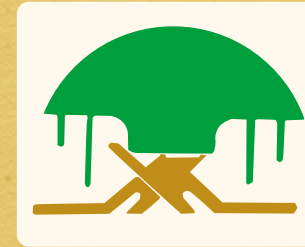


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*Arsha Vidya
Newsletter*

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!

Second Muṇḍaka Section 1

(Mantra 2 ...continued..)

Gauḍapādācārya says,¹⁷ *ajāḥ kalpita-saṁvṛtīyā paramārthena nāpyajāḥ, brahma* is called *ajā* from the standpoint of the projected world, but really it is not even *ajā*. *Samvṛti* is a movement of thought forms. It is such a movement alone that makes a world; there is no other world. The world is *kalpita*, a projection. The manifestation of Brahman as *jagat* is an 'as though' manifestation; one cannot say that Brahman takes birth as the *jagat*. The *jagat* is not an attribute to Brahman.

By saying *ajā*, *śruti* negates all other forms of change like old age and death.¹⁸ All these negations are necessary because of the existence of various notions born of ignorance. Whatever you think *ātman* to be, *śruti* says, "Not this, not this."¹⁹ Knocking off all notions, it reveals the nature of *ātman* by implication.

Aprāṇaḥ : free from *prāṇa*. Being unborn, naturally it has no *prāṇa*. A body that is born has *prāṇa*; it energises the body. *Prāṇa* keeps moving all the time; it is *kriyā-śakti*, the power of doing. *Puruṣa*, however, is free from *prāṇa*; it is *aprāṇa*.²⁰ The statement 'Devadattaḥ aputraḥ, without a son,' can convey two meanings — His son expired or he never had a son.²¹ Similarly, there are two meanings for the word '*aprāṇaḥ*' — There was *prāṇa* once and now it is not, that is, the person is dead or there was no *prāṇa* in the first place. Here, '*aprāṇaḥ*' has the second meaning. *Puruṣa* has no birth; it is the *upādhi* along with *prāṇa* that is born.

Amanāḥ: free from mind.²² Being not born, it is free from mind, which is an effect. Mind is manifestation of *jñāna-icchā-śakti*, the power of knowing

¹⁷ माण्डूक्य कारिका 4.74

¹⁸ सर्व-भाव-विकाराणां जनिमूलत्वात् तत्प्रतिषेधेन सर्वे प्रतिषिद्धाः भवन्ति । यमुण्डक भाष्यम् फ

¹⁹ नेति नेति । य बृहदारण्यकोपनिषत् 4.4.22)

²⁰ अविद्यमानः क्रियाशक्तिभेदवान् चलनात्मकः वायुः यस्मिन्नसौ अप्राणः । य मुण्डक भाष्यम् फ

²¹ यथा अनुत्पन्ने पुत्रे अपुत्रो देवदत्तः । य मुण्डक भाष्यम् फ

²² अनेक-ज्ञानशक्तिभेदवत् सङ्कल्पाद्यात्मकं मनः अपि अविद्यमानं यस्मिन् सोऽयम् अमनाः । य मुण्डक भाष्यम् फ

as well as desiring. It has various expressions such as knowledge, emotions, doubts, memory, and ego. One *māyā-śakti* alone is expressing in the form of both *prāṇa* and mind. *Puruṣa* is free from any *upādhi* including *māyā*. For an ignorant person, *ātman* appears to have the attributes of *prāṇa* and mind due to the error of taking them as *ātman*, like space is erroneously taken to be subject to pollution. One should note that while *prāṇa* is *ātman*, *ātman* is not confined to just being *prāṇa*.

ātman appears as if having *prāṇa* and mind because it is *vivartta-upādāna-kāraṇa*, a non-changing material cause. The word '*vivartta*' means apparent. It is a change without involving a real change. The *ātman* remains the same and still seems to assume various forms. It is exactly like the clay assuming the form of a pot, a rope appearing in the form of a snake, the waker assuming the form of the dreamer.

The formless appears with form and the attributeless alone appears with attributes. In any hymn of 108 or 1008 names of the Lord, like the *viṣṇu-sahasranāma*, there are names referring to both the *nirguṇa* and the *saguṇa* aspect. All the glories and episodes from different incarnations, as well as the general expressions like the creator, the sustainer, the all-knowledge, form part of one set of names like *gīridhārī*²³ and so on. The words describing the formless and attributeless such as *niravayava*, partless, and so on, form another set of names. Both of them contribute to the establishment of the non-dual nature of Brahman. Suppose one says that *nirguṇa* has become *saguṇa*, then there is no *nirguṇa* at all, and there will be no *mokṣa* possible. *Nirguṇa*, free from attributes, cannot become one with attributes. It is always free from attributes.

śubhraḥ : It is pure. It is free from *rāga-dveṣa* or any kind of mental problems. *ātman* is free from the concept of pure and impure. Even a good quality may have some blemish. Being unborn, it is pure.

Parataḥ akṣarāt paraḥ : that which is beyond *māyā*. The word '*akṣara*' is used in two different senses - one in the sense of the *vastu*, the other in the sense of *māyā*, the unmanifest cause. In '*akṣarāt parataḥ*' the word '*akṣara*' means *māyā* only. *Māyā* is called *akṣara* because when everything is dissolved, *māyā* continues to remain in its causal form, and it is called *para* because everything goes back into it. *Māyā* depends on Brahman, and so Brahman is *para*, superior to *māyā*. *Māyā* is not an intrinsic attribute of Brahman, nor is it a parallel reality to Brahman. *Māyā*

²³ One who holds the Govardhana Mountain.

is the *kalpita-upādhi* of Brahman and it is *mithyā*. So *parataḥ paraḥ* means that which is the *adhiṣṭhāna*, the truth of the very *māyā*.

We are constrained to look at one reality in a two-fold way. One is the *puruṣa*, the *caitanya* which is Brahman and which is not bound by time. The other is only from the standpoint of time. Ontologically, the first order of reality is called *satya* and the second order is *mithyā*, empirically true. The *śāstra* uses the word '*satya*' in the sense of both orders. The word '*satya*' refers to Brahman, the cause of everything that does not undergo any change and also to *māyā*, the cause of everything that undergoes modification. *Māyā* is non-separate from Brahman and has, therefore, the ontological designation of *mithyā*. Anything born of *māyā* also is *mithyā* and is empirically real.

These two orders of reality have been clearly revealed in the sentence, '*sarvaṁ khalu idaṁ brahma*, all that is here is indeed Brahman',²⁴ through a particular usage of words. The words '*idam*' and '*sarvaṁ*' are in *sāmānādhikaraṇya*,²⁵ in apposition, revealing the same object. It is similar to the sentence, 'Devadatta is a grammarian,' where the words 'Devadatta' and 'grammarian' are in *sāmānādhikaraṇya* revealing one and the same person. However, here Devadatta's knowledge of grammar is as real as Devadatta and both enjoy the same degree of reality.

Suppose a person mistakes a rope for a snake. He is told that it is not a snake but a rope. The sentence 'This snake is rope' is not like the sentence, 'Devadatta is a grammarian.' The words 'snake' and 'rope' have *sāmānādhikaraṇya*, but the snake is not an attribute of the rope; it resolves into the rope. There is no adjective-substantive connection between the snake and the rope. Neither the snake is an attribute of the rope, nor the rope is an attribute of the snake. In this type of *sāmānādhikaraṇya*, one word negates itself and reveals the other. We call this *bādhāyām sāmānādhikaraṇyam*. When there is an error in perception or cognition, the words used in *sāmānādhikaraṇya* to correct the error, work by negation, in the wake of the knowledge of rope, the snake disappears.

²⁴ छान्दोग्योपनिषद् 3.14.1

²⁵ *Samāna-vibhaktikāṇaṁ bhinna-pravṛtti-nimittānāṁ ekasmin adhikaraṇe tātparyam yatra tatra sāmānādhikaraṇyam* ~ words of same case ending having different meanings, pointing out to one thing are said to have *sāmānādhikaraṇya*. It is unlike the words of a sentence that has got *saṁsarga*, syntactical connection. When someone says, 'Hey Govinda bring the cow with the help of a stick in hand,' the words are not in *sāmānādhikaraṇya*. Each word having different case ending points out to different things here.

श्री रुद्रम्
Śrī Rudram
Mantra 10

R̥ṣi - Vairājaḥ; Chandas - Tr̥ṣṭubh; Devatā - Śānbhuḥ

Dhyāna- śloka

मङ्गलायतनं देवं युवानमतिसुन्दरम्।
ध्यायेद्वनचराकारमागच्छन्तं पिनाकिनम्॥
*maṅgalāyatanam devam
yuvānamatisundaram
dhyāyedvanacarākāramāgacchantam
pinākinam.*

May one meditate upon the Lord who is an altar of all that is good, who is young and beautiful, holding the bow/ trident called *pināka* and who is in the form of a hunter coming towards oneself.

Result for chanting of the tenth *mantra*: One wards off fears such as *rāja- bhaya*, fear from the State, *cora-bhaya*, fear from thieves and *prāṇa- bhaya*, fear from any danger for life.

मी॒दृ॒ष्ट॒म॒ शि॒व॒त॒म॒ शि॒वो॒ न॒स्सु॒म॒ना॒ भ॒व॒। प॒र॒मे॒
वृ॒क्ष॒ आ॒यु॒ध॒न्नि॒धाय॒ कृ॒त्तिं॒ व॒सान॒ आ॒च॒र॒ पि॒ना॒कं॒
बि॒भ्र॒दा॒ग॒हि॒ ॥१०॥

*mīḍhuṣṭama śivatama śivo nāssumanā bhava,
parame vṛkṣa āyudhannidhāya kṛttiṁ vasāna
ācāra pinākam bibhradāgāhi (10)*

mīḍhuṣṭama - one who fulfils all desires;
śivatama - one who blesses with inner purity; *śivaḥ* - auspicious;

naḥ - for us; *sumanāḥ* - with good thoughts; *bhava* - may you be;
parame vṛkṣe - on the top of a tree; *āyudham* - weapon;
nidhāya - keeping; *kṛttim vasānaḥ* - wearing a tiger skin; *ācara* - come;
pinākam - (your) staff *pināka*; *bibhrat* - holding; *āgahi* - come
towards us

O the fulfiller of our desires! Make our heart pure. May you be the auspicious and the benevolent one for us. Keeping away your frightening weapon on treetops, wearing a tiger-skin and holding your *pināka*, staff, come towards us.

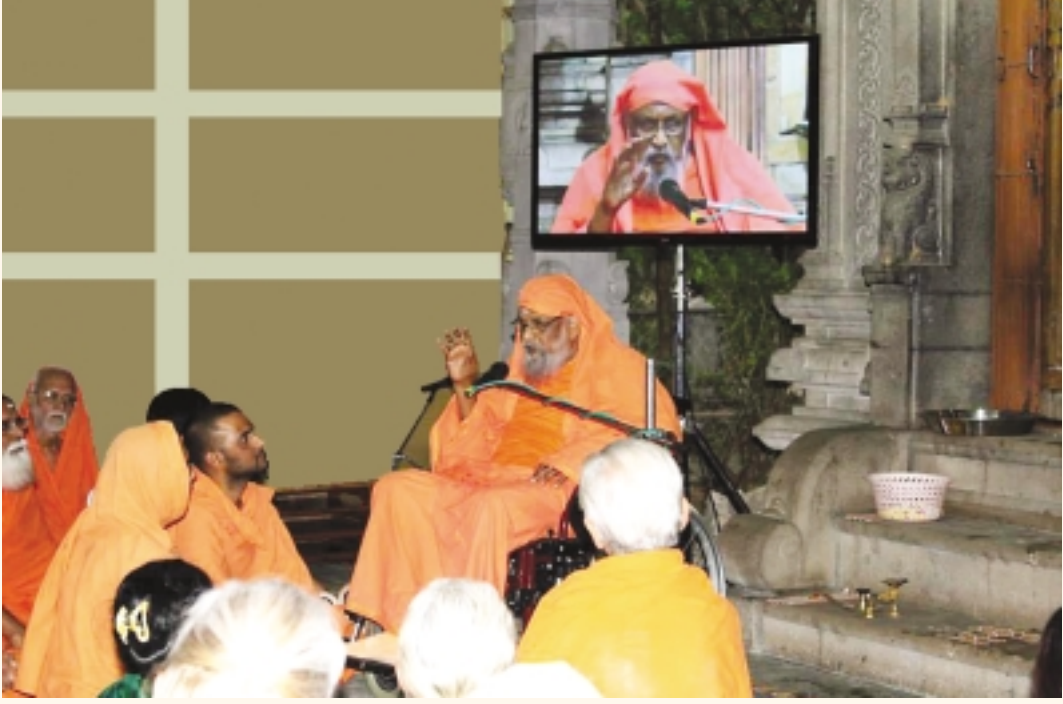
Mīḍhuṣṭama ¹³⁴ means the one who showers the objects of desires. The Lord showers the desired objects like a downpour. He is *śivatama*, who blesses you with inner purity. Peace, happiness, freedom are all *śiva*. Lord Śiva is easily pleased and gives everything to his devotees, including himself. He is not only the giver of *karma-phala*, but also gives himself by giving you knowledge of *śivo'ham*.

We pray to him: “*Naḥ sumanāḥ bhava*, may you be *śiva*, auspicious for us and not *rudra*, frightening. Though ready to punish us for our faults— not doing what is to be done and doing what is not to be done— please withdraw all your frightening weapons and come to us. You are Īśvara and so you can reverse the decision as a result of our prayer. Let all these *pāpas* go away.” This is the power of the *Śata Rudrīya*.

Kṛttim vasānaḥ - wearing a tiger-skin. Tiger-skin signifies power while deer-skin signifies purity. People who want purity sit on deer-skin and the ones who want power sit on tiger-skin. Here, the Lord is presented as the powerful one. Lord in the form of holding his *pināka* is prayed here to come and protect us.

¹³⁴ Derived from the root *miha snehane*, to be affectionate and *atiśayena praṇata-kāma-varṣin* is *mīḍhuṣṭama*, one who abundantly showers the objects of desire to those who have surrendered.

Pujya Swamiji's Anugrahashanam on 17th February 2015 - Sivaratri Day



त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम्। उर्वारुकमिव
बन्धनान्मृत्योर्मुक्षीयमाऽमृतात्। It is a beautiful श्रीरुद्र
mantra.

त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे we invoke the grace of Lord
त्र्यम्बक. For what ? मृत्योः मुक्षीय to release from
Lord Yama. त्र्यम्बक त्रीणि अम्बकः यस्य सः-the
one has three eyes representing past,
present and future- meaning the one who
knows entire past and future and present .
सर्वज्ञः.

सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम्-त्र्यम्बकं- the one who is ever
fragrant, the one who is the nourisher of
every thing. तम् परमेश्वरम् यजामहे- we invoke

the grace of *parameshvara*, who is all
knowing, who is nourisher of health, who
is not subject to ageing.

मृत्योः मुक्षीय please release us from the hands
of death. How to release उर्वारुकम् इव बन्धनात्-
release, स उर्वारुकम् इव -like watermelon from
its creeper. When one enters the garden he
sees the ripened watermelon on the creeper
(creeper is normally spreads over the
ground). Watermelon is attached to the
creeper vein. When the person comes back,
this fruit is seen already detached from
the mother creeper, without interruption of
any person. Gravitation is also not

responsible. It is so ripened it gets detached automatically/effortlessly.

Let ईश्वर *Ishvara* help us to get released from this samsara like the watermelon उर्वारिकम् इव. Remaining with the creeper, watermelon gets nourished. Once nourished, it is freed, it gains moksha. Similarly marriage, parentage etc are primarily necessary for growth – inner growth – emotional growth. Such a matured person seemingly remaining in this world, gets matured and released उर्वारिकम् इव like the watermelon from the creeper. That is moksha, that is effortless (just by knowledge) release.

मा अमृतात्मुक्षीय – do not release from immortality. Immortality is my nature – it is my innate nature-one need not do anything.

मृत्युञ्जयः Lord Shiva is called. There is a story of Markanteya. One devoted couple did not have a child. They prayed for it. The *ishtadevata* appeared before them and said you are great devotees and I am pleased with your devotion. Looking in to your karma I cannot fulfill your wish 100%. There is a choice between

- 1) a son with 100 years of life but may not live a life of devotion like you or
- 2) a son who will excel your devotion but live for only 16 years.

You choose whatever you want. He chose the later – a devoted child who will live 16 years. This child lived a life of devotion, life of dharma, in short यथोक्तकारी *yathoktakarii*. Father's name was Mrukantu and the child was called Markanteya.

16 years were over. Yama's messengers - *dhootas* came. Markanteya knew his time of death –16 years. He was doing puja to Shiva. At that time Yama's *dhootas* came. During puja they cannot act. They went and told Yama, who himself came to get Markanteya. Yama saw Markanteya embracing the *linga* –he became one with the Lord Siva. Yama threw his rope (*pasakayiru* in Tamil) and pulled him along with *linga*. Out came Lord Shiva from the *linga*. Yama the lord of death was punished – he was kicked out. Yama was defeated Ajyt by Siva and hence the name मृत्युञ्जयः

When you are away from *Ishvara* (in terms your thinking) death - *mrityu* is around. When there is no more alienation in your thinking *mrityu* cannot touch, because you have मृत्युञ्जयः *mrityunjaya* with you – non-separate from you. Great story!. On this Shivaratree day – a day of spiritual commitment, vows, disciplines, I invoke the blessings of Lord Narmadhashvara & Jnaneshvari and Lord Dakshinamurthy and Lord Jnana Ganapati.

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श्रद्धा-भक्ति-ध्यान-योगाद् अवेहि

(Based on a class by PujyaSwamiji at Anaikatti on 8th Oct, 2014)

This is a वाक्य from the कैवल्योपनिषद्. This उपनिषद् is not commented upon by भगवान् भाष्यकार, but it is very popular. There are महात्माs who do पारायणम् of this उपनिषद् daily - some of the mantras in this उपनिषद् are breathtaking, amazing mantras. There is a story - Ashvalaayana goes to ब्रह्माजी and asks him to teach ब्रह्मविद्या. ब्रह्माजी begins his teaching by saying “श्रद्धा-भक्ति-ध्यान-योगाद् अवेहि” meaning - May you understand this ब्रह्मविद्या which I am going to teach, with the help of श्रद्धा, भक्ति and ध्यानम्.

The first thing the उपनिषद् refers to here is श्रद्धा. When प्रमाण is there, श्रवणं is possible. You should look upon शास्त्र as a प्रमाण, a means of knowing. It is important that शास्त्र is looked upon as a प्रमाण. That is श्रद्धा. Generally you do not go beyond the five means of knowledge for knowing anything. The five means of knowledge you have - प्रत्यक्ष, अनुमान, अर्थापत्ति, उपमान and अनुपलब्धि are useless here since they have no access to ब्रह्मन् which you want to know. You do not accept any means of knowledge beyond these five. This is where you require श्रद्धा - that the वेद is a means of knowledge. वेदान्त is a part of it. Veda is a means of knowledge for अपूर्वम् - that is anything beyond the five means of knowledge we have. Anything to which these five means have no access (enjoying अपूर्वता, प्रमाणान्तरम् अनधिगतत्वम्).

Vedas being a deliberate प्रमाणं, it must also enjoy प्रयोजनवतत्वम्, it must serve a पुरुषार्थ,

a useful purpose. The Veda talks of certain means and ends - साधन and साध्य - “You do this you get this”, “To get there you do this”. The Veda enjoys प्रामाण्यम्, when it reveals a knowledge which enjoys अपूर्वता. Typically it reveals an otherwise unknown - साधन, साध्य, or both.

In some situations, the end is known but the means are not known - Like पुत्रकामेष्टि - a ritual to remove obstacles to beget progeny. Another example is rains, which is a known end, but the means, a ritual called करीरि, is unknown. Rains come when the ritual is done. Similarly, for wealth - the end is known, I have some known means, but there are some other unknown means that remove obstacles - which is the subject matter of the Veda.

In other situations the Means are known, the end is unknown - like पूर्तकर्म - which involves fulfilling some need of the community, whatever is required you fulfil. The unknown end is - you get पुण्य, अदृष्ट. Here an unknown end, पुण्य, using known means is pointed out by Veda.

In yet other situations, both the means and the end are not known. I am told - there is a place called स्वर्ग, Heaven, and that to go there is very interesting. You do not age there (no जरा). It is a nice place to go, no childhood problems also, because there is no childhood - you go there ready to enjoy, as an adult. Therefore there are no core

(childhood) issues. Who tells you all this? The Veda. To go there, there are known means like पूर्वकर्म and there are unknown means like इष्टकर्म - revealed by the veda through sentences like ज्योतोष्टोमेन स्वर्गकामो यजेत

This (अपूर्व) unknown साधन-साध्य is the topic of the Veda. But how will you do anything told by the Veda unless you are endowed with श्रद्धा? It is by श्रद्धा – purely श्रद्धा. It is not faith, but it is accepting veda as प्रमाण, as a means of knowledge. शास्त्रस्य गुरुवाक्यस्य सत्यबुद्धयवधारणम् , One looks upon the शास्त्र and the teachings of a गुरु as प्रमाण. Here सत्यबुद्धि is प्रमाणबुद्धि.

Veda is a प्रमाण for knowledge which is not available for other means of knowledge. In the context of मोक्ष, which is a complete freedom (from a sense of lack), sought by all human beings, there is no साधन or साध्य. This is because we are talking of the limitless, which has to be something सिद्ध, something already existent, already accomplished. Therefore there is nothing new to be achieved. There is no साध्य, it is सिद्ध. But owing to अविद्या this सिद्धवस्तु appears to be a साध्य, appears to be something to be accomplished. The problem being one of अविद्या (Ignorance), the only possible solution is विद्या, knowledge. So मुमुक्षा, a desire to be free, has to first get converted into जिज्ञासा, a desire to know. People in some form of spiritual pursuit usually call themselves साधक, seekers. But when they recognize the solution lies in knowing a सिद्धवस्तु, it is better they call themselves जिज्ञासु s! I want to know what is already existent but not known to me properly – partially it is known. When I say 'I am' , "I" is partly known, but not fully

known due to अविद्या. So my attempt is now to gain knowledge of the "to be achieved" ब्रह्मन्-अधीहि भगवो ब्रह्मविद्ब्रह्म - to be achieved is ब्रह्मन्. ब्रह्मविद्ब्रह्म अधीहि. If someone says "Teach ब्रह्मन्" – one can define ब्रह्मन् as सत्यम्-ज्ञानम्-अनन्तम् ब्रह्म and say 'it is over'. But when one says ब्रह्मविद्ब्रह्म "अधीहि", यया विद्ब्रह्म तदक्षरम् ब्रह्म अधिगम्यते - Please teach me that विद्या by which I will know अक्षरम् ब्रह्म – this person will stay for the class. ब्रह्माजी is the Guru and begins by saying "श्रद्धा-भक्ति-ध्यान-योगाद् अवेहि".

First you must have श्रद्धा – not श्रद्धा for साधन-साध्य, but for a सिद्धवस्तु. प्रमाण works differently in the context of a सिद्धवस्तु. It converts परोक्ष into अपरोक्ष. What is not known properly is made into day light – that is the विद्या, the teaching. So श्रवणम् possible only because of श्रद्धा. मननम् and निदिध्यासनम् will go along with श्रवणम् because शास्त्र says आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः.

आत्माद्रष्टव्यः should be understood (clearly), for that - आत्माद्रष्टव्यः- it should be listened to. Therefore teacher comes along too. श्रुति comes along with the teacher – because आत्मा should be listened to.

मन्तव्यः – Doubts have to be removed – doubts raised by other intellects or your own intellect. Someone's doubt becomes your doubt if you are not able to answer. Means your knowledge, your clarity, is lacking. Anyone's question not answered by you satisfactorily, is your doubt, your question now. The process of removing those doubts is called मननम्. If there is a doubt in understanding the श्रुति, it comes under श्रवणम् .

निदिध्यासितव्यः- When there are no more doubts about what is said, but "I" am the

doubt. In the sense, a person begins to doubt “whether I know or I do not know”, this is called विपरीतभावना. My mind, my behaviour are not in-keeping with what I know. This is विपरीतभावना- a distortion, which means some kind of clearance is needed in my understanding. It is not that the understanding is in trouble. What is already known, understood thru श्रवणमननम्, is made real by निदिध्यासनम्. The problems arising out of habitual thinking and distortions coming from core issues are addressed. This has to be done - it is a process and is included with श्रवणमनन for ज्ञानम्. One has to contemplate daily in the light of what one knows – that is निदिध्यासनम्. श्रद्धा will cover all the three श्रवणमनन and निदिध्यासनम्.

भक्ति-ध्यान-योगाद् अवेहि

The word भक्ति is from भज् धातु – भजनम् = ईश्वर-भजनम्. श्रवण will bring in ईश्वर in the beginning itself, else we wouldn't have known ईश्वर. The ईश्वरज्ञानम्, knowledge of ईश्वर, is परोक्ष = indirect to start with, in the form – ‘अस्ति जगतः मूलकारणम्’ meaning ‘there is a cause for the जगत्’ – otherwise जगत् cannot be what it is. For my body, for the whole जगत् there must be a cause and it must be an intelligent being. When we are talking of the ‘cause of everything’ that intelligent being must be an all knowing being and should also be almighty, all power. The maker for this entire जगत्, known and unknown, is all power, all शक्ति. This much understanding is enough for the time being to have भक्ति, to enable one to pray - पालय माम्, तारय माम् – Please protect me, take me across. If one prays to him, then what happens? There is grace. Prayer is a कर्म and the फलम् of prayer is called grace. I do not think the English word grace means कर्मफल. It is कर्मफलभक्त्या (by

bhakti) earn grace. How much grace must I earn? Until you no longer need grace, until you are the very grace. You will never have enough of grace.

Even if you are a ज्ञानि, you need grace for good students. At the end of केनोपनिषद्, when the teacher has taught the whole उपनिषद्, one student asks “उपनिषदम् भो ब्रूहि” Sir, please teach the उपनिषद्, These kind of students can be there.

There used to be a पण्डितजी, a कथाकार (one giving discourses through stories). पण्डितजी was very happy with a person. This person used to come and sit in front of him everyday when he told रामायण-कथा, like हनुमान्. At the end of the series of talks, on the last day, everyone had left and this person was still there. पण्डितजी said – you are so devoted like हनुमान्. I was so happy you were coming regularly. The person asked – पण्डितजी, I have a doubt I want to ask you, can I ask? पण्डितजी said - sure, what is your question?

The person asked, Sir in your कथा-discourse you mentioned three words often - one is राम, second is रावण and the third is राक्षस. I have understood राक्षस is a very bad fellow. But I have to ask you, whether राम is a राक्षस or रावण is a राक्षस? पण्डितजी said Neither राम nor रावण, I am the राक्षस!, having told Ramayana to you. This kind of students can be there. Let me not get such students, good students should come – I need grace. So there is no redundancy of grace. You need grace, you need ईश्वर. You have to understand ईश्वर in terms of order – because ईश्वर is both maker and material cause. How do you recognise the efficient cause? Only through Isvara's order.

ध्यानयोग-ध्यानम् एव योगः-Dhyana is the means. You require a mind that stays with the topic all the way. सजातीय-वृत्ति-प्रवाहः A flow of thoughts whose object is the same or is connected to the same object. Need a mind that stays with the topic, stays with the present and for that you have to train yourself with ध्यानम् - meditation. सगुण-ब्रह्म-विषय-मानस-व्यापारः is ध्यानम् . The वृत्ति, thought, is centered on सगुण-ब्रह्म - Isvara with attributes. The object for ध्यानम् can be a form I relate with - like गणेश or just a name, a नाम - like "रामरामराम". The मन्त्र is just the नाम, You stay with that मन्त्र, there is सजातीय-वृत्ति-प्रवाहः - A flow of thoughts, whose object is the same. When you do पूजा, all activities are not the same, but it is सजातीय, because they all connect with the same altar of worship. In mental पूजा, anything you do is पूजा - when you do आरति it is पूजा, when you offer incense it is पूजा, when you offer flowers it is पूजा, when you offer sandal paste it is पूजा - Different objects - but all this is पूजा. Therefore there is सजातीय-वृत्ति-प्रवाहः. Mental पूजा is ध्यानम् . Mentally if you offer पूजा it is called ध्यानम् तत्र (मानसपूजायाम्)सजातीय-वृत्ति-प्रवाहः- There in a mental worship, there is flow of वृत्तिस belonging to the same activity, which is a complex activity. मानस-पूजा is a very good practise for maintaining सजातीय-वृत्ति, because the mind has a scope to move about, but at the same time it does not move away. So ध्यान-योगाद् अवेहि.

भक्ति and ज्ञानम् support श्रद्धा. श्रवणम् (with श्रद्धा) is the primary साधनम् , श्रुति being a प्रमाण. That is why we say - श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानम् . Why is श्रद्धा necessary? because it

is outside the five प्रमाणs we wield - प्रत्यक्ष अनुमान अर्थापत्ति उपमान अनुपलब्धि. When one goes for a प्रमाण outside these five प्रमाणs one requires श्रद्धा. It is called शब्दप्रमाण (शास्त्र). You need श्रद्धा in this प्रमाण. श्रद्धा is a special word - it is not faith. When you go for a sixth प्रमाण, outside the five प्रमाणs, maintain श्रद्धा until you are blessed by the प्रमाण.

I was saved by श्रद्धा - when I was studying वेदान्त I came to a point where I thought that वेदान्त does not really solve the problem. It is all intellection, you figure it out yourself, because in my understanding of वेदान्त, there was no प्रमाण, no discussion of प्रमाण. Without discussion of प्रमाण, वेदान्त will not serve, if you think properly. So I came to recognize the limitation of these words. How they are going to deliver the goods? I almost left the pursuit. I had burnt all my boats. I had nothing else to do. So there was a big conflict in me. I distributed my books - asked people to come and take them away. But being brought up in a vedic family, I had श्रद्धा, श्रद्धा in the शास्त्र. I said I might not have understood properly. Due to श्रद्धा I did not dismiss शास्त्र. All English books I dismissed, शास्त्र I did not dismiss. That was श्रद्धा. Then I discovered शास्त्र is a प्रमाण - and then I never looked back. "श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानम्"- I am the proof for it. The one who has श्रद्धा gains knowledge. श्रवण, मनन, निदिध्यासन, ईश्वरभक्ति, ध्यानयोग, daily जप - all these are necessary to support श्रद्धा.

Understand ब्रह्मन् thru श्रद्धा supported by भक्ति and ध्यानम्.

How to Teach the Value of the Values

Swami Vidadatmananda Saraswati's talk to teachers

at Pūrṇa Vidyā Teacher's Training Camp, August 2014
Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Pennsylvania USA

(... continuation of 3rd part from November 2014 issue)

Animals live instinctively, meaning that they do not have a free will. Therefore, they do not have to deliberate before making a choice. What is freewill? Freewill is that because of which we deliberate before we do anything. What is instinctive behavior? No deliberation at all. You just behave, which is what Swamiji would call a one-step response. So, whatever occurs in the mind, you do it. Whatever instinct comes, do it. That is the one-step response.

Unfortunately many human beings also live doing that only. Whatever instinct comes, whatever impulse comes, whatever desire comes, whatever thought comes, they do. In that case, there is not much difference between a human being and an animal. So what distinguishes a human being from other creatures is the freewill which gives him the freedom to deliberate and make a choice. So number one, there is freewill which gives me a space, a freedom to deliberate, and secondly we have an "internet" with which we can judge what is right and what is wrong. Two things are there. Not only freedom is there, but also an "internet" is there.

If you are driving a vehicle and you come to a bifurcation, you have the freedom to take whichever route you want. If you don't know which route to take, in the same way that many people do not know what is right and what is wrong, then that freedom is of no use. So not only you should have the freedom to choose, but also the awareness of understanding what is

right and what is wrong. However, we should have cultivated that intelligence. To know what is right and what is wrong requires education, which we should have. Thus, when the road bifurcates, I should have the education of knowing which road leads to my destination. So making a choice requires me to have the knowledge of what the destination is and also the knowledge of what is the path leading to that destination. All of this intelligence we have, except that we have to use that intelligence in first understanding what the destination is and second in understanding what is the path leading to that destination. Then only what is right and what is wrong is known. So, that which leads me to my destination is right and that which deviates is wrong. Thus, we have freewill and we also have the intelligence of determining what is right and what is wrong. Freewill is given to us; intelligence has to be cultivated. So we have to educate ourselves in understanding what is right and what is wrong.

In human life there is something right and there is something wrong. When freewill is there, then there is something right and something wrong. When freewill is not there, then everything is right. So whatever a cat does is right. PujyaSwamiji gives an example. Suppose you have a couple of bananas in your home. You place them near a window and a monkey comes and takes them. Is it right or wrong? Suppose somebody puts bananas near a window and you come and take two bananas when nobody is watching; would it be right or

wrong? When a monkey takes two bananas, it is right because a monkey behaves instinctively. It is a programmed feature, like a toy's program where you press the button and the car starts running. You press another button and it stops. The car has no freedom, it is programmed. That car runs and perhaps collides with something; it is not wrong because there's no freewill. If I drive a car and collide with something, it is wrong because I have the freedom not to collide. This means that when a monkey takes away those bananas, it is not called stealing. Whereas if a child takes away the bananas, we say he or she stole the bananas because a human being has freedom of choice and at the same time the intelligence to understand what is right and what is wrong. Not just the freedom, but also the intelligence.

Why is it wrong? Why do you think that for a human being taking away bananas is wrong? Or when nobody is watching, taking away a pencil, why is it wrong? Or when somebody is doing lessons, looking at the notebook and copying, will it be wrong or right? It is wrong. Why would it be wrong? I would not want my bananas to be taken away like that. So if I take somebody's bananas it is not right. Our awareness allows us to use our intelligence to decide what is right and what is wrong. Otherwise, if the awareness was not there, we would not know what is right and what is wrong. So, a monkey does not have the full awareness, only one-way awareness. A monkey doesn't allow its bananas to be taken away, but does not feel guilty when it takes away another's bananas. But, a human being has a two-way awareness. Therefore, stealing becomes wrong because I do not want something that belongs to me to be stolen. So freedom of choice is given, but the intelligence to decide what is right and what is wrong has to be cultivated. We do need education as far as understanding what is right and what is wrong. That is not given to us.

When we teach the value of values, it is difficult to explain to a child why a value has a value. It is easier to explain to an adult, because whenever we violate a value it creates a sense of guilt in our mind. This is so because we are self-conscious beings. That is another faculty. We are self-conscious beings, conscious of ourselves. Therefore, whenever we deliberately do something which is wrong, we know that it is wrong.

So, suppose it is wrong, what is wrong with that? Suppose stealing is wrong, let it be wrong; what does it matter? Does it matter? If I steal and I know that nobody knows what I did, what are the consequences? I know that I did something that is not right, why should I feel bad about it? Because I am a self-conscious being, I have an expectation about myself. What is the expectation? That I should be honest, that I should not steal, that I should be correct. I have an expectation. If that expectation was not there, then there would be no guilt. I have an expectation of myself that I should be right. I should not steal. I should be honest. That expectation I have of myself. Therefore, when am I happy with myself? Am I happy with myself when I'm honest or when I am dishonest? When I deliberately do something that requires dishonesty, I become unhappy with myself. That is a very important thing to know.

I may have performed an act of dishonesty such as stealing, because there is some material advantage in that. But as a result, it creates in me a sense of guilt because it is quite contrary to what I expect from myself, meaning that I was not able to live up to my own expectation of myself and when I cannot live up to my expectation of myself, I feel unhappy with myself. I feel dissatisfied with myself. I feel I am not good enough. I'm not worthy. This is the main problem. My own dissatisfaction with myself, the judging of myself as not worthy, is the cause of my sadness.

To be continued...

Long Term Course at AVG During January 2015 - February 2015

A summary of the Vedanta classes held during January 2015 – February 2015 is presented below:

CLASSES ON GENERAL TOPICS BY PUJYA SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATI

Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati gave insightful talks on various topics requested by the students:

SURRENDER: Surrender to *Ishvara* is a relative surrender. The ego is temporarily kept suspended. **Absolute surrender takes place when there is understanding that all that is here is *Ishvara*.** The individual ego is a part of the total ego. **The more one understands *Ishvara*, more is the surrender.**

VEDA AS THE PRAMANA: One needs to understand what we are trying to understand from the Veda. The Veda has a vision about me - that I'm the whole, I'm the meaning to security, happiness. I cannot arrive at this vision by any other means of knowledge. No other *pramana* has access to it. No will is involved. **Just as one surrenders to the sense organs like one's own eyes for sight, the Veda has to be operated as a *pramana* to know the truth.** Veda being an external *pramana*, the ego interferes. The more one sees that the Veda is the only means of knowing the reality about myself, the more is the attitude of *sraddha* towards the Veda.

GURU: Guru is the one who teaches the *Mahavakya*- the equation between the *jiva* and *Ishvara*. The Guru handles the *Shashtra pramana* in a way that makes one see that 'I'm the cause of the entire universe'. The

Guru is praised as the very same *vastu* that he teaches about. All the praise goes to *Brahma vastu* alone. Guru as an institution transcends the individual. **The wielder of the *pramana* is also looked upon as *pramana*. The ego is kept suspended by acceptance of *pramana*.** Only then learning can take place.

GURU SEVA: In olden days, *sishtyas* had lot of physical work to do at the Gurukulam and also personal *seva* to the Guru. But in today's context of large Gurukulams, **attending classes regularly is *Guru seva*.** After gaining knowledge, **sharing that knowledge with others is a great way for *Guru seva*.**

IS BRAHMAN TO BE EXPERIENCED? There is a wrong popular belief that *Brahman* should be studied first. Later it has to be experienced in meditation. This is because there is no understanding that the Vedas are the only *pramana* to know *Brahman*. *Brahman* has to be known only through the Vedas. **It is not something that can be experienced. Every experience is *Brahman*.**

TIME MANAGEMENT FOR STUDENTS: Pujya Swamiji advised the students to do what is to be done. The suggested **order of priority for the students: Vedanta study, Sanskrit study, Japa and Prayer, Meditation and Chanting.** All the programmes are important. During earlier long term courses, those who sincerely attended the entire programme are frontline teachers now.

SELF APPROVAL: Welcome yourself means welcome all facts about your life

such as: parentage, upbringing, social status, education, economical status, looks and all emotions. You are connected to others. Welcome them as well. *Ishvara* is both the maker and the material of the whole universe. All emotions are within the order of *Ishvara*. You can never go wrong in the eyes of *Ishvara*. He is the super-therapist. Resolve your emotions in the understanding of *Ishvara* as the Infallible. **Your own awareness of *Ishvara* as the orders, validates you. You do not require anybody's approval.** Everybody's approval will come when you have no complaint.

PURIFICATION OF MIND: The whole set of instruments like mind, *buddhi*, *chittam* are referred to by one word, *antahkarana*. *Antahkarana* is momentary. How to clean it? **No one can escape from likes and dislike when one encounters the world.** They by themselves are not a problem. **Only when likes and dislikes dictate your actions that are unacceptable according to *dharma*, can it be called an impurity.**

Antahkarana shuddhi means *raga-dvesha* neutralization. Likes and dislikes can be neutralized only through *adrshtha*. **One gains *adrshtha* (*punya*) and neutralize *duritas* (*papa*) through performance of prayer and reaching out actions.** It is important to understand the significance of the role of *karma* in producing purity of the mind.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A JNANI: Chapter XII of Bhagavad Gita talks about some characteristics of a *Jnani*. This is not intended to judge someone, but **it is meant for the seeker to imbibe and emulate.** What is spontaneous for the *jnani* becomes a *sadhana* for the seeker. A *jnani* doesn't acquire these qualities at once. They must have to exist in relative measure even before, for it to become spontaneous. **A deliberate act, with practice, becomes spontaneous.**

A JNANI IS HAPPY BEING HIMSELF: *Jnani* has a sublated ego, like a roasted seed – there is **no real sense of doer-ship/enjoyer-ship.** He **sees everything as manifestation of *Ishvara* and *Ishvara's* order.** He is compassionate, free from doer-ship, accommodative and free from elation, fear and anxiety.

CLASSES ON GITA BHASYAM BY SWAMI SADATMANANDA

Arjuna entered the battlefield for protection of *dharma*, but when he saw his Gurus and relatives on the opposite camp, he was overpowered by sorrow and delusion. He realized that the confusion was born of a deeper problem that he could not solve himself and sought a permanent solution from Lord Krishna to end that sorrow.

ESSENCE OF THE FIRST 57 SLOKAS:

Sri Adi Sankara, begins his commentary by presenting the summary of the ideas presented in the verses in Chapter-1 till the 10th verse of Chapter-2.

The preceding verses till verse 11 of Chapter 2 are meant to demonstrate the perpetuation of defects like **grief and delusion forming the seeds of *samsara*.** It is **caused due to ignorance.** Ignorance further causes delusion characterized by the notion of **"I belong to them and they belong to me"**. This leads to **intense attachment** causing grief and delusion. This further leads one to engage in actions that are **prohibited *karma* or *karma* to safeguard one's possessions.** These actions result in ***punya-papa*** which further cause **re-birth**, thereby **perpetuating *samsara*.** Arjuna seeing his relatives in the opponent camp of the battle field was overcome with delusion and sorrow and in order to retain their lives, preferred to live as a mendicant, which was *paradharma* (Gita 2.4). Similarly **everyone under the spell of grief and delusion abandon their *svadharma* and take up prohibited action. Only *atma jnana* can remove grief and delusion.** The Lord

desirous of blessing all the people by teaching atma jnana starts his message by telling Arjuna **"you grieve for those who are not to be grieved for"** (Gita 2.11).

Bhasyakara presents possible opposing ideas and resolves them in the form of a objections raised by the Purvapakshi (opponent) and establishing the right idea in the form of Siddhanti's answer to the objections.

PURVAPAKSHI'S VIEW: Moksha can be gained by combination of knowledge and actions. The Vedaas seen as pramana with reference to both karma kanda and jnana kanda indicates that both karma and jnana have to be pursued to gain moksha. The following verses also support this view: "This righteous battle if you do not fight" (Gita 2.33), "your choice is for action alone" (Gita 2.47) and "therefore do action alone" (Gita 4.15). Even if some karma involves himsa, that which are ordained by the Veda do not result in papa. Sruti mandates that one shall perform sruti ordained karma as long as one lives.

SIDDHANTIN'S VIEW: Moksha can be gained by knowledge alone without combining with karma (as prescribed by the Sruti and Smruti). The verses starting with "those who should not be grieved for" (Gita 2.11) and ending with "even considering your duty" (Gita 2.31), the Lord explains that Samkhya is the nature of the self. Later he says that he will tell about (karma) yoga (Gita 2.39).

There is impossibility of commitment to knowledge and action by the same person at the same time as the two lifestyles have their basis in two different understandings and the candidates are different. **A life committed to jnana** is characterized by an understanding that "I'm not the doer" as Atma is not subject to changes. **A life committed to karma** is characterized by pursuit of means that lead to moksha with

the understanding that "I'm the doer" and "I am other than the body".

Brahadaranyaka Upanisad 4.4.22 and 1.4.17 also tell that when one is exclusively interested in atma loka and not interested in son, wealth or svarga, he becomes a sannyasi.

This idea is further substantiated by citing Arjuna's questions which would otherwise be untenable. Arjuna asks the Lord in Gita 3.1, "When you say knowledge is superior, why do you ask me to do action?" This implies that the Lord did not teach that knowledge and action can be combined but taught that knowledge is superior to action.

Further, in Gita 5.1, Arjuna asks the Lord to advise which among the two, knowledge or action is best for him. If knowledge and action were to be combined, the Lord would have told him that I already asked you to combine both.

The Lord clearly says in Gita 3.3, that there are two distinct life styles; for people committed to knowledge and for people committed to action.

These arguments will apply equally with reference to the purvapakshi's contention of combining just Smruti based karma with the pursuit of knowledge.

Therefore, in the Gita, none can show that there is the slightest proposal to combine pursuit of knowledge along with actions prescribed by Sruti or Smruti, for attaining moksha.

Gita says in 4.15, Janaka and others performed action and attained success. If for argument sake, we say Janaka is an ajnani, we can say that he did action and attained mental purity and later got jnana. If we say Janaka is a Jnani, we can say that he did action for protection of the world.

We may conclude that Lord Krishna and Jnanis like Raja Janaka performed action

with the understanding of non –doer ship. They did not perform action for getting purity of mind or for gaining punya. But they performed action for the welfare of the world and for setting an example for others to emulate.

KATHOPANISAD BHASYAM CLASSES BY SWAMI SADATMANANDA

INTRODUCTION: We study mainly three **prasthanas** (texts) in Vedanta. The main prasthana is Sruti or **Upanisads**. The other two prasthanas are **Bhagavad Gita** called smarta prasthana and **Brahma Sutra** called nyaya prasthana, are based on Sruti.

Muktiko Upanisad gives the number of Upanisads in each of the four Vedas. There are totally **1180 Upanisads**. Of them Lord Rama lists to Hanumanji 108 **main Upanisads**. Out of them 10 are considered **major Upanisads** as Sri Adi Sankara has written bhasyam on them.

Vedas are revealed by the Lord to Rsis. Kathopanisad belongs to Katha saka of Krsnayajurveda. Katha rsi received Kathopanisad or Kathakopanisad. He was a disciple of Vaisampayana rsi. Vaisampayana rsi was a disciple of Sri Veda Vyasa.

Kathopanisad comprise of two adhyayas (chapters) each contains three vallis (sections) and totally 119 mantras. It is in the form of a dialogue between Lord Yama, the teacher and Naciketas, the disciple.

SANTI MANTRA: The most popular “**sahana vavatu**” is the santi mantra. The prayer is let the Lord protect both of us, the Teacher and the Student by nourishing us with the result of knowledge. Let both of us make adequate effort so that the study be effective. Let there not be any misunderstanding between us. Let there not be obstacles from the individual, surroundings and from one’s purva karma.

PRAYER FOR BHASYAM: The first sentence starts with ‘om’ and the second

sentence starts with ‘**atha**’ as these are the auspicious words used by Brahmaji, at the time of manifestation of this jagat. Salutations to Lord Yama, the Lord of death, son of Lord Sun and Teacher of Brahma Vidya. Salutations to the glorious student Naciketas. Sri Adi Sankara says that a brief explanation is given so that the students can grasp easily the teaching.

MEANING OF UPANISAD: The root ‘sad’ means destruction, reaching and weakening. The prefix ‘upa’ means going near the Teacher teaching Brahmavidya. The prefix ‘ni’ means pursuit with determination. The suffix ‘kvi’ means the doer. The first meaning is, it is the **destroyer of the seed of samara** i.e. ignorance along with desire, karma and punya-papa by giving Nirguna Brahman jnanam. The second meaning is that the **knowledge of Nirguna Brahman makes the Mumukshu reach Brahman**. The third meaning is that the knowledge of Saguna Brahman can **weaken the effect of samsara** by taking the person to Brahmaloaka. To summarise, Upanisad means **Brahma Vidya**.

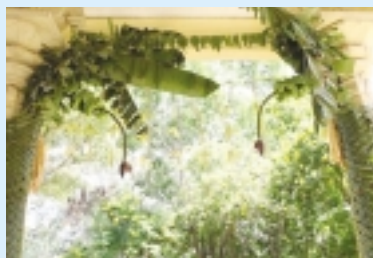
OBJECTION: The students who chant Upanisad say that we study Upanisad. The Teachers who teach chant of Upanisad also say that we teach Upanisad.

REPLY: The word Upanisad in the primary sense means brahma vidya. In the secondary sense it means the text of Upanisad.

ANUBANDHA CATUSTAYAM OF UPANISAD: **ADIKARI-** One possessing sadhana catustam. **VISAYA-** Param Brahman **PURPOSE-** Destruction of Samsara and attainment of Brahman **SAMBANDHA-** **Sadhana** (Knowledge is the means) **Sadhya** (Moksha is the end) Sambandha.

Report by N. Avinashilingam

Thai Poosam



Photos by uga/ tomoko

Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati - His Uniqueness in the Vedanta Sampradaya - Book Release



Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati released the second edition of the book titled '**Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati-His uniqueness in the Vedanta sampradaya**' written by Sri D. Venugopal on February 8, 2015 at AVG, Anaikatti. **Swami Sadatmanada** received the first copy of the book.

This book discusses the **uniqueness of Pujya Swamiji in unfolding** Vedanta as a pramana, handling of prakriyas, correction of the current deviations from the sampradaya, nurturing and spreading the vision and protection of Sanatana Dharma.

Swami Paramarthananda in the foreword to the book mentions: "By going through this, a Vedantic student can steer clear of the possible pitfalls of misunderstanding. May this book reach all sincere students of Vedanta and benefit them."

Sri D. Venugopal completed a long term course in Vedanta at Anaikatti during 2002 to 2005. He is currently teaching Vedanta

at Coimbatore. He has also written another book titled '**Vedanta- the solution to our fundamental problem**'. The subject Vedanta and the methods employed in unfolding are discussed in this book. This book is available online at www.arshaavinash.in

Sri D. Venugopal states that Vedanta is a pramana only when it is handled by a traditional Teacher. Pujya Swamiji unfolds the authentic vision of Vedanta in the most understandable and appealing way with remarkable clarity. He is the living example of what he teaches.

Pujya Swamiji told that he is unique because he is a traditional teacher and due to the usage of words and means employed in teaching. But charts used may not be able to convey this vision. Some of his disciples does teach Vedanta as per tradition. All the Acharyas in this Gurukulam teach as per tradition.

Report by N. Avinashilingam

Bhagavad Gita class of Swamini Brahmaleelananda



Sri Gurubyo Namah !!

Swamini Brahmaleelananda has been teaching Bhagavad Gita on every Tuesday at Purandaradasar Kalai Arangam, R.S.Puram, Coimbatore.

Swamini completed the teaching of 18 chapters of Gita last month, and took Gita Mahaatmiyam. It took about 3 years to complete the teaching of the 18 chapters of Gita.

Offering their gratitude to Iswara, Sastra and Guru Parampara, all the students did a puja on Feb 3rd, chanted Guru Stotram, Guru Ashtothra shata namavali. They also chanted Iswara Naamas mentioned in various chapters of Gita. Students spoke for

few minutes about what they learnt through the shravanam of 18 Chapters of Gita.

Swamini nicely unfolded each Gita verse giving the vaakyaaartha and lakshyaartha. She gave examples from various Puranas and quoted relevant points from Upanishads, which made the understanding easy for the students.

Swamini is going to start a new batch of Bhagavad Gita class. Currently, Swamini is teaching Chandogya Upanishad on every Monday and Tuesday.

For any questions, Swamini can be contacted at +91 94433 00880.

Om Tat Sat.

Vedanta Retreat & Workshop



Smt Neema Majmudar and Sri Surya Tahora have both done long term course on Vedanta at Anaikatti. They conduct retreats and workshops all over the world bringing the vision of oneness. Details of the enormous work done by them can be seen in their website www.discovervedanta.com

They conducted a Vedanta retreat and workshop at AVG, Anaikatti from January 23 to 27, 2015. The participants were from different professions and came from various parts of India and abroad.

In the morning, participants learnt **different verses of the Gita**. In the afternoon, interactive sessions were held to help participants assimilate and incorporate vision of the Gita in their daily life. The interactive sessions covered 4 modules revisiting some essential aspects of the teachings through engaging participants in **group discussions, case studies drawn from personal and work situations, role plays and videos**. The topics covered were: successful living, decision making,

interpersonal relationship in light of the teaching of the Gita.

These two sessions were reinforced with **morning meditations, yoga and practice of meditative moments**. They were also given an opportunity to interact with resident Acharyas **Swami Sadatmananda** and **Swami Sankarananda**. At the end of five day programme, the participants left with a feeling of gratitude for having an opportunity to be exposed to the teaching.

During the valedictory function, the participants thanked the Teachers for helping them discover their true nature and ways to initiate self growth to be able to assimilate the profound teaching of the Gita. One of the participant, Dr. Anand Nadkarani, Psychiatrist, who runs one of the biggest mental health centre in India told that he had in the past tried to incorporate Indian spiritual teaching to his profession. This retreat had given him some more ideas in this direction.

Report by N. Avinashilingam

Arsha Vidya UK Vedanta Retreat Conducted at Manjakkudi, 26 Jan-3rd Feb 2015



Last year, Pujya Swamiji invited the students who had been unable to meet him in January, due to his illness, to join him in his home village of Manjakkudi in early 2015. Many of us were able to do so and he treated us to several days of illuminating talks, took us to many events in his schedule and showed us various aspects of local village life.

The group was formed of Swamini Atmaprakashanandaji's students, mostly from the UK, but also from Australia. By 26th January all had arrived and that evening the village reverberated to the trumpets and drums of a festival in which the temple deity was paraded down the main street – a very loud, joyous and propitious beginning to our stay!

Each morning began with Pujya Swamiji conducting meditation in his ancestral home in Manjakkudi village, followed by the first of two daily classes by Swamini Atmaprakashananda on a Prakarana

Grantha. This advanced work was handled brilliantly by her, much to everyone's delight and inspiration. Only a teacher of her calibre could unfold a text this obscure, and so convincingly reveal its intended and proper meaning and vision.

Later the same morning, Pujya Swamiji began his classes speaking with typical eloquence, weight and matchless logic – all delivered in that rich, deep voice. Most of his eight classes were varied in theme but consistently insightful and memorable. Afterwards, we often had the privilege of meeting him informally after lunch and again after dinner for satsang.

On many occasions, Pujya Swamiji combined this daily programme with that of his own, taking us with him when, for example, he addressed the 1700 students of the Swami Dayananda Secondary School or visited a nearby Veda Patashala that his educational trust supports. One such visit was to his boyhood school where we saw not only his classroom but the original paper record of his Register of Admission, and also his Register of Attendance from 1944-5 – any record of boyish misdemeanours having long been mislaid or forgotten! Naturally, the present-day boys were excited by his presence and competed for the touch of his outstretched hand upon their heads from the open window of his car.



There are over 6,000 students on the Manjakkudi campus, in various schools and colleges, all institutions of his creation. With so many students and so much talent, there was much to applaud: one evening we were, again as his guests, treated to a dance performance that was of a magical standard; another time we heard him speak to the students of his English school and later to the teachers of all the schools.

On another occasion, he eagerly showed us a magnificent lotus pond in full bloom at the edge of his mother's village and ensured that we each received a freshly picked lotus from his own hand. His mother's house is simple and modest, a single-storey building occupied now by a teacher at one of his many Manjakkudi schools. The interior is impressively spartan: completely devoid of luxuries.

The final event to which we accompanied him was a chariot festival on February 2nd. It was a very hot day and a very, very huge chariot (well over 40m high) so big and

heavy that a JCB was needed at the rear to give the many hundreds pulling on the massive ropes some help moving it. The head of the local mutt had invited him and shared the dignitaries' vantage point with him.

At the end of the retreat, Pujya Swamiji congratulated Swamini Atmaprakashanandaji for inspiring many students by her teaching and counsel.

Naturally, there is much more to tell – the Sesame seed press, the pada puja, the meals, the meeting with pupils – all contributed to our many happy memories of the visit. We are, however, especially grateful to Mrs Sheela Balaji whose generosity and superb organising skills provided us with accommodation of 5-star standard and whose efficiency and care ensured that everything ran happily and smoothly. Most of all, though, our deepest thanks must go to Pujya Swamiji for the time and attention he unsparingly gave us.

Eleventh Annual Graduation Ceremony

‘A day of victory is moving towards glory’



Syndicate member Dr. Sekar, Dr. Ravichandran, Swamiji, Ms. Sheela Balaji, Secretary, Dr.K. Krishnaveni, Principal and Mr.K. Bhaskar, Correspondent

The Eleventh Annual Commencement of Swami Dayananda Arts and Science, Manjakkudi was held on Sunday 25th January 2015. Ms. Sheela Balaji, Secretary gave welcome address. Dr.K.Krishnaveni, Principal presented the academic achievements of the college throughout the academic year 2014-2015.

Dr. N. Ravichandran, Executive Director, Lucas - TVS Limited has graciously consented to preside over the function and deliver the Graduation Day Address. He insisted to acquire knowledge continuously in all ways. He said “Education is the root; culture is the flower and wisdom the fruit”.

He highlighted the important competencies to get employability those who passed out from the institution.

Pujyasri Swami Dayananda Saraswati conferred degree certificates and blessed the graduands through his valuable speech. He persisted to consumer less and contributes more.

Dr.S.Sekar, Principal, Urumu Dhanalakshmi College, Tiruchirapalli and Member of Syndicate, Bharathidasan University offered felicitation. Sri K.Bhaskar Correspondent proposed vote of thanks.

An Enthusiastic Teacher of Indian Culture



Can you believe that one Teacher can teach 5,710 students Indian culture every week ? It s o u n d s incredible until you meet **Brni. Mahalakshmi of Tirupur** in Tamil Nadu and listen to her statistics.

Brni. Mahalakshmi has been a student of **Swami Sudeerananda** of Coimbatore since 1994. She has studied chanting, Sanskrit, Bhagawad Gita, Upanisads and introductory texts on Vedanta from him. She has received mantra diksha from **Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati** in 1998.

Her special talent lies in teaching school children. In the **11 schools** she teaches, the students from different classes from standard I to standard XII assemble eagerly in the auditorium for those 45 minutes that she spends with them. The school management decides which classes participate in the classes.

In schools, she teaches **daily prayers**, Sanskrit and Tamil **sloka chanting with meaning**. She tells inspiring **stories** from Ramayana, Mahabharata, life of Nayanmars and Alwars from Tamil Nadu, life of Maharastrian Saints, life of Sri Adi Sankara, Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Smt Sarada

Devi and Sri Vivekananda. The students eagerly look forward to her classes.

She teaches in the following schools in and around Tirupur: Century Matric Hr Secondary School, Century Nursery & Primary School, KCS CBSE School, Kid Club Matriculation School, Kids Club International School, Gurukulam International School, Sathya Sai Matric Hr Secondary Schools Tirupur & Chithode, MGVS Global Academy, Palaniappa Matric Hr Secondary School and Nachammal Vidya Vani CBSE School. In all these schools put together, **she teaches 4,860 children.**

She also **teaches 700 women workers** of SCM Garments & SCM Mills near Tirupur for an hour every week. They learn Tamil sloka chanting and stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata.

In addition, she teaches home makers of Tirupur in 5 locations, through classes of 2 hours each. Totally, she **teaches 150 home makers**. She teaches them chanting and meaning of Bhagawad Gita, Vishnu Sahasranama, Lalitha Sahasranama, Soundarya Lahari and Narayaneeyam.

If we have more such energetic, enterprising and dedicated teachers like Brni. Mahalakshmi, and Schools committed to teaching Indian culture, the whole of our future generation will be blessed with the knowledge of their precious culture.

Report by N. Avinashilingam

Photo by Uga Tomoko

Arsha Vidya Bhavan 21st Anniversary in Pondicherry



Arsha Vidya Bhavan celebrated its 21st year of service to the spiritual seekers of Pondicherry on 7th to 9th of January, 2015 at Jayaram Tirumana Nilayam for 3 days. Sri Swami Tadevananda Saraswati from Arsha Vidya Peetam, Anaimalai, Coimbatore was invited as Chief guest for the event. Sri Swami Tattvabodhananda Saraswati, Acharya of Arshaviday Bhavan welcomed the Audience after the Vedic prayer and introduced Sri Swami Tadevananda Saraswati to the participants.

Swami Tattvabodhananda introduced the topic SADHANA PANCAKAM by Bagavatpada Sankaracharya is a beautiful Spiritual manual consisting of a well graded set of forty instructions in five verses for the spiritual seekers. These instructions are extracted from the Vedas and Upanishads arranged systematically to guide a seeker step by step and it is worth to get by heart easily.

Sri Swami Tadevananda Saraswati is the Acharya of Arsha Vidya Peetam, Anaimalai, near Coimbatore teaching Vedanta for the past twenty years in and around Anaimalai, Pollachi, Udumalai areas.

Though the text Sadhana Pancagam was in Sanskrit, Sri Swami Tadevanandaji's unfolding was in simple tamil, lucidity, clarity in the subject taken, usage of words, handling the lakshnavakyas, anecdotes were much appreciated by the listeners.

On the 3rd concluding day unfortunately the Seravai Adheenam Sri La Sri Kumara GuruparaSwamigal was not able to come and gave his Anugrahabasanam, but it was nicely covered by Sri Swami Tadevananda Saraswatiji.

One of our member Sri Ravikumar's daughters Kumari Varsha and her younger sister Diya Sri gave a nice Bharata Dance performance.

More than 100 participants attend all the 3 days. Sri Swami Tadevananda Saraswati completed the text and people felt that they had a sense of Satisfaction.

Each day an excellent prasadam were offered to the participants by the Patrons of Arsha Vidya Bhavan.

Report On 2014 Year-End Family Vedanta Camp

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Saylorsburg, PA



The year 2014 was culminated in the customary way at the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam (AVG), Saylorsburg, PA with a year-end family Vedanta camp from Dec 24-31, 2014. The camp was attended by 120 adults and 75 children. The Vedanta topics covered included Kailvalya Upanishad (KU), Kali-Santarana Upanishad (KSU) and Navadha Bhakti (NB). The KU and NB classes were taught by Swami Pratyagbodhananda while Swamini Svaatmavidyananda taught the KSU classes.

The camp began with an orientation program on the eve of Dec 24th conducted by Swami Pratyagbodhananda. A typical day during the camp consisted of guided meditation in the morning, three one-hour classes on Vedanta and an hour of satsang in the evening. In addition, Vedic chanting and yoga classes were also included. The





guided meditation sessions were conducted by Swamini Svaatmavidyananda.

Swami Pratyagbodhananda in his class on Kaivalya Upanisad enlightened the audience on the essence of Veda and how the self is deluded by Maya and self ignorance. Swamiji further unfolded how this ignorance is removed by the knowledge of Brahman and that after gaining the knowledge the person meditates upon the one being that is all pervading consciousness and happiness. A beautiful analogy was brought out, considering the ego as the lower *arani* and Om as the upper *arani* and on account of the repeated friction between the two *aranis*, in the fire of knowledge that is born, for the wise person the bondage of samsara is burnt. In the Navadha Bhakti classes, Swami Pratyagbodhananda highlighted the nine types of devotion - Shravanam, Keerthanam, Smaranam, Padasevanam, Arcanam, Vandanam, Dasyam, Sakhyam and Atmanivedanam. Swamiji emphasized that even if one takes one type of devotion with shraddha one can gain Ishwara's grace to gain self-knowledge.

Swamini Svaatmavidyananda in her talks on Kali Santarana Upanisad highlighted the meaning of the word '*kali*.' While '*kali*' generally stands for the '*kali yuga*,' Swaminiiji beautifully enhanced the meaning of the word by suggesting that it stands for the *kashaya*, the unconscious or the 'inner child,' a term well known in analytical psychology. With the decline of dharma in the '*kali yuga*' and a concomitant increase in the circumstances for the manifestation of the *kashaya*, a human being, as though possessed by the '*kali*,' struggles to cross the ocean of samsara. This, in fact, is the concern of Narada when he posed the question to Brahmaji as to how one would overcome the effects of the '*kali*.' Notwithstanding this conundrum, the desire for freedom, the *mumukshutvam*, is an innate urge in every human being. The *mumukshu* has to become a *jijnasu*, the seeker of self-knowledge as knowledge alone is the means for liberation. Swamini Svaatmavidyananda underscored that the Kali Santarana Upanisad gives the solution to this problem through the response of Brahmaji to Narada's question which

entailed the process of reciting the sixteen names of the Lord as in the mantra, “hare Rama hare Rama Rama hare hare,” or “hare Krishna hare Krishna Krishna Krishna hare hare.” By the recitation of the Lord’s name with sincerity, the mumukshu turned jijnasu, gains antahkaranasuddhi and with concomitant pursuit of the Vedanta Shastra for a length of time, in due course his/her self-ignorance is destroyed and the person’s true nature is revealed as being non-different from the total.

CHILDREN PROGRAM

The program started with the orientation session addressed by Smt Savithri Mani in the Yoga Studio. The children were divided into groups of juniors, seniors and teens. The chanting classes for juniors and seniors were conducted by Br Girija and Br Radha. Vedic Heritage classes for juniors and seniors were conducted by Br Suryanarayanan, Smt Usha Swaminathan, Ms Shreya Anand and Br Radha. Vedanta classes for the teens were conducted by Br Girija and Br Suryanarayana. Yoga classes for all the groups were conducted by Lance, Vasiliki and Aiofe. Arts and Craft for juniors were conducted by Vasiliki. SmtLakshmi Anand conducted question and answer (Q&A) session for the teens based on Vedic Heritage. Sanskrit classes and Q&A session for seniors were conducted by Br Radha and Br Suryanarayanan. The teens were addressed by different speakers including Swamini Svaatmavidyananda on various topics. During the camp a one-day field trip was arranged for all the groups to America on Wheels museum. During the camp fire the children exhibited their talent by singing, dancing and playing on various musical instruments. Vignesh and Amogha helped in conducting games for children. On the final day of the camp there was a cultural extravaganza show presented by the



children depicting the nine types of devotion through stories from the Puranas. For the cultural program the children were trained superbly by Smt Savithri Mani, Br Radha and Br Girija. At the end of the program AVG Manager Sri Suddhatma gave the vote of thanks.

The children presented a talent show on the evening of 31st Dec. As the midnight hour approached, Pujya Swamiji through Skype blessed all the campers and ushered in the New Year with the chanting of “Om Nama Sivaya.” The campers were exhilarated by this auspicious beginning.

During the New Year day celebrations on January 1st pre-recorded New Year messages of Pujya Swamiji followed by that of Swami Tattvavidananda and Swami Veditatmanandawere shown to the nearly 1000 attendees who were present. Swami Pratyagbodhananda and Swamini Svaatmavidyananda also gave their benedictory messages following which there was a Pushpanjalito Lord Dakshinamurthy with the chanting of the 108 names of the Lord by the priests, Sri Ravi and Sri Ganesh. The New Year celebrations concluded with a sumptuous lunch thanks to Sri Ramachandran and his team who also took care of the culinary needs of the campers during the week.

Report by Br Girija & Br Radha

Pearls of Wisdom



One is already a complete person (poornavastu). The vedhic tradition is only an aid to discover this profound truth.

The sadhana for the discovery of one's true nature is EMOTIONAL MATURITY . Veda gives a complete plan to make oneself matured person emotionally.



When there is no discordance between the dharma, Ishwara and yourself, there is joy, there is beauty, and you need not do anything else to enjoy, to bring beauty to your life.



Since the tradition knows the limitations of words, it has employed with great care paradoxes to reveal the truth. अणोः अणीयान् महतः महीयान् smaller than smallest, bigger than biggest. The implication of this paradoxical statement is the poorna vastu is NOT an object of perception.

People brand desire as the problem, something to be avoided. In reality, my attitude towards the result of an action is the problem. If I accept the result with proper attitude, then a desire does not cause any problem.



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Acharya Swami Sadatmananda with students of long term course