

# OUR INSTITUTIONS

## PART-2

The memories of those Vedic-chants continued to ring in my ears. The entire day seemed to be very auspicious and pleasing, probably due to the impact of those chants. I decided to go back to the A:*sramam*, on the very next Sunday. I could not go to the A:*sramam* on the following Sunday, as I had to go to Hyderabad. Immediately after coming from Hyderabad i.e. on Monday evening I went to the A:*sramam* with a tape-recorder to record those chants. It was 6.30 p.m. by the time I reached the A:*sramam*. The western sky, which was still glowing red, the hill that is situated on the western side of the A:*sramam* and the serene atmosphere at the A:*sramam* bewitched my heart and soul.

Even as I entered the precincts of the A:*sramam* I could listen to some chants. These chants sounded different. This time the chants emanated from the main building (prayer-hall) of the A:*sramam*. Immediately after parking my vehicle in the parking area I rushed into that building. All the boys were seated in rows, there were a couple of young men guiding them and there were around twenty people seated here and there in that big hall. I too sat along with them, by the side of a pillar in that hall.

After some time the chanting stopped and one small boy started to sound the gong. Within a few minutes an electric curtain which was covering the main sanctorum started to rise and the sound of the gong stopped. Everybody started to chant some prayers and the Ha:*rathi* was offered to the deity. Immediately after the Ha:*rathi* some *thi:rttham* and *prasa:dam* was distributed to everybody in that hall. The curtains came down and everybody started to disperse from that hall.

Krishna identified me and smiled

at me. I said hello and he reciprocated by saying JAI SRIMANNARAYANA! I immediately asked where is your *guruji*? And he led me to a young man who was clad in white. As soon as I approached him I said *Namasthe* and he nodded his head with an erudite grin. Then, I introduced myself to him as a student of commerce. He said I am Govardhana:charya, I teach *Vedas* to the kids in this institution and what can I do for you. I told him about my eagerness to know about *Vedas* and the institution. He readily consented to give the necessary guidance. He led me to a small room that was next to the building. He offered me a seat (straw mat) and he sat on a different mat in a cross-legged pose. There I recorded the following conversation.

I: The other day my friend and I had come to the Asram being captivated by the melodious *Vedic*-chants emanating from here. I am very eager to know about the *Vedas* from that day, so please tell me about them.

G: (with a thoughtful sigh) The term *Veda* is derived from the Sanskrit root '*VIT*' which means that which is to be known. The sacred knowledge that was passed on by the word of mouth from generation to generation through a traditional lineage, is known as *Vedas*.

I: what do they contain? What is the use of chanting them? Are they of any use to the society?

G: As the name itself says *Vedas* means knowledge. These scriptures deal with all the aspects of human life. There are various incantations in these scriptures which help us to attain the desired results. Hence, mere chanting of the *Vedas* enhances the welfare of the society.

I: Don't you think that you are superstitious in your belief?

Let us see what Govardhanji says in the next issue.

