



Arsha Vidya Newsletter

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ईशावास्यम् इदं सर्वम्
Whatever here is Ishvara



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Swami Dayananda Ashram

Sri Gangadhareswar Trust

Purani Jhadi, Rishikesh

Pin 249 201, Uttarakhanda

Ph.0135-2431769

Fax: 0135 2430769

Website: www.dayananda.org

Email: dayas1088@hotmail.com

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Arsha Vijnana Gurukulam

72, Bharat Nagar

Amaravathi Road, Nagpur

Maharashtra 410 033

Phone: 91-0712-2523768

Email: brahmapra@gmail.com

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Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Institute of Vedanta and Sanskrit

P.O. Box No.1059

Saylorsburg, PA, 18353, USA

Tel: 570-992-2339

Fax: 570-992-7150

570-992-9617

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Institute of Vedanta and Sanskrit Sruti

Seva Trust

Anaikatti P.O., Coimbatore 641108 Tel.

0422-2657001

Fax 91-0422-2657002

Web Site <http://www.arshavidya.in>

Email: office@arshavidya.in

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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!**

Mundaka

Second Muṇḍaka

Mantra 2.2.1 continuation from previous issue.....

Śaṅkara gives here the analogy of spokes on the hub of a chariot's wheel⁵⁹ to point out how everything has its being in *Brahman*. Without the hub the spokes have no being. Similarly, everything is placed in this *Brahman* alone. The hub and the spokes enjoy the same order of reality. The example, therefore, has a limited scope and is meant only to show that the hub supports all the spokes. Similarly, the wheel of *saṁsāra* also has a number of spokes, factors that make it continue. These factors have their being in the hub of Brahman. It is not a hub of activity; it is a hub of placement. Because of this hub alone the spokes are in place and the wheel of *saṁsāra* moves. So it is *mahat-padam*. The mantra now lists all the things that are placed in Brahman.

Yat ejat : that which moves. Here it means anything insentient that moves, like air, water and so on. Anything that is alive is covered by the words *nimiṣat* and *prāṇat*. It is the *upaniṣad*'s style of covering things. *Yat nimiṣat* : anything that closes and opens the eyes. It means that which has eyelids. All the animals and human beings are included. *Yat prāṇat* : that which breathes, meaning anything that has *prāṇa* like trees. Even insects are included in this.

All these are various *upādhis*. One does not understand the implications of the term *upādhi*. We often hear people saying, "Swamiji, I know I am limitless, but I have a problem with my *upādhi*. It is not good." It is just shifting the language to express one's problem. Unless one identifies with the *upādhi*, one cannot make the statement, 'I have a problem with my *upādhi*.' With that identification the *upādhi* is no longer an *upādhi*, but has become oneself. The first step in recognising the *vastu* is to know that one is not the *upādhi*. The next step is to

The first step in recognising the vastu is to know that one is not the upādhi. The next step is to see that one is not enclosed in the upādhi. The final step is to know oneself as the one in whom all the upādhi are placed

see that one is not enclosed in the *upādhi*. An *āstika*, a believer in the *Vedas*, does not think he or she is the body, but thinks that he or she survives the body. For such a person, the body becomes a trap; one has to get out of it. Not knowing how to do so, the person seeks a good trap in the form of better body. It is like a Prince, found guilty of a crime, being slain with a golden sword. The final step is to know oneself as the one in whom all the *upādhi* are placed.

Sad-asat: which has forms and which is formless. *Sat* here means anything tangible, anything that has a form and *asat* means that which exists but is not tangible, and has no form. In the *śāstra* whenever the words 'sat' and 'asat' are used, we need to see the context in which they are used before interpreting them. Here, the teacher is talking about the manifest world. So the context is not *satya* and *mithyā*.

Taittirīyopaniṣad uses the terms *sat* and *tyat* for *sat* and *asat*, respectively. *Sat* refers to the elements having form such as fire, water and earth, and *tyat* refers to the elements having no form like space and air. The *jagat* is nothing but these five elements put together. So '*sadasat*' is the Vedic way of expressing the *jagat*.⁶⁰ *Brahman* is in the form of the five elements. Elements have their existence because of *Brahman*.

This *Brahman* is *vareṇyam*:⁶¹ worshipful. *Brahman* is to be sought, worshipped and understood by everyone. *Varaṇa* is in terms of choosing the best. *Brahman* is the *nitya-vastu*, and hence, if you want to put an end to your seeking, you should make it the subject matter of your pursuit. All your prayers and actions should converge to accomplish the knowledge of this *nitya-vastu* alone, knowing which everything is as well known. Any other knowledge does not make a real difference in your life. But when this knowledge is there, all other knowledge becomes sacred. This knowledge is, therefore, the most worshipful for a *vivekin*.

This Brahman is vareṇyam: worshipful. Brahman is to be sought, worshipped and understood by everyone. Varaṇa is in terms of choosing the best. Brahman is the nitya-vastu, and hence, if you want to put an end to your seeking, you should make it the subject matter of your pursuit. The glories of all the deities are the glories of this vastu alone.

The glories of all the deities are the glories of this *vastu* alone. They are placed in this *vastu* only, even though they are all worshipful. So everything, which moves, breathes, opens and closes eyes, which has form and no forms, is placed in *Brahman* and hence *Brahman* is *vareṇya*. It is said⁶² that 'salutation offered to any deity goes only to *Īśvara*.' The route is your *iṣṭā-devata*. Therefore, you can worship any form.

In the *gāyatrī-mantra*,⁶³ the word '*vareṇyam*' occurs. *Om* is the most worshipful and sought after *vastu*. All three worlds, *bhūr-bhuvas-svāḥ*, are nothing but *Om*. *Tasya devasya bhargah dhīmahi*, may we meditate upon that all-knowledge *Īśvara* who is free from ignorance, like the sun that is free of any black spot.

Yah vareṇyaṁ bhargaḥ naḥ dhiyaḥ pracodayāt, may that omniscient Lord, who is the most worshipful, who obtains in the heart, guide our intellect in the right direction, brighten our intellect.

One can take the potential mood of the verb *pracodayāt* as present tense form '*pracodayati*' and explain that he is the one who illumines the *buddhi*, who causes all activities. Then the whole mantra becomes a *mahā-vākya*.

Tat vijñānāt paraṁ prajānām: it is above the knowledge of the people. Any knowledge is gained by the senses and mind through perception and inference, and whatever knowledge is gained by a person through these means is *aparā-vidyā*. The knowledge of *Brahman*, on the other hand, *parā-vidyā* which is not available for perception and inference. *Brahman* does not require the mind and senses to reveal itself because it is self-evident and reveals everything else. *Prajā* means not only human beings, but all beings.

Variṣṭham: the most exalted. There are any things which are exalted, but *Brahman* is the most exalted. Why? Because it is free from all limitations, all defects.⁶⁴ *Brahman* is always free, shining and pure.⁶⁵ it is the only thing that is perfect. If at all there is a concept of perfection, it is not in *saṁsāra*, but only in the *ātman* which is free of attributes. If something has an attribute it is imperfect. People who are committed to perfectionism are always in trouble. Suppose a person wants to write perfectly; he will never start writing. If one wants to do a job perfectly, one will never begin the job. It is a psychological problem. There is no such thing as perfection in *saṁsāra*. Knowing *Brahman*, on the other hand, there is no limitation for the person. Thereafter, one is no longer subject to *saṁsāra*. That is the nature of *āviḥ*, *brahmātmā*, in which everything has its being.

So the teacher tells his disciples, '*etat jñātha (yūyam)*: may you all know this as the *svarūpa* of yourselves. ' It happens to be oneself, knowing which everything is as well known. So the original question on the part of *Śaunaka* remains answered.

⁵⁹ रथनाभाविवाराः (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

⁶⁰ सदसतोर्मूर्त्तामूर्त्तयोः स्थूलसूक्ष्मयोः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

⁶¹ वृजः एण् (उणादिः ३ ॥ १८) ।

⁶² आकाशात् पतितं तोयं यथा गच्छति सागरम् । सर्वदेवनमस्कारः श्रीकेशवं प्रतिगच्छति ।
(सन्ध्यावन्दनमन्त्रः)

⁶³ ओं भूर्भुवस्स्वः तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ।

⁶⁴ सर्वपदार्थेषु वरेषु तद्व्येकं ब्रह्म अतिशयेन वरं सर्वदोष-रहितत्वात् । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

⁶⁵ नित्यमुक्त-नित्यबुद्ध-नित्यशुद्ध स्वभावः ।

to be continued.....

Vedanta Dindimah

With the Glossary tattvaparakāśikā

..... Continued 3rd part

जीवो ब्रह्मात्मना ज्ञेयो ज्ञेयं जीवात्मना परम् ।
मुक्तिस्तदैक्यविज्ञानादिति वेदान्तडिण्डीमः ॥१६॥

jīvo brahmātmanā jñeyo jñeyam jīvātmanā param ।
muktistadaikyavijñānāditi vedāntaḍiṇḍīmahaḥ ॥16॥

जीवः jīvaḥ - the individual, ब्रह्मात्मना brahmātmanā - as Brahman, ज्ञेयः jñeyaḥ - has to be known, परम् param - the Supreme (Reality), जीवात्मना jīvātmanā - as the individual, ज्ञेयम् jñeyam - has to be known, तदैक्यविज्ञानात् tadaikyavijñānāt - by the recognition of their Unity, मुक्तिः muktiḥ - liberation, ----

One should recognise that the individual is essentially Brahman and that the Supreme Reality Brahman alone is the individual. Vedanta like a drum proclaims that recognition of this Unity leads to liberation. (16)

सर्वात्मना परं ब्रह्म श्रोतुरात्मतया स्थितम् ।
नायासस्तत्त्वविज्ञप्तौ इति वेदान्तडिण्डीमः ॥१७॥

sarvātmanā param brahma śroturātmatayā sthitam ।
nāyāsastattvavijñaptau iti vedāntaḍiṇḍīmahaḥ ॥17॥

परं ब्रह्म param brahma - the Supreme Brahman, सर्वात्मना sarvātmanā - as everything, श्रोतुः śrotuḥ - of the listener, आत्मतया ātmatayā - as the innermost being, स्थितम् sthitam - obtains, तत्त्वविज्ञप्तौ tattvavijñaptau - in recognising the Reality, न अयासः na ayāsaḥ - no exertion, ----

The Supreme Brahman alone obtains as everything, and also as the innermost being of the listener (of Vedanta). Hence, Vedanta proclaims that there is no exertion involved in recognising that Reality. (17)

ऐहिकं चामुष्मिकं च तापान्तं कर्मसञ्चयम् ।
त्यक्त्वा ब्रह्मैव विज्ञेयमिति वेदान्तडिण्डीमः ॥१८॥

aihikaṁ cāmuṣmikaṁ ca tāpāntaṁ karmasañcayam ।
tyaktvā brahmaiva vijñeyamiti vedāntaḍiṇḍīmahaḥ ॥18॥

ऐहिकम् Aihikam - related to this world, च ca - and, आमुष्मिकम् āmuṣmikam - related to the other world, तापान्तम् tāpāntam - end in suffering, कर्मसञ्चयम् karmasañcayam - accumulated actions, त्यक्त्वा tyaktvā - having relinquished, ब्रह्मैव brahmaiva - Brahman alone, विज्ञेयम् vijñeyam - has to be known, ----

All actions in pursuit of the pleasures of this world or of the other world ultimately lead to suffering and bondage. Hence, Vedanta proclaims that the seeker of Self-knowledge should relinquish all actions prompted by desire and strive to know Brahman alone. (18)

अद्वैतद्वैतवादौ द्वौ सूक्ष्मस्थूलदशां गतौ ।
अद्वैतवादान्मोक्षस्यात् इति वेदान्तडिण्डिमः ॥१९॥

advaitadvaitavādaḥ dvau sūkṣmsthūladāśāṃ gatau ।
advaitavādānmokṣasyāt iti vedāntaḍiṇḍimāḥ ॥19॥

द्वौ dvau – the two, अद्वैतद्वैतवादौ advaitadvaitavādaḥ - the visions one of unity and the other of division, सूक्ष्मस्थूलदशाम् sūkṣmsthūladāśāṃ - subtle and gross state, गतौ gatau - gained, अद्वैतवादात् advaitavādāt - due to the vision of unity, मोक्षः mokṣaḥ - liberation, स्यात् syāt – takes place, ----

There are two visions: one, that of unity and the second, that of division. The vision of unity is subtle, and the vision of division is gross. Vedanta proclaims that among them, the vision of unity gives liberation. (19)

कर्मिणो विनिवर्तन्ते निवर्तन्ते उपासकाः ।
ज्ञानिनो न निवर्तन्ते इति वेदान्तडिण्डिमः ॥२०॥

karminḥ vinivartante nivartante upāsakāḥ ।
jñāninō na nivartante iti vedāntaḍiṇḍimāḥ ॥20॥

कर्मिणः karminḥ - those who are committed to actions, विनिवर्तन्ते vinivartante - return, उपासकाः upāsakāḥ - meditators, निवर्तन्ते nivartante - return, ज्ञानिनः jñānināḥ – the knowers of the Self, न निवर्तन्ते na nivartante - do not return,--

Vedanta proclaims that there is rebirth for the performers of rituals and for the meditators, but not for the knowers of the Self. (20)

to be continued.....

Dealing With Our Mind(Alertness,Japa)

Satsang with Sri Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati-Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Question

What is the cause of the thoughts occurring in our mind?

Answer

Our thoughts are a result of our *saṁskāras*, impressions. These *saṁskāras* are implanted in our mind by our past karma, actions. When we perform an action, an outcome or result is created. This result is stored in the form of impressions, and when the impression fructifies, a thought occurs in our mind. Impressions can also fructify as situations. Thus the situations that we meet outside as well as the thoughts that occur in our mind are a result of our karma.

Question

Can we have a commitment to cheerfulness?

Answer

We cannot command cheerfulness. It has to happen. Our commitment can be to do things that are conducive to cheerfulness. We can perform those actions that we would perform when we are cheerful. We can bring about a smile on our face. We can be courteous. These are under our control. But to be cheerful is not under one's control. When we realize that our thoughts are not so cheerful, we have the freedom to distance ourselves from our thoughts so that they do not impact us. This way we can stop further buildup of these thoughts. Sadness is a result of buildup of thoughts.

When we find that a certain thought keeps occurring over and over in our mind, we have the freewill to change the thought process. Though thoughts occur as a result of our destiny, we can use our freewill to change the direction of our thoughts, plant other thoughts and do some other activity. But we cannot determine what our next thought is going to be, unless we planted it ourselves. This is what we do in japa -- repeating the same thought over and over again. When we do japa, or chant a prayer, or repeat a stotra, we perform a deliberate action making our mind think those thoughts.

The idea is to repeat the same prayer or *stotra* long enough to form impressions in our mind so that the mind will repeat those thoughts. These new impressions will slowly erase the impressions created in our mind due to our past actions. This is possible by one's self-effort alone.

Question

If we do not really believe in *japa*, are we tricking our minds by doing *japa*?

Answer

Japa is not tricking our mind, but using the process of the mind itself. By *japa* we are inserting desirable flow of thoughts. When we feel that there is no desirable flow of thoughts in our mind, then by an effort we can insert desirable flow of thoughts. Typically, we do *japa* to deliberately insert a desirable flow of thought and to completely transform our thought flow.

Thoughts have a tendency to flow in the channels already created. By a certain pattern of thinking and reacting, we have already created channels through which the thoughts flow. By *japa* and prayers, we are creating new channels so that new thoughts can flow through these channels. It is not just any thought that is created here. *Japa* is repeating the name of the Lord, who is the purest of the pure. Therefore, by repeating the Lord's name, we are inserting healing and purifying thoughts in our mind to slowly transform the composition of our mind. In *japa*, we are allowing our mind to think the way we want it to think. When we are solving a math problem, for instance, we make our mind think what we want it to think. Similarly also when we do *japa*, we engage the mind and let the thoughts flow only in that direction.

Question

Can we concentrate better if we meditate?

Answer

Meditation requires that we focus our minds on some object of meditation; therefore, it hones our ability to concentrate through constant practice. This, in turn, is bound to cause beneficial effects in other activities that demand concentration too. Therefore, meditation definitely does help us concentrate better.

Question

How do we develop alertness of the mind?

Answer

To explain with an example, let's take any action, say, the action of eating. It is important to commit ourselves to alertness by saying that for the 10 to 15 minutes that I will be performing this action, I will be alert about every activity that I perform, every gesture that I make. This mental awareness will help to make this a conscious project in working on alertness.

Another method of effectively practicing alertness is *japa*. That is, I can tell my mind that I cannot move to the next mantra unless I have chanted this mantra '*om namah śivāya*' with complete awareness. Usually in mantra-chanting, the *mantras* are recited one after another continuously. If the mind does get distracted, it is usually in the time interval between the mantras. Once I am focused on the chanting without worrying about the number of times that I have chanted, it is a meaningful action.

On the contrary, when the intention is to finish ten *mālās* in ten minutes, the priority is misplaced, as the act of finishing the chanting becomes more important. The accomplishment of time-based completion (like wanting to better somebody's record of reciting the Vishnu *Sahasranamam* in 15 minutes by completing it in 7 minutes) makes the entire exercise mechanical and futile.

When *japa* is viewed as an act of worship, the *nāma* is important; mainly because the devotee is conscientious in his/her effort that the *nāma*-offering be pure and sacred. Mahatma Gandhi was a great example of cultivating alertness of the mind very conscientiously, through his *Rāma-nāma japa*¹.

¹ Summer 2003 satsang, transcribed and edited by Subbalakshmi Chandrasekaran, Jaya Kannan and Chaya Raj.

UNDERSTANDING GOD

Swami Paramarthananda's Shivratri Talk 2008

Relationship with the lord

Religious activities and religious study are two methods by which a devotee preserves and promotes his or her relationship with the lord. Every devotee considers his or her relationship with the lord as the most important and the most supporting relationship. If there are emotional problems and turmoil caused by other worldly relationships, the main remedy or source of strength is this relationship with the lord. This relationship lasts eternally and has continued जन्म (birth) after जन्म. All other relationships are fluctuating, fragile and perishable. A devotee keeps this primary relationship and looks for functions or occasions like शिवरात्रि (shivarathri) in which he can revive and reinforce this भक्त- भगवान् (devotee-god) relationship.

Religious study also helps because by the study of scriptures more knowledge about god is gained which helps the devotee to go a few steps closer to the lord. Understanding god will help in strengthening the जीव ईश्वर सम्बन्ध (relationship with god and individual). In the Hindu scriptures, there is a very vast literature about the nature of god, the glories of god, the functions of god, etc. When these descriptions are understood better, the relationship with the lord is strengthened. A wrong understanding of these descriptions may challenge the भक्ति (devotion) itself. We'll briefly study and understand few of the important descriptions of ईश्वर (lord) as per the scriptures.

The scriptures define the nature of ईश्वर (god) as a formless, intelligence principle which pervades the whole universe and maintains/sustains the universe in perfect harmony through a network of universal laws. Since भगवान् is all pervading intelligence principle, he cannot be limited by a particular finite body. To be all pervading is to be formless and to be formless is not to have a limited body. But, भगवान् must have some form if he/she is all pervading intelligence.

माया as भगवान् body

The scriptures describe भगवान् body as formless, all pervading माया तत्त्वम्. माया is a formless, all pervading principle like space and this all pervading माया is the body of the lord. It carries the intelligence. Therefore भगवान् is intelligence with माया शरीरम्.

Even though भगवान् has got the formless माया as his शरीरम् without any distinct body, भगवान् can accomplish everything through his सन्कल्प शक्ति that is given by माया. Through this सन्कल्प शक्ति, भगवान् can also assume temporary finite bodies for the sake of devotees. This is the definition of ईश्वर given in the scriptures.

ईश्वर जगत् कर्ता

भगवान् is described in several important terms in the scriptures. One of the descriptions of भगवान् not only in the Hindu religion but also in other religions is that भगवान् is creator of the world. It is a very important description and hence, should be properly understood.

According to scriptures, the word creator should not be taken in its literal meaning but in figurative meaning. This is because the scriptures point out that all the living being, all the जीवस and the inert universe (जीव and जगत् – चरम् and अचरम्) are eternal and therefore, uncreated. Science also states the same. According to the law of conservation of matter and energy, even an ounce cannot be created (or destroyed). Therefore, there is no question of creation at all.

भगवान् cannot be the creator of the uncreated eternal universe. Therefore the word creator should not be understood literally. This literal understanding (or misunderstanding) has led people to ask many questions such as the purpose of creation, etc.

Active and passive state

The scriptures point out that even though the जीव and जगत् are eternal and uncreated; both of them go through alternate conditions of active state and passive state, like the wave having a crest and a trough. Exactly like we go to sleep in the night and wake up in the morning, जीव and जगत् are eternally going through active and passive state. Each state is preceded by the other and followed by the other.

भगवान् does not create जीव जगत्, since they are already there. भगवान् role is activating the जीव and जगत् from their previous passive state. Every time he activates, it is not a fresh activation but a reactivation. This reactivation is only referred to as “creation”. भगवान् has been doing the reactivation eternally and will continue to do so.

Why is भगवान् required for the reactivation?

Scriptures point out that भगवान् is required because the reactivation of जीव and जगत् is not a random process. It has to take place according to the law of कर्म. During the passive state, all the जीव exist with their own कर्म (which can be पुन्यम् or पापम् depending on the good or bad actions respectively).

The quality of universe, therefore, is not dependent on भगवान्'s will. It is dependent on law of कर्म. So when terrible events and calamities happen, it is not because of भगवान् but because of the law of कर्म. ईश्वर, as the reactivator, is called सामान्य कर्त and our कर्म (पुन्यम् and पापम्) are called विशेष कर्त. The activation involves not only creation of universe but also the creation of body mind complex. भगवान् has to reactivate (create) because the पुन्यम् and पापम् will have to come into play.

भगवान् as the protector of devotees

Scriptures describe भगवान् as the protector of devotees. भगवान् protects the devotees in four different ways.

लौकिक साधनानि

भगवान् has already kept solution to problems in the creation itself. For hunger problem, food has been kept. For the thirst problem, water is already provided. भगवान् has given us the बुद्धि to explore, understand, implement and benefit. लौकिक साधन means worldly solution. भगवान् has given land, water, grains and brains –we have to sow the seed, plant, protect, reap and enjoy. He will not directly plant the seed; he has given us the provision.

शास्त्रीय साधनानि

In the scriptures, especially in the कर्म खण्ड portion and in the मन्त्र शास्त्र, varieties of ritualistic solution, for varieties of problems in the form of परिहार, प्रायश्चित्त or शान्ति is provided by भगवान् . भगवान् has also given the method of diagnosing the problem. If the person has got the skill, he can diagnose the problem and find out which particular देवता is connected to that particular problem. Technically, it is called देवता कोपः – displeasure of a particular deity. For देवता कोपः, देवता शान्ति is the type of remedy which is also provided by भगवान् . Therefore through शास्त्रीय साधनानि, भगवान् protects the devotees. But this method should be employed carefully since wrong diagnosis can lead to adverse results.

अलौकिक साधनानि

Occasionally or rarely, भगवान् himself performs miracle in answer to devotee's intense and sincere prayers and through miraculous methods, a devotee's problems are solved. The devotee has only used intense prayer as a solution and in answer to that prayer, भगवान् performs one miracle or the other and the devotee is out of problem. पुराण is full of such stories – Prahlada, Dhruva, Draupadi, etc. In answer to the prayer, भगवान् rarely, occasionally for some people at some time, performs miracles. This is called अलौकिक साधनानि.

आध्यात्मिक साधनम्

In answer to devotee's prayer, भगवान् gives the devotee the power of endurance and also change of attitude. And because of this change in attitude, the devotee does not see a problem as a problem. He sees it only as another situation and since he doesn't see it negatively, it is no more an unwelcome situation. This is called आध्यात्मिक साधनम्.

आध्यात्मिक साधनम् is a subjective solution in which nothing has happened outside but something has happened inwardly. In Ayodhya kanda of the Ramayana, both Kausalya and Sumitra face separation from their sons. While Kausalya is extremely upset, shattered and curses everyone including भगवान्, Sumitra who is facing the very same situation is not at all upset. Infact, she happily sends lakshmana to the forest. Seeing Kausalya upset, Sumitra gives her great advice which is described by Valmiki in one sarga. Sumitra changed the attitude of Kausalya and at the end of the counsel, kausalya does not see it as a problem. Problem is not solved but dissolved. This is called आध्यात्मिक साधनम्.

Thus through worldly solution, ritualistic solution, miracle solution and internal solution, भगवान् protects a devotee.

Which solution is the most successful?

Scriptures point out that out of these four solutions, the first three are unreliable. All the problems are not solved by the first three methods. The only fully successful solution is the fourth one. Through आध्यात्मिक साधनम्, sufficient endurance is obtained and भावना also undergoes a change.

Therefore when भगवान् is said to be protector, भगवान् uses any of the four methods but warns that only the fourth method is a completely reliable one.

भगवान् as स्वामी (master)

भगवान् is described in the scriptures as स्वामी or master. After reactivating the जीव and जगत्, भगवान् created scriptures as a manual to help human beings. These scriptures are specially meant for human beings as they have got will, intelligence and power and therefore there is a chance of misuse of power. The animals do not have freewill, choice, knowledge and hence no power. Animals are not a threat to the universe. As the famous saying goes, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Therefore भगवान् addressed humanity and said that humanity cannot live a life as they like. He prepared a set of moral and ethical principles without following which, we will be named असुर. When labelled as an असुर, even if you are the greatest भक्त like Ravana, you will be destroyed. Therefore, being the master, भगवान् includes moral and ethical principles along with भक्ति. A true भक्त follows ethical and moral principles.

It is very important to understand this because in certain other religions and also in Hinduism, there are certain cults that say if when we have surrendered to the lord, there is no need to follow ethical and moral principles. This is a misconception in the name of चरणागति तत्त्वम्. There is a misconception. चरणागति does not save you from your responsibility. You have to study the scriptures, know what is right and wrong and follow what is right. That is being obedient to भगवान् as master.

If these three words are clearly understood - भगवान् as creator, भगवान् as protector and भगवान् as master, we will be true भक्त and true भक्ति will help us attain the greatest goal of life.

Transcribed by Mrs Vinodhinee, a disciple of pujya Swamiji and Swami Paramarthanandaji

Sri Gurubyo Namah
ARSHA VIDYA PITHAM
Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh
is pleased to invite you
to
THE KUMBHABHISHEKAM OF ADHISTHANAM
of PUJYA SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATI
On 10th & 11th September 2016 (Sat & Sun)
&
First Anniversary & Inauguration of Adhistanam
on
12th September 2016 (Monday)
at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh

SRI RAMASUBRAHMANEYA RAJAH, Chairman Ramco Group has consented to be the Guest of Honor and inaugurate the Adhistanam.

You are requested to register yourself at www.dayananda.org/Anniversary for us to make arrangements for your comfortable stay here.

Arsha Kala Bhushanam Award Ceremony

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti under the banner of its cultural wing Arsha Kalarangam organized a colourful function on February 28, 2016 at Mani Higher Secondary School, Coimbatore and conferred Arsha Kala Bhushanam awards to highly acclaimed five carnatic musicians and two bharata natyam dancers. The awards were presented by Swami Omkarananda of Sri Chidbhavananda Ashram, Theni.

Pavithra Srinivasan eloquently conducted the events as the master of ceremony.

MUSIC: Dayananda Sisters rendered kritis of Pujya Swamiji expressing deep devotion, affection and love for their Guru.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS: Swami Sadatmananda welcomed the gathering.

AWARDS PRESENTATION: Swami Omkarananda presented the awardees with a citation, a purse of Rs. one lac and a silk shawl. They were conferred the title Arsha Kala Bhushanam.

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH: The awardees thanked Pujya Swamiji for selecting them for this award and honouring them. They said they missed receiving the award from the hands of Pujya Swamiji himself.

Neyveli Santhanagopalan and Karaikudi Mani could not attend the function due to other commitments and their representatives received the awards.

SWAMI OMKARANANANDA'S ANUGRAHA BHASHANAM: Swami Omkarananda said that Pujya Swamiji is worship-worthy and hence to be remembered in the early morning. He quoted Bharatiyar's song where it is mentioned that Goddess Saraswati resides in all places including music and dance. All the fine-arts are integral part of the temple worship as per tradition. For instance in Thiruvidadaimarudur temple, there are many sculptures which depict various dance postures and in all traditional temples, music/dance are offered as one of the steps in the deity worship. Like yagna, music and dance rendered with devotion results in punya.

Thus one can easily relate to Ishvara through music and dance. Keeping this in mind Pujya Swamiji, although was a traditional teacher of Vedanta, due to his broad outlook, promoted fine arts. Pujya Swamiji may not be here physically but by occupying every one's mind his absence is not felt.

Swami Omkaranandaji blessed the awardees and all those present

FELICITATION TO SRI KRISHNAN

Sri Krishnan of Krishna Sweets was felicitated for the services he rendered towards the Arsha Kala Bhushanam annual functions. He was presented with shawl by Swami Omkaranandaji.

VOCAL MUSIC BY SMT ARUNA SAIRAM: It was not just the usual carnatic music concert. The artist with her emotive energy and devotional fervor transported the audience to a divine world. She kept the audience spell bound by her multi lingual kritis and majority of the crowd did not leave although it was very late in the evening. The concert ended with AIM for Seva motto song.

VOTE OF THANKS: Swami Sankarananda proposed a vote of thanks.



Shraddhanjali to Pujya Swamiji



Music by Dayananda Sisters



Inagural address by Swami Sadatmanandaji



Swami Omkarananda's Anugraha Bhashanam



Swamijis along with awardees





Felicitation to Sri Krishnan.



Vote of thanks by Swami Shankaranandaji



Solemn Function



Vocal Music by Smt. Aruna Sairam and group



Section of audience



Awardees, Citation and Award

Sri Chitravina N. Ravikiran

for his admirable contribution to Indian and World music through his scholarship, performances, compositions, creativity, classicism, teaching and commitment to promote & preserve tradition.

on this day, the 11th July, 2015.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati



Sri Neyveli R. Santhanagopalan

for his admirable contribution to Carnatic music through critically acclaimed performances and nourishing the classical musical tradition as an accomplished performer, an erudite scholar, an innovative educator and an inspiring Guru.

on this day, the 11th July, 2015.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati



Sri Guru Kaaraikkudi Mani

for his admirable contribution to music through performances bringing out the sophistication & importance of rhythm in music, pioneering the sruti-laya percussion ensemble, conforming to tradition and for being an inspiring guru.

on this day, the 11th July, 2015.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati





Smt T.Rukmini

for her admirable contribution to Carnatic music as a violin maestro creating a generation of performers and teachers and preserving tradition.

on this day, the 11th of July, 2015.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati



Smt. Shanta Dhananjayan and Sri. V.P. Dhananjayan

for their unique contribution in the field of classical Bharatanatyam, for creating a generation of artists, both in India and the U.S.A., each carrying the proud seal of the Dhananjayans abhinaya on this day, the 11th July, 2015.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati



Sangita Kalanidhi

Dr. R. Vedavalli

for her admirable contribution to vocal Carnatic music through her performances, keenly researched lecture demonstrations and publications, staggering multi-lingual repertoire and mastery over musical improvisations conforming to tradition.

on this day, the 11th July, 2015.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Report by N. Avinashilingam

Pancadasi Tenth Chapter

Swami Sakshatkridanandaji, the previous course acarya visited Arsha Vidya Gurukulam between 9th to 12th March. Swamiji was received with poornakumbham at the entrance of the lecture hall by the present acaryas and students.



Swamiji recieved with Poornakumabam

From 10th to 12th March, in six classes, Swamiji covered the Pancadasi 10th Chapter – Natakadeepa Prakaranam. A short write-up of the same follows:

Verses 1 to 5 establishes the need for enquiry of jiva, jagat and ishvara leading to the understanding that the paramarthika satyam brahman along with maya upadhi 'becomes' jiva, jagat and ishvara without undergoing any real change termed as vivarta karanam.

Verses 6 to 10 . In any knowledge process pramata (knower), pramanam (means of knowledge) prameyam (object of knowledge) and sakshi caitanyam are four factors involved. Of these first 3 are jatam (inert) and they can neither reveal themselves nor others. And hence no knowledge can take place without the

4th , the sakshi. Sakshi reveals pramata and pramanam directly and indirectly the prameyam through pramata (through the sense organs).

Verses 11 to 15 brings- in an imagery of the lamp in a dance hall called nataka deepa. By this nataka deepa example, it is made clear that साक्षी सर्वम् (इदम् जगत्) भासयेत् नृत्यशालास्थिदीपवत् विना यत्नेन युगपत् . In the stage there are the dancer and prabhu (the organiser) and in the sabha the audience, all of them being illumined by the lamp which does not undergo any change. After the dance program is over the empty hall is also illumined by the same lamp. The example and the exemplified are captured as follows.

दीपः दीपयेत्	प्रभुम्	नर्तकीम्	सभ्यान्
दीपः दीपयेत्	अहङ्कारम्	धियम्	विषयान्

The later verses 16 to 29 points out the uniqueness of the sakshi as acalam nirvikaram aprameyam etc. It is self-evident svathasiddhaH.

Classes were concluded on 12th March evenings and the students expressed their wish to have more classes by Swami Sakshatkridannanda.



Swamiji Taking Class

Pilgrimage to Anaikatti

We had heard so much about AVG Anaikatti from Swamini Sumatmanandaji that to find ourselves finally here was like a dream come true. Swaminiji had planned the 4 day pilgrimage to Anaikatti meticulously to the hour. The very first darshan we had was of Lord Dakshinamurthy. And attended the morning and evening pujas. The main purpose of our visit was to offer a 11 dravya puja and bhiksha in gratitude to Pujya Swamiji whose Grace in our lives is tangibly felt through the teachings and classes by Swaminiji on - Prakaranas of Adi Sankara, Sanskrit, vedic chanting and Bhagavad Gita back in Hyderabad.

Next at Ganga Kutiya of Pujya Swamiji we chanted the Guru stotram and did our pranams to the guiding Guru of all Gurus and Source of Arsha Vidya.

We had a delightful post lunch Satsang with Swami Sadatmanandaji, Chief Acharya who talked to us about the importance of purushaarthanischaya in life.

Sw Sankaranandaji gave us invaluable insights on how to bring more Isvara in one's life

It was a delight to distribute sweets and fruits to children of AIMS Boys and Girls Chatralayas.

Swaminiji also explained to us the significance of the अष्टमूर्तिभूत् or eightfold Lord in the temple. Thank You Pujya Swamiji ,Thank you Arsha Vidya Gurukulam.

Students of Swamini Sumatmananda – Usha, Lata, Srinivas, Lakshmi Vaidyanathan and Padma.



At Kutia.



With Acaryaji

MAHA SIVARATRI PUJA AT AVG

Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati said that spiritual practices undertaken on Sivaratri are effective and yield good spiritual results. Traditional Hindus observe fast during the day and remain awake during the night, doing nama japa and pancaksari mantra japa.



Lord Jana Ganapati



Lord Medha Dakshinamurti



Lord Narmadeshvarar



Jnaneshvari

AkandanamaBhajan

AVG, Anaikatti observed Maha Sivaratri Puja in a time-honored and solemn manner on March 7, 2016.

NITYA PUJA: Daily puja was done at Lord Dakshinamurti temple from 5 a.m. Special abhisheka were performed accompanied by vedic chanting.

AKHANDA NAMA JAPA: There was *akhanda nama japa* of the *pancaksari mantra* 'Om Namah Sivaya' from 7 AM to 3 PM. Swami Atmatriptananda from Kolkata led the chant. All the Swamis, Swaminis and students at AVG, Anaikatti took turns and chanted the mantra continuously. Many musical instruments accompanied the chanting. The atmosphere was filled with divinity and the mantra continued to echo in minds of the participants for many more days even after Sivaratri.

EKADASA RUDRA ABHISEKA: The chanting of Sri Rudram commenced at 4 pm, and during each of the 11 chants, 11 different *dravya abhisheka* was performed to Lord Medha Daksinamurthy and Lord Narmadesvara.

MAHA ARATI: The *Maha Arati* took place at 8 PM.

RATRI PUJA: During the night, three kala pujas were performed for Lord Narmadesvara. Led by Swami Atmatriptananda, many participated in the bhajans in the temple all night. There was divine ecstasy and the atmosphere was charged with devotion to the Lord.

The Swamis, Swaminis and Students observed fast and kept vigil for the whole night and spent the day in a memorable manner.



AkandanamaBhajan



Report by N. Avinashilingam & Photos by Uga Tomoko

Letter to Pujya Swamiji

Dear Swamiji,

Words cannot describe the amount of gratitude I have towards you and your teachings. Your physical absence has no doubt left an unexplainable void that I am trying very hard (without much success) to replace through your teachings and the various memories I have of interacting with you.

I am thankful to you Swamiji for many things and I am hoping this letter can capture a few of them. I hope it reaches you, wherever you are.

Thank you, Swamiji for being with me through every phase of my life. As a 5 year old, I looked up at you in awe as you started speaking in fluent and understandable English. I wondered if I would ever be a person so adored by many in the future. As a teenage girl, you stopped me from many tantrums and many ridiculous questions that a normal teenager would have come up with. Thanks for being with me in the form of “Teenagers” series of lectures. As a woman who had crossed her brahmacharya ashrama, you made me realize the challenges and importance of grhastha ashrama in the society.

Thank you, Swamiji for enlightening me on the wonder of my Hindu culture. My parents have a huge part in this, but I’m sure my parents themselves owe this to you (Being your students). I was introduced to our itihasas and puranas by my parents at a very tender age in the form of bed time stories. Later on, I listened to your Mahabharata series, where in your own inimitable style, you narrated the great epic. You added your humour, wit and presentation in that. I am safeguarding these invaluable lectures for the future generations too.

Thank you Swamiji for making me realize the importance of performing my duties irrespective of whether I like it or not. Then as my maturity increased, you taught me to like my duties and slowly I was able to thin the line between my duty and my likes.

Thank you Swamiji for teaching me the importance of being with what I do. This is one of the most amazing lessons you’ve taught me, Swamiji! My level of concentration and the quality in any work I do has increased to a great extent post learning this principle.

Thank you, Swamiji for teaching me the value of values. Even as a 24-year old right now, I shudder at the thought of uttering a white lie. You taught me that lying leads to a split personality and that is the first step towards failure in life.

Thank you Swamiji for being motivating whenever I’ve met you. I met you before my exams, you told me that I’d do well. I met you before my results, you blessed me that my results would be favourable. I met you after my “favourable” results, you told me that you are proud of me. Well, if this is not down to earth, I don’t know what else is. So, thank you Swamiji.

Thank you, Swamiji for giving a great teacher like Swami Paramarthananda ji who has the same amount of clarity and passion towards teaching the advaita Vedanta. As his student, I am ever grateful to you. Much like Lord Krishna in the Mahabharata who acted as the ferry man for the pandavas (kaivarthaka kesava) to cross the river of adharma and kauravas, you’ve been the Krishna to me in the river of the world. Additionally, you’ve also taught me (and continue to do so) to ferry for myself and cross this challenging yet interesting river of life. Thank you very much, Swamiji. I hope I live up to what I have learnt from you.

-by a devotee of Pujya Swamiji

A Tribute to Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati

– By Swami Svatmananda

Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati was a great visionary and global leader who transcended the confines of a sect, religion, or a nation. His many contributions in various arenas will be analyzed and appreciated as time goes on. Swamiji (as we affectionately call him) will be remembered for his bequests to India and the world during the last 15 years of his life: he founded the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha — a platform uniting all Hindu sampradayas (traditions) so that they can speak with one voice; he started the Aim-for-Seva movement — a unique social enterprise bringing free education and healthcare to the children living in rural and tribal areas of India; he challenged proselytizing institutions by rendering that ‘religious conversion is violence’ — which resulted in a United Nations resolution that called upon all religious organizations to mutually respect each other and to cease proselytization practices. Pujya Swamiji also initiated the Hindu-Jewish and the Hindu-Buddhist Summits — both transformative theological dialogues; he steered the rescue of Rama-Sethu bridge from certain desecration; and he was a tireless champion of Hindu and Vaidika Dharma through countless other initiatives and projects.

However, above and beyond all of these contributions, Swamiji was an outstanding teacher. He loved to teach. For more than 50 years, those who have listened to Swamiji’s discourses and those who have been his students and disciples, knew Swamiji at his best — when he was teaching. His profound lectures and eminent writings have been published in more than 60 titles in English, and some of them have been translated to other languages of the world.

Those who studied and grasped his teachings will recognize that Swamiji’s unfoldment of Vedanta as the most profound and irrevocable gift to mankind in centuries. His emphatic exposition that Vedanta is a pramāṇa — “a means of knowledge,” provided the pivotal shift needed to inquire into and understand the nature of the Self through the mirror of Vedanta. It became the crux of his teaching. It changed everything both for him and his students. It fundamentally transformed the study of Vedanta, and changed the spiritual landscape for all sincere seekers of the truth.

Until Swamiji brought this brilliant teaching to the forefront, Vedanta, and Veda for that matter, remained comfortably misunderstood and camouflaged in the dense forest of mysticism and magical fancies. For too long, spiritual teachers and their acolytes have been entranced with, and falsely profited by vague, unverifiable claims, and have transfixed themselves and others with attestations and seeming manifestations of a separate reality. In the extreme, many of the inhuman atrocities of wars, terror, famine, slavery of all forms, and colonization were perpetrated under the guise of belief systems or in the name of a fraudulent spiritual teacher or a personified god. Instead of such religious institutions emancipating humanity, they inadvertently became instrumental in perpetrating untold human suffering throughout millennia. Given this plight and the history of religious violence, many a modern existential thinker, armed with scientific reasoning, view religion and other forms of belief systems with forlorn skepticism and relegated them to the realms of superstition and meaningless ritualism. Science became the de facto standard with which everything had to be empirically substantiated or logically explained. Humanity meanwhile, remained caught in a seemingly irreconcilable schism between Science and Religion.

Instead of cursorily dismissing the demand for “scientific verification” Swamiji rationally demonstrated the limits of Science. Any scientific proof remained limited to the realms of the five senses and thus limited in scope and domain, thereby ostracizing science as an ill-suited means of verification. Moreover, by the mere fact that there exists a valid means of knowledge for understanding the spiritual realm, the basis of blind-belief which many religious institutions depend upon, became inconsequential. Unfolding Vedanta as a pramāṇa, that is, a means of knowledge, was Swamiji’s ingenious stroke that made both the demand of empirical scientific verification, as well as the demand for implicit and unquestioning belief, superfluous and inconsequential.

This method of teaching Vedanta has far-reaching and astonishing implications. It goes beyond presenting Vedanta as the testimony of realized beings of the past, whose realization has to be verified by one’s own experience of enlightenment here and now. It repositions Vedanta as a self-sufficient means of knowledge that neither requires scientific or empirical verification nor implicit and blind belief.

Vedanta’s objective or Swamiji’s for that matter, was not to shatter scientific inquiry or to repudiate belief systems, but essentially to enable bona-fide spiritual seekers to legitimately embark upon the pursuit of mokṣa — freedom from self-inadequacy by knowing the nature of reality. Vedanta unequivocally mandates that the ultimate goal for any human being is the pursuit of mokṣa. By introducing this pivotal-shift in looking at Vedanta as a pramāṇa, Swamiji made a process of guided self-inquiry accessible to thousands around the world, regardless of religious or cultural background. Thousands have been enthralled by Swamiji’s enlightening lectures interspersed with humorous story-telling and hilarious anecdotes. Hundreds of his students became teachers in their own right, some of whom continue to teach what he taught. Rather than build a hierarchical organization of teachers, he created a movement, by producing hundreds of independent teachers around the world, who in turn, continue to teach and change the thinking paradigm of future generations around the world.

Furthermore, looking at Vedanta in the light of pramāṇa equips those embroiled in existential, epistemological, or ontological inquiry, with a valid tool for their investigation. Establishing Vedanta as a pramāṇa made such investigations plausible and in fact verifiable. Swamiji, in his understated manner, would say, “you have to give a chance for pramāṇa to work.” “It ‘works’ when the student sees what the teacher sees,” he would add. A student had to employ pramāṇa, to see what Swamiji saw. Then and only then, the vision of Vedanta became real. The teaching became real: it came alive, validating not only the pramāṇa and the methodology that pramāṇa would rope in along with it, but also the teaching tradition (sampradāya), and ultimately, the Guru.

Swamiji was that extraordinary quintessential Guru as described by the Veda, who said with unpretentious humility that he was a traditional teacher. Endowed with rare insight, Swamiji made Vedanta accessible to the wider world, by seamlessly integrating contemporary English and ancient Sanskrit - which is a highly complex and refined language. Demonstrating great wizardry with words, Swamiji’s synthesized the two mismatched languages with such versatile dexterity without tampering or dumbing down the meaning of Sanskrit terms. He remained true to the teaching and to the teaching methodology, without compromising the tradition. He found it unnecessary to use any kind of props — no bombastic verbiage, no acronyms, no boards - black or white, no charts, no power-point presentations and no gimmicks. Just an earnest unadulterated dialogue between a Guru and Shishya (disciple), and in that dialogue Swamiji relied entirely upon the Śāstra pramāṇa to work. If the pramāṇa is skillfully handled by a traditionally trained teacher, there is no need to resort to auxiliary tools or techniques for the student to see what the teacher sees. Simply ingenious!

Swamiji's teachings and the magnitude of this particular contribution will continue to reverberate across the globe, and across generations, transcending cultures and civilizations, to profoundly transform mankind for the better. He shall therefore, I believe, be better known as the Swami who changed the world.

OM TAT SAT

Swami Svatananda Saraswati is a disciple of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati since 2003, and completed an intense study of Vedanta in a traditional three-year course in 2007. Swami Svatananda has devoted his life to Vedic knowledge. He studied Vedic disciplines in India and the U.S. and traveled great distances in order to learn from the foremost experts in each of the following specialties. He counsels individually and lectures to groups worldwide on Hatha yoga, Meditation, Jyotisha (Vedic astrology), Ayurveda (Vedic medicine), Vaastu (Vedic architecture), Sanskrit language and Vedanta. Swami Svatananda's experiences of living and working in four different continents gives him an exceptional ability to connect with people from varied backgrounds during his lectures. His rare combination of innate skills, broad life experiences and dedicated study translates into a uniquely comprehensive approach to counseling, teaching and applying Vedic wisdom in modern times.

Sanyasa Dheeksha on Sivaratri - 2016



Students of Sw Saksha

Br.GaneshSwami Ganeshwapoorananda
Br.Neela..... Swamini Nityatmananda

Students of Jitatmananda (malasia)

ChandrikaSwamini Divyasvaroopananda
Narendran.....Swami Atmasvaroopananda

Pearls of Wisdom



Nothing in the world can affect the 'I' or the Self in everyone and it is free from any sort of affliction. That is why in sleep the rich is no longer rich, the poor is no longer, poor, the blind is not blind.

A child trusts its parent totally and feels fully secured. So too an adult must learn to trust Iswara totally.



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Rudra Japam SIVARATRI - 2016

Arsha Kala Bhushanam



Left to right: Mrs.SanthanaGopalan, Smt.Rukmani, Sri Chitraveena N.Ravikiran, Smt R.Vedavalli, Swami Omkaranandaji, Swami Sadatmanandaji, Smt Shanta and Sri V.P.Dhananjayan, Sri Karaikudi R.Mani's disciple.