



Arsha Vidya Newsletter

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*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 Mantrā 7



(Continued from the last issue)

From the unmanifest, the world manifests. This is cyclic. Here we are talking about a given cycle. Before the manifestation, there must be a certain motion, some commotion is involved. That is pointed out here. The Sāṅkhyās say that before the creation there is some commotion in pradhāna, the cause, consisting of three guṇās—satva, rajas, tamas. They are in equilibrium in the unmanifest condition. That equilibrium gets disturbed due to some vibration and the creation starts. Here we ask, “How did it get disturbed? Who disturbed it?” Puruṣa, the conscious being, has nothing to do with pradhāna. Other than puruṣa nobody else was there. If pradhāna gets distributed on its own, then it should always be disturbed. How come the disturbance did not take place so far? Another section of the Sāṅkhyās, who accepts Īśvara disturbs the equilibrium.” Then what is the occasion for Īśvara to disturb it? Sāṅkhyās have no logical answer. But every one of them has to point out that before the creation there must be a disturbance in the unmanifest, and there was a disturbance.

It is like the factor that wakes you up in the morning from sleep. Why do you wake up in the morning? What makes you get up? While you were sleeping you did not have any agenda to wake up. In sleep you do not recognize anything. A person who is sleeping should be sleeping all the time, sleep being a pleasant experience. No. There is a karmic pressure working. One more day you have to live. You have to undergo the experiences that are brought about by the karma on a day-to-day basis. This is one model of explanation, the karmic model. You can also give a physiological model. The body had enough rest, and, of course, it is hungry in the morning. A physiological stimulation in the body wakes you up. A psychological explanation also is possible. But it is all finally karma only. Day-to-day karma has got to be exhausted.

Similarly, something happens before the creation. Whenever we say ‘creation’ you must take it as one cycle. It has no end. This creation is like the previous creation. The previous creation was like its previous creation. Thus every creation was

preceded by a creation. In between two creations Īśvara brings about dissolution, which is called pralaya. When one goes to sleep, one dissolves one's own individuality and ceases to experience any object. This dissolution is called laya, sleep. When the creation goes to dissolution it is called pralaya. After dissolution and just before creation, there must be another state, and that is said to be tapas in the śāstra. He saw, ¹ "He desired..he did tapas"²..these are the words used in other śrutis. They mean 'He was aware' of the entire knowledge, that is, he identified with the knowledge and became ready for creation. The nimitta, occasion, for the tapas is the karmas of all the beings that clamour to fructify. Tataḥ annam abhijāyate: the unmanifest world is born from that Brahman. Anna is food. Adyate iti annam, that which is eaten is called anna. Here it means, that which is going to be experienced by all the manifest jīvās later. The entire jagat that is devoured at the time of dissolution is anna. It refers to avyakta, the unmanifest. Anything with distinct features, anything that is created, is vyakta. That which is in a causal form, without distinct features is avyakta. If you take a seed, the entire tree is there in it. The tree has a number of distinct features like trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, fruits and so on. But if you look into the seed, you do not see any of them. At the same time, you know that the tree has come from the seed alone. Given the time, place and atmosphere, all those features will manifest. The seed in vyakta, manifest form, is a tree. The tree in avyakta, unmanifest form, is a seed. Similarly, the causal form of this world called anna or avyakta is the upādhi of Brahman. It is also called māya. When the śruti says that anna is born, it means that Brahman identifies with this upādhi, identifies with the knowledge of avyakta which is going to be manifested later as jagat, and thereby, it becomes the potential cause for the creation. The avyakta has to be differentiated for others' perception, and this differentiation is called the creation or manifestation.

Annāt prāṇaḥ : from that anna is born prāṇa. Prāṇa is the name for the sūtrātman or Brahmaji, the creator. He is called hiraṇyagarbha also. Īśvara assumes the form of hiraṇyagarbha; at that level, a creation already has taken place. Hiraṇyagarbha means the one in whom is the entire knowledge of creation.³ He has the jñānaśakti icchā-śakti kriya and śakti. Jñānaśakti means the capacity to know and he has all the knowledge. Kriya-śakti means the capacity to create, sustain and dissolve the world. Iccā-śakti means the capacity to desire. These

¹ तदैक्षत । छान्दोग्योपनिषत् 6।2।3।

² सोऽकामय । स तपोऽतप्यत तैत्तिरीयोपनिषत् 2।6

³ हिरण्यं ज्ञानं गर्भे यस्य ।

capacities are unfettered measure in hiraṇyagarbha while in a human being they are limited.

Brahman, identified with the total subtle universe, is called Brahmaji or hiraṇyagarbha. Brahman does not modify to become the subtle universe, but māyā or avyakta modifies to become this subtle universe. Brahman is changeless. Associated with this subtle universe, Brahman is known as Brahmaji. Brahman first becomes Brahmaji so that he can create. Once Brahmaji has come into existence, then the creation can start. There is an order here.

Prāṇāt manaḥ satyam lokāḥ: from Brahmaji all minds, all the five elements and all the worlds are born. Manaḥ is part of hiraṇyagarbha alone. Satya is virāṭ, the physical world. The five elements and elementals are not separately mentioned here. Satya includes these five elements and the elemental world. Everything being born of Brahman, the satya of everything is Brahman. At this level satya is what is empirically true. Lokāḥ refers to all fourteen worlds—bhūḥ bhuvāḥ and so on. In the worlds, human beings, devas and so on come into being. Then human beings do varieties of karmas. These karmas are also born from the same Brahmaji. When a person is born, all his good and bad karmas are born with him.

Karmasu ca amṛtam : from the action the results are born. With reference to karma there is phala, the result of karma. All the various results—birth, pleasure, pain and so on—are born of action. The result of action is called amṛta. You cannot exhaust karma phala except in the form of experiences, or by knowledge that you are not the kartṛ, the agent of action. The result of action is called amṛta. You cannot exhaust karma phala except in the form of experiences, or by knowledge that you are not the kartṛ, the agent of action. Karma-phala standing in your account should necessarily fructify in terms of experience—pleasant and unpleasant. Even though karma-phala is finite, until it is experienced it does not come to an end. So, it is called amṛta. The context makes the meaning of the words clear. Here the context being creation, amṛta cannot mean limitless in terms of time. This karma-phala also is born of Brahman only. Brahman alone is born as the physical world, and is born in the form of karma and karma-phala. Therefore, the whole thing is Brahman. This is further explained later.

Let us understand here why the śāstra does not maintain a certain order with reference to this 'so-called' creation. The Taittirīyopaniṣad says: "From that Brahman, which is this self, space was born. From the space, air was born and so on"⁴ All the five elements came first, and afterwards oṣadhi, vegetation (including food) came, and finally physical bodies came. In Chāndogyopaniṣad⁵ it is pointed out that from Brahman, which is 'sat', the three elements, fire, water, and earth, came. Here, in this upaniṣad, elements do not come into the picture at all, even though they are referred to as satya in this mantra. Similarly, in some other upaniṣads, the order of creation is presented a little differently. The śāstra does not maintain the same order because it is only interested in revealing everything is Brahman and not in the order of creation. Brahman is both the intelligent and material cause. Therefore, nothing is separate from Brahman. What has come is mithyā, the unborn cause is Brahman, the satya. You are that Brahman. You are everything. That revelation is necessary because you think that you are one among the many, and weighed down by the world that is too vast. For your own well-being, the truth of 'you' is revealed. This is the teaching. This is called sampradāya, the tradition. The śāstra is committed to unfolding the non-dual nature of Brahman. It is neither interested in the order of creation nor in showing how the world comes about, whether by a big bang, or a bigger bang and so on. It is not interested in what has come because nothing has come. It is only interested in pointing out that the effect, the jagat, is not separate from the cause, Brahman. In fact, it is Brahman. If the effect and the cause are one and the same, the effect is mithyā. The details of creation have no meaning when creation is dismissed as mithyā. Whether you know the details or not, it is mithyā. All that you know is good enough.

To be continued...

⁴ तस्माद्वा एतस्मादात्मनः आकाशः सम्भूतः। आकाशाद्वायुः। तैत्तिरीयोपनिषद् २।१।

⁵ तत्तेजोऽसृजत तदपोऽसृजत ६।२।३ ता अन्नमसृजन्त - ६।२।४

Śrī Rudram

नमोऽसिमद्भ्यो नखंचरद्भ्यः प्रकृन्तानां पतये नमः ॥ ७ ॥

namo'ṣimādbhyaḥ naktañcaradbhyaḥ prakṛntānām pataye namaḥ || 7 ||

namaḥ – salutation; asimadbhyaḥ – of those who carry a sword on them; naktañcaradbhyaḥ – of those who are nocturnal; prakṛntānām – of those who rob others by killing; pataye – to the Lord; namaḥ – salutation.
Salutation to the Lord of those who carry a sword on them, who wander in the night and who kill for robbing.

Naktañcaradbhyaḥ – People who move during the night with swords and knives to rob people. They stop the bus and rob the people. Some others kill to rob. They are prakṛntās.¹ The Lord is in the form of these people and when they become devotees, he protects them.

नम उष्णीषिणे गिरिचराय कुलुञ्चानां पतये नमः ॥ ८ ॥

nama uṣṇīṣiṇe giricarāya kuluñcānām pataye namaḥ || 8 ||

namaḥ – salutation; uṣṇīṣiṇe – to the one who wears a turban; giricarāya – who wanders in the hills; kuluñcānām – of those who appropriate other's property; pataye – to the Lord; namaḥ – salutation.

Salutation to the one who wears a turban, who wanders in the hills and who is the Lord of those who appropriate other's property.

Uṣṇīṣiṇe namaḥ – Salutation to the one who wears a turban. He is kuluñca,² one who appropriates other's property, which is in the form of a house or field. He goes and sits in the property and then claims rights of possession/ownership. Such encroachers of properties remain in villages and towns who bully people to accomplish

¹ hatvā eva apaharantaścoraḥ prakṛntāḥ – prakṛntāḥ are those thieves who steal after killing.

² kuṁ bhūmim gṛha kṣetrādi rūpaṁ luncanti iti kuluncāḥ dvidihāḥ - grāmeṣu sthitvā uṣṇīṣinaḥ duṣpravartikaṭāya durbalānām kṣetrādyapahāraḥ kecit kecittu giri-vanāyāśrayeṇa baliṣṭāḥ kṣetrādin apaharanti – those who grab land in the form of house, field and so on, are called kuluncāḥ. They are of two types: some of them remaining in the villages and wearing turbans, grab the land etc., belonging to the weaker strata of society, while others resort to hills and forests being strong, forcibly occupy others' lands (and rob their belongings).

their desired ends. They will say, 'Go to the court and only your grandson will get the judgment'. Others live in the forest well protected. They have their own army. They are strong and use force to occupy and claim the right of possession. They harvest someone else's paddy and go away with it. They go on extending their domain and the villagers keep losing the lands. Here, the Lord is presented as ātatāyi, one who performs any one of the five great crimes, namely, arson, poisoning, stealing wealth, attacking a weaponless person, usurping land and grabbing another's wife.

The division of everything as good and bad constitute the jiva. Being judgemental is a great impediment in knowing Īśvara. It is difficult to see people as they are. From actions one makes judgements about others and then deals with them based on those judgements. One cannot make a judgement without branding a person by a single word. In every judgement there is the need for a single word. 'He committed theft,' is a fact. 'He is a thief' is a judgement. 'Thief' is a single word. He is not the thief at all times, in all situations. He does many other actions, like any other human being. How can one label him as thief?

There was a person presented as a fool by others. I desired to see a fool in him, to know what he looks like. But when the time came to eat, he placed the food in his mouth, not in his right or left ear. When he walked, he lifted his leg. He seemed to know a log of things. I failed to see a total fool in him. That he is a fool is a judgement. Fool is a single word. As long as one has these one-word judgements, Vedanta is a far cry. That judgement goes away once we repeat these mantras, knowing their meaning.

Naming a person a kuluncā, thief, is a form of judgement. But it is taken away by saying he is one more form of Īśvara. I cannot say, 'Do not call him kuluncā.' But kif I say, "kuluncā is Īśvara," it changes my attitude to be saintly. Rudra text is unique because of the kind of presentation of Īśvara therein. It takes a clear vision of Vedanta to understand Īśvara as a robber and also his or her protector.

नम इषुमद्भ्यो धन्वाविभ्यश्च वो नमः ॥ ९ ॥
nāmaḥ iṣumadbhyo dhanvāvibhyaśca vo namaḥ || 9 |

namaḥ – salutation; iṣumadbhyo – to those who have arrows;
dhanvāvibhyaḥ – to those who hold bows; ca – and; vaḥ – to you; namaḥ – salutation.

Salutation to you in the form of those who have arrows and who hold bows.

The previous topic, that is, the Lord is sahamāna is concluded, and vaḥ 'to you' who is sarvātmā is brought in here. One can see a change in the style and topic from here on. It is easy for us to look at the sun, stars, earth, fire, herbs and even animals, as the Lord.

Now, the mantra mentions simple people such asunters in a forest who are not educated and for whom study of any Veda is out of question. All that they know is arrows and animals. They are inadequately clad and perhaps use a sign language. One cannot say, this person is Īśvara's glory! Suppose one meets a scholar, then one says he is Īśvara's glory and Īśvaratva exists in him. One can see the Lord only in chosen people such as scholars, saints and sages. In cruel people one cannot see the Lord. In Tamilnadu, there are certain nomadic people who go around, each with a bag made of jackal skin. When you see them, you do not want to have anything to do with them. We begin with them—the fierce people of the forest—to see Lord in them.

Iṣumadbhyo dhanvāvibhyasca namaḥ – Salutation to you, O Lord, in the form of those who have arrows and bows. People who have arrows, iṣumantaḥ, people who have bows, dhanvāvinaḥ, are non-separate from the Lord. The Lord himself is wearing the arrows and holding the bow to protect them. The same Rudra is in the form of all types of people, devatās, aśurās and so on. They exist; they are the Lord and to them, my salutation.

Are you afraid of them? The devotee says, 'No, because they are you.' Vo namaḥ— yuṣmabhyam namaḥ, salutation to you. I salute them because they are you. They may be anybody doing anything, but they are you and I accept them as you, whether they have a mace, a disc or an arrow.

नम आतन्वानेभ्यः प्रतिदधानेभ्यश्च वो नमः ॥ १० ॥

nama ātanvānebhyaḥ pratiḍadhānebhyaśca vo namaḥ ॥ 10 ॥

namaḥ – salutation; ātanvānebhyaḥ – to those who are trying to string in the bow; pratiḍadhānebhyaḥ – to those who are setting the arrows on the tied bow, ca – and; vaḥ to you; namaḥ – salutation.

Salutation to you, in the form of those who are trying to string in the bow and those who are setting the arrows on the tied bow.

Here the arrows of the Lord are depicted in different stages of use. Ātanvānebhyaḥ—to the ones who are tying the string to the bow. One devatā is going to strike in the form of lightning. Another devatā is going to strike in the form of an earthquake. Yet another with something else. All of them are included here. The Lord ties the string and is getting ready. Then what does he do? He sets the arrows on the bow where the string is already tied. It is the saṅkalpa of the Lord that any deity gets ready to strike. O Lord! You are now a frightening person; my salutation to you.

नम॑ आयच्छ॑द्भ्यो॑ विसृ॑ज्ज॒द्भ्यश्च॑ वो नमः॑ ॥ ११ ॥
 namā āyacchadbh̄yo visr̄jadbh̄yaśca vo namaḥ ॥ 11 ॥

namaḥ – salutation; āyacchadbh̄yḥ – to those who are drawing the string of the bow; visr̄jadbh̄yaḥ – to those who are releasing the arrow; ca – and; vaḥ – to you; namaḥ – salutation.

Salutation to you in the form of those who are drawing the string of the bow and who are releasing the arrow.

Now they are drawing the string upto the ear for releasing the arrows. Now they are releasing the arrows. This is more frightening than before. O Lord! You alone are in the form of those people who are going to release the arrows and those who have already released; salutation to you.

नमो॑ऽस्य॑द्भ्यो॑ विध्य॑द्भ्यश्च॑ वो नमः॑ ॥ १२ ॥
 namo'syadbh̄yo vidh̄yadb̄yaśca vo namaḥ ॥ 12 ॥

Namaḥ – salutation; asyadbh̄yaḥ – to those who are sending the arrow that reaches the target; vidhyadb̄yaḥ – to those who are piercing the target; ca – and; vaḥ – to you; namaḥ – salutation.

Salutation to you in the form of those who are sending the arrow that reaches the target and who are piercing the target.

The arrow that is released and its travel to the target is frightening. It then pierces the target. The release covers the travel of the arrow up to reaching the target. The arrow piercing the target is indifated by vedhana, striking. Those who do these two acts are Rudra and unto him my salutation. O Lord, you are in all these forms and therefore they are no longer frightening to me.

The Three-Year AVG Course at Rishikesh Ashram

The students of the three-year course, that began in Anaikatti in 2010, stood outside the temple awaiting the arrival of Pujya Swamiji. The sound of Ganga flowing over the rocks below and the cold nip in the air reminded one this was Rishikesh and not Anaikatti.

It was Sunday, 10th February, 2013. That afternoon, Pujya Swamiji would begin a four-week study of Chandogya Upanishad. What is it that makes this study stand apart from the teaching up until this point? It is not that Pujya Swamiji's unfolding Chapter Six of Chandogya along with bhashya could be done with anymore clarity, thoroughness, or enthusiasm than the previously unfolded Upanishads. What is it then? Perhaps it is the additional grace manifesting to give the



students the opportunity to study in the very place where one's Guru living in a grass hut, taught and studied for many years.

The Rishikesh ashram acharya, Swami Santatmanandaji, and others, have taken no shortcuts in assuring that the students are able to focus on their studies. When one sits down for the first Chandogya class of the day at 8:30 am, each student has had the freedom to attend puja, take time for japa, and sit in a guided meditation, which is followed by breakfast. Nothing is required of the student other than to simply be in the right place at the right time.

The Sixth Chapter of Chandogya is the story of Svetaketu that Pujya Swamiji so lovingly and colourfully portrays as the brilliant, but very proud, young man who has returned home after 12 years of study at a gurukulam. How does a parent





address such an attitude observed in his child? Uddalaka, Svetaketu's father, simply asked his son, what brought about this prideful conduct? Did you ask your teacher for that knowledge, knowing which, all else is as though known?

Of course, Uddalaka knew that Svetaketu had not been taught that knowledge – there is no room for pride in knowing the truth of oneself. Svetaketu was initially not convinced that such a knowledge existed. He asked how this sort of knowledge could be taught. Uddalaka explained that it is like knowing clay. If one knows clay, all objects that are made of clay are as though known – the clay pot, bowl, etc. Indeed, pot, bowl etc., do not have any existence apart from clay. It is merely name and meaning that creates the so-called differences between pot and bowl etc. Uddalaka gave several further examples to assure that Svetaketu understood that a product is not separate from its cause.

Having understood what he was told, and convinced that there was a knowledge whereby everything could be as well known, Svetaketu is worried that his father may send him back to the gurukulam for

further study. In order to avoid this potentiality, Svetaketu tells his father that he is sure the teacher did not have this knowledge and asks to be taught by his father himself.

The teaching that ensues is a detailed vichara of satyam and mithya. Without understanding mithya, one cannot know the sadvastu. The basic definition of mithya is that which cannot be categorically stated as real, nor can it be categorically stated as unreal – this is called anirvacaniya. However, to truly understand what this means is not easy. Even among those who ask for the knowledge and make efforts towards understanding there can be a lot of confusion. Therefore, proper vichara is necessary.

The jagat, universe, is nothing but sat, or consciousness. However, there are those who contend that everything comes from non-existence, which the Upanishad necessarily refutes. Everything has a cause – there is no pramana for the birth of something from nothing. Some others will argue that not only did everything come from non-existence, but that the non-existence is non-dual. How can non-existence that is non-dual and time of creation be spoken of together? Further, without pramana, the non-existence must have been witnessed in order to say it was. Thus, the non-dual non-existence requires the presence of existence to prove its non-existence!

Next the Upanishad says that sat visualized, I shall become many, aikshate bahusyam. Sankaracharya raises the question, if sat is partless how is it that all these forms are in the jagat? Answering, by pointing to the rope-snake example, one understands how when something is not known for what it is, there exists the possibility of taking it as something else. Does this mean that

everything that is perceived is unreal, like the snake on the rope? No, it is sat alone, which is nothing but what is real, that is being taken as something else.

So what is sat? Is it sentient or insentient? Clearly, only something that has sentience can visualize. However, there are those who hold that sat is insentient. They argue that statement, “sat visualized”, is a figure of speech, and no different from saying that the insentient river-bank “wants to fall” into the river. As Pujya Swamiji pointed out, figure of speech is only indicated when there is a contradiction. Here there is no contradiction as the cause of the jagat is the subject of sruti pramana alone. In fact if one were to take it as a figure of speech, it would be contradictory. It is from this point that the Chandogya classes are proceeding.

Bhagavad Gita class continues in the afternoons. Rajavidya-rajaguhya-yoga, otherwise known as Chapter 9 is currently being unfolded. When one says that there is nothing but Isvara some kind of understanding of the truth has taken place. However, to include oneself in “nothing but Isvara”, that is to know oneself as non-separate from Isvara takes a prepared student and knowledge that is free from vagueness and doubt. What can be done to assist one in gaining the grace that is



required for such preparation and knowledge to take place has been the topic of the last few verses that Pujya Swamiji has covered thus far.

Satsangs have seen many requests for Pujya Swamiji to share stories of how he came to Rishikesh and what life was like living in a grass hut on the bank of Ganga. After a particularly rainy and windy 24-hour period, one person was inspired to ask, how Swamiji survived the weather, wouldn't the grass hut blow away?! Pujya Swamiji has obligingly shared many stories with us, which both inspire and serve as a reminder that the opportunity that we are given for devoting ourselves to this study is a rare thing indeed.

This month is particularly auspicious for Ganga bathing, it being kumbha mela. The chill of Ganga's waters is not noticed as much as her rush to bless the one taking snanam, pouring herself over and around the submerged body. Even when not bathing, her dance mesmerizes one as she weaves over, and around the rocks. The sun drawing a path across her more placid waters, and sparkling like gemstones in whirlpools and eddies, has the ability to draw one to contemplate on the grace which has brought one to this place, this teaching and this teacher.

Report by Julie Carpenter

Vedanta Literature

The term Vedanta literally means the end portion of the Vedas. Vedanta unfolds the essential identity of the individual, the world and the Lord. This knowledge is revealed through the words of the Upanishads which make up the end portion of the Vedas. The teaching tradition by which this knowledge is unfolded is known as sampradāya. This teaching tradition has been kept alive through a teacher-student lineage, guru śiṣya paramparā.

The Lord in his role as the first teacher is given the name Dakṣiṇāmūrti.

The lineage of teachers can only originate from a teacher who has all knowledge and himself does not need a teacher. Such a source can only be the omniscient Lord. Thus the lineage is traced to the Lord himself. The Lord in his role as the first teacher is given the name Dakṣiṇāmūrti. He taught his four disciples: Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra. Many illustrious teachers in this unbroken lineage of teachers have greatly contributed to the teaching tradition of Vedanta through their scholarly treatises. These works along with the upaniṣads, form the Vedanta literature.

Upaniṣads

The word Upaniṣad means self-knowledge. “Up” and “ni” are prefixes to the root “sad”. Upa means “the nearest” and ni means “ascertained knowledge”. The meaning of these two prefixes together is ascertained knowledge of the nearest, which is the self-knowledge of the nearest, which is the self. The root “sad” means that which removes, destroys, and helps one to know. Thus the word Upaniṣad means: the ascertained knowledge that destroys the undesirable life of becoming and helps one know the whole, Brahman, which is oneself.

The word Upaniṣad means: the ascertained knowledge that destroys the undesirable life of becoming and helps one know the whole, Brahman, which is oneself.

In the various Upaniṣad, the truth of oneself is presented from various standpoints. For instance, Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad unfolds the nature of the self with reference to the three states of experience: waking, dream and deep sleep. The Taittirīya upaniṣad reveals the self by correcting the universal error of taking oneself to be the physical body, mind and senses. Kena Upaniṣad presents the

self as limitless awareness that illumines the mind and the senses.

Even though there are many Upaniṣads in the Vedas, the ones listed below have gained prominence due to Śaṅkarā's commentaries on them.

Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad

This Upaniṣad gets its name from the first word of the Upaniṣad which is Īśāvāsya. It is also known as Samhitā Upaniṣad since it belongs to samhitā portion of the Śukla Yajur Veda. The Upaniṣad has eighteen mantras; the first line of the first mantra itself presents the Vedic vision of the Lord: *īśāvāsyamidam sarvam yatkiñca jagatyām jagat*—the entire world consisting of inert and conscious is pervades by the Lord:.

Kena Upaniṣad

This Upaniṣad also gains its name from the **first word of its first mantra**. Kena Upaniṣad belonging to the Śāma Veda, has thirty-four mantras spread out in four chapters. The first two chapters unfold the self as limitless, the third chapter brings out the glory of the self through a story, and the fourth chapter deals with certain upāsanās, meditations, as well as qualifications necessary for self knowledge.

In the story, Brahman, the Lord gained victory for the devas in their fight against the asuras, demons. Due to their pride, however, the devas took the credit for the victory. Hearing of this, Brahman decided

to make them understand that which makes things happen. Assuming a charming and shining form, Brahman appeared before the devas who were celebrating their victory. The devas were wonderstruck by the celestial form, yakṣa, but could not recognize who it was. The god of Fire, Agni devatā, was asked to find out who the being was. Before Agni devatā could ask the yakṣa, the celestial being asked Agni, "Who are you?". Surprised that he was not known to the yakṣa, Agni said "I am the popular Agni, who is also called Jātaveda. "What makes you so popular and great asked the yakṣa. Agni answered by saying he could burn anything. The yakṣa then asked him to burn a dry blade of grass but Agni could not burn it. Humiliated, Agni went back and told the devas that he could not find out who the yakṣa was. Next, the god of Air, Vāyu devatā, was sent to discover the identity of the yakṣa, but he also returned without finding out. Finally, Indra, lord of the devas, approached the yakṣa, but before he could contact the being it disappeared and in the same place stood Goddess Umā. Indra then asked her for the identity of the being and she replied that it was Brahman, the Lord who gained victory for them in their fight against the asuras. Indra reveals this truth to the other devatās and thus glorifies Brahman.

Katha upaniṣad

Katha upaniṣad, belonging to the Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda, consists of one hundred and twenty mantras in three chapters, each having two sections. The first three sections

of the upaniṣad are generally chanted during śrāddha, the death anniversary. The upaniṣad is presented through a story leading to the student Naciketa asking for self knowledge from Yama.

The story begins with Vājaśravas, Nachiketa's father, performing a ritual known as Viśvajit in which the performer of the sacrifice gifts away all his wealth. Naciketa sees his father giving away old worn-out cows as gifts and is concerned that his father might not obtain the desired results from the sacrifice. Wanting to help his father, he offers himself as a gift. He asks his father, "To whom will you offer me?". Annoyed by Naciket's persistence, his father in anger says, "I give you TO Yama (the god of Death).

After convincing his father that spoken words should be fulfilled, Naciketas goes to the god of Death and waits for three days before he meets him. Lord Yama extends all the honours that a guest should receive and grants him three boons to compensate for the three nights that Naciketa waited for the Lord without food. Naciketa encashes the first boon for the welfare of his father. He uses the second boon to acquire a ritual which can be performed by people desirous of a future heavenly life. For the third boon, he asks for the knowledge of the soul that survives death. Lord Yama tries to lure Naciketas away from his question by offering him various objects of security and pleasure. Naciketas rejects them all and asks only for knowledge. Convinced of his

maturity, the Lord teaches him Brahma Vidhyā, knowledge of the Self.

Praśna Upaniṣad

The Praśna Upaniṣad, belonging to the Atharva Veda, contains six sections with a total of sixty-eight mantras. The Upaniṣad is presented in the form of dialogues between a teacher and six students. The teacher is; the students are Śukeśā, Satyakāma, Gārgya, Āśvalāyana, Bhārgava and Kabandhi. Each student asks a question and the questions progress in their subtlety and depth. The Upaniṣad derives its name from the fact that questions, praśnas, form the context for unfolding the teaching.

The first question refers to the origin of the created beings, the second to the number and nature of the devatās functioning in the human body; the third to the nature and origin of prāṇa, the life breath; the fourth discusses the nature of the individual and the three states of experience: waking, dream and sleep; the fifth refers to the results of meditation on Om; and the last question is about the nature of the self.

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad is also from the Atharva Veda. It has three chapters, with two sections each and contains sixty-four mantras. Śaunaka's question to Sage Aṅgiras regarding "the knowledge knowing which everything is as well known" forms the context of the Upaniṣad.

This Upaniṣad points out that knowledge is the means for freedom, mokṣa, and prayers and meditations as means to prepare the individual for that knowledge. It also presents values such as truthfulness, austerity and brahmacharya as prerequisites for knowledge.

Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad

This upaniṣad belongs to the Atharva Veda and consists of twelve mantras. Unlike most of the upaniṣads, this upaniṣad does not have any anecdote or dialogue and it directly unfolds the nature of ātmā. It is said that if a person cannot study all the upaniṣads, the study of Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad is enough to obtain self-knowledge. Here, the three states of experience are analyzed to reveal the self as free and limitless in nature.

It is said that if a person cannot study all the upaniṣads, the study of Māṇḍūkya upaniṣad is enough to obtain self knowledge.

Taittirīya Upaniṣad

This upaniṣad belongs to the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka of Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda. It is presented in three vallīs, chapters: Śikṣā vallī, Ānanda vallī and Bhṛgu vallī. The upaniṣad has a total of thirty-one anuvāka , sections of a vallī, each comprising a few mantras.

The first vallī discusses upāsanās, meditations. It also contains instructions to

students who have completed their study in a gurukula. The second vallī unfolds the nature of the self as being limitless happiness. There is an interesting calculus of ānanda, happiness, presented in this section. The happiness of a strong, brave, healthy, well-educated and clean young man who rules the entire world is counted as one unit of happiness. The happiness of Brahman is figuratively measured as trillion times more than this unit of human happiness.

In the third vallī, the truth of the self is unfolded through the dialogue between Varuṇa and Bhṛgu. Bhṛgu, wanting to know Brahman, was taught by his father Varuṇa that he should contemplate and understand that out of which everything has emerged, by which everything is sustained, and unto which everything will go back. Bhṛgu, by his contemplative inquiry, comes to discover the self to be Brahman.

Aitareya Upaniṣad

The Aitareya Upaniṣad belongs to the Ṛg Veda. How this upaniṣad got its name is told in the story of Mahīdāsa, who was born to a Ṛṣi and his wife Itarā. The Ṛṣi also had sons by other wives whom he cared for more than Mahīdāsa. Seeing that her son was not treated properly by his father, Itarā prayed to her kula devatā Bhūmi Devi, Goddess Earth, for help. Pleased with her prayers and Mahīdāsa's knowledge, Bhūmi Devi appeared and gave Mahīdāsa a boon that he would thereafter be known

as Aitareya, and a Brahmaṇa and the corresponding Āraṇyaka section of Ṛg veda would be named after him.

The Aitareya Upaniṣad consists of three chapters with a total of thirty-three mantras. The first chapter discusses the creation of the world and the Lord's presence therein. The second chapter describes how the individual perpetuates himself through various births. The third chapter unfolds the ultimate destination of the individual as knowing oneself to be Brahman. Here we find the mahāvākya: "prajñānam brahma", consciousness is Brahman."

Chāndogya Upaniṣad

This upaniṣad is from Sāma Ved. It contains eight chapters. A major portion of the upaniṣad discusses upāsanās, various forms of meditation. The sixth chapter is a dialogue wherein Uddālaka teaches his son Śvetaketu that the self is the limitless Brahman and the mahāvākya: "Tat tvam asi – that thou art" is repeated nine times. Through Uddālaka's illustrations and teachings, each restatement of the identity as indicated by the mahāvākya is an inevitable conclusion from the preceding discussion.

The sixth chapter opens with a story of Uddālaka and his son. Uddālaka sends his son Śvetaketu to a gurukula to study the Vedas. Returning home after twelve years of study, Śvetaketu has the pride of a learned scholar which is unbecoming of a person endowed with spiritual knowledge.

Desirous of finding out whether his son had received self knowledge, Uddālaka asks Śvetaketu whether he sought this knowledge from his teacher. At first Śvetaketu responds overconfidently saying that his teacher did not know about this knowledge. He felt that had his teacher known, he would have surely taught him since he was the most brilliant of all the students. Śvetaketu later discovers his arrogance and requests his father to teach him.

The seventh chapter begins with Nārada's request to Sanatkumāra to teach him knowledge of the self, knowing which he would be free from sorrow. Sanatkumāra wants to know all that Nārada has studied and Nārada lists all the disciplines of knowledge that he has mastered. Nārada tells Sanatkumāra that in spite of all his knowledge, he is still subject to sorrow. Sanatkumāra teaches him the knowledge of the self which is free from sorrow, which is bhūmā, limitless.

There are a number of inspiring anecdotes of the Chāndogya upaniṣad. One such story is told of Satyakāma who went to a teacher in search of truth. The teacher asks Satyakāma about his parentage and Satyakāma tells him that he only knows his mother and that he has no knowledge of his father. Moved by Satyakāma's truthfulness, which indicates his qualification for knowledge, the teacher teaches him.

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad

This found in the Śukla Yajur Veda , is the largest of all upaniṣads. It consists of three khāṇḍās: Madhukāṇḍa, Yājñavalkyakhāṇḍa and Khilakhāṇḍa, each kāṇḍa having two chapters. The first kāṇḍa imparts Vedantic teachings; the second kāṇḍa embodies logical analysis to support the teaching of the Vedantic vision; and the third kāṇḍa discusses various forms of meditation.

Like the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, this upaniṣad has many stories illustrating the teachings, such as Gārgī's debate with, Yājñavalkya and Maitreyī's search for self-knowledge. In one such debate, Gārgī stands against the mighty Yājñavalkya.

As the story goes, King Janaka once performed a great sacrifice. Eager to listen to debates on spiritual topics he promised to give gifts in the form of one thousand cows adorned with gold and precious ornaments to the victor of the debate. Yājñavalkya declared himself as undefeatable and ordered his disciples to take away all the offered cows. The other scholars in the assembly raised different

questions and the sage calmly answered all of them. Lastly, Gārgī asked Yājñavalkya a number of questions and he patiently answered them. As the debate progressed, Yājñavalkya discouraged Gārgī from pressing for answers to certain difficult questions. One such question she put to him was: 'O Sage, what is the one beyond the heavens, below the earth, and in between, what is the one which is not subject to past, present and future?' Finally, the Sage replied, telling Gārgī that everything is pervaded by the unchanging akṣara, which is Brahman.

In another story, Yājñavalkya desires to leave his home and two wives, Maitreyī and Kātyāyini, to live a life of a renunciate. Yājñavalkya calls Maitreyī and informs her of his plans. He tells her that he has equally divided his property between Kātyāyini and her. Maitreyī asks him whether this wealth would give her freedom from saṃsāra. The Sage truthfully replies that there is no hope of immortality through wealth. Maitreyī then wants to know what will give her that freedom and Yājñavalkya teaches her Brahma vidhyā.

"The factual response is the approach to situations of a truly practical person. One is most practical when one sees situations objectively. This is the real human strength. Human strength is not found in powerful miracles but in the quiet mind of the one who faces situations as they are. Such a one is a strong person. Human weakness is the inability to accept situations, to face facts. Human strength is the strength of reducing situations to simple facts".

Pujya Swamiji

सुभाषितम् SUBHĀṢITAM

शकटं पञ्चहस्तेन दशहस्तेन वाजिनम् ।
हस्ती शतहस्तेन देशत्यागेन दुर्जनम् ॥
śakaṭam pañcahastena daśahastena vājinam ।
hastī śatahastena deśatyāgena durjanam ॥

Keep away from a bullock cart by five armlengths, a horse by ten arm lengths, an elephant by thousand arm lengths. And in case of an evil person get out of the place right away.

सन्तोषस्त्रिषु कर्तव्यः स्वदारे भोजने धने ।
त्रिषु चैव न कर्तव्योऽध्ययने तपदानयोः ॥
santoṣastriṣu kartavyaḥ svadāre bhojane dhane ।
triṣu caiva na kartavyo'dhyayane tapadānayoḥ ॥

Be content with what you have already got as wife, food and income. But don't ever be content with your knowledge, self-improvement and charity.

सुश्रान्तोऽपि वहेद् भारं शीतोष्णं न च पश्यति ।
सन्तुष्टश्चरते नित्यं त्रीणि शिक्षेच्च गर्दभात् ॥
suśrānto'pi vahed bhāraṁ śītoṣṇam na ca paśyati ।
santuṣṭaścarate nityaṁ trīṇi śikṣecca gardabhāt ॥

The donkey teaches us three things; to work tirelessly for the master, stoicity and contentedness.

इन्द्रियाणि च संयम्य बकवत् पण्डितो नरः ।
देशकालबलं ज्ञात्वा सर्वकार्याणि साधयेत् ॥
indriyāṇi ca saṁyamya bakavat paṇḍito naraḥ ।
deśakālabalam jñātvā sarvakāryāṇi sādhayet ॥

A clever man must concentrate his attention on his goal just like a crane. When it spots a fish it stands immobile eyes fixed on the target.

प्रत्युत्थानं च युद्धं च संविभागं च बन्धुषु ।
स्वयमाक्रम्य भुक्तं च शिक्षेच्चत्वारि कुक्कुटात् ॥

pratyutthānaṃ ca yuddhaṃ ca saṁvibhāgaṃ ca bandhuṣu ।
svayamākramya bhuktaṃ ca śikṣecatvāri kukkuṭāt ॥

The cock imparts four lessons; rising early, being ever ready to defend or attack, giving due shares to others and grabbing own share of food.

बह्वाशी स्वल्पसन्तुष्टः सुनिद्रो लघुचेतनः ।
स्वामिभक्तश्च शूरश्च षडेते श्वानतो गुणाः ॥

bahvāśī svalpasantuṣṭaḥ sunidro laghucetanaḥ ।
svāmibhaktaśca śūraśca ṣaḍete śvānato guṇāḥ ॥

When dog gets food, it overeats. If it does not get to eat anything, it is not worried. It just goes to sleep contentedly. But even a slight noise wakes it up. The dog is a very loyal pet and never is shy of fighting feorciuously. Learn these six lessons from a dog.

प्रभूतं कार्यमल्पं वा यन्नरः कर्तुमिच्छति ।
सर्वारम्भेण तत्कार्यं सिंहादेकं प्रचक्षते ॥

prabhūtaṃ kāryamalpaṃ vā yannaraḥ kartumicchati ।
sarvārambheṇa tatkāryaṃ siṃhādekaṃ pracakṣate ॥

Whatever the project a person has to execute, the lion teaches us to begin it with full thrust of your power and not to relax till the task is completed.

अर्थनाशं मनस्तापं गृहे दुश्चरितानि च ।
वञ्चनं चाऽपमानं च मतिमान्न प्रकाशयेत् ॥

arthanaśaṃ manastāpaṃ gr̥he duścaritāni ca ।
vañcanaṃ cā'pamaṇaṃ ca matimānna prakāśayet ॥

A wise person must not reveal to others the loss of money, the deep wound of heart, scandal of the family, the incidents of getting cheated or insulted.

अनभ्यासे विषं शास्त्रमजीर्णो भोजनं विषम् ।
दरिद्रस्य विषं गोष्ठी वृद्ध्य तरुणी विषम् ॥
anabhyāse viṣaṁ śāstramajirṇo bhojanaṁ viṣam ।
daridrasya viṣaṁ goṣṭhī vṛddhasya taruṇī viṣam ॥

Learning without exercise is poison; a meal without appetite is poison; living in society of a poor man is poison and for an old husband, a young wife is poison.

संसार तापद्धानां त्रयो विश्रान्तिहेतवः ।
अपत्यं च कलत्रं च सतां संगतिरेव च ॥
saṁsāra tāpadgdhānāṁ trayo viśrāntihetavaḥ ।
apatyaṁ ca kalatraṁ ca satāṁ saṅgatireva ca ॥

In this world, the hot hell of miseries, only three things provide some cool relief: good offspring, devoted wife and the company of noble people.

किं तया क्रियते धेन्वा या न दोग्धी न गर्भिणी ।
कोऽर्थः पुत्रेण जातेन यो न विद्वान् न भक्तिमान् ॥
kiṁ tayā kriyate dhenvā yā na dogdhī na garbhiṇī ।
ko'rthaḥ putreṇa jātena yo na vidvān na bhaktimān ॥

What is the use of a barren cow that can't give milk? What is the use of giving birth to a son who neither is a scholar nor devoted?

मूर्खश्चिरायुर्जातो तस्माज्जातमृतौ वरः ।
मृतः स चाऽल्पदुःखाय यावज्जीवं जडौ दहेत् ॥
mūrkhāścirāyurjāto tasmājjātamṛtau varaḥ ।
mṛtaḥ sa cā'lpaduḥkhāya yāvajjīvaṁ jaḍau dahet ॥

A son dead soon after birth is preferable to an idiot son with a long life. The dead son causes grief once for a brief period. But the living idiot is a life long grief.

A new theatre initiative at the Swami Dayananda Rotary Matriculation School puts the fun back into education!



KADALUR, T.N.—First standard student S. Ashwan is sitting by himself, waiting for his turn. He’s a bit tense, as if expecting someone. “Vaishu and Vishali are not here,” he says, quietly. “Only if they come, we can be three umbrellas.” Soon, the teacher calls for the umbrellas—umbrellas, inga vaanga (come here)—and Ashwan jumps up, eagerly. He is soon lost in the group of first standard children representing the water cycle—clouds forming droplets and pouring down as rain. The end of the scene features Ashwan and his two absent friends, who together protect the people from the rain.

The scene is part of an initiative by AIM for Seva titled Theatre for Development, and its pilot is being implemented at the

Swami Dayananda Rotary Matriculation School in Kadalur, Kanchipuram District. Spearheaded by noted theatre director and actor N.S. Yamuna, the model introduces the concept of theatre and performance in education.

Taking a step away from rote learning, Theatre for Development aims to help students understand concepts—even mathematical concepts—in a fun and engaging way. It brings creativity into learning, and the children are better able to retain concepts, since they are able to experience it, rather than simply see and learn the concepts through a blackboard and a notebook.

"After the success of the Art for Development initiative, the Theatre for Development will now offer our students another dimension to self-expression," says Ms. Sheela Balaji, managing trustee and secretary, AIM for Seva. "Learning through performance is a new concept in most schools in India, which still view theatre as an 'extra curricular activity' and we are proud to have launched this in our school." "The program is being done as a model of how teachers could make their own classes more interesting and engaging," says Ms. Yamuna. "When you employ theatre, the teacher does not have to shout all the time. It also allows the children to express themselves."

Ready for the cycle to start!

At the school, the program is being led by local theatre artist A.S. Mugilan, who specializes in training NGOs in theatre and mime. Mugilan and his theatre group, Mugil Gramiya Kalai Kuzhu, were extensively trained by Ms. Yamuna before embarking on the project.

The project aims to teach the children concepts from their own text books in an interactive and interesting way. For instance, the higher classes have concepts of mathematics included in a villupaatu-style format. "It requires a different kind of treatment," says Ms. Yamuna. "With the physicality of theatre, you are adding a different dimension to the learning."

At the Kadalur school, all classes, right from kindergarten to the sixth standard, are part of the initiative. Children are excited about the upcoming annual day, when they will perform their "lessons". Kindergarten children are amazingly enthusiastic and quick in their learning, says Mugilan. "The children enjoy this so much, and look forward to this time," he says.

Each class comes in for an hour a week, in preparation for the big show, scheduled for the end of March, to coincide with the World Day of Theatre for Children and Young People.

Meanwhile, there is chaos at the centre of the class, where the children are practising. "Where are the boats?" asks the teacher and a group of students who are "boats" raise their hands. "When the rain comes, people need you to go from place to place," says the teacher, asking them to join the group of students who represent rain and clouds, and they walk in, mimicking oars.

Another group of students is sitting on one side, rapt with attention. They are waiting for their cue. When asked what they were, they say, "We are seeds." One of the children, S. Sanjay, has more to add. "When rain comes, we will grow and become plants," he says, oblivious of any metaphor that the statement lends itself to. What kind of plant, I ask. He thinks for a bit before adding, "Healthy plants."

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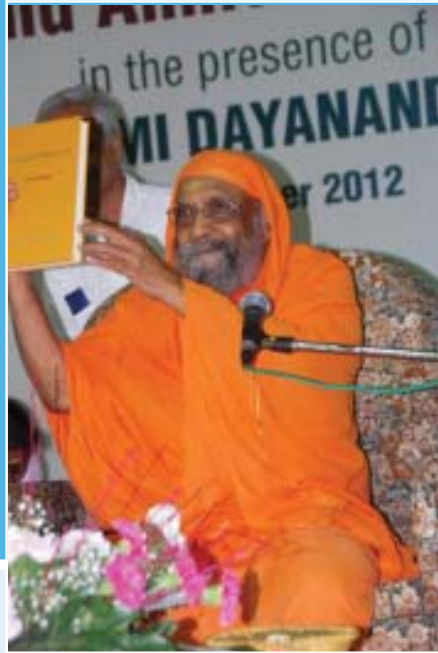
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Bhagavad Gita Tamil Home Study Course Set Released



CHENNAI—The much-awaited Tamil version of the nine-volume Bhagavad Gita Home Study course, titled “Veeduthorum Geethai”, was released at the 22nd anniversary celebrations of the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti on October 21.

Releasing the book, Pujya Swamiji spoke about the relevance of the Bhagavad Gita in today’s world. “One is disturbed by so many happenings around. To be insulated from the disturbances, one should know the greater purpose of life. Study of Bhagavad Gita will help one have proper attitude and clear knowledge,” he said.

The hard-bound set, at nine volumes, is a comprehensive exposition of the Bhagavad Gita, and at the standard book size, is easy to carry. For more details, please visit www.avrpt.com

Price: Rs. 3000

The Banyan Tree has Fallen, Long Live the Banyan



There is a Japanese proverb that says, "Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher." A pillar of support, an epitome of strength, a disciplinarian yet always approachable and warm at heart — that's what a teacher is, for every student.

G. Ramachandran, affectionately called GR, who was passionately connected with and committed to the Swami Dayananda Saraswathi school/college and its allied institutions in Tamil Nadu, precisely fits into this frame.

Manjakudi is a village near Kodavasal, Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu. It houses an



aided higher secondary school, where 2,100 children within a radius of 10 km have been receiving quality education for the past 30 years. In 2000, with the help of an industrial house, an arts and science college emerged. To tap the rural potential, and talent, a large IT company established in 2011 its first rural BPO at Manjakudi.

Born and brought up at Manjakudi with three brothers, GR was a teacher. While he would not tolerate any student or teacher failing to be punctual, he would be the first person to help them if they had any personal problem.

Alcoholism is a major problem in villages, and many children drop out of school due to their fathers' drink habit which leaves them with no choice but to take up some job. To address this issue, we started our first treatment camp at Manjakudi.



The stigma associated with alcoholism is so high in villages that it is not that easy for a recovering person to get immediately employed even after treatment.

GR stepped in and made the vital contribution of giving some work to the person until he got a job. (He was doing this till he breathed his last). This was crucial to the villager as it helped him sustain his recovery and keep his morale intact. This again shows GR's non-judgmental attitude and innate compassion.

Whenever anyone in the village died, GR would be the first caller to console the bereaved. Besides, he would offer them cash to buy firewood and other basic needs for cremation.

Understanding the ground reality that an agricultural labourer may not have cash in hand at the time of death of his family member, and providing money — a very crucial and timely help for the villager.



When the tsunami struck, GR was one of the first to go over to Nagapattinam. He spent a week there helping the injured and physically moving the dead and the mutilated for mass burial and cremation. Little did GR bother that this action took a toll on his health.

During his last few days, GR needed help to move around. Despite this, he continued to be actively engaged in work. Actually, he was on the school premises 20 minutes before his final departure.

A banyan tree has fallen. Banyans do leave behind a number of roots to survive and grow again.

(The writer worked with GR for over 26 years in running the higher secondary school and also conducting addiction treatment camps. email: ttrcrf@gmail.com)

Legal Battle Over Meditation Far From Tranquil In Iowa

FAIRFIELD, IOWA, January 20, 2013 (Washington Times): The followers of a meditation practice that has roots in ancient India say it's simple: Close your eyes, silently repeat a mantra and relax. But a dispute among rivals for control over its teaching is anything but peaceful, featuring personal attacks, aggressive lawyering and accusations of improper business practices.

The feud pits the Iowa nonprofit that has taught transcendental meditation for decades against Thom Knoles, a former associate who left and built his own group of followers. The outcome could decide whether the Fairfield, Iowa-based Maharishi Foundation will continue to control the teaching of U.S. transcendental meditation — or whether rivals can market similar services and its benefits without obtaining a license from the group.

The sides are fighting for customers and to protect their reputations in a federal-court case over whether the foundation can enforce its trademark rights and claims of false advertising against Mr. Knoles and other teachers of his rival Vedic Meditation.

To the foundation, Mr. Knoles and his followers are using the credibility and positive image associated with its technique to promote themselves and mislead customers. To Mr. Knoles' backers, the foundation is unfairly seeking a monopoly on a technique that's existed thousands of years.

Supporters say the technique originated with the Vedas, sacred Hindu texts. Its modern incarnation was developed in India in the 1950s by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who later spread the technique worldwide. Maharishi founded a university that settled in Fairfield in the 1970s. His backers manage the foundation, which teaches classes to thousands of students annually and owns trademarks for Transcendental Meditation and its TM nickname.

Sojourns in tirthas, which are meritorious and which constitute one of the high mysteries of the rishis, are even superior to sacrifices.

— Mahabharata

National Highways Authority of India Spares 1,300-Year-Old Temple

Source

CHENNAI, INDIA, January 22, 2013 (The Hindu): The Siva temple at Panaiyapuram in Tamil Nadu was to be demolished to make way for widening the Vikkiravandi-Thanjavur highway. When the plans to widen the NH-45C, cutting through the temple, became public, residents of Panaiyapuram, Pappanapattu, Mundiampakkam, Kappiyampuliyur and Thuravi forgot their caste and class divisions and rose as one to protest against it. For the widened highway would have shot like an arrow through the ancient Siva temple and its sanctum sanctorum for Panankateesvarar, and the

shrines for his consort Satyambikai, Ganesa and Muruga would have been razed to their foundation. Inscriptions belonging to Rajendra Chola (regnal years 1012 CE to 1043 CE), his son, Rajendra Chola II, Adhi Rajendra, Kulotunga I, Jatavarman Sundara Pandiya I, Vikrama Pandiya and others would have disappeared.

This enraged the villagers, who were determined not to allow the temple demolition to go through. They petitioned Villupuram Collector V. Sampath, National Highways Authority of India officials and Union Ministers. The State government's land acquisition officer feared the issue would lead to a law and order problem. The NHAI officials informed their headquarters about the protests.

The NHAI has now decided "to restrict the proposed ROW [right of way] width to avoid acquisition of the ancient temple near Panaiyapuram village by restricting the extent of land acquisition up to the existing compound wall of the temple on the LHS [left hand side] of the temple portion only." The NHAI has stated this in a letter, dated October 6, 2012, to the Competent Authority and the Special District Revenue Officer (LA), National Highways-45C, Villupuram. In an earlier communication also, dated September 20, 2012, the NHAI said the "four-laning of NH-45C will be accommodated between the existing compound wall of the temple and the existing Veeranam pipeline on the other side." When contacted, an NHAI official said: "The temple will not be touched."

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Dr.HOWARD STEINGERIL

Dr.Howard Steingeril, an American scientist, collected Mantras, Hymns and invocations from all over the world and from all religions, tested their strength in his Physiology Laboratory.

He concluded that the Hindus Vedic Gayatri Mantra is the most rewarding scientifically.' That the Gayathri Mantra produced 110,000 sound waves per second. This was the highest and found it to be the most powerful prayer hymn in the world. That the combination of sound and variation in the sound waves and its particular frequency is capable of developing specific spiritual potentialities. The Hamburg university initiated this research into the efficacy of the Gayathri Mantra both on the mental and physical plane of CREATION...

The GAYATHRI MANTRA is now being broadcast daily for 15 minutes from 7 P.M. onwards over Radio Paramaribo, Surinam, South America for the past two years, and also in Amsterdam, Holland for the last six months

HINDUS SHOULD NOW WAKE UP AND KNOW THEIR WORTH RATHER THAN CREATING NEW SUB CASTE CREED AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Going To Vaishno Devi This Summer? Take A Train To Katra

Source

KATRA, INDIA, February 14, 2013 (The Hindu Businessline): By mid-2013, Katra, a destination in Jammu near Vaishno Devi temple, one of the main Hindu pilgrim destinations, is set to become accessible by rail.

At present, the nearest railhead to Katra is Jammu, from where people travel by road for about two hours along the hills to reach Katra.

The train journey will be more comfortable, cheaper and picturesque compared to the road option, though the time saved may not be significant, as the train will chug to Katra through Udhampur.

About 20,000-25,000 people visit Katra everyday, according to industry estimates. Along with a train connection to Katra, pilgrims will get accommodation as well as shopping and food outlets on the first floor of the railway station. Tickets for the shrine will also be available at the station.

”By May, a 25-km (15.5 mile) rail track between Katra and Udhampur should be ready for trial run. Udhampur is already connected to Jammu,” said B.D Garg, Chief Administrative Officer, Udhampur Srinagar Baramullah Railway Link (USBRL), Northern Railway.

Homage Paid to Goddess of Knowledge

Source

KATHMANDU, NEPAL, February 15, 2013 (Himalayan Times): Hindu devotees today observed the Saraswati Puja, also known as Basanta Panchami, by worshipping Saraswati, the Goddess of learning, across the county.

Students, teachers, musicians, artists and others worshipped the Goddess. The kids who are about to enroll at school were made to scribble letters today with a belief that the Goddess bless them as they seek knowledge.

Devotees and students were seen thronging various Saraswati temples in the Kathmandu Valley and across the country since early morning. According to the Hindu calendar, the day also marks the end of the winter and beginning of the spring season

Increased Security for Fifth Bathing Day At Kumbh Mela

Press Release

ALLAHABAD, INDIA, February 13,2013 (Press Release): The Kumbh Mela administration said today that a foolproof comprehensive planning is in place for the fifth bathing festival of Maha Kumbh of Basant Panchmi.

Allahabad Divisional Commissioner Devesh Chaturvedi today held a marathon meeting with all stake holders including railways, UP State Road Transport Corporation, Allahabad

district administration, police and security forces to ensure safe and successful bathing. The Railways assured that it will continue to run the maximum number of special trains from different stations of Allahabad city to ferry the pilgrims for three days. These trains will be in addition to the trains passing through Allahabad junction and other city based stations and in each train a minimum of 20 bogies will be provided to accommodate maximum number of pilgrims. Similarly 1,500 additional buses will be pressed into service by UP roadways from seven different bus stands set up for the Mela. These buses will be put on diverted routes if jam like situation arises on normal routes.

Allahabad district administration will be setting up seven shelter places to hold the crowd of pilgrims adjoining to Allahabad and other important railway stations. All basic facilities will be provided to pilgrims at every shelter place free of cost. Arrangements are also being done setting up a network of

Public Address Systems in the city area to inform the pilgrims about movements of special trains.

Steps are also being taken to provide medical facilities immediately in case of any urgency and four ambulances are being placed at Allahabad railway station and shelter houses meant for pilgrims. Seven ambulances will be parked at sensitive places in the city as reserve. The administration has also made arrangements to remove the vehicles from the roads in the case of any break down.

Every department involved in the Kumbh Mela are leaving no stone unturned for the success of the third Shahi Snan of Akharas and the fifth bathing festival of the Kumbh Mela event in view of the stampede at Allahabad railway station on last Sunday claiming 36 lives. Senior officials from most of the different departments will monitor the arrangements being done for Basant Panchmi bathing festival

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