

New Year Message 2012



Time is a great myth. It is a very important myth, a significant myth. If you inquire into its content, it disappears. If time is a series of 'nows'—now, now, now, now—and you inquire into the content of now, now just disappears from being a length. It is no longer a length of time. Now is not a length of time. And now which is not a length of time makes a length of time. A series of 'nows' make a length of time, like a series of points making a line. A single point occupies no space and a series of points make a length! This is what Vedanta is. That there is a length, that there is time, is not something we should be weary about, because it is magic. Time is magic, and therefore, you need to enjoy the time you have got now. A new year means you have one more year to accomplish what you could not accomplish last year. And if you have survived without accomplishing last year, this year is not going to be difficult. Therefore, just enjoy the day, the time that is there right now. May this New Year be new all the time, fresh all the time. Getting up every day it is a new day. The New Year begins with a new day, the next day is a new day, the next day is a new day—again new day of the New Year. Then new day, new day, new day—new day. Let us keep it that way, new day. Happy New Year 2012.

Dayananda

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's Kāśī Pañcakam

With the commentary Tatva Prakāśikā by Svāmi Tattvavidānanda Sarasvati

(Continued from the last issue)

The body identification is three-fold: *aham*, I am the body, *mama*, my body, and *mahyam*, body is for me. We practise *karma yoga*, selfless service, to neutralize *mahyam*. The body is put to rightful action without seeking results; the results are surrendered to Īśvara or the society at large. Just as the wind does not blow for its own sake, but for the swake of the entire manifestation, so also the faculties of the body and mind function not for our benefit alone, but for the welfare of the entire humanity. The *mama* identity is neutralized by *bhakti yoga*, motiveless devotion. In the context of devotion, *namaḥ*, prostration, is very important. It means *na me*, not mine. Everything of this creation, including the body, belongs to śavara. Then, the ignorance that I am the doer is negated by discernment of Self as distinct (not different) from the body, which is the non-self. This is sāṅkhya yoga.

Upaśāntiḥ, the dousing of the fire, the fire of affliction. There are three kinds of tāpa, affliction: ādhyātmika, related to the physical body like ill-health, ādhibhautika, the suffering caused by raging street dogs, thieves etc., ādhidaivika, problems like famine caused by the gods. The heart is at peace when these three fires are doused.

Why the adjective parama, supreme or ultimate, to upaśānti? When we sleep, all the afflictions are gone and when we wake up, the three types of afflictions come back. It is as if they are waiting for us to wake up. Thus the śānti, that we experience during sleep is brittle, not parama. In the

waking state too, there are many methods to reduce the agitation of the mind, e.g. taking tranquilizers. The agitation however comes back once the effect of the drug wears away. In fact, we often become more distressed after such temporarily acquired peace of mind. It is like lighting, which briefly lights up objects in the dark and disappears quickly. We want the real peace of mind, not the ephemeral one.

We seek permanent cessation of all suffering and pain and that is mokṣa, also called nirvāṇa. Vāṇa is suffering and nirvāṇa is freedom from suffering. Freedom is mostly described in negative terms. What it is cannot be described. It is not what is described in words. Therefore, what it is not alone is described. It is freedom from afflictions. It is conscious presence that transcends all divisions. We just abide in the self, 'I am', and discover that inner silence.

It is not the silence per se that is important. The flow of thoughts is harmless if and only if the content of the mind is realized as unreal. As we take the content of the waking consciousness as real and as 'other', we psychologically depend upon that content for self-fulfilment and happiness. And then, we try to manipulate the content as we seek pleasure and avoid pain. This is nothing but deeply ingrained ignorance and bondage.

The flow of thoughts acts as a screen that covers up the truth. The mind creates a world for us and presents it to us on a

platter every morning, and we accept that as real and take ourselves to be a small part of that world. Unless we negate this projection of the mind, we cannot discover the truth. This subject-object division and plurality projected by the ignorant mind is mithyā, unreal. To know the truth, we have to step away from the mind and watch it; then, it automatically becomes calm and quiet.

As we identify with the mind, we give a reality to the object of its thoughts. While paying attention to and investing interest in the objects of the world, we cannot realize it as illusion. Withdraw your attention, withhold your interest and draw back from the mind. Watch the mind constantly. Be kind to it, but in an uninvolved way. This is yoga. Initially, the progress is slow in yoga, and therefore, perseveringly withdraw from the thoughts. Be a witness to the mind, and the mind becomes pure. De-automatize every action. For instance, we talk while taking food, and eating becomes mechanical. Stop talking and experience fully the taste of the dish. That is also yoga. Similarly, watch yourself while walking.

When the mind is agitated, I am agitated, for there is no discrimination between the 'I' and the mind. 'I am' and 'I think' are not the same; they are diametrically opposed to each other. 'I am' is the motionless being, while thinking is changeful. As we identify with the mind, we remain trapped in it. As we withdraw from the mind and start watching it, we realize that we are the knower of the mind. The mind is kṣetra, field, and all the objects of thought are part and parcel of this field.

In yoga, one should not contradict oneself. One should not increase the impurities of the mind or work at cross-purposes. As we purify the mind by prāṇāyāma or control of the mind through regulated breathing, meditation, listening to the scriptures etc.,

we should avoid impurities like hate, jealousy, greed etc. at all costs. Once the mind is pure, we will realize that we are not the mind, but a witness of the mind. Since the mind is filled with the six-fold enemy such as greed, anger, jealousy, etc., realizing oneself as the witness is not possible. We have to know deep within that we are not the mind, and thus transcend the mind. We will be able to transcend the mind if and only if the mind is pure.

An impure mind that is attached to the world holds us back. Antaḥkaraṇa śuddhi or purification of the mind, is the most crucial starting point. As the mind becomes pure, it becomes sāvika in nature – calm and quiet, loses its rājasā (hyperactivity) and tāmasā (dullness) burden. Then, one can easily see oneself that he is not the mind. One is the intelligence behind the intellect; one is prior to the mind. This inner space is a deep, unshakeable peace. This inner silence is the conscious presence. It is not void, it is Kāśī.

In Kāśī, there is the river Ganges. It is vimalā, sanctifying. Water of the Ganges remains pure despite a lot of toxins and chemicals that are dumped into it. No other river has such power of self-purification. For example, it is relatively pure as the river enters the city of Kanpur, but the water becomes very dirty and toxic as the many tanneries of Kanpur dump their waste into the river; but within 10 miles of leaving Kanpur, the water again becomes almost pure. The sealed Ganges water remains pure for a very long time. The Ganges of Kāśī stands for the perennial manifestation of Atman, the timeless Awareness, in the form of waking consciousness. The movement of the mind and the senses are the content of that consciousness.

To be continued...

Gita Jayanthi and Swami Dayananda's 80th Birthday Celebrations

Thursday, December 15, 2011

HOUSTON - Arsha Vidya Satsanga celebrated the Bhagavad Gita Jayanti and the 80th birthday of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswathi at Keshav Smrithi on Sunday, 4th December. The event consisted of a *laghu pooja* to Lord Krishna, Gita chanting, singing and dancing of classical compositions of Swami Dayananda Saraswathi, a video presentation about the life of Pujya Swamiji and recognition of key people of Arsha Vidya Satsanga(AVS), and *prasada bhojanam*.

Gita Jayanti is the day on which Lord Krishna did the teaching of Bhagavad Gita to the Pandava prince Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra.

This day is celebrated by all spiritual seekers as the day of rededication to the study of the song divine- Shrimad Bhagavad Gita. It falls on the Shukla Ekadashi of the Mrigashira Masa. Pandit Viswasankaran Kartick led the chanting of 108 names of Lord Krishna- *Krishna Ashothara Namavali*.

This was followed by the brief Veda parayanam and a vedic arathi. A group of



children who are learning Bhagavad Gita at AVS chanted the Dyana *shlokam* of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita. It was a very encouraging to see kids who are American born achieve a good degree of proper Sanskrit pronunciation. Then, the members of the various AVS Gita home study groups chanted the 10th and 15th chapters of the Bhagwat Gita. AVS conducts Gita home study courses in Sugarland, Bellaire, Clearlake, and Jersey Village. The organization also conducts kids classes in Sugarland and Jersey Village.

Then, it was time to celebrate the eightieth birthday of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati, a world renowned teacher of Vedanta, and the main inspiration behind AVS. Swamiji completed 80 years in

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August and this was celebrated by his devotees in a grand manner in India and in the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam in Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania. The event is called Satabhishekam in vedic parlance and comprises pujas, yagnas, and other rituals to celebrate the joyous occasion.

Sri Swami Dayananda among his many multifaceted activities is a scholar and lover of both classical music and classical samskrutam. Hence, it came as no surprise that he had composed many songs on the dieties of the Hindu pantheon as well as on Vedanta. These are set to mellifluous music and had been popularized by many leading classical musicians in India and US. The highlight of these compositions are the harmonious synergy between concepts, words, music, and the emotions (bhava) sought to be conveyed by the song. A group of Houston based singers and musicians got together to learn and perform these compositions as their personal tribute to Swamiji. The songs presented include Bhaje Vignarajam (Hamsadhvani), Dakshinamurte Amurte (Ranjani), Shankaracharyam (Mohanam), and Ramam Bhaje (Durga). This was followed by a dance performance of Pujya Swamiji's composition by the students of Guru Padmini Chari. Varenya Hariharan performed Bho Sambho in Revati (one of the most popular pieces of Swamiji) and the Ramachandran sisters (Smrithi and Sathvika) performed Bharata Desha Hitaya in Desh (the theme song for AIM for SEVA). The singing as well as dancing moved the audience very much.

This was followed by a short video about the life of Swami Dayananda Saraswathi. It was remarkable to watch the many

achievements of Swamiji. He has been a traditional teacher of Vedanta teaching several students, founder of the All India Movement for SEVA, the founder of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, given sanyasa diksha to several sadhakas, convener of Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha, a composer of songs, a writer of several books, a counsellor to several people, and above all, a compassionate person. When one gets to read or watch a life of such a noble soul who give the entire life for the welfare of humanity without the least expectation, one realizes that the message of Bhagavad Gita was not in vain. The entire audience was highly motivated after this and lot of people committed to a more serious study of the Bhagavad Gita and give more to humanity. The organizers then recognized the students, teachers, and the patrons of AVS. This was followed by Gita Arathi and a simple prasad.

Prahalad Appaji said that for the first time he learned of the Gita Jayanti, his wife Smitha was impressed by Swamiji's accomplishments and that their children got interested in learning the new compositions and that each in the family had become personally enriched. "It would be good to conduct a Houston-wide Gita Jayanti program, seeing that the Bhagavad Gita is a popular scripture," said G. V. Krishnan. Dr. Radhika Hariharan was particularly impressed with "small children chanting the Bhagavad Gita from memory!" Rohini Chandrashekar "was glued to her seat all through the program". After seeing the full breadth of activities, Hirji and Ila Bhudia decided to enroll their two children in the Vedic Heritage classes at Jersey Village.



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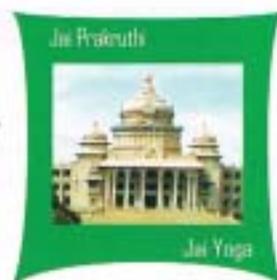
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Digvijaya Hemantha Shibhir' Under The Guidance of Shri Swami Brahmayogananda

19th to 27th November 2011 - YOGA SHANTHI GURUKULAM

Somnath temple was attacked and destroyed by the Muslims 17 times and was reconstructed each time. The Sagar Matha (The Sea Goddess) was witness to all the atrocities and the subsequent reconstructions. Now the same Sagar matha is facing this magnificently and gloriously reconstructed Somnath temple. In the very same premises of this sacred and holy 1st of the Jyothirlingam shrines, **Shri Swami Brahmayogananda** conducted 18 classes for 121 of his students on Adi Sankaracharya's text- '*Sarva Vedanta Siddhanta Saara Sangraha*' for three days. The topics taken were Samaadhanam, Uparathi and Mumukshuthvam as part of Sadhana Sathushtayam.

During the inaugural function which was presided over by **Sri Kamlesh Raval, Deputy Secretary & GM**, Sree Somnath Trust, the holy flag of this symbol of Rashtriya Gauravtha- Somnath temple was hoisted (**Dwajaroohan**) after Swamiji performed a Puja to the Dwaja under the guidance of the Chief temple priest. Between 21st & 23rd Nov, students were engrossed in their Spiritual quest at Sankirtan Hall of the Somnath temple complex which is a Z Plus Security area.

Sri A K Joti, Chief Secretary, Govt of Gujarat, participated in the Valedictory function of the camp and honored Swamiji and Sri Vijaisinh Chavda, Deputy General Manager, Sree Somnath Trust also took part in this function. This camp created such an impact that the whole temple town was



aware and talking about Swamiji and the classes being taken. The trust management was so impressed by the discipline that they helped in the stay & food arrangements at Dwaraka. Yet another highlight was that the Deputy Secretary, a Gujarati, addressed the students in Tamil and one of Swamiji's students spoke in Gujarati for thanks giving thereby denoting the spirit of **National integration**.

After the 3 day camp at Somnath, on 24th Nov, the students were taken for Beyt Dwaraka darshan, Nageswaralinga (another Jyotirlingam) darshan and Dwarakadish darshan. In Beyt Dwaraka, Swamiji called for all the Brahmanas in the small island of 5000 people and asked them to take a Sankalpam to perform their daily rituals like Nithya Puja and chanting of Gayathri mantra continuously for 3 years and by this way, the 4000 muslims in the island would automatically return back to Hinduism. It is to be noted that a Muslim boatman-



Ahmed who was very rude on the onward boat journey totally transformed on the way back and asked for Swamiji's blessings, merely by observing Swamiji's attitude and activities during the 3 hours at **Beyt Dwaraka**. Swamiji made contributions close to Rs 1 Lac in this holy place of Lord Krishna.

On the last day of the camp (26th Nov), Swamiji along-with 60 of his students met the Chief Minister of Gujarat, **Shri Narendra Modi**, for over an hour at his official meeting place- Circuit house. Swamiji blessed Modi ji to lead a Vibrant Bharatham in the model of Vibrant Gujarat. After Swamiji's inaugural speech, Shri Narendra Modi shared details on the achievements and development of the state in the fields of Agriculture, Electricity, etc

over the last 10 years. Modi ji also enthusiastically responded to several nation based questions posed by the students of the Gurukulam.

This 1 week visit of Swamiji along-with his 121 students was well covered by many Gujarat dailies and also specially covered in **Shri Narendra Modi's website**. It is to be recalled that Swamiji took the blessings of **Pujya Shri Swami Dayananda Saraswati** at Anaikatti, just before commencing this historic camp. This was yet another memorable camp for the students and for all those who were associated with it.

Jai Somnath! Jai Dwarakadish!

Guruve Saranam

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