



# NEWSLETTER

## Ammaji's Message



Life is a relentless perpetuation of things arising out of that which has passed. There is the coming and the going; the emptying out and the filling up; the uprooting and the planting – an unrelenting exchange that makes things unrelentingly new. The coming of spring heralds a resurgence arising out of the debris and a decay of fall. It is a message woven into the fabric of creation where nothing ends - as an end is only a beginning in disguise.

Our lives are full of cycles that begin and end. We will live through many beginnings and endings. Some of those we will experience first-hand and will be phases of our own lives, and others we will experience through the stories of others.

And every chapter in life will come to an end sometime. It is important to acknowledge and accept this – to walk away and move forward when something has reached its conclusion.

Our new beginning might be different, it could take us in an entirely new direction. Whatever be the nature of this new step, life is such that it opens new horizons, paints new vistas, and calls us to a perpetual adventure if we are willing to heed the call. Remember - an ending is only a beginning in disguise!

We cannot hold onto that which is closing, but we can make the end grand and glorious by celebrating the past as we welcome the future.

Wishing you a glorious closure of 2019 and a grand opening of 2020!

Be part of  
Purna Vidya family



# Awaken to The Truth

Continued from Volume 15

## Parents and Siblings



The parent-child relationship occupies a special place in one's life because it begins with birth and ends only with one's own death. Whether or not one outlives one's parents, whether they are available to relate to or not, throughout one's life parents remain an intimate part of one's emotional life.

A child remains dependent on his or her parents for fulfillment of physical needs far longer than the offspring of any animal. Even as an adult, a child continues to seek guidance, support and acceptance from his or her parents. The absence of a parent at any stage of life is painfully experienced.

In the Vedic tradition, parents receive love, devotion and high esteem from their children. The Taittirīya Upaniṣad says, "māṭṛ-devo bhava, piṭṛ-devo bhava" - may you be one for whom mother is a deity and may you be one for whom father is a deity.

The Sanskrit word for mother, 'mātā' derives from the verbal root 'mān' meaning 'to worship'. The word 'mātā' means the one who is to be worshipped. She is the one who carries a child for ten months, and after birth nourishes it physically and emotionally. The mother is the primary caretaker of the child in most societies. It is generally on her lap that the child begins to learn about the world.

While a sannyāsī is saluted by all those belonging to the other three stages of life (brahmacarya, gr̥hastha and vānaprastha), as well as by his own father, a sannyāsī prostrates to his mother. This convention points out the high esteem accorded to the role of the mother in the Vedic tradition.

The Sanskrit word for father, 'pitā', derives from the verbal root 'pā', meaning 'to protect'. Cāṇakya describes a father in the Artha-śāstra as follows:

**अन्नदाता भयत्राता यस्य कन्या विवाहिता ।  
जनिता चोपनेता च पञ्चैते पितरः स्मृताः ॥**

*annadātā bhayatrātā yasya kanyā vivāhitā |  
janitā cōpanetā ca pañcaite pitarah smṛtāh ||*

continued ...



# Awaken to The Truth

“One who gives food, one who removes fear (by providing security), one who gives away a maiden in marriage, one who (with the mother) is the cause for the birth of the child and one who initiates a boy into the study of the Vedas - all these five types of people are called fathers.”

The father removes fear by providing physical and emotional security. In the Vedic culture, the father also initiates a child into the study of the scriptures by a ritual called upanayana. The child then goes to a gurukula for formal studies. This study can eventually lead one to a search for self-knowledge. One can gain this knowledge directly from one’s father, as did Śvetaketu in Chāndogya Upaniṣad and Bhṛgu in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad, or by approaching a guru, as did Sukeśa and others in Praśna Upaniṣad.

Just as one worships the gods, one also looks upon one’s mother and father with an attitude of love, worship and respect. Lord Rāma showed love and respect for his parents by following his father’s order to go to the forest. This was an expression of his value for piṭṛvākya-paripālana, protecting the words of one’s father.

The Rāmāyana also illustrates dedicated service to one’s parents in the story of the boy Śravaṇa Kumāra. It was while taking his blind parents on a pilgrimage that Śravaṇa Kumāra was killed by Daśaratha, who, hunting in the forest, mistook the boy for a deer.

## Siblings

Siblings profoundly influence one another in the formative years of life. Having a sibling, one learns to share and compete, both of which are essential to emotional growth. Early relationships between siblings, whether pleasant or conflict-ridden, form the basis for relationships with others. A positive relationship of love and mutual support between siblings is encouraged in the Vedic culture.

The love between siblings is evident in the Rāmāyana. When Kaikeyī asks for Bharata to be the king instead of Lord Rāma, Lord Rāma is happy that his brother has this honour. Bharata, on the other hand, cannot consider taking away from Lord Rāma that which is rightfully his. Disenchanted, hurt and angry with his mother, he goes to the forest to bring back Lord Rāma. Lord Rāma consoles Bharata with gentle and loving words. Bharata brings Lord Rāma’s sandals back to Ayodhyā and rules the kingdom, with humility and reverence, as Lord Rāma’s proxy.

The five Pāṇḍava brothers in the Mahābhārata exemplify the bond of brotherly love and respect even during adversity. After Yudhiṣṭhira is tricked in a game of dice and loses everything, including the freedom of his brothers and their wife Draupadī, his brothers stand by him. While the brothers live in the forest, they equally share whatever food they obtain. Yudhiṣṭhira, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva, furthermore, each share half of their portions with Bhīma, the largest and strongest of the five, so that his hunger can be appeased.

*to be continued ...*



## The Planetary Deities



Invoking the Lord in the form of planetary deities is one of the unique forms of worshipping Īśvara seen in the Vedic culture. The planetary deities are perceived as playing a significant role in the life of an individual. Jyotiṣa, one of the Vedāṅgas, includes astronomy and astrology. Jyotiṣa connects the life events of a human being to the orderly patterns of the movements of the planets in the earth's solar system.

In addition, astrology is a predictive science based upon the positions of the various planets cast at the time of one's birth (the horoscope). While the horoscope indicates the life pattern destined at birth, the law of karma enables an individual, within the confines of his birth, to exercise free will through actions and to change destined events. These actions include prayers known as śānti.

Śāntis are specific prayers offered to Īśvara who is invoked in the form of various planetary deities called grahas. Jyotiṣa recognises nine planets, nava-grahas, that are associated with various life experiences. These planetary deities also preside over the twelve signs of the zodiac in the following order: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces.

### Navagraha Devatās

#### Sūrya Devatā

Because the essential nature of Sūrya, the sun, is light, it is called the ātmakāraka or the presiding deity of the ātma, awareness. The sun governs a person's confidence, authority and status. The sun is also the presiding deity of the eyes and rules the sign Leo. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa (2.8.15) states that the sun does not move; nor does it rise or set. Rising and setting imply appearance and disappearance.

#### Candra Devatā

Candra, the moon, is the presiding deity of the mind and emotions. This devatā is depicted with crescent moon, holding lotus buds in his hands. He rules the sign of Cancer.

*continued ...*



# Vedanta Parampara

## **Kuja Devatā**

The deity Kuja, the Mars, is also known as Maṅgala or Aṅgāraka. In the Purāṇas he is also described as Kārtikeya, the son of Lord Śiva and Goddess Pārvatī. He is depicted as wearing red clothes and carrying a spear. He governs the qualities of courage and bravery, and presides over siblings and health. He rules Aries and Scorpio.

## **Budha Devatā**

Budha, the Mercury, is the deity who presides over intelligence. He governs a person's teaching capacities. He is depicted as holding the Vedas in one hand and a sword, a mace and a shield in his other hands. He rules Gemini and Virgo.

## **Guru Devatā**

Guru, the Jupiter, is the presiding deity of religious inclinations and prosperity. He is also the presiding deity of married life for women. He is described in the Purāṇas as Bṛhaspati, the preceptor of the devatās. He is often depicted in a standing posture with four hands, in one of which he holds a weapon called the vajra-āyudha. He rules Sagittarius and Pisces.

## **Śukra Devatā**

Śukra, the Venus, is the presiding deity of material comforts, arts, culture and aesthetics. He is also the presiding deity of love and married life for men. In the Purāṇas he is depicted as being the preceptor of King Bali. Śukra is depicted as standing with his hands folded. He is the ruler of Taurus and Libra.

## **Śani Devatā**

Śani, the Saturn is the presiding deity of longevity, calamities and difficulties in life and at the same time, of renunciation and spiritual wisdom. He presides over painful experiences and inner growth. In the Purāṇas, he is considered the son of the sun deity. He is depicted with a dark complexion, bearing a mace and moving at a slow pace. He has a crow as his vehicle. His eyes are generally blind-folded because of the belief that his glance is very powerful and may bring misfortune. He rules Capricorn and Aquarius.

## **Rāhu and Ketu Devatās**

Rāhu is the presiding deity of worldly desires and Ketu is the presiding deity of mokṣa, or freedom from limitations. Astronomically, they are not planets but the northern and southern nodal points of the moon. They are closely connected to each other astrologically. Mythologically, they are born of a rākṣasa. The upper half of Rāhu's body is similar to a man, while the lower half is like a snake. Conversely, the upper half of Ketu's body is similar to the head of a snake, while the lower half is like a man. They do not rule any signs but give the effects of the ruler of the signs where they are situated.

*to be continued ...*



# 2019 at a glance



Review

# 2019

at a glance !





# Children's Corner

Dear All,

The end of the year can feel like it's flying by, packed to the brim with holidays, family gatherings and travel. Amidst the chaos, take a step back to reflect.

2019 had been a great year filled with wonderful activities: You had the Smart Dream contest, The Purna Vidya Utsav and community classes catching up in Chennai as well as abroad. Your response was awesome. Before this year ends, let me thank all of you who made this year beautiful for us. The year's end means the beginning of a new one with new possibilities.

Let me open the treasure trove a little and give you a glimpse of what we have in store so that all of you are ready to ponder, perspire, pour out ideas and present creatives in large numbers.

Schedule for the first half of 2020:

January and February	Slogan writing contest for National Youth Day (Birthday of Swami Vivekananda)
March and April	Limerics / hykoos on wildlife safety for World Poetry Day World Turtle day
May and June	Paragraph writing contest on "Turtle and My thoughts"

You have these to work on and much more fun coming your way from Purna Vidya Foundation such as OBL at the ashram and so on.

We wish you all a great year ahead!

From the Educational Team of Purna Vidya



# Ammaji's Vedanta Programmes

JANUARY



- 08 - 09 ▶ PVF : Community-Education Teacher Training Program  
23 - 24 ▶ PVF : Outbound Learning Program  
29 - 12 Feb ▶ Middle East : Upadesa Saram & Meditation

FEBRUARY



- 22 - 1 Mar ▶ SYD/AUS : Bhagavadgita & Heritage Programs

MARCH



- 2 - 13 ▶ BRV/AUS : Bhagavadgita & Heritage Programs  
25 - 2 Apr ▶ PVF : Vasanta Navaratri Retreat, Sankshepa Ramayanam

APRIL



- 16 - 18 ▶ PVF : Community-Education Teacher Training Program  
for Chennai Centers

MAY



- 25 - 2 Jun ▶ TAP/UKH : Gangadashara Retreat, Ishavaasya Upanisad  
**Ganga Dasahara** marks the descent of the River Goddess Ganga on earth

JULY



- 06 - 15 ▶ BIR/UK : Gita Utsav Family Retreat & Vedanta Sadhana Retreat  
16 - 26 ▶ GER : Vedanta Workshops & Vedanta Sadhana Retreat  
28 - 2 Aug ▶ GER : Vedanta, Yoga Philosophy, Teacher Training

AUGUST



- 7 - 14 ▶ ITA : Bhagavadgita Workshops

OCTOBER



- 17 - 27 ▶ TAP/ UKH : Navaratri Retreat

NOVEMBER



- 1 - 1 Dec ▶ PVF : Vedanta Course, Sat Darshan

DECEMBER



- 4 - 15 ▶ PVF : Course and Chanting : Vishnusahasranamam



# Online learning programmes



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# Reflections

## Reflections from Vedanta Students, Purna Vidya Foundation



I am very humbled and grateful for the teachings received at Purna Vidya Foundation during the Vedanta Course. Swamini Pramananda, "Ammaji", is an inspiring and knowledgeable teacher that gave us a comprehensive understanding of Tatva Bodha, a Vedantic text. She has the wonderful capacity to bring the teaching alive, full of anecdotes and being extremely funny at times. So although the concepts are hard to grasp by themselves, through her guidance it seems much easier. This was a treasure in itself and Ammaji's comments were spot on. Furthermore Swamiji's Samskritam classes were pure joy and gave us an opportunity to dip into this ancient and sacred language. Chanting, pujas and meditation rounded up each day in our spiritual journey. Finally, the love and compassion demonstrated by them to all of us was priceless and indeed, in a true Vedantic fashion. Amazingly, they don't charge for their teachings and are only supported through donations. Another opportunity to open your heart and give and receive love. In summary, this has been an invaluable, uplifting and enriching experience which I highly recommend to any spiritual seeker who is looking for deep and lovingly spiritual knowledge. The shram in Coimbatore is the perfect place to dive deep into this knowledge, offering a contemplative environment surrounded by beautiful forests and hills.

*Om Anandi (Silvana Tarlera Robles), Uruguai*



My feelings at the end of the course are more than I could have expected. The teachings of the Vedas have brought alive to me the teachings and how to apply them in my life. In addition the introduction to Samskritam and chanting are all essential parts of the whole. The teacher all have shown such dedication to the purity of the teachings and presented all throughout with wisdom, grace, kindness and deep compassion and of course humour. They are exemplary in showing how these teachings are a way to live life to the full in the heart. I am so grateful to whatever it was that guided me here and I hope forward to implementing what I've learned in the next stages in my life.

*Jane Roberts, Spain*



# Message from Editorial Team

Namaste Dear Friends!

Every year we are given chance to start with a clean slate. Each time we can hit the reset button and do things differently. It doesn't matter if we have had a good or bad year because life constantly only moves forward. Closing the door, turning the page, moving on and so on - call it what you wish - what matters is that you leave the past where it belongs, so that you can make the best of the life that's still to be lived. This ending you've experienced is not THE END. It is your life beginning again in a new way. It is a point in your story where one chapter transitions into the next. And the secret to a good life is to pay more attention to the beginnings than the endings. Remember, there are three little words that can release you from your past struggles and guide you forward. These words are: "From now on..."

Best wishes from the Purna Vidya Newsletter team to you all for a progressive and prosperous year ahead. 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)

## Editorial Team

*Under guidance of Ammaji*

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