



SRI VISHNU SAHASRANAMAM



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How big is *A:thma*? – ‘*ye:sho:nur Oa:thma che:thasa ve:dithavyaha*’ - answers *Upanishad*. *A:thma* is as big as "*Anu*". *Anu* doesn't really equate to an atom. *Anu* refers to an element which cannot be broken down or split further into smaller elements. It is the minutest of minutest. We, the *a:thma*, inspite of being infinitely small are able to produce tremendous amount of energy, possess varieties of knowledge and are capable of doing all the things we do right now. This fact is quite amazing! The parts of the body to which there is uninterrupted flow of *Jn:ana* function normally. If there is any restriction in the flow of *Jn:ana*, that part of the body ends up being physically challenged - the ear may not allow us to hear, the eye will not register any images, the eye would be nonfunctional and so on.

This fact is elucidated in the *Upanishads*. A tree has life. The *ji:va* in the tree spreads the life throughout. When a branch is cut, the *ji:va sakthi* is inhibited from reaching it and hence it dries up. The tree however continues to live. The *Ji:va Sakthi* is present within the root of the tree. As long as the root is not disturbed, the other parts of the tree can potentially grow back. If the root is removed, "*sarvam jaha:thi*" - the whole tree dries up once the *a:thma* leaves the body. The tree is analogous to our body. The *a:thma* is inside the body, well, we can't see, can we? But *a:thma* radiates the knowledge to all the different parts of

the body. Even if different parts of the body are severed (one's hand is chopped off, eyes are lost, even if an entire part of the body is paralyzed) we see people still alive because the *a:thma* is still inside the body. Once the *a:thma* leaves a body, even if all the body parts are intact the body is useless. It is disposed off. We, the *a:thma* are at a certain place in the body and propagate the knowledge throughout the body. *A:thma* contains *Jna:nam* (knowledge) as its *Ru:pam* (form). It also provides *jna:nam* throughout the body. As it is a provider of the knowledge, it is called *Dharmi* (*one that possesses dharmam*). Since knowledge is the element that spreads throughout, it is called *Dharmam* (*an attribute*).

In the example of a lamp the lamp itself is separate from the light it diffuses. The light that diffuses is called *Dharmam* and the lamp is called *Dharmi*. But both are *the:jas* (light). How do we differentiate one from the other? One that is concentrated to a single point (the *Dharmi*) is *Dharmibhu:tha The:jas*. The one that diffuses is called *DharmaBhutha The:jas*. Thus, *A:thma* is *Dharmibhu:tha jna:nam*. The knowledge it spreads is called *Dharmabhutha jna:nam*.

What is the difference between us and the *Parama:thma*? Let us learn in the next issue.

Jai Srimannarayana !