

India's Divine Raksha Bandhan

India and spirituality are inseparable. The history, culture, the sacred rivers, the temple towns, the glorious lineage of saints, and their songs, stories, and principles, form the backbone of India. "If the world is our home, India is the puja (prayer) room," says Sri Muralidhara Swamiji.

This year India celebrates 62 years of independence. A fine spiritual thread ran through the hearts of all our freedom fighters right from Gandhiji to Bharathiyar, Rajaji and many others who quietly played out the Divine Will. For many, sacrificing their lives for the sake of the country was simply spiritual *sadhana*.

Gandhiji's belief in the Rama Nama is testament to the fact that anything in the world can be achieved by merely chanting God's Name. In his final talk before independence, he said, "We have tried our best. Now let us all chant the Divine Name together. Only that has the power to free us."

Even today, our country is being protected by Mahans. Some people may think that saints do not do anything for their nation. Sri Muralidhara Swamiji says, "A common man never understands a Mahatma's true nature. If a man is afflicted with a headache, people around can relate to that pain, as they too know what it would feel like. But the same cannot be said about being in a Realized state".

He adds, "A *Jnani* might appear still and silent in the eyes of a passerby; the truth is that the Earth moves due to His power."



This ideology goes deep into the fiber of Indian history. Spiritual masters, since the beginning of time, have guided India from darkness to light.

A devotee once asked Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, "There are great men, public workers, who cannot solve the problem of the misery of the world".

Maharshi said, "They are ego-centered and therefore their inability. If they remained in the Self, they would be different".

The devotee was quick to jump, "Why do not Mahatmas help?"

Bhagavan said, "How do you know they do not help? Public speeches, physical activity, and material help are all out weighed by the silence of the Mahatmas. They accomplish more than others".

All the Mahans unanimously vouch for the fact that miseries can be annihilated forever only with devotion and *jnana*. In addition to providing that eternal knowledge and guidance to spiritually liberate people, Mahans also play a vital role in protecting our country.

In 1999, Sri Yogi Ramsuratkumar, who used to read the daily newspaper thoroughly, did not do so on a particular day. A devotee asked him, "You usually read the newspaper completely. In today's issue there are articles of Kanchi Sri Maha Swamiji whom you like very much and also about Sri Rajaji. Have you not read them?" Sri Yogi Ramsuratkumar replied, "Where was the time for this beggar to read the newspaper? This beggar was busy in Kargil!"

Similarly, during the 1965 war with Pakistan, Singapparaja, who led the Indian army, approached Kanchi Maha Periyava for his blessings. Maha Periyava instructed him to meet Andavan Pitchai, who was a great Muruga devotee and a Mahan. Singapparaja had her darshan and prayed for India's victory. Andavan Pitchai had a wonderful vision. In it she saw Ambal (Devi) moving in a golden chariot drawn by *devas* and protecting our border! She immediately wrote *Kali Kavacham stotra*.

While our motherland is being protected by the God-sent Mahatmas, what we can do for our part is to sincerely abide by the direction pointed by those Mahans. Sri Muralidhara Swamiji's message to us is easy to follow. His words are, "Let a new India sans violence and selfishness but at the same time devoid of lethargy and cowardice be born. Let us all, with this in view, take the Name of the Lord and chant the Mahamantra; make all chant the Mahamantra. Fill India to the brim with Nama Kirtan. Let her offer to the world the spiritual bliss that she has found."

Sriram Ramanujam, Houston, TX
Illustration: Sripriya Sarathy, Charlotte, NC

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Namadwaar in Australia—tête-à-tête with Poornimaji

Australia is one of the countries where Global Organization for Divinity (GOD) has a strong presence. The first Namadwaar outside India will soon be inaugurated in Sydney. Sri Muralidhara Swamiji's disciple Poojya Poornima Kumarasamiji recently visited Australia and conducted several satsangs in many cities in Australia and New Zealand. Here we present an interview with Poornimaji about the activities in Australia and the story behind the first Namadwaar.

We have heard that Australia was one of the first countries where our regular Nama Sankirtan satsangs started. Can you tell us a little more about it?

December 31st, 1999 – It was the dawn of the new millennium. A few devotees of Sri Muralidhara Swamiji in Sydney started an informal group to spread his message of Bhakti and Nama Sankirtan in the country. With time, the organization began to grow. In 2006, Sri Ramanujamiji, another disciple of Sri Swamiji, and I visited Australia at the behest of the devotees and conducted numerous satsangs. This and subsequent yearly visits helped spread the word far and wide in the country.

To spread the ideals of Sri Swamiji more effectively and reach out to the wide Australian public, the devotees felt the need to formalize themselves and thus the “Global Organisation for Divinity – GOD Australia” was born in January 2008. Today, thanks to the tireless efforts of the members here, satsangs have been established in several Australian cities and by Sadguru’s grace, it has spread to nearby New Zealand too.

What are the activities of GOD Australia?

GOD Australia has been conducting regular Nama Sankirtan satsangs in Sydney and other cities. On special occasions, they perform Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan from 6 AM to 6 PM. The satsang reaches out to different communities – Nepali, Fiji Indians,

and people hailing from various parts of India. They also participate in the annual Indo-Australian fairs to talk about the path of Nama Sankirtan to Australian nationals, who have shown a great interest in chanting the Mahamantra. The Australians are very open to our culture and heritage!

Monthly mass prayers are conducted in Sydney where many residents place their requests and Mahamantra Sankirtan is performed for them. It is wonderful listen-



ing to the experiences of so many devotees who have benefited from such mass prayers. Apart from these, special

mass prayers during calamities – Victorian Bush fires, Houston Hurricanes, etc. are performed.

Sri Swamiji’s talks are regularly broadcast on Tamil Radio. Special festivals like Janmashtami, Sri Rama Navami, etc. are celebrated in a grand manner, providing special focus to the talents of the younger generation. The simple and powerful path of Mahamantra Kirtan has attracted the Australian youth as well.

What is ‘Namadwaar’? Please enlighten us on this.

Namadwaar is essentially a spiritual powerhouse of the Divine Name. It is a sanctum where the Divine Name of God will be chanted everyday, the eventual goal being incessant, round-the-clock Nama Sankirtan. Anyone and everyone, transcending distinctions of age, gender, race, and religion can come to the Namadwaar to chant the Divine Name and pray for their well being. There are already about 10 functional Namadwaars in various places in India.

We hear that a Namadwaar is coming up in Australia...

Yes and that is a wonderful story of grace! Recently a devotee from Australia had the darshan of Sri Swamiji in India. After hearing about the satsang activities in Australia,

Sri Swamiji said, “A Namadwaar will soon be established in Sydney”.



The Australia satsang immediately began looking for land in March this year. One particular land at Winston Hills in Sydney was a favorite. However, the land-owner, an Australian national, had initial reservations about selling his property for community purposes. But the satsang members sincerely performed prayers to Lord Krishna and our Gurudev.

In the next meeting with the seller, they spoke in detail about the organization and its purpose. The seller was pleased with their intentions and expressed happiness in proceeding further. He even promised support to spreading the Divine Name in his own community!

More such pleasant surprises were to follow! Our final offer still fell short of the owner’s expectations. While the negotiations were on, one of the Australian satsang devotees happened to visit India and had a chance to meet Sri Swamiji. When Sri Swamiji was apprised of the negotiation, Sri Swamiji asked them to immediately accept the owner’s asking price. The very next day, back in Sydney, the deal was closed. We later came to know that on that very evening of confirmation, the seller had received a better offer, but had to turn it down as he had given us his word!

With the divine grace of Lord Hari and Sri Swamiji, a modest *Bhoomi Puja* was conducted on June 4. The Namadwaar should be up and running in a few months. The entire team is excited!

Does Sri Muralidhara Swamiji make trips to Australia?

Sri Swamiji addresses the devotees of Sydney and Melbourne through webcasts/video conferences. Now, with the first international Namadwaar being established in Australia, Sri Swamiji has decided to stay permanently in this country! He has blessed the devotees here with His Holy *Padukas* which are no different from Him. They will be enshrined in the Namadwaar.



Krishna Smaranam...

The avatara of Lord Krishna is the greatest of all of the Lord's incarnations because of the beauty of His appearance and the color and vitality of His actions. When a person or thing is beautiful, is it not easy for us to think constantly about it or crave for it?

Sri Krishna's form and His divine plays have been described in great detail in *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Is it surprising then that merely reading or listening to this great Purana can sprout love and devotion for the beautiful Lord?

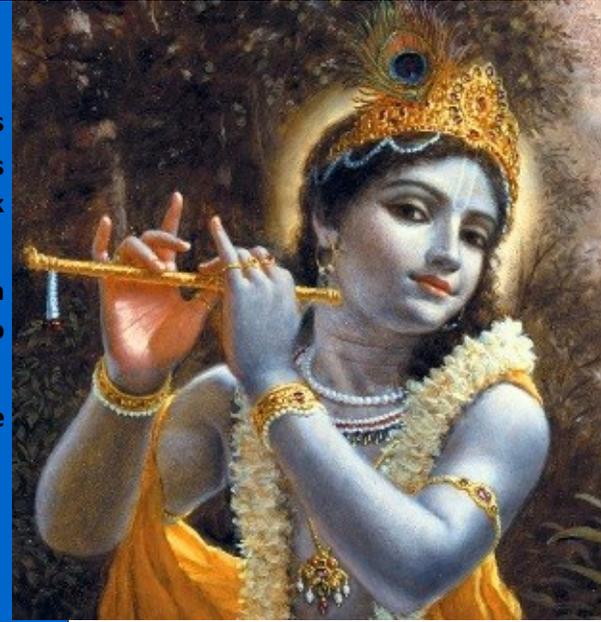
As a jewel among the beautiful verses of *Srimad Bhagavatam* is one where Lord Krishna's appearance is described:

*barhApeedam natavaravapuh karnayoh karnikAram
bibhrad vAsah kanakakapisham vyjayantIm cha mAIAm I
randhrAn venoradharasudhayA pUrayan gopavrindaihi
vrindAranyam swapadaramanam prAvishad gItakIrthi II*

The Lord, in His exquisite form resembling that of an actor, is adorned with a crest of peacock feathers. He wears karnika flowers for earrings. His garment is golden and He wears a long vyjayanti mAIA (garland made with flowers of five colors) around His neck. Enchanting music emanates from His flute, whose holes are filled with the nectar of His lips. The Lord thus enters Vrindavana, which is charming with His footprints, while His glory is sung by hosts of Gopas.

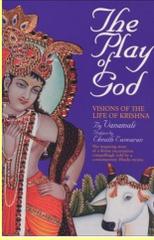
How handsome the Lord is! Do we not wish that we could revel forever in His beauty and not lose Him in the mire of everyday life? Believe it or not, reveling forever in His beauty is indeed a true possibility! This can be accomplished by merely uttering His equally beautiful name, "Krishna"! The Name is not different from the Named, and constant utterance of His name can lead us right unto His Lotus Feet.

This *Janmashtami*, let us all chant His beautiful name, meditate on His captivating form, and pray for His grace to grant us communion with Him.



Pages of Inspiration

Play of God
by Devi Vanamali
Blue Dove Press, CA



In the annals of history, no manifestation of God has been as complete as that of Lord Krishna. Hiding behind the veil of His own Maya, He stole butter as a child, danced with the Gopis as a youth, and was a heroic upholder of dharma as a man. Writing a book on Him is no simple feat. It can only be done with the Grace of Lord Krishna Himself.

Presenting a synthesis of Lord Krishna's life as set forth in both *Srimad Bhagavatam* and *Mahabharatha*, *Play of God* is the one of the few books available to us that wholly capture the pastimes of the Lord—in Gokula, Brindavana, Mathura, Dwaraka as well as in Hastinapura and the battlefield of Kurukshetra. It is complete in the analysis of the Lord, yet in all humility has presented before us the fact that none can truly fathom Him. The book presents to us the Lord, as He is. Spiritual seekers of all traditions will find inspiration and revitalized faith through this book.

The Indian edition of this book is called *Sri Krishna Lila* and both the editions are available in online book stores for a very reasonable price.

Aravind Thathachari, Orlando, FL

KIDS' QUIZ—Ganēsha Trivia

1. Lord Ganēsha was Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati's:

- A. Second child
- B. First child
- C. Middle child

2. The birthday of Lord Ganēsh is celebrated on:

- A. Shukla Chaturthi of Bhadrapad month
- B. Shukla Chaturthi day

C. Krishna Chaturthi day of Shravana month

3. The sibling of Lord Ganēsha is:

- A. Muruga
- B. Siddhi
- C. Hanuman

4. Which animal is Lord Ganēsha's vehicle?

- A. Cat

B. Mouse
C. Dog

5. What does Lord Ganēsha have in his hands?

- A. Noose and Goad
- B. Snake
- C. Chakra

Compiled by
Ramya Srinivasan, CA

Answers:

1-B, 2-A, 3-A, 4-B, 5-A





Satsang News and

Boston

On July 19, New England GOD satsang invited Mrs. Mangalam Ramaswamy, an expert in Srimad Bhagavatam who was visiting the Boston area, to lead a special Bhagavatam satsang. The event started with the Mahamantra chanting for about 30 mins, followed by parayan of various *stutis* and *gitas* from the Bhagavatam. Mrs. Ramaswamy then gave a discourse on Bhagavatam and *Ajamila charitra*, and also reminisced about the numerous Bhagavata parayanas that she had been blessed to lead, thanks to Sri Swamiji's blessing and encouragement.



Satsangs were also conducted in the New England area on July 12 to celebrate Guru Poornima and on July 18 for Ekadasi, which included discourses by devotees, kirtans, Mahamantra sankirtan, and Srimad Bhagavatam parayan.

Seattle

Guru Poornima was celebrated in a grand manner by Seattle GOD satsang on July 12. The event, which was attended by over 60 people, started off with Nama Sankirtan followed by slokas on the Guru. Children took an active part by helping with decorations and enthusiastically performing a wonderful skit on the story of Adi Shankara and Padmapada to illustrate Guru Bhakti. Sri Muralidhara Swamiji's speech on 'Guru Bhakthi and Nama Kirtan - Imperatives to attain the Infinite' was then relayed. Following this, the devotees sang several bhajans. The satsang concluded with Nama Sankirtan and the song *Maitreem Bhajata*.



Akhanda Nama in Houston, Los Angeles, Orlando



(Above) Houston Gopa Kuteeram kids volunteering at the local Meenakshi Temple.

Akhanda Mahamantra kirtan was performed for 12 continuous hours at Houston and Los Angeles GOD satsangs on July 11 for Guru Poornima, and on 3 July at Orlando GOD satsang for Ashada Ekadasi. All the events saw enthusiastic participation from devotees and satsang members. The highlight of the Houston event was that it was broadcast over the Internet and many devotees across the world were able to take part.



Upcoming Satsangs & Events

Aug 8, 7 AM—7 PM, Houston, TX

Narayaneeyam recitation at the residence of Sri Narayan Dave. Ph: (832) 243-6036

Aug 13, 6 AM—6 PM, Orlando, FL

Akhanda Mahamantra Nama Sankirtan and Srimad Bhagavatam parayan at the residence of Sri Aravind Thathachari. Ph: (321) 214-3424

Aug 15, 10:00 AM, Houston, TX

Janmashtami satsang at the residence of Sri Sriram Ramanujam. Ph: (832) 515-1251

Aug 16, 5:30 PM, Seattle, WA

Janmashtami satsang at the residence of Smt. Priya Subramanian. Ph: (425) 246-0009

August 23, 4 PM, Cambridge, MA

Ganesh chaturthi satsang at the residence of Sri Prakash. Ph: (617) 820-2968

Aug 23, 5:30 PM, Seattle, WA

Ganesh chaturthi satsang at the residence of Smt. Priya Subramanian. Ph: (425) 246-0009

August 25, 7 PM, Cambridge, MA

Swati satsang at the residence of Sri Narayanan Sathiamoorthy. Ph: (617) 246-0009

Aug 29, 6 PM, Houston, TX

GOD booth at Grand Annual Houston Janmashtami celebrations. Contact Narayan Dave at (832) 243-6036

Aug 29-30, Orlando, FL

Mass prayer and Srimad Bhagavatam satsangs at various locations in the Orlando area. For more information contact Sri Aravind Thathachari. Ph: (321) 214-3424

Weekly satsangs are held regularly in the following regions:

Bay Area, CA; New England region, MA; Chicago, IL; Cortlandt Manor, NY; Dallas, TX; Houston, TX; Los Angeles/Cerritos, CA; Orlando, FL; Seattle, WA

A weekly national telecon satsang is held every Friday evening at 8:30 PM CST.

Srimad Bhagavatam study circles are conducted in various cities.

Email newsletter@godivinity.org for more information.