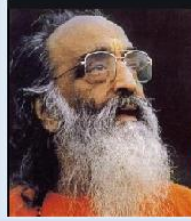




CHINMAYA MISSION CHICAGO

BADRI - A School of Vedantic Studies

Monthly Newsletter – May 2023



Chinmaya

Wisdom Quote

Proficiency is gathered knowledge, while efficiency is the ability to translate the knowledge into action.–
Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda

Gurudev's Message



Significance of Ramayana

Video Message by H H Swami Chinmayananda

[In this message Gurudev relates Ramayana to a person's Spiritual Journey and brings out the significance of Ramayana as a reminder to each one of us to not merely look at it as a story on the life of Lord Ram. This message is a must see for every practicing Hindu.]



The Significance of Ramayana

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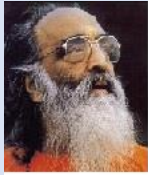
[Ramayana Saptah](#)

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Upcoming Events -

- **Vishnu Sahasranamam:** 5/7 @ 9:15 am
 - At Badri Shrine
- **Gurudev Jayanthi:** 5/8 @ 7 – 9 pm
 - At Badri Shrine
- **Monthly Bhajan:** 5/13 @ 6 – 7:30 pm
 - Host: Smt Geeta & Sudarshan Iyengar
 - RSVP: 646.678.7040
 - Residence: 3197 Bromley Ln Aurora
- **Mothers' Day Celebration:** 5/14
 - At Badri – Mātrū Puja & Outdoor Picnic
- **Group Vedic Chanting** - 5/21 @ 9:00 am
 - At Badri Shrine
- **Balavihar Graduation Ceremony – 6/4**



30th Chinmaya Aradhana Mahasamadhi Camp 2023

29th July to 3rd August 2023 @ Waterford Banquet & Conference Center

Highlights from Previous Month

The month of April gives us the opportunity to celebrate Rama Navami to commemorate the birth of Lord Rama and Hanuman Jayanthi, which similarly commemorates the birth of the greatest devotee of Lord Rama. To coincide with Rama Navami, it was also decided to conduct the Ramayana Saptah as the earlier plan three years back was disrupted by the pandemic. The much awaited Ramayana Saptah, was very well organized by all the devotees and conducted by Swami Shanthananda ji, the head of Chinmaya Mission West.

1. Bhajan Sandhya

The March month's Bhajan Sandhya was hosted by Smt Gayathri & Shri Muthuswamy at their home. The evening was well attended as several participants sang the Bhajans after all the shlokas were chanted. The event as always practiced, ended with the chanting of Nirvana Shatakam and Aarthi, followed by the distribution of prasadam dinner.

2. Vishnu Sahasranamam Chanting

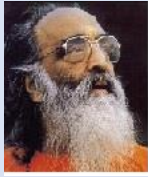
On the first Sunday of the month, the practice of chanting Vishnu Sahasranamam continued this month too. There was a good participation and the chanting reverberated through the shrine as everyone chanted in unison at the same pace. The session concluded with the chanting of Narayana Suktam. We are seeing a great level of interest among devotees in participating in this monthly chanting.



3. Monthly Vedic Chanting

This month also our Monthly Group chanting of Vedic mantras and suktams was conducted on the last Sunday of the month. As it fell on the day after the Ramayana Saptah, there weren't many participants as seen in the previous months.

Any willing to join the chanting or listen to the chanting of the Vedic mantras can join the group on the last Sunday or the date specified in the 'Upcoming Events' section of this Newsletter.



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4. Ramanavami BV Programs

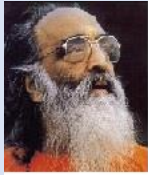
The Ramanavami Puja and celebration was during the previous month and the Balavihar cultural programs were performed on 2nd April 2023 as a part of the concluding prayers at our Badri Shrine. The children performed dances and enacted in plays. These events kept up the enthusiasm for the Ramayana Saptah that was planned towards the last week of the month.



5. Devotional Classical Music Concert

Going by the tradition of hosting cultural events, this year also during Spring, we hosted a Carnatic Music Concert at Badri on 9th April. The enthralling concert was performed by Smt. Lakshmi Rangarajan and Smt. Subhashini Parthasarathy on vocal, Shri Rajesh Salem on Mridangam and Shri Rishabh Ranganathan on Violin. The audience were treated to a melodious evening that seemed to be never ending. The event ended with the distribution of prasadam dinner.





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Ramayana Saptah

The much awaited Ramayana Saptah was conducted with great fervor and enthusiasm by all the volunteers and devotees alike. It was great to see everyone chipping in based on their availability and addressing any gaps that arose during the entire 8 days event. Swami Shantanandaji's narrative with interjections of humor and vedantic reference, brought in so much of mass favoritism towards the epic and the event overall.

Day 1



The Saptah started with a Pothi Puja, followed by a grand procession accompanied by traditional chenda melam, the percussion ensemble from Kerala. The sudden hail and rain did not deter the spirit of the devotees.

The discourse started with the narration of Narada's story, which was the starting point for Lord Narayana to commit taking a human birth and appear as Lord Ram at the Kingdom of Ayodhya. Swamiji also connected on the vedantic perspective of the four sons born to King Dasharath and his three queens to Brahman, Prajna, Taijasa and

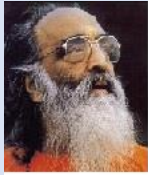
Prajna, Taijasa and Vaishwanara. The poet with overflowing bakthi, which is Sant Tulsidas, has brought out all reactions of anger and jealousy in a positive way as we have seen the way Narada muni's frustration with Vishwamohini or Sage Vishwamitra's anger towards King Dasharatha. The day's discourse ended with the young princes, Lord Ram and Lakshman, demolishing demoness Tataka and her son demon Subahu and sending the master of illusion demon Mareecha to a faraway land and proceeding to Mithila to take up the Dhanush Baan yagna.

Day 2

The 2nd day's discourse started with Vishwamitra's trip to Mithila accompanied by the two young princes.



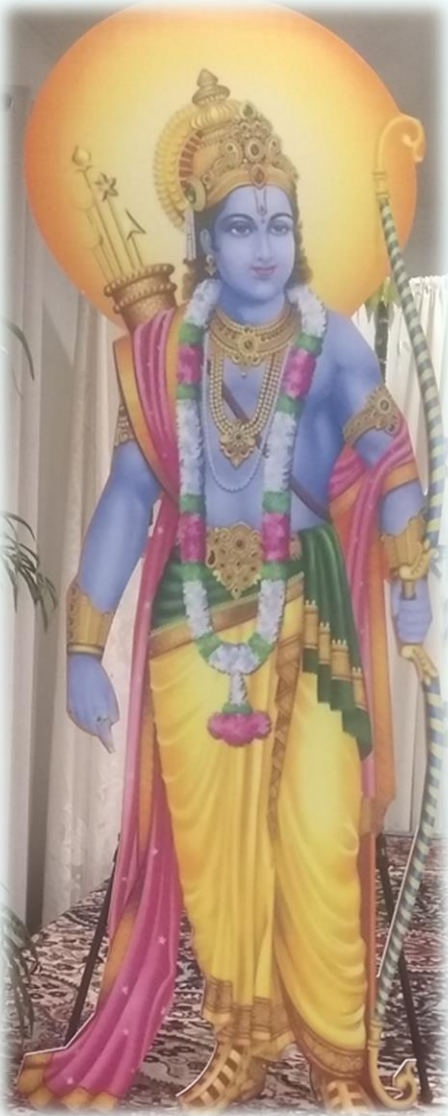
Enroute Lord Ram helped Ahalya realize her true self, just as how viveka helps the jiva overcome its ignorance and realize its true identity. There is also the observation by King Janaka who says, being a completely dispassionate person towards all worldly things, if he feels attracted to these two young princes, then they are not mere mortals. It is also explained that being able to totally accept a person for what he or she is, is the result of practicing true Kshama (*forgiveness*). The Sita swayamvar ends with the royal wedding of Lord Ram and Sita. And along with that all the three brothers of Lord Ram,



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Lakshman, Bharath and Shatrugna also get married. With all the four newly married princes accompanied with their wives, returning to Ayodhya for a grand reception and celebration is how Day 2 ended.



Who came up with undisputable reasons to serve the Lord, who in turn blessed him with **Vimala Bhakthi**, which is considered higher than **mukthi**. Lord Rama, Sita Mata and Lakshman with guidance and direction from Valmiki Rishi, followed by Atharva Rishi and Anasuya, settle at Chitrakoot. Tulsidasji beautifully explains that Lakshman took care of Lord Rama and Sita Mata just like how an ignorant person

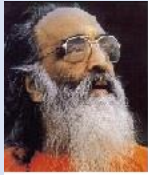
Day 3

The discourse on this day starts with the Ayodhya Kand, which is a perfect blend of the opposites. Starting with the wedding festivities and celebration followed by the planning for Lord Rama's coronation, things turn for the worst when Queen Kaikeyi lends an ear to evil talk (*Manthara*). This results in Lord Ram accompanied by Sita mata and Lakshman leaving to the forests for 14 years to honor his father's word. This also led to the death of King Dasarath. On leaving Ayodhya, they meet Nishad Raj, who had also studied under Rishi Vashisht and Lakshman gets to share his wisdom that gets to be called Lakshman Geeta.

- A person's experience is totally based on his/ her karma and not caused by anyone else.
- Everything that happens is a result of Maya. It is real only when a person thinks it is real.

Day 4

The narration on the 4th day starts with the interaction Lord Ram has with the boatman Kevat (*Guhan*), who came up



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identifies himself with his body and takes care of it. On the other hand, he describes the way Lord Ram and Sita Mata took care of Lakshman, just like how the eyelids take care of the eyeballs, totally protective.

Around this time King Dasarath breathed his last, remembering the curse of Sravanakumar's father, as the King had killed their only son by mistake. This brings Bharath back to Ayodhya and on learning about Lord Ram's vanavaas, leaves to meet his brother Lord Ram calling it *Parama Dharma*. Tulsidasji writes that what Bharath showed towards his brother Lord Ram is ***Prema Maryada***. This episode of Bharath teaches that power corrupts, but only those who are already corrupted. On seeking advice from Lord Ram about running the kingdom, Bharath is advised that a Leader should be like the mouth, which takes in everything and duly processes it to be shared with all other body parts, though the mouth is not in any way special but just another organ.

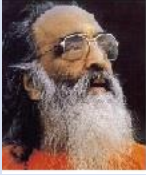


Day 5

The day's discourse started with the Aranya Kand, which is often highlighted as the section in which Maya plays a very prominent role. There were some vedantic narratives from Ramayana in this section starting with Lord Indra's son Jayanth being blessed with an ability of non-dual vision. There after Rishi Suthikshna on meeting Lord Ram says he needs the ego to identify himself as a servant of the Lord and is blessed with Saguna Bhakthi and Moksha. During a meeting with Jatayu, Lord Rama elaborates on the 5 different faiths a person should have and this came to be known as the Rama Geetha. And finally Lakshman throws his questions on Maya, Vairagya, Bhakthi and difference between Eshwar and Jeeva. The conversation brings the concepts of Vidya Maya and Avidya Maya based on their ability to liberate from bondage and creating bondage. The importance of humility as a mark of true knowledge is also mentioned.



The episodes of Surpanakha followed by the abduction of Sita Mata by Ravana with help from Mareecha that led to Jatayu moksham and meeting with Sabari were all narrated towards the end of the day.



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Day 6

The day started with what Lord Rama explained the nine types of devotion to Sabari. It starts with defining devotion as having an unconditional love for the Lord. And it includes **Satsang, Ramanam (love for the Lord), Service to Guru, Singing the Glory of the Lord, Repetition of Mantras with faith, Vairagya, Seeing the Lord in everything around us, Total contentment in whatever is given to us and Being the same to all.**



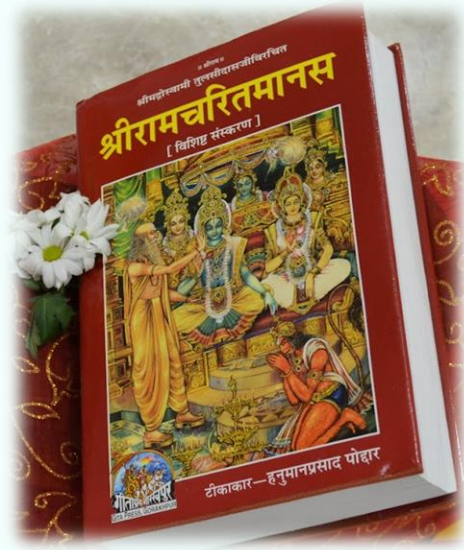
It is mentioned here that Lord Narada meets Lord Rama here and seeks a boon. This is to ensure that out of the 1000 names of the Lord, it should be the name given to this incarnation that should be the most popular. This is chanted as a part of Vishnusahasranamam even today – *Sree Rama Rama Ramethi, Rame Rame*

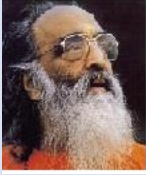
Manorame. Sahasranama Thathullyam, Rama Nama Paranane.

Here the Kishkintha Kand begins and the divine meeting of Lord Rama and Lord Hanuman takes place here too. The rest of the Kishkintha Kand is about ensuring Sugreeva becomes the Crown King and a team including Hanuman, Angad and Jambavan, who head south in search of Sita Mata, come to know that she is in Ashoka Vatica. This section ends with Lord Hanuman agreeing to cross the ocean. There after it is Sundara Kand, which is all about Lord Hanuman's visit to Lanka, his meeting with Sita Mata and his alarming exploits in that kingdom and his meeting with Vibheeshana.

Day 7

The narration on this penultimate day starts with the conversation Ravana has with Lord Hanuman, during which Ravana is made to understand who Lord Rama is and what is in store for Ravana. After causing wide destruction in Lanka, Lord Hanuman returns to Lord Ram and they all move to Lanka. Here the Lanka Kand begins. After building the bridge, the Vanara Sena led by Lord Rama reach Lanka. Here Angad, who goes as Lord Rama's messenger to Ravana, has a conversation with him during which he narrates the 4 principles a King must follow





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Sama, Dana, Bheda & Danda. The war begins, Kumbhkarna joins and perishes and this brings Ravana's son Indrajit, who shot Lakshman unconscious and once again it took Lord Hanuman's valor to bring the mountain when a herb was required. War continues and after Indrajit gets killed, Ravana enters the war. With help from Vibheeshana, Lord Rama kills the King of Lanka. Sita Mata passes through fire and joins with Lord Rama.

Day 8 (Final Day)

The last Kanda of Ramayana, the Uttara Kanda beings as Lord Rama and Sita Mata along with a select few reach Ayodhya on the Pushpaka Viman to the eagerly waiting citizens of Ayodhya and Bharath. The saptah ended with the Coronation of Lord Rama as the King of Ayodhya.



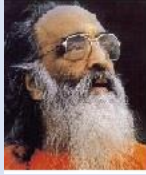
श्री राम राम रामेति रमे रामे मनोरमे । सहस्रनाम तत् तुल्यं रामनाम वरानने ॥

śrī rāma rāma rāmeti rame rāme manorame .

sahasranāma tat tulyaṃ rāmanāma varānane

All through the Saptah there were several other programs like daily parayanam of Ramacharithamanas, cultural programs during the birth of Lord Rama, Sita Swayamvar and the Coronation of Lord Rama. An army of volunteers worked tirelessly to feed all the attendees on all eight days, three times a day.

As is the case with everything else that has a beginning, this exhilarating experience also ended on 29th April with a grand lunch for all.



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Badri Weekly Class Schedule

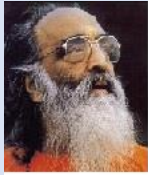
Chinmaya Mission Chicago Badri		Weekly Class Schedule					
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Geeta Chanting	9:15 – 9:45 am 12:00 – 12:30 pm	7:00 – 8:00 pm *					
Sanskrit Classes	7:15 – 8:30 pm *	6:00 – 7:00 pm *			7:00 – 8:00 pm *		
Stuti Vandana			6:00 – 6:30 pm * 6:30 – 7:00 pm *				
Swaranjali (Bhajans)	12:30 – 1:00 pm			7:00 – 8:00 pm *			
Vedic Chanting	9:15 – 9:45 am 7:30 – 8:00 pm *				7:30 – 8:00 pm * 8:00 – 9:00 pm *		
Vishnu Sahasranamam	6:00 – 7:00 pm *						
Yoga							9:30 – 10:30 am

* - Online Classes – Please check website for details – <http://mychinmaya.org>

Contacts	Please check website for registration and zoom information	
Geeta Chanting	Ramesh Turuvekere : rameshrt@gmail.com Sudha Gouthama : sudhagouth@yahoo.com	http://mychinmaya.org/gita-chanting
Sanskrit	Venkat Palli : vsp410@gmail.com	https://mychinmaya.org/sanskrit-classes/
Stuti Vandana	Suchi Achar : suchiram@hotmail.com	https://mychinmaya.org/activities/stuti-vandana/
Swaranjali (Bhajans)	Pavithra Anand : pavithra.anand@gmail.com Raman Mahadevan : ramdevan23@gmail.com	https://mychinmaya.org/activities/swaranjali-2/
Vedic Chanting	Sunil Narayanan : pnsunil@outlook.com Sashi Narasimhan : laksharag@gmail.com	https://mychinmaya.org/activities/vedic-chanting/
Vishnu Sahasranamam	Sudha Gouthama : sudhagouth@yahoo.com Sini Narayanan : sini_athul@yahoo.com Venkat Palli : vsp410@gmail.com	
Yoga	Shila Sanghani : shilaom@gmail.com	https://mychinmaya.org/activities/yoga-meditation/

Swami Sharananandaji's Weekly Program Schedule

Program Name	Details
Saddarshanam (on Zoom)	Sunday/ 8:00 – 8:45 am
Bhagavad Gita Discourse (In-person at Shrine)	Sunday / 10 – 10:30 am
Viveka Choodamani (on Zoom)	Tuesday/ 7 – 8 pm
Mandukya Upanishad (on Zoom)	Wed/ 7 – 8 pm
Drik Drishya Viveka (on Zoom)	Saturday/ 8 – 9 am



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Study Group Reflections –

Bhagavath Geeta Chapter 13 Study Group

Who is God In you because of whom everything functions? And what is the role of God?

When your mind is wild and just wants to do an action God/ Purusha is just a witness.

But when a good and noble thought comes (eg -- I want to attend this spiritual talk/satsang) then He is the Anumanta/ Permitter.

When I act on that noble thought ---I am going to the satsang--- He becomes the supporter-- Bhartha--- energizes and propels you

Those who are devoted-- full of devotion and meditating --- the Lord in you enjoys--- just like Krishna enjoys the butter from the Gopis.

The Gopis perform all actions dedicated to God--- whatever vasanas gathered as the pure white Satwic butter-- the Lord enjoys--

One who enjoys that Peace--- that Purusha is Maheshwara--- Lord of the entire Universe--- Also known as the Supreme Self --- Paramatma.

Gems from Balavihar

From Prahlada (*Kindergarten*)

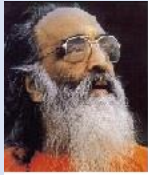
We are learning about our Chinmaya Alphabets every week. So far, we have learnt from A to O.

We revised all of them and are now learning R for Righteousness and Respect. (We'll be doing P for Prayer and Q for Quiet at the end, after understanding the values of all the other alphabets)

R: Righteousness: Righteousness is ingrained in the creation, but we sometimes deviate from it because of our selfishness or ignorance. We tried to understand together the meaning of 'doing the right thing'. The right thing is doing what is morally good, just and correct, no matter what everyone else says or does. We discussed many specific situations with the kids in day to day life and what are the right actions to take during that time. Doing the right thing always brings happiness and good rewards at the end.

R: Respect :

We should always be respectful of everyone. When one is respectful, he/she will be respectful to everyone. Even a drunkard or a thief! If we think we can change anyone with force or anger, that is not true. It can only come about with respect and love. When one is respectful, one will listen with open mind. It neutralizes all negative thoughts.



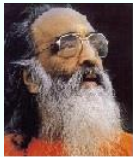
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Updates from around the world -

- [Swadhyaya Series of Self Learning](#) – Online learning with access to materials for a lifetime
- [CIF – Courses](#) available this month
 - Online mode only
 - Registration required
- [Puja Vidhanam Course](#)
 - 1 month in-person/ English
 - Swami Sharadananda Sarasvathi
 - Basic and Advanced level courses available
 - 12 Aug – 10 Sept 2023 @ Adi Shankara Nilayam

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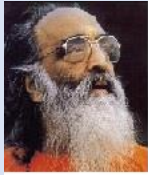
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Our wait is over; this year the 30th Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Aradhana Camp is returning IN-PERSON to....CHICAGO! Our love and gratitude for Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda binds us all together as One Chinmaya Family. The annual event which brings our Chinmaya family together to exclusively celebrate His life and legacy is our annual Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Aradhana Camp.

Our respected Swami Swaroopananda will be present in-person leading this 30th MSC along with Swami Shantananda, Swami Sharanananda, Swami Ishwarananda and Swami Aparajitananda who will be covering inspirational topics and planning activities for the entire family. There will be activities for children from pre-k through grade 8, high schoolers, young adults, and adults. There will be meditation, workshops, yoga, swaranjali, cultural programs and of course mouthwatering food. There will be opportunities to share in devotion and offer seva by participating in Bhiksha, Arati, and Puja.

We just can't wait to meet again in-person to celebrate our Pujya Gurudev.

Please [click here](#) for more information and registration.

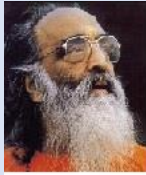


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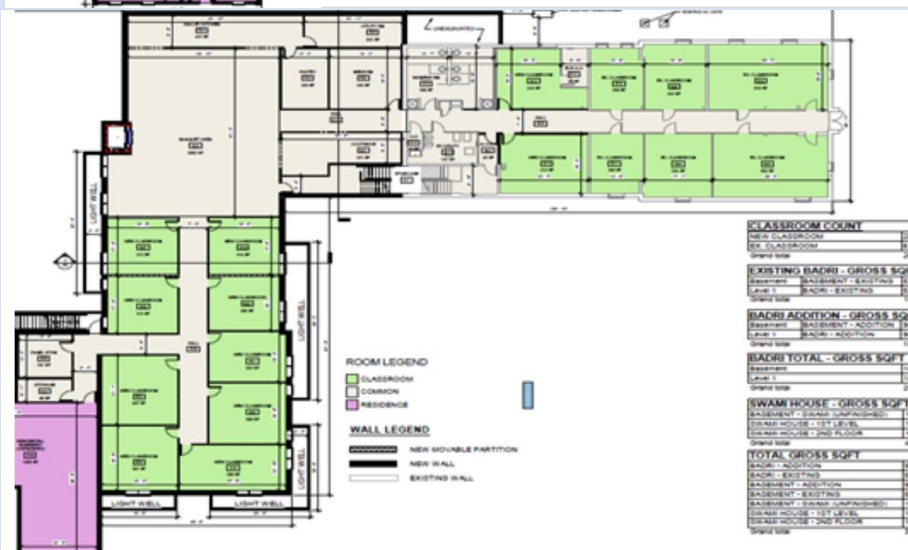
Badri Expansion – Models & Plans





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Om Tat Sat