



pūrṇa vidyā newsletter 7|22

Contents

- 1** Ammaji's Message
- 3** Śiva-mānasa-pūjā (Part 3)
- 7** Bhagavad Gītā Q&A (Part 10)
- 9** Yoga-Practice (Part 17)
Ayurvedic Yoga
- 12** Upcoming Weekend Workshops
- 13** Upcoming Courses & Retreats
- 16** Past Events – Ashram & Online
- 23** Children's Corner
- 27** Editorial Team Message



Ammaji's Message

Dear Readers,

Kindness is an innate quality within all of us. It is an extension of compassion and can be defined as being selfless, caring, generous and considerate. Kindness from one helps to foster kindness in others. That is why there is a saying that says, “kindness begets kindness”.

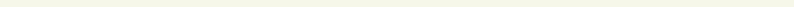
If kindness is a natural quality than why do we face unkind people and situations from time to time? It is because people get caught up in the doing of things that they forget about being. Humans are human beings and not human doings! When one gets caught up in the doing acts, they have no time to attend to another and when one is so busy in pursuing their secular goals, they negate the time to nurture their spiritual being. This in turn leads to a lack of patience and understanding required to attend to another's emotion or state of mind and being. The universe provides us with multiple opportunities to extend our kindness if we allow ourselves to be tuned in to the environment.

>>>

When our foundation is based on kindness and compassion, there will be lesser hurt in our thoughts, speech and action. When Īśvarā the very epitome of kindness and compassion is residing within each of us, how can we hold on to hurt and anger? We need to learn the art of tapping within us to help us reconnect to our natural tendency so that we can become a bigger person during trying moments. There are many instances in our lives when kindness from total strangers have guided us and helped us through the torments of life. Isn't it time to repay those kindness by paying it forward to another and becoming a contributor? Extending kindness is not a difficult task if one becomes intentional in their dealings with the universe. May we learn to tap into HIS grace and abundance of kindness at every moment of our lives

Love and Blessings,

Ammaji



> Part 3

Śiva-mānasa-pūjā – A Mental Worship of Lord Śiva



The Śiva-mānasa-pūjā, we have seen is a progressive step-wise journey into our own inner space. I consciously create my thoughts, I choose certain thoughts. I create them and I fix my altar. While I fix my altar I have a choice, either to merely recite the Śiva-mānasa-pūjā mentally or to actually perform each step as I recite. And this happens in your inner frame. And what is the prayer? What is it that you are visualizing? What are you going to actually do in this prayer and how it is so empowering to be able to recite these five verses to Lord Śiva in your inner space? Believe me, this is going to be a rare unfoldment. There is nothing equal to this. The verses themselves progress the growth of the devotee in the process of offering this mental worship. By the time one finishes the three verses of the worship and enters the fourth, there is a meltdown of the devotee into the very altar. We will see this as we learn the Śiva-mānasa-pūjā. If you find the meditation difficult or don't have the time now, it's ok. You can start with just learning the Śiva-mānasa-pūjā, understanding the sentiment behind it. Whenever you are ready you could start your contemplative practice. To be able to have a contemplative practice of this dimension really requires a grace. It is the greatest gift you can give yourself. You learn to relate to your own soul differently once a practice like this kicks in your life.

In the previous session, you were beautifully guided from āsana to prāṇāyāma to pratyāhāra.

We are now set to move into the next level of prayer – a prayer which is a proper systematic worship of the Divine; done by being in a meditative posture, through an internal meditative process called upāsana by invoking the devotee in you. When I can worship the Lord in this manner, so attracted to the form of Śivaliṅga, I am able to hold my emotion, hold my devotion, hold my expressions of worship in my internal meditative state. That form of prayer is called Śiva-mānasa-pūjā – a mental worship of Lord Śiva in the form of the Śivaliṅga.

We have seen how one equips oneself to move up to that inner space where one would invite the deity in an altar. You know your altar is not changing, you've fixed the flowers and fruits and incense and all of that in one place knowing that it is firm and it will remain where you've positioned ready for being offered step-by-step in a sequence. Such a detailed, meticulous, methodical arrangement in your inner space, in your mental space is the power, a power of prayer that you command in yourself. We have seen during my introduction of this topic, the various tools that aid this process – the bahiraṅga sādhanas and the antaraṅga sādhanas. Amongst these tools, it is dhāraṇā that can help you hold the relationship of a devotee.

>>> **The Different Forms of Bhakti**

It is also useful in this context to touch upon the nava-vidha-bhakti. If you remember, I had elaborated in another session of the Power Of Prayers, that there are nine forms of worship or nine different ways of connecting the devotee in you to the divine, to the infinite. These are described as - śravaṇam kīrtanam caiva smaraṇam pāda-sevanam arcanam vandanaṁ dāsyam sakhyam ātma-nivedanam. In these nine forms of worship, I also pointed out different devotees who had taken to a specific expression of worship. Some used śravaṇam, listening to the stories of the divine that touch your heart. Stories of devotees, of saints, their sacrifices and their love of the divine, what about them? Well, when those stories touch the devotee in you, you find yourself also expressing your devotion. And so each of this form of worship has different devotional expression. When it comes to expression of devotion through pūjā or arcana, it can be a simple five-step to an elaborate sixty-four-step worship.

What the Gītā Says About Bhakti

There are two very important verses that glorify bhakti in the Gītā to point out the fact that it is not about what is being offered, but it is a matter of how it is being offered.

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam
yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tadahaṁ bhaktyupahṛtam
aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ*

So, whatever you offer to the Lord, a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or just water, as long as it is offered with bhakti, Lord Kṛṣṇa says, I will receive, I will accept with all my heart. I receive because the power of your devotion is behind your offering. Similarly, there is another verse,

*yo yo yāṁ yāṁ tanuṁ bhaktaḥ
śraddhayārcitumicchati
tasya tasyācalāṁ śraddhāṁ
tāmeva vidadhāmyaham*

In whichever form your śraddhā emerges, your faith emerges, in whichever form your devotion emerges, Lord Kṛṣṇa says I'll bless that faith, I'll accept and I'll validate and help you stabilize that faith in the infinite being. While on the one hand we have a beautiful process of worship which may involve a range of steps, on the other, when you imbibe the process, you learn to connect your spirit behind the form. The spirit of devotion gets connected to the form.

The Expression of Bhakti

How does one tell the other that they are in love? You'll only take an expression, an expression which is commonly known in your generation. We know one thing for sure that flowers somehow carry the sentiment of love. Somehow this seems to be commonly accepted in our culture. And especially if it's a red rose, it carries the love from the heart. It carries it as a post man and gives it to the other. And so how does this rose petal carry your love? What does it have to do with your love? You don't pick a blue rose and get the blues or the yellow rose or a pink rose. You go for that red rose. Don't you? Well because, all of us by association, we have decided that this red rose is the best carrier of your love to your beloved. Is it not true!

Who decided that? We decided. And so when you take this rose, this form and infuse it with your love and give it to the beloved, that beloved of yours also receives it and holds it to her heart. Because, from that heart, the love with the rose has arrived into this heart. I'm just imagining how it would be. And you hold it to your heart. And if your sister says 'oh it's a beautiful rose, give it to me, I want to put it in my hair', you'll say, 'you take the other rose. This is only for me'. What is so special? That love from him sits in this rose! And so every form carries a spirit.

"Power of Prayers" – Śivamānasa-pūjā

For a simple ordinary human being when you use many ways to express your love. (at least before marriage), when it comes to expressing your love to the infinite being, what is your model of expression? How will you tell the infinite that you really are grateful, and thankful for this life? How are you going to express your love and devotion to the divine without having some forms that carry your sentiment? Those forms which carry such sentiment have been handed down to us in this tradition over many generation. That is the form of worship which is commonly known as puja!

When I sit with the infinite being, it doesn't matter if I have to sit for three hours. That's why Indian pujas go on and on and on and on. Because when you invite the infinite being there's so much to say, so much to give, so much to express. In your love of devotion you lose your separation with the Lord. When you start dialoguing with the divine, do you remember time? When you are talking to your beloved, do you remember time? Suddenly you find two hours have gone, is it not? Here a devotee's devotion to the infinite, expressing itself as a puja, is the most heart rendering, most beautiful expression if one can find one's connection to this form of prayer.

While the tradition is very eloquent, about these superbly, extraordinarily esoteric, aesthetically profound forms of worship, it also shows that in the case of a true devotee, even though the expression of devotion is gross, it is still accepted by the divine in the same manner. Can you believe this? Look at the range. Look at the tenacity, look at the flexibility, look at the accommodation of the tradition, of the depth of the culture because it accepts all forms of worship. Including the worship of Kannappan. Kannappan is a devotee. I would like to tell this beautiful story of Kannappan a great bhakta today.

The Episode of Bhakta Kannapan

Kannappan was the son of tribal chieftain. Kannappan's original name was Thinnan. As a boy, he was trained in martial arts and grew up to be a strong young man. They lived in the forest region near the Kalahasti temple. Of the five temples of Lord Śiva that are dedicated to the five elements, the element of air, vayu is in Kalahasti, present day Andhra Pradesh. When the chieftain was getting old, he hands over the responsibility to Thinnan, like taking the tribe to the forest for hunting and so on. And this young man goes and successfully conducts many hunting expeditions. One day while going on this hunting expedition, he is chasing a boar in the forest and chasing this boar he ends up deep in the forest. All the others are left behind except one assistant. Finally, Thinnan manages to kill the boar and as he is carrying this boar back to the tribe for their food, he comes across a beautiful Liṅga that draws his attention. He is so drawn to the Śivaliṅga that he decides to cook this boar here and offer this meat to this Shiva! And so he stays there and cooks that dead meat and offers it to Lord Śiva, to that Liṅga. This brings him great satisfaction and happiness. By now it is the end of the day but somehow Thinnan is not able to leave. He is so drawn to that Śivaliṅga, he sends his assistant away and sends a message to the tribe, saying he is staying back with the liṅga. Thinnan does not return.

Next day again he wants to do this worship to Lord Śiva and he goes out into the forest hunting. And then he kills an animal and carries this animal. But now he wants to do a proper puja. And there is no proper puja without washing the Liṅga with water, without offering flowers. So this hunter, Thinnan collects the wild flowers and carries them on his head as both his hands are holding a dead animal. He also doesn't have any vessel to carry water, so he carries some water in his mouth.

>>> and goes away. Then comes Kannappan in the afternoon and does his worship by spitting this water, putting those flowers and offering meat.

When the priest sees all this the next day and the day after, he is so disturbed. One night he gets a dream. Lord Śiva comes to him in the dream and tells him, "Don't be disturbed by what you see. You want to know how that is happening, you stand behind the tree and watch tomorrow, so that no one else sees you". And he watches next day, Thinnan arrives with his dead meat and mouth full of water and the flowers and goes through his own ritual to the Lord. When he is finished and is admiring the beauty of the Liṅga, suddenly Thinnan sees that there's blood oozing out of one eye of the Liṅga. From one side of the Liṅga blood is oozing. Thinnan is nervous. He runs here and there. He brings some herbs from the forest, he applies to that Liṅga to see that blood oozing stops but it doesn't stop. He doesn't know what to do. He knows for sure that it is caused due to some pain and so he hits upon a great idea. He takes one of his arrows, pierces it through his eye, pulls it out places it on the face of Lord Śiva, on the Liṅga. As Thinnan places the eye, the oozing of blood stops. The oozing of blood stops.

Thinnan is so happy that his solution, his medicine worked but suddenly the second eye begins to ooze blood. Now, Thinnan is ready to pull out his second eye. But thinks for a moment, 'How am I going to know where to place my second eye once I pull it out? So he lifts his foot and positions his thumb in the place where the second eye should go.

He was actually placing his leg on the Śivaliṅga. As he was about to pierce his second eye, Lord Śiva appears and says – Kann appa; appa means stop. Stop the transfer of the eye. That is how his name became Kannappan. So, Kannappa had already melted into Lord Śiva. Whether it is his body in pain or the divine body in pain, they both have become one for Kannappa. Lord Śiva then blesses him thereby restoring the lost eye.

The priest witnesses this great devotion of Kannappan. Today whenever we talk about devotion, we talk about Kannappan's devotion to Lord Śiva. In many temples in south India, we find this form, including Thiruvannamalai temple, you find this form of Kannappan with one foot on Śivaliṅga and arrow on the other eye. Kannappan is one of the 63 saints in the Shaiva tradition. The point made here is that the rules and regulations had no place in Kannappan's life, but his devotion reached the highest point. While the tradition shows that a devotion of non-separation from the divine is really the destination of every devotee, the culture, still provides a systematic process of devotion which one can imbibe, develop, and use that form to connect to the divine.

A Global Satsang with Ammaji

for Purna Vidya's
Gita Group Study Members



Q A few people are unduly attached to a person, a thing, or some event in the past. How does one create a distance from it or remove the thought process concerning a person in the past, if it is causing serious effect?

A The question concerns something or somebody we are attached to from the past, or some event that is causing pain to you today. And how to remove that thought process.

The more I tell you not to think over a thought, the more the thought will go only in that direction. My guru used to say, “I’ll teach you a meditation. It is such a powerful meditation that it will just open up all your cakras and your kuṇḍalinī energy will shoot straight up to the sahasrārā. It’s such a powerful meditation.” Who doesn’t want to learn, right? And everybody says, “I’m ready, please teach me.”

And then my guru says that there is one condition we must follow very carefully. Make sure that you do not think of a monkey when you are meditating. Do not think of a monkey. And then you sit there, being guided by your teacher. You want to do everything right, as this is the only chance for you to get your kuṇḍalinī out there. You are so alert, eyes closed. Nothing should go wrong now, including what I must not do – think of a monkey. And thinking of what you’re told not to think of is exactly what you think of!

Therefore, these attachments, these past events, the events that hurt me linger on and on. What can I do? The greatest sword to slash that, to cut it out, is the sword of self-knowledge. But relatively speaking, it’s about forgiveness. It’s about learning to let go.

Learning to release your soul from past experiences. Why should I release? Because there is so much in the present to enjoy. Why would you want to deny the joy of the present by sitting in the past? Therefore, to just learn to live in the present, I need to release myself from the past. It is for selfish reasons. As somebody once said, “To hold a grudge is like putting poison in your mouth and hoping that the other will die”. You are the one holding the grudge. You are putting the poison in your mouth. How can the other one die? They will live on, and therefore by holding on to the past, you will not be hurting the other; you will only be hurting yourself. And therefore, learn to forgive, releasing yourself from the past.

The greatest empowering tool is forgiveness. Forgive the other for doing you wrong. And forgive yourself for attracting the wrongness in the other towards you. It goes both ways – forgiveness and release yourself from the past. That’s the process that needs to be consciously taken up, through journal work, through visualizations or through meditations.

You may not be able to sit down and talk to the person. But you can call the person in your vision, dialogue and release yourself from that soul, and vice versa. Believe me, it really works. I’ve seen it many times. You don’t need to speak to the other. Just visualize and make the dialogue from your heart. You have so much power in you that you will release yourself from such experiences of the past which burnt you.

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Āyurvedic Yoga⁶

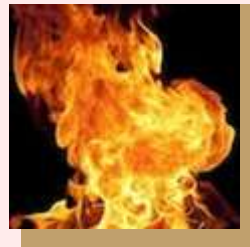
Namaste Dear Sādhakas,

After examining the different modes of action of the kapha-doṣa over the last three months, we will explore the pitta-doṣa in the following three months. Today we start with the *physical level*:

What is the effect of an excess of pitta here?

Physical imbalance caused by pitta

If we recall the principle of pitta and the properties resulting from it, we can understand the physical complaints that an imbalance causes: The pitta-doṣa is based on the element fire. It embodies the principle of light and heat. Pitta rules over all heat processes, especially those of transformation.



- When pitta becomes overactive or its flow blocked, inflammation and fever can result. Excessive sweating, especially sweating that smells acrid, is also a sign of excessive pitta.
- However, the main seat of pitta is the small intestine. Here it controls our metabolism (gross transformation) and thus our digestion. However, healthy, complete digestion can only take place with the help of bile. Acid production in the bile is an important task of pitta ("pitta" = "bile"). Ayurveda speaks of healthy digestion as a healthy agni ("fire"). However, if this fire is too strong, diarrhea develops. This can cause the intestinal mucosa to recede and subsequently cause intestinal inflammation.
- Since pitta also dominates the blood, high- blood-pressure with the corresponding heart problems often develops.

As we can see, the physical symptoms can be very varied. – How good that we can influence all these ailments with simple āsanas! ☺

The harmonization of pitta

- The healing āsana practice is characterized by slow, light movements. *sūrya-namaskar* (instructions for this in previous newsletters 2021) can be practiced if it is practiced gently and mindfully in order to avoid sweating and excessive demands. Light ujjayi-breath with constant exhalation through the mouth can dissipate heat well.
- Forward bends, particularly those while sitting, are most effective in reducing pitta and may even increase pitta that is too low. Even slight twists can gently lower pitta. Valuable āsanas are for example *paścimottānāsana* & *bharadvājāsana 1*.
- All postures should be held for a long time but performed without effort and ambition. Exercises that help us to let go are excellently suitable for this. Closing your eyes also encourages letting go.
- A very helpful āsana, which should always be the conclusion of the practice, is *śavāsana*. 20 minutes of deep relaxation successfully decreases pitta if there is sufficient inner peace. If there is increased discomfort, it is more useful to practice for a correspondingly shorter time and then slowly increase the duration.



1.) paścimottānāsana

a) Sit on the floor with your legs straight. Push the buttocks far back to allow the lumbar spine to be long and straight. Feel free to add a folded blanket for support. Stretch your heels forward and pull your toes toward you. Lower the backs of your knees toward the floor. Your torso is long and upright. If you like, close your eyes.

b) Now, while inhaling, raise your arms and stretch upwards. Exhaling, bend forward from the hip joint as far as your back can stay long and your chest wide. With each inhalation, lengthen your legs and torso in your position. With each exhalation, bend forward from the hips, your stomach sinks towards your thighs.



c) Feel your body and align your practice fondly and calmly. Remain free from ambition or haste.

d) Find your comfortable endposition in which you can linger comfortably. Lower your arms to the legs or floor and choose a relaxed position for your head. Consciously let go of all unnecessary tension. Enjoy letting go!

e) Remain in the position as long as you feel comfortable... Then release the pose carefully and look into the effect while lying down.

f) => As a beginner's variation, you can also practice the āsana with a belt or a chair.





2.) bharadvājāsana 1

a) Begin in the kneeling pose. First, sit to the right of your heels. The left ankle rests straight on the sole of the right foot. Align yourself so that both sit bones can remain on the ground. If the left sit bone still rises, you can put a folded blanket underneath. If it's comfortable for you, close your eyes.

b) Inhaling, place your left hand on your right knee and straighten your spine upwards. Exhaling, turn straight to the right. With your right hand find support behind your back or grab your left elbow. Your glance follows gently to the right. Arms and back stay long, chest wide.

c) Your breath is deep and regularly; possibly through the mouth. Each inhale keeps your arms and back long and your chest wide. Each exhalation invites you to gently deepen the twist and release unnecessary tension.

d) Practice gently and caringly. Stay as long as you are comfortable here... Then slowly release the pose and look into the effect in the kneeling pose before practicing on the other side.

e) => For an advanced variation, bharadvājāsana 2, place your right foot in your left groin and clasp your right foot with your right hand.



> Text and photos by Nina;
Support: Helga, Gela, Judit, Kerstin and Birgit

Caution!

An important rule to benefit from your yoga practice is to listen to your body and always practice mindfully and without feeling pain. Every human body is anatomically different and therefore every posture should be practiced from this perspective.

If the āsanās are practiced without a teacher and thus without the possibility of a professional adjustment, the risk of injury can be greater. If you are unsure whether any of the āsanās offered are good for you, we wholeheartedly advise you to speak to a certified yoga teacher or doctor before practicing that āsanā.



Upcoming Workshops / Satsangs in August 2022 with Ammaji



"My Yatra - Sadhana Pancakam"

A Satsang for Sevaks

1st Saturday 6th Aug, 2022; 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. IST

Join with Zoom Meeting ID : For Sevaks Only | Passcode : For Sevaks Only



"Teacher Training Program"

A Satsang for Vedic Heritage Teachers

2nd Saturday, 13th Aug, 2022; 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. IST

Join with Zoom Meeting ID : 892 6178 0444 | Passcode : Heritage21



"Dhyana Yoga - Contemplations"

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Part -1 (30 Sessions) Syllabus Covered

- Verbs- Present tense - Conjugations of Roots belonging to 1, 4, 6, 10 classes
- Phonetic Combination - Vowel Sandhi & Visarga Sandhi
- Nouns - Masculine and Neuter
- Syntax - All 8 Cases

Swamini Pramananda is a Vedanta Teacher and a Sanskrit Scholar. She has been studying Sanskritam from a young age. As an Acharya, Ammaji taught Vedanta with Shankara-Bhasyam and Paniniyan Sanskrit Courses at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam for a decade.

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Ammaji's birthday this year was celebrated in a unique way on her star birthday and on her birth date. On her star's birthday on 1st July, the entire Purna Vidya family from the ashram went to Palakkad to celebrate the birthday where they were joined by other guests from Coimbatore who were more than eager to be part of such a momentous occasion. At Palakkad the day started with pujas at the Sri Venugopala temple followed by abhishekam and aarthi. Ammaji took all the guests for a walk in the nature to the nearby stream and pond. This gave all the guests an opportunity to blend and stay with nature for a while. After lunch and relaxing for a while, Ammaji was requested to cut a cake to mark the occasion. The day ended on a happy note with all the guests carrying memories of the wonderful time spent with Swamiji and Ammaji and the blend with nature.

Ammaji's Birthday



The second part of Ammaji's birthday celebration was on the actual date, which is the 7th of July. On this day, the entire Purna Vidya family connected virtually from across the globe to wish Ammaji. We had children reciting the opening and closing prayers with a lot of religious fervor and all the students of Ammaji seeking Ammaji's blessings wishing with lamps and flowers which are dear to her. The event concluded with a short message from Ammaji.





Bhagavad Gita Study Completion

The Purna Vidya Families of Selvapuram completed their Bhagavad Gita Study with Ammaji on 6th July, 2022. These classes had begun in 2018 and were hosted in the city of Coimbatore for the past five years. The students had a great sense of fulfilment at the completion of their first round of Gita-studies, while their eagerness to continue the journey of Spiritual Learning, was renewed with a greater commitment and perseverance!







Guru Purnima, a day to remember and honor our Gurus was held at the Coimbatore ashram on 13th July. The day started with a pada puja for Swamiji and Ammaji with Vedic chanting by Swami Paravidyanandaji and his disciples. This was followed by an elaborate puja for Pujya Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati by Sri Swamiji, Ammaji and Arulji. The Disciples performed pada puja for Swamiji and Ammaji and offered their respects to them. The whole occasion was marked by a mood of serenity and respect. Ammaji then gave a satsang on the importance of a Guru in everyone's life in achieving their life objectives with focus and internal calmness.

There were many guests who came over to grace the occasion, notably a big contingent from Nana Nani Homes. They all enjoyed the function and were all praise for the ashram-arrangements and the sumptuous lunch offered to all of them.



July 15th was a special day remembering Pujya Swami Dayanandaji's vision of 'Green Kovai', a vision which had been taken up with great fervour by his disciple, Vanitha Mohan and materialized with Siruthuli, over the decades. Swami Paravidyananda joined hands in creating 'Vedanta Vanam' in the name of our beloved Guru, on a temple land in Peedampalli, Coimbatore.



let's extend our gratitude
and support the Ashram!



Gift A Day



Dear Well Wisher,
Hari Om!

we are pleased to announce Gift-a-day campaign for supporting the Ashram's one day expense. Mark a birthday, anniversary day, etc. as your annual support to ashram's sustenance and receive the blessings of prayers at our Lord Vanalingesvara and Ma Ganga Temples.

With Ammaji's wisdom, unconditional love, tireless effort of sharing the sacred teachings, let us extend our gratitude to Purna Vidya by offering to support the cost of running the Ashram for at least one day.

Sponsor 10,000 INR for one day

Thank you all for your generosity and support.

For any additional information

Contact Us at :

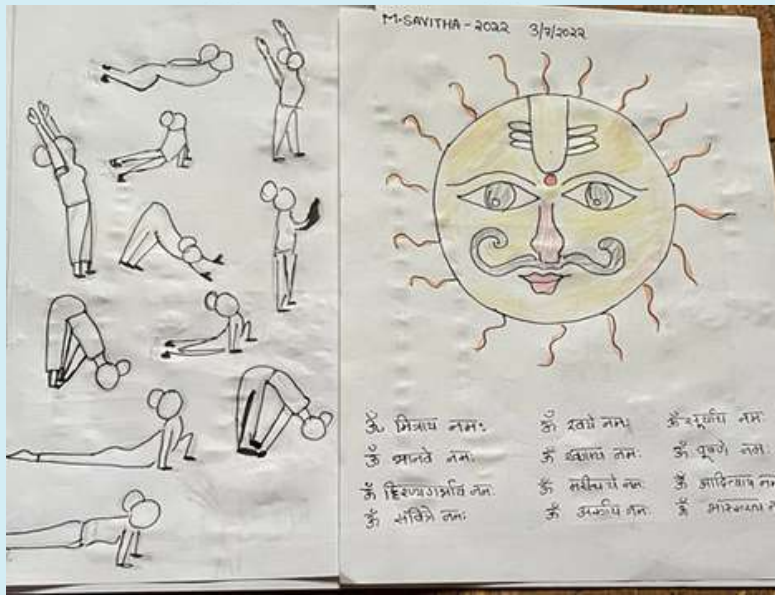
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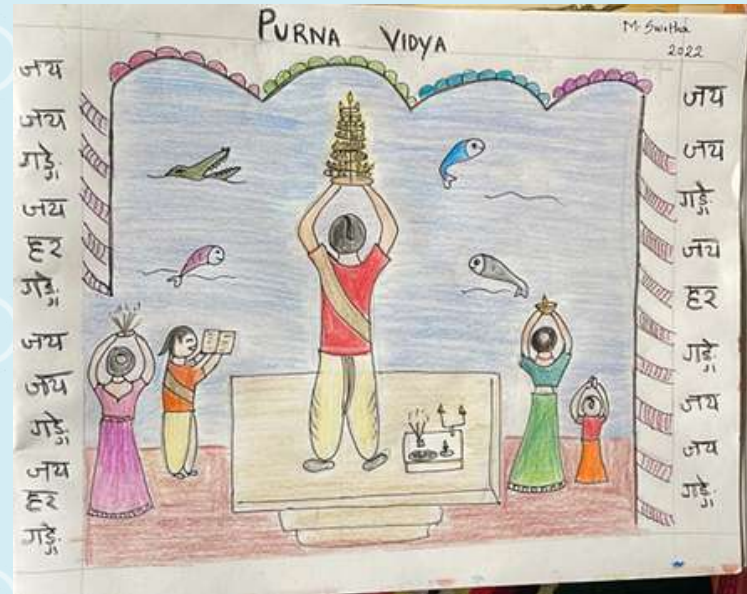
programs@purnavidya.org

There is only one Giver - the Lord, as everything we have in life is given by Him! We can only be instruments in sharing with others, what has been given to us! Share and discover the joy of giving!

-Swamini Pramananda (Ammaji)



By Savitha M, 13 years, Trivandrum



By Swetha M, 15 years, Trivandrum

Insights from Purna Vidya Children doing Isvara & Religious Disciplines

FASTING

Upavasa is a vow which refers to fasting. In Ayurveda, fasting is described as a benefit to one's health as it provides organs with the needed rest from their continuous activity during the day.

The Brhadāranyaka Upanisad [4.4.22] tells us about the discipline called the 'anaśana' which literally means not eating at all. One may misunderstand the goal of fasting to be a physical discipline however verses point out that the purpose of this discipline is not to starve the body but in fact to gain a mind that can appreciate the Lord.

People fast on many days such as solar eclipse, ekadasi, shivarati, lunar eclipse and so on. Ekādaśī fasting is done by a lot of Hindus on the 11th day of the bright and the dark half of the lunar cycle. It is also called "pūrna upavāsa" which means complete fast when one does not eat anything for 24 hours. Along with not eating for 24 hours this discipline also involves spending time in prayers of the Lord.

My parents have been fasting on every Ekadasi day for the past 1.5 years. My parents have felt very energized and at peace with themselves during the fasting period. They feel more connected with the Lord, themselves and the universe.

By Richa Ramchandra Dalvi, 13 years, Bangalore

JAPA

Japa is an oral form of worship. Japa is beneficial because it helps one gain an increased alertness to one's thinking patterns. There are 3 forms of worship of japa: ucca-jappa, Manda japa & citta-japa. Japa is also called Dhyana or meditation. A japa-mala is made of 108 beads as Sanskrit alphabets consists of fifty-four letters. Repeated forward and backward the total is 108. The number 108 represents the Lord. My grandfather does japa everyday with Japa mala. Japa has helped him stay calm and focused and connect with god. Japa has helped him with concentration and changing his thinking patterns. The syllable 'ja' signifies the end of the cycle of birth and the syllable 'pa' stands for the destruction of impurities. Therefore, japa serves as a prayer and also as a useful technique for understanding the ways of the mind.

By Vibha J, 13 years, Bangalore

Insights from Children Studying Sanatana Dharma Course

I learnt a lot in Purna Vidya classes but some of my favorite and fascinating things I learnt are the stories behind avatars of Lord Vishnu. I also learnt about some of the marriage rituals done in the Indian marriages in another chapter. We also went deeper into learning about Karma and rebirth. We learnt about the fourteen-fold Vedic knowledge and how it is categorized and what each of them contain.

By Sriju S Setty, 15 years, Edinburgh (UK)

Samaskaras

Samaskaras are the rituals performed in the life of a person as per Sanatana Dharma. Those who follow Vedic tradition correctly, perform these Samskaras which are given below:-

There are two samskaras which are performed before the birth of child. They are Pumsavana and Simanthonayana.

After the birth of child, there are five samaskaras which are Jatakarma, Namakarana, Nishkramana, Annaprasana and Chudakarana. When the child enters life of a brahmachari, there are two samaskaras performed which are Vidyarambha and Upanayana. When the boy enters into life of Grihastha, Vivaha samskara is performed.

My own experiences:

Namakarna : It was performed by my father. He told my name three times in my ear and so did my mother, grand mothers and grand fathers

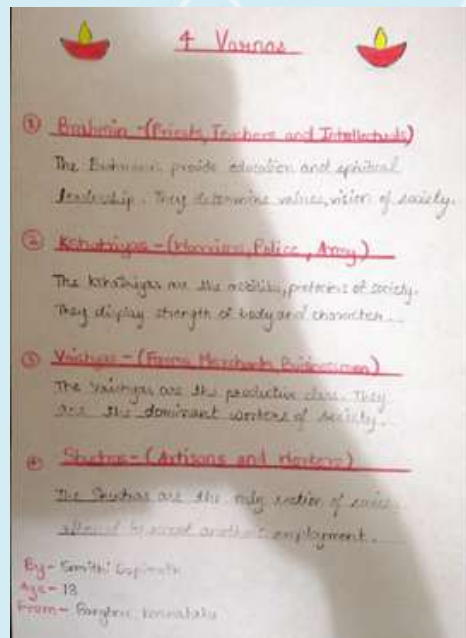
Annaprasna : My parents and many relatives gave me rice for the first time in sixth month. When I was one year old, I went to Gurwayur Krishna temple for this ceremony.

Chudakarana: When I was three years old, I went to Tirupati. It was my first tonsure and my second tonsure was in Madurai Azhagar temple.

Vidyarambha : It was performed by my father when I was five years old . It was performed on the day after Saraswati pooja on Vijayadashami day.

Upanayana : It is yet to be performed for me.

By Pranav, 13 years, Chennai



By Smriti
Gopinath,
13 years,
Bangalore

Samskaras

The 16 Samskaras taught me many concepts in detail, including new samskaras that I only heard about after Purna Vidya classes such as Garbhadana, Pumsavana and Vedarambha. I also obtained detailed explanations of samskaras which I had only heard of such as Simmantonayana, Namakarana and Jatakarma. This chapter helped me understand each samskara on a much deeper level and interested me greatly whenever I would experience them myself. The samskara Vivaha especially eagerly greeted me. I learnt about the various types of marriages, the eligibility of the bride and groom and of course the various rituals in a marriage. Many of the rituals and eligibility for different Samskaras intrigued me and helped me understand the significance when I witnessed them.

Purna Vidya has greatly helped me understand and appreciate our culture on a much deeper level. I look forward to the upcoming courses.

By Aatreyi S, 15 years, Bangalore

Purnavidya has always been an eye-opener and a happy place for me. It has inculcated so many values and so much hope and positivity into me. In these past years, through various programs of Purnavidya I was able to devote my time and understand myself. A big benefit these classes have given me are the lessons and culture that has made me closer to my belief.

One of the courses I attended that intrigued me a lot would be the Sanatana Dharma which was taught by. In this course, we learnt so many new and diverse things about the Vedas, Samskaras, Karmas etc. There are many parts of this that fed my curiosity. I have always been irritated by the caste system due to various problems occurring because of the division but through this course I was able to analyze and see the origin of this system and how righteous and effective it was. I never knew much about how karma and rebirth work but with the help of my mentor and this course, I got a much better understanding of it. Living in a foreign country, I don't get much experience to understand various cultural activities. This program helped me fill in that void, as the lessons of samskaras has taught me so much about our culture.

Not only this, but my Purna Vidya teacher made the program fun and easy for me to understand. As a teacher, he always fed my curiosity and also taught us many new slokas as well as facts. All in all, this experience given by the institution has made me honored to be a part of this community.

By Saadhya Shetty, 15 years, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Puranic and Moral Tales Course Completion

Children from Puranic and Moral tales, Batch 3, successfully completed their course. During the concluding session, children enjoyed dressing up in their characters and enacted 'Power of Lords Name' play from Purna Vidya book.



Ashrita



Veda



Shanvita



Jaanvika

Namaste Dear Friends!

To be kind is not a Herculean task. Being kind is about being intentional. It is not about doing it when it is easy, but rather when it's difficult and even when it brings some discomfort in us. Kind acts are many such as a smile, a nice word, an unexpected deed or a planned surprise. We can be kind in our responses to others when someone makes a mistake. Often pride comes in the way when we react to a situation thus if we could all remember that none of us are perfect, we could be kinder to each other. Practice giving compliments, donate generously, say thank you, open the door for the person behind, be kind to people and animals. Volunteer in animal shelters or in Homes for children / elderly. Help someone with directions, offer your seat to someone who needs it more than you in a crowded transportation. Appreciating someone may be awkward for some but it is a positive reinforcement that encourages people to want to do more good deeds and reminds people to act with intention

Points to ponder: When was the last act of kindness that you saw? How did it make you feel? What was the last act of kindness that you received or did? How did it make you feel?

We hope that you have enjoyed this volume of our newsletter. We warmly welcome your feedback and contributions through purnavidya.newsletter@gmail.com

*“We are
looked upon
as givers and
not receivers.
Be a
contributor!”*

(Ammaji)

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