

## AMMAJI'S MESSAGE



In this newsletter's article on Ísvara, the Lord is seen as the pañca-mahābhūtas, the five great elements. This universe is a manifestation of Ísvara and all forms in this universe can be resolved into the five elements of space, air, fire, water and earth.

Since all forms in this universe, seen and unseen, are comprised of the five elements, we, human beings, are of the same matter as any other being or form around us. All differences are perceptual and apparent, only due to the different combinations of the elements. This is a crucial fact to assimilate. Many times, we take ourselves to be separate from another person or being in this universe.

There is no difference between us and the rest of the universe. This fact should guide us in our daily attitude and activities. Cultivate respect for the universe. Treat every being with respect and love. Be responsible in the usage of the Earth's resources by minimizing, conserving and recycling as often as possible.

Showing respect and behaving responsibly is our Dharma and a way of showing our love for the Lord!

Love and blessings,  
Ammaji

## INSPIRATIONS....

### QUOTES FROM AMMAJI



"Stop the commodification of Earth's resources! Today, water, forests, minerals and lands are exploited to feed the greed of a few.

Nurture life and enhance the well-being of the Whole."

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### GANGA DASAHA RA RETREAT

4th - 13th June, 2019

Tapasyalayam

On the banks of the sacred Ganga, Tapasyalayam offers you, the spiritual seeker an opportunity to enjoy not only the rich culture of the Ganga Belt, but the spiritual truth behind your inner longing for happiness.

Celebrate this auspicious time of Mother Ganga's descent to our Earthly realm, by joining Ammaji in this sacred retreat. Ammaji will unfold the Mundakopaniṣad and lead meditation and intense reflection sessions. The study sessions will be complemented with yoga sessions and treks to the neighboring villages

[Enroll](#)

# PAST EVENTS



*Ammaji addressing the event*

## PURNA VIDYA COMMUNITY CENTER VOLUNTEERS MEETING

15th February, 2019  
Chennai

Chennaiites were blessed to have Ammaji for the 'Purna Vidya Chennai' wing meet up. It comprised of the core team, volunteers, teachers and also Prabhakarji, Trustee / Treasurer and Hariharanji, Auditor, Trustee / Secretary from Dharma Rakshana Samiti.



*Volunteers meet up*

The meet began with a blissful Sanskrit prayer by Dr. Bhanumathy and introduction of the various attendees. This was followed by Ammaji's powerful and effective rendition on Sanātana Dharma where Ammaji emphasized Purna Vidya's role protecting and propagating Sanātana Dharma, the need of today. The meeting also included an update of Purna Vidya's community classes in Chennai and plans for further outreach in the communities.



*Session participants*

We also share with you photos of our community classes in Chennai.



*Community classes*



*Community classes*

## MAHĀŚIVARĀTRI

4th March, 2019  
Purna Vidya Foundation

Mahāśivarātri, the great night of Lord Śiva, was celebrated with much devotion and grandeur this year. The Rudra abhiśekams for Lord Śri Vanalingeswar were accompanied by chanting and bhajans round the clock right into the next day. The dynamic participation of around 500 devotees including people from neighbouring villages and towns certainly rendered this night grand and memorably befitting for our Lord of all puruṣarthās!



*Ammaji offering arati*



*Ammaji offering pushpam*



*Arulji performing puja*



*Devotees for the great night of Lord Śiva*



*Ashram prepared for the celebrations*

## ĪŚVARA

*Continued from Volume 5*



### Īśvara as the Elements

In Sanskrit, the creation is known as *viśva* which means “*vividha-pratyaya-gamyam*”- that which consists of many and varied forms. The Vedas reduce all these forms to five constituent elements, called the *pañca-mahābhūtas*, five great elements. They are *ākasa*, space; *vāyu*, air; *agni*, fire; *āpaḥ*, water; and *pṛthivi*, earth.

In this five-elemental model of the creation, the creation is seen as nothing but these five great elements which have undergone a process of grossification. These elements are thus present in every object in varying degrees. For example, a living object occupies space; is composed of air, water, earth; and contains fire, in the form of temperature. Even inanimate objects such as water, have the qualities of the five elements. Water occupies space; is composed of air, in the form of hydrogen and oxygen molecules; contains fire, in the form of temperature; and contains earth, in the form of minerals and organic elements.

As the creation is non-separate from *Īśvara*, the five great elements that comprise the creation are worshiped as *Īśvara*. There are five temples in India where *Īśvara* is invoked in each of the five elements. These temples are:

### Chidambaram

At the Chidambaram Temple in Tamil Nadu, Lord Śiva is worshipped as the element space. The temple contains an altar which has no idol; instead it has a mirror draped with a golden garland of bilva leaves to which prayers are offered. After *ārati* is offered to the *śivaliṅga* in the sanctum, it is also offered to the Lord in the form of space. This form of worshipping space is called the *Cidambara-rahasya*, or the secret of Chidambaram. The Chidambaram Temple is also famous for its deity, Lord *Naṭarāja*, the dancing Śiva.

### Kalahasti

In the main sanctum of the Śiva temple in Kalahasti, Andhra Pradesh, is a *śivaliṅga*, as well as a lamp with a constant flame. The temple has been designed so that a slight draft of air keeps the flame flickering without blowing it out. Air cannot be seen. Its presence can be inferred by seeing an object wavering in the wind, or by feeling the movement of air through the sense of touch. The flickering flame implies the presence of air, which is worshiped as the Lord in this temple.

### **Tiruvannamalai**

At the Thiruvannamalai Aruṇācaleśvara Temple, the Lord is worshipped as agni, fire. This temple is dedicated to Lord Śiva, known as Aruṇā-caleśvara, who is believed to have revealed himself here to the devatas in the form of light. The śivaliṅga in the temple is worshipped as tejoliṅga, the fire liṅga.

The hill adjacent to the temple is itself seen as a liṅga. On the day of the Kṛttika star, in the month of Kārtika (October- November) a big fire called the Kārtikai dīpam, the flame of Kārtika, is lit on the top of the hill. The fire can be seen from a great distance.

### **Tirucchirapalli**

In the Jambukeśvara Temple, located in Tirucchirapalli, the presiding deity is Śiva in the form of Jambuka, one of the names of Varuṇa, the presiding deity of water. Here, the Lord is worshipped as the element of water.

### **Kanchipuram**

In Kanchipuram about 40km from Chennai, is a Śiva temple called the Ekāmreśvara Temple, where the Lord is worshipped as the element earth. The śivaliṅga in the temple sanctum is made of earth. The name ekāmra, meaning 'one mango', refers to a mango tree in the temple that is said to produce only one mango at a time.

*To be continued ...*

## **R̥ṣi Lineage**

The Vedas are a body of knowledge believed to have been revealed by the Lord to the seers, ṛṣis, who were capable of receiving and handing over the knowledge to posterity for the benefit of humanity. These seers came to be known as the mantra-draṣṭāraḥ, seers of the Vedic mantras. The word 'gotra' refers to a clan or lineage of a Hindu family which is traced to one of these ṛṣis and named after him. There are ten ṛṣis from whom all the gotras are believed to have originated. They are Marīci, Bhṛgu, Aṅgiras, Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Agastya, Pulastya, Pulaha, Viśvāmitra and Kratu. There are 229 gotras, of which approximately forty are common today. These forty include Vātula, Ātreya, Garga, Kauṇḍinya, Kauśika, Gautama, Naidhruva-Kāśyapa, Harita, Bhāradvāja, Śāṅḍilya, Maudgalya and Śrīvatsa.

Gotras are further classified into five groups, depending upon the number of ṛṣi descendants in a particular gotra. These groups are ekārṣeya-pravara-gotra, which has one ṛṣi descendant; dvayārṣeya-pravara-gotra, having two ṛṣi descendants; trayārṣeya-pravara-gotra, having three ṛṣi descendants; pañcārṣeya-pravara-gotra, having five ṛṣi descendants; and saptārṣeya-pravara-gotra, having seven ṛṣi descendants. Examples of trayārṣeya-pravara-gotra are Vātula, Ātreya and Kauśika gotras.

In the Vedic tradition there is a form of salutation in which one introduces oneself to the elders by narrating one's name and family lineage. One states one's gotra, thereby acknowledging one's ancestral ties. By doing so, one naturally discovers an attitude of reverence and gratitude for all that one has been given by one's ancestors.

There are many other occasions when one is called upon to state one's gotra. For instance, when a puja or a ritual is performed for the benefit of a particular individual, his gotra is mentioned besides his name and the star in which he is born. Marriage alliances between two people belonging to the same gotra are customarily prohibited.

One's gotra is a symbol of one's connection with the past. It provides an identity with one's heritage and an intimate bond with one's parents and ancestors. Everyone born into the Vedic culture belongs to a gotra whether one does or does not know the name of the ṛṣi of one's lineage.

*To be continued ...*

## CHILDREN'S CORNER



### SAINTS

Saints are the personification of the religious culture of India. Inhabiting different regions, they have greatly enriched the devotional and philosophical literature of their regional languages and inspired millions of people in their religious pursuits.

#### Saints of Tamil Nadu

The sixty-three Nāyanmārs, Saivite saints who worshipped Lord Śiva and the twelve Ālvārs and the many women saints like Tilakavatiyar, Punitavatiyar and Mangayarkarasiyar also lived during this period. The great devotional songs of the four Śaivite saints, Appar, Sambandhar, Manikkavachakar and Sundarar, enlivened the hearts of Śaivites and guided them in their spiritual pursuits. These saints visited many Śiva temples in Tamil Nadu and sang hymns in praise of the Lord, known as Tevaram. The Thiruvacakam of Manikkavachakar occupies a place in Tamil sacred literature analogous to that of the Upaniṣads. The woman saint Andal, wrote the famous composition, Tiruppavai, which is sung by many devotees everyday in the early morning hours in the month of Mārgaśira. The poet-saint Tyagaraja lived in the Tanjore district of Tamil Nadu. He composed many devotional songs in Telugu in praise of Lord Rama. These songs, known as kīrtanas, remain popular in South India

#### Saints of Kerala

Ādi Śankara was born in Kaladi in Kerala. Within the short span of his thirty-two years of life, he traversed the length and breadth of India and re-established vaidika-dharma. Śankara also composed hymns in praise of many deities. Śrī Nārāyaṇa Guru was not a mere reformer, but a great teacher of Vedānta.

#### Saints of Andhra Pradesh

Bhadrachalam Ramadas was an officer posted in Bhadrachalam. Out of devotion to the Lord, he used the government's tax revenues to build a temple for Lord Rāma in Bhadrachalam. His devotional works, known as kīrtanas, became famous. The prison where Ramadas spent his time in solitary confinement exists even today.



### **Saints of Rajasthan and Gujarat**

Mirabhai, a saintly poetess, was devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. She devoted her life exclusively to the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa. She composed devotional songs; these songs are exquisite literary compositions and testify to the depth of her devotion.

Narsi Mehta, a great poet-saint of Gujarat, composed devotional lyrics in praise of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Even today, the people of Gujarat recite some of his devotional songs, including the Prabhatiyas, Govindagamana, Surata-sangrama and Sudama-caritra.

### **Saints of Uttar Pradesh**

Tulasī Rāmāyaṇa, known as Ramcharit-manas was written by saint Tulasidas. He also wrote Vinaya-patrika, a series of prayers in the form of poems. Kabirdas, is another saint who is known for his devotional songs and couplets. The blind saint Surdas, left a rich legacy of devotional songs in praise of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Even today there are many sādhus who are leading a peaceful life devoted to God

### ***Something to think about...***

*Who are the sadhus you know about?*

*Why do we call them sadhu?*

*What are the qualities of a sadhu?*

*How does anyone become a sadhu?*

# STUDENTS' REFLECTIONS



## VEDANTA COURSE

January, 2019

Believe it or not, this one month has been the best period in my life! I have never been so happy and never been so healthy. I do not know what has changed. Whether it is because of the teachings or the atmosphere. If I continue in the same spirit with whatever activities I have been doing here, I will be very happy for the rest of my life. Whatever I have learnt, I will definitely try to implement it in my day to day living. And I am sure that the different relationships in my life will definitely improve. That ego that used to be there strongly... has reduced to a major extent. And if I continue living with this attitude, I am sure I will be the happiest person.

*Arun Bhere, India*

# AMMAJI'S 2019 COURSES / RETREATS / TOURS



## **Ganga Dasahara Retreat @ Tapasyalayam**

4th - 13th June, 2019

[Enroll](#)

## **U.K & Europe Vedanta Tours**

17th July - 20th August, 2019

[Enroll](#)

## **Navarātri Retreat @ Tapasyalayam**

28th September - 9th October, 2019

[Enroll](#)

## **Vedanta Course (1 month) @ Purna Vidya Foundation**

8th November - 8th December, 2019

[Enroll](#)

## **Purna Vidya Family Reunion**

24th December, 2019 - 1st January, 2020

[Enroll](#)

# ARULJI'S 2019 COURSES / EVENTS



## VEDANTA

### **Vedanta Retreat (Tamil) @ Purna Vidya Foundation**

*1st - 15th June, 2019*

[Enroll](#)

### **Navarātri Retreat (Tamil) @ Purna Vidya Foundation**

*28th September - 9th October, 2019*

[Enroll](#)

## CULTURAL EDUCATION

### **Teacher Training Programmes @ Purna Vidya Foundation**

*April - September, 2019*

[Enroll](#)

### **Classes for Children and Youth @ Purna Vidya Foundation**

*2nd and 4th Sundays every month, starting 14th April, 2019*

[Enroll](#)

### **Outbound Learning Camps @ Purna Vidya Foundation**

*April - September, 2019*

[Enroll](#)

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## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

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### **Namaste Dear Friends!**

Ammaji's message in this newsletter highlights the importance of seeing ourselves as essentially non-separate from all in this universe. This fact encourages us to cultivate an attitude of respect, love and gratitude for all that the universe provides us.

Let us treat all beings with love or at the very least, respect. Let us cultivate simple living, acquiring and consuming only what is really needed. This reduces wastage and especially, the burden on the Earth's resources. Find ways to recycle. All the information on minimalist lifestyle and recycling is readily available on the internet. So take the first step (if you have not already) or take giant strides in responsible and Dharmic living!

We hope that you have enjoyed this volume of our newsletter. We warmly welcome your feedback and contributions through [purnavidyaprograms@gmail.com](mailto:purnavidyaprograms@gmail.com)

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## THE EDITORIAL TEAM

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