



The Vision

A monthly journal started by HH Swami Ramdas in 1933
DEDICATED TO UNIVERSAL LOVE AND SERVICE

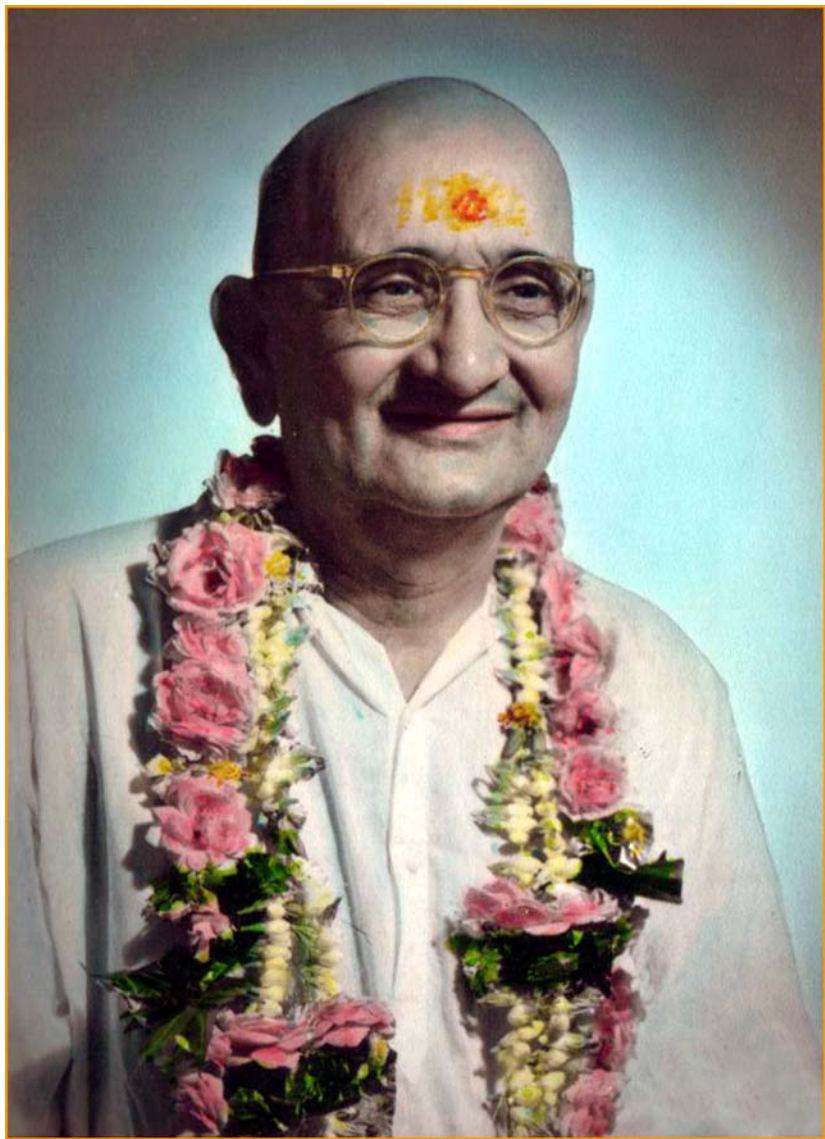


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Om Sri Ram jai Ram jai jai Ram

ॐ श्री राम जय राम जय जय राम

Om Sri Ram jai Ram jai jai Ram

MY BODY IS A TEMPLE

I heard a song – I was charmed:

“My body is a temple.

I went in to see God.

Lo, I became God myself!”

Verily, you are He!

Go within to know this.

All the manifest life is yourself.

There is none but you.

You are love and joy incarnate.

- Swami Ramdas

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FROM THE EDITOR

Idol worship is an integral part of Indian culture. The idol in a temple symbolically represents God, the all-pervading almighty Lord of the universe, to whom devotees offer their worship with faith and devotion and seek solutions/remedies for their various problems and also to bring about peace and tranquillity in their mind. The idol also reminds the devotees of their subservience to a greater Power than themselves. All these are there because right from the impressionable age, we are taught to think that God is separate from us though He is the very Subject behind all creations and their various dynamics. This is normally termed as Bhakti path where devotees ultimately feel that they owe everything to Him and that they have no separate existence other than the Lord.

However in their day to day life devotees do not bring in the God-dimension in all that they think, talk and do. Only in times of crisis they remember Him and seek His intervention to help them get over the crisis. That means the remembrance of God is not constant. It will be therefore better if devotees realize the significance of idol worship vis-à-vis their intimate relationship with the Lord.

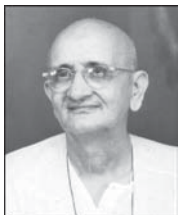
This month's issue of THE VISION highlights various aspects of idol worship through the words of Mahatmas.

— EDITOR

TEMPLE WORSHIP

By Swami Ramdas

Man cannot conceive of God, who is infinite and eternal. God is beyond name and form. The instrument, which we have to make use of, in trying to comprehend Him, is the mind. And the



mind can think only in terms of name and form. So, if we want to concentrate our mind on God, we have to give Him a name and a form. The image in the temple serves this purpose. When we stand before the image, we take it as the very embodiment of the Divine. We sing before it of His great attributes, His infinite glory and power, His eternal existence, knowledge and joy.

The image, by itself, is only a mere idol, made of metal, wood or stone. But the consecratory ceremonies at the time of the installation of the idol invest it with Divine powers. The sanctity of a temple largely depends upon the faith, purity and devotion of the priests who perform daily worship in it. The Mantras

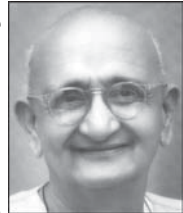
that are recited during the Puja are also charged with spiritual power. They create an atmosphere vibrant with peace and purity. So all these combine to make one conscious of the Divine presence in the temple, and instill faith in the devotee. When thousands thus fix their faith upon that image, it naturally adds to the Divine light and power generated therein. And the moment anybody, with faith in the Divinity installed there, enters the temple, he feels this very clearly. So temples have become places of worship for the masses, in general, who are not yet fit to turn inwards and find the God within their own hearts, in His true and eternal nature.

All should have free access to a temple, no matter to what caste they belong. But the holy atmosphere in the temple should not be defiled. The sanctity of the temple can be preserved only by the faith and devotion both of the priests and of the people who offer worship there. People must go to the temple only for worship. The principal qualification for worship in the temple is staunch faith in and devotion for the Deity. In the precincts of the temple, devotees are expected to be physically clean, and to preserve that decorum and attitude of mind which is suited to the Presence of God.

BELOVED PAPA SWAMI RAMDAS ANSWERS

Devotee: Please describe the love of Gopis and other great devotees.

Papa: The very thought of Krishna made the Gopis forget everything and they were immersed in bliss. Krishna's bluish figure and everything that He did, filled their hearts. Whenever they saw the blue sky they would go into trance or ecstasy. When they saw the forest His remembrance would fill them with bliss. It is a rare, pure, glorious love that Gopis gave to Krishna, the idol of their hearts.



The Gopis were suffering the pangs of separation after Krishna went to Mathura. Uddhava went to console them and talked to them of Jnana: "Krishna is not merely the form but He is the eternal Truth. You need not feel separation from Him. He is always with you. He pervades everywhere. You can be aware of His presence everywhere and enjoy bliss and peace." On hearing this, Radha said, "You have told all these things, but our hearts are so full of Krishna that your ideas cannot enter there. We are so fond of the figure of Krishna that your Jnana does not at all appeal to us. You may take the Jnana with you. We want our

Krishna.” What love it is! In the presence of that Love, Jnana, Siddhis and the like fade into insignificance. “Thousands of Kabirs are floating in the ocean of one Gopi’s love,” said Kabir. Saints and sages of all ages praise the unique devotion of the Gopis so much.

Mira, the great devotee of Krishna, was told by her husband, the Rana. “Mira, you are my wife. As such, you ought to love me. But you don’t.” Then she said, “What can I do? My entire heart is robbed by Krishna.” That means Krishna had occupied and possessed her entire heart.

You have heard of Sabari. She was a Bhil woman, living in the forest, and so she was badly treated by people in the neighbourhood. She had heard that Lord Rama was coming. She was waiting and waiting, preparing herself every day to welcome the Lord, making ready the fruits to be offered to Him, cleaning her hermitage and the surroundings and continuously remembering the Lord with a heart filled with love and devotion. Verily, Sri Rama came to give her Darshan, and her joy knew no bounds. The lesson to be learnt is: if you have such a genuine love for God. He cannot but come to you. This is true for all people

and for all times. This episode is described so beautifully in the 'Tulsidas Ramayan' and also in the 'Valmiki Ramayan'.

Devotee: While aspiring for God, how should He be thought of?

Papa: As the Supreme Being, you can take Him as an Avatara Purusha for the purpose of concentrating the mind. For, it is difficult to concentrate on God as Nirguna. You have to conceive of some form in the early stages and dedicate yourself to Him. You become ultimately one with Him and realize His Nirguna aspect. Then you will see Him in the universe everywhere, and enjoy real happiness, peace and freedom.

WITH THE DIVINE MOTHER

By Swami Shuddhananda

Mataji: Sri Gondavale Maharaj and some of the town-dwellers sat together and planned to raise a big temple of Lord Ramachandra, Sita and Lakshmana. They got the land and the temple came up in no time. The disciples now asked the saint from where the idols could be acquired for installation in the temple. "That is Rama's lookout," replied the saint.



In another town, quite close, a devotee had installed three beautiful idols of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana in his house. It so happened that the temple caught fire and the whole structure burned down. The only things that survived and were unscathed were the three idols. That night, the house-owner had a dream in which Rama asked him to instal the three idols in the newly-built temple in the next town.

The very next day, the three idols arrived at the Gondavale temple and were installed with due ceremony. Soon after this, one day, Gondavale Maharaj gave some of his disciples a big scolding (“Just as I pick faults with you all,” interpolated Mataji with a smile) as they did not carry out the duty assigned to them. He was disgusted with their conduct and decided to leave the Ashram for good and go and live in the Himalayas. So saying, he set forth, brushing aside the wails of his disciples. Then, the three idols also were seen shedding tears and a disciple ran after the Guru and told him that even the idols were shedding tears at his departure. Hearing this, Sri Gondavale Maharaj came back and with his own hands wiped off the tears that continued to stream down from the eyes of the three idols and told them: “Rama, you too did not want me to go, is it? Well, here I am.”

MY LORD! MY EVERYTHING!!

Excerpts From The Poem By Swami Satchidananda

Oh Rama, Rama, Rama, my Rama...!

Manifest as innumerable universes,
And being their substratum,
Thou art the transcendent Truth,
Oh my Lord!



Thou art the transcendent Truth!
Thou art without attributes, Thou art with attributes!
Thou art without form, Thou art with form!

With intense love and devotion,
Remembering and meditating on Thy form,
As Vishnu, my mind craving for Thee alone,
Struggling to merge in Thy
Eternal Being, I beg of Thee.

Thy four arms holding,
Conch, discus, mace and lotus,
And Thy ever-smiling face,
And Thy ever-shining, enticing cheeks,
May this Thine adorable form,
Standing on red lotus,
Ever shine in our heart, in all hearts!

Standing on lotus showering grace on all,
Thy bewitching form may ever shine,
Not merely in our heart, in all hearts!
Mysterious are Thou, bewildering too,
Charming and bewitching is Thy form,
Sweet and intoxicating is Thy name,
Bestower of Bhakti and Mukti is Thy Kripa.

May all Bhaktas be blessed with Thy Kripa!
May all sing Thy sweet, intoxicating Name!
May all be blessed with Thy vision –
Of charming and bewitching form!
May all realize Thy supreme Godhead,
Unravelling the mystery and know,
There is only One, THAT THOU ART!

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shantihi

IDEA OF PERSONAL GOD

By Swami Vivekananda

Throughout the history of the world, we find that man is trying to grasp the abstract through thought-forms, or symbols. All the external manifestations of religion – bells, music, rituals, books, and images – come under that head. Anything that



appeals to the senses, anything that helps man to form a concrete image of the abstract, is taken hold of and worshipped. There is no reason why man should not use symbols. They have them in order to represent the ideas signified behind them. This universe is a symbol, in and through which we are trying to grasp the thing signified, which is beyond and behind. The Spirit is the goal, and not matter. Forms, images, bells, candles, books, churches, temples, and all holy symbols are very good, very helpful to the growing plant of spirituality, but thus far and no farther.

All of you have been taught to believe in an Omnipresent God. Try to think of it. How few of you can have any idea of what omnipresence means! If you struggle hard, you will get something like the idea of the ocean, or of the sky, or of a vast stretch of green earth, or of a desert. All these are material images, and so long as you cannot conceive of the abstract as abstract, of the ideal as the ideal, you will have to resort to these forms, these material images. It does not make much difference whether these images are inside or outside the mind. We are all born idolaters, and idolatry is good, because it is in the nature of man. Who can get beyond it? Only the perfect man, the God-man! The rest are all idolaters.

We should look at humanity as one vast organism, slowly coming towards light – a wonderful plant, slowly unfolding itself to that wonderful truth which is called God – and the first gyrations, the first motions, towards this are always through matter and through ritual.

The whole universe is, as it were, the external symbol of God, and behind that stands His grand name. Each particular body is a form, and behind that particular body is its name. As soon as you think of our friend So-and-so, there comes the idea of his body, and as soon as you think of your friend's body, you get the idea of his name. That is to say, psychologically, in the mind-stuff of man, there cannot come the idea of name without the idea of form, and there cannot come the idea of form without the idea of name. They are inseparable; they are the external and the internal sides of the same wave. As such, names have been exalted and worshipped all over the world – consciously or unconsciously, man found the glory of names.

Again, we find that in many different religions, holy personages have been worshipped. They worship Krishna, they worship Buddha, they worship Jesus, and so forth. Then, there is the worship of saints;

hundreds of them have been worshipped all over the world, and why not? The vibration of light is everywhere. The owl sees it in the dark. That shows it is there, though man cannot see it. To man, that vibration is only visible in the lamp, in the sun, in the moon, etc. God is omnipresent; He is manifesting Himself in every being; but for men, He is only visible, recognisable, in man. When His light, His presence, His spirit, shines through the human face, then and then alone, can man understand Him. Thus, man has been worshipping God through men all the time, and must do so as long as he is a man. He may cry against it, struggle against it, but as soon as he attempts to realise God, he will find the constitutional necessity of thinking of God as a man.

So we find that in almost every religion these are the three primary things which we have in the worship of God – forms or symbols, names, God-men.

Source: Complete Works Of Swami Vivekananda

NEED FOR TEMPLE WORSHIP

By A K B Nair

Can mankind be saved from turmoil? Can mankind be restored to perfect health by bringing peace in the mind? The answer is an emphatic “yes”. This is because

our forefathers, being aware of even what was going to happen in the world during our present times, had formulated many a spiritual scheme for the survival and benefit of mankind. Temple worship or idol worship is actually one such scheme fashioned for bringing about peace and tranquility in the minds of the common man. The march of time has proved that temple worship is a potent means of freeing man's mind from all stresses and tensions and of restoring his mind to a state of good health by bringing peace and calmness to it.

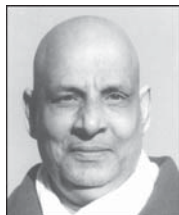
There is historical evidence that temple worship was prevalent in different parts of the world even as far back as 10000 BC. Idol worship has a scientific basis. The reason is not far to seek. The human mind can conceive only idols or forms. God is omnipresent. In the ultimate reality, this is a true statement. But man has limitations. He can form an idea of anything within the limitations of the instrument called "mind" with which he is endowed. It is not possible for everything that can be entertained in the intellectual realm to be shaped into form in the mind and understood. In our daily lives all of us are idol worshippers.

Source: Temple Culture

IDOLATRY

By Swami Sivananda

A piece of ordinary white paper or coloured paper has no value. You throw it away. But, if there is the stamp or picture of the king or emperor on the paper or if it is a currency note, you keep it safe in your money-purse or trunk. Even so, an ordinary piece of stone has no value for you. You throw it away. But, if you behold the stone Murti of Lord Krishna at Pandharpur or any other Murti in shrines, you bow your head with folded hands, because there is the stamp of the Lord on the stone.



The Pratima or idol is only a symbol of the Divine. A devotee does not behold therein a block of stone or a mass of metal. It is an emblem of God for him. It is precious, as it bears the mark of his Lord, as it stands for something which he holds holy and eternal.

When you worship an image, you do not say, “This image has come from Jaipur. It was brought by Prabhu Singh. Its weight is fifty pounds. It is made of white marble. It has cost me rupees five hundred”. You superimpose all the attributes of the Lord on the image and pray, “O Antaryamin! You are all-pervading; you are omnipotent,

omniscient, all-merciful. You are the source for everything. You are self-existent. You are Sat-chit-ananda. You are eternal, unchanging. You are the Life of my life, Soul of my soul! Give me light and knowledge! Let me dwell in Thee for ever". When your devotion and meditation become intense and deep you do not see the stone image. You behold the Lord only, who is Chaitanya.

Idols are not the idle fancies of sculptors, but, shining channels through which the heart of the devotee is attracted to, and flows towards God. Even as you can catch the sound waves of people all over the world through the radio receiving-set, it is possible to commune with the all-pervading Lord through the medium of an idol. The idol remains an idol, but the worship goes to the Lord.

The God in you has the power to awaken the latent divinity in the idol. Regular worship, Puja, and other modes of demonstrating our inner feeling of recognition of Divinity in the idol unveils the Divinity latent in it. This is truly a wonder and a miracle. The picture comes to life. The idol speaks. It will answer your questions and solve your problems. For a devotee the image is a mass of Chaitanya or consciousness. The devotee beholds actually the Lord in the idol. He draws inspiration from the image. The image guides

him. It talks to him. It assumes human form to help him in a variety of ways.

For a Bhakta or a sage, there is no such thing as Jada or insentient matter. Everything is Vaasudeva or Chaitanya: “Vaasudevah Sarvam Iti”. Narsi Mehta was put to the test by a Raja. The Raja said: “O Narsi, if you are a sincere devotee of Lord Krishna, if as you say the idol is Lord Krishna Himself, let this idol move”. According to the prayer of Narsi Mehta, the idol moved. The sacred bull Nandi before Siva’s idol took the food offered by Tulsidas. The Murti played with Mira Bai. It was full of life and Chaitanya for her.

Tulsidas had cosmic consciousness. He communed with the all-pervading, formless Lord. And yet, his passion for Lord Rama did not vanish.

Tukaram also had the same cosmic experience as that of Tulsidas. He sings in his Abhanga, “I see my Lord all-pervading just as sweetness pervades the sugar-cane”. And yet, he always speaks of his Lord Vitthala of Pandharpur with His hands on the hips.

Mira also realised her identity with the all-pervading Krishna, and yet, she was not tired of repeating again and again, “My Giridhar Naagar”.

When one advances in meditation, the form melts in the formless, and he becomes one with the formless essence.

Source: Bliss Divine

SAGUNA UPASANA

By Swami Ramdas

We all know that God is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. As such, it is difficult for us to approach Him unless He assumes a human form. So He has assumed for our sake a Saguna Swarupa. He is worshipped in thousands of temples all over India (and the world) in particular forms or images. So these images are not merely, as you see, made of metal or stone. They are the very personifications of the Divine, full of splendour, power and joy. So, whenever a devotee goes to the temple and stands before the Lord in the form of the image, he addresses Him as the Lord of the universe and he prays to Him for pure devotion or for so many things that he requires in this worldly life. By the grace of the Lord he gets what he wants; that means his prayers are fulfilled. In fact, when we place full faith in God, he grants us our desires.

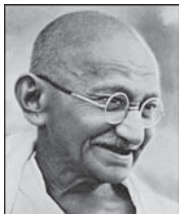
What we should rightly ask of Him is not the perishable objects of the world, but one-pointed devotion to Him so that we can have His Darshan. Through His grace we get Jnana or the realisation of our oneness with Him, and thereby attain immortal happiness, freedom and peace. Without knowing God in His essence, in His all-pervading consciousness,

we cannot attain liberation or Moksha.

God in the temple is the concrete expression of the universal Truth or Reality. Therefore His Darshan means to behold Him in the entire universe. Of course, before He grants us this Nirguna Darshan, He grants us Saguna Darshan. There are so many devotees of God who have seen Him in person before them. Ramdas has read the lives of saints in India. There were so many among them who not only worshipped God in the temples as their Beloved, but also made Him talk to them and made Him eat the food offered to Him. So the images in the temples are not lifeless and formless, but full of chaitanya, full of Divine radiance and power. This life and radiance is infused in the image through the faith and devotion that flows out towards Him out of the hearts of the devotees. It is the faith of millions that makes the Lord manifest in that image.

HE HAS MANY NAMES

By Mahatma Gandhi



There is only one omnipotent and omnipresent God. He is named variously and we remember Him by the name which is most familiar to us. Each person can choose the name that appeals most

to him. Ishwara, Allah, Khuda, God mean the same.

God has a thousand names, or rather, He is nameless. We may worship or pray to Him by whichever name that pleases us. All worship the same Spirit, but as all foods do not agree with all, all names do not appeal to all. Each chooses the name according to His associations and He being the Indweller, All-Powerful and Omniscient, knows our inmost feelings and responds to us according to our deserts.

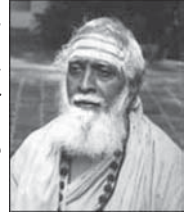
In my opinion, Rama, Rahaman, Ahurmazda, God or Krishna, are all attempts on the part of man to name that invisible Force. Man can only conceive God within the limitations of his own mind. What matters, then, whether one man worships God as a person and another as Force? Both do right according to their lights. One need only remember that God is the Force among all the forces. All other forces are material. But God is the Vital Force or Spirit which is all-pervading, all-embracing and therefore beyond human ken. Daridranarayan is one of millions of names by which humanity knows God who is unnameable and unfathomable by human understanding. And it means God of the poor, God appearing in the hearts of the poor.

Source: Pathway To God

MENTAL WORSHIP

By Swami Shantananda Puri

There was a man named Dhanpal belonging to the business community, a contemporary of Tulsidasji the author of 'Ramcharit Manas'. One day he approached Tulsidas and asked him, "I want to worship Lord Ram everyday elaborately but I cannot afford to spend even a single pie for purchase of fruits, milk, camphor or incense sticks etc. Can you kindly instruct me on such a method of worship." Tulsidas looked at him with all compassion and said - "Yes, there is a method of mentally worshipping Bhagavan and all offerings are only through imagination. It would cost you nothing. You have to install your Ram on a golden throne and offer him plenty of different varieties of fruits and hot cow's milk with sugar added to it. As it is all through imagination there is no need for you to be miserly. Do not forget to add one full teaspoon of sugar to the milk offered to the Lord." Tulsidas told him the method in detail.



Dhanpal began to worship daily as directed by Tulsidas. He was keeping a small plastic container with sugar and he never forgot to add one spoon of sugar to

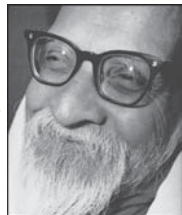
the milk (all in imagination). Fifteen years passed. One day as he had misplaced the spoon, he had to pour the sugar into the cup of milk directly from the container when a good amount of sugar fell into the cup (imagination). Immediately he dived his hand into the imagined cup and tried to take out the surplus sugar, though there was no cup in reality. The Lord saw that even after 15 years of continuous worship the miserliness has not left Dhanpal. Lord caught hold of his hand and told him, “Aye, there is neither real sugar nor a real cup of milk. If more sugar has fallen into it, let it remain so. It is after all imagination.” When once Dhanpal experienced the Divine touch of Lord’s hands he was transformed. He renounced his house and all property and went to the Himalayas to do Sadhana.

Source: Stories For Inspiration

SAGUNA AND NIRGUNA ARE COMPLEMENTARY TO EACH OTHER

By Acharya Vinoba Bhave

Just as fish cannot live outside water, Lakshman could not live without Rama. With his whole being he lived for Rama. He had virtually become Rama’s eyes, His hands, His mind. He had



merged himself into Rama, just as a river merges into the sea. He had become Rama's shadow. Lakshman's Bhakti was Saguna one.

Bharat, on the other hand, was a Nirguna devotee. For him, devotion to Rama meant doing his work. He has shown how to do God's work. He overcame the pangs of separation by immersing himself in that work. Bharat's attitude was that of a Nirguna Bhakta, but Saguna continued to support Nirguna.

Bharat bowed to Rama's command to go back to Ayodhya and bid farewell to him; but he immediately turned back and said, "Rama, my heart is still not reconciled to your decision. I feel that something is lacking." Rama understood the state of his mind and gave him his sandals. The respect for Saguna thus remained intact. Saguna did soften and brought warmth to Nirguna in the end. Lakshman would not have been content with Rama's sandals; he yearned for much more. Bharat's standpoint was different. Though he stayed away from Rama and worked from afar, his mind was full of Rama. To him, work was worship; still he did feel the need for the sandals. Both Lakshman and Bharat were Rama's devotees. Their standpoints were outwardly different. But

although Bharat was committed to his duties and principles, that commitment too needed the reassuring warmth of a symbol.

Saguna and Nirguna are closely intertwined with each other. Saguna cannot altogether dispense with Nirguna's support and Nirguna does need Saguna's warmth. Work is worship in itself, but devotion has to be there in the heart. The mechanical action of offering flowers to the Lord's idol is no worship; that action has to be saturated with devotion. Offering flowers to the Lord's idol is one form of worship; doing good work is another way. In both of them there must be warmth of devotion. If this warmth is not there, offering flowers to an idol will be no different from offering them to a stone. It is the inner feelings that matter. It is devotion which makes the difference. Saguna and Nirguna, work and love, Jnana and Bhakti – all these are completely identical. They all lead to the same ultimate experience.

What appears Saguna from one angle may appear Nirguna from another. In saguna worship a stone idol is looked upon as a symbol of God. To see God in a stone is, in a sense, the height of Nirguna. It is easier to see God in the saints, the parents and the

neighbours who can be seen to have wisdom, love or altruism. It is far more difficult to see God in a stone. Still we worship the stone idol. Is it not verily a form of Nirguna worship?

To sum up, Saguna and Nirguna are complementary to each other. Saguna is easier than Nirguna. But in another sense, Nirguna is easy and Saguna is difficult. Both lead us to the same end.

Source: Talks On The Gita

SAGUNA WORSHIP LEADS TO JNANA

By Swami Ramdas

You know, whenever you are worshipping the image of God, you look upon the image as the very manifestation of Divinity. In the first stage of worship, you all know, we superimpose upon the image our own Atman, and then worship the image as the manifestation of the Atman or God. This is called Avahan. After the worship is over, there is what is called Visarjan, i.e., we take back the superimposed Atman into ourselves. Gradually, as we go on worshipping with this faith and devotion, we feel that the image is seated in our heart. So the external form of worship is changed into the internal



form of worship. This is called Manasa Puja. It is then that, in our meditation, we behold the image of the Divine within our hearts. It is by the grace of this Divine within us that we get Jnana. Because, as we find Him within ourselves, all the impurities of the mind are washed away and we become absolutely pure. When the mind becomes pure, we know that we are not the body, but the supreme Atman. So Saguna worship leads to the realisation of the Self. What we have to do, therefore, is to bear in our bosom the image of God and have His name on our tongue. Then our body becomes the temple of God. Thereafter, singing His glories and chanting His name becomes a blissful experience for us. Then our eyes will also be illumined with the light of God and we can behold God everywhere in all the manifestations. Verily, we behold the entire universe as the one huge image of God. God is in us, is everywhere and is in everything.

So, Saguna form of worship is an essential step for our spiritual evolution. The personal form of God is easy to concentrate upon, easy to have Darshan and easy to have a relationship with. He becomes our father, mother and master and ourselves His children and servants. In this kind of relationship with Him we

are able to increase our devotion to Him from day to day, until His grace comes to us and purifies us, and He accepts us as His true, loving and confiding children. He becomes our sure, unfailing protector and helper. He becomes, as some saints have described Him, our adamant armour. Because, you feel His presence everywhere and are sure that you are protected by Him in every way and in all situations. So God now is, for you, at once personal and impersonal, divine protector, father, mother, friend and helper.

Even after attaining Jnana, even after having His vision everywhere in the universe, the devotee maintains his relationship with God as a personal Being, and always enjoys the bliss of His close proximity, paternal care and benevolent grace.

ME TO WE

*(Dwelling On The Values Describing
The Lord's Dearest Devotee In Srimad Bhagavad Gita)*

Intensely dwelling on the last eight Shlokas in Chapter 12 of Srimad Bhagavad Gita explains how an aspirant can become the dearest devotee of the Lord. Let us try to understand and then emulate the values described in these shlokas through an example from daily life:

*Santushtah satatam yogi yatatma drdha nischayah
 Mayyarpita mano buddhiv yo mad bhaktah sa may priyah
 Ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled,
 and possessed of firm conviction, with mind and
 intellect fixed on Me, one who is thus devoted to
 Me, is dear to Me. || 14 ||*

YOGI: To highlight the fact that the presence of the Lord of the universe can be felt by writing the holy name of God with faith and devotion, Sri Ekambaram in Chennai is promoting 'Likhita Japa' and preserving the same in a well packed stacks. Worship is offered to the Nama in letters with all devotional fervour. He has set up a Ram Nam Bank where he receives written Ram Nam books from devotees and at the same time conducts "Ram Nam Pratishta" of these books in the homes of those devotees who desire to have it.

DEAR CHILDREN

God Is In Your Heart

A devotee, who was very keen on beholding his Ishta, Sri Krishna, desired to have guidance. So he asked some devotees he met whether they could help him in finding Krishna. They said that they had themselves not seen Him and so they were not able to guide him. They suggested he might be able to get

suitable advice in the matter from the devotees living in Brindavan. Krishna's devotee made his way directly to Brindavan with the purpose of fulfilling his quest. He went to various temples of Sri Krishna, met the Pujaris and the devotees assembled there and asked them if they could give him the clue for beholding Krishna. With one voice they all said that they themselves had not met Krishna; so they were unable to help him in the quest. They directed him to Gokul where they thought he might be able to succeed in his attempts to see Krishna. He went to Gokul but did not gain his purpose. As directed by the people, he went also to Govardhan, Mathura, Dwarka and other places. Practically he went over the whole of India, wherever temples of Krishna existed and devotees of the Lord resided. But, all to no avail.

The devotee was stricken with despair and did not know what to do next. In a dejected mood, he at last sat on a stone in a solitary spot and in a plaintive voice said, "Oh Lord, I am tired of searching for You. Where can I find You? How can I have Your Darshan? Oh Lord, knowing that I am Your devotee craving intensely to meet You, do grant me Your beatific vision."

Then a strange thing happened. A charming and melodious voice spoke from within his heart: "Oh my

child, I am here seated in your heart. Turn to Me and behold My resplendent figure and be permanently blessed.”

Source: Stories As Told By Swami Ramdas

EPISTLES OF SWAMI RAMDAS

Beloved Ram,
Dandavats at your holy feet.

Ramdas remembers the thrills of ecstasy he experienced when your body and his clasped each other in a fond and blissful embrace. O Lord, how gloriously pure you are! Indeed, to embrace you is to embrace the whole universe. You are the one, immutable, eternal, all-pervading, imperishable Truth, beyond name and form, whose nature is pure splendour, bliss and peace. The worlds are your manifestation. All form, change and movement in it, are the workings of your infinite Power or Shakti. This manifestation, this Shakti of yours is your love and Anand. You are Shiva. You are Shakti. You are Saguna. You are Nirguna. You are the motionless, invisible, changeless, all-pervading Spirit. You are the moving, visible, changing worlds and universes. You are the One. You are the many. You are the Eternal Witness of your own play. As witness, you are immortal peace; as player, you

are immortal love and Anand. You are all in all. You are Sat and Asat. You are beyond Sat and Asat. You are the doer and non-doer at once. You are the incomprehensible, the inexpressible First Cause. You are higher than the highest, more perfect than the perfect, the ultimate, grand, transcendent Existence and Reality. You are the God of gods.

Ramdas is your child, blood of your blood, soul of your soul, being of your being, in love separate from, in Spirit one with you.

Love to you all.



ANANDASHRAM NEWS

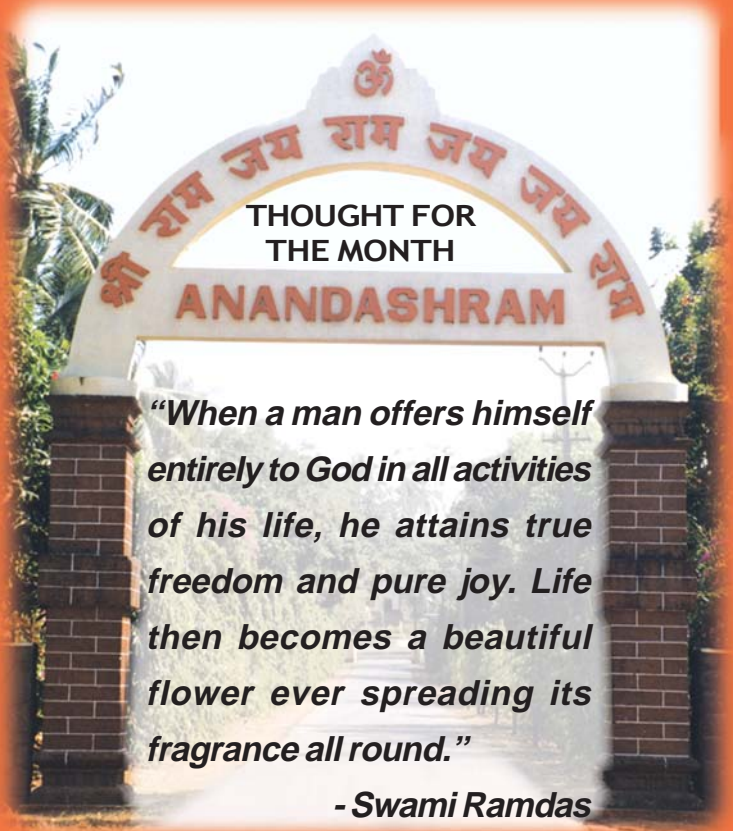
15,500-CRORE NAMA JAPA YAGNA FOR WORLD PEACE: The total Japa received in the second round of the 15500-Crore Nama Japa Yagna For World Peace in the month of June 2016 is 250 crores. The grand total of the Japa done so far now stands at 13485 crores.

BELOVED PAPA'S 53RD MAHA SAMADHI DAY will be observed on the 7th of this month. On this sacred occasion, THE VISION offers its humble homage to Beloved Papa with a prayer for the speedy spiritual progress of all, culminating in eternal happiness.

LIST OF ASHRAM PUBLICATIONS

ENGLISH Arati Book At the Feet of God Call of the Devotee * Cherished Memories Dive Deep Soar High * Gospel of Swami Ramdas I & II * Gita Sandesh Glimpses of Divine Vision God Experience I & II Set Guru's Grace Hanuman Chalisa Hints to Aspirants In Quest of God In the Vision of God Krishnabai Mundane to Spiritual Passage to Divinity * Poems Points to Ponder Ramdas Speaks I*, II* to V Set Shraddhanjali Stories as told by Ramdas Swami Ramdas on Himself Swami Ramdas' Talks * Swami Satchidananda * The Divine Life I & II * Set The Pathless Path * The Sayings of Ramdas Thus Speaks Ramdas Viswamata Krishnabai With my Master With Divine Mother I to III Set World is God * Srimad Bhagavatata *	50 50 25 25 25 30 115 55 35 60 120 30 100 50 30 225 60 25 45 25 20 30 35 85	In The Cave * In the Vision of God Swami Satchidananda * The Sayings of Ramdas * Thus Speaks Ramdas World is God HINDI At the Feet of God Gita Sandesh Guru's Grace In Quest of God * Swami Ramdas on Himself Swami Satchidananda * The Pathless Path * Thus Speaks Ramdas Viswamata Krishnabai * Call of the Devotee God Experience Vol I & II KANNADA Anandashram Bhajanamrutha Arati Book* At the Feet of God Gita Sandesh God Experience Vol 1 Gospel of Swami Ramdas * Guidelines * Guru's Grace In Quest of God In the Vision of God I * Ramdas Speaks I*, I to V Set Stories as told by Ramdas Swami Ramdas' Talks Swami Satchidananda * The Pathless Path * Viswamata Krishnabai World is God *	55 5 10 90 20 25 40 35 12 15 35	MALAYALAM Arati Book Bhagavad Gita* Guru's Grace * In Quest of God Jnaneswari Swami Satchidananda* Viswamata Krishnabai At the Feet of God Gita Sandesh* MARATHI Guru Krupa * In Quest of God * Prem Sudha Prem Sudha (with English) Swami Satchidananda Thus Speaks Ramdas *	10 40 300 30 25	Thus Speaks Ramdas TELUGU Arati At the Feet of God* Call of the Devotee Dive Deep & Soar High Gita Sandesh Glimpses of Divine Vision God Experience I & II Set Guidelines* Guru's Grace Hints to Aspirants In Quest of God In the Vision of God Mundane to Spiritual * Passage to Divinity * Ramdas Speaks Vol I & V Set Stories by Swami Ramdas Swami Ramdas on Himself Swami Ramdas' Talks Swami Satchidananda The Sayings of Ramdas* Thus Speaks Ramdas* Viswamata Krishnabai ORIYA In Quest of God FRENCH Thus Speaks Ramdas* Guru's Grace	30 10 30 45 25 15 100 30 40 30 30 240 25 35 26 10 30 40 150 40 30 25 35 35 10 40 30 50 50 100 30 40 30 30
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“When a man offers himself entirely to God in all activities of his life, he attains true freedom and pure joy. Life then becomes a beautiful flower ever spreading its fragrance all round.”

- Swami Ramdas

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