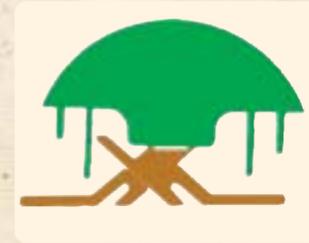


Date of Publication : 30th of every month

RNI NO: TNENG/2000/2250
REGISTERED REGN. NO. TN / CH(C) / 175 / 12 - 14
LICENSED TO POST WITHOUT PRE-PAYMENT OF
POSTAGE WPP NO. TN/PMG (CCR) WPP-286 / 2012-2014



Arsha Vidya Newsletter

Rs. 15/-



Arsha Vidya Pitham
Swami Dayananda Ashram
Sri Gangadhareswar Trust
Purani Jhadi, Rishikesh
Pin 249 201, Uttarakhanda
Ph.0135-2431769
Fax: 0135 2430769
Website: www.dayananda.org
Email: dayas1088@hotmail.com

Board of Trustees:

Chairman:

**Swami Dayananda
Saraswati**

Managing Trustee:

Swami Suddhananda

Trustees:

Swami Santatmananda

Swami Hamsananda

Sri Rajni Kant

Sri M.G. Srinivasan

Col. Kamal Kumar

Sri M. Rajalingam

Arsha Vijnana Gurukulam

72, Bharat Nagar
Amaravathi Road, Nagpur
Maharashtra 410 033
Phone: 91-0712-2523768
Email: brahmapra@gmail.com

Board of Trustees

Paramount Trustee:

Swami Dayananda Saraswati

President

Rajashree Shrikant Jichkar,

Secretary

Madhav Babasaheb Solao,

Trustees:

Ramesh Bhaurao Girde

Avinash Narayanprasad Pande

Madhav Chintaman Kinkhede

Ramesh alias Nana Pandurang
Gawande

Rajendra Wamanrao Korde

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Institute of Vedanta and
Sanskrit
P.O. Box No.1059
Saylorsburg, PA, 18353, USA
Tel: 570-992-2339
Fax: 570-992-7150
570-992-9617

Web Site : "http://www.arshavidya.org"

Books Dept. : "http://books.arshavidya.org"

Board of Directors:

President:

Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Vice Presidents:

Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati

Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati

Secretary:

Anand Gupta

Treasurer:

Piyush and Avantika Shah

Asst. Secretary:

Dr. Carol Whitfield

Directors:

Drs.N.Balasubramaniam (Bala) &
Arul

Ajay & Bharati Chanchani

Dr.Urmila Gujarathi

Sharad & Lata Pimplaskar

Dr.V.B. Prathikanti & Sakubai

Dr.Sundar Ramaswamy(Dhira) & Usha

Dr.L.Mohan & Vinita Rao

V.B.Somasundaram and Dr.Anasuya

Bhagubhai and Janaki Tailor

Dr.Ashok Chhabra & Martha Doherty

Vijay and Pammi Kapoor

Associate Board of Directors:

Dr.Soma & Nagaveni Avva

Dr.Ravindra Bathina

Dr.Mahesh & Maheswari Desai

Dr.Pramod & Lata Deshmukh

Dr.T.A.Gopal & Lata

Dr.Kamlesh & Smita Gosai

Dr.Haren Joshi & Pratima Tolat

Dr.Arun & Mangala Puranik

G.S. Raman & Gita

Dr.Bhagabat & Pushpalakshmi Sahu

Rakesh Sharma

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Institute of Vedanta and Sanskrit
Sruti Seva Trust
Anaikatti P.O.
Coimbatore 641 108
Tel. 0422-2657001,
Fax 91-0422-2657002
Web Site : "http://www.arshavidya.in"
Email: office@arshavidya.in

Board of Trustees:

Paramount Trustee:

Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Chairman:

R. Santharam

Trustees:

C. Soundar Raj

P.R.Ramasubrahmaneya Rajhah

Ravi Sam

N.K. Kejriwal

T.A. Kandasamy Pillai

Ravi Gupta

M. Krishnan

Secretary:

V. Sivaprasad

*Arsha Vidya
Newsletter*

In fearless voice may
we proclaim

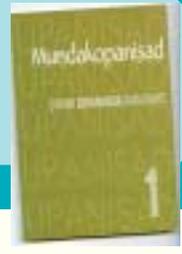
The Rishi's message
from all house-tops

And bring the men
of different claim

To a fold of Love
where oneness lasts!



Muṇḍakopaniṣad



First Muṇḍaka Section 2

In the first section of the first Muṇḍaka, it was initially stated that one must gain two types of knowledge. One is aparā vidhyā, which is preparatory; the other is parā vidhyā, which is to be accomplished. In this section aparā vidhyā is talked about in detail. Aparā vidhyā is not just secular education, but also, the religious life. It includes the study of Vedas, śikṣā, kalpa, and so on and the performance of rituals. That means the person lives a religious life with the knowledge of all the karmas that he has to do. We look at the whole thing from the standpoint of the Veda. In the first portion of the Veda, which constitutes the bulk of the Veda, varieties of rituals are mentioned. In performing these rituals, generally the three Vedas are involved. Ṛgveda provides mantras, Yajurveda tells us the whole method of performing the rituals. Sāmaveda is the singing of Ṛg-mantrās in praise of Īśvara. By performing these rituals one can gain both the dṛṣṭa-phala, the result that one gains here, and also adṛṣṭa phala, the result that one gains hereafter. This is already said in the karma khāṇḍa. It is restated here for the purpose of introducing the adhikārin, qualified person, for this knowledge.

The introduction of the adhikārin is done elaborately. Quite a few mantras describe the nature of rituals and the results. Again, the mantras describe what happens to the results if the ritual is not done properly. In performing these rituals, a lot of effort is involved. If the rituals are not done properly, even though one may not attract any pāpa, definitely nothing good will happen for the person. The results of these rituals also are anitya lokās, temporary realms of experience. All these are aparā vidhyā and they are stated in order to introduce the prime qualification viz., vairāgya, dispassion, which is finally prescribed in the 12th mantra beautifully.

Karma can be converted into a yoga, a means, for purity of mind. Vairāgya towards karma is laziness, but Vairāgya towards karma phala is maturity. When one performs karma, it will produce phala even if one is not interested in it. One will get puṇya whether one likes it or not. But if one is not interested in phala, then it works in a different way, according to one's intention in doing the karma as revealed in the saṅkalpa: I do this karma to please the Lord by neutralising the pāpa.¹ It then neutralises one's pāpa. We generate these antibodies for neutralising the pāpa, which is getting unfolded in day-to-day life. Like this, there are special karmas that can help you gain antaḥkaraṇa śuddhi, purity of mind. Thus, the karma khāṇḍa becomes meaningful, and therefore it is discussed here in this second section. This is the basis for Lord Kṛṣṇa's teachings on karma-yoga in the Gītā. Being the Lord, Kṛṣṇa knows what he has been talking about there. He does not require a basis or thesis, but definitely this is the basis.

Mantra 1

तदेतत् सत्यं
 मन्त्रेषु कर्माणि कवयो यान्यपश्यन्-
 तानि त्रेतायां बहुधा सन्ततानि ।
 तान्याचरथ नियतं सत्यकामाः
 एष वः पन्थाः सुकृतस्य लोके ॥ १।२।१
 tadetat satyaṁ
 mantreṣu karmāṇi kavayo yānyapaśyan
 tāni tretāyāṁ bahudhā santatāni ।
 tānyācaratha niyataṁ satyakāmāḥ
 eṣa vaḥ panthāḥ sukṛtasya loke ॥ 1|2|1

yāni – which; karmāṇi – rituals; mantreṣu – in mantras (in Vedas); kavayaḥ - the ṛṣis; apaśyan – saw; tat etat – it is; satyam – true; tāni – those (rituals); tretāyāṁ – in the three Vedas; bahudhā – in many ways; santatāni – are explained; tāni – them; ācaratha –may you perform; niyatam – regularly; satyakāmāḥ – Oh! Seekers of

¹ दुरित-क्षय-द्वारा ीपरमेश्वर-प्रीत्यर्थम् अहम् इदम् करिष्ये ।

durita-kṣaya-dvārā śriparameśvara-prītyartham aham idam kariṣye।

karma-phala; vaḥ – for you; panthāḥ the means; eṣaḥ – this; sukṛtasya – of well-performed actions; loke – for gaining the results.

‘All the rituals which the sages saw in the Vedas are true. Those rituals are explained in many ways in the three Vedas. Oh! Seekers of results of actions, may you perform them regularly. For you, this is the means for gaining the results of well-performed actions.’

Tat etat satyam: that which is going to be said is true. Tat means ‘that’, which is going to be said. Etat means ‘this’, which is already in the mind of the teacher. In modern English we often use this expression. A person who is talking to me now says, “Swamiji, when I went to Chennai, I met this man”. He has not mentioned anything about that man at all before. How can he use the pronoun ‘this’, without mentioning who that man is? This is grammatically incorrect, but it is the colloquial style in the English language. The meaning of the pronoun ‘this’ is in that person’s head. It is not in my head. This style is also there in Sanskrit. Etat, this, is already loaded in the intellect of the speaker and it is going to come out. The topic that is going to be discussed by the speaker is already in his mind, and therefore, it is etat, this. It is still not known to you, the listener, and therefore it is tat, that.

What is that? The word ‘tat’ refers to the karmas, which are going to be talked about. Karmas are called satya. Satya² here means that which is definitely a means of achieving different ends in life. Because karma produces result without fail³ it is called satya. The word ‘ṛta’ also is used in the same sense for referring to karma-phala. What are these karmas?

Mantreṣu karmāṇi kavayḥ yāni apaśyan: those are the karmas that the sages saw in the mantras. Kavi means one who is able to see through. A poet is called kavi because he is able to see more than what meets the eyes. The Lord who is sarvajña and sarvavit is also called kavi.

² सत्यम् एकान्त-पुरुषार्थ-साधनत्वात्। (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

³ कर्मफलं सत्यमुच्यते अवश्यंभावित्वात्।

Anyone who is able to see things properly is called kavi. Kavayaḥ means people who are well informed in the śāstra. Here the word kavayaḥ means ṛṣayaḥ, sages. They use this word 'kavi' in all the four Vedas in the same sense as 'ṛṣi'.

The ṛṣis talk about a number of karmas starting from agnihotra and going to aśvamedha. Agnihotra to aśvamedha is a Vedic expression for 'A to Z'. The agnihotra is a very simple daily ritual. It has only two oblations in the morning and two in the evening. Before the oblation one has to chant some mantras⁴. In the morning the oblations are given to sūryā, sun, and prajāpati, Brahmaji. In the evening the oblations are given to agni, fire, and prajāpati. We start with agnihotra because there is no complexity involved in it.

For all the karmas agnihotra is the primary karma. One must get married before one can do agnihotra. After having performed the agnihotra, if one is still a kṛṣṇa keśa, one who has black hair, and is jāta putra, one who has a son, he is called upon to perform some other karmas enjoined in the Vedas. This is called adhikṛtasya adhikāraḥ, conditions prescribed for the one who has already become qualified. For instance, only graduates can qualify to join a postgraduate course. If there are conditions for graduates like age, performance and so on, the fulfilment of those conditions becomes adhikṛtasya adhikāraḥ. Already he has accomplished something, and so certain further qualifications are prescribed for him. Similarly certain karmas enjoined by the Vedas are only for certain people. They have to fulfil a number of prescribed conditions before they can do these enjoined actions. One has to take the conditions into account before performing these actions. When you perform agnihotra, you become qualified for darśa and paurṇamāsa rituals. They go along with agnihotra.

Thus agnihotra becomes more and more complex later, when accompanied by a few other rituals. If one wants to gain the complete result of agnihotra, one has to perform all these rituals. Otherwise agnihotra will give only simple puṇya. When agnihotra is followed by darśa and paurṇamāsa, then a big result will accrue. Beginning from agnihotra, varieties of rituals are mentioned in the three Vedas - Ṛg, Yajus and Sāma.

To be continued..

¹ सूर्याय स्वाहा । प्रजापतये स्वाहा । इति प्रातः । अग्नये स्वाहा । प्रजापतये स्वाहा इति सायम् ।

Śrī Rudram

Anuvāka 4

R̥ṣi – Durvāsa; Chandas - Mahāvīrāt; Devata - Śambhuḥ
Dhyāna śloka

भस्मोद्धूलितसर्वाङ्गं जटामण्डलमण्डितम् ।

ध्यायेद्देवं वृषारूढं गणेश्वरयुतं हरम् ॥

bhasmoddhūlitasarvāṅgaṃ jaṭāmaṇḍalamaṇḍitam ।

dhyāyeddevaṃ vṛṣārūḍhṃ gaṇeśvarayutaṃ haram ॥

May one meditate upon Lord Śiva who is covered with ashes all over the body, whose hair is shining, who is seated on a bull, who is with Gaṇeśa and who removes all papās (the cause of duḥkha).

May one always meditate upon Lord Śiva whose whole body is covered with ashes. Ash indicates absence of any difference and the Lord's true nature is nirviśeṣa, free of attributes.

Result (for chanting this anuvāka): The mantras of this anuvāka are chanted to remove dreaded diseases.

नम आ॒व्याधि॑नी॒भ्यो वि॒वी॒ध्यन्ती॑भ्यश्च वो नमः॑ ॥ १ ॥

nama āvyādhinībhyo vivīdhyantībhyascha vo namaḥ ॥ 1 ॥

namaḥ – salutation; āvyādhinībhyaḥ – to those who are in the form of female power that strikes all around; vivīdhyantībhyaḥ – to those who are in the form of female power that strikes in various forms; ca – and; vaḥ – to you; namaḥ – salutation. Salutation to you in the form of female power that strikes all around and in various forms.

In āvyādhinībhyaḥ,¹ 'ā' is a prefix meaning āsamantāt, referring to a certain totality. Vivīdhyantībhyaḥ² refers to the feminine force that can destroy in different ways, such as with looks, words and deeds. The Lord is the one who is in the form of these kinds of women who are frightening. These are Kāli, Durgā and so on, who are all bhagavat śaktis. When we see Kāli in Kolkata, her tongue is out and she has a big spear in her hand. We worship that form of Kāli. If we try to get away from ugra śakti, the frightening power, we cannot be the whole. It is interesting to note that in the U.S.A. any volcano or cyclone was given a woman's name. Now the name alternates; the female name is followed by a male name. You see the glory of Īśvara in it. Unto the one who is in the form of māya śakti, an expression of himself, my salutation.

नम उगणाभ्यस्तु हतीभ्यश्च वो नमः ॥ २ ॥
 namaḥ ugaṇābhyastuḥḥatībhyāśca vo namaḥ || 2 |

namaḥ – salutation; ugaṇābhyaḥ – to those who are in the form of the group of seven female deities; ṛmḥatībhyaḥ – to those who are in the form of powerful deities that harm; ca and; vaḥ to you; namaḥ – salutation.

Salutation to you who are in the form of the group of seven pleasing female deities who bless as much as the powerful deities that harm.

Namaḥ ugaṇābhyaḥ – Salutation to saptamāṭṛkās, mothers of blessing, who are Brahāmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī and Cāmuṇḍā. They are called ugaṇās, utkṛṣṭa gaṇās, great powers of blessing. Protection, blessing and destruction are all śaktis. If you are selective in your outlook you are not dealing with your problems including fears. Vedanta does not work for such a person. You have to face and resolve every frightening form. To say, 'I am Brahman' is not easy. It includes everything and excludes everything. The Lord is the one who is in those forms who can chastise and who can bring global upheavals, one of them causing disappearance of dinosaurs and the separation of Australia from Asia. Also, he is the one who can truly bless. Unto him my salutation.

¹ The derivation of the word āvyādhinībhyaḥ: āsamantād veditum śaktaḥ sthriyaḥavyādhiniyaḥ tasca jagati yavantyaḥ santi tāvadrūpebhyaḥ—the feminine force in the world that can destroy in all respects is āvyādhinībhyaḥ, unto the one in those forms.

² The derivation of the word vivīdhyantībhyaḥ: veddhum śaktaḥ striyaḥ vividhyantyaḥ tasca jagati yāvantyaḥ santi tāvadrūpebhyaḥ—the feminine force in the world that can destroy in different ways is vividhyantyaḥ—unto the one in those forms.

नमो॑ गृत्से॑भ्यो॑ गृत्सप॑तिभ्यश्च॑ वो॒ नमः॑ ॥ ३ ॥

namo॑ gr̥tsebhyo॑ gr̥tsapatibhyaśca॑ vo॒ namaḥ॑ ॥ 3 ॥

namḥ salutation; gr̥tsebhyaḥ – to those who are in the form of the greedy ones; gr̥tsapatibhyaḥ – to those who are the lords of greedy ones; ca – and; vaḥ – to you; namaḥ – salutation.

Salutation to you in the form of greedy ones and also their Lord.

The greedy ones never say enough. Here it refers to fire, the devouring agni. The Lord is that fire. He is also Rudra, the Lord of the fire itself. So both fire and the deity of fire are Parameśvara. Unto him my salutation. The plural 'patibhyaḥ' is for respect.

नमो॑ व्रा॑तेभ्यो॑ व्रा॑तपतिभ्यश्च॑ वा॒ नमः॑ ॥ ४ ॥

namo॑ vrātebhyo॑ vrātapatibhyaśca॑ vo॒ namaḥ॑ ॥ 4 ॥

namaḥ – salutation; vrātebhyaḥ – to those who are born out of different varṇās, vrātapatibhyaḥ – to those who are the Lords of all these vratas; ca – and; vaḥ – to you; namaḥ – salutation.

Salutation to you in the form of people belonging to different varṇās and the Lord of all of them.

Namaḥ vrātebhyaḥ – Salutation to the one in the form of people born of different varṇās. Vratas³ are people having different professions. Family members may have different types of vṛtti, livelihood; for instance, the father may have one livelihood and the son may have another. They are all bhagavat rūpa, the Lord's form alone. The ideas such as 'I am born of such and such gotra and so on', are all complexes that cannot co-exist with Vedanta. In the beginning they protect you, but they have to disappear when you deal with the infinite. In the beginning orthodoxy is a protection; later it becomes a hindrance. Everything has its place at a given time, but at the same time, one needs to grow out of things in the course of time. Unto Rudra, who is the Lord of all the vratās, my salutation.

¹ aniyatām vṛttim āsritaḥ—those who do not have settled profession.

Effortless Living Talk by Swamini Pramananda



Sri Krishna Sweats organised public talks of Swamini Pramananda on the topic "Effortless living- a divine gift". The talks were held on 10th February 2013 at Kikani School, Coimbatore.

CA C.S.K. Prabhu introduced Swamini to the audience.

Swamini Pramananda said that she was happy to be in Coimbatore for the public talks and be amongst her Coimbatore students. Our orientation in life is towards

taking efforts and acquiring possessions. People are driven to 3 P system of running after Productivity, Possessions and Popularity.

The western world has ruthlessly destroyed the environment for short-term profits of business enterprises. The meat industry has done more damage to global warming than even all the automobiles put together in the world. Thousands of acres of Amazon forests have been destroyed for growing fodder to the animals for meat industry.

This consumerism is driving people to suicide due to stress to perform according to physically impossible targets.

Vedas proclaim "Isavasyam idam sarvam", which means everything that is here is Iswara or divinity. This everything should obviously include "me" also. Troubles are due to our identification with the physical body and mind. One should understand that he is spiritual being with a physical body and mind. When one understands his true self, then there will be total peace and harmonious acceptance of Iswara's will.

Our ancestors did not have this stress and pressure and had total peace of mind. Hence they were able to utilise their full creativity and turn out great works in Science, Mathematics, Grammar, Arts, Music and other disciplines of knowledge.

VOICE OF GOD is LOVE. It is expressed as trust, abundance, honesty, unconditional acceptance, availability of spiritual essence each moment, innocence, forgiveness, non-judgmental and freedom. It manifests as

sympathy, empathy, compassion, understanding, joy and friendship.

VOICE OF EGO is FEAR. It is expressed as mistrust, scarcity, deception, conditional expectations, blames others for our problems, victimisation, condemnation and attachment. It holds on to the past and projects into the future without gracefully accepting the present. It manifests as anger, guilt, resentment, sadness, depression, jealousy, lack of caring and lack of understanding.

One should submit totally to Iswara's will. There is really no choice. When one's ego is let go, he will experience effortless living as a divine gift.

Swamini welcomed everyone to visit her Tapasyalayam Ashramam at Uttarkashi. She said that details of the activities can be had from the web site www.purnavidya.org.

Report by N. Avinashilingam



Sashtiabdhapurti celebrations in Mumbai for Swami Brahmavidananda Saraswati

What better way to start Swami Brahmavidananda's Sastiabdhapurti celebrations than with the message and aashirwaad of his paramguru Pujya Sri Swami Dayanandaji,

VIDEO MESSAGE AND AASHIRWAD FROM SRI PUJYA SWAMIJI

"I am very happy that Sri Swami Brahmavidanandaji is going to be 60. I can't believe it. He came to me as a young boy going to college and since then I have been seeing him. And he is now 60 years. All these days from his college days till now he never had any other commitment. He had only one commitment - to understand the shastra, to live that life. It's an amazing accomplishment, an unflinching commitment. Although he had a short stint of work, it did not work for him!"

And his parents were very supportive. That has helped him a lot. And ofcourse I was supportive. He had come to Rishikesh and stayed here for quite a few years. He not only studied with me but also Swami Tarananandaji. He had gone through the difficulties that one goes through as a student, but happily. He and Uday Acharya, both of them. He had been teaching in Bombay very quietly. Only his students know him. He did not make a big news about himself. He did not make any attempt to do that. He enjoys being a quite teacher and that makes him a very, a very significant Mahatma. I am very proud to have him as my disciple. I wish him well."



Blessed by this message, the Sashtiabdhapurti programme for Swami Brahmavidananda commenced on 24th March 2013, being his Nakshatra birthday. On a quiet Sunday, in the busy Matunga suburb fragrant with the flower market and the aroma of South Indian coffee, Swamiji's students from his many different classes spread across Mumbai gathered in the Kanyaka Parmeswari temple. Ganapati Homa, Navagraha Homa, Ayushya Homa and Mrityunjaya homa were performed. A parallel session continued upstairs which had the screening of Pujya Swamiji's video message (above) and a 15 minute film of heartfelt tributes for Swamiji from students, friends, and purva ashram family members. The hall reverberated with dialogue, debate and discussions – purvapakshas and siddhanta by 8 students regarding different topics in Vedanta. The topics ranged from the summary of Adhyaasa bhashya, jnanam vis-m-vis karma for moksha, parallels between Vedanta and Sufism and Reflection of Vedanta in the Quran. A parallel between project management cycle and the management of life was also drawn – how one erroneous notion (Everything has to be done immediately/ I am a limited being/

) can influence the course of events. A couple of students shared their personal experiences and sang touching bhajans as well as an unusual qawwali in a South Indian accent (believe-it-or-not) paying tribute to the sadguru.

Abhishekam of Swamiji was done with sanctified water after the homas as well as water from the Ganga followed by Guru Archana. Swamiji said that, "In this journey from a student to a teacher, I owe all that I know to Pujya Swamiji." In his anugraha bhashanam, he spoke about 'What it takes to be a contemporary and traditional teacher'. Swam Brahmavidanandaiji said, "What is traditional and contemporary need not be opposed to each other – they can be in perfect harmony. Tradition is 'trans diction', in English – what is transferred by word of mouth. Therefore it is knowledge centric." Swamiji spoke about the highlights of the traditional methodology of teaching emphasizing that "only traditional teaching can transmit the vision of purnatvam. To be contemporary means to set the traditional teaching in the background of modern science, psychology and the contemporary socio-cultural economic milieu."

A souvenir commemorating Swamiji 's Sashtiabdhapurti was released on the occasion by Uday Acharyaji and Swamini Brahmaprakasandaji who came all the way from Nagpur. Swaminiji reminded everyone how blessed they were and reflected on the role Swamiji had played in her life, "He was not just a friend to me those days but he was also my friend philosopher and guide — all rolled in to

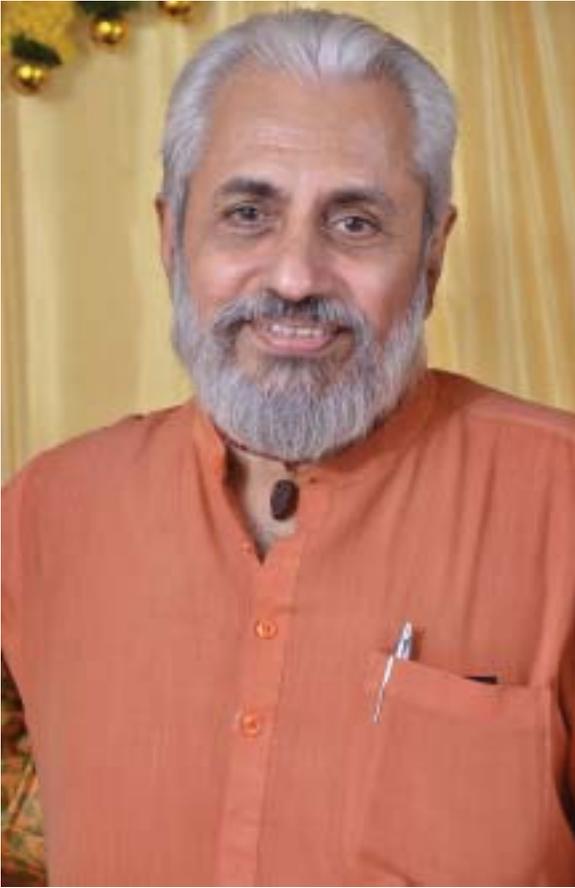


one. He was the one who initiated me into a deeper study of the vedanta-sastra, the allied subjects and the grammar of Panini. He gave me the vision of the possibilities and was the inspiration for me to take to this life of atmajana with complete surrender to our sadguru, Pujya Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati."

The celebration for the day concluded with students seeking Swamiji 's aashirwaad and a sumptuous lunch. Reflecting each other's happiness, one of the students aptly said," Really speaking it is our birthday celebration today as Swamiji was born to teach us brahmavidya." Some of the excerpts from warm, heartfelt and glowing messages from Gurubhais and Gurubehen – of Swami Brahmavidananda, his life and his presence:

Swami Sakshatkritananda, Acharya of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Coimbatore: *Swami Brahmavidanandaji is a great teacher who combines tradition and modernity. Traditional because he got the knowledge from Pujya Swamiji - sampradayavit. He is modern because the teaching that he gained comes through his mind that has got modern education. The modernity in his teaching is in using modern examples.*

Suddhatma Chaitanya: *Swami BV ji was instrumental in introducing 'Rishikesh Sadhu life' to me and we discussed Vedantic teachings during our stay in Rishikesh. I still have fond memories of those days, living with minimum and yet, gaining maximum in terms of 'Self Knowledge'. My wife Samata, also his 'Gurubehen' joins me in sending lots of love and prayerful wishes to Swami BV on his 60th birthday,*



Swamini Brahmaprakashananda, Resident Acharya of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Nagpur: *In our close knit group, he was a model and inspiration for all of us. He was also our teacher teaching us the Bhagavadgita to the Brahmasutra-bhashya. His skills as the teacher of Vedanta, the clarity of the knowledge have always impressed me. He was a very committed sadhu and he lived and studied in the Himalayas for many years.*

Uday Acharya, Vedanta teacher in Mumbai - Swami Brahmavidananda - Friend, Colleague, Mentor, Guide - He has been there in my life from my school days to Sandeepany to Rishikesh. If I have been a competent teacher, a good writer, successful motivator, able

counsellor, and great networker, I owe a great deal to this wonderful friend, philosopher and guide.

Swami Atmatriptananda, Kolkata - *It is not easy to find a teacher with the degree of clarity that he has on the subject which is the subject matter of life. Swami Brahmavidananda is a rare contemporary teacher who easily accommodates, leads and guides today's youngsters with flair and finesse. His understanding of all modern social issues and problems is amazing and thorough. In him, I see someone who neither assumes the airs of guru nor that of a sannyasi. I once had a chance to study a text called Vedantaparibhasha taught by him. There was not a trace of superiority I saw in his disposition. This is the kind of relationship I have ever enjoyed with him. I would have certainly missed something if I were to not know him.*

On this most auspicious occasion of his 60th birthday, we join our hands in prayerful gratitude and pray to Lord Dakshinamurti to bless Swami Brahmavidanandaji with sound health and a long life. May he continue to bless us with his teaching and share his wisdom with hundreds and thousands of students, in the years to come. Om Tat Sat.

By Mrinalini Rao

Swami Brahmavidananda Saraswati,
502, Radha Krishna Kunj,
Plot 417, 9th cross road,
Chembur, Mumbai - 400017
Ph: 9820501171

Arsha Vidya Teertha, Jaipur



Sri Ramanavami was celebrated with special pooja and stotra-patham.

Sri Swami Ishvarananda Giri Maharaj of Samvit Sadhanayana, Mount Abu, visited the Jaipur Chhaatralaya and blessed the boys. He addressed them, asking them to have **Shraddha** and **Tapas** in their lives in order to gain knowledge, especially, Brahma-vidya. He also taught them the Mekhala-mantra as a prayer for knowledge and qualification. He said that being Bharateeya implied the pursuit of knowledge (**Bha**- light of knowledge, **Rata** - engaged in), and we must follow the Rishis as we have from the earliest times, for the upliftment of mankind.

It was a memorable event for the Arsha Vidya Teertha, Jaipur, to have had. such a great Mahapurusha visiting and blessing us all!

**Books Release by Pujya Swamiji in Rishikesh Ashram
'Nomenclature of the Vedas' & 'Rshikas of the Rgveda'
Author – Swamini Atmaprajananda Saraswati**



On 20 March 2013, two books – 'Nomenclature of the Vedas' and 'Rshikas of the Rgveda' authored by Swamini Atmaprajananda Saraswati, were released by Pujya Swamiji in Arsha Vidya Pitham, Rishikesh. Copies were gifted to Pujya Swamiji's overseas students in Germany, Japan, Brazil, Dubai, Singapore, etc.



- as reported by Swami Santatmananda Saraswati
Resident Acarya, Arsha Vidya Pitham, Rishikesh



ashram temple



“Swami Jnanananda (Ashok Chhabra)

Swami Cetananda (Chetan)

Date of Sannyasa: 27.3.2013



Dr. Srikant Jichkar Memorial
ARSHA VIJNANA GURUKULAM
Vedapuri, Nagpur

Long Term Residential Course in Vedanta and Sanskrit

By the grace of the Lord Dakshinamurti and Sadguru, Pujya Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati, we the president and the trustees of Arsha Vijnana Gurukulam are glad to announce the third Three Year Residential Course in Vedanta and Sanskrit. The course will commence on Monday, the 15th of July, 2013. The course will be conducted under the guidance of the Sadguru, Pujya Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati, by his disciple, Swamini Brahmaprakasananda Saraswati.

The admission to the course is entirely dependent on the discretion of the Acharya and the Board of Trustees. Those who would like to attend this course may apply with personal details to the following address.

Swamini Brahmaprakasananda

Chief Acharya

Arsha Vijnana Gurukulam

72, Bharat Nagar,

Amravati Road,

Nagpur, Maharashtra, 440033

Phones: Office: +91 98902 93641

Mataji: +91 88050 23450

Email: avg.ngp@hotmail.com

What is in a Prayer?

What is required in order to know oneself as complete, free from a sense of inadequacy, *moksha*? Grace – a lot of grace. Before one even comes to the pursuit the need for grace begins. To be born in a human body and have a desire for *moksha* is due to grace. It doesn't stop there. Grace is further needed for bringing one to a qualified teacher, assisting in removing all *pratibandhas*, obstacles, that could distract the seeker from the pursuit as well as for *adhikaratvam*, the preparedness necessary for knowledge and assimilation.

The grace is available, but it has to be tapped and the best way to do that is through prayer. As Pujya Swamiji points out, there is no doubt that every student of Vedanta has, either in this or a previous life, prayed for *moksha*. When one makes the choice and prays to know the very truth of oneself the grace flows.

How does grace manifest? Grace is like an antidote for *karma* that is unfolding. All around us in the transactional world, *vyavahara*, we see order. Without order, seen as cause and effect, it would not be possible to study physics, biology, chemistry, geology and psychology, to name a few. There is also the order of *karma*, the relationship between actions of *jivas* and the results of those actions. For the *jiva* the order of *karma* seems somewhat unpredictable. Who does not have experiences of unplanned and unexpected events occurring? However, from *Ishvara's*

point of view there is nothing unpredictable. *Ishvara* being the author of all order, including the order of *karma*, does not miss even the smallest detail. Each *jiva's* *karma* account is perfectly settled.

By tapping grace it is possible to ameliorate *karma* that is unfolding. A prayer said before participating in some sporting activity, might make the difference between some minor bruising and a broken arm. Might make a difference. The grace flowing from prayer provides no guarantee that *karma* causing uncomfortable, and therefore less desirable, situations will be prevented. The strength of the unfolding *karma*, the intention behind the *karma*, past *karmas*, and whether planned or reactive, are all taken into consideration by the *karmaphaladata*, the giver of results of actions, *Ishvara*. There is no way to establish how the law of *karma* works and, as Pujya Swamiji reminds us, it is completely pointless to try and figure out. The *pramana* for the law of *karma* is *shruti* and being such there is no other means of knowledge is available. *Shruti pramana* does tell about certain ritual *karmas* that can be done to gain specific results, such as the birth of a child, wealth, bringing of rain etc. However, on how *punya* and *papa* result from *karma*, the *shruti* remains silent. What is told is that prayer is an action, making it beyond doubt that there will be a result; in the order that is *Ishvara* there is no action without a result.

What is grace? Grace the ability to accept

the order of *Ishvara* in one's life. The more grace there is, there less stress there is! To accept *Ishvara* in life, one has to know *Ishvara*, for which the only *pramana* is *shruti*. One has to suspend all preconceived notions about the world, about reality, and about *Ishvara*. This suspension of erroneous thinking and beliefs is achieved by admitting one's helplessness. To admit helplessness, is to admit that one is not in control and if one is not in control, it necessarily means that something else is in control, or at the very least has an influence over the way things are. That influence is necessarily conscious, intelligent and all knowing – it is *Ishvara* - this is what *shruti pramāṇa* tells. Therefore, for the one who is striving to know the truth of what is, *Ishvara* becomes the altar for one's prayers. To the extent that one acknowledges *Ishvara* in one's life, there is a place for *Ishvara* to abide. There is no such thing as being in the driver's seat and accepting *Ishvara* at the same time. Acceptance of truth does not coexist with rejection of that very same truth.

Really speaking, it is by *Ishvara's* grace alone that anything occurs – not a single nanosecond goes by that is without *Ishvara's* grace. How to pray for that grace? One can say a general prayer, a "sprayer" as Pujya Swamiji calls it. However, as a student of Vedanta one has to be clear about what it is one is seeking. There must be a commitment to know every step of the way. The prayers found at the beginning of each *Upanishad* (generally all *Upanishads* of a given Veda will have the same beginning prayer) focus on what is most helpful for the students in gaining the knowledge. What are those areas where grace most needed for students of Vedanta? The prayer at the beginning of

Kenopanishad, which is in Sama Veda, beautifully answers this question for the student.

The student of Vedanta needs a healthy body. All the sense organs, and internal organs of the body, including the mind, must be functioning relatively well. If one cannot hear, how can one do *shravanam*? If the body is aching, one's focus will not be where it needs to be, because the mind has a tendency to remain fixed in the area where the discomfort is. Therefore, one invokes the grace of *Bhagavan* with *om*, and then begins the prayer: *apyayantu mamangani vakpranascaksuh srotramatho balamindriyani ca sarvaṅi*. Bless my limbs, speech, eyes and ears, along with all other organs, including memory, so that they not only function well, but also gain the strength which is necessary for this pursuit of *moksha*.

Having asked for grace to have the physical preparedness, the second sentence directs the student's focus to the teaching. *sarvam brahmaupanisadam*. Everything is *Brahman* as revealed in the *shastra*. Without *shastra* it cannot be understood that *Brahman* is everything – in fact, the statement reveals the knowledge for which *shastra* is *pramana*. What is this "everything"? *Brahman* is all that is manifest and all that is unmanifest. Saying this, there is nothing is left unaccounted for – including one's own-self. One must come to know this truth. It is only by knowing all that is here is nothing but *Brahman* that one can know oneself as whole.

Next the prayer turns to clearing the way for the pursuit itself. Manifesting *karma* can derail the pursuit. *Karma* may give rise to situations whereby study becomes difficult to continue. If the student's *pratibandhas* are

too strong, it may be that the student gives up on the study. Therefore the prayer, *maham brahma nirakuryam* - let me not negate this pursuit of knowledge.

ma ma brahma nirakarot. May I always be a receptacle for *Bhagavan's* grace. The grace may be pouring but because of some obstacle it is overlooked. The human orientation of relying on sense organ reporting and the conclusions reached which are based upon those perceptions can be a big obstacle. We know that this unquestioned reliance upon sensory perception does not always yield the truth. One only has to look as far as the daily report by the eyes that the sun rises on the Eastern horizon, travels across the sky and sets over the Western horizon. It is well known that this so called rising and setting of the sun is due to the earth orbiting around the sun, not the sun circling the earth as suggested by perception. Likewise, the conclusion based on sensory perception that 'I' ends where the skin stops, the body-mind-sense complex, is other than I, is equally erroneous. How can this be said? *Shastra pramana*, which tells there is one undivided truth that necessarily includes you.

The request for the grace to sustain the pursuit is important as is repeated again in the next sentence. *anirakaranamastvanirakaranam me astu*. One may come to the study with gusto, much like a can of fizzy drink that when first opened bubbles wildly. After a while one can loose enthusiasm for any number of reasons and, like the once fizzy drink, become "flat" with regards to the pursuit. It could be that the progression of the

pursuit does not live up to some preconceived notions about *moksha*, or that one needs to exhaust more *karma* before being able to stay with the pursuit. One prays, therefore, for the grace to sustain the pursuit until the truth that one already is what one is seeking, that is *Brahman*, is fully known.

Finally one needs to be prepared. How does one prepare for such knowledge? *tadatmani nirate ya upanishatsu dharmaste mayi santu, te mayi santu*. The final line of the prayer is a request that all the qualities necessary to be an *adhikari* be present in the one who is committed to the pursuit. The word *dharma*, refers to the qualities of *sama*, inner resolution, *dama*, discipline over the sense pursuits, *uparati*, letting go of external crutches, *titiksa*, dropping complaining, and *samadhana*, meaning the ability to stay focused. It also includes *shraddha* in the teacher and the *pramana*. *Shraddha* is often translated as, faith pending understanding, but is more than this. *Shraddha* increases as the doubts decrease due to growing clarity in understanding. Faith on the other hand, being merely a belief, has no room for growth and is always subject to doubts.

The prayer concludes, as does every Vedic prayer, with a final request to be free from the three sources of obstacles by chanting: *shanti, shanti, shanti*. May there be freedom from obstacles in the form of *adhidaivika*, over which I have no control, *adhibhautika*, from sources over which I have no immediate control, and *adhyatmika*, myself.

May prayer bring the grace necessary for all your pursuits.

By Julie Carpenter



OM NAMO NARAYANAYA

ARSHA VIDYA PITHAM
Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh

is pleased to announce a

1 Year Residential Course
at the Ashram in Rishikesh on
Vedanta and Sanskrit
starting from
April 14th, 2013

*Application form can be downloaded here
which can be filled up and sent through email to
dayas1088@gmail.com*

Swami Dayananda Ashram, Purani Jhadi,
Muni-Ke-Reti-249137,
Tehri Garhwal, (Uttarakhand), India
Phone: 0135-2430769/ 2431769

Texts like Gita, 2-3 Upanisads and
a few vedantic treatises shall be covered.
There will also be a Yoga class, Meditation,
Chanting and Sanskrit sessions
everyday.



श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः

Uttarakhand – Gharwal & Kumaon Tour, Feb 15 – 26, 2013

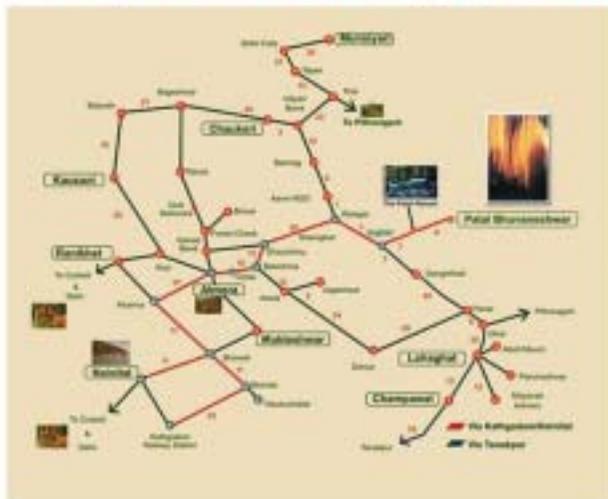
"Uttarakhand is the heartland of the Himalayas. A wide expanse between the Himalayas in the north and the Shivalik range in the south, it offers the most breathtaking views of the mighty peaks; mist covered deep gorges and verdant valleys. Uttarakhand is a popular spot amongst pilgrims and nature lovers.

This state is also popularly known as the 'Abode of Gods' as it includes many shrines and places of pilgrimage." 'Chardham', the four most sacred and revered Hindu temples - Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri have always been hot favorites during summer. The route is blessed with magnificent glaciers, majestic snow-clad mountains, gigantic peaks, valley of flowers and dense forests which attract all ages.

Besides Charidham in Garhwal Himalayas - Mussoorie, Dhanaulty, Lansdowne, Harsil and in Kumaon Himalayas – Munsiyari, Chaukori, Binsar, Jageshwar, Mukteshwar, are also known for their pristine beauty. Nature is something to feel and absorb so the only travel tip for those who are planning to visit Uttarakhand is to travel less and stay more. Stroll around the hills, breathe pure air to rejuvenate the inner self, go for a trek, visit local temples and see the mists encircling the town with its mysterious sound at any sudden hour of the day. Just unwind, to recharge your energy."

On February 26th, 2013, our team of four Suddhatma, my Brother-in-law, my Sister, & myself - Samata, returned from a twelve-day trip to Uttarakhand - Gharwal & Kumaon. I present below a brief account of our most memorable winter (an off season!) sojourn. But first, we would like to thank our Beloved Swami Ji, without whose blessings and unconditional love none of this would have been possible. I would then like to thank our Driver Mempal Ji, who drove us around those treacherous mountain roads, flawlessly for those twelve long days with a smile and courage. We are extremely grateful to him for being our 'Saarathi' in the real sense. In fact, he was very much a part of our expedition team.

This was a part of our Kumaon tour map, Baijnath onwards.



The Itinerary & Travel log

February 15, 2013 – We boarded Spice Jet Airlines for Delhi from Pune airport, at around 7.20a.m. Our driver Nivas was there at our door step of 'Prime Panache', sharp at 4.30am to leave us at the Lohgaon airport Pune.

February 15 – Reached New Delhi around 9.15am. Mempelji was waiting outside the airport with the vehicle to pick us up. It was a new gleaming white Innova, which we had rented for the next eleven days. We started off for Rishikesh right away, our journey towards the great Himalayas; via Gaziabad, Modi Nagar, Meerut, Muzaffar Nagar, Roorkee, Haridwar to Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh. En route Rishikesh, we stopped at Bikanerwala, Gaziabad for a mouth-watering multi cuisine breakfast. Later, around 2.00pm we took another break at The Moolchand's at Muzaffar Nagar for a light yet filling lunch. We reached Rishikesh Ashram by the Ganga around 6.15pm. Checked into our rooms in that biting cold, met with Pujya Swami Ji and then had some nice Bhiksha at night.



Dayananda Ashram is on the banks of Ganga in Purani Jhadi area of Rishikesh.

It was a rainy cold day and partially a wash out. Yet, Mempelji drove us down to Lakshman Jhula and later dropped us at Ram Jhula. From here we took on our Rishikesh excursion walking across the Ram Jhula through the market place to several Ashrams on the bank of Ganga. We returned back by afternoon and spent rest of the evening in the Gurukulam, meeting Pujya Swami Ji and others.



February 16 – We had decided to take on our Gurusthanam, ऋषिकेश. **Rishikesh** is a city in Dehradun district now in Uttarakhand. Located in the foothills of the Himalayas in northern India, it is known as 'The Gateway to the lofty Himalayas'. Rishikesh is surrounded by three other districts namely Tehri Garhwal, Pauri Garhwal and Haridwar. It is located approximately 20kms north of the holy city of Haridwar. Swami



February 17 – It was a clear day and morning we again took on our Rishikesh tour from where we had left the previous noon. It was a better day for taking pictures and window shopping. We returned to the Gurukulam after visiting the Gita Press, Gita Mandir, Parmarth Niketan and their Ghats. After lunch we left for Haridwar.

Haridwar is just 25kms down Rishikesh, towards Delhi. हरिद्वार is an important pilgrimage city in the Haridwar district of Uttarakhand. The River Ganga, after flowing for 253kms (157 mi) from its source at Gaumukh at the edge of the Gangotri Glacier, enters the Indo-Gangetic Plains of North India for the first time at Haridwar. This gave the city its ancient name, Gangadwara. Haridwar is regarded as one of the seven holiest places for Hindus. According to the Samudra manthan, Haridwar along with Ujjain, Nasik and Allahabad is one of the four sites where drops of Amrit, the elixir of immortality, accidentally spilled over from the pitcher while being carried by the celestial bird Garuda. This is manifested in the Kumbha Mela being celebrated every 3 years in one of the 4 places, and thus every 12 years in Haridwar.



On the way we stopped at Saraswati Niketan to pay our respects to Swami Tarananda Ji's Samadhi. We then



went up to **Manasa Devi** temple by the rope way. After darshan we had tea and some munchies to eat, which goes unsaid! Next Mempelji drove us down to Chamunda Hill, from where we took a rope way up to the **Chamunda Devi** temple. Indeed an exciting scenic ride up the mountains that gave a panoramic view of the Ganga flowing below. On landing from the rope way we picked up some Puja items and Prasadam for rituals. However, the harassment from the Monkeys in this part of the Himalayas is worth a mention. The moment they spot you with a bag... they are after you, waiting for a chance to snatch it.



From there we went to **Daksha Prajapati** temple where Sati's father 'Prajapati Daksha' had arranged for a 'Sahastra Yaag' to insult Shiva by not inviting him. This is the place where Sati immolated herself owing to Daksha, her father's caustic remarks demeaning Shiva, her husband. After having Darshan we proceeded to 'Har ki Pauri' but we were late for the 'Ganga Arati' and did Arati on our own. We ate at the famous Paratha galli of Haridwar and reached Rishikesh pretty late. Had our dinner once again and then called it a day as we were to leave next day for a long Himalayan tour.



February 18 – It was a nice bright day and we were ready in the early hours to go see Puja Swami Ji. We took our travel plan and went to Swami Ji for his blessings. Puja Swami Ji intently looked at my map, asked me a few questions and said, "Half of these places she mentioned, I don't even know of." He showed his concerns and I quivered, "Swami Ji please don't say that! We need your blessings." I touched his feet with the itinerary and the map in my hand and said "let all go well with your blessings." He laughed and said, "Yes, all will go well, keep these oranges they will be helpful for the windy mountain road journey." With his blessings we were ready to leave after the 'Rahu Kaalam' and a nice breakfast.

Baggage all tied up on the carrier overhead, we were all ready to leave.....motivated, anxious and EXCITED! Our first stop of the day was going to be a popular local pilgrimage, called



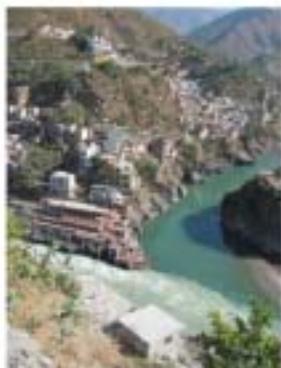
'Vasishtha Guha' literally meaning the Cave of sage Vasishtha, it is 21kms up from Rishikesh amidst Deodar forest, by the Ganga. This is a place huddled in the middle of high range hills all around with Ganga flowing to the right of the cave. There was complete silence interspersed by the crackling sound of leaves dropping on the ground and chirping of the birds. Historically the great sage Vashishta was said to have done 'tapas' penance here some 3,000 years ago. The entrance of the cave does not give any hint of what is there inside.

When we entered through the door we were completely engulfed by darkness not able to see anything around. This sustained for about a minute during which I felt the presence of someone else around, besides us! As my eyes got adjusted slowly, I started seeing things around. The cave was about 20 feet long, 10 feet wide at the entrance but slowly tapering down and the height was about 7 feet. In other words, this was a huge cave. At the furthest end of the cave, there was a Shivlinga with an oil lamp nearby. I had read on the internet that this cave stretched quite a way inside the mountain, but was walled off at this point for the public. There lingered a meditative peace and a feeling of completeness by just being there for a few minutes, what to talk of actually being able to spend some time in meditation here! After spending some quality time here with the care takers of the place and the local resident Swami, we proceeded to our next stop... 'Kaudiyala' 32kms from Rishikesh.



Kaudiyala is a famous river beach camp, situated on the banks of the holy River

Ganga. It is known for water sports like rafting and kayaking. We had some excellent freshly made hot lunch at Morals. 'Palak Paneer Sabji, Chole, hot Rotis and Rice were on our menu. After a little sight-seeing we started off again for our next destination of the day, Dev Prayag, 35kms further up from Kaudiyala.



Devaprayag - देव प्रयाग is a town in Tehri Garhwal district in the state of Uttarakhand, and is one of the 'Pancha Prayag' (five confluences) of Alaknanda River where Alaknanda and Bhagirathi rivers meet and takes the name Ganga or Ganges River (in English). 'Devaprayaga' means 'Godly Confluence' in Sanskrit. As per the Hindu scriptures, Devaprayaga is the sacred event of merging of two heavenly rivers, Alakananda and Bhagirathi, to form the holy Ganga.

Our car was parked on the other side of the confluence; we had to walk across the bridge to go across the Ganga. On descending down to the confluence we fed the fish and then did 'Tarpanam' for our 'Pitris'. Now after that long walk and long rituals in the scorching Sun it was time for a tea break! We stopped by a road side

Dhaba for some hot 'Adrakwali Chai and garmaa garm 'Aloo de Paraahe!' It was a worthy variation from too much of religious rituals to some mundane Munchies! Soon after being refreshed, we started off for our next destination of the day, 'Dhari Devi'.



Dhari Devi is a temple on the banks of the Alaknanda River in the Garhwal Region of Uttarakhand state. The temple is located in Kalyasaur along the Srinagar-Badrinath Highway. It is about 15kms from Srinagar-Uttarakhand, 20kms from Rudraprayag and 360km from Delhi. It houses the upper half of an idol of the goddess 'Dhari' that according to local lore, changes in appearance during the day from a girl, to a woman, and then to an old lady at night. The idol's lower half is located in Kalimath, where mata is prayed in Kali Roopa. According to the legend, one of the temples of Mata Kali was washed away during a disastrous flood in the Garhwal region.

When the Dhari idol struck a rock, it cried out, attracting local villagers to investigate. They were told to place the idol where it was found, and the temple was constructed there to honor it. The temple is a kilometer down the mountain. The descent and the climb up both were challenging due to construction of a Dam. We offered our prayers, performed some rituals at the feet of this potent deity. It was hard to hide the offerings from the local 'Hanumanas' (Monkeys), they were on a rampage all around inside the 'garbhagriha' (sanctum sanctorum). The Sun was slowly heading its way down the Horizon and we had to reach our Destination for the day, Rudraprayag. So without further delay we started for Rudraprayag.



Rudraprayag रुद्रप्रयाग is a town in Rudraprayag district in the state of Uttarakhand. Rudraprayag is one of the Pancha Prayag (five confluences) of Alaknanda River, the point of confluence of rivers Alakananda and Mandakini. Alaknanda then proceeds towards Devaprayag where it joins with Bhagirathi to form the holy Ganga. Kedarnath, a Hindu holy town is located 86kms from Rudraprayag.

On reaching the city we started window shopping for a good Hotel. Eventually we settled down for Hotel Tulsi which was overlooking the valley where Ganga was flowing right below us! We checked into our rooms and placed an order for some Hot & freshly cooked Dinner. Not to forget, that we were travelling in WINTER, which is an off season, so most of the hotels were closed for the season and food was only available on orders

placed well before time. In an hour's time Roti, Aloo Gobi Sabji, Dal, Chaawal and of course the pahadi pickle were all waiting at the dining hall on the first floor. But, to climb down one huge floor in that biting February night in Himalayas can be a chore. All though well fed, we were hungry again and devoured couple of hot Rotis. After a sumptuous dinner we ordered for some Aloo Parathas, Tea and Milk for the next day's breakfast and called it a DAY! Bundled up in thick 'Rajaais' & Blankets and with heat blowers on, off we all went to sleep.

February 19- Morning we were up and ready by 8.00am. Repacked all our stuff and went for a Hot Breakfast, or rather a Brunch of Aloo Parathas and Jam-Butter Toast. As the saying goes in Hindi, 'भूखे पेट भजन न होई गोपाला' meaning – starving, one can't engage one's mind in prayers! How true! Tanks full we went to the Prayag for Darshan. On reaching Rudraprayag we went down to the confluence but there was a cremation ceremony going on at the confluence so we did not go down to the banks. On our way up, we stopped by sage Narada's 'taposhali' temple, which is on the mountain top right above the confluence.

From here on we started our journey towards the majestic Kumaon or Kumaun, which is one of the two divisions of Uttarakhand state. It's headquarter is located at beautiful lake city Nainital. Kumaon Division consists of six districts Almora, Bageshwar, Champawat, Nainital, Pithoragarh and Udham Singh Nagar .



It's cool and fresh mountain breeze, the ethereal Himalayan scenic view, tall swaying Pine and Deodar trees and the rolling cultivation of the terraced hill crops would captivate even dull hearts. Bloodshot Red and fully bloomed Rhododendrons, in contrast to the white snowy peaks in background are a sure treat to the eyes. The entire road journey is like a travel in Heaven!

We went up to Karnaprayag on NH 58, but after that we took a bifurcation into the beautiful Kumaon to take a single road route to Baijnath via Dungari, Tharali and Gwaldham. We traveled 122kms to reach Baijnath.



Baijnath is a small town on the banks of the Gomati River in the Bageshwar district of Uttarakhand. The place is most noted for its ancient temples. There is a famous Baijnath Mandir (Lord Shiva) on the banks of river Gomati, which is said to have been built by the Kumaon Katyuri king in around 1,150 A.D. The temple holds significance because, according to Hindu mythology, Lord Shiva and Parvati were married at the confluence of River Gomati and Garud Ganga. Dedicated to Siva as 'Vaidyanatha', the Lord of Physicians, the Baijnath temple is actually a temples' complex built by the Katyuri kings with the idols of Shiva, Ganesh, Parvati, Chandika, Kuber, Surya and

Brahma. Also the town of Baijnath draws its name from this temple. Situated on the left bank of the Gomati River, at an elevation of 1,126mts, the temples are constructed in stone. The main temple here houses the great Lord Baijnath in form of a Linga and right behind it is a beautiful idol of Parvati chiseled in black stone. These temples are indeed a poetry written in stone. You can hear the stones speak of our rich culture. The idols here breathe! Indeed very elevating! After having darshan we came out hungry and tired. We had hoped to find

something interesting to eat at Gwaldham, but that place turned out to be a dump! So we survived on the snacks we were carrying. Our next stop of the day was going to be Bageshwar, 2kms from Baijnath.



Bageshwar is a city in Bageshwar district in the state of Uttarakhand. The town is situated on the confluence of Gomati River with Sarju River which is a tributary of Sharda or Kali River and joins Kali at Pancheswar. The city is named after its famous temple also known as the Bageshwar temple. This temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva in form of a linga. Interestingly the Shivalinga here is stripped yellow and black and is in the shape of a tiger's face. As per a mythological legend, Sage Markandeya stayed at this holy place. He continuously meditated day and night at this very place. Every night Lord Shiva appeared before him in form of a Tiger to bless him. Owing to this legend the temple was dedicated to Lord Shiva and was named 'Bageshwar' as Bagh means Tiger.

We had some nice quiet time with the Lord here, sat beneath a tree for a while but sure enough by now we had tigers growling in our tummies. We quickly jumped into our vehicle and started our 'food hunt'. Our next and final destination for the day was pinned on 'Chaukori', which was 44kms further up. Luckily we hit upon a Dhaba cum lodge, right by the road side near Dhaulchini. It was late afternoon and past tea time too yet, the cooks here obliged us with Hot Aloo Parathas and Chana with some hot milk and Adrakwali Chai. What a blessing, to find hot freshly cooked food in these forlorn places at odd hours! Talking to some locals here we were advised to stay in Hotel Himshikhar in Chaukori. So there we started for Chaukori, our final destination of the day en-route Berinag!

Chaukori is a tiny hill station in the Pithoragarh district set among the lofty peaks, of the western Himalayan Range in the Kumaon Division of Uttarakhand, India. To the north is Tibet and to the south is Terai. The Mahakali River, running along its eastern boundary, forms the Indo-Nepal international border. Chaukori's elevation is 7,000 feet above sea level, with a spectacular view of the snowy peaks of Mrigthuni, Trishuli, Maiktoli, Nanda Devi, Nanda Kot and PanchaChuli. It is approximately 10kms from Berinag, another little hill station.



The sun was slowly getting lazy over the mountain tops and my heart a little anxious trying to reach before sunset. It was pitch dark by the time we hit the out skirts of Chaukori. Bill boards were not visible and to add to our blindness, the electricity was OUT by the time we reached the main city. In the feeble lights of our car we hit upon a Hotel...and Lo! It was Hotel Himshikhar! Being an off season we were like those fishes that have gotten into an irreversible trap in the weary hours of the Himalayan forest night. The manager tried his best to get the maximum tariff from us, adding extras for the heaters etc. Later he loosened up, after knowing

that we were to stay there for two days, two nights. After deciding our dinner menu, we settled down in our rooms.



The rooms were facing the snowcapped Himalayan ranges just like this.....

The night was quiet and cold with the barometer falling down to -2 degrees Celsius. We turned some heat on in the rooms to bring in some warmth, but dare if that bite could crack down! We bundled up further and went down for dinner. Had some excellent Aloo Sabji, Moong Dal, garmaa garm Tava Rotis and mixed vegetable Pickles; Himalayan cold somehow demands something hot and spicy! Dinner is not complete for Suddha till he has some rice so...Jeera Rice was also ordered. After a perfect dinner we decided upon some mouthwatering Aloo Parathas with pickles and Toast butter - Jam for the next day's Breakfast, and walked towards our rooms. As we walked down the patio, few drizzles were coming down in slow motion. After a while it began to pour, and for the first time we witnessed the Himalayan Rains. It was like the heavens cracking down with a thumping triumph!

February 20 – We were up early to witness the sunrise from our porch of the Resort room. The rains had stopped and it was clear once again. To the chants of Gayatri we welcomed Aditya Devta over the Himalayan range. It was one of the best mornings of my life that had dawned just for me, and believe it or not this was going to be the best day of our lives. The most blessed day, that had picked four of us in this universe for an out of this world experience. Visit to Patal Bhuvaneshwar and later Kalika mata temple was on that day's itinerary. After a sumptuous breakfast of Aloo Parathas with pickles and Toast butter - Jam, Chai & Milk we started for the most awaited....Patal Bhuvaneshwar.



Patal Bhuvaneshwar temple ... reaching it is a challenging experience. If you have visited this place know that you are blessed and amongst the chosen few!!!! We started our journey for Patal Bhuvaneshwar via Berinag at 8 in the morning after a heavy breakfast. In an hour and a half we were there. Patal Bhuvaneshwar is 37kms from Chaukori and 27kms from Berinag and about 14kms from Gangolihat in Pithorgarh district in Uttarakhand. This underground cave of Patal Bhuvaneshwar has a vertical 120-metre tunnel-like path to go inside. The temple is amidst a thick forest of Oak and Deodar. This place offers a spectacular view of the Himalayan

peaks - Nanda Devi and Panchachuli. Breathtaking panorama of the Greater Himalayas, a beautiful valley below, and above all, the extraordinary Patal caves! This place turned out to be a surprise package for all of us, because this indeed is something to be experienced firsthand.

Kumao in Uttarakhand is famous for its striking natural beauty and religious beliefs. Deep inside this land, one can find many famous temples, caves which make an impact on the visitor, who is left with a sense of wonder about the creation of God. One such example of this phenomenon is Patal Bhuvaneshwar nestling between River Sarju and east Ramaganga in Pithoragarh district. It is also one of the seven subterranean wonders of the world. There is a reference in 'Manskhanda' of 'Skandapurana' about Patal Bhuvaneshwar. This is a very famous place and has an interesting legend attached to it. As the story goes.....

Once the sages asked sage Vyasa about 'Patal', - the other world. Their questions were...

1. How does Mahadeva reside there in total darkness?
2. How big is it?
3. Who are those creatures, who reside there and worship Mahadeva?
4. Who are the main Gods of Patal?
5. Who was the first person to discover this world?
6. How do the people there survive without the Sun and the Moon?

Vyasa in reply, said, "The world of Patal is similar to the world above. Even Vashishta and the other sages cannot say how far the other-world goes. They can say only that what is known by visiting Patal

continued...

Thousands of Revelers Partake In 21st Annual Phagwah Parade In Jersey City

Source

JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY, March 30, 2013 (The Jersey Journal): Thousands of people descended on Lincoln Park in Jersey City this afternoon for the 21st Annual Phagwah Parade and Holi Hai Day festivities, a colorful Hindu spring harvest tradition that is celebrated by revelers who playfully shower each other with various colors of powder.

”The biggest significance of this is that everybody becomes a myriad of colors,” said Dayanand Mangru, an executive with the United Hindu Association, adding that on such a holy day there are no racial distinctions. “There is no brown, black, or white.”

The parade began around 11:30 a.m. at Audubon Park at the intersection of Kennedy Boulevard and Stegman Parkway as ten decorated floats blaring traditional Indian dance music made their way down Kennedy Boulevard to the fountain in Lincoln Park where the festivities continued into the afternoon.

”The focus is to bring all together in unity,” said Gireeraj Beggs, president of The United Hindu Federation of New Jersey which led the organizing efforts for the parade. “As Hindus we believe in the unity of all people.”

• [Email to a friend](#) •

Raising A Hindu Kid In New York

Source

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, March 26, 2013 (New York Times, by Shivani Vora): How do you teach your children about religion, particularly your own? Are the parents responsible for this vital task, or should they call in some outside help? It’s a question I faced when I became a parent almost five years ago. I am a Hindu who was born in New Delhi and lived in India until I was 8, before immigrating to the United States with my parents and younger sister. Throughout my childhood, Hinduism wasn’t something I formally learned; it was a natural part of my everyday life.

My parents did pujas (prayers) with my sister, Aditi, and me every evening in front of the makeshift mandir (temple) on top of their bureau in their bedroom. We celebrated all the major holidays, including Diwali and Holi, with parties and more elaborate pujas. Aditi and I spent Saturday mornings in India watching episodes of the Mahabharata and Ramayana on TV and listened intently to bedtime stories from our mother based on Indian mythology.

Following this tradition became more challenging as I grew into adulthood and got married. My husband, Mahir, who is from

Mumbai, and I live in New York City, where we have never been starved for an Indian community. But, perhaps like many Indians who came to the United States as children, our careers and mainstream life took precedence over our religion as we grew up.

This slipping away of an integral part of my roots didn't bother me at all until I gave birth to my daughter, Meenakshi. Sometime in her first year of life, I started feeling urgently that she should learn all about her religion. Mahir and I started doing a short puja with her before she went to bed, but we felt inadequately equipped to be her sole source of learning and wanted something more.

When it comes to kids' classes in New York City, there are almost too many options, whether it's gym, music or art. That's not the case with those on the Hindu religion - I could only find three for kids. We picked Bal Vihar, one of the most popular offerings in the area. Part of the Chinmaya Mission, a religious group founded in 1953 in Mumbai by Swami Chinmayananda, the school is focused on teaching the age-old philosophy of Advaita Vedanta. The school came to the United States in the early 1970s, according to Runjhun Saklani, the secretary of the New York mission, when a handful of parents said they wanted an organized way to teach their children Hinduism.

Bal Vihar started in 2002 in the New York City area in a small way: four or five children met in apartments, where volunteer teachers taught them devotional songs and prayers and

the names and meanings of the gods and goddesses. By the time we enrolled Meenakshi in Bal Vihar classes in 2011, there were classes around the country, and Ms. Saklani estimates that more than 5,000 children attend Bal Vihar in the United States today.

Ramayana Now In Polish Language

Source

WARSAW, January 14, 2013 (Hindustan Times): The Ramayana, the great Indian epic, is now available in the Polish language, courtesy of Janusz Krzyzowski, an Indologist in Poland who has translated the monumental work. Though a few episodes of Ramayana were translated into Polish in 1816, these were mere translations of Western writers.

Krzyzowski collected the material from dozens of books and presented in a coherent manner so that a reader could sustain his interest while going through different chapters. The original was penned by Maharishi Valmiki in Sanskrit. "My main purpose was to translate this epic into many chapters in a story format so that laymen and particularly Polish children could enjoy the book as well as they should be aware of the great Indian mythological tradition.

"Ramayana and Mahabharata are two great epics which cannot (be) compared with other epics. Even Greek epics come out as pale shadows when we see the canvas of the Indian epics. They are almost unique in the history of mankind," Krzyzowski told IANS.

Krzyzowski is the president of India-Poland Cultural Committee since its inception in 2004. He has been a prolific writer on India since 15 years. His love for India has roots since his university days when he enrolled for a master degree in philosophy after a medical degree. This interest turned him into an automatic Indophile

Water, Milk For The Gods — Now Being Conserved In Temples

Source

INDIA, March 31,2013 (Hindustan Times): An astrologer and social activist has turned the religious practice of offering water and milk in temples into a unique way of water conservation. Pandit Purushotam Gaur, known as Guruji, has developed water harvesting infrastructure in more than 300 temples in Rajasthan over the past 13 years.

Gaur is harvesting the millions of gallons of water offered by devotees in Hindu temples

that earlier used to literally go down the drain. Gaur said that he had started his Jalabhishek campaign in 2000. "I used to notice that the water offered by devotees in temples is completely wasted as it goes into the drain. So, an idea to use it in recharging the increasingly depleting groundwater level struck me," the 41-year old astrologer told IANS.

He started channelling water from temples (especially Siva temples) through several filter chambers before it drained into the ground and recharged the ground water level. As part of the project, several tanks and bore wells were constructed in each of the temple with the help of the people, Gaur added. "I was delighted when several scientists and groundwater experts joined forces with me and came up with an institution called Shiksha Samiti. The institution has calculated that the city, with more than 3,000 temples, daily has at least 45 million liters of water poured on the deity of Lord Siva and other deities during the Hindu holy month of Shraavan (July-August)," Guar explained. About 300 temples have been covered by the campaign.

Arsha Vidya Newsletter

Annual Subscription: Rs.180/-

Published by V. Sivaprasad

Trustee, Sruti Seva Trust, Anaikatti, Coimbatore 641108

Edited by S. Srinivasan - 0422-2657001

Printed by B. Rajkumar, Rasi Graphics Pvt. Ltd.,

40 Peters Road, Madras 600014. Ph. 28132790, 28131232

