

## Ammaji's Message



Guru Parampara as a representation of lineage, is a unique tradition in the world in which a guru passes on his/her acquired knowledge to a disciple. It means a line of spiritual gurus in authentic succession of initiation; the chain of spiritual knowledge and authorized continuity, passed from Guru to Guru.

The greatness of a lineage is highly dependent upon the Guru Parampara where, apart from the immediate guru, three preceding gurus are also revered.

All systems of Vedanta, Dvaita, Advaita and Visishtadvaita honour Guru Parampara. The tradition is to venerate the Acharya who imparts the Brahma Vidya and from him the line of preceptors is traced upwards to the Supreme Brahman. The Lord is revered as Adi Guru as he gave the Vedas to Brahma and also enlightened him about them. The Upanishads are eternal and it is only through the grace of good Acharyas that one is able to gain access to them.

An Acharya's effulgence that reflects his enlightened state dispels the darkness of ignorance in the Sishyas and a good disciple always remains grateful to his preceptor for this grace. The lord Himself inspires excellent Acharyas and equally dedicated Sishyas through whom the tradition continues in an unbroken manner.

The Guru is the essential link between the individual and the immortal and if one wants to head towards self-realization, then one has to have a Guru. Lord Krishna himself tells Arjuna that if you want to approach me then approach me through a teacher who himself is self-realized and who knows who I am so that He can guide you successfully through this spiritual world and make you one with Me. He said that any human being, no matter whatever bad karma he has done earlier in this birth as well as his previous births, once he accepts a spiritual leader or Guruji (in the disciple succession of Guru Parampara), takes naam daan from the Guru and surrenders himself totally to his Guru (Sharnagati), this person's sin would be forgiven and forgotten and he would be on the path to Moksha (oneness with the Supreme Lord)

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Purna Vidya family

## Iṣṭa Devatās



### Śivaliṅga

Īśvara as Lord Śiva is generally worshiped in a particular form known as liṅga. The word 'liṅga' in Sanskrit means a symbol. The derivation of the word is "liṅgyate bhudhyate anena iti liṅgam" - that by which (something) is represented or known is liṅga. The liṅga is a form which has no particular form. If all forms in the creation were put together that would form an indefinable form which is symbolized by the liṅga. Since all forms are Īśvara and Īśvara is not any one form, the liṅga represents the formless form of Īśvara.

It is believed that a highly symbolic and esoteric philosophy emerged with the advent of Tantra-yoga, addressing masculine and feminine principles in the creation. During this time, the Śivaliṅga came to be looked upon by some people as representing the union of masculine and feminine aspects symbolized as a phallus. However, there is no known reference of such a meaning in the Vedas. Lord Śiva is the deity for those desirous of gaining mokṣa, liberation. Śiva is commonly worshiped on Mondays. People in North India generally worship Lord Śiva by chanting Śivamahimna-stotra. Lord Śiva is also worshiped on the day and night of Śivarātri, a festival which occurs during the month of Phālguna (February - March). Śivarātri is an important day of prayer and fasting for spiritual seekers.

### Śāligrāma

Lord Viṣṇu is the sustainer of creation. He is invoked in a śāligrāma, which is a type of stone obtained from the River Gaṅḍakī in Nepal. Śāligrāma is also the name of a sacred place of pilgrimage in the Himalayan ranges where the River Gaṅḍakī originates. This stone contains marks of the cakra, disc, a weapon Lord Viṣṇu holds in his hand; it gains its importance from its association with Lord Viṣṇu as told in the puranic stories. There are nineteen different types of śāligrāmas.

Lord Viṣṇu is commonly worshiped on the day of Vaikuṅṭha-ekādaśī, which falls in the month of Mārgaśira (November - December) and during Satyanārāyaṇa-pūjā, which is performed on the full moon day every month.

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## Dress & Ornamentation



Dress and ornamentation are part of daily worship in the Vedic tradition. Unlike in the West, where clothes reveal a person's occupation and social status, in India, clothes play a simple and religious role. The style of clothing the people wear today does not fundamentally differ from that worn 2000 years ago.

In the Vedic vision, the body is considered to be a temple whose indweller is non separate from the Lord. Because wearing clothes itself is an act of worship, mantras are chanted while dressing. Clothes honour the sanctity of the indweller of the body by concealing the form with modesty, and by not accentuating the body contours. The śāstras also prescribe discipline with regard to clothing. Clothes worn for pūjā, rituals and activities such as cooking may not be touched by other members of one's family and are handled by the wearer only after taking a bath. This practice brings about a religious awareness and an alertness with respect to one's conduct. In keeping with the value for ahimsā, noninjury, the tradition discourages silk clothing to prevent the killing of silkworms for silk.

While Indian attire is simple and elegant, the ornaments are intricate and assorted. Ornamenting one's limbs symbolizes adorning the presiding deities of various limbs with gold, silver and precious stones. These ornaments include earrings, nose-rings, toe-rings, ornate necklaces, bangles, armlets, anklets and jewelled ornaments on the forehead and along the part of the hair. Certain forms of gold necklaces beaded with gems such as coral and black onyx, and other ornaments, such as toe-rings, symbolize marriage. Total absence of ornaments on a woman may reveal widowhood or commitment to an ascetic lifestyle.

Beaded necklaces such as rudrākṣa, tulasī and sphaṭika, crystal, indicate religious orientation. In the Rudrākṣa Upaniṣad, rudrākṣa is praised as being auspicious and sacred to Lord Śiva. Since the rudrākṣa seed does not decay, it is treasured by families for generations. It is also believed to be beneficial to health. While sphaṭika is used for the worship of Lord Śiva, tulasī beads are associated with Lord Viṣṇu.

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# Form & Spirit of Vedic Culture

One form of worship includes offering ash, bhasma; sandalpaste, gandha; and vermilion, kuṅkuma to the Lord. Applying these on the forehead and other parts of one's body is a form of decoration of the Lord within. Different types of marks on the forehead indicate devotion to various deities. Worshipers of Lord Śiva apply three horizontal lines of ash on their foreheads. Being devoid of differences born of forms, ash represents the Lord. Devotees of Lord Viṣṇu mark their foreheads with three vertical lines converging between the brows, using a material called gopicandana, made of white stone.

Women apply a tilak, a vermilion dot in circular form, on their foreheads to symbolise auspiciousness and devotion to Goddess Devī. Vermilion applied on the parting of a woman's hair symbolises marriage. Collyrium is used to enhance the dark beauty of the eyes and henna leaves serve to decorate the hands and feet in red. In ancient India, women chewed betel leaves or applied the essence of red hibiscus flower to redden their lips. Women characteristically have long, jet-black hair, nourished by oil, neatly braided and decorated with fragrant flowers or tied up in a knot. While tying one's hair is mark of sumaṅgala, auspiciousness, leaving the hair loose represents the occurrence of an inauspicious event in one's family, such as death.

Another religious practice is to shave off the hair on the head. While the shaven head of a man may reveal an ascetic lifestyle, for a woman it symbolises widowhood. Generally one looks upon hair as constituting the beauty of a person. Self-image is also greatly influenced by the beauty of one's hair. In the vision of the scriptures, because the self is different from the physical body, giving up one's hair reveals commitment to the pursuit of the self-knowledge and dispassion towards the body.

The ancient sculptors depict some styles of apparel worn by men and women. The pieces of apparel draped on the body carried a natural fall and concealed rather than fitted the body-line. Generally, both sexes used two pieces of garments: the lower garment was fastened around the waist, while the upper garment was draped around the shoulders. At times, the women wore a third piece of garment to cover the breasts. In some early sculptures, the lower garment is depicted as elaborately pleated in the front, with the end hanging loose or thrown over the shoulders, like the present-day sari. Another mode of wearing the lower garment was to tuck the pleats at the back.

Dress and ornamentation not only reveal one's inner religious life, but also speak of one's place and stage in life. The colour, type and style of clothing specify the varṇa and āśrama of the people wearing them. While Brahmacharya is symbolised by yellow clothing, sannyāsa, renunciation is symbolised by saffron clothing.

Male householders wear white, whereas women householders adorn themselves in all varieties of colours. Clothing can also be suited to particular occasions such as visiting temples, attending marriages and festivities. For instance, people wear new clothes on birthdays and New Year Days to mark the beginning of another year of life. Thus, dress and ornamentation form the visual language of customs and manners of the people of the Vedic culture.

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## Absence of Ego



The Sanskrit word 'anahankāra', in its most general sense, means absence of ahaṅkāra, pride. It is important to clearly understand what is meant by the term ahaṅkāra. Ahaṅkāra is generally translated in English as ego or the I-notion.

Everyone is born with a twofold ignorance: ignorance of oneself and ignorance of the world. As a new-born child, one has some sense of one's physical needs, such as hunger, discomfort and pain, and also some awareness of one's environment. As one grows, one develops a sense of self-identity as an individual entity distinct from and, at the same time, a part of the world. In other words, one develops an I-sense.

The I-sense is a product of, and is influenced by, a number of factors. When one learns to respond to a given name, the I-sense takes on a nominal identity. One's cognitive capacities develop naturally with growth, and one gains an increasing knowledge of the world. Emotions arise in oneself as a response to the people and conditions in one's environment. One also learns from the positive and negative responses of others to one's own actions. All these interactions result in feelings of security or insecurity within oneself. Thus, one's cognitive capacities, emotions, perceptions and distortions go into the development of the I-sense.

The 'I' comes to be known in the context of one's body, feelings, knowledge, understanding and distortions; others' opinions and judgements; and one's own known and unknown insecurities. This is the I-notion that one lives with. It is called a notion because upon further analysis it can be shown to be merely a construct, different from the true nature of the subject 'I'.

As long as the 'I' is unknown, the I-notion is the operating entity. As the Bhagavad Gītā (3.2) points out: "ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāhamiti manyate- deluded by the I-notion, one thinks, 'I am the doer'. The perpetual doer, in the process of gaining accomplishments, is likely to develop a sense of pride.

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# Vedanta Parampara

Generally, one has all the more pride in one's accomplishments when others lack what one has. No one is proud of having hands and legs or an organ of speech. But an accomplished musician, for example, can develop pride. Is this pride legitimate? Many elements go into attaining skill in music. One's voice may be trained, but one has to be endowed first with a trainable voice. And merely having a pleasant voice is not enough. One must also be endowed with the ability to hear, grasp, remember and reproduce the notes. One can take these endowments as given or as gifts.

Further, one has to meet a person who knows music and has the patience and willingness to teach. Again, the musical elements such as sound, notes, scales and rhythm are not created by anyone, but are already available in the creation. Finally, there must be people available to appreciate the music. It is evident that there is no skill for which one can claim sole authorship. Thus, pride is false and anahaṅkāra is a value to be understood.

To become an accomplished musician, one must have the desire to learn and be willing to put forth the required effort. The capacity to desire, the ability to act and the capacity to know are essential principles necessary in any accomplishment. In Sanskrit, they are called icchāśakti, kriyāśakti and jñānaśakti respectively. The source of all these śaktis, or capacities, is the source of the creation, which one identifies as Īśvara, the Lord. Recognising the fact that the Lord is the source of all glories brings humility.

Hanumān, in the Rāmāyaṇa, exemplifies the quality of humility. Hanumān had immense strength and was invincible. Alone, he destroyed La;ki!. No one else could perform the feats that he single-handedly performed. When he stood in Rāvaṇa's court as Lord Rāma's envoy, Rāvaṇa himself was filled with awe. Hanumān attributed the source of his strength to Lord Rāma. Later, when Lord Rāma expressed gratitude to Hanumān, saying that he could not repay Hanumān for all that he had done, Hanumān simply asked to be blessed always with devotion to Lord Rāma. Accordingly, Hanumān is depicted in a posture of humility, sitting or standing with his palms joined together, and with eyes filled with tears of devotion and humility. No one who reads the Rāmāyaṇa can remain unmoved by the beauty of humility embodied in Hanumān.

One who has humility does not take anything for granted. There are many cultural practices that help one develop an attitude of gratefulness. For example, in the Vedic culture, one does not take the sun for granted. One is supposed to wake up before sunrise and welcome the sun by offering salutations. One offers daily prayers to the pitṛs, ancestors, and to the ṛṣis, sages, who handed down the knowledge and vision of the Vedas. Prayers to various deities acknowledge forces, functions and laws in the creation. Such acts help one develop the attitude of anahaṅkāra.

*to be continued ...*

## Interactions with sādhakas, Bedford, UK



A brief visit to Bedford on Independence Day resulted in the launch of a Gita Satsang Group in Bedford which continues every week with few families and friends with commitment.



## Bhagavatam



## Interactions with sādhakas, Malaysia



Eleven years ago when Sri Dhiraji visited Malaysia upon being invited by Padma Kanda and Mrinalini, Purna Vidya's spiritual work began in Malaysia. Since then, a team of dedicated families have sustained weekly children classes.

On 29th August evening, Ammaji and Swamiji were received with great love and affection with Pada Puja and Arati by over a hundred teachers, parents and Baladandayudapani temple visitors. Purna Vidya students performed a Tamil skit of Lord Krishna's Darshan to Karna after his fall in the battlefield. Ammaji spoke on Dharma and described the Navavidha-bhakti. She highlighted the role of teachers and parents in spreading the Indian culture and heritage and appreciated Purna Vidya Seremban, for protecting the traditions even after four generations of relocation to a foreign land. The audience were very attentive and devoted. The program concluded with vote of thanks by Dr. Mrinalini.



## Interactions with sādhakas, Malaysia



Another special event was the Annual day celebration held on 30th August, in which 90 children participated. They chanted the prayers while four of them performed the shodasachara puja. Beautiful song renderings were done. Ammaji highlighted the importance of both Apara and Paravidya in one's life and encouraged the parents also to study the Bhagavad Gita, while the children studied the Heritage program. Swamiji distributed the annual graduation certificates and mementos with his blessings and prasadam.



August 30th evening, Ammaji held a Teacher Training Program for the 12 year program of Purna Vidya books, which was attended by teachers from Seremban, Petaling Jaya and Kajang. Methodical and clear explanations on the gradation of the books and also the teaching methodology and assessment criteria was shared with all.

On 31st August, Ammaji addressed the children of Sugam Samskara, in the presence of the teachers and parents on the topic of 'Ramayana in Daily Life'. As part of their learning curriculum, a Vedic Heritage Course is being taught weekly for the past decade by dedicated family of

Suchitra, her sisters and parents. Ammaji 's chemistry with the kids was amazing and all of us enjoyed the Interactive session. Starting with the explanation on OM, Ammaji took up the story to SriRama, Sitadevi, Lakshman-rekha and explained what is drawing one's own boundaries. All present including the teenagers were watching and listening in awe to Ammaji's eloquence. Swamiji blessed all of them and distributed chocolates as prasadam.

In brief, Swamiji and Ammaji's first time presence in Malaysia brought great inspiration and zeal for the dedicated families to continue the Purna Vidya work, not only for children but also the Adults. Much work was done to initiate weekly Bhagavad Gita Study Groups.

## Unearthing the Gem Within You, Hindu Centre, Singapore



Ammaji's annual Singapore visit to Hindu Centre began with Ganesh Chaturthi Celebrations. This was followed by public talks on "Unearthing the Gem Within You" which was very well attended and appreciated. Ammaji conducted a workshop for the eight Purna Vidya Gita Satsang Groups that are happening in Singapore which was met with great enthusiasm and commitment.





## **Vedānta - Spiritual Learning Programme**

Purna Vidya Ashram, Coimbatore.

8-Nov - 8-Dec, 2019

Purna Vidya will launch its successful 5th Vedānta course with classes on Vedāntic teachings of Bhagavad Gītā by Ammaji, there will be Sanskrit grammar and chanting classes helmed by Swamiji and Arulji respectively. . This programme serves as an introduction to the vision of the Vedas, providing participants an insight into the reality expounded by the sages of India. Ammaji will teach certain chapters of the Bhagavad Gītā, an important scripture that contains the essence of the Upaniṣads. Added benefits of this programme include meditations, yoga, temple pūjās, quiet time for personal reflections, evening satsangs and visits to local temples. We extend an kind invitation to you by gifting yourself this period of intense learning and inner growth!

[Enroll](#)

# Upcoming Events

## Category 1 (Classes 3,4 & 5)

1

1. Fancy Dress
2. Shloka Recital
3. Colouring

## Category 2 (Classes 6,7 & 8)

2

1. Gita Recitation
2. Drawing
3. Group Dance

## Category 3 (Classes 9 &10)

3

1. Essay Writing
2. Gita Recitation
3. Skit in English



## Category 4 (Classes 11&12)

4

1. Tamil Recitation
2. Essay Writing
3. Bhajans



### Purna Vidya Utsav,

Purna Vidya Ashram, Coimbatore  
02-11-2019, Saturday 09:00-17:00 hrs

We are happy to inform you that, as part of Poojiya Swami Dhayanand Saraswathi Jayanti celebrations, we are organizing a cultural fest Purna Vidya Utsav, an annual event of cultural awakening. In this programme a variety of interesting competitions would be held for school students of different age groups. This is open to schools in and around Coimbatore. More details will be sent to the participating schools.



1

*R.S. Rishi Bala, VI-D, Amrita Vidyalayam, Ettimadai, Coimbatore*

2

*Ramsidharth, X-B, Amrita Vidyalayam, Ettimadai, Coimbatore*

3

*Pratheeksha, IX, Amrita Vidyalayam, Rettaivaikkal, Trichy*  
*R.Subhavarshini, IX-B, Amrita Vidyalayam, Trichy*



AS a part of Independence Day celebrations during the month of August, we had shared a few articles presented by the school students from various cities in Tamil Nadu on the topic of "A smart dream for my mother land - India". We deeply appreciate all the participants for sharing their vision and dreams for India. Selected entries attract special gifts during Purna Vidya Utsav 2019 in November. More information will be sent to respective schools and made available in the bulletin.



# Purna Vidya Book Series



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assisted texts'***

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delivery and instructor  
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# Ammaji's 2019 Courses/Retreats



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

8th November - 8th December, 2019

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## **Purna Vidya Family Reunion**

24th December, 2019 - 1st January, 2020

[Enroll](#)





## Teacher Training Programmes @ Purna Vidya Foundation

*April - September, 2019*

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## Classes for Children and Youth @ Purna Vidya Foundation

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

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## Outbound Learning Camps @ Purna Vidya Foundation

*April - September, 2019*

[Enroll](#)



# Message from Editorial Team

Namaste Dear Friends!

The word “Guru” in Sanskrit is translated as “dispeller of darkness”. ‘Gu’ means darkness and ‘ru’ signifies the elimination of darkness. So, together they make a true sense and depict guru as the one who enlightens our mind and soul, and removes all the darkness from our lives. In Hinduism, Guru Purnima is also called Vyasa Purnima as on this day, Ved Vyasa, the great sage was born. He is known as the most influential gurus in Hindu traditions and an epitome of Guru-Shishya custom. The day of Guru Purnima is traditionally the time when seekers offer the Guru their gratitude and receive his blessings. Vande Guru Parampara.

To receive more cultural and spiritual teachings, register yourself for our retreats and courses in Vedanta and Vedic Heritage.

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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*Under guidance of Ammaji*

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