



Sri:mathe: Ra:ma:nuja:ya Namaha

EDITOR'S DESK

For the followers of *Ve:dic* culture, the month of October is a time to look forward to, as it highlights a number of joyous holidays and festivals that fill up our calendars from August through the month of January.

One of these festivals is *Vijaya Dasami*, which is also called '*Dasara*' in some parts of India. From a cultural perspective, we are taught that this day is considered to be the one of Victory, when Good triumphs over Evil, and all new endeavors lead to success. However, the *Ve:dic* perspective of this holiday gives a whole new understanding of its significance and meaning to our lives.

Vijaya Dasami is the day when Lord *Sri:man Na:ra:ya:na* took the form of *Sri:niva:sa* and descended to the Seven Hills of *Tirumala* for the benefit of all. Thus, one is blessed with victory, known in Sanskrit as



"*Vijaya*", on this day. The term *Dasami* means the tenth day after the full moon. But, it should also be noted that the root "*Da*" means "give", and the term "*Sami*" is the Sanskrit name for the *Peepal*, a tree which mainly grows in humid climates such as that found in the southern parts of India. The *Sami* tree is the form which Our Divine Mother took to remain with Her Eternal Consort on Earth when He descended as the Lord of *Tirumala*.

Our *A:cha:ryas* teach that none of us are really qualified or pure enough to approach the Lord directly. Instead, we should approach Him through our Divine Mother, as Her maternal affection is unconditional, no matter who we are or what state we are in. Consequently, on this day, we should worship Her in the form of the *Peepal* Tree such that She can speak on our behalf to Her Consort and He can Bless us with all success

in being good and doing good for the world.

As per our scriptures whoever worships the *Sami* tree on this day will be bestowed with Victory in all good endeavors. In the *Maha:bha:ratha*, the *Pa:ndavas* prayed to the *Sami* and hid their weapons in Her branches while in exile. Later, the same tree was worshipped by *Arjuna* before he went off to battle. And, in the *Ra:ma:yana*, it is recorded that *Sri: Ra:ma* worshipped *Sami:* prior to the combat with *Ra:vana*.

Traditionally, the following *slo:kas* are recited in praise of the *Sami:* Tree

sami: samayathe pa:pam
sami: lohitha kantaka: |
dha:rinyarjuna ba:na:na:m
ra:masya priya darsini: ||

karishyama:na ya:thra:ya:m
yattha: ka:lam sukham maya: |
thathra nirvighna karthri: thwam
bhava sri:ra:ma pu:jithe: ||

amangala:na:m samani:m
samani:m dushkruthasya cha |

dusswapna na:sini:m dhanya:m
prapadye:ham sami:m subha:m ||

In addition to this Holy Day, and along with the famous Festival of Lamps, *Deepa:vali*, October also marks the Holy Appearance Day of three great scholars and disciples of Bhagavad *Sri: Ra:ma:nuja - Sri: Ve:da:ntha De:sika, Sri: Manava:la Maha:muni*, and our beloved *A:cha:rya Sri: Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji. Sri: Ve:da:ntha De:sika*, whose birthday falls on the day of Lord *Sri:niva:sa's* appearance on the Earth, is featured on the back cover of this month's issue.

While in the West we can only speak of pumpkins, costumes, and "trick or treat" during this time of year, our rich *Ve:dic* culture has provided us with all these wonderful holy days for all of us to understand our connection to God, to our *A:cha:ryas* and to each other. So, let us all make a joint effort to share the joy of this season.

Jai Sriman Narayana!

