



# NEWSLETTER

## Ammaji's Message



Prayer is the highest form of communication with the Lord and can be offered in simple words or as an elaborate ritual. The mode of prayer may differ from person to person, but the attitude is fundamental to all. Prayer helps nurture one's special relationship to the Lord by invoking the devotee in oneself. Unlike the other relative roles one plays in life, the role of a devotee is non-demanding since the Lord seeks nothing from us.

Prayer is expressed in three ways: physical, oral and mental. While a ritual or puja is a physical form of prayer, singing in praise of the Lord or chanting verses and Vedic hymns is an oral prayer. Japa or worship done silently is mental prayer.

There is no meditation, no ritual, no chant which is complete without a prayerful attitude - because when these are mere techniques, the will is retained. But in prayer, the will willingly submits to the higher altar and that submission performs the miracle.

In this submission, the human freewill finds its total expression. This is so because one prays to the Lord who is invisible to the available means of perception. That a person can offer salutation and prayers to an entity who is invisible takes the expression of the whole free will. Prayer is thus centered on the total person, and it comes from the person who sees very clearly his or her helplessness in a given situation.

No given situation is centered on my will or even my understanding. And hence I give myself up not to despair, but into the hands of the Lord, the Omniscient being. The whole person that is me submits to the Lord in prayer. This is the meaning of surrender in prayer and it is this attitude that carries the power of divine grace.

Such prayers align our hearts and minds with the highest purpose of our lives, viz. self-awakening. There is no power in the world other than the power of prayer that can carry us towards Divinity. And with this prayerful surrender, one is able to relax and find inner peace and comfort. A deep trust is formed in one's core being and one can face life turmoils and turbulences without losing one's inner peace.

Let us learn to pray with full trust that our prayers will be answered. Let us ask for Divine intervention during these uncertain and challenging times for our human family and trust that our prayers will be heard – that the Universe will intervene and relieve us of this unknown enemy called Covid19 virus.



# Prayer



Prayer is the highest form of communication with the Lord and can be offered in simple words or as an elaborate ritual. The modes of prayer may differ from person to person, but the attitude is fundamental to all. Prayer helps nurture one's special relationship to the Lord - the relationship of the created to the creator - by invoking the devotee in the person. Unlike the other relative roles one plays, the role of a devotee is non-demanding since the Lord seeks nothing from us. When one's relationship to the Lord becomes primary in life, other relationships become secondary and thus less problematic.

Prayer is expressed in three ways: physical, *kāyika*; oral, *vācika*; and mental, *mānasa*. A ritual or a *pūjā* is a physical form of prayer. Singing in praise of the Lord or chanting verses and Vedic hymns is an oral prayer. Japa or worship done silently is mental prayer. Prayer has its purpose in helping one achieve an object of desire, be it mental clarity or a given end. Ultimately, prayer helps one gain the maturity to be a qualified recipient of spiritual knowledge. This knowledge teaches us our identity with the Lord and helps us discover freedom and happiness, the nature of oneself.

In any pursuit, including education, there can be a number of obstacles, *tāpas*. These obstacles fall into three categories:

- *Ādhidaivika* - Obstacles which are natural and over which we have no control, e.g., storms, earthquakes, floods.
- *Ādhibhautika* - Obstacles created by one's surroundings, e.g., noisy neighbours, traffic, distractions by family.
- *Ādhyātmika* - Obstacles created within oneself, e.g., tiredness, an agitated or distracted mind.

Any of these obstacles can prevent one from achieving success in a given endeavour. *Śānti*, peace is, therefore, chanted three times for the mitigation and the removal of these threefold obstacles.

## The Purpose of Prayer

A prayer may carry a different intent for different individuals. In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa describes four types of devotees. The first one is called an *ārta*, a person in distress. He prays seeking relief from difficulties.



# Prayer

The second type of devotee is said to be the arthārthī, a person who seeks worldly ends. This is a person who is aware of the Lord's grace in his life, but whose motivation for prayer stems from seeking personal ends.

The third type of devotee is a jijñāsu, a seeker of knowledge. This person pursues knowledge for mokṣa, freedom from unhappiness. Though mokṣa is a desirable end for all, only a jijñāsu recognises knowledge as the means to this end and pursues it. His prayer is for inner growth and maturity, for the sake of gaining this knowledge.

The jñānī, a wise person is the fourth type of devotee. He knows his identity with the Lord. In the Bhagavad Gītā, Lord Kṛṣṇa describes the wise person as being one with the Lord. The jñānī's prayer is an expression of wisdom and is the highest form of prayer.

## **Prayer: Invoking the Unknown Factor**

In order to accomplish any given end three factors are necessary. The first factor is adequate effort, prayatna. One cannot accomplish anything in life without adequate effort. The second factor is time, kāla. Once effort is made, time is necessary for the results to fructify. For example, when one sows a seed, time has to elapse for the plant to grow before it bears fruit. The length of time varies according to the nature of action and the result desired.

Despite making adequate effort and allowing sufficient time, the results may not always meet one's expectations. One's knowledge and power being limited, one cannot foresee and make things happen as one wants. There is always an unknown element, the third factor, often called chance or luck which a sensitive person understands as daivam, grace of the Lord. Such a person knows that the Lord's laws govern the results of actions and, through prayer, the person invokes the grace of those laws for obtaining desired results. The laws being non-separate from the Lord, prayer is efficacious in accomplishing any given end.

Like any other action, prayer produces a result. The result is twofold: one is immediately seen, dṛṣṭaphala and the other is unseen, adṛṣṭaphala.

The immediate result of prayer is the inner comfort that comes from acknowledging one's limited capacities and accepting a power higher than oneself. Being objective about situations over which one has no control and praying to that all-knowing source is an act that frees one from anxiety regarding the expectation of a result.

The unseen result of prayer refers to the subtle result called puṇya, which accrues to the doer of the action. Puṇya manifests in the form of comfortable situations whether in this life or later. When one prays for success, the accrued puṇya, which one may call 'grace', may not ensure success, but without it, the outcome could be worse..

***to be continued ...***



# The Journey Within



## Krodha (Anger)

Krodha, anger is an unpleasant, undesirable and potentially harmful emotion. One sometimes hears the term 'positive anger' when people talk of channeling anger in a manner that leads to some productive conclusion. One may accept the idea that it is better to have a positive than negative outcome when one is angry. However anger in itself is not a 'positive' emotion. Additionally one does not need to have an undesirable emotion as a motivating factor for productive outcomes. One needs to learn how to deal with anger of its own accord. It is easier for a mind that is not consumed with anger to act in a productive manner than it is for an angry mind.

The first step to dealing with anger is to learn to acknowledge it when it occurs. It is difficult to acknowledge to one self, much less to others that one is angry.

No one likes to admit to having undesirable emotions. It makes us fall short of our ideals, our idealized self image or idealized image that is shown to others. However, unless one is able to admit to being angry one cannot learn to manage or overcome it.

Anger is a reactive response to a situation. One may or may not be aware of what triggers anger in one's mind. Obviously if one is not aware of what triggered ones anger it is difficult to avoid it. One needs to learn to be more aware of what goes on in one's mind. Ironically, we know our minds much less than we think we do. That is why we are often surprised by our own thoughts and actions. Being more aware of oneself is a conscious process and enhanced with practice. One useful exercise to accomplish this is by spending some time daily reviewing one's thoughts, actions and feelings. This should be done when one is in a calm state of mind. If there were times of anger, one can try to recollect what was happening before one became angry and how one's mind reacted to the situation. This will help to be more proactive and correct one's thought process that leads to anger.

The anger reaction is at times instantaneous; at times a 'build up' of dwelling upon whatever it was that triggered the anger. The time interval between the trigger and response is important. The greater it is the more opportunity one has to manage it before it causes damage.

There are values that can be cultivated that can dilute and even neutralize the anger response. Some of them are:

*continued ...*



# The Journey Within

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Dayaa: Compassion or Empathy is a quality one is born with. It is the capacity to place oneself in another's position and to recognize what they are experiencing.

Ahimsaa: Ahimsa is a universal and inherent value. No living being wants to be hurt physically or emotionally. This is recognized and honored as a fundamental right of all living beings.

Kshamaa: Kshamaa means accommodation. One needs to cultivate the desire and capacity to let people be who they are. Every person wants to be able to think and act in keeping with who they are. While we recognize this need in ourselves and expect others to respect it and let us be who we are, we tend to forget that others have a similar expectation and we have to let them be who they are. One needs to do this willingly and without malice. It is said:

**कश्मा शत्रौ च मित्रे च यतिनाम् एव भुशनम् कश्मा**

*Kshamaa shatrau ca mitre ca yatinaam eva bhushanam*

Having accommodation towards foe and friend is the glorious attribute of a person who strives for spiritual growth.

It is important to understand that while anger is a normal and universal emotion, it is not inevitable in a given situation. Everyone can vouch for the fact that situations that make a person angry at one time or place may not do so at another time or at a different point in their life. Additionally what makes one person angry may not make another so. This only highlights that more than the situation it is our response that is the cause of anger. One might even say that while anger is a universally felt emotion, its genesis is not really legitimate. I would consider it legitimate if anger was the one and only option available to everyone in a given situation. If one tries to look for an example of such a situation, one finds that there is always another option that is available to an individual to act or feel besides being angry.

Sometimes we justify our actions towards another born of anger as being for their own good. For instance the way we reprimand or act towards someone close to us, a child or adult. It is good to remember that actions born of anger lead to and are meant to hurt, not to educate.

- *Sri Dhira Chaitanyaji*

*to be continued ...*



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**Swamini Pramananda** is a Vedanta teacher and a samskr̥tam scholar. She has been studying samskr̥tam from a young age. She has taught Vedanta with Sankara-bhasyam and Paniniyan samskr̥tam courses at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam for a decade.

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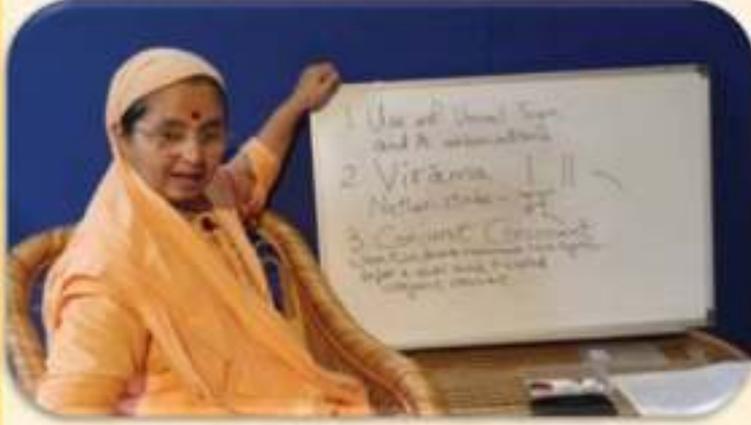
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**Swamini Pramananda** is a Vedanta teacher and a samskr̥tam scholar. She has been studying samskr̥tam from a young age. She has taught Vedanta with Sankara-bhasyam and Paniniyan samskr̥tam courses at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam for a decade.

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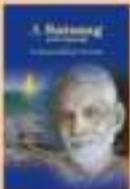
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# Message from Editorial Team

Namaste Dear Friends!

Praying is purely a personal act in which you establish a heart to heart communication with the object of your prayer. Also, when people pray together collectively, it makes us feel connected and socially responsible. It helps us to achieve our common goals and collective welfare as a group.

Pray from wherever you are and in whatever condition or situation, you find yourself. In prayers you combine the synergies of contemplation, concentration and devotion. Through prayers you augment the power of your thought with the power of God by uniting your mind with the universal mind and elevate your consciousness to step into the will of God and make the impossible possible.

Our prayers have no expiration date. You never know when, where or how God will answer. Let us keep praying with faith that this global disaster, COVID 19, will vanish soon and the earth returns to her full glory, with peace restored in human beings.

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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