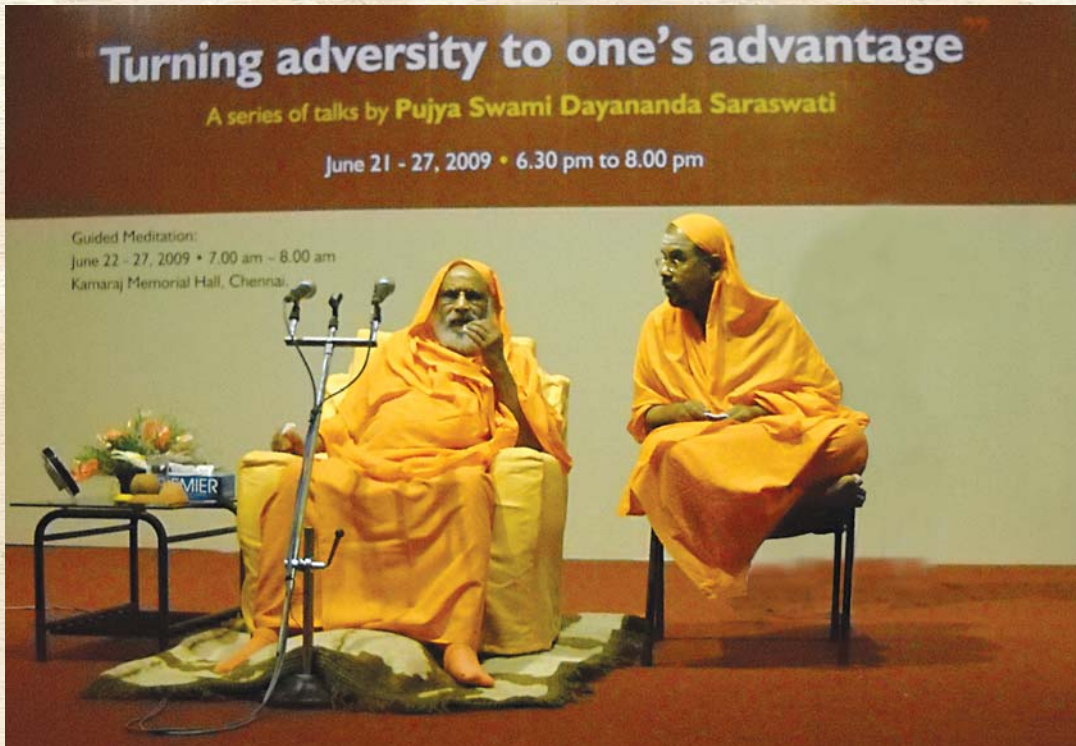




Arsha Vidya Newsletter

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कठोपनिषद् Kāthopaniṣad

यः पूर्वं तपसो जातमद्भ्यः पूर्वमजायत ।
गुहां प्रविश्य तिष्ठन्तं यो भूतेभिरव्यपश्यत । एतद्वै तत् ॥ २।१।६ ॥

yaḥ pūrvam tapaso jātamadbhyaḥ pūrvamajāyata ।
guhām praviśya tiṣṭantaṁ yo bhūtebhirvyaśyata । etadvai tat ॥II.i. 6 ॥

He sees the aforesaid Brahman who sees the first-born (Hiranyagarbha)—born earlier to the birth of water etc. as existing in the cave of his heart in association with the elements.

That which is first born—pūrvam prathamam jātam—is called Hiranyagarbhaḥ. īśvarā as Brahmāji created everthing. There is an order of creation mentioned in the śāstrā. The order is ākaśa, vāyu, agni, āpa and pṛthvī. Hiranyagarbhaḥ is the first born before all the five subtle elements were born. Then He himself became ākaśa, vāyu, agni, āpa and pṛthvī.

After creating all this, He entered the guhā , namely, buddhi. He entered the antaḥkaraṇa. He is the one who obtains in the buddhi guhā as śrotā, as mantā, as a thinker, as a knower, as a hearer. He is the one who experiences the sound etc. through the senses.

We thus know that the vyaṣṭi is not separate from the samaṣṭi. The sthūla śarīra is not separate from the sthūla prapañca. the sthūla prapañca includes the physical body. The samaṣṭi includes the vyaṣṭi. Therefore, the one who is the seer, knower or hearer, is non-separate from Paramēśvarā. Hiranyagarbhaḥ in the jīva upādhi is called jīvaḥ.

The one who recognises Hiranyagarbhaḥ as the one who is śrotā, the one who is the hearer etc. and that He is non seprate from Hiranyagrbha, he is Hiranyagarbhaḥ alone. This is surrender unto īśvarā. Surrender means one is not separate from that īśvarā.

Etatvai tat. That is indeed this. This is only that Brahman. How can it be said that he recognizes jīva as Hiranyagarbhaḥ? How can it be said that he recognises Paramēśvarā? It is like the golden ear ring is not separate from the gold—svarṇāt jātam kuṇḍalaṁ svarṇameva bhavati. Similarly Hiranyagarbhaḥ is nothing but Parameswara.

या प्राणेन संभवत्यदितिर्देवतामयी ।
गुहां प्रविश्य तिष्ठन्तीं या भूतेभिरव्याजयत । एतद्वै तत् ॥

yā prāṇena sambhavatyaditirdevatāmayī ।
guhām praviśya tiṣṭhntīm yā bhūtebhirvyajāyata । etadvai tat ॥ II.1.7

He (sees) that very Brahman who sees that Aditi, comprising all the deities, who takes birth as Hiranyagarbha, who is manifested in association with the elements, and who is seated in the cave of one's heart, after entering there.

It is said avyaktāt puruṣaḥ paraḥ. Pūrṇa vastu is Brahman vastu and is no doubt independent of everything. That is what is being said here and that puruṣaḥ is avyakta, and is indeed Hiranyagarbhaḥ. It is indeed buddhiḥ, manaḥ, indriyāṇi and hence vyaṣṭi, and śamaṣṭi Virāt. So the Virāt Rūpaḥ also is also Parameswara alone. Paramatma alone. This is being pointed out here one by one. Etadvaitat.

Ya prāṇena sambhavati Aditiḥ: Brahma vastu has no Hiranyagarbhaḥ even though the vastu, Brahman is in neuter gender, and again when it is said Puruṣaḥ ātmā, it is masculine. Cetanā, when you say it is puruṣaḥ; Caitanya, if you say, it is napuṃsakalinga. Aditiḥ if you say, it becomes stree Hiranyagarbhaḥ.

Aditiḥ – çabdādēnām adanāt aditiḥ The one who (eats) experiences çabda, sparśa, rūpa, rasa, gandha viñayas is Aditiḥ. Hiranyagarbhaḥ: experiences çabdādi viñayas in the individual śarīra, and therefore Aditiḥ. The Hiranyagarbha, as sukṣma śarīra experiences all the śabdaadi viśayas, objects such as sound etc., therefore, called Aditiḥ.

Then again purvavat, as said earlier, guhām praviśya tiṣṭanti yā āditiḥ - bhūtebhiḥ vyajāyata – the one who obtains in the buddhi, having entered into the buddhi, as the upalabdā, the one who gains all the experiences, bhūtaiḥ samanvitā vyajāyata – the one who is born along with the beings, śarīra etc. Etadvai tat.

The one who is born along with the śarīras of the various beings, and the one who obtains within the śarīra itself, within the buddhi as the upalabdā, and the one who is the Hiranyagarbha, is nothing but Param Brahmaiva. Etadvai tat. This is indeed what was asked for. Or, the one who is in the form of all deities, the one who is the Hiranyagarbha and who is called Aditiḥ, one who is upalabdā of everything, one who is along with the sukṣma śarīrās of the various beings and the one who obtains in the buddhi of all the beings, that Hiranyagarbha is nothing but Param Brahma. Etadvai tat iti.

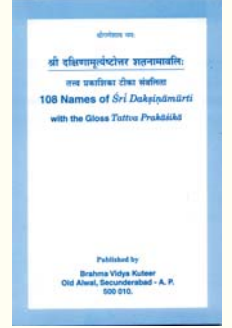
(To be continued)

108 Names of Śrī Dakṣiṇāmūrti With the Gloss Tattva Prakāśikā

By Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati
Translated into English by Puppala B.



108 Names of śrī Dakṣiṇāmūrti With the Gloss Tattva Prakāśikā



३१। ओं वनवाससमुल्लासाय नमः।

वने वासः तस्मिन् सम्यक् उल्लासः उत्साहः यस्य सः। तस्मै नमः।

परमेश्वरः दक्षिणामूर्त्यवतारे वटवृक्षस्य मूले महर्षिभिः परिवारित आस्ते। एतदृश्यं कस्यान्विचनकर्या बभूवेति न युक्तम्। एतदरण्यपरिसरस्य सदृशं दृश्यं खलु। अपि च यत्र ग्राम्यभोगानुरक्तिः स ग्रामः यत्र शास्त्रश्रवणादि अभ्यस्यते तपस्संघीयते तदरण्यमिति च वेदान्तिनां परिभाषा। तथाच ब्रह्मसंसदेव वनम्। तस्मिन् भगवान् सदा स्वीयसन्निधिं विधत्ते।

Salutations to the One who revels (in himself) living in the forest.

Dakṣiṇāmūrti as an incarnation of the Lord sits under a banyan tree surrounded by great sages. It is not appropriate to assume that this scene belongs to some urban surroundings. This is indeed a scene resembling the surroundings of a forest. In the terminology of Vedāntins, it is said to be village where there is a passion for sense pursuits; it is said to be forest where one is engaged in listening to the scriptures (from *guru*), or where one is committed to contemplation. Thus a forest is a place of assembly of those who seek *Brahman*. There the Lord always grants his sacred presence to the devotees.

३२। ओं वनवीरैकलोलुपाय नमः।

वनेषु वीराः किरातादयो वनवासिनः। तेषु एकलोलुपः अत्यन्तमासक्तः। तस्मै नमः।

भगवान् शिवः अर्जुनस्य परीक्षार्थं किरातरूपेणावतीर्य किरातस्त्रीरूपेणावतीर्णया पार्वत्य सह वने विचचारेति पुराणगथा प्रसिद्धा। वनं तपसः संसारनिवृत्तेश्च उपलक्षणं भवति। तपस्शालिषु सर्वकर्मसंन्यासपूर्वकज्ञाननिष्ठापरायणेषु च भगवान् अतिशयेन वत्सल इति च विदितमेव भक्तजनानाम्।

Salutations to the One who ardently longs for forest dwellers.

Events in May and June 2009

May 8, 2009

Pujya Swamiji, accompanied by Sri Ramasubramaneya Rajah visited Ayikudi on 8th May 09 at the request of Amar Seva Sangam to inaugurate the Centre for Special Education.

The institution established by Sri S. Ramakrishnan, is dedicated to educate and rehabilitate young people with disabilities.

Himself disabled, helped by Sri. Sankararaman, the Secretary, Sri Ramakrishnan has worked hard to take the institution to great heights in doing seva.

Pujya Swamiji was touched by the services of the institution. During his speech, Pujya Swamiji instantly offered to build the road leading to the buildings at a cost of Rs.5 lakhs.

May 10, 2009

Pujya Swamiji participated in the annual day celebration of Friends of Tribal Society, Coimbatore Chapter on 10th May, 09 at GKNM Hospital Campus.

Padma Sri Dr. P.R. Krishna Kumar, MD, Arya Vaidya Pharmacy was the Chief Guest.

The function began with screening of a film made by Ekal Vidyalaya on their work and achievements. It was touching to see how they have now entered Jammu and Kashmir also.

In his speech, Dr. Krishna Kumar dealt at length on how he attempted to bring the tribal people to the mainstream society in his earlier days.

Pujya Swamiji lauded the efforts of Ekal Vidyalaya in taking the education to inaccessible areas and their commitment to their goals.



Pujya Swamiji visited Kottur, Palacode on 15.5.09 to participate in the Bhumi Puja for a boy's hostel near the existing girls' Chatralaya and also to inaugurate the new hall built in the existing Chatraylaya.

Sri Ram Mohan Pai had offered the land for the purpose of building the Chatralaya.

The function was attended by Jimmy Kotwal, Manager, Financial Systems and Procedures, Emirates and Smt. Hemalata Ravi, Representative, Emirates Foundation, Dubai.

The guests interacted with many girl students and were happy to know about the future plans of the students in going for MBBS, Law etc.

Everyone was appreciative of the dedicated seva done by Brini. Pungothai.

The cultural programme was exceedingly good and enjoyed by everyone.





Pujya Swamiji visited Mohanur on 4th June, 09 to address the teachers, students and parents on the occasion of takeover of the higher secondary school run by the Cooperative Sugar Mills of Mohanur. The school was once the best educational institution in the Namakkal Dist and due to one reason or the other the student strength dwindled gradually. Now with the news of takeover by AIM for Seva, there is sudden spurt in the admissions.

Pujya Swamiji offered all assistance to the administration for bringing the school to its previous heights. The function was well organized with the great enthusiasm of Sri. G. Ramachandran, Correspondent of Swami Dayananda Higher Secondary School, Manjakkudi. Secretary AIM for Seva, Smt. Sheela Balaji attended the function. In addition, the School Principal, Panchayat Officials and Cooperative Sugar Mill officers attended the function.





Pujya Swamiji participated in a function organized by Rotary Club of Coimbatore Metropolis on the 5th of June 09 to felicitate the centenarian Sri.G.S.Chandrasekhar, as a keynote speaker.

The function was well attended by people of Coimbatore who were benefitted in one way or the other by the elderly teacher who served Mani High School for more than four decades.

Pujya Swamiji, in his address, stressed the need for employing innovative means of communication so that any student could gain knowledge. Teaching is not a profession, Pujya Swamiji said, and there are no clients for a teacher. It is one of teacher-student relationship. There cannot be any payment for the services of a teacher.

Pujya Swamiji's address was heard with rapt attention by the audience.

How To Make Life Into Yoga?

Public Talks By Pujya Swamiji At Coimbatore

“Life is yoga when it is lived with the understanding of Isvara. Hinduism is based on knowledge of Isvara. The Guru tells “Everything is Isvara”. The Sishyas accept this pending understanding. Our country’s wealth is “knowledge”, and so what we can export is knowledge and persons having knowledge”, declared Pujya Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati while addressing the public at Kongunadu Arts & Science College at Coimbatore on 13th and 14th June 2009.

Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswathi gave public talks on the topic “ How to make life into yoga” at Kongunadu Arts & Science College at Coimbatore on 13th and 14th June 2009. Around 1000 persons attended.

Swamiji said Life is yoga when it is lived with the understanding of Isvara. Hinduism is based on knowledge of Isvara. “Everything is Isvara” tells the Guru. The Sishya accepts pending understanding. Our country’s wealth is “knowledge”. So what we can export is knowledge and persons having knowledge.

Everything that “is” is Isvara. We can take any aspect as Isvara and worship. That is why before building a house we do “bhoomi puja”. We worship Mother Earth as God. In no other culture they do this.

Let us assume you are sitting in a class. You want to draw the attention of your neighbour. You only touch his little finger. The whole person responds. Like that you can invoke Isvara by invoking any blessed form. During puja, with a small quantity of turmeric you make a lump. You invoke Lord Ganesha in that form. You tell Oh Lord Ganesha please come in this form as I want to worship you. This is the beauty of Hinduism. You can invoke Isvara in any form because everything that “is” is only Isvara.

When I start worshipping the whole, I start from me. That is why we circle ourselves when there is a homa or fire ritual at our house , and there is not enough space to go around the fire. Like this we can invoke Isvara in us.

There is a misconception that only non vegetarian food contains proteins. This is wrong because even elephants get all the proteins from vegetarian food. 99% of the vegetarians in the world are Hindus. We have communities like Saiva Vellalars, Saiva Pillais, Saiva Chettiars who are communities of vegetarians.

We should have clarity of what we want in life and our attitude should be healthy. When we have proper understanding, our attitude of life will change.

Some people say do your karma , without expecting result. This they say because of wrong understanding. Krishna says in Bhagawat Gita that, he is the desire, when the desire is in accordance with Dharma.

When we do karma, we can get any one of the four results: equal to our expectation, more than our expectation, less than our expectation and opposite of our expectation. We have a choice only while doing our action. But we do not have the choice while getting the result. Accepting the result of our karma as “prasadam” from Isvara converts our life into yoga.

Once the action is done, result will accrue. Isvara gives the result. Whatever comes from Isvara is only Prasad. When we understand that the results come from Isvara and we are able to receive the result with reverence, then our attitude is proper. This attitude helps for the equanimity of the mind. Graceful acceptance of the results makes one a complete person.

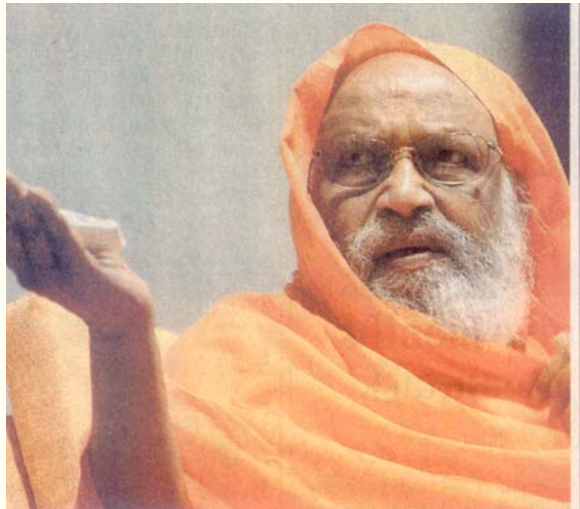
Our mind due to various transactions, requires cleansing. Our scriptures asks us repeat this mantra: Atchutaya namaha: Anantaya namaha: Govindaya namaha: With understanding of Isvara, when we chant this, our mind will become clean.

Having a proper attitude to life, will make our life yoga.

Report By N. Avinashilingam

Need for common currency stressed

Staff Reporter



CHENNAI: Global economical slowdown is a consequence of absence of a common currency for the world, Swami Dayananda Saraswati has said. He began his series of lecture on "Turning adversity to one's advantage", organised by AIM for Seva, here on Sunday.

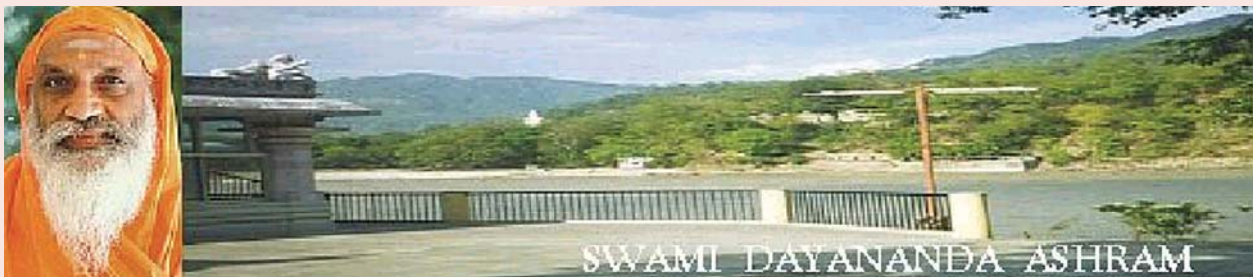
He blamed the economic system, which he said was "designed to be defective", for the downturn in the economy.

The monetary system encouraged rich to get richer by flouting rules. "Economic slowdown is an avoidable human error. Economic system turned out to be a disaster when people for whom the system was built were forgotten," he said. The concept of outsourcing jobs to talents in other countries also contributed to the economic failure and the economy needed to be rebuilt upon strong foundations.

The country's population should be utilised resourcefully instead of blaming it as a hurdle for a fast economic growth, he said.

Terming the philosophy of relinquishing desires as "reductionism, Swami Dayananda Saraswati said desire is an inborn quality in human and any philosophy that goes against what is bestowed on mankind is 'non-thinking'. There is a stark difference between desire and greed and the distinction lies on the path one takes to attain the goal, he concluded.

Courtesy: The Hindu, June 22, 2009



Daya Home For Retirees in Rishikesh

In Rishikesh, the Gateway to Himalayas, Swami Dayananda Ashram will be starting a Daya Home for the Retirees on the banks of the Holy Ganges, near the ashram.

It is proposed to construct fifty units of residential facility initially. Taking into account the high prices of land, its development and construction cost, a two bedroom unit would cost Rs. 20 lakhs (all inclusive) while a single bedroom would be Rs 18 lakhs (all inclusive).

Besides attached kitchen, TV and other facilities in the individual unit, there will be common kitchen, dining hall, assembly room, indoor games room, T.V. room etc in the campus.

Those who are interested in joining the Home are requested to fill in the application form and submit it with a demand draft of Rs. 25000.00 (Rs. Twenty five thousand only) in favour of Daya Home for Retirees, payable at Rishikesh. This amount will be adjusted against the cost of the unit.

All correspondence on this subject may please be addressed to Swami Aparokshananda Saraswati at the address given below.

Swami Aparokshananda Saraswati,
Swami Dayananda Ashram,
Purani Jhadi, Post Box No.30,
Rishikesh- 249201 (Uttarakhand),
Phone & Fax No. – 91 135 2430769,
e-mail id – dayas1088@gmail.com

AIM for Seva - The Penny Drops A Personal Perspective

After saying goodbyes to new friends made at the *Rama Gita* camp in Rishikesh and waving goodbye at Delhi Airport to fellow London campers, a small group of students of Swamini Atmaprakashananda took the Spice Jet flight to Coimbatore.

Tamil Nadu was hot, the rains hadn't yet cooled the dry air, but Swamini (appropriately nicknamed 'Swamini Dynamite' by Pujya Swamiji) kept up the pace. But this is not about the 25 temples visited in 15 days, or the amazing generosity and warmth of all the families we met, or the tranquillity of the Anaikatti Gurukulam, or the brightness and confidence of the six *veda pathshala* boys who study there, or the unspoilt beauty of Manjakkudi (Pujya Swamiji's home village), or the deliciousness of South Indian cuisine. This is about the moment when I suddenly realised that I had not really understood what *AIM for Seva* was really all about.

Interest in the work of the movement was re-stimulated by two events: the first was the visit to the tribal hospital and the 'Green Kovai' project near Anaikatti; the second was a visit to a hostel for tribal girls in the area. (The visit to the nearby *peda*-making co-operative – also set-up by *AIM for Seva* – will be remembered most for the sweet taste it left in the mouth!)

The hospital and the 'Green Kovai' herb farm were exemplars of dedication and order. The hospital was clean, bright, tranquil. There was something different about it – one got the fanciful impression that simply being there would be enough to eliminate one layer of disease. The doctors and the pharmacist attended the tribal women with calm dedication and still made time to talk to us. The overriding impression was one of love and simple happiness.

A short walk from the hospital was the herb farm – another labour of love. Around 90 plants had been meticulously researched and labelled for their medicinal properties and made available free of charge to those who wanted to grow them as cash crops for the pharmaceutical or alternative therapy industries. The project had also been commissioned to grow 500,000 *Jatropha* saplings for distribution to tribal families to aid both the greening of Coimbatore as well as to produce oil for diesel vehicles and for electricity-generating plants. This alone would lift 80 tribal women out of poverty. Sri Ramanji, an engineer by training, had dedicated his retirement to the task of researching and labelling the plants, overseeing their distribution, securing buyers, collaborators and funders and generally being the welcoming face of the project. (Anyone visiting, however, beware if he ever invites you to sample a yellow plant that deals with toothache: it will numb your tongue and lips and cheeks, and send Ramanji into fits of laughter at your astonishment. He's quite a character!).

And then came the moment that made the deepest impact: the visit to a hostel for young tribal girls. It started simply enough: being shown the girls going about their various tasks of washing clothes or playing or studying. But just as we were getting ready to leave, we were requested to please wait because the girls wanted to sing for us. The hostel bell was clanged, followed by a flurry of activity as girls emerged from all corners of the place and scrambled into the assembly room and did a whirlwind tidy up of clothes, books and other personal items. We entered into a room of order, the girls sitting in neat rows, the older ones at the back and the youngest (a lively six-year old) in the front row.

Swamini Atmaprakasananda, one of her students from Spain, a young teacher from London and myself (the only male) were ushered to chairs facing the girls. Then they began to sing! Even now as I write this, months and miles away from the event, my hairs are standing on end with the memory of that sound, and a wave of sentimentality is struggling to surface. Today, back in London, I might be able to control that sentimentality; that afternoon at the girls' hostel I couldn't. In next to no time, listening to the girls had all of us fighting back the tears (unsuccessfully). Their voices touched the heart and melted the ice of defensive distance. It will be a memory that will stay with me for a long time yet.

That evening, back at the Gurukulam, I related the story to Sri Jagan Nathan, the *AIM for Seva* Project Manager for the Coimbatore region, and expressed my willingness to help to spread the message to help raise support in London. He gave me some reading materials to digest.

A new paradigm for the social enterprise

I had always thought of *AIM for Seva* as one among thousands of similar social projects, with the underprivileged of India being the beneficiaries of the generosity of well intentioned, or skill-rich benefactors with cash or time to donate. But here, these girls, who were so-called under-privileged, who most likely would have missed out on childhood and basic education, were giving the 'privileged' visitors a gift that is rare anywhere in the world: a taste of love, of open-heartedness, of generosity – a touch of *ananda*. The beneficiary-benefactor terms of the equation had momentarily flipped sides. And in the hospital and farm too, what was it about the doctors and Ramanji that allowed them to exude the care they did?

This answer came in one document in the pack of reading material I was given: Elizabeth Thornton's '*A Social Entrepreneurship Framework*'¹. Reading it changed my view totally. It brought out the massive scale and uniqueness of the vision behind *AIM for Seva*. It showed that the movement is more than just another Indian fundraising project for building

schools and hospitals. It is an audaciously ambitious project aimed at nothing short of transforming India – on par with the Grameen Bank movement. The penny dropped! I suddenly saw that *AIM for Seva* isn't one in a thousand. It is a one-off. It may be about material upliftment, but it is much more beside.

The vision of *AIM for Seva* is to uplift Indian society by inspiring a culture of compassion. This unique movement gives people the opportunity to change from simply being consumers to being *contributors* to the wellbeing of fellow citizens in greatest need. Individuals with resources and skills are invited to express compassion by *contributing* funds or expertise to support a range of education and health programmes across India created for those in greatest need. The people delivering the programmes are not simply doing a job: they are chosen because of their commitment to the larger social vision of compassionate *contribution*. And the people who benefit from the programmes are taught the value of compassion and are raised to a position from which they too can be future *contributors* to society.

Everyone wins. A nation of *contributors* is a mature nation. The best way to understand the true import of *AIM for Seva*, is to go straight to Pujya Swamiji's description of his vision:

"Competition means you have to follow norms. Without rules there is no competition. Whether it is a game or business, you need to follow rules. The rules have to grow upon you. The competition we see today has been thrown upon us. Therefore people are insecure, and the symptoms of insecurity are seen in terms of grabbing and hoarding and taking advantage of each situation. This is a society that was once unknown in India, but now it is seen to be rampant.

"Therefore, I thought we should create a new chemistry. In our culture there is such a thing as *dānam*, sharing, caring. We are caring people. We do not throw our elders into old age homes. We have homes and we keep our elders with us and we respect them. Therefore, we have to emphasize some of these very important values

in our own being and allow these values to surface. For this, a movement is necessary. I, therefore, started the *All India Movement (AIM) for Seva*.

"Any movement needs to reach a critical point and from that point alone it will take off. I think we are somewhere around that point. The new chemistry has to come from caring. Why? Because there is no other way a person can really mature. *The whole process of maturing implies the transformation from being a consumer to a contributor*, even though one continues to be a consumer. The one who contributes more than he or she consumes is a grown up person. Otherwise, the person is still a child. Therefore one has to discover oneself as a contributor and inner transformation has to take place.

"That is India. Giving is India. We have to emphasize this caring through programmes of caring. We should get people involved because the problems are so enormous. Even people who see the problems cannot do anything because they are emotionally paralyzed. They cannot think of doing anything. Therefore we have to create an avenue for people to pitch in. It may be small help, but when there are a lot of people pitching in, then that becomes a movement. So that's the whole vision. All our *sadhus* are also engaged in this work. There are also a lot of people who are quietly doing small things individually. But all of them have to be brought together in a movement. This is the movement."

A new paradigm for giving

The implications for benefactors from this vision are far-reaching. *AIM for Seva* is asking more of them than mere disposable income and social consciousness. No doubt, the building of hospitals, schools and hostels is essential to lift people out of social deprivation. And there's no denying that disposable income and a social consciousness are essential to fund the building of hospitals, schools and hostels. But to transform society for the better requires more: a conscious commitment to becoming a *contributor* instead of just being a consumer. *AIM for Seva* asks benefactors and volunteers to add this attitude to their donations and social consciousness.

Contribution is an attitude, not just an activity. When the contributor is in place, social giving can become transformative. The contributor is the one who is aware there is an ethical and spiritual dimension to life, and the contributor-benefactor gives with this attitude in mind. The contributor-benefactor is as interested in his or her own transformation as in the transformation of the lives of those who are less privileged. Is it essential to have disposable income to be a contributor? The straight answer is: "No", one can contribute expertise and time as well. But is money necessary to initiate the sort of programmes that *AIM for Seva* is initiating? The straight answer is: "Yes", but with the caveat that it is not sufficient to bring about a fundamental uplift in Indian society without the attitude of *dānam* behind it.

So here are three key questions for donors and volunteers:

- > Will my spiritual maturity be furthered by my contribution? If so, how?
- > Is the project I support instilling a 'contributor-mindset' in its beneficiaries? If so, how?
- > Do I subscribe to Swami Dayananda's vision for transforming India?

When the answer to all three is 'Yes', then the full vision of *AIM for Seva* will be advanced. And India will be the beneficiary.

NOTE 1.

Elizabeth R. Thornton's 'A Social Entrepreneurship Framework' was developed for the Entrepreneurship Faculty at Babson College in the US, one of the country's leading management courses for the past 15 years. The Framework places *AIM for Seva* among such pioneering social programmes as the Grameen Bank (Bangladesh), the Women's Health and Economic Development Association (Nigeria), Project Impact (USA) and the Furniture Resource Centre (UK).

Elizabeth Thornton is Adjunct Lecturer of Entrepreneurship, and Babson College's first Chief Diversity Officer.

Thornton is a member of the President's Cabinet, leading efforts to create and sustain an

inclusive multicultural environment that attracts, educates, empowers and retains under-represented students, faculty and staff. She is also a part-time member of the Entrepreneurship Faculty, teaching in the graduate and undergraduate programs at Babson.

Thornton was founder and CEO of the training and consulting firm, Entrepreneurship Advantage, Inc., which helps dislocated or downsized workers regain economic self-sufficiency by creating small businesses. She has assisted more than 85 businesses in Massachusetts and hundreds nationwide, and has consulted with the Pioneer Institute, the Center for Women and Enterprise, Inner City Entrepreneurs, the State of Massachusetts, and the City of Boston, to name a few.

She has 15+ years of corporate experience with institutions such as American Express and Bank One and 15+ years of entrepreneurial experience with clients such as the Presidential Inaugural Committee, Clinton '92, The White House, and several small businesses.

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Free Hospital for tribal women



Herb farm. Peter Bonnici , Ramanji, Swamini Atmaprakasananda examine roots of the Vetiver plant, used for making aromatic oil.



Girl's hostel

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Swami Vishnuswarupananda

Arsha Vidya Varidhi, Janaki Bhavan, Plot 5, Bus Stand Road, Ganeshpeth, Nagpur 400 018

Helplessness and Seeking Help

Swami Dayananda Saraswati

You cannot manage a situation unless you know exactly what is happening. The inner responses are allowed to happen for want of a proper insight and knowledge. You want to have the capacity to manage every happening properly so that you do not deliver yourself into the hands of likes and dislikes, into the hands of anger, frustration and its roots. You are working towards that capacity.

I am absolutely helpless in the event of a reaction. I seem to have no power over this anger. Please understand that it takes a lot of courage to accept helplessness. Unless I have the courage to accept helplessness I can never grow out of it. I will not seek help even if it is available. It is like the man who was an alcoholic. When someone asked him, "Why do you take alcohol every day?" he replied, "I am not an alcoholic. I can give up alcohol any day." This response is more from the alcohol than from the person. A man who wants to give up alcohol has to first accept the fact that he has no power over alcohol.

Similarly, I must know intimately that I have no power over my anger, my sorrow, depression, and frustration. Some people advice, "Don't get depressed". Very often religious teachers become advisers. Nobody seems to really understand what is going on. A person does not choose to get depressed; it just happens. Equally that person cannot choose not to be depressed. There is no point in advising someone not to get depressed. When we advise someone not to get angry, he gets angrier because it is not that a person wants to be angry. Anger happens. We need to realise that we have no power over anger, over sorrow, over mechanical thinking because they

are mechanical. If we had control over them, we would not have them in the first place. If we understand this, a way out opens up for us.

When I am helpless in controlling my reactions, I can approach the Lord for help because everybody else is in the same situation as I am. I am sad and another person is also sad and two sad persons coming together do not make a happy lot. If a drowning person gets hold of another drowning one, both get drowned in the process. Therefore, this popular prayer on these lines is very relevant here: "O Lord, I am helpless. Please give me the maturity to accept gracefully what I cannot change, and the will and effort to change what I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

All of our problems are because we refuse to accept facts and very often we worry about things we cannot change. We do not know what can be changed and what cannot be. If we knew that, we could spare our efforts and divert our energy. Our efforts can gain a direction. We can pray.

The basis for any form of prayer is the acknowledgement of our helplessness and then seeking help. Prayer is born naturally when I realise my helplessness and recognise the source of all power, all knowledge. If both of these are acknowledged, prayer is very natural. If everything is in order I need not pray. All prayers have their fulfilment in keeping everything in order.

When I need help, I seek help from any person I can. When the helplessness is in terms of my incapacity to let go of my past or to let the future happen without my being apprehensive, then a person like myself cannot help me. I

¹ Excerpt from *Insights*, Arsha Vidya Research and Publications, 2007.

have to go to the source from where such help is possible. That source is the Lord whom I can invoke through prayer.

I intimately realise that I am a victim of my own past. As a victim of my past, I cannot but be apprehensive about the future. I become worried. I become cautious. I become frightened of my future. To deliver myself into the hands of the Lord, I deliver myself to the order that is the Lord. The Lord is not separate from the order and the order is not separate from the Lord. My past then becomes part of the meaningful order of my personal life. The future unfolds itself in keeping with the same order, an order that includes my previous *karma*, if there is such a thing.

As a child I had no will of my own. I was in the hands of my parents, my elders, my teachers, and other adult members of the society. As a child, I saw that I was absolutely helpless. My knowledge was limited and my perception was never clear. I was insecure. I was learning with a small mind, with meagre information, without any wisdom at all. Naturally, I made conclusions about the world and myself. These conclusions formed the basis for my interpretation of the events to come. In the process, these interpreted events definitely seem to confirm my conclusions.

Look at the helplessness. As an adult I cannot remove the conclusions I made as a child and therefore I become a victim of my own past. Whom should I blame? I cannot blame myself nor can I afford to blame the world. Blaming does not help me let go, the past being retained. It is one thing to acknowledge the mistake of others but quite another to hold on to them and to retain my fears and anger. I have to eliminate all forms of blaming in order to be free of my past.

I may have valid reasons to blame. I see those reasons and I let go of my past. By allowing my blaming to continue, I allow the past to continue. If I was a

victim of the behaviour of my elders, by blaming them now I continue to be a victim. I understand all of this, but still I am helpless.

“O Lord, help me. Help me accept gracefully what I cannot change. Let me be free of blaming anyone, including myself. I cannot blame myself for what happened to me nor can I blame others because others themselves have yet others to blame.

O Lord, help me accept gracefully what I cannot change. Blaming means that I want to change the past. I want my past to be different. How can it be? O Lord, help me accept gracefully what I cannot change. I let go of my resentment, anger, and dissatisfaction by accepting gracefully what I cannot change. O Lord, perhaps what I went through was meant to happen. Perhaps it was all in order.

O Lord, all the years of pain, struggle and groping seem to have paid off, for I pray and by this prayer everything has become meaningful. My pain, my past, has resulted in my coming to you to seek help. Intimately, I acknowledge my helplessness. I seek your help, your intervention, to make me accept what I cannot change. I cannot change what has happened, nor can anyone else, not even you. Intimately I acknowledge the fact that what has happened cannot be changed.

O Lord, help me accept totally what I cannot change—my mother’s behaviour, her omissions and commissions, my father’s neglect, his anger, his indifference, his lack of care, his mishandling, his mismanagement, his drinking, the fights between them, the confusion at home, my being left alone, not fondled, not cared for, not loved. Perhaps, I was wrong, but this was how I felt.

O Lord, I cannot change what has happened. Please help me accept gracefully what I cannot change. I do not want to bury the past, nor do I want to forget the past. I cannot. I just want to accept the fact, accept the past. Gracefully, I accept the past. I even begin to see an order in all of this, for do I not pray now? I have come to be objective. I see some order here. Please help me accept gracefully what I cannot change.”

Interview with Swami Dayananda “Reach Out” Rishikesh – March 2009

1. Swamiji, please clarify us about the importance of solidarity, using one’s time helping others, giving and reaching out.

You have to reach out, because emotionally you need to grow, to grow into a self-accepting person. You can’t remain an insecure person. If you are insecure you can’t reach out, you want the whole world to help you (laughs). One takes advantage of every situation. Any weak person, or one who is in a weak situation, can exploit to one’s own advantage and so that means you’re a grabber, not a contributor. To be a contributor you have to give, you have to reach out. That is the method of growing, by giving, by contributing, you grow into a more complete person, a more compassionate person. The more compassionate you are, the more you accept yourself, the more insecure you are, you cannot accept yourself. It feeds itself, I am insecure therefore I can’t give, and therefore I grab. So the more I grab because I’m insecure, I become more insecure. We all start with a certain insecurity and we grow to become a contributor. The more you contribute, the more secure you are. The less you contribute the more insecure you are. Therefore, living becomes just getting on. I gave a talk on this “Living versus Getting On”. Getting is just get by, living is just when you contribute.

2. What is the vision of the Vedas on this subject?

Danena adanam tara it says that you have to give. *Danena adanam tara*. Look at this ashram. We don’t charge, we don’t do anything, but we are running. So many *sadhus* come, people come and stay and all that, and we have no problem. We do it in America also and that’s an amazing thing. We’ve appointed a new manager in Coimbatore and that person has his own problems. He charges so much that nobody can come for the camps (laughs). I just left it for him to understand what it is all about. The principle is not understood. The principle is to allow people to take care of it. You don’t attempt to take care of it, if you make an attempt to take care of it, you’ll never be able to take care of it, because it’s huge. You have to allow people to take care of it. Bring people, that’s what a manager should do. Bring more people and then let them take care of it. You just administer, don’t spend the money, don’t waste the money, administer properly and then money will come. That’s the principle, that’s cultural, that’s our culture. *Danena adanam tara*, if one has incapacity to give, that’s natural, but you have to cross that. *Tara* means cross, this is Veda, Sama Veda. “*Au au au setumstara dustaran*”¹, very difficult, make use of a setu,

a bridge to cross this. These are all difficult things to cross, that is *adanam*. How to cross not giving? *Danena adanam, danena adanam, danena adanam...Danena adanam tara* - not giving you cross by giving (laughs). Fake it and make it, *danena adanam*. If you have no *shrada*, *shradaya ashradam*, with *shrada*, means act as though you have *shrada*. What people who have got *shrada* do, you also do. *Shrada* will come, that is true. *Shradaya ashradam, akrodenam krodam*, anger please cross through *akroda*, through the practice of no *kroda*, there is no other way. Don't victimize people, neutralize all this anger *krodenam krodam*. *Satyenam anrtam*, by what is true cross *anrtam*, what is false. So that's Veda, Sama Veda and Yajurveda. *Shradaya deyam*, this is also Veda. That is Sama and this Krishna Yajurveda. *Shradaya deyam*. *Deyam* means give, this should be given, with *shrada* I give. *Ashradaya deyam*, don't give without *shrada*.

So we invite all the sadhus, we have *bandhara*, and we make them feel that they are obliged to come, we don't make them feel that we are giving them food, no. We make them feel they are obliged, so that's the truth, that is giving, that is called *shrada*.

I can't bend, I have problems in the lower back, but then I just manage with some yoga and all, but even though it is true, I will go and make *namaskara* to everyone, whoever it is, I don't question, I do *namaskara*, even to *bhramacharyas* and other people. I do *namaskar* to everybody. They feel good you know? But for me it is real, I have no pretension, I really respect. So that is *shrada*. With help you give, with humility you give, if you can't give more. With knowledge to whom you are

giving, give, whether that person will accept it or not. Please make sure he accepts, the recipient accepts, but you give. Give with knowledge of what for you are giving, and all that.

So, so much in this tradition, is about giving. If you look to the voluntary contribution in the countries, in the various countries, voluntary day-to-day contribution of a person, only happens in India. In this culture, even poor people will contribute. All the *sadhus* used to live here, there was no place distributing food at that time, but they used to come here because they could learn from each other. That's how it started. They wanted to learn and they came to Rishikesh. Nobody else was here. They used to help each other. One person knows grammar, one person knows Vedanta...and then you can learn. Grammar teachers will teach you grammar, Vedanta teachers, will teach Vedanta; a grammarian will go to Vedanta. Vedanta teacher will know grammar, but he won't teach grammar, because it's a waste of time for him. He will guide, you, please go and learn from the other person. There is a specialist and therefore grammar teacher will also come to Vedanta teacher. So they used to help each other. There will be somebody who knows a little bit of grammar, good enough for a beginner, and he will teach. So people used to come here, then they would go to the villages, in the mountains, and people would give them food. There was no problem. They would do *namaskar* and give. *Shrada, shradaya deyam, ashradaya deyam*. So in this tradition *danam* is very big. And giving without any complaint, no strings attached.

3. We have seen some people becoming very self-centered in their spiritual life. What is the importance of solidarity for those who are engaged in Moksha?

Unless you have compassion there is no Moksha. *Buthadaya*, that means you have to have *advesta sarva butanam maitra karunayeva*. There should be *Karuna* – compassion. *Maitra*, the one who has got friendliness, no hatred, towards anybody. *Advesta sarva butanam maitra karunayeva*. Therefore, there is no way of spiritual growing unless one has compassion. *Daya*, compassion. Look at my name itself – Dayananda. *Daya*, it's a big thing, it is – compassion. Because they have a value for *Daya* the name is given. I'm not the only Dayananda, there are many Dayanandas. One of them made it has Dayananda. He was some kind of a teacher, he founded one big organization Aria Samaj. Even today I'm mistaken for that person. I get letters to recommend for admission in DAV School, which belongs to Aria Samaj, of Dayananda. They think I'm that Daynanda, therefore I get letters to recommend, no idea. There are some many Dayanandas here, that's why I put Saraswati. Saraswati is a title. I need not have a long name, Swami Dayananda Sarawati, no computer print out puts the name altogether,

so they put Swami D. Saraswati, Swami D. This is very common; there are many Dayanandas in Rishikesh. So what I say is *Daya*, the word, is highly valuable, it is a very important word – *buthadaya*. *Karuna* is another word. So you grow into a person for Moksha by *Daya*.

4. How should individuals help, locally or globally?

You have to find out, see in a country like Portugal you have certain welfare; the government takes care of the welfare. So, individually you don't require much help, but lots of people require time to hear their stories. So we can hear them, we can talk to them, that's a great help. No therapy, just allow them to talk. We should never do therapy, if you do therapy you have to be a professional, you have to charge them. Charging them is a part of the therapy, if they pay it works, therapy works. If they pay, they will take you as a professional and they will begin talking to you, because they are paying (laughs). They will keep talking and talking, they cannot stop. If they don't pay, they won't talk. Here is different, just giving your hears, that's a great help. Tuition of children is a great help also, like this we can do some work. Everybody can do some work.

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LIFE IS ROLE PLAYING¹

Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Action and reaction, as we know from physics, are both equal and opposite. You cannot rub against something, without yourself getting rubbed in the process. However, I am looking at these two words with reference to one's response to the world.

LIFE INVOLVES RELATIONSHIP

You cannot avoid relating as well as responding to the world, whether you like it. You must necessarily relate to the world in order to live your life; you need not relate to the world just to be alive. When you are in deep sleep, you are alive but you do not relate to the world; there is no world, in fact, for you. There is no relationship, no memories, no situational problems to cause any concern. You are just alive; you merely exist. You can exist even in a state of coma, without in any way relating to the world. It is possible to keep a person alive in coma for years on life support systems. However, that is not living. In order to live your life, you need to relate to the world.

Any relationship implies two factors: one is you, the person, who relates and the other is what or whom you relate to. Of these two, one is a changing factor – that which you are related to. The situation to which you are related keeps on changing all the time and

the change can be total. Now you see fire and now you see a stream of water; two things entirely different in nature. You meet your father and the next moment you meet your son. The object has completely changed, the son replacing the father. In terms of sensory perception, the objects constantly change. You perceive a form or smell or sound or touch or taste. Thus, the world you confront keeps changing whereas you, the one who confronts the world, is invariable. A person who sees a form is the same who hears a sound.

The one who saw and heard is the one who is talking to someone now. The person, 'you' remains the same, whereas the objects keep changing. Therefore, we can say that of the two factors involved in relating, one is variable and the other, the one who confronts, is invariable. You are the same person whether you relate to father or son, uncle or husband, friends or foe, employer or employee.

You are the same whether you see or hear, walk or talk, sing or smell. This is true even from the standpoint of mental activities: the one who doubts is the one who decides; the one who loves is the one who hates; the one who is kind is the one who is cruel. The person is invariable and that is you.

¹ Excerpt from *Action and Reaction*, Arsha Vidya Research and Publications, Chennai, 2007.

THE INVARIABLE FACTOR

We need to look into the 'you' that is invariable. Is it totally invariable? We cannot say so because there seems to be a variable status even for the subject, the person who relates, in keeping with what or whom he or she relates. When you relate to your father either mentally or perceptually; you are a son. Again, when you relate to your son, you are no longer the previous person, the son; you are now a father. You undergo a change. The subject 'I' that was a son while relating to the father has changed to become a father while relating to the son. The person 'I' is there but he or she has a different status now. To a sister, the 'I' is a brother; to a wife, the 'I' is a husband; to a student 'I' is a teacher and to a teacher the 'I' is a student. Thus, because of a relationship, the 'I' also undergoes change.

The change in the 'I', however, is not total as is the case with the objects with which the 'I' relates. The object can be a form perceived earlier, that is totally replaced by a sound heard now. The object can be a friend that is totally replaced by another, a stranger, the exact opposite. There is something I like and something I do not like. Thus the change in the object is total. The subject 'I', however, is not totally replaced. If it is, there will be no continuity at all. The father-I is replaced by the son-I, but the 'I' is not totally replaced. If it is totally replaced, there will be neither father nor son because the one who related to the son has vanished, while a new one who has appeared in his place cannot have a relationship with the father. If an invariable factor is not there in the subject, there will

no thread to connect the experiences. Hence, the subject does undergo a change in relation to the object but the change is not total; it is incidental and partial.

The partial change in the subject 'I' does not seem to leave any trace upon the 'I'. Imagine that while you are talking to your sister, your wife comes along and you start talking to her. In relation to your wife, the brother goes away completely and the husband has taken his place. You are very much there, remember, because the one who was a brother is the same who is now the husband. At the same time, the previous role does not leave a trace upon you, the subject.

Therefore, you are able to assume a new role altogether without suffering a change on your part. It reveals a great fact about life. It is an amazing capacity to undergo change when you relate to something, without intrinsically undergoing change. It is this capacity that makes your life imbued with freshness and freedom. If you do not recognise this fact fully, it is indeed a great tragedy and life becomes a misery.

The invariable factor 'I' undergoes a seeming change with reference to a particular situation. When I come in contact with an object that I like I become a liker. The next moment, if I come in contact with an object that I dislike I immediately become a disliker. In both these situations the 'I' is very much present. This 'I' is invariable and is therefore neither a liker nor a disliker. Is it not true? If you know this to be true, you have made your life.

Qualified Student of Vedanta¹

www.avgsatsang.org
Satsang with Swami Dayananda Saraswati
Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Question: Swamiji, who is a qualified student for Vedanta?

Any one who wants the knowledge is qualified. To want the knowledge is the first qualification. If your answer to the question, “Do you want to know?” is “Yes” then you are qualified. But, you may well ask, “How can you say I am qualified just because I want to know?” Then I would say, “If you can know, you are qualified.” If I teach you that you are the whole and you understand what I say, then you are qualified. And if you do not understand what I say, it simply means that you have to qualify yourself.

You are qualified for the knowledge, but in order to understand what is being said- “You are the whole,” you must equip yourself. There are, therefore, four qualifications—referred to in Sanskrit as *viveka*, *vairāgya*, *samādhiṣaṭkasampatti*, and *mumukṣutvam*.

viveka is the capacity to understand realities. If you have *viveka*, you have already analyzed your experiences in life, experiences that once considered so important— your job, your marriage, your children, some power or pleasure, such as music. You have understood that a thing is important until you acquire it and, then it becomes unimportant and something else becomes more important. But, if you analyze them, you find that these more important things are not in any way different from those that were important previously.

www.avgsatsang.org

This analysis of personal experience and the experience of others leads you to the understanding that there is no real answer to this problem. And if you understand that, then what is the answer? You are the answer. The answer is not your experiences.

You are the problem and you are the solution. The whole problem is self-nonacceptance.

That I do not accept myself is the problem. And yet I must come to see myself as acceptable. If I have to accept myself, I must be acceptable. Therefore, to resolve the problem, I have to know that I am acceptable.

¹ Published in Arsha Vidya Gurukulam 3rd anniversary souvenir, 1989.

Limitlessness alone is acceptable. Thus, if I am acceptable, I cannot become limited. In fact, there is no question of becoming at all. I can never become limited. I appreciate, then, that I cannot become acceptable by any process of becoming.

No change, then, will make me acceptable. If, without any change, I have to be acceptable, then I must necessarily shift my vision about myself from that of seeing myself as unacceptable. Vedanta tells me that I am acceptable because I am the whole.

At least this much knowledge, I must have. I should at least know that any pursuit, other than knowledge, will not remove my sense of limitation. This particular disposition, achieved through an analysis of one's experiences, is *viveka*.

Once there is *viveka*, then a certain dispassion, *vairāgya*, towards life experiences is possible. You gain a certain objectivity. You understand the limitations of money, power, and all other pursuits. You may continue pursuing them, but with a clear understanding of their limitations. To be able to seek only what is to be sought means that you have *vairāgya*.

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The third qualification, *samādhiṣaṭkasampatti* is a set of six disciplines consisting of a certain composure within yourself (*sama*); control over your pursuits so that you do not get carried away by fancies (*dama*); freedom from a sense of ownership (*uparama*); the capacity to put up with small difficulties (*titikṣa*); faith or trust in the means of knowledge we call Vedanta and in the words of the teacher whom you have come to recognize as one who is capable of teaching (*śraddhā*); and the capacity to set the mind on a given object of inquiry for a length of time, a certain self-satisfaction and cheerfulness, so that the mind can absorb itself (*samādhānam*).

The final qualification is a desire for freedom from bondage (*mumukṣutvam*). This desire comes from discerning the problem as a fundamental problem of self-nonacceptance and wanting to be free from it. Seeing the problem and seeking a solution is *mumukṣutvam*. A person who has *mumukṣutvam* is called *mumukṣu*, one who desires to be free.

People generally do not know about these four-fold qualifications. They seek solutions without really knowing what they are seeking. Therefore, it is an education in itself just to understand the problem. The main qualification, therefore, is to see the problem very clearly and to know that I seek the solution only in terms of knowledge.

If this much understanding is there, I am a qualified student for Vedanta. Without these qualifications, knowledge cannot take place. I must see that this is the solution, that I am the solution, and that there is no other way of solving the problem. This is the solution, for which I seek a teacher to teach me. Once I am committed, the commitment will bring all of the other qualifications.

Sankaracharya decries attack on Hinduism

Statesman News Service

BHUBANESWAR, 15 JUNE: Emphasising the need to protect India's tradition, culture and religious values, Sankaracharya of Puri Gobardan Math, Swami Nischalanand Saraswati, blamed the political class for carrying forward a distorted development agenda which is destroying the nation.

It is "vinash" and not "vikas" that is taking place, he observed, while talking to reporters here and insisting that India has turned directionless. He went on to refer to the Ram Setu controversy and the conversions that are taking place.

"Why is it that conversion is deemed not a problem in our neighborhood, be it due to the influence of Pakistan or China?" he questioned, before announcing that the politics of the 'vote bank' is squarely responsible for allowing large scale conversion to take place.

The seer went on to express concern over the onslaught on the Hindu religion and culture as well as the attacks on religious leaders. Responding to questions on the recent murder of a head of one of the ashrams in Puri, he said it was "a matter of concern" that the state government is unable to protect sadhus.

"A couple of years ago, I used to take pride in telling people across the country about the safety of Puri. I used to say that even at 2.00 a.m. one could walk around Puri without any fear. But I can't say the same thing now."

Answering questions on the suspected links between Maoists and a religious group, the Puri seer said it was for the Chief Minister to spell this out. "Ask the CM, why are you asking me?" demanded the seer, before adding that he was not bothered about threat letters being sent to him.

"The CM should say who killed Laxmanananda Saraswati and who was behind the murder. Laxmanananda was attacked on nine previous occasions and he had escaped, but the tenth attack was committed by trained and armed people. This indicates that somebody had conspired and engaged trained people to eliminate Laxmanananda," he said.

<http://www.thestatesman.net/page.news.php?clid=9&theme=&usrssess=1&id=258097>

Opposition to the impending visit of United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) to India

- 1) **US body should not interfere in Indian affairs: Shankaracharya**
Pioneer, June 13, 2009
TN Raghunatha | Mumbai

Kanchi Shankaracharya Jayendra Saraswati on Friday vehemently opposed the impending visit of United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) to India, by saying that it was nothing but “an intrusive mechanism of a foreign Government to interfere in the internal affairs of this country”.

“Though the Indian Government has permitted USCIRF for sending its delegation to this country to hold meetings with our people to ascertain religious freedom in our country, the delegation should actually not be allowed to enter this country on this intrusive mission. We will not allow external interference into our internal affairs,” the Shankaracharya said.

The Shankaracharya was interacting with the mediapersons after initiating the inter-faith dialogue with Christian leaders, including a cardinal from Vatican City in Rome, Jean Louis P Tauran and Cardinal Oswald Gracias from Mumbai.

Held at that the Shanmukhananda Hall in central Mumbai, the inter-faith dialogue — aimed at sending a message of peace and harmony to the people — was along the lines of a similar move undertaken by the Pope Benedict XVI to hold talks with the chief of Rabbinate of Israel at Jerusalem on May 12, 2009, to bolster religious tolerance between Jews and Catholics.

In a significant statement, the seer from the Kanchi Kamakoti Mutt voiced his opposition to “forceful conversion” by any religion. “It has become easy for the missionaries to convert Hindus. All Hindu organisations and associations should work together to educate Hindus and eradicate conversion activity. We have conveyed this message to Christian leaders in the meeting,” the Shankaracharya said.

Echoing the sentiments expressed by the Shankaracharya vis-à-vis “forceful conversion”, Mumbai’s Cardinal Oswald Gracias said: “We will not encourage any forceful activities. This message will reach all the Christian organisations.”

The Shankaracharya also exhorted the Churches and Christian groups to utilise the funds received by them from abroad for social causes and not for religious conversions.

“We know that very large amounts of money come into this country for Churches and Christian groups, ostensibly for charitable work. These funds should be used only for social causes like health, education etc and should not be used for religious conversion. The Christian organisations should also distribute the funds received from abroad among various charitable institutions irrespective of their religious faith,” the Shankaracharya said.

The Shankaracharya went on to add: “... the Hindu dharma and the Hindus welcome Christians, Muslims, Parsis and Jews to make this land their home. We expect that these religions will not seek to destroy our faith,

religion and wound the religious sensibilities. We encourage all religions to live with mutual respect and harmony and in a shared sense of nationalism which should bind us all as one nation”.

The Shankaracharya also advised the churches in India against using Hindu religious words, phrases and symbols like Veda, Agama, Rishi, Ashrama and Om, as an “inculturation” tactic to deceive vulnerable sections of people targeted for religious conversion. He also urged the Indian Government to look into the reported efforts by some churches to script a new bible for new converts by usurping sections of sacred Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas and incorporating them into the Bible.

<http://www.dailypioneer.com/182645/US-body-should-not-interfere-in-Indian-affairs-Shankaracharya.html>

2) Interfaith Dialogue @ Mumbai - Press briefing by Kanchi Acharya

HH Sri Kanchi Sankaracharya's briefing on June 12, 2009

1. Exactly one month ago to the date, the Pope went to Jerusalem where Jesus was born, for a similar dialogue that the Vatican had undertaken with the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. At the end of that meeting when the Pope and Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yona Metzger jointly addressed the Press and Media, the Chief Rabbi thanked the Pope for assuring the Chief Rabbinate that the Catholic Church would desist and cease from all missionary and conversion activities among the Jews. This is construed as endorsed and agreed by the Pope since he was present in the press meet. We need a similar commitment from the Church for Hindus.
2. After such inter-faith meetings, the points agreed have to be faithfully abided. Otherwise there will be no point in holding such meetings. Unless the Church reassures Hindus that it will not conduct itself in a manner that wounds Hindu sensibilities and follows up on those assurances, such inter-faith meetings, no matter how frequently they are held will be futile and will not serve any meaningful cause.
3. In 1999, Pope Johan Paul II had stated that the mission of the Vatican was to plant the Cross in Asia in the third millennium to facilitate the Christianizing of the world which alone would cause the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The Pope must tell us the rationale for the First Coming of Jesus Christ when there was no Christianity or the Church to undertake the mission to Christianize the world.
4. We see the USCIRF (US Commission on International Religious Freedom) as an intrusive mechanism of a foreign government to interfere in the internal affairs of this country. The USCIRF which has been permitted to visit this country to hold meetings with our people to ascertain religious freedom in our country must no longer be permitted to enter this country on this intrusive mission. We will not allow external interference into our internal affairs.
5. We know that very large amounts of money come into this country for Churches and Christian groups, ostensibly for charitable work. These funds should be used only for social causes like health, education etc and should not be used for religious conversion. During these dialogues, it should be agreed that the funds should be distributed to all Organisations who

do charitable work irrespective of the organisations' religious faith. A common pool should be created and a Committee formed to distribute and monitor the usage of these funds.

6. It has become easy for the Missionaries to convert Hindus. All Hindu Organisations and Associations should work together to educate Hindus and eradicate the conversion activity.
7. Hindu dharma is by nature diverse and so all different panthas and sampradayas co-exist on this bhumi without seeking to destroy the others. Hindu dharma has nurtured and supported all faiths and religions because that is the way of dharma. We expect that religions which have come into this bhumi from other lands will respect this vital characteristic of Hindu dharma and not do anything to subvert or disturb the sense of nationhood of this country. Hindu dharma and the Hindu people welcome Christians and Muslims, Parsis and Jews to make this land their home. We expect from these religions that they will not seek to destroy our faith, our religion and wound our religious sensibilities. We encourage all religions to live with mutual respect and harmony in a shared sense of nationalism which should bind us all as one nation. Nationalism should come first.
8. We are aware of the preaching that they will cure diseases and ailments if the individual converts to their faith. This is illegal as per the DRUGS AND MAGIC REMEDIES ACT 1954.
9. Most of the countries in the world (USA, UK, Japan, Middle-east nations, Pakistan, Sri Lanka etc.), adopt national resolutions and statements of intent proclaimed by their governments and

their tallest religious bodies affirming their determination to protect and defend the culture and the religion from which their cultures derive. In India alone we pass resolutions which officially and legally promote an irreligious and unspiritual creed called secularism. Secularism is an administrative quality; it cannot be the soul of this nation. The soul of this nation is religious and spiritual. We call upon our government and other important religious bodies to recognize this truth and affirm their commitment to protect the soul of this nation.

10. The Buddhist Mahasangha and the Joint Committee of Buddhist Organizations have declared its intention to get the Sri Lankan government to pilot and pass a national anti-conversion Bill and make it law. We welcome this move and strongly endorse this measure.
11. The Church in India must stop forthwith the use of Hindu religious words, phrases and symbols like Veda, Agama, Rishi, Ashrama, Om and other such in what is referred to as 'inculturation' tactics but which are only intended to deceive the vulnerable sections of our people who are the intended targets for religious conversion. This is also insulting to and wounding the religious sensitivities of Hindus. Similarly it has been brought to our notice that some churches are scripting a new Bible for the new converts by usurping sections of our sacred Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas and incorporating them into the Bible. This must stop immediately and all such Bibles must be withdrawn from circulation. We urge the Indian government to look into the issue and do the needful.

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First “World Conference on Untouchability” Is Truly Global (Correction)

Source: www.iheu.org

LONDON, UK, June 10, 2006: Government representatives, activists and experts from around the world will address the first “World Conference on Untouchability” at Conway Hall Humanist Centre, London, UK, on June 9 and 10, 2009. The conference is organized by the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) to explore a problem that afflicts nearly 250 million people in countries from Japan to Nigeria.

“Untouchability” - the social exclusion of people because of the population they are born into - is a problem in diverse cultures. Some examples are less known than others; the list includes Bangladesh, Burma, India, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Nigeria and Pakistan. This is the first conference of its kind to explore untouchability in many different cultures and to bring together activists to share strategies.

Speakers include political leaders Lord Desai of St. Clement Danes, from the British House of Lords, and Mahendra Paswan, Nepal’s Minister for Land Reform, as well as grassroots campaigners against untouchability, including Babu Gogineni in India and Leo Igwe in Nigeria.

“The international community seems to want to ignore the dehumanizing discrimination experienced by ‘untouchables’ across the world,” says Sonja Eggerickx, president of IHEU

The Exalted Role of Women According to Hindu Scriptures

Source: www.al.com

HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA, May 29, 2009: Mahatma Gandhi wrote that the way we treat our women is an indicator of our barbarism. The ultimate and the only authority on the practices of Hinduism are the four Vedas. That women and men are equal in the eyes of dharma is made explicit in a beautiful verse from the Rig-Veda: “O women! These mantras are given to you equally [as to men]. May your thoughts, too, be harmonious. May your assemblies be open to all without discrimination” Many seers were women in the Vedic period. Indeed, several of them authored many of the verses in the Vedas. The Rig-Veda lists the names of some of the well-known women seers: Ghoshsha, Godha, Vishwawra, Apala, Sri, Laksha and many others.

The Manu-smriti, an ancient text that contained the law codes for ancient Hindu society, extols the virtues of women: “Women are worthy of worship. They are the fate of the household, the lamp of enlightenment for all in the household. They bring solace to the family and are an integral part of dharmic life.” The fact of Hindu scriptures honoring women is testimony to the enlightenment of the Vedas and the Vedic period. Many common social issues such as remarriage of women, widow remarriage, ownership and inheritance of property by women and so on were permitted in the Vedic period

VHP of America Voices Concern About “Religious Freedom” Expedition to India

Source: www.vhp-america.org

UNITED STATES, June 6, 2009 (Press Release): On behalf of the Hindu American community, The Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) would like to voice its disappointment with the US Congress-backed panel “United States Commission on International Religious Freedom’s (USCIRF)” expedition to India in June 2009, to investigate and gain perspective on Indian government’s response to recent disturbances.

It is incomprehensible that of all the countries in the world, USCIRF is visiting India to examine Religions Freedoms. India, the largest functioning democracy in the world with an independent judiciary, a statutorily constituted Human rights Commission, an independent press and other supporting organizations would appear to be quite capable of taking care of the religious freedoms and human rights of its citizens. India not only offers freedom of religion under its constitution, but does not discriminate based on religion. Similar freedoms are not available in its neighboring countries which do not have Hindu majorities.

California Education Board to Compensate Hindus

Source: www.rediff.com

CALIFORNIA, USA, June 9, 2009: An organization of Hindu-American parents, which had filed a law suit against California education board alleging that information about Hinduism was distorted in the school text books, has decided to withdraw its litigation in an out of court settlement.

The California Department of Education and the State Board of Education have agreed to pay US\$175,000 to the California Parents for the Equalization of Educational Materials (CAPEEM) to fight the case against the California State.

“Believing that its points had been clearly understood by the defendants, CAPEEM opted not to prolong the litigation,” CAPEEM said in a statement.

CAPEEM had filed a lawsuit in the US District Court of Eastern District of California in 2006. It had challenged the process by which religious claims were incorporated into the textbooks used by public school students, as well as some of the religious claims, themselves, which had made their way into those texts.

“CAPEEM looks forward to participating in a review process free from biases, and to work with the State to approve textbooks that do not favor or disfavor any religious doctrines,” the statement said. “We are a group of parents residing in the state of California. We are deeply concerned about the indoctrination of Abrahamic religions and the negative descriptions of Hinduism in the History and Social Science textbooks of our state,” the CAPEEM website said.

“For decades, the California public school system has presented insufficient, inaccurate and misleading information about various religions to young Americans. These issues must be addressed urgently,” it said.

CAPEEM said Hindu parents in California participated in the adoption process and conveyed that the proposed textbooks contain factually incorrect information about ancient India and Hinduism while repeating derogatory, colonial-era

cliches and perpetuating Eurocentric and Biblical views.

Rather than consider the viewpoints of Hindu parents and experts on ancient Indian History and Hinduism, the California Board of Education, solicited the advice of hostile academics who carry political and ideological baggage against Hinduism and India and whose knowledge of ancient Indian history and Hinduism is both limited and prejudiced, it alleged. Consequently it filed a law suit in 2006.

In its lawsuit CAPEEM charged that Hinduism is not treated on par with other religions in these textbooks. Positive aspects of ancient India and Hinduism are ignored, while Euro-centric, colonial and Biblical views are given prominence in the textbooks, it said. Whereas Christianity, Islam and Judaism are presented from the believers’ perspective, Hinduism is presented from the non-believers’ perspective, CAPEEM alleged.

In its lawsuit, CAPEEM said the civil rights of Hindu school children are violated by advancing an inaccurate and derogatory picture of Hinduism in sixth grade school textbooks. The California Department of Education and State Board of Education meetings on the matter failed to address Hindu concerns. Hindus are being discriminated against, it alleged.

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