will also be encouraged to do so themselves. All things good are centred around the temple. Simplicity in worship is valued more. Temple visits are compulsory for all. They are necessary and a must for all. Above all, it is our duty.

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