

## The Forgotten "Prayer"

For free distribution only. Not for sale.  
To receive this newsletter by email,  
send request to [newsletter@godivinity.org](mailto:newsletter@godivinity.org)

On January 1 every year, His Holiness Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji conducts a Mahamantra Mass Prayer in a various cities in India. This year, the fortunate place was Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. The event was attended by 5000 people and watched on the Web by about 75,000 people from 41 countries. Below are some excerpts from Sri Swamiji's New Year message in Q&A form.

### Why Mass prayers?

Sri Swamiji spoke as follows:

I go to many places to meet people, to pray for their well being and to pray for an early resolution of their problems. Sometimes in a casual discussion, I ask them, "What do you do when you are confronted with a problem whose resolution is beyond normal human efforts?"

Some say, "We do *pariharam* (expiation rites)." Some say they visit astrologers. Some say they rely on the power of gems. I rarely come across anyone who says, "I shall pray to the Lord to resolve the problem by His benign grace."

What a sorry state we have all come to! How sad that we have all forgotten the grand path of prayers relying on Bhagavan's grace!

When I saw this 'perversion' in the minds of many, in order to revive the faith in prayers and to make them more powerful, Mass prayers were initiated from the year 2006.

The fragrance of a single jasmine is sweet, but when we make a garland or a bouquet with many jasmine flowers, the fragrance is even more potent and benign. So when people gather together and pray, the impact is many, many times greater than just praying in isolation.

### Why on Jan 1?

Even though we (Sri Swamiji and the members of GOD Satsang) do Mahamantra Mass prayers all round the year, the mass prayer on Jan 1 is done on a grand scale every year since 2007. Jan 1 is indeed a special day. Way back in 1886, in the divine abode of Cossipore garden house, Sri Ra-

makrishna Paramahansa was physically weakened by cancer. But despite this, on this very day, in the afternoon, he came down to the garden for a stroll. At that time, he became a veritable Kalpatharu (wish fulfilling divine tree) and blessed all the devotees. He said, "What more shall I say! I bless you all. Be illumined!"

All the devotees who were present there got all their wishes fulfilled immediately by the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. What

Sri Ramakrishna did 125 years back as a *kalpatharu*, the Name of Rama and Krishna shall do this day as the same kalpatharu. The Mahamantra shall fulfill all the prayers of the people assembled here.

### What do I pray for?

Sri Swamiji spoke as follows:

When I pray to Bhagavan what do I ask for?

I do not ask for liberation (*moksha*), nor do I ask for any yoga *siddhis* (divine powers). I ask no personal favors.

I only pray that He, out of his immense grace, should fulfill speedily ALL the prayers of you devotees who are in distress. None should leave this place empty handed. This is my only prayer.

### Can we have materialistic prayers in our minds?

Sri Swamiji spoke thus:

Many people who are in the path of *Nama sankirtan* or are in the habit of visiting a temple or a mahatma regularly, also pray for relieving their problems. This is **not** *kaamyārtha bhakti* ('temporary' devotion with the aim of only having desires fulfilled, without real love for God).

With whom else can real devotees share their troubles and sorrows, and pray to for divine help but Bhagavan? Draupadi or Uttara, who were devotees of Krishna, could not do anything else but surrender to Krishna for help when they were in distress. That is certainly not *kaamyārtha bhakti*.

If someone goes to a temple or to a mahatma **only** when they have problems and

only to get relief from problems, only that is *kamyārtha bhakti*.

### How powerful can prayers be?

We in Tamil Nadu and in another neighboring state were constantly troubled by the Kaveri problem spanning many decades. Whenever the monsoon failed, this problem would surface and many times take a severe dimension of violence, with loss of life on both sides. This was brought to my notice in 2007. We ordained a 48-day uninterrupted *Akhanda Nama Kirtanam* to pray for the water crisis to disappear in both states.

From that year onward, we seldom see this issue getting flared up. No one even sees this issue in the papers. This is a prayer by just about 100 people in one place. If this can bring about such a benign but drastic change, imagine the positive impact of mass prayers in many places, by many more devotees!

### A Special Prasadam

Sri Swamiji spoke thus:

Today I am going to give you all, as a *prasadam*, a 1-rupee coin. It has '1' marked on one side.

This tells us: 'God is One and Mahamantra is the one way for all to receive His grace.' The other side has the Ashoka chakra. 'Ashoka' means 'destruction of sorrow', which is the immediate result of chanting the Mahamantra.

So I am giving you all this coin as a *prasadam* of this Mahamantra mass prayer so that your sorrows are destroyed by the One God, through this One way of Mahamantra chanting.

Let us all also remember this message about Prayers performed with the Mahamantra. This New Year, let us all resolve to pray to the One God by chanting the Mahamantra and having all our problems resolved and all our wishes fulfilled.



### Inside this issue

The Real Enemy	Pg 2
Answers and Beyond...	Pg 2
Kid's Story — A Body full of Noses	Pg 3
Kid's Quiz — Swami Vivekananda	Pg 3
News and Events	Pg 4

## The Real Enemy

Our best friend and worst enemy, the mind, always aims to outsmart us. The sooner we learn its double agent nature, the better, because when we realize who we are up against, we'll progress faster.

Say we resolve to stop a long time habit (for e.g., coffee addiction). It (mind) is the one that makes us take up the resolution. It provides the confidence, and the impetus, and makes us want to do it. But it also knows when to put the brakes. Slowly but surely, even to one who has a strong will power, it will find a way to beat the resolution that it initiated in the first place. Why? Because the very nature of the mind is to keep us enslaved, for that alone feeds its sustenance. Will a corrupt agent ever turn himself in?

To achieve its purpose, perhaps the mind too takes the approach of *sAma, dhAna, bheda, dhanda*. Initially we start off with some enthusiasm, but soon enough that very mind will begin to employ its arsenals. First it tries to reconcile (*sAma*). "What's the big deal with coffee? You can start or stop it anytime. You are not really addicted." Then comes *dhAna* (sacrifice): "Look! Caffeine is the problem. Here's decaf! - tastes just as good, and it's better for your health." If that doesn't work, then there's *bheda* (threat): "See, you'll have a headache if you stop this morning coffee. Is it really worth having a lousy start every day?"

By now, most of us would have said goodbye to the challenge. To the most resolute, finally, there is

## Mind Matters

'*dhanda*' (fight). We go through several days of battle resisting the temptation over and over again. Time will test our endurance and will power, and a very small fraction of survivors may seemingly pass the test. Here again, they may not have realized that the mind has conveniently switched the game on us by enslaving us on a replacement addiction. "Look, here's a new toy. It's Touch screen, it's Android and has got Angry Birds!" So, we are off chasing something else. The mind is happy as long as *it* pulls the strings on us.

Even in spiritual progress, the mind does the same because of its nature. When we chant the Divine Names, it may interest us in a resolution to *chant sitting in one place for 30 minutes without distraction*, and define that as progress. Soon enough, it switches sides and aims to break that challenge. Here comes the *sAma, dhAna, bheda, dhanda* for this. *You know you can chant and write Nama as well; Working on Satsang related things while chanting is acceptable, ok?; Maybe changing tunes every 5 min will make it go faster?; If you don't finish this 30 min, then be ready to face the consequences!*

Such is the vacillating nature of the mind. While seemingly appearing to be beneficial, it can prove quite damaging unless a strong sense of discrimination (*viveka*) is applied to each passing thought in order to filtering out the harmful ones.

Sriram Ramanujam, Houston, TX

## Answers and Beyond...

Spiritual questions answered by  
Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji

**Q. India has the same earth, water and resources like other countries. When that is the case, what makes India 'Holy'?**

**A.** Great saints have the same physical body like any common man. Would it be appropriate to state that they are all one and the same, based on the physical similarities? The saints are vibrant with spirituality and that sets them apart. Similarly, India may be similar to other countries as far as resources are concerned. The earth and the water may be similar externally. But this land is the seat of spirituality and everything about it is holy and spiritual.

**Q. We find that majority of the advancements in modern science have originated from other countries. Why is it so?**

**A.** If one researches into the external world with his intellect, scientific advancement ensues. If one turns inwards and dives within one's own self, it results in spiritual progress. The natural tendency of our countrymen is to turn their vision inward and perform self-enquiry. This is the prime reason why our nation is the spiritual nucleus of the world and no other nation has matched us in spirituality. On the same note, one cannot deny that our Vedas have spoken of innumerable rare scientific facts too.

**Q. Is it possible to prove the special sanctity that is attributed to the water from river Ganges?**

**A.** There are countless instances that are mentioned in various scriptures that extol the greatness of the Ganges. Let us set aside all of them. If we collect some water from the Ganges and keep it in a sealed container, it remains pure, microbe-free and unaffected, without any special preservative, even after many years. Does this is not clearly prove that water from Ganges has special qualities?

**Q. Why is there a worsening of a psychological disorder on the days such as Poornima (full moon) and Amavasya (New Moon)?**

**A.** On these days, there is variation in the intensity of the gravitational force. Our scriptures and Mahatmas opine that fluctuations in the gravitational force disturb the neurotransmitters and therefore those with mental disorders experience aggravations.

**For more such answers by Sri Swamiji, or to ask a question of your own, please visit the Nama Dwaar website at [www.namadwaar.org](http://www.namadwaar.org).**

## Swami Vivekananda's Tale: A Body Full of Noses

Swami Vivekananda was born on January 12, 1863 in Kolkata, India. His parents were Vishwanath Datta and Bhuvaneshwari Devi, and they named him as Narendra Nath Dutta.

Naren grew up to become the prime disciple of Ramakrishna Paramhansa and the founder of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. Even today he is world famous for the inspiring talk that he gave representing Hinduism in the World's Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. His birthday is celebrated as National Youth Day in India.

Vivekananda loved to interact with children and youth. He would tell them many stories to instill values in the youngsters. Here is one such story told by Swami Vivekananda.

Once upon a time in a small village, there lived a boy named Arun who had a very small nose. His father was no more and

he had to take care of his mother. He was a hard worker.



But his friends were naughty and they made fun of his nose. Arun felt bad and would complain about them to elders but his friends did not stop.

Slowly, Arun grew up but his friends continued to tease him. His mother became old and passed away, which made Arun very lonely. At that time an old man from the same village asked Arun to get married and start a new life. Arun agreed to get married but felt that beautiful girls would tease him so he said, "I

will only marry a girl with a small nose."

Finally he got married to a girl from nearby village who also had a small nose like Arun. He was very happy and felt that all his problems would come to an end.

But it became worse; his friends now teased both husband and wife. Arun was annoyed and felt that he should pray to the Lord sincerely as it was He who had given him a small nose.

Owing to his devotion God appeared before him and gave him three boons. Filled with excitement, he ran to his wife to share the message. His first desire was to ask for a beautiful nose but his wife wanted wealth, so she stopped him from asking. But Arun, in a rush, asked the first boon, "We want noses and nothing but beautiful noses".

Immediately their bodies were covered with noses and both were shocked. Arun was upset and asked for the second boon, "Hey Lord! We do not want these noses, please take them away." Now even the small nose vanished, they became nose-less. Finally Arun was totally confused and asked for the third boon, "Please give us back our original noses."

Learning: Opportunity once lost cannot be recovered. Use the opportunity wisely.

*Adapted by*

*Shalini Kelappan, Doha, Qatar*

### Kid's Quiz — Swami Vivekananda

C. Ahobila Math

1. Swami Vivenakanda was the disciple of

- A. Ramakrishna Paramahansa
- B. Swami Sadananda
- C. Ramana Maharshi

2. Swami Vivekananda's birth name is

- A. Virendar Dutta
- B. Narendranath Dutta
- C. Rabindranath Tagore

3. Name the birth-place of Swami Vivekananda

- A. New Delhi
- B. Kolkata
- C. Chicago

4. Swami Vivekananda was the founder of

- A. Sringeri Math
- B. Ramakrishna Math

5. Swami Vivekananda was responsible for spreading knowledge about this religion in the West:

- A. Buddhism
- B. Jainism
- C. Hinduism

6. Swami Vivekananda was born on the auspicious day of

- A. Vaikunta Ekadasi
- B. Makara Sankranti
- C. Durga Pooja

7. The headquarters of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission is

- A. Belur Math
- B. Sandeepani Gurukulam
- C. Kapila Math

8. The birthday of Swami Vivekananda is

celebrated in India as

- A. National Youth day
- B. Children's day
- C. Labor Day

9. Swami Vivekananda attained Mahasamadhi at the age of

- A. 52
- B. 39
- C. 88

10. Swami Vivekananda began his speech in World's Parliament of Religions in 1893 with the following words

- A. Brothers and Sisters
- B. Ladies and Gentlemen
- C. Sisters and Brothers of America

*Compiled by:*

*Ramy Srinivasan, San Jose, CA*

**Answers:**

1-A, 2-B, 3-B, 4-B, 5-C, 6-B, 7-A, 8-A, 9-B, 10-C

# Sri Poornimaji's visit to the US

## News and Events

### Annual Year-End G.O.D. Utsav in Houston



With the immense grace of Sri Swamiji and the Lord, the Annual G.O.D. Utsav in Houston was celebrated in grandeur from Dec 26th 2011 through Jan 1st 2012.

Sri Poornima ji, disciple of Sri Swamiji, was the special guest from India. She guided the events throughout the week and conducted a wonderful series of Srimad Bhagavata pravachans.

The special events through the week included Mahamantra chanting, Srimad Bhagavata parayanam, pravachan, Nama sankirtan, Quiz, Vanabhojanam, Padhuka procession and a variety of events for the kids, like fancy dress, talent show, concert performances, a Bhakta Meera play on New Year's eve and fireworks.

Devotees flew in from 6 states around the US to Houston Namadwaar to join the celebration.

Sri Ramanujamji delivered a special, inspiring New Year message via telephone right before the stroke of midnight on 31st, and the entire gathering welcomed the New Year with Mahamantra chanting. On New Year's Day, Sri Swamiji's mass prayer in India was telecast live at Namadwaar and several devotees in Namadwaar enjoyed the talk and chanted the Mahamantra along with Sri Swamiji.



### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Bay Area: Jan 12 to Jan 15**—Satsangs with Sri Poornimaji. For more details visit [www.godivinity.org](http://www.godivinity.org)

**Seattle: Jan 17-Jan 31**—Satsangs with Sri Poornimaji.

**Jan 18**—Gopa Kuteeram Art competition. For more info [sampradayacamp@gmail.com](mailto:sampradayacamp@gmail.com).

**Michigan: Jan 14,-16** — Madhura utsav satsang. For more info [shreedevi\\_bharath@yahoo.com](mailto:shreedevi_bharath@yahoo.com)

**Chicago: Jan 21**—Gopa Kuteeram—Shloka Contest. For more info [chicagogopakuteeram@gmail.com](mailto:chicagogopakuteeram@gmail.com)

Weekly satsangs are held regularly in the following regions:

**Atlanta, GA; Bay Area, CA; New England area; Chicago, IL; Cortlandt Manor, NY; Dallas, TX; Hartford, CT; Houston, TX; Cerritos, CA; Orlando, FL; Richmond, VA; Seattle, WA**

A Telecon satsang is held every Fri evening and Tele-Bhagavatam discourse is telecast every Tue evening, both at 8:30 PM CST. Anyone is welcome to attend. Ph: 605-475-4000, Passcode: 131581

Gopa Kuteeram (kids' programs) & Srimad Bhagavatam study circles are conducted in various cities. Email [newsletter@godivinity.org](mailto:newsletter@godivinity.org) for more info.